MINISTERS, METAPHORS, AND THE NEW ENGLAND WILDERNESS, 1650-1700

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MINISTERS, METAPHORS, AND THE NEW ENGLAND WILDERNESS, 1650-1700

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This study focuses upon ministerial perceptions of the New England wilderness, as seen in sermons preached between 1650-1700. The "wilderness" is understood both in its metaphorical and Biblical sense. This metaphorical and Biblical meaning of the "wilderness" involved three distinct but overlapping meanings.

From 1650-1674, New England's ministers perceived the American landscape as a place of promise for, with proper worship and the lessening of evil, it was the place of God's role. The second meaning of the wilderness emerged during King Philip's War (1615-1677) when New England learned to be the land of promise. During the years it was a place of threat, for the Indians served as God's agents in punishing the saints for their sins. Finally, during the last twenty years of the century, ministers referred to the wilderness within the human heart. This third meaning of the wilderness was abundantly clear, as they stressed that a renewed reliance upon the Spirit would clarify their mission into New England.

This study concludes that, contrary to ministerial claims that the New England saints were increasingly degenerate and less pious than...
their ancestors, religious fervor did not wane. Noticeable religious fervor existed, evident in the success both of Solomon Stoddard and the Brattle Street Church, in 1700. This fervor, paradoxically, stemmed from the New England ministers' constant references to dependence upon the Spirit for guidance and clarification of the saints' mission in New England.
INTRODUCTION

The wilderness still fascinates modern Americans. It awed, too, the first settlers, as they stepped onto New England's shores. Our libraries contain countless studies by literary scholars, ministers, and historians who have examined this lasting interest. Among the more interesting studies are those by Howard Mumford Jones, Henry Nash Smith, and Peter D. Carroll.

Jones, using the concepts of image and anti-image, has shown that the wilderness was simultaneously a place of attraction and repulsion. Smith, through his examination of the influence of the wilderness upon literature, has demonstrated that myths and symbols of the American West coalesced into the image that Americans had formed of themselves. Carroll's work investigated the interaction between the wilderness and Puritan social thought and ideas; he also showed that metaphors were used to describe New England's wilderness. The intellectual uses that these authors make of the wilderness influenced the meaning of the wilderness this dissertation uses.

The wilderness influenced far more than our literature and social history. Ministers saw the wilderness of New England as the place where God had called His people and where He continued to save them. Within this wilderness, these spiritual leaders continually questioned themselves, their congregations, and others about the meaning of that place which attracted and repelled them.

These ministerial questions have long interested intellectual historians. Have their studies been satisfactory, or is there room
for additional studies in this controversial subject? A brief glance at Puritan historiography indicates that much more still needs to be done. 4

Since Perry Miller's death in 1963, most historians of American Puritanism have tended to align themselves upon one side or the other of a division between those who have largely accepted Miller's assumption about the primacy of ideas, and those who have followed Darret Rutman and others in replacing Miller's emphasis upon ideas with questions of a different sort, usually in a social context.

Among those who have retained Miller's interest in ideas, Sacvan Bercovitch is among the most conspicuous in that he had developed a greatly expanded understanding of typology: the study of a relationship (in Puritan thought, in this case) between the Old Testament and the New Testament. While "typology" in its traditional sense meant the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy in the New, Reformation and Puritan scholars expanded this understanding to explain the events of their own people and their own times. 5 It is this fuller "Protestant" sense of "typology" that commands the attention of Bercovitch and others.

To understand the meaning and use of the term "wilderness" in this dissertation, it will be helpful to present some contemporary uses of this term.

Carroll uses the concept of wilderness as a metaphor: his definition is quite similar to the second definition in the Oxford English Dictionary: "The figure of speech in which a name of description is transferred to some object different from, but analogous to, that to which it is properly applicable."
Jones and Smith both use the idea of wilderness as an image. Their treatment of the concept of "image" seems to conform to the fifth definition in the Oxford Dictionary: "A mental image representing something (especially a visible object), not by direct perception, but by memory or imagination; a mental picture or impression; an idea, a conception." This is not the meaning of wilderness in this dissertation.

This dissertation uses the concept of "wilderness" as a metaphor to reveal the history of the ministerial psyche during the seventy years from 1650-1720. The metaphor is well-suited to do this, for it reflects man's deepest hopes and aspirations. Each mirrors man's interior because each evokes wishes and desires that can become sources of either encouragement or discouragement. As an individual reflects upon and enters into his own metaphors, he also becomes aware of the metaphors that others use. He knows, therefore, more about their aspirations and what existence means to them.

Internal and external factors enter into the formation of metaphors. Sound, sense, biological factors, and environmental influences constitute some of the sources. Man's response to stimuli forms his metaphors, which, in turn, reflect life's meaning. It is crucial, when examining an individual's metaphors, to understand both the internal and external factors which have entered into them.

This brief descriptive definition of the metaphor reveals that it can tell us much about man's ideas and his feelings.

The wilderness, a generic concept, contains many specific metaphors that complete and fulfill the meaning of the larger metaphor of wilderness. Ministerial metaphors saw the wilderness as a Garden,
a place where God's Balm was administered, a place of war, and where He called and saved His people. These particular metaphors are similar to the pieces of a puzzle. Just as the pieces of the puzzle exist and have meaning only in light of the entire puzzle, so also do the specific metaphors within the wilderness metaphor give meaning to the larger wilderness metaphor.

The application of this definition of metaphor to the specific Biblical metaphors, as used in New England sermons, allows us to enter, directly, into the ministerial wishes and desires. This study, therefore, goes beyond Miller and Bercovitch, both of whom focus upon the intellectual process. By probing the meaning of "wilderness" and its associated metaphors as they appear in sermon literature, we may be able to understand more fully, not simply the ministerial "mind," but the ministerial emotions and psyche.

Sources for this study come from Evans' American Bibliography. The accessibility of the sermons was a major factor in the selection process. In addition, these sermons come from a sufficiently broad geographical area and are sufficiently numerous to test the validity of metaphor as a tool to better understand the ministerial psyche. Evans fits nicely into the seventy years that this dissertation studies.

The seventy years from 1650-1720 were quite important in Colonial New England. By the first date many of the familiar figures of the settlement generation were beginning to disappear; by the second date many of the second generation had died off and New England had begun to experience the first stirrings of a religious revival. During these years, various social, economic, and political and religious
changes were shaking New England. These presented the ministers of the third generation with the formidable task of explaining these changes to themselves and to their congregations. The sermons are the best single source for understanding the ministerial explanations.

Chapter I will investigate literary, ministerial, and historical understandings of the wilderness; it will also suggest why various contemporary uses of the concept of "wilderness" were found wanting and resulted in this dissertation's emphasis upon the emotional aspects and meanings contained in "wilderness as metaphor."

The following chapter will study the most important genre in Puritan writing: the sermon. This chapter will stress the subject matter, subject, rhetoric, metaphors, and the theology of the sermon.

Subsequent chapters will inspect particular metaphors within the larger metaphor: Wall, Garden, Zion, Balm, etc. Further preliminary investigation will indicate both the quantity of metaphors, and the manner of presentation.

The concluding section will draw upon material used in this dissertation and secondary sources to present a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of the importance of the metaphor.

Several important implications flow from the use of metaphor in this dissertation. It should make historians more alert to the deeper meaning that may be contained in Miller's work, not by stressing a return to Miller, but by emphasizing the importance of ministerial metaphors. This focus will reveal that greater continuity existed between the first and second generation of preachers and early eighteenth century ministers than once was believed.
At the same time, the methodology of this dissertation may serve to supplement the work of Bercovitch and others who emphasize Biblical "types." Perhaps by entering into ministerial wishes and hopes, we shall be able to enlarge our perspectives with respect to the fuller implications of typological studies and their relationships to the ministerial mind.

Social historians, too, can benefit from this dissertation's stress upon the role of metaphors by considering the possibility of studying the correlation between ministerial metaphors and congregational metaphors.

Perhaps such a study would answer their questions about the impact of the ministerial word upon the congregation.

In shifting the focus from intellectual and social history, this study suggests that historians of American Puritanism center upon the Puritan perception of the nature of man as understood through a substantive use of Biblical theology. This focus upon man's nature might reveal that it is not man who has so greatly changed, but merely that his metaphors reflect an ever-present awareness that certain questions that each metaphor, even our twentieth century metaphors, simultaneously asks and seeks to answer: "Who am I and where am I going?"

Finally, this dissertation offers itself as a pilot study in the use of printed sources.
REFERENCES


CHAPTER I

SERMONS IN PERSPECTIVE

The most casual reading of the New Testament reveals that Jesus of Nazareth wanted His message preached to the ends of the Earth. It was; the many valleys and wilderness areas of Europe heard his words from numberless individuals.

As the Gospel message took root, so also did the worship of God. Simultaneously with the preaching of the Word was the celebration of the Word in the Mass which was, for centuries, the centerpiece of worship. The two, preaching and the celebration of the Mass, were inseparable in Catholic worship. The Church taught that the sacraments, and the Eucharist in particular, continued the work of redemption which Christ inaugurated. Sacraments were outward signs instituted by Christ to give grace.

In this system of worship only a priest or bishop was empowered to celebrate the Mass. The Mass was valid in itself (ex opere operato) and not dependent upon the moral condition of the priest or bishop (ex opere operantis). The baptized participated in the offering of the Mass through the sacrament of Baptism which conferred a special "character" upon the faithful so that they could participate in the Mass. The baptized, therefore, shared in the actual offering of the Mass, but in a manner distinct from that of either the priest or bishop.¹

Although the sacramental system remained the central element in worship, the role of preaching was not unimportant, even though
the quality of preaching diminished. There was a resurgence of interest in preaching because of the efforts of the preaching friars.

Originating in Europe during the Medieval era, friars later came to England and emphasized the need for a personal faith, a reverence for the Bible, and ecclesiastical reform. Although the friars had received ecclesiastical approbation, some feared that their emphasis upon a personal faith and love scripture might militate against the hierarchical structure of the Church. The friars harmed neither the faith nor the obedience of the faithful to the church; they did, however, awaken an interest in a more personal faith. Only in this manner did they create an awareness about salvation and the Bible that was akin to the emphasis of future European religious reformers.  

Other influences prepared and readied England for the European reformers. Foremost was Wycliffe, a philosopher and theologian, who rejected the prevailing skepticism and who emphasized that Scripture was the only source of faith. The Earthquake conference of 1382 condemned Wycliffe's objection to transubstantiation and other Church teachings. Wycliffe's ideas were not original; his importance consisted in the fact that he, too, helped to prepare England for the European reformers who stressed the centrality of the Bible as the rule of faith.  

The original disciples of Wycliffe, the Lollards, stressed the need of a personal faith, along with an emphasis on the Bible and the need of reformation. All, they said, possessed the right to read and interpret the Bible. Lollard's ideas did not cause immedi-
iate change, but they did influence many in London and other craft areas. Lollardism made England more receptive to those currents of Change that eventually flowed into the land from Europe.  

A major influence upon England came from the universities whose graduates influenced all aspects of English life. Important intellectual changes were taking place at the universities and the effects were to be monumental.

Erasmus of Rotterdam first came to Cambridge in 1505; six years later, 1511, he returned to Cambridge to teach Greek, a language he had mastered in five years. His 1516 translation of the Bible, which included a Greek translation to parallel the Latin, assured Erasmus of immediate fame.

Erasmus' influence upon Cambridge, an institution which he neither particularly liked nor enjoyed, was profound. Under his tutelage, future English religious leaders, and others, received their introduction into the new textual criticism that altered Scriptural studies. Greek and Latin manuscripts now received meticulous examination. The results were revolutionary, for Cambridge dons and students saw the Bible differently. Theological studies now began to incorporate and integrate the new learning into their studies.

The Puritan preacher, therefore, did not just "appear" in the sixteenth century. Rather he was an heir to a rich preaching tradition which had extended from the seventh to the sixteenth century. The preacher also beenfitted from the preaching friars who had emphasized the need of a personalized faith. Erasmus' "new learning" was a significant element in the Puritan minister's
heritage. Finally, the Continental reformers who emphasized the centrality of the Bible and personal faith suggested basic religious formulae which the English dissenters grasped. When these elements congealed, new religious forces were unleashed within England. The dramatic result was a new form of worship in which the Word became first in importance with a corresponding deemphasis upon the centrality of the sacraments in worship.6

The 1540s and 1550s witnessed heated discussions about religion; the use of the surplice, the issue of kneeling, and the use of the sign of the Cross were but some of the problems. Cranmer produced the Book of Common Prayer in 1549; a revised edition appeared in 1552 and revealed the decisive influence of the Continental reformers. During these controversies, Elizabeth became Queen in 1558 and Supreme Governor of the Church by the Act of Supremacy in 1559.

From the outset of her reign, the religious question interested Elizabeth because it was a delicate and potentially explosive situation which could be inflamed by unstifled comments. Her cautious religious policy was not founded upon religious scruples, but upon shrewd political acumen that warned her that such issues influenced the political stability of the realm. She was wise enough not to suppress dissenters; she merely moderated their positions because politically there was no other choice.7

Archbishop Parker and his successors did impose religious conformity upon England. The Prayer Book, a compromise edition resolving doctrinal and liturgical differences, was reissued in 1559. The government issued and promulgated the Thirty-Nine Articles and Advertise-
ments. These resulted in a political calm that lasted until the 1570s.

More extreme Puritans surfaced in the 1570s with the Admonition to Parliament and with the effort to bring England into the Presbyterian fold. Parliament did not accept the Admonition and subsequent debates clarified teachings about the nature of the Church of England. The act against sedition Sectaries added greater clarity to the religious picture, as did the Lambeth statements of 1593 which silenced overt disputes within England and, as a result, radical Puritanism was effectively checked until the advent of Archbishop Laud. At the time of her death in 1603, Elizabeth was religiously what she had been in 1558, a huge boulder in the path of Puritanism, unavoidable, unsurmountable, unmoveable. The conflicts which she had adroitly prevented emerged within a short time.

James I arrived in England in April, 1603. Whether England would continue to have religious peace would clearly be determined by this new King whose interest in religious affairs was well-known. In 1603 the reformers were confident; within a year they would be virtually despondent.

James had been a very successful monarch in Scotland. In the 1590s he had urged Elizabeth to exercise moderation in the treatment of dissidents. At Hampton Court, however, his tolerance was tested as no monarch's had been since the reign of Henry VIII.

Shortly after his arrival in England, the Puritans presented James the Millenary Petition which sought relief from the "common Burdens of human rites and ceremonies." Again the issues that had faced Elizabeth, Parker, and others rudely surfaced. Significantly,
however, the Petition made no mention of the Episcopacy. Moderate Puritans, because the episcopacy had not mentioned the Puritans at the Hampton Court Conference, mustered their forces, as James examined the Petition, and Whitgift, Bancroft, and others marshalled their arguments. This was obvious when James and the Puritans came together in 1604.

At Hampton Court the radicals presented their suggestions on the second day. The same day the dissidents met with the king; the Puritans were frustrated in their hopes for further reforms; however, for while the conference showed signs of agreement between them and James, the bishops sabotaged any chance of progress in its aftermath. James would not deviate from the Elizabethan Settlement; he would try to obtain conformity. 8

James' position was clear and he did not allow his Calvinistic beliefs to blind him about the Puritan threat. Preachers now had to be licensed and a year later Archbishop Bancroft suspended nearly ninety Puritan ministers, a small number when there were 9,000 benefices in the Church.

More restrictions came. Adherence to all the Thirty-Nine Articles became mandatory, along with the licensing of preachers. Yet, because the theology of the Church remained Calvinist Under James and because the strongly anti-Puritan Archbishop Bancroft was succeeded in 1611 by the more conciliatory George Abbot, the Puritan commitment to the Church of England remained strong. The fact that Cambridge accepted the Thirty-Nine Articles indicated the thoroughness of James' effort to insure conformity.
The King's efforts did not quell opposition. Discussions about separation from the English Church arose; many, within and outside Parliament, were displeased with the religious condition. Opposition was ineffective because James controlled England's political processes.

The trend towards religious conformity, however, became more severed in the reign of Charles I. Buckingham's appointment as chancellor of Cambridge in 1626 dampened Puritan hopes of changing the University. William Laud's continued rise with the Church, as the Bishop of London in 1628 and as the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, indicated that Puritan reformers could aspire to few, if any, changes in worship. By the late 1620s, the Puritans had been driven into a position which they had avoided in 1695; confrontation with royal officials, and a belief that the Church leadership no longer adhered to sound doctrine.

Charles and Laud shattered the Elizabethan Settlement; in doing so, they brought forth many issues that prior monarchs had successfully blunted. Puritan claims that Arminianism dominated the Court, and that the monarchy sympathized with Roman Catholicism, and the continued use of altars, surplices, and vestments only augmented Puritan suspicions that England offered no hope. Puritans had lived under monarchs whose religious practices they disapproved, but the efforts of Charles and Archbishop Laud clearly indicated that drastic changes were needed.

Puritan desires for change clashed with the King's determination to enforce conformity. Both forces, in a sense, focused upon the minister who was the main element in the parish which was the basic
unit in English society. The minister, with his emphasis upon faith and the Bible, was becoming more and more political, as he guided his flock. As a member of a "new class," he was a member of a small, well-educated minority that the King and his advisors increasingly feared. These competent, zealous individuals more than compensated for their lack of numbers because of their influence and interests which received support from newly rising economic groups.  

When these ministers preached, the Bible dominated their presentations. Their mastery of the Bible resulted from intensive Biblical studies which had marked English theological studies since the 1530s and 1540s. The Geneva Bible, known for its annotated pages, influenced and educated many for years and "played no little part in making Puritanism the strongly vertebrate movement that it was." The Bible, the 1571 Convocation of Canterbury urged, should be present throughout the Realm and:

Every archbishop and bishop should have at his house a copy of the holy Bible of the largest volume as lately printed at London . . . and that it should be placed in the hall or the large dining room, that it might be useful to their servants and strangers.  

Puritan sermons reflected the teachings of the European Reformers and were cast in a relatively unadorned rhetorical style that eschewed classical rhetoric. A more simplified manner of speech replaced the involved, eloquently devised classical system that had dominated Europe's and England's pulpits for centuries. Called "plain style," this new oratory prided itself because it was unadorned, not complicated, and because it stressed that man's rhetorical powers should never obscure or demean the Holy Spirit.
The Puritan sermon blended, to a large degree, elements of medieval faculty psychology and the new logic and rhetoric of Peter Ramus who had rejected the classical Aristotelian-Ciceronian logic and rhetoric.

Peter Ramus was a sixteenth century French philosopher and follower of Calvin who devised a system of logic and rhetoric that assumed much. Man, said Ramus, possessed principles of knowledge that enabled him to differentiate aspects of existence and to order these properly. The function of logic was to systematize existence and logic enabled Ramus to subdivide the world into an infinite series of dichotomies.

Rhetoric, on the other hand, focused upon the presentation of ideas. Once knowledge, which was static in Ramus' system, was classified, the role of rhetoric became dominant, as it arranged the presentation of the material.13

Before beginning the composition of his sermon, the minister or preacher had to look at his text and to consider its meaning "by using grammaticall, rhetoricall, and logicall analysis." This threefold study would be apparent in the opening of the sermon which situated the Biblical quotation in its historical setting, and its relationship to other books of the Bible, and included, if necessary, a brief discourse on the grammatical significance of the expression. This "opening" of the text revealed its divinely contained message which was enunciated as the sermon's "doctrine."14

The doctrine, the "pivot on which the whole sermon was carefully balanced," was a theological statement or axiom which the minister constantly developed throughout the remaining pages. Although many
sermons had only one doctrinal statement, more than one doctrine might be opened to the congregation.\textsuperscript{15}

The doctrine was buttressed and fortified by an enumerated list of "reasons," which only demonstrated the doctrine's truth. These reasons appealed to the hearer's intellect, as did the doctrine, and were designed to reinforce the doctrine's apparent, divine truth. The reasons were illustrated with suitable Scriptural references aimed at clarifying both the doctrine and reasons within the sermon. When the congregation's intellectual curiosity was satisfied, the minister next turned to moving his congregation's will and emotions.

As the minister began the preparation of his sermon, he had to be mindful of his congregation's spiritual condition. In the final section, this was extremely important, for he was speaking to a "mingled people," a group with varying interests and education and levels of ability. As the minister reminded the congregation, through his "uses and applications," about the sermon's import, he commanded all rhetorical skills, figures of speech, and motivational techniques to move his congregation. These concluding words, not a peroration because theorists maintained that the sermon's internal structure carried the hearer to its conclusion, were pungent, strident, and bolstered by frequent Biblical citations that constantly reminded the congregation of its relationship to God and the need to live good lives.\textsuperscript{16}

The underlying psychological unity of the sermon was based upon medieval faculty psychology which stressed that human action was based upon man's reason first being moved by truth. Next, the will embraced
the truth under the form of a good which it desired. Finally, the
emotions would follow, once the intellect and will had been activat-
ed. The sermon's division into doctrine, reason, and use and applica-
tion, when linked with the psychological emphasis upon intellect,
will, and emotions, resulted in a sermon that was extremely neat,
coherent, and self-contained. In the hands of educated and zealous
ministry, the sermon was extremely effective in spreading God's
Word.17

Much of the effectiveness of the Puritan sermon is found in the
pervasiveness of their metaphors which helped to reduce the doctrine's
abstract position to a concrete reality that the listener could not
misunderstand. This metaphorical emphasis perhaps reflects Milton's
insight that God spoke to man through metaphors because man was in-
capable of directly comprehending God through his intellect or reason.

Metaphorical language involves the linking of two words. In
the sentence, "Man is an animal," before the words "Man" and "animal"
are joined, the fuller implications of what each word might mean is
not known, for there is no referent for either word. Each remains a
literal statement. When linked, however, each word's meaning is ampli-
fied because the new context of each word reveals and illuminates
formerly unexplored understandings of each word. Metaphors give added
intellectual understanding of concepts and an emotional clarity as
well. Metaphors, however, can obscure meaning and the development
of knowledge if the speaker or writer is not careful in his joining
of words. Not understanding the intellectual level of the audience,
a lack of appreciation of his listener's interests and talents, and
obscurity in the speaker's mind about what he intends to clarify, can
result in pairings that are unintelligible and which diminish not only intellectual advancement but emotional clarification and relief.¹⁸

Dead metaphors, too, can lessen understanding, for such metaphors have lost their original vitality and ability to arouse an individual or group. Such metaphors can become imbedded in language and become so commonplace that the original metaphorical meaning is either not known or the expression is not recognized as a metaphorical expression.

Intellectual and emotional clarity result from the proper use of metaphors. This is true because each metaphor is suffused with both truth and emotion, the result of two words which are linked in a manner that can excite and interest the reader or listener. A successful speaker or writer can convey considerable emotion to his statements and communicate to others his veiled visions about his subject which, in turn, mobilize similar visions in his hearers. This emotional awakening and transference is quite important, for it enables the speaker to grasp his audience's attention and, more importantly, to retain its interest. Metaphors, because of their unique ability to appeal to man's intellect and emotions, offer virtually unlimited opportunities to the successful speaker or writer, as he strives to influence others.¹⁹

As New England's ministers stepped onto the desolate shores of their new homeland, their upraised eyes saw a wilderness. Perhaps they recalled the memory of their Christian tradition which constantly reminded them that life was a journey through the wilderness even here in New England, as it had been in old England.
George H. Williams emphasizes that the Christian wilderness tradition saw the world as divided between inhabited areas with its sown land and promises of joy and the desert which threatened life. The desert did threaten the orchards, the gardens, and vegetation because demons, winds, and death had their origins there. There was constant threat that the desert would encroach and stifle life. These dangers eventually resulted in the Jewish conception of the "desert" as "almost a moral term" to explain evil. In addition to the desert's constant threat of consuming life, underlying the desert was "the immense deep, the ocean which lives provisionally curbed under the earth."²⁰

Despite these dangers God's power had prevailed in Old Testament times and the "wilderness as a place of redemptive, convenantal bliss . . . a place of testing and tutelage" became a motif in Jewish religious writings. The desert, even though threatening, was a "garden enclosed" (Hos. 4:12) and the place where God addressed His people (Jer. 2.2). In this land wonderful things did happen, for God purged, took pity, and consecrated His people to Himself.

Williams concluded these reflections by stating that the desert or wilderness was (1) a "Moral waste but a potential paradise," (2) "a place of testing or even punishment," (3) "an experience or occasion or nuptial (conventual) bliss," and (4) "a place of refuge (protection) or contemplation (renewal)."²¹

This wilderness heritage became an integral part of the Christian tradition. It influenced the monastic tradition with its emphasis upon man's inner life as a spiritual wilderness which had to be conquered. It has influenced among other things, medieval heresies
which viewed life as wilderness, and those aspects of seventeenth century England which produced Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*.

New England's ministers were aware of this tradition. They knew it from their education; they knew it, too, from a currently used seventeenth century definition of the "wilderness" in John Wilson's *Christian Dictionarie* which defined the wilderness as "A wast and desart place, not inhabited, Psalm 95.8," and as "A Countrey full of Hills, Mountains, and Forrests, like to a Wilderness," which "had some inhabitants . . . ." Moreover, it was the "Countrey as Heathen and Pagan people, which were void of grace, and barren in good workes (as a wilderness) Esay 35.1. The Wilderness shall rejoice, And . . . I will make the Wilderness (as a poole of water) A METAPHOR."

This metaphorical definition of the wilderness is obvious in the printed sermons of New England's ministers. Miller has said that their sermons were "not written with words but with arguments and axioms," and that the ministers "would find a metaphor at hand . . . ."23

Ministerial sermons indicated that there were many "images at hand" within the New England wilderness. Page upon page of these sermons speak through images drawn from the Bible which illustrate New England's likeness to ancient Israel, as she left Egypt, crossed the Red Sea, and entered into the Promised Land. Ministerial sermons informed the many congregations in New England that their wars, need for fasting and humiliations, and days of thanksgiving reflected the
saints' need for reformation and repentance which God had similarly demanded of the Jews, his first chosen people.

The exposed settlements were newly planted vineyards within the wilderness which demanded protection. To meet this need, trained armed bands, units of fifty volunteers which were subdivided into additional units as the number of volunteers increased, existed outside of Boston to meet defensive needs. In Boston, the formation of the Artillery Company in 1638 demonstrated that some citizens were equally concerned about the colony's safety. The Boston unit met monthly, later reducing its meetings to four per year.  

The June meeting of the Artillery Company was significant for the New England ministers. The Company, after having assembled for its morning drill, would march to the State House where it would then escort the Governor and the General Court to the religious service which preceded the election of the officers for the Artillery Company. When this had taken place, the Company marched to the Commons for its election; when the results were announced, the Company disbanded until the evening when it again assembled for its annual banquet.  

The centerpiece of the day was the sermon, which reminded the troops of their obligations both to the community and to God. These sermons, delivered by a minister whom the Captain of the Artillery Company had selected, expostulated about the meaning of God's will as expressed in the doctrine, buttressed with numerous references to the Bible, which always asserted in one way or another that the saints must never forget that they were Israel's successor in the North American wilderness.
There were other occasions which permitted the ministers to speak about the need of reformation and repentance. On officially proclaimed days of fast and humiliation, the ministers implored God's help either to remove existing evils and degeneracy or to induce the saints to renewed dedication to God's will. These special days required abstention from food, nonessential liquids and servile labor until noon of the fast day and, in particularly severe times, the fast would last for twenty-four hours.

The annual election day sermon, delivered in May, was perhaps the most significant occasion for the ministers to speak to their civil leaders about the Colony's religious and civil affairs. The Election Sermon was important to the ministers, for it allowed them to express their beliefs on crucially significant events which disturbed numerous saints, as ministerial comments about baptism, the Lord's Supper, and church membership indicated. Civil leaders were reminded of their obligations through the skillful use of Biblical imagery and metaphors that stressed that they were the successors to Israel's Nehemiah, Abraham, and Moses. Never did a congregation depart from a service unmindful of its heritage as Israel's successor in the wilderness. These Election sermons clearly resonated the conviction that matters of church and state were inseparable and that the role of ministers in New England was to reinforce this message.

There were additional sermons: Sunday sermons, Thursday lectures, execution sermons, special words about the significance of God's will when a notable person died within the colony, and thanksgiving sermons which stressed that the saints, even though they had been unfaithful to God, had been blessed once more by God and that
reformation and repentance would indicate their gratitude for his mercies.

Whatever the occasion, the ministerial sermon reveals that the Bible was interwoven into ministerial thought and expression about the saints' condition in the wilderness. Reinforcing the doctrinal position of the ministers, the metaphor supplied the preacher with a tool of great flexibility so that he could adjust his sermon's content to the needs of his congregation. The sermon addressed the crucial question of the saints' relationship to God in the wilderness which surrounded them, in the wilderness which erupted into war, and in the wilderness of their hearts which constantly sought greater peace and security in the midst of a rapidly changing society.

The remaining chapters indicate that the sermonic use of the wilderness metaphor contained three distinct but overlapping meanings. From 1650-1674, the wilderness metaphor indicated that New England's wilderness was a place of the promise. This optimistic perception shifted during King Philip's War (1675-1677) when the wilderness became a place of threat. Finally, during the last decades of the century, the wilderness metaphor increasingly referred to the wilderness within the human heart caused by discipline and sin.

This study suggests that rather than speak about decline in New England's religious fervor, it is possible to assert that by 1700 considerable fervor existed, paradoxically stemming from the material emphasis upon reliance upon the spirit of God.
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CHAPTER II
THE WILDERNESS PROMISE
Symptoms, Diagnosis, and Treatment: Ministerial Sermons, 1650-1674

The image of the wilderness pervades the several sermons used in this chapter. It reflects part of the Hebraic-Christian tradition that permeated the ministerial imagination and expressed itself through Biblical metaphors. When the ministers used the wilderness image, they were thinking of three possible Biblical meanings.

It could mean that period in Israel's history between the departure from Egypt and the entrance into the Promised Land. It could mean the setting of this journey, where Israel was told of God's promises and Israel's responsibilities. Or it could refer to the purification of the Promised Land after it had been settled by the Jews, who were constantly tempted to imitate those whom they had conquered by adopting some of their governmental practices.¹

In their sermons, New England ministers applied all these understandings of the wilderness to the experiences of their settlements: The Exodus from England and the journey to America, the trials of the first generation of settlers, and the problems of continued purification and reform.² Like Israel of old, the new Israel faced internal and external threats to her existence.

As in Israel of old, there was a "divided heart" in New England from the 1650s through the 1670s. New England's problem echoed those of the ancient Jews who, after they had settled the Promised Land, compromised their trust in Yahweh by imitating and adapting religious
practices which were not, as the ministers constantly stated, in accord with God's will. New Englanders familiar with Jeremiah (2:2-5) knew they did not differ from Israel in this respect; such conduct was indicative of a divided heart.

The ministers, assuming a role similar to the role of the prophets in Israel, reminded their congregations that they newly occupied wilderness, now becoming God's vineyard through the patient efforts of the saints, was God's gift to them and in need of His protection. Through the use of watchtowers, watchmen, walls and warfare, external enemies might be thwarted; through obedience to God's ordinances and prescriptions, the hearts of those in the vineyard might be safeguarded from unkindness, ungodliness, and drunkenness. The imates of journey, exodus, and purification—the three basic meanings of the wilderness—are interwoven throughout these sermons, as Hall and Plumstead have shown.

Although daily life in the wilderness was severe and required constant effort, successes were not unknown. The ministers encouraged their congregations and reminded them about the spiritual trial that was present within their daily work. For these men, the wilderness referred to the entire process of salvation whereby man learned the correct use of his material goods, the meaning of God's mercies, and the significance of spiritual trials. The conquest of evil and the correct use of God's gifts reminded the saint that his fundamental relationship was to God. Reform and salvation were additional gifts; the use of watch-towers to keep alien forces outside the vineyard, along with the use of ordinances and prayer to purify the hearts
of the saints, were valuable only if these mercies were seen as God's and not man's.

Wilderness imagery was quite varied, ranging from the most tender to the most violent, as it referred both to the saint and to his environment. Ministers could refer to the Spouse of Christ who emerged from the wilderness leaning on her beloved, and know that their congregations knew that the 'spouse' referred to the one whom God loves—the beloved whose bridegroom was God. References to honey, brooks, the shepherd, and wild animals reveal that New England's ministers did not shrink in their use of Biblical metaphors, using these images to speak about the land's spiritual and civil leaders, physical and natural disasters, and governmental and church problems.

Second generation ministers constantly compared their own generation's lack of zeal and fervor with the notable accomplishments of the first generation. This contrast indicated to them that their predecessors had relied upon God and that their generation's problems were caused by a lack of fidelity and trust. This era of difficulty, called the "declension" by historians, was a period of decay to Miller, but a period of religious growth to Pope.

Israel's blessings came from the Covenant which God had entered into with His people on Mount Sinai. There, God had promised Moses that he would protect His people; in return, they had only to commit their trust to Him, and rely upon no human assistance. Like ancient Israel which found its strength in this Covenant, so also could the New Israelites derive their strength from their special covenant with God. Even though the Covenant guaranteed the saints protections,
they murmured, as did the first Israelites in their journey, about God's plan that took them into their Promised Land. These murmurings--indications of unbelief and signs of a withdrawal of trust from God--enabled the ministers to contrast New England's attitudes and faith with the Jews' whose trials foreshadowed New England's. New England's ministers not only accurately reflected this tradition of the prophets in their warning to the saints, but also emphasized the saving value of the wilderness in their sermons. Ministerial sermons contain many references to Moses and Aaron, manna and water, the golden calf, idols, and Nineveh, all indicating that the use of Biblical metaphors as vehicles of communication to remind the saints that her unbelief was similar to Israel's.

New England's ministers in this period did not romanticize the wilderness, nor did they perceive it as a place to be shunned. They defended it as the source of hope. It contained both God's mercies and Satan's snares; it was constantly a place of consolation and strength because it was God's choice for his aints.

The wilderness metaphor, as it was used by the New England ministers, displayed a deep belief that man had to become ever more conscious of his powerlessness as he faced his trials and a simultaneous awareness that God's power could conquer the trials they faced. New England's ministers sought to address the meaning of their wilderness trials; their Biblical language alone provided the requisite means of expression, as they struggled to clarify New England's meaning to themselves and to their congregations.

This chapter, a study of the published sermons preached between 1650 and 1674, commences with a consideration of indices of trouble
in the new Israel. These were couched in Biblical language that likened New England's trials to Israel's, as she followed her God into the American wilderness. The next section will reveal that the ministers offered careful, well-reasoned arguments that congealed into a comprehensive diagnosis of New England's sickness. The concluding section will demonstrate that the ministers did not despair; their consoling words always contained practical solutions so that they and the saints might again reestablish the proper relationship with Yahweh.

**Signs of Decay**

By the middle of the seventeenth century, New England's ministers could look back upon the land's successes and believe that they and the saints had been guided and strengthened by God's illustrious providences; the American wilderness had become one of God's most choice vinyards. Within a few years, congregations heard agitated and worried ministers; these troubled and fidgety men pleaded with the saints to reform and to repent. Why had they become so worried? What disturbed them? Signs bothered them, signs of decay and degeneracy.

When these ministers referred to the evil of degeneracy, they spoke about the failure of the church's mission in the New England wilderness. They also mentioned the wilderness, New England, and her need for effective leaders who would urge the saints to cease lying and respond to God's call. They spoke, too, about the need of fighting their numerous enemies, while simultaneously reminding their flocks that New England's war with the Arminians and others
symbolized a deeper, more personal conflict in which Satan was attempting to squelch their deepest desire: union with God.

When New England's ministers addressed these issues—the church, the land, leadership, reform and reformation, warfare and love—they used imaginative language which came from the Bible. Through Biblical metaphors they perceived New England as God's newly chosen People who, like ancient Israel, had to expunge evil from the most remote corners of their land. More was demanded, for these ministers insisted that the vineyard had to return to the "pristine primitive profession," as one minister perceived it, "of the settlement years."\(^9\)

The many pages of sermons preached from 1650-1674 reveal that ministers perceived that God's elect had fallen from His mercies into the unmerciful grasp of Satan. Ministers encouraged the saints to persevere in their reformation, as they railed against those sinners who were depriving God of His grandeur and glory.\(^10\)

In the face of many trials and difficulties, God's spokesmen often alluded to the reasons for the saints' presence in New England. John Higginson drew from the Old Testament the example of Israel's General Assembly to illustrate what God's interests meant in the new Israel. He specified this as the continuation of reform and repentance, equating these with God's cause in New England and, conversely, with New England's as well.

Higginson stated that this cause had been the interest of the Israel Assembly which periodically convened to discuss the progress of reformation and to beg God's assistance in their efforts to assist Him (I Kings 8:57,58,59). The General Court in Massachusetts could
earn much from this group, he said, for it had to follow its example and remember that it "may need and require more than ordinary help from the Lord Himself," as it attempted to further reform and repentance.  

In his sermon, Higginson candidly addressed the problem of growing wealth in the Commonwealth. He quoted, perhaps wondering if some of his congregation might have been pondering their "cause" in the wilderness, Jeremiah's words—'Have I been a wilderness to Israel?'—as he cited God's additional mercies" of "town, ships, and prosperity." There were, merchants, he emphasized to those whose wealth was increasing "Cent per Cent," who should remember why their ancestors had come to the wilderness. As he reminded them that the Colony's notables had not come for "wordly wealth," he also commented that "New-England is originally a Plantation of Religion, not a Plantation of Trade." His concluding comments revealed his gratitude for God's mercies, for:

It is now 36 year since I well remember, in the year 28, that one of the first ministers that came over into this Wilderness, gave some account of his ground in a great Assembly of many thousands at Leicester in Old-England. He mentioned this as one, the mercy of the Patent, from the Royall Authority of England, for the People here to chuse their own Magistrates, and to admit unto freedom such as they should think meet, and that religion was the Principall end of this Plantation in his majesties Royal intention and adventurers free possession. This whole generation hath seen how good the Lord hath been in using this Wilderness for so many years under the Government here by the Patent.  

Higginson's skillful use of the biblical metaphors, which acted as lenses through which he filtered his perceptions of God's causes in the wilderness, was the practice of other ministers; they constantly drew upon the Old Testament for metaphors that would assist them in applying Israel's relationship with God in their efforts to
explain the new Israel's mission in America. A splendid example of this ministerial ability to discover and use Old Testament metaphors to understand New England's history is seen in Thomas Walley's metaphorical understanding of New England as the new Gilead.

Gilead, a land abundantly blessed with rich grazing land and streams and rolling hills, was extremely ill, even though she possessed ample balm and physicians to effect a cure. This was known to the people of Israel's time, for Jeremiah spoke of Gilead as "the summit of Lebanon," but because of her sin, he said, "I will make you a desert, uninhabited city." Isaiah was also aware of her riches and beauty, for he cited this land as a model of the restored Israel. God had been good to her, as the Old Testament revealed; he had taken her from captivity to Canaan and during this journey, in which many had become ill "in the wilderness," and where "many carcasses fell in the wilderness," as the Book of Numbers (14:32) says in its narrative of Israel's wilderness experiences, Gilead's illness lingered for she remained stubborn and refused to listen to God.13

New England's condition was similar, for her "wise and foolish Virgins seem all to be asleep," (Math. 25) and therefore unaware of God's gifts. Walley said this somnambulent condition was accompanied by a "Burning Fever" that permeated the land, for "many are puffed up with an evil spirit." Citing Hosea's description of Gilead as a "city that worketh iniquity," (6:8), Walley perceived the new Pestilential," as he introduced Jeremiah's condemnation of Babylon.
which he perceived so appropriate for his sick New England. "We
would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed; forsake her, and
let her go every one unto his own country: for her judgement
receive unto Heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies" (51:9).
New England could expect a similar judgment if she did not abandon
her "spirit of Error and Delusion." 14

Ministerial sermons make numerous references to the settlers' continued need for suitable civil and religious leaders who would demand reform and repentance. Their search led them not to contemporary secular rulers or religious leaders, but to the Old Testament where they could find suitable successors to New England's "Moses and Aarons" who had so clearly manifested God's concern for His people.

When God had elected to save His people, He selected Moses, conferring upon him the covenant, the law, and an understanding of who He was. He also informed Moses about His plan to save His people and what Moses and they must do. Moses served God, despite failings which resulted in his death on the borders of Canaan because of disobedience to God, helping Him lead His people from Egypt to the Promised Land.

Assisting Moses was Aaron who had become Israel's religious leader. In addition to these ritual functions, he helped Moses in civil functions and became the first of many religious leaders whose efforts had become so important to Israel's salvation.

God had blessed His new Israel with other "Moses and Aarons," as the ministerial sermons constantly emphasized. Frequent references to these Jewish leaders indicated that the ministers had applied these
names to John Winthrop and John Cotton who had led their people from their English bondage into the new Canaan of the American wilderness. When these notables, and others of the same generation who had founded the Congregational way, began disappearing from the New England scene in the 1650s, the ministers turned to the Old Testament in search of suitable successors to Moses and Aaron who might serve as models for their generation's leaders. A ministerial favorite was "tender-hearted" Nehemiah.  

Nehemiah was perhaps the butler to Artaxerxes, the King of Persia. He served his king faithfully and, when he had obtained the king's permission to inspect the battered walls of Jerusalem, this crafty, shrewd, and dedicated man of God went to the city. There he reduced conflicts among warring factions of the Jews, forbade marriages between Jews and gentiles, and formulated a new covenant with the people. Despite immense difficulties, he successfully united the people and rebuilt the shattered wall.  

Johathan Mitchel's election sermon, Nehemiah on the Wall, ranks amongst the finest examples of preaching. Constructing a model of leadership from several chapters and verses from the Book of Nehemiah and rearranging these into a forceful image of the ideal of New England leadership, Mitchel's sermon reveals both how the metaphor of the wilderness both supplied the minister with the tools which he needed to explain and understand New England's leadership needs and how, in turn, the biblical metaphors captured the imaginations of the ministers who used them.

New England's future leaders heard Nehemiah's words, "the thing you are doing is not good," illustrated by Mitchel's references
of evidences of apathy, pride, and spiritual decay in the wilderness. Future leaders faced a difficult task; they had to, as Nehemiah had done, remind their people to "walk in the fear of God" and to reject the "taunts of the nations enemies . . . ." If the leaders were to succeed, they someday could contemplate, with Nehemiah, that God had listened when they had said, "And for the wood offering, at times appointed, and for the first fruits, Remember me, O my God, for good." The "remnant of the captivity there in the province" that are "in great affliction and reproach" (Neh. 1:3) would benefit from demanding leaders because of the "hard work" that involved "weak instruments, ready many times to be discouraged," as Nehemiah had said in reference to those whom God had directed him to govern (Neh. 4:10). New England's leaders knew these words were true of their people, too. 17

Although firm and determined leadership was required, Mitchel cautioned future leaders to be "tenderhearted," as Nehemiah had been; even though some saints sinned and committed evil, God still considered them the "spouse of Christ." They remained the object of His love, he said, citing Zechariah's (1:14) comment that God considers "very tender," and "for whose welfare He is exceedingly jealous." 18

Mitchel's affirmation that reform and repentance were essential for the settlers was expressed through biblical metaphors which were constantly intermingled in his text. This usage reveals how the skillful preacher could insert Old Testament references into his text in order to emphasize that New England's experiences had meaning in light of Israel's. This heavy reliance upon biblical metaphors illustrates how these metaphors came to permeate ministerial
minds, providing them with the means of furthering their understanding of New England's mission.

Mitchel's use of the biblical metaphor illustrates how the knowledgeable preacher could "plug in," insert Old Testament loci into New England's experiences and thus clarify the role of her mission in the wilderness. Jonathan Mitchel's ministerial colleagues continued to use the same method in their efforts to induce change in New England.

New England's ministers constantly warned their congregations that they would either reform or perish. Urian Oakes stressed this, for there was "much thorny ground" in this Country, and the Seed of the Word is chocked . . . by the cares of the World, deceitfulness of Riches and lusts of other things." A reference to Jeremiah's words, "Be appalled, Oh Heavens . . . be utterly desolate, says the Lord for my people have committed . . . evils" gave Oakes words to explain the horrors of "Dreaming Professors among us," "Cumbersome Professors," and the absence of "longing For Sabbaths and Lectures Dayes . . ." More prosaic concerns, such as "garish attire," and "Pride of Parts" did not escape condemnation. His familiarity with the Old Testament enabled him to liken the ostentatious saints of the New England wilderness to the Cinnamon tree nothing good "but the Bark," citing the ancient Jewish practice of using the bark for perfume and discarding the rest. 19

Oakes again dipped into the Old Testament for metaphors which would be suitable to understand those "Merchants, or Pedlars rather" who were victimizing the saints in the wilderness, as they traveled along New England's coast. He warned his congregation that Jeremiah's
words "everyone beware of his neighbor and put no trust in any brother . . . every neighbor goes about as a Slanderer" (Jer. 9:4)—were applicable to these merchants of New England whose dishonesty was so distressing to the New England ministers. These merchants, while profiting greatly in their trade, harmed the cause of religion by their conduct and vicious talk about the civil and religious leaders.  

Political and religious leaders did not go unscathed; Oakes perceived their conduct indicated that they "have gone to the school of Machiavel . . ." rather than to the school of Nehemiah which should have been their model. These leaders, similar to the "roaring lion, and a raging bear," (Prov. 28:15), had threatened the settlement, but God, he said, "has delivered you from the Paw of the Lion and Bear . . . ." New England's numerous "sinful deportments" indicated a deep decay; New England's love relationship with God, similar to Israel's fickle and immature relationship with God, suggested that Hosea's words (12:1)—"Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity"—were equally appropriate for fickle New England.  

Underlying these perceptions of drunkenness, apostasy, and "sinful deportments" was the fact that New England was a "lie" because, as Dufour says, the lie indicated "deceit, cheating, the disagreement between thought and tongue." New England's lie consisted in her allegiance to idols which indicated that God no longer was central to her life.  

Sin, drunkenness, rampant impurity, growing apostasy indicated to Stoughton that New England had decayed, as did "Worldliness . . . Whoredoms and Fornications . . . Revellings and Drunkenness . . .
Exactions and Oppressions . . . Slanderings and Backbiting . . ."
as well as a people which was "Sermon-proof and Ordinance proof."
Stoughton had contrasted this apostasy with the picture of the
New Israel which God had planted and which Isaiah's words beauti­fully depicted. God, he said: "looked for grapes from his vinyard, Isa. 5, because he had fenced it, and gathered out of the stone, and built a tower in the midst thereof and which was planted with the choicest vine. So Jer. 2.21. Yet I planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed."23

Such always had not been true of New England, however, for
"God had sifted a whole nation that He might send choice Grain
over into this Wilderness" but evil had flourished, and "not for these things, but better things, O New England, hath thy God expected from thee." There was a "degenerate plant of a strange vine" (Jer. 2:21) now present indicating that "Many having begun in the spirit now walk as they were made perfect by the flesh." A redemption which "began out of Egypt, and . . . carried in through the wilderness," had descended upon some who hankered for the "onions and Garlick of Egypt, again," symbols of the saints' former "servitude" in England. New England's evil was intended by God to teach "New England . . . the . . . dispensation of divine Providence . . . under which the Lord hath set us and continued us unto this day." It was a providence that Stoughton perceived so evil that he said:

How the good grain diminished, and the chaff increased? The first generation have been ripened times after time, and most of them gathered in as stock of grain in their Season. But we who rise up . . . who are we? It is sad to be named, to be styled children that are corrupters; but are we not indeed
many of us corrupted and which is far worse, corrupters. How water is mixed with the wine.\textsuperscript{24}

Closely related to the biblical concept of the "lie" was another metaphor: call. This word, as Dufour reminds us, is rooted in the concept of God's election which is accomplished through the following of His will. It involved a mission, a sending that has salvation as its purpose. The call interfered with man's life, for it disrupted him in its demands. This call changes man's existence, not merely in externals, but within his soul, for it changes and makes man different.\textsuperscript{25}

The ministers were aware that God's call effected such a change in those whom it touched; John Davenport knew God's call had disrupted the life of his congregation, but not as he had wished. Dissent, divisions both in the church and civil government, decay, people living in fine homes and places "where they have the Word not powerfully preached to them" indicated that His saints had been deaf to God's call for reform and repentance. God had not punished His new saints, for as Malachi had warned the Jewish people, so Davenport reminded them that God has said, "I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (3:6). Punishment would come if there were no repentance; in this case, this minister again cited Scripture, suggesting that Jeremiah's words about the Jews would be applicable of the newly chosen people for "Reprobate silver shall men call them because the Lord hath rejected them" (Jer. 30:6). To reinforce the congregation's awareness of the power of evil and sin, Davenport stated that "it blasts the corn; destroys the fruits of trees; brings diseases on men's bodies; fills the earth with Nursuries, and Hell with Everlasting torments."\textsuperscript{26}
New England's deviant conduct aroused profound ministerial concern. Their land was reeling, staggering beneath evil. There was a desperate need for reform and repentance.

Thomas Shepard's *Wine for Gospel Wantons* emphasized the need of change so that New England would cease her stumbling and staggering. This sermon, another illustration of the use of biblical images in this literature, states that both England's and New England's conduct may be explained through the metaphor of drunkenness. This concept, as Dufour says, refers "to those suffering disaster, especially from God's anger, who are compared with those actually staggering from drunkenness."  

England's deviant conduct indicated the presence of a deeper "spiritual drunkenness" which Shepard attributed to the consumption of false doctrines. The mind, "by drinking these in ... it is made drunk," and the result was a land marked by "Unsteadfastness and Unsetledness," a land marked by doubt and confusion. This condition reminded Shepard of Isaiah's statement about Israel which he applied to England, saying "all tables are full of vomit, no place without filthiness" (Isa. 28:8).

Were New England not to change, she would resemble England's "spirit of Drunkenness," entering in to a "sleep of security" so deep that "no awakening providences of the Lord can awaken them . . . ." Shepard's vision of New England as the new Israel allowed him to appropriate Jeremiah's words, "He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood" (Lam. 3:15). Once the saints are in that condition, Shepard warned, as Jeremiah had warned, that God would say, "In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will
make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual
sleep, and not wake, saith the Lord" (Jer. 51:39). Such a
judgment would be proper, for Shepard stated that the "Lord in His
just judgments . . . puts His cup into their hands and bit them
take pleasure in their sins." 29

God's new Israel had to be sober, for conflict and war threat­
ened her existence, just as an integral part of the first Israel's
existence involved conflicts from the time of her departure from
Egypt and her arrival in the Promised Land. At the same time,
these ministers knew, that war "poses moral problems," as Dufour
has said, because:

Its presence in the world of the Bible allows revelation to
express from a common experience, an essential aspect of the
drama in which humanity is engaged and of which salvation is
the stake - the spiritual combat between God and Satan. It
is true that God's plan has peace for its ends, but this
peace itself supposes a victory won at the price of combat. 30

New England's ministers used the metaphor of war in the artil­
lery sermons which they delivered at the annual elections and training
of the militia. These stressed that only bold and decisive action
would destroy New England's material and spiritual enemies. The
saints must learn, as Israel had, that wars were needed to defend
God's interests in the wilderness.

These sermons, stressing that physical combat mirrored man's
interior conflict with Satan, drew heavily upon Old Testament
sources. The conflicts of which they speak were severe, but
Urian Oakes insisted that "all true believers have a transcendant
. . . Conquest and Victory in all their severe Engagement with the
Enemies of God . . . in Jesus Christ." His sermon affirmed that
all must be prepared to fight for God's cause, using Nehemiah's
illustration of the efforts to rebuild Jerusalem's shattered defenses to say: "That which builded in the Wall, and they that bear burdens, with those that laded, every one with his hand wrought the work, and with the other hand held a weapon." 31

New England's war consisted of routing the Arminians and the powers of "Darkness, confusion, Misunderstandings," and violations of church order. Because the conflict was severe, resolute action was needed. Oakes turned to the Old Testament and discovered, for example, that Joshua's efforts in leading the people into Canaan had been so arduous that he had fallen "on his face and did worship" (5:14). This attitude indicated that New England's wars might be as difficult, perhaps enabling Oakes to mention the conflict surrounding the split in the Boston church in 1667. He cited Israel's conflicts and, in an appeal for harmony amongst the contentious, he urged all not to "be afraid . . . neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee." Even though "thou dost dwell among scorpions," he continued to say, "be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks though they be a rebellious house." 32

War was the theme of Samuel Moodey's artillery sermon of 1674 that depicted New England as a land whose paths and trails were "lined with Enemies." Within this land were some who would "fain live without Care and fear, meet with no cross . . ." along with others who were "working out . . . salvation . . . under the metaphor of fighting." The saints' enemies were numerous, but the central enemy remained the "Current of Natural corruption . . ." This sermon about "Military Divinity" or the "Divine soildier" saw
that evils of "Pulpit and Presses," apostasy, and laxity could be combated successfully if the saints imitated Paul who fought "not as one that beats the air." 33

In contrast with the artillery sermons, which emphasized the need of aggressive warfare against Satan, devotional sermons revealed a slightly different emphasis. They did speak about the constant battle within the human soul that represented a state of restlessness upon which the Evil One attempted to capitalize. This battle within the interior wilderness represents, however, as Dufour says, that their human restlessness reflects . . . "a seeking of God, but often this search fails and must be set right. Then man discovers that his search for God is rooted in the fact that God first seeks out man." 34

This restlessness is present in John Oxenbridge's sermons to "sluggish souls," and indicates that the search for God motivated these parishioners. Selecting his text from the Prophecy of Isaiah, 55:6—"Seek the LORD while He may be found"—Oxenbridge tied this to the metaphor of the market-place which stated that his flock must use its time in the market-place properly. This latter metaphor, referring to Matthew's statement (22:4) about Jesus who "sent for servants, saying, tell them which are bidden, Behold I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fattlings are killed, and all things are ready for the marriage," offered an end to sluggishness. The saints, "If in seeking the Lord . . . would not miss the Season thereof," would attend this banquet, if their salvation followed upon an orderly pursuit of material successes, which, in turn, necessitated the proper use of time. Those saints tempted to search for lesser
goods, while saying that tomorrow would provide time to seek the Lord, were urged to remember, "to morrow may be no day to thee."
The saints were to use their possessions correctly and daily give to God their finest goods, not "Fragments, Scraps, or Crumbs from the Devil's table."

John Allin's flock heard their minister appeal to their more tender sentiments, because, when this minister referred to the spouse who was emerging from the wilderness leaning on her beloved, he buttressed his comments by indicating that God had never deserted them, citing, almost literally, the description of God's help in Deuteronomy which said that He "found them in a desart land and in the wurst howling desert, he led him about, he instructed them, he kept them as the apple of his eye, etc." (Deut. 32:10). He had also been with them in their "fear and dread," at the time "the people passover which thou has purchased," were at the Red-Sea (Exod. 15:16). He had, moreover, been with them, as He had been with Israel, "to purge them and make them white, Dan. 12, to bring out of them confidence in themselves."

New England ministers did not limit themselves to biblical metaphors that referred only to animals, trees, or places; their land suggested numerous opportunities for the selection of other metaphors that would assist them in understanding their mission into the Wilderness. One of the richest metaphors, and it is contained in almost all sermons, refers to "fruit," i.e., the product of their labors. Dufour states that it refers to "that which is produced by creatures; for if God plants and sows as a man, we do not say that he bears fruit: He harvest the fruit which ought to manifest his glory."
A striking example of this metaphor is seen in Shepard's sermon which explains why New England is God's "eyesore." The Neglect of Youth, free thinkers, evidence of Popery, and such seemingly insignificant evils as the sale of images of the Virgin Mary upon ships in Boston harbor indicated the extent and gravity of New England's troubles. Disedifying leaders, those who perhaps would continue to hasten New England's downfall, had been expelled, Shepard likened such to the "Bear that would have uprooted the vineyard of the Lord." 38

God had been good to his new people. Amos' words (2:10) about Israel—"Also I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness to possess the land of the Amorites"—seemed so appropriate to Shepard that he used them to describe the new Israel's freedom in America. He could say, however, about the people that "Why then is this people . . . slipped back by a perpetual backsliding," citing Jeremiah's lamentation (8:5) over Jerusalem. They refused, he continued, "to return." 39

The people had none to blame other than themselves, as Jeremiah's words revealed; they "had not procured this unto thy self, in that those hast forsaken thee LORD, thy God, when he led thee by the way?" Shepard's condemnation of New England is best seen in his likening her to Sodom for the " . . . fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters," but "neither did they strengthen the hand of the poor and needy" (Ezek. 16:49). This perverse spirit told him, and his congregation, that God can mingle evil and good to make the people err and repent. Isaiah had said such of his people; Shepard appropriated his words to emphasize
that the same was true of New England. "The LORD hath mingled a
perverse spirit in the midst thereof; and they have caused Egypt
to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit. (19:14)"  

Samuel Torrey's election sermon of 1674 indicates the distance
between Shepard's sermon of 1645 and the events of 1674. Whereas
Shepard's sermon was specific, precise, and controlled both in style
and content, Torrey's sermon was bombastic, florid, and rambling both
in style and content. Although Torrey specified difficulties in New
England, his language consisted of such generalizations as "Spiritual
declension," "carnal confidence in our visible Liberties, and Privi­
ileges," "carnal ease and rest," and "spiritual plagues and judge­
ments." His imagery was more bitter, for it indicated that New
England "will not be more unto God than another people (Jer. 9:26)."
This reference to Jeremiah's dire predictions about the fate of Isra­
el was indicative of how he viewed Israel as an example of New Eng­
land's condition, one similar to "Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the
children of Amon and Moab . . . ." In comparing his people to the
Edomites who practiced fertility rites, to the Amonites who engaged
in religious perversions, and to the Moabites who were the successors
of Lot, Torrey's perception of New England was indeed dismal.  

Symptoms of decay, stemming from infidelity to God's mercies,
permeated all phases of daily life in the New England wilderness.
"Garrish attire," "pedlars," "sermon-proofed" ministers and professors
of religion, ale-houses and drunkenness masked an illness which the
ministers addressed through their use of biblical metaphors which
acted as screening devices. Not content with merely cataloging the
symptoms of apostasy, the ministers graphically portrayed these through biblical metaphors that contained references to the cockatrice, cinnamon trees, and Moabites that lived within or bordered ancient Israel. These examples, not examples drawn from New England's pine trees or Indians, supplied the ministers with those reference points which enabled them to link New England with Israel. The pervasive use of these metaphors perhaps indicates that ministerial imaginations perceived Israel's experiences as normative of New England's actions; it indicates, perhaps, that the language of the Old Testament became so captivating to the ministers that it, in turn, dictated ministerial judgements so that their biblical rhetoric became the reality of New England.

Not content with listings and citations of evil in the new Promised Land, ministers suggested a diagnosis that touched all phases of New England life.

**Illness Diagnosed**

When the ministers stood before their congregations, they spoke forcefully about evil and sin. They were not content to preach about the evident apostasy they perceived, but railed against symptoms of pride, materialism, and secular-minded people who were causing trouble into the wilderness. They sought to discover and to diagnose the cause of New England's decline and to clarify, for themselves and the saints, the meaning of her wilderness mission.42

John Danforth's sermon of 1670 addressed these questions; this eloquent sermon, which sketched the story of New England's former glory in light of her tragic decline, contained important references
to the religious, political, and commercial attitudes that were present in New England during the 1650s-1670s.

Magistrates, ministers, and saints heard Matthew's words (11:7-9), "What went you into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?" educed into the following, lengthy doctrinal statement:

Such as have sometimes left their pleasant Cities and Habitations to enjoy the pure worship of God in the Wilderness, are apt in time to abate and cool in their affections thereunto: But then the Lord calls upon them seriously and thoroughly to examine themselves, what is that drew them unto the Wilderness, and to consider that it was not the expectation of ludicrous levity, not of courtly pomp and delicacy, but of the free and clear dispensation of the Gospel and the kingdom of God.

Danforth divided his doctrine into two sections. The first stressed that those who "have sometimes left . . . their pleasant cities to enjoy the pure worship . . ." had entered into the wilderness and had tempted God by murmuring against the accomplishment of the first generation, those "godly and faithful teachers . . . the Moses and Aaron" (Ps. 95:8). This reference to the first generation's leaders was followed by a second section which noted that "when men abate in their affections, the Lord calls them to " . . . examine themselves." Danforth continued to remind his congregation about their wilderness mission by contrasting it with Israel's journey into Canaan which was punctuated with many murmurings about God's design.

Danforth directed comments to each social group within his congregation. When he enumerated God's mercies to New England, he paralleled some of these with their opposites: "Secretaries, and Hereticks, and all manner of Heterodoxies." Uneducated children,
signs of "Pride, Contention, Worldliness, Covetousness, Luxury, Drunkenness, and Uncleanness" indicated the presence of New England's central problem: "Unbelief." "Inordinate worldly cares, predominant Lusts and Malignant Passions, and Distempers stifle and choak the World . . ." and indicate the need for reform.45

Some ministers who were "swallowed up alive by earthly affections," Danforth chided, adding that they would either "escape the Lime-Pit of Pharisaical Hypocrisie, fall into the "Cool-Pit of Sadducean Atheism and Epicureanism." The Lord's house was a mess or the "Temple-work in our Hearts, Families, and Churches, is shamefully neglected." This when joined with the wilderness' physical disasters--"Blazing stars," earthquakes--and moral trials such as the "removal of the Principal Stakes out of our Hedges, the Corner Stones out of our Walls," revealed a trouble in New England. He urged all to "attend . . . our Errand upon which Christ sent us into this Wilderness, and he will provide Bread for us," and to forget the bread that came from the "pursuit of their private interests." Those interests which so bothered Danforth and his ministerial colleagues were not new to the saint.46

Seven years before Danforth delivered his sermon, Robert Keayne had completed his Apologia which he wrote to justify his wealth and to affirm his loyalty to the church which had been the source of "many deep sorrows, and varies of experiences and hard measures." Keayne, who had come to Massachusetts in the 1630s, had run afoul of the Colony's leaders in the late 1630s, had run afoul of the Colony's leaders in the late 1630s and early 1640s. What most bothered him had been the "inequality of such proceedings . . . the very cause of his grief." His Apologia reflected this sorrow
especially in those sections where he reflected upon the New England that had been a "buyer's hand" and where the practices for which he had been condemned "had been common in every shope and warehouse, but then and ever since." 47

When Keayne wrote his Apologia, significant shifts in economic practices had taken place; these had resulted in greater cooperation between rural and seacoast areas; New England has recovered from a serious economic slump and had established commercial links with Europe and the Caribbean. These commercial changes reverberated throughout New England, influencing political and religious attitudes. 48

Danforth had mentioned religious problems, but religious troubles had begun during the settlement years of Winthrop and Cotton whose successful resolution of the Antinomian conflict in the 1630s did not end religious turmoil. In the 1640s, Robert Child presented his Remonstrance to the General Court which suggested a widened franchise, an enlarged church membership, and the use of English law. Although Child's effort was blocked and his effort to obtain help from London was thwarted, troubles continued, although temporarily muted by the Platform of 1648. More disagreement about this document, coupled with important political changes, culminated in the Half-Way Covenant of 1662 which satisfied few. So bitter was the dispute about the Covenant's implementation that it resulted in the formation of the Third Church in 1667; even then, controversy continued.

The persistent presence of Baptists and Quakers complicated the religious scene. Quakers had arrived more recently than the Baptists, but were causing more trouble. Baptists, who had been
in New England since the 1630s, revealed, in their debates with
leaders of Congregationalism, that they were disciplined, educated,
and theologically informed. 49

The deaths of Hooker, Winthrop, Cotton and others in the late
1640s and early 1650s further complicated events, for their deaths
created a hiatus within the leadership of church and government.
Their deaths signaled the gradual replacement by civil and religi­
ous leaders who came from the increasingly more important commercial
faction within the colony. This group, which Keayne had represented
in the Colony's earlier years, differed greatly from him, because
it refused to accept the existing political and religious customs
of the Colony.

Finally, there was the important question about the nature of
the relationship between London and Boston. Some of the new leaders
favored greater toleration and this evoked memories of Child's Remon­
strance and the fear of greater foreign control. Others desired a
broadened franchise and favored the new King who actively intervened
in the Colony's affairs three years after his Restoration. The
revocation of the Colony's Charter in 1684 conformed the fears which
had bothered many in the 1650s, as they witnessed greater changes
in New England.

The 1650s-1670s saw many changes and conflicts. The ministers
spoke about these, analyzing these through the skillful application
of Biblical metaphors. Their comments may be divided into two
categories. The first, based upon a study of the election, artillery,
and fast sermons, suggests a more analytical perception and under­
standing of New England's troubles. The second category consists
of the devotional sermons which evidences a deep, compassionate concern for the saints. This category can remind us that New England's ministers were deeply dedicated to God through a devoted, pastoral service to their parishioners.50

Although the sermons in the first category used many different metaphors, their diagnosis of New England's problems revealed marked similarities, for differences in language and metaphors, flowing from an imaginative use of the Bible, resulted in an interesting, diversified, yet unified view of the New England's wilderness trials.

God's cause in the wilderness would be protected, Higginson believed, only if the saints would recognize that economic activity posed a major threat to the Colony's mission and if the Court would simultaneously understand that it had to continue the mission of their ancestors who had come for "a more full Reformation according to God's word."51

A renewed affirmation of the Congregational Way would grant security, "in godliness as well as honesty." God's peace would again permeate the wilderness, if pure Gospel worship were recovered. Essential to this restoration was the need to affirm the primacy of Gospel worship through a return to the established manner of worship. All had to obey God's dictates, for the "gospel hath a right paramount, all rights in this world . . . a Divine and Suprem right" that demanded "even the knee of the Magistracie . . . to bow before the name of Jesus," whose interests were apparently best known to Higginson and his ministerial colleagues.52

The increasing signs of evil included both "a gradual yielding to a toleration" and a forgetfulness that demanded the need to
"... distinguish between the corruptions and disorders of the Churches, and Churches themselves." We profess communion with, not separation from the Churches of Christ in lawful things." Such a distinction, so crucial in Higginson's understanding of the Colony's failing, permitted him to focus upon the need of all to give "consent of the synod" which earlier had clarified New England's religious mission and manner of worship. The saints had to remember that they had come from England to correct "what was amiss or defective in the Churches we came from, from which we made no separation but only a local succession unto this wilderness. . . ."\(^{53}\)

Higginson's realistic appraisal of the settlers' problems centered upon the Court's function which was similar to the task which had faced the Jewish General Assembly: to safeguard God's cause (I Kings 8). It had to protect the Gospel's "Divine and Supreme right," linking this with the "Liberty," i.e., the right "to walk according to Faith and Order of the Gospell . . . ." This right contained its contrary, i.e., "that which is contrary to the Gospel has no right and therefore should have no liberty."\(^{54}\)

Higginson's diagnosis included suggestions to safeguard the New England way, indicating that deviations from the Colony's traditions had caused the saints' trials. The Court heard him urge all to embrace the "confession of Faith by the Assembly of Westminster, and the platform of Discipline," for these not only had been essential to the Colony's prosperity, but would continue to safeguard the practice of reform and repentance. Conformity in religious beliefs and practices would come from the observation of these documents which clearly defined and specified the basic religious
practices of the Congregational Way. Amongst his recommendations was the use of a church council when appropriate, even though:

It is true that in time of Popery, there was a great abuse of Council; yet it is as true, that in divers of the first centuries, there was a great advantage to the truth by means of Councils, and in somewhat above the last hundred years, the work of Reformation was much promoted by the Godly Councils and conference of Reformers.

Higginson's sermon nicely illustrates the use of biblical metaphors throughout the course of a sermon. Using the model of the Jewish General Assembly permitted him to show that the General Court had to engage in a similar function as its ancient model had done. In the New Israel there had to be a continuing cooperation between the civil and religious leaders if God's cause was to prosper.

Others advocated a return to the Cambridge Platform; it "sheweth what New England is," said John Norton. This minister's vivid description of the Colony's decay which masked a deeper wound—"not a green wound, but an Ulcer, a fettered Wound and Sore . . ." that stemmed from her departure from the earlier, proven ways of the past. This minister spoke about the Platform and censured members of the congregation, reminding them that "There was a time when the General court did approve of it, and the members of that Synod pleaded for it," in contrast with those now neglecting it. The Platform was "a Principall Ingredient of his healing Plaister." He knew that his defense of this order raised the critical question in the minds of some, "Whether the Congregational-way is practicable." Even though the opposition of "The Episcopal man, the Presbyterian . . . the Morellian careth not for it, . . . the Soulaster, the Labourer careth not for it," this did not deter his defense of the Platform against such formidable odds. His defense of the established way
and his rejection of innovation into the Colony's religious prac-
tices were couched, as his sermon indicated, in the biblical
context of the "outcast"; his rejection of change was the reason,
he said, that "Gods outcasts are not Fanatics."\textsuperscript{56}

Norton's suggestion that the Colony begin to use a "Ministerial
Judge" indicated how essential he perceived law and order to be in
New England. This instrument would have arbitrated those delicate,
sensitive issues that tended to cause continuing divisions amongst
the settlers. He defended this position, stating that:

> When a Controversie ariseth in a Church and differences must
not always continue, what shall resolve the same, if a
Ministerial Judge be not admitted? Take away this Order,
and how shall Peace or the Society continue? This truth of a
Ministerial Judge, is reckoned among the Fundamentals . . .
because it doth tend to the preservation of all else that is
of the foundation.\textsuperscript{57}

Norton clearly distinguished between "Regular" and "Irregular"
councils, buttressing his argument by rejecting assertions that
errors by ministerial judges would militate against the effectiveness
of his position. He claimed that someone ultimately was responsible
for any decision and his reference to Scripture seemingly added God's
blessing to his position, for God had said that "the man that will do
presumptously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to
minister here before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, even that
man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel"
(Deut. 17:12).\textsuperscript{58}

Norton clearly understood that his efforts, and those of his
colleagues, were merely external supports in formal worship, for the
basic assistance that the saints required stemmed from God's efforts.
They hoped that their efforts would assist their Master so that
"Now God will apply a Sanative Cataplasman and healing Plaister, and this is Repentance and Restitution."\(^5^9\)

Walley constantly asserted that New England's problems were severe, also stressing that the directives of the "godly ministers," the power of the "precepts of God," and the efforts of God's "Mourning and Praying Saints" were insufficient to induce the spiritual recovery which they so desired. This was true because some saints continued to resist the "Means of Healing," a means which ministers emphasized as a returning to the chartered ways of the Colony's religious history.\(^6^0\)

Although the ministers demanded the use of councils and the ministerial judge, this is not to imply that they did not distinguish between essential and non-essential truths of salvation. They well understood the importance of such a distinction; they were equally determined that they best understood what this meant.

Thomas Walley clearly understood the importance in distinguishing truths into the "Fundamentalia in Fide," and the "Munutila." The former indicated the "Magnalia Dei," truths inseparable from salvation, and the latter, truths which did not threaten either the unity of faith or its practice. This distinction permitted him to see that a renewal of peace was possible in New England, because the observation of these differences would indicate that the wilderness' balm and ministerial cures had been applied. Only toleration and cooperation could check the powers of decay.\(^6^1\)

This distinction allowed him to comment that the "breach as in the Walls of Jerusalem," as well as the "cockatrices in the Egge" might be eliminated and repaired. The latter reference to the
cockatrices, perhaps a reference to Jeremiah 8:7—"For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the Lord"—suggests the presence of enemies within the wilderness, whereas the former indicates enemies outside the new Jerusalem. These stresses or emphases do illustrate that church order would eliminate New England's troubles; if so, there would be an elimination," and end of Differences before they began.

Numerous references to New England's "worthies" of the settlement cover the printed pages of the sermons preached during these years. Their memory assisted their successors in their efforts to check the all present degeneracy. Ministerial diagnoses, similar to that of Thomas Walley's which was posited in the context of the new Gilead's sinfulness, reflected the need of cooperation and toleration. These ministers did not compromise with the forces of decay; they fought these by continual references to validity, strength, and value of the traditions of the church.

Jonathan Mitchel appealed to the new Nehemiahs to adhere to the "Principles of Reformation, or the Rules of Scripture" which guaranteed the welfare of the people, an interest had to embrace all within the land. He stated that the "Fundamentals of Salvation" differed from truths that were not fundamental, illustrating this by saying "though the points of Baptism, Church-Order, and such like be not Fundamentals of Salvation, yet they are matters of necessary practice . . . ." He rejected "spurious principles" that might harm "an excellent work by Professing of mixing Practices:" his mention of the evils of "Separation, Anabaptism, Morellian
(Anarchical) Confusion and Licentious Toleration," emphasized his comments that the saints must:

... not so avoid Separation, as to neglect or prejudice Reformation. The good old Non-Conformists were very zealous for Reformation, and yet always steadfast Enemies to Separation: These two may well conflict, and lest as a good example therein. Such things as are of have been known Corruptions in other Churches, it is no part of sinful Separation, but a part of Reformation to avoid them.  

The pleadings and warnings of Oxenbridge were similar, for he stressed that the possibility of conflict could be reduced by adhering to the distinction between "corruption and run into sinful Separation," if the saints followed the precedents of their ancestors.

John Oxenbridge used analysis of those difficulties which were facing the church, reminding the congregation that "your civil and Religious liberties are so coupled here, that if one be lost, the other cannot be kept." His concern about the land's future leaders and the issue of baptism indicated his anguish about New England's reformation.  

Comments about the quality of leaders indicated that being "custom born" into the faith of the church was insufficient. Others were "false to Christ as was Judas," and these leaders were carrying the "image of the Devil" and not the image of true leaders who "represent Christ the judge of all the Earth." Next, he turned to the electors, reminding them of their "power to enter ... dissent and protestation which saves your soul from guilt . . .," fortifying his comment by observing that "Plato, saith, good magistrates are better than good laws." Only the "mis-making and mis-acting of Freeman" can harm the state; such which would be manifested in poor officials, would indicate that "you deserve to be whipt."
Church difficulties, especially controversial policies about the acceptance of new members, could be a source of considerable harm, for "it may be a pretense of a necessity to set up a Cour-tier for you Governor in the Commonwealth, and a Prelate or some-thing like in in the Churches . . . ." Oxenbridge, too, resorted to the difference between essential and non-essential truths, arguing that this power to discern God's truth was vested in the church, for:

... nor is it upon any different Principles, for it is ex-pressly owned on all hands that the major part of a church must issue their matters, where the rule not contradict, neither can I understand why the question about adult children of the Church should may any estrangement.66

The persistence of this emphasis upon the reliance upon the early New England churches' precedents was present in other minis-ters, too. They desired the use of councils for these had "sweetened their wilderness condition," according to Urian Oakes who argued that "those that laid our Foundation were directed by God, to steer a mid-dle course" . . . between" . . . Rigid Presbyterianism and Levelling Brownism." The wisdom of the "Frame of Church Government," and the "Platform of Church Discipline" had effectively curbed religious dis-content. While advocating an inspection of "the writings of our Ab-lest and most Judicious Divines," he also affirmed, that, "if we should leave the good old way so far as to town Councils and Synods into Classes and Provincial Assemblies, and there should be such a laxness in Admissions of Members to Commission as is pleaded for and practised in many Presbyterians . . . ."67 would be wrong. Rather, he said the solution consisted in "Councils orderly assembled and acting in the fear of God, Ministerially declaring the mind of God, and
commending their advice to the Churches concerned, without any irregular imposing upon their liberty."

The traditions of the "Ancient Stock," the founders of the Congregational Way, was a constant theme in these sermons that averred that "Unmixed Gospel Worship" was paramount to New England's recovery. Stoughton stressed the notable efforts of their "Worthies" which legacy continued to permeate some in his generation, serving as a reminder to others that they must "build upon that which hath been laid." "Foundation-work" was New England's major need, not change nor wealth. He told his congregation to remember Jesus' words about possessing all but losing the soul (Matt. 20:6) for:

What did it profit the Israelites in the wilderness, that they had been called according to the Pattern, but they themselves were a rebellious and hard hearted generation? If we be transfigured, we shall utterly perish.

New England's safety and salvation rested in the continued reliance upon the established means of both civil and religious government.

Wilderness reform and repentance were impeded by a pervasive lying and deceitfulness. Reform, a return to the established manner of worship and prayer, and observation of ministerial suggestions, would slowly remove this lying conduct that was so harming New England. This emphasis, implicitly contained in all sermons, was central to Shepard's diagnosis of New England's troubles.

Thomas Shepard's beloved New England was disgustingly drunk. Her staggering obviously indicated that alcohol had replaced the truth which he said, in an unclear reference to a verse in John,
Chapter 17, God had said that he would send. This truth, which he
told his congregation "you already know," would come to the saints
if they would listen to the counsel and skilfull and merciful
physicians in the New England wilderness."70

This theme of listening to those whom God had charged to be
his new prophets was essential for reform. The saints, like the
ancient Levites whom God had selected in place of the first-born
of Israel, indicated that his "call" went to those whom he had
elected. The new Levites in the American wilderness had to
understand that God had to "purifie . . . and Purge them." This
would insure that interior reformation, the purpose of God's send­
ing them into the wilderness, which had to match the desired ex­
ternal reforms he urged upon his congregation.71

Purgation, reform, and repentance were New England's constant
needs. Opposition to these existed, for Satan constantly resisted
God's will and moved the saints to remain contented in their lives
of ease. The theme of conflict was highlighted in all the sermons;
it was more clearly evidenced in the artillery sermons which diag­
nosed New England's wars in terms of struggles within the human
heart. It is important to appreciate that this theme certainly
was present within the election sermons; it is also equally important
to emphasize that election sermons focused more upon the social and
communal problems in the American wilderness.

Ministerial sermons revealed current ministerial perceptions
about man's nature which was involved in the conflict between God
and Satan. One minister, Urian Oakes, perceived conflict coming
"from his own Heart and nature, as it is depraved and vitiated;
from his natural corruption, or that sin that is inlaid and radi-
cated in his Nature." This position, central in this diagnosis of
New England's problems, indicated that man's powerlessness before
evil permeated all facets of life, indicating the truth of
Ecclesiastes (8:8) that "... no man hath power over the spirit
to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death:
and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness
deliver those that are given to it." Oakes' citation of Old Testa-
ment affirms the ministerial propensity for buttressing comments
and arguments through referrals to the experiences of the first
Israel. 72

Another ministerial diagnosis suggested that man had to accept,
surrender, and beg God for knowledge about his sinfulness. This
involved seeing the enemy as "Sin, self, Satan, World," for even
"self is sin." Sin, for Moodey, was rooted in the heart; like "an
enemy that lurks in thine own bosom. And hence is advantaged to
do thee more harm." War was simply part of life, a "perpetual
Warr," adding that "He that never knows Warr shall never know Peace." New England's saint battled the "Current of Natural Corruption"
that "runs downward," while "that of Supernatural grace moves
upward." Reliance upon the established ways which included "Press-
Money from the Lord, "--a reference to baptism--man had little to
fear because "Jesus Christ, Our General" guarantees success. 73

The devotional sermons, the second category of sermons, also
emphasized that man's heart was the focal point of conflict. This
truth, similar to that which was emphasized in the Artillery
sermons, resulted in ministerial probings of the heart so that they
might better understand its needs. Their diagnoses revealed that the external wilderness represented conflicts that God's love alone could overcome, for the exterior world was but a dim sign or indicator of the mystery of life that was constantly unfolding within man's interior. This was a persistent theme, as an examination of the various "uses" in these sermons shows.

Devotional sermons focused, as did all the sermons, upon the importance of daily life in the wilderness. John Oxenbridge's last sermons display a beautiful delicacy and pastoral tenderness for his flock's troubles. His congregation heard him state that "if thy Soul were once engaged to Jesus Christ," little else would matter because "all thy incomes would not give thee rest." This was true because of God's love which, in a citation to Rev. 3, actually verse eight, indicated that he had said, "I know thy works; behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it . . . ." These words he paired with Jesus' words in Matthew's Gospel (Matt. 5:20) that stressed that man must never cease knocking at the door of his heart. God's constant appeals—His knocking at the door of man's heart—came through God's "Common Mercies" . . . "Special Mercies." Oxenbridge's sensitivity to human needs which are fulfilled in a life with God was wonderfully stated in his perception about man's desires for material wealth which permitted him to state that God "opens his Purse for Silver or Gold, but he opens all the Veins of his heart to let out his heart-Blood to Redeem thee and thine Inheritance."74

John Allin perceived the wilderness "as a state of affliction and temptation," but simultaneously viewed it as a place of security
because it harbored the Spouse who "shall come up from the wilderness to the admiration of such as behold her." He proclaimed to his congregation that, as Isaiah had said (63:13,14), God had "led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness," and "As a beast goeth down in to the valley, the spirit of the Lord caused him to rest, so did thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glory-name."75

The land, a place of "fiery serpents and scorpions," also contained the reminder that God's word (Jeremiah 2:2) "... I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou went after me in the wilderness, a land that was not sown," was still true. God had called them into the wilderness for continued reform and repentance.76

Their presence in the wilderness paralleled their ancestors' presence, and Israel's experience in the desert, so that God could say to them, "I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there I will plead with you face to face ... as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD" (Ezek. 20:34,36). These trials will, however, not be that disturbing, for the saints knew that they would be accompanied by the Lord, like Jesus who was "led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Matt. 4:1) The saints had to continue to dwell in the wilderness, for it was the place where Allin's suggestion "stay upon him, rest upon him" would be applicable.77

John Allin's comforting, optimistic diagnosis of New England's illness and needs was countered by a pessimistic diagnosis by
Samuel Torrey. His diagnosis indicated that all must work to re-establish "... the worship of God, Both Moral and Instituted Worship ...," for:

O the first love of New-England's first Espousals, the kindness of her youth, when the first followed God into this Land; namely and onely out of Love ... God remembers it and truly we ought to remember it also, with shame and confusion of face, under a sense of our loss neglecting and despising the Worship and Ordinances of God. O this is the original of all our decayes in the Worship of God: the heart of the Generation, the heart of New-England is much gone from the Worship and Ordinance of God.78

His diagnosis indicated that it was necessary to "preserve purity in Constitution of Churches," along with a "pure ministry," and a respect for "all the offices of it, the Power, the Investiture ... ." Page after page of this sermon repeats this refrain of destitution and despair; it seemed that all Torrey could tell his congregation was that "O let us keep and cleave unto the naked Ordinances, simple simple Ordinances; the Crystalline Purity of the waters of the Sanctuary ... flow from the Fountain of Divine Institution."79

Ministerial understanding of the New England wilderness indicated that their present hope resided in living, abiding, and following the established ways of their ancestors. Even those artillery and devotional sermons, which might not seem to emphasize such, did, for their authors understood, quite significantly, the importance of place in God's salvation. Their references are concrete, drawn from the Old Testament, illustrating the validity of Jewish experiences for understanding the meaning of God's will in their life. Their diagnoses without any exception always are stated and posited within the wilderness. The American wilderness
was paralleled with Israel's, in its physical and spiritual aspects, and the ministerial understandings of the settlements' problems constantly referred to this. All their perceptions of the land's troubles resulted because, like the first chosen people, the saints failed to listen to God who spoke to them in a concrete, specified physical environment. New England's present hope, therefore, consisted in using the tools, the means which God had given to this people.

When the ministers spoke, they encouraged their congregations to reform and to repent; these were the means which they constantly recommended to their errant congregations.

**Proposed Cures or Remedies**

Interspersed with comments about symptoms of degeneracy were specific references which indicated that New England's ministers did not despond when they spoke about the troubles afflicting the saints. Although they constantly affirmed that New England's disfigurement came from sin, they simultaneously stressed that reform and repentance were possible. This optimism sprang from two elements which were constantly present in their sermons: the memory of God's mercies to New England and man's need to affirm his powerlessness before himself and his sin. This combination, always posited within the context of New England as the new Israel, served as a constant reminder that God's power, coupled with the saints' admission of their sinfulness, constituted New England's salvation. It was quite unimportant whether sinful New England first acknowledged God's mercies or her own unfaithfulness; both elements were, as congregations knew, imperatives in the process of reform and repentance.
Indeed, this hopefulness provides a balance to Miller's view. Sacvan Bercovitch has gone so far to describe the Jeremiad as an optimistic sermon.

The central truth of salvation, i.e., that it involved man's surrender to his weaknesses and sinfulness and God's absolute power to save the saints, was emphasized in each ministerial sermon which used biblical metaphors to stress that Israel's experiences must serve as examples of God's mercies and power for the new Israel.

Ministerial treatments emphasized that the place—New England—had been blessed by God, as had Israel; just as Israel had been forced to understand that God operated within the events of her life, so New England, too, had to realize that God's mercies had come to her through the events in her history. His mercies would provide New England with renewed hope, because they came, not in the settlement's numerous memories of the joyous past or hoped-for-future, but in each day's experiences. This teaching became more apparent to the saints as they listened to their ministers' constant stories of Israel's mission, repeated so that they, the new Israelites, might benefit from Israel's errors. The sermons, as the congregations knew, stressed that their hope rested in the present, in their admission of weakness before sin and God's power, in the land which God had given them.

New England was quite drunk, as one minister said. This metaphor of drunkenness, a sign of sin and weakness, contained the contrary, i.e., God's power, for it served as a reminder that man was weak and God was strong. New Englanders simply had to cease using intoxicants and had to permit the spirit to work so that they
would more appreciate God's mercies. This conviction of weakness, coupled with the concurrent awareness of God's power, was essential in the treatment of New England, as Shepard's statement implied:

When the Lord doth leave you under the sense of your own weakness; that you know not the truth, and under a sense of distemper, and you know the sin of your heart, wherefore the Lord is gone; in this take counsel of skillful and merciful physicians.81

This treatment indicated that God's absence was intended to force man's admission of total powerlessness so that he would embrace God's power which consisted in relying upon the truth. This is revealed in Shepard's reference to John 17—the reference in the printed sermon is obscure and incomplete but refers to verse 17—that says that the truth will sanctify them, for "thy word is truth." The truth was not haphazardly granted, however, for God's properly appointed ministers were needed, dispelling any position that indicated the contrary. This trinity of sinner, God, and minister occupied a central position in all the ministerial sermons of the period, indicating a hierarchy of salvation that was essential in the treatment of the wilderness illnesses.82

God's cause in New England had suffered; John Higginson knew this; he also knew the disparity between God's continuous mercies to New England and her unfaithful response. This was a major theme in his election sermon which emphasized the role of the General Court in assisting the settlers' continued reform and repentance. The Court both had to understand that it was to guarantee the mission of the church—"Christ Mystical"—which was floundering and awash in trials. His words clearly indicated that the metaphor of the storm at sea (Matt. 8:23-28) applied to his church, for:
... when sinking, yet saved by Christ the cause of God and his People when ready to be overturned, overwhelmed; yet they preserved, secured, maintained by the outstretched arm of the blessed Savior:... that no less than the Infinite Wisedom, and good pleasure of Omnipotence itselxe can do the deed.83

He underscored this point, using the metaphor of a sinking ship to illustrate the nexus between man and the church's powerlessness and God's absolute power; both were in:

... the same condition as a ship in which the disciples went when Christ was asleep, there came down upon such a storm upon the Lake, and they were so covered with waves, and in such Jeopardy, that they were faine to cry out unto him, Master save us or we perish.84

Troubles served as reminders to the General Court and the congregation that human weakness, the Devil's power, and the negative Providences of God existed to force man, as it were, to look at and observe his life so that he would know both his limitations and sin while simultaneously experiencing God's saving power. It is important to understand that New England's ministers believed that evil could serve man's desires for salvation. Higginson's somber words of hope indicated and included this.

Some saints in the wilderness were guilty of Sabbath violations, i.e., failing to attend church. When they did attend services, some might have heard John Norton speak about the wilderness' outcasts who were reminded that their disobedience to God's laws could be countered by a renewed allegiance to them. This minister warned them that they would either obey God and live, or they would disobey him and die. To reinforce this basis truth, he turned to the Old Testament, and found in the Book of Numbers, chapters 16 and 17, evidence of what disobedience meant to God.85
These chapters speak about the revolt against Moses in the wilderness that stemmed from hardships which the Jews encountered in their journey to Canaan. Moses intervened, begging God's forgiveness for his people. Although many did survive, God punished them, "fourteen thousand and seven hundred" (16:49) dying in the plague. Norton did not discuss this history; he focused upon the three final words of 16:2—"men of renown"—which in its entirety reads: "And they rose up before Moses with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the Assembly, famous into the congregation, men of renown." Norton blended those final words into his observation that:

I could tell you, and you must not forget it, that there have been Men of Renown, as they were called in Numb. 16:2 . . . that did go out of Egypt but yet could not endure the order of God in the wilderness.

In the following sentence, he commented, "Let us shew it, that we misconceived ourselves, pretending to live under the order of the Gospel." Norton perceived "... this part of Israel do under God confide in you, and betrust you with their welfare," along with renewing his emphasis upon the need of continued trust, "the great duty of Israel in the Wilderness of old . . ." Mitchel's persistent emphasis upon trust and prayer was exemplified in his reference to the Old Testament account of the Jewish rebellion in the wilderness. Mitchel selected verse 12 from Numbers, chapter 14—"I will smite them with pestilence and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they"—and he used this reference (the sermon cites only this) to illustrate that God's wrath never descended upon the Jews because of Moses' intervention and prayers.
So effective were his prayers that David's words (Ps. 62:8) said, "I have pardoned according to thy word" (vs. 20). New England's saints had to "trust in him at all times; yet people, pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah," were used by Mitchel as he instructed his congregation.

Emphasis upon work was always coupled with prayer; again, the example of Israel's leaders suggested to Mitchel the comment, "How oft the Prayer of Moses and Aaron in the wilderness slip in between them and destruction." Prayer and work would force man to experience her weaknesses, as Israel had done in her failings, and would also remind the saints that:

Never did God take person or people into his Covenant and near fellowship with himself, but he put them upon this sooner or later: to venture all upon God, and to rely upon his Mercy, Power, and Faithfulness, having no string to their Bows, but faith in him. So Abraham and Jacob often; so Israel at the Red-Sea, and in the wilderness, where they were called openly to act and love God by Faith in the sight of the world, both as to Provision and Protection.

To all, he urged that they remember God's mercies, along with deepening their awareness of their powerlessness and sinfulness. This is admirably expressed in his words that reveal that he, as other ministers, saw their cure to rest in combining their sinfulness and God's power.

When William Stoughton pondered New England's lingering, persistent "lie," asking why she persisted in such a condition in the midst of God's loving mercies and tender physicians, he knew his answer: evil and human weakness. Stubbornness suggested the presence of continued resistance to God's will; in this, New England resembled God's "first born in the wilderness," and his saints were the first born in this Wilderness. This reference to the "first-born"
indicated the special relationship which New England had with God, a relationship that would once again permit peace and joy to reign amongst the saints, if they would merely observe God's commandments. His saints must, as the first chosen people of God had heart, remember that "all that openeth the matrix is mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep, that is male" (Exod. 34:19) belonged to God. For the New England saints this indicated that all the profits of their labor belonged to God, for they had a "special Relation with God":

. . . whom the Lord more signally exalted then his people in this Wilderness? The name and Interest of God, and Covenant-related with him . . . hath been written upon us in capital letters from the beginning. God has his Creatures in this Wilderness before we came, and his Rational Creatures, too. But as to Sons and Children that are Covenant-born unto God. Are we not the first in such a Relation? In this respect we are surely the first-born in this Wilderness.90

New England's sinfulness could be repaired and restored only if the saints became more grateful for their gifts; gratitude, the cure which they so needed, consisted of obedience to God.

New England's healing for her ills was extremely uncomplicated cease to sin. It consisted, however, in the linking of the memory of God's mercies of the past which he was continuing into the present, along with a total trust in his mysterious ways. The message of fidelity to the Gospel worship permeated each printed page of the preached sermons.

John Davenport's suggestion was that the saints simply listen to God, for He had provided them with ministers who were the "dressers of the Vine," with "Ordinances" which were His "manuring of it." Such metaphors permitted him to make an easy transition to the metaphor of the fig tree which he used to illustrate both
God's mercies and His wrath. His treatment of the message of the fig-tree again illustrates the methodological approach which so permeated ministerial sermons.  

Drawing upon Jesus' references to the fig-tree in Matthew (13:7), Davenport included some of these references in his picture of New England, its mission, and the need of purification and reform. This permitted him to say:

... is not good fruit the end of husbandry? Therefore where it follows not, what can be expected? ... when the dresser of the vineyard came since three years seeking fruit, and found none, cut it down, why combers the ground? Christ comes in Ordinances, and Providences: to what ends? To purifie the Sons of Levi and to purge them: but when the Means attain not this End, see what follows, Jer. 6:30. 

What follows is a partial citation of Jeremiah's statement, "Reprobate silver shall men call them." The remaining section of this verse gives the reason for such a rejection, "because the LORD hath rejected them." Davenport's stress upon the purification and purging merely emphasized that either New England would heed God's words—and be cured—or she would refuse to listen and die. 

This minister did not permit his congregation to indulge in worthless, remorseful ruminations about their sinful state, for he reminded them that knowledge of their wickedness, when given into God's power, would effect a cure. This would be seen in the proper use of their possessions, in Godly worship, and in obedience. This simply would indicate that they had learned that:

When people who have been formerly under the effects of God's displeasure, do turn unto him with unfeigned Repentance, and Reformation of their former evil wayes, God will certainly turn to them in mercy, and make all his creatures serviceable for their good, as he is the Lord of Hosts.
The image of the New England minister as the dispenser of harshness, evil, and the auger of nothing but God's wrath simply is not true. The purported harshness in their sermons, and it certainly is present, need constantly be weighed against their strong suggestions that God's cures and treatments were constantly present, if they repented and reformed. This message of strength was present in John Oxenbridge's sermon which indicated how he both pleaded and warned New England's saints to follow God's ways.

This minister bewailed the crumbling, the "breakdown of the hedge of your churches and Commonwealth," that would continue if they "will lay open the field to such as watch to make spoile of you." His treatment of such a possibility consisted in permitting God to circumsize the hearts of the saints, for being "custome born" was insufficient for salvation. He developed this theme through looking into the Old Testament where he found metaphors suitable to enlighten him and the saints about their conduct. 95

When he stated that "ye can never really love either by outward fleshly circumcision alone, when ye are only . . . custome born, Deut. 30:6," he was citing the Old Testament source that stated:

And the Lord thy God will circumsize thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD with all thine heart, and with all thy souls, that thou mayest live. 96

These words he developed into his position that "there's need for the Lord's own circumcizing your hearts and the hearts of your seed, as he is really your God in covenant . . . ." To those disrupting the saints' tranquility and service to God, he suggested in graphic, earthly language, which perhaps would violate the sensibilities of a modern and sophisticated congregation that he hoped the trouble
maker would have "his natural Fore-skin, the enmity of his carnal minde . . . upon any ripening temptations break out . . . ."\(^{97}\)

New England ministers, in their encouragement of the saints, never ceased to cite God's current mercies, relating these to the prior mercies of God. Urian Oakes indicated that the New England wilderness was "a place of Rest and Liberty" which God had bestowed upon His people after they had endured great sufferings and after they "had crossed a great Ocean." Threats of disaster had been averted, for God had given the saints " . . . Moses, Men I mean of the same spirit to lead and go before you." Obedience to these leaders had allowed the saints to endure "many a bitter cup" of suffering. The people must constantly remember, for strength and encouragement,

. . . the refreshing mercy of God to his People when he first brought them over and that which sweetened to them many a bitter cup, and supported them under the burdensome inconveniences of a wilderness condition.\(^{98}\)

This minister's cure consisted in continued reformation repentance which, as his words implied, had to be based upon God's mercies which still were so operative. God was teaching His people, as He had their forebearers in Israel, that "God who hath instructed us, as he did in Israel in the Wilderness," still desired reformation. This God would not desert His people, as He had not deserted Israel, but would continue to guarantee that "you have dwelt safely in the wilderness, and slept securely in these woods" could expect even greater solace if they reformed. The underlined words in Oakes' encouraging words came from the Prophet Ezekiel (34:25) who had revealed God's intentions to Israel:

I will make with them a covenant of peace and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and in the woods.\(^{99}\)
An interesting element of Oakes' suggested treatment was his desire for a chronicle that would list God's mercies to England, for he believed that it "is our greatest duty to be the Lords Remembrances or Recorders." The future generations could draw strength from their ancestors' deeds whose efforts Oakes believed merited his citation of Isaiah's words (62:6)—"I have set watchment upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night; yet that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence"—which were so appropriate for the new Israel's watchmen. Their successors could look forward to appropriating Isaiah's words (3:10)—"That it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings"—if they imitated their illustrious predecessors' faith and trust in their Master's love.

This emphasis upon man's surrender to his weaknesses and sin, joined with his entrusting these weaknesses in the artillery sermons. Centering upon the basic evil that was rooted in man's heart, they suggested forceful, even violent treatments in the unending battle against Satan. The irony was quite simply stated: the weaknesses and evil of the heart could be effectively treated and become the sinner's greatest strengths, if the saints turned to using prayer, obedience, and strong actions.

Urian Oakes urged the use of the "Shield of Faith," the "Helmut of Hope" . . . and sword of the Spirit" in the war against the spiritual enemies of New England. So severe was the conflict that "Hand-to-Hand Combat" might ensue, so Oakes urged the need of great skill, dexterity and seriousness in training for war. Oakes exempted
none from this conflict, and urged all, through prayer and obedience to the authorities, to "Learn and Labour to improve the Lord Jesus Christ in all . . . Spiritual Conflicts and engagements."\textsuperscript{101}

Joshua Moodey's suggestions were equally demanding; combat challenged all to fight "actively, not negatively beating the air." Military service meant constant warring against sin which "lurks in thine own bosom" and which impedes "your march Canaan ward . . . ." The Lord "by spiritualizing all our Imployments . . . ." guarantees that war is permissible. Moreover, he loves "to see the man that girds up the loins of his mind . . . ." in his fight against Satan. Oakes' instructions about the use of weapons was explicit and included the advice that "The Old-man" must be struck "under the fifth rib." His Christian warrior had to strike Satan "about the Ears . . . and beat him all black and blew," endeavoring to "let his bowels out, lest you do nothing." Oakes blasted the cowardly, the weak, likening them to the "Fencer, a Stage-Player in Religion with a Button on the Point of thy Rapier."\textsuperscript{102}

New England's ministers did not always use such vivid metaphors when they spoke about the conflicts. They were quite capable of selecting metaphors that explained the wilderness conflict in terms of the aspirations and desires of the human heart. Devotional sermons revealed this, for they evidenced that the ministers were both attuned to their parishioners' needs. Central to these was their continued search for the spouse of God.

John Oxenbridge's doctrine to "sluggish souls" noted that "If in seeking the Lord we would not miss success, we must not miss the Season thereof." He developed this doctrine through use by the
metaphors of marketplace, marriage, and the farm (Matt. 22:4) to focus upon the dangers that false seeking can produce. Seeking goods incorrectly meant a waste of time; those dallying about were reminded that "to morrow may be no day to thee" and were urged to remember that "if thy soul were engaged to Jesus Christ, all thy incomes would not give thee rest." The rest, which he inferred was the desire of men, has begun and the present peace of the saints was foreshadowed in his comments:

... wilde beasts are gone to their dens, that is those violent disorders that were in thy Soul, they are couched in their dens, that now how darest not walk and speakest as thou didst.103

John Allin, too, spoke to the hearers of his congregation; he spoke about their wilderness, "a state of Affliction and temptation," which was similar to what Jesus experienced as he was led into the desert to be tempted, but said that they had been brought out of this turmoil. The wonder was that their spouse came from this wilderness leaning on her Beloved. T-is "leaning" indicated a faith in Christ who was "... sensible of her distresses and wilderness temptations ..." God had found his people "... in a desert Land, and in the worst howling wilderness," and "he led him about, he instructed them, he kept him as the apple of his eye ..." Their treatment consisted in continuing to trust the God Who had given them "manna ... and water out of the Rock ..." Their treatment lay in a deeper trust which meant that they must "... stay on him, rest upon him, cast all your burden ... upon him, Strengthen yourselves in him, you will need a strong Faith in Wilderness trials that may befall us ..." 104
Allin's treatment indicated that he neither romanticized the wilderness, nor abhorred it, for it was the source of his hope.

It is quite difficult to find more than several general comments about cures in Samuel Torrey's sermon, for it is quite bleak and dismal. It lacks the deep Christian sentiment found in Oxenbridge's sermon to sluggish souls or in Allin's words about the spouse of Christ. His repeated assertion that "Foundation-work" is needed honestly summarizes his perception about New England's cures. It lacks, too, the extensive use of biblical citations that characterized most of the preceding sermons. This sermon has been called the most typical of the Jeremiads, a comment which has perhaps been mistakenly applied to the works of Oxenbridge and other ministers.

Although there is a marked degree of hope in these sermons, events in New England would soon shatter these ministerial expectations. The deep murmuring of apostacy, discontent, of something seriously wrong with New England would be questioned in two years when New England's ministers again questioned themselves about the meaning of their mission, the saints' mission in New England, and the significance of King Philip's War.

The various cures involved two elements: powerlessness and God's strength. They focused upon New England as the place where these treatments would be applied and, hence, where New England would begin to experience God's joys. There is, however, a strong millenial trend in all the writings which perhaps accounts for the strong strain of Millenialism which MacLear and others have noted. Yet, this perhaps cannot be attributed so much to these generations of ministers who constantly stressed the value of living, here and now,
in New England. References, in the New Testament, are constantly reaffirmed, as it were, through references to the Old Testament. These citations indicated that the root of the New England experience rested in the metaphors that permitted the ministers to perceive New England as the new Israel, modeled upon ancient Israel. Seldom, if ever, are there references to the future which have not been based in the Old Testament. It perhaps is true that later generations went from the expectations which Israel harbored into the millenial vision of the Book of Revelations; these ministers, however, consciously avoided such a "trap." They lived in time, space, and in the midst of human events which they believed did not obscure, but actually enhanced God's will in their lives. Their perception of hope was firmly rooted in the present which, they believed, would certainly unfold into the vision and ultimate presence of the Kingdom as seen in Revelations, chapter 3.

The ministers within the New England wilderness never ceased emphasizing the power of God's love. This message of hope became even more vital within a few months of Samuel Torrey's sermon, for the one peaceful, hope filled wilderness quickly became a place of threat and danger, as the American Indian emerged from the wilderness to punish, as the ministers would emphasize, God's saints for their sins and infidelities.
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CHAPTER III

A REBELLIOUS WILDERNESS

Within thirteen months of Samuel Torrey's election sermon of 1774, the grim predictions of doom which he had foretold had appeared in New England, for war engulfed the colonies. Before King Phillip's War ended (1675-1677), no part of New England had been spared from the bloodiest, most costly war America had yet seen.

When the war ended, the economy was shattered. The fur trade, fishing, and commercial links with Europe and the West Indies all had been changed. In addition, approximately one of every sixteen military-aged men had been either killed or died from wounds directly related to the war.¹ Throughout the region, orphans, widows, and widowers existed whose spouses had been killed or perhaps remained captive.

What caused such terror? The Colonies' ministers ruminated about the reasons for this war, perceiving it as God's chastisement of a degenerated people. In recent times, others have viewed the causes with equal interest.

The first section of this chapter will examine three modern studies of King Phillip's War. The second will discuss the sermonic literature on the war, and the third will explore the specific reactions of Increase Mather. The second and third sections will suggest that historians have not fully assessed nor appreciated the significant religious meaning of the war, because they have not
fully appreciated the significance of the wilderness in Puritan writings or ministerial sermons.

Conflicts with the Indians had been rather few in New England since the Pequot War in 1637 which ended hostilities for nearly forty years. During these years, however, important shifts and changes had occurred in New England.

In addition to dramatic economic growth, there had occurred a number of important social and religious changes. The Restoration of Charles II had introduced more royal centralization into the colonies, simultaneously altering relationships between the settlers and the Indians because of Charter revocations. By royal fiat, established land policies in Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Plymouth were changed, triggering lingering conflicts amongst the settlers over land claims. Within these disputed lands were New England's Indians who rapidly became the victims of inter-colonial rivalries which erupted into war in June, 1675.

Douglas Leach's Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Phillip's War attributes the conflict to land hunger, coupled with greed. The Puritans, Leach stated, were interested in "worldly prosperity achieved by wise and diligent stewardship of God's blessings, and external salvation granted by God to his chosen few . . . ." This had caused a war "of extermination" between the two races, partially caused by years of settlers' encroaching upon Indiana lands.

Alden T. Vaughan's New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians denies Leach's contention that Puritan avarice caused the conflict.
Although Vaughan does not deny that the settlers entered into Indian lands, he maintains that there was an orderly, legal, and humane policy of settlement which did not harm the Indians. Moreover, says Vaughan, the lands that the settlers did occupy were unused. Leaving aside the question of expansion, therefore, Vaughan focuses on the nature of the policy by which the Puritan "brand of Western civilization" came into "the neolithic world of the American Indians." It was not, he says, either rapacious or inhumane.

The most recent work on King Phillip's War is also the most controversial. Francis Jenning's *Invasion of America* asserts that the myth of the "chosen people" was basic to Western Civilization and became the ideological basis for the Puritan claims in North America. Jennings rejects contemporary explanations of the causes of the war and asserts that only "ethnohistory," "the process of acculturation involving two interacting cultures," adequately explains the conflict's origins. Unlike Leach and Vaughan, Jennings emphasized the complicated legal aspects of the conflicting intercolonial land claims to illustrate the validity of his "ethnohistorical" approach.

Vaughan's and Leach's studies contain minimal references to either Puritan theology or religion. Jennings makes no effort to disguise his contempt for the Puritans, whereas Vaughan and Leach tend to more favorable interpretations of the settlers. None refers to the rich Biblical metaphors of the wilderness that permeate sermonic literature.

The metaphor of the wilderness adds to our appreciation of the causes and troubles that ensued from the war by permitting us to
more deeply appreciate the ministerial perceptions of the war which reveal that their understandings were somewhat similar to the three modern historians, differing only in that the ministers perceived the war to be basically a religious conflict, i.e., as God's way of punishing His errant people. Because man had been unfaithful to God in the years preceding the war, deceit, land-hunger, and the improper treatment of the Indians grew. The Indians were merely assisting God, as He rebuked His saints for their sins in the American wilderness. The once peaceful wilderness now became the home of the avenging Heathen, the new Philistines who were punishing God's chosen for their violations of the Covenant's demand for continued reformation and repentance.  

As the Indians continued to pummel New England's poorly defended borders, the settlers' daily life continued and the ministers commiserated with the war's victims, urging continued reformation and repentance that God's will might be better known in the American Wilderness. William Hubbard indicated this and perceived that those "who first came over thither for the Gospel," had been well pleased both with their modest possessions and limited grants of land; others, however, were "not satisfied," even though they had "more carefully swallowed down so many hundreds" through their land-grabbing schemes. This policy, clearly contrary to God's aims in the wilderness, was a source of dissension, one of several which disturbed Hubbard, and indicated the appropriateness of Jesus' words in Matthew's Gospel "an house or kingdom divided against itself cannot stand" (12:28).
Numerous references to the Old Testament cover the many pages of Hubbard's lengthy sermon, offering a glimpse into his mental processes that selected Biblical metaphors that might better illuminate the meaning of New England's trails. What Israel had experienced in her journey into the Promised Land, New England was experiencing in her efforts to repent and to reform. Biblical metaphors deepened his perceptions of New England so that, at times, it seems that he was seized and controlled by the language which he used.

Hubbard's New England was threatened by internal dissension, as Israel had been threatened through the deceits of "Ahab, Jeroboam, and Jehu," kings of Israel who had seriously disturbed the peace in their conflicts with the religious and civil leaders. Ahab had died in war, following charges of religious violations, Jeroboam, had revolted against Solomon because of excessive taxes and his use of forced labor. Jehu had slaughtered one of God's prophets along with members of the royal family.9

New England's counterparts, i.e., the governors and magistrates, were equally evil, for they were causing dissension among the saints, the civil, and the religious leaders; so horrible was their influence that Hubbard could bemoan the fact that there were some in the wilderness who tended "to embrace the abominable idolatry of the Calves." Hubbard's comments to the "Calves" merits additional comments.10

When God had spoken with Moses on the Mountain and had given him His commandments, Moses' absence from his people produced restlessness. Exodus tells us that they became disgruntled and
constructed a "molten calf" and said, "These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (Exod. 32:4). There was another event similar to this involving King Jeroboam. The Books of Kings reports:

Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold they Gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt (I Kings 12:28).

In both instances, God's anger was immense, for such actions indicated that his people's confidence in him was wavering and deceitful. Now, in New England, God's newest chosen people were imitating the first Israelites who had angered God.

The tendency to honor the "calves"—material possessions and lustful living—clearly signified that Israel's infidelity had become New England's, i.e., a turning from God for salvation to the embracing of the idols of luxury and ease. Hubbard's comments to the General Court reflect this evil, indicating that improper attitude towards the elections was reprehensible.

There was joy in Israel when the Tribes met together to establish the Kingdom in the hands of David . . . by proportion this day was wont to be a joyful day unto us, being, as it were, the solenizing of the Birthday of our little state, the renewal of our Government, with all our civil privileges.

Hubbard and his congregation knew that New England's glories were but memories, for God's chastisements had come, "cutting them off from the world, and new Plantations, till they get them new hearts . . . ." God has been so angered that he even "Layes his arrest upon our tillage;" this, and other evils, permitted Hubbard to turn to the book of Deuteronomy (32:21) where he discovered that
New England's conduct aptly depicted in language that indicated that she, as Israel, had so angered God that he stated:

They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will love them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nature.  

Hubbard used these words from Deuteronomy (32:21) blending them into his own perceptions about the war with the Indians, stating that God tells his people of old that he will move to make them jealous by them that are no people and provoke they by a foolish nation, i.e., by whom they despised and most condemned, (Deut. 32:21). How we have been too apt to speak contemptuously of the Indians, as if one of us could fight hundreds of them. It may be it hath been in former times, when God put the dread of us in them that were round about us. Samson after his Delilah enchantments thought to have done as at other times, but he wish not that God was departed from him.  

The story of Samson and Delilah is well-known from Sunday School. When the Israelites had conquered Canaan, the nearby Philistines proved to be their feared enemy. They had conquered the Jews and Samson, a weak and nondescript individual, proved to be Israel's most wonderful defender. The book of Judges tells us (Chapt. 13-16) that his long hair had been the source of his amazing victories over the Philistines. It speaks also about Deliliah, Samson's mistress, who cut off his hair after he had fallen asleep, rendering him powerless. In his final victory, God had intervened, empowering him to conquer the Philistines, even though he had lost his life in the contest.

Hubbard's allusion to this story perhaps says that the New England "Samson" had become so weakened by the "Delilahs" of material possessions and an unreformed life that the Indians, God's newly selected "Philistines" who were to chastise his people,
might destroy them as Samson had been destroyed. This brief citation indicates the forcefulness of the Biblical metaphor and it also presupposes that the ministers were aware that their congregations were sufficiently familiar with the Old Testament that they could use such references with no fear of being misunderstood.

The bitterness of the war forced Hubbard to remind his congregation to restrain from barbarism, for "we must not doe wronge to the Innocent be they Idians or English." The saints must always use their lessons according to the guidelines that David had given to his troops, for the "Military concernments of Israel" demanded "no little prudence and skill," for "sometimes as much difficulty is found here as in the former."^{15}

The picture of a once attractive and fruitful wilderness no longer existed; rather "dead bodyes" littered the ground as meat for "the fowles of heaven," and women wept, like Rachel who had wept for her children. The first Rachel had wept for the children of Ephraim who had been butchered in the wars (Jer. 31:15); New England's Rachels had tears for "children who were not," because "they had gone into captivity, or removed into the other world by the sword of the enemy." The wilderness had intruded upon the settlers and Hubbard's rhetorical question, "Why are our hedges broken down, and the wild boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast out of the field doth devour it," was easily answered; sin and degeneracy.^{16}

Hubbard believed that the "heathens are come into thine inheritance," implying that God had left New England to reap the
full effects of her sins. He stressed this when he compared the vineyard's condition prior to the war to "standing waters" that "are apt to corrupt and grow putrid" because God's mercies had not been accepted. The growing presence of discord, divisiveness, and dissension indicated that even though some had warned against sin among the saints, other hidden sins were present, for:

... Israel hath sinned, and it is as yet hid from the rulers, as well as from ourselves? There had been something objected against the proceedings with the Indians, but in times fore-gone as well as later, relating both to the present war and former peace ... 17

Hubbard's comments revealed that God was not pleased with New England. Samuel Hooker knew this was true and he knew that "we may all agree, I fear, ... God hath a controversie with New England," confirming these sentiments from a reference to Exodus (32:8) which permitted him to contrast his people with Moses, reminding them that God "was never reconciled to that proud stiff-necked unsubdued Generation that murmured and rebelled against Moses and Aaron but consumed them in the Wilderness." New England's conduct fitted this description of Israel, for she "hath not only budded and blossomed, but brought forth its fruit" that was so evil that God "for this and that transgression would not turn away the punishment of New England." 18

Hooker indicated that a crop of "sensual," "sluggish," "remiss," people "wanton in their profession" because they had "waxed proud and unruly" now dominated the landscape. They would serve no further ... "making their own pleasure not God's the rule of their obedience." These "untamed Bullocks, impatient of the "Yoke"
had become "disused to the plow that will not keep the furrow." Such evils had provoked God. 19

The New England wilderness which once had threatened the settlements once had been subdued. Now, it contained "forsaken villages," "widows," "caterpillars," "blastings and the sword" that indicated the immensity of God's anger. These horrors indicated that the saints no longer could control their lives, a proof that stemmed from the destruction the War had inflicted upon the land. Devastated farms and New England's dead were silent rebukes to a proud people, a remembrance of when the "time was, that good men grew in this land by clusters, but how then: Lord, visit the Earth and Water it." 20

Hooker's words revealed that both the saints and the wilderness required God's righteousness, His rain to permeate a dehydrated people and land. The rain would remind the saints that, according to Psalm (69:9,10), of their evils. "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me;" and as a result, repentance, for "when I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was my reproach." This psalm (the words are not quoted in Hooker's text) was followed by Hooker's perception that God's rain

... setteth the Earth and inricheth the land, both these are eminently true of this spiritual rain, Isa. 33:6, and wisdome and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and the fear of the Lord his treasure. 21

This quotation reveals how a minister took his perceptions of New England's needs combined these with scriptural references. In this citation, the words that follow the reference to Isaiah are
from the Book of Isaiah, indicating that it may be difficult to separate a minister's reflections from Scriptural references.

Hooker incorporated the references to the psalm and Isaiah into the following statement, an informal prayer of petition, saying:

O How would a soaking shower of righteousness settle our shaking
times, repair our losses, and restore the years which the Caterpillars, the Sword, and the Mildew have taken from us.22

Present in Hooker's sermons were comments that indicated that God must be both loved and feared. Hooker reinforced this comment through a series of Biblical images which offered solace and comfort to the saints in the midst of sinfulness and confusion.

Obedience, he indicated, would produce calm and peace, as Hosea indicated (10:12)—"Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy, break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you."—so that as his personal reflections indicated:

That the Vine brought from far and planted here, may still retain its ancient nobility: even the same spirit of Holiness which came after God into this Wilderness when it was a land not sown.23

Hooker's further comments suggested that if the saints surrendered their sins to God, His mercies would become the mainspring of their salvation. He illustrated this through a combination of Old Testament references from Isaiah and Jeremiah; the former stated "How is the faithful city become a harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murdereds," and the second revealed that God's presence would redeem the new Israel, for:

Thus saith the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall being again their capitivity; the LORD bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness.24
Among Hooker's concluding comments was the suggestion that the saints follow the example of John the Baptist "who was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, I 232 (all voice) his words and works, his language and his life spake this, make strait the way of the Lord, you ye, and do likewise." So impressive were the Baptist's words that Hooker suggested to the ministers that they "soke your sermons in prayer, print them in your practice and conversation."  

New England's ministers tirelessly remembered God's redemptive plans which had begun with Abraham's call which the Book of Genesis discusses. When God had summoned Abraham and when he had shown fear, God had said, "Fear not Abraham, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward" (15:1). God then demonstrated this not only to Abraham's immediate successors, as he led them through the desert into the promised land, but also to the new Israelites whom had led into the American wilderness. This story constantly reminded the ministers of God's presence, even though some "would have no sabbaths, nor preaching, more precise walking, would be rid of godly Magistrates, Ministers, Christians that have too much of them . . . ."  

King Phillip's War revealed the need of increased sabbath observations, godly magistrates, and more serious Christians because the war revealed the depth of New England's lack of reformation and repentance. The ministers knew this; they focused upon the effects of the conflict to urge their congregations to renew their efforts to reform and to repent, indicating in vivid, imaginative language this message to the several congregations
in New England that were alienated not only from each other, but from God himself.

King Phillip's War served not merely as a reminder that the saints had been unfaithful to God in the New England wilderness, but also as a metaphor that described the internal and unending conflict with Satan which the external conflict had depicted. Ministers focused upon this metaphorical use of the war to stress that military preparedness must be accompanied by an internal change that indicated a willingness to wage war within themselves against Satan.

In the opening pages of his sermon, Willard compared the human heart "to a Castle or Fort . . . exposed to the assaults of the Enemies" whose constant demanded that each "Keep thy Heart and all diligence for out of it is and are the Key Issues of Life" (Prov. 4:23). The heart, he continued, resembled "little kingdoms, or dynasties which ows Fealty to the Crown and Empire of Heaven understanding, will, affections, and all their operations are to be employed in God’s service."27

These words, reflecting current European attitudes about war, indicated to his congregation a different perception of war, however; their conflict was taking place within the American wilderness where his images more realistically applied to the war within the human heart. Even the ministers of New England might easily "fall into snares," and become entangled and caught "in ambush." These could easily be forestalled, if both the ministers and soldiers learned to use their weapons, even though they be tempted to discard them as they moved from their bases. Willard advised against
this, because "some pieces will be missed in the fight if left behind," adding that "the soldier without his Shield, without Helmut would be in great danger."[28]

Willard's comments covered all possibilities which the New England soldier might encounter. They always had to remember that "a Fort always Assaulted" is "liable to Breaches, Engines of Warr . . ." which could shatter walls so that "Ladders" could capitalize upon those "little breaches" which "will soon grow into great ones, if not speedily made upon."[29]

Whether in the field or in garrison duty, soldiers had to watch for the "alarums" of Satan, for the "enemy was treacherous." His warnings might not be evident, for he could come "silently upon your backs," which indicated that all must "keep your Eyes in your heads and looking around." Dangers came not only from Satan, but from friends, too.[30]

Willard reminded his soldiers that, when the duty officer was making his rounds, danger could be present. The unfortunate soldier might suffer from the "just Sarcasme of that Captain, who in walking the Rounds found one that should have been watching, asleep, drew his sword, ran him through, saying, dead I Found thee, dead I leave thee!"[31]

Such comments obviously were intended to awaken the New England soldiers both to the need of awareness against the Indians and also served to remind them that the "Empire of Heaven" would be their reward if they successfully fought the "... soul Enemy lurking in they bosom," who could easily thwart their efforts. He urged his military listeners, therefore, to
fly not before, much less lay down your Arms and cry Quarter; have no mercy is to be expected, our Spiritual Enemies are unreconcilable... it will be Death or worse to thee to bear the brand of Coward, for throwing away more than the World can repair, for want of Refusing.32

The seriousness and nobility of the conflict was measured in Willard's concluding comments, Haec olim meminisse, Virgil's reminder to the ancient Romans of history's future judgment upon Rome's efforts to preserve herself against her enemies. Future generations would certainly apply these words to the New England soldiers who were literally fighting for both their survival and for the preservation of reformation and repentance in the New England wilderness.

Inspiration and models for conduct were easily found in the Old Testament, and the New England ministers knew this. They never ceased turning to this source for exemplars who would serve the needs of their leaders. A favorite was Abraham whom God had called when he was seventy-five years old to lead his chosen people into the promised land. He was, according to Thomas Nowell, more than a religious leader; he was the "first explicit Christian soldier being in arms," and he had armed his followers and led them into battle. His conflict in battle was exemplary, for he took no booty because he was "contented with the blessings of God." He fought only to protect his land and to recover what had been stolen.33

Nowell's sermon serves to add emphasis to the Old Testament's importance in ministerial sermons, illustrating that Scripture nicely reinforced doctrinal statements. Nowell's entire sermon, interlaced with numerous references to the Bible, provides color...
and imagination, tells us much about New England's ideal warrior and about the metaphors that permeated his understanding of the saints; battle with the Indians.

Nowell defended the legitimacy of war, bolstering his comments with biblical references that forcefully emphasized this. From I Chronicles 12:33-36, he discovered that the excellency of Zebulon, the Danites, and Asher came from their military expertise, for all "held swords, being expert in war every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night." Such words, and they are not in Nowell's text, referred to three of the twelve tribes that had entered into Canaan which were forced to fight in order to win the possessions which God had promised. He used this example to chide some within the colonies who questions the legitimacy of war, commenting that "it is a strange piece of dotage befallen this crazy-headed Age that men should not use the sword." Not only should men use the sword, but they should honor its use because God had blessed those using it; for He ordered

Make bright arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: For his devise against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of his temple (Jer. 51:11). 34

Isaiah's words (54:16,17) supplied Nowell with his image of the smith, I have created the smith that bloweth coals in the fire . . . that bringest forth an instrument for his work . . . I have created the waster to destroy." Moreover, "No weapon formed against thee shall prosper." Moreover, Scripture tells us that God prepared the sword which is effective, for "If I whet my glittering sword . . . I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me" (Deut. 32:41). Words from Joshua referred to God's leadership,
for "... as captain of the host of the LORD and I now come ..." (5:14). He orders the battles, as Chronicles said (2:32,8), because "with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles ..." As God does this, He supplies His troops because, as Isaiah (13:45) indicated, He "is ... the Lord of host ministereth the host of the battle," because the war belongs to Him. This is true because "all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with the sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands." This citation (I Sam. 17:47) was followed by instructions (2 Sam. 1:18) to the elders because "also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the boy: behold it is written in the book of Jasher.) This powerful array of Biblical metaphors added body to a sermon that would have been both listless and uninteresting if shorn of such Biblical citations.

Those pondering the meaning of the war with the Indians perhaps found solace in Nowell's suggestions about the meaning of God's providences within the wilderness. His strong belief in God's providence was evident in his citation from Judges (3:1,2) that indicated that "Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan." The war, continued Judges, existed "only that the Generations of the Children of Israel might know, to teach them war, as the least such as before knew nothing thereof." The story of Judges, the narrative of Israel's wars with the Canaanites, suggested to Nowell that the Indian was teaching the American settler a similar message for:
The Lord hath dealt with us, though he hath given us a good country, yet not with full possession, but that there are some which our sad experience hath taught us, they have been left to teach us war . . .

God has so arranged events in the new wilderness that the Indians "not join with us to make one Body," and consequently "are preserved to be thorns in our Sides." These providential events in the American wilderness were, as he emphasized, part of a universal condition because:

So it is in other things, no Plantation goes on and thrives, but they that have neighboring plantations or and observing it, our own daily observation may be sufficient to make us believe this, there is not a small island in America, but the Prices of Europe are striving for it as we see the other day for Tobago, St. Christophers . . .

His exhortation included words of encouragement, emphasizing and linking military expertise to Samuel's instructions to the Jews: (2 Sam. 1:18) "You have People bread up in this country, that have the heart of Lions" would be true.

Ministerial sermons contained numerous references to the younger generation of settlers, the "rising generation," emphasizing that education, parental care, and societal interest and protection were needed both for their assistance and for the future of the saints. This prevasive concern was the theme of Eleazar Mather's final sermon which he delivered at North Hampton, as his doctrinal statement indicated:

... that the Lord would graciously present with the succeeding generation, as he was with their Fathers, not leaving nor asking of them, is the great desire of those what wish well to the Lord's people.

Mather's elaboration of his doctrine stressed that God had showered New England with countless mercies and had, in permitting
trials which resembled the difficulties that Israel had experienced been attempting to instruct His people about the urgency of reformation and repentance. Change was demanded, for the youth appeared to be "forsaking God," as Israel had done, because "whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart," as his citation to Hosea (4:11) indicated. Additional references to the Old Testament allowed Mather to continue to draw a rather unfavorable picture of the land. Isaiah's words (33:3)="at the noise of the tumult, the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself, the nations are scattered"--captured the confusion which Mather perceived; he feared that God might treat the new Israelites as He had threatened the old, i.e., "and he smite them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock of Etam" (Judges 15:8). Mather's somewhat startling perception of God was nicely balanced by his insistence that God, as "father," should be perceived as kindly, understanding, as the One who had conferred many mercies upon their ancestors, the "natural Abraham (Abraham to Isaac) or mediate" leaders who had guided the saints into the wilderness, protecting them from God's judgments, those "worthies . . . could not live and glorify God in their generation, if God had been absent, nor more can those who succeed them . . . ." When Mather asked, "Why pray for the youth," he partially answered his question through a reference to the Book of Genesis (17:1) which indicated that God's presence was beneficial, as Abraham had discovered when he "was ninety years old." Prayer
was required so that the saints would focus upon the Lord who bestowed all blessings, and more importantly because:

Many pray for a good harvest, outward temporal mercies, but not for the Lord's presence; yea some that are not sensible of the Lord's departure from them, but if they have outward comforts, all is well, others care not for God's Presences, Job 21:14.43

Mather's reference to Job—"Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways"—indicated that he perceived some in his congregation resembled Yahweh's critics, i.e., having centered their lives upon family, livestock, and wealth, they dismiss God as an unnecessary interference into their lives.44

Mather's ability to select metaphors that would remind his congregation of their dependency upon God was evident in his selection from Deuteronomy (32:2) which revealed that God had once said: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill us as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and the showers upon the grass ... ." Additional biblical references indicated that God had "... found them in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he had led them about, he instructed him, he kept him, as the apple of his eye ... " (Deut. 32:10) for their God was gentle, kind and considerate and caring "as the eagle stirret up her nest, flutterest over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taken them beareth them on her wings" (32:11). The patient, concerned God stood in stark contrast to the impatient, unconcerned saints in the wilderness.45

When Mather spoke about God's presence, however, he could speak vigorously, reminding them that he wondered if God were
present, "as in days of old." Present difficulties provided a warning to the saints which Mather enunciated through Jeremiah's words (6:8), "Be though instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee! lest I made thee desolate, a land not inhabited."

He suggested to the congregation, again citing Scripture (Hos. 7:9) that "a stranger hath devoured his strength, and he knoweth not; yea, grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not."

Murmurings from "plantation to Plantation" permitted Mather to intimate that trials would continue to harm New England, as they had wounded Israel, through the deaths of the leaders. 46

Mather lamented the departure of those leaders who had been so instrumental in both establishing and preserving the order of Gospel worship, citing Israel's experiences which indicated that "It went full ill with Israel when Joshua, and the Elders that outlived Joshua were gathered to their fathers." This condition seemingly confirmed Isaiah's prediction (57:1) that "The righteous perish, and no man layeth to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come." 47

Commercial interests caused many of the settlers' troubles, for "when the word is lodged only in the Porch and never cometh into the House ... their Hearts are not wrought upon ..." was Mather's judgment about presence of evil. Mather's references to "Outward Prosperity ... a worm at the root of godliness, so that Religion dies when the world thrives. Deut. 28:17 & 32:15" indicated, as the former citation said, that "Cursed
shall be thy baskets and store;" while the latter suggested even
a more vivid picture of the evil that had settled upon New
England:

. . . J ehusurn waxed fat, and kicked; thou are waxen fat,
thou are grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then
he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the
Rock of his salvation. 48

Mather urged fidelity to God's promises, urging his congregation
to remember:

The first Generation, that have been betrusted with the
management of the Kingdome of Christ, and the interest of
Religion (mostly) hitherto: Labour to keep God still with
you, even as in days of old, and also to leave his Presence
with Generations that are to come after you, that you may
say upon your death beds, when you are leaving the world
to them that succeed you, as some times old Israel did to
Joseph, Gen. 48:21: Behold I die but God shall be with
you. 49

Mather's citation of Genesis was incomplete; the uncited words
indicated that God had so promised that He would "bring you again
unto the land of your fathers," words which reflected not only
Mather's dream, but the hopes of his congregation, as well. 50

The rising generation, the "Generation that proceeds from your
own loins," should concern all, for "was it not for their sakes
that many came thither? . . .," asked Mather. Why, he continued,
"came you unto this land? Was it not mainly with respect to the
rising Generation?" These searching questions, and his ardent
belief that the present generation had suffered more than its
ancestors, indicated a destitute condition stemming from a lack of
reformation and repentance, allowing Mather to comment that:

They have had not such opportunities their Fathers had, to know
and see what was in their hearts. Me thinks I see them like a
Company of Children in a Boat that is driven out to Sea, may be
it many come to shore, but in greater danger to sink or drown
them otherwise. 51
Mather's vessel had sprung leaks, some of its crew were ill, and there were but "a few left to keep Pumping going. Are they not in danger to sink and perish in the waters? Is it not so here?"

Reformation and repentance would result if the more experienced settlers set a good example for the rising generation. He encouraged his congregation to reflect upon Joshua's words:

(24:15)

... if it seem evil to you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in the land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

These words meant to Mather that "you must live religion, as well as TALK religion..." because the saints had to either serve God or mammon. 52

New England, like Israel, had to decide whether she would fight the Amorites, her internal and external enemies who threatened her land, as Israel had done, or succumb to their threats. Resistance to evil could not be limited to the market place, for even the New England homes had to experience God's love so that they might resemble seminaries that inculcate principles of goodness. These urgings for reformation, Mather understood would not be well received by some, for "I know I have dead hearts to deal withal, but the Lord may breathe the breath of life unto them."53

When Mather urged his congregation to continue its effort to reform, he couched his words in Biblical terms, citing Jeremiah (2:31)--"O Generation, seek the word of the LORD. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness wherefore my people, we are the lords, we will come no more unto thee?" If some felt
that God had been a wilderness, their doubts were perhaps lessened, as Mather again turned to Scripture (Isa. 63:8) where he discovered that:

. . . the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. 54

Another fine example of plain style preaching is evident in William Adams' The Necessity, a fast sermon preached in 1678 which opened with references to Isaiah 32:13-18 which refers to Israel's messianic hopes, i.e., the promise of her salvation. Adams applied these verses to New England, developing these into statements that would both strengthen his people and offer them motives for additional reformation and repentance. His message was quite clear: if New England became obedient, she would be redeemed. 55

Adams perceived that New England's unfavorable judgments resembled those which had afflicted Israel, indicating this by referring to Isa. (32:13) -- "Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city."

The following verse, which he cited, speaks about the result of such judgments, i.e., "The palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks." 56

This revolting condition would not always characterize New England; she would, if she repented, understand the truth of Ezekiel (28:14), which Adams found appropriate, for "the anointed cherub that he covereth; and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain
of God; thou has walked up and down in the midst of the stone of fire." New England's condition received further development through Adam's reflection that the troubles of New England" . . . the Thorns and Briars coming upon the Land, we may understand pricking, grieving, and disquieting troubles falling upon the Inhabitants of the Land." These trials which Adams clearly perceived as metaphors for the interior sufferings of the saints would not last, however.57

Even though the sufferings were causing great pain and anguish, their end was inevitable, for when "... the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field will be counted for a forest." These words merely confirmed that Isaiah's prophecy (58:15) would reign in New England; she would not perish. Adams' reflection on Isaiah was contained in his understanding that:

... the Wilderness be a fruitful Field, i.e., Those that have been as a wilderness, barren and unfruitful, bringing forth no fruit to God, but wild fruits of sin, they shall be changed, tilled, converted, and made fruitful, to bring forth fruits of holiness unto God.58

This shift in understanding from the physical wilderness of New England to the spiritual wilderness within the saints' hearts was immediately followed by the sermon's doctrinal statement which stressed the importance of conversion:

When God hath once set a People under a dispensation of judgment, their miseries will be like to proceed; till there be the pouring out of the Spirit from on high upon them to their sound Conversion, and there will be restoration and multiplication of sure mercyes and blessings upon them.59

This conversion which God would perform in New England would dispel evil and remind the saints, as Adams stressed, that:
Had we sinful and foolish People in New-England been wise in season, and taken those warnings have been given us, much of that sorrow and misery which we have felt, and do feel in War, Sickness, and other shakings might have been escaped.60

This minister was content with this mild rebuke; his interest was to persuade his congregation that only forceful actions would demonstrate their sincerity.

During the course of King Phillips War, ministers successfully used metaphors as tools to sharpen their perceptions about the meaning of the conflict with the modern heathens, the Indians. Frequently cited was the Book of Judges which supplies a partial account of Israel's conflict with the Canaanites, Amorites, and others; the story of the conflict about Jericho was one of the more fascinating incidents which John Richardson used in his artillery sermon.

Jericho was a walled, Canaanite city. The Book of Judges says that before Israel attacked it, Joshua sent scouts to reconnoiter the land. They were sheltered by Rahab, a prostitute; then they returned, they told Joshua that the city feared them. Before attacking the city, Joshua marched his troops around it for six days; on the seventh day, the Jews sounded their horns and the walls of Jericho crumbled. Jericho was conquered and all the inhabitants, except for Rahab who had protected the Jewish scouts, were slaughtered. This was to remind survivors that efforts to rebuild the city would result in additional death.

John Richardson's artillery sermon of 1675 spoke about the collapse of Jericho. This sermon, addressed to Christian people, stressed that:
There is a Civil as well as a Spiritual Warfare that a Christian must be exercised in. This is the Point which I intend to handle; and that which I judge may be most useful at this time.61

He defended the legitimacy of war by asserting that "God works now by men and the meanes; not by miracles: Neither can we expect that the walls of Rome as the walls of Jericho shall fall with the Sound of a Rams-horn," and stressing that "War is an Ordinance appoynted by God for subduing and destroying the Churches Enemies here upon Earth."62

Richardson's opening text was 2 Sam. 1:18, "Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow; behold it is written in the Book of Jasher," indicated David's instructions to his followers, as he reflected upon Saul's death. David knew that military skills were needed for Israel's ordeals; Richardson's use of this text indicated that New England's needs were similar. This citation was buttressed by another which taught a similar message.

A reference to Genesis (14:14)—"When Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan"—clearly implied that the destruction of Israel's enemies was not against God's will. Dan, which had been bothered by the Philistines, was one of Israel's twelve tribes which suffered from repeated assaults, as it attempted to consolidate its position in Canaan. The new Israelites would profit greatly if they accepted the fact that war was required if they were to protect themselves against the attacks of the Indians.63
Effective warriors were needed, for the "Lives, Liberties, Estates" depended upon the use of weapon. Equally important was the need of honest leaders who would defend "your Walls and Bulwarks" against the timid dishonest leaders whom he referred to through using Jeremiah's words (48:10), "Cursed be he that does the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back blood from his sword." New England's domestic and external enemies could be checked only by resolute, determined leaders.64

Thomas Wheeler's God's Mercy to Several Persons at Quabauq or Brookfield is a wonderful illustration of how the New England minister exercised his sermonic skills during King Phillip's War, as they attempted to take the war's grief and sadness and demonstrate how it could become a source of hope and strength. This important lesson began with Wheeler's text, Psalm 116:12, "What shall I render the Lord for all his Benefits towards me." Wheeler answered Scripture's question by suggesting that thanksgiving was the fitting answer, for "one may say, I was spared and not touched, when others were dangerously wounded: Another may say, I was only wounded when others were killed: I am recovered when others wounds proved mortal ... ."65

Wheeler did not confine his litany of thanksgiving to the present turmoil in New England, for he cited God's mercies of "Town, Church, State," the grateful widow whose husband be returned home safe," the child whose father "is a benefit to me": in addition to the mercies of "Magistracy and Ministry."66
Wheeler's list included mercies extended to his congregation's ancestors who had left "from Old-England," to God's mercies "in this Country" mercies "in the house or Garden," and "ship mercies and Shoal mercies." Even more remote gifts consisted of the experiences "in your mothers womb," along with mercies "in childhood," and mercies for those "in single and married Condition." God had blessed the New England wilderness with "spiritual, temporal, prevention, paring, supplying . . ." mercies.

Even though God's mercies permeated the New England wilderness and its saints, there were some who evidenced "wantonness of Spirit" and kicking against God," suggesting to Wheeler that Deuteronomy's (32:15) depiction of Israel was suitable to those who grumbled in New England, for they "waxed fat, and kicked; thou art wax covered with fatness; then he forsake God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of salvation." Wheeler's reproach indicated the continued need for reformation and repentance for the new Israelites were becoming more forgetful of God's ordinances and the Gospel's mandate to worship; he reminded his congregation that God's commandments applied to all, suggesting the gravity of continued forgetfulness of God's mercies, for:

you that are not in ful Church Communion, either you are prepared or unprepared with respect to your present state; if still unprepared, yet in a Carnal state, what would have become of you, if you had dyed at the Swamps, or in the Garrison, if you had been taken away? if you be prepared, . . . and you neglect his Ordinances God may cut you down by some temporal Judgment, though you, be not damned for it: consider that place, Num. 9-13.

Wheeler's advice to "consider that place" referred both to Israel's wilderness conflict in which God had urged continued
obedience and fasting and to the Book of Numbers which spoke about God's demands for sacrifice and worship, the need to observe religious days, and his ordinances which he had explained to Moses as the Israelites were about to leave Egypt. God's commands constituted the source of his protection and several verses, particularly verse thirteen, stressed that "the man that is clean and is not in a journey, and forebeareth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought the offering of the LORD to his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin." ^69

The initial comments in Wheeler's sermon evidenced a deep understanding about the nature of prayer; words about false prayer indicated that he perhaps chided some in the congregation that doubted God's love as they had fought the rampaging Indians; others, perhaps, were consoled by his comments because they had reaffirmed the importance of prayer. Those who had scoffed at prayer, along with those who had been constantly petitioning God for mercy, heard Wheeler say:

A thoughtful heart in a lively frame takes delight to speak of the goodness of God toward him, is not soon tryed, nor wary thereof. All Repetitions are not babblings; and therefore let us beware of so judging them; sometimes out of the Abundance of Heart Christians go over and over the same thing in petition of good from God and in thanksgiving for good received at his hands. ^70

New England's wilderness demanded light, illumination, and clarity. This was understood by Thomas Thacher, as his fast sermon of 1674 indicated. He developed his doctrine through the metaphor of light, emphasizing that the sin and degeneracy flowed from its absence. Yet, as he spoke, he wondered how the saints would respond to the rigors of a fast, for they were "rocked asleep in sin"
and, as Isaiah had said of the Israelites, New England was the place where "God's watchmen are blinded; they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber" (56:10). New England's need was not necessarily for additional prayer, but prayer that revealed that their hearts were honestly listening and trying to obey God. 71

This loathsome condition inspired wars, famines, and plagues, for "... the saints' worship is not worship, their godliness, their fasting and prayer is not such as God hath chosen." This bogus worship and play at piety revealed the discrepancy between the heart murmuring of the saints and their fleshly desires which indicated that:

you may outwardly be a Christian, and inwardly an heathen in the sight of God, all these are uncircumcised in heart ... says the Prophet ... whilst you are in the outward man a Christian, your circumcision may become uncircumcision before God; alas what's an outward Baptisme, if your Souls never reaches a spiritual Baptisme, if there be the washing with water without the layer of Regeneration ... 72

Thacher presented his questions about the saints' ability to endure a fast to his congregation, asking "... New-England, New-England, how wilt thou be able to hear the burthen of thy Fasts?" "Can," he asked, "any of your souls come to seek mercy from God, and have your hearts shut up against the poor and needy with great hypocrisie? How doe your hearts work toward these things?" 73

Jesus' words (Mark 11:25) supplied both Thacher's answer and the authority for his words, for he had said, "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive your trespasses." God's absence, Thacher implied, came because, in words he selected from
Isaiah (58.4), "Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high." These Biblical references were immediately followed by his assertion that "it is true observa­tion concerning prayer, that you can put no Petition to God for mercy but it implies a promise unto God of new obedience, especially when you come to God in such a solemn way and manner . . . ."

Thacher was well aware of his congregation's sensitivities, for he commented that, despite those who fasted incorrectly, he knew "there are precious Souls amongst us that mourn for these things," i.e., proper fasting by all the saints. A proper stance before God would result, if the saints hearkened to become mindful of Isaiah's words (66:2) which suggested that the majesty and love of God must motivate all actions, "For all things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look even to him that is poor and of contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." The saints could be confident that God would hear their pleas and respond to their fasting for, as Isaiah had indicated to the Jews in their time of troubles (65:24), "... it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."^74

Thacher coupled his suggestions about reformation and repentance to the daily concerns of the saints whom he encouraged to remember God's mercies, recalling that God had protected as He "... led them through the wilderness ... as their righteousness went before them" with his pillars of cloud and fire, so the saints had to remember, he continued, that "when God accept you graciously through
the Righteousness of his Son Jesus Christ . . . goes before you, this is a benefit whereby he manifests his gracious acceptation . . . ." New England's deliverance from sin was continuing, he stressed, through Jesus who was urging New England, as he had urged the blind man whom he had cured and later found in the temple, to "sin no more; lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:13,14,15). God's love would again permeate New England, for a "fast which God hath chosen, is the way to all fruitfulness. . . ." 

The ministerial sermons of the final two decades of the seventeenth century indicated that New England had separated her heart and intentions from God's plans in the New England wilderness. Sermonic literature attempted to stimulate interest in reformation and repentance so that the glories of the first generation would again become present in the land. These ministerial sermons were explicit, candid, and effusive; they lacked, however, the vitality and verve of Increase Mather who best epitomized and understood the deep dichotomy which existed between God's and the saints' vision of the Congregational Way in the New England wilderness.

Increase Mather idealized, as did other ministers, the founders of New England. He, as they, offered the second and third generation settlers understandings of their history. Increase spoke of the achievements of the past by using Biblical metaphors that revealed a "gap" between the original settlement experiences and his own generation's conduct in the New England wilderness. The "wilderness" experience of the 1630s was the norm against which Increase Mather assessed the conduct of his generation.
Increase Mather often used wilderness images to explain his understanding of God's relationship to New England. Through the wilderness images, and the related images contained within this generic image, Increase preached his doctrine of salvation. Basic to his teaching and to Cotton's was a stress upon the covenant, which he used as the norm for assessing New England's faithfulness to God's call. References to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea and other prophets, along with New Testament citations, reveal how he imagined New England. One may not minimize the importance of wilderness imagery in reading Increase's works. Our interest is to briefly look at the uses of the wilderness image and related images as he used these to understand New England.

In 1677, Increase preached the Day of Apostasy which revealed the importance of the wilderness "... if the children shall forsake the Lord he will cast them off forever." This fear of rejection contains another important theme: hope existed in New England's dangers. 76

These words on apostasy, referring to New England's departure from her founders' way, revealed Increase's belief that New England was degenerate and so horrible that a "disscovenanting and unchurching was possible." Hope existed if the people would turn to God. 77

Mather's exhortation urged an active response by his listener, one similar to David's response to God's summons in the desert. This listening, necessarily joined to hearing God's commands, and observing them, involved patience. Faith, which resulted in praising God through works, revealed the presence of belief; this Increase contrasted with man's lack of response which resulted "when
men defy others besides God." His stress upon the twofold task
of listening and responding was central: it meant obedience to
God. 78

Increase did not hesitate to warn his congregation that hesi­
tancy in doing God's will resulted in being "forsaken of God,"
which meant that God was saying to New England, "I will love them
no more." This lack of love would be devastating; it meant that
God's words, "I will betroth you to me forever" (Hos. 2:19) would
cease. The people in the wilderness would realize their empti­
ness . . . "I had sent her away with a decree of divorce"
(Jer. 3:8). 79

Romans 11:11, which refers to the Remnant that God will save,
supplied Increase with the Biblical locus for asserting that hope
existed. As the Jews, "fallen from the visible Church state,"
would be saved, so should New England. The Jews had fallen from
God's favor because of the "calf in the wilderness." New England,
too, had lost God's favor for she, as Israel, loved ungodly things
which indicated that she "... sinned against the second command­
ment." We can see Mather's emphasis upon obedience, searching,
and serving the Lord to change this condition in images that refer
to New England's founders:

... as did seek the Lord, for the body of the present genera­
tion in New England, it may be said to them, your fathers were
such as did serve the Lord, yea, it was love to God and to80
Jesus Christ which brought them unto this wilderness . . .

Unlike the "original Abrahams" and the "choice gain in the
wilderness, the present generation sinned against the commandments
by honoring wealth, in sins of lust, in unfairness to the daily
labourer." Mather despaired not of this generation; the possibility of conversion existed if it responded, pleaded and returned to the God who had blessed the founders of New England. The importance of that generation is apparent:

... the first generation of Christians in New England is in a manner gone off the stage, and there is another and more sinful generation risen up in their stead ... in former years enjoyed the sunshine of prosperity, and that had been attended ... with great apostasy.81

Two years before the Apostasy sermon, King Phillip's War had raged throughout New England. Fought in the wilderness of New England, the war indicated to Increase that his earlier fears of decay were true. This severe war disclosed much about Mather's images of the people, the land, and the Indians. Once again, the absence of the first generation influenced his understanding of the origins of the conflict. He suggested that:

... nor were our sins ripe for so dreadful a judgement, until the body of the first generation was removed, and another generation risen up which hath not pursued as ought to have been, the blessed design of their fathers in following the Lord into the wilderness.82

The fortunes of war varied greatly at the outset of the conflict. At one point, Mather stated that people "... were not fit for deliverance nor could health be restored unto us except a great deal more blood be first taken from us."83

Although God needed more blood before New England's deliverance, this demand did not blunt Mather's hope; God, he said, would not let "his people utterly perish." Disaster would have meant God's failure and a "Heathen" victory.84

Indians, "inhabitants ... in the dark corners of the earth, lurked in swamps," from which they attacked the settlers. These
"dark corners," Mather implied, were areas "where there was no church nor instituted worship." Within these areas, "adversaries" lurked ". . . at our doors causing the Heathen in the wilderness to be thorns in our sides . . . The Heathen . . . the Indian who was the "perfection children of the devil," fought skillfully. Increase observed that their successes came from their use of the land where they "lay in ambush behind almost every tree and place of advan-
tage . . . ."85

Events moved quickly as the year progressed. Increase noted that the "lord of Heaven smiled upon us at this time for the day before thanksgiving and also the day after, he gave them to hear that some of our captives returned." In addition, rain came for God "opened bottles of the heaven . . ." and the threat of famine was averted. Increase's exhortation that "praying without reforming does no good" indicated that a reformation occurred.86

King Philip's War told Increase that degeneracy existed, as he had stated in the Day of Trouble is Near in 1673. His doctrinal position, "God doeth sometimes bring times of Great Trouble to His people," revealed his belief that hardships were God's way of preparing New England for New Canaan. Images of "children of Israel" passing through the Red Sea, Mather paralleled with New England's voyage, stressing ". . . so must we wade through a Red Sea of troubles and pass through a wilderness of miseries, ere we can arrive at the heavenly Canaan."87

The Day tells us something about Increase Mather's eschatology. Images from the New Testament, he correlated with Old Testament prophets. Romans 8, which speaks about creation's groanings for
salvation, answered David's question about salvation. David's desires surely foreshadows Jesus' redemptive work. The wilderness images assert that New England's trials are severe and that the wilderness was great. "Many false prophets will arise and lead many astray," Mather said (Matthew 24:12). The result, he implied, was the presence of perverse spirits.88

When "The Lord doeth mingle a perverse spirit among a people . . . the day of trouble is near." Troubles, indicated by his generations's departure from the ideals of New England's founders, would be present, but God would not leave his Church "lie in the midst of thorns and wolves and tigers . . . for the power of God is seen and glorified." Troubles and insecurity meant that God was present, for "great security meant that trouble was near."89

The "little-little flock" would find its salvation through prayer and reformation. Mather cites Jeremiah's "little book of consolation" and joins this with Peter's words that testing proves the worth of God's people (I Peter 1:7). This testing will eliminate idolatry which natural phenomena, "clouds of disaster in heaven and earth," indicated were present. Mather's confidence was not impaired, for "God will not destroy this place." " . . . even though afflictions bring it quite low." Why? Because "our fathers have built sanctuaries for his name therein, and therefore he will not destroy us."90

Mather balanced images of hopelessness with images of hope; his reflections to his generation revealed that, troubled as the times might be, he considered his generation blessed because the "Lord will pour out his spirit upon the children and posterity of his servants."91
Why was it possible for Increase Mather to write so effectively about New England? More important, what was Mather's basic insight into the meaning of King Phillip's War? An examination of the Brief Exhortation to the Inhabitants can tell us much and answer these and additional questions.

Increase Mather, reflecting contemporary views of King Phillip's War, related all of life's events to the "special providences" of God. In this exhortation he stated:

Let due enquiry be made into the cause of the Lords controversy with us. We know in general it is for sin, Mich. 1:5. For the transgressions of Jacob in all of this, and for the sins in the house of Israel.92

Referring to the settlers as "Patterns of Sobriety," they did not drink, "more than should suffice nature, and conduce to their health," whereas their successors "could transact no business, nor hardly engage in any discourse," without "a pint of wine or a pot of beer." Drunkenness had "become a common Sin, but how much more that which is Drunkenness in the sight of God."93

Pride, too, had been "no small Provocation before the Lord," especially with respect to "Pride in respect to Apparel." People dressed no properly "in a wilderness, especially when it is such a humbling time as of late years hath been." Among the more guilty were the "poorer sort of people, who will needs go in their Silks and Bravery as if they were the best in the land." The rich, too, dressed improperly, "especially here in Boston." "Men are seen with ... monstrous horrid Perriwigs;" women "with their Borders and False Locks and such like whorish Fashions ... ."
All were guilty, "Rich and poor, merchants and mechanics, magistrates and people . . . ." 94

"Inordinate Affection to the World" was another evil. He scored "Idolatry" which results in Covetousness:

Land! Land! hath been the Idol of many in New England. Whereas the first Planters here that they might keep themselves together were satisfied with one Acre for each person, and his propriety, and after that with twenty Acres for a family, how have men since coveted after the earth, that many hundreds, many thousands of Acres, have been engrossed by one man . . . Is the interest of New England indeed changed from a Religious to a Worldly Interest? That's a strange God, and it be so, no wonder that there is War in our Gates: do men prefer their Farms and Merchandize about the Gospel? Here is the reason why Armies are sent forth against us, and our Cities are burnt up. 95

Mather did not hesitate to speak about the poor treatment tendered to the Indians; in forceful language, he said:

More over since this War begun, the Indians have been scandalized by the English: It is well if some English have not the guilt of Indian blood upon their souls, yea if in their skirts be not found the blood of the souls of poor innocents. And what could have been done more then hath been done by too many to prejudice the Indians against the English interest, yea, against the interest of Christ in this land? 96

Mather continued, speaking about the "madness and rage . . . against the Indians . . . ." He struck at the betrayals, the willingness to destroy those that (like the Gideonites of Old) are "Proselyted to the Faith" and who were "under the Protection of the English Israel in this land, though they never did hurt us . . . ." He remarked that "the Indian work I mean the work of Christ among them (which indeed hath been one of the Glories of New England) been slighted, scored, vilified." He lashed out at "some praying English as perfidious, as hypocritical, as those who condemned the Praying Indians." Shall we therefore condemn all?" he asked. The
The "profane world" has been guilty of this sin, but also "Profes-
sors and Church-members have many of them to lament before the Lord
for this evil." "Now, I Exhort you

and beseech you, whomever you be that have been guilty of mur-
muring in any respect, or of casting a stumbling-block before
the Indians, to God in secret places, confess your sin before
him, pray that it may not be imputed to you or to your Families,
or to the Land for your sakes. In the Love of Christ I have
thus spoken to you."

Increase Mather and his colleagues continued to urge their
congregations to reformation and repentance during the final years
of the seventeenth century. These ministers, who only a few years
earlier had perceived King Phillip's War as God's punishment upon
his wayward saints, more consciously linked external infidelities and
sins with an interior illness which indicated that the saints' hearts
had strayed from God. The sermons of the concluding twenty years
of the century spoke about this interior alienation from God, indi-
cating that the rendered hearts of the New England saints could be
freed only when the Spirit became more operative in their lives.
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CHAPTER IV

WILDERNESS WITHIN

Significant economic, political, and religious changes continued to characterize New England during the last two decades of the seventeenth century, so much so that she appeared substantially different from what she had been nearly fifty years before.

New England's lucrative trade with France and Britain became so rewarding that London's merchants became increasingly disturbed, seeking increased imperial control over colonial trade. New England's prosperity was reflected in growing numbers of citizens who took an increasing interest in London's fashion, intellectual pursuits, and religious attitudes which were frequently criticized by the Colony's ministers.

Economic controls were inseparable from London's growing plans to increase royal control over all aspects of colonial life. The citizens of Massachusetts Bay Colony came to understand this when, in 1679, New Hampshire was separated from Massachusetts, and a year later when Edmund Randolph came to Boston to enforce the Navigation Acts. Although he did seize many vessels, he failed in obtaining court convictions. His actions, along with questionable means of seizing vessels and the lack of court convictions, so frustrated him that he returned to London in 1681 to urge more effective measures in enforcing the Navigation Acts.¹

The vacating of Massachusetts charter in 1684 and the imposition of the Dominion of New England in 1686 under Edmund Andros introduced
more tensions into the colony which were augmented by the Governor's changes in the land policy, tax system, and religious practices. An important result of these policies was the alliance between the ministers and merchants who felt excluded from the new government.

During these years, Massachusetts still desired and worked for a return of her charter. Increase Mather's visit to London in 1688 for this purpose was unsuccessful; while he was in London, the Glorious Revolution occurred. The control of New England reverted to the Colony's more experienced leaders. Although Mather's efforts to regain the original charter failed, New England received a new charter in 1692 which still indicated that London's control would be paramount, for it provided the Colony with a Royal Governor and a council whose functions were severely restricted, and a changed basis for voting qualifications. Property and not religion would determine who would henceforth vote.  

New England had never been without religious dissent; it became more vocal and effective as the century closed. The unheard of use of Samuel Willard's church for Easter services by Governor Andros in 1686 indicated the inroads of different religious practices; Willard did use his church, however, after Andros and his fellow worshippers had ended their services. There were influences beside Anglicanism which were equally distressing.

Serious threats to the Congregational Way came from several quarters. One involved some of Boston's merchants who sided with the more liberal ministers whose efforts succeeded in the appointment of William Brattle as the pastor in Cambridge in 1696. Two years later, Brattle and others formed a new church, selecting as its minister,
Benjamin Colman, who had been ordained in London by the Presbyterians. This challenge to the Congregational Way culminated in the Brattle Street Manifesto of 1699 which called into question many of the prevailing beliefs and religious practices of the Colony.  

All children were to be baptized. The manifesto disclaimed the practice of publicly examining individuals seeking membership in the Church. Church services were modified so that Scriptural readings were no longer accompanied by ministerial commentaries. Free prayer was replaced with formulated prayers. Finally, women were admitted into the governance of the church.  

The difficulties of 1699 were followed by more trouble in 1700 because of Solomon Stoddard whose religious views seriously disturbed those in Boston. Stoddard questioned the possibility of detecting the elect, suggesting that the ordinances be perceived as means of conversion. His position on the Eucharist, i.e., that it was a converting ordinance, was coupled with another of equal importance. He would not deny the Lord's Supper to any but notorious sinners. These views which Stoddard promulgated in Connecticut and in western Massachusetts, culminated in his The Doctrine of the Instituted Churches, his doctrinal statement about the nature and organization of the church. His quasi-Presbyterian church would have a national synod charged with empowering ministers to administer the sacraments and to preach to all who sought them. Regional synods would exist, assisting the national synod in the church's governance. Elders would have received their powers from the local churches and would be charged with safeguarding doctrine and overseeing ministerial education.
Stoddard's position, along with the Brattle Street Manifesto, slowly eroded the basis of the Congregational system, because it undermined the role of the clergy, questioned existing church policy and emphasized doctrinal positions that radically altered pastoral procedures with respect to the Lord's Supper, baptism, and worship.

Evidence of the Inner Wilderness

The scathing denunciation of New England's conduct by the Synod of 1679 did little either to lessen reports about continued degeneracy or to indicate that ministers witnessed a change in the saints' conduct. Their separation from God continued, as Uriah Oakes' 1682 fast sermon inferred, for rampant disobedience, violations of Gospel worship, and a lack of honesty in God's service still seemed to characterize the lives of many congregations. Oakes understood this; his text, selected from Isaiah (43:22)—"but thou hast not called upon me; O Jacob; but thou hast been very weary of me, O Israel"—permitted him to suggest to his flock that it neither had called upon God nor recognized its weariness and that God "would make a way in the wilderness and Rivers . . .," and, as Oakes added, "an easie passage into their own Land;" God's present judgments confirmed this and indicated that he both "prickes those bladders, pulls down those high conceits, demonstrates their obligations to his free grace and favor for all these things," along with reminding the congregations that their "deliverance . . . was not to be attributed to their prayers . . . obliging deportments of themselves towards the Lord; but . . . absolutely, solely ascribed to his gracious good pleasure."5
Oakes' skillful use of the Old Testament revealed that the new Israel was duplicating the first Israel's sin: disobedience. He reinforced this message by repeatedly reminding the congregation that it, as Israel's successor, must understand that God's lessons were reminders that salvation came through their wilderness experiences. The ingratitude that Israel had offered to God in return for His mercies suggested important lessons to his congregation.

When Oakes inferred that some in his congregation might be more grateful for God's gifts, criticism arose which he easily silenced by suggesting that Scripture's condemnation of Israel was suitable to the New England saints who "steal, murther, commit adultery, swear false, and burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods. . . (Jer. 7:9). Scripture also rejected those who "come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations" (Jer. 7:10). A more severe judgment would be difficult to envisage.

The reference to Baal was significant, for Oakes asserted that the new Israelites in the American wilderness were repeating Israel's sin through their "babblings of formality," their deceitful daily lives, and false worship. Were New England to change, she would have to undertake a self-scrutiny that must include the professors of religion whom Oakes perceived to be among the worse violators of God's commandments. His less than optimistic words about New England's condition were balanced, however, by his reflections that:

Many there are of the good old generation, many of the middle and of the young generation; yea, more, I doubt not, that are aware of, that call upon God in sincerity, yet there may be many a wise Virgin. . . that say (with the Spouse, Cant. 5.2) I sleep but my heart waketh.
Oakes added to these reflections others based upon Jesus' comments (Math. 7:22,23) about those who had "prophesized in thy name . . . cast out devils . . . and done wonderful works . . ." but because of their "iniquity" would be rejected, his own stern reflections that, while watchfulness and obedience were important, the saints had to remember that "without an inward principle of Grace," there works lacked value in God's sight.

The constant parallels between Israel and New England indicated that "we have the same hearts and natures, and are disposed also to the like frame," Oakes' reminder that New England could benefit from Israel's experiences. The weariness to which this minister constantly referred touched even the hearts of the godly professors of religion who were "weary of subjugation, service, obedience unto God. The Lord charged them with omission and neglect of his worship and service . . . their burthen, troubles, and they were sick and weary of it." Continued false worship would only deepen this malise; what God was seeking in New England was "A requittal of his kindness to us," which indicated, as it had to Israel, the profundity of his love; "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your inequities" (Amos 3:2).

The murmuring saints in the New England wilderness reminded Oakes that the Israelites had also murmured against God (Numb. 21:5). They had "spake against God, and against Moses, wherefore ye brought us out of Egypt to die in this wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread." Had not, he implied, the saints grumbled against their "Moses," against God's church," and against God's mercies? Because New England
"servedest not the LORD thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of things," they would undergo chastisements similar to Israel's. "Therefore shall thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, in want of all things; and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee (Deut. 28:47,48)." New England had yet to learn, as Israel had, that God had said, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your inequities" (Amos 3:2).

Some believed that God would not abandon New England. Oakes cautioned these unduly optimistic believers that God's judgments could destroy the land. He immediately cushioned these reflections with assertions that God did love His saints, reinforcing his perceptions with references to Hosea's tender, consoling, strengthening words (11:8,9) which indicated that as angry as God might be, His love was stronger, for

How shall I give thee up, Ephraim; how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Adman? how shall I set thee as Zeboim; mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

I will not execute my fierceness of mine anger. I will not destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not enter into the city.

Adam and Zeboim, cities which God had destroyed along with Sodom, were horrible references for the saints; they indicated the extent of God's anger and Oakes' perceptions about New England's conduct which he tempered by reflecting that:

Doubtless the Lord will remember the kindness of our youth and the love of our espousal, when we came after him unto this wilderness, and were Holiness to the Lord. He hath not forgotten the Faith, the Love, and the Zeal, the self-Denyall, the Holiness and
Heavenly mindedness of those Worthies that laid the foundation of this Plantation.\textsuperscript{11}

The observation that "our murmuring like Israel in the wilderness show this," offered hope to Oakes because it indicated that changes in attitudes and conduct would be New England's salvation. Even though many of his congregation had forgotten their past, God's memory of the Worthies might inspire confidence. Oakes' vivid metaphors, his juxtaposition of man's unfaithfulness and his desire for unity with God, and his perception that the saints' weariness contained God's power if they would surrender to his love was his message to New England.

New England had partially rebuffed God's mercies; her weariness had indicated ingratitude; Oakes conveyed this message, citing Malacai's words (1:13)---"The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachai"---perhaps indicating his prophetic role in the history of New England.

Oakes' sermon contained the fascinating pastoral observation that man:

\begin{quote}
\ldots may be weary sometimes of God's service, but then he is weary of himself, for it, wary of that weariness of God, falls out with himself on that account, if full of displeasure and indignation against himself, and his own wretched heart \ldots God will not leave his own children to an allowance of themselves in such weary frames, but will reclaim them to a true Christian temper by his Word, Spirit, Rod, one means or others.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

These insightful considerations, manifestations that Oakes was quite aware of the sensitivities of human nature and its response to God's love, displayed a pastoral concern that suggested a deep hope in God's love. God alone would teach the saints about the source of their weariness, he said, instructing them about whether it was caused
by God's service" or "all by himself." He offered strong encourage-
ment to his flock as he warned them to "be not heart sick and weary
of himself, you may be sure that he under the power of this spirit
of God." His congregation perhaps left this sermon both with a
deepened awareness of their weariness in God's service but with an
increased reliance upon his love.

One book of the Old Testament spoke directly about the relation-
shop between human and religious values: the Book of Ecclesiastes.
It stressed that human happiness was both vain and empty if man
separated himself from God. Urian Oakes was familiar with this
message which is particularly evident in the ninth and tenth chapters
of Ecclesiastes which Oakes used in his artillery sermon.13

Oakes, citing Ecclesiastes to underscore the frivolity and fool-
ishness of New England's military efforts in recent years, began his
artillery sermon of 1677 by referring to Solomon's words which he
believed were the Patriarch's comments upon his life of sensuality
and religious formalism. Oakes found these most helpful; they
reminded him of his congregation's task, along with reminding the
colony's leaders that "the Council and Providence of God ordering
and governing Time and Chance according to his own good pleasure"
had guided the judgments of New England.14

God's providences in New England included ever her wars which
clearly manifested not only His mercies, for "The Salvations of New
England have been most apparently by the Lords Governing Time and
chance . . this or that chance or Occurrent . . . in the very nick of
time to prevent Ruine . . ." but also the actions of the Indians who
had exercised "God's design is to humble New England." He added that:
we have seen that despised . . . Enemy, that is not acquainted with books on military Discipline, that observe no regular Order . . . that fight in a debased, cowardly, contemptible way, have been able to rout, and put to flight, and destroy our valiant and good soldiers. And I must confess, that which determined by thought to this text, was this very consideration. 15

New England has to learn that her salvation from a "despicable Enemy" came not from "the Sufficiency of the Instruments of our Salvation, but from the All-Sufficiency of God, and his overruling Events wonderfully." He was referring to the recent war which is, "in some cases Lawful, and at times Necessary: and since then, learning of War . . ." to emphasize that training duties were important. 16

It appears that the New England soldier had not learned God's design for New England too well, for "Great Complaints there have been from time to time of the neglect of these Military Exercises." Wisdom was required to that attitude change, because some acted "as if there were Dayes to meet on, to smoke, and carouse, and swagger, and dishonor . . ." their obligations. More than human wisdom was needed to listen and understand. 17

James Allin's fast sermon of 1687 which he preached at Roxbury commented that worms, caterpillars, withered corn and grass indicated that God's judgments afflicted even nature. Only "a General Repentance . . . the only Remedy of Publick judgments . . ." could help New England and only if accompanied by a deep humiliation and a renewed promise of faithful service. This minister depicted the gravity of New England's sin through references to Joshua (7:11,12) which indicated that New England, as:

Israel hath sinned, and have also transgressed my covenant, which I commanded them; for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. 18
The following verse in Joshua indicated to Allin that New England's condition both resembled Israel's stance before God and his anger with her, for

Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their back before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed among you.  

A properly conducted fast involved more than prayer, for effective action would indicate that the saints had surrendered to the need of reformation and repentance. Allin pursued this insistence by suggesting that Isaiah's words to Israel (64:4) "... an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away"--when linked with Job's estimation of himself--"Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," (42:6)--indicated the posture which the New England saints should have before God. This attitude, he implied, might clarify their need for reformation.  

He further suggested that the members of his congregation might reflect upon God's judgment of Eliphaz (Job 42:7)--"... My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends; for you have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath." Ruminations upon the Book of Job and the Prophecy of Isaiah offered much for the New England saints.  

Allin's congregation had heard much: Isaiah's imaginative words about evil, Job's words of repentance, and God's rejection of Eliphaz's self-justifications. Each offered hope; each suggested that honesty in the presence of evil, coupled with repentance and reformation, constituted New England's salvation. The New England
wilderness, troubled as it was, had served Allin's purpose quite nicely, for it allowed him to remind the congregation that the exterior confusion merely mirrored their internal wilderness. Consequently, there was

... no love and esteem of Ordinances, and may be seen and found by sad experience in New-England children, who do not rise up in the same Spirit with their Godly and Eminent Predecessors, the first planters in this Country, who like Jeremiah in the wilderness, when newly freed from Egyptian-bondage ... set up worship of God ...22

Skeptics, scoffers, and others in Allin's congregation were urged to remember that New England's "... Errand into this Wilderness ... for Purity of Worship ..." once had revealed how

... the Lord was highly pleased with it, it was the love of Espousals; but behold what degeneracy, many cannot be content to live ... Let this be an awakening word, bring your hearts to the Bar of it, for Conviction and Humiliation. The Lord may be as peace with you, and so Good may come to you.23

The sermons during the final two decades of the seventeenth century continually indicated that the ministers were constantly concerned about the inroads of formalism "God's worship." Joshua Moodey's fast sermon of 1681 wonderfully illustrates this concern, because it directly spoke about the "... sin of formality in religion." His lengthy sermon touched upon the saints' alienation from God that had produced an evil so profound that Moodey easily compared his congregation with Israel whom Hosea had condemned (11:12) "Ephraim who compasseth me about with lies ... and Israel with Deceit." New England's "Dissembled Heart" poured forth evil, indicating the truth of the Deuteronomic judgment--"They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to god whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, when your fathers feared not." (32:17) --in New England. The saints' degeneracy was so
advanced that they were unprepared for war, as the Jews had been, when "... war at the gates; was there a shield or spear among forty thousand in Israel"—This judgment from the Book of Judges (5:8) was true of New England, for she was powerless before both her external and interior enemies. At this point in his sermon, however, Moodey shifted from the congregation to the ministers, indicating that:

But I shall confine my Discourse unto such as are professors of the true God who have also the right way of Instituted Worship, but through the falseness of their hearts do but lye to in all they perform; a Sin commonly practised in our Days by Professors of Religion.  

New England's hypocrisy was so detestable that Moodey's indignation was revealed in his additions to Jesus' comments about the Scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem "whitened sepulchres" (Matt. 15:7,8) whom he claimed were similar to "... a painted tomb without, Corruption and Rottenness within, Fire without and Frost within. A flame in the mouth but Ice in the Heart; a perfect piece of Pageantry, a Play ... he is ... King, is in reality, a Beggar." These ungodly professors sacrificed lies to God, as they "confess all God's Glorious Attributes, but do not make him the object of our Faith, Love, Fear, Delight ... ".

They were guilty, because their consciences indicated that they "... lye unto him, while not humbled even unto this day," and not, as the uncited words of this verse said, because they feared, ... walked in my law, ... in my statues, that I set before you and your fathers." (Jer. 44:10)

Moral and spiritual decay permeated every aspect of life, even the "Sacrament" where "men lye to God," because they "... come to
a Feast but not with an appetite, to a Wedding Feast, but not with a Wedding Garment . . . ." The metaphor of the garment referred to the Biblical understanding that "it is a sign of a definite order coming from the Creator and likewise a symbol recalling the promise of a glory lost in Paradise." Its absence indicated to Moodey that the saints were alienated from God because of "sin which man's corrupt nature is dreadfully addicted to," as well as "condemned by the light of nature." Saints working about the "olive in planting, pruning, dressing, from which they expect some fruit, produce nothing, nothing comes of it, so will the labour of such a worshipper prove . . ." unless the interior confusion and wilderness be changed. Until then the fruits of the saints' efforts would remain without value. 27

Moodey insisted upon a return to "Instituted Worship" as the first step in New England's reformation, suggesting, "see Exod. 20:6 for a fuller explanation of this worship." This reference claimed that it was the place where God showered ". . . mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments," simultaneously indicating that "One day in God's house is worth a thousand" (Ps. 84:10). Moodey blended these two biblical references into a plea for "the right Conceptions about God" which, he emphasized, "will notably influence you unto right Worship, and a due performance of it." An additional suggestion reminded the congregation that it should "study well the right way in which God will be Worshipped, and his own way is the only right way." 28

Adherence to these suggestions would begin the process of reformation that would depend not upon the observations of the
Ordinances, but upon an interior reformation that would admit the existence of an interior wilderness which the spirit alone could order and pacify. His comments included a reference to the poor widow whom Jesus praised because she "hath cast more in ..." to the treasury than others. The story of this "widow's mite" (Mark 12:41-44) Moodey amplified, suggesting:

Do not offer unto God that which cost you nothing but a little Breath and Lip Labour, remember that your heart gives value to your two Mites, the least piece of Hearty Service is in his esteem with God.29

The Remembrance of Former Times, William Jameson's Thanksgiving sermon of 1697, is one of the finer sermons because of its extensive use of the wilderness imagery. This sermon emphasized the differences between Israel's trials and New England's troubles, for, as Jameson said,

we especially in New England have been brought up under great and glorious light than they. They were trained up under the mysterious types and shows; only point to Christ to come; but we under the clear Light unto that accomplishment.30

Jameson's emphasis, however, does not preclude shifting the similitudes so that their metaphorical impact might be studied.

Centering his comments upon God's mercies to New England, Jameson painted an elaborate picture of the New England settlers that clearly indicated that her history parallels Israel's.

This minister's perceptions allowed a focus upon God's mercies, stressing that New England's mission paralleled Israel's from the moment God had summoned her. The originally planted vine lacked its former attractiveness, even though ministerial efforts to save her from "wasting judgment" had failed; God continued to await its growth, even though it presently is "Rife or Ripening for Desolating
Judgments" because New England has "brought forth wilder or sower grapes, bad fruit . . . after great things God had done for us, especially in our Primitive Times."\(^{31}\)

New England had been called by God, as had Israel been called, with the admonition, ", . . Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. 15:1). God had called her, saying, "I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exod. 20:2). This mercy ought, "Jameson continued, to warn the saints, . . . lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. And when joined with references to Deuteronomy (6:11,12) also suggested that:

Now may this not be said in a parallel sense of the first Generation of our Godly Fathers and Ancestors. For although God did not bring them out of an Egyptian Heathen Land, rather a pleasant and desirable . . . Country, yet considering the sore persecution of the Saints and Servants in their times, they might be truly said to be brought out of the house of bondage; Israel's bondage was outward chiefly; but there's a Conscience Bondage, and that is the sorest, and that with great and heavy outward sufferings, too.\(^{32}\)

The freedom from bondage was followed by the second step in redemption, the passage "over the great Atlantick Ocean . . . and that with the most remarkable safety in those dayes; so to plant them his Vineyard in this Wilderness" which he compared to the passage through the Red Sea (Exod. 15:19). Not only had God delivered the new Israelites ", . . . out of Egypt, thou has cast out the heathen and planted it" (Ps. 80:8), ", . . as in the Parable to gather out the Stone for the planting of the vineyard . . ." indicated. God's gifts continued, for:
... at first planting of his Vineyard in this Land in the
days of our Fore-fathers, he settled Evangelical Churches
according to the Pattern on the Mount, viz those primitive
Times of the Gospel without respect to Humane Traditions as
the Inventions of Men.\(^3\)

God's mercies extended beyond the planting of the vineyard;
He had bestowed upon her "... thy Holy sabbath, and commandest
them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant,"
(Neh. 9:14) in the mercies of "his Churches in New-England in those
first times with pure Worship and Ordinances ..." along with
towers in the midst of the vineyard and civil judges, and "... rulers wise and godly."\(^3\)

This list indicated that God's mercies were extensive; this
minister hinted, too, that if the saints compared their own days
with "... former day with our times," such a comparison would
easily justify considering Jeremiah's words (2:21) which pic-
tured the New England wilderness: "Yet I had planted thee a noble
vine, wholly of right seed: how then art thou turned into a degen-
erate plant of a strange vine unto me?" These words would help the
saints understand their unfaithfulness to God, again justifying
Jeremiah's (31:32) words which were quite relevant to the confusion
in New England:

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers
in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the
land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was
a husband unto them, saith the LORD.\(^35\)

God's new covenant indeed existed in the American wilderness,
although imperfectly observed by New England's sinning saints.

"Monstrous Head-Towers, and other antick Dresses," along with
Isaiah's description of evils (3:13-24)--Pride, oppression, "women
rule over them," others who "grind the faces of the poor,"
"Tinkling ornaments," "chains and bracelets," "The rings, and
nose jewels," "Changeable suits of apparel," "fine linen"—
certainly indicated a profound presence of evil, confirming
Isaiah's words:

And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there
shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead
of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a
36  girdling of the sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.

When the saints came to understand the horror of their practices,
they would turn and say, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord:
for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will
bind us up" (Hos. 6:1). To assist them in this process of becoming
aware of God's gifts, Jameson offered words from the Psalmist
(Ps. 44)—"We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told
us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old." Con­
tinued reflection upon these words and the remaining twenty-five
verses could teach the saints much about their mission in the
wilderness. 37

Because New England had "forgotten the Design and Ends of our
Fore-Fathers coming into this Wilderness, viz, Religion and Godli­
ness . . .," Jeremiah's words seemed appropriate to describe the
present religious state of the saints, for he stated (6:13) "For
from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is
given to be covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest
every one dealeth falsely." Jameson's reflection upon this verse
indicated that "... if we are not as yet a vineyard laid waste,
assuredly we are by present and impending judgment laid open to it,
and have cause to fear." 38
The Internal Wilderness According to Samuel Willard

Weariness was a persistent theme in the sermons during the last two decades of the seventeenth century. It appeared in listless service, in religious formalism, in the monotonous, difficult lie of the saints. Samuel Willard understood this, appreciating that weariness stemmed from trying to honour God properly, from the misuse of military exercises, and from the clearly sinful conduct in New England. He discovered, however, in Peter's words (I Peter 4:12), "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the Fiery Tryal, which is to make you, as though some strange thing happened to you," the source of truths which might better strengthen the saints as they sought to understand the meaning of their "Fiery Tryal" in the New England wilderness. 39

Before Samuel Willard had completed his sermon, his congregation had heard that Israel's wilderness experiences had been sent by God to purge and to assist her in the journey into the Promised Land; they also understood that God was striving to teach his New England to use her wilderness trials for reformation and repentance, instructing his congregation to perceive the "... pain, grief, and trouble which they put the mind of man to, and sometimes his body also, as render them exceedingly difficult to bear; and because as fire they serve to purge and cleanse them from many pollutions ... ."40

What apparently distressed Willard's congregation was the congeries of events that lacked meaning, resulting in an inner confusion and bewilderment about the saints' mission in the New England wilderness. He attempted to alleviate some of this confusion through
the appropriate use of Biblical metaphors which stressed that the trials of the first Israelites contained much that could help the New England saints to perhaps more fully accept God's will. He referred, for example, to the psalmist's confusion and inner bewilderment in the presence of God's wonders, then non-repentant and sinful New England could learn much from each, for she was neither repentant nor sinless as she witnessed God's mercies.

Willard could not deny that his flock had suffered; he emphasized, however, that as God had instructed "Israel in Egypt" about the inner meanings of her sufferings, so would God enlighten New England's understanding about the sufferings that were separating her from Him. God's fiery trials manifested his "sorest anger" as it had provoked God when he led the Israelites "... through the wilderness ..." which involved "a going through fire and water ...." New England's history was similar; God was leading her through trials to purify His people and His church. 41

Willard partially perceived Israel's journey into the Promised Land in terms of the psalmist's words (66:13) which indicated the path which the new Israelites must follow; as Israel's successor, she would pass through "fire and water," but she had to remember that "these things I have spoken to you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have retribution: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16 ult.). 42 Willard's quotation referred to verse thirty-three.

The saints certainly would "overcome the world," provided they eliminated evil from their midst and if they remembered that their God was the One who had instructed ancient Israel in her journey.
The trials, "which Israel met in the wilderness," were "his means whereby God . . . certified them, that the design of all these was only this, that he might humble thee, and prove thee, to do good in thy latter end." God was teaching His New England saints a similar lesson.43

If she was to be aware of God's love, she would have to learn that, as Israel had "... not hearkened unto Moses for anguish of spirit and cruel bondage" (Exod. 6:9) and had suffered, a similar judgment awaited New England if she persisted in disobeying the successors of Moses in seventeenth century New England. This demanded an interior change that would permit them to understand that God's higher hand moves the "lesser wheels" and that a winnowing time would descend upon the wilderness if no change occurred.44

Sin ruptured God's covenant; it could be repaired only with reformation and repentance. Willard and his ministerial colleagues knew this, as they constantly preached that greater judgments would descend upon the saints if change did not occur. Willard taught that God's judgments "which befell the church in the wilderness" were intended to remind the people that "... and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." They had come from her sins, implying that additional evils "will break down this hedge, and let the wild beasts in upon them, to devour them." Sin had dimmed the saints' memory of the "great pains . . . God afterward did take with his people for their Reformation, and when they had forgotten the work he had done in Egypt, in the wilderness and revolted from him . . ." suggesting that the saints'
reformation consisted in recalling both God's mercies and their selfish response to these. 45

Without "an inward working upon the hearts . . . by the spirit of God," however, there was scant hope for a successful reformation, for the "sottishness in Men" had so corrupted the saints that they cannot think their ways are perverse." Harangues about evil, too, were frivolous, for it was

... not crying out our sin in general, nor calling of Solemn Assemblies, Fasting, Praying, Confession, Petitionary, renewing of Covenants, making of Laws, putting away some more gross and enormous sin that are apparently provoking, that will answer Gods expectation, and so put a stop to his anger, and turn away his Judgments from us. It is another manner of thing to Reform.

"It is another manner of thing to Reform," Willard continued, as he offered words from Jeremiah (31:18) which indicated what New England's attitudes towards God should be; God had said "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God."

They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities; and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.46

Honesty about her unfaithfulness to God was of paramount importance to New England, for God's perceptions of the saints were needed and "if . . . we do not put this sense upon the present state of affairs, we shall deceive ourselves, and be exposed to more than this wrath; and is not this a fearful thing?"47

It would be a "fearful thing," "a madness to Paroxism," especially when "we see him up in arms, and causing the arrows of his vengeance to fly among us," as he is "Marching through our Land in his
Fury." God had labored to help his saints and His considerable efforts suggested to Willard that the saints might remember

All the cost and care, are peculiar husbandry that God hath laid out upon them is lost; he hath been at a great more of expense upon this Vineyard, than upon the vast wilderness . . . God in this account compares his people to a vine, which sort of a plant, that if it bear well, and good grapes plentifully, is very excellent and useful; but if it doth not so bear, it is good for nothing but to make a fire of: Ezek. 15 begin.

Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son provided Samuel Willard with the story that would explain New England's apostacy. This parable, the story of the younger son who claimed his inheritance and left home to spend it upon an immoral life only to return to his father's home when he had experienced the emptiness of sin, became the basis for twenty-two sermons which Willard preached in 1684 and clearly illustrate how a skilled minister could select a New Testament passage and amplify its meaning through extended citations from the Old Testament which tended to remind his congregations that Israel's experience had much to suggest about God's mercies. Willard's treat indicated, too, that the saints external trials mirrored a deeper torment and confusion within their hearts.

Willard's assertion that "God's grace chuseth oftentimes the vilest and worst of men to make itself know upon" was based upon his likening of New England to the younger son of the Father (Luke 16:1).

The Prodigal's actions reflected a "contentious will" which cloaked "wicked intentions . . . fairest pretences," and a "carnal confidence" and presumption that directly contradicted Jeremiah's words (9:23) which Willard cited for his congregation:

Thus Saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches.
Reprobate, haughty actions manifested the presence of a sinful arrogance that indicated a forgetfulness of God's mercies, as Hos. 2:8,9 indicated—"For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal." Such conduct so angered God that He said:

Therefore will I return and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness. 50

Forgetfulness of God, a sign that man's interior was confused and bewildered in its search for understanding in the wilderness, resulted in the honoring of the "baals," i.e., physical and spiritual goods that so satisfied some of the saints that these had replaced God as the objects of their devotion, forced Willard to comment that "all those natural and acquired favours which God bestowed upon him, to be his own" had become a source of dissention, as the sight of prospering evil saints and others suffering in performing God's will indicated. New England's sinful sinners vindicated Willard's use of Jeremiah's words (44:16)—"As for the word thou has spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee." Yet, within the hearts of such rebellious individuals, Godly consciences remained, for additional words from Jeremiah (31:18) revealed that:

I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastized me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn to me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God.51

Willard continued to parallel the New England saint with the ancient Israelite, for he saw him as the "man . . . born as the wild-ass-colt, Job 11.12 which never keeps in the enclosures, but hath the wilderness for his range." Such defiant conduct
indicated that the sinner had strayed from God's pastures, defying God who "hath made the earth by his power, . . . hath established the word by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion."\(^5^2\)

Errant conduct posed the troublesome question about the sinful saints who prospered and the good saints who suffered in the American wilderness. Willard understood this, both as his references to the Old Testament indicated, along with his observation that "God sometimes grants wicked me large Portions of Favours," and "Leaves them to use them as their own pleasure, without controle."\(^5^3\)

Citations from the Old Testament, from Job and Jeremiah, allowed Willard to address this problem through Scripture. To those perhaps who did not understand, or despaired of, the power of wisdom in explaining the nature of will, Willard offered the example of Job for their consolation and strength.

Zophar, one of Job's three questioners, instructed Job (chapter 20) but not satisfactorily, for at the end of his comments (chapter 21, vs. 1), Scripture says: "But Job answered and said." The remaining verses are not cited in the printed text of Willard's sermon, but the entire chapter which is a rejection of Zophar's comments concluded with Job's observation "How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?" (vs. 34). If Job's words suggested little consolation to those suffering in the wilderness, an additional reference to Jeremiah perhaps was more suitable (12:1), for the sinner pleaded:
Righteous thou art, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all the happy that deal very treacherously?  

Both the sinner and the saint were instructed, however, that God's patience was limited. Willard reinforced this statement with his own reflections which he buttressed with Scripture:

When God would not longer leave Israel to himself, he hedgeth up his way with thorns, that he shall not find the way to come at his lust and lovers, Hos. 2:6, 7. But when he lets men have a large range; liberty and opportunity, when he afflicts them not, but they prosper and have all at will, and there is no outward controls, this is a leaving of men, thus God did to Ephraim, Hos. 4:7 Ephraim is joyned to idols, let him alone.  

God's separation from man resulted when Babylon had sinned; the prodigal's separation from God indicated that "every child of Adam left to himself will prove a prodigal." This inevitable condition indicated that, "Natural men will serve God no longer than may answer to their own carnall ends," simultaneously confirming that man's interior confusion and bewilderment testified that "man is estranged from God." They have, as the prophet indicated, listened to "... the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me." This alienation began with mental confusion,

... as estrangement in the understanding, they knew him not, though God be near to them, they see him not, though he doth all for them, they do not observe it, Hos. 2:8. She did not know I gave her Corn, etc.

The estranged prodigal revealed one of the main emphases in Willard's case against the New England sinner; i.e., the sinner's lack of gratitude for God's many gifts, or as Willard stated, "the more God doth for Sinners, the farther they seek to get away from him." The final destruction of the winner Willard illustrated through the
Psalmist's words, "for, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish; thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee" (73:27). Willard's own reflections indicated the same things, for he stated that their "wicked Apostacy is here compared to a journey . . ." which ended in sin, fulfilling Ezekiel's words (8:12):

Then he said unto me, Son of Man, hast thou seen what the ancient of the house of Israel, do in the dark, every man in the chamber of his imagery? for they say, the LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsake the earth.57

This rejection of God, which resulted in the inner torment of the sinner, came slowly, for the saints reached "the height of profaneness by degrees." The saints' return to God would be equally slow, for they "must be reduced to an afflicted and distressed condition before they will think of a return, Hos. 5:15." Their ingratitude, not merely an attempt to strip God of his glory, revealed their powerlessness in the presence of evil, indicating that they had become what "their hearts are." Ingratitude was ". . . the great quarrel which God hath with the world of sinful men, that he is forgotten and disregarded while they seek and serve themselves, Hos. 1:16,17." The sinner, consuming "... time and strength, and estate in the service of sin," had earned a "great condemnation in the last day." Hos. 13:9 "Oh, Israel, thou has destroyed thyself." Isaiah's words, too, (55:2) admirably characterized New England's condition: "Wherefore do you spread your money for what is not bread?"58

The patient descent into evil culminated in "a mighty famine in that Land . . .," so that the Prodigal "began to want." This painful condition indicated an inner bankruptcy and "all that which
natural or unregenerate man place their confidence in, will fail, and leave them short of salvation," along with the awareness that, in such a condition, "the world then most of all deceives and fails, when men have the most need of help." Willard stressed this, for

Only do you know your misery, and fly to God in time to get redress of it' so shall you find in him, all that which is in vain. And to no purpose you have been seeking in a howling wilderness, in a famishing world.59

The prodigal's effort, a "seeking in a howling wilderness . . .," to grasp for infinite meaning in finite realities revealed that Willard effectively used the saints' improper use of God's mercies as signs of their interior wilderness condition as well as a sign of God's continued love; "when God intends saving Grace to any, he first makes them effectually sensible of their own miserable and undone state." This interior awareness of separation is important, Willard stressed, for:

In this afflicted estate, men are apt to ponder and think of their condition: Affliction puts men upon consideration, and make them usually more ready to learn, and to take unto their meditation such things as concern them, Hos. 5:15.60

Evil, therefore, served God's purpose of reminding the saints about the nature of their interior barrenness, for "this conviction is to make him know and feel this pressing condition . . . that he is now undergoing perdition," indicating, too, that "those that will not serve God, shall have a worse master." Man's struggle with God did not end with this conviction, for his pride and stubbornness resulted in additional searches, terminating in a renewed understanding of internal confusion that told the saint that "it is vain to look anywhere for salvation." The sinner had
to understand that the "Fallen, back-slidding wandering Prodigals may have hope with him in returning, Hos. 13.9 Oh Israel thou hast destroyed thy self, but in me is thy help."61

Hope would result when God invited man to return to Him, as Hosea (14:1) had told Israel - O Israel, return to the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." Before the return to God was completed, the sinner had first to seize the horror of his "necessary and voluntary bondage" to evil which had captured his lust and turned "his body into a living cask." The sinner's final humiliation was required so that he might see not only the heights he had fallen from, but also the "folly of sinful man . . . "62

The New England sinner, like the Prodigal who had filled his belly with the "huskes that swine did eat" and who had discovered that "The things of this world are but husks," then would realize that he had squandered his wealth which turned him into a "nasty, brutish, filthy, loathsome" person, "always wallowing in the mire of defiling themselves." This deepened conviction of inner confusion and turmoil produced, within the sinner, an awareness that he was "beside himself" and powerless to change. Similar to the "broken cistern in which there is no water" and which is powerless to change its condition, the broken sinner in the New England wilderness had to experience a similar interior paralysis before his conversion.63

As God summons the sinner, appealing to his "UNDERSTANDING" because He works according to man's nature, confidence within the sinner begins to develop as he simultaneously begins to understand
the horribleness of his sin. Although the sinner is under the power of the spirit, Willard cautioned that this stage of conversion was fraught with danger, for the sinner resembled the seaman

that sleeps at the top of the Mast, . . . in more danger, of being thrown into the Sea and drowned, because he is asleep; and be sure, hell will be no whit easier to bear, because you drop into it unawares.64

Willard's comments, indicating that the moment of the sinner's greatest danger coincided with God's offer of redemption, were followed by the insight that, as the sinner pondered his resolution to return to the Father, he also had to understand that his "soul . . . perishes, if not freed." Dallying with sin indicated that the sinner had lost "the Images of God: and that Ashur will not save."
The New England sinner knew that Ashur, the Assyrian deity which embodied the ideals and practices which the Israelites rejected, represented the false gods and idols they were worshipping within the New England wilderness.65

Central in the process of God's redeeming acts was the Father's love which Willard constantly emphasized. The sinner's awareness of his evilness possessed no saving value, for it was merely rational knowledge; the sinner had to comprehend that he contained "nothing but the ground of despair, and all his hope in God, Hos. 13.9" would save him, as the prophet had said centuries before: "Oh Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help." God's power would save the sinner, reminding him that God used evil for his purposes, as Romans (2:4) indicated:

Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering not know that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?66
Willard continued to expound upon this theme, stressing that the "goodness of God is a great motive to true repentance, Rom. 2:4," kindling within the sinner the memory of God's kindnesses. It was "not terror" that saved the sinner, for "God's grace, not terror alone" which was central to salvation. The love that once called Israel (Hos. 14:1) --"0 Israel, return to the LORD thy God: for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity."--still worked within the New England wilderness, offering salvation and exciting the sinner to remember God's goodnesses, as Willard's citation of the Song of Songs (1:4) revealed.

Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.

This message remained the sinner's hope, even though Willard reminded them that "we're by nature, children of wrath."  

The return of the Prodigal indicated that he had "demeaned himself," both indicating and manifesting that the sinner confessed his sins with the "greatest aggravation." No longer does the sinner attempt to shift his guilt to others, as Eve did when God spoke to her in the Garden (Gen. 3:12), saying "What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Rather, the repentant sinner resembled the centurion whom Jesus visited (Luke 7:1-10) and who confessed, "I am not worthy . . . ." God's love had revealed the malice of sin so that the sinner could acknowledge that he had abused God's mercies and "... dishonoured his Great name with his flax and wool, etc. Hos. 2:8,9." The sinner is thus led to "a voluntary resignation of himself to God's dispose," as he responded to God's love which Hosea exemplified
(14:1)—"O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." Such manifestations of love suggested to Willard that men "are damned because they slight the Gospel, not because they are reprobated."68

Willard never ceased stressing that repentance was God's gift and that man's salvation depended upon his receiving God's love. God's compassion was the "only moving cause" of man's forgiveness; God's compassion, his "love and grief," were but pale indications of divine love because He merely "speaks after the manner of men."

Willard knew of God's tenderness, stating that:

Thus God also (speaking in our own dialect) seeing poor sinners in their misery, expresseth himself like one whose heart is ready to burst, Hos. 1:18. How shall I give thee up? My heart is turned: my repentings are kindled.69

Willard's sermon constantly reiterated man's powerlessness in the face of his interior confusion and bewilderment. Incapable of educing any indices of reformation, this changed "when God manifests his special love to the soul of a Sinner in Conversion," for ". . . it will draw forth the most kindly acts of true Repentance." Willard's development of this theme displayed a deep compassion, tenderness, and familiarity with Christian sentiment, for he understood that the day of reunion with the Father was the sinner's "wedding day" that meant that the sinner, in the words of Rev. 20:6, ". . . shall reign with him a thousand years."

Conversion demonstrated that "God manifests his choice and incomparable love to a Sinner. . .," granting freedom and confirming the Father's words that "I have sent forth my Prisoners out of the pit where there is no water." This God-given union comes directly from
the Father, culminating in the exchange of kisses between the father and son and which foreshadows "... that union which in conversation is made between Christ and the soul. God Acts. 33:4."
This reference to Genesis reminded the congregation that as "... Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.," so would New England run to meet, embrace, and kiss when she met the Father. In this union,

Each doth know, as it were, breath himself unto the others bosom; they exchange souls, manifesting by dumb designs, that love which is too great for words to express, that by this expression we are taught.70

This exchange of affection is "no dissimulation," for God's "... heart goes out with his promises;" when this happens in the wilderness, the sinner comes to realize that his heart resembled that of the ancient Israelite as he discovered that his inner confusion and bewilderment ended when God allowed him to repent. These long sermons of Willard, touching upon the interior confusion that disturbed many in the closing decades of the seventeenth century, clearly illustrated that the New England ministers were capable of adapting their sermons to speak to the interior wilderness that troubled many.71

Samuel Willard's Barren Fig-Tree Doomed, another series of sermons which were published in 1692, spoke about the ministers' role in the visible church "under the Privileges therein conferred upon them." These sermons, based upon Jesus' parable about the barren fig tree (Luke 13:6-9), contained many images drawn from the Old Testament which emphasized that New England could learn much from Israel's experiences in the wilderness.
Equating the fig-trees with "particular ministers" whom God had planted in the American wilderness to protect his "visible church," New England was the place where God's special vines differentiated her "from the rest of the World which is therefore compared to a Wilderness in opposition to the Church." Her vines rested in "fruitful Hills" and were protected because "God hath set up a Wall or Hedge about it, to keep out such as are enemies to Him and his people . . . ." God had done more, providing the land with "men eminent and desirable," the "choicest vines," Jer. 2:21. I planted thee a noble vine." Although God's initial work had been perfect, Willard commented that "there are fruitless fig-trees in a vineyard. . . ." God had intended that "... no beast or prey get into it to devour, no inroads be made upon it . . . .," yet Willard asked his congregation:

Is that God's Vineyard? And is all the rest of the World a Wilderness? and doth that begin to look like a Wilderness too? are there growing in it, instead of Plants of Renown the degenerate Plants of a strange vine? doth it bring Instead of grapes, wild Grapes? 72

Willard believed that degeneracy had touched the vineyard, as his citation to Hos. 10:1 indicated because God had a "complaint which he makes of Israel . . . . He is an empty vine, he brings forth fruit to himself." To change this condition, Willard suggested that the congregation turn to God for "manuring" (John 15:2) so that Every branch in me that beareth no fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth that it may bring forth more fruit." 73

Willard paralleled the New England ministers to fig-trees that should have produced fruit, as Hosea (9:10) said of Israel, because
"I saw your Father as the first ripe in the Fig-tree, at her time," buttressing these reflections with a citation from St. John (15:8)—"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."—to remind the ministers of their obligations. God had planted his vines in the wilderness for an important reason.

These selected vines were to assist God, for He had called them through his Gospel message of reformation and repentance. Ministers were His assistants, His agents who were to inform the saints about His promises which included baptism and His covenant which was "conditional." This covenant did not guarantee salvation, for it merely incorporated the elect in God's vineyard which the ministers were to protect. Signs of degeneracy . . . briars and thorns . . . indicated that there were "cursed Plants that are appointed for burning . . ." within the church.

Discord and dissention proved that the "Wedding Garment," i.e., the requisite dispositions to accept the invitation to the wedding feast, was absent among many of the saints. Such resembled those whom Hosea had condemned (10:1) for "Israel" is an empty vineyard, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself; according to the multitude of his fruits he hath increased the alterars; according to the goodness of his land thy have made goodly images.

New England was producing wild grapes, i.e., dissention, conflict, and discord. This ingratitude, manifestations of an interior bewilderment because of the saints' refusal to obey God, occurred even though God had guarded New England and . . . fenced it, and gathered out the stone thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of
it; and also made a winepress therein; and he looked that it
should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes
(Isa. 5:7)

New England's deplorable condition, however, was checked by signs
of goodness, for Willard observed that there were some who

... walk in conformity to the Rule of God's words, frame their
lives in all things according to it; these are fruits pleasing
to him, and such as become his Vineyard, and those where in
you may shew forth his praise.77

These Godly saints were significant to Willard, for they could
remind the less observant that Jeremiah's words (2:30) were suitable
descriptions of their lives, for he had stated that "In vain have
I smitten your children; they received no correction: your own
sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion." The
Godless could also benefit from a renewed reflection upon God's
mercies to New England, using Isaiah's words (5:4) which indicated
God's concern for New England, Israel's heir to God's promises in
the new wilderness.

What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have
not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should
bring forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes?78

Willard continued to pursue this theme of the saints' ingrati-
tude in the light of God's mercies to New England. He emphasized,
citing the psalmist (139:7) who served to remind both saints and
sinners that it was impossible to flee God's presence—"Whither
shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy
presence?—as well as stating that God was the "Provident
husbandman" who was

... all Eye, & that eye is fixt upon all things, and therefore
is fixt upon all things, and therefore is said to behold them.
Ps. 33:33,13,14.79
The psalmist's words, "the LORD looketh from heaven, he beholdeth all the sons of men," and "From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth," indicated God's concern for both the saints and those who lacked the "Wedding Garment." God "treats him accordingly," even though they yielded only poor fruit. Such unfaithful ministers reflected Israel's experiences, for

When Israel were in the Wilderness, and were accounted Holiness to the Lord, yet there was many a vile witch discovered, and a mixt multitude always rebelling against God.80

Willard's effective use of Biblical metaphors is obvious in his vivid description of the vineyard's decay. Citations from Isaiah (chapter 5), coupled with the example of Judas' betrayal of Jesus and Hosea's words (10:1), clearly indicated that the saint was responsible for his degeneracy, even though some "Indeed make a shew as if they were green trees, and are full of leaves of an outward profession. . . ." Willard compared such saints, using Jesus' description of the scribes and Pharisees whom he liken to "whited sepulchres . . . full . . . of all uncleanness," that "outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." New England's saints were "empty-plants," not because of God's limitations, but because "there is a natural barrenness unto God in all Adams Posterity" and because "his soul is become such soil, as no good fruit will grow in it; it will bring forth nothing but thorns and thistles." In addition, ". . . the Moral power of his Soul habitually bent unto Sin, and his heart is set in him to do wickedly." (Ecc. 8:11) clearly
indicating that men's hearts "naturally and voluntarily resist the spirit of God."\(^81\)

A major cause of God's displeasure with the ministers stemmed from their inability to account for the gifts which God had granted them, as Willard's use of Amos (4:6) indicated:

And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

This remissful conduct merely indicated that ingratitude for God's mercies was "one great reason for the barrenness of professors," accounting for that internal wilderness and emptiness that Willard characterized either as partial or total. The former, "a root of corruption . . . leading to unfruitfulness in God's children in this life," was contrasted with "total powerlessness" which indicated that "The stock, and root and branches are dead; and as a dead tree cannot bear, cannot put life into it, a Miracle only can. John 1:13," i.e., "... because ye have known the Father." Willard understood this type of knowledge in terms of a journey "to the Father, the great Husbandman and praye to him that he will purge you, that so you may bear fruit."\(^82\)

The saints refusal to accept repentance would produce "A fearful Destruction . . . upon such as have wearied out God's patience by their barrenness," justifying God's judgment: "Cut it down." To avoid this judgment, Willard inferred that Jeremiah's words (4:4) about Israel's future would be true of New England, for she had not heeded God's inunction to reform.

Circumcize yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that non can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.
Were no repentance to enter into the hearts of the saints, God's punishments would assuredly come so that "the increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath." Such judgments manifested the extent of God's displeasure with his New England ministers who had to remember that: "All those that are planted in Gods Vineyards, were at first transported out of the Wilderness: there was no difference in them from others, but what God was pleased to make by bringing them under the Gospel." 83

Additional reflections revealed that Willard perceived the ministers as those whose ". . . birth and nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father as an Amorite, and thy mother a "Hittite" (Ezek. 16:3). Israel's successors in the American wilderness must remember that God's patience was limited and "There is no wood will burn so fiercely and make so hot a fire, as that barren fig-tree, when it is cut down, and cast into unquenchable flames." Because God's gifts had been so extraordinary, the pain would be more intensive, for,

Then you will wish that you had never grown in such a soil, been within such a pale, enjoyed so much cost and labour as was laid out upon you then you will wish that you have grown in the remotest Desart, where God and Christ had never been heard of. 84

New England's fig trees, drawing "sap, shade, sunbeam," from the fruitful trees, harmed not only themselves but their flocks. The land's "barren professors" constituted a "Society of Carnal Professors" which had brought the "visible Church into a wilderness of profaneness and immorality . . .;" their actions harmed others, for "the Godly kept in mourning." 85
If conditions did not change within the vineyard, Willard could not guarantee that God's wrath would be restrained, for "well then may it be expected, that God will not long keep up the fence about such a piece of ground, so unprofitable to him." Willard suggested that "God's faith and Ministers" attempt "to stay his judgments when they are ready to break in upon and destroy barren professors," for "sanctifying grace" can restore "lapsed human nature, and its turns that love which before was carnal into a holy love." Willard buttressed these comments with the story of Isaiah's vision of the Lord which prompted him to cry out:

Then said I, Woe is me: for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts (6:5). 86

New England's ministers had seen the Lord and they, too, needed not only clean lips but reformed and repentant hearts. Their importance in New England Willard underscored by citing Jeremiah's call (1:5) which, along with Isaiah's vision of the Lord, reenforced his words, for

Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. 87

Both prophets, in Willard's interpretation, indicated that great "digging and dung" were required before good fruit would appear in New England; its appearance would indicate that God had forgiven the New England minister, that "his sin shall be blotted out as a cloud . . . ." 88

Funerals provided New England ministers with the opportunity to speak about God's providences. When Governor John Leveret died in 1679, Samuel Willard's funeral sermon indicated that God's
judgments were descending upon the wilderness. Willard's text, Ezek. 22:30,31., mentioned Israel's sinfulness and that her offerings to God only confirmed her evilness in God's sight. The ensuing doctrinal pronouncement indicated this, because "When Apostacy hath opened a breach to let in mistery, and God seeks for, but cannot find to make it up, it is a sad presage of great calamity." 89

Additional preached sermons by Willard indicated his persistent concern about the interior wilderness within the saints. Four sermons preached between 1681 - 1684, focusing upon man's adoption by God, the significance of death, elections, and animosity towards God, all indicated that weariness and confusion entered into all aspects of New England's life. Each also demonstrated that Willard was extremely skilled in his use of wilderness images which reinforced his doctrinal statements.

Willard selected I John 3:2:

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 90

as the scriptural source for his doctrine which stated that "the poorest and most despised believed in the World are now the sons of God."

He contrasted this new condition with man's life prior to the advent of God's love by comments that the saints had once been "at that time . . . aliens . . . from the Covenant of promise" (Eph. 2:12) so that they resembled the Prodigal who, upon his return to the Father, stated "I am not worthy to be called thy son" (Luke 15:21). Sonship, God's "voluntary adoption," meant that the saints had become "joynt heirs with him," "the Heir of all things." These scriptural sources
enlivened Willard's understanding of this new relationship with God so that he might add that:

... man is made to believe, he is then and not till then born of God, he is then also married to Christ; Christ married with none that are dead; he finds them indeed spiritually dead when he comes to them; but he first quickens them by his Grace ...

This transformation meant that each became "a child of God so that those who were before by way of disgrace called Adam's Son, and Children of Hell ... should rise and be henceforth called the Children of God."^92

Additional comments suggested reasons for hope within New England. The regenerated saints now shared "part of the Glorification, it is something of Heaven, meeting us on our way; it is a bunch of those grapes, which grow in the celestial Canaan, brought us to taste in the wilderness." God's saints have "their sips and foretastes, and the first fruits of their Glory here . . .," so that they appear to have been "taken unto the Mount, rapt up in the third Heaven . . .." So intense was this love that the saints might honestly ponder "who will give me the wings of a Dove, that I might mount up and be done. . . ." The fullest measure of this love would be revealed, however, on the day of Christ's appearance when each would understand that "it is your Marriage-day, in which your bridegroom will shew himself to you in his glory, you therefore should be diligent in making ready to meet him. . . ." On that day, when they realized that "they are called the Bride, the Lambs wife, Rev. 19:7, 2:9 and it is the wives prerogatives to share in their husbands honor," because they have marked the end of their waiting for God's
presence. Their hopes, until then, would be reflected "through a glass" which Willard depicted as:

"... not a Perspective Glass, which represents things near and plain, and the things themselves, but it is a Looking Glass, which reflects only the rayes and representation of things, and when they have shown us all they can, we must now conclude with Job 26.14. How little is heard of him?"

When Major Savage died in 1681, Willard used the occasion to suggest that death "... is sometimes a presaging forerunner of approaching evil, caused both by the death of a notable leader and the sins of the people." Willard believed this, for successful leaders were the representatives of God and

"... do stand between him and his People, that he can do nothing to them: God had ruined Israel in the wilderness for their sins had not Moses stood between them and pleaded for them, Psalm 106:13 Therefore he said he would destroy them, had not MOSES his chosen stood before him in the breach to turn away his wrath."

New England's ministers, the successors of Moses in the wilderness, served a similar function, acting as safeguards for the saints who were unkind, drunkards, and unworshipping. Their leaders, spiritual and civil, were constant reminders that their external acts must reflect an internal conformity to God's will. This important function was imperiled, however, when leaders began to die, for

"... when the Pillars are gone, how shall the building stand? When the watch-men are asleep, who shall descry, and warn us of the enemies approach? when the Wall is pluckt down, and the hedge removed, who shall keep out the Bore of the Wilderness? when the Gap-men are taken away, who shall stand in the breaches? when the lights are put out, who shall direct us in a right way?"

When Samuel Willard spoke about the failure of piety in the New England wilderness, his imagery contained vivid references to the first Israelites and their experiences in the desert, for he understood these as forerunners of New England's experiences.
Willard suggested God's ministers were commissioned "to denounce awful threatenings against and Apostatizing Generation . . .," and that the ministers were "on the Watch-Tower, and . . . charging them upon pain of death to sound when occasion calls for it." Some ministers spoke more forcefully than others, because "... a spirit ... the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8) to remind the saints that God was saying of them, as he had of Israel, that "... I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth." New England's many gifts indicated that she, as in the case of Israel (2:31), had not properly valued these, for she

... hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the hourse rusheth into the battle.

God had gifted New England and she could find no evil in his gifts; despite New England's unfaithfulness, God remained mindful of her, for:

... He hath not forgotten the love of your Fathers, who followed him into a Wilderness, a Land that was not sown: He hath a respect for the faithful in the land: though an Ax be us, and ready to fall, yet he sees a few clusters and will spare it ... .96

New England's sins, unkindnesses and enviousness, God does understand and Willard's observation upon the condition of the saints leads him to emphasize that the seriousness of their conduct rested in a divided heart, for:

It is not a sin only, but a judgment too, and that which tends to issue in mistery, Hos. 10:2 Their heart is divided, now shall they be found guilty. Gal. 5:15. If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.97
In a sense, discontent and confusion indicated the presence of conspiracies against God, for troubles indicated that the saints hearts were not united in their mission of doing God's will in the New England wilderness. Willard spoke about conspiracies against God, selecting citations from the Book of Job which reenforced his belief that suffering was beyond human comprehension.

Those conspiring or working against God could ponder Eliphaz's futile efforts to explain the nature of evil. Book 38 of Job consists of a series of questions which God asked Job, and for Willard, these questions illustrated God's dominion over the entire universe. Willard cited Job: 38:8 to 11. God's questions, beginning with the second verse, asked "Who is this that darkeneth my counsel by words without knowledge,?" included verse eight which asked "or to shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as it had been issued out of the womb." Verse eleven asked, "And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?"

These verses from Job, Willard linked with Psal. 65:7, "which stilleth the noise of the Seas, the noise of their waves, also the tumults of the People," to indicate that "God's hand hold the "Flood-gates . . . ."98

God's providence was New England's safeguard in the midst of the numerous conspiracies which engulf her; the church belong to Him and it is

... the house which is built upon the Rock, wind, rain and floods can never dissettle it; this is the City which hath foundations, the Mount Zion which God loveth, and will establish forever: to this Christ hath made that promise, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Math. 16:18
Nothing could shake this church because Willard claimed that David believed this, "Psal. 46:5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved." So confident was Willard in this belief that he could state:

Oh! with what sedateness doth God sit, and with how much holy contempt doth he behold an Army of Pismires and Moes, trying to undermine the brazen walls of his . . . and blow up that rock on which his Church is built?

Because of this, New England's saints could take great solace from God's presence; it meant that God was

. . . not ceasing day nor night to be earnestly and importunately putting him in mind of his Covenant, his Name and Glory? and in Faith pray to him in the behalf of his poor, despised, and abused Church, which is a Lilly among Thorns, that he would remember and not forget, or grow unmindful of the Congregation which he hath purchased of old . . . .

Cotton Mather's Wilderness and Increase Mather's Ichabod

Cotton Mather's sermons have a vividness and liveliness that is partially explained by his liberal use of metaphors drawn from the Old Testament. Military Duties, a sermon to the Trained Band, indicated that God used military skills; Mather's colorful demonstration of God's attitudes towards the military was reflected in Mather's comments that:

It is recorded of the Patriarch Abraham (of that Father of the Faithful) in Gen. 14.14, that he had a Kind of Artillery Garden at his house, and Artillery Company was under his conduct where-to about forty files belonged. Shall we imagine that God will teach any unlawful things? No; He described the presence of "a swarthy Generation of Philistines here, the Indians" who had "... had many a Hellish Feast on English Flesh; and the main thing wherein the wild Creature out-did us and in-did us was this, They were very rare Marks-men ... ." using these comments to urge the militia to "Abstain from the
ordinary Epidemical Vices of Training Days," in particular "excesses of Surfeiting and Drunkenness," so that they might "Stand like the Israelites in the Desart of Old, pitching everyman by his Standard about the Tabernacle of the Lord."101

Mather referred to the exploits "of the Field, for us in the late Indian-war," indicating that it had been "an Holy Warr," because

Ever since we are born into the World, we have lived in Territories of our Enemies; and we scarce take a step without Annoyances from the bloody Murderers of our Souls.

This presence of evil within indicated that "we have within our Bowels, A Sheba that riseth up in Rebellion against" us, indicating the need for constant watching, for "Unless we look to this, the great Leviathan of Hell, will esteem our Iron to be but straw, and our Brass, but as Rotten Wood."102

Mather's use of the wilderness metaphors to emphasize the spiritual combat that was present within the saints' conflicts again appeared in his words about the Serviceable Man. Contrary to assertions which indicated that critics of New England were extremely vocal about her loyalty and treatment of the Indians, Mather asserted that "... you may see an Israel in America, by looking at this Plantation; may Peace be upon this Israel of God," for its history indicated that the land had become God's vineyard when "a number of Pious and Worthy men transplanted themselves unto this Wilderness with the Designs of practising the Religion of the Lord Jesus here." These people had faced problems, for

This people of God, is a part of that Israel, where it may be said, his Adversaries be round about him. The Enemies of New England have not been few or small...103
New England's enemies were numerous, for in addition to external enemies that pressed upon her, the threat of the "Episcopacy, that Common Prayer, and those unwarrantable Ceremonies, with the Land of Our Fathers Sepulchres has been defied with . . ." indicated the extent of her enemies. Against profanations of the Sabbath and other ills, Mather could only beg that the saints practice "Reformation, Reformation, Reformation!".104

Serviceable men were needed for New England's defense so that the "Present State would weather the crisis, for:

If an Heathen . . . could not think their Lives too large a price for each others Peace, what Life should be too much to be sacrificed for the Peace of a People which God counts as His own?

Mather continued to bemoan the threats engulfing New England, praying that:

God grant the last Dayes of New-England may not now be Cumming: tis too Evident, that we have more Perillous Times, and, I wish it were not as Evident, that men are too generally Lovers of their own Selves.105

Mather excoriated those "Bad Livers" because in his times of "Distress and Danger, as it never saw," they were causing New England's troubles because "Is you that bring whole Armyes of Indians and Gallic Blood Hounds in upon us. . ." Bad-Livers were the "most Querimonious, and Outragious of all People, in your Discontents," even though the "Fathers of this Country have been Warning all Bad-livers" to repent. Their efforts, along with attempts of some to directly harm the people, would fail, for "it makes them at length Vomit, their very Bowels Up."106

News of the war with France reached Mather the evening before he delivered this sermon, but the lateness of this information did not prevent him from commenting that the attacks took place upon
the more the Pagan skirts of New-England, where no ministers of God was countenanced; and that very place which is just now Assaulted and consumed, has had upon it the infamy of a most Heathenish Disrespect unto a Ministry.

Failure to reform and to repent simply indicated that the French Ax accompanied with Indian Hatchets. " were avenging God's wrath with New England, even though "A Golden Age, will arrive at this place, and this before all our First Planters are fallen a sleep. Now, tis a dismal Uncertainty and Ambiguity we see our selves placed in. " Deliverance will come to "Almost the only Garden which our Lord Jesus has in the vast continent of America, has the wild Boars of the Wilderness trying to set into it." The preached sermons of the last half of the seventeenth century indicated a shift in the meaning of the "wilderness" as metaphor from a physical condition, i.e., the wilderness as the "place within which" the ministers had discussed the meaning of the Congregational Way and, during King Phillip's War, the "place from which" the Indians had struck at God's vineyard in the New England wilderness, to perceptions of the "wilderness" as metaphor that indicated the presence of a "psychic wilderness," i.e., a spiritual malaise indicating an interior search for God which was mired in the confused, distracted church in New England.

During the final twenty years of the century, unrest continued within the church so that by 1700, when the practices of Stoddard and the Brattle Street Church had emerged, the Congregational Church suffered from growing indications that some saints were interested in alternative methods of honoring God.
The established church did not lack its defenders; one of the more vocal and eloquent was Increase Mather who, in 1702, published *Ichabod*, two sermons that addressed New England's apostacy. Mather based his first sermon upon Ezekiel 9:3, "And the Glory of the God of Israel was gone from the Cherib whereupon he was, to the Threshold of that House," educing the doctrine "That when God removed the Glory of God from a People, he used to do it gradually and not all at once." Mather confirmed this doctrine by referring to the decreased number of conversions, the emptiness of ordinances, the absence of manifested holiness amongst the converted, along with the sharp comments about individuals who mingled their position "with Divine Institutions." Also condemned was the practice of admitting individuals "not duly qualified . . . unto those ordinances which they have no right unto," an apparent reference to Stoddard's practice of using the Lord's Supper as a "converting ordinance."  

As Mather neared the conclusion of his first sermon, he indicated:

I cannot this Time proceed unto what remains. I confess I have many things in my Heart to speak, which my very Soul is concerned in the Meditation of them. O New-England! New England! Look to it, that the Glory be not removed from thee. For it begins to go. It is come to the Threshold of the House, if not to the East-Gate.

Among the many things in Mather's heart was grief about the College and his perceptions of its role in New England, for,

if the Fountain should fail: I mean the College which has been one of the Glories of New-England: If that should fail, or (which is worse) become a Nursery not of Plants of Renown, but of Degenerate Plants, who will forsake those Holy Principles of Truth, which their Fathers came unto this Land with respect thereunto; the Glory is like to be gone from these Churches unless one Generation, so that nothing of New-England
will be found in New-England itself. Let us do what we may to prevent it."

Mather's second sermon addressed the question "how Does it appear God removes the Glory by degree and not all at once?" He answered by claiming that God's rejection stemmed from New England's rejection of His ordinances and rules. God's judgments, beginning with the "lesser judgments do by degrees insensible weaken a People, and make way for that Judgment which at least proves fatal to them," could not be dismissed as incapable of descending upon New England, for

If the Glory has been removed from Jerusalem, and from the land of Israel: if from the Lesser and Great Asia? if from so many places in Europe? Is it not possible that it may be removed from New-England also?

History could therefore suggest to the saints that "we cannot say that he will have a Church in Boston, or in New-England, or in America, as long as the world shall stand." He added that "What God will do for the future with America, is not for us to determine."

The saints' obligation was to observe "his Providence," even though it seemed that "The Glory of the Lord seems to be on the wing, as some in his congregation understood when he stated "You that are Aged persons, and can remember what New-England was Fifty Years ago, that saw these Churches in their first Glory; Is there not a sad decay and diminution of the Glory?"

Mather then suggested to his congregation that it

Look into Pulpits, and see if there is such a Glory there, as once there was? New-England has had Teachers very Eminent for Learning, & no less Eminent for Holiness, & all Ministerial Accomplishment. When will Boston see a COITTON, & a NORON again! When will New-England see a HOOKER, A SHEPARD, A MITCHEL, not to mention others? No little part of the Glory was laid in the Dust when those Eminent Servants of Christ were laid
in their Graves. Look into your Civil State: Does Christ reign there as once He did. Is there that Glory in Courts, as once there was? Is not our House in diverse parts of this Land, in some danger of falling for want of Pillars to support it? Look into Towns; How few do we find that are a Glory to the places where they live? When Vacancies are made, it is a difficult thing to find persons fit to make up those Breaches. And almost every where "tis so, whether in our Ecclesiastical, Military, or Civil State. So that what our Great Hooker long since predicted, that the People of New-England would be punished with the want of Eminent Men to manage Publick Affairs, both in Church and State, is in part sadly verified already. How many Churches, how many Towns are there in New-England, that we may sign over them, and say, "The Glory is Gone." Mather grieved about New England's lost glory included references to the successes of those who labored amongst the Indians, indicating

That work of Gospelizing the INDIANS, has been one of the peculiar Glories of New England: I have in another part of the world, heard Great and Noble Personages, and those too of several Nations, speaking Honorably of New-England in that. There the whole Bible has been Translated into the Indian Language. And in that there were some that while since were Pagans, are not become Preachers of the Glorious Gospel.

Particularly distressing to Mather was the future of Harvard; he feared that it "will become a Seminary for Degenerate Plants, who will with their Foolish hands pull down those Houses which their Fathers have been building for the Mane of the Lord in this Wilderness."

Even though there were signs of "a General defection in New England from Primitive Purity and Piety," Mathers indicated that "I have not spoken these things that we should Despair, but that we might be Awakened to do what we may to prevent further and greater Removals of our Glory." He asked, "Is there no way to prevent the Removal of the Glory from us? Yes there is."
The solution rested in returning to the past, so that "New England MIGHT BECOME "now what once it was!" Reform and Reformation were New England's tasks, and

This is the very work of our Generation, and the very work we engaged for into this wilderness; this is the scope and end of it: that which is written on the Forehead of NEW-ENGLAND, viz. The compleat walking in the Faith of the Gospel according to the Order of the Gospel, -- You have the Platform of Church Discipline ... If any be departed from it, let them look to it.116

Furthermore, the saints had to remember their mission which 
"was purely on a Religious account that they ventured themselves and Little ones over the vast Ocean into this which was then a waste and howling Wilderness." Doubt about New England's mission would cease, for

No one needs to Enquire What is the Order of the Gospel! You have it declared in the Platform of Church Discipline, agreed unto by the Elders and Messengers of these Church, above Fifty Years ago.117

Although Increase Mather's Ichabod had painted a rather dim picture of New England's decline during the prior fifty years, it is possible to assert that the parallel emergence of new forms of religious worship indicated that the Spirit was working deep within the hearts of the New England saints. This phenomenon, perhaps, suggests that rather than a decline in religious vitality, New England was undergoing a spiritual revival whose fullness would be seen in the Great Awakening.
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CHAPTER V

AFTERWORD

The printed sermon literature from 1650-1674 provides precise, vivid, imaginative commentaries on the religious, social, and political events in Massachusetts Bay Colony. References to frequenting ale-houses on the Sabbath were linked, within a few pages, with comments that spoke about the requirements for church membership or the reception of the Lord's Supper. Such disparate references revealed that little escaped ministerial comments which they buttressed with Biblical references from both the Old and New Testament. The memories of Winthrop, Cotton, and Hooker and other founders of the Holy Experiment in New England's wilderness found their way into the sermons through references to their principles and ideals. The results were a series of sermons that perhaps are unexcelled in American preaching because of their vividness, excellency of expression, and range of interest.

The sermons of this early period stressed that the religious practices of the saints must be in accord with God's will which He manifested simultaneously in church and state. His will, the ministers claimed, included the observation of the Ordinances, civil obedience, and the use of both ministerial expertise and civil shrewdness in resolving both the establishment and clarification of the New England way. The saints must perform according to God's established order, not according to rising whims that would result in confusion and distrust in the wilderness. The ministers, charged with
informing the saints about God's will, seriously discharged this
duty partly through their preachings which emphasized the saints'
mission in the wilderness.

Early sermons perceived the surrounding wilderness as friendly;
it contained the subdued animals, milk and honey, and the Spouse who
emerged from the wilderness to comfort the flock. These peaceful
perceptions drastically changed when the wilderness erupted into war
in 1675 as it unleashed God's vengeance upon the saints because of their
disobedience. Ministerial sermons during this middle period from
1675-1679 taught, that just as the Jews were chastized upon their
entrance into the Promised Land for their infidelities to God by the
Philistines who were God's agents in instructing the Jews about their
need to reform and repent, so were the American Indians teaching
the same lesson to the saints who also had to learn the need of
reformation and repentance. These new Philistines caused consider­
able pain, sorrow, and disruption in New England, as the ministerial
sermons revealed; at the same time, the sermons indicated that kind­
ness, consideration of God's love, and gratitude had to be present
within the hearts of the saints in their conflict. Always, the min­
isters stressed, the conflict was God's conflict and must be properly
contested. Although the ministers emphasized that the saints ought
to be grateful that greater harm had not come upon them, conditions
were still horrible according to the Synod of 1679.

The sermons of the last two decades of the seventeenth century
reveal a distinctly new emphasis, i.e., a shift from the wilderness
as an external force containing enemies and threats to an interior
wilderness which revealed that the saints were seeking meaning,
comfort, and understanding of God's will in the American wilderness. These sermons which were preached during the troubled years when the charter was revoked, when Andros ruled, and when Increase Mather failed to regain the Charter, reveal that the Ministers were interested in the growing problem of "formalism in religion," i.e., the absence of conformity between the saints' religious dispositions and attitudes and their conduct. Although these sermons contain many of the more familiar references to drunkenness, Sabbath violations, and the neglect of youth, their central emphasis focuses on the spiritual wilderness or search for God. Repentance and Reformation were needed; more significantly was the demand that the saints become more open and responsive to the Spirit who would inform their actions with the proper attitudes so that reformation and repentance would be acceptable to God.

I would suggest that the ministerial use of the biblical metaphor of "wilderness" had three distinct but overlapping meanings during the period from 1650-1700. The first refers to the meaning of the New England, as the place where the saints clarified their understanding of God's will with respect to the method of worship and government. Discussion on these issues largely ended by 1674. King Philip's War, ushered in the second meaning of the "wilderness," i.e., the place where the surrounding environment changed from a peaceful, helpful land into an area that contained God's vengeful judgments: the Indians or the Philistines. The third meaning of the "wilderness" metaphor indicated that the heart had become the new wilderness, as it sought for meaning, love, and understanding of God's will. Their interior barrenness revealed their spiritual destitution, if we may believe the
ministers, which would be dispelled as they permitted God's spirit to operate.

Perry Miller has claimed that ministerial sermons during the final decades of the seventeenth century reflected a wounded ministerial pathological condition; Emory Elliott sought to demonstrate that Biblical metaphors served to bridge the generation gap between the second and third generations, and Peter N. Carroll claimed that Biblical metaphors and language failed to meet the demands of a changing society because of its inflexibility. Although there is some truth in these positions, it may be better to understand ministerial preachings in terms of their primary significant, i.e., ministerial utterances about the meaning of God's will in the American wilderness. As God's spokesmen in New England, the ministers were interested in all phases of life, filtering their observations through their images of New England which were derived from the Bible and which guided their perceptions and judgments of the saints. While not disclaiming the interpretations of Miller, Elliott, and Carroll, it might be more profitable to understand their interpretations within the three understandings of the wilderness which this dissertation suggests were present throughout the second half of the seventeenth century. This perspective suggests and offers several advantages which enable us to better appreciate the role of the ministers in the New England wilderness.

Rather than perceiving the ministers as unfortunate victims of signs of decay that left them in a pathological condition or attempting to bridge the generation gap, or being captured by a language that was incapable of adapting to the changing social and political
events in New England, this dissertation argues that the sermon literature of 1650-1700 contained stronger elements of hope than of despair. There is a paradox involved here, because the very success of these sermons as vehicles of the message of salvation was founded upon the preacher's insistence that their congregations must accept the punitive judgments of God and surrender to his power. It is possible to assert that the so-called decline of religious practices in New England, an assertion which has been challenged by Pope and others, actually revealed ministerial success, indicating that both congregations and individual saints had heeded the ministerial warnings about honesty in religion and the dangers of religious formalism. If this is true, perhaps it indicates that by the end of the seventeenth century, the ministers had succeeded in unleashing the Spirit whom they constantly emphasized could reform and change New England so that New England's religious practices would be in accord with her religious beliefs which came from the power of the Spirit. If this is so, then the emergency of Stoddardism and the Brattle Street Church were fruits of the Spirit, rather than denials of the Spirit manifesting that ministerial urgings had been more successful that the ministers had believed. The virtual demise of the New England way, therefore, did not indicate the failure of the ministers, but their success, i.e., the unleashing and freeing of the Spirit so that God could be more completely honored.

According to this understanding of the last half of the seventeenth century, it is possible to understand the next forty years in New England's religious history as a period of fermentation, years
not bereft of religious interest and faith, but years of deep, silent growth which terminated in the Great Awakening. This interpretation is possible, for the absence of visible charisms is no proof of the absence of the Spirit, just as the presence of visible charism is not a sign of religious vitality, but only the presence of a religious form. Perhaps, then, the greatest glory of the ministers was to prepare for the Great Awakening.

A brief examination will indicate why this interpretation is plausible. The first ministers constituted the best educated group in the early settlements and exercised a truly magisterial role in the early, critical years. They were perhaps moderately successful until the late 1660s, even though serious tensions were present. As the relatively cohesive society began to dissolve, ministerial influence waned, especially with the cessation of King Phillip's War. The final two decades saw a greater seaparation of the form of government, i.e., the rise of Andros and the exclusion of minisetrs from their active role in the colonial affairs, with a corresponding emphasis in their sermons upon the search for meaning during these distressing time. It is possible to argue that by 1700 the secularization problem had continued and climaxed, for control of government had shifted into hands alien to the ministers and disparate forms of religious practices had emerged. The Spirit, not ministerial sermons, were resulting in new forms of religion which might be called both conservative and liberal.

Ministerial stress upon the Spirit reveals that millenium was strongly present in New England from the earliest years. All sermons, and there are no exceptions, indicated that the Spirit would
liberate, free, and reform New England. During the first period, 1650-1674, this thrust was somewhat obscured beneath discussion about the methods and forms of worship. During the second period, 1675-1679, it is more apparent, for the ministers saw the war as punishment for New England's refusal to obey the Spirit. In the final period, 1680-1700, the millenial thrust burst forth, as the ministers turned to the interior wilderness and confusion which could be tamed and subdued only by the Spirit. One of the finest indications of this emphasis was contained in Increase Mather's *Ichabod*, which aptly described the seemingly shattered hopes of the last fifty years of the seventeenth century. The first period, therefore, stressed the role of persons and needs in New England, the second, the place where God's purgation continued, and the last period, the interior search for God.

There was a single constant in sermonic literature: the wilderness. Ministerial rhetoric understood this through a metaphorical identification with the physical place, the surrounding wilderness, and man's interior condition. So forceful was this presence of the wilderness throughout this period that the ministers actually perceived the New England experience through Biblical metaphors, thus transforming in their eyes rhetoric to reality. They came closest to the biblical meaning of "wilderness"—that is, as a spiritual condition which God alone could heal―during the final years of the seventeenth century.

Did the collective influence of the ministers decline during the second half of the seventeenth century? This question would seem to permit a variety of answers. I would suggest that the answer
rests in understanding the shifting role of the minister in New England's history. At the outset, these men were influential within the colony because of their excellence, their numbers, and the religious tone of the settlement. At the end of the century, they remained influential, not as a collegial body with binding authority in the society, but as individual pastors who had learned to concern themselves primarily with the spiritual needs of human beings. Perhaps, in other words, their magisterial influence remained significant, even though shifting from a concern with the totality of society in the early years to a concern for the so-called "purely spiritual" issues at the close of the era. By 1700 their role in New England was perhaps even more clearly understood than it had been at the height of the "New England Way," approximating the role which later eras have found appropriate to God's representative on earth: a reminder that the present life is a preparation for another life which is non-visible and eternal.
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