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Preparing the way of the Lord: Three case studies of ministerial preconditioning in congregations before the Great Awakening, 1675-1750

Douglas Kevin Fidler

University of New Hampshire, Durham

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PREPARING THE WAY OF THE LORD:
THREE CASE STUDIES OF MINISTERIAL PRECONDITIONING IN
CONGREGATIONS BEFORE THE GREAT AWAKENING, 1675-1750

BY

DOUGLAS KEVIN FIDLER
B.A. University of New Hampshire, 1972
M.S. University of Massachusetts, 1976
A.M. University of Southern California, 1981
M.A. University of New Hampshire, 1992
A.A.S. Community College of the Air Force, 1993
A.A.S. Community College of the Air Force, 1994

DISSERTATION

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In

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This dissertation has been examined and approved.

Dissertation Director, Charles E. Clark
Professor of History and the Humanities

David H. Watters, Professor of English

Marc L. Schwarz, Associate Professor of History

J. William Harris, Associate Professor of History

David Frankfurter, Assistant Professor of History

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Date
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DEDICATION

To
Susan
Gabriel
Elizabeth
&
Mom

AMOR OMNIA VINCIT
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincerest thanks to the following people:

* To my dissertation committee, Professor Charles E. Clark, Director

* To my brothers and sisters at Parkway Christian Fellowship and the Durham New Testament (now Christ the King) Churches

* To my friends and colleagues in the Department of History

* To my friends and colleagues at the Air National Guard Noncommissioned Officer Academy

* To Harold Smith, my tenth-grade history teacher

* To Elizabeth Doran, my twelfth-grade English teacher
Mark A. Noll’s lamentation that the “scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind”\(^1\) gave me reason to pause to consider my own faith, my reasons for studying the Great Awakening, and how my faith should shape and inform my conclusions about this revival. A short summary of these considerations may help readers of this study to understand better why I have analyzed the evidence in particular ways and why I have concluded certain things from that evidence.

I consider myself an evangelical, if David Bebbington’s list of their four characteristics—adherence to conversionism, biblicism, crucicentrism, and activism—is accurate.\(^2\) As a student of history, I find that my Christian worldview informs my understanding of the historical process without changing time-honored methods of interpreting historical evidence. As a Christian, I have been sensitive to an unwillingness, even resistance, of some members of academia to permit evangelical Christians to allow their beliefs to inform their scholarship and teaching. So long as Christian scholars keep their religious beliefs in the private domain, the campus community seems generally willing to tolerate freedom of conscience. This presents a dilemma to the evangelical, since the desire to express and apply his or her faith in the public domain can be as strong as the desire to express cultural, ethnic, or racial individuality.

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As Noll has cogently pointed out, however, evangelicals must accept significant culpability for what they sometimes consider exclusion from mainstream academic life. There is a cultural imperative among evangelicals that causes them to oversimplify very complex issues and to exchange critical analysis and profound reflection for enthusiasm and zeal. There is also an institutional problem. Because evangelicals are, in Noll’s words, “activistic, populist, pragmatic, and utilitarian”, they often value great “doers” above “great thinkers.” Academic life has also suffered from a lost sense of shared intellectual life that comes through interaction among scholars from widely differing academic specialties. Finally, there is a theological problem. Put simply, evangelical culture has permitted a belief in some quarters that equates “bein’ smart with bein’ proud” and has “neglected sober analysis of nature, human society, and the arts.”

Richard Hofstadter has identified evangelicalism as one of a number of sources of anti-intellectualism in American culture and, perhaps justifiably so, secular academia has concurred with this interpretation. This has led too often to a belief that arguments grounded in a Judeo-Christian worldview are necessarily shallow and not worthy of serious consideration.

As a Christian historian interested in colonial frontier religion and revivalism, my attention was drawn irresistibly to the First Great Awakening. First, the study of this period offered exciting possibilities for understanding the forces behind revivals and how they might be applied today to similar ends. Second, this period provides a way to study the results of applying spiritual principles to secular circumstances and how changes in

\[\text{vii}\]
people's personal lives can effect society. Third, as a member of several independent, Charismatic churches since the late 1970s, I am interested in historical examples of the manifestation of spiritual activity and why they were accepted or rejected by contemporaries. There has been an amazing congruity in these philosophical positions about spiritual manifestations throughout the centuries.

Jon Butler's averment that historians have totally overestimated the importance of this spiritual revival, if indeed it ever occurred in the first place, has affected this study of the Great Awakening.⁵ I wanted to reassess historical evidence in light of his challenging questions. Applying a political aphorism, I discovered that "where one stands depend upon where one sits." Sitting as an evangelical, my stand is that Butler's observations are correct to a reasonable degree if one believes that revivals are about institutional change, but are rather doubtful if one believes that they are about people whose lives are changed significantly by what they believe to be a touch from God and a consequent renewal of religious belief and practice. I also found it curious that he would place so much credence on the power of occult and folk religious practices without avowing similar validity for charismatic manifestations among Christians. More curious still is his unwillingness to admit to any influence of the revival upon the American Revolution.⁶

The continued ministries of a significant number of New Lights, a shining example being

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Daniel Rogers of Exeter, into the Revolutionary period would seem to argue that there has to be some connection between the two events, even if historians have not fully discovered or understood it yet. This study does not attempt to trace this connection, but to explain a phenomenon I have called “preconditioning,” which will be discussed in full in the Introduction. It suggests that, since ministers greatly influenced how their congregations reacted to the Great Awakening, they may also have done the same for the Revolution. If this is so, this may be one way of understanding the relationship between the Great Awakening and the American Revolution.

It may be helpful to discuss briefly how I came to choose the topic for this study. It began with reading the diary of the radical New Light, Nicholas Gilman of Durham, New Hampshire. His portrayal by later historians as a firebrand did not ring consistent with the person portrayed by the entries of the first three years. Gilman portrayed himself as an earnest seeker after God’s favor, orthodox in belief and practice, and zealous for the welfare of his congregation. Pondering this dilemma one night, I shouted at Gilman, “you had no choice. You were driven to excesses.” This outburst caused me to wonder what forces could have so influenced Gilman that he became a radical itinerant despite his irenic disposition. A thorough study of the ministry of his predecessor, Hugh Adams, convinced me that Adams profoundly influenced his congregation to respond to spiritual manifestations and it was the expectations of those people, as much as Gilman’s spiritual sensitivity, which nudged the younger minister to move toward excessive emotionalism. I have termed this profound influence “preconditioning” to differentiate it from the kind of influence that ministers normally exercise over their congregations. Anne S. Brown’s
work with Chebacco Parish, another hotbed of New Light radicalism, suggested another case study, made even more intriguing by the fact that this had been the parish of the renowned John Wise. Could preconditioning shape events even years after the pastor's death? The Chebacco Separates' use of Wise’s two treatises on Congregational polity to justify the division of the parish suggested that this did indeed happen. The case of John Odlin of Exeter demonstrates that preconditioning can be equally applied to Old Lights and New Lights. The fact that Odlin was Gilman’s professional mentor, and was opposed in Exeter by Daniel Rogers, Gilman’s close friend, provided an opportunity to observe interactions between parishes and well as within them.

From my perspective as an evangelical, while benefiting from and appreciating Butler’s contributions, I cannot accede to his conclusion that the Great Awakening was a non-event, with no long-lasting impact upon American society. I have concluded this from my own evaluation of the evidence and from my own charismatic experience because I believe that revivals are about people and their relationship to God, not about institutionalizing the effects of a revival by the creation of denominations and other forms of social control. Obviously, my interpretation differs greatly from Butler’s and this is the result of our disparate worldviews. Iain H. Murray has suggested that the “fundamental reason why opinions on [Jonathan] Edwards are so divided, and why his biographers should also differ so widely” is that most have refused to consider Edwards’ often and clearly stated religious beliefs seriously. As with Murray, I have chosen to interpret the historical evidence in light of my own Christian worldview and, to rephrase

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his observations, I believe that the religious experiences of these eighteenth-century people were not only subjective (which they were), but also related to timeless, spiritual realities. Their prayers were not just psychological exercises and their theology matters of changing human opinion, but indicators of their relationships with God. As an historian, it is not my place to say that there was a divine intrusion into this historical event, but I have chosen to consider seriously their belief that "God, and heaven, and immortality ... [are] concepts ... belonging to the realm of the factual." In doing so, I hope that this study's observations and conclusions will provide opportunities for its readers to benefit from new or different perspectives.

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9 Ibid., xxiv.
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<td>American Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIHC</td>
<td>Essex Institute Historical Collections</td>
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<tr>
<td>HNH</td>
<td>Historical New Hampshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>MHS</td>
<td>Massachusetts Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEHGR</td>
<td>New England Historical and Genealogical Register</td>
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ABSTRACT

PREPARING THE WAY OF THE LORD:
THREE CASE STUDIES OF MINISTERIAL PRECONDITIONING IN
CONGREGATIONS BEFORE THE GREAT AWAKENING, 1675-1750

By

Douglas K. Fidler
University of New Hampshire, December 1997

This study demonstrates that ministerial predecessors in three northern New England communities actually preconditioned community reactions to the Great Awakening during the years preceding the revival itself. "Preconditioning" is not the ordinary "influence" of pastors within their churches and professional circles suggested in other works. This kind of influence might cause parishioners to consider various behavioral alternatives when confronted by spiritual circumstances. Preconditioned congregations would already have established paradigms for responding to spiritual stimulus. While individual parishioners might act in ways consistent with their own personalities, psychological needs, and spiritual sensitivities, congregations as a whole would apply a predetermined set of responses forged by their relationship with their pastor over the preceding years. This study demonstrates preconditioning with the help of three case studies. The example of John Wise and his Chebacco Parish in Ipswich shows how the eventual separation of the church into New Light and Old Light congregations actually reflected Wise's views on congregational polity. Those who separated from Theophilus Pickering's ministry to join John Cleaveland's did so as much for reasons of polity as for theological ones. The second case study explains how the radical New Light ministry of Nicholas Gilman of Durham, New Hampshire, was

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actually a response to congregational forces set in motion by his predecessor, Hugh Adams. The third case study argues that the separation of the Exeter, New Hampshire, church of John Odlin was preconditioned by Odlin’s beliefs about the role of the minister in his parish and that this position was so strong that antagonists had to justify their position by referring to Wise’s views on polity. This study concludes that historians should understand the Great Awakening as a process occurring over time, not as a series of events. Since the process was different in each community, they should look closely at forces and circumstances within discrete groups if they are to understand the religious dynamics of mid-eighth century New England.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Great Awakening has fascinated historians for 150 years. While changing emphases, theories of historical process, methodology, and ideology may have shaped different interpretations, images of visions, ecstatic utterances, swooning, censoriousness, torch-lit parades and book-bumings, and half-crazed itinerant preachers stirring thousands to a religious frenzy continue to entice historians to discover how and why this amazing series of events took place in pre-Revolutionary America, and what effect it had on future American society. Its complexity has permitted historians to view this profound international religious experience on several levels. Some have considered it as one of many such episodes that have come and gone in cyclical fashion, while others have chosen to view it as one of a linear series of religious events that have occurred throughout American history.\(^1\) Others have ascribed the appearance of this increased

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\(^1\) The cyclical interpretation of revivals can be traced back to the works of the eighteenth-century divines who considered the importance and nature of the First Great Awakening. As a tool of historical analysis, the interpretation was used for its explanatory power by church historians trying to understand the implications of the 1857-58 revival. Histories of American religion continued to view revivals as cyclical in nature into the twentieth century. Revivalism as a subject of study lost credibility in the aftermath of the Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy of the 1920s. William Warren Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America* (New York, 1930), was the first to attempt to study revivalism from an environmental and sociological perspective rather than from the providential perspective of Reformed churchmen. His *Revivalism in America: Its Origin, Growth and Decline* (New York, 1945), firmly established the legitimacy of revivalism as a worthy subject of scholarship. During the 1950s, William G. McLoughlin received Sweet's mantle as the leading spokesman for the cyclical view of revivalism with several important works, including *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York, 1959). Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (Nashville, 1957), put forward an interpretation that challenged the hegemony of the cyclical view of the Reformed writers. He championed the Wesleyan perspective that maintained that revivalism has been a constant force in American society. The works of these two scholars have continued to define the opposing interpretations of the place of revivalism to American history, although McLoughlin's *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* (Chicago, 1978), restates his cyclical view in light of anthropological studies about cultural revitalization. For an
spiritual interest to a wide variety of causes, particularly social change. The promotional efforts of popular figures like George Whitefield and the impact of radical itinerants, as well as the existence of an international network of evangelicals, have been important factors for other historians. Still others have sought through community studies to


discover numerous underlying social forces that together explain periods of revival, particularly in congregations whose activities led to notorious demonstrations of New Light or Separatist fervor.4

It is interesting to note that these recent studies have removed the attention once focused almost exclusively upon the intellectual accomplishments of key clerical figures and have dispersed it upon a wide variety of potential influences. More recent works have not only challenged many of the long-accepted assumptions about the Great Awakening, but have also caused historians to reevaluate their beliefs about the macrocauses as well. While recognizing the importance and validity of these different approaches, this study will seek to refocus the reader's attention upon flesh-and-blood clergy and their powerful influence upon their congregations.

That ministers influenced their own and other congregations in colonial New England is understood because of numerous studies of clergymen from a variety of perspectives.5 No single minister has attracted as much interest as Jonathan Edwards. The largest portion of this interest, however, has come in the form of explorations of the

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5 Historians have striven to understand the impact of early American ministers on their congregations, including David D. Hall, The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1972); J. William T. Youngs, God's Messengers: Religious Leadership in Colonial New England, 1700-1750 (Baltimore, 1976); Harry S. Stout, The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England (New York, 1986); David D. Hall, Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England (New York, 1989); Jon Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People (Cambridge, Mass., 1990); and Crawford, Seasons of Grace. Hall's second work, as well as Butler's, have administered necessary checks against any belief that ministers held inordinate powers to overcome the wishes of their congregations, arguing that folk religious beliefs offered people an alternative interpretation of supernatural as well as natural occurrences.
minister's immense intellect rather than his influence upon the everyday spiritual lives of his people in Northampton, Massachusetts. This approach epitomizes the emphasis of earlier historians of the Great Awakening upon intellectual, rather than social, history. This is not a criticism of intellectual history; nor does it imply that earlier historians failed to recognize the religious character of the event. It simply means that the great amount of extant material—published works, letters, sermons, news reports, journals, private diaries—has made the treatment of this revival as a history of ideas considerably rewarding. An intellectual approach, however, has made it more difficult to understand and describe how the ideas of ministers influenced the affections of their auditors and this is one reason why studies in recent years have tried to concern themselves more with "ordinary, fallible" men and women. Not surprisingly, many of these studies have looked at clergy and laypeople whose religious beliefs placed them on the radical side of this religious movement. Because this study will look closely at New Light activities in three northern New England parishes, it will be useful to look next at scholarship involving New Light radicalism.

If one man epitomized the excessive emotionalism of the Great Awakening, think Harry S. Stout and Peter Onuf,6 he was James Davenport, minister of New London and scion of a revered clerical dynasty. Davenport drew the outraged derision of his conservative peers because he took George Whitefield's technique of challenging local ministers to renew their commitments to God and the people, which was always aimed at ministers as a group, and applied it *ad hominem* to ministers he judged unconverted. He also violated professional courtesy and trust by stirring up congregations to leave their

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ministers, and refused to follow time-honored techniques of sermon delivery that were
calculated to ensure the dignity of the profession. The value of this work is that, while
effectively narrating the participation of New Light extremists, Stout and Onuf have also
explored the underlying and implied attack of the New Lights on mid-eighteenth-century
society. Davenport’s book burning episode exposed the crisis in the ministerial
profession, rapid social change, a popular rebellion against the established religious
authority, and the power of lay authority.7

Leigh Eric Schmidt8 maintains, however, that Andrew Croswell, and not
Davenport, was the true exemplar of New Light ministers. His study of the minister of
the church at Groton, Connecticut, has sought to redress this oversight by demonstrating
Croswell’s centrality to the New Light cause and the intellectual importance of his
doctrinal positions. Croswell typified the New Light strategy of singling out Old Lights
as unregenerate, but he also lumped moderate New Lights in with them. He encouraged
role reversal in his church by giving women, Africans, and children a free forum for
expressing their religious experiences. As the Great Awakening progressed, Croswell-the-preacher became Croswell-the-prophet as he began to articulate through his tracts
some definite doctrinal positions. He reasserted solafideism, casting out preparation as
the mode of receiving salvation. He also denied that Christians were pilgrims because
Christianity was at heart a joyful, triumphant faith and not one of constant struggle.

7 In March 1743, Davenport led New London followers to a local wharf where they proceeded to throw
many Puritan classics and personal adornment into a bonfire. Cray has tried to revise the historical image
of Davenport-the-Fanatic in favor of Davenport-the-Penitent. In “More Light on a New Light,” he
concludes that Davenport’s “spiritual off-spring—the Separates and Strict Congregationalists—crafted a
more enduring religious identity, a memorial to the work of the Southold evangelical.” p. 7. In another
work, he discusses the dynamics of ministerial reputations and the long-lasting consequences of the revival.
8 Schmidt, “Second and Glorious Reformation”.

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There was simply no room for accepting the struggles the Enemy would attempt to impose upon the believer. Croswell roundly criticized Edwards's *Life of David Brainerd* for its melancholy, which he claimed denied that Christ could deliver his friends from despair. Assurance was at the very heart of his doctrinal emphasis, and a "joyful noise" helped to claim the assurance. Old Lights and Moderate New Lights attacked his doctrines for a number of reasons, particularly rebelling against the egalitarianism that dissolved the distinction between the minister and his congregation, eliminated the physical distance between the pews and the pulpit, eliminated seating by social standing, and denigrated ministerial dignity. Because of Croswell's vitriolic attacks upon every pillar of the New England Way — particularly assurance, preparation, justification, and sanctification — he had few supporters in America. Ironically, he found the support he needed to continue his battle against moral collapse by turning to the Scottish and London-based evangelical Calvinists, and became part of a general British movement to overcome Enlightenment dilution and Calvinist distortions of morality.

Dennis Barone⁹ considers another leading New Light, Gilbert Tennent, but contrasts the evangelist to James Logan, a leading political figure and enlightened philosopher from Pennsylvania. Barone tests the hypothesis that the threat to traditional authority found first in the Great Awakening served as a basis for revolutionary thought. He has determined that Logan's rhetorical beliefs and practices supported the traditional authoritarian system and hierarchical structure of society, but that Tennent asserted that virtue was not based on social position. Logan represented the Enlightenment's belief that the study of rhetoric and logic taught one how to think and that mathematics gave it a

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precision that would enable the mind to govern the passions. This strength of mind allowed its possessor to rule society effectively. While the heart had a part to play, it must be subordinated to the mind. Tennent, however, stressed that the mind and the passions must be appealed to separately and equally. When it came to religion, the passions must be excited because religious truth must be known at both levels. Since he saw the world as a battlefield between good and evil, he made emotional appeals that readied the people to fight. While Tennent appealed to both the mind and the passions, he obviously preferred the latter; his use of the emotional appeal showed his anti-intellectual, democratic bent. Barone sees in Tennent the anti-authoritarianism typical of New Light radicals, and in Logan a strong authoritarianism. He also maintains that revolutionary Republicanism adopted both these strains of thought: an authoritarianism that could defend people’s rights and a break with traditional authority that allowed the rise of individualism so important to Republican ideology.

In investigating David Brainerd’s expulsion from Yale and Edwards’s role in bringing his life to public light, Norman Pettit provides further insight into the nature of New Light radicals. In providing the details of the expulsion, Pettit describes the internal battle at Yale between the Old Light faculty and radical New Light student groups. Although absent with a severe illness when George Whitefield preached on campus,

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10 Norman Pettit, “Prelude to Mission: Brainerd’s Expulsion from Yale,” New England Quarterly 59 (March 1986): 28-50. I have not included the discussion of Jonathan Edwards’s use of Brainerd’s journal in the text, but it does warrant a short review here. Pettit maintains that Edwards modified, change, deleted, or added to the journal wherever necessary to ensure it would serve his own purpose in fighting Arminianism. Edwards diminished Brainerd’s sense of outrage and frustration over his expulsion, hid whether the punishment was actually deserved, showed Brainerd as repentant when he was most certainly not, hid Brainerd’s frank admiration of Whitefield, hid Brainerd’s move off campus as an act of intolerance, hid Brainerd’s radical New Light doctrine, and deleted Brainerd’s visions. Pettit questions how much of the Life was really Braineder’s. David L. Weddle, “The Melancholy Saint: Jonathan Edwards’s Interpretation of David Brainerd as a Model of Evangelical Spirituality,” Harvard Theological Review 81 (April 1988): 297-318, provides additional insight.
Brainerd quickly fell under the influence of Gilbert Tennent, Ebenezer Pemberton, and James Davenport during their subsequent visits. These itinerants encouraged Yale students to reject professors who opposed the Great Awakening and to set themselves apart to avoid contamination. Brainerd was expelled when he commented about the state of grace of one professor and left angry and resentful over Yale's refusal to grant him the degree he needed to join the clerical profession. This forced him into itinerant preaching and then missionary work among native peoples rather than to settle a church of his own.

Pettit's description of the internal squabbling at Yale is particularly important because it supports a continuing theme in studies of New Light ministers: their alienation from the mainstream of their profession, their challenge to the Old Guard, and their ability to use their knowledge of the profession to damage the profession itself. Also, Brainerd's insistence that true virtue was only possible in acts that flowed spontaneously from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and not from morality based upon reason and sound judgment, placed him squarely in the mainstream of New Light (and Edwardsian) doctrine.

While some historians have studied the careers of particular ministers to gain further understanding of the Great Awakening, others have concentrated on the clerical profession as a whole for clues about this time of revived interest in religious matters. James W. Schmotter believes that questions about the role of the clergy in the Great Awakening cannot be answered unless historians understand what ministers considered the important issues of the day. The most important of these was the need to overcome a decrease in status, prestige, and prerogatives with an increase in professionalism. This

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professionalism was expressed in a number of ways, including a more rigidly defined curriculum of preparation, and a change in the function of the association from doctrinal watchdog to determiner and maintainer of professional standards of membership.

Ministers also exchanged their traditional role as first among equals within the flock for a sacerdotal role that set them apart and above the people.\textsuperscript{12} They reinforced this exchange by constant demands for greater deference and higher salaries, and justified their right to these things by virtue of their training and expertise and, not, surprisingly, on the basis of their personal piety or doctrinal purity. By the time of the Great Awakening, this separation from the people based on their concept of clerical professionalism caused some ministers to misinterpret the revival as a threat to their status and others to miss out entirely on the blessings of the day. Even those who were determined to cast off their professional baggage to promote the revival found it exceedingly difficult to put it aside.

Schmotter identifies the irony in the ministerial experience of the revival: while most clergy recognized it as a time of professional crisis, they did not realize that it was their own professionalism—which many of their parishioners rejected—that had brought on and exacerbated the crisis.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12} Schmotter points to changes in the ordination ceremony as a good example of this trend. Ibid., 154-5. In “Congregational Clericalism: New England Ordinations before the Great Awakening,” \textit{WMQ}, 3d Series, 31 (July 1974): 481-90, J. William T. Youngs, Jr., sums up these changes as follows: ministers replaced the brethren as ordainers of the new minister; the ordination by clerical peers replaced the election by church members as the conveyance of the ministerial office; ministers were occasionally ordained over congregations without election by its members; the sermon was preached by the senior minister rather than by the new minister himself; and the day of ordination became a day of solemnity rather than the joyful celebration it had originally been. Youngs believes these changes represent the deliberate attempt of an emerging profession to separate itself from non-members. Thus, by the 1740s, the clergy may have felt secure as professionals, but they were sadly out of touch with the spiritual state of their people. For the most part, they could only view the Great Awakening as a challenge to their own authority. Wilfred Earnest Tabb, III, has concluded that this professional crisis also affected Presbyterian ministers in the middle colonies as well. Tabb, “Presbyterian Clergy of the Great Awakening,” (Ph.D. diss., Washington University, 1992).

\textsuperscript{13} See Chapters 2 and 4 as case studies in the rejection of clerical professionalism.
George W. Harper perceives the crisis in the clerical profession as pastoral care in his study about the Great Awakening in Boston. He complains that historians have too often seen the revivals as anti-intellectual phenomena first and as social and ministerial problems by derivation only. In Boston, Old and New Light divines worked together within a common theological framework in the initial stages of the awakening, especially with regard to the need for conversion. The rancor did not result from disagreement over the nature of salvation, but over the nature of the church, especially its natural constituency. The Old Lights feared the radical itinerants as a threat to the authority of the established clergy, particularly concerning the exposition of the Word. The controversy was also over the received pattern of the role of the clergy. Old Lights believed their duty was to study Scripture to deliver it effectively to the people, with only minimal pastoral duties, and to guard the prerogatives of the clergy from lay encroachment. New Lights, however, took their cues from the Pietists, who saw their primary duty as pastors to their flocks. They encouraged independent lay actions to bring the Heavenly Kingdom to earth, and spent a great part of their day visiting members of their congregations. Thus, the New Lights, who recognized the changing role of pastors from one of spiritual and intellectual direction to one of nurture, were in the vanguard of social change, and the Old Lights were reactionaries who failed to see this need and

14 George W. Harper, "Clericalism and Revival: The Great Awakening in Boston as a Pastoral Phenomenon," *NEQ* 57 (December 1984): 554-66. He more fully developed this argument in "Changing Patterns of Pastoral Ministry in the Congregational Churches of Mid-Eighteenth-Century Boston" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1992). In this study, he identifies three varieties of ministerial approach to the Great Awakening: ministers who took an activist approach to ministry, becoming known as "New Lights", ministers who renewed their zeal for the traditional clericalist paradigm and were considered "Old Lights", and ministers who embraced the revival while trying to maintain traditional clericalism. He concluded that those in the third category courted disaster, since they could not meet the need of parishioners for personal attention while remaining aloof from those effected by religious fervor. Again, see Chapters 2 and 4 for the examples of Theophilus Pickering of Chebacco and John Odlin of Exeter.
attempted to maintain their quickly diminishing prerogatives. The congregations that were ripped apart by the Great Awakening were those led by ministers who refused to adapt to their changing role.

Roger Alan Marsh\textsuperscript{15} looks at this same phenomenon from a different perspective, determining that as respect for ministers decreased over the first century in New England, their influence over the people likewise waned. With an increase in materialism, these ministers could no longer revive the people's interest in spiritual things because they had little influence over their parishioners. This left a void in religious leadership and authority, a void that was filled in the 1740s by men whose personalities and methods of revivalism elicited a fresh zeal towards their religious faith and toward the clerical profession. Richard D. Brown\textsuperscript{16} sheds further light on the role of ministers as not only purveyors of the divine, but also intermediaries between the New England cultural and political capitals where they were trained and the common people in the outlying regions. Their authority lay not only in their ministerial office, but also in their power to provide, withhold, and interpret information. It was only as other professionals made their ways into the hinterlands that ministers lost their monopoly. While Brown's work concentrates on the last third of the eighteenth century, it nonetheless implies that ministers held this same authority during the Great Awakening.

\textsuperscript{15} Roger Alan Marsh, "Diminishing Respect for the Clergy and the First Great Awakening: A Study in the Antecedents of Revival Among Massachusetts Congregationalists, 1630-1741" (Ph.D. diss., Baylor University, 1990).

Laura Broderick Ricard\textsuperscript{17} opposes the traditional interpretation of New Light ministers as a monolithic set of supporters of the revival of religion. Her prosopographic analysis of 25 Maine and New Hampshire clergymen describes five distinct New Light temperaments that emerged as a result of the divisive issues that surfaced during the revival. \textit{Innovative} New Lights did not value ecclesiastical traditions when support for them would hinder God's work. They were willing to depart from those traditions to promote the saving of souls in whatever manner possible. These were opposed by \textit{Conservative} New Lights, who supported the revival but who considered the maintenance of ecclesiastical order above all else. \textit{Partisans} refused to even acknowledge the problems created by the Great Awakening, while \textit{Dogmatic} New Lights were ministers who were heedless of disorders in practice and who concerned themselves principally with doctrinal orthodoxy. \textit{Radical} New Lights comprised the fifth category of ministers. They were “ecclesiastical miscreants” who overemphasized their emotions and subjective religious experiences to the detriment of Calvinist orthodoxy.\textsuperscript{18}

That New Light ministers perceived their new roles as profoundly pastoral suggests the existence of great forces of change in America’s towns and villages. Social historians have provided important insights into the effect of the Great Awakening on a changing American society, particularly in the more rural areas. Anne S. Brown,\textsuperscript{19} whose work will be considered later in greater detail, centers her community study of the Great Awakening on the Chebacco Parish of Ipswich, from which she came to view the Great

\begin{footnotes}
\item[18] Ibid., 312-23.
\item[19] Brown, “Visions of Community in Eighteenth-Century Essex County.”
\end{footnotes}
Awakening as an encourager of communal reformation. Ned Landsman\(^\text{20}\) looks at the effect of the Great Awakening on a New Jersey community. He points to ethnic tensions as the major force for first provoking revivals, then providing a unifying force, in Freehold Township. Pointing to anthropological studies that show that revivals often result from the meeting of different cultural groups, he examines ethnic tensions between the Scots and English as the cause of the early revival there. The tensions arose from a number of sources: a national tradition of enmity between the English and Scots, controversy over a commercial venture, and a conflict between Scottish and English Friends that caused a shift toward Scottish Presbyterianism. Within the Scottish church at Freehold, there was further competition between Scottish and English Presbyterians for control of the church. With the calling of Gilbert Tennent to the ministry, however, the Scots strengthened their hold on the church, which gave them a greater sense of solidarity. Tennent’s enthusiastic, sometimes mystical, style of preaching, and his close supervision of the conversion process were both characteristic of the Scottish style of evangelism. As the revival spread to other ethnic groups, the church was able to absorb non-Scottish converts into the community without an ensuing loss of Scottish solidarity, thus enabling the church to become one of the few sources of ethnic harmony in New Jersey.

While this harmony may have extended across ethnic lines in New Jersey, the case of Hugh Bryan and the evangelicals in South Carolina showed that it could exist across racial lines in only very special and rare circumstances.\(^\text{21}\) Harvey H. Jackson\(^\text{22}\) explores

\(^{20}\)Ned Landsman, “Revivalism and Nativism in the Middle Colonies: The Great Awakening and the Scots Community in East New Jersey,” \textit{AQ} 34 (Summer 1982): 149-64.

\(^{21}\)For examples, See Patricia U. Bonomi, \textit{Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in
Bryan's career to gain insight into the building of a community of believers on the colonial Southern frontier and the origins of evangelical efforts to Christianize slaves. He illustrates the personal and joint effects of Whitefield's evangelistic techniques, and how attacks on the political and religious establishment caused Carolinians to reassess their involvement in the evangelical movement. The wealthy and influential Bryan was Whitefield's biggest supporter in the South. He determined it was his duty as a good master to evangelize his slaves, which was at first acceptable to the slaveholding society. When Bryan began to attack established authority for its worldliness, teach his slaves Christianity in large assemblies, and prophesy a coming slave insurrection as God's retribution for worldliness, however, there was an immediate backlash against his efforts. After repenting for these activities, he was soon taken back into society, but the scare effectively ended the influence of evangelical Christianity in South Carolina. What did remain was a legacy of Christianizing slaves to make them obedient, and providing both believing and non-believing masters a reason for preserving the institution of slavery.

Alan Gallay\textsuperscript{23} relates much the same story about Hugh Bryan, but he more fully supports the idea that Whitefield's continuing influence on the Bryan Family planted the seeds that became slaveholding paternalism a century afterwards. He has also suggested a number of reasons why slaves were willing to participate in this use of religion: it was a social

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outlet and release from work, a source of social leveling when dealing with owners, and a source of privileges.

Whitefield would have been aghast if he had known that he would be linked so directly to the institution of slavery. Yet such is the reputation of the single most influential figure of the Great Awakening. Not surprisingly, historians have found other ways he contributed to the spread of revival. Frank Lambert has determined that, through his vigorous use of the press, Whitefield helped to create a new religious public sphere that extended throughout the colonies. In fact, the evangelist redefined popular religion by making it public and national, rather than private and local. By appealing directly to both men and women through his pamphlets, tracts, sermons, and newspaper and magazine articles, he enabled them to reason about religion independent of clergy to determine their own meaning of the revivals. Furthermore, by demanding reasoned evidence from the disputants, the people forced them to develop and employ a whole range of strategies that would render arguments authoritative, commonsensical, and impartial. Whitefield also pioneered a strategy of “print and preach,” which used advance publicity and cheaply produced tracts to get his message to the people. In going straight to the public, he used the public institution of the press to circumvent the authority of the private institution of the established church to present an old truth, new birth, through a new approach, interdenominationalism. The press was also Whitefield’s means of constructing an intercolonial revival by compressing the spatial and temporal

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24 Frank Lambert, “Great Awakening as Artifact.” In “Pedlar in Divinity”, Lambert more fully develops his thesis that Whitefield pioneered the use of commercial techniques to “sell” religion to an ever growing number of customers.
dimensions of his message. People no longer had to be present to enjoy the impact of a
Whitefield crusade. They could follow its progress in the papers.

Susan O’Brien has expanded the factors affecting the Great Awakening beyond
both the importance of one man and the local dimension. She traced a transatlantic
network of like-minded evangelicals who coordinated their efforts and shared ideas that
helped revivals to prosper on both sides of the ocean. This network took the form of
ever-broadening concentric circles. At the core was a group of letter-writing ministers
who centered upon Whitefield and included Jonathan Edwards, Benjamin Colman, and
Thomas Prince, Sr., in New England; James Robe, William McCulloch, John M’Laurin,
and John Erskine in Scotland; and Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge in London. The
next layer included ministers, lay evangelists, financial backers, and printers who
corresponded with Whitefield and at least one of the other ministers. The outer layer
consisted of the thousands of people who received their news from varied sources and
wrote occasionally to principal leaders. Their purpose was to write letters describing in
detail the local revivals, methods employed, and outcomes. These letters were passed
into the public domain by printing them in newspapers and magazines, or reading them at
public reading days. While this network did not cause the Great Awakening on either
side of the Atlantic, it did promote it by giving people in even the most remote areas a
sense of participation and greater purpose. This happened in the parishes in northern
New England that this study will consider.

The on-going study of social factors in colonial society has provided valuable
information for understanding the Great Awakening. Patricia U. Bonomi and Peter R.

Eisenstadt\textsuperscript{26}, who were curious to know whether Americans were as unchurched during the eighteenth century as historians have thought, have reconsidered this question of church adherence from a new perspective. They have redefined "churched" as regular church attendance and not membership, focusing on whom the minister saw from his pulpit when he arose each week to preach. They discovered that using this definition meant that from 56 percent in the South to 80 percent in New England were churched. Also, the low percentages of "churched" people on the frontiers was due not to a lack of zeal or interest, but to the lack of settled clergy. Evidence is preponderant that people went in droves when services were available nearby. Finally, they have discovered that the Great Awakening did not significantly increase church attendance. Combining this study with those previously cited, however, it would appear that the Great Awakening provided the qualitative difference that Bonomi and Eisenstadt admitted was not a part of their study. Church attendance during the revivals created a greater sense of belonging to a spiritual community, not to a geographic community, that is, while larger numbers of people may not have attended church during the revival there was a great deal more spiritual benefit derived from that attendance. Richard D. Shiels\textsuperscript{27} has narrowed his study of church attendance to the membership of women in Congregational churches over nearly a century, discovering that the proportion of female to male membership increased throughout each period and increased from period to period. The only checks to this progression occurred during the general awakenings, when the proportion of male converts increased. Surprisingly, the New Light emphasis upon conversion appealed to


\textsuperscript{27} Richard D. Shiels, "The Feminization of American Congregationalism, 1730-1835," \textit{AQ} 33 (Spring
men and revivals based on new birth encouraged greater male membership in the eighteenth century. This study, with reference to the First Great Awakening, suggests that while the New Light message offered a form of equality for women, it also provided an outlet for masculine needs as well.\footnote{This brings to mind the study by Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, \textit{The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy} (New Brunswick, NJ, 1992), who maintain that “[R]eligious organizations are stronger to the degree that they impose significant costs in terms of sacrifice and even stigma upon their members.” p. 238. Perhaps men, inured by the rigors of frontier life to value individualism, were attracted to a religious movement that cost them at least the approbation of their conservative neighbors. Finke and Stark have suggested that growth came for churches which promoted traditional doctrines and made serious demands on members; the denominations who rejected traditional orthodoxy and ceased to make serious demands on their members ceased to prosper. Cedric B. Cowing’s study of the increase in the proportion of male church membership during the Great Awakening is informative as well. He suggests that the authoritarianism found in sectarian religion and the existence of the “definite crisis” found in revivals appealed to men, particularly those living outside major towns with a tradition of “soul liberty.” Cowing, “Sex and Preaching in the Great Awakening,” \textit{American Quarterly} 20 (Fall 1968): 624-44.}

A series of studies by Jon Butler during the past 15 years has challenged historians to reconsider long-held beliefs concerning the Great Awakening. While there had been lively scholarly debate over the relative importance of various forces involved in revivalism in general and the Great Awakening in particular, few had actually questioned the existence of it as an epoch-making event. Butler has raised many issues that deserve careful consideration, but this discussion will address only those which impact this study.

Butler’s opening salvo was fired against the taken-for-granted belief in the existence of a relationship—not necessarily causal, but there nonetheless—between the Great Awakening and the American Revolution proposed by Alan Heimert in 1966.\footnote{Jon Butler, “Enthusiasm Described and Decried: The Great Awakening as Interpretive Fiction,” \textit{Journal of American History} 69 (September 1982): 305-25. Heimert, \textit{Religion and the American Mind}. Heimert developed his idea in the introduction to this work. It is interesting to note that Heimert did not see the Great Awakening as the \textit{cause} of the Revolution: “But an assessment of the quality of the spirit of 1775 is not to be construed as a diagnosis of the causes of the Revolution. Nor for that matter is it the purpose of this study to demonstrate how any event or activity was a consequence of the Awakening or of any idea espoused by either Calvinists or Liberals. What is here delineated is the sequence of ideas, and their myriad interrelationships, in the period between the Awakening and the Revolution.” p. 21. McLoughlin,}
has argued that the use of an “interpretive fiction”—the Great Awakening—to describe something not particularly great at all had resulted in generations of historians misinterpreting the importance of the event. It had also resulted in the belief that the religious revivals were a causative agency vis-à-vis the American Revolution, something that could not be demonstrated from the evidence. The revival generation itself did not even call the movement the “Great Awakening”; the term was in fact coined by Joseph Tracy in 1841 to establish by association the validity and excellence of the revival in which he himself was an active participant as one on equal par to that of the eighteenth century. The appearance of the earlier revival could not be considered “great,” let alone having an effect on society, which was his primary concern. Vaunted claims of increased democracy within the congregations were overrated: ministers still tried to maintain their local prominence, lay members still tried to control the church and minister through the purse, and there was no lower-class discontent caused by raised expectations. The revival affected little permanent social change; thus, because the various revivals seldom became proto-revolutionary, they could not influence the timing, causes, or effects of the political movement were so deeply imbedded in the soil of the First Great Awakening forty years earlier that it can be truly said that the Revolution was the natural outgrowth of that profound and widespread religious movement.” McLoughlin, “Enthusiasm for Liberty: The Great Awakening as the Key to the Revolution,” Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society 97 (Part I): 69-95.

30 Tracy, Great Awakening. Tracy insisted that this was a time when “some great idea was ... extensively at work, breaking up established and venerated habits of thought, feeling and action, and producing a revolution in the minds of men, and thus in the very structure of society.” p. viii. Perhaps the “great awakening” occurred in people’s minds as well as hearts. Frank Lambert, although having no problem with the term “interpretive fiction,” does disagree with Butler’s contention that it was Tracy who invented the use of the term which subsequent historians have used ever since. In fact, he suggests, the interpretive fiction began with the European publication of Jonathan Edwards’ Faithful Narrative. Proponents of the Great Awakening saw it as a second Reformation and from the beginning used the term to create just such an impression. This creative use of the term began with the publicizing of the Northampton revival, changed to a defense of the Great Awakening as a true movement of God, and then continued as a means of memorializing the event in the ensuing years. Lambert, “The First Great Awakening: Whose Interpretive Fiction?”, NEQ 68 (December 1995): 650-9.
Revolution in any significant way. New Light leaders could neither expand membership nor maintain their momentum to make permanent political changes. While the Great Awakening probably provided anti-British ideology, the strength of New Light support was more a result of British challenges to their financial interests than to religious beliefs. In short, the “Great” Awakening was not great because there was no immediate and dramatic structural or systemic change to colonial society. As year followed year, what little effect that was wrought in colonial churches slowly disappeared as well.

Butler has continued to ponder the best approach to take to study colonial religion more effectively. Noting broad shifts of method and interpretation over the previous twenty years that had looked to local and community studies to probe the social consequences of religion, as well as the innovative techniques of European scholars studying similar phenomena in their own countries, he has suggested a six-point agenda for the future study of colonial American religion.31 His agenda includes a greater focus on the spiritual life of an entire population in all its diversity, and both the multiplicity of religious choices in America and the religious experiences of both churched and unchurched people; an exploration of the extent of commitment to formal Christian religious institutions and teachings and informal practices, and how the need for Christianizing and attempts to achieve it affected American culture; an analysis of the physical and visual sources of American Christianity—churches and graveyards, for example—and what they indicate about the place of religion in American society; and the need to look beyond New England for answers to historical questions. Butler’s answer to his own challenge has come in a study of the “pursuit of coercive authority and power”

by which religious leaders made effective use of institutionalized religion and symbols of authority to force the Christianization of the nation by the nineteenth century. Prominent themes include a reinvigorated declension model for Puritan New England, a weak Anglican establishment weakened further by immoral and incompetent clergy in the South, the growth of religious pluralism that was so chaotic that the various denominations did more to prevent church growth than promote it, and the wanton destruction of African animist religions, which he refers to as a spiritual holocaust. As with his essay on the Great Awakening as interpretive fiction, there are many provocative conclusions that almost demand that historians of colonial American history, particularly religious history, reconsider their notions about the role of religion in the formation of American society.

Beginning with the state church in Europe on the eve of colonization, Butler posits that there was little Christian understanding and practice in Old World society, where for most it was mixed thoroughly with belief in magic and the occult. Attempts in the seventeenth century by civil and ecclesiastical authorities to revitalize the faith through reforms met with general apathy. While Protestants did initially establish reformed religion in America, Old World ambivalence in the forms of localism, secularism, and irreligion soon led to a real decline in religion that reached its nadir on the eve of the American Revolution. Afterwards, religious authority was reestablished, reorganized, and centralized in both established and denominational churches from the top down, and became coercive, not voluntary, and oriented towards the institution rather than towards the individual. Butler believes the Great Awakening actually contributed to the chaos

32 Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith.*
against which an increasingly coercive institutional church had to contend by promoting a divisive, sectarian spirit that, far from being democratic, was socially reactionary.

In the aftermath of the revivals of the 1740s, the clergy predictably demanded higher, not lower, standards of discipline and authority over their churches to restore communal order, which was reinforced by the power of the state in the form of an established church. They were even able to harness the power of nature to reinforce institutional power by "sacralizing" the landscape, a power symbolized in the steepled church. At best, those in the generation before the Revolution could only prevent church adherence from falling any further than it did. Having learned well the lesson of creating strong institutions, church leaders were able to counter the weakening of the state church following the Revolution by creating new ones: denominational structures, interdenominational societies, and church colleges which in the nineteenth century created the impetus for social reform movements and the successful Christianization of the United States.

There is little wonder why Butler has cast doubt on the very existence of a "Great Awakening" given his belief that colonial American religious history is essentially the story of the institutionalization of orthodox Christianity and its use as a tool of hegemony and social control in the post-Revolutionary period. There is a problem with his application of the process of institutionalization, however, that causes him to overlook much of what might be considered the "human side" of religious revivals—the fact that people do not choose to participate in a revival because of its effect on society, but because they have personal spiritual, psychological, or even physical needs that are met by revival activities. However strong Butler's argument for its impact of the society of
the early republic, institutionalization was not a primary issue during the Great Awakening, although it certainly was afterwards as both Old and New Light leaders attempted to formalize either resistance to or support for spiritual manifestations. As the case studies of Chebacco, Durham, and Exeter will show, the people who chose to separate themselves from the institutional church, as well as countless people who responded to the emotionalism of the New Light but remained within it, cared little for the institution defined by the *Platform*. What mattered to them most was the freedom to express their hearts in an emotional response to "awakened preaching" and to include supernatural manifestations in their worship. It is ironic that as much emphasis as Butler has placed on the importance of magic and the occult as genuine forms of spiritual expression in colonial America, he overlooks the importance of manifestations of spiritual activities such as dreams, visions, prophesy, speaking in tongues, and bodily contortions in Christian congregations. Butler minimizes the importance of the Great Awakening because it provides so little evidence of the process of institutionalization and hegemonization of American religion. Yet, through this approach, he misses the importance of the Great Awakening when he loses sight of two key ideas concerning revivalism—that, like institutionalization, revivalism is a process in its own right; and revivals are not first and foremost about institutional change, but about people and the effect of revitalized religion on them.

As noted above, historians of revivalism have adopted two ways of defining and describing the process of revivalism, one cyclical and the other linear, roughly

corresponding to Calvinistic and Arminian views of soteriology. The cyclical approach to understanding revivalism emphasizes that religious awakenings have come and gone in recurring fashion as societal pressures and conditions have provided the environmental factors required to promote interest in eternal values or increased religious activities. The linear approach stresses that revivals are an integral part of American life and never entirely disappear at all from the scene. An underlying assumption of this study is the process of revivalism is really a combination of the two approaches. Revivals may be better described as having an undulant nature, that whatever may or may not appear above the “surface” of the times, there is always movement beneath that surface that is both the result of previous revivals and a precursor of ones to come. Revivals occur when the daily lives of people are affected by pressures that seem best answered or ameliorated by a religious response. This yearning for eternal verities begins with a few individuals and spreads to an increasing number of people as those feeling the same pressures come to believe likewise that release of their troubles to God is the best solution. Frequently, this release has been accompanied with displays of emotional, physical and, some would say, spiritual manifestations. At this point, however, the thing that had thus far unified people—a search for a fuller, more satisfying relationship with God—has become a point of contention among the people and, especially in the American experience, one that has separated Christians into warring camps that contend over not theological, but pneumatological, issues.

The key to understanding revivalism in recent years has been the study of environmental factors that have contributed to the appearance of general awakenings,
such as the rise of ministerial professionalism, changes in perceived roles and relationships between pastors and congregations, pressures deriving from modernization and pre-industrialization, and others discussed above in the review of literature. From this review, it is apparent that historians have found much to explain the phenomenon known as the Great Awakening. The ground-breaking works of early historians of the Great Awakening described people and events of whole regions—New England, the Middle Colonies, or Virginia, for example. In other words, they gave their readers the how and when of revivalism. Later historians interested by the why of revivalism have analyzed individual congregations or ministers during the revival period itself, or have examined existing factors that contributed to the appearance of the revival. What has been missing, however, is an organizational framework or approach that helps to explain why community responses to the revivalistic impulse that suddenly appeared in the 1740s were actually grounded in a religious dynamic that existed in different forms in mid-eighteenth century New England towns and villages. In other words, communities responded as they did because they each had a pre-existent set of conditions that shaped or determined those responses. If the goal of historians interested in the Great Awakening is to understand why responses to the revival varied so greatly, then they will have to study communities, or in some cases sets of communities, individually to determine the wide variety of conditions that underscore those responses. In analyzing the many kinds of pre-existing conditions, historians will be better able to understand the Great Awakening as an American religious phenomenon.

Cedric B. Cowling’s recent work on the relationship between geographical origins and theological predisposition toward revivalism not only echoes David Grayson Allen’s
exploration of regional differences and David Hackett Fischer’s discussion of folkways, but also suggests a pre-existent set of conditions caused by culture and tradition that explains in part why individual congregations reacted to the Great Awakening in the way they did.⁴⁴ Beginning with the assumption “that a dominant religious style, or mentalité, affects the values of a whole region,”⁴⁵ he has identified the existence of two geographical areas in Britain whence came immigrants to New England—the Northwest, where people tended to be evangelical, devotional, sometimes heterodox, and oral in their religious pursuits; and the Southeast, where strict orthodoxy, a reliance of reason over intuition, a dependence on the printed word, and submission of the emotions to the intellect marked a significantly different approach to the practice of religion. He demonstrates that 70 percent of the ministers who descended from Northwest families were New Lights, and 70 percent of the ministers from the Southeast were Old Lights. The Antinomian controversy, the Salem witchcraft trials, and the Great Awakening all demonstrated the result of a clash between fundamentally different religious paradigms.⁴⁶ That Puritans had both control of and desire to use the law to squelch the heterodoxy of those with Northwestern roots demonstrates that there was no neutral ground in this clash.


⁴⁵ Cowing, Saving Remnant, 4.

⁴⁶ The geographic origins of some of the chief protagonists in the Antinomian controversy and the Salem witchcraft trials were in the Northwest area. It is also interesting to note, in the context of this study, the importance of the ministers around whom these difficulties revolved: John Cotton and Samuel Parris, respectively. See Emery Battis, Saints and Sectaries: Anne Hutchinson and the Antinomian Controversy in the Massachusetts Bay Colony (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1962); and, especially, Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft (Cambridge, Mass., 1974).
This study investigates a different set of pre-existent conditions that affected the response of individual congregations to the Great Awakening—the intramural relationship between the long-standing pastor and his congregation—and explains that response as a result of what is referred to as preconditioning. Preconditioning is defined as the process by which the pastor of the New England Congregational church, through his personality and the authority incumbent in the role of the settled minister, placed an indelible stamp on members of his congregation and how that influence caused them to respond to forces of revival in specific ways. Over time, the congregation assumed a kind of corporate personality that was a reflection of its pastor, in much the same way as children adopt their parent's mannerisms, modes of speech and dress, values, and the like. Preconditioning also suggests that certain responses could remain dormant pending special circumstances, such as a time of religious revival. Once established, this special relationship was enduring; seeds sown 10, 20, 30, even 40 years before bore both "good" and "bad" fruit that was "harvested" during the decade of the 1740s, as suggested by the Biblical principle of sowing and reaping, even if that minister had left his pulpit by death or dismissal.

A few additional thoughts about this notion of "preconditioning" would be valuable to the reader. It is used in this study as a rhetorical device, rather than as some new sociological or psychological concept for understanding the Great Awakening in different ways than before. It also serves as a reminder that, just as Butler suggests, there was no great and overarching response to the revivalistic impulse; that, in fact, the Great Awakening must be understood as a series of local responses to changes in the religious dynamic of the middle seventeenth century. In essence, it requires the historian to look
more closely at the relationships of people within individual congregations. Further, the immediate “influence” of pastors within their churches and professional circles suggested in the various studies considered above does not have the same connotation as “preconditioning” intended in this study. The “influence” of pastors might cause, for example, their parishioners to consider various behavioral alternatives when confronted by spiritual circumstances, but preconditioned congregations would already have established paradigms for recognizing and responding to this spiritual stimulus.

Furthermore, while individual parishioners might act in ways consistent with their own personalities, perceived psychological needs, and spiritual sensitivities, congregations as a whole would apply a predetermined set of responses forged by their relationship with their pastor over the preceding years. Surprisingly, this set might remain dormant for years, only to break out of that dormancy when conditions in the revival permitted fruition. At that time, a different pastor would be surprised by unsuspected feelings and actions and, depending on how he reacted to his congregation’s behavior, he might find himself either being resisted quite strenuously or being swept along by forces he only vaguely understood.

Since “preconditioning” is descriptive rather than prescriptive, it does not define a specific method of preconditioning employed by all pastors or, in fact, that they were even conscious of this special impact on their people. The preconditioning of a parish was very much determined by such intrinsic determinants as the personality and character of the individual minister and, for that matter, the congregation itself. Sometimes the philosophical position of the pastor on a number of important sacred or secular issues was pivotal while, in others, eccentricities might account for the shape of the preconditioning.
Additionally, this study does not attempt to supplant the importance of the wide variety of other forces already described by historians, such as economic change, political infighting, professionalization, or modernization.

This idea of ministerial preconditioning is hinted at in a recently published study by the late Paul R. Lucas, who demonstrates indirectly the existence of the preconditioning influence of Solomon Stoddard upon the Northampton congregation. Noting the commonly accepted belief that the Great Awakening in America began in the Connecticut River valley, Lucas suggests that the beginning of the revival should be dated not from the 1730s with Jonathan Edwards' ministry, but instead observed in the theological assumptions and ministerial techniques of Stoddard that came about shortly after 1710. He explains that, following Stoddard's own highly emotional, terror-filled, conversion experience during his late sixties, the venerable pastor became convinced that he may have led hundreds of his parishioners into a false sense of security about their salvation during his decades of ministry. Only the application of "legal" terror—sermons that would overwhelm his auditors with the fear of eternal damnation—could force the unrepentant to yield their souls to God. Since fear affects the emotions, Stoddard determined that his sermons must reach those emotions through carefully chosen words and gestures.

Stoddard adopted a "carrot-and-stick" approach that threatened people with damnation while holding out the promise of God's mercy. Aware of the potential for exaggerated responses to emotional preaching as well as accusations of "enthusiasm," he attempted to balance heightened emotions with appeals to the need for Christian humility.

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meekness, and gentleness. Lucas maintains that Edwards adopted his grandfather’s approach to revivalism and this is shown in the 1734-35 revival in Northampton. Since Lucas’ work seeks to describe the influence of Stoddard on Edwards, he does not attempt to link this influence to any greater conceptual understanding. In fact, he seems unaware that the reaction of the congregation to Edwards’ ministry was the result of their preconditioning by Stoddard himself. It is apparent from Lucas’ work, however, that Stoddard did precondition the people of Northampton to respond to spiritual stimulus in a specific way and, although their pastor had died in 1729, that their response to Edwards’ leadership in the 1730s and 1740s was the result of Stoddard’s earlier preaching and teaching. The value of Lucas’ study is that it demonstrates the existence of preconditioning in another part of New England, and challenges historians to look elsewhere for further understanding of this special relationship between pastor and people.

Like voices themselves crying in the wilderness, historians of northern New England have noted that the worldview of people north of the Merrimack River was substantially different from that of those to the south. Charles E. Clark38 has observed that the “men who settled the region northeast of the Merrimack differed from the Pilgrims and Puritans in place of origin, motives for settlement, religion, politics, temperament, and way of life.” His study concentrates on the economic shift from early fishing and logging interests to a largely agricultural economy rather than the religious viewpoint of the settlers, but it is important to note that his description of their cultural interests places them squarely in Cowing’s Northwest group of people. It is not

surprising, therefore, that a large number of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century settlers along the northern frontier had Welsh, Cornish, Devonian, Scotch-Irish, and northern surnames. Likewise, it should not be surprising that radical New Light preachers attracted a large number of inhabitants in northern New England who were willing to hear out and respond to their exhortations.

Clark has expanded his analysis of the culture of northern New England to include the Great Awakening, stressing in a chapter on the revival period the impact of the “heart religion” of George Whitefield on a “war-weary, frightened, sickened, saddened people, some of whom had begun to feel the venom of stubborn ecclesiastical quarrels ....” He singled out the Reverend Nicholas Gilman, whose Durham, New Hampshire, pastorate will be discussed in Chapter 3, as an example of a “fanatical minister [who] whipped up the religious emotions of a people who had suffered far more than their share of the difficulties and tragedies of frontier life and had, in addition, long experience with church quarrels.”

Clark has suggested in a later work that, apart from these environmental preconditioners already mentioned, that it was the Reverend Hugh Adams, Gilman’s immediate predecessor and “as eccentric in his own way as the mad evangelist,” who prepared the Durham church for its controversial response to the Great Awakening.

Not only was the congregation already divided, and not only had old Mr. Adams already planted the intoxicating seeds of enthusiasm in this frontier community, but Durham had shared with its neighboring towns in northern New England the special circumstances of life in that troubled region in the early eighteenth century.40

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Chapter 3 is devoted to exploring how Adams actually did affect Gilman's pastorate.

Elizabeth C. Nordbeck has echoed Clark’s conclusions that the Great Awakening in the north was not “merely a parochial reflection of the revival in Massachusetts and Connecticut—and a reflection, at that, in which a radical element was dominant …”, but one that came out of the northern experience and, therefore, unique in its own perspective. In fact, she has pointed out, the Great Awakening was a kind of continuation of a series of mini-revivals that sprang from the exigencies of life along the northern frontier. 41

Harry S. Stout 42 has recognized the importance of treating New England clergy as a social subgroup. “If not a microcosm of the general society, the clergy at least represent a clearly defined subgroup, which, when viewed as a whole, provides the richest mine of information for distinguishing rival camps in the Great Awakening.” By applying statistical methodology, he has determined the existence of a strong correlation between the status of the cleric as a New or Old Light minister and differences in home environment, academic background, economic issues based on class, institutional and geographic mobility, and family demographics. He has concluded that the evidence suggests that the Great Awakening did not create new divisions among the clergy, but followed contours formed prior to the actual outbursts of the revivals. It is now obvious that, when viewed across the span of an entire lifetime, broadly defined social patterns did exist to differentiate Old Light from New Light clergymen and that the Great Awakening was not general among the New England ministers, but of limited and discernible sweep.

Clark and Nordbeck’s works have pointed out the need to consider the clergy of the


northern frontier in ways different from their colleagues to the south. Stout has challenged historians to stop “viewing the clergyman from the mature perspective of 1740,” but to consider his “home environment and trace it through adolescence and ultimately, the clergymen’s’ own family structure as mature adults.”43 This study will attempt to answer the call of these historians to study ministers from northern New England and to view their entire lives and the impact they had on their flocks. Because it maintains that preconditioning in a congregation required a significant amount of time to develop, it will employ case studies of three different northern New England congregations as the most effective means of identifying and describing how such environmental conditions as the special relationship between shepherd and flock created a greater understanding of the dynamics of revivalism in the 1740s.

Chapter 2 considers the influence of the Reverend John Wise of Chebacco Parish at Ipswich, Massachusetts, who is an example of a minister like Stoddard whose powerful influence continued during the Great Awakening although he had died many years before the revival. It is Wise whom Moses Coit Tyler lamented as “the one American who, upon the whole, was the most powerful and brilliant prose-writer produced in this country during the colonial time, ... [but who has] passed since then into utter obscurity; while several of his contemporaries, ... who were far inferior to him in genius, have names that are still resounding in our memories.”44 Wise’s congregation split into New Light and Old Light factions some 20 years after his death when his successor, the Reverend Theophilus Pickering, not only refused to embrace wholeheartedly the emotional aspects

43 Ibid., 23.

44 Moses Coit Tyler, History of American Literature (New York, 1897), 2: 104.
of the Great Awakening, but also violated, in the eyes of many, the cherished principles of lay leadership that Wise had propounded so skillfully many years before. This chapter will demonstrate preconditioning in Chebacco Parish by showing how the eventual separation of the church into New Light and Old Light congregations actually reflected Wise's views on congregational polity, that those who separated from Theophilus Pickering's ministry to join that of John Cleaveland did so as much for reasons of polity as for theological ones.

In Chapter 3, the Reverend Hugh Adams of Durham, New Hampshire, is offered as an example of a minister who, although removed from his pulpit shortly before the beginning of the Great Awakening, largely determined the reaction of his people to revival fires. That Adams remained in town to affect the ministry of his successor only exacerbated the effect of his preconditioning. A man of strong faith and even stronger opinions, Adams shepherded his flock at Oyster River for 20 riotous years before he was removed by an ecclesiastical council in 1739 for, among other things, imprecations against some of New Hampshire's most important people. If he had only just accepted the counsel proffered in 1716 by his friend, Judge Samuel Sewall, to "Govern your Tongue, and govern your Pen," he might have disappeared into the obscurity of time with hardly a note. Instead, because of his ability to remain in the public eye through his extraordinarily public interpretations and applications of Scriptures to contemporary problems, he became almost a byword for the frontier enthusiast, the "Detractor General" as one Boston pundit put it. While his successor, the Reverend Nicholas Gilman, has been frequently portrayed as a wild-eyed firebrand of the worst order—in fact, a northern

James Davenport, this study will show that it was Adams who established the behavioral norms in his congregation that overwhelmed the delicate health and sensitive nature of Gilman and resulted in the extravagances of his New Light congregation.

The case of the Reverend John Odlin and his parish in Exeter, New Hampshire, is explored in Chapter 4. He represents those clergy who remained in their pulpits to witness the results of their own years of preconditioning. Conservative in thought and practice, he presided over religious affairs in a prosperous market town, noted for an ecclesiastical "placidity unusual in those days," 46 for 35 years before the emotionalism of the Great Awakening split his congregation into one loyal to himself and the other one to the radical New Light and Gilman's close confidant, Daniel Rogers. Clifford K. Shipton 47 has argued that the split in the Exeter Church was a result of the nepotistic ordination of John's son Woodbridge in 1743 as his assistant and heir-apparent, since the senior pastor's hold on the church was exceptionally strong. Yet, this could hardly have been the case. While the ordination may have provided the spark that touched off the explosive nature of revivalism, this study will argue that the separation of the parish was preconditioned by Odlin's belief in the role of the pastor and his approach to handling congregational controversy. As northern New England's model for the growing sense of clerical professionalism, noted above, and archetypal Old Light, Odlin remained intransigent as one-third of his congregation tried to pry away from him his God-given responsibility and right to shepherd his flock as he perceived God's will to be.


47 Ibid., 170.
This study begins, however, with an individual whose concern was not with maintaining clerical influence and authority, but for protecting the power of laypeople to maintain a proto-democratic arrangement of checks and balances within the meetinghouse. During over 40 years of service to Chebacco Parish, the Reverend John Wise established himself as a folk hero, a “man of the people”, whose preconditioning influence remained from Cape Ann to the northern frontier long after his death in 1725.
CHAPTER 2

"REGULAR COMMUNITIES DULY ESTABLISHED":

JOHN WISE AND THE INTELLECTUAL ANTECEDENTS OF THE GREAT AWAKENING

Even the paucity of relics of his existence on earth cannot hide the larger-than-life appearance of the Reverend John Wise (1652-1725) of Chebacco Parish, Ipswich. Scourge of inept military leadership, defier of autocratic government, clever disputant of leading Boston divines, pastor of a single church for 45 years, and renowned wrestler, he seems the archetypal American—country boy, rugged individualist, beloved champion of the people against the elite—and worthy folk hero. Historians have made much of his humble origins. The son of Joseph Wise, an indentured servant to Joseph Alcock of Roxbury, Massachusetts, and Mary Thompson, he worked his way through Harvard College, graduating in 1673 and taking the master of arts degree in 1676. His preaching career had already begun somewhat earlier, since he refused an offer of settlement at Branford, Connecticut, and marched as a chaplain with the military forces against the Narragansetts in January 1676. Moving northward along the Connecticut River Valley to Hatfield, he preached there in 1677 and 1678, but again refused the call to ministry. In December 1678 he returned to Roxbury and married Abigail Gardner, who gave birth to their first child Jeremiah, the future minister at Berwick, Maine, less than a year later. He

1 John Wise, A Vindication of the Government of New-England Churches, Drawn from Antiquity; the Light of Nature; Holy Scripture; its Noble Nature; and from the Dignity Divine Providence has put upon it (Boston, 1717), 52.
began ministering to the people of Chebacco Parish, Ipswich, in 1680, but it was not until August 1683 that he was settled by the rite of ordination. He made a profound impact on this frontier community for nearly a half century, an impact that would be evident during the Great Awakening, years after his death, in a split in his parish between those favoring his Old Light successor, Theophilus Pickering, and those New Lights who formed the Fourth Parish under the ministry of John Cleaveland.

Although Essex has been one of the most studied of all the New England counties, no single work has gone as far to describe the workaday life of Essexmen as a recent monograph by Daniel Vickers,3 *Farmers & Fisherman: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1850*. It is significant because it provides a key to understanding Wise by describing the working conditions and economic dreams of success of members of the flock he shepherded for so long. It is not a study of ecclesiology or theology, but an investigation of attitudes toward labor and practices that led to the production of wealth during the six working days of the week. Vickers has attempted to explain how New Englanders overcame a chronic shortage of labor in a place where slavery, indentured servitude, *repartimiento*, or a patronage system could not pay for itself for want of a cash crop. He identified three successive adaptations that resulted in New England's preindustrial development: (1) confronting the challenges of the frontier and adjusting to the risks and costs of operating in a labor- and capital-scarce environment, (2) the passing of the frontier and changes in labor practices that resulted in the accumulation of capital and manpower, and (3) changes set in motion by

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2 *SHG* 2: 428-41.

commercialization after the Revolution. The tenure of Wise spans neatly the end of the first phase and the beginning of the second.

From the beginning, the basis of the economic culture of Ipswich was the "ambition of most working men to establish themselves and their offspring in comfortable independence" or competency, defined by Vickers as the "ability to employ themselves and their families relatively free of outside control." Competency was characterized by such requirements as possession of tools, skills, and land necessary to work for oneself, and the ability to pass the means of future employment and subsistence onto one's children. As an early version of the "American Dream," competency served as a goal and ideal, where land ownership was a key factor in independence, self-employment an indicator of status, and the possession of personal property a measure of material well-being. Without a cash crop, lacking capital, and suffering from chronic labor shortage, Essex County farmers sought to secure their competency by employing their own sons and each other, or organizing other members of their families, to maximize economic diversification. Vickers paints a vivid picture of parishioners who were relatively homogeneous in religious belief, stressed regular work habits, maintained stern standards of public authority, and were dedicated to providing economic independence for their families. Wise's parishioners were people of independent thoughts and ways who recognized the necessity of working for group needs to secure personal goals. His pastorate occurred during an important transition phase when they experienced the need for a change in labor practices resulting from the accumulation of capital and manpower. As their pastor, Wise became the spokesman for their feelings of disquietude, not only

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because he was their spiritual leader, but also because he shared a common cultural heritage and economic perspective.

There is a composite picture of John Wise as a man with considerable authority—spiritual, political, and even physical. Three generations of Chebacco adults grew up under his spiritual supervision. Even after his death in 1725, his influence maintained significant authority in a wide variety of matters in the congregation and community. As will be shown below, he engendered and encouraged a spirit of local autonomy as a vocal and articulate spokesman for rural independence. As an inheritor of an economic philosophy that valued competency, he resisted attempts by Boston’s oligarchy to subsume the welfare of his parishioners to its dreams of economic expansion. The strength of his character and personality, not to mention his longevity, implanted seeds that continued to influence the people of Ipswich years later and, in fact, preconditioned them to respond to circumstances in particular ways. Wise published no theological treatise from which to gauge his orthodoxy. Perhaps his longevity alone is sufficient to render a *nihil obstat* on his faith and practice. His power to influence is plain to see in a number of documents he wrote during his life, but it would be better, perhaps, to begin this discussion of his influence by observing what contemporaries thought and wrote about him.

The funeral sermon\(^5\) preached by Wise’s son-in-law, the Reverend John White of Gloucester, is a suitable measurement. Choosing 2 Cor. 4:7, “For we have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels,” as his text verse, White demonstrated in a long sermon how the

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ministers of God, fragile earthen vessels though they be, were His chosen instruments for leading His people to the greatest of all treasures, salvation through Jesus Christ. He adjured them to consider the loss of their shepherd and the need to choose his successor wisely. White saved a little time at the end of his sermon to praise the earthly vessel, as well as the spiritual treasure that had dwelt within it. White would “dare not Presume … to attempt to give … the Character of the Venerable Mr. Wise. He that would do it to the Life, must have his Eloquence,” but he would offer a few comments. He offered these encomia about his father-in-law: “His kind, condescending, and most generous and obliging Carriage, … Majesty mixt with Affability, Gravity with Facetiousness, Charity with Severity; Charity to the Persons, and Severity to the Opinions of his Antagonists.” Second, he noted the “high Value and Veneration for Men of his Character and Order” and his concern for the people to teach their children to esteem godly ministers. Next, he praised Wise as a man “Zealously Affected towards his Country, and the Civil & Sacred Liberties and Priviledges of his Country”, who was “willing to Sacrifice any thing, but a good Conscience, to Secure and Defend them.” Finally, and perhaps most important, White disclosed the thing most dear to the heart of the old parson: the “Well-being of these Churches; … no Risks were too great to run, no Pains too great to take, to Defend and Confirm the Order, and Established Constitution; or promote the Purity and Peace of the same.”

White preferred to defer any discussion of the character of his revered father-in-the-faith to one of the deceased parson’s generation. There is a brief statement of the “Character of the Reverend Mr. John Wise” written by “another Hand” and attached to

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6 Ibid., 37-8.
the published funeral sermon. The anonymous author extolled Wise for his “mighty
genius and brighter Excellencies of his Superiour Soul” and noted his “strong and
elevated Fancy, solid Wisdom, steddy Fortitude, great Generosity, Courtesie and
Integrity; and above all, a zealous Piety, and liberal Charity, which nobly furnish’d him
for the Great Services that Providence design’d him for, and employ’d him in . . . .” Wise
was also a “Great Divine, and an able Minister of the New-Testament, and had a peculiar
Talent for Composing Church Controversies, and Ecclesiastical Difficulties, and was
happy in a constant Success in it.”7 These characteristics, desired in all clerics at the
time, made Wise an able and honored spiritual leader, but it is interesting this eulogist
said more about Wise’s role as a community spokesman than he did about the
performance of his ministerial duties.

“Another Hand” made much of Wise as a “Learned Scholar, & an Eloquent Orator,
as his Excellent Writings and Discourses Testify. He was of a Generous and Publick
Spirit, a Great Lover of his Country, and our happy Constitution, a studious Assertor, and
faithful Defender of its Liberties and Interests.”8 He supported these assertions by citing
three occasions when Wise proved his value to his constituents: in his resistance to
Governor Sir Edmund Andros’ scheme of taxation, his duty as a chaplain with Sir
William Phips’s expedition against Quebec during the summer of 1690, and his defense
of independent congregationalism against incipient Presbyterianism in the 1710s. If this
eulogist considered these three events indicative of the accomplishments of a lifetime to a
congregation who loved and honored their deceased pastor, then undoubtedly a closer

7 “Another Hand”, “Character of the Reverend Mr. John Wise,” Ibid., np.
8 Ibid.
look at these three signal events would testify much about the influence he had on them.

Governor Andros' arbitrary imposition of a tax without the consent of the General Court provided Wise the impetus for stepping into the political arena in 1687. Andros, appointed the Governor of All the New England Colonies by James II, imposed a penny-on-the-pound tax upon New Englanders, allowing them only the right to choose their own tax commissioners. Stirred to action, Wise gathered a small group of influential townsmen in Ipswich to discuss this violation of their Charter rights and agreed to recommend to a town meeting not to participate in the illegal election of a tax commissioner. Unanimously agreed upon, the record of the town meeting was dutifully sent to Boston, whence Andros responded by hailing Wise and five others to Boston to answer a mittimus for contempt and high misdemeanors. Denied a writ of habeas corpus and the privilege of giving personal bonds to appear in court by Chief Justice Joseph Dudley, they remained in the Boston jail awaiting trial. Tried before a jury of twelve, most of whom Wise doubted were peers ("non-freeholders of any land in the colony, some of them strangers and foreigners"), Wise pleaded on behalf of them all that the tax edict violated the Magna Carta and statute laws that secured "the subject's properties and estates". The judges were not sympathetic. One thought they should not assume the laws of England followed them to the ends of the earth. "Mr. Wise," declared another, "you have no more privileges left you, than not to be sold as slaves ... ." Found guilty, the six were returned to jail for three weeks before receiving their sentences. Wise was fined

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9 Clerical fears of an Andros government were the result of more than just tax hikes. They were aware from letters from Dissenters in Britain that the accession of James II posed dire threats to their freedom to practice their Congregational form of government. There was a real possibility that Andros would force Anglican worship and Episcopal government on them. Clifford K. Shipton, "The New England Clergy of the 'Glacial Age'," *Transactions of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 32 (December 1933): 28-9. See also Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*. 

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£50 and suspended from the ministry.\textsuperscript{10} He and his co-defendants were each ordered to post a £1,000 bond to guarantee good behavior for one year and to pay the costs of the court. These, added to expenses for their upkeep and in time and lost earnings, cost the men more than £400 together.\textsuperscript{11} Throughout his trial, Wise remained undaunted in the face of what he considered tyrannical rule; his people honored his stand by repaying all his court costs and by choosing him a year later to represent Ipswich at the reorganization of the General Court to consider legislative affairs under Andros’ replacement.\textsuperscript{12}

Recognizing the value of his leadership in the recall of Andros, the General Court invited Wise to hold another position of trust by sailing with Sir William Phips as chaplain\textsuperscript{13} to the expedition against Quebec. We have Wise’s own account, in which he apologized for “Some Expressions of Immodesty or Such as Carry Self Arrogance with them”, of the assault on Quebec and his quite candid assessment of the defeat, written for the benefit of an unknown correspondent.\textsuperscript{14} Because it was a personal letter and not a public account, one can glean from it why he earned a reputation for military leadership

\textsuperscript{10} This action clearly violated the relationship between the church and magistrate found in Chapter 17 of the Platform. \textit{A Platform of Church Discipline} ... (Cambridge, Mass., 1648), 27-9.


\textsuperscript{12} Wise represented Ipswich along with Nehemiah Jewett on the Council for Safety of the People and Conservation of the Peace that sat in Boston on 9 May 1689. Robert Earle Moody and Richard Clive Simmons, eds., \textit{The Glorious Revolution in Massachusetts: Selected Documents, 1689-1692} (Boston, 1988), 70.

\textsuperscript{13} “Voted, That Mr. John Wise, Mr. Jeremiah Sheppard, Mr. John Emmerson, Mr. Nehemiah Walter, and Mr. Nathaniel Overton be desired to Accompany Sr. William Phipps Knt. as Ministers in the Expedition against the French at Canada.” Minutes of the Meeting of the General Court, dated 5 July 1690. Ibid., 264.

\textsuperscript{14} “The Narrative of Mr John Wise, Minister of Gods Word at Chebacco,” \textit{New England Historical and Genealogical Register} 55 (November 1901): 283-97. Samuel A. Green, who transcribed the manuscript, believed the correspondent was Increase Mather, who was in England at the time.
without being overly concerned the report was self-serving, although his assessment should be balanced by the knowledge that defeat in battle is frequently followed by recriminations and confusion about what happened on the battlefield. Wise divided his narrative into three parts, interspersed with excoriation of the field commander, Lieutenant General John Walley. The first part was a brief summary of the principal reasons for the defeat, which in present-day military parlance might be considered logistics (lack of supplies and munitions), strategy (lateness of the season and poor planning), and inept or uninspired leadership ("Cowardize"). The second part was an extended treatment of the order of events from initial anchorage to final withdrawal, best characterized as a long list of missed opportunities. He completed his account by assessing blame which, if not for the mingled satire and sarcasm, may have been said in just one word: Walley. While it would serve no purpose to review the military action here, Wise’s discussion about his interaction with General Walley does shed much light on his own character under fire.

Ordered to remain on board ship by Phips, Wise observed the action until the first wave of attackers were ferried to land and a pinnace returned for him. Arriving on shore, he checked the wounded and pressed on into a swamp, where he noticed a large portion of the army standing about without direction. None could say where the field commander was, but with some effort Wise found the dispirited Walley for himself. “I do assure you Sir”, Wise summarized his initial and on-going attempts to stir Walley into action, “our Lieutenant General Seemed to me to be destitute of all proper care for the Mannagement of the Army for the buisness that was before us and yet by the Index of a certain reserved Gravity & a Lonesome walk from place to place that he had he seemed
to be swallowed up with thoughts which I can deem from first to last to be only the Invincible Arrest of fear[.]" Wise also outlined a series of opportunities upon which the general refused to capitalize even with the chaplain's encouragement, as well as "many intolerable Errors committed on Shore." These included Walley's refusal to press the attack against Quebec when it lay open to destruction, and to follow up minor skirmish victories when the French were retreating and scorch the earth in their wake, as well as his "base and Cowardly losse of our field pieces" when he ordered the army to desert them when not even threatened. Wise's wrath at the recollection of Walley's battlefield conduct knew no bounds: "So that for my private Censure when the blame is rightly fixed[,] as I do think it is these lines[,] there is no less then Death deserved; The Losse of pay and wearing the wooden Sword are but little better then Childrens pay upon Such an Unpardonable Omission."16

There is a clear suggestion in this narrative that Wise, despite his best efforts to minimize his own role, was a man who responded to the challenge of the moment to undo the damage resulting from inept leadership. He seemed to appear everywhere at once on the battlefield, trying to rally the troops in one place, urging Walley to take action without simply usurping a command for which he had no commission, caring for the needs of the troops for food and rest, sending out subordinates to gather intelligence to plan for counterattacks. On the third day of battle, with defeat overshadowing the

15 Ibid., 290-1.

battlefield, he stood before Phips and his senior officers and argued forcibly for tactics that could still win victory if only they were willing to press the attack. On the final day, as Walley’s fear continued to paralyze any thinking by the general staff of orderly retreat, Wise remained at the water’s edge to prevent an attack upon the withdrawing English forces. The tales of the performance of their beloved pastor on the battlefield before Quebec, if those brought back by local Essexmen on the expedition were even close to his personal account, would have enlivened many a winter night’s story telling. It is not surprising that Wise’s anonymous eulogist, even 35 years later, could still praise Wise “not only [for] the Pious Discharge of his Sacred Office, but [for] his Heroick Spirit, and Martial Skill and Wisdom, [which] did greatly distinguish him”.17 Perhaps Wise’s deed had really only grown with the retelling over the years, but perceptions still existed that made the pastor a “larger-than-life” character.

Learned scholar, eloquent orator, of generous and public spirit, lover of his country and its constitution, a studious assertor, faithful defender of its liberties and interests—the anonymous eulogist did not even have to mention the titles of two of John Wise’s political works—The Churches Quarrel Espoused (1710) and A Vindication of the Government of New-England Churches (1717)—to elicit memories of their late pastor’s fight to maintain the tradition of church polity that stressed lay control against the plan to organize churches into a Presbyterian-like organization of leading divines and ruling elders.18 Wise spoke to and for fearful members of autonomous congregations, particularly those beyond the pale of Boston and Cambridge, who saw themselves too

17 “Another Hand,” “Character of the Reverend Mr. John Wise,” Gospel Treasure, 42.

18 Cotton Mather et al., Questions and Proposals, printed in John Wise, The Churches Quarrel Espoused (New York, 1713), 3-9. They are also printed in Williston Walker, ed., The Creeds and Platforms of
little involved in the scheme, the benefits of participation too small, and the burden of
government too great and restricting.19

The controversy resulted from a list of 16 Proposals approved on 13 September
1705 by a committee of nine clergy representing five ministerial associations that was
moderated by Samuel Willard of Boston’s Third Church, but whose driving force was
undoubtedly Cotton Mather.20 The purpose of this document, which was approved by the
General Convention of Ministers on 30 May 1706, was to provide church councils the
“due Constitution and Efficacy in supporting, preserving and well ordering the Interest of
the Churches in the Country”. The first eight proposals sought to increase the role of
ministers in approving and licensing new ministers for vacant pulpits. The committee
undoubtedly had in mind the installation of Benjamin Colman at the Brattle Street
Church, about which many had expressed unheeded concern. The second group of eight
proposals called for the establishment of standing councils that would meet at least
annually to address matters of ecclesiastical concern, and whose “determinations ... for
the necessities of the Churches, are to be looked upon as final and decisive” unless
unusual circumstances called for a final appeal. These standing councils would also have

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19 Shipton cast this as a controversy between the generation of ministers, led by Cotton Mather, who were
“engaged in a struggle to bring their churches to a gentler and more liberal Calvinism”, and the “elderly,
conservative, and usually uneducated laymen whom Wise wished to see put in control as ruling elders.”
a wide-spread feeling in favor of stricter church government, a feeling which such liberal sympathizers as
Ebenezer Pemberton and Benjamin Colman shared [with conservatives]. So far from being the work of a
faction, it would be hard to show what elements of then existent Boston Congregationalism were
unrepresented in their production.” Walker, Creeds and Platforms, 491.

20 For a detailed summary of the origin of the Proposals, see Ibid., 465-95. When Wise reprinted the
Proposals in Churches Quarrel, rather than using the September date when the committee completed its
work, he affixed the date that the Boston Association approved them—5 Nov. 1705, the centenary
celebration of Guy Fawkes Day. One can imagine his humor at work here.
the power of anathema against congregations unwilling to submit to their authority.\textsuperscript{21}

While many ministers seemed not to comprehend the full potential of the Proposals to undermine the authority of the local churches to choose their own pastors and rule themselves, Wise believed that their adoption would significantly undermine the strict independency established by the Cambridge Platform of 1648 and the principle of local rule embodied in it. It would also tend toward centralizing church polity in the hands of the Boston-area churches at the expense of the churches in the outlying districts. The adoption of the Saybrook Platform in Connecticut in 1708 along similar consiliar lines only reinforced the trend toward federalism. Wise’s contribution to the controversy took the form of The Churches Quarrel Espoused, written in 1710, but not published until 1713 in New York, not Boston. While no reaction to the first edition is extant, the 1715 Boston edition did draw a comment from Cotton Mather, who wrote to Robert Wodrow in Scotland about that “furious Man, called John Wise, … [who] has lately published a foolish Libel, against some of us, for presbyterianizing too much in our Care to repair some Deficiencies in our Churches.”\textsuperscript{22}

While historians have debated just how important his contribution was to defeating the Proposals, The Churches Quarrel Espoused has been hailed by some as one of the most articulate and powerful defenses of strict congregationalism from the colonial period. In Wise’s “Epistle Dedicatory”, he outlined in a series of “petitions” to the churches of New England the efficacy of local control of the congregation through the ruling elder and the lack of necessity for any hierarchical form of Presbyterial control.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.

He also chided them for allowing the excellent polity delivered by the founders for their benefit to decay through lack of vigilance and defense of their liberties. In the main body of the pamphlet, he answered each proposal separately, point by point, in his best Ramian style made even more forceful by satire. He continued to emphasize throughout the purity of the *Platform* and the danger of turning over liberties to governing bodies not of the people’s direct choosing.

Wise’s second work against centralization in church government was *A Vindication of the Government of New-England Churches*, published in Boston in 1717. Given that the *Proposals* were already a dead issue when he wrote the *Churches Quarrel Espoused*, some have found it difficult to understand, particularly in the absence of any hint from Wise himself, why he wrote the *Vindication*. Perry Miller wondered if Wise did not feel a bit guilty about beating a dead horse the first time with the biting whip of satire and felt obliged to make amends by offering a second work subdued by a forensic approach to disputation. Did Wise hold a grudge of some sort or, perhaps for a reason Miller suggested but never stated, could Wise, the very antithesis of Cotton, not resist tweaking the lion’s beard? Better still, perhaps those amorphous concerns about the trend toward a Presbyterial polity, originally expressed in this jocular fashion, began to take on a more fearsome shape as he delved into the political philosophy of Baron Samuel Puffendorf.

Wise’s *Vindication* has become known as not just a defense of the democratic nature of Congregational church government, but perhaps the earliest American statement upon the efficacy of a democratic civil government from a natural rights

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23 Wise, *Vindication*.

position. He argued persuasively from the ancients, Scripture, and reason that participation of the people in religious and civil affairs is the greatest guarantee of security from oppression and prosperity in spiritual and temporal interests. While all three sources were put to good use, Wise's resort to reason was strangely prophetic of a revolutionary time some 50 years in the future. His political philosophy was greatly influenced by Puffendorf's *De Jure Naturae et Gentium*, first published in 1672 in Latin and in an English edition in 1703, although he parted company with Puffendorf's avowal that monarchy was the best form of government.

Wise's defense of democratic church polity through lay control earned the admiration of several twentieth-century historians. Vernon L. Parrington has rejoiced in John Wise as a prophet of rural democracy and as important to the development of the Congregational institution as Jonathan Edwards was to the development of its doctrine. George A. Cook has developed the importance of Wise's *Vindication* as a seminal contribution to creating the democratic spirit of America. Perry Miller has stated the real achievement of the *Vindication* was Wise's successful expounding of Congregational polity as a democratic polity that treated membership as participatory, and his transfer of the Congregational position from Biblical authority alone to the one supported by reason.

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as well. Resorting to both sources of authority allowed Wise to appeal to both the Puritan conception of history and New England's provincial experience, and to vindicate the democratic principle—especially in church government. Perhaps more important, he also laid foundations that later secular apologists built upon to promote the development of American democracy. It does not even seem to matter, Miller thought, that the Proposals had had little impact from the beginning and Wise's argument was unnecessary. What did matter is that Wise was, in Parrington's words, the first "village democrat," a kind of "leveler." Parrington looked to Wise as evidence that the rise of an American society based upon libertarian ideals came only with the victory of the forces of Enlightenment over the forces of reactionary Puritan theocracy at the end of the seventeenth century. Miller was unwilling to view Wise as a member of the vanguard for modern liberalism as Parrington had done, but he did identify Wise's source of support for Congregational democracy as his plebeian and yeoman roots.

Eldon R. Turner has noted that concentration on the political implications of Wise's works have caused historians to overlook their actual readership and, by doing so, "Rebellion against Government for Particular Subjects to break in upon Regular Communities duly Established, is from the premises to Violate the Law of Nature; and is a high Usurpation upon the first grand Immunities [the ability to choose between actions, the right to choose for oneself, and the equality of people in their choices] of Mankind." Yet, considering that Wise's short discussion of rebellion was in the context of a political covenant between the governor and the governed, it may have been the necessity of each fulfilling specified agreements that caused the reprinting of his works in 1772. Wise's sanctions against rebellion should not be seen as condoning tyranny because he went on to quote Puffendorf that, where the civil government is based on a covenant, "as the one are not to Invade what by Concessions and Stipulations is granted to the Ruler; so the other is not to deprive them of their lawful and determined Rights and Liberties; then the Prince who strives to subvert the Fundamental Laws of the Society, is the Traitor and the Rebel, and not the People, who endeavour to Preserve and defend their own." Wise, Vindication, 52-3.

has caused them to miss further insight into the actual values Wise sought to protect.

Turner has taken a new look at the second of the parson's two works and claimed earlier historians, by subordinating *Churches Quarrel Espoused* to *A Vindication*, had missed the purpose of the two works: Wise's themes—law, authority, mythopoeic history and others—made *Churches Quarrel Espoused* not a liberal defense of democratic principles but a parochial defense of a legal document, the *Cambridge Platform*. *Churches Quarrel Espoused*, Turner argues, rested squarely on rural concerns and its primary audience was rural laity—farmers and fisherman—who were suspicious by nature and experience, superstitious, pragmatic, stingy, and constantly worried about Roman Catholics and Native Americans. Wise understood these farmers lived in a closed world under attack by economic change and religious reforms, and he appealed to their patriotism, war readiness, the mythopoeic mission of reformed Protestantism, their parsimony, and a blanket religious bigotry. They were *not* the independent democrats of historiographic fame, but peasants of a variety of ranks who lived with fewer institutional and more social distinctions than are now common. They were deferential to social, educational, and economic superiority, and were members of clear status groups that required a mixture of rights and duties. They placed high value on cooperation and mutual subordination to religious ideals, not individual liberty, and depended on ministers as a source of authority to interpret threats to their world view. Far from embracing an anti-authoritarian ideology, Turner suggests, Wise consistently held paramount the law of God and emphasized the duty to obey. *Churches Quarrel Espoused* does not belong with the reasoned and revolutionary assurance of the Enlightenment, as Moses Coit Tyler argued. Instead, it belongs with the work of an influential group of authors who were
concerned with sacred experience and sacred history. It was written to defend not only a
collection but also a culture. Turner's interpretations carry considerable validity, but it
is important to recall that Wise's political works were highly respected by many of his
professional colleagues and members of the local elite who also read them. Also, as will
be seen later in this chapter and then again in Chapter 4, the arguments expressed in these
two works were revived in the 1740s to justify church separations caused by the Great
Awakening. His intellectual influence was indeed lasting.

Wise's apologies for independent Congregationalism demonstrated his mental
tenacity and support for the traditions of the people of the Northwest and the rights and
privileges of gathered bodies of Christians. His stands on provincial controversies
showed a courage of convictions that sometimes placed him in opposition to the Boston
clergy. He defied both common wisdom and common sense to protest the incarceration
of John Proctor, then awaiting trial in Salem, for suspicion of witchcraft. Writing to
defend Proctor and his wife with "The Humble and Sincere Declaration", he and 31 co-
signers from Ipswich declared that, "as to what we have ever seen or heard of them, upon
our consciences we judge them innocent of the crime objected." They knew the Proctors
well, had known the husband's parents, and had never had the least cause to doubt the
innocence of either husband or wife of witchcraft. As it turned out, the document was
insufficient to gain Proctor's release from prison or death, but Wise's prestige among
many of the people of Salem village was sufficient for them to seek his help in the
aftermath of the event. When dissenting members of the congregation began their

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32 Wise, "The Humble and Sincere Declaration of us, Subscribers, Inhabitants in Ipswich, on the Behalf of
our Neighbors, John Procter and his Wife, now in Trouble and under Suspicion of Witchcraft," in Charles
W. Upham, Salem Witchcraft: With an Account of Salem Village and a History of Opinions on Witchcraft

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attempt to remove Samuel Parris from his pulpit, they demanded a mutual council that would include Wise to help arbitrate a settlement. Even with the support of Cotton Mather, Parris was not keen on a mutual council, particularly with Wise on it.\(^3\) With that threat, Parris agreed to submit himself to an ex parte council of distinguished ministers and leading political figures, and eventually left Salem. Wise also lent his support to the Reverend Thomas Symmes of Bradford Parish, Haverhill, in favor of regular singing in 1720 and thereafter, and in 1721 to the Mathers on the inflammatory issue of small pox inoculations when few supported this position, concurring with the lawfulness of this preventive measure.\(^3\)\(^4\)

In 1721, as *Amicus Patriae*, Wise provided *A Word of Comfort to a Melancholy Country* to encourage the government to continue the bank of credit and, if it should not, to find another way to recover the economy.\(^3\)\(^5\) It is a particularly useful work because it

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\(^{33}\) By this time, leading New England ministers, particularly Increase and Cotton Mather, had successfully prevailed upon Governor Phips to end the Salem witchcraft proceedings and were trying to reestablish equanimity among the people. Seen in this light, Cotton Mather’s support for Parris may be seen as an attempt to put the whole affair behind with as little additional aggravation as possible. That Parris’ church tried to enlist Wise’s aid suggests that Wise was quite willing to keep the affair going, undoubtedly to ensure some kind of justice prevailed. Shipton, “New England Clergy,” 42-3.

\(^{34}\) Increase Mather, “Several Reasons proving that inoculating or transplanting the Small Pox, is a lawful practice, and that it has been blessed by God for the saving of many a life,” *MHS Collections* 9 (1857) : 275-80.

\(^{35}\) *Amicus Patriae* [John Wise], *A Word of Comfort to a Melancholy Country, or the Bank of Credit Erected in the Massachusetts-Bay, Fairly Defended by a Discovery of the Great Benefit, accruing by it to the Whole Province; With a Remedy for Recovering a Civil State when Sinking under Desperation by Defeat on their Bank of Credit* (Boston, 1721). Massachusetts had financed the war against the French and Indians through paper bills of credit, including the enormous sum of £40,000, to invade Canada. The bills had replaced specie as the medium of commerce. With the return of peace, there developed three parties with proposals to improve the economy. Thomas Hutchinson, Sr., led a small group which favored a return to a bimetallic system and the withdrawal of all paper currency. A very large group, led by Dr. Elisha Cooke, Jr., Dr. Oliver Noyes, and William Payne, would establish a private bank which would issue more bills of credit and bind them to real property as security. The third direction, supported by most of the Governor’s Council, favored public financing. The government would lend bills to any inhabitant who would mortgage their own property as security. Public financing won the day, and Massachusetts loaned £50,000 under the trusteeship of Andrew Belcher, Addington Davenport, Thomas Hutchinson, Sr., Edward Hutchinson, and John White of Boston. *A Word of Comfort* supported the continuance of this policy, not surprisingly because Wise himself had borrowed these bills of credit. Thomas Hutchinson, *History of
sheds light on a variety of ideas of importance to Wise. As an economic statement, *Word of Comfort* was a surprising mixture of both modern and antiquated ideas about the need for credit in an expanding, neo-capitalist economy, the role of a strong economy in sustaining political power and moral stability and, indirectly, a kind of psychology of money. While his work did not attempt to intertwine economics and politics as in a planned political economy, it did emphasize the need for government oversight for any private financial scheme. It was also a tribute to the value of husbandry to the strength of a country and the nobility of agrarian life that predated Crevecoeur by 50 years. Finally, when considered along with the letter of an anonymous critic, Wise’s satirical answer to that critic, and Wise’s letter to one of his sons, all published the same year in a pamphlet entitled *A Friendly Check, from a Kind Relation*, it gives insight into Wise’s own activity in the land bank.36

Wise set forth four propositions in the first part of *A Word of Comfort* that sought to establish the necessity of bills of credit and, having established that need, argued in favor of a partnership between private entrepreneurs and government to sustain them. He quickly passed over his first two propositions, that at the present New Englanders lacked for nothing but a sufficient medium of trade for their commerce and that commerce is vital to a strong civil government and a peaceful community. The existence of a convenient and safe medium of trade, he contended in his third proposition, was necessary for promoting commerce. Hard specie was neither convenient nor safe because the “more Cost and Intrinsick Worth a Medium carries with it, or the more Valuable it is

*Massachusetts Bay, 154-6.*

36 *Amicus Patriae* [John Wise], *A Friendly Check, from a Kind Relation, To the Chief Cannoneer, Founded on a Late Information, Dated N. E. Castle-William, 1720, 21* (Boston, 1721).
in itself, the less useful it will be in supporting an Universal Trade and Commerce.”

Specie was simply not safe to use because its costly and valuable nature made it
inconstant, unfixed, and volatile; its durability caused its possessors to hoard it for their
estates; and it “inclines Men more to Extortion, Dissembling, and other Moral Evils in
Trade then One which has no Instrinsick Value in it. The Love of Money is the Root of all
Evil. But the Paper Medium is easy of Exchange, and not so apt to corrupt the Mind.”

With these preliminary thoughts out of the way, Wise addressed his thesis: “This
Province can create for them selves, A sufficient Medium, that shall answer all Points of
Business and Profit, better then Money: And that by a Publick or Private Bank of Credit;
and either of them will do under the Influence, Patronage, Sanctions, & Awe of the
Government.” Noting that countries all over Europe, even Spain with all its gold and
silver, had severe shortages of specie, he avowed that only bills of credit would help
them. He reminded his readers of what having notes had done in the past—the continued
support and maintenance of church and state without grumbling, continued payment
of costs accrued from a long Indian war, and the flourishing economy of the present—
and what benefits would derive from continuing them—encouragement of commerce,
support for a growing body of craftsmen dependent on trade, continued sustenance of
church and state, the promotion of husbandry, expansion of the frontiers, and the
production of more local goods for foreign trade.

Anticipating what undoubtedly were two of the most important concerns about bills
of credit in his day, Wise proceeded to explain how to maintain the value of credit notes

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37 Wise, Word of Comfort, 5.
38 Ibid., 7.
and to whom should be given the responsibility for managing them to the best advantage of the province. It is instructive that out of his seven suggestions for maintaining value, only the last one might be considered as practical business sense: “Let us look upon our Publick Bills thro’ such Bright and Manly Examples as we have derived to us … but from the Wise & Prudent, in the Management of the Affairs of this Life.” His ensuing discussion of the financial successes of banks in Europe and in New York suggests considerable study and knowledge of foreign and domestic affairs. Wise’s other six suggestions, however, showed a concern for the effects of human nature on the economy and, in fact, of the economy on human nature. Since trust in credit is largely perceptual, he warned against addressing derogatory remarks against the bills, as well as dwelling on the few known cases, such as in South Carolina, where foolishness led to high inflation and devaluation. It was also too easy to blame devaluation on the bills rather than on true causes, such as poor harvests or disasters which by themselves would cause prices to rise. Reminding his readers that bills had been useful and accepted in the past, he assured them they would certainly continue to benefit the province in the future. The problem was, he thought, people were forgetting the Biblical reminder that lasting wealth is gained slowly and over a long time; getting rich quickly might be possible for a few with specie, but the average family needed to invest time and labor in procuring the benefits of the land. Also, equating bills of credit with hard specie would naturally cause disparities in perceptions of value. They were not equal; specie was not really a medium but merchandise to be purchased with credit.

39 Ibid.
40 P. 40.
Ideally, Wise believed, the government ought to manage credit. "It is very apparent, that those who have had the Management of the Bank hitherto, have done it well. They have in their great Wisdom saved and supported their Country; and why should any Man meditate a new Ministry, for this Great Trust?" The success of other governments, the value of using the profits to the public benefit, and the need to support annual public expenditure through notes all suggested this was true. Also, public faith in the stewardship of the government made bills of credit more supportable, and the impartiality of the government made it far less likely to enter into fraud or collusion for the benefit of the few. Yet he was realistic enough to admit Europe did provide examples of the private management of credit and its benefit to the public. Properly overseen by the government, managed by "Men of known Integrity, of Real Estates, Good influence, and Considerable Trade", private credit could work well. The rich merchants knew and understood trade better than government ministers would and would be party to information that would help maintain prices. Likewise, their natural interest in benefiting themselves would ensure profits for others. He also suspected that, once established, a privately regulated credit could not readily be recalled or suppressed without a far greater danger to the financial success of the entrepreneurs themselves.

Wise's naivété concerning the complete trustworthiness of pious men when managing large sums of money, not to mention the impartiality of government, sounds a rather strange note on modern ears. It also complements his belief in the nobility and necessity of agrarian life. It is quite evident that his principal reason for writing A Word of Comfort was his concern for the welfare of his rural parishioners who would be the

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41 P. 52.
first to suffer with a return to specie payment. So long as there were bills of credit, farmers could maintain the prices of their products better; faced with a barter economy, they would have to take anything the merchant might offer because their produce could not keep indefinitely. "The Farmer must be duly, and sufficiently encouraged or you ruin all. Keep him in a thread-bare Coat, and starve him of his Profits, by Pinching, and Penurious Markets, and Prices, you will then much disanimate one of the best Servants to the Crown, and the means of your Plenty, your Safety, and Flourishing Condition."42 When farmers fail, there is a danger of starving without his crops, a danger of Indian attacks without his arms. "Those Blades who are Detach't from rugged grounds; And then drawn up into Battle array, Will stand the hardest Brunts; Bear the deepest Wounds When Neat, and Oyled Heads will run away."43 Wise also considered overpopulation in settled areas, with its problems of not enough farmland, the inefficient mixing of trades with husbandry to make ends meet, and the overabundance of bachelors and old maids who could not establish a household, as well as the scarcity of population on the frontiers that invited Indian attacks. Bills of credit would promote the increase of settlement on the frontier of families wishing land and the subsequent filling in of the lands in between. This, in turn, would promote the migration of Protestant peoples from Ireland, Scotland, and the north of England seeking opportunities. Together, this increase in productivity would encourage the growth of manufacturing for foreign markets. All were important for the success of the province.44

42 P. 23.
43 P. 24.
44 It is interesting to note that it appears that Wise advocated the settlement of residents of the Northwest area of Britain to fill in the vacant frontier land, not those from the Puritan Southeast. He considered them of "equal religion with us; but [having] a Superior Ingenuity and Skill in Manufactures." p. 26.
The only published reaction that is extant is an anonymous advertisement in the *Boston News Letter* suggesting Wise had another important reason for writing *A Word of Comfort*: self-interest. Referring to *Amicus Patriae* as "'Worldly Wise Man' ... [who] has spoke two Words for himself, and not one for his Country, as Actions will better shew a Mans designs then his Words", the author wondered why *Amicus Patriae* had not told his readers that from "Twenty Years long experience he has not been able to pay Interest for Money borrowed off Private People, and of Twelve Hundred and Fifty Pounds (of his Miracle working Paper Money) borrowed of the Government by himself and two Sons he has yet paid but 250 l. of it in again ... ."\(^{45}\) That the old controversialist chose to "Answer a fool according to his Folly, least he be Wise in his own conceit,"\(^{46}\) suggests not only the parson’s sense of humor, but perhaps the sting he felt at the attack. His answer was a tongue-in-cheek chastisement of a "cannoneer" who fired off a countering broadside with only "a few Cumels of Old spent Powder, at such a Brazen and Daring Attempt as he [Wise] has made in passing our Castle, and entering our Country; you deserve by the *Law of Arms*, if not to be Pistoled and Tumbled cross the Britch of your Cannon, yet to ride the Wooden-Horse, for your Cowardize."\(^{47}\) As a kind of postscript, Wise challenged his readers that "if any Gentlemen think it agreeable with the Interest of this Province, to Write in Opposition to *Amicus Patriae*, that they will do it Solidly and not Pevishly; and he engages his Thanks to any Man that will fairly subvert

\(^{45}\) *Amicus Patriae*, "N. E. Castle-William, February, 1720, 21", *Friendly Check*, 7. From the pun on "Wise", it is evident the author not only knew his Bunyan, but his *Amicus Patriae*, too.

\(^{46}\) *Amicus Patriae*, *Friendly Check*, 4.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., 2.
That there was a sting associated with the advertisement is suggested by “A Letter from Amicus Patriae, to his Son,” which Wise also included in his pamphlet. In stark contrast to the mocking tone of his Friendly Check or the panache of his challenge to the Boston “Gentlemen!" to answer his earlier pamphlet, this letter sought to put right any impressions about his financial affairs impugned by the anonymous writer. Wise wrote to his son that, less than three years before, he had pledged his estate to the public bank, worth £2,500, for £1,000 in bills of credit both as a show of public confidence and as an opportunity to settle some previous obligations and furnish the family business managed by his brother. In that short time, he had repaid £200 plus interest and was about to pay another £100. He was full of “Assurance that in the Remaining Six Years, by Divine Aid, and by a Frugal and Prudent Management we are quite out of Danger, as to Crows and Vultures.” His conclusion suggests the sting: “Therefore what I have Wrote on the Bank of Credit, was purely in Love to my Country, that all Men in their Affairs, may be as Prosperous as I have been. At Least that our Country may Universally Flourish in their Outward Affairs.”

Thus far, we have examined the career of John Wise and have observed the many sources of his influence in Essex County and beyond. While there is little evidence of his performance as a gospel minister, his long tenure and the many tokens of respect for his learning and piety suggest that he mirrored, if not modeled, the archetypal frontier

48 P. 4.

49 "A Letter from Amicus Patriae, to his Son," in Friendly Check, 5.

50 Ibid., 6. Wise was probably writing to his son, Jeremiah, pastor at Berwick, Maine. The other son, the manager of the family business, was probably Henry, who was a merchant at Ipswich.
clergyman of his time. When he spoke, people listened and acted on his words, including many of his clerical associates. He was known as a man of principle who would take on either civil or ecclesiastical authority with tenacity and courage that commanded respect even without agreement. At the heart of this principle was a heart-felt belief in the church as the foundation of any prosperous commonwealth, a democracy which extended outward into civil affairs, even against tyranny. He was equally at home in the cornfield or battlefield as he was in the pulpit or witness stand. He was very much a transitional figure: he was admired as much for his physical size and strength as he was for his learning. He saw no incongruity between preaching about the efficacy of spiritual treasure on the Sabbath and seeking the efficacy of worldly treasure—real and personal estate—on the other six days. He was a leader of his people not just by virtue of his knowledge and position, but because he used them to serve and support the best interests of those people. And why not? He shared their humble heritage. When Wise argued in favor of paper currency, he understood the dreaded effect of a return to hard specie upon their economic dreams because he would share their fate; when he argued in favor of congregational autonomy, he understood how much his people disliked the outside interference of squires and the priestly hierarchy in the Old Country; and when he protested witchcraft persecutions, he understood the length to which village promoters of petty quarrels and slights would go to avenge their defeats through the demise of others.

Could the influence of a 45-year pastorate disappear in just the 15 years between his death and the beginning of the Great Awakening? If anything, Wise the Myth supplanted Wise the Man during that time, apotheosizing him into a prototype of the American frontier hero later characterized by Daniel Boone, Andrew Jackson, or David Crockett.
Certainly, those three or four generations of children who were catechized, instructed, and corrected by this impressive figure, and who heard stories of earlier days when their hero performed so many “larger-than-life” deeds, could not have escaped his lingering influence. Wise greatly influenced even those who long outlived him in their view of the world, both the sacred and the secular, by preconditioning them to react to spiritual stimuli in particular ways. While perhaps in normal circumstances the influence remained subcutaneous in those weathered and work-hardened spiritual and emotional skins of farmers and fishermen, the heady days of the Great Awakening provided the right circumstances to bring those responses to the surface, in some cases in an explosive way. It would therefore be instructive to move 15 years into the future to observe how in Wise’s own parish during the Great Awakening his people applied his views about Congregational polity to justify the separation of a significant number of members from the Chebacco parish church.

Theophilus Pickering succeeded Wise as pastor of the Chebacco Parish on 13 October 1725. He was born in Salem in 1700 and graduated from Harvard College in 1719. He taught school in Bridgewater for three years and, after qualifying for the master of arts degree in 1721, preached in Bridgewater for several months. He was sent by the province to Tiverton, Rhode Island, to preach to unappreciative Baptists and Friends, remaining there for a year. Perhaps tiring of that effort, he sought the peace and success of a permanent settlement in Charlestown in the fall of 1723, but lost the call to Thomas Prentice. While not famous as a preacher or scholar, the lack of any notoriety suggests Pickering successfully if not notably pursued the cure of souls in Chebacco. He was

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51 SHG 6:331-5.
noted for his craftsman’s skills in wood and metal, and farmed his land. He may have completed his ministerial career in relative obscurity if an intramural squabble between his Old Light and New Light parishioners had not spilled out into the public print. Four pamphlets, two by each side, as well as some other public comments of Pickering are important to explaining the rather vitriolic separation of the church during the Great Awakening. They also help to demonstrate the lasting effect of John Wise’s influence on his people.

As an ardent Old Light, Pickering left no doubt he had little time for the wild excesses or enthusiastic reactions to firebrand itinerants that disturbed the serious business of ministry. Perhaps, as Christopher M. Jedrey has impishly suggested, this was because he had had his fill of all that when he had tried without success to minister to those Tiverton folks.\(^{52}\) He had the misfortune of having New Light rivals in the persons of the Reverends Rogers in the immediate area—John, Sr., and Nathaniel at neighboring First Church Ipswich; John, Jr., at Second Kittery (Eliot); and the soon-to-be ordained Daniel, minister-at-large—whose likewise ardent support for the Great Awakening put his own views into sharp relief. By 1742, it had not taken long for these differences to become apparent, particularly since the Rogers began to prepare greener pastures into which to lure Pickering’s sheep. With Second Church members attending the excitement at First Church, it was only natural they would want similar excitement at their own church. Their own pastor refused to admit Daniel to his pulpit, so all three Rogers left off preparing the pasture and began, at least in Pickering’s perception, to rustle his flock from his own pasture. At first, Pickering seemed content to settle differences through

\(^{52}\) Jedrey, *World of John Cleaveland*, 47.
private discussion or letters. It was not until the fall of 1742 that he had had enough of such public references as “Blind Minister” that he thought it necessary to bring correspondence with the Rogers to public view in a small pamphlet.\(^{53}\)

In the first letter reprinted in the pamphlet, dated 3 February 1742, Pickering asked Nathaniel and Daniel to clarify the distinction between God’s ordinary work of salvation as preached since the founding and “This Work” about which they continued to preach, and to provide Scriptural evidence supporting the distinction. He also added their desire for him to join in “This Work” had reached his ears by the “importunate Sollicitations” of some of his parishioners. The Rogers answered that there was no difference in the way God effected salvation then and now, but what was different was the way the Holy Spirit “descended upon many Places in this Land as elsewhere, and is effecting this Work of Conviction and Conversion more powerfully sensibly and extensively for the Time than has been known, it may be, since the primitive Ages of Christianity.”\(^{54}\) Pickering’s reply asked that, if there was no distinction, why did they confuse his people by making it appear distinct? By calling “This Work” “extraordinary”, twice in his own hearing, they seemed to suggest there are two distinct works of God—conviction and conversion, and creation and Providence. He also wrote that, as to the Holy Spirit visiting many places, they really only meant in the many “Night Meetings” they held in private houses. He reminded them of two meetings on successive evenings he attended with them the previous January and how on both occasions they attempted to stir up a response by appealing for “the Descent of the Holy Ghost”, each time without success. “And now, is

it not evident that you lay such a Stress upon the *outward Appearance*, as if you hardly believ'd that the Lord *Jesus* could be present in your Assemblies *by his Spirit*, to perform a gracious Work on the Hearts of the People, *without some Effects attendant as visible Signs or open Discoveries of his inward Operations*? His was a frequently asked question during the Great Awakening.

Pickering was still waiting for a reply to his question when he wrote to Nathaniel in July. The spirit of the letter was much changed from earlier ones. Before, he had sounded much like a "seeker after truth," patiently awaiting an explanation that would clear the air of misunderstanding. This letter was as much an expression of frustration from a man who had borne much public humiliation and rejection as it was a recapitulation of interactions between the Rogers and himself during the previous several months. He recounted their unsatisfactory reply to his first letter, and their preaching in his meeting house without his consent and one of them, "publicly in the Hearing of my People" calling himself "their Blind Minister." After Pickering had forbidden them in May to preach to his people, Nathaniel Rogers had preached elsewhere in the parish, as if not preaching within the meeting house would satisfy his demand; and now he had heard Daniel was returning from a preaching tour to speak once again. But, worst of all, was the "Liberty taken to vent your Zeal in forward Expressions tending to render me suspected and bring my Ministry into Contempt, after I had earnestly sought to you ... ." He asked later,

And why have you us'd me *Thus*?—Is it because you think you have the *Gift of discerning the Spirits*? ... Or is because I don't discover a

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54 N. Rogers and D. Rogers to Pickering, Ibid., dated 5 Feb. 1742, 3.

55 Pickering to N. Rogers and D. Rogers, ibid., dated 15 Feb. 1742, 6-7.
Disposition to believe that you preach by *Immediate Inspiration*? ... Or is it because I can’t see such Lack of *faithful and wise Stewards* in the Ministry, or of *hopeful Candidates* for the sacred Trust, as to be convinc’d of the Necessity of copying after your Example in some Things that tend to encourage Persons of all Sorts setting up for Exhorters in open religious Assemblies, and to introduce an Ignorant Ministry into the Churches of Christ?

He asked for an answer to his original question one more time—this time in as plain and exacting language as he could. “This is my *Third Letter*—. I beg a *plain and particular Answer in writing*; and expect that you send it *without Delay*, unless you let me know that you desire me to wait for *Mr. Daniel’s Return from the Eastward*.”

After waiting without reply for over a month, Pickering wrote one last time, obviously hurt because he had heard nothing directly but had heard it “talkt in Town, as if *my Letters were weak—a quibble about Words—and not worth an Answer*.” He had had enough: “And therefore I send to inform You that I have tho’ts of publishing what we have written, and trust you’ll not be offended.” This was necessary to vindicate himself, to describe his course of action for those wanting to know the truth as he saw it, and to prevent the evils he was sure would result from the excesses of the times. It was time to stop the endless debate and settle the issue. The publication of these letters and the closing of his pulpit to all outsiders signaled the end of his willingness even to consider the views of New Lights. For several months he adamantly refused to share his pulpit, although he finally allowed “prudent” ministers to return in January 1743. The more active members of the congregation appeared willing to agree to disagree over the matter and an uneasy peace reigned for over a year. Then, on a Sunday in March 1744,

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56 Pickering to N. Rogers, ibid., dated 16 July 1742, 7-16.

57 Pickering to N. Rogers, ibid., dated 18 Aug. 1742, 16-8.
Pickering—whether wittingly or unwittingly is not apparent—reopened the disagreement with what appeared to be a slight against New Light principles. What followed over the next four years can only be described as ugly—and so public that people were treated to a blow-by-blow description in the public press.

Pickering drew first blood with *A Bad Omen To the Churches of New-England*, a compilation of letters and explanatory notes dealing with his attempt to prevent the ordination of the Reverend John Cleaveland, a radical New Light who graduated from Yale in 1745, as pastor of the brethren separated from the second church. Hearing that the "self-styled" fourth church intended to ordain Cleaveland on 11 February 1747, Pickering went to a local inn to persuade Nathaniel Rogers not to ordain him. Rogers refused to see him, so he read a declaration to those who would listen and left a copy for Rogers to read. His argument was essentially that these were people who had been properly denied the right to separate according to the *Platform* and had instead been suspended and admonished for their unrighteous conduct; they had no right to secede or ordain. He intended for his declaration to dissuade other local churches, particularly the first church, from participating in the illegal activity because "such a Procedure is encouraging of unwarrantable Separations, a disparaging of ecclesiastical Councils, a Breach upon the Fellowship of the Churches and destructive of their Peace and Order, and highly injurious to the Second Church in Ipswich." While Cleaveland was not ordained that day, Pickering spent the intervening two weeks trying to obtain copies of church records and correspondence, first by written request to Rogers, then by venturing

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58 Theophilus Pickering, *A Bad Omen To the Churches of New-England: In the Instance of Mr. John Cleaveland's Ordination so termed, over a Separation in Chebacco-Parish in Ipswich ...* (Boston, 1747).

59 Ibid., 3. This is nothing more than a recapitulation of activities discouraged by the *Platform*.
to the meeting house to ask personally, forcibly, for the documents. Pickering and members loyal to him also worked feverishly until the very morning of the ordination, 25 February 1747, to prevent this “very unchristian-like and evil” procedure, but to no avail. Meeting together on 4 March, they voted several resolutions, among which were, first, that the ordination was contrary to the “known Order of our Churches” and they looked upon the “said Ordination to be null and void notwithstanding the Shew of Solemnity”; second, they called upon the two sponsoring churches, First Ipswich and Second Kittery, to “acknowledge the Invalidity of said Ordination, and publickly renounce the Same”; and, third, to ask Cleaveland not to perform any ministerial functions until all their concerns were addressed.60 The churches continued to spar throughout March and into April with a series of letters, which Pickering dutifully published as A Supplement To a Piece lately printed, intitled A Bad Omen to the Churches.61 The Supplement disclosed a change in strategy, from essentially a pastor-to-pastor, to a church-to-church inquiry about the validity of the ordination. The Second Church as a body demanded an explanation and reversal, while the First Church, Ipswich, and Second Church, Kittery, continued to beg the question. Pickering’s church, however, made its position clear: “And therefore (dear Brethren!) we are oblig’d to declare our selves aggrieved that your Pastor had a Hand in said Ordination: and presuming that you sent him, we are offended with you on that Account, and look upon your Conduct as a Breach of Fellowship.”62 They justified their action by the Platform and the Acts of Communion of Churches from

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60 Pp. 11-2.

61 Pickering, A Supplement To a Piece lately printed, intitled A Bad Omen to the Churches ... (Boston, 1747).

62 Ibid., 1.
the Synod of 1662. Theirs was a legal position.

The position of the Fourth Church, detailed in *A Plain Narrative Of the Proceedings which caused The Separation Of a Number of aggrieved Brethren From the Second Church in Ipswich*, was likewise defended on legal grounds, but this defense was a strange mixture of the *Platform* and *A Vindication of the Government of New-England Churches*. The *Plain Narrative* averred that all covenants presuppose two parties, each of which agrees to provide something for the other party. This was in complete agreement with the *Platform*, which set forth in Chapter 4 that Christians must have a “Visible-Political-Union amongst themselves” to consider themselves as members of a particular church. This could only be distinguished by its form which, in the case of Congregational churches, is the “*Visible Covenant, Agreement, or consent wherby they give up themselves unto the Lord, to the observing of the ordinances of Christ together in the same society, which is usually called the Church-Covenant .... This Voluntary Agreement, Consent or Covenant .... puts us in mind of our mutuall duty ....*”

This mutual duty is outlined in Chapters 5 through 10 of the *Platform*. When Christians covenant together as a church, Jesus Christ imbues them with power to fulfill their purpose in His body. The power of office is given to the eldership so that these leaders may faithfully fulfill their responsibilities to minister, in the case of pastors and teachers, and rule, in the case of ruling elders, among the people. The power of privilege is given to the members whereby they choose their own officers or remove them should

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63 John Cleaveland, *A Plain Narrative Of the Proceedings which caused The Separation Of a Number of aggrieved Brethren From the Second Church in Ipswich: or A Relation of the Cause which produced the Effects that are exhibited in the Reverend Mr. Pickering's late Print, Intitled, A bad Omen to the Churches* (Boston, 1747). While the author is unidentified, historical consensus indicates Cleaveland wrote this work.
the "Elder offend incorrigibly," and admit or remove other members. In the view of the writers of the *Platform*, "This powr of Government in the Elders, doth not any wise prejudice the powr of priviledg in the brotherhood; as neither the powr of priviledg in the brethren, doth prejudice the power of government in the Elders; but they may sweetly agree together."\(^5\)

At this point, the argument of the "aggrieved brethren" changed from a strict interpretation of the *Platform* to one that was informed by Wise's own political philosophy expounded in *A Vindication of the Government of New-England Churches*. They stated that when church officers deny their ministrations to members in good standing, those members are no longer bound to that church because the officers had already broken the covenant binding officers and brethren together. The problem for the aggrieved brethren was that the writers of the *Platform* conceived of no such circumstance that could justify this position when defining procedures in Chapter 13 by which church members might leave their church. In fact, they were not to "*remove or depart* from the Church, & so one from another as they please, nor without just & weighty cause but ought to live & dwell together .... Such *departure* tends to the dissolution & ruine of the body ...."\(^6\) According to the *Platform*, there were only three reasons why members might leave their church: if remaining there would lead them to commit sin, if there was personal persecution against them, or when they could find absolutely no means of "competent subsistence", and then only if there was a church

\(^5\) *Platform*, 5.

\(^6\) Ibid., 14.
nearby that could meet their spiritual needs. A decision to remove oneself was a serious
matter indeed.

To separate from a Church, euther out of contempt of their holy
fellowship, or out of covetousness, or for greater enlargements with just
greife to the church; or out of schisme, or want of love; & out of a spirit of
contention in respect of some unkindness, or some evill only conceived, or
indeed, in the Church which might & should be tolerated & healed with a
spirit of meekness, & of which evill the church is not yet convinced,
(though perhaps himselfe bee) nor admonished: for these or the like
reasons to withdraw from publick communion, in words, or seales, or
censures, is unlawfull & sinfull.67

This is why it was essential that the “aggrieved brethren” should establish their right to
leave the fellowship in an orderly way.

In their case, the “aggrieved brethren” believed Pickering, “tho’ the Art and
Subtily of the Pastor being himself involved; or the implicit Obedience of a major Part of
his Church, to his Dictates and Designs”, had caused their

Relief not to be obtained in the Way of Order [as set forth in Chapter 15].
Then, we say in such a Case, it is lawful, at least excusable ; to be sure,
not answerable to the first Agressor, for such a disappointed and injured
Member, to seek Relief in a Way extra-judicial, since the main Thing in
Religion, viz. The Edification of the Person can’t be obtained otherwise.68

The rationale for this position cannot be found in the Platform; it is, however, expounded
in the Vindication.

How can it consist with the Honourable Terms man holds upon here on
Earth; that the best sort of Men ... when they enter into Charter-party to
manage a Trade for Heaven, must ipso facto be clapt under a Government,
that is Arbitrary and Dispotick ; yea that carries the plain symptoms of a
Tryanny in it, when the Light of Nature knows of a better Species, and
frequently has made use of it? It wants no farther Demonstration, ... that

67 Pp. 19-20. The “aggrieved brethren” did not cite the “personal persecution” provision as a reason for
separating from the Chebacco Parish. Perhaps this was because the illustration for this passage in the
Platform was Paul’s decision to leave the church in Damascus, and suggests a major disagreement among
leaders rather than a church singling out specific members for unjustified discipline.

68 Cleaveland, Plain Narrative, 3-4.
Nature is so much Mistress of her self, that man in a Natural State of Being, is under God the first Subject of all Power, and therefore can make his own Choice, and by deliberate Compacts settles his own Conditions for the Government of himself in a Civil State of Being: And when a Government so Settled shall throw its self from its Foundations, or the Subjects of Sovereign Power shall subvert or confound the Constitution, they then degrade themselves; and so all Power returns again to the People, who are the first Owners. ... If the Government of the Churches be settled by God, either in the hands of a Church Monarch, or Aristocracy, and the People are no ways the Subject of Church-Power: Nay, if they are not under Christ, the fountain of Power; then the Reformation so called, is but a meer Cheat, a Schism, and notorious Rebellion ... 69

There is an echo in this passage of John Locke's argument that the dissolution of government returned the people, "who are the first Owners", to a state of nature with the need to reestablish government in a manner of their own choosing, but there is no evidence in Wise's writings that indicates he ever read Locke's political treatises. Indeed, it was Puffendorf that informed his thinking. Nevertheless, it is apparent that when the "aggrieved brethren" determined that Pickering had violated his covenant relationship with a large part of the membership, he had subverted the church covenant and the people had to assume their right to establish another covenant that would protect their rights.

There is little wonder why Pickering and the majority party denied this reasoning.

The Platform declared

This Government of the church ... [to be] a mixt Government ... In respect of Christ, the head & King of the church, & the Soveraigne power residing in him, & exercised by him, it is a Monarchy: In respect of the body, or Brotherhood of the church, & powr from Christ granted unto them, it resembles a Democracy. In respect of the Presbyetry & powr committed to them, it is an Aristocracy. 70


70 Platform, 13.
They believed that the *Platform* declared that while it was true that members were empowered to elect their elders, "Yet when such a people do chuse any to be over them in the Lord, then do they become subject, & most willingly submit to their ministry in the Lord, whom they have so chosen." Having submitted themselves, however, the members gave up a considerable amount of their power for independent action. When the elders called them, they declared, the people, without just cause, may not refuse to come: nor when they are come, depart before they are dismissed: nor speak in the church, before they have leave from the elders: nor continue so doing, when they require silence, nor may they oppose nor contradict the judgment or *sentence* of the Elders, without sufficient & weighty cause, because such practices are manifestly contrary unto order, & government, & in-lents of disturbance, & tend to confusion.

This conception of the relationship between church members and their elders disagreed fundamentally with that expressed in *A Vindication* and by the "aggrieved brethren" in their pamphlets. The basis for this disagreement must be seen in the different views about the original source of church government. The authors of the *Platform*, in Chapter 1, Sections 1 and 2, declared that "Ecclesiasticall Polity or Church Government, or discipline is nothing els, but that Forme & order that is to be observed in the Church of Christ upon earth, ... [and the] parts of Government are prescribed in the word, because the Lord Iesus Christ the King and Law-giver of his Church, is no less faithfull in the house of God then was Moses ... ." That is, church government had divine origins. Wise, however, averred that all forms of human government, sacred or

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71 Ibid., 10-1.
72 P. 14.
73 P. 1.
secular, were of human origin, determined by application of reason to the state of nature.

I shall consider Man in a state of Natural Being, as a Free-Born Subject under the Crown of Heaven, and owing Homage to none but God himself. It is certain Civil Government in General, is a very Admirable Result of Providence, and an Incomparable Benefit of Man-kind, yet must needs be acknowledged to be the Effect of Humane Free-Compacts and not of Divine Institution. ... Nothing can be Gods Ordinance, but what he has particularly Declared to be such; there is no particular Form of Civil Government described in Gods Word, neither does Nature prompt it.\textsuperscript{74}

For Wise, there was "no greater Example of natural Wisdom in any settlement on Earth; for the present and future security of Humane Beings in all that is most Valuable and Grand" than that found in the Platform. But he also believed that "Wise and Provident Nature by the Dictates of Right Reason excited by the moving Suggestions of Humanity; and awed with the just demands of Natural Libertie, Equity, Equality, and Principles of Self-Preservation, Originally drew up the Scheme, and then obtained the Royal Approbation" of God.\textsuperscript{75} It was his belief in the human origins of church government that made it possible for him to espouse the lawfulness of amending its form, even dissolving it, whenever tyranny threatened the rights of the people.

When Pickering dealt with the "aggrieved brethren" in what they thought was a cavalier fashion, they had firmly in mind Wise’s strictures against monarchical or aristocratic forms of church government that viewed the people as their subjects rather than viewing themselves as representatives of the people’s will. Wise spent considerable time exploring the forms of government that churches had assumed since the early church. The example of the Pope proved the dangers inherent in the monarchical form, where "his Holiness, either by reasonable Pleas, or powerful Cheats, has assumed an

\textsuperscript{74} Wise, \textit{Vindication}, 33.  
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 32.
absolute and universal Sovereignty ... ”76 In this case, one man could enslave his people
to his wishes by virtue of holding the keys to heaven and hell in his hands. Wise feared
an aristocratic form of polity, too, which is a

dangerous Constitution in the Church of Christ, as it possesses the
Presbytery of all Church Power: What has been observed sufficiently
Evinces it. And not only so but from the Nature of the Constitution, for it
has no more Barrier to it, against the Ambition, Insults, and Arbitrary
measures of Men, then an absolute Monarchy.77

The Plain Narrative of the “aggrieved brethren” recounted that in the year 1741, “it
pleased God out of his infinitely rich free and sovereign Grace to bring upon the Minds of
many in this Parish, a deep Concern about their future Estate, and what they should do to
be saved ... .”78 They naturally applied to their pastor for his guidance, but in both
attitude and words he showed a “general Slight & Contempt ... which we apprehended
was in a Manner unbecoming a Minister to treat any Thing that had but the Appearance
of Religion; to be sure in a Manner extremally offensive and grievous to tender Minds.
This Carriage, together with his old Way of Preaching ... caus’d great Uneasiness.”79

Putting Pickering’s preaching style aside, it was his imperious way of dealing with his
people that reminded them of the dangers Wise had expressed many years before.

There was no better form of church government for Wise than a democracy. “The
End of all good Government,” he wrote, “is to Cultivate Humanity, and Promote the
happiness of all, and the good of every Man in all his Rights, his Life, Liberty, Estate,
Honour, &c. Without injury or abuse done to any.” In a church where the people have

76 P. 54.
77 P. 60.
78 Cleaveland, Plain Narrative, 4.
79 Ibid., 5.
"elected certain capable Persons to Minister in their affairs, and the said Ministers remain accountable to the Assembly; these Officers must needs be under the influence of many wise cautions from their own thoughts ... in their whole Administration ... ." When the "aggrieved brethren", after trying to reason with Pickering for several years, determined that he would never consider himself accountable to their direction, they exercised their right to remove themselves from their present political union in favor of one that would answer to their needs. The "aggrieved brethren" were sure that when they presented to the public in their pamphlet all that had gone on before the separation and ordination, which Pickering had not described in his own, their actions would be excusable, if not entirely acceptable.

Some approached Pickering to discuss the matter privately, but he would only answer in writing and then without satisfaction. By the spring of 1744, a large portion of the congregation decided that action more formal than in the past must force the issue with their pastor after an altercation over the sermon he preached on 11 March. Some of a New Light leaning in his flock sought clarification from Pickering about a statement made in his sermon: "That none Knew the Actings of Faith, but God only", since this might have meant that Christians could not discern the movement of the Holy Spirit. When Pickering refused to answer or explain, he also said, undoubtedly defensively, that "he was not afraid of disobliging a Friend, or of losing a Parish ... ." When he would not answer at the meeting house, they went to gain satisfaction from him at his home the following day. When he still refused, they presented him a list of 14 Articles of Grievance, signed by 26 of 53 members, respecting his preaching and practice. His

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80 Pp. 5-6.
written answer to this list was also defensive:

Wherefore knowing your Assertion aforesaid to be an absolute and pernicious Falsehood, contrary to the Peace of our Sovereign Lord the King, and tending to my great Damage and Defamation: As also considering the State of the Church and Parish, and the Circumstances of the Times: These are to inform you, that I am disposed to take such Measures as may oblige you to answer for your Offence at the next Court of General Sessions of the Peace to be holden in and for the County of Essex, unless you make a satisfactory Acknowledgement, with Promise of behaving well for the future; and also give me sufficient Security to respond to all Damages, which in Consequence of your Conduct may in any wise accrue to me. 81

Put simply, Pickering had thrown down the gauntlet against a substantial portion of his congregation, threatening legal action if they did not capitulate.

The remainder of the pamphlet detailed what amounted to a four-year chess game, in which the “aggrieved brethren” attempted to show that they tried every move provided by the Platform to solve their intramural quarrels and that Pickering was satisfied simply to check them without allowing any solution. There really was no compromise position: Pickering was unalterably opposed to the excesses of the Great Awakening and would not even palliate their concerns; the “aggrieved brethren” were determined to enjoy the benefits of their religious experience despite their pastor’s interference. Pickering would not resign his pulpit or let them leave honorably; they offered him a generous settlement to leave and were willing to separate if necessary. The last effort of the “aggrieved brethren” to gain a proper hearing for their complaints, which Pickering had at first steadfastly worked to prevent, but then later agreed to, was to call a council to arbitrate. When they perceived, however, when one was called, that they had not helped to call this council, but were merely being summoned to it, they decided they would not

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81 P. 6.
abide by its findings. Their patience gone, they resolved to separate to form their own church, believing they had done everything and more required of them by the Platform to resolve the controversy.

Pickering and the remaining members of the Second Church determined very quickly to answer the charges in A Plain Narrative, made clear by the pastor’s letter to the “separated Brethren” dated within only days of its publication. While Pickering may have begun The pretended Plain Narrative convicted of Fraud and Partiality he certainly did not finish it. Within two weeks of writing this letter, he died from a fever at age 47. The church continued to work on its answer for the remainder of the year. It was not until 31 December 1747, that the church approved it for publication, which occurred soon afterwards. The pretended Plain Narrative was an exhaustive, point-for-point answer that attempted to show incomplete and inaccurate testimony of the circumstances, particularly with regard to the council of churches called according to the Platform’s second way of communion to advise the Second Church. Its most powerful allegation was that the “separated brethren” had never really wanted to have a council for fear they could not prove their grievances against their pastor. In fact, they strove only so long as Pickering refused one, but when he agreed to call a council they found reason to sidestep the council’s decision. The pamphlet was above all a defense of their deceased pastor, whom they eulogized as follows:

We of Chebacco have ... had among us for many Years a Man of God, a learned, orthodox, prudent, faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, tho’ not without Failings, even as others; one, whom we heard teaching and

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82 Pickering et al., The pretended Plain Narrative convicted of Fraud and Partiality or, A Letter From the Second Church in Ipswich, to their separated Brethren, in Defence of their deceased Pastor and Themselves, against The injurious Charges of the said separated Brethren, in a late Print of Theirs (Boston, 1748).
preaching the great Truths of the Gospel, with Pleasure, and we hope, with Profit; and whose Memory will, we trust, be ever dear to us, notwithstanding the Reproaches that have been plentifully cast upon him.\textsuperscript{83}

Of particular importance, the Second Church appended "The Result of an Ecclesiastical Council &c.", held in May and June 1746, to The pretended Plain Narrative to strengthen their argument that, while the council did criticize Pickering in some minor ways, the overall result was that

\begin{quote}
We can by no Means approve of said aggrieved Members Withdrawment from the Communion of the Church ... and from the publick Ministration of the Word by the Pastor: Yea, we look upon this their Conduct as very unjustifiable, and reproachful to Religion, and more especially since they have also, contrary to the known Order of these Churches, set up a separate Assembly for solemn Worship ... \textsuperscript{84}
\end{quote}

The Second Church also had the integrity to include the dissent of six men, led by Nathaniel Rogers, who believed that,

as to the Letters of Remonstrance, offered by the Aggrieved to the Pastor, that tho’ as to some Things therein we have not sufficient Light to say, the Pastor gave Offence thereby, Yet that as to many main Articles of Charge exhibited, the Aggrieved had real Grounds of Grievance with their Pastor; and that it appears to us, these Grounds of Grievance do still remain. ... And upon the whole, we cannot concur with the Council, that the Withdraw of the aggriev’d is unjustifiable and reproachful to Religion; neither that they have exposed themselves to the Censure of the Church thereby ... \textsuperscript{85}

The final work in the pamphlet war was penned by a "Friend of Truth," the Reverend John Cleaveland of the Fourth Church.\textsuperscript{86} He addressed the issues in the same

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 27.

\textsuperscript{84} John White, "Result of an Ecclesiastical Council," Ibid., 36. White moderated the council of nine churches.

\textsuperscript{85} "Dissent" from "Result of an Ecclesiastical Council," Ibid., 37-8.

\textsuperscript{86} "A Friend of Truth" [John Cleaveland], The Chebacco Narrative Rescu’d from the Charge of Falshood and Partiality. In A Reply to the Answer Printed by Order of the Second Church in Ipswich and Falshood and Partiality fix’d on said Answer (Boston, 1748).

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tit-for-tat method of the previous publication, but his answer is important because it concentrates most effectively on the “bottom-line” issue of the controversy—the underlying reasons for the separation and whether the separation truly constituted an unwarranted breaking of the traditional order of fellowship. It is an argument based on social compact theory and the right to freedom of association. In *The Chebacco Narrative Rescu'd from the Charge of Falshood and Partiality*, he emphasized the importance of the church covenant as a legal contract to which members willingly submitted and agreed themselves. Certainly, all called upon God to recognize and bless the union, but the contractual arrangement brought with it binding responsibilities to which both sides must adhere. The “aggrieved brethren” did not take lightly their responsibility to the contract or release themselves from it for trivial reasons. They had attempted for four years to use every provision of the *Platform* to air their grievances and gain satisfaction. The refusal of the pastor or the congregation to hear their grievances and act upon them meant they had broken the contract, making it null and void, which had therefore freed the aggrieved brethren from any responsibilities under the contract: “so far from a Breach of the Constitution and Order of these Churches, that it is rather a Resumption and Reavowment of it.”

He could not conceive of the removal of the “aggrieved brethren” as an unlawful separation. They had not separated from Christian orthodoxy, but were adhering closely to it. They had not separated from the established Rule of Order, Worship, and Discipline of the *Platform*, but were even more exacting in their adherence. “In short, they would find their Doctrines sound and orthodox; their Discipline strict, yet tender and moderate; their Worship serious and devout, and their

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87 Ibid., 16.
Lives sober, humble and discreet ... .\footnote{88}

Anne S. Brown’s community study of Chebacco Parish during this controversy argues quite convincingly that historians have mistakenly identified the Great Awakening as a challenge to authority: rather than being a threat to the status quo, it actually restored traditional order to that of the period in which Wise served, which Cleaveland’s answer seems to support.\footnote{89} At issue were definitions of societal order and Christian community. Because Old Lights identified the church with the geographic community and its inhabitants, order meant recognition of the established clergy as authority figures and the willingness of laypeople to put themselves under the moral watch and guidance of the local church. The New Lights, however, identified the church as a community of believers who were mutually pledged to work together to bring order to the community by eliminating worldly contamination. Brown posits that, for Old Lights, one of their problems with this definition of order was that it required active lay participation, which necessarily meant a diminution of clerical prestige and authority and a democratization of the church. Chebacco Parish suffered schism during the Great Awakening, yet each side used the same argument to exonerate itself: they themselves had attempted to restore peace and unity within the congregation, but the others had broken the covenant. New Lights claimed Old Light members stood passively by while the pastor and a select group

\footnote{88} Ibid. In reality, while their Calvinist doctrine remained squarely within the orthodox camp, the additions to “their Discipline” were based on interpretations that went far beyond the Cambridge Platform, but rather closely to Wise’s glosses.

\footnote{89} Brown, “Visions of Community in Eighteenth-Century Essex County.” Brown is correct when she states that the battle against Pickering was a restoration of the traditional order found during Wise’s pastorate, but the event also looked forward to the American Revolution. By tying the covenant theology of the Platform to Wise’s views of social compact theory, the “aggrieved brethren” anticipated the later political argument that declared that people have the natural right to withdraw from their civil contract when their rulers dissolved the covenant by first neglecting their responsibilities toward the people.
of lay leaders made all decisions; Old Lights claimed New Lights were ungovernable and rowdy. Brown identifies the real difference as one based on the meaning of community. While the victors always get to write the history of the battle and the Old Light view has prevailed among many historians, it was truly the New Light separatists who were the champions of communalism and not individualism. Her analysis of the role of social change in promoting the Great Awakening is well argued; but there is another, yet related, interpretation suggested by the four diatribes published over the Chebacco split that will demonstrate that even 20 years later John Wise’s influence—by his ideas and his personality—on his people also had a profound impact on the course of the Great Awakening in Ipswich.

The form of church polity for which the “aggrieved brethren” declared when establishing the Fourth Church was based on that detailed in the *Platform*, but the democratic spirit that led to separatism was that preconditioned by the writing and preaching of John Wise. The Articles of Faith and Church Government the Fourth Church drew up guaranteed members the right to remove pastors without any need to consult outside councils of ministers, to adjourn meetings by vote, and the right to speak on any issue without interruption or censure, and others—everything, in fact, Pickering denied to them during their four-year attempt to be heard on matters important to them. Ironically, contrary to Pickering’s claims that the “separatists” wanted to throw off the discipline of the *Platform*, their adherence to the *Platform* was indeed stricter than Orthodoxy had required for many years. Under Cleaveland’s shepherding, explains Jedrey, a combination of reformed orthodoxy, lay participation, and evangelical-style preaching became not only the *modus operandi* in Chebacco, but, later, also came to
dominate New England rural Congregationalism for years to come. It is important to remember that the demands expressed in the Fourth Church’s covenant did not simply arise out of the controversy with Pickering itself, but were the practical expressions of the ideas Wise expounded in the Churches Quarrel Espoused and A Vindication of the Government of New-England Churches. Without doubt, some of them had heard Wise speak about these ideas from the pulpit, at church meetings, and in informal conversations. The folks had learned their lessons well; a quarter-century later they were still using his words to argue a social compact theory of government.90

The Reverend John White91 of Gloucester, the eulogist mentioned earlier, so closely modeled his own professional and personal lives after his beloved father-in-law that it is possible to understand Wise’s impact on his clerical brothers and their laypeople in northern New England by observing his reaction to the Great Awakening. White was born in 1678 to Joseph and Hannah White of Brookline and graduated from Harvard in 1698, a class ahead of the Reverend Jeremiah Wise of Berwick, Maine, John’s son. His first ministerial position was that of chaplain to the military force at Fort Saco, from which he was called by the church of Gloucester on 11 September 1702 to minister to its 70 members and other local congregants. John Wise took part in White’s ordination on 21 April 1703 by offering him the right hand of fellowship. It is clear that he approved of

90 Jedrey, World of John Cleaveland, 56. James F. Cooper, Jr., disagrees with Jedrey’s assessment that Chebacco’s brand of Congregationalism was just a purer brand of that detailed in the Platform. Instead, the Separates chose, ignored, or bent the rules to secure a pure membership based upon a conception of the conversion experience and revival preaching that provoked that experience. He concludes that Separates were hardly the proto-democrats they have been portrayed. Cooper, “Enthusiasts or Democrats? Separatism, Church Government, and the Great Awakening in Massachusetts,” NEQ 65 (June 1992): 265-83. Several members of the Choate Family, in their twenties when Wise published his second defense of Congregational polity, played important roles as Separates. James Savage, A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England (Baltimore, 1965), 382-3.

91 Biographical sketches are found in SHG 4: 421-4; and John James Babson, History of the Town of Gloucester, Cape Ann, Including ... Rockport (Gloucester, Mass., 1860).
his young colleague for more than just professional reasons; on 9 June 1703, White offered the right hand of his daughter, Lucy, in marriage to his young colleague.92 Ties of marriage may have initially bound them together, but close harmony is matters of doctrine and polity certainly made them as one man in promoting Wise's vision of the Congregational way in northern New England.

Like his father-in-law, White championed the provisions established in the Platform. He signed the commendation in the Churches Quarrel Espoused and his support for Wise continued for years to come, as evidenced by his writing in 1734 that the “present weak and shattered State of Our Churches, on the account of their Order, Government, and Discipline” was a matter of lamentation for all New Englanders.93 He was convinced that much of the difficulty in the local churches was the result of their refusal to apply the system of checks and balances already established, as glossed by Wise. Ruling elders elected by church members would naturally foil attempts by arbitrary pastors to assume too much control over their congregations, and the application of the various ways of communion would ensure that church squabbles could be handled judiciously without public scandal. White also held that congregations were permitted to measure the effectiveness of the pastors in their administration of various responsibilities.94

In theology, White remained opposed to the watering down of Calvinistic doctrine

92 White did not have far to travel when he courted his future wife. Chebacco Parish, Ipswich, bordered White's Gloucester parish on the northwest side.

93 White, New-England's Lamentations ... (Boston, 1734), 30.

94 White, “Preface” to John Tufts, A humble Call to Archippus. or, The Pastor Exhorted, to take Heed that he fulfill His Ministry. A Sermon at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. Benjamin Bradstreet At Glocester. Sept. 18. 1728 (Boston, 1729), ii.
by encroaching Arminianism. In 1701 he argued for the master of arts that “the law of grace has surely never been universal,” an opposition that had not flagged in 1734 when he preached that another matter for lamentation was that “some of Our Young Men ... educated for ... the Ministry of the Gospel, are under Prejudices against, and fall off from, important Articles of the Faith of these Churches, and ... propagate and preach the Arminian Scheme.” With such close support for and identification with John Wise’s causes, might not White’s reaction to the Great Awakening in Gloucester likewise reveal something of the influence of Wise on the people of Cape Ann?

Christine Leigh Heyrman provides an excellent milieu for understanding how the combined influence of Wise and White preconditioned their flocks to react to the Great Awakening in the manner they did. In Commerce and Culture: The Maritime Communities of Colonial Massachusetts, 1690-1750, she challenges the communal breakdown model that maintains that the appearance of materialism, secularism, and a hunger for profits at seaports in New England resulted in the final destruction of communal values that stressed religious, political, and social consensus. She looks closely at Gloucester and Marblehead, towns to the north of Boston, and discovers that the “conversion to a trading economy did not precipitate a sweeping, uniform set of

95 Ibid., 16. On his own copy of this work, the Reverend Simon Bradstreet of Charlestown, often suspected of Arminian practices himself, considered White’s treatment a “mighty Silly work, especially that part against the Arminian Principles.” He concluded White was “to[o] weak [an] adversary” to the liberal doctrine. These observations are on the front cover of the copy owned by the American Antiquarian Society. Ironically, it was Simon Bradstreet the younger, who succeeded Edward Holyoke at Marblehead, who encouraged the Great Awakening at the Second Parish. SHG 8: 108-9.


97 There have been numerous community studies that have considered the relationship between the coming of trade and the breakdown of community institutions. Among them are Bushman, From Puritan to Yankee; Darrett B. Rutman, Winthrop’s Boston: Portrait of a Puritan Town, 1630 to 1649 (Chapel Hill,
changes in provincial seaports.” Instead, despite significant material changes, even by 1750 “the ethos prevailing in both towns, by that time important seaports, was remarkably similar to that in the surrounding agrarian villages of Essex County like Chebacco Parish.” While tensions naturally arose between people of different social classes, occupations, and ethnic origins, they never “threatened the stability of the social order or augured the onset of a fundamental change in politics.” Her findings, especially when considered with Brown’s study of Chebacco Parish, only reinforce the likelihood that Wise’s influence over his own people extended not only geographically throughout Cape Ann, but also over time. That is, because Wise’s pastoral care and commanding influence were unifying and creative forces in the development of the local ethos, the institutional mechanisms he helped to forge and that maintained community health after his death. Also, while Wise was long dead by the 1740s, his close protégé, who was in many respects his “carbon copy,” continued to provide the same kind of communal support and leadership as had his father-in-law. Given White’s evangelical Calvinism, his strong support for the primacy of the local church in governing its own responses to religious phenomena, and his belief in the church’s centrality to town unity and health, it is likely that his reaction to the Great Awakening was similar to what Wise’s might have been had he lived a few years longer. In fact, there is a sense in which White’s reaction “was” Wise’s reaction.

The revival began not in Gloucester’s first meeting house, but in its school house,
where the daily religious exercises of the young schoolmaster, Moses Parsons, had a profound effect upon the children. Recitations of the *New England Primer* were combined with fervent prayer, robust singing, and lively preaching. Parents were so impressed with the change in their children’s behavior and character that they soon began to appear at the school house to join their prayers with their children’s. The result was that soon “the Spirit of God came so powerfully upon the School, so that they could not attend the ordinary School Exercises.”

White’s reaction to these initial stirrings of the Great Awakening were those of a mature, self-confident man of God. Rather than seeing Parsons’ success as a challenge to his own dignity and authority, White embraced the people’s supernatural manifestations as the movement of God and sought opportunities to promote it in ways that would work to their good while still preserving spiritual discipline.

White began by calling a day of prayer and fasting and asked Nathaniel Rogers of First Ipswich, the same one with whom Pickering was then presently battling about the perceived “invasion” of his parish, to join him and the pastors of Gloucester’s other two parishes in seeking God’s further favor. The people’s hunger for God’s Word became so acute that, perforce, he soon called for the other pastors in town, as well as Moses Parsons, to help him with preaching. The preaching of Parsons resulted in rather spectacular manifestations of supernatural activity: “in the Close of the Exercise, the Spirit fell upon a great Part of the Congregation to the Amazement of many … .”

Bradstreet’s sermon on the efficacy of true Godly sorrow and repentance so impressed

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100 White, “Epistle to the Reader,” in Benjamin Bradstreet, *Godly Sorrow described, and the Blessing annexed consider’d. Discourse Deliver’d January 28th, 1741, 2. At an Evening Lecture in the first Parish in Glocester, ....* (Boston, 1742), ii.
members of the congregation that they collected a subscription for its printing. Frequent
church services brought about many changed lives in the seaport town. “And the good
Fruits of this Visit [of God] are very apparent; no less than twenty-one had their
Experiences read the last Sabbath Day.”\(^{101}\)

Considering the vitriol of the controversy in nearby Chebacco Parish raging at that
same moment, it is remarkable that the Great Awakening experience in Gloucester
worked as a unifying force there. The credit for this must rest with White, whose
strength of character and confidence in his own role as the town’s senior pastor ensured
that the people could experience the thrill of the revival without suffering the
consequences of uncontrolled emotionalism. While welcoming and encouraging his
people’s desire for a more exciting spiritual life, White also suppressed extraordinary
activity that might have grown into the wild excesses that visited, for example, Durham,
New Hampshire, and Marblehead, several miles to the south.\(^{102}\) “As to visions we had
enough of them, until such time as in a lecture sermon I declared my sentiments
concerning them; and so far as I can understand, there has never been one since. Our
congregation has been disturbed and interrupted by outcries, but I labored to suppress
them.”\(^{103}\) White had built up such credibility and confidence in his people in his 40 years
of ministry that they quite willingly submitted to his leadership. They knew and trusted
his unexceptionable orthodoxy and his unshakable belief that, true to Wise’s

\(^{101}\) Ibid., ii-iii. Bradstreet was pleased to write to Thomas Prince that his young people had left their
“addictions” to quarreling, swearing, and drinking in favor of joining religious societies. Benjamin

\(^{102}\) See Chapter 3 for a discussion of these excesses in Durham, and Heyrman, Commerce and Culture, 366-
405.

\(^{103}\) Babson, Notes and Additions to the History of Gloucester, Second Series (Salem, Mass., 1891), 127.
understanding of the *Platform*, the minister labored on behalf of his people as their servant, not their master. In doing so, they permitted White to do what every shepherd must: lead his flock to green pastures where the sheep may be nurtured without fear of outside danger.

Was the logical outcome of Wise’s ideas on democratic church polity the excesses of the Great Awakening and the reawakening of the fear of antinomianism on the part of the Old Lights, especially in Chebacco Parish? Unfortunately, Wise died before even the smaller revivals of the late 1720s and 1730s, so there is nothing extant that would provide his observations on revivals in a general way. It is therefore more difficult to judge what effect his personality might have had on his congregation 20 years after his death. Noting the consistency of his thoughts and deeds over a half-century of ministry, however, it might be possible to infer from them what might have been his reactions to the revival.

First, Wise’s belief in the equality of all believers and the efficacy of democratic rule within the church body politic indicates he would have been sympathetic to many of the claims of the “aggrieved brethren.” For example, viewing himself as an elected officer of the congregation and subject to recall, would he have denied the petitions and requests for meetings of a large minority of the congregation? Given his belief that covenant requires mutual consent of the governors and the governed and a mutual fulfillment of responsibilities, would he have turned a deaf ear on their argument that the failure of Pickering to fulfill his responsibilities meant the dissolution of the covenant? Given the centrality of the laity in choosing those who would deliver the Word of God, would he have denied their right to invite James Davenport or George Whitefield\textsuperscript{104} to

\footnote{Concerning Davenport, Pickering wrote, “I have not been very fond of \textit{itinerant Preaching} among us.” Pickering to James Davenport, 9 Aug. 1742, in Pickering’s \textit{Letters To the Rev. N. Rogers and Mr. D.}.}
preach at the Second Church as Pickering had done? Second, Wise’s fearlessness in opposing the colonial elite over matters of principle would argue favorably for his willingness to take on any attempt of the elite to stifle the movement of the Holy Spirit, even if that meant a challenge to his own authority as a clergyman. Whether during the Salem witchcraft trials, the controversy over small pox inoculations, or his support of paper currency, he demanded a hearing for the “little people,” no matter how unpopular their position. Finally, Wise was a man of very human emotions and sympathies. As a staff officer before Quebec, his concern for the safety and comfort of his men, and the humiliation he felt for their denouement, caused him to argue to the point of insubordination or mutiny. As a man of “Generous and Publick Spirit, a Great Lover of his Country, and our happy Constitution, a studious Assertor, and Faithful Defender of its Liberties and Interests,” his position on the Great Awakening would have certainly permitted, if not encouraged, those of his people who stood in need of an emotional approach to their faith. While he would not have broached an assault against the integrity of his professional brethren, he would have favored a broader view of the move of God in Chebacco and elsewhere.

The Reverend John Wise was a man whose strong principles were guided by a powerful intellect, whose profound humility was grounded in yeoman roots that cherished competency, and whose tenacity and physical courage and strength made him ever ready to defend the natural rights of his flock. As such a towering figure, he

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Rogers, 18. To Whitefield, he insisted, “you must be deem’d to be an Episcopal Clergyman in New England as well as Old; until you publickly revoke your Subscription ....” Pickering, Mr. Pickering’s Letter to Mr. Whitefield : Touching his Relation to the Church of England; his Impulses or Impressions; and the present unhappy State of Things, &c. (Boston, 1745), 4


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preconditioned his flock to view congregational independence as sacrosanct, ready to be defended should any attempt to prevent the will of the people through the established order. His foundational influence over the people of Cape Ann remained equally strong in both Chebacco and Gloucester for years after his death, but the differing effect this influence had on them was the result of how succeeding pastors built on his legacy. White, identifying closely with Wise’s beliefs concerning parish polity and dynamics, learned he could trust his people to decide important issues for themselves. Over many years, he earned their confidence and the right to act as their guide, teacher, and intermediary before God. Pickering’s view of the clerical profession led him to consider himself as a leader whose people were bound to follow him by virtue of his position as minister. For both pastor and church, the legacy of John Wise in Chebacco remained to incite a separation that must result when a pastor usurped power and refused to allow the people to exercise their role in the church body.\footnote{Cowing has pronounced the Great Awakening as a “belated victory for Wise.” When the New Lights “laid bare the ‘stretched out passion’ latent in Puritanism,” they reintroduced the tension that had existed in Reformed religion between reason and the affections. Those men whose families originated to the northwest of the Puritan strongholds of East Anglia and Boston, Massachusetts, returned to organized religion and effected a political, not theological, change. The reestablishment in many Separate and New Light congregations of closed communion, public confession, and a ruling eldership were the very things advocated by Wise nearly 40 years before.} It should therefore not be surprising that Wise’s own parish split over the Great Awakening while the parish just to the south had a reasonably harmonious and satisfying religious experience for many. With this look at the lasting impression Wise made on the Second Parish at Ipswich concluded, we must now turn to a similar analysis of another frontier parson, one who preconditioned his flock in a polar opposite direction of the “aggrieved brethren”—not toward order, but toward the disorder of antinomianism.
CHAPTER 3

"THE WHEELS OF PROVIDENCE OYLED BY PRAYER OF FAITH":

HUGH ADAMS, NICHOLAS GILMAN, AND THE
ROOTS OF ENTHUSIASM IN THE GREAT AWAKENING

The ministry of the Reverend Hugh Adams (1676-1748) at Oyster River Parish both
defined expectations of ministerial behavior and preconditioned his congregation to react
to spiritual stimulation in certain ways. The sources for studying his life are few in
number and provide only a glimpse of his strong personality and indomitable will. In
fact, if it were not for Adams’ quarrelsome, litigious nature and its trail of official
records, and one remarkable autobiographical manuscript, he might have passed into
eternity virtually unremarked. Provincial documents sprinkled with suits and petitions
suggest an unrelenting need to secure and protect his rights and privileges. His
autobiographical statement begun in 1724 and finished several months later details

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1 Hugh Adams, “A Narrative of Remarkable Instances Of A Particular Faith, And Answers of Prayers ...
Recollected by Him ... at his spare hours from December 7, 1724, to March 27, 1725,” unpublished
manuscript in the Massachusetts Historical Society, 16. Hereafter cited as “Narrative”. Page numbers used
will be those of Adams on the manuscript pages, not the page numbering subsequently added in pencil.
This autobiographical manuscript is comprised almost entirely of this “Narrative”, but a few extant pages
of his “Theosophical Thesis” are interspersed among its pages. Adams’ choice of the adjective
“theosophical” is a clue to the nature of this highly controversial work. In its broadest sense, theosophy
stresses an intuitive knowledge of God very much apart from what is revealed about Him in sacred
writings. Obviously, his purpose for writing this thesis was to reveal insights about the character and
nature of God that he had discerned from sources others than the Scripture. To many, the contents of
Adams’ thesis proved the charges of enthusiasm often leveled at him by his critics. See these works for the
impact of enthusiasm on American religion: Maurice W. Armstrong, “Religious Enthusiasm and
Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion (New York, 1950); David S. Lovejoy, Religious
Enthusiasm and the Great Awakening (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1969); Hillel Schwartz, The French
Prophets: The History of a Millenarian Group in Eighteenth-Century England (Berkeley, Calif., 1980);
Lovejoy, Religious Enthusiasm in the New World: Heresy to Revolution (Cambridge, Mass., 1985); and
Clarke Garrett, Spirit Possession and Popular Religion: From the Camisards to the Shakers (Baltimore,
1987).
important facts about the first 48 years of his life and provides great insight into his inner man—his mind and spirit. All told, these various documents portray a man with remarkable abilities, but with personal flaws that separated brethren rather than united them.

Adams was born in Limerick, Ireland, in 1676, of Scottish parents. His parents, Hugh and Avis Adams, moved their family to Boston in 1684, where Hugh, Sr., worked his trade as a cordwainer. The younger Hugh entered Harvard College from Boston Latin several years older than his peers and graduated in 1697 at 21 years of age. After graduating from Harvard, Adams went to Charleston, South Carolina, in the summer of 1698, following the example of a large number of New England Congregationalists who sought greater opportunity promised by panegyrists of the region. While undoubtedly hoping to receive a call from one of the few churches in the area, he had to satisfy his professional aspirations for a time by supplying the needs of churches during the absence of their pastors or those of the scattered settlements for an occasional sermon or baptism. Adams survived a period of “seasoning,” as the residents called it, in the summer and fall of 1698 that killed hundreds of others, including his mother. While in South Carolina, he married Susanna Winborn, the daughter of the Reverend John and Elizabeth Hart Winborn from Manchester, Massachusetts. The Winborn family had immigrated to South Carolina in about 1691. Before returning to Boston in 1706, Adams served congregations along the Wando River to the north of Charleston and along the South

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2 SHG 4: 321-36.

3 John Wise was very active in the movement to promote immigration to South Carolina and it is possible that Adams saw his instructions written to members of a company formed for that purpose. John Wise, “Instructions for Emigrants from Essex County, Mass., to South Carolina, 1697,” New England Historical and Genealogical Register 30 (January 1876): 64-7.
Edito River, about 50 miles from the capital. In each case, he had trouble collecting his salary, which, together with his fear of an Indian war and the appointment of Governor Nathaniel Johnson, made further service in the South unappealing.

After preaching to some outlying areas to the south of Braintree, Massachusetts, Adams received a call to gather a church in the area in 1707. His three-year tenure was unsatisfactory, due primarily to the intramural fighting of his congregants, the opposition of the minister of the town of Braintree, his inability to collect his salary, and his own invective against all parties which opposed him. He gained an orderly dismissal from the pulpit there and returned to Boston for the winter of 1710-1711, living primarily on the largesse of his friends. In April 1711, Adams received a call from the village of Monomoit on Cape Cod to settle there and by the summer had moved his family there and built a home on 50 acres of land near the meetinghouse. Rash by nature, Adams managed to affect the sensitivities of most of the people in the village, soon to be called Chatham, over the next four years, being accused at one time or another of Anabaptism and enthusiasm. His decision to take on one of the most popular and powerful men in the village, Ebenezer Hawes, led to court battles, ecclesiastical councils, virulent disputation, and his eventual dismissal from that church.

Without a pulpit again, Adams cast his eyes once more to the frontier to practice his calling, this time to the sparsely-settled territory far to the north of Boston. In August

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4 While not specifically mentioning Adams’ difficulties in Chatham, J.M. Bumsted does discuss the difficulties other ministers faced on Cape Cod. Several controversies indicate that bones of contention associated with Great Awakening congregations actually occurred during the preceding two decades in Barnstable County. These included questions over finances, control over individual and group behavior, and the relationship between the clergy and influential laypeople in controlling local political matters. Other problems included what to do with lay exhorters, who should determine the qualifications of acceptable pastors, and the difficulty of enforcing order when congregations disagreed even over matters of taste or convenience and the dissent could find clerical support. Bumsted, “A Caution to Erring Christians: Ecclesiastical Disorder on Cape Cod, 1717 to 1738,” *WMQ*, 3d Series, 28 (July 1971): 413-38.

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1716, he left his family behind in Chatham and traveled to eastern Maine, where he began to preach to the settlers at Georgetown on Arrowsick Island at the mouth of the Kennebec River. After preaching several weeks, he considered settling there so favorably that he began to learn the Abenaki language, “with hopes to gain them over from the French Popish Idolatry by our True Protestant Gospel ... .”5 Before leaving to return to his family at Chatham, he received a stipend of about 20s per sermon and promised to return to Georgetown if his wife would agree to the move.

Adams sailed as far as Boston, but remained there while awaiting further passage to Cape Cod. A master of a sloop from the Oyster River Parish at Dover, New Hampshire, having heard he was in Boston, delivered a message to him requesting he come preach in his village. The people were pleased enough with what they heard to offer him a six-month trial period with the intention of calling him to settle among them. His answer to the Oyster River call was essentially the same as to Georgetown’s call: “I could not engage till I had consulted with my Prudent Wife ... .”6 He soon found passage and arrived back in Chatham, thankful for the health and safety of his family during his four-month absence. Unknown to Adams, his wife had been “Inform’d of The Peril of that Place [Arrowsick] in the former Indian war, and the Difficulty of Escape from thence,” and he could not convince her to “suppose it her duty to remove thither.”7 Oyster River, on the other hand, was only 12 miles from Portsmouth and her family could escape by water to the large town in times of danger. Thus, with her agreement, he journeyed in “the Month of May. 1717, With my Wife’s Children and Carolina Indian Woman Servant;

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6 Ibid.
unto said Oyster River Parish in Dover ... ." Adams’ ministry in Durham began officially with his ordination on 26 March 1718. The ceremony was quite ordinary, and there was nothing in its orderly solemnity that would portend the stormy pastorate of Hugh Adams during the next 20 years. While he is all but forgotten today, Adams became notorious among his contemporaries for his eccentric and frequently unorthodox behavior.

As a graduate of Harvard, Adams was schooled in all subjects expected of a well-educated clergyman. As the son of a tradesman, however, he had learned much of the basics of a classical education through self-study and tutoring, not having many of the advantages of young men who came from wealthy or professional families. He was well versed in Latin and Greek, and appeared knowledgeable in Hebrew as well. While trained to prepare and read sermons from notes from the pulpit, he learned quite early in his professional life to speak without them. At his Wando River Parish in South Carolina, he was criticized by a number of his parishioners for reading just the heads of his sermons: “some of the looser sort would say, We had as good stay at home to read a sermon, as to go to church to hear a man read his Notes.” Distraught over the offense to

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7 P. 30.
8 Ibid.
9 Jonathan Cushing of Cochecho (now Dover) opened with prayer. Adams then preached from Canticles 3:11, said his own short prayer, and read the Church’s Confession of Faith and Church Covenant. He signed his name to it, joining his to those of other members. When Cushing asked for but received no objection to the ordination, he proclaimed Adams as their pastor and accepted the unanimous show of hands on his behalf. Joseph Adams of Newington followed by offering the right hand of fellowship, the congregation sang Psalm 132:13-18, and the new minister sent his people home with a blessing. Notice of the ordination appeared in the Boston News-Letter, 31 Mar.-7 Apr. 1718, p. 2. What seems unusual for an ordination ceremony occurred after Adams formally accepted the call. Cushing read publicly the same written testimonial signed by the Reverends Increase and Cotton Mather, James Keith, and Nehemiah Walker in 1711 before Adams went to Chatham. There is no apparent familial relationship between Hugh and Joseph Adams. Joseph’s famous nephew was President John Adams.
his people, he sought God's wisdom and was reminded from John 14:26 "The Comforter, which is The HOLY- GHOST He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your Rememberance, whatsoever I have said unto you." From this, he determined to learn to speak extemporaneously by writing down and memorizing the headings and proof-texts and then relying on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to guide him through his sermon. "[U]pon tryal I found I Preached better to my own and my hearers Edification and Comfort without my Notes in my Bible than ever I could before with them." He also improved his delivery both by reading books on pulpit delivery and by studying "as hard daily for the Increase of my knowledge as most men living," so that he was fully prepared to speak extemporaneously even "before the most Noble and Learned Auditors ... ." Because of his method of study which featured preparation for any circumstance, he claimed he could "certainly Preach best when I know not my Text till I be come into the pulpit. Then am I more straitened for want of time than of pertinent matter, bringing forth, out of my Treasure, Things both New and old." The result of this ability was to preach as the Spirit led him, rather than by the letters in his notes. "[F]or the letter (of an affected Scholastick method, as really as of the Law), killeth but The SPIRIT (not quenched thereby, but at His Liberty nor the true Gospel simplicity, thereby) giveth life."10 The ability to recall and apply Scriptures to a wide variety of circumstances is still valued as a tool for promoting the gospel, and Adams' exercising of his "particular faith" appealed greatly to a people who found comfort in a minister who could use Scriptures to help them understand their life's circumstances.

10 All quotations in this paragraph are from Adams, "Narrative," 47.
Adams was also a man of prayer, as his frequent references in his narrative would suggest; but this was not just “professional” or perfunctory prayer, but an “on his face, down in the dust” type of prayer that exemplified the kind of petitioning the Scripture commends in many passages. He was whole-heartedly determined to make the meeting house a true “House of prayer.” He was appalled that his flock had allowed the new meeting house to remain unfinished for a period of well over five years, and he was convinced, and told his people so, that if they did not soon set about to correct their neglect, “it was to be feared that Christ The Angel of JEHOVAH would send something of the Curse of Meroz upon them speedily ... .” His prediction would seem to have come true for, within the next six weeks, five people died, four of them from Indian attacks. Unfortunately, it is not known when the meeting house was finished, but his congregation could not have missed how seriously he considered the proper preservation of the meeting house as the “Standing Monument of The Temple of Christ’s Body ... .”

The zealousness with which Adams pursued all his professional duties certainly stemmed, at least in part, from his experience in South Carolina, whereby God’s “Wonderful Regard to my Ejaculatory Prayer” resulted in his miraculous healing during the tertiary stage of yellow fever. Given back his life, he was determined to expend it in the care of God’s people. He took pride in every victory; in fact, in 1725, at the end of his first eight years of ministering at Oyster River he took stock of his spiritual increase.

I have been employed by Christ as an Instrument in His Hand, not only to Gather a Church for him Consisting of 25 Living Brethren and 52 Sisters in full communion, Having Baptized 444 Persons old and young—all children of

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11 Ibid., 8. The curse against Meroz is found in Judges 5:23. “Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” It is a verse from the “Song of Deborah” that followed the victory of Israeli forces against the army of Jabin King of Canaan, commanded by Sisera. Deborah cursed the town and its inhabitants for refusing to do their part to fight the enemies of the Lord.
the Covenant, and Joyned in Marriage 52 Couples: but also prevailed so, as to set up three private meetings of the Church Under the Watch and Government of each of the three Elders Which I had Ordain'd, and also as many private Meetings of young men assembling for Religious Exercise in the Evening of Each LORD'S DAY Sabbath.\textsuperscript{12}

The extant church records that extend beyond 1728 in an incomplete form show further increases in the vineyard: 532 baptisms, 108 admissions, and 78 marriages over a dozen-year period. Comparing these figures to the estimated population for Durham in 1732—1,040 people—suggests the tremendous impact the pastor had on the town.\textsuperscript{13}

One feels the loss of Adams' diaries, particularly since his detailed “Narrative” left off in 1725 and his church records, although continuing into 1729 for baptisms and 1730 for marriages, provide so little information about his activities. A scattering of legal documents fills in a few details for the 1730s. It is possible to gather some additional information about the character of his ministry in Durham from Elizabeth C. Nordbeck,\textsuperscript{14} who studied revivalism in northern New England for the period 1727-1748. Her work is particularly valuable because it considers increased spiritual interest during the latter part of Adams's tenure. One period of revival occurred toward the end of 1727 and into 1728 following the Great Earthquake of 29 October 1727. Adams was among many ministers who seized upon the event as a warning for the need to repent from the increasingly immoral conditions found in the towns. On 7 November he called a "Parish Fast Day on

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 30. While Adams did not mention John Wise anywhere in his extant writings, it would appear that he accepted Wise's belief in the importance of ruling elders, although it would be surprising if he was willing to share much of his authority with church officers or laypeople. In a letter to Richard Waldron, for example, Adams expressed disapproval of the Secretary's renewing the captain's commission of Deacon Samuel Emerson, that "Insolent Antiministerial διώκυσας; Upon Whose Haughty Proud Arrogancy like that of Nabal, in 1.Sam.25.17, Some of his own Town's People have made a Lamentable Outcry." Adams, "Letter of Hugh Adams to Richard Waldron," dated 14 Sept. 1732, unpublished manuscript in the Library of Congress.


\textsuperscript{14} Nordbeck, "Almost Awakened."
Account of the Awful Earthquake, which had been on Sabbath night about 1/2 hour after 10”, a day on which he had baptized Mary Hicks, the daughter of Captain Joseph and Sarah Davis Hicks. During the next two months, he baptized 34 more people; by the end of six months this total increased to 76. Admissions to full communion followed the same pattern Nordbeck demonstrates for six parishes along the coast.\(^{15}\) The 23 admissions during 1728 were almost six times the number for 1727 and over three times the number during 1726.\(^{16}\)

Like many colonial frontier ministers, Adams practiced a second calling during his almost 50 years of ministry; in fact, his considerable medical skills gained him access to homes where his clerical garb might never have.\(^{17}\) He would not have admitted the two

\(^{15}\) Ibid.,” Table 1, 29.

\(^{16}\) Two events set off mini-revivals during the decade and a half before the Great Awakening, the earthquake and a diphtheria epidemic in the later 1730s. Clark discusses both in The Eastern Frontier, 272-80. In “Science, Reason, and an Angry God: The Literature of an Earthquake,” NEQ (September 1965): 340-62, he provides valuable insight into the response of colonial New Englanders, both clergy and laypeople, to earthquakes in his study of the seismic disturbance that occurred in 1755. He notes a thematic consistency in sermons about the event, no matter what doctrinal position the minister had maintained during the Great Awakening, that was quite similar to that expressed after the earthquake of 1727. God caused the earthquake to warn his people of coming judgment; He had shown great mercy by sparing lives and the people ought to turn to Him; the people ought to consider their present and future lives and respond accordingly. For a bibliography of earthquake literature, there is Clark, “The Literature of the New England Earthquake of 1755,” Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America 59 (July-September 1965), 295-305.

\(^{17}\) The joint practice of the ministry and medicine was not unusual at this time. Adams’ interest in medicine began as a youth when, because of his general ill health, he was “supposed scarce worth the Rearing. By the Diseases of the Rickets, Measles, Small pox, and worms, and in my youth at School and at the Colledge often tormented with reins of my left kidney & bladder.” He underwent considerable self-study, having

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were separate disciplines, but merely different expressions of God's mercy to his people. While "Remarkable Cures in my Practice of Physick and Chyrurgery, [may have been] wrought by my heart and hands", it was through "the Direction and Blessing of Christ The Chief Physician" they occurred. Wherever he went, he would not begin his medical ministrations until he "would submitt previously to suitable improvement of The Word of GOD and Prayer for the sanctification of the Affliction of my Patient and my Endeavour to heal as Physician." He identified so closely with the healing of bodies that he devoted nine pages of his "Narrative" to describing in some detail the diseases and cures he effected upon himself, his family and servants, and his parishioners. Many of the episodes he described paint pictures of a man ready at any time to apply his healing arts for the benefit of his people, and one who labored unstintingly as he encouraged and prayed and persevered during even the most disagreeable illnesses. If he maintained the love and loyalty of many of his people, despite his many eccentricities and troubles, it may have been due in large part to the many mercies he tendered them.

One cold December evening, he rode to Hilton Garrison in Exeter where Mary Glitten, the wife of Benjamin, had been in labor for three and one-half days. Even "Madam [Anne] Hilton[,] one of the most skilfull and Improved Midwives, and all the neighbouring Women attending her all that time, finding all their endeavours and helps in vain," began to despair "other wise of the life both of mother and infant." The Glittens and their midwife asked for Adams' assistance, a request, suggests Laurel Thatcher

"The Books of Riverius, and of Senertus; of Culpepper and Salmons Works & Other authors : & Began my Practice of my self; and with The LORD'S Blessing Recover'd a cure of each Disease aforesaid ... ."
"Narrative," 33.

18 Ibid.
19 P. 35.
Ulrich, that was indeed unusual considering childbirthing was almost exclusively in the hands of women in colonial America.\textsuperscript{20} His own dramatic account is worth repeating verbatim.

\begin{quote}
I first of all Began with Fervent Prayer to EMMANUEL Christ Jesus, Pleading His Gospel Promise in I.Tim.II.14,15, The woman shall be saved in child bearing &c. I then Gave her some of the most strong Hysterick medicines to recall and quicken her labour pains; and Dilated the passage of nature with Unguentum Aperitivum meipsum; Then Rather than both the mother and infant should Dye for want of my utmost help: In the Strength of Christ our LORD, (according to the best Rules of Chyrurgery that I had learnt), I Proceeded in manual operation ... \textsuperscript{21}
\end{quote}

He discovered his work had only just begun. The baby presented itself in a breech position and Adams, crying out “in my oral ejaculation to Christ our LORD, for his Immediate Direction and Help in that Extremity”, manipulated the baby into a “capable position” and guided the manchild into the world. He left the removal of the after-birth to the midwife and immediately baptized him as Benjamin, fearing with his parents that the child would not survive the ordeal. Yet, survive he did, and Adams hoped he would “(if spar’d to its years of understanding) in the words of that Devout Acknowledgement with thankfulness [say to his pastor], as in Psal.22.9, Thou art He that took me out of the womb.”\textsuperscript{22}

Adams’ “Cure of Joseph Mason of a Malignant Putrid peracute Feaver” must have seemed a miracle to Mason’s loved ones. Resting by the fire from his earlier attempts to treat the young man, Adams was summoned to Mason’s bed by the cries of the patient’s

\textsuperscript{20} Ulrich, “Psalm-tunes, Periwigs, and Bastards.”

\textsuperscript{21} Adams, “Narrative,” 36. “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” 2 Timothy 2:14-15.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
mother, wife, and sister, who were then crying, “now he’s gone; he’s gone .... .”

Determined by his lack of pulse and death pall that he had only just stopped breathing, Adams “Gave one of the women about a thimble full of a De-flegmating Volatile Spirit, in a spoon, to apply first to his nostrils and temples, and to poor there into his open’d mouth; and in less than a Minute after he Recover’d his breath, and started up out of his bed as if he had not been sick .... .” As always, his “Scriptural counsels to him, Prayers and Cries to GOD our Saviour for him, being previously and intermissively employed as in other cures; Let Emmanuel Christ Jesus (The Chief Physician) with His FATHER and SPIRIT of Grace, Have all the Glory and Praise Honour and Thanks for such a Remarkable Recovery of that poor man .... .” Adams himself also learned a valuable lesson: “And the Experience of that man’s Reviving, I hope shall keep me from Despairing of a Patients life untill I perceive him or her too long a time really Dead, for the future.” While there is no way of determining the effect of this event on the community, would it surprise anyone to discover that news spread like wildfire that the pastor had raised Mason from the dead?

This description of Adams as curate of both body and soul would suppose a minister who was much loved, esteemed, and valued by a grateful community, but his love of contention could also make strong enemies. He consciously bore his own personal history of trials, tribulations, and triumphs to Oyster River, all of which shaped the way he viewed the world in general and the ministry specifically. Headstrong and constant, it is not surprising he maintained strong, unbending views on important issues of the day. As settled minister of Oyster River Parish for 22 years, Adams was at the

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center of many contentions and controversies, some of which he caused himself and
others that drew him in because of his central position in the community. The following
pages will look at a number of these: the efficacy of regular singing, his battles with the
couranteers, his ministerial leadership during the Indian Wars, his participation in a
paternity suit against the scion of an eminent local family, and his attempts to collect
back pay and to regain his pulpit after his dismissal. These episodes are not just curious
vignettes in the life of an eccentric eighteenth-century minister in northern New England,
but also, more important, will demonstrate how his strong personality, and his strengths
and weaknesses as both a man and a pastor, preconditioned the people of Oyster River to
react to the coming of the Great Awakening.

The controversy surrounding the reintroduction of singing by note into New
England Congregational churches began quite innocuously with the publication of An
Introduction to the Singing of Psalm Tunes by the Reverend John Tufts of Medford in
1715. This work was intended to correct what he considered a glaring deficiency: the

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24 See the following works for a fuller exposition of the regular singing movement: Robert Stevenson,
Protestant Music in America (New York, 1966); Ola Elizabeth Winslow, Meetinghouse Hill (New York,
1972), 150-70; David P. McKay, “Cotton Mather’s Unpublished Singing Sermon,” NEQ 48 (September
55 (March 1982): 79-96. Ulrich documents Adams’ support of the movement in “Psalm-tunes, Periwigs,
and Bastards,” 255-79. For a general treatment of psalmody, see Richard Crawford, “Massachusetts
Musicians and the Core Repertory of Early American Psalmody,” in Music in Colonial Massachusetts,
1630-1820 (Boston, 1980), 2: 583-629. For a sample of “regular singing”, listen to Goostly Psalms:
Anglo-American Psalmody 1550-1800, sung by His Majesty’s Clerkes, Paul Hillier, conductor; recorded
by Harmonia Mundi (No. 907128). This compact disc includes “Psalm No. 40” from the Massachusetts
Bay Psalm Book and “The Beauty of Isr’el is slain” from The Grounds and Rule of Musick by Thomas
Walter. Sung a cappella, the recording brilliantly captures the reason for rescuing such inspiring music
from the “usual way.” Joanne Grayeski Weiss maintains that it was the Great Awakening, however, and
not the agitation of the 1720s that played the most important role in the change from psalmody to hymnody
in the New England colonies. The regular singing controversy was an outward expression of a growing
inner dissatisfaction with traditional Calvinist theology. Likewise, Isaac Watts did not cause the change,
but he accelerated it by filling the need for musical expression for the anthropocentric theology that derived
from the Great Awakening. Weiss, “The Relationship Between the ‘Great Awakening’ and the Transition
from Psalmody to Hymnody in the New England Colonies (Ph.D. diss., Ball State University, 1988).
ability of New England Congregationalists to make the singing of sacred songs rival the noise made by an awakening barnyard rather than that of an awakened congregation. It appears that Adams began to introduce regular singing into his own congregation at Oyster River before 1720 and his support was every bit as ardent as that of its chief proponents. Ulrich believes he was able to introduce it quietly to Oyster River without the bitter division occasioned by the controversy in other congregations because, as a new church in a frontier area, there had not developed either entrenched traditions or lay leadership that worked against it.\(^{25}\) Adams was certainly susceptible to the same pietistic influence Joyce Irwin concludes was a motivating force because regular singing obviously touched him at a deep and emotional level: “The Consideration of all which Reformation in that so Blessed Ordinance (of Christ, in singing Psalms Hymns and Spiritual songs ...), hath been such a motive to myself, to Reform my daily morning and evening sacrifices of Praise to GOD in my family Duties ... .”\(^{26}\) He bubbled over with his excitement for the “wonderful Reformation in \textit{Singing of Psalms Hymns and Spiritual Songs, with understanding} in the Tunes: as well as the words, so Agreeable with \textit{The Word of Christ} in Col. 3. 16. ... .” He acclaimed the means by which the transition occurred in worship. It was

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\text{managed in such} \, \text{Wisdom} \, \text{for the Accomplishment thereof: By the Reverend M' Tuft’s Facilitating the Method of Learning The Musical Rule thereof; And the schools; And so many of The Churches in our Land, and Especially in Boston so to receive and Practice This so Transcendently Melodious Method of walking according to This Rule of Sacred Musick, in their Hallelujahs of Thankfull Devotions.}\(^{27}\)
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\(^{25}\) Ulrich, “Psalm-tunes, Periwigs, and Bastards,” 261.

\(^{26}\) Adams, “Narrative,” 4.

\(^{27}\) Ibid., 3. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” 1
While Adams did not plunge into the controversy over regular singing as a disputant, he clearly espoused and supported the ideals of the movement, although, it would appear, for reasons considerably different from those of his contemporaries. Despite his heartfelt and undoubtedly genuine appreciation for the spiritual dimensions of regular singing, there was also a pragmatic, even utilitarian reason for Adams' espousal which clearly separated him from the like-minded: it was a weapon of war against the "Popish forces of Antichrist", the French and their native allies. His belief was due to the exercise of what Adams referred to as "particular faith", grounded upon his understanding of the Scriptures, that God seemed to quicken in his spirit during his devotions. This exercise, of course, was considered enthusiastic by his professional peers of the day because the meaning of Scriptures was based upon time-honored exegesis and strict interpretation of the text in the original language, and the belief that God no longer spoke directly to people through immediate inspiration because He had pronounced His final word in the Bible. For Adams, it was a simple matter of opening his spirit to hear what God was saying about his present circumstances through the written Word. Thus, when faced with yet another series of attacks by the French and Indians, he turned to Scripture and read in any number of places where the Israelites triumphed when they preceded their battles with singing and praise. Having read, for example, that King Jehoshaphat, in 2 Chronicles 20:21-22, had appointed choristers and musicians to lead the people in praise before going out to win a glorious victory against their enemies, the

Colossians 3:16

28 "And when he [King Jehoshaphat] had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten."

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knowledge of this inspired his faith “That The LORD would (likewise in these days) set Ambushments against our Indian Enemies; As Thanks be to His Name, He did so, in my Parish, on the 10 Day of June last 1724; for the smitting of four Indians, and Getting the Scalp of a Chief Captain among them .... ”

Note the process by which Adams prophesied the victory: he and his flock were faced with the return of an external danger; he turned to the Scriptures for inspiration; he read of the Israelites in a similar situation and, exercising his “particular faith”, applied the Scriptural illustration to the contemporary situation; he believed God would move likewise; and then attributed victory to the application of his own faith to the Word. It is likely that this willingness to discern and accept direct inspiration from the Holy Spirit was what most separated his understanding of the application of the Scriptures from that of many of his clerical brothers. What had made this victory possible, he declared, was the return of the people to a form of worship which honored God with melody and order through regular singing: “Regular Singing Introduceth Slaughter on Enemies” was a heading in his narrative.

Adams believed musical instruments could be also employed effectively as a weapon of war. Relying on Numbers 10:9 for his inspiration, he corrected what he believed was a “matter of Manetation and Defect in our obedience to said statute and Scripture Examples of success therein,” by crafting two trumpets of cattle horn to use to call his people to worship “instead of the Bells of such an Antichristian Popish original on Houses of Publick Devotion, so superstitiously used to charm away evil spirits out of


30 “And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets. And ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.”

31 Adams, “Narrative,” 5.
the air so unwarrantably by the sound thereof."  

So assured was he of the efficacy of sounding the trumpet before proceeding from camp, that he "employed my two younger sons in Sounding of them when my Eldest son [was] gone forth a Volunteer into our Wilderness against our said Indian Enemies." He also attributed the victory of provincial forces against the Abenaki at Norridgewock in Maine for the return to regular singing.

[Si]o superabundantly for That LORD of Armies so afterwards to set such An Ambushment against our Indian Enemies at Norridgwok, as to smite so many of them in the late memorable Victory over them, with the obtaining so many of their scalps, as never the like success before, in any former war with them: How Remarkable Is it to Engage our future Thankfulness and Reformation, and to animate others also to learn so by Rule to Sing His praises?  

He was also thankful God fulfilled his promise in the second part of Numbers 10:9—

"proportionably hath He in faithfulness Performed, That not one of my family hath been hitherto kill'd, wounded, captivated or any ways Spoyled by Indian enemies ... ."

To many on the frontier, the New-England Courant represented a growing urbanity and a kind of free thinking that threatened their Calvinistic world view. Adams frequently found himself at odds with the ideas of its writers and, never one to shirk the Lord's battles, delighted in the opportunity to oppose His enemies with pen and voice, an action which surely would have caused him to rise in the estimation of many of his people. The lead article in the Courant's 22 January 1722 issue provides one example of

\[32\text{ Ibid.}\]

\[33\text{ Ibid. The eldest son was Samuel, born June 1705, who later became Durham's physician until his death in 1762. The two younger sons were Winborn, born 19 April 1715 and died in 1736, and John, born 13 Jan. 1718, and later settled minister of Durham and Newfield, Maine. He died in 1792. Everett S. Stackpole, Lucien Thompson, and Winthrop S. Meserve, History of the Town of Durham New Hampshire (Oyster River Plantation) with Genealogical Notes (1913; reprint, Portsmouth, NH, 1994), 2: 5.}\]

\[34\text{ Adams, "Narrative," 5.}\]
Adams’s “no-holds barred” approach to disputation with the newspaper. Under the banner “Bloody Fishing at Oyster-River”, the editorialist wrote that a “certain Clergyman in his common Conversation, with as much Zeal as ever he discover’d in the Application of a Sermon on the most awakening subject,” had by “malicious Arts used by him ... [attempted] to spoil the Credit of the Courant, that he may reign as Detractor General over the whole Province, and do all the Mischief his ill Nature prompts him to ... .” The clergyman’s allegation? “THAT the Courants are carry’d on by a Hell-Fire Club with a Nonjuror at the Head of them ... .”

It seems strange that the New-England Courant, given its penchant for promoting serious debate over silly topics, did not seize upon Adams’ intense disliking for current cosmopolitan fashions as an opportunity for some fun at his expense. Adams was so repelled by what he considered “Frenchified Fashions”, that he wrote a long

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35 Ibid.

36 New-England Courant, 15-22 Jan. 1722, 1. The use of the word “awakening” is informative, being a synonym for “enthusiastic”. It was Cotton Mather who popularized the comparison of the Couranteers with the overtly blasphemous London organization of that name, and Adams undoubtedly borrowed the term from him. Known for its arcane, if not occult activity, the London Hell-Fire Club shocked the religious sensitivities of most people in New England. The Couranteers were not involved in blasphemy, but Mather and Adams were both offended by the disrespectful treatment of the clergy at the hands of the editorial writers and undoubtedly tried to use the comparison to discredit their rivals. The “nonjuror” was John Checkley, a Boston Anglican who expressed support for nonjuring bishops and was even accused of Jacobitism. The editorial writer went on to affirm “Mr. C[heckley]’s” participation in writing articles about the “Rights and Liberties of the Subjects,” but denied Checkley had written any articles “wherein the Ministers were touch’d upon ....” See Bridenbaugh, Mitre and Sceptre, for a discussion of Anglican inroads into Boston. See also, Clark, The Public Prints: The Newspaper in Anglo-American Culture, 1665-1740 (New York, 1994), for more on the Couranteers.

37 Mrs. Silence Dogood did broach the subject of ladies’ fashions in “her” letter to the Courant in June 1722, but this did not generate enough interest to spark debate. She was “sure” the hoop-petticoat was the reigning vice in the town, the one which “portends the Ruin of Church and State,” and observed in veiled scatological terms their effect on the men of Boston. NEC, 11-18 June 1722, 1.

38 Adams never defined “Frenchified Fashions” which is indeed unfortunate because there are a wide variety of potential meanings in the term. He could have simply meant effete or effeminate men’s fashions or over-revealing women’s apparel. He may also have been alluding to the decadence of the court of King Louis XIV, the New England Puritan’s favorite figure of anti-Christ.
“Admonishing Poem against mens wiggs and womens hooped coats” for publication, probably in the fall of 1720. The poem waited for a “Birth of Publication by The Press” for about 18 months without success. Adams himself believed it was because “no Printer there could be found without a Wigg, that would or dare to Print it”. The complete poem is not extant, but he included these verses from his “Narrative” that were part of its “Finishing Epilogue”.

Therefore, I must Adventure to Divine,
If Reformation can’t among you shine
Quickly, in Wiggs and Hoops; the mistake’s mine,
If on Frontiers food savages sha’n’t Dine
Before One Year’s Expir’d : &c.
Alas! such Frenchified Fashions will
(I fear) cause them much English blood to spill.
In a short time, by the united skill
Of French and Indian’s howling voices shrill
With Guns and Hatchets Spy’d on ev’ry hill,
Cutchilla’s too, to scalp poor captives, till
Few in such trespass dare to go on still. Psal.68.21
The Rules whereby I thus Prognosticate
So sacred are, none should abominate,
To View the same here Quoted not too late;

Further insight into hirsute fashions is found in Ulrich, “Psalm-tunes, Periwigs, and Bastards,” and Henry Latimer Seaver, “Hair and Holiness,” MHS Proceedings 68 (October 1944): 3-20. Adams shared with his friend Samuel Sewall a disgust for periwigs. It particularly irked Sewall when he heard Cotton Mather deliver in a public lecture an apology for wearing periwigs in which the minister said, “To be zealous against an innocent fashion, taken up and used by the best men; and yet make no Conscience of being guilty of great Immoralities” would be hypocrisy. Sewall lamented, “I expected not to hear a vindication of Perriwigs in Boston Pulpit by Mr. Mather ....” Samuel Sewall, “The Diary of Samuel Sewall,” MHS Collections, 5th Series, Vol. 6, 342. Sewall also related that John Higginson of Salem gave him a short treatise against periwigs to read in Nov. 1697. When he suggested the parson publish it, Higginson “said he would not have it done while he liv’d ....” Ibid., 6: 463-4. Periwigs remained a “pet peeve” with Sewall for the rest of his life.

Adams sent Sewall a copy of his verses on periwigs, perhaps hoping to gain his influence for their publication. In a letter dated 2 Feb. 1722 to which he attached the verses, Sewall offered two kinds of advice: literary and friendly. As to the verses, he “earnestly advised him wholly to obliterat Zimri and Cozbi; Names and Text. Leave out Madam Maintenon; I have heard no such Character of her.” As his friend, however, he added Adams should “Keep still at Oyster River, Labour in that part of Christ’s Harvest; you may run into Worse Troubles ....” Samuel Sewall, “Letter-Book of Samuel Sewall,” MHS Collections, 6th Series, Vol. 2, 137.


39 Further insight into hirsute fashions is found in Ulrich, “Psalm-tunes, Periwigs, and Bastards,” and Henry Latimer Seaver, “Hair and Holiness,” MHS Proceedings 68 (October 1944): 3-20. Adams shared with his friend Samuel Sewall a disgust for periwigs. It particularly irked Sewall when he heard Cotton Mather deliver in a public lecture an apology for wearing periwigs in which the minister said, “To be zealous against an innocent fashion, taken up and used by the best men; and yet make no Conscience of being guilty of great Immoralities” would be hypocrisy. Sewall lamented, “I expected not to hear a vindication of Perriwigs in Boston Pulpit by Mr. Mather ....” Samuel Sewall, “The Diary of Samuel Sewall,” MHS Collections, 5th Series, Vol. 6, 342. Sewall also related that John Higginson of Salem gave him a short treatise against periwigs to read in Nov. 1697. When he suggested the parson publish it, Higginson “said he would not have it done while he liv’d ....” Ibid., 6: 463-4. Periwigs remained a “pet peeve” with Sewall for the rest of his life.

40 Adams, “Narrative,” 11. Adams sent Sewall a copy of his verses on periwigs, perhaps hoping to gain his influence for their publication. In a letter dated 2 Feb. 1722 to which he attached the verses, Sewall offered two kinds of advice: literary and friendly. As to the verses, he “earnestly advised him wholly to obliterat Zimri and Cozbi; Names and Text. Leave out Madam Maintenon; I have heard no such Character of her.” As his friend, however, he added Adams should “Keep still at Oyster River, Labour in that part of Christ’s Harvest; you may run into Worse Troubles ....” Samuel Sewall, “Letter-Book of Samuel Sewall,” MHS Collections, 6th Series, Vol. 2, 137.

Whereon I pray you well to meditate.
Luk.13.8,9, Lev.26.22-25, 33; Deut.28.58,61
Isai.5.26 / 7.18, Jer.28.16, Zeph.I.8,11,
Mal.3.9, &c:

Adams considered his poem as a prophetic warning to his compatriots to give up their frivolity or suffer the consequences of their sin. In fact, in his “Narrative” he noted the “Said Indian War really began in a few months after said Warning, and hath been fulfilling my said Prediction hitherto; according to my Particular-Faith in these scriptures of truth.”

He expanded this warning by prophesying that, because “Boston, Portsmouth and The Whole Countrey” had rejected the Admonishing Poem, he would leave them to their folly.

“The LORD’S People in New England being joyned to their idols [of strange apparel] must be let alone; for a Triennial Punishment by the Sword of the wilderness (Isai.16.14), For the Antichristian hairy scalps of the men Psal.68.26 and the womens Diana of great hoops, There must be the scalping of so many of Inhabitants and soldiers at our Frontiers, till at least three years be expired .... .

If they would still not repent from their frivolity, he promised them “Seven times three years War more ... By a War in the nations ... .”

It is entirely possible Adams’ harsh words against the Boston newspaper had stemmed from more than the occasional irreverence of the Couranteers. After all, they had failed to give him support even when he supported them. A remaining scrap of “Thesis” noted the refusal of Christ’s enemies to repent of “their murders, fornication, & thefts. So Neither Repented they of their

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid. “But now the Lord hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contermed, with all that great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and feeble.” Isaiah 16:14. “Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.” Psalm 68:26. Would it have surprised Adams that it would not be until 1763 that the combined armies of French and Indians would cease to threaten the northern frontier?
Sorceries.” Adams’ opinion, the “present-day sorcery” practiced in New England was that of smallpox inoculation. Given his own position on this subject and the Courant’s strong support for the “anti-inoculators”, Adams may have felt aggrieved that the newspaper would not use his verses to promote their attack on fashions.

Only one whole argument and part of a second of the four Adams offered to support his position on the evil of inoculation remain, but even as a sample they would explain much of the Courant’s unwillingness to court Adams’ support. Adams argued first that Satan would try anything to tempt people to help in their own destruction, which inoculation certainly did in his opinion. Then there was the problem of the origin of inoculation among Africans who, bearing in the color of their skin the “Mark of Noah’s Righteous Curse upon Canaan,” drew their inspiration for their practice directly from their worship of the Evil One. Adams’ next argument, while undoubtedly a more reasonable interpretation, would certainly not have gained any sympathy from the Couranteers. He viewed inoculation as not only tempting the Lord by deliberately contracting the disease, but also resisting

The Revealed Will of The Chief Physician in the Ordinary Course of His Divine Provider by their Striving in such an unwarrantably Loathsome Way; to Anticipate and prevent His Appointed Time and Means ... for Chastening in love with any Disease By Resolving therein not to wait for the Good Pleasure of His Will ... 45

Adams was by then well known for his unusual interpretations of things spiritual and material, and the last thing the Courant would want to do was to weaken its own


credibility and cause by having a charge of “enthusiasm” added to that of being a “Hell-Fire Club.”

Undoubtedly, Adams considered the Couranteers minor irritations compared with his preoccupation with the dangers the native peoples presented during the Fourth Indian War,46 dubbed locally as Lovewell’s War. His thoughts were filled with ways to protect his people against the “Frenchified Popish Eastern Indians in the Northern and Eastern as also Western Frontiers of New England.”47 While he never took to the warpath with one of the colonial guerrilla bands, he clearly viewed himself as a New Testament Phineas, whose zeal God had used to reverse the intended destruction of Israel.48 Adams’ own zeal for the Lord manifested itself in a number of interesting ways and his “Narrative” shows he played an important role in the long struggle, even from the very beginning of his pastorate at Oyster River in 1717. He had then foreseen the coming of another war and was concerned for the safety of his family in the frontier area. He believed by exercising his own faith he could personally hold off the depredations of the Eastern Indians on his parishioners. He had witnessed “the Eastern Indians then making their surly Appearances about us” and had read of the “Horrible Slaughters, Captives & spoiles therein made in former wars . . . .” Considering these things, he “could not but Crie and

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47 Adams, “Narrative,” I.

48 “Phineas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.” Numbers 25:11-13.
Pray most solemnly to GOD my Saviour Christ, That If It might be His Blessed Will Then to Prevent The Seemingly Outbreaking War: He would Please to Direct me as a Gapman, What Method of Duty I should take in order thereunto...” Adams believed if he did plant the church in Oyster River, he “might Depend upon the literal sense of His Word in That His Parable in Luk.XIII.6,7,8,9 of having full four years Cessation or Suspension of the War threaten’d by the Indians...”49

One of the ways Adams could fulfill this mission was to ask God to avenge Himself upon the settlers' chief antagonist, Father Sebastien Rasle, who was the spiritual mentor and temporal guide of the Abenakis, whose territory included land between the Piscataqua and Penobscot Rivers in Maine. In fact, Adams anthropomorphosed all the forces of evil in this figure of this Jesuit priest. Rasle lived at the tribe’s principal residence at Norridgewock along the Kennebec River, serving there as a missionary from about 1690 to his death in 1724 at about 70 years of age.50 In Adams’ judgment, Rasle had “so subjugated The Savages (as he named them) under his Arbitrary Power as to influence them into all their so barbarous Hostilities of the former wars during the 32 years past, as their Oracle in all their Enterprises, and consequently the chief incendiary

49 Adams, “Narrative,” 13. “He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.” Adams believed God would give him three full years to “establish His garden” in Oyster River without interference from the Eastern Indians and another year to bear spiritual fruit. Luke 13:6-9. The word “gapman” admirably suits what he viewed his mission: it was for him to stand in the gap between the forces of anti-Christ and God’s people while those people worked to establish spiritual defenses through their new church. In the meantime, he knew that he must suffer much personally because the gapman is always in the most exposed position.

50 George F. O’Dwyer notes the priest was born in Franche-Comté in 1657, but provides no source. “Sebastian Rale and the Puritans,” Catholic World 112 (October 1920): 50. Fannie Hardy Eckstorm credits Georges Goyau for discovering a baptismal register in the church of Sainte-Bénigne in Pontarlier, France, that indicates Father Rasle was born on 4 Jan. 1652. Eckstorm, “The Attack on Norridgewock,” NEQ 7
of all the wars and ... spoyles since that time." Adams "discerned his Proud and Envious Intention so to Push on this War," and responded with a "Particular Faith Inspiring me ... with Zeal against his Ingratitude and Treachery; ... I thenceforward believed I had that Infallible Warrant Given to me (more especially) to be such An Adversary against him as to Deliver him unto our LORD CHRIST The Judge ... To Deliver him to the officer (of Death) ... ." 

Taking his inspiration from Psalm 68:1-2, Adams prayed for three years to this end, and even used the pages of the Courant to warn the Jesuit against promoting his fiendish schemes against the English. "To the Beaver-loving-Friend of the Eastern Indians! ... I am sent unto thee with heavy tidings ... in these two Messages, in 2 Chron. 19. 2 & 1 Kings 20. 42. which thou may'st read at leisure, and expect the Execution thereof, if such a murdering perillous Design or Act be not repealed in due Season ... ." During that time, Adams bristled at every foray of the Abenakis against the English and

(September 1934): 542n.


52 Ibid., 2. While Adams had resided at Arrowsick Island before coming to Oyster River, he had treated Father Rasle without payment, hoping thereby to gain influence over the priest to prevent further Indian depredations. He seems never to have forgiven the Jesuit for the perceived ingratitude.

53 "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God."

54 NEC, 17-24 Dec. 1722, 2. "And Jehu the son of Nanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord." 2 Chron. 19:2. "And he [a certain man of the sons of the prophets, from v. 35] said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people." 1 Kings 20:42. Adams signed the letter "Phinehas Micajah". It would be interesting to speculate whether Adams adopted this nom de prophete because he was entering into the spirit of the Courant correspondents or because he knew the newspaper did not consider anything he wrote for publication with a friendly eye.
thrilled at every English answer to their insults, content that it was his spiritual authority that was promoting final victory for the English.

Adams' faith remained constant during the four-year period, despite English deaths in raids upon his own parish and reports of destruction in other places to the east. He considered his faith-filled constancy well rewarded and his prophetic vision vindicated with the decisive victory of the English over the Abenakis at Norridgewock and the death of Father Rasle on 23 August 1724. He positively thrilled when God executed judgment by the hand of Captain Jeremiah Moulton of York upon this

*man appointed to utter destruction.* ... The LORD of Armies Reward him and them for that so great service to Christ and to our King & Countrey. ... Should not we thankfully Triumph as we're Required? in Rev. XVIII.20, *Rejoyce over her; thou (Militant Church) heaven, and* (in the Faithfull Ministry Thereof) *ye holy Apostles and Prophets; For (on the Account of all the righteous bloodshed; from the blood of Righteous Dummer at York, unto the blood of Rolf at Haveril, and of Willard, ... GOD hath avenged you on her.*

The venomous fierceness with which Adams attacked the enemies of the true gospel was not limited to that visited upon Father Rasle and the Abenakis. He looked within his own camp, in Oyster River and its immediate environs, to challenge and destroy false religion. For Adams, a convinced Calvinist and Congregationalist, these were any who promoted either a different theology or polity. In New Hampshire, there were few if any admitted Roman Catholics with whom to fight, although he remained

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55 Eckstorm’s account of the victory is very useful. She also investigated Lovewell’s 1725 fight at Pigwacket at which he lost his life. Eckstorm, “Pigwacket and Parson Symmes,” *NEQ* 9 (September 1936): 378-402. Adams took special interest in Lovewell’s doings, seeing him as a weapon wielded by the arm of God against His enemies. He prayed fervently the “prayer of Faith, for Captain John Lovewell (of Dunstable) & his Volunteer Company, with whom I sang a Psalm ..., that He and they might be instrumentally ... JEHOVAH’S hand, ...” before they set off into the wilderness in one of their earlier raids. Adams attributed Lovewell’s subsequent “victory” over a party of ten sleeping Indians to the officer’s “obeying the Counsel and Charge I Gave him at first, to Pray with his Company of Soldiers as his own military family each morning and evening; and as I perceive the wilderness woods were, with his own and so many of his men’s Regular Singing of Psalms ....” Adams, “Narrative,” 43-44.

56 Adams, “Narrative,” 2.
ever alert to the possibility of their presence. Instead, his chief antagonists were Quakers, Anabaptists, and even a few “Barren Figg tree Professors” within his own church.

Adams shared the antipathy of the more conservative members of the Standing Order for the Society of Friends, particularly their pacifism. The interchange Adams had with a Friend in the latter part of the summer of 1724 illustrates well the nature of his public disputations with them and, in this case, what he thought about their pacifism. The “Chief Rule”, as he called him, among the local Friends came to a house he was visiting to ask him if it were true “that thee hast said, thee dost Believe, we Quakers shall suffer by the Indians before this war be ended as really as the Presbyterians”? Never to back down from an opportunity to debate, he answered the Friend that he had said words to that effect and believed they would come true. When the other, naturally, asked why he believed so, Adams gave him three Scriptural grounds for his prediction. First, citing Matthew 4:7, he argued that you tempted God by “dwelling so exposed in, or so near, the woods, in your own ungarrison’d houses, your going so naked without firearms, and your so obstinate refusal to Remove into Garrisons ... whereby ye tempt Divine Providence to let loose the Indians upon you.” Second, he reminded the Friend of the “Awfull Curse [found in Jeremiah 48:10] which is upon you Quakers, For your Refusing to take up Arms in this time of war against the common Enemy.” Finally, perhaps in an attempt to juxtapose the “brazenness” of Quaker women with their “cowardly” men, he cited Revelation 2:18,20,23 as proof that “Quakers are Jezabes

57 “Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”

58 “Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.”

59 “And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; ... Notwithstanding I have a few things against
children ... because they more than any sect of opinion about religion in the world have suffered their Jezabel women to call themselves Prophetesses, and to teach and seduce Christ’s servants ... .” In this particular case, the soft answer of the Friend did not turn away the wrath of the Congregational minister. Protesting the Lord would protect the Friends because their faith was in the Lord, Adams rejoined that it was not trusting alone that would grant them safety, “except ye also be doing good ... by your walking in all the Commandments and ordinances of The LORD blameless ... .” In his opinion, because of the Friends’ failure to conduct daily family prayers, sing Psalms, hear the Word preached by regularly ordained clergy, be baptized in water, participate in the Lord’s Supper, attend service on Sabbath, and other such ordinances, all their “fruit is but a presumptuous provocation to The LORD to leave you to the will of Indian-enemies.” When, less than a month later, Eastern Indians attacked the unguarded homes of Ebenezer Downs and John Hanson, both Friends, with barbarous results, Adams felt justified in asking his intended readers if he had not been proven correct.61

It had been well for those silly creatures so slain and captivated out of the family of said Quaker John Handson and said Downs Himself If the Government of our Province of New Hampshire had previously compelled them into Garisons as others of their neighbours had been order’d thereinto. And Whether the tolleration of such Jezabel Women among the Quakers so to call themselves prophetesses ... be a principal Article in The Indictment which The SON OF GOD hath Arraigned up for at his Bar ..., I Believe the Wofull Events of this present war will Determine the matter?62


61 Ibid., 7. Ebenezer Downs was probably the “Chief Rule” with whom Adams debated.

62 Ibid. Jeremy Belknap, in his History of New Hampshire (Boston, 1792), 2: 205, noted that after his
Adams gave ample evidence that he feared these enemies within the camp far more than the ones without. In what is possibly another extant scrap of his “Theosophical Thesis,” he provided seven reasons why Friends were “twofold worse and more dangerous to your selves, than the Serious and ignorant Papists.” In fact, “there seems to me to be twofold more grounds of reasons to hope for the Salvation of such common Papists, than of you Quakers.” The errors of Roman Catholic people were the result of the delusions visited on them by their clergy, teachings sincerely believed by gullible, ignorant common people. There was hope for them because the truth of Scripture, when finally taught correctly, could overcome this delusion. The errors of the Friends were far worse because they were caused by deliberate perversion of the Scriptures by those who were once knowledgeable of the Truth but had turned willingly toward wickedness. For them he believed there was little hope, but, as a gapman, he was willing to reach out to them through “A Call To The Quakers To Come Out of Mystery Babylon”, as a heading in his “Thesis” read.

Adams effectively, if perhaps erroneously, contrasted Roman Catholics and Friends in this duality of ignorance versus self-delusion, basing his assessment of the two theological approaches on his own biased understanding. While Catholics transgressed the Second Commandment in their manner of worship, Quakers violated the

capture, Downs was “grossly insulted and abused” by his captors for not dancing for their entertainment. While Hanson and his eldest daughter were at the Quaker meeting house, warriors entered his house, killed and scalped two of his children, and kidnapped his wife and nursing new-born, two daughters and a son, and a nurse. There is a small monument to the raid on the Hanson house along Route 155 in Madbury, on the “back way” from Durham to Dover.

First Commandment of the Moral Law, in changing the Object of Divine Worship. For the Quakers affirm the Light within, which ... is no other than a Light of the Moral Law in the Conscience by Nature, and is consequently but a creature which is worse[,] their light is the evil Spirit ..., yet affirm to be GOD and to be CHRIST, and to adore it as such : which Damnable heresy, is poysoning their strongly deluded & Defiled Minds to believe this lie ... 64

Catholics, he continued, at least “own & acknowledge” the Scriptures as the Word of God and as a guide for their lives, even though the clergy withheld their use of it in everyday life, but the Quakers considered it a dead letter compared to the Inner Light, and unnecessary for daily living. Likewise, Catholics recognized their sinfulness and their need for a savior, but “the Deluded Quakers are so whole in their own eyes, they see not their need of the True Christ ... .” “Serious Papists” prayed regularly and privately, in their families and corporately, but the “heathenish Quakers very seldom perform the Christian duty of prayer, except when their Spirit of Worse errour moves them to it ... .” Catholics also recognized and submitted to the Ordinances of Baptism and Communion, “altho’ they circumstancially erre in the manner of administering them. But The Presumptuous Quakers do blasphemously deny.” To their credit, Catholics did honor and esteem their learned clergy, although they followed them into error when called. “But the Much more Rebellious and Erroneous Quakers ... do make Priests of the lowest of the People, of the most unlearned, yea even of Jezebel Women suffering them to teach and seduce, yea also unlearned and crafty men who creep into houses, leading captive Silly women laden with iniquity, led away with diverse lusts ... .” The Quakers’ final error was to refuse to sanctify the Sabbath on the first day of the week, keeping it only for “conveniency, and custome.” The Catholics at least recognized the Sabbath as set aside

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and holy, even if they did not keep it perfectly. Almost as an afterthought, Adams added one additional difference that marked Quakers as more dangerous to the common good than Catholics: their refusal to honor men and their authority in socially acceptable ways. They would not ascribe “suitable Titles of Honour to men especially superiors”, either clergy or magistrates. “But ye most ill bred Quakers, who ordinarily shew no more manners in your words or actions than the very Indians the Wild Heathen; yea the Ethyopians the Negroes I have Seen in their own countreys shew more manners and breeding than you Quakers. Herein ye are the most bruitish of all Mankind.” It would appear the Friends refused to show him the respect he expected from laypeople.

In his “Theosophical Thesis”, Adams identified the Anabaptists as the “Fourth Sort or Sect of Mankind, Who Profess themselves to be The People OF GOD ... .” In South Carolina, his dispute with William Screven, who founded the church considered by many to be the progenitor of all Southern Baptist churches today, gave him first-hand knowledge of Baptist doctrine and polity, as well as many reasons to be against this sect. He undoubtedly came into contact with the Baptist Church at Kittery on occasion, since one road to York and his friend and classmate, Father Samuel Moody, passed right through the village. It is also clear that, like many of his generation, he continued to besmirch the Baptists of the early eighteenth century with the memory of the Anabaptists of sixteenth-century Münster, whose theft, murder, and rapine had made the word Anabaptist a by-word and a curse even two centuries later. He identified contemporary versions, such as “Sabbatarian Baptists, who keep the Seventh day Sabbath,

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65 Ibid., 21-4.

66 Ibid., 26-7.
Antisabbatarians who are against keeping any Sabbath at all, as I understand, &c Baptists who dip themselves, and Separate Baptists who will have no communion in any religious worship with any but those of their own Sect.” Unfortunately, the scrap of his Thesis pertaining to Anabaptists ends just when he was admitting that “many of the Modern Anabaptists are not like the Ancient & Original baptists, blasphemous and wicked in their principles and practices as they, but much more sound in their fundamentals, and more sober in their Conversation ... .” It is not possible now to know what Adams thought they must do to become truly “The People OF GOD”.67

Adams was fearless, although at times perhaps misguided, in his disputation, taking on any situation that even suggested injustice or unrighteousness to him. He took seriously his charge as pastor of his flock to watch over the sheep of his pasture and confront evil wherever and whenever necessary. He was also acutely aware of his clerical status and countenanced no suggestion of disrespect to his calling or his person. This is nowhere better demonstrated than in his on-going battle with the most influential family at Oyster River, that of Colonel James Davis, Justice of the Peace, and his wife, Elizabeth Chesley Davis.68 It is perhaps unknowable when and for what reason their disagreement began. Bad feelings between Adams and Davis possibly originated in the early days of his pastorate, since the two were on opposite sides of the great dispute between Durham Falls and Durham Point people over the site of the meeting house. Perhaps Adams objected that Davis would not become a member of his church. Perhaps he resented a figure who could wield greater power or influence among his flock than he

67 Ibid., 28-30.

68 For more biographical information, see Stackpole, Thompson, and Meserve, History of Durham, 1: 292-293; and 2: 51-2 and 94-7.
could. On the other hand, Davis could easily have considered Adams an upstart, the son of a tradesman, one too sure of his own opinions and too willing to speak fervently and in no uncertain terms when angered. Whatever the reason, their on-going feud took place in one form or another for very nearly the next 30 years. 69

A paternity suit pressed by Sobriety Thomas in 1721 against Thomas Davis, the JP’s second son, provided yet another reason for the two to feud. 70 It is curious that Adams made no specific mention about the suit in his “Narrative,” but there is an extant letter addressed to the Rev. Jonathan Cushing at Cocheco that, besides frankly detailing some quite serious ethical allegations against both Judge and Mrs. Davis, also provides insight into the nature of the feud and the character and personality of Adams. 71 Adams sent this letter to his colleague when he learned the Davises intended to become full

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69 Adams died in 1748 at age 72 and Davis in 1749 at age 86. They apparently battled until the very end.

70 Sobriety Thomas first approached Elizabeth Davis in Jan. 1721, claiming she was pregnant with Thomas’ child and that he had promised to marry her. Young Davis denied the accusation. The following day, the mother went with her 30-year old son to confront the young woman at her grandmother’s home, but the young woman could only cower before the imperious matron. Realizing she would receive no help from any member of that family, she filed suit in Exeter before Samuel Thing, Justice of the Peace, rather than before Judge Davis. The suit came before the bench in Sept. 1721 after the baby’s birth in early Apr. 1721. While there were witnesses who attested to the young woman’s previously demonstrated lack of virtue, far more important to her case was the testimony of Anne Hilton, the midwife mentioned earlier, who swore Sobriety had accused Thomas Davis several times during her labor of being the child’s father. As was believed then, the time to test paternity was during the woman’s travail, since she would not lie to prevent disclosure during this period of intense pain and emotion. Thomas immediately filed an appeal, basing it on the fact that Midwife Hilton had not examined Sobriety under oath. Denying the appeal, the court found that an oath was unnecessary, since the evidence was in agreement with the “sense and meaning of the Law in the common use.” He was ordered to pay a half-sovereign every week until the child reached seven years of age, over £45 in support during that period. Manuscript in the New Hampshire State Archives, Case Number 17453. Ulrich provides interesting insights into this suit in “Psalm-tunes, Periwigs, and Bastards,” 273-76. See Ulrich’s exploration of the world of colonial midwifery in the following works: A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812 (New York, 1990); and “The Living Mother of a Living Child: Midwifery and Mortality in Post-Revolutionary New England,” WMQ, 3d Series, 46 (January 1989): 27-48.

71 All references in the following paragraphs to this letter to Cushing will be subsumed under the following citation: [Adams], “Ecclesiastical document relating to Durham, 1723,” edited by Nathaniel Bouton, et al., Documents and Records Relating to New Hampshire, 1623-1800, 40 vols. (Concord, Manchester, and Nashua, N.H., 1867-1943), 9: 235-7. Hereafter cited as NHSP.
members of the church in Dover. He referenced the Platform to justify entering “my objection against them for scandalous crimes until their publick confession & reformation[.]” Colonel Davis was guilty of four “crimes” that disqualified him from membership: hypocrisy over disputes about land, “Sacrilegious fraud” as the “ring leader of the point peoples” who had withheld £16 of his first year’s salary, “Sacrilegious covetousness” of the parsonage land he wanted for his son Daniel, and using his judicial position for gaining a measure of revenge against “his own legal minister”. The nature of these charges suggests Adams viewed Davis’ activities as the use of legitimate power for illegitimate purposes.

The four “crimes” of Elizabeth Davis, however, were those of a woman who usurped the legitimate authority of men for her own illegitimate ends. Three of those related directly to the paternity suit. First, she refused to remain silent in church by “railing against the said minister publickly at the church meeting in the meeting house by saying that the said minister told a lie in the pulpit about Sobriety Thomas &c.” Her objection to Adams’ comments directed at her in this sermon earned her a session before the church disciplinary apparatus. He was appalled at her “profane mockery at Christ’s ordinance of a church meeting for discipline by her saying in a way of derision theres going to be another caball now ... .” Bad enough she would not submit to legitimate ecclesiastical authority, she also committed the crime of “being disorderly as a busy body at every one of her husbands Courts to be his advisor or intermeddler in his passing judgment in any case as if he should regard her more than his oath the Law or evidence ... .” Finally, she had ensnared “her son Thomas into so many denials of any such concernment with Sobriety Thomas in all that Scandalous business.”
Adams declared to Cushing that he had done the only thing he could given these circumstances: he followed Scriptural injunctions and *Platform* procedures concerning those who would not submit to proper authority and "both of them laid under the Censure of his pastoral rejection as unbaptized heathen man & woman as Warranted by the law of Christ ...." On 22 October 1723, he noted in his church records that this censure was spoken before the gathered church, having "rejected publickly All Barren Figg tree Professors of above 3 years standing in the Covenant of Baptism, being Adult. and all those 6 sorts in 1 Cor. 5: 11." This is certainly a reference to Elizabeth Davis, whom Adams had baptized on 1 November 1719, almost four years before. The letter to Cushing suggests, however, the censure may have extended to a number of the Davis children, too: "For which *cum multis aliis & c* as baptized Children of the covenant by their proper minister they are ... laid under the Censure ...." Adams made it clear to Cushing as he closed his letter that he "must suppose in charity for your church by the receiving such among you would not dare to transgresse these written orders in the Apostolick Law of Christ." Undoubtedly, he was much chagrined when the Dover Church admitted the Davises on 24 November 1723, despite these "written orders".

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72 "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." It would appear from this list of "crimes" that the Davis family had managed to fall into most of the six categories. It is interesting that Adams attributed "the Barren Figg trees in the vineyard of my flock", as well as periwigs and hoops, as causes of the Indian War. "Narrative," p. 15.

73 Hugh Adams, "Church Records of the Rev. Hugh Adams," edited by Samuel C. Adams, *NEHGR* 23 (April 1869): 178-81; 23 (July 1869): 297-9; 24 (January 1870): 27-9; 30 (January 1876): 59-62; 32 (April 1878): 133-7; 33 (January 1879): 80; 33 (July 1879): 345-9. This record is found in 33: 349. In 1723 most of the five children baptized with their mother in 1719 would have been adults: James (34), Hannah (24), Ephraim (23), and Elizabeth (22); he may have included Phebe (17), however. Ibid., 30: 59. In the church records, Adams identified James and Ephraim as the sons of James and Elizabeth, and Hannah, Elizabeth, and Phebe as "maidens". There can be little doubt that these three were the daughters of James and Elizabeth.
Adams was a dedicated and caring pastor and tending to the spiritual and temporal needs of his flock around the village would have been a driving force in his life. Yet he was combative by nature as well as jealous for his professional and personal rights. Having entered into a community already divided by geographical divisions—the Point versus the Falls—and quite likely political divisions—between those aligned with James Davis and his associates in the provincial government and the local yeoman with their more prosaic interests—Adams could do nothing else but take sides. Choosing the side opposed to the powerful and influential Davis Family quite naturally led to a host of other difficulties for Adams, the single greatest of which was his perennial difficulty collecting his salary. What little is known about Adams after 1725 comes from a series of petitions and litigation for redress of his grievances from the late 1730s and early 1740s. These provide enough detail to indicate how little Adams changed as he approached old age. If anything, he became more querulous. They also permit us to trace his influence upon his flock up to and beyond the settling of the Reverend Nicholas Gilman of Exeter.

Adams wrote a lengthy petition, probably early in 1738, that appealed directly to Governor Jonathan Belcher to solve a long-standing grievance about arrears in pay and benefits. This provides a good deal of information about Adams’ tenure in Oyster River between 1725 and 1740.74 Beginning with a brief summary of the agreement between town and minister (which, he added, the parish clerk, John Smith,75 and subsequent clerks


75 There is an interesting reference to Smith in Adams’ “Narrative” which would indicate this failure to insert the contract into the records was no mere administrative oversight. This petition mentions Smith by name and that he had died in 1722. The “Narrative” does not mention him by name, but does indicate “Our Then Parish Clerk Anno 1722, having a year or two before been over quarreling against and deriding my Doctrine and Ministry, most implacably, at last published a libell written with his own hand unjustly to Defame and Reproach me, in order to prejudice my hearers against me.” p. 20. Adams’ response then was to lay the document before God in prayer, following the example of King Hezekiah in Isaiah 37:14,
had never entered into the records), he explained the town had agreed to pay him £104 per year, paid semi-annually during the first week of April and October. Not once, he averred, during his 21 years of pastoral care had the town paid him the total amount due, let alone paid it on time. In fact, his post-harvest payment came upwards of three months late, causing him frequently to borrow money to buy provisions at inflated prices. 76

Worse yet, he claimed, since prices for necessities of life had doubled in those years, his salary was worth only about £36 per year, despite a tripling of ratable property. "Also this year 1738 the Majority of Said Durham Inhabitants have stopt their Ears at the Cry of the poor at their two publick Town meetings altho it's threaten'd they shall Cry themselves but shall not be heard."77

Adams' first request was to solidify the insecure legal ground upon which he found himself standing by asking the governor to require all town clerks since the beginning of his ministry to verify through oath or deed the town's original agreement with its pastor. He also asked him to order that the town pay his contractual salary in full and on time

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"Whereupon in the month of July in said year the officer of Death by an Horrible sickness did then summons him to The Tribunal of the SON OF GOD, to answer my Complaint, & for his other iniquities ... ." p. 20. It is interesting to note John Smith was married to Elizabeth Buss, the daughter of the previous, non-settled, minister, John Buss, Sr., who had preceded Adams and had been reduced to poverty in old age because the parish would not support him adequately.

76 Adams wrote about the financial burdens that late payment caused "when the Price of provisions was raised at least 25 per Cent Dearer than at the Harvest or Ingathering thereof, which Delinquency of theirs in said 21 years hath been to the damage of said minister above £520 ... especially where he has been necessitated, rather than starve, to borrow considerable sums of money upon 6, 10, 15, & 20 Per Cent Interest yearly, & running on Interest upon Interest, yet unto this day, to his impoverishing oppression & sinking discouragement ... ." "Adams's Complaint," NHSP 11: 569. For discussions about the rise in commodity prices during this time, see Ruth Crandall, "Wholesale Commodity Prices at Boston, 1700-1795," in Wholesale Commodity Prices in the United States, 1700-1861, edited by Arthur Harrison Cole, (Cambridge, Mass., 1938), 3-8; and Roger W. Weiss, "The Issue of Paper Money in the American Colonies, 1720-1774," Journal of Economic History 30 (December 1970): 770-84.

77 Ibid. Adams' reference is to Proverbs 21:13. "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard."
with a penalty of 20 percent for withheld or late payments\textsuperscript{78} and that those who refused to pay their rates for the minister’s salary should be punished according to the law. While to this point his requests seemed more or less reasonable, his final request showed the existence of intra-village politics and intrigue, not to mention some of his bitter feelings about them. He requested that

Daniel Davis ... may be summoned & Judged ... for his sundry years trespassing upon & inclosing within his fence & detaining so forcibly from said Minister several years previous Possession thereof, Sundry Acres of Upland, & salt Marsh & Thatch bed, belonging to the Glebe Land or Parsonage, possessed by, Improved for, as also granted to, the Minister of said Parish or Town at least sixty years...

and the land returned to him for his use.\textsuperscript{79}

Instead of explaining how Daniel Davis and other “unjust Incroachers” had managed thus far to remain on his land for so long without retribution, he went on to express great surprise that his people should have shown such ingratitude to him considering how his spiritual ministrations had given them so much benefit. He described how it was his yearly covenant with the Lord for the past 13 years that had prevented further Indian attacks on the town. He also recalled how, in response to an “Antichristian Council Eclesiastical” that had “robbed him of the 50£ addition to his...

\textsuperscript{78} Adams justified this sum by referencing Leviticus 5:15-16 and Numbers 5:6-8. “If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the Lord; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the Lord a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering: And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him.” Leviticus 5:15-16. “Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty; Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the Lord, even to the priest; beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him.” Numbers 5:6-8.

\textsuperscript{79} “Adams’s Complaint,” \textit{NHSP} 11: 570. Adams had complained in his letter to Cushing in 1723 that Colonel Davis was then trying to use his influence to gain use of the glebe land for his son Daniel. It
Salary ... granted him the preceding year 1728,” he had responded to this insult by praying for a drought that lasted until his fasting and praying released the rains in time to recover “the languishing Corn & Grass & Fruits of the Trees, unto a considerable Harvest thereof ... .” Given these two signs from heaven he could not understand why they had not “fulfilled their Condition of honourably supporting their Minister ... .”

Adams’s petition was supposed to receive some consideration because its scheduled hearing by the Court of Appeals for Equity, meeting at Portsmouth in May, was postponed until July 1738. In preparation for his hearing, he drafted “A Declarative Agreement”, “Signed, sealed & delivered in the presence of Stephen Glasier and Eliphalet Daniel”, both of Durham, to Colonel Richard Waldron, Secretary of the Province, whose contents were astounding. In this document, he promised to follow the Biblical precedent found in Genesis 47:26, “that when any King’s Representatives in his Court of Equity, do and shall judge any case therein according to good conscience: The Fifth part of the sum justly granted in their decisive Judgment: should thus be distinctively remunerated” to them. Adams saw fit to name the price he expected to receive in back pay and allowances (plus interest): £1,858. He assisted “their Honours” by computing the “Fifth part” at “371£. 12s”, of which £71 12 would go to defray the costs of his suit, £200 to the governor, £40 to the Secretary, and £20 each to the three members “which may equitably judge in said case. ... And not as a bribe, is intended any part of said Fifth: But as a just tribute For Equitable judgment as required by the

appears that he succeeded rather well.

80 Ibid., 570-1. When Oyster River became the town of Durham in 1732, one of the first items of business was to divide up some of the common land. The list of those benefiting from this action contains 191 names, with grants ranging from one to twenty-five acres. It provides important clues about the relative standing of the recipients in the community and to determining the total number of ratable people.
Supreme JUDGE, As written in Rom. XIII. 4, 6. Adams also asked for "reasonable liberty of directing the Sherriff in levying the execution of the Equitable judgment, Upon the most blameable and able persons (or their estates) which have wilfully and unjustly occasioned such prosecution of said case; and that the innocent therein may suffer no wrong." In other words, he did not want to receive the arrears through a general assessment upon the common people, but by punishing those whom he considered his enemies in the town. Who else could these include but Colonel James Davis and his family and close allies, whom Adams believed had grown rich from their many positions of influence?

It appears that the minister's petition to Governor Belcher succeeded because Adams later referred to a letter from Colonel Waldron dated 27 November 1738, wherein the Secretary wrote "Agreeable to your [Adams'] Request, I have Copyed The Judgment which you Obtained against Your Parish &c ... ." Unfortunately for Adams, retribution

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81 "And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part; except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's." Genesis 47:26. "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. ... For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing." Romans 13:4,6. Adams would have Waldron believe he did not comprehend that money offered to judges before judgment could be considered attempted bribery. The minister surely would have understood the Greek word ἑλέους, translated "tribute" in Rom. 13:6, meant an individual tax assessment, not a free-will offering.

82 All quotations are from Adams, "Declarative Agreement," NHSP 5: 36-7, except where noted. A postscript suggests Adams may have given a bit of second thought as to the propriety of his declaration. Referring "This Instrument ... to your Honour's wisdom," he asked Waldron to show this document only to the governor and to Councilors Jotham Odiome, Joseph Sherburn, and Ellis Huske, all of whom he expected to concur with his petition, but otherwise it "be conceal'd prudently from every other living person." He finished by offering their share of the "tribute" to Waldron should the three gentlemen refuse to accept it. It is also interesting to note that the same date Adams wrote his "Declarative Agreement" he also petitioned Waldron and Belcher to remove Davis as justice of the peace in Durham and replace him with Joseph Drew, his son-in-law. He justified his request by explaining the "said town and parish, being (too long time) the majority of the inhabitation of each, sadly grown exceedingly vicious, disorderly, and unruly ... For want of such an overseer in said authority, to see the good Laws of this Province for regulation of such disorders duly prosecuted ... ." It seems "Col. D[avis] in our Town being now doting, superannuated, selfish, covetous, and partial, [was] utterly unqualified for such an office any longer; being grown so old and foolish, that he will be no more admonished ... ." "Petition of Hugh Adams, Minister at Durham," NHSP 5: 36.
came far more swiftly and unmercifully from his enemies in Durham than did the town’s repayment of back salary. Before an Ecclesiastical Council of eight ministers and twenty messengers from local churches and a large number of congregants that met in Durham on 24 January 1739, to investigate charges of making imprecatations, Adams “was Treacherously surprized with an Unexpected Allegation (In their Audience) made and so Proclaimed by Ephraim Davis ... .” The fifth son of James Davis accused Adams of attempting to bribe the governor and his council to win his case against the town and added that Waldron himself would appear before the Council if necessary to testify against him. The Council censured Adams, dismissing him from his pulpit for “supposed crimes of Imprecations ... .” This ruling appears disingenuous, not because the charges were false (after all, he had been cursing his enemies for years), but because the council may have been a public pretext for divulging the “Declarative Agreement” which the Davis party expected would finally rid themselves of their most visible and outspoken critic.

Adams was devastated by both his censure and a betrayal by someone he supposed was his friend. In a long letter to Waldron dated 11 April 1739, he described the provincial secretary’s disclosure of privileged information and the results of the Council, and reiterated that his “Bond” was not bribery, but a Scripturally-correct response to receiving justice.

Your communicating said Bond to ... Ephr. Davis was judged My Most Scandalous Crime for Unsettling Me; Whereby You’ve so Hurtfully Trespassed against and Despised Me ... . [Nonetheless,] I Forgive You And In Gratitude for all your former and latter Friendship to US, To Pray Acceptably For the Temporal and Eternal Welfare of Your Honourable Person and Family.
The poignancy of his letter was due in part to Adams' realization that a town and parish he had served for over 20 years no longer needed him. He may well have been disingenuous on his own behalf because he still needed the secretary's help. "I've not Received from Durham as Yet One Penny of said Judgment: Therefore, This is To Request Your Honour, To Draw out The Execution Thereof, And to Committ it To Mr. Sherrif [Eleazar] Russel ...." He seemed resigned, however, to his own dismissal: "If Colonell James Davis or's Son Ephraim or John Woodman, Lt Samuel Smith, or Any on that Side shall so bear Rule any longer: Then I Must Obey That Order in Mat.X.14 And Depart out of Said Town and This Province as soon as possible."83

Adams was in a most difficult position. An ecclesiastical council called under the auspices of the Platform had dismissed him from his pastorate after 22 years of service. Yet, he could not simply leave Durham without receiving his past-due salary and allowances; at 62 years old where could he go to start all over without them? Yet, how could this fiercely proud and combative man remain with the taunts of his victorious enemies to remind him of his ignominy? All he could do was petition once again to the civil powers which had already proven unsympathetic so many times in the past. It had been 14 months since the council had dismissed him and the town had still not "liberally" provided, as recommended, for him and his family as token of their long service to the town. So, he wrote yet another petition for assistance, which he presented on 6 February 1740.

"The Said Party's of's male-content people's non-compliance with their Share

83 All quotations are from Adams, "Letter of Hugh Adams to Richard Waldron," dated 11 Apr. 1739, unpublished manuscript in the Massachusetts Historical Society. It is also located in NHSP 5: 38-9. "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet." Matthew 10:14.
of Said Result has been so long an intollerable Oppression and Aggrievance to Your Petitioner and His Church Flock Yet Adhering To's Ministration, and To's Distressed Family which are yet in hopes of some Redress of Said Aggrievance to be had from Such Polytical Fathers ...

Two days later it was dismissed.\textsuperscript{84}

Adams' many supporters, "His Church Flock Yet Adhering To's Ministration," sought a different kind of solution. They drafted a petition, signed by 57 "Sundry of the Inhabitants of the Town of Durham", requesting Durham be divided into two parishes, one of which would settle Adams as its minister. The petitioners did "apprehend it would be a great Indecency if he who was once & so long the Minister of the said Town should have no other provision made for his Support than what the Law Provides for one of the poor of the Town and that he should be Reduced to a Necessity of Depending upon such a Subsistence." The town had discussed various solutions, yet there was none acceptable to both parties. There remained a large number who still wanted to "Sit under his Ministry and are willing to support him & his Family Suitable to his character & Station among them ...", yet they could not support him if they likewise had to support a second minister in the town. They asked only that they be excused from double taxation during the life of Adams, whereupon, presumably, the two parishes would become one again. They thought this a suitable solution: their long-serving pastor would have his just reward and the town could be at peace. Once again, the legislature dismissed the petition, although, Waldron noted in the journal, a quorum of councilors voted four to four to concur with this dismissal.\textsuperscript{85} The old man still had some sympathy in high places.


\textsuperscript{85} "Petition of Francis Mathes and others for a new parish in Durham," \textit{NHSP} 9: 238-40. Perhaps the oldest of the petitioners recalled their neglect of another superannuated pastor had resulted in similar legal action. John Buss, Sr., although not the town's settled minister, served the spiritual and physical needs of Oyster River for 40 years, and petitioned Governor Samuel Shute in 1718 to require the town to support him in his
This last attempt to keep him as a pastor in Durham, even if not the pastor, failed, but this did not mean the end of his presence or influence there. Both of these—his physical presence and the lingering legacy of his powerful personality—had significant effects upon the town throughout the Great Awakening period—the 1740s. The factionalism would remain and contribute to the catastrophe of the ensuing pastorate and Adams’ enthusiastic approach to theology and practical issues of living would express themselves in a congregation that became famous as a radical New Light faction. By the time of this last petition on Adams’ behalf, the majority of the town leaders were already beginning to woo Nicholas Gilman of Exeter as their next pastor, a young man who would become notorious as the choreographer of the “Durham Dancers”.

During his long pastorate, Adams indelibly stamped his important and irascible personality upon the people of Durham, preparing them in unexpected and unanticipated ways for the Great Awakening. He carried with him a wide variety of experiences in frontier living, desirable skills in ministry to both souls and bodies, and a willingness to sacrifice himself for the good of the people God placed in his hands. He also carried with him some deep hurts and character weaknesses that hindered his ministry: a disputatious spirit that would rather be right than charitable; a litigious nature that must demand justice no matter what the cost, whether in heaven or on earth; a personal history of rejection that could make him react unmercifully against those who disagreed with him;

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old age. “But being now advanced to Seventy Eight years of age and encompassed with a great many infirmities, and unable to perform the usual Exercise of the Ministry the People have not only calld another Minister but stoped their hands from my Subsistence, where upon he is greatly reduced having neither bread to eat nor Sufficient Cloathing to encounter the approaching Winter.” Stackpole, Thompson, and Meserve, History of Durham, 1: 172.

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86 Clark popularized the image of the Durham congregation as one in which dancing and other physical manifestations of spiritual activity could be found in abundance. Clark, “Nicholas Gilman.”
and an annoying habit of arrogating to himself the apostolic authority to bind and loose
the power of heaven against his enemies. Perhaps most deleterious to the future ministry
of Nicholas Gilman was Adams' uncanny ability to polarize any group of people into
those who loved and followed him, and those who despised and rejected him.

It is difficult to summarize swiftly or accurately the mind and personality of a man
such as the Reverend Hugh Adams. Perhaps the word "zealous," which was frequently
applied to him by his contemporaries, is suitable. Wholly orthodox in Calvinistic
theology and New England Congregational polity, he could hardly be distinguished from
his contemporaries in the understanding or performance of his duties as a settled minister.
He baptized his people when new born, instructed them in their catechism and Christian
responsibilities, visited and tended them in sickness, married them into the earthly
covenant so closely identified with Christ's relationship to His church, reproved them
when their conduct required it, and sent them off to their eternal home with the solemnity
of Christian burial. He was perhaps too much aware of his own professional authority
and prestige at times, but this was in itself not so unusual when comparing him to many
of his contemporaries. He was certainly not afraid to take on powerful secular figures if
he considered their behavior unrighteous. He also fulfilled the expectations of laypeople
by speaking fearlessly from the pulpit about important issues of the day. While never
holding a secular position in town affairs, as was only proper for a man of God, he played
an important role in town matters by his leadership in identifying and clarifying options
for his people. All in all, he was an outstanding example of the frontier parson of early
eighteenth-century colonial New England. Over nearly 25 years, Adams created an
expectation among Durham people that their pastor should be zealously dedicated to the
pursuit of godliness, a strong and mature leader with decided opinions in all kinds of village *contretemps*, and a man of spiritual authority who kept tight reins on the activities and behavior of those people who had won admission to his church by the strength of their salvation experience and by owning the covenant of the Durham Church. These good and acceptable qualities should have made for a long and successful ministry, but they did not because of aspects of his personality that offset the benefits of his strength of character.

Another contemporary word that described Adams was “eccentric”. Modern readers of his “Narrative” would be excused if they used the term in its pejorative, dismissive meaning. His ideas and actions to them might suggest a colonial Elmer Gantry who bent the Scriptures to delude the senseless (or was it “pence-less”) of their pocket-change. This would be most unfair, however; his contemporaries took him most seriously, using “eccentric” to mean someone who deviates from acceptable behavioral norms. True, Adams was orthodox, but what distinguished him from his peers was the zeal with which he carried out his responsibilities. Not that zeal itself was wrong, but the excess to which he expressed his beliefs made him open to a charge of enthusiasm, a most serious one in his day. While Adams frequently denied these charges, his willingness to discern and accept direct inspiration from the Holy Spirit and the extent to which he applied this understanding to everyday situations was what justified the use of that term by his clerical brothers. Added to this eccentric behavior must also be his habit of considering anyone who doubted the appropriateness of his interpretation as a personal enemy of both Jesus Christ and himself. People who did not listen to his warnings did not deserve pity, he thought, but whatever the consequences of their sin demanded.
Another aspect of his eccentricity was his willingness to arrogate to himself the authority to suspend natural law or historical process, as was his right, be believed, by virtue of his position as God’s gapman on the northern frontier. His almost puerile inability to anticipate the effect of his strange behavior and doctrines on others frequently resulted in misunderstandings and continued controversy. Unfortunately, his weaknesses in personality had as much effect on the people of Durham as did his many better qualities. By the time of the Great Awakening, he had helped create a parish in which supernatural manifestations, particularly those of a prophetic nature and signs and wonders, were not considered heretical or unusual.

While Adams continued to retain a strong grip upon community and church affairs, the people remained constrained. With his dismissal and the settling of a minister with a far milder and iredic disposition, not to mention a greater delicacy of health, the worst excesses could not be contained for long. Few historians who have looked upon the short but eventful ministry of the Reverend Nicholas Gilman and marveled over the fanaticism of the Durham church have considering the role Adams played in preconditioning the town to react to the impulses of the Great Awakening in particular ways. Most of the seven charges of conservatives against revivalists outlined by Leonard W. Labaree over 50 years ago—the forsaking of the traditional creed and doctrine for “secret impulses”, censoriousness, extempore preaching, emotionalism, and disruption of church unity and discipline—could have been as justly laid at the feet of Hugh Adams as they have been at

87 The noticeable exception has been Clark, who has correctly identified Adams as having “already planted the intoxicating seeds of enthusiasm” in the town before Gilman arrived. He has noted that the pressures and struggles of frontier existence made evangelical religion a welcomed outlet to the people of Durham. Ibid., 47.
those of Nicholas Gilman. As this study will now show, rather than being a catalyst for New Light fervor in Durham and the surrounding areas, Gilman was to some extant a victim of forces too powerful for his delicate spirit, sickly body, and professional inexperience to resist or prevent.

The Reverend Nicholas Gilman was born in Exeter in 1708, the fifth son of Judge Nicholas Gilman and Sarah Clark of Newbury. He was sent to his mother’s home town at the age of eight to begin preparations for matriculation at Harvard College. While at the college, he suffered from ill health that would be his bane throughout life and began a life-long application of folk medicine to relieve the symptoms of a wide variety of illnesses. From a few extant scraps of poetry and a student-produced imitation of Addison and Steele, as well as from his interest in Alexander Pope, John Bunyan, and Sir Isaac Newton, it would appear that he had eclectic tastes in reading and a love for professional camaraderie associated with college life. He graduated fourteenth in a class of forty in 1724 and almost immediately began to teach school at Stratham, New Hampshire, just east of Exeter. He became a full member of the Exeter Church under the ministry of the Reverend John Odlin in the fall of 1724, from whom he began to learn the rudiments of the clerical profession. Leaving Stratham to teach school in Exeter in 1725, he continued his studies in divinity and preached his first sermons at Kingston in April

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88 Leonard W. Labaree, “The Conservative Attitude Toward the Great Awakening,” *WMQ*, 3d Series, 1 (October 1944): 335-7. The other two charges were itinerant preaching and evangelism, and distraction of the laity from their daily temporal duties. Adams apparently traded pulpits with other ministers, but it is doubtful that he ever itinerated. One might argue that his ability to get caught up in petty squabbles might distract himself and his parishioners away from their work, but this is hardly what Labaree meant.

89 Information for this biographical sketch comes from the following sources: *SHG* 7: 338-44; and Arthur Gilman, *The Gilman Family* (Albany, NY, 1869), 59-64. The following discussion of Gilman’s role in Durham is also greatly informed by entries from his diary, which is in the collections of the New Hampshire Historical Society. This study uses an unpublished transcription of the diary. See William Kidder, “Diary of Nicholas Gilman,” (Master’s thesis, University of New Hampshire, 1972). Hereafter cited as *Gilman*. 
1727 and then in May at Exeter. He took the master of arts degree at commencement a month later.

As a member of a very prosperous and influential family, Gilman did not have to find a church in which to settle immediately. For fifteen years following graduation, he devoted his time to private business interests, teaching school in Exeter, and substituting for ministers in the local area. He frequently preached at the Reverend Nathaniel Gookin’s church at Hampton and occasionally filled the Reverend Ward Clark’s Kingston pulpit during the year of his friend’s final illness. Gilman did have opportunities to settle at local churches. When the Newmarket parish separated from Exeter in 1728, he declined an invitation to settle there at a salary of £100, as well as an offer from the church at Southborough, Massachusetts. In 1734, he preached for four months to a church gathered at “Drinkwater”, later Kensington, New Hampshire. Gilman left no indication why he chose not to enter the ministry full-time in the years following his graduation. Health was very likely a primary reason; the need to earn a living certainly was not, considering the value of his personal estate. Even his marriage to Mary Thing in 1730 and the birth of four sons during the ensuing decade did not require him to find a pulpit. Considering his chronically delicate health, his personal and family prosperity, and his reluctance to answer any call to the pulpit, it is surprising that when he did enter the full-time ministry it should be in Durham, New Hampshire.

The dismissal of Hugh Adams from his pulpit left a spiritual vacuum in the life of the town that would have to be filled as quickly as possible if it were to avoid further

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90 The inventory of Gilman’s estate taken by John Lord and John Gilman, III, on 1 Sept. 1748, indicated a net worth of £3,237 13s 4d. NHSP 33: 570. The estate of his father, Judge Nicholas, taken in April and May 1749 by Theophilus Smith and Benjamin Thing, was assessed at £33,931 7s 10d. Ibid., 668.
asperity and division. Well aware of their need to agree on Adams’ replacement, the people formed a committee with representatives from the three areas of settlement within the Durham parish: Lieutenant Jonathan Thompson from the Falls, Joseph Wheeler from the Point, and Benjamin Smith from Lubberland, an area in the south of Durham near the Newmarket line.\(^9^1\) It is unknown when Gilman first preached to the people in Durham, but the parish voted to call him to the ministry on 14 September 1739, with a rather generous salary package, considering the parsimony with which the town had treated first John Buss and then Hugh Adams.\(^9^2\)

Despite this call, Gilman refused to commit himself immediately. Initially, he may have been waiting to hear if the New North Church in Boston would call him to fill the position of assistant to the Reverend John Webb left vacant and disputed since the death of the Reverend Peter Thacher in February 1739. While Gilman does not reveal his purpose for traveling to Boston in January 1740, he spent nearly three weeks there obviously cultivating this professional opportunity. He preached on consecutive Sundays at New North Church and then once for the Reverend Thomas Prentice at Charlestown. He met frequently for meals or discussions with prominent New North members, including Elder Thomas Baker, Deacon Josiah Langdon, the Parkman brothers—Samuel,

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\(^{9^1}\) See Map 1 on page 261.

\(^{9^2}\) The parish promised to pay him a starting salary of £100 the first year, with increases of £10 per year for the first four years, then a final salary of £150, all linked to the rate of inflation for durable goods in 1739. Gilman also agreed to a lower salary in money should the prices for goods fall. *A Family History in Letters and Documents*, edited by Mrs. Charles P. Noyes, (St. Paul, Minn., 1919): 39-41. The church also offered to contribute to his initial move such staples as 500 pounds of pork and 600 pounds of beef; 10 bushels of wheat, 15 bushels of winter rye, and 30 bushels of Indian corn; and 10 bushels of malt for beer, 10 barrels of cider, several gallons of rum or wine. The parish appears to have attempted to keep its promise: Gilman noted in his diary that he had “received of Durham £31 — so that in the Whole have received £103 10s 0d —”. *Gilman*, 27 Oct. 1740, 150.
Elias, and William—and William Owen.93 Two weeks after returning to Exeter, he received letters from Samuel Parkman and Peter Thomas, “Members of the New North Church in Boston[,] representing their affection to Me ...”, whom Gilman added “represent the Present divided state of the Church ... .” Over the next two months Parkman kept Gilman informed by letter or in person of the current state of the search for an assistant. During his visit to Exeter in March, Parkman’s discussion of “the present divided state of the Church” caused Gilman to pray, “May they be happily United in Choice of a Pastor,” rather suggesting his own hope was dwindling somewhat. A letter from Parkman received on 2 May laid to rest what hope remained, giving an “account that the New North Church in Boston ... voted that Mr. [Daniel] Rogers and [Ebenezer] Bridge should preach ther each, his two months, which will conclude in August ... .”94

Putting aside any disappointment from this lost opportunity, Gilman still had to contend with a far more difficult problem: the Durham Church’s inability to resolve the conflict originating with the Adams ministry and to avoid the factionalism that had become synonymous with it. Adams was apparently currying the favor of the Durham Point residents, who responded in February 1740 with the petition signed by 57 residents requesting a new parish mentioned earlier. Gilman surely realized this petition would mean great difficulty for his pastorate.95 While he recorded no incidents in his diary

93 See Ibid., 66-75, for his busy itinerary.

94 Ibid., 15 Feb. 1740, 80; 21 Mar. 1740, 89; 2 May 1740, 105-6. In the end, neither man was settled at New North Church. Rogers began itinerating throughout New England and beyond at this point. Later, he was ordained by Gilman and others as a “minister-at-large” at York and later became the first pastor of the Exeter Separate Church. By the time of the vote, he had already left to follow George Whitefield. Bridge became the settled pastor at Chelmsford in 1741. New North finally chose Andrew Eliot as Webb’s colleague in 1742.

95 An entry in Gilman’s diary less than two weeks after this petition was filed suggests that he tried to decline the invitation to settle in Durham, undoubtedly because of the divisions among the people. “Treated with the Committee of Durham, They are Unwilling to receive a Negative Answer to the
during 1740, those he mentioned in 1741 indicate significant resistance from the Point people. In January 1741, “Three Men from Durham[,] Opposers of My Settlement[,] brought a request, in writing to me.” This was followed nearly a month later by “a Conference with Durham Point People” from which he had “no great matter of edification.”

Meanwhile, the committee appointed to secure his settlement continued to plight its troth. Jonathan Thompson visited with Gilman, and rode to and from Exeter with him, undoubtedly applying personal persuasion. In an obvious attempt to satisfy Gilman’s worldly needs, the church worked through the winter of 1740-41 to finish the parsonage begun in 1739 and to raise a barn for their new pastor. The church also continued to pay him regularly: he recorded the receipt of over £45 in April. Having failed to settle in Boston, Gilman frequently met with the Durham settlement committee throughout the spring and early summer of 1741 and, by July, had agreed “if Nothing intervenes to prevent, that I remove my Family to Durham.” He sent his household goods to Durham from Exeter by gundalow in early October and followed by chaise with his wife and son Josiah a few days later.

Having agreed to settle in Durham, Gilman immediately set about to reach some kind of modus vivendi with his predecessor, Hugh Adams, who continued to be a major irritant. Gilman was well aware of at least the more recent history in the town’s dealing...
with Adams, and his approach to dealing with his predecessor seemed simple and straightforward: without leaving Adams any doubt who was now to be the spiritual leader of the Durham people, Gilman reached out with a kind of professional cordiality. Adams attended divine worship in November and Gilman undoubtedly offered polite words at the time. In December, the new pastor dined with his predecessor and followed up this with a “friendly visit” in March 1742, less than two weeks after his ordination. But theirs could never be a personal friendship and Gilman proved longsuffering with Adams’ eccentricities, particularly when the revival came to Durham and Adams sought some role in its progress. He stood by while Adams preached the funeral sermon for his old friend, Capt. Nathaniel Hill, in late February and his daughter-in-law, Phebe Chesley Adams, in early March 1743. This forbearance was understandable. When Adams appointed a lecture at Joseph Dudy’s house in June for the same time the new pastor was to preach there, Gilman permitted the older man to preach first. He even saved his observation, “tis remarkable,” for his diary.100 Even more remarkable was that at a town meeting at the end of March, the people voted that “Mr. Hugh Adams shall have twenty pounds of the new issue bills of credit yearly during his abode in the town of Durham, Provided he set down satisfied and Preach no more in said town for the futer ... .”101 But, ever defiant, the old parson would not be silenced for any amount of filthy lucre.

Lucre, in the form of back salary and allowances, however, continued to be the subject of legal action. A series of law suits against the town for back salary finally met with success in May 1743 when the Supreme Court of Appeals found in Adams’ favor to

100 Ibid., 15 Nov. 1741, 229; 19 Dec. 1741, 234; 16 Mar. 1742, 255; 3 Mar. 1743, 312; 7 June 1743, 324.

the amount of £66 8s. When he had still not received his money by September, the Court
issued a warrant to the sheriff to collect it and threatened all ratepayers with incarceration
if they failed to meet their responsibilities. Before Sheriff Thomas Packer could serve the
warrant, the town ordered a legally constituted meeting to discuss the matter for 19
September, which it promptly postponed until 3 October. It then voted to charge the
selectmen with laying assessments on the inhabitants to collect £100 to cover all costs of
the action. The town seemed in no great hurry to do its duty because in late December it
held yet another meeting that again agreed to raise £100. When Constable Daniel
Meader was ordered to collect the money for settlement, he found himself trapped
between his duty to collect the tax and violation of provincial law if he did. In his
petition to the General Assembly in February 1745, he informed the government how the
town “in a Covert disguised manner purposely concealing the use & design to which it
was to be applied with an Intent as your Petitioner Conceives both to oblige him to
Collect it & the Quakers to pay a part of it who are Exempted by law from paying any
part of [a minister’s salary] … .” Faced with having to pay two ministers that year, the
town fathers had attempted to raise general funds from which to pay Gilman and have all
inhabitants pay for Adams’ judgment.102 Adams probably did not receive the satisfaction
of receiving all due to him during his lifetime, since it was not until May 1751 when a
committee, appointed in December 1748, finally agreed with Susannah Adams that £262

102 For the legal documents involved in this dispute, see NHSP 9: 573-5. The Meader petition is found in
NHSP 9:241-2. It was still not considered in December of that year. NHSP 9: 396. Gilman mentioned
two of the town meetings in his diary: 19 Sept. 1743, 339; and 26 Dec. 1743, 350. In the first entry, he
mistakenly wrote the total amount was £225; perhaps he thought the town would vote to collect his own
salary. Adams also sued Gilman for misappropriation of 10 acres of parsonage land in Mar. 1744.
Gilman, 2 Mar. 1744, 359.
old tenor would settle the town’s debt to her deceased husband. The committee refused to pay for his funeral expenses, however.\footnote{Stackpole, Thompson, and Meserve, \textit{History of Durham}, 2: 189.}

Dr. Samuel Adams, Hugh’s son, also proved to be a constant irritant for Gilman, even though he was one of the 23 men who indicated his desire for the new pastor’s settlement. Diary entries suggest the doctor had his father’s hot temper and lust for disputation. There were terse mentions of having “some words in Publick with Dr. Adams” in March 1742 and a “Controversy [that] arose with Dr. Adams” in May 1742. In each case, Gilman simply turned the final outcome over to God. In September, there was a church meeting called after the public lecture when “Dr. Adams Conduct in Publishing a Scandal of Dr. [Joseph] Atkinson [the other Durham doctor]—was considered and referred to a further hearing … .” Whether public censure was enough to convince Samuel for a time that silence was preferable is not clear, but the effect was certainly not permanent. In January 1744 the church observed a day of prayer and fasting and examined the case of “Dr. Adams for Slander, lying, Quarrelling, Contempt of Discipline etc.” and suspended him from membership.\footnote{\textit{Gilman}, 24 Mar. 1742, 256; 9 May 1742, 266; 8 Sept. 1742, 287; 27 Jan. 1744, 354. Unfortunately, Gilman does not clearly state the source of the doctor’s complaint. It is unlikely that the quarrel with Dr. Atkinson would be over a professional difference, but it is possible that Adams may have thought that Atkinson, as selectman, was somehow responsible for his father’s not receiving his back salary.}

Thus, when Gilman began his pastorate in Durham, he was faced with a far more difficult situation than adapting to his surroundings, getting to know his people and gaining their trust, and settling his family into village life. He was confronted immediately with the results of 25 years of village factionalism and the reality of having to replace a predecessor whose powerful eccentricities had preconditioned the people to
expect rather unorthodox behavior from their pastor. To make matters worse, that predecessor’s continued presence would only exacerbate that factionalism. Then, suddenly, he was confronted with another reality—a spiritual revival. It would be helpful to recount Gilman’s own spiritual transformation to suggest how it interacted with the influence of Hugh Adams’ pastorate on the Durham congregation.

Gilman did not emerge as a flaming New Light radical over night. The transition occurred slowly, beginning with a desire for personal spiritual renewal that would simply draw him closer to God. Once begun, he sought for a palpable and more intense manifestation of God’s presence in his life. Once convinced of the reality of God in his life, he next looked for ways to promote a similar experience for members of his congregation, followed quickly by sharing his own experiences with other ministers and their congregations. Simultaneously, he became aware of the growing spiritual revival throughout his native New England and beyond. The public press kept him well informed of the progress of the movement elsewhere and helped him to identify his own experiences with those of other Christians. Close relationships with ministers in his own association and those nearby only continued to confirm the reality of the revival. While he heard only occasional reports, his own experience served just to whet his appetite for

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105 This is not to say that Gilman’s spiritual sensitivity dates only from the revival period. John Corrigan describes the effect that Boston’s “catholick clergy” had on New England Congregationalism, particularly through the aegis of tutor, then President, John Leverett of Harvard College on future ministers. “Catholicks” were noted for their irenic disposition and their unwillingness to argue about indifferent things. Their theology stressed reason, purpose and unity in nature, and the fundamental orderliness and predictability of the world. They were noted for their belief in the acceptance of the human body as a gift from God and the need for human emotions to play a role in religious worship and practice. Sermons ought to be preached that raised human affections, particularly in a public setting. Gilman was a student during Leverett’s tenure and it is highly likely that the Durham minister’s theological views were shaped by the president’s catholicity. Corrigan, “Catholick Congregational Clergy and Public Piety,” Church History 60 (June 1991): 210-22. At the same time, the French instructor, Louis Langloiserie, was beginning to interest a number of students in the efficacy of spiritual dreams and visions. Perhaps Gilman’s interest in these spiritual manifestations dates from this time, too. SHG, 7: 555.
similar experiences for himself and his church. As he himself experienced the power of God in increasing measure, that appetite for spirituality was not sated, but increased. His transition to full radicalism was the result of a kind of spiritual gluttony that eventually knew no bounds, but only sought further opportunity to satisfy itself. What keyed that gluttony were the unrestrained acceptance of the revival on the part of his congregation, the result of the preconditioning by their previous minister, and his association with other radicals who encouraged him toward emotional excess. Before exploring these two factors it would be useful to look at the progress of the Great Awakening in the lives of both Gilman and his congregation.

The revival of religion in Durham began first in the heart of its pastor. The traditional tools of personal spiritual renewal—prayer and fasting, Scripture reading and meditation—helped Gilman to increase his spiritual sensitivity gradually throughout the two years leading up to a dramatic experience that may be viewed as the point when Gilman turned irrevocably toward the radical New Light position. He recorded this experience in his diary as follows:

1742 January 31. . . . I had more Joy than Usuall thro’ the Day, but when the Assembly was dismissd at Night, as I saw the people pressing to go out, I was movd to tell em that if I coud See them flocking to Heaven as they were from Meeting it woud make My Heart leap within me; upon hearing that they tumd about... We continued in religious Exersises all Night. Had the presence of the Lord with us in a very Wonderfull Manner—He was graciously pleasd to Reveall Himself to My Soul ... Blessed, for ever Blessed be God for his goodness to such a poor Self destroying Sinner ... Dear Jesus keep me safe, ... may I give all glory to thee and by thee to thine Eternal Father and Ever blessed Spirit—Amen.106

1742 January. we held on thro the Night, Blessing and Praising admiring and adoring God and the Redeemer—Sometimes Praying, then Singing, Exhorting advising and directing, and Rejoycing together in the Lord—it Seemd the

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Shortest and I think was the Sweetest Night that I have Seen ...  

This was only the climax of many less dramatic, yet just as important, spiritual experiences. First, there were the early stirrings: “O My Lord quicken Me with Life and Zeal.” Then, he felt a growing desire for greater personal holiness: “O My God let me not content my Self with a Partial reformation.” After months of searching, he confronted his Savior in a profound religious conversion: “I am Convinced that Christ is all in All to a Believer.” Finally, he exploded with ecstasy at the touch of the Holy Spirit upon his deepest self: “I was constrained to cry with a loud voice—Glory to God on high [!]—Glory to the Redeemer [!] ... for some considerable Time ....  

The Lord did then Anoint me with that Holy Anointing.” Gilman’s response to what he perceived to be the movement of God was highly personalized, the sum total of his own experience, his psychological and spiritual state of being, his training, and his willingness to respond to God’s touch on his life.

The Great Awakening revived an interest in the role of the Holy Spirit that ministers like Edward Wigglesworth believed had been fulfilled during the Apostolic era: the purveyor of “signs and wonders.” Old Lights were content to limit the Third


\[109\] The New Testament describes many supernatural manifestations that occurred during the early church era, including examples of miraculous healing, the raising of the dead, speaking in unknown languages, and speaking prophetic utterances. Since then, orthodox Christianity has frequently denied their continued existence as a legitimate expression of Christian spirituality, often averring that these were gifts that were required from God to establish the church in its infancy but which ceased to exist once the church survived early persecution. One of the ongoing difficulties for opponents has been to explain away similar recurring manifestations that have accompanied revivals for centuries. In Gilman’s time, Old Lights placed these manifestations on a kind of continuum, somewhere between the works of Satan and the fleshly acts of weak-minded enthusiasts. Most New Light supporters, while accepting that both explanations were likely true to some extent and in many cases, insisted that these manifestations were similar to those in the Scripture and that their appearance provided additional proof that God was moving mightily through the land. This controversy continues today, although opponents frequently support their arguments with explanations rooted more in psychology, sociology, and anthropology than in dogma or theology.
Person of the Trinity to the role of comforter and enlightener, but feared that physical, not
to mention supernatural, manifestations of ecstasy, which some interpreted as proof of the
Holy Spirit's presence, were actually manifestations of Satan's works. It is not
surprising, then, that Gilman, as he became more convinced of his New Light position,
should read tracts that explored the role and manifestations of the Holy Spirit. His
selections suggest that the key question for him was how to determine when ecstatic
experiences, both personal and those he witnessed, were genuine manifestations of the
movement of God's Spirit, and when they were Satan's counterfeits or the affectations of
over-wrought lay people. "Try the Spirits," the Scriptural admonition found in 1 John
4:1, was the rallying cry of both New Lights and Old Lights. Proponents of the New
Light pointed to dramatic conversions of hardened sinners, the increased awareness of
and desire for spiritual things, and growing church membership as adequate tests of the
presence of the Holy Spirit. Old Lights, however, looked to the irrational behavior and
claims of instant access to the mind of God, as well as their belief that signs and wonders
were a special dispensation meant for the early church only, to refute the excesses of the
Great Awakening.\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{110} A current controversy among evangelicals exemplifies this abiding tension between intellectual assent
and spiritual experience. Hendrik "Hank" Hannegraaff, president of the Christian Research Institute and
host of the "Bible Answer Man" radio program, recently published a scathing attack against all spiritual
manifestations in \textit{Counterfeit Revival: Looking for God in All the Wrong Places} (Dallas, Tex., 1997).
Beginning with the First Great Awakening and ending with the present-day "Toronto Blessing," he has
condemned them as works of demonic deception in which people ignore soteriological issues in favor of
spiritual experiences. Jon Ruthven, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Regent University and
an ordained minister of the Assemblies of God, criticized the work for its weak argumentation and
outrageous conclusions. Citing a study by Margaret Poloma, a University of Akron sociologist, of
Christians who took part in the revival meetings in Toronto in 1994, he reports that, while controversial
manifestations were certainly evident in the meeting, the people afterwards "focused on how they acquired
deepier spiritual passion, more zeal for Christ or greater love for their spouses." In his opinion, Hannegraaff
"spends most of his book seeking out the bizarre aberrations, the sin and the sleaze that is part of the human
condition and, yes, sadly part of any revival movement," but ignores social scientific evidence that
disproves his conclusion that participants in charismatic revivals are simply thrill seekers. Jon Ruthven,

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As a promoter of paranormal manifestations, Hugh Adams preconditioned his people to expect unusual occurrences. While he did not mention in his "Narrative" that he had observed the same kinds of signs and wonders—physical distortions, crying out in anguish or ecstasy, and the like—he made it clear that he occasionally importuned God to suspend the laws of Providence and nature to assist him in his ministry when necessary. People who had witnessed their pastor sealing the heavens against watering their crops or predicting a soon-coming Indian war would hardly be surprised when spiritual manifestations presented themselves. The people understood that what was at issue was not the kind of spiritual manifestation, but God's power to cause violent shaking, whether in the earth's crust or in a person's body. Having learned to expect unusual spiritual manifestations from Hugh Adams, the congregation responded quickly and positively to Gilman's legitimizing behavior towards signs and wonders. Their willing cooperation in turn reinforced Gilman's willingness to counteract these unusual spiritual activities.

Following Gilman's personal awakening in February 1741, he could appreciate in a different way a work such as Jonathan Edwards' *Faithful Narrative*, with its thrilling account of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. But this appreciation was the result of a long process of personal preparation that included hours of prayer, discussion, and Scripture reading. Gilman's avid interest in reading anything about the works of the Holy Spirit, especially Whitefield's *Journals* and numerous tracts by and about the evangelist, made him fully familiar with the issues involved in the Great Awakening. As Gilman sought first for his own awakening, and then for that of his congregation, these of Hannegraaff and Ruthven can be traced throughout the history of revivals in America.

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works held center stage. But, following the all-night service of 31 January 1742, Gilman referred to his specialized tracts about the Third Person just one more time. One week later, on 8 February, he turned to David McGregor’s *Spirits of the present Day Tried* for reassurance that what had happened in Durham was blessed of God. He then read Wigglesworth’s *Seasonable Caveat Against believing every Spirit* and Edwards’ *Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* for added corroboration. They convinced him of what he already knew in his heart: “What a Blessing it is to be made an instrument of Winning Souls to Christ—Lord grant I may esteem Every Such Seal [of supernatural manifestation] of My Labours as of More worth than a Kingdom[!]”

Confirmed in his belief of the reality of God’s active involvement in this revival, Gilman plunged fully into its promotion and continuance.

As Gilman’s own personal awakening took place, he became better able to counsel those of his people who were likewise feeling the tug of the Holy Spirit on their lives. His attractiveness as a spiritual counselor transcended barriers of sex, age, and even race. Women found particular solace in his presence. One woman visited him at his Exeter home at least four times over an eight-day period in May 1741, coming first with “concern for her soul,” then submitting herself to his instruction, with her heart “very tender and exceeding thirsty after Knowledge of God and Christ — .” Gilman marveled at her teachable and childlike disposition. A married woman came to him “under strong convictions and concern for Salvation weeping for Jesus,” and he spent an entire

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113 Ibid., 15 May 1741, 196; 16 May 1741, 197; 20 May 1741, 198.
evening directing her along the correct spiritual path. He repeated one of his sermons privately to a woman who "came desirous to hear it and acknowledging her first awakenings wro’t by it." Children were also drawn to him by his gentleness and concern for them. A "little maid, whom I have observd serious at her book for some time, broke her mind to me and seems to be in considerable concern—with her I discoursed in Private, she gave Very good attention . . . ." He frequently conversed with young people, either singly or in small groups. He "Visited, discoursed and prayd with a Man aged and infirm—above 80", whose confusion over the nature of prayer caused Gilman to "remark in Sorrow". African bondspeople also asked for him. In one case, Gilman noted, when he was "calld to pray with Capt. Hill’s Negro man Cofar at the point of death," the old man surprised him by "discours[ing] very sensibly—profess[ing] his dependence on Christ for the pardon of sin … [and by being] particularly good in his parting words with his master . . . ."

This expectation of a pastor who carefully shepherded the people of Durham had been well established during Hugh Adams’ 25 years of ministrations. In his "Narrative", Adams listed five pages of various recoveries from illness and injury that he wrought with God’s help. Whether it was the cure of "Abednego Leathers, of a Pestilential Perperacute Feaver", "John Buss junr. Who by a Violent Fall … so dangerously Bruised him both within and without," or an "Ulcerated Cancer in The Temple of William Dam’s Wife", he had demonstrated that during times of physical, emotional, or spiritual trouble,

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114 Ibid., 2 June 1741, 200; 11 June 1741, 204.
115 Ibid., 5 June 1741, 201.
116 Ibid., 14 June 1741, 205.
the people must turn to their minister.\textsuperscript{117} Adams' ability to relate the cure of bodies with the cure of souls, always by seeing a spiritual lesson in the disease and its cure, only reinforced this. Having been preconditioned by Adams to expect this close relationship with their pastor, it was only natural that Gilman’s people should turn to him to help them understand the great spiritual changes that were overtaking them during the revival.

These private meetings encouraged Gilman’s own changing heart and gave him a sense of quiet purpose as the revival spread throughout the seacoast area. When these quiet manifestations of the moving of God in individual lives, however, broke loose into the frenetic and vociferous manifestations of supernatural presence, Gilman was swept along by the rising tide of revivalism. He first became aware of the existence of extraordinary behavior associated with the revival through the popular press. He read with great interest the accounts of such activities in Whitefield’s \textit{Journals}, and he was particularly impressed by Jonathan Edwards’ account of the earlier revival in Northampton, marveling at the “Amazing depths of [God’s] Divine Counsells—how Wonderfull are his works and his Ways past finding Out … .” After reading the first six issues of Thomas Prince’s \textit{Christian History}, he prayed that God would “bless it for the Advancement of his Kingdom” and sent the editor 10 shillings. Visitors to the area provided further news, such as when Capt. John Storer from Wells gave him a full “Account of the Awakenings in Cambridge and Boston.” Other reports came from Newton, where “People continue to be more and more awakened … .” His cousin Daniel Little wrote in a letter about “the glorious Work of God going on at Timberlane in Haverhill …”, and Gilman heard later that day that Somersworth had begun to experience

\textsuperscript{117} Adams, “Narrative,” 35-9.
spiritual manifestations the previous Sabbath evening "and is carried on Marvellously as also at York, Kittery, Berwick etc." 118

News of supernatural manifestations caused Gilman to hunger for similar things at his own meeting house—in fact, he began to use their existence to define, consciously and subconsciously, appropriate behavior for members of his flock in religious settings. He may have begun to define these expectations to some degree by May 1741 when, preaching from Phil. 4:6, "in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God", some people "went home affected." His entries for the next six months only hint at a gradual increase in these manifestations, but by the end of year, the people of Durham were ready to commit themselves to a more outward show of spiritual changes in their lives. In late November, Gilman preached to a full meeting house from John 3:3, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God", and "Some persons [were] bro’t under great awakenings" right then and there. A week later, after exhorting from the pulpit that at "times of this ignorance God winked at: but now commandeth all men every where to repent," from Acts 17:30, there arose "Between meetings a great crying out, among people in Anguish of Spirits." That evening, he turned to Edwards’ Narrative for further insight and, from his reading, should not have been too surprised when during the following week he discovered "Numbers now awakened daily ... ."119 Gilman expected


such manifestations as groaning from deep within, sobbing, crying out, and shouting and dancing for joy as the results of his inspired preaching.

Gilman frequently emphasized that spiritual revival came under the aegis of the Holy Spirit, but receptivity to the movement of the Holy Spirit within the congregation was promoted and intensified by the awakened preaching of the Spirit-filled man of God. The message began with a text discerned from the Spirit of God and prepared through prayer, fasting, meditation, and study. It is clear that Gilman’s discourse was orthodox with regard to creed and interpretation of Scripture. A convinced Calvinist, he was quite willing to defend the doctrine. In November 1740, for example, he entered a “considerable private controversy with a Clergyman about the Armenian Tenets” in an argument that appeared to touch on all the chief doctrines of Calvin’s teachings, but particularly the “Doctrine of an Imputed righteousness—the Doctrine of Native corruption etc.”120 The accessibility to pulpits willingly granted by his professional colleagues attested to his orthodoxy, particularly in the eighteen months between when he had tentatively agreed to minister in Durham and when he was awakened from his spiritual slumber by the New Light. He preached in Kingston’s East Parish for Peter Coffin in August 1740, in Exeter for John Odlin in September, and in Stratham in October for Henry Rust; all three of these ministers opposed the work of George

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120 Ibid., 21 Nov. 1740, 158. One may assume Gilman is referring to predestination and utter depravity. While Gilman did not provide the minister’s name, he may have been William Balch of Bradford parish, near Haverhill. He was an Arminian who originally embraced the revival, but later became disaffected with many of the excesses of the New Light. As a good Calvinist, Gilman would have argued that Christ died only for the predestined elect, while his opponent would have championed the universal saving will of God. This dispute suggests a difficulty of being a Calvinist during a revival. If God has predestined certain individuals to salvation and they are powerless to resist His grace, why bother with evangelistic preaching that needlessly excites the religious affections and raises the hopes of the damned? Charles G. Finney was perhaps the first evangelist with Calvinistic leanings who decided to ignore the dilemma and attempted to reach as many people as possible with the Gospel. See McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism.
Whitefield in the seacoast area that began that same fall.\textsuperscript{121} He also belonged to a ministerial association that regularly included John Moody of Newmarket, Joseph Adams of Newington, Jonathan Cushing of Dover, James Pike of Somersworth (his brother-in-law), William Shurtleff of Portsmouth's South Parish, John Blunt of New Castle, and Jeremiah Wise of Berwick.\textsuperscript{122} Their quarterly ministers' fasts featured what appears to be a predetermined rotation of preaching duties; Gilman preached at least five times to his brethren over a three-year period. Like many of his local New Light colleagues, he welcomed physical manifestations as a witness that the Holy Spirit was indeed moving through the congregation. The overpowering, awe-inspiring truth of God, he believed, delivered through the human instrument of the preacher straight to the auditor's heart required some kind of bodily manifestation. He also shared the belief that if there were no physical manifestations there must be some deficiency in his own performance. Since the Holy Spirit was willing to move on the people, he reasoned, his own sinful nature must be what prevented the Spirit from moving at times. There were other spiritual manifestations besides bodily movement, however, that continued to amaze him as they were displayed by his people in public meetings or private consultations.

There can be no doubt that Gilman was convinced of the importance of visions to the vitality of the revival in his own church, even though he himself did not appear to enjoy this spiritual adventure. He was a quite willing disputant in the ministerial

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 24 Aug. 1740, 132; 25 Sept. 1740, 140; 19 Oct. 1740, 146.

\textsuperscript{122} Most of these men were committed to promoting the revival, although their New Light shone with varying degrees of candlepower. Pike (HC 1725) and Wise (HC 1700) were energetic promoters of the revival, and Blunt (HC 1727), Adams (HC 1710) and Shurtleff (HC 1707) were moderates. Cushing appears to have leaned toward the Old Light, but was not actively promoting or opposing the Great Awakening. Only Moody (HC 1727) was an Old Light active in the fight and he put up rather strong resistance to outside influences affecting his pastorate.

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controversy over the subject. He received a letter from the moderate New Light John Blunt of New Castle in February 1742 and answered it with a prayer that it “please the Lord to give a Blessing to My Endeavours for His [Blunt’s] good.” Two months later, when Blunt visited Durham to preach, the two ministers were still discussing the subject. “Dear Jesus [Gilman wrote] give me all Needful Light in this Dispensation of Thine—Open to My Soul all that is Needfull for Me … .” When Thomas Prentice of Charlestown rode to Exeter to preach, Gilman engaged him in a discussion of visions that carried into the next day. Recording his impressions later that evening, Gilman could “remember no Arguement that he brought against them but only fears and Jealousies of the Conference … grant that I may so fear thee and Trust in thee as that I may have Nothing else to fear … .”

Gilman appeared to use the single term “vision” to identify two similar, yet distinct, spiritual manifestations. Steven Busse’s vision, for example, was that of a “White dove [which had] come down into the Meeting house over head which he steadfastly beheld till prayer was done … .” In this sense, Gilman understood that Busse had seen into the spiritual world with his physical eyes while remaining himself distinctly in the natural world. Gilman distinguished this kind of vision from one in which his parishioner was transported into the spiritual world where the sights and sounds of that place surrounded him or her. He had a particularly close relationship with one young woman, Mary Reed, who was known for her extensive visions. She showed up on her pastor’s doorstep in late March 1742, described her exceeding joy during the day and, convinced of her imminent transport to heaven, retired to one of the beds in the parsonage. After “Some little time, 

\[123\] Gilman, 27 Feb. 1742, 251; 14 Apr. 1742, 262; 18-19 May 1742, 268.
[she] fetchd many deep Sighs as tho’ her soul was departing, after which she lay Some
time to appearance Breathless but her pulse beating .... ." She lay in bed the following
day, "Blessing and praising God in whispers, in the Language of a Soul actually in
Heaven—afterwards she lay Singing praises to God in Extempore Verse—Anon—she
said, My Soul is in Heaven, My Breath is not gone but it will depart, and dont be in haste
to bury me if it be a fortnight .... ." She remained in bed yet another day “with her Heart
in Heaven, very joyfull wrapt up in Divine Praises calling on everything to Bless and
praise the Lord.” She awakened the following day, professing that “for the time she had
lain so, She rememberd nothing that was done or said in this world.”

Gilman’s wholehearted acceptance of visions undoubtedly reinforced the legitimacy
of that manifestation in the hearts and minds of his people. In fact, it would appear that
he courted further visions by the way he authenticated their experiences. During one
meeting, for example, he permitted Mary Reed to describe an earlier vision, upon which
he only added a word of exhortation that clarified and explained her experience. The
result of this activity was that the “Holy Ghost came down with Power upon the People
So that there was an Universal Outcry, some rejoycing and others lamenting, but few I
believe were unmovd.” When Hubbard Stevens, the teenage son of Deacon Hubbard
Stevens, came to his pastor with a message to warn the people of the need to repent,
Gilman called a meeting for that very afternoon. During the meeting, young Stevens was

124 Ibid., 31 Jan. 1742, 243; 26-29 Mar. 1742, 256-8. It appears Mary Reed remained in Gilman’s house,
while his wife was in Exeter, for almost three weeks, when after a “great and very unreasonable disturbance
made in the Town about her being at My house—she left it and went to the Neighbourhood to Stephen
Busses .... .” Ibid., 13 Apr. 1742, 261-2. One may read much into this episode, particularly from a
Freudian perspective. What is particularly interesting is that Reed’s extended visit would have supported
the contention that enthusiasm naturally led to sexual libertinism. Contemporary literature, whether critical
of the Great Awakening, the French Prophets, Hutchinsonianism, or other similar examples, pointed out the
easy road from religious to sexual ecstasy, particularly where young, nubile women were involved.
overcome by a vision and “warn and exhorted them most Earnestly.” Gilman also promoted acceptance of visions by transcribing these visions into a written account, something that must have both thrilled and awed the people.

While visions were manifestations of special interest to Gilman, he also took notice of prophetic utterances, defined here as words from God that provided special direction for him or his people, that came from a variety of sources. He placed special credibility on words from Mary Reed, at whose bidding he preached four sermons from specific texts from May to December 1742. In May, she brought him Psalm 49 to read and urged him to “call the people together every Wednesday for two Months, for their Time was but Short. Accordingly I notified a Lecture on Wednesday, and purposd to Wait on the Lord for further Direction.” He or a ministerial colleague preached a weekly sermon, with few exceptions, through the rest of the year, only calling fewer meetings when his itinerating and leadership in the New Light cause began to take up more of his time. Other local women attempted to play minor supporting roles in affecting Gilman’s choice of sermon texts.

L.W., a “young person,” asked him to read Mathew 13 in the public meeting. Sarah Thompson Hill “at Secret Prayer was Strongly impressed to pray for her minister and in token she should be heard he woud behave remarkably today—she did so—I found my Self grow lively in Sermon ….” Sarah Johnson told Gilman that Ezekiel 13 was given to her in a vision for him to read to her. This chapter begins with God’s word to Ezekiel to “prophecy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say ... Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing.” After reading her this chapter, he seems to have assumed that she was manufacturing her own spiritual

125 Ibid., 4 Mar. 1742, 253; 23 Mar. 1742, 256.
manifestations and that God had spoken condemnation against her with her own lips. Gilman “gave her Warning” and prayed, “God may it be thy Holy Will to Bless it for her Souls good.” Three weeks later, apparently more careful about claiming authorship but still desiring a supernatural experience, she was “Struck dumb—within this day or two, but can Speak again—now.”

As the Great Awakening spread throughout the local area, Gilman came to understand the need to preach without notes. Because he wanted to discern the movement of the Spirit and flow with it, prepared notes were becoming less useful or expedient. His parishioners appreciated a sermon delivered from the heart rather than read from a manuscript, an expectation surely derived from their long experience with Adams’ extemporaneous preaching. As Gilman began to itinerate, he learned that spontaneity was a valuable tool of evangelism; even if he had enough time to prepare notes, he might miss an opportunity to win the lost because he took time for extensive preparation. He was also aware, like the Apostle Paul, that he had to be ready for any opportunity to preach the word along the roads and trails as he traveled. Gilman judged the efficacy of his preaching using two standards: the state of his own spiritual being when he delivered it and the physical reactions of his auditors as he preached his message. While preaching from Revelation 2:16-17, a text calling for immediate repentance or spiritual death, he beheld “a Very considerable moving in the assembly—and Blessed be the Lord, I was enabled to Speak with Some Boldness and Freedom.”

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126 *Gilman*, 2 May 1742, 264; 31 May 1742, 268-9; 31 Oct. 1742, 293-4; 12 Apr. 1742, 261. Ezekiel 13 is one long diatribe against false prophets and the special judgment God had in store for them. The transliteration of Ezekiel 13:2-3 found in the *Living Bible Version* suggests better the nuance Gilman undoubtedly understood when he read the passage to the young woman. Ezekiel was to “prophesy against the false prophets of Israel who are inventing their own visions and claiming to have messages from me when I have never told them anything at all.” Gilman’s stern correction, of course, may have stemmed in part from Sarah Johnson’s unintended suggestion that he was one of the false prophets.
this case, the reactions of his people lifted him out of his doldrums, and he later prayed that God would “Give Me Life, give me love, deliver me from this Stupidity of Soul, and make me a Lively ...” instrument. Sometimes God prepared his heart in a special way to preach and the ensuing results could be quite dramatic. “After a Conflict with Much Deadness Dulness and Unbelief—it pleased the Lord as I turnd the Corner of My House going to a meeting, to give Me suddenly a thought ... that affected me much, and Blessed be the Lord had a Sweet day, in his House—Much of the Glory of the Lord, I trust was seen in the Sanctuary—numbers filld with Joy—and was assisted graciously in Preaching and administering the Sacrament ... .” There were also times when Gilman could not resist the overpowering emotion that his preaching, the reactions of his people, and the presence of the Holy Spirit combined to create in him. In January 1742, he was so overwhelmed when God was “graciously pleased to reveall Himself to My Soul ... [that he] was constrained to cry out with a loud voice—Glory to God on high—Glory to the Redeemer ... for some considerable time ... .” 127

Gilman’s change in delivery reflected both his desire for greater spiritual sensitivity in his preaching and the practical need to be ready in and out of season to speak God’s Word. From the meticulously prepared and delivered sermons, first learned at Harvard and refined through years of personal experience and observation of his mentor, John Odlin of Exeter, he became renowned among New Light congregations for his extemporaneous style of exhortation. It is not unreasonable, however, to credit his congregation’s expectations as another reason for this change. It has been noted that Hugh Adams arrived in Oyster River having already perfected his ability to preach

without notes. Likewise, there is the rather acerbic observation from the *New-England Courant* that attested to Adams’ predilection for delivering sermons “on the most awakening subject,” the sort of comment that refers to the method of preaching as well as the subject of it. Twenty-five years of extemporaneously delivered sermons on “awakened subjects” preconditioned his people to expect and value this style of delivery.

Gilman did not shed light on how and why he came to change his style of delivery. This suggests that he was even unaware of the influence of his congregation on himself. Yet surely his people did play a large role in this change.

As knowledge of Gilman’s ability to preach a good “awakened sermon” spread beyond his own parish, there were more demands placed on his schedule and pressure on his pastoral duties. He visited many of the outlying areas of nearby parishes which had just or would soon become parishes or towns in their own right, such as Madbury and Brentwood. Usually, he would preach in a private home to people in the neighborhood, but he was not averse to preaching outdoors wherever people called upon him. Local pastors who supported the New Light cause would also invite him into their pulpits and quite willingly give him access to the homes of their own parishioners. This was not the case everywhere. The Gilman family’s own pastor, John Odlin, eventually closed his pulpit to Gilman, even though the younger pastor had frequently preached there in the past. There were growing differences associated with the revival, but Gilman’s family also led the movement to block the ordination of their pastor’s son, Woodbridge, as associate pastor and were active in establishing a separate body in Exeter.¹²⁸ In the two years leading up to the separation, Gilman frequently officiated in private meetings in

¹²⁸ This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.
Exeter. He was also unwelcome in the parish of Henry Rust, pastor of the Stratham Church. Gilman entered the controversy between the Old Light minister and his parishioners who were working to separate themselves from the main body. After preaching a public lecture at Stratham at which there was a “very great Moving among the people …,” Gilman noted, he “dealt pretty Plainly with Mr. Rust …”, an activity not likely to gain much support from his very conservative colleague.\textsuperscript{129}

Pleased with his local success, Gilman began to consider by late 1742 whether he should travel further afield to preach the Word of God. Richard Woodbury, a young and unordained firebrand from Rowley, several miles to the south of Exeter on Cape Ann, played a central role in his decision to travel. Woodbury in many respects was a northern version of James Davenport, with an ability to leave a wake of chaos and discord wherever he preached. Gilman first recorded Woodbury’s presence in Durham in November 1742, when the itinerant exhorted the people after Gilman preached the lecture. Gilman permitted Woodbury to minister with him for almost a month, during which time the lay exhorter disputed New Light Joseph Adams’ interpretation of Hosea 10:1 and was reproved, “spoke much to the offence of Many”, and stirred up an “Uproar” and a “Tumult” among the people. In late December, Gilman set off with Woodbury for Kittery, but a message forced the lay itinerant’s return to Rowley. Woodbury came back to Durham in June, where he once again exhorted after Gilman preached, and “gave Some great uneasiness, occasiond [with] an Uproar and Tumult ….” Leaving town a couple of days later, Woodbury did not return to Durham for another three months, this time to berate Colonel James Davis and Deacon Hubbard Stevens for some unspecified

\textsuperscript{129} Gilman, 5 Jan. 1743, 304.
What amazed his family and friends were Gilman's steadfast loyalty and support for Woodbury, support that family legend contends contributed to Gilman's early death from consumption.

It is probable that Woodbury's description of the revival on Cape Ann caused Gilman to decide in January 1743 to travel further afield to preach the Word of God. He arrived in Newbury on 8 January and immediately sought out John Lowell for permission to preach in his meeting house. Having been forbidden to do so except under "Such limitations and Conditions as were by No Means agreeable to Me," Gilman preached from John 2:17 to a meeting of separates held in a private home, "And his disciples remembered that it was written, The Zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." The next day, Gilman tried once again to reason with Lowell, who appeared to "throw off the Gentleman" when he told Gilman in no uncertain terms what he thought about itinerants. Although originally sympathetic to the ministry of George Whitefield, Lowell was greatly angered in May 1742 when Nathaniel Rogers, Daniel Rogers and others took over the Newbury meeting house while he was away and stirred the separate factions in his church to turn further away from their settled pastor. So adamant was his refusal that Gilman thought "there is so far from being a Reformation that Solid Christianity is exceedingly cramp'd." Convinced he would have no success in Newbury, Gilman traveled to Ipswich where he preached once again from John 2:17 at the meeting house of his friend Nathaniel Rogers. After spending a day resting and consulting with Rogers, Gilman visited Byfield where he preached from Genesis 22:12 at the church of Moses Hale. While on a side trip to Newton and Haverhill, he conferred with Edward Barnard

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of Haverhill, "who like the Rest of Merrimack Ministers is afraid of Confusion—and for keeping All in peace." Before returning home after a two-week sojourn, he preached at meetings at private homes in Hampton Falls and Ipswich. Woodbury's return to Durham in March 1744 augured another long preaching trip for Gilman. It took only one week before a town meeting was called to discuss the great divisions that Woodbury continued to create. Before the passing of another week, Gilman left Durham with the itinerant to spread the Good News of the revival. Between 3 April and 29 May 1744 (when his diary ends), he ministered only six days in Durham; he spent most of the remaining time in the company of Woodbury, Daniel and Nathaniel Rogers, and lay leaders involved in the separate cause in Newbury.

Woodbury's influence over Gilman led to more than just long preaching trips through northern New England; it also made Gilman subject to some extraordinary displays of aberrant behavior which gave his enemies the ammunition needed to fight his plan to spread the New Light and caused even his friends to doubt his sanity. While in Maine, for example, he traveled to York to meet with Samuel Moody and preached the evening lecture. Not remaining there overnight, he rode "into the Wilderness[,] about up and Down till near Morning—when on the Cold ground I lay down and had a short Nap . . . ." He also assisted Woodbury with a letter-writing campaign that sought to convince those whom they believed to be luke-warm or opposed to the revival to put aside their fears and wholeheartedly support the New Light. In a letter dated 17 May 1744, for example, Woodbury asked Paine Wingate of Amesbury Second how long he would wait before supporting the revival. Gilman appended his own note that suggested that if

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Wingate had "not received the Holy Ghost ... now humble yourself at the feet of Christ—put in for a share in such rich mercy, lest you be confounded if you slip such an opportunity." In another letter, dated 27 May 1744, Woodbury asked "In the Name of the King of Kings & Lord of Lords" if the Reverend Webster of Salisbury was prepared "to give account of Your Stewardship and how you have improvd the Talents committed to your Trust ... If you cou'd but understand What a great Charge, Yours is—'twould be enough to make you tremble to think how dolefull it will be, and how Awfull your account, if you are guilty of the Blood of Souls perishing thro' your Neglect." Gilman's postscript warned Webster to ignore the "great cry of Enthusiasm ... More talkd of than Understood ..." and ask Jesus to remove the "Vail over the good work of the present day."\(^\text{132}\)

The tumult occasioned by these letters drew the attention of people throughout the region through the pages of the Boston Gazette and the Boston Evening Post. The outrage began when Gilman and Woodbury determined to follow up their letters with personal visits to their recipients. Calling Woodbury an "illiterate person generally apprehended of a disordered brain," the reports described his coming to Ipswich and "affirming himself to be not only a Minister of Christ, but extraordinarily and immediately sent and commissioned of him to perform great and wonderful things ... ." The account clearly blamed Gilman, whose support and encouragement had caused Woodbury to arrogate "to himself the Revelation of secret things, by pretended predictions and denunciation of temporal and eternal curses upon particular persons."\(^\text{133}\)

\(^\text{132}\) Noyes, A Family History, 42-3.

\(^\text{133}\) Boston Gazette, 24 July 1744; and Boston Evening Post, 30 July 1744.

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Ebenezer Parkman, the minister at Westboro, likewise mentioned the “Great Disorders ... [that] were lately at Ipswich by means of one Woodbury who with Mr. Gilman of Durham has sent Letters to many Ministers of the Province ... I transcribd a Letter at Mr. Newmans Study ... respecting the Ipswich Disorders in the last month, horrible to relate.” Justice Sewall also blamed Gilman for the “strange madness that has possessed some people at Ipswich occasioned by one Woodbury, a mad enthusiast, ... I was quite shocked ..., being surprised that some of the chief clergy there had been so weak as to be drawn away by these follies. This is a remarkable instance to what lengths of madness enthusiasm will carry men once they give it a loose [rein] ... .”

Little is known about the last four years of Gilman’s life, but what is known shows that he continued very much along the same path just described, at least until the ravages of consumption and chronic diarrhea robbed him of the strength and energy required to continue his itinerating. With their pastor frequently away from the parish, the Durham church tried to get along as best it could. By 1747, when the church finally called for an ecclesiastical council to sort out its many problems, part of the body was relying on an unordained blind preacher, Joseph Prince; another part sought its preaching from its deacons or local ministers willing to help; and a small but active part clung to Gilman and held their services in private homes. An earlier account of a visit of Samuel Chandler and Jeremiah Wise for a fast called by the church provides a glimpse of the most extreme of the radical elements. While Wise preached, there were four or five people who “made all manner of mouths, turning out their lips, drawing their mouths awry, as if convulsed,

straining their eye balls, & twisting their bodies in all manner of unseemly postures. Some were falling down, others were jumping up, catching hold of one another, extending their arms, clapping their hands, groaning, talking.” When Chandler preached the following day, the same group carried on as before, but this time Gilman got up to say that he had “a witness within him that I neither preached nor prayed with the Spirit”, thus reinforcing the censoriousness exhibited by some of his parishioners. Within a few months, however, Gilman was so ill with his terminal sickness that he returned with his family to Exeter, thus effectively ending his short pastorate.

It is as difficult to summarize Gilman’s ministry succinctly as it was Hugh Adams’, particularly since his aberrant behavior and the demise of his church have made him an ideal example of New Light excess for historical footnotes. Yet, it is necessary to balance this notoriety with his contributions to evangelical Christianity on the northern frontier. Those people who came to the forefront of his ministry were those who did not normally wield power and influence in the church or community. Simple laborers and artisan-farmers, the young and old, women, and slaves—in short, the unimportant—were those who followed him into the excesses of revivalism. They were drawn by his vulnerability—his emotional nature and his sickliness. They were drawn by his willingness to give credibility to their personal experiences, particularly spiritual ones, and they were drawn by his tender concern for their well-being. It is important to stress that Gilman was a free moral agent and a willing promoter of the revival in northern New England. Those same people who looked to him as their spiritual guide and leader, however, also influenced their own pastor down a road toward religious radicalism upon which none but the hardiest could accompany him. One must not underestimate the
influence of the lay people over their pastor even in colonial New England, but it is vital to reemphasize that it was Hugh Adams who preconditioned the Durham congregation to respond both to the revival and to influence their new minister through their reactions to spiritual stimulation. Gilman was not only swept along by the forces of revival; he was also swept along by the expectations of his flock that were based upon his predecessor's spiritual eccentricities.

Gilman's contemporaries applied the word "enthusiasm" to him and he was so aware of this charge that he made it a point to defend himself against it. Enthusiasm, as used in the early eighteenth century, had a significantly different meaning than today, and connoted far more than the pejorative term "religious fanatic" frequently used now. In fact, an enthusiast was by definition a heretic, since he or she claimed to have immediate knowledge of God that needed no Scriptural basis for proof; enthusiasm equated to the antinomianism of Anne Hutchinson and her followers a century before. New Englanders were also well aware of more recent examples of enthusiasm: the Anabaptists, French Prophets, Familists, Dutartres, and other mystical sects. Intimate, first-hand knowledge of God's mind was only one of numerous symptoms of enthusiasm. Others included dreams and visions, dancing and whirling, ecstatic and rapturous joy expressed in shouting and other boisterous sounds, unusual body movement and posture, and the

136 While the power of the clerical profession in colonial New England is virtually axiomatic, historians have begun to address the influence of congregations on their ministers by considering the influence of "folk religion". Examples include Hall, Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment, and Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith.

137 The public needed only to turn to the recent work of Commissary Alexander Garden of Charleston for a thumbnail sketch of these various enthusiasts. Garden, Take Heed How Ye Hear. A Sermon Preached in the Parish Church of St. Philip Charles-Town, in South Carolina on Sunday the 13th of July, 1740. ... (Charleston, 1741).
belief that one could discern the sheep of God’s pasture from the goats of the Lord of this world.

Gilman believed that supernatural phenomena, particularly visions, wild bodily contortions, and discernment of spirits, were not only legitimate signs of the presence of God, but also legitimized the Great Awakening as a genuine movement of God. There is no evidence that Gilman was prone to “enthusiastical” beliefs for the first two to three years of the revival in New England, but it is evident from his diary that his interest and participation in spiritual extravagance grew as his people fully embraced supernatural manifestations. While it is true that Gilman’s brand of preaching helped stir their religious fervor, his preaching was nothing more than what they had come to expect from Adams. Adams, who also defended himself from charges of enthusiasm, had always insisted that through his intimacy with God he could understand the plan of Providence in everything from local problems with sickness or drought to the macro forces of history as God arranged events to suit His eschatological goals. When Gilman exercised his own spiritual gifts of prophesy and exhortation, whether from the pulpit or horseback, his people were prepared to receive his message “as from an angel.”

Gilman never claimed the ability to perform miracles or, for that matter, appeared to perform them, but his predecessor certainly had convinced many of his flock that their pastor could affect some rather remarkable changes to natural law. The older folks remembered when Adams had prayed for a drought and how there was no rain until he released the heavens. Some of his medical cures seemed to call back people from death. The people’s belief in the possibility of miraculous events, preconditioned by Adams’ own activities, created in Durham an expectation that their pastor could indeed call forth
supernatural manifestations. They naturally responded to Gilman’s dramatic calls for “more of the Spirit” because they already believed their minister was capable of summoning the Spirit of God.

Adams was fearless in his attacks against those in power and the people of the Durham Church came to expect their pastor to uphold righteousness against whomever the perpetrator, no matter how powerful or well-to-do. Many would have remembered the day that Adams excoriated the Davis family in public, a wholly unacceptable place to correct the best of families before their social inferiors. Long before censoriousness became an issue in the 1740s, Adams had already preconditioned his flock to judge behavior for themselves and make their opinions widely known. As the Great Awakening intensified in Durham, many of Gilman’s people were already known for openly questioning the authenticity of others’ religious experience, challenging the inspiration behind other ministers’ preaching, and for their reputation for an ungovernable spirit. Even the meek and mild Gilman was caught up in this kind of criticism. In 1745, he challenged both George Whitefield and Sir William Pepperell to consider whether they each had really heard the Word of God to attack Louisbourg.138

The strength of Hugh Adams’ preconditioning influence upon the Durham Church undoubtedly contributed to the early demise of Nicholas Gilman. It created a kind of vortex into which Gilman slipped and from which he could not escape. Gilman’s own sensitivity to spiritual influence caused him to become an early adherent of the revival,

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138 Gilman, *Gilman Family*, 61-64. Contrary to the traditional interpretation of this expedition, J.M. Bumsted downplays the importance of the “crusade” on Louisbourg as a religious event, even though coming as it did during the latter stages of the Great Awakening. What few treatments there were of the victory by the clergy emphasized strategic and commercial importance over the spiritual benefits of overturning the bastion of Catholicism in North America. Bumsted, “Sermon Literature and the 1745 Louisbourg Campaign,” *Dalhousie Review* 63 (Summer 1983): 264-76.
and early successes in awakening his own people drew him deeper into the whirlpool of religious affections. As they took their cue from their pastor and participated more fully, the people drew upon their experiences with their old pastor and created an environment that set a spiritual agenda over which Gilman had increasingly less control. When confronted with the powerful twin forces of spiritual revival and pastoral preconditioning, Gilman could not long withstand their effect on his health and vitality. His great journey into the Great Awakening ended in an early grave.

Nicholas Gilman died in Durham on 13 April 1748 and was buried at Exeter's Front Street burial ground. His headstone records the great affection and esteem with which he was held by many: known for “extensive Charity and Beneficence[,] eminent in Piety, Self-Denial & Victory over the World.” It does not even suggest the great discord he helped to engender in the prosperous market town in the church of his spiritual mentor, the Reverend John Odlin. This study will now turn to this episode for another example of how the preconditioning influence of a northern New England pastor affected his people during the Great Awakening.
CHAPTER 4

OLD LIGHT ARCHETYPE ON THE NORTHERN FRONTIER:

JOHN ODLIN AND THE SEARCH FOR CONGREGATIONAL PEACE AND ORDER

Exeter, March 13\textsuperscript{th}. 1744,-5

This Day the Rev. Mr. \textit{Whitefield} preach'd Twice in the Town, at the House erected by the \textit{Separatists} of this Place. ... Mr. \textit{Whitefield}, upon his coming to Town, after tarrying some Time at the House of one of the chief of the Separatists, waited upon the Rev. Pastors, suddenly, without any previous Notice given them of his being in Town; and after some solemn and weighty Objections offer'd him by the Rev. Mr. \textit{Odlin}, against his preaching in his Charge, repeatedly declared, that in Principle he disapprov'd of \textit{Separations}, and that tho' he was going to preach in the \textit{Separate House}, he was not going to preach to them as Separatists: ... a number of People under any Minister's Charge have a right to invite any Minister, and that he had a right to preach to them ... .

With a rising flame of ardor fanned by righteous indignation, the Rev. John Odlin (1681-1754) stepped out onto what is now Court Street to face the young upstart who dared to challenge his 40-year reign as \textit{vox dei} in the town of Exeter and to block his way to the meeting house less than a half-mile to the east. George Whitefield, on his way from Greenland to preach to a body of townspeople who had gathered themselves under the Rev. Daniel Rogers, seemed unimpressed that he had come face to face with the champion of the Old Lights on the northern frontier. Undaunted by Odlin's "solemn and weighty Objections", the evangelist answered with "several bold Challenges, made to any present, and even to the whole World, to prove, that either his Matter or Manner of Preaching had any natural Tendency to Unpeaceableness, or any real Prejudice to the

\footnote{\textit{Boston Evening-Post}, 25 Mar. 1745, 2.}
Kingdom of Christ . . .” Ignoring the attempts of two other ministers to answer his challenge, he rode on to the appointed meeting. Not even a letter from Odlin, in which he “solemnly warn’d and charg’d him against preaching in his Parish,” delivered to Whitefield before the service began, could keep the Grand Itinerant from his errand.2

While Charles Chauncy of Boston is arguably the best known of the Old Lights, Odlin must certainly rank with him as an important opponent of George Whitefield and other New Light itinerants. In a region where the great majority of ministers were at least moderate New Lights and a few, like Nicholas Gilman, Daniel Rogers, and Joseph Adams of Stratham, were considered radicals, he was a powerful voice for conservative orthodoxy. As the pastor of the Exeter Church since 1706, he had amassed great personal influence and authority in one of the wealthiest towns in northern New England. Then, at the beginning of the seventh decade of his life, the Great Awakening arose to disturb the solid placidity of his pastorate with the rancor of separation during a time that should have been filled with well-deserved veneration for the old man of God. Instead of enjoying a well-earned rest as his son, the Rev. Woodbridge Odlin, began to assume more of the church’s pastoral responsibilities, he had to take leadership in both local and provincial ecclesiastical controversies. His response to the challenge of revival forces around him provides modern historians yet another example of the preconditioning influence of colonial pastors. Unlike John Wise, who had died in 1725, or Hugh Adams, who was dismissed from his pulpit in 1739 and no longer credible before much of his congregation, Odlin was still in authority over his church and able to witness the results of this preconditioning. Before discussing the events of the 1740s that best display the

2 Ibid.
strength of character and purpose of John Odlin, it would be helpful to look at his earlier career.

John Odlin\textsuperscript{3} was born in Boston in 1681, the son of Elisha and Abigail Bright Odlin. His father was a well-to-do artisan, deacon at Old South Church and a close friend of Samuel Sewall. His grandfather, for whom he was named, arrived in Boston as early as 1634 and was elected a member of the Artillery Company in 1638, despite having been earlier disenfranchised for his support of Anne Hutchinson. The younger John graduated from Harvard College in 1702 in the middle of his class and took his second degree in 1705 by arguing that Trinitarianism could not be discovered from nature. While preparing for his master of arts degree, he taught school and preached well enough in Groton to receive a call from its church in July 1705. He declined this, but must soon have gone to supply the pulpit at the Exeter Church left vacant when the Rev. John Clark died that same month. Allowing only a week for funeral arrangements and burial, the Church began its search for a new pastor by appointing a series of committees of influential citizens who worked over the next several months to handle every detail. The church agreed to call Odlin in April 1706 and another committee worked with him throughout the summer and fall to decide his salary and settlement allowances. He was ordained on 12 November 1706, having agreed to a salary of £70 per year and all the offerings of visitors to the church, a settlement fee of £100, the use of the parsonage lands, and 200 acres of common lands.\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{3} For biographical sketches, see \textit{SHG} 5, 168-72; and John Taylor, “The Odlin Family,” \textit{NEHGR} 41 (July 1887): 265-71. For information about his call to Exeter, see Charles H. Bell, \textit{History of the Town of Exeter, New Hampshire} (Exeter, N.H., 1888), 176-8.

\textsuperscript{4} During his first few months in Exeter, Odlin also went courting, because just three weeks before his ordination he married the previous minister’s widow, Elizabeth Woodbridge Clark, a woman eight years his senior. She brought with her four children and her husband’s estate of £1,000, as well as the grateful
Very little is known about the majority of Odlin's career, but it is apparent that the townspeople came to appreciate greatly Odlin’s pastoral leadership and labor on their behalf during the next 35 years. The evidence suggests a frontier pastor whose personal power and authority grew greatly as years passed by and significantly shaped the way his people would react to the Great Awakening. One measure of his influence was the way the town and province remunerated his work. Unlike Hugh Adams in Durham, Odlin received occasional increases in his salary that at least attempted to keep up with the size of his family and the inflation that came with paper scrip. Odlin received raises of £10 in 1713, 1718 and 1720, followed by an additional £20 in 1725. Inflation brought on by paper currency caused the town in 1736 to add £50 per year for the following five years on condition that he not seek compensation for purchasing power lost to inflation.\(^5\) The provincial council exempted his personal and parsonage lands from taxation in the Swampscott Patent in Stratham in 1716, which it extended during his lifetime in 1719.\(^6\) The town’s strong financial support also ensured his ability to take advantage of opportunities to increase his personal estate. He owned a large tract of land to the west of the town center in Brentwood and was a proprietor of Gilmanton along with other influential people from Exeter.

Another measure of Odlin’s influence was his participation in civil affairs that required mature judgment. Odlin may have joined with other New Hampshire pastors and the provincial government to protest the removal of Joseph Dudley as governor in

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of the town, which would not have to look after her material needs. Before dying in December 1729, she bore Odlin five children, including her husband’s successor, Woodbridge.

\(^5\) Bell, *History of Exeter*, 177-8, 182-3. This is partly explained by Exeter’s greater prosperity, but Durham’s niggardliness shone forth in its mean-spirited methods of withholding town rates from Adams.

\(^6\) *NHSP* 2: 688 and 2: 728.
1707. The consensus of Dudley’s supporters in New Hampshire was that the native New Englander understood their particular needs better than a royal appointee from England and that his replacement was the result of dissimulation from malcontents.

Odlin also played a leading role in an ecclesiastical council that met in 1734 at Salisbury to consider a dispute between the town of Chester and its pastor, Moses Hale. In a model of the Congregational Way, the Chester Church called the council to advise it “what may be most proper for them to do under their present difficult circumstances by reason of ... their Pastor being wholly disabled from serving them in the work of the Ministry ... .” Hale was suffering from a “great disorder of body & Distraction of mind & for a long time bereaved of his reason & understanding & thereby rendered incapable of Discharging the work of the Ministry ... .” What should they do? The council found that, since there was little hope their pastor would be restored to his church, “that it be wisdom & duty of the Chh & people of Chester to proceed in the regular steps to call &
settle a Gospel minister among them ... ."\(^{12}\) The council members did not lack compassion for Hale’s welfare and expressed this concern in their written report. They advised the church to allow “the said Mr: Hale the town right which: accrued to him upon settlement and what then was else given him to encourage his settlement they should not forget their obligation to be ready to contribute to his support & relief according to their power & ability ... ."\(^{13}\) As the recorder, Odlin expressed not only the findings of the council, but the spirit of his own observations as well. He was a firm supporter of the *Platform* and the need for both pastor and people to fulfill responsibilities required by that agreement. He was also very much aware of the rights and privileges that his peers had by right of their ordination and was unwilling to cooperate with capricious laypeople.

It would appear the Chester Church did not immediately act upon the council’s advice to “proceed in the regular steps to call & settle a Gospel minister”, although the growing number of Scots and Scotch-Irish in the area did ordain John Wilson according to the rites of the Church of Scotland in 1734. In June 1735, a second council met, this time to “consider and determine of the case in controversy” between Hale and his church.\(^{14}\) The report of this council, as with the first, was also an expression of Odlin’s views about such church controversies. The ministers agreed that the church could not remove him “from the Pastoral office among them meerly upon the account of his

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\(^{12}\) Ibid.

\(^{13}\) P. 305-6.

\(^{14}\) The majority of members were new to the council. Cushing returned as moderator and Odlin as the recorder; Joseph Parsons and Joseph Whipple returned as well. New to the controversy were the Reverend Jabez Fitch of Portsmouth, and Deacons Nathaniel Weare of Hampton Falls, William Bradbury of Kittery, John Lord of Exeter, Jonathan Fifield of Hampton Falls, Joseph French of Salisbury, Thomas Wilson of Exeter, and one other unnamed pastor. Ibid., 307-8.
Incapacity to exercise his ministry" because his health might improve at any time. Since there was no turpitude to be discerned from Hale’s behavior, they could not simply remove him. Yet, the council also recognized that the people’s present prejudice against Hale’s ministry and their unwillingness to wait any longer to replace him also meant that no good could come from continuing the relationship. They recommended that Hale should resign his office if the people would agree to pay all arrears with interest from salary and settlement, as well as allowing him all the rights of citizens of the town, and they should do so within three months of the resignation. They should then proceed immediately and quickly to settle a new minister. In this decision, the council clearly placed emphasis on the minister’s moral character as the foundation of his ministry and frowned on dismissal for reasons of convenience. Odlin would not deviate from this principle ten years later when separation threatened his own church.

While as ardent an Old Light as Chauncy, Odlin did not share doctrinal views that would eventually lead the Boston minister away from Christian orthodoxy. Odlin was a Trinitarian, a rock-solid Calvinist and, from the outlines of numerous sermons Nicholas Gilman kept during the 1720s and 1730s, he taught his people all the Christian fundamentals needed to keep them on the narrow road to heaven. As already shown, he also supported Congregational polity and the relationship between churches established in the Platform. His concept of the rite of baptism, as a modification of the Halfway Covenant, was somewhat skewed from the accepted norm, however, if the ancient parishioner whom Ezra Stiles interviewed in 1777 was entirely correct. Stiles was somewhat surprised to learn, when he was about to baptize a child at Exeter, that the

15 Ibid., 307. The town agreed to settle Ebenezer Flagg on 23 June 1736. Ibid., 308.
people "neither own the Covenant nor make Profession of the Faith for the Baptism of Children. But all that is requisite is that one of the Parents has been baptized & is free from Scandal." Adding to his concern was that the child presented for baptism in this case was a "Firstborn Child, & but a little above seven months from the Marriage."

Although Stiles did not like the divergence from the usual practice of the ordinance, he was satisfied enough with the father’s knowledge of Christianity to baptize the child. Stiles learned that "Rev. Mr. Odlin sen. Always said publickly to the Parents at baptizing a first child 'you covenant & promise to bring up this Child in the Nurture & Admonition of the Lord'—this he never repeated but afterwards baptized all their subsequent children."\(^{16}\)

While knowledge of Odlin’s orthodoxy is somewhat circumstantial, there is a clear picture of what Odlin believed about his clerical profession in *Christian Courage necessary for a Gospel Minister*,\(^{17}\) an ordination sermon preached when his step-son, Ward Clark,\(^{18}\) became the first pastor of the Kingston Church in 1725. His well-chosen text verse was from 2 Timothy 2:1,3, wherein the Apostle Paul sought to prepare his spiritual son for the rigors of his coming ministerial responsibilities. Like Paul, Odlin knew that ministers of the gospel must be strong through the grace Christ imparts to them and ready to endure many hardships to be effectual in their callings. In a concise and

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\(^{18}\) After marrying Clark’s mother, Odlin took full responsibility for raising the two-year old and his siblings to adulthood. His scholarly preparation of the young lad for the ministry was so effective that Clark entered Harvard as a second-year student. Clark was the schoolmaster at Exeter for two years before accepting the call to Kingston in 1725, unusual in that he had not yet received his second degree at the time. Clark’s short tenure was tragic, as he lost his wife and all four children to throat distemper in 1735-36. He died in his middle thirties, like his father, in 1737 from consumption. *SHG* 7: 156-8.
effective sermon, he delivered a message that was met with "General and Grateful Acceptance" by clerical peers and laypeople alike. Written and delivered during the twentieth year of his pastorate, his ordination sermon is also a reliable source for understanding, at least in part, why Odlin resisted most of what the Great Awakening brought to the seacoast area. It is important to bear in mind his views of the ministry when considering his actions during the 1740s.

In their preface to the ordination sermon, Caleb Cushing and Nathaniel Gookin wrote that the "Scope and Design of the Sermon seems to be to mind us of the Dignity and Excellency of the Ministerial Office . . . ." Odlin was ever conscious that "Ministers of Christ are made Stewards of the Mysteries of God; Ambassadors for Christ, Overseers of the Flock." As such, God had given them authority over the people to fulfill His purposes on earth: "The same Power is there given to the Ordinary Church Officers, that was given to the Apostles." Because the salvation of their people was in their hands, ministers must "discharge their Duty with all Diligence and Courage, and that in the face of Opposition." In doing this, they

must strenuously defend the doctrine of Faith, and make it good by a Life suitable to the Rule of Faith. Ministers should be like good Soldiers that will keep their ground in the hottest Engagement; and like Soldiers should be before-hand preparing to encounter with the Enemies that are like to assail them in the Discharge of their Office . . . .

Their work was made all the harder by Satan and his minions by raising up "such as contemn the Ministers of Christ, and count them the Scum & Offscouring of all things: and by these Means he many times prejudices Persons against the Word, and takes away the Force and Efficacy of it from them." Ministers must be courageous to face adversity

19 Odlin, Christian Courage, i.
whenever confronted with it, courage made possible by the grace that Christ would infuse in them to fulfill their responsibilities. This often meant facing adversity alone and even standing up to powerful and influential people.

The Ministers of Christ should not like Snails put out their Heads to see what Weather is abroad, (what countenance Religion hath among those whose Names are Written in greater Letters than others are,) and if the Heavens frown they shrink into their shells, esteeming that their Happiness: But the faithful Ministers of Christ will make a Business of Religion, and won’t give back, nor put in, because of Tryals. Prosperity cannot charm them; nor Adversity find Darts to abate their Holy Resolution.20

From these comments, it can be seen that Odlin was a mature and confident minister of the Gospel who understood the difficulties and hardships of pastoral work. He was not afraid to face any adversaries to his work, whether spiritual or secular, and certainly not those within his own church and town. He believed that, as the minister of God in Exeter, it was his responsibility as the spiritual leader to do what he thought was best for their eternal salvation. Sound, learned instruction of gospel truths was what his people needed, and not an emotional performance that might cause them to miss the narrow way. He certainly would not countenance any outside interference, no matter how popular the preacher. All that he expected of his people was their obedience, and “an Honourable Maintenance … that [he] may not be under Difficulties upon that account: … and by giving to … [him] at all times, that Honour that is justly their [minister’s] due.”21 Odlin’s views about the power and authority of the minister in his own church are important to understanding his reactions to the controversy brought about

20 Ibid. 4, 19, 16, 16-7, 7, 14.
21 P. 21.
by the Great Awakening in Exeter. Odlin’s preconditioning influence can be observed clearly by the way his congregation accounted for his views when it separated.

George Whitefield’s first visit to the seacoast area in 1740 struck a spark that ignited much of the northern frontier with revival fires, in fact, a blinding New Light in several places. While Odlin welcomed the renewed interest in religion he found throughout his parish, he decidedly abhorred what were quickly becoming the bane of his existence: itinerant exhorters, excessively emotional responses to revival-style preaching, and the growing loss of control over the spiritual direction of his congregation. One might feel sympathy for him and the predicament in which he found himself.

Nearing the end of 35 years of a highly successful and “placid” ministry, he had to be looking forward to surrendering full-time pastoral work to his son Woodbridge and entering venerable semi-retirement. Instead, he was confronted first with the need to defend his own pulpit against those he considered to be usurpers and then to extinguish the spread of the New Light in towns all about him. His fight to protect his own ministry shows a pugnacious determination to maintain the peace and order of congregations and retain his pastoral authority against all challengers. Odlin’s leadership of seacoast moderate New Lights and Old Lights in the waning days of the Great Awakening reveals the skill and wisdom of a senior father in the faith, but this authority was challenged by the influence and close proximity of his student and protégé, Nicholas Gilman. Their relationship must be inferred from scattered sources because, unfortunately, neither left any account of their feelings for the other. What is known, however, suggests that there existed two men whose dichotomy of personalities and values could do nothing but

22 See Map 2 on page 262.
assume contradictory positions of principle in the emotionally charged 1740s.

While Gilman did not take up the clerical profession during the fifteen years following his graduation from Harvard, he did continue to prepare for the ministry under John Odlin. He kept extremely detailed notes of his pastor's sermons and what had to be study outlines of various lessons on divinity. It is clear from the kinds of books Gilman read that he was a confirmed Calvinist in doctrine and Congregationalist in polity. Both of these preferences came straight from the heart of his mentor. Odlin obviously trusted the young man's ability to deliver words of salvation because his approval had surely opened pulpits to Gilman all over the seacoast area, including some in Boston and Cambridge. Even Gilman's well-known irenic approach to church life argues in favor of substantial influence from the pastor who favored peace and order above all else.

Undoubtedly, Odlin also appreciated Gilman's abilities and dedication to his studies, perhaps even seeing the young man's continued ministrations in Exeter throughout the fall of 1741, six months before his ordination in Durham, as an extension of his own ministry.

As their positions concerning the Great Awakening began to diverge more and more, Odlin's and Gilman's relationship began to suffer considerable strain. Gilman's close association with Daniel Rogers and his own itinerating offended the old man's belief in the inviolability of parochial boundaries. As will be seen, the harsh words the two had over Odlin's June 1742 sermon on works as evidence of faith, itself a very strong criticism about issues of importance to New Lights, may be seen as the beginning of a theological and personal rift that came to define Odlin as the archetypal northern Old Light and Gilman as the archetypal New Light radical. Odlin was immovable in his
belief that the works of a righteous life were the only sure way to receive assurance of
salvation. Christian people did Christian things. Gilman, however, preached that the
testimony of the Holy Spirit through divine inspiration was sufficient proof for any
concerned over their salvation. This disagreement drove a wedge into their longstanding
friendship, a rent made even wider a week later when Odlin publicly criticized Gilman
for his close working relationship with Daniel Rogers. Less than a year later, Odlin’s
refusal to allow Gilman the use of the meeting house where he had so frequently
preached in years past may have marked the fatal blow to their long personal and
professional friendship. From that time forward, Gilman and Odlin appeared on
opposing sides in whatever controversy that arose out of the area’s revival.

To say that Gilman and Odlin played leading and opposing roles in the Great
Awakening, however, does not likewise mean that their influence in the clerical
profession was similar. Odlin’s influence over Gilman is obvious in the Durham pastor’s
abiding Calvinism and his perceptions of the pastor’s role in the lives of his parishioners.
But Gilman’s defection to the camp of the enthusiasts had no significant impact on
Odlin’s ministry or prestige other than to incite the elderly pastor to greater heights in his
defense of conservative Congregationalism. Even Gilman’s encouragement and
leadership in forming a Separate church in Exeter did not diminish Odlin’s standing
among his professional peers. Throughout the 1740s, Odlin remained a bulwark for the
like-minded. Before turning to Odlin’s work as the leader of the Old Lights on the
northern frontier, however, it will be important to digress to an intramural squabble over
the further division of Exeter.23 While it appears that Odlin had no direct role in the

23 See Map 3 on page 263.
geographical division of Exeter, the division is germane to this discussion because it explains why many residents of Exeter were in no mood to compromise over any issue in the early 1740s.

As one of the four original towns of New Hampshire, Exeter had originally covered a very large area, about 80 square miles. Even carving the town of Newmarket from the northeast corner in 1727 had not significantly reduced its size. The beginning of the Great Awakening, however, coincided with the end of a period of growth which left many residents of Exeter clamoring for separate parishes and maintenance for their own ministers and meeting houses. They lived in pockets of farms and houses several miles west of the Old Town and wanted to have both the convenience and the privileges associated with having a separate parish that would conform to their liking. Most of those whose farms were in the northwest quadrant, known locally as Tuckaway, lived more than seven miles from the meeting house and some more than nine. The distance to the Old Town was too far to travel in any but the best of weather. They were quite willing and able to support a minister and meeting house of their own but, since "most of them [were] new Settlers (tho' upon good land)"; they were unable to produce sufficient earnings to pay taxes to support two ministers. Their petition, signed by 56 residents, was favorably considered by the provincial legislature and governor, and they in turn sent it to Exeter for a town vote. Epping became a new parish and town in early 1742.

Residents in the southwest quadrant of Exeter, in the area around Deer Hill, had a much more difficult time convincing Exeter to allow them to separate. They were considering separation as early as 1735 when they built a meeting house for their own convenience, but Old Town residents had continually refused their permission to become
a separate parish, ostensibly because they were not yet sufficient in number to support
their own minister. They tried again unsuccessfully to petition for a separate parish in the
fall of 1738. Their petition to the town selectmen mentioned the “inexpressible
Disadvantages & Difficulties … by reason of our Great Distance from the publick
Meeting house,” standard fare for such petitions. Of particular interest here is that during
the winter months, when travel was all but impossible, they had for “Diverse years past
… thought it Best to be at the Expence of Supporting preaching amongst us without any
abatement of our Rates to the Support of the ministry in this Parish … .”24

Perhaps encouraged by the recent success of Epping residents, a contingent of over
50 families led by James Dudley petitioned the town again in February 1742 for
permission to establish their own parish and, undoubtedly much to their delight, the town
meeting agreed to grant their petition. Their delight was short-lived, however, when
Andrew Gilman and 39 other families who lived closest to the Old Town counter­
petitioned to have the approval overturned because of irregularities in the town meeting.25
Claiming that his party understood that the meeting in question was intended only to
settle the boundary line between Epping, Newmarket, and Exeter, they would not come to
discuss the proposed separation of the southwestern section. In fact, they claimed, the
Dudley party had taken advantage of their absence to gain assent for an action that they
were convinced was against their best interests. They had property that would reside in
both towns and would therefore be assessed for maintenance of two churches. This
petition went directly to newly appointed Governor Benning Wentworth and, from there,

24 NHSP 9: 252.

25 The series of petitions over the separation of Brentwood is found in NHSP 9: 256-78.
into the public arena. The Gilman party could not prevent the separation of the new parish of Brentwood from Exeter in June 1742, but they did continue to hinder further action by petitioning for the government to allow them to use the meeting house near the border with Exeter that they had built for themselves in 1735 and excuse them from paying taxes to Brentwood. This resulted in a counter-petition from about 60 families farther to west that claimed that Brentwood could not support itself if these established families left them alone to pay the rates. Meanwhile, a fierce argument continued to rage over the location of the new Brentwood Parish meeting house for at least two years between factions living further to the west near Chester and those living nearer the center of the town. The disagreement was so severe that it was not until December 1748 that the Rev. Nathaniel Trask was ordained as minister of Brentwood.26

Thus, when the revival arrived in the seacoast area in late 1740, Odlin’s town was already embroiled in controversy that had both political and religious overtones. Groups of families living in the southwest and northwest parts of town were determined to go their own way, being no longer content to support a town and church from which they gained little advantage. Separated by so many miles from regular attendance at worship, they had worked out informal ways of gathering the body of Christ on the Sabbath. In doing so, they were less affected by the discipline and order of the Exeter Church. More susceptible to an emotional religious experience as a result of earlier preaching of Baptist

26 Jonathan French, “Congregational Churches and Ministers in Rockingham County,” NEHGR 1 (January 1847): 40-6, 1 (April 1847): 150-7, 1 (July 1847): 244-50. Odlin participated in Trask’s ordination service. It is interesting to note that Brentwood features prominently in Goen’s list of Separate and Separate Baptist churches. Many of the separates from Exeter ended up in the Brentwood church, particularly those baptized by Hezekiah Smith. From there, members planted branches in Epping, Hampstead, Lee, Nottingham, and Stratham. See the Appendix in Goen, Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 319-21.
itinerants, they flocked to the New Light cause. Many members of the Brentwood church became proselytes of Baptist preachers such as Hezekiah Smith, and spent the next several years planting churches in Epping, Hampstead, Lee, Nottingham, and Stratham. By the middle 1740s, Exeter Church was surrounded on three sides by radical New Light or Separate congregations. In one sense, their separation did not affect Odlin or his ministry greatly, as his influence over them had been less than direct because of the distance separating them. For Odlin, however, the fulmination of competing parties over the separation of Brentwood sparked a great deal of aggravation among those members of the Exeter parish who were content to remain in the mother church. Certainly part of this arose from concerns over increased rates due to a smaller tax base as well as the breakup of familiar relationships among families who had attended worship together. But contemporary with the political division of the town was the spiritual division of the Exeter church. This study will now turn to Odlin’s opposition to the Great Awakening and how it resulted in the splitting of his parish and the creation of a second center of spiritual authority in Exeter.

Without doubt, a large number of Odlin’s flock went to hear Whitefield preach at Hampton in October 1740 and some followed him about the seacoast area to hear him speak several times. Having received a taste of the power of the young preacher’s oratory, many returned to Exeter with hearts strangely warmed by preaching that reached their emotions as much as, if not more than, their intellects. While the majority of the congregation remained quite satisfied with the service of their faithful pastor, as the

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27 After Nicholas Gilman preached at the Deer Hill meeting house in Apr. 1741, he sensed the stirring in people’s hearts. “[M]ay there be some good fruit found of it—Amen O Lord.” Gilman, 26 Apr. 1741, 190.

28 See Map 2 on page 262.
months went by and other exhorters flooded the area, a substantial minority began to yearn for a greater emotional dimension in their religious lives. These needs Odlin was determined not to meet, not because he was against the role of the heart in conviction, but because he was unalterably opposed to the “several [who had] run very much into the Antinomian Scheme … .”29 If he had anyone particularly in mind when he penned these words to Mather Byles, which he undoubtedly did, it would have been Daniel Rogers, the son of the Rev. John Rogers of Ipswich and the grandson of President John Rogers, who very quickly became the bane of the old minister’s existence.

The Rev. Daniel Rogers30 graduated from Harvard in 1725, the year after Nicholas Gilman, and took his master of arts in 1727. Neither studying nor preaching were his strengths as a young man, but he remained at the college for many years after graduation. He existed first on scholarships and then by the largesse of his Aunt Mary Saltonstall before winning an appointment as a tutor in 1732. His tutorship was rather eventful, as it included a suit against him for assaulting a student and his flirtations with spiritual dreams and visions under the guidance of the French instructor Louis Langloiserie.31 Surprisingly, he was reappointed twice more by the Corporation, despite Tutor Nathan Prince’s outspoken deprecation of his scholarly abilities. Although he failed to obtain Cotton Mather’s pulpit in 1730, Rogers did give occasional sermons in the towns between Cambridge and his father’s church in Ipswich. By 1740, Harvard was working behind the scenes to get him settled at New North Church as John Webb’s assistant, the

29 John Odlin to Mather Byles, quoted in Byles’s Preface to Odlin’s sermon, Doing Righteousness, an Evidence of our being righteous (Boston 1742), i.

30 SHG 7: 554-60.

31 It is tempting to link Langloiserie with the French Prophets, but his name does not appear on the list of known French Prophets found in Schwartz, The French Prophets.
post Gilman also attempted to secure for himself. It was at this time that Rogers first heard Whitefield preach and, forsaking his tutorship and the proffered ordination, he decided to follow Whitefield wherever he went in New England. While he could not apply himself to the study required to prepare a satisfactory sermon or to deliver it in ways acceptable to his peers, he found the expository style of Whitefield to fit his personality and ability exactly. He soon became a much sought-after preacher among New Lights and even invited himself into pulpits where his oratory was unwanted. He appeared to settle on Exeter as a central point on the northern frontier from which to itinerate Down East as far as North Yarmouth and to the south into Cape Ann, stopping in Odlin’s parish whenever itinerating through the area.

Daniel Rogers’ first appearance in Exeter was no later than September 1741 when he tarried there after an extended preaching tour through Maine. Over a two-day period, he preached twice in the meeting house and once at the home of Trueworthy Gilman, the brother of Nicholas. When he attempted to preach in the meeting house again in June 1742, Odlin refused to allow it at first, although “leave at length with much Ado, was obtained for a Sermon to Morrow.” Rogers preached in the morning from Genesis 6:3, a good text for evangelical preaching, but which could not have pleased Odlin given Rogers’ penchant for emotional preaching. In fact, the pastor could be excused if he thought any of the itinerant’s more controversial comments were directed specifically at him. Odlin’s sermon the following Sunday, Nicholas Gilman noted, contained “publick

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12 Daniel’s active role in splitting Chebacco Parish was related in Chapter 2. He also helped stir dissension in John Lowell’s Newburyport and Christopher Toppan’s Newbury churches.
Reflection on Mr. Rogers and My self in his Sermon ... May it be forgiven him and this evenings conversation have some good impressions on him.\textsuperscript{33}

It is interesting to note that Odlin's only published comment about church politics was preached during this same time. It is important because it provides clues both to his thoughts on the progress of the revival and to the spiritual climate in the Exeter church when Rogers' impact was felt there first. Preaching from 1 John 2:29, "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him," Odlin exhorted his people to do acts of righteousness, since they provided sound evidence of being righteous. Before even beginning his exegesis, he paused to make clear his purpose in preaching this particular message. Alarmed by the recent excess in emotionalism in his parish, he was determined that "Seducers are timely to be opposed, and that their Folly may be made manifest, and that they may proceed no further." He much regretted that there were those among them who "must have Teachers of their own, and not of God's sending; but they chose them to gratify their Lusts and please their itching Ears." Summing up the effect of those teachers on some of his congregation, he remarked that they were those who receiv'd some of the first Principles of Christianity but were grown up to no Maturity of Understanding in them, or of Faith and Holiness. They had frequent Emulations and Quarrels among them, upon the Account of their Ministers: these were Proofs of their being carnal; that fleshly Interests and Affections too much swayed them. Factious Spirits act upon humane Principles, not upon Principles of true Religion; they are guided by their own Pride and Passion, and not by Rules of Christianity.

\textsuperscript{33} Rogers' early activities in Exeter are obtained from the following entries in Gilman's Diary: 9 Sept. 1741, 220; 10 Sept. 1741, 220; 7 June 1742, 270; 8 June 1742, 270; and 17 June 1742, 273. The two quotations are from the entries of 7 and 17 June, respectively. The verse from Gen. 6:3 reads, "And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." This has always been a favorite evangelical verse because it challenges auditors to respond to the message immediately, since God will not always be patient with people. Rogers could as easily have applied this to the pastor as to the congregation.
Looking back over the “thirty-six Years that I have preached the Gospel to you,” he averred that he had “never preached any other Doctrine to you, than what was according to the holy Scriptures, and according to the calvinistical Scheme.” As their pastor, he felt called to denounce antinomianism as a false doctrine that had crept in among his people, and he asked all his people to join him in “suppressing and beating down Error, and do what we can to promote the Good of Souls, and advance the Kingdom of Christ.”

The emotionalism of New Light adherents certainly distressed Odlin greatly, but it is also clear that he viewed it as mere outward manifestations of a much greater doctrinal error preached by the “Seducers” of his flock. He found unacceptable the teaching that the indwelling Holy Spirit alone would attest to the justification of the individual before God and that sanctification was possible without outward manifestations of the Spirit’s presence in the form of good works and the fruit of the Spirit. His purpose for preaching this message was to convince those wavering between the New and Old Lights that without good works and spiritual fruit they did not have the proof needed to discern the witness of the Spirit that they were truly among God’s elect. Odlin developed a convincing argument that would have drawn a hearty “Amen” if that would not have been too extroverted for his eighteenth-century Congregational meeting. His sermon raised a great deal of displeasure among those of the New Light persuasion, however.

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34 Odlin, Doing Righteousness, 1-4.

35 For my purpose here, “good works” are those actions performed in the name of Christ and in obedience to His Word that bring glory to God and advancement to His kingdom among the people. “Good fruit” refers to the “Fruit of the Spirit” mentioned in Gal. 5:22. The fruit of the Spirit results when the believer allows Christ to transform him or herself to the extent that the character and very being become those of Christ Himself. Put succinctly, works are what a believer “does” and fruit is what a believer “is”. Orthodox Christianity has traditionally stressed both of these ideas, although in different proportions at different times.
because he also used the sermon as a platform for attacking them as antinomians. It is not surprising that in a sermon on works Odlin should emphasize how behavior demonstrates conformity with Christian values. Thus, it was easy to show how New Lights were disproving their own inner witness when they would not “live in respect of themselves, in the just Government of their Affections and Passions, and with respect to God, piously discharging the Duties and Paying the Homage they owe to him.”

Christians were also not ones who were seen “following the World and the Things thereof; prosecuting their own Designs, and not aiming at the Glory of God … .”

Obedience to lawful authority is another sign of Christian behavior, but New Lights constantly demonstrated that they were contrary … to the apostolick Spirit, who cry down Works of sincere Obedience as any Evidence of a State of Grace, and call those legal Preachers who preach up good Works of Obedience to the divine Commands as a Christian’s Duty, and as an Evidence of his Love to God; but they themselves at the same Time, under Colour of advancing Free Grace, are … “Enemies of God, to the People of God, to the Gospel.”

In closing, he adjured his people to “have a Care you don’t compass yourselves about with Sparks; and walk in the Light of your own Fire, and in the Sparks that ye have kindled: And should have … [God’s despising] at the Hand of God, to lie down in Sorrow.”

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36 When Nicholas Gilman rode to Exeter a week after the sermon, he must have heard a complete report because the following night he “had a Controversy with Mr. Odlin About Works being an Evidence of Faith.” Gilman, 8 June 1742, 270.

37 Odlin, Doing Righteousness, 13-4.

38 Ibid., 17. This suggests that Odlin’s sermon was a response to previous disagreements over the role of behavior as proof of salvation.

39 P. 24.
With this one sermon, Odlin made his position perfectly clear to his parish. He was not going to accept any kindling of the New Light in his parish and he was quite convinced that those who would attempt to do so were deluded and, quite possibly, not among the elect. He had earlier purchased several sermons on the same subject by Mather Byles, the noted Boston minister, poet, and humorist, and had dispersed them among his people. When many found Byles's ideas objectionable, he preached this particular sermon, which was so well received by his supporters that he determined to publish and release it into the marketplace of ideas. Byles welcomed the opportunity to preface the work, seeing it as an opportunity to “guard the Doctrines of Grace from such a detestible and fatal Abuse of them; and to oppose those unhappy Sons of Error, who so boldly turn the Grace of God into Lasciviousness.” With the publication of his sermon, Odlin became both the recognized Old Light leader in northern New England and known as an intractable opponent to emotional religion in his own parish. The sermon stood as a powder keg in the meeting house awaiting the touch of an errant Light. Surprisingly, it was not the New Light of Daniel Rogers which touched off the powder, but the Old Light of Woodbridge Odlin.

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40 Byles was the grandson and nephew of Increase and Cotton Mather, respectively. He was a classmate of Daniel Rogers and graduated a year behind Gilman at Harvard, and was also a friend of Benjamin Franklin. Shipton notes that Byles, arguably one of the best preachers of his generation, preferred to avoid theological controversy and, like his uncle with the Salem witchcraft trials, chose to handle the religious excitement of the 1740s with great caution. His opposition to Davenport and, especially, Whitefield earned him the vilification of New Light clergy. SHG 7:464-93.

41 Byles, Preface to Doing Righteousness, ii. Byles’s use of this term in the context of emotional responses to religious stimulation is quite interesting. It is derived from the Latin verb “lascivire”, meaning to frolic, frisk, run wild, or be irresponsible. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, there was a combined sense of sexual licentiousness and lack of proper restraint that came with a lack of experience or maturity. H.B. Parkes, reacting to James Truslow Adams’ notion that the only release for Puritan emotions was sexual, insists that, “whatever truth there may be in the charge that revivalism in general, by breaking down inhibitions, has a tendency to cause unchastity, it is unlikely that this was true of the Great Awakening.” Parkes, “Sexual Morals and the Great Awakening,” NEQ 3 (January 1930): 133-5.
Woodbridge Odlin was born in 1718, the youngest son of John and Elizabeth Woodbridge Clark Odlin. He graduated from Harvard in 1738 and took his second degree in 1741. While serving as Exeter's schoolmaster, he occasionally preached for his father in Exeter and Nicholas Gilman in Durham. He impressed the people of Biddeford, Maine, enough that it appeared they would call him to their pulpit. He would have settled there if not for an unofficial visit from an Exeter committee and its tacit promise of his becoming his father's colleague. In doctrine and theology, Woodbridge appears to have been a faithful recipient of his father's mantle. He certainly shared his father's views on George Whitefield and other itinerant preachers, if his public subscription to Charles Chauncy's *Seasonable Thoughts* is any indication. The majority of the congregation viewed Woodbridge Odlin, a serious and studious scholar, as an excellent candidate for assuming his father's pastoral charge in the near future—that is, the majority that was doctrinally conservative. A large minority did not view him as ideal and it was this group that eventually led the church to division and separation.

The split in the Exeter church started quite innocuously with the petition of 71 residents to insert an article in the warrant for the town's annual March meeting for a committee to treat with the young man about assisting with his father's pastoral duties. Accordingly, the meeting passed the article and, when the church concurred, gave authority to seven influential residents to meet with the young Odlin and come to some mutually agreeable arrangements. This did not sit well with a party of 44 members, who

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43 *NHSP* 9: 281.

44 See the following for a summary of the calling of Woodbridge Odlin: Bell, *History of Exeter*, 185-6; *SHG* 10: 307-8; *NHSP* 9: 280-9. For a contemporary account, there is *The Result of a Council of Ten Churches; Conven'd at Exeter, Jan. 31. 1743* (Boston, 1744).
provided a written statement that dissented from the town’s vote because of Woodbridge’s attitude toward the Great Awakening. The committee’s formal invitation came in June 1743, when it offered him a salary of £37 10s and an additional £50 per year for the first four years, and then £65 per year and the use of the parsonage upon his father’s decease. When he accepted this offer the same day, the committee reached agreement with their senior minister to reduce his salary to £50 per year with improvements to the parsonage. The son was ordained on 28 September 1743, and began a 33-year pastorate with the Exeter church. In ordaining him without achieving consensus in the congregation, however, the Exeter church left its dissenters with only one choice—formal separation from the main body of believers.

The separation of at least 50 families from the Exeter Church meant that at least 200 people left the direct pastoral care and authority of John Odlin.45 The heads of household were not satisfied simply to leave the church without a word of complaint. Besides the need to lay their case before the church, they also believed it necessary to justify their separation in light of the requirements of the Platform. Letters sent to Odlin and the church in the three to four months immediately following the decision to settle Woodbridge provide good insight into John Odlin’s influence and authority over his church. They characterized both Odlin and the brethren as “Opposers of the rich, sovereign Grace of GOD”, as evidenced by the “Caution used by the Pastor, and approved by the standing Brethren, as to admitting into his Pulpit Such Preachers as the dissatisfy’d Brethren have desired, whilst he himself judg’d it would not be to the

45 The date of initial separation is unknown, but Gilman does leave a clue to a possible day. His entry for 8 Apr. 1743 reads, “Private Fast of the Christians at [my cousin] Nicholas Gilmans house—Praying for Direction in this important day. Mr. Daniel Rogers arrivd towards Evening.” Gilman, 316-7. The “important day”, coming just 11 days after the annual town meeting, may have been the day the group
Edification and Peace of the Flock committed to his Charge to admit them ....” Clearly, John Odlin decided for himself whom he thought should address his people and these did not include those of a New Light position. They also believed Odlin an opposer because of his “discountenancing such as have been the Subjects of a glorious Work of Grace ....” The senior pastor obviously withheld sanction from any who displayed excess emotionalism in his congregation and refused to allow a church meeting that would provide a full forum for discussing these grievances, obviously self-assured that no amount of argument or persuasion would change his mind. The aggrieved brethren also were offended with the method Woodbridge was called to assist his father, both because of the way the business was placed on the agenda and because of “the Notion of his being an Opposer of the Work of GOD ....”46

In light of Odlin’s stalwart refusal to hear any complaints, the Separates called their own church council to hear their grievances and give them advice how to proceed. Considering the composition of this council, it should not be surprising that they received the support they desired from the conferees. The council met from 23-25 August 1743 and was comprised of elders and messengers from five nearby churches, all sympathetic to the New Light cause: John Rogers from Kittery Second, William Shurtleff from Portsmouth Second, Nathaniel Rogers from Ipswich First, and James Pike from Somersworth. The Separates from Chebacco Parish also sent Deacon John Choate to represent them. Undoubtedly, a powerful force in the deliberations was the pastor of the

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46 These letters are no longer extant, but their grievances are clearly inferred from the summary provided in Result of a Council of Ten Churches, 4-5.
fifth parish, Nicholas Gilman of Durham. The results from this council were only preliminary, as the Council readjourned on 18 Oct. "with the addition of Topfield and Rowly ... [and] drew up a result in favour of the Aggrieved Separating brothers." John Odlin was not about to accept the findings of a Council in his own parish in which he had had no part. He was willing to call a council on behalf of both parties, but the Separates refused to join with the Exeter Church. When their formal refusal came by letter in December, Odlin decided to act on his own. To substantiate his own position and to flex the muscle inherent in the Platform, he called his own Council that met in January 1744 to consider the actions of the Separates.

The composition of this council, which was moderated by the venerable John Newmarch of First Kittery, must be considered a reflection of John Odlin’s own positions on church government and the Great Awakening, since it was he who called it and framed the nature of the arguments. The members’ first business was to review and answer the charges found in the letters sent to Odlin by the Separates. They could find no evidence contained there that could justify their separation from the church. The conferees were quite dismayed, in fact, that the Separates portrayed their pastor and brethren as “Opposers of the rich, sovereign Grace of God; a Representation which to us appears most unjust.” Indeed, Odlin was an example of clerical probity, worthy of

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47 Thanks to Gilman, historians know the composition of the council and that members met together to fast and pray, and to consider a letter from John Odlin to William Shurtleff. Unfortunately, as to their findings, all he mentioned was that the group "drew up a Result and delivd to the Aggrieved Brethren and adjournd to Oct. 18th." Gilman, 23-25 Aug. 1743, 333-5.


49 John Newmarch of Kittery First served as the moderator and Benjamin Prescott of Peabody as the recorder. Other ministers included Samuel Phillips of Andover, James Diman of Salem Second, Peter Clark of Salem Village, Jonathan Cushing of Dover, Joseph Parsons of Bradford (Haverhill), Stephen Emery of Nottingham, John Blunt of New Castle, Samuel Parsons of Rye, and John Lowell of Newbury Second (Newburyport). Results of a Council, 3.
emulation by those who revered him as a father in the faith. Rather than denying his flock a blessing by refusing to share his pulpit with whoever wished to preach, “we think he acted therein the Part of wise and faithful Watchman . . .” An opposer of the mighty work of God’s grace? “On the contrary, the said Pastor to us appears, to have been a faithful Assertor of the Doctrines of Grace, and a zealous Promoter of whatever tends to the Advancement of them.” They could find no reason to criticize the pastor for refusing to call a church meeting to air grievances. “It appearing to us a plain Case, that . . . [refusing to call a church meeting] ought to have been done, that so the Pastor, whose proper Business it is to call Church-Meetings, might judge whether there was just Occasion therefor; and might also be able to inform the Church when met, what their proper Business was.”

As to the calling and ordination of Woodbridge, how could there be any impropriety when a majority of both town and church approved it? They certainly could find no justification for concluding that the young man was an opposer to true religion.

The council reserved its strongest disapproval for what it considered violations of the order of government established in the Platform. They considered that “the aggrieved Brethren’s calling a Council, at the Time and in the Manner they did, was an uncommon Step of Procedure”, a rather sedate response to what many may have considered quite a breach of the Standing Order. They were also disturbed that a number of churches would even participate in such an irregular meeting and hoped that such an action may not become precedential; but that all the Churches of CHRIST among us, may take Caution therefrom, and act more agreeable to the Order of the Gospel, and their own Constitution; and shew a greater Respect to, and treat their Sister-Churches with more

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50 Ibid., 4-5.
Candour, Justice, and Equity than those Churches have shewn and acted in their Meeting and Results, towards the Rev. Mr. Odlin, and his Church.\textsuperscript{51}

It must be kept in mind that this criticism of the five churches that met in council with the Separates was really aimed at the pastors of those churches whose behavior had for some time been anything but an example of wise ministerial leadership. Three of those ministers—Gilman, John Rogers, and Pike—had been involved in the extralegal ordination of Daniel Rogers in Kittery. Gilman had also traveled throughout the towns from Cape Ann to North Yarmouth assisting Daniel Rogers and Richard Woodbury as they sought to stir up the heat required to ignite the New Light throughout northern New England. Gilman and Daniel Rogers at that very moment were working closely with the Stratham Separates in their split with Henry Rust and his congregation. Thus, it represented the condemnation of conservative orthodoxy against a long list of errors that the Old Lights perceived had come to fruition with the excesses of the Great Awakening. It was also a condemnation of the failure of pastors to practice good leadership. Finally, the council also expressed succinctly John Odlin’s view of the Great Awakening and, as such, were Odlin’s own criticisms of the New Lights.

The council was concerned with not only the causes of this particular separation, but also the problem of separation in general. For New England Congregationalists, separation was an extremely serious matter that required considerable prayer and effort before giving up as hopeless the call for Christians to live in unity. The council appended “several Propositions upon the Head of Separation” written by Peter Clark of Salem Village (Danvers) with accompanying Scriptures, which they hoped would cause the

\textsuperscript{51} Pp. 6-7.
Exeter Separates and any others reading them to pause before final division occurred. Clark's twelve propositions were really building blocks with which he tried to prove, step by step, that separates could not use the Scripture to support the legality of their actions. They also reflected the conservative view of the *Platform*.

Clark began by discussing the nature of church fellowship and the illegality of separation except under extreme circumstances. First, Christ Himself called Christians to join in fellowship and to preserve unity and peace among themselves. This relationship requires true charity in behavior towards one another and the conscious cementing of bonds of fellowship through the practice of the "Ordinances of the Gospel". Since this is a sacred bond of fellowship, any withdrawing of charity or separation from the visible church and the sacraments must only occur with just cause, and that being the existence of gross and continuing sin. Separation for any other cause "is manifestly unlawful, and is condemned in the Word of GOD, as a Schism in the Body of Christ." While it is vital that Christians should leave a church body involved in sin, while there is any doubt they should "choose the safest side of the Question, and to forbear withdrawing Communion." Since sin is the only reason for separating from fellowship, differences of opinion or "Errors in Matters of less Moment in Religion, are no warrantable Ground of Separation from Church Communion." Offenses that arise in the course of normal church fellowship are never grounds for separation either.52

From this general discussion of separation, Clark went on to address issues raised by the Great Awakening that were leading to schism in the churches. Those who believed that through some extraordinary means they were able to determine that their

52 Pp. 9-10.
pastors lacked the spiritual sensitivity to lead their churches during the revival were clearly in error. "Ill Surmises of the spiritual State, whether of Officers or Members of a particular Church who are found in Faith, and regular in Conversation, which consequently are not capable of rational convictive Proof, are manifestly against Charity, and the plain Rules of the Gospel, and by no Means a Ground of Separation." Those who considered themselves "the purer Part", above the "general Decay, and more gross Corruptions" of the present-day, church could not justify their separation either; nor could those with "superiour Attainments in Knowledge and spiritual Experience."

Exceptional "Zeal for the Cause of CHRIST, or of the Spirit" was insufficient reason because a "Zeal that runs out this Way, tends to pervert the true Cause and Interest of CHRIST and his Religion." Those who claimed Christian liberty for separation were woefully incorrect because the liberty spoken of was for the indifferent things. What the Scripture ordained—Christian unity—was an essential thing. By way of summing up his argument, he averred that separation "ought to be the last Remedy, and not to be attempted, till the previous Steps directed to in the Gospel of CHRIST, have been taken, and after long waiting, in the Use of the prescribed Methods, for removing Errors, Scandals, and Corruptions, out of the Church, and they have prov'd unsuccessful".53

While these propositions were in Clark's words, they perfectly explain Odlin's own opinion about the separation in his church. They are of the same spirit found in his sermon Doing Righteousness, addressing the importance of obedience to God's written word and of behaving toward other Christians in ways that demonstrated faith, hope, and charity. They also express his belief in the established method of governing found in the

Platform: strict adherence to congregational independency with the pastor as the leader of the church and the use of councils in prescribed ways to settle disputes. The propositions also supported his belief in the orderliness of religion, that God ruled his people through an established order of command and authority, expressed through His Word and through the institutional structure established by New England’s spiritual forefathers. Those claiming the immediacy of the Holy Spirit were a danger to the order God had established long before. Furthermore, it is unlikely the council would have published its findings for the world to see if Odlin had not granted his imprimatur.

It would be easy to forget that in the midst of the theological and doctrinal battles there were everyday tradesman, farmers, and artisans who had separated themselves from their church to take advantage of what they believed to be a period of extraordinary grace of God. It is true that some of the town’s most influential leaders were among them—Judge Samuel and (later) Colonel Daniel Gilman, both brothers of the Rev. Nicholas Gilman, and Deacons John and Josiah Lord—but most were humbler folk who wished to form a church and settle a minister who would meet their spiritual needs. In the months following the decision to call Woodbridge Odlin, the Separates only continued what had already begun in 1741. They held their own meetings in private houses. Nicholas Gilman recorded his attendance at several where he preached or gave a word of exhortation, including ones held in the homes of his kinsmen, Peter and Nicholas Gilman, Jr., and in his brother Trueworthy’s. While Gilman assisted with some of the pastoral duties in Exeter despite his own responsibilities in Durham, the one who became most identified with the Exeter Separates was Daniel Rogers.54 His first visit to Exeter had

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54 Those sympathetic to Rogers would have preceded his name with the title “Reverend”, since he had been ordained as a kind of “minister-at-large” in a ceremony held at York in July 1742. Gilman, 13 July 1742,
made a lasting impression—for better and worse—and the Separates continued to urge him to dwell among them. In the months following this initial visit, Rogers toured central Massachusetts and continued south to northern New Jersey. There, he induced the firebrand Gilbert Tennent to come to New England with him, much to the dismay of conservative ministers. In the spring of 1743, however, Rogers began again to frequent Exeter, assuming a kind of de facto spiritual authority, not only over the Exeter Separates, but over the separated brethren of Stratham as well.

By the summer of 1744, however, the continued expense of supporting their own preacher and meeting house began to tell on the purses of the Separates. The heads of 54 households of the Separate congregation, including 12 Gilmans, petitioned the provincial government on 18 July for an exemption from supporting the First Church so long as they supported their own minister. They complained about the hasty method in which the town meeting made its decision to call the associate pastor. They also revealed that their reason for separation, the ordination of Woodbridge Odlin, was for no personal reason against the young man. It was because they perceived that “neither wee nor our households would be likely to proffit under his Ministry therefore could not receive him as our minister ...” In short, they objected to paying for a ministry that would not meet their needs (particularly for a minister whose friends procured his calling through a bit of chicanery), but were willing to pay for one that would.

When the legislature referred this petition to the selectmen of Exeter to answer why

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277. Gilman, joined by Jeremiah Wise of Berwick, his brother-in-law James Pike of Somersworth, and John Rogers of Kittery, had shocked the clerical profession throughout New England with this clear violation of the New England Way. Reports of outrage were still being published in November. See the Boston Evening-Post, 22 Nov. 1742. Odlin never appeared to have accepted the validity of Rogers' ordination, then or even when the Separates ordained him as their minister in 1748.

55 NHSP 9: 278.
the petition for exemption should not be granted, the town responded by appointing Nicholas Perryman, James Gilman, and Zebulon Gidding, the town clerk and innkeeper, to draft its reply. As a document, the counter-petition effectively put forth the church’s case against the Separates once again, this time to a secular rather than ecclesiastical body. The Separates were mistaken; the town had not hastily formed its committee to meet with Woodbridge, but met in as “moderate & Deliberate a manner as annual meetings have been usually carry’d on in, and the choice of the said Committee was made after a mature consideration and Deliberation of the Voters then Present ....” In fact, the document continued, the town had waited several months for the ordination to give the Separates an opportunity to come round, “And what moved many of the Petitioners to be prejudiced against him we know not.” The church had permitted the aggrieved brethren to lay their grievances before the representatives of twelve churches who came for the ordination of Woodbridge in September; these pastors and elders had then denied the justice of their grievances. The council that met in January 1744 had likewise considered all the evidence and found in favor of the Exeter church. There could be no doubt that the ordination was “agreeable to the Laws of this Province, & the usage of the churches in this Government ....” Looking beyond these simple issues, they also warned that granting the petition would

Tend Greatly to the Prejudice not only of this church but also of all the other churches of this Government and will be a manifest breach of the Law of this Province and Contrary to the Constitution of the churches in the Country for any small number of Persons who through unreasonable Prejudice shall desire this Honble Court to Exempt themselves, their Familys and Estates from paying toward the support of the Present settled ministers ...., unless the Petitioners should so change their Principles in Religion that the Act of Parliament would Free them from the same which we apprehend is not the Case of the Present Petitioners.
Also of great concern was that separating without just cause was both an evil in itself and had caused further evil by having "Drawn Many belonging to the Neighbouring Towns & Parishes away to the Separate house and to Leave their own Ministers ... ." Allowing this to occur by granting the petition would surely "be a Leading Example to Others, and be a means of bringing this Province into the utmost Confusion both by Dividing Familys and Separating friends and Christian Societies". It is easy to find the influence of John Odlin in this statement.

The authors of the counter-petition obviously believed that their position in the affair stood squarely on the foundation of church order and discipline found in the Platform. There is one church and one minister in each town, they argued, so that people may fall under the spiritual authority of one man of God. Indeed, within each church there is a mechanism for imposing discipline and remonstrating with those who fail to maintain it. Separation, they continued, is also evil because it violates Scriptural order and Christian obedience, and without these two requisites, the Kingdom of Christ could not advance. Finally, what affects Christ's Kingdom will also affect secular government; the church's role as an instrument for maintaining peace and unity would be ineffective if there were two churches vying for authority in one parish. Separation is therefore a civil danger, because it sets people free from traditional institutions and the order those institutions bring to society.

Judge Samuel Gilman and Colonel Peter Gilman wrote the rejoinder to this counter-petition. Whereas the Separates' original petition had been short and concise, with very little elaboration on their many grievances, their "Answer" was skillfully contrived to

56 Ibid., 280-4.
demonstrate that the issue was far more complicated than presented by the combined efforts of church and town. They did not deny that the calling of Woodbridge Odlin had met legal requirements, "But in this account there is nothing said of the Art used first to prepare matters" so that the desired ordination would result. The several examples cited in the Separate’s answer to the counter petition sought to prove “the thing to be Contrived & determined before it came to be Voted, and that those who asserted their freedom & Liberty had Reason to be dissatisfied ... .” There were other misrepresentations in the counter petition. For example, the “itinerants” John Odlin had refused to allow into his pulpit were actually additional candidates that the aggrieved brethren wished to consider for the position of associate pastor. Odlin’s denial effectively removed all of his son’s competition. Given all the chicanery surrounding Woodbridge’s ordination, they summed up, “if this settlement was Legal, it will be very Difficult, if not Impossible to prove it to be agreeable to the usage of the churches in this Government.”

The Gilmans made it clear from the beginning that replying to these minor points was not their true purpose for submitting further explanation. As they were “Sincere in their Principles which relate to this matter [of the ordination] so they would be just in their Reasonings upon it ... .” They “should ... have been glad to have avoided entering into the consideration of [these] several points & matters of fact ... because they will be a Diversion & a Digression from the Main Question”. The most important allegation of the church was that permitting a legal separation through tax exemption within a single town would constitute a grave danger to the welfare of church and state. The


58 P. 285.
interlocutors foresaw rightly that they had to address this in forceful and audacious terms because they perceived that enlisting the secular arm in the discipline of the church presented frightening possibilities. While the church had always welcomed the magistrate’s involvement in preventing or at least punishing overt sin found in the community, had any church ever threatened those who had owned the Covenant to conform to church discipline or suffer state sanctions since the Hutchinson controversy? The Gilmans’ rationale against this threat to their liberty is breathtaking. Arguing from a clever melding of natural rights and social contract theories, they defended their right to separate from the Exeter Church with a political, not a religious, major premise: individuals may covenant together to form whatever organizations they wish and as long as the members of that body are peaceable and law-abiding, their right to free association and the pursuit of happiness may not be infringed. Further,

[W]hen tis said the granting this Petition would be a manifest breach of the Laws of the Province the Objection Implies that this court are to proceed only on Laws already in force that they are Restain’d by them, & are only to put such Laws in Execution—which is not the case, the petitioners ask for a new Law, & apply to those who can make it— ... The Question therefore ought not to be whether the Law ask’d for will be a breach upon other Laws. But whether the End propos’d by it be good, whether it is Right & Reasonable to be done, ... [W]e take it for undoubted Truth in which all Christians are agreed That the end of all Public worship is the Honr of God & the Edification of the Worshippers, ... That assemblies worship & care [the] only means to attain the End. Viz the Edification of those who attend them. That this cant be done where the worship is not voluntary, for it must be in Spirit and in truth, free and sincere—

The answer to the dilemma demonstrated by the two petitions was simple. If any activity that is presently against the law works for the common good of the community, then

59 P. 287.
change the law. "[T]he doing of which will no more be a breach of the old, than the
making any other new Law & the same argument lies with Equal Reasoning against
making any new Law, for every Instance of that Kind in some sense alters those before in
force".  

Though foundational doctrines of the church were well defined and immutable,
there were many aspects of spirituality that must be left to the dictates of individual
consciences. People must not be forced to accept "indifferent things" that violated their
scruples. If their religious needs could be met better in another congregation, they must
be allowed to follow their consciences and attend worship there. In fact, "when a number
sufficient to embody in Church order have the same Judgmt as to that point they ought to
separate & embody ..." themselves together elsewhere.

Furthermore, the Separates could not accept from the government the permission to
separate if it did not include exemption from taxation as well. With words that
anticipated Patrick Henry, the authors asked "If it be said tis enough for such separatists
to enjoy their Liberty of Separating without being Eas'd of their taxes—the answer is that
would be making them purchase their Liberty of those who enjoy their own freely & is
not Liberty Equally every mans right who had not forfeited it? If so no man should be
olig’d to purchase it at a dearer Rate than his neighbor ... ." The Gilmans conceived this
as a fundamental natural rights issue. If to maintain freedom of conscience they had to
endure hardships that others did not have to in order to maintain their freedom, then the
law that bound them so was unjust. "In short," they concluded this argument,

60 Ibid.

61 P. 288. Note that this "right" to find a congregation best suited to personal needs was never even
suggested in the Platform. Actually, the notion presages the later "voluntarist" approach to church
Whenever a sufficient number agree to go off from a church or churches, & Embody by themselves & by their outward actions or the General course of their lives ... there is Reason to think them sincere in their pretensions, if they are willing to support the preaching of the gospel & Other ordinances among themselves & especially when their Separation does not break up the churches they leave, we humbly conceive, & with great deference & submission would say they have a right to demand of the authority, that protection, Exemption & Countenance whereby they may Enjoy their Opinions & Sacred Rights on as Cheap & Easy terms as their neighbours so far as the Circumstances of their case will admit—62

There is a strong current of both equal protection under the law and separation of church and state in this argument that presaged the same rhetoric used to justify the right of separation from an Empire 30 years later. Petitions like this one might be used to support an intellectual link between the Great Awakening and the American Revolution, but that would be looking forward into the future. It would be better to see this petition as the fullest expression of an idea from the past, an extension of the social contract theory expounded by John Wise of Chebacco in the *Churches Quarrel Espoused* that was fully developed in Chapter 2. John Odlin stood in the same place in Exeter as Theophilus Pickering in Chebacco, having denied the right of his congregation to have a full and open hearing of their grievances, and the right to elect their own officers or choose whom they wished to preach to them. In separating from the town’s church, the aggrieved brethren of Exeter justified their departure in the same manner as the aggrieved brethren of Chebacco. Since the pastor and church had not fulfilled their responsibilities under the covenant, their social contract, the Separates were free, in fact, compelled, to leave to form a more perfect union of saints. Only in this case, the Exeter Separates appealed to membership.

62 P. 289.
the secular rather than sacred arm for redress of grievances. Besides the similarity in rhetoric between Wise’s book and the “Answer” to Exeter’s counter-petition, other evidence points strongly to a quite conscious borrowing from Wise. Deacon John Choate, who represented the Chebacco Separates on the council called to give advice to the aggrieved brethren of Exeter in August 1743, had already considered and used Wise’s arguments in the battle with Pickering. It is unlikely that he would have missed the glaring similarities between the two controversies.63 Surely, he would have added his views on Wise when the delegates determined their course of action.

What of John Odlin? By implication, all of the criticisms found in the “Answer” to the counter-petition were cast in his direction. There was a hint that the fight was in part over whether the Exeter parish would lose financial support for its two ministers, “the great point of maintaining the minister in Affluence & Ease”. More important, however, was their resentment of Odlin’s overextending his authority over the church. “[I]t is worth considering whether force, Compulsion or Restraint is a likely way to promote the Interests of pure religion, whether to compel to Conformity is a likely means Ever did or ever will Make a sincere Conformist, & what Interest is such a Conduct likely to promote, unless that of the purse of the parishioners & the more, comfortable Subsistence of the Parson for the Larger the Parish … .” Odlin’s perspective, quite naturally, was rather different. What the Separates complained of as forced conformity, he viewed as the need to ensure willing compliance to the commandments of Christ, the New England

63 Several descendants of John Choate of Ipswich (born 1624) were Chebacco Separates who were actively involved in the pamphlet war with Pickering’s supporters. While the name of Deacon John Choate, III, does not appear among the signatories to letters from the aggrieved brethren to Pickering, those of brother Robert and cousins Thomas, Thomas, Jr., and Francis do appear. Cleaveland, A Plain Narrative, 9, 16. Also, Nicholas Gilman owned a copy of Churches Quarrel Espoused and read it on at least one occasion when circumstances prevented his leaving his study. He noted he had read it on a snowy evening. Gilman, 11 Dec. 1740, 162.
Way of church government, and the church covenant. What they viewed as his intransigence to the extraordinary movement of the grace of God, he viewed as an unwelcome challenge to the peace and unity of his church. Odlin’s view of the spiritual hierarchy of the church—the Father, the Son, the minister, the elders, the deacons, and the people—meant not the elevation of the pastor over his people, but the assurance that the peace and order of Christ would come through the rightful submission of the people to those whom Christ had called to shepherd His flock. Ultimately, the provincial government denied the request for exemption and the aggrieved brethren had to be satisfied with their de facto, if impecunious, separation. Odlin’s vision of ministry and community, preconditioned in the people from the pulpit for almost 40 years, successfully parried a strong thrust for freedom of conscience and association. It was a testament to Odlin’s powerful influence that despite the presence of the Separates in his parish, he continued to be a leader of the Old Lights on the northern frontier.

John Odlin continued to maintain his great esteem among his conservative colleagues through the 1740s. He was the founding force of the New Hampshire Association of ministers which first met in Exeter on 28 July 1747 in recognition of the “great Need of Union among the Ministers, & their most prudent, hearty & Unanimous Endeavours to promote such valuable Ends & to guard the Churches against everything that might Shock their Foundations or corrupt their Doctrine.”⁶⁴ The meeting chose him as its first moderator and he exercised great influence as a member of the committee

which established the purpose for the association and set the agenda for present and future meetings. In fact, the product of their consideration provides ideal indicators of those things he thought vital to the revitalization of traditional Congregationalism.

Odlin's committee recognized that there had been "divers Errors in Doctrine of late propagated by some Ignorant and Enthusiastical Persons, and Practices encourage contrary to the Rules of Peace & Holiness ... ." It was their responsibility, as ministers of the gospel, to overcome "such Errors & Disorders (whereby we are persuaded God has been greatly dishonoured, the holy Spirit grieved, & the Progress of the glorious Gospel greatly obstructed) ... ." The list of proposed actions for their peers that were calculated to overcome obstacles to sound religious doctrine and practice also indicates those errors that grieved Old Light hearts the most. Their list of "Doctrinal Errors which have more remarkably discovered themselves of late in several Places among some Persons who woud seem zealous of Religion" is particularly informative.65 These included

1 : That saving Faith is nothing but a Persuasion that Christ died for me in particular.
2 : That Morality is not of the Essence of Christianity.
3 : That God sees no sin in his Children.
4 : That Believers are Justified from Eternity.
5 : That no unconverted Person can understand the meaning of the Scriptures.
6 : That Sanctification is no Evidence of Justification—66

Odlin and his committee also reaffirmed the damage done by "Ignorant Persons who set themselves up for Teachers, understanding not what they say nor whereof they affirm ..."

65 Ibid., 3.
66 Ibid., 3-4. In the next meeting held at Portsmouth in October 1748, four members of a much larger Association dissented "from the Paragraph which contains an Enumeration of Antinomian Errors, partly because the Convention had refused first of all to declare their Sentiments in doctrinal Points that it might be known what they apprehended to be Truth, & partly because in their Opinion Armenian & other pernicious Errors prevailed as much as Antinomian and ought equally to be taken notice of." p. 8.
during recent years. By entering parishes without permission, the itinerants had “broken into other men’s Charges without any sufficient Warrant from Scripture or Reason, whereby the Peace & Order of the Churches has been much broken & true Religion injured ...”. Their solution for overcoming their present situation would be to continue to set a good example of piety, by frequently meeting informally and formally at least once a year in Association, and by agreeing “not to encourage or improve any as Candidates for the Ministry till they are recommended by some Association ...” unless they are experienced preachers with sound credentials and references.\textsuperscript{67}

No doubt, Odlin had desired such an Association for some time, but it is likely that the ordination of the New Light Joseph Adams in Stratham in early 1747 precipitated the rapid flow of letters around the province that resulted in an agreement to meet together to form an association. Like Nicholas Gilman, Daniel Rogers, and Richard Woodbury in northern New England, Adams had frequently raised havoc in the towns and villages he visited. It was he whose preaching in the Newbury area divided the churches of John Lowell, Caleb Cushing, Christopher Toppan, and Thomas Barnard. Adams had warned Barnard that if he did not repent for opposing the Great Awakening, “God in his own Time will frown you into Hell, where you will mourn your Folly when ’tis too late, ... I hope the Lord will convert you, and every unconverted Minister, or turn you out of the Ministry.”\textsuperscript{68} His zeal attracted the attention of Exeter Separates and they invited him to their Church. Adams soon directed his energy against Henry Rust, whose conservative doctrine and opposition to the Great Awakening made him a near prisoner in his own

\textsuperscript{67} Pp., 4-5.

\textsuperscript{68} Joseph Adams, \textit{A Letter from Mr. Joseph Adams} (Boston, 1743), 3-4.
church. In early 1745, the New Lights called Adams to the pulpit of the town church, despite the fact that Rust still filled it. After much controversy and a compromise worked out by the legislature, the town set the ordination date for March 1747. Despite attempts by area ministers to prevent this illegal activity, since Henry Rust had not been removed by consent of a church council, the church held an ordination ceremony that was conducted by John Rogers of Kittery and John Cleaveland of Chebacco. Odlin recognized that individual protests were not going to prevent such unorthodox ceremonies. He hoped that a united front of ministers who were doctrinally orthodox and held to a strict interpretation of the *Platform* would be able to assume control of ecclesiastical matters and bring some sanity back to the province. This did not occur immediately.

The Exeter Separates announced only six weeks after the inaugural meeting of the Association that they would call Daniel Rogers to their pulpit. Although he had preached off and on since the beginning of the division, he had never been set apart as the minister of the church. As the day drew nigh for the ordination, Odlin and the Exeter church worked diligently against his settling, even until the appointed day. It was vitally important for Odlin, as the recognized leader of the Old Lights, to be seen opposing it and this undoubtedly accounts for his publication of *An Account of the Remonstrances of the Church in Exeter* soon after the ordination. Perhaps it was also a measure of the frustration he felt over his unsuccessful attempt to prevent or forestall the event, which symbolized a *de facto* recognition of the existence of two church bodies within the same parish. Odlin organized his brief account into five sections that succinctly restated and confirmed his belief that the continuing existence of the church in New England required
strict adherence to the New England Way. This was apparent to any reader before even beginning the work; the text verse on the front cover was from Colossians 2:5, “For though being absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.”

Odlin’s first section related his dealings with a council of the churches69 the Separates called to install Rogers as their pastor. The use of this term “install” was significant, at least in his eyes, because he believed the aggrieved brethren meant to add weight to Rogers’ illegal ordination in York in July 1742 by promoting a ceremony that appeared traditional. Wise and Pike visited with the Odlins and asked whether they would be willing to “leave the Matters of a Difference between the Church and Separatists to a joint Council?” Yes, the Exeter ministers were quite willing to have a joint meeting to consider yet again these matters and formed a committee to treat with them, but, rather strangely, Wise and Pike later said that they had come “only in a private Capacity, not sent by any Council, [and] they would make the Proposal to the Separatists.” After waiting a considerable time, the church committee went to the inn and asked Wise for the Separate council’s decision. Would they have been surprised to discover that the Separates had declined to meet in a joint council? Needless to say, the Separates ignored the remonstrance of the Exeter church and ordained Rogers on 31 August 1748. Odlin’s reaction was soon forthcoming. “Now as such an unwarrantable

69 The following churches sent elders and messengers to the Exeter Separate church: Berwick, Second Kittery, Ipswich First, Somersworth, York Second, Londonderry Presbyterian, and Portsmouth Second, and the Separate congregations from Newbury, Chebacco, and Stratham. Assuming the churches sent their pastors, the following men would have attended: Jeremiah Wise, John Rogers, Nathaniel Rogers, James Pike, David McGregor, and William Shurtleff from the Congregational churches; and Jonathan Parsons, John Clevland, and Joseph Adams from the Separate congregations. John and Woodbridge Odlin, An Account Of the Remonstrances of the Church in Exeter, and of a Number of neighbouring Ministers, against the Installment (so term’d) of Mr. Daniel Rogers, over a Number of Separatists belonging to said Church : with Some Things relating thereunto (Boston, 1748), 3-4.
Procedure looks with a dark Aspect upon the Churches in general, as well as upon the Church in Exeter in particular; it is thought proper, that some Things relating to that Transaction, should be made publick, that all the Churches might know, that faithful solemn Testimony was born against it.”

Having failed through personal appeal, Odlin sent a written remonstrance to the churches gathered for the ordination that took the form of five statements. These were undoubtedly well known to all by now, but with an eye to public disclosure, Odlin restated them. He began by stating the Separates had no just cause for leaving “an orthodox Church of Christ, walking in the Faith and Order of the Gospel,” and they had broken their own covenant promise by departing without consent. Having no consent, they had no right to form themselves together as a church and to call a minister to their pulpit. They had not called neighboring churches for assistance or gained provincial permission to form a parish. They had not followed the Platform in settling disputes. “And tho’ we have often since, endeavoured an amicable Reconciliation with them, (being desirous of Peace, if we could have it in a Gospel-way, and agreeable to the Constitution of our Churches) yet all Attempts that Way have hitherto proved in vain.”

Since they had expressed their willingness to forgive the Exeter church and even jointly worship on occasion, why had they not simply returned to full communion? They also had not consulted those churches nearest to them whether “the Neighbours have any just Dissatisfaction, [or give them] all the Respect required by Scripture, and Reason, and Gratitude, may be paid unto [them].”

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70 Ibid., 4-5.
71 Pp., 5-8.
Meanwhile, the senior Odlin had sought further support and guidance from several of his local allies. His seven “queries” were really interrogative statements to which, given his audience, he could only receive confirmation of what he already believed about the separation. Do the properly appointed minister and his congregation stand in a covenant relationship with each other? Yes, they do, was the reply. Is not each party to the covenant therefore obliged to observe all requirements until the bond is lawfully dissolved? Of course. Does this not mean that both parties must faithfully fulfill all duties commanded by God in this covenant and that they could not break covenant if they no longer wanted to observe it? Naturally, and they could not “be excus’d nor justify’d, supposing they be indispos’d to them, (whether Persons or Duties) or ever so averse to them, whether ignorantly, wilfully or justly [.]” Neither can any group of members presume to “judge, condemn and punish the Church without Trial?” Rather, it is the church that has power to discipline its members. Is it not absurd to tolerate “all and every Christian in their several Opinions and Practices, under the Notion of Liberty of Conscience, (and because they pretend to Scripture-Warrant therfor, …)” since this tended “rather to countenance and promote Error, Schism, Contention and Vice …”? The answer was so obvious the question needed no reply. Was not the refusal to submit to their pastor not, “in the Nature of it, a Contempt of the Authority of those whom God hath set over them …” and therefore an aid to Satan who desired to scatter the sheep? Certainly, and a “Christian’s thinking he can’t profit so much by his own Ministers Preaching, as by anothers, does not excuse him from attending his Administrations, and licence him to run after Strangers or others at random, under the Pretence of getting more

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72 These pastors were John Moody of Newmarket, Ward Cotton of Hampton, Jeremy Fogg of Kensington, Nathaniel Gookin of North Hampton, Elisha Odlin (John’s son) of Amesbury, and Robert Cutler of Epping.
Good thereby." Furthermore, they reaffirmed, the aggrieved brethren could not justify under any circumstances their separation. Nor could Rogers in due conscience be ordained over any church because of his "Fickleness and Inconstancy with Respect to his Principles," his support of discontent and defection, and his neglect of "duty for Years together, which he was by his Ordination Vows bound to Practice ... ." 73

Odlin did not receive a reply to these remonstrances when he sent them to the pastors assembled for the ordination. He then came before them as they were about to begin the ordination and urged the moderator, John Rogers, to either read the paper to his colleagues or allow him to read it to them. 74 Rogers turned away this importunity with the excuse that it was not the proper time to consider them, although he did promise to raise them again "if any had a Mind to dispute, whether their Proceedings were agreeable to the Gospel, the Cambridge Platform, or the Laws of this Province ... ." Odlin's allies urged Rogers to reconsider, bearing testimony once again "against the unwarrantable Proceedings of the Day." When Rogers again refused to consider their charges, they left in protest, and the ceremony proceeded as planned. 75

All that was left for Odlin to do was publish his account of the events and to leave a warning to his colleagues elsewhere. "[W]e trust that what is thus exhibited will meet with candid Acceptance from all that love the Peace and Order of these Churches. And may all the Churches be upon their Guard against the bold Attempts that are made for the

73 The Odlins, Account, 10-15.

74 Shipton misinterpreted the Odlin's account of the proceedings. He assumed the "Assembly" was the New Hampshire Association Odlin had helped found the previous year, and that John Rogers had used a parliamentary ploy as the moderator of the Association to prevent a hearing of the charges. The context of this account clearly shows that Rogers was the moderator of the council met to ordain his younger brother. SHG 5: 171.

75 The Odlins, Account, 15-6.
Overthrow of our Constitution, lest in suffering the Order of the Gospel to be broken in upon, the Glory should depart from our New-English Churches.”76 It was a short pamphlet. Yet, although it represented a failed attempt to prevent what Odlin must have considered a disgrace to New England Congregationalism, there is no sense of failure in its pages. Odlin, by then 67 years old, was still the roaring lion protecting his pride and joy, the Bride of Christ in New England. Rather than the product of a querulous old man, the pamphlet is an indicator of the steadfast resolution of a champion of peace and order to stand at his appointed place until his Heavenly Commander called him home. Found in its pages are the echoes of a lifetime of service on the front lines of spiritual battle and the signs of a true warrior—faithfulness, loyalty, and dedication to the maintenance of peace and order. There is also a sense of authority that military commanders assume during a long career of commanding obedience and being obeyed.

While losing this particular battle, Odlin showed no signs of losing the esteem of his professional colleagues in the days to come. He remained moderator of the New Hampshire Association until his death in November 1754 and the stamp of his leadership remained visible on the pages of the records of the convention. The recommendation of the annual meeting to be stricter in discipline speaks of his belief in the necessity of order in the church. Yet, the attempt of the Association in 1748 and 1749 to bring order to the chaotic situation in Durham brought about by the death of Nicholas Gilman and the dissolution of his congregation into fractious parties suggest his belief in the restorative power of order in the church: the process of repentance, forgiveness, restoration, and return to order. As the effects of the Great Awakening diminished and the threat of New

76 Ibid., 16.
Light separations likewise relented, the defender of the order of churches also looked for other foes. The visible decay of piety and religious zeal was important to him, and he emphasized to the Association members their need to instill in their people a devotion to religious duties. They needed to fight against “The Sins of ye Day”, which included “Carelessness in Religion in General—Neglect of Family Religion & Government in particular, Sabbath breaking, Intemperance, Uncleaness.” He also recognized the threat of Anglicanism to Congregational interests and took the lead in enlisting the help of his fellow dissenters to guard against plots and schemes in London that would affect the New England Way. He followed with interest the attempts of some in the Church of England to appoint a bishop for the American colonies.

Despite Odlin’s desire for order and unity, he never could reconcile himself to welcome Separates into the ministerial fold. It is obvious from changes that occurred soon after Odlin’s death that he continued to use his influence to deny the privileges of the ministry to those he thought had denied their duties and responsibilities, and had disrupted the peace and order of New Hampshire Congregationalism. In Exeter, frequent pleas from the Separates to achieve the status of parish or to receive at least an exemption from taxation were ignored in both the church and the town. When, six months after his death, they again petitioned the provincial government for a tax exemption, the parish could not raise enough opposition to prevent its acceptance. Less than six months after that, the Assembly incorporated the Separate church as a legally recognized parish and


78 See Bridenbaugh, Mitre and Sceptre, for the fullest exposition of this subject. Odlin did not have to look too far to find examples of the inordinate influence of the Church of England in colonial affairs. Nearly all of the Wentworth Oligarchy in Portsmouth were Anglicans. See especially Clark, Eastern Frontier, Chapter 17; and “Second New England”; and Daniell, “Politics in New Hampshire under Governor Benning Wentworth, 1741-1767,” WMQ, 3d Series, 23 (January 1966): 76-105.
residents were afforded the choice of which church to pay their rates. It may have taken another ten years, but Daniel Rogers was eventually elected moderator of the New Hampshire Association of ministers. At the annual meeting following Odlin’s death, the radical New Light Joseph Adams of Stratham applied to the Association for reconciliation and willingly submitted to a committee comprised of James Pike, John Moody, and Robert Cutler. Together, they drew up a confession wherein Adams attempted to expiate for conversations that discredited other ministers and encouraged separations, professing “hearty grief here for As I have offended God, & griev’d the Ministers of Christ …” and asked their forgiveness.79 Thus, while Odlin himself was too much the warrior to reconcile himself personally to his opponents, the Association of ministers he ruled for the last seven years of his life had had built into it the mechanism by which the peace and order Odlin so desired could eventually manifest itself.

John Odlin presents another example of the preconditioning influence of the New England minister. In his case, his immutable determination to maintain the New England Way against the perceived threat of antinomianism must be largely credited with limiting the damage to the Standing Order resulting from the practices of the more extreme elements of the radical New Light cause along the northern frontier. While the church of Durham self-destructed and that of Stratham was surrendered to the Separates, the remaining New Light congregations were quickly restored to the fellowship promoted by the Platform. His last ten years of ministry saw more stress and challenge than the previous thirty-five years. As he aged, his bodily health declined, but his mind and indomitable will never failed to meet the challenge. His influence continued many years

after his death in the forms of his son Woodbridge and the New Hampshire Association. Perhaps it is not too much out of the question to see his influence in Exeter’s reaction to the American Revolution. From among the residents, from families who remained loyal to him and those who separated from his care, there was a tremendous dedication to duty and principle and a love for order. He would have been pleased to learn that his diligence brought such exceptional blessings.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

These case studies have attempted to show how three northern New England ministers—John Wise of Ipswich's Chebacco Parish, Hugh Adams of Durham, and John Odlin of Exeter—played vital roles in the way their congregations reacted to the Great Awakening. The focus of each case study was not on what each minister did during the revival to direct his people's reactions—after all, Wise had died many years before—but how his many years of powerful ministerial presence had preconditioned his flock to respond to spiritual stimulus in particular ways. The minister's influence was in part the result of the profound respect New England Congregationalists had for their clergy as well-prepared men of God. "Position power" is an apt description for this kind of influence. This study has emphasized, however, that clerical influence was also the result of what might be called "personal power," that is, the degree of respect allotted to ministers by virtue of their integrity, tenacity, honesty, and even eccentricity in fulfilling their callings. Position power came immediately with ordination, but personal power could result only from consistent and dedicated service to the community over many years.

The major source of personal power for at least two of these three ministers was their intellectual life—the power of their ideas. In the case of John Wise, whose story was told in Chapter 2, this was especially the case. Wise, who was arguably one of the more influential pragmatic thinkers of pre-Revolutionary America, earned regional...
respect as a result of his fight to maintain the independency of Congregational polity. That his two treatises against the "presbyterianizing" of the New England Way were published rather late in the controversy does not alter the fact that his political ideas permeated the churches along the northern frontier. His arguments were well accepted and understood by many frontier people by virtue of his personal influence upon their pastors as well as themselves.

Wise took a rather progressive approach to many other issues of the day and his willingness to express his ideas could even threaten his own well-being. Given Andros' determination to rule New England as a Crown colony, Wise's refusal to play the role of willing accomplice was an act of unusual courage in the face of raw political power. While many members of the clergy tried to distance themselves from the witchcraft controversy or took the even safer position of being sympathetic to the need for identifying and weeding out malefactors, he questioned the validity of the whole issue by demanding that judges look at character and behavior demonstrated by daily living rather than relying upon evidence that could be neither seen nor defended against. Wise's exposé of a failed military expedition demonstrated that he would not be prevented from attesting to what he believed was the truth of a matter, no matter how powerful the opponent. Wise's ideas about the specific role of civil government in the economy might appear naïve today, but behind them was a mind that shrewdly recognized that a successful economy relied on the interplay of many forces.

Moreover, in each of these situations, Wise's position was one that defended the interests of farmers, fishers, and artisans. His ideas were not just hypothetical; he was offering practical solutions to problems that affected people in frontier regions. His fight
against Andros was to protect the rights of common people to tax themselves through their own chosen representatives. When Wise supported the independence of individual churches, he was in essence promoting the importance of laypeople in their congregations. It was they who governed their own affairs, not the pastor alone or with the help of one or two elders. When he objected to the arrest of John Proctor for witchcraft, he was objecting to the interruption, if not destruction, of the life of a private person who was guilty of no wrongdoing and whose personal conduct was otherwise above reproach. Even his support for the land bank was meant to protect the livelihoods of those who looked to him for leadership. Consider the effect of such intellectual leadership on a people for 45 years. Three generations and more from Ipswich and surrounding towns learned to give credence to what this minister told them. His ideas about the relationship between people and their church and government became their ideas as well. Even after his death, those ideas remained in full force to influence the way the people of Chebacco Parish would react to the forces that split apart their parish. No matter on what side of the division a person stood, the intellectual battle was still in the terms Wise had proposed 40 years before. The church covenant was a social contract between and among people and their officers. The covenant brought mutual responsibilities. When one group refused to fulfill its covenanted duties, the other had the right to redress of grievances. If there could be no solution, the aggrieved people had the right to separate and create another contract to their liking. When those people who opposed the ministry of Theophilus Pickering clashed with those supporting him, the terms of the argument, no matter from which side, were those of John Wise.
Unlike Wise, John Odlin published no major treatises in sacred or secular matters and it is therefore necessary to use more indirect means to determine to what extent his ideas influenced his community. It is in his steadfast resistance to the forces of the New Light and what he saw as its threat to the peace and order of the body of Christ that his intellectual leadership, built over more than three decades, is easiest to see. While towns and villages all around him were succumbing to a highly emotionalized and, therefore, exciting religion, he continued to marshal and organized conservative opposition that stood for the New England Way and its place as the foundation for “civilized society”.

Like Wise, Odlin viewed the congregation as a self-contained, independent body that established standards for membership, ruled its own affairs, and administered discipline to whomever failed to comply with accepted behavior. In Odlin’s scattered writings, it is clear that he based his view on church polity solely on the Platform, especially the need to maintain discipline within individual churches and to exercise carefully chosen methods of seeking assistance from local churches whenever internal affairs required the wisdom of neutrality. But unlike Wise, Odlin perceived the minister as the one who played a far greater role in governing and maintaining discipline. He was not a kind of first among equals, an elected officer of the church who had to pay close heed to the voice of his constituents. Instead, the minister was called by God as a spiritual father to His people. Because God would hold him responsible for the spiritual welfare and salvation of his flock, it was his duty, as well as right, to exercise his spiritual authority whenever he believed they were threatened by false shepherds and ravening wolves from outside the fold.¹

¹ Together, Hall’s Faithful Shepherd and Youngs’s God’s Messengers provide an excellent portrait of colonial ministers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, respectively, as well as how they understood
Odlin certainly viewed itinerant ministers and laypeople who exhorted his flock to resist his authority as just such threats to the peace and order required by the Good Shepherd Himself. His absolute refusal to allow outsiders to preach in his parish without his advanced permission should not be seen as opposition to the revival of religion in the area, but to those who attempted to usurp his rightful place of authority among his people. For 35 years he had preached the five tenets of Calvinism and the importance of demonstrating the reality of personal faith by performing good works and obeying the Scriptures. He had repeatedly stated that the way to Christian peace and harmony was through strict adherence to the New England Way. When the New Light first shone forth on the northern frontier he was among the first to take a stand against its effect on hitherto peaceful congregations. When a split occurred in his own congregation between New and Old Light factions, he applied to that situation the same rigorous criteria that he had emphasized for those many years.

As with Wise in Chebacco, the argument between the two factions in Exeter were in terms already defined by Odlin himself. The pro-Odlin faction repeatedly stated that the aggrieved brethren had no Scripturally-sanctioned justification for leaving the church with which it had a covenant relationship freely entered into. There had been no gross sin from which the church refused to repent. The selection of their pastor’s new associate had been ratified by a majority of the church and town and could not be used as a reason to separate. Their pastor had exercised all proper authority in his spiritual leadership over their parish. The church had submitted the disagreement to a church council as required by the Platform and the Separates had simply refused to abide by its findings. The
response of the aggrieved brethren demonstrated that they had been schooled by the same master. They understood the nature of the church covenant as taught by their minister and realized that if they were going to justify their separation they would have to base their reasoning on something quite different from what he had taught them. Taking their cue from Chebacco Parish, they turned to a natural rights argument in favor of freedom of conscience and freedom of assembly because they found it difficult to justify their position from the *Platform*. In doing so, they tacitly admitted that their old pastor's intellectual position was too strong to overcome without outside reference.

The power of Odlin's intellect can also be shown in his leadership in the creation of the New Hampshire Association in the waning days of the Great Awakening. Its very foundation was a living testament to his organizational and promotional talents. The Association should not be seen as an attempt to consolidate gains made through revived spirituality in the lives of pastors and people. Instead, it was Odlin's attempt to repair what he saw as the great damage done to Congregational unity through the divisions and separations of congregations in the area. It was also his answer to the lure of nearby Separate and Separate Baptist congregations. There was still much confusion and a lack of peace, and the Association, true to its creator's principles, was established to overcome all that had destroyed that equanimity. That Odlin was able to build an organization that included not only those of like mind but many moderate New Lights demonstrates his prestige and influence in northern New England.

In the cases of John Wise and John Odlin, then, their preconditioning influence, created throughout long and successful careers in single locations, can be best demonstrated by the manner in which members of their churches reacted to the political
issues arising from differences over forms of worship and church authority. It is important to note that these men did not cause their people to react in a unified and specific way to the fires of religious revival. In both cases, their churches actually split between those who wanted a highly affectional religion and those who were content to remain within a form of worship that emphasized an ordered and intellectual approach to their faith. What their preconditioning did cause, however, was a similarity in approach to dealing with the separation.

Whether in Chebacco or Exeter, those favoring the standing minister emphasized that the church covenant required adherence to specified methods of behavior and redress of grievances. The crux of the argument was church polity: the Separates in the two churches, while certainly in favor of promoting their own form of religious expression, agreed quite emphatically. What they stressed was their belief that the covenant was in place for the benefit of the people and not the institutional church. When there were significant numbers who believed that the church was failing to live up to its commitment to their spiritual growth, then they by right could separate themselves to create a body that would meet their needs. In both Chebacco and Exeter, it was the standing minister who enunciated the intellectual foundations of the church covenant system and who defined the parameters within which his church would operate. It took a religious revival to divulge a hidden flaw in the church covenant structure: there was not enough flexibility in that structure to accommodate two widely differing views of the form and meaning of worship within the same congregation. Considering both polity and worship together, when there came a profound difference centering upon worship, which the encouragement and display of spiritual manifestations certainly meant, the two sides
could not agree whether or not the Platform condoned or forbade separation. When the test came in the middle 1740s, this lack of flexibility in the Platform, as well as a liberalizing view of freedom of conscience and freedom of assembly, resulted in rancorous divisions that did not dissipate for many years to come.\(^2\)

The personal power of Hugh Adams cannot be said to have been based on the force of his intellect. This is not to say he was lacking in intellectual ability, but the dearth of evidence prevents an accurate assessment of his ability to muster a strong intellectual argument. The evidence does suggest, however, that much of his preconditioning influence over his people came from what might be referred to as his charisma. The modern use of this term, which frequently refers to superficial or artificial manifestations of personality, would not give him full justice. The root meaning of charisma in the Greek, “gift”, has far more explanatory power. Adams possessed a certain innate “gifting” to draw people to him or to repulse them. He was also “charismatic” in the modern religious meaning of the term. He depended greatly on what he perceived as a close, if not immediate, communion with the Holy Spirit to discern and interpret material circumstances in spiritual ways. In this sense, he possessed what his Scottish ancestors would have considered the “second sight”, the ability to see things in the spirit world that other people could not.\(^3\)

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\(^2\) It is interesting to note that, in the case of Exeter, the two parties did not finally reunite until after the death of Daniel Rogers in 1785.

and theological predisposition toward revivalism suggests that Adams possessed that same approach to Christianity as others from the northwest of Britain—evangelical, devotional, sometimes heterodox, and much more attuned to the spoken Word than the written. His many prophecies, his imprecations against his enemies, and his calling forth droughts to punish his people for their lack of zeal or repentance were all examples of this tradition. What seemed quite acceptable and predictable to most of his people, many of whom were Cornish, Welsh, and Scotch-Irish, when he preached to them on Sunday, appalled his more conservative colleagues to the south who could only asseverate against what they perceived as his blatant enthusiasm.\(^4\)

A second aspect of Adams' influence can be seen in the way he met the spiritual and physical needs of his people. Like John Wise and Father Samuel Moody, he was a “fighting parson”, a minister who did not shrink from the dangers of the frontier during one of New England's most dangerous times. He put the Indian wars into perspective for his people when he explained that they were sent by God as trials and punishments for sins, and as a call to repentance. He armed local troops with spiritual weapons such as regular singing which he assured them would sustain them better in the wilderness than their weapons of iron. He also made it possible for those remaining at home to fight the good fight as well. His prophecies of victory and his call for their prayers to sustain the army of God in the field gave a purpose for those who could only stand and wait for the particularly that surrounding their week-long communion services.

\(^4\) The lists of men receiving shares of common lands in 1734 and 1737 contains 90 surnames. Of the 51 that can be identified with various English counties or regions, 36 come from those areas Cowing defines as northwest. There were 11 from the north of England or Scotland, 17 from either side of the English/Welsh border, 6 from the southwest, and two from Ireland. Stackpole, Thompson and Meserve, *History of Durham*, 1: 19-21. Basil Cottle, *Penguin Dictionary of Surnames* (New York, 1984), is a useful tool for determining origins of family names.
results. His cure of bodies as well as souls was seen as exceptional by those living in a place where medical skills were highly valued and hard to find. Many of his patients would have attested to the near miraculous nature of some of his cures. That Adams never failed to link his own skill with the providence of God only reinforced the close link for his people between their pastor and their God. Another personality trait that brought him much esteem was his willingness to take on the proud and the powerful who, in Oyster River, were best represented by the large and prosperous Davis Family, particularly its patriarch, Colonel James Davis. Adams was fearless in his public censure of a man he believed used his position to enrich himself and his own. The feud was public and vitriolic, and it took the Davises nearly 20 years to overcome sufficiently the influence of the town minister to oust him from his pulpit. That occurred only when they were able to present evidence of moral turpitude, attempted bribery, a charge that Adams strongly disputed but could not disprove.

It is unfortunate that Adams’ reaction to Great Awakening events is unknown other than in a couple of inferences from Nicholas Gilman’s diary that suggest that he sought to promote the revival in some small way. The New Hampshire Association records indicate that in the late 1740s those people on Durham Point who continued to support him began to promote his nephew, John Adams, as Gilman’s successor and it must be assumed that he was active in this movement. Even without this evidence, however, his preconditioning influence is quite evident in the reaction of the town to the Great Awakening. It has been popular to cast Gilman as a firebrand who incited most of his

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5 Ulrich maintains that gender divisions in Durham were so important that it was Elizabeth Davis, not her husband, who played the most important role in the opposition that eventually brought down Adams. Ulrich, "Psalm-tunes, Periwigs, and Bastards," 259.

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congregation to join him in many outrageous excesses of New Light fervor. This is not an entirely fair picture of Gilman, particularly in light of the spiritual development he detailed in his diary. In the eighteen months following the visit of George Whitefield to Hampton, Gilman’s understanding of God’s hand on his spirit and soul broadened and matured. From the unsure novice, he was transformed into a “fervent sound persuasive Preacher abounding in the work of the Lord”, one whose powerful sermons challenged the consciences of thousands of people to turn from their coldness of heart to a fuller life in God.7 In part, this increasing confidence was the result of his flock’s willingness to accept and participate in a growing number of spiritual manifestations. What made this possible was not only Gilman’s leadership, but their long exposure to Adams’ involvement in a wide variety of extranormal occurrences. Thus, when Gilman called upon his congregation to respond to these spiritual manifestations, they were already prepared by Adams’ preconditioning influence to do so.

In a sense, Gilman was as much acted upon by his congregation’s behavior as it was by his own leadership. But there was a major difference between Adams and Gilman and this led to the demise of both the church and pastor. Adams had the strength of character and personality to promote such spiritual activities and still maintain control of his parishioners in their manifestations. Gilman was too emotionally sensitive and physically enervated to exert the same kind of control as his predecessor. Once he fell under the influence of Richard Woodbury, whom many considered a madman as well as a fanatic, he was unable to rein in the forces that he had unleashed. As Woodbury drove him on to


7 The quotation is from the epitaph on Gilman’s headstone.
greater heights of emotional excess, Gilman’s already weak constitution fell to a
cconsumption that resulted in his early death. Already preconditioned to accept the
validity of “enthusiastic” manifestations and encouraged to greater and greater
emotionalism by their young pastor and his itinerant friends, many Durham church
members simply self-destructed into factions and sub-factions when Gilman entered his
final illness. Bereft of any spiritual authority, they were subject to no man, but any whim
of fancy.

Each of these case studies has considered the intramural relationship between a long­
standing pastor and his congregation and how it created a set of conditions that affected
the response of individual congregations to the Great Awakening. The term
“preconditioning” has been used as a rhetorical rather than conceptual device to describe
this process, as well as to emphasize that, just as the relationship between shepherd and
flock was a highly personal and localized thing, so also was the response of the flock to
the great turmoil created by the revival. While earlier historians have attempted to
understand the Great Awakening as a regional, continental, or transatlantic phenomenon,
this work has maintained that to understand the Great Awakening in its many facets,
historians must first understand these local reactions, and then seek to synthesize them.
Also, this study has been informed by Cowing’s notion of the Northwest/Southeast
dividing line as a way to understand why churches’ reactions to this revivalistic impulse
differed so greatly. Put simply, as a general rule people from these distinct regions
viewed the role of religion in their lives in dramatically different ways. Cowing’s
approach shows how *culture* conveyed a preconditioning influence upon a congregation,
while this study’s approach shows how *ideas*, particularly of pastors, served the same

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preconditioning purpose. Together, they will help historians to understand the many local variations in behavior during the Great Awakening.

This study has shown that by the 1740s there was a significant difference in the way members within congregations understood and applied the philosophy and ways of communion implicit in the *Platform*, both of which were reflections of the Southeast, or Puritan, *mentalité*, that stressed strict orthodoxy, reliance of reason over intuition, a dependence on the printed word, submission of the emotions to the intellect, and a passion for organization and order. Congregations along the northern frontier had a significant number of families with Northwest origins, which Clark and Nordbeck maintain resulted in worldviews that were noticeably different from people in churches in Massachusetts. So long as nothing occurred that exacerbated these differences, particularly if the standing pastor possessed a Puritan *mentalité*, then parochial life continued in relative placidity. When the Great Awakening came with its form of spirituality that appealed to those with a worldview from the Northwest, the covenant theology and way of order demanded by the *Platform* became unrealistic and unsupportable. Vitriolic separations occurred where the tension was worst.

Ideas played as significant a role as culture in these intramural problems. In Exeter and Chebacco Parish, the approaches of Odlin and Pickering modeled the Congregational order required by the *Platform*. A large majority in Odlin's congregation and a small majority in Pickering's accepted their interpretation and followed their leadership in trying to maintain that order. Lying dormant, however, was the understanding of order and covenant relationship that was dear to the hearts of people from the Northwest in the form of Wise's conceptions of strict independency and the strong role of laypeople in the...
government of their own church. While Odlin and Pickering equated order with conformity and submission to spiritual authority, those informed by Wise’s views believed that order resulted from strict observation of personal rights and the performance of specified responsibilities. When the revivalistic impulse freed these people to express their spirituality in ways that appealed to them—freely, emotionally, ecstatically—and conservative pastors and members tried to use the *Platform* to enforce conformity to their ideas about spirituality, these people, while still accepting the wording of the *Platform* as a useful fiction, refused to be suppressed by a concept of order alien to their understanding.

This rejection of the *mentalité* inherent in the *Platform* also uncovered a weakness in the mechanism for maintaining and restoring order to New England Congregational churches. This mechanism demanded the rational, intellectual approach to problem solving found in the *mentalité* of the Southeast, and the kinds of problems that required its application were nearly always ones that it could address effectively. The very few examples of disciplinary problems involving heterodox spirituality or worship that might have exposed this weakness—the Hutchinsonian controversy, the Gortonists and Friends, Roger Williams, the Salem witchcraft persecutions—were so rare or isolated that raw ecclesiastical or secular power, or banishment, could overcome any difficulties arising. The problem with the Great Awakening was that this heterodox religious behavior, so inherent in the culture of those from the Northwest, was too widespread, powerful and *visible* to handle according to the New England Way. In the case of Durham particularly, Hugh Adams’ long personal history of dramatic displays of spirituality inherent in the Northwest *mentalité* gave a kind of credibility to extranormal activities. This might
explain in part why that congregation became so ungovernable during the 1740s. When large percentages of members from churches throughout the area began to separate to form their own churches over differences in forms of worship or spiritual expression, the disciplinary apparatus empowered by the *Platform* was incapable of dealing effectively with the consequences. John Wise’s earlier treatises on independency provided the intellectual foundation needed to resist the arguments inherent in the *Platform*.

This notion of preconditioning emphasizes that ministers planted intellectual and spiritual seeds that remained dormant until the emotional and intellectual climate permitted their fruition many years later. This suggests a way in which the Great Awakening and the American Revolution may be linked in some kind of causal relationship. In the case of both Chebacco Parish and Exeter Church, the rhetoric chosen by the Separates resulted from the conception of the church covenant as a social contract that must be fulfilled by all parties or rendered void. The language was directly from Wise, whose vision of church government was decidedly democratic in conception. If what he wrote in 1710—and undoubtedly spoke long before then—was recalled from the recesses of time to defend Separatism in 1745, would it be too much to suggest that this same rhetoric, changed and adapted to some degree, could not be used again in 1775 for essentially the same purpose, the defense of democratic, albeit, secular institutions? 8

McLoughlin avers that the same spirit of revivalism that energized the Great Awakening was the same one that energized the American Revolution a generation later. “The Revolution was a movement permeated with religious dedication, impelled by millennial

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8 There was a third edition of *Churches Quarrel Espoused* printed in 1772. It would be interesting to discover a direct connection between Wise and Revolutionary political rhetoric. Another case might be made for the influence of Wise on the development of the “voluntarist” nature or the democratization of American churches.
faith, and fought with the conviction that its outcome was foreordained by the will of God.”¹⁹ If the seeds of ideas could endure years of dormancy before the Great Awakening, then might not seeds planted during the Great Awakening likewise bear fruit during the American Revolution? There were a surprisingly large number of New Light pastors who were still ministering to their congregations even into the 1780s. What influence did they have on their congregations that resulted in political changes that occurred in America?

There has been an important shift toward understanding the role of common people in colonial America. Since religion was profoundly important to them, a great deal of scholarship has occurred in this area. Periods of revival have been singled out for particular emphasis because of the existence of large amounts of material and because it is frequently only in change that historians can discover underlying motivations and beliefs. Social history has supplanted the traditional importance placed on intellectual history to a large degree in the study of revivalism, a necessity if ordinary men and women are to be considered. This study has attempted to meld these two approaches. It has looked at congregations made up of ordinary people and how the Great Awakening affected them, but it has also returned their ministers to their traditional places as purveyors of ideas and leaders of communities. Perhaps the net effect will be to emphasize once again the symbiotic relationship between pastors and people during times of revival and the need to join intellectual and social historical methodologies to promote greater understanding of periods of great religious change.

¹⁹ McLoughlin, “‘Enthusiasm for Liberty’,” 73.
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Music

FIGURE 1

DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE, AND ENVIRONS, 1744

FIGURE 2
CONGREGATIONS OF SEACOAST NEW HAMPSHIRE AND MAINE, 1744

New Light Congregations
1 Durham 10 Portsmouth 2nd
2 Epping 11 Newington
3 Brentwood 12 Kittery 2nd
4 Kingston 13 New Castle
5 Hampstead 14 York
6 Hampton 1st 15 Wells
7 Stratham 16 Berwick
8 Greenland 17 Somersworth
9 Portsmouth 1st 18 Rochester
19 Exeter
20 Newmarket
21 Nottingham
22 Chester
23 Haverhill 2nd
24 South Hampton
25 East Kingston
26 Kensington
27 Hampton Falls
28 Hampton 2nd
29 Rye
30 Kittery 1st
31 Dover

Old Light Congregations
11 New Light
12 Old Light
13 Separate


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FIGURE 3

EXETER, NEW HAMPSHIRE, AND ENVIRONS, 1744


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