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In the name of the father: The continuity and paradox of Puritan theology and pastoral authority

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IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER:
THE CONTINUITY AND PARADOX OF PURITAN THEOLOGY
AND PASTORAL AUTHORITY

BY

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B.A. Hartwick College, 1976
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DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

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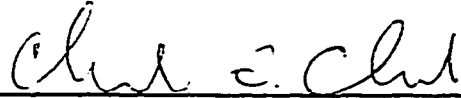
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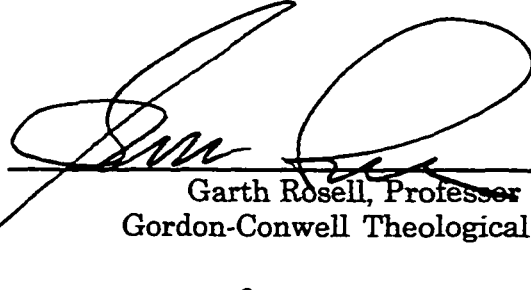
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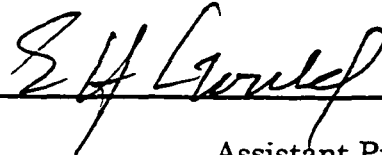
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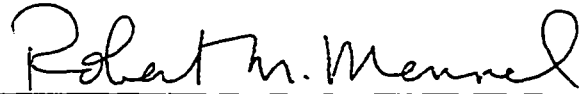
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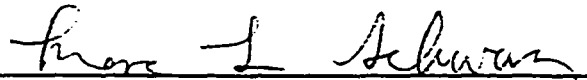
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For Joel Christian Zeigler,
William Thomas Hill and Katharine Lahr Hill, and
Frederick Samuel Zeigler and Beverly Yancey Zeigler

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indebtedness is acknowledged to Professor Rosell and is found in the delight of having a sharp mind willingly attend to the task before him. His encouragement has had a long history and, more than once, he has helped me when I was considering further studies in New England religious thought.

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Amesbury, Massachusetts
January, 1998

ABSTRACT

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER:
THE CONTINUITY AND PARADOX OF PURITAN THEOLOGY
AND PASTORAL AUTHORITY

BY

PATRICIA J. HILL-ZEIGLER
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, MAY, 1998

American scholars have long been interested in the intellectual and social impact of the eighteenth-century religious revival, the Great Awakening. This dissertation uses a colonial family as a case study of the significance of this major colonial event. It traces and compares the intellectual and theological development of Michael Wigglesworth, and his two sons, Samuel and Edward. The Wigglesworth family represents both the foundation of Puritan thought in the seventeenth century and the transformation of that thought in the eighteenth century. Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705), a tutor and Fellow at Harvard College and pastor of the church in Malden, Massachusetts, was a poet of noted fame. "The Day of Doom" (1662), a long theological poem, was an immediate success; its first printing of 1800 copies were sold out within just over a year, and it became, according to Edmund Morgan, "the most popular book of his time". Wigglesworth would have observed a spiritual and cultural transition in the Colony, away from its Puritan foundations and toward a greater tolerance of other Protestant points of view by the end of the seventeenth century. Samuel and Edward, in turn, exhibited the theological division which arose between the orthodox and the Arminianist traditions in eighteenth-century colonial America. And while one brother supported the historic revival, the other maintained reservations of it. Nevertheless, they were sons of the man who inspired New England and epitomized its Calvinist theological roots through such poems as "The Day of Doom" and "God's Controversy with New

England".

Samuel Wigglesworth (1689-1768) was not an extremist in his support of the Great Awakening, nor was Edward (1693-1765) completely hostile to its call for a renewing of faith; and yet, both men found themselves on opposing sides of what has been described as the first historic colonial-wide movement. This study explores the reasons for their differences by using an examination of familial and intellectual heritage. This project, then, analyzes intellectual, professional, and social forces -- with the goal that the Wigglesworth family adds to our understanding of the repercussions of a major religious movement, the extension of Puritan theology into the eighteenth century, and the paradoxical transformation of professional authority concerning pastoral leadership in early American society.

INTRODUCTION

The development of early New England religious thought and culture was built upon a formidable legacy of erudition and learning established by reformed leaders in Britain and on the Continent. The sixteenth-century Reformation was a movement of such magnitude and force that it transformed the basic framework of Christian theology, stripping away medieval indoctrination which the reformers believed thwarted the means for true and liberating faith. In England the Reformation engendered an able group of scholars, the Puritans, who worked assiduously to gain a more complete understanding of religious issues. The Puritans were concerned with the clear communication of the Christian gospel, especially through dynamic preaching¹, and a more representative form of church government². They therefore saw the importance of sufficient training and education for the church's leaders and desired that the Church of England shed its hierarchical traditions for a more simple and Biblically-oriented ecclesiology. Building on Calvin's views concerning the purpose of the ministry, the Puritans viewed the parish minister as God's instrument of salvation and esteemed him as "the physician of the soul"³. In sixteenth-century England however, with too many illiterate clerics, the state of the ministry was bleak.⁴ A disturbing doubt about the

¹ Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (New York, 1964), pp. 55-119; and Paul Seaver, *The Puritan Lectureships: The Politics of Religious Dissent, 1560-1662* (Stanford, CA), 1970.

² John Calvin, *Institutes of The Christian Religion*, Henry Beveridge, trans. (Grand Rapids, 1983), II.339-352; and Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of the Protestants: The Church In English Society, 1559-1625* (Oxford, England), 1982.

³ William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism: Or The Way to the New Jerusalem As Set For In Pulpit and Press From Thomas Cartwright to John Lilburne and John Milton, 1570-1643* (New York, 1957), pp.26-48.

⁴ In *The Religion of the Protestants: The Church In English Society, 1559-1625* (Clarendon Press, 1982), Patrick Collinson examined the paucity of learned clergy for the Church of

competence of the clergy led the Puritans to a greater commitment to theological education in order to assure proficiency in the work of the church. The universities, notably Cambridge, therefore grew into important and valued centers for training in the ministry⁵.

As esoteric as their theology would become, Puritan leaders nevertheless prioritized theological education in order to train ministers to make religion "lively" and useful for individual lives. Puritan thought emphasized "increasingly the willing response of the individual to the covenant of grace", so that members of the laity took on more responsibility for their spiritual growth and piety.⁶ The covenant was a matter of considerable importance in Puritan thought. The individual covenant meant that one was united to God by faith and signified a new identity and a new dignity. On a personal level this meant that one's conversion was not just a one-time experience, but a process of growth and maturity, so that conversion was "always in some ways incomplete".⁷ Within the framework of the individual covenant, conversion was a life-long process and integrated the maturing of one's faith with the maturing of one's nature.

The individual covenant also carried with it a corporate emphasis and, in American Puritanism, the gathering of a local church symbolized the volitional act of individuals to form a covenantal community. The corporate characteristic

England in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. For example, in 1560 the Diocese of Worcester had 19% rate of university-trained clergy and that increased to a rate of 84% by 1640; in Oxford, the rate went from a low of 38% in 1560 to a remarkable 90% in 1640, p. 95; see also pp. 92-120.

⁵ Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley, 1966), pp. 123-138; Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (New York, 1982), pp. 25-54; and William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, pp. 4-82.

⁶ Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of the Protestants*, p. 251.

⁷ Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals* (New York, 1971), p. 63-64.

represented by the church covenant was an issue of principal concern for American Puritans.⁸ For this reason John Cotton did not baptize his son who was born in 1633 on the voyage to New England because "he had 'no power to give the seals [baptism] but in his own congregation'"⁹. Likewise, the extension of the corporate identity from the local gathered church to the colony as a whole was a third yet paramount understanding of the covenant. This doctrine came from Christ who, in the work of redemption, served as an archetype for the larger body of the church: "For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). Here, the disastrous result of Adam's sin upon the human race spread to all persons, but the effect of Christ's sacrifice was to transfer to the faithful his righteousness. Thus in the federal sense of the covenant, Christ represented the whole church. Moreover, in the history of the nation of Israel, God often did not regard sin as an isolated individual act, but looked upon the corporate effect that it brought about. Likewise, American Puritans saw the establishment of their colony as an endeavor to form a religious society for the purpose of God's forwarding design in history. They therefore had a responsibility to live as piously and harmoniously as possible because their wrongdoing had corporate or social consequences, bringing havoc and shame on the commonwealth. In his sermon, "A Model of Christian Charity", John Winthrop clearly articulated the ramifications of the federal covenant: "For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw his present Help

⁸ Harry Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York, 1985), pp. 16-20.

⁹ David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, 1972), p. 102.

from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world".¹⁰ For American Puritans, the multiple facets of the covenant engendered a vision and a purpose -- individually, ecclesiastically, and federally. That which came to New England shores bore the Puritan heritage in the documented form of books, sermons, treatises, and in the personal manner of friendships, familial ties, and partnerships. English Puritans especially provided a striking model of pastoral leadership which New England thoroughly embraced.

The minister was to be a "scholar, preacher practical divine -- and a channel for the Word to the people".¹¹ Thus, his role was first pastoral in that he was a rational, persuasive, patient, and nurturing leader.¹² He was, moreover, a model of faith and practice worth emulating: "Join in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you....Whatever you have learned or received from me or heard from me, or seen in me -- put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you" (Phil. 3:17; 4:9). In addition, the minister had an important prophetic role in the sense that he spoke for God to his people, carefully and logically explaining Biblical doctrines: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). Significantly, as a way of measuring his effectiveness, it was expected that the laity would participate in assessing the proficiency of their minister by checking the accuracy of his preaching.¹³ In

¹⁰ John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity", in *The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry*, Perry Miller, ed. (New York, 1956), p. 83.

¹¹ Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (New York, 1982), p.33.

¹² David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd*, pp. 15-19. Hall understands the minister's character according to this pastor/prophet duality and has offered a useful paradigm of the tensions inherent in the ministerial office through its evangelical and sacerdotal functions. See also William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, pp. 36-37.

¹³ David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd*, p. 12.

addition, Puritan thought called for the return to lay participation in the election of ministers: "Anciently, none were admitted to the number of the clergy without the consent of the whole people....In the case of presbyters, indeed, the consent of the citizens were always required....So careful were the holy fathers that this liberty of the people should on no account be diminished that when a general council, assembled at Constantinople, were ordaining Nectarius, they declined to do it without the approbation of the whole clergy and people, as their letter to the Roman synod testified".¹⁴ Although the Puritans firmly maintained that the ministerial office deserved respect and honor, the reciprocity between a minister and his people and his accountability to them demonstrate how much American Puritans reacted against the clericalism inherent in the Anglican hierarchical polity.

With remarkable acumen, Samuel Eliot Morison, Perry Miller, and Edmund Morgan presented a body of carefully crafted and transforming work on Puritan history. Their venture into Puritan thought and society resulted in an appreciation of Puritan intellectual vigor, institutional idealism, and personal courage and has led to the unfolding of the separate field of Puritan studies.¹⁵ Likewise, Perry Miller, Edwin Gaustad, and C. C. Goen produced seminal analyses about the Great Awakening and a complementary significant body of research on eighteenth-

¹⁴ John Calvin, *Institutes of The Christian Religion*, II.334-335.

¹⁵ Several review articles offering useful material about of historiography of early American studies include Michael McGiffert, "American Puritan Studies in the 1960's", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 27 (1970), 36-67; Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, "Reconstructing British-American Colonial History: An Introduction" and David D. Hall, "Religion and Society: Problems and Reconsiderations", both in *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Period*, Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (Baltimore, 1984), pp. 1-17 and pp. 317-344; Jon Butler, "The Future of American Religious History: Prospectus, Agenda, Transatlantic *Problématique*", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 42 (1985), 167-183; David D. Hall, "On Common Ground: The Coherence of American Puritan Studies," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 44 (1987), pp. 194-229; and Jack P. Greene, "Interpretive Frameworks: The Quest for Intellectual Order in Early American History", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 48 (1991), 515-530.

century religious culture has proliferated.¹⁶ Fewer studies, however, have been offered as a way of linking New England's seventeenth-century Puritan culture to its eighteenth-century religious society. We have, for example, Perry Miller's two major works, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* and *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*, which trace the English Puritan theology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to American religious and political literature in the seventeenth century and demonstrate that, by the eighteenth century, Puritan thought was modified because of the movement toward a more diversified American culture.¹⁷ Alan Heimert presented a political interpretation of the religious relationship of Puritan emphasis on the individual identity to an emerging concern for political liberties in the eighteenth century.¹⁸ J. William T. Youngs, Jr., has studied the issue of pastoral authority from a psychological framework to chronicle a maturation process within the American congregational system, concluding that eighteenth-century ministers had come to see themselves in a new light after the Great Awakening.¹⁹ And Harry Stout has traced the intellectual significance of the sermon in New England culture between 1620 and 1776, distinguishing the function of the "regular" Sunday sermon from the "occasional" sermon on public events and linking the rhetorical function of tens of thousands of sermons delivered over these years to the American Revolution.²⁰

¹⁶ For a summary (though not exhaustive in its scope) of the recent research on the Great Awakening, see Chapter Four of this dissertation, "A House Divided", pp. 1-2.

¹⁷ Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*, Cambridge, MA, 1953 and *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA), 1954.

¹⁸ Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind* (Cambridge, MA), 1966.

¹⁹ J. William T. Youngs, Jr., *God's Messengers: Religious Leadership in Colonial New England, 1700-1750* (Baltimore, 1976).

²⁰ Harry Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York, 1985).

Beginning with the American Puritan ethic concerning the ideal pastoral model, this study will use the familial example of Michael Wigglesworth and his sons, Samuel and Edward, as a way to trace the influence of Puritan culture on the eighteenth-century transformed style of pastoral leadership. In addition, this dissertation examines how the phenomenon of the Great Awakening paradoxically strained certain Puritan traditions that were concerned with pastoral prerogatives while exalting other Puritan convictions that dealt with individual faith. The sum of the lifetimes of the Wigglesworths crossed from the seventeenth century to the middle of the eighteenth century. This study, then, will consider how the Puritan culture was imparted over time, which elements of the Puritan system were relevant to the eighteenth century, and why this was the case. Through their theological and professional positions, the Wigglesworths offer a useful way to examine the transmittal of Puritan thought and traditions over a period of approximately one-hundred and twenty-five years, from 1645, the year which marks the beginning of Michael Wigglesworth's first diary to 1768, the date of Samuel Wigglesworth's death (which followed his brother's death by three years).

Chapters One and Two focus on Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705). Chapter One, "A Man of Sorrows", examines Wigglesworth's life in light of his personal struggles and reviews the historiography of his rather ill-received position in history. Chapter Two, "A Private Life", discusses how Michael Wigglesworth's diaries may be understood in the context of a general trend in the early modern period of developing an individual identity and how the diary had a unique religious function, serving as a place of private confession. Wigglesworth was a minister to the church in Malden, Massachusetts, from 1655 until his death. He was a sickly and despondent man whose illness (both physical and emotional) kept him from his duties for about twenty-five years of his ministry. Remarkably, in the midst of this depression Michael Wigglesworth produced his most significant work. *The Day of*

Doom (1662) was an exceedingly famous poem and, for a long time, he earned more money from its eight editions than from his salary.²¹ The poem graphically describes the Final Judgement and became a cultural symbol of the Puritan evangelical call to faith which culminates in the sweet benefits of the individual covenant. *Meat Out of the Eater* (1669) went through four editions and represents Wigglesworth's desire to comfort the weary and troubled of New England.²² *God's Controversy with New-England* (written in 1662) represents a classic "jeremiad" of the Puritan culture, exhorting people to return to the federal covenant; however, this poem did not appear in print for two-hundred years.²³ While *God's Controversy with New-England* is significant for understanding Wigglesworth's mentalité, because it was not published until 1873, it could not have influenced those works of the seventeenth-century religious world that would form the jeremiad genre. Although a failure for many years in his own parish church, Michael Wigglesworth nevertheless gained great stature through his poems and became a type of minister-at-large to New England.

Samuel Wigglesworth, the older one of the two brothers, is the subject of Chapters Three and Four. Chapter Three, "From One Generation To The Next: The Covenant Preserved", examines Samuel Wigglesworth (1688/9-1768), the parish minister of the Third Church of Ipswich for fifty-four years. In many ways, Samuel epitomized the type of ministry that his father often yearned for but never had until the latter part of his life. Samuel was well-loved and admired, whereas at one point Michael submitted a painful letter of resignation to the Malden church because the congregation long had been critical of him and hostile to his second

²¹ Ronald A. Bosco, ed., *The Poems of Michael Wigglesworth* (Lanham, MD), 1989, p. x.

²² Ronald A. Bosco, ed., *The Poems of Michael Wigglesworth*, p. xl.

²³ Ronald A. Bosco, "Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705)", *American Writers Before 1800: A Biography and Critical Dictionary, Q-Z* (Westport, CT), 1983, p. 1588.

wife. However, Samuel Wigglesworth never faced such a humiliation, and contrary to part of the thesis of J. William T. Youngs, Jr., the generally high esteem Samuel received from his congregation permitted him to escape any need to envelop himself in an autocratic ecclesiastical style to maintain the respect of his office.²⁴ Instead, Samuel Wigglesworth composed regular sermons that served his congregation well, often highlighting the importance of the individual and federal covenants.²⁵ He was a respected member of the Massachusetts clergy and delivered the election sermon (1733) and the Dudleian Lecture (1760). During the Great Awakening (the subject of Chapter Four, "A House Divided"), Samuel Wigglesworth became a noted and visible supporter of the revival and was chosen to serve on a council to help a neighboring church settle its division over their pastor's style of ministry. The problems of pastoral leadership and authority emerge as a crisis of paramount importance for the state of religion in New England. In this way, the Great Awakening served as a catalyst to challenge traditional pastoral authority and reshape, as a whole, the landscape of New England religion. Samuel Wigglesworth typifies one of the many ministers whose theology and inclinations welcomed the Great Awakening, but who had to deal with its sometimes splintering effects.

Edward Wigglesworth (1693-1768), the subject of Chapters Five and Six, was at Harvard College during a time when the school had been influenced by important new intellectual developments in the field of ethics. The faculty at Harvard had an aversion to the traditional Aristotelian system of ethics, maintaining that while it was religious, it did not contain an orthodox Christian concern for virtue because it emphasized the self rather than God.²⁶ Nevertheless by the eighteenth century,

²⁴ J. William T. Youngs, Jr., *God's Messengers*, pp. 64-82.

²⁵ Harry Stout has examined the role of the typical Sunday sermon, the "regular" sermon, and distinguishes that from sermons that served as special orations for particular public functions, or "occasional" sermons. See Harry Stout, *The New England Soul*, pp. 32-49.

²⁶ Norman Fiering, *Moral Philosophy at Seventeenth Century Harvard: A Discipline in*

Charles Morton was teaching Harvard students the importance of passion over reason for the appropriation of virtue. This religious and psychological development was linked to the thinking of Cambridge Platonist Henry More, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury, and Francis Hutcheson, and is what Fiering calls the "new moral philosophy".²⁷ Apparently, Edward Wigglesworth was not significantly affected by the new moral philosophy in his intellectual development. As far as the extant material on Wigglesworth reveals, he was concerned more with theological and ecclesiastical doctrines than with philosophical issues.

But the surprising and fascinating characteristic of Edward Wigglesworth's tenure is the fact that, in light of these new intellectual developments at Harvard, he remained a moderately conservative Calvinist theologian. This is the basis for the discussion found in Chapter Five, "A Man of the Old Way Made New". Several historians have described this period at Harvard (and Yale) as a theologically liberal time. For example, Perry Miller noted that "Edward Wigglesworth was a discreet man, but smelled as much of Latitudinarianism as anybody in New Haven....Upon his appointment as Hollis Professor in 1722, there were murmurings throughout New England which his friends tried to silence with a campaign of reassuring propaganda."²⁸ Miller and Alan Heimert have examined the rationalism found in Charles Chauncy's theology and claim that it carried over into Harvard and Yale: "Such a rationalism [like that of Chauncy's], soon to be developed in the classrooms of Harvard and Yale as a general philosophy was the distinguishing mark of the

Transition (Chapel Hill, 1981), pp. 3-67. Fiering's complementary study, *Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought and Its British Context* (Chapel Hill, 1981), focuses on Edwards' development as a philosopher and does an impressive job of linking Edwards' Augustinian view of the affections with his philosophical arguments in his treatises that deal with sin, the will, and moral virtue.

²⁷ Norman Fiering, *Moral Philosophy at Seventeenth Century Harvard*, pp. 207-267.

²⁸ Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (Amherst, MA, 1981), p. 9.

'Liberal religion' of eighteenth-century America".²⁹ And Christopher Jedrey refers to "the liberalization of Harvard College and of the Boston clergy" as one reflection of the anglicization of the urban world.³⁰ These observations may be referring to the general trend of an encroaching Arminianism from Europe during the eighteenth century; but they do not describe the theological positions of the Chair of Divinity between 1722 and 1765. And although Wigglesworth could meticulously explain the Arminian position to his students, he did not embrace it for his own theological conclusions.³¹ There is a difference between a tolerance of more liberal views and a disinclination to personally embrace them.

An astonishing development in Edward Wigglesworth's tenure at Harvard was his visceral and adamant rejection of the Great Awakening as a whole, and George Whitefield in particular. For a man generally considered to be open-minded and reasonable³², he set aside these characteristics when in 1740 George Whitefield described the spiritual state of Harvard College as "not superior to *our Universities*...[which were] meere Seminaries of Paganism."³³ Although Whitefield

²⁹ Alan Heimert and Perry Miller, "Introduction", *The Great Awakening: Documents Illustrating the Crisis and Its Consequences*, Alan Heimert and Perry Miller, eds. (New York, 1967), p. xli.

³⁰ Christopher Jedrey, *The World of John Cleveland: Family and Community in Eighteenth-Century New England* (New York, 1979), p. 103.

³¹ Edward's son, Edward Wigglesworth, Jr., who assumed the Hollis Chair after his father from 1765 to 1794, however, did reject Calvinism. The evidence from his printed works seems to indicate that he was more interested in natural philosophy than theology or moral philosophy. See Clifford K. Shipton, *Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College, Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, Cambridge, MA, 1933-1945, "Class of 1749", pp. 507-517.

³² Rick W. Sturdevant, "Edward Wigglesworth (1693-1765)", *American Writers Before 1800: A Biographical and Critical Dictionary, Q-Z*, James A. Levernier and Douglas R. Wilmes, eds. (Westport, CT), 1983, p. 1587.

³³ *George Whitefield's Journals (1737-1741), To Which Is Prefixed His "Short Account" (1746) and "Further Account" (1747)*, reproduction of the William Wate edition (1905), William V. Davis, introduction (Gainesville, FL, 1969), p. 109.

later retracted his impertinent remarks, Wigglesworth always viewed him as something of a presumptuous and reckless ecclesiastical radical without any Biblical basis for his itineracy. While Whitefield managed to gain the forgiveness of many whom he insulted in New England (for example, Harvard officially honored him with the thanks and praise of the college after Whitefield raised a considerable amount of money to replace books burned in the disastrous library fire of 1764), he remained in the contempt of Edward Wigglesworth.³⁴ In his eyes, Whitefield, as the revival's chief voice, represented the Great Awakening. And Wigglesworth could not stand the changes, and often the disaster, brought to the office of the ministry that the Great Awakening helped to engender.

The Wigglesworths present an intricate and unexpectedly delightful model of the paradox of pastoral leadership and pastoral authority. And this study will explore that paradox: Samuel, while more theologically conservative than his brother, could accept the general benefits of the Great Awakening -- thus becoming more culturally liberal than Edward -- all the while looking back to the individual covenant of Puritan thought as a means of comprehending the momentum of the revival and becoming a model of the transformed pastoral leadership. Meanwhile Edward, to a degree more theologically liberal than his brother, nevertheless became something of a reactionary in his conservative stand against the revival's encroaching influences on pastoral authority and sought his position's vindication in the Puritan tradition of the federal covenant and the Cambridge Platform of 1648.

³⁴ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield By Way of Reply To His Answer to the College Testimony against him and his Conduct*, (Boston, 1745), p. 13 ; Edward Wigglesworth, *Some Distinguishing Characters Of The ordinary and extraordinary Minsters of the Church of Christ* (Boston, 1754), pp. 11-34; Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield* , pp. 48-61; and Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival* (Westchester, IL), 1980, II.429.

Note:

The ellipses at the end of quotations have been eliminated for the sake of reading continuity.

Bible quotations are from the New International Version (East Brunswick, NJ, 1978).

CHAPTER I

A MAN OF SORROWS

The young minister was struggling with a nagging throat disorder when he accepted the invitation to "settle" with the church in Malden, Massachusetts. He never quite recovered and brooded whenever he could not fully carry his preaching responsibilities. In 1657, Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705) was ordained as the church's teacher, but he assumed the dual responsibilities as pastor and as teacher.¹ Several years earlier, Wigglesworth considered marriage to Mary Reynor. He feared that he might have a sexual disease, but fretted even more that Mary Reynor's relation to him as a cousin might constitute incest.² After studying the matter, he reasoned that his relationship with his cousin was not immoral. He recovered from the disease and married Mary Reynor in 1655.

In the diary entry of April 17, 1655, Wigglesworth noted that his physician assured him that his condition was not "vera Gon". Edmund Morgan (who edited this diary from the period of 1653-1657) proposes that (although there is no

¹ The organizational practice in early New England churches included the ordination of two ministers: a pastor, who taught the theological doctrines identified with the Protestant Reformation, and a teacher, who taught Biblical studies from the Old and New Testaments. For example, although John Wilson was the pastor of the First Church in Boston, John Cotton--who gained preeminence--was its teacher. The support of two ministers, however, often was too great a financial burden for most churches outside of Boston. In a majority of cases, a church's minister assumed both offices of pastor and teacher. Wigglesworth was ordained as teacher by the church in Malden, and he was expected to be in the pulpit at least two to three times a week. For further discussion of the dual offices of the ministry, see David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), pp. 94-96 and Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan: The Life of Increase Mather*, (Middletown, CT, 1988), p. 26. See also William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism: Or The Way to the New Jerusalem As Set For In Pulpit and Press From Thomas Cartwright to John Lilburne and John Milton, 1570-1643* (New York, 1957), pp. 26-48.

² Edmund Morgan, ed, *Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, 1653-1657* (New York: Harper, 1965), p.86, note 42; pp. 87-93.

certainty of it) Wigglesworth meant "gonorrhoea" by "vera Gon" and that he feared he suffered from the disease. Wigglesworth's physician, however, diagnosed the condition not as gonorrhoea, but as a type of "sweating of the genital parts". There was some kind of sexual disorder that bothered Wigglesworth, but he successfully found treatment for it. In the entry on September 10, 1655, Wigglesworth discussed some of the difficulties he was having supporting his mother and sister who recently had moved in with him. The family was overcrowded, but he discovered that some "friends [are] willing to entertain us thus long". Thus Wigglesworth was hopeful of God's provision and encouraged, and drew a sketch of an Ebenezer, a pillar commemorating the recognition of providential help.³ Eva Cherniavsky interpreted this sketch as a "phallic pillar", "delineat[ing] gender and thus in the puritan imagination [it] traces the boundary between integrity and corruption", and that the pillar "reassert[s] the system of differentiation on which the puritan social and symbolic order is founded".⁴ Although there is merit in interpreting the sketch in psychoanalytical terms of self-identity, it must be noted that Wigglesworth was twenty-three at the time and in all likelihood was experiencing what young men generally encounter in their sexual development. His particular sexual problem, although still a concern, was resolved not long after his marriage. In addition, a theologically analytical approach that is concerned with the religious significance of memorials in Biblical history will add to our understanding of Wigglesworth's self-perception. The "Ebenezer" was a memorial that commemorated God's miraculous intervention which enabled the Israelites to capture the Ark of the Covenant from the the Philistines (1 Sam. 7:1-17). The prophet Samuel built the Ebenezer, much

³ Edmund Morgan, ed., *Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, 1653-1657*, pp. 92-93.

⁴ Eva Cherniavsky, "Night Pollution and the Floods of Confession in Michael Wigglesworth's Diary", *Arizona Quarterly*, 45 (1989), 15-33, p. 30. See also Richard Crowder, *No Featherbed To Heaven: A Biography of Michael Wigglesworth, 1631-1705* (Michigan State University), 1962, pp. 82-90.

like a cairn, on a promontory between "Mizpah and Shen" so that all might see it and remember the restoration of Israel's only sacred religious object. The Old Testament use of memorials was a didactic device employed to encourage the Israelites' piety. One was to see the memorial and to think back upon God's benevolence. In this sense, Wigglesworth, after learning that his affliction was not as serious as he had first feared, that it was curable, and that accommodations for his family were available, paused for a moment in his diary's private contemplations and sketched the Ebenezer as a way to acknowledge -- and remember -- God's providential care during an exceedingly troublesome period in his life. The Ebenezer was a consecrated place in his private life and his memory of God's compassion indelibly would influence his later work.

In 1659, Michael Wigglesworth's first wife, Mary Reynor, gave birth to a stillborn child around October 22, 1659. It is not clear that this birth led to Mary's death two months later, but the birth was difficult. Mary was in labor for over four days and perhaps she never recovered from the trauma. Wigglesworth and she discussed the possibility that the birthing process might lead to her death: "Ah dear love, how is it with your spirit under this long affliction of your body can you willing submit to Gods wil whether in life or death?" Mary responded that she relied on God for strength and tried to encourage Wigglesworth, "Let your heart be not troubled for me". Nevertheless, their deaths tore him apart. In his diary, Michael Wigglesworth confessed, "[I] found difficulty in submitting to the wil of God in so bitter a cross as the death of my wife....Oh it is heartcutting and astonishing broke in it self. Lord help me to bear it patiently."⁵ Already despondent over his deteriorating health and his inability to work, Wigglesworth took nearly twenty

⁵ Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, Manuscript Collection of the New England Historical Genealogical Society. Wigglesworth had been married to Mary Reynor, his first wife, for four years at the time of her death in childbirth in 1659. In 1656, they had a daughter, Mercy, the only surviving child of this union.

years to recover from his grief.

Wigglesworth's lingering depression and infirmity raised criticism and contempt from his congregation and stirred doubts within himself about his own worth. While the Malden church retained him as senior minister, it cut off his salary because illness kept him out of the pulpit. During this trying period, Wigglesworth was not without complete support. He relied on his medical training at Harvard to earn a small income as a physician. There was, however, a constant series of debilitating disorders which kept him from preaching and he suffered from wrenching guilt. From out of this state of personal turmoil, he offered the only means of fulfilling his duties as the church's teacher through a piece of writing, "a poor prove of service at my hands".⁶ Thus, encumbered with sickness and frailties, he sought a way to fulfill his didactic responsibilities through writing, rather than the presentation of Biblical studies from his pulpit. In 1662, Wigglesworth published *The Day of Doom: Or, A Poetical Description of The Great and Last Judgement*, a long theological poem about the final judgement of humanity. *The Day of Doom* became one of the most popular publications during the colonial period and highlighted Wigglesworth's concern that complacent New Englanders be prepared to face a destiny without God's grace through a visceral and vivid understanding. In fact, what Wigglesworth was communicating was the heart of Puritan theology distilled into terms and images that the average person could understand. All copies of its first printing sold out within a year of its release.⁷ Nevertheless, plagued with

⁶ Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, Manuscript Collection of the New England Historical Genealogical Society.

⁷ Ronald A. Bosco, ed., *The Poems of Michael Wigglesworth* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989), p. xxxviii. Wigglesworth cites in his diary that "of 1800 there were scarce any unsold (of but few) at the yeers end" (Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, Manuscript Collection of the New England Historical Genealogical Society). Stephen Foster, however, maintains that the "figure of 1800 copies sold...refers to both the first edition and a now lost 1663-1664 edition..." ("The Godly in Transit: English Popular Protestantism and the Creation of a Puritan Establishment in America", *Seventeenth Century New England* [Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1984], p. 28, n. 6). Wigglesworth's diary

doubts, Michael Wigglesworth went to Bermuda in 1663 with the hope that a warmer climate might restore his flagging energy and perhaps heal his ailments. But he became even sicker. He caught a cold that lingered over several months.⁸ Wigglesworth continued to find expression through his writing, however, and in 1669 he published a collection of didactic poems, *Meat Out of the Eater*, which dealt with riddles and paradoxes about the cross.⁹ At this time, *The Day of Doom* went through a second printing and continued to give Wigglesworth enormous success throughout his life.¹⁰ Over the next twenty-five years, however, Wigglesworth's health never fully improved and the church at Malden had to hire several ministers to carry the responsibilities of preaching.

In 1679, after twenty years of widowhood, Wigglesworth married his servant, Martha Mudge. But the notion that he, a minister, would marry a servant scandalized clerical circles. Increase Mather, the preeminent minister in Boston, wrote to Wigglesworth to try to dissuade him from humiliating himself before his peers and before Boston society in general. Mather had studied under Wigglesworth at Harvard and had the utmost respect for him. Nevertheless, he admonished Wigglesworth to consider the facts of the matter. "[Y]our servant mayd...[is] of obscure parentage...& of no church, nor so much as Baptized....The

entries are ambiguous about the matter. The reference to the 1800 copies is located between a dating of 1662 and 1664 and he adds that "about four yeers after they [my books] were reprinted with my consent, and I gave them the proofs and margin notes to affix". The next entry, referring to his trip to Bermuda in September, 1663, states, "After first impression of my books was sold; I had a great mind to go to Bermuda...", implying that it was the first edition--or "impression" -- which was the best seller by "yeers end".

⁸ Bosco, *The Poems of Michael Wigglesworth*, p. xxxviii.

⁹ About this time, Wigglesworth composed another epic poem, *God's Controversy with New-England*, but this poem "remains in manuscript for the next two-hundred years", Bosco, xxxviii. Samuel Eliot Morison also notes that this poem was not printed in Wigglesworth's lifetime. See Morison's *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England* (New York, 1956, second edition), p. 217.

¹⁰ Bosco, *The Poems of Michael Wigglesworth*, p. xxxviii.

like never was seen in New-England. Nay, I question whether the like had bin known in the Christian world"¹¹ Wigglesworth could not be convinced otherwise and wrote to Mather to explain his reasons for going forward with his plans. Mather responded that he and a number of other ministers regretted Wigglesworth's decision in this marriage. "They are not forward to give advice in the case and supposing that it is now too late -- It is not good after vows to make enquiry; Had you advised with them before your Treating with the party concerned, you may be sure they would earnestly have diswaded [you] nor is there any of those that dane [dare?] encourage your proceedings....And it is thought that your Affection both bias your judgment & that therefore in this case you are not so competent a Judge"¹² Whatever the state of his mind, Wigglesworth was in love. He withstood intense pressure from his peers and married Martha Mudge.

But Wigglesworth paid the price for his decision. Certain members of his congregation, who already had been critical of him because of his inability to deliver sermons over the years, now also vocally disapproved of his marriage. Wigglesworth began to chafe under their longstanding lack of respect.¹³ He prepared a fifteen-point statement for the congregation to explain his offer of resignation. "Of late yeers their encouragements have been real discouragements, as holding for the contempt at least a very low esteem of my ministry." Added to this strain was a new insult for Wigglesworth -- public disrespect for Martha. "I discern such an envious and spiteful disposition in some towards my wife...as

¹¹ Letter from Increase Mather to Michael Wigglesworth, 8 May, 1679; Manuscript Collection, Boston Public Library.

¹² Letter from Increase Mather to Michael Wigglesworth, 12 May, 1679; Manuscript Collection, Boston Public Library.

¹³ According to Ronald A. Bosco, by 1660-61 "Wigglesworth increasingly reduces his ministry to the point of scandal". He could not preach because of physical illnesses and, in all likelihood, because of depression due to his health and his wife' death. See *The Poems of Michael Wigglesworth*, p. xxxvii.

argueth little love or respect for me...therefore I deliver [to] a Place for me & my wife where we may sit with less envy & without molestation."¹⁴ The congregation did not accept his resignation, but instead, hired a new assistant minister for Wigglesworth. Evidently the majority of the congregation could forgive his flaunting of social mores -- after all, their minister had now gained a reputation as a best-selling author at home in New England and abroad in England. Perhaps they thought it would reflect poorly on their judgement if they were to let such a rising star go.

Of Martha Mudge, Wigglesworth "never regretted his choice".¹⁵ In fact, he credited Martha Mudge with restoring his health and spirit. "[M]y late wife was a means under God of my recovering a better state of health."¹⁶ Increase Mather recovered enough from the shock of Martha's pedigree that, in 1684, he offered the presidency of Harvard College to Wigglesworth. But Wigglesworth declined the position. However much his relationship with Martha proved to be beneficial, Wigglesworth nevertheless still lacked stamina. He told Mather that he doubted that his "bodily health and strength [were] competent to undertake or manage such a weighty work as you mention."¹⁷ In 1688/9 Samuel Wigglesworth, Michael Wigglesworth's first son (and seventh child) was born.¹⁸ The next year Martha died

¹⁴ Michael Wigglesworth, "Some Grounds & Reasons for Laying Down My Office Relation", 1679; Manuscript Collection, New England Historical Genealogical Society.

¹⁵ The Rev. William H. Lyon adds that Martha Mudge "made his life so comfortable". From a sermon on Michael Wigglesworth (see Lyons Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, p. 116). Donald A. Bosco describes Wigglesworth's eleven years with Martha Mudge as a time of "domestic happiness" and a "high point"; Bosco, *The Poems of Michael Wigglesworth*, p. xli.

¹⁶ Michael Wigglesworth, "Letter Proposing Marriage to Sybil Avery"; G. G. Lee Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society.

¹⁷ Michael Wigglesworth, "Letter to Increase Mather, Declining to be a Candidate for Presidency of Harvard College; Manuscript Collection, Boston Public Library.

¹⁸ A daughter, Mercy, was born in 1656 to Wigglesworth and his first wife, Mary Reynor. Martha Mudge gave birth to five daughters before having their son, Samuel.

and Wigglesworth now had to care for six young children.

While he mourned for Martha, Wigglesworth faced this personal challenge without the lingering despondency that followed after his first wife's death. In fact, within a few months, he was in contact with Sybil Sparhawk Avery, the widow of a Boston physician, and aggressively pursued her hand. On March 23, 1691, at the age of sixty, he proposed to Sybil Avery with a ten-point treatise explaining that divine guidance, their mutual experiences, and his strong affection for her would preserve them in a good marriage. "Reason and judgement principally Loveing and desiring you for those gifts and graces God hath bestowed upon you, and propounding the Glory of God the adorning and furtherance of the Gospel....Be pleased to consider that although you may Peradventure have offers made you by persons more Eligible, yet you will hardly meet with one that can love you better, or whose love is built upon a surer foundation."¹⁹ Wigglesworth also drew upon the advantage of his training in medicine, which he had practiced in Malden for the last forty years. He reasoned that, after having been married to a doctor, Sybil Avery might look favorably upon this aspect of his background. "By this means [marrying another physician] you may in some things and at some manner receive help [and] get an increase of skils and become capable of doing more than [worry] hereafter if need should be."²⁰ When Sybil Avery raised concerns about Wigglesworth's age and large household, he attempted to reassure her that he would "do as much Good in a little time as is possible... [to provide] for your future welfare...[and] the number of children may be lessened if there be need of it".²¹ Three months later, they were

¹⁹ Michael Wigglesworth, "Letter Proposing Marriage to Sybil Avery"; G. G. Lee Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society.

²⁰ Michael Wigglesworth, "Letter Proposing Marriage to Sybil Avery"; G. G. Lee Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society.

²¹ Michael Wigglesworth, "Letter Proposing Marriage to Sybil Avery"; G. G. Lee Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society.

married. In 1693, Sybil gave birth to a second son, Edward. Malden's esteem for Michael Wigglesworth continued even after his death in 1705, when the church voted to continue to support Sybil Avery Wigglesworth.²² Reversing the community's expectations, their preacher, poet, and physician -- though an object of contempt at the beginning of his service -- had become a leading voice in New England by the end of his career.

Samuel and Edward Wigglesworth inherited a striking legacy from their father and carried on Michael's ministerial example. Samuel became the first minister of the Third Church in Ipswich, Massachusetts (now the First Congregational Church of Hamilton, Massachusetts) and served this church for fifty-four years until his death in 1768. Edward became the first Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard, teaching from 1722 until his death in 1765. In order to draw out the theological implications of Michael Wigglesworth's life and work on his sons, it is essential to consider the context of his era, his personal struggles, and the theological perspective of Puritan leaders -- the latter of which Michael emerged a chief advocate in New England. As we have seen, Michael Wigglesworth carried deep, emotional wounds for a significant period in his life. During that time, he faced rejection by the congregation in Malden and frequent illnesses, which undoubtedly were exacerbated by his emotional state. Wigglesworth's turmoil is further revealed in his diaries which dramatized the religious tension of critical self-doubt and hopeful release in God's grace. The subject of Wigglesworth's diaries (most notably one diary which was published in 1949 and edited by Edmund S. Morgan) encompasses the use of a personal journal as part of a general genre which was emerging in the early modern era and the self-identification framed

²² Bosco, *The Poems of Michael Wigglesworth*, p. x.

within the structures of faith and piety. (The diaries, and approaches by historians to interpret them, will be examined in the following chapter, "A Private Life".) Ironically, despite his seeming inability to work, Wigglesworth wrote and published *The Day of Doom*, the one piece from which he gained fame and fortune. By turning to writing, Wigglesworth carried on his pastoral role, not just for Malden but for New England as well. Unexpectedly, the latter part of his life was surprisingly outgoing and productive. He continued to write and publish poetry, prepared and delivered two to three sermons a week, visited the members of his congregation, and maintained his practice as a physician. He also married for a second, then a third, time and fathered his last child at the age of sixty-one. At the time of his death in 1705, Wigglesworth epitomized the pastoral leadership of the Puritan era.

Over the last one-hundred and fifty years, the scholarly reputation of Puritan writings has fluctuated. Wigglesworth's reception by scholars covers a range from admiration to disdain and deserves our attention for its indications of certain trends found in professional criticism. Puritan literature, the majority of which is in the form of sermons and theological treatises, was respected during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In his biography of Michael Wigglesworth, John Ward Dean notes that as late as 1828 (quoting Francis Jenks), *The Day of Doom* was a "work which was taught our fathers with their catechisms, and which many an ancient person...can still repeat".²³ By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, Puritan writers received little acclaim. At worst, they were men of "sulphurous threats" and at best, they were objects of condescension. A major portion of Michael Wigglesworth's most famous piece, *The Day of Doom*, contains a graphic portrayal of God's wrath at the final judgement of the world.

²³ John Ward Dean, *The Sketch of the Life of Reverend Michael Wigglesworth, A. M.* (Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1863), p.1, note.

Like other Puritan works, the poem, though popular for the next two hundred years, never received much sympathetic review by nineteenth century critics. In the introduction to *The Poets and Poetry of America* (1842), Rufus Griswold asserted that "the poetry of the colonies was without originality, energy, feeling or correctness of diction."²⁴ Griswold eliminated Wigglesworth from his collection because he was among those whose work qualified as "quaint and grotesque absurdities."²⁵ Moses Coit Tyler, in his *A History of American Literature, 1607-1765* (1887), explained that "[n]o one holding a different theology from that held by Michael Wigglesworth, can do justice to him as a poet, without exercising the utmost intellectual catholicity...not having served his poetic apprenticeship under any of the sane and mighty masters of English song, he was himself forever incapable of giving utterance to his genius -- except in a dialect that was unworthy of it...[*The Day of Doom* was] a blazing and sulphurous poem."²⁶ By the early twentieth century, little had changed. David D. Hall notes that "[t]he two leading interpreters of Puritanism during that period, James Truslow Adams...and Vernon L. Parrington...merged the popular prejudice against Puritanism with the current appeal of class conflict."²⁷ Parrington dismissed much of Puritan literature in his review: "It is not pleasant to linger in the drab later years of a century....A world that accepted Michael Wigglesworth for its poet, and accounted Cotton Mather its most distinguished man of letters, had certainly backslidden in the ways of

²⁴ Bosco, *The Poems of Michael Wigglesworth*, p. xii.

²⁵ Rufus W. Griswold, *The Poets and Poetry of America* (New York: James Miller Publisher, 1842), p. 20.

²⁶ Moses Coit Tyler, *A History of American Literature During the Colonial Period, 1607-1765* (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1876), pp. 23, 27.

²⁷ David D. Hall, ed., *Puritanism In Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968), p. 2.

culture."²⁸ In his introduction to the 1929 edition of *The Day of Doom*, Kenneth Murdock described the "sulfurousness, the cruelty of its doctrine and its harping on the horrors of Hell...[the poem] smells no more strongly of brimstone than the utterances or writings of hundreds of others."²⁹

Deprecating views of Puritan writers were replete in volumes of scholarship until the middle of the twentieth century, when Samuel Eliot Morison and Perry Miller transformed early colonial studies. The modernist view of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries lost footing with an emerging reappraisal of Puritan literature. This reappraisal renders works such as *The Day of Doom*, will substance and credence, because it has reasserted that the importance of Puritan literature for the colonial period is undeniable. Morison referred to the *The Day of Doom* as the "most popular poem that New England has ever known...[its] circulation is beyond the wildest dreams of the most high-pressure publisher of modern fiction". In the seventeenth century four American and two London editions were published and in the eighteenth century there were at least six editions -- "besides divers others of which no copy has survived, printed on broadsheets and hawked about the country like ballads."³⁰ In reviewing early colonial thought, E. Brooks Holifield notes that, "The best-selling publication in New England -- Michael Wigglesworth's *The Day of Doom* (1662) -- was a poem."³¹ Stephen Foster refers to the first printing of 1800 copies of the *The Day of Doom* as representing the "nearly insatiable demand" for its work.³² In his literary analysis

²⁸ Vernon L. Parrington, *The Colonial Mind: 1620-1800* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1927), p. 85.

²⁹ Kenneth B. Murdock, ed., *The Day of Doom* (New York: The Spiral Press, 1929), p. x.

³⁰ Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England*, pp. 214-215.

³¹ E. Brooks Holifield, *Era of Persuasion: American Thought and Culture, 1521-1680* (Boston: Twayne, 1989), p. 11.

³² Stephen Foster, "The Godly in Transit: English Popular Protestantism and the Creation

of the poems of Michael Wigglesworth, Donald A. Bosco comments that "[a]mong religious literature, the Bible and the *Bay Psalm Book* were the only serious rivals to Wigglesworth's *The Day of Doom* ."33

What caused such a striking demand for *The Day of Doom* by readers? Part of the answer may be found in the colonial readership's desire for poetry. Poetry was second in popularity to theological works. According to Holifield, "If everyone who wrote poetry can be designated a poet, the colonies can be said to have overflowed with them. The seventeenth century gave rise to more poetry, proportionately, than any other period in American history."³⁴ The genre of writing verse combined a thorough knowledge of profound theological subjects and an acquired skill in rhetorical expression -- traits highly prized in New England culture. To one degree or another, religious issues, theological debates, and personal piety characterized the mindset of the seventeenth century populace. What Michael Wigglesworth offered was a long oration, easily read, but with an exactness of content that was clearly expressed in vivid images. According to David Hall, "*The Day of Doom* had company in passages in many published and unpublished sermons, texts that played on violence and that fascinated readers with their tales of evildoing".³⁵

The poem begins with a peaceful night, when all humanity suddenly "rush from their beds" to a dazzling light, brighter than "the Noon-day Sun", to peer at "the Son of God, most dread", who has arrived with his multitude of angels to

of a Puritan Establishment in America", *Seventeenth Century New England* , p. 222.

³³ Bosco, *The Poems of Michael Wigglesworth* , p. x.

³⁴ E. Brooks Holifield, *Era of Persuasion*, p. 10. See also Morison, *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England* , p. 23.

³⁵ David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement: Popular Belief in Early New England* (New York: Knopf, 1989), p. 57.

"Judge both Quick and Dead".³⁶ The poem depicts men and women who are characterized according to their life and achievements, from the most vile to the most rational and moral, but who nevertheless are wanting in spiritual grace. Wigglesworth described the whole range of human spiritual conditions -- any one with which a person might identify. This approach was a deliberate move on Wigglesworth's part, since he knew that most people tended to assume that reprobates were easily identified by their blatantly profane behavior. The trickiest matter to clear up, then, were those people who had lulled themselves into thinking that their morality would justify them in the end. Wigglesworth did not want to insult these people and thereby alienate them from the corrections he hoped they would accept. Thus he recreated every possible argument an otherwise decent person might make for a certainty of one's salvation and pointed out its weaknesses.

Persuading his audience to listen to his cause was no easy task. Wigglesworth's genius as a rhetorician is clearly seen in that -- even though a bearer of very bad news -- he successfully kept his audience enthralled with what was, for the seventeenth century mind, the ultimate human drama. The public responded enthusiastically. Throughout Wigglesworth's life (and well beyond his death), people kept buying this poem about terrifying consequences of self-justification. Part of the reason *The Day of Doom* gained such widespread appeal is in its doctrinal premises. According to Harry Stout, "The average weekly church goer in New England (and there were far more churchgoers than church members) listened to something like seven thousand sermons in a lifetime, totaling somewhere around fifteen thousand hours of concentrated listening."³⁷ Thus

³⁶ Michael Wigglesworth, *The Day of Doom*, Bosco, p. 12.

³⁷ Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford, 1986), p. 4.

Wigglesworth's subject reached into the realm of religious consciousness in seventeenth century life. The poem is a forceful argument for the core of the Calvinist doctrine of sin, redemption, and grace. Point by point, Wigglesworth delved into the finer vagaries of the human psyche in order to demonstrate the logical hope found through divine intervention. Here Wigglesworth was well on track with his predecessors. Thomas Hooker, a renowned Puritan leader who migrated from England, "knew what kind of minister would succeed: one who disdained general platitudes and fired painful darts and arrows at the sinful soul".³⁸ But Wigglesworth's success goes beyond the content of his message. He touched people at their most personal and deepest fears and doubts. Like a skilled orator, he engendered a deeply visceral response to life's most important dilemma: one's final destiny.

Another reason Wigglesworth was able to reach so many people, and not alienate them in the process, may be found in the introduction to the poem. There, Wigglesworth explained that he was not capable of judging people as to their spiritual worth. Instead, he appealed to his readers to accept his verse "in Love, and read it for thy good: There's nothing in't can do thee hurt If rightly understood." He hoped that their reading of the *The Day of Doom* will result in "thine own peace" and that they will "be assured of A happy, glorious end. Thus prays thy real Friend".³⁹ Here Wigglesworth assumed the role of a fellow human being who has no inside track or advantage. In fact, he portrays himself as a weak and clownish example of spirituality:

³⁸ E. Brooks Holifield, *Era of Persuasion*, p.93. Hooker's rhetorical skills were well known; "according to one contemporary, he could 'put a king in his pocket'" (Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco, *The Puritans in America: A Narrative Anthology* [Cambridge: Harvard University, 1985], p. 22).

³⁹ Michael Wigglesworth, *The Day of Doom* , Bosco, p. 8.

Reader, I am a fool,
 And have adventured
 To play the fool this once for Christ,
 The more his fame to spread,
 If this my foolishness
 Help thee to be more wise,
 I have attained what I seek,
 And what I only prize.⁴⁰

Wigglesworth also brought up to his readers the well-known criticism from the Malden faction, who had complained about his inability to fulfill his pastoral role in the pulpit. This was a clever rhetorical stroke in order to overcome such detractions by using his opponents' arguments to support his case.

Thou wonderest perhaps,
 That I in Print appear,
 Who in the Pulpit dwell so nigh,
 Yet come so seldome there:
 The God of Heaven knows
 What grief to me it is,
 To be with-held from Serving Christ...
 I am a Debtor too, Unto the sons of Men;
 Whom wanting other means,
 I would Advantage with my Pen.⁴¹

By frankly admitting to the enervating effects of the past ten years of illness and his history of relinquishing preaching responsibilities to others, Wigglesworth created a strong platform from which he assumed the role of an apologist for apocalyptic literature. Work he would, but not as he or others could have anticipated. As a teacher of the Christian community, he demonstrated Biblical truths about redemption and the Final Judgement in lessons he audience could grasp -- and while holding their rapt attention.

⁴⁰ Michael Wigglesworth, *The Day of Doom* , Bosco, p. 5.

⁴¹ Michael Wigglesworth, *The Day of Doom* , Bosco, p. 5.

The Day of Doom was published during a major political transition in England that meant, for both English and American Puritans, a disappointment of profound dimensions. The Restoration of the Stuart family to the throne in 1660 meant the end of the Puritan Commonwealth. England's experiment with a full expression of the Reformation was over. With the official return of the episcopacy, Puritanism and its various denominational forms were relegated to a minority status, stripped of their national influence. Charles II (1660-1685) required all subjects to observe the ordinances as prescribed in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. In 1662 Governor Simon Bradstreet and John Norton, a leading minister, went to London to represent the Massachusetts Bay Colony before the King. They discovered that Charles II wished to direct New England churches as well. He commanded that all but the most scandalous be permitted to receive the sacraments.⁴² The implications of this royal move reached into a prized distinction of American Puritan churches -- that the sacraments were administered only to church members. This action began to unnerve the members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony with the fear that their charter, which permitted them the right to rule themselves quite independently of the Crown, was no longer a certainty.

The year 1662 also presented an internal crisis of identity of immense proportions for New England Puritanism. Although baptized as children, the adult second generation did not have, to the same degree, the remarkable conversion experience as did their parents, the first-generation settlers. An account of a personal conversion was the necessary condition for membership in the churches. As a result, many of the second generation did not present themselves for church membership in the same numbers as their parents did twenty years earlier. Here

⁴² Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco, *The Puritans in America*, p. 224.

was the source of a long-term dilemma: without church membership, members of the second generation could not participate in communion or assume leadership in church affairs, nor could their children be presented to the church in baptism -- an ordinance that recognized a covenant relationship within the local church. Thus more and more, those attending church services were either not members or unbaptized. In order to avoid a depletion of participants within the covenant community, a special synod presented a plan to include the unbaptized youngest generation. Parents of good behavior, who were baptized as infants but not church members and who upheld the historical faith of the Church, could present their children for baptism and thereby have them identified with the Puritan community.⁴³ The Half-Way Covenant (as it became known by later historians) stressed the importance of the church covenant, which had, at its root, the commitment of believers who raise families of faith. "Believing that the family the first social organization created for mankind by God after the Fall, the Puritans made the family the foundation of both church and state."⁴⁴ While for the most part this Half-Way Covenant was adopted by churches in New England, it was not unanimously accepted. Most notably, Increase Mather took a stand against his father, Richard Mather, in opposition to the Half-Way Covenant. Increase Mather, "using familiar typology, argued that baptized men and women who had not gone on to a new birth in Christ had forfeited their membership and the right to have their children baptized into any particular church".⁴⁵ Such a familial disagreement in one

⁴³ It was hoped that, by accepting the "historical faith", these adults would come to a personal faith. See Hary S. Stout, *The New England Soul*, p. 58.

⁴⁴ Lillian B. Miller, "The Puritan Portrait: Its Function in Old and New England", *Seventeenth-Century New England*, David D. Hall and David Grayson Allen, eds., (Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, distributed by the University Press of Virginia, 1984), p.168.

⁴⁵ Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan*, p. 59. Although his initial opposition was deeply felt, Increase Mather would reverse his stand on the correctness of the Half-Way

of New England's prominent families represented the kind of searing division that the Half-Way Covenant engendered. Other well noted seventeenth-century Puritan leaders, such as John Davenport and Charles Chauncy, found themselves challenging their respected and beloved colleagues with the same deep convictions over the Half-Way Covenant's impropriety. Quite simply, the Half-Way Covenant could not please those ministers who stood out against its liberalness and New England remained in an uneasy truce. Here was Michael Wigglesworth's contribution to his world: the publication of *The Day of Doom* during this era of political and religious ambivalence was a second and important reason for its appeal to New Englanders. If people wondered where their God would take them in this world, they could find solace in the certainties of His judgement in the next.

It was also during the debate over the Half-Way Covenant that Wigglesworth wrote *God's Controversy with New England; Written in the time of the great drought, Anno 1662, By a lover of New-England's Prosperity*. This poem highlights Wigglesworth's personal fears over the state of the Puritan commonwealth. To Michael G. Hall, *God's Controversy with New England* "may stand as the classic jeremiad of the second generation, because here, for the first time, a whole people is addressed, and not the saints merely, as in [Thomas] Hooker's *Danger of Desertion*, [Thomas] Shepard's lamentations for the saints' forgetting their original errand, or [John] Cotton's regretful reminders that even the best of Bostonians had fixed their eyes on earth rather than on on heaven."⁴⁶

Covenant. In 1675 he publicly embraced the position in his book, *Discourse Concerning Baptism*. Mather's reversal partly had to do with his own concern for the dwindling numbers of members in his own congregation. See Michael G. Hall, pp. 140-146. It also may have been based on a "deathbed plea" from his dying father, Richard Mather (see Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco, *The Puritans in America*, pp. 237-238). The importance of a dying father or mother's last words was held to the highest degree of significance in Puritan thinking. At the end of one's life, a righteous person was capable of dwelling on that which is closest to God's own heart and thus able to speak of spiritual truths not discernable to others.

⁴⁶ Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco *The Puritans in America*, p. 230.

Through *God's Controversy with New England* we may understand Wigglesworth's perspective of the federal covenant. The poem refers to natural calamities, such as the 1662 drought, as signs of impending divine judgement on all of New England. Wigglesworth's warning derived from the larger picture, the general well-being of New England, and his message was ominous: the Puritan colonies were at a point of no return. If the people did not repent of their apathy toward God and his providence, there was no hope for New England's future:

This O New-England hast thou got
 By riot, and excess:
 This hast thou brought upon thy self
 By pride and wantonness.
 Thys must thy wordlyness be whipt.
 They that too much do crave,
 Provoke the Lord to take away
 Such blessings as they Have."⁴⁷

In *God's Controversy with New England*, once again, Wigglesworth fulfilled the duties of his office as "teacher". He reached out to his people, not from a pulpit, but from a book. And, as in *The Day of Doom*, Wigglesworth did not take the role of a judge, but more of a prophet who spoke for God's concerns and sought to awaken the people to their spiritual problems. He appealed to the faithful to pray and work toward this end. Wigglesworth also confessed his deep love for the New England colonies by juxtaposing his harsh warning with his compassion:

Ah dear New England! dearest land to me:
 Which unto God hast hitherto been dear,
 And mayst be still more dear than formerlie,
 If to his voice thou wilt incline thine ear."⁴⁸

Wigglesworth anticipated the removal of God's blessing on the Puritan

⁴⁷ Michael Wigglesworth, *God's Controversy with New England*, Bosco, p. 101.

⁴⁸ Michael Wigglesworth, *God's Controversy with New England*, Bosco, p. 102.

colonies, and, with the impending development of political affairs, he was not too far off course. The eventual loss of the charter for the Massachusetts Bay Colony occurred under the reign of James II (1685-1688). He was a flagrant supporter of Catholicism. For all Protestants, James II represented an ill fate. England's religious distinctiveness -- carved out by Henry VIII and Elizabeth -- as a powerful Protestant nation before two prominent Catholic adversaries, Spain and France, was now lost. All of New England feared for the motherland and soon their fate was sealed. In 1686 the Crown officially dissolved the Massachusetts Bay Colony and threw its people into five years of political limbo without any charter. During that time New England and New York were organized together as the Dominion of New England and ruled under one royally appointed governor. One of the agents representing Massachusetts before the new monarch, William III (who took the throne in the 1689 Glorious Revolution), was Increase Mather. Mather spent considerable time and energy trying to persuade William III to grant Massachusetts the same latitude and independence from royal interference with its internal affairs that it had under the old charter. Mather was not successful in that end, however. The new charter of 1691 granted Massachusetts a royal governor with more power than his predecessors (nevertheless, it also included a House of Representatives with greater powers than the lower houses of other royal colonies). The new Massachusetts province effectively ended Puritanism's religious dominance in political affairs. As Michael G. Hall asserted, "The Puritan commonwealth dreamed of and put in place by John Winthrop was no more; the constitutional framework for the pluralistic, secular society that would be inherited by John Adams was now in place."⁴⁹ Mather returned home, hopeful that his efforts produced the best possible government with the greatest advantages that circumstances would now

⁴⁹ Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan*, p. 251.

permit. Much to his dismay, many of those with whom he was most closely associated expressed their criticism of the new charter because it meant the effectual end of the Puritan commonwealth. Theirs was a conservative view that could not abide the final blow to the commonwealth's demise. It was those who were of the religious minority (and thus New England's dissenters) who praised the religious toleration that came with the charter. The end of the City on a Hill created room for Baptists, Quakers, and most shocking of all, Anglicans.

During the turbulence of the loss of the old charter, the indefiniteness of the Dominion of New England, and the secularizing consequences of the new charter, Michael Wigglesworth married his second wife, Martha Mudge in 1679 (who died in 1690) and, for a third time, married Sybil Avery in 1691 (who died in 1708, three years after Wigglesworth). At the age of fifty-seven, he fathered Samuel, and Edward, at sixty-one.⁵⁰ He lived to see both the zenith of the Puritan commonwealth's culture and its final days. His poetry became public sermons to a tight-knit world that was losing over to greater political and religious diversity. Despite this trend, Wigglesworth was compelled to remind his beloved New Englanders that they held a sacred obligation to live righteously before their God. Thus, when the witchcraft trials of 1691-92 erupted, he worried that the impact would turn New England toward an irreversible downward path. A year before he died, he advised Increase Mather to proclaim a "Public and solemn" humiliation over the injustices done to the victims and their families. "I fear...that God hath a Controversy with us about what was done in the time of the witchcraft I fear that innocent blood hath been Shed, and that many hath had their defiled therewith."⁵¹

⁵⁰ With Martha Mudge, he also had five daughters, Abigail, Mary, Martha, Esther, and Dorothy; Edward, however, was his only child by Sybil Avery.

⁵¹ Michael Wigglesworth, "Letter to Increase Mather Attributing Current Distresses To What Was Done By The Massachusetts Authorities During The Witchcraft Episode", 22 May, 1704; Misc. Bound Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Out of his concern that justice be done, Wigglesworth also led "the movement for indemnity to the victims' families."⁵² His fears for the spiritual welfare of New England stayed with him until the end. Though he worked, hoped, and prayed for it, Wigglesworth could not have foreseen the renewal of religious fervor during the eighteenth century's Great Awakening -- the era in which his sons, Samuel and Edward, would have critical roles. He looked to his sons to carry on his legacy. This they would do, but each in his own manner and on opposing sides of the revival that would crack apart the American colonies.

⁵² Samuel Eliot Morison, *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA, 1936), Vol. 2, p. 494.

CHAPTER II

A PRIVATE LIFE

"We call you Puritans, not because you are purer than other men...but because you think yourselves to be purer."¹ This invective of Oliver Ormerod, an English clergyman, reveals the negative tradition behind the naming of Anglicanism's most disturbing dissident movement in the seventeenth century.² In the early twentieth century, sociologist Max Weber identified asceticism as the essential characteristic of Puritanism.³ Intense guilt over sin and the self-reprobation found in Puritan thought is yet another trait of this movement which shook up Anglicanism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In a poignant book about the history of corporal punishment and abuse (*Spare The Child*, 1991), Philip Greven sees the theme of melancholy and depression as "persistent" in the lives of Puritans, as well as in evangelicals and fundamentalists of the last several

¹ *The Puritans in America: A Narrative Anthology*, Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco, eds. (Cambridge, MA, 1985), p. 1.

² Of the first of three types of early American Protestant temperaments that Philip Greven identifies, the evangelical temperament was "dominated by a persistent and virtually inescapable hostility to the self in all of its manifestations. Thus evangelicals were preoccupied with ways to abase, to deny, and to annihilate their own enduring sense of self-worth and self-hood, convinced that only by destroying the self could they conform absolutely and unquestioningly to the sovereign will of God." If what Philip Greven says of the evangelical temperament is true, the origins of the derogatory nature of "puritan" also carries with it a touch of irony. [See Philip Greven, *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (Chicago, 1977), pp. 12-13.]

³ Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan: The Life of Increase Mather* (Middletown, CT, 1988), p. 15. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century historians, however, had disparaging views of the Puritans. See Vernon L. Parrington, *The Colonial Mind: 1620-1800*, New York, 1927: "A world that accepted Michael Wigglesworth for its poet, and accounted Cotton Mather its most distinguished man of letters, had certainly backslidden..." p. 85 and passim; Moses Coit Tyler, *A History of American Literature During The Colonial Period, 1607-1765* (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1876), p. 23 and passim; Rufus W. Griswold, *The Poets and Poetry of America* (New York, 1873), p. 15 and passim.

centuries. To Greven, the conversion experience of these Protestant groups "rarely relieved them of their depressive symptoms".⁴ One Puritan frequently and often associated with this pessimism is Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705). His biographer, Richard Crowder, while writing an overall sympathetic view of Wigglesworth, nevertheless must comment about Wigglesworth's self-reproach found in his diary: "Because it is principally a record of Michael's daily struggles to be worthy of approaching the throne of God, the diary itself is an incomparable source of emotional history, though admittedly the constant writhings become tedious for a casual reader."⁵ While recognizing Wigglesworth's fame and reputation as a best-selling poet, Greven identifies him as "suffer[ing] from profound melancholy from his early twenties through at least his early fifties".⁶ The negative assessments of Wigglesworth, and of the Puritans in general, can be found through examination of published sermons and treatises (including Wigglesworth's poems). But it is also true that from reading their private journals, a profound inner life can be seen. As evidenced from their private writing, there is no doubt that Puritans excoriated their own sins. From their intensely personal journals it would be easy to assume that their maudlin words concerning the utter depravity of the human heart was their primary focus. However, we cannot assume that an overwhelming despair was the core impetus in the Puritans' life. Such a presupposition would betray the basis of their faith (the promise of God's forgiveness and justice) and the purpose of their life (to love and know God). Just as their absolute view about the prevalence of human sin is ever present in their work, their belief in grace and

⁴ Philip Greven, *Spare The Child: The Religious Roots of Punishment and Psychological Impact of Physical Abuse*, (New York, 1991), p. 132.

⁵ Richard Crowder, *No Featherbed to Heaven: A Biography of Michael Wigglesworth, 1631-1705*, (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1962), p. 48.

⁶ Philip Greven, *Spare The Child* (Boston), p. 132.

mercy ought not to be denied an equal hearing in our assessment of them.

The focus of this chapter is the development of the private spiritual journal, which Puritans and their contemporaries kept. This personal journal, or diary, came out of the context of a larger literary genre, the personal history. The keeping of personal histories, which included family histories and personal diaries, became a custom identified with the increasing self-discovery associated with the early modern era. This chapter will examine the private spiritual journal as the religious incorporation of a greater process of individual discovery closely associated with the early modern age. Many types of religious people kept journals. When we read the personal writing of Puritans, such as that found in diaries or journals, it is useful to view them as their confessionals.⁷ Onto countless pages Puritans poured out their troubles and yearnings--they are not unlike the confessions of deepest regret and fear which today are shared in sessions of private counseling. Along with our present clinical disciplines, these early chronicles serve a similar purpose: the analysis of the private inner self for greater personal understanding. Such a perspective will help balance our understanding of this self-critical aspect of the Puritan thought and practice. Their lives were well documented. In many cases their personal writing was not meant for public scrutiny, but was published during or after the lifetime of the author nonetheless. In other cases, writers perceived a wider audience than their own consciences and wrote with that second intention in mind. Whether intended for publication or not, personal diaries and journals represent intensely private thoughts, generated within a larger cultural movement of self-discovery.

The recording of personal histories by the heads of wealthy households has

⁷ It is from William Haller that the idea of the journal serving as confessional comes (Haller refers to them as "diaries"). See William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism: Or The Way to the New Jerusalem As Set For In Pulpit and Press From Thomas Cartwright to John Lilburne and John Milton, 1570-1643* (New York, 1957 [first printing, 1938]), p. 38.

engendered a long tradition in western history. By the late middle ages, however, it was no longer the noble families' domain. This was partly due to the increasing literacy found in the emerging middle-class homes, where fathers and mothers created written family histories. For example, starting in the late medieval period and continuing well into the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, parents noted the lives of their ancestors, and added the births, deaths, baptisms, and the names of godparents of their present day. A new pattern was beginning to emerge from out of these family histories. By keeping record of their family concerns (including financial matters) fathers, as the head of households, gave considerable effort to identifying themselves and their children. "Family documents were 'sacred and religious objects; poring over them, the father resembled a priest performing a ritual of commemoration and propitiation in his private temple."⁸ Nevertheless, these were private materials. They were not meant for the eyes of others, but only for the adult children who then were to carry on the solemn task of recording the family's heritage. Certainly, family histories were not meant for publication.

Eventually, out of recording family histories, evolved the writing of a personal history by members of the middle classes. The genre of diary keeping or personal meditations of one's life was not new to the early modern age. Though their writing represented elite political and social classes, Julius Caesar and Marcus Aurelius were two well known examples from the classical age. The colorful diary of Samuel Pepys, the Clerk of the Acts of the Navy Board who lived in seventeenth century London, demonstrates the growing sense of self-consciousness associated with the English Enlightenment. Proud of his intelligence, books, and a remarkable

⁸ Charles de la Roncière, "Tuscan Nobles on the Eve of the Renaissance", *A History of Private Life, II, Revelations of the Medieval World*, George Duby, editor (Cambridge, MA, 1988), p. 217. Theologically, "propitiation" is defined as the turning away of God's wrath for sins done.

sexual prowess, Pepys's written exchanges with himself reveal the candor of one quite comfortable with his private self. Unlike Luther or Calvin, his writing was not for spiritual reasons. (He especially liked to salaciously recount how his wandering hands found their target.) But Pepys's diary does tell us this: he was using the act of writing as a discipline to gain self-knowledge. Pepys sometimes wrote in cipher, probably to insure the privacy of his personal recollections.⁹ The occasional cipher or Latin was common practice for diary keepers, and this need for insuring privacy in their papers helps us to appreciate the degree to which early modern persons prized the sanctity of the inner self. Michael Wigglesworth also wrote in his diary in cipher. It is likely that on these occasions, Wigglesworth could barely confront his most private thoughts, and so, chose an especially private language in which to express them. Wigglesworth, then, is an early modern example of the delicacy of self-revelation and confession through diary-keeping.

More affluent women also kept family histories and personal diaries. By the fifteenth century, it was not uncommon for noble women, and those of the wealthier middle classes, to have separate bedrooms from their husbands. Some made their bedrooms into a type of private chapel, where they could kneel and pray, several times a day.¹⁰ Both Protestants and Catholics referred to this space as their "closet".¹¹ The term "closet", deserves some comment. In a theological sense, "closet" has a double meaning, of which these religious women probably were aware. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus describes an effective way to pray as

⁹ Orest Ranum, "The Refuges of Intimacy", *A History of Private Life, III, Passions of the Renaissance*, Roger Chartier, editor (Cambridge, MA, 1989), p. 209.

¹⁰ Charles de la Roncière, "Tuscan Nobles on the Eve of the Renaissance", *A History of Private Life, II, Revelations of the Medieval World*, p. 218.

¹¹ Anne Clifford, "The Diary of Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset, Pembroke and Montgomery", *Her Own Life: Autobiographical Writings by Seventeenth-century Englishwomen*, Elspeth Graham, Hilary Hinds, Elaine Hobby and Helen Wilcox, eds. (New York, 1989), p. 52, note 39.

"going into an inner room" (see Matthew 5:6). Older translations, such as the King James Version and the Geneva version, however, use the term "closet". Thus, the privacy of spatial solitude ("a closet" or "the inner room") permits one to then go into oneself ("the inner self"). The bedroom also offered a private place for the careful recording of facts about families. The family record, then, was precious information. Away from the public eye, men and women gave attention to a sphere of self and family. In addition, these histories demonstrate a shift away from relying on oral tradition to an accuracy the author personally ensured in the form of the written record.

The transition to the early modern period is identified through the pattern of more intimate expressions of self-consciousness -- and diaries, letters, confessions, and autobiographies demonstrate the desire to reveal the self. "Confessions, journals and chronicles are sources of information about the individual private lives, that is, about people's bodies, perceptions, feelings and ideas."¹² As an early example of personal religious writing, Augustine's *Confessions* became the epitome of spiritual journal-keeping for Catholics and Protestants. A fourth century lawyer and Platonist, Augustine excelled after his conversion as one of the Church's most brilliant theologians and bishops. "More than any other narrative form", Augustine's *Confessions* inspired several important early Renaissance writers: Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. Their writing modelled Augustine's "sensitive dialogue of the soul before God". Petrarch wept as he read the *Confessions*, moved by the "pain and individual dignity Augustine revealed."¹³ Augustine wrote a penetrating psychological study of his converted life and delved deeply into his own

¹² Philippe Braunstein, "Toward Intimacy: the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries", *A History of Private Life, II, Revelations of the Medieval World*, George Duby, editor (Cambridge, MA, 1988), p. 541.

¹³ Philippe Braunstein, "Toward Intimacy: the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries", *A History of Private Life, II, Revelations of the Medieval World*, p. 542.

character and deeds. He documented his human failings as a believer still trapped by an "an extreme case of compulsive habits".¹⁴ "Thus soul-sick was I, and tormented, accusing myself much more severely than my wont, rolling and turning me in my chain till that were wholly broken, whereby I now was but just, but still was, held. And thou, O Lord, pressedst upon me in my inward parts by a severe mercy, redoubling the lashes of fear and shame, lest I should again give way...hesitating to die to death and to live to life....The very toys of toys, and vanities of vanities, my ancient mistresses still held me; they plucked my fleshly garment and whispered softly, 'dost thou cast us off?'"¹⁵ For his time, Augustine was astonishingly frank. And Augustine's early example of diary-keeping is quite similar to Michael Wigglesworth's use of the diary as a place of confession and religious expression.

In the sixteenth century Martin Luther reflected the tradition of Augustine's candor. Assigned to a monastery in Wittenberg, Germany, he described himself as "an impeccable monk". Nevertheless, Luther lived in terror of God's judgement: "I was myself more than once driven to the very abyss of despair so that I wished I had never been created. Love God? I hated him."¹⁶ Luther was an Augustinian monk and, like his order's namesake, his torment put him on the verge of complete ruin. But though he found release from his personal anguish and created the intellectual foundation of a wholly new era in Christian history, Luther suffered with bouts of depression throughout his life.¹⁷ Like Augustine, Luther shared these personal ordeals as a didactic tool to encourage others who struggled in their faith.

¹⁴ Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (New York, 1986 [first printing, 1967]), p. 173.

¹⁵ Augustine, *Confessions*, Charles W. Eliot, editor (New York: Colliers, 1909), VIII.5.

¹⁶ Luther, as quoted in Roland Baintain, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Nashville: Abington, 1978 [first printing, Pierce and Smith, 1950]), p. 44.

¹⁷ Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*, p. 286.

"For the devil is wont, in affliction and in the conflict of conscience, by the law to make us afraid, and lay against us the guilt of sin, our wicked life past, the wrath and judgment of God, hell and eternal death, that by this means he may drive us to desperation."¹⁸ Luther's comments derived from his own agony and fears. For Luther, despondency led to insight and discovery, so that he was able to develop a pastoral role out of his terrors and apply his understanding to his students and followers. Michael Wigglesworth followed a pattern similar to Luther's. In Wigglesworth's case, it took years to ride out a period of personal desolation; nevertheless, he emerged from the process as a leading voice for early New Englanders.

John Calvin, whose career was filled with impressive accomplishments, also never seemed able to escape struggle with his sense of self worth. His life was such that though he could apprehend spiritual fulfillment, he seldom experienced it. In *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait*, William J. Bouwsma considers the "tensions and conflicts within [Calvin] were even more erosive" than the numerous physical ailments and pressures from his responsibilities.¹⁹ Bouwsma portrays Calvin as possessing an acute sense of self, who was a "singularly anxious man and, as a reformer, fearful and troubled." Like Luther, Calvin extended his personal understanding to empathize with the anxieties of others. "But though we are unworthy to open our mouths for ourselves and call upon them in adversity, yet as thou hast commanded us to pray one for another, we pour out our prayers for all our brethren, members of the same body, whom thou now chastisest with thy scourge...[render] thy chastisements useful for the reformation of their lives."²⁰

¹⁸ Martin Luther, "Commentary On Galatians", *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, John Dillenberger, ed. (New York, 1961), pp. 107-08.

¹⁹ William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait* (New York, 1988), p. 31.

²⁰ John Calvin, "Forms of Prayer for the Church," *Tracts and Treatises on the Doctrine and Worship of the Church, Vol. 2*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, 1958), p. 110, quoted

Just as many did in the early modern period, Calvin and Luther saw the benefits of self-examination, though they agonized through it.²¹ They were compelled to write, and in their enduring misery and inner turmoil, they were like Augustine, their remarkable predecessor from Carthage. Thus, they also turned deep anxiety and self-appraisal into penetrating and brilliant work.

The English (and in particular English women) gave rise to more diary-keepers than any other European nation. "It is no accident in England the birthplace of privacy, diaries were widely kept from the late 1500s. In France there is nothing comparable."²² A collection of women's autobiographies, including several personal spiritual journals has been organized in *Her Own Life: Autobiographical Writings by Seventeenth-century Englishwomen* (1989). As a writer during the early modern period, Margaret Cavendish, the first Duchess of Newcastle, studied herself and with calm clarity described her temperament as leaning toward "...those thoughts that are sad, serious, and melancholy are apt to contract and to draw too much back which oppression doth as it were overpower or smother the conception in the brain....As for my disposition, it is more inclining to be melancholy than merry, but not crabbed or peevishly melancholy, but soft, melting, solitary and contemplating melancholy."²³ Her public persona, however, does not match her private life. Cavendish dressed in her own peculiar fashion, attended the Royal Society, and "expected the world to take her writings seriously".²⁴ (Even Samuel

in Dorothee Soelle, *Suffering*, trans. Everett R. Kalin (Philadelphia, 1973), p. 24.

²¹ William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait*, p. 179.

²² Philippe Aries, "Introduction", *A History of Private Life, III, Passions of the Renaissance*, Roger Chartier, editor (Cambridge, MA, 1989), p. 5.

²³ Margaret Cavendish, "A True Relation of my Birth, Breeding and Life", *Her Own Life: Autobiographical Writings by Seventeenth-century Englishwomen*, Elspeth Graham, Hilary Hinds, Elaine Hobby and Helen Wilcox, eds., pp. 94-96.

²⁴ Introduction to Alice Thornton, "A Book of Remembrances", *Her Own Life: Autobiographical Writings by Seventeenth-century Englishwomen*, Elspeth Graham, Hilary Hinds, Elaine

Pepys could not avoid fascination with her.) Margaret Cavendish took herself seriously and was quite outspoken. Nevertheless, she defined herself as much by flaunting the prevailing expectations of a lady of her social position, as by her private diary entries. Her personal habit of self-analysis certainly must have contributed in some measure to her ability to gain considerable recognition in society. What is even more remarkable is that, in the public sphere where women did not normally make one's mark, she revealed a strong "public side" -- all this, despite a profoundly melancholic private life.

What is significant about the women's spiritual journals documented in *Her Own Life* is that while they contain highly personal reflections, they were not intended to be exclusively private. Perhaps they were prepared first to serve the writers' own needs for self-analysis, then later, they met the needs of others -- especially women. This application, then, allowed a voice in society for women in an age that honored their public silence. For example, Alice Thorton pondered about God's justice in light of serious illness, and recounted her conversion experience as, "not able to do any good thing, which caused a deep and great apprehension and fear with awe of his glorious majesty, lest I should offend him at any time by sin against him or my parents, and that he would punish all sins. It also caused in me a love to him my creator, that had make me to serve him and his particular love and grace to me."²⁵ Her journal describes her deep concern for her family, and a long life of hardship. Despite her grief and losses (she outlived her husband and all but one child), she lived to the age of 81. Her journals freely confess to God her sustained misery; nevertheless, they show how Alice Thorton

Hobby and Helen Wilcox, eds., p. 87.

²⁵ Alice Thorton, "A Book of Remembrances", *Her Own Life: Autobiographical Writings by Seventeenth-century Englishwomen*, Elspeth Graham, Hilary Hinds, Elaine Hobby and Helen Wilcox, eds., p. 98.

derived astonishing fortitude from her faith.

Like Alice Thorton, Hannah Allen used her personal spiritual journal to chronicle her intense need to order her life amidst chaos. In this case, she reveals her anxiety and pain and her search for comfort and help through her faith. By the end of her journal, she is able to distance herself from a cycle of despondency, and to separate herself from her doubts and her fears (some of which led to suicidal attempts). She examined the "old self" of her despondency in contrast to her "new self" of the spiritual hope. A large part of her written work reveals the considerable time she spent in examining herself and crying out to God for relief. "For Christ's sake, pity my case, or else I know not what to do. And do not deny me strength to bear with me, that one sin may not be in me, unrepented of or unmortified....The Devil still keeps me under dreadful bondage and in sad distress and owe."²⁶ This struggle echoes strong Augustinian and Lutheran influences, as her condition was probably exacerbated by the pain and lethargy of a strong depression. Yet Hannah Allen was a survivor. As she found comfort and relief from her faith, she wrote that her story may serve as an encouragement to another.

From the northern towns of the Massachusetts Bay Colony Anne Bradstreet composed deeply personal reflections, but her talent was in verse. It is not clear that Anne Bradstreet intended her poetry for publication, as her contemporary Michael Wigglesworth did. Her brother-in-law nevertheless took her poems to England and published them in 1650. Although she expected a small audience to her private musings, she also was quite conscious of a prevailing cultural disdain for female poets:

I am an obnoxious to each carping tongue
Who Says my hand a needle better fits,

²⁶ Hannah Allen, "Satan His methods and Malice Baffled", *Her Own Life: Autobiographical Writings by Seventeenth-century Englishwomen*, Elspeth Graham, Hilary Hinds, Elaine Hobby and Helen Wilcox, eds., p. 201.

A Poets pen all scorn I should thus wrong,
 For such despite they cast on Female wits:
 If I do prove well, it won't advance, they'l say it's stolen,
 or else it was by chance.²⁷

(Despite such concerns, she was a hit.) In Anne Bradstreet's case, just as a personal spiritual journal allows the individual private moments for reflections, her poems represent a vital, self-conscious inner life. She is in dialogue with herself. So, we see her Puritan side when she chides herself over her materialism after her house and possessions are gone in a fire, or when she acknowledges the prevalence of sin in her human nature (that is, what Christianity refers to as "the flesh"):

For I have vowed (and so will do)
 Thee as a foe [her "flesh"] still to pursue,
 And combat with thee will and must
 Until I see thee laid in th' dust."²⁸

Likewise, just as she does not hide from her private self her grief over the death of a grandchild, she does not censure her sexual passion for her husband. Through her poetry Bradstreet faced her private self and contemplated her world of responsibilities and fears. Her poems helped her to put her world into the framework of her religion. Like a personal journal, her poems offered both release from anguish and articulation of her life experience.

Because Michael Wigglesworth's world view was oriented in the Calvinist-Puritan tradition, he accepted the profound degree of personal guilt for his sins. In light of Augustine's, Luther's, and Calvin's tortured disclosures, it seems that Michael Wigglesworth was not alone in his anguish and sorrow. Wigglesworth's epic poem, *The Day of Doom*, published in 1662 has severe imagery in it. But that

²⁷ Anne Bradstreet, "The Prologue" (5), *The Puritans in America: A Narrative Anthology*, Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco, eds. (Cambridge, MA), p. 132.

²⁸ Anne Bradstreet, "The Flesh and the Spirit", *The American Puritans: Their Poetry and Prose*, Perry Miller, ed. (New York, 1950,) p. 268.

the imagery was meant to reflect the personal struggle involved in the long process of conversion and encourage true self-knowledge within the personal contemplative world that Puritans encouraged all to develop. Thus Wigglesworth's warning about the impending final doom for the unrepentant fit a general Protestant tradition of his age. For example, ten years earlier as a tutor at Harvard, Wigglesworth heard a sermon based upon the prophet Jeremiah, an imposing book of biblical judgement: "that when the lord removes his means of grace from a people, he makes way for desolation, nay its already begun...he lays the desolation inwardly in the souls off his people. September 9, 1649".²⁹ Most of *The Day of Doom* contains Wigglesworth's vivid description of God's final judgement and it echoes the type of sermon he heard earlier:

The Judge draws nigh, exalted high upon a lofty throne,
Amidst the throng of angels strong, like Israel's holy one.
The excellence of whose presence and awfull majesty
Amazeth Nature and every creature doth more than terrify.³⁰

Because these images were not composed in isolation from Wigglesworth's culture, they reflected a common trend among early New England ministers to admonish people to consider the certainty of death. David D. Hall comments on the literary and cultural milieu in which *The Day of Doom* was created. In *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement: Popular Belief in Early New England* (1991), Hall evaluates the theology of Puritan ministers, "The New England clergy told the living to behave as though at any moment they might die. 'Behold and think of death': this motto was...reiterated in a thousand sermons. Death was thus a warning, a reinforcement for the rules of disciplined asceticism and repentance."³¹ Harry S.

²⁹ Michael Wigglesworth, "Diaries", New England Historical Genealogical Society.

³⁰ Michael Wigglesworth, "The Day of Doom" (14), *The American Puritans: Their Poetry and Prose*, Perry Miller, ed., p. 286.

³¹ David Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement: Popular Belief in Early New England* (New York, 1989), p. 205.

Stout assesses their messages this way, "The overwhelming number of sermons dealt with corporate sin. In sounding the rhetoric of failure, ministers echoed the jeremiads of the founders..."³² Death and the Final Judgement of God were part of New Englanders' mentalité, their everyday world. *The Day of Doom* became of symbol of this ethic in the seventeenth century, and in doing so, the poem gained powerful significance for the people. According to Clifford Geertz, "Sacred symbols relate an ontology and a cosmology to an aesthetics and a morality: their peculiar power comes from their presumed ability to identify fact with value at the most fundamental level."³³ Likewise, Wigglesworth took notes on a sermon by Richard Mather's when he was a student. In his diary Wigglesworth noted: "May 19, 1650, That when God looks at in others with an Eye of Jealousy and indignation, he looks at in his own people with an Eye of pitty and compassion".³⁴ David D. Hall has observed that for the Puritan mind, "[l]iving well meant dying well; a peaceful conscience ensured a smooth passage from this world to heaven."³⁵ The poem also came to transcend its purpose of instruction to become a symbol to New Englanders of the paramount importance of the covenant in Puritan thought. As a cultural symbol, Wigglesworth's *The Day of Doom* was to call the people of New England back to God by reminding them of the reality of the invisible world and the promise of peace with God. In this way he became an Old Testament prophet to the Israel of the New World. And he did so squarely in the mainstream of his profession. *The*

³² Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture In Colonial New England* (New York, 1986), p. 75.

³³ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, (New York, 1973), p. 127.

³⁴ Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, Manuscript Collection of the New England Historical Genealogical Society.

³⁵ David Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement: Popular Belief in Early New England*, p. 205.

Day of Doom still was a best seller well into the eighteenth century. It had not lost its luster.

In writing a diary that served as a personal spiritual journal, Wigglesworth reflected the general influence of the early modern era, when personal self-examination was becoming increasingly common. More so than that of his contemporaries, however, his journal is replete with confessions of his lack of love for God. For example, Samuel Sewall's diary is less focused on his inner spiritual life and deals more with the concerns and worries of his daily life. Thomas Shepard's *Journal*, however, comes close to the confessional type of writing that we find in Michael Wigglesworth's diaries.³⁶ Shepard was minister of the Cambridge church from 1635/6 to 1649. To a degree, Shepard expresses more hope in his condition than Wigglesworth. Nevertheless, similar to Wigglesworth's experience, Shepard's journal/diary entries are filled with a heart struggling with inner turmoil. "I saw how fit it was that the will of Christ should be done, as well in denying as in giving enlargements, though he should strip me naked of them and all other things...I then saw that I was to be content to want them in regard of my own unworthiness, and so [1] to be vile in my own eyes for my sin that moves the Lord to deny; [2] to mourn that he should not glorify himself by me...[In] my prayer I saw my heart very vile, filled with nothing but evil, nay mind and mouth and life, and void of god. Hence I prayed to the Lord to possess me again (1) because he only was good; (2) because he only was worthy."³⁷ That Shepard had a keen sense of what he perceived as his own deficiencies and that he was the minister of Wigglesworth's church when Wigglesworth was attending Harvard reveal that Wigglesworth's diary-keeping was part of the Puritan ethic of self-examination. "When [the

³⁶ *God's Plot: The Paradoxes of Puritan Piety, Being the Autobiography and Journal of Thomas Shepard*, Michael McGiffert, ed., Amherst, 1972.

³⁷ Thomas Shepard, November 25, 1640, *God's Plot*, Michael McGiffert, ed., p. 83.

Puritan preacher] fell weary of the coil of business, discouraged by external difficulty, by the sense of his own failure, and by the futility of his own effort, he retired to his study and poured out his heart in his diary. At such moments, the healthiest mind seems morbid."³⁸

Rarely does Wigglesworth cease from his self-abasement in his journal: "I abhor myself before the Lord for my shameless pride, especially now when god is abasing me. I am ashamed of my apostatizing heart of unbeleef...Yet the 4th day at lecture I found my vile heart apt to be weary beforehand of the feared legnth of the publick ordinances: and I feel my spirit so leavened with sensuality that I cannot but be hanckering in my thoughts after creature comforts as of meat and drink &c when I should be holy intent to gods worship in religious services...I have no confidence in the flesh. my owne conceits of my doing something for god more than others do, I see are all vain. I feel I cannot do any thing of my self, so far as god leav's me to myne owne weakness (though I contrived never so wel before hand) yet I fayl in the doing so that same may sit in my face; yea I mar all I doe."³⁹ If we are to understand the personal spiritual journal of Michael Wigglesworth through what he was taught, what he believed, what he preached, and what he published, however, we must appreciate his obsession with guilt as someone who grasped his religion wholeheartedly. Edmund Morgan, the editor of Wigglesworth's diary, notes that in his writings and sermons Wigglesworth was never accused of "heresy or eccentricity".⁴⁰ As a representative of Puritan culture, Increase Mather offered him the presidency of Harvard. Wigglesworth's journal, then, is best seen as an expression of his acute sense of guilt and remorse -- this was his private

³⁸ William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, p. 39.

³⁹ *The Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, 1653-1657*, Edmund Morgan, ed. (New York, 1965), pp. 13, 18, 22.

⁴⁰ *The Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, 1653-1657*, Edmund Morgan, p. viii.

confessional. It was not until he was in his sixties that this constant inner strain lessened -- most significantly, when he remarried, after having been a widower for twenty years. Edmund Morgan concludes that Wigglesworth was "exceptional", but not fanatical.⁴¹ Thus, within the culture of Puritan promise and pastoral responsibilities, Wigglesworth's dooming words, both public and private, aptly fit within his world.

Self-discovery comes from a deliberate intention to focus away from subjects that demand daily attention, such as problems at work, family worries, and social responsibilities. Self-discovery is born out of the need for personal knowledge through the questioning of one's self and the probing of one's motives. The pattern of family record keeping -- as a private history -- associated with the early modern period easily extended to the more intimate record of the personal journal or diary. People wrote to gain self-discovery, whether it be the bawdy accounts of a Samuel Pepys or the grace under pressure of an Alice Thorton. These meditations mark a pattern of moral courage. When examining oneself honestly, whether it be in the perspective of humanist self-reflection or through Calvinist self-criticism, there is always considerable opportunity for remembering one's failures and condemning one's habits.

Christianity is a religion that requires self-examination and Augustine's *Confessions* became the prototype. Across a span of centuries, heart-wrenching dread and mental forboding characterized some of Christianity's most impressive leadership: Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. Puritan writings and journals, then, are closely linked to a long-standing religious discipline. This form of writing emerged for the purpose of religious exercise and psychological release. However, the

⁴¹ *The Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, 1653-1657*, Edmund Morgan, p. ix. Cinthia Gannett views the Puritans as one among several dissenting groups in England that turned to spiritual journals for "rigorous self-examination and assessment". See Gannett, *Gender and the Journal: Diaries and Academic Discourse* (Albany, NY, 1991), p. 110.

religious diary is also unique. Unlike a private diary, it serves both as a means of communication with oneself and as a confessional to God. Interestingly, the need for self-understanding is a mark of the twentieth century, as evidenced by the growth and development of the fields of psychological therapy and counseling. In the twentieth century, journal-keeping has been instituted as a psychological aid in physical and emotional healing.⁴² Despite the varying degrees to which people of the past intended to reveal their private thoughts, the desire to record and understand themselves has led those of the western world into intensely profound inner journeys. For religious leaders in particular, personal tragedies with doubt and despair became the impetus for their creativity. Out of their anguish came distinct and forceful convictions which they honed into Christian doctrine, critical to western civilization. Michael Wigglesworth was a tortured soul. Yet he also was deeply concerned for people. He loved New England, "the dearest land to me" and, like his predecessors, Luther and Calvin, took from his inadequacies and heartache in order to speak to his world. Although Wigglesworth's *The Day of Doom* is filled with images of violence and affliction, it was also a rapid best-seller. Its first printing of 1800 copies was sold out within just over a year.⁴³ Here is where Michael Wigglesworth found New England's pulse and directed his energies toward painting a unforgettable account of God's judgment and also, ultimately, God's grace. Meanwhile, the personal diary was for Wigglesworth a confessional where he spoke to God in a hushed and humbled voice. This discipline, coming out of early

⁴² Ira Progoff, *At A Journal Workshop: The Basic Text and Guide for Using The Intensive Journal Process* (New York, 1975), pp. 9-14. See also Bernard Siegal, *Love, Medicine, and Miracles: Lesson Learned About Self-Healing From a Surgeon's Experience With Exceptional Patients* (New York, 1986), p. 187. Scott Peck's *The Road Less Traveled* (New York, 1984), another popular psychological and spiritual book of self-discovery and healing, has sold 3.5 million copies as of 1990. See also, Irvin D. Yalom, *Existential Psychotherapy* (New York, 1980), pp. 1-12.

⁴³ *The Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, 1653-1657* , Edmund Morgan, p. viii. It became, according to Morgan, "the most popular book of his time".

Christianity, parallels the movement toward greater individualization which emerges during the early modern period. Nevertheless, the religious diary remains distinct. While it has the similar pattern of self-discovery that other forms of diary-keeping have, religious diaries serve as a means for personal growth in tandem with the biblical goals of knowing God on the most intimate terms associated with self-disclosure. The religious diary's role also prepares one for making a contribution to one's world. However neurotic the cries of Michael Wigglesworth's diary may be, they were part of a long-standing tradition of acknowledging the private life for public service.

For Wigglesworth, *The Day of Doom* served his purpose of entreating his readers to know themselves in a frank and honest way. The poem permitted individuals to make their inner lives transparent before their consciences -- and these consciences long had been steeped in biblical theology. In one sense Wigglesworth was making *The Day of Doom* into a "confessional diary" for his public. Did his readers truly see themselves in the poem? He hoped so. He wanted them to use it as a means to reflect upon their spiritual state and to know their inner self, warts and all. As difficult and as repugnant as that process might be for them, *The Day of Doom* thus allowed the private lives of Wigglesworth's readers to become unveiled before their own eyes. Likewise, as they reflected on the majestic certainty of the Final Judgement, Wigglesworth's aim was to see his readers apprehend the mercy of God and the certainty of hope. Perhaps this was why the poem was so popular. People found that they could identify with it and discover their inner self as a result of reading it. While they were caught up with the vivid scenarios of the Day of Judgement, they also were captivated by the process of self-disclosure. In Wigglesworth's hands, *The Day of Doom* thus became a "closet of confession" in which the people of New England wrestled with their inner doubts and turmoils. It also became their vehicle of apprehending the sweet benefits of

God's mercy and appropriating the covenant of God.

CHAPTER III

FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT: THE COVENANT PRESERVED

The continuity of thought from Michael Wigglesworth to his sons, Samuel and Edward, demonstrates the consistency of essential Puritan theology over a period of approximately one-hundred years. This continuity of Puritan thought from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century represents the imparting of values found in the doctrine of the covenant and the role of a minister as a pastor/prophet to his people. We can trace Michael's doctrinal teachings from the middle of the seventeenth century to the final sermons of his sons in the middle of the eighteenth century. While Michael published his most famous pieces of literature when Puritan culture dominated New England life, he nevertheless represented a figure of transition in Puritan authority. By the 1660s, many leaders from the first generation were dead. As a leader of the next generation, Michael found signs of piety and faith in New England. But like many ministers, he despaired that too many were too casual in their religious convictions. If the people, as a whole, lacked true passion for God, they put into question the vision of a commonwealth of saints. As a result, New Englanders were close to cutting short the mission of the "City on a Hill" in a short period of time.

Wigglesworth's concern about an impending judgment on a whole society reflected a crucial tenet of covenant theology for the New England Puritans -- that God had a purpose for them and had established it within a sacred bond. That the covenant was designed for a people was important, but this "communal"¹ sense of

¹ Michael McGiffert, "The Problem of the Covenant in Puritan Thought: Peter Bulkeley's *Gospel-Covenant*", *New England Historical Genealogical Register*, 130 (1976): 127. This article examines the tensions found in Puritan doctrine of covenant of grace (God's work in salvation) and the covenant of works (or human effort in pious living). See also McGiffert's, "Grace and Works: The Rise and Division of Covenant Divinity in Elizabethan Puritanism",

the covenant was only part of its fuller meaning. Taken from main currents of reformed theology, covenant theology first had a fundamental application in individual lives. Reformers taught that God's grace in the act of salvation provided tremendous benefits: among them are the forgiveness of sin, reconciliation with God, spiritual regeneration, and eternal life.² Reformed leaders preached the great doctrines of the Church with excitement, and the Puritans (of England as well as New England) were among the most articulate spokesmen.³ They traced the covenant to the promise that God gave to Abraham and his descendants, the Hebrew people: "And I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you" (Genesis 17:7).⁴ The covenant is developed further in the book of Jeremiah as a "new covenant": "...I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah....This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel...I will put My law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people" (Jeremiah 31:31, 33). Reformed theologians constructed a theology of the conversion process that came out of this "new covenant" (which was realized ultimately through the mediating work of Christ). The covenant was God's promise of faithfulness to the individual believer, who then entered a special

Harvard Theological Review, 75 (1982), 463-502.

² The reformed doctrine of salvation involves a number of aspects: the application of Christ's atonement, election, calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, and glorification. This is not so much a description of the temporal order of the components of salvation, as it is a description of the logical occurrence of them. Indeed, all of the aspects (except for glorification) occur simultaneously.

³ The Reformed doctrine of the covenant came through the writings of Calvin and Zwingli in the Swiss city-states of Geneva and Zurich and was further developed by Reformed theologians in Germany, the Netherlands, and finally in Britain.

⁴See also Genesis 17:1-22.

relationship with him. "The union was initiated by God, founded on his promise and confirmed by the active response of those to whom the promise effectually came. The promise became evangelically effective at the point when its recipients found themselves...to take God at his word and act upon it."⁵ God's covenant with a people, then, represented the aggregate embodiment of individual covenants. It was a means of promise and hope for the believer and the believing community.

Puritan doctrine drew upon the importance of the covenant since it embodied both the individual appropriation of grace and its corollary application to a larger society. "Although covenant doctrine was not an exclusive possession of Puritan, still less of New England Puritans, preachers of that persuasion tended to make more of it than did their Laudean or Lutheran contemporaries."⁶ In this sense, Michael Wigglesworth's concern for the spiritual state of New England dealt with the covenant's relationship to the individual and community-at-large. He was a leading Puritan voice in the latter half of the seventeenth century and his apprehension is evident in his public works: *The Day of Doom: Or, A Poetical Description of The Great and Last Judgement* (1662) and *Meat Out of the Eater: Or Meditations Concerning The Necessity, End, and Usefulness of Afflictions Unto God's Children* (1670). New England's covenantal welfare was the focus especially in a third poetic exhortation, *God's Controversy With New England: Written in the Time of the Great Drought Anno 1662*.⁷ This essay will compare Michael

⁵ Michael McGiffert, "William Tyndale's Conception of Covenant", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 32 (1981): 174.

⁶ Michael McGiffert, "The Problem of the Covenant in Puritan Thought: Peter Bulkeley's *Gospel-Covenant*", p. 108.

⁷ *God's Controversy With New England*, written in 1662, was not published during Wigglesworth's lifetime. Ronald A. Bosco notes that "...the poem was destined to remain in manuscript for the next two centuries" (Ronald A. Bosco, ed., *The Poems of Michael Wigglesworth* [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989], p. xxxviii and also p xxx). According to Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco, *God's Controversy With New England* was "...discovered in manuscript in the nineteenth century...", (Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco, eds., *The Puritans in America: A Narrative Anthology* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard,

Wigglesworth's theology, as it is rooted in covenant theology, with that of his first son, Samuel, who served as the pastor of the Third Church of Ipswich, Massachusetts, from 1714 until 1768.⁸ Michael's poems and Samuel's sermons demonstrate remarkable thematic similarities despite the span of roughly one-hundred years, when New England culture was loosening from its Puritan structures and taking hold of more complex social institutions. However much New England was changing, as far as Michael and Samuel Wigglesworth were concerned, the call to repent and to follow God carried on.

The 1660s were an ironic period for Michael Wigglesworth. Increasingly ill, despondent, and still grieving over the death of his wife (December 21, 1659), he could not preach and barely fulfilled his pastoral duties. His hopes that a voyage to Bermuda in 1663 would improve his health were dashed. Instead, the trip resulted in exacerbating his already weakened physical state and further drained his emotional frame of mind. Nevertheless, Wigglesworth wrote the three longest poems of his body of work and earned recognition in England as well as New England from *The Day of Doom*. "I was a a gainer by them [the 1800 copies of the first edition of *The Day of Doom*], and not a loser. Moreover I have since heard some success of those my poor labours."⁹ Despite a long period of despair and loneliness, Wigglesworth sought to reach out to New England to speak for God -- and the covenant underpinned his themes.

In his poems, we can see that Wigglesworth knew his audience. His readers were biblically literate and listened to the mysteries of faith explained in plain

1985], p.230).

⁸ The Third Church of Ipswich (known as the Hamlet church) is now the First Congregational Church of Hamilton, Massachusetts, and was incorporated in 1791.

⁹ Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, Manuscript Collection of the New England Historical Genealogical Society.

terms. "The extraordinary history of *The Day of Doom* grows out of the fact that all the basic themes of the 'traditional' marketplace converged in a single text, a text that also borrowed from the ballad by which current events ('sensations') were announced to a popular audience."¹⁰ The language of the poems fulfills these desires. In *The Day of Doom*, Wigglesworth quietly approached his readers, seeking to persuade those whose religious sensibilities were waning, or who nominally found satisfaction in an intellectual acknowledgement of "owning the Covenant" (as participants in the Half-Way Covenant), to "...put not off Repentance till to morrow"¹¹. Wigglesworth was one of a generation of ministers who "...addressed audiences who had been schooled in the basic truths of Scripture from infancy....Yet these same audiences...also seemed far more prone to challenge the prerogatives of their ministers and resist conversion."¹² By his choice of vivid language, Wigglesworth painted real and terrifying images of the Last Judgement and successfully held people's attention. This type of poem served as a jeremiad, a sermon that "...called for rebuke, condemnation, and corporate recall....But they could not be repeated every week without distorting the biblical balance of consolation alongside condemnation...[They] were reserved for occasional fast and election sermons."¹³

Even more exemplary of the jeremiad than *The Day of Doom* was

¹⁰ David D. Hall, "The World of Print and Collective Mentality in Seventeenth-Century New England", in *New Directions in American Intellectual History*, John Higham and Paul K. Conkin, eds., (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1979), p. 175. Hall adds that "[w]e err greatly in thinking of the ministers as intellectuals...Leaving aside all the other ways in which the ministers mingled with a general audience, their relationship to the literary marketplace would disprove this view" (p.175).

¹¹ Michael Wigglesworth, *The Day of Doom*, Bosco, p. 80.

¹² Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford, 1986), p. 95.

¹³ Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul*, p. 96.

Wigglesworth's next poem, *God's Controversy With New-England*. Just as he did in *The Day of Doom*, in this poem he put himself in his readers' place and asked to be accepted as a fellow human being, a finite creature:

Good christian Reader judge me not
 As too Censorious,
 For pointing at those faults of thine
 Which are notorious.
 For if those faults be none of thine
 I do not thee accuse...
 I blame not thee to spare my self:
 But first at home begin,
 And judge my self, before that I
 Reproove another sin...¹⁴

The individual and communal covenant are evident in many of the parts of *God's Controversy With New-England*. The poem also functioned as a fast day sermon -- the purpose of which was to provide an opportunity for individuals to assess the current state of their own spiritual affairs and that of the greater community.

Such, O New-England, was thy first,
 Such was thy best estate:
 But, Loe! a strange and suddain change
 My courage did amate...
 With whom I made a Covenant of peace,
 And unto whom I did most firmly plight
 My faithfulness, If whilst I live I cease
 To be their Guide, their god, their full delight;
 Since them with cords of love to me I drew,
 Enwrapping in my grace such as should them ensew.¹⁵

According to Harry S. Stout, the publishing of a fast day sermon served "...primarily

¹⁴ Michael Wigglesworth, *God's Controversy With New-England*, Bosco, p. 89.

¹⁵ Michael Wigglesworth, *God's Controversy With New-England*, Bosco, p. 93.

as a historical rather than evangelistic tool. It was not intended to represent regular preaching but to chart the children's location in providential history."¹⁶

Along with the purpose of reflecting on a particular historical moment, the heart of a jeremiad revealed the dissolution of the individual's passion for God and warn of impending judgement. The covenantal bonds were straining under the pressure of human unfaithfulness, so that natural warnings, such as the 1662 drought, were alarms to heed:

This O New-England hast thou got
By riot and excess:
This hast thou brought upon thy self
By pride and wantonness.
Thus must thy worldyness be whypt.
Thy, that too much do crave,
Provoke the Lord to take away
Such blessings as they have.¹⁷

Nevertheless, *God's Controversy With New-England* was not without hope -- for no jeremiad was. Indeed the nature of the jeremiad was to warn and to demonstrate the dire consequences of inner and communal spiritual decline. But the jeremiad also offered a means of resolution and, in the covenant tradition, the jeremiad taught that the means of resolution was repentance. The result was hope, for there then was reconciliation in a relationship that had soured. Being in union with God and knowing God's love were the preeminent goals to which the believer and the community-at-large may attain. God's benefits would result in greater holiness and joy in the individual's life and greater benevolence in society as a whole. In a jeremiad, the message was clear -- repentance was worth it:

Ah dear New England! dearest land to me:
Which unto God hast hitherto been dear,

¹⁶ Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul*, pp. 74-75.

¹⁷ Michael Wigglesworth, *God's Controversy With New-England*, Bosco, p. 101.

And mayst be still more dear than formerlie...
 Cheer on, sweet souls, my heart is with you all,
 And shall be with you, maugre Sathan's might:
 And whereso'ere this body be a Thrall,
 Still in New-England shall be my delight.¹⁸

While it was not in the genre of a jeremiad, Wigglesworth's third work, *Meat Out of the Eater*, nevertheless represented the importance of the individual covenant to its readers. In this collection of poems, Wigglesworth adopted more the role of a pastor to his people than that of a prophet for God.¹⁹ Instead of warnings about the feeble conditions of spiritual health, there were words of compassion. Instead of dreadful judgement, there was encouragement. Instead of harsh measures of discipline, Wigglesworth offered an empathic ear to his audience. *Meat Out of the Eater's* basic presupposition was simple: life is harsh. The human experience includes suffering, hardships, and perhaps disasters. The Scriptures taught that God was omnipotent and loving. This was an inscrutable paradox for the faithful. The tension, theologically, was how to put one's life experience and suffering into perspective. Early in the poems, Wigglesworth explained that "All Christians must be Sufferers" and that, in the present world, all face difficulties in life:

All that resolve to be
 Christs faithful Followers,
 Must be contented in *this* world
 To be great Sufferers.
 They must renounce themselves
 And their own Wills deny,

¹⁸ Michael Wigglesworth, *God's Controversy With New-England*, Bosco, p. 102.

¹⁹ In his diary Wigglesworth said of the poems that would become *Meat Out of the Eater*, "I have been long imployed in a great work composing poems about the cross." *Diary of Michael Wigglesworth*, Manuscript Collection of the New England Historical Genealogical Society, September 17, 1669.

Take up their Cross and follow Christ
Through sufferings chearfully. ²⁰

The pastoral voice Wigglesworth used to communicate to his readers was meant to reflect an important attribute of God, that of a loving father whose heart is filled with tenderness and compassion. Although Wigglesworth chided his readers to realize "[n]or must we think to ride to Heaven Upon a Feather-bed"²¹, he led them through a series of issues that often puzzled believers or drained them of their emotional or physical resources. And knowing his audience, Wigglesworth again chose plain words and employed a language that extended his message in real and familiar images. For example, in *Meat Out of the Eater*, the reader feels the "sharpest Winter Frosts", sees the ship sinking because it lacks the necessary ballast, and works the ground and sows the seed in order to "expect a Crop or Harvest to obtain"²². The collection's theme was to face and endure one's hardships. This is the human condition. Certainly as a writer, Wigglesworth drew upon his own life experiences and recalled his own agonies, weariness, and grief to describe and analyze life's harsh realities. This gave him tremendous conviction when he assured his readers of God's presence and nurturing love:

Droop no faint-hearted man,
Thou art not yet undone:
So long as god himself survives,
And is thy Portion.
Out of the eater He
Will surely bring forth Meat:
And Spiritual good more sweet than hony
Our of Affliction great...
It is my daily Prayer,

²⁰ Michael Wigglesworth, *Meat Out of the Eater*, Bosco, p. 107.

²¹ Michael Wigglesworth, *Meat Out of the Eater*, Bosco, p. 107.

²² Michael Wigglesworth, *Meat Out of the Eater*, Bosco, pp. 112, 113, and 119.

Lord let me never teach,
 That unto others which my self
 Have little care to reach.
 I have not Told thee Tales,
 Of things unseen, unfelt,
 But speak them from Experience:
 Believe it how thou wilt. ²³

At the end of *Meat Out of the Eater* Wigglesworth described the peaceful and happy resolution of the believer's dilemma. He created a dialogue between "the Believing Soul and her Savior".²⁴ This use of a feminine image in Christian piety is not unusual. For example, an important metaphor in Christian theology is that of the church as the "bride of Christ" and Jesus Christ as the bridegroom.²⁵ This imagery symbolizes the covenantal intimacy and union of believers with God. Wigglesworth assumed that his readers also would acknowledge that God's love for humanity is both holy and passionate. Despite the hardships of life, the believer's true gift is experiencing that love and loving God in return:

Thy Love doth all surmount,
 And is beyond account:
 I never can express,
 Sufficient thankfulness.
 Yet help me to endeavour
 To honour thee for ever;
 Thee only to desire,
 Love, Reverence and Admire.²⁶

²³ Michael Wigglesworth, *Meat Out of the Eater*, Bosco, pp. 117, 139.

²⁴ Michael Wigglesworth, *Meat Out of the Eater*, Bosco, pp. 172-175.

²⁵ See Matthew 9:15; 25:1-13; Revelations 21:2, 9-10; 22:17.

²⁶ Michael Wigglesworth, *Meat Out of the Eater*, Bosco, pp. 174-175.

The Day of Doom, *God's Controversy With New-England*, and *Meat Out of the Eater* represented the genre of a jeremiad in poetic verse. In this sense, they functioned as sermons. However, the poems exemplified another rhetorical tradition within Puritan thought -- the use of dramatic images in preaching. "In 1592 William Perkins, lecturer at Christ's College in Cambridge, produced the first English manual on preaching since the Reformation, *The Art of Propheying*."²⁷ Considerable training was given to the delivery and style of preaching, since the Puritans maintained that the sermon was an essential tool in the process of conversion. "[I]n the seventeenth-century Puritan sermon, both minister and parishioner are immediately submerged in the Word...[The consciousness of the congregation] was highly conditioned, well-stocked, and continually primed for the presentation about to occur."²⁸ In general, New England's congregations were quite familiar with the Bible and theological matters, and they expected their ministers to be able "deliverers" of the Word. Such a high expectation would have given Michael Wigglesworth plenty of reason for despair. During the 1660s and 1670s he seldom entered the meeting house to preach in the pulpit in Malden. In spite of disappointing his parishioners, however, Wigglesworth made a way for his sermon-poems to extend beyond Malden, to nearly all of New England and onto England. Only years after their publication (most specifically, that of *The Day of Doom*) did he realize success.

²⁷ Alan D. Hodder, "In the Glasse of God's Word: Hooker's Pulpit Rhetoric and the Theater of Conversion", *The New England Quarterly*, 66 (1993), pp. 80.

²⁸ Alan D. Hodder, "In the Glasse of God's Word: Hooker's Pulpit Rhetoric and the Theater of Conversion", 85. Hodder adds, "For his re-enactment of the *dies irae* in 'The Day of Doom,' Michael Wigglesworth found dramatic staging conveniently to hand..." (p.69). See also David D. Hall, "Toward a History of Popular Religion in Early New England", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 41 (1984), pp. 49-55; and Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under The Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (New York: Oxford, 1986), esp. pp.vii-viii and 3-127.

Along with his father's reputation as a best-selling poet, minister, and physician, Samuel Wigglesworth (1689-1768) received from Michael a legacy of heart-felt conviction and compassion for his parishioners. Samuel's sermons also demonstrated a zeal for orthodox doctrine and a desire to make one's religion genuine and emotionally satisfying. The extant sermons of Samuel are made up of two types of collections. One collection is of evangelical sermons in manuscript form, dating from 1714-1764.²⁹ There is also a collection of "occasional sermons", which were printed between 1727 and 1760. The key distinction between these sermons was the day on which a sermon was heard.³⁰ The more common type of sermon was the evangelical sermon, heard on Sundays, which explained some doctrine concerning salvation, including possibly both the individual and communal covenants. Occasional sermons, however, were relegated to a weekday, and their thematic topic was some aspect of the communal covenant. "Through this simple but comprehensive rhetorical division of labor based on the day of the week, the sermon could retain both its purity and power in guiding the spiritual and civic lives of its listeners."³¹ Occasional sermons usually included (but were not restricted to) fast day sermons and the annual election sermon. But other moments of civic importance also called for an occasional sermon: a war, a drought³², or the death of a leader or a criminal.

Samuel Wigglesworth's evangelical sermons explicated the individual covenant

²⁹ The manuscript collection of Samuel Wigglesworth's sermons is located in the Massachusetts Historical Society.

³⁰ Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul*, pp.23-31.

³¹ Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul*, p. 27.

³² Michael Wigglesworth's *God's Controversy With New-England* served two functions in explicating the communal covenant: first, it was a jeremiad to call the people back to the covenant, and second, it was intended to draw New Englanders to their responsibilities to the community-at-large.

and the means of salvation and drew upon texts from both the Old and New Testaments.³³ An early sermon, for example, used James 4:17 as the text, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, & doeth not, to him it is sin".³⁴ Wigglesworth wove together the intent of the individual covenant with the need to live righteously when he said, "That which respects god, namely when we live to his glory, by obeying his lawes, worshipping his perfections, praising his works, and celebrating his name...chuse unto righteousness, and a repenting that now sins may be blotted out".³⁵ In 1731 he preached from Romans 6:22, "But now being made free from sin & becom servants to God, Ye have your fruit unto holiness, & the end everlasting life". Here Wigglesworth highlighted the covenantal transformation of the inner heart by God's redemption: "In redemption there is also grace confered, & thereby the man is enclined & exalted to act graciously. Such an one is born again and acts like a new creature because he is one...[A] work of grace makes all the affair appear rational Harmonious & excellent."³⁶

Using a short text, "Lord thou knowest all things" (John 21:17), a sermon from 1752 examined the "honor and "happiness" and the covenantal benefits of knowing God. "The bright Excellencies of his Nature, the holy wise just and good precepts of his Will & his admirable works of Creation Redemption and Providence are well worthy of Enquiry & Contemplation of all understanding Minds."³⁷ Another sermon

³³ Approximately sixty-percent of the evangelical manuscript sermons expound New Testament texts and forty-percent examine Old Testament texts.

³⁴ Samuel Wigglesworth, Sermons, Manuscript Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society. (The biblical texts cited are quoted from Wigglesworth's sermon.) On many of his sermons, Samuel notes the dates he preached them. In this case (James 4:17), the sermon was preached in 1720, 1729, and 1731.

³⁵ Samuel Wigglesworth, sermon on James 4:17, Manuscript Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society.

³⁶ Samuel Wigglesworth, Sermons, Manuscript Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society.

³⁷ Samuel Wigglesworth, Sermons, Manuscript Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society.

from 1755 explained the covenant within the context of a marriage relationship: "Canticles 4:12...[In] a garden inclosed is my Sister, my Spouse....The Subject matter is most and noble a Song Concerning Jesus Christ and his Church....There is between Jesus and every member of his true Churches a voluntary & indissoluble Covenant binding them to each other forever going beyond the Marriage Covenant in the viz that Death It Selff [sic] can't separate or make a Divorce." These and other evangelical sermons carefully built logical ("reasonable") arguments for turning to God and apprehending the individual covenant. They resounded with covenantal themes such as "humbleness", "happiness", "gladness", the mediating work of Christ, the terrifying reality of God's punishment in hell, God's faithfulness, the liberty of the soul, the nature of true conviction both as fear and trembling and as a joyful discovery, and "the happy effect of justification". Drawing from the vein of seventeenth-century orthodoxy, Samuel Wigglesworth supported and preached about many of the salient doctrines associated with salvation and the individual covenant. Michael Wigglesworth would have been in agreement with the covenantal language of his son's words and he would have been quite at home hearing them from a pew at the Hamlet Church.

In 1727, at the ordination of Josiah Dennis (in Yarmouth, Maine), Samuel Wigglesworth's occasional sermon, *The Excellency of the Gospel-Message*, examined the duties and anticipated the satisfaction of serving a local parish. The text he chose was Romans 10:15, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace, that bring glad tidings of good things!" He explained that "...the ministers of Christ are Messengers of *Good*. They are EVANGELISTS...and bring happy News to Mankind". Drawing in the theme of the individual covenant, Wigglesworth noted that "Peace with God is not meerly Negative; it supposes not only a Freedom from his Wrath, but an Interest in his Favour, and a Title to his Benefits. There is a League, a Covenant between God and the Soul that is at Peace

with him."³⁸ The beauty of the ministry was another theme in this sermon and Wigglesworth encouraged his hearers to be delighted in the gift of their new pastor.

A Religious Fear of God's Tokens was preached just two days after an earthquake struck New England on October 29, 1727. Certainly no event better suited an occasional sermon than an unexpected natural disaster. November 1, 1727, was designated as a "Day of Humiliation", and Wigglesworth compared the natural human fear of an earthquake with the religious fear of jeopardizing the covenantal community in New England. He used Psalm 65:8 as his text: "They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy Token....There is a Fear of God's Tokens (and even of the Religious Kind too) that may be called a Common Fear....[And] Good, Bad, Holy and Prophan...have such a fear of God's Judgments....Let us assure our selves, that an EARTHQUAKE is one of God's Works, that it is the Great God who hath so fearfully shaken the Earth, our Houses and our selves of late. He is the God of Nature, hath given the Powers of Motion and Operation to Natural Causes; and co-operates with them perpetually."³⁹ In Wigglesworth's mindset and that of his culture, natural causes were under God's domain and though frightening, they were useful lessons and served as a symbol of the Final Judgement -- an event of true fear.

In 1760, Wigglesworth delivered the Dudleian Lecture at Harvard College. This lecture was an annual event and it provided a unique opportunity for Wigglesworth to examine theology, philosophy, and church history in one special public forum. The "occasion" of the lecture is an address before the whole body of Harvard College. Wigglesworth chose for his text 1 Corinthians 1:21: "For after that, in the

³⁸ Samuel Wigglesworth, *The Excellency of the Gospel Message; with the Duty and dignity fo the Messengers of Christ*, (Boston, 1727) pp. 7, 8.

³⁹ Samuel Wigglesworth, *A Religious Fear of God's Tokens, Explained and Urged; In A Sermon Preached at Ipswich, November 1, 1727, Being a Day of Humiliation on account of the terrible Earthquake, October 29, 1727* (Boston:, 1728), p. 14, 15, 18.

Wisdom of God, the World by Wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the Foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe." Wigglesworth used the paradox inherent in this verse to compare the differences between "natural religion" and Christianity. He affirmed the reformed doctrine of predestination by a sovereign and personal God in contrast to the impersonal but transcendent deity of Deism: "And Deism carries[s] the Matter farther still; setting up the Religion of Nature as the only one, and exalting Natural Reason as a sufficient Instructor in Truths relating to this Religion, and consequently rejecting all scripture Revelation as an useless uncertain Guide, or rather an Imposture...[Deists] build the Honour of Natural Reason and Religion on the Ruines of the Gospel Discovery: Which usurped Honour ought to be taken from it and given where tis due; by asserting not only the Preferableness, but even the Necessity of that more full, clear and certain Light, that hath been given us by Inspiration of God."

He further argued that it was reasonable to worship the Christian God because history had taught that the natural religions, while a "gift", were limited and were not efficacious in removing sin and judgment. Wigglesworth also balanced the reasonable and rational elements of Christian doctrines with the beauty of knowing God as "a sublime and everlasting Beatitude in the Enjoyment of God". He reminded his audience that the covenant was necessary and only God could create a "new Heart and new Spirit". Above all, he wanted his audience to be convinced of "...the already revealed Truths, and to make such a strong and vigorous Impression on our Mind, as shall create in us that Love of the Truth....In a Word, none of the Heathen, or yet their best Writers seem to have any suitable Notion of the future Blessedness, of it's sublime nature, Greatness or Everlastingness: No view of it's Holiness, the Vision of God, Likeness to him, or Communion with him: Tis the Scripture alone dictated by the Spirit of God that tells us what he hath prepared for them that love him."

Wigglesworth ended his sermon with a hymn that anticipated that the whole world would come to know and praise God: "Lastly, let us out of Compassion to our Fellow Creatures...having nothing else than this weak depraved Reason to guide them; pray constantly and fervently that through the tender Mercy of God the Day-Spring from on high may also visit them: the Knowledge of Salvation, by the Remission of their Sins. That God would give his son for a Light to the whole Gentile World...That so [sic] all Nations may come to the Knowledge of the Truth and be saved. God be merciful to us, and bless us, and cause Thy face to shine upon us, Selah. That thy Way may be known upon the Earth, and thy saving Health among all Nations. Let all the People praise thee O God, let all the People praise thee."⁴⁰ What is striking about this sermon is that it balanced a strong rational and intellectual thesis with the emotional attractiveness of the sublimity of spiritual life. Neither aspect of the reformed heritage was expended for the sake of the other. In this way, Wigglesworth provided a cohesive argument that also reached into the hearts of his audience. Wigglesworth knew that many of his listeners were articulate and thoughtful (his brother, Edward, was Harvard's professor of divinity). And he wanted to persuade them to accept wholeheartedly the truths of Christianity. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Harvard's commitment to moral education was transforming from the medieval scholastic traditions toward a moral philosophy that acknowledged the the importance of passion over reason. Rather than using the intellect for attaining morality, virtue was understood to be generated in the emotive aspect of human personality.⁴¹ What is fascinating about

⁴⁰ Samuel Wigglesworth, "Mr. Wigglesworth's Sermon At the Annual Dudleian Lecture At Harvard College in Cambridge, May 14th 1760", Harvard University Archives. See pp. 3, 6, 8, 12, 16, 26, 33, 35, 36, 39.

⁴¹ Norman Fiering, *Moral Philosophy at Seventeenth-Century Harvard: A Discipline in Transition* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1981). Fiering's important study offers a comprehensive history of philosophy from the late medieval and early modern periods in Europe to the seventeenth and eighteenth century educational system at Harvard.

this lecture is that, in the midst of the Enlightenment, Samuel Wigglesworth spoke as a pastor/prophet of New England, exhorting his hearers (especially his professional colleagues) to avoid any secularizing tendencies in their intellectual development and to remain in the way of orthodoxy.

The ideas, convictions, and personal musings of Michael Wigglesworth spanned from the middle of the seventeenth century to the middle of the eighteenth century because of the continuation of his thought found in the work of his son, Samuel. Both men were committed to the fundamental reformed doctrines, such as the covenant and efficacy of the atonement in Christ. While what remains of Michael Wigglesworth's work is in epic poems and Samuel's in sermons, both men sought to keep the integrity of the covenant before their audiences. Michael's work was in various forms of the jeremiad; although *God's Controversy With New-England* also had elements of a fast day sermon and *Meat Out of the Eater* was in many ways a type of a pastoral letter in verse. Most of Samuel's sermons clearly were part of the evangelical genre for Sunday worship; fewer of them were occasional sermons as applied to specific events. Samuel organized his sermons logically and emphasized the reasonableness of the Christian doctrines. Nevertheless, he also employed sensitive language to express the deep emotional satisfaction of religious piety. Michael, meanwhile, had made use of vivid imagery and created rhythmic poetry with a practiced ear, because he knew his work would be heard as well as read.

While Michael Wigglesworth suffered through physical weakness and depression during long periods of his life, there is no evidence that Samuel's physical or emotional state suffered much more than the norm. Nevertheless, for Michael, an exceedingly long and difficult period brought about his most productive

See especially pp. 4-39, 180-239.

literary efforts. Both men, however, saw their work as a ministry to the people of New England -- a people whose religious sensibilities needed constant nurturing because the vitality of the covenant of the individual believer always affected the benevolence of the community-at-large. Samuel's brother Edward also saw his position as a minister to the whole of New New England. Nevertheless, the tension between the importance of individual faith, as grounded in the Puritan doctrine of the covenant, and the importance of institutional traditions, also based in Puritan thought, would be the ground over which the two brothers would divide. Samuel would stress the necessity of pastoral leadership to shepherd the individual to faith during the tumultuous period of the Great Awakening, while Edward would become an ardent defender of pastoral authority as it is expressed in the New England Way.

CHAPTER IV

A HOUSE DIVIDED

Samuel Wigglesworth was one among hundreds of ministers in New England who found themselves embroiled in the impulses of the Great Awakening. The importance of the revival is that it would forever change the religious experiences of individuals and the ecclesiastical ordering of New England Christian institutions. How local ministers would deal with such overwhelming forces is the subject of this chapter. As historians have examined the impact of the Great Awakening from the intellectual, social, and cultural perspectives, it is clear that the revivals of the Great Awakening transformed American society. To Perry Miller, the Great Awakening brought out the intellectual force of the American "mind" -- a trait that evolved from British philosophical and intellectual roots, but which remains distinctly American and therefore unique. Richard Hofstadter argued that the Great Awakening was "the first major intercolonial crisis of the mind and spirit." Edwin Gaustad, C.C. Goen, and Alan Heimert identified the crucial element in understanding the Great Awakening as the tension between rationalism and emotionalism.¹ For Gary B. Nash and Rhys Isaac, the revivals were a means of rending the fabric of social

¹ Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, 1956), pp. 153-166. Richard Hofstadter, *America at 1750: A Social Portrait* (New York, 1973), p. 216. See also Edwin Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England* (reprinted: Gloucester, MA, 1965), pp. 82-140; C. C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening* (New Haven, 1962), pp. vii, 36-67; Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 3, 8, 159-236; Harry Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York, 1985), pp. 185-187. In something of an iconoclastic article, however, Jon Butler argued that the term, "Great Awakening", should be abandoned. "In religion it is a *deus ex machina* that falsely homogenizes the heterogeneous; in politics it falsely unites the colonies in slick preparation for the Revolution."; Jon Butler, "Enthusiasm Described and Decried: The Great Awakening as Interpretive Fiction", *The Journal of American History*, 69 (1982), p. 322.

hegemony of colonial elites by the working classes. Patricia Bonomi observed that the Great Awakening, "...pierc[ed] the facade of civility and deference that governed provincial life."² In addition, Alan Heimert and Harry Stout have traced the arguments put forth for greater religious liberties during the Great Awakening with the growing political concerns for liberty in pre-Revolutionary society. Other historians, including Rhys Isaac, Kenneth Lockridge, and Christopher Jedrey, have confirmed the link between religious and political liberty.³ In recent analyses, the transatlantic relationships among leaders of revivals in the American colonies, Britain, and on continental Europe have been considered. According to Susan O'Brien, a well-developed community of international correspondence served to infuse "...traditional Puritan practices with fresh evangelical techniques and attitudes". Michael J. Crawford, examining transatlantic British relationships, has traced the idea of the evangelical revival from its Puritan roots to the first Great Awakening and on to the "second" Great Awakening of the nineteenth centuries.⁴

² Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 204-227. Rhys Isaac, "Evangelical Revolt: The Nature of the Baptists' Challenge to the Traditional Order in Virginia, 1740-1790", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 31 (1974), pp. 345-368; and Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill, 1982), pp. 161-180. Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (New York, 1986), pp.132-133.

³ Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind*; Harry Stout, "The Great Awakening in New England Reconsidered: The New England Clergy", *Journal of Social History*, 8 (1974), pp. 21-47; Stout, "Religion, Communications and the Ideological Origins of the American Revolution", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 34 (1977), pp. 519-541; Stout, *The New England Soul*, pp. 259-316. Rhys Isaac, "Evangelical Revolt: The Nature of the Baptists' Challenge to the Traditional Order in Virginia, 1740-1790", pp. 366-368; Kenneth Lockridge, *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years, Dedham Massachusetts, 1636-1736*, expanded edition, (New York, 1985), pp.170-171; Christopher M. Jedrey, *The World of John Cleveland: Family and Community in Eighteenth-Century New England* (New York, 1979), pp. 126-135. See also Edwin Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England*, p. 110; David Harlan, *The Clergy and the Great Awakening in New England* (Ann Arbor, 1980), pp.116-126.

⁴ Susan O'Brien, "A Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network, 1735-1755", *American Historical Review*, 91 (1986), p. 815. O'Brien also elaborated on the "high regard" held by British revivalists for the New England

This chapter will develop the ways in which the Great Awakening affected several churches in Ipswich, Massachusetts, and the role of Samuel Wigglesworth as a supporter of the Awakening who found himself compelled to deal with its divisive and acrimonious side.⁵ In particular, it examines how the ministries of some itinerant evangelists who purporting to do the will of God, actually caused confusion and division in the Second Church of Ipswich. As the minister of the neighboring Third Church in Ipswich, Samuel Wigglesworth was asked to mediate between two disputing parties at the Second Church, the pastor and a pro-revival faction. Nevertheless, in this intermediate role, he also was caught between his co-equals, John Rogers, Jr., of the First Church in Ipswich, and Theophilus Pickering, of the Second Church. Wigglesworth firmly endorsed the Great Awakening and Rogers, even more so. Rogers was ardent in his support of the Great Awakening. He hosted at his church two of its most famous evangelists, George Whitefield and James Davenport. Pickering, however, was critical of the Great Awakening and came to dread the combined fallout from Whitefield's and Davenport's fiery deliveries. Essentially, Pickering's church split over matters of religious doctrine and, most clearly, over the direction and social authority of pastoral leadership⁶.

conversion experience and their use of American testimonial correspondence as a means of encouraging personal conversions (pp. 820-829). Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace: Colonial New England's Revival Tradition in Its British Context* (New York, 1991), pp. 164-222.

⁵ In the eighteenth century Ipswich's borders included areas which later became independent towns. Thus the Ipswich Hamlet and its church, the Third Church of Ipswich, is now respectively Hamilton, Massachusetts, and the First Church of Hamilton. Likewise, Ipswich's Chebacco Parish and the Second Church of Ipswich is now, respectively, Essex, Massachusetts, and the First Church of Essex.

⁶ J. William T. Youngs, Jr.'s model of the transformation of pastoral authority due to the sociological changes in the Great Awakening offers some intriguing ideas about the role of the clergy and the submissiveness of their congregations. He argues that ministers were forced to reorient their self-images in order to retain their authority over their congregations. See Young's, *God's Messengers: Religious Leadership in Colonial New England, 1700-1750* (Baltimore, 1976).

These issues emerged as a direct result of his congregation's decision to embrace the spirit of the Great Awakening. For about two years, Wigglesworth and other area ministers worked hard to help Pickering and the pro-revivalists from his church reconcile. Wigglesworth was recognized and respected as a leader in ecclesiastical affairs; nevertheless, this was one tough case. In the end, it was too encumbered with differences and bitterness and it overwhelmed all his expertise at mediation. This was one case in which the power to create or destroy was exercised in the hands of the local gathered church.

The revivals of the Great Awakening swept through the colonies of America in the 1730s and 1740s. From the outset, the Great Awakening produced an intense interest in religious renewal -- an interest that could not be ignored, even by detractors. The phenomenon of an emerging and broadly-based affinity for spiritual matters drew together leaders from various Protestant traditions during this period of heightened religious concern. Ministers wrote -- and often published -- sermons and treatises to share their understanding and observations of the workings of divine action on the human heart and mind.⁷ Combining the Calvinist emphasis on God's sovereignty with the Puritan emphasis for an "experimental" religion⁸, the Great Awakening became the means of applying the Calvinist school of theology and a newly emerging practical spirituality to eighteenth-century New England. Influences outside of the region -- most notably in the person of George Whitefield - - contributed heavily to the revival's character and, among ministers and lay leaders, added to the already established network of transatlantic correspondences. Benjamin Colman of Brattle Street Church, Thomas Prince of Boston's Old South,

⁷ Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul*, p. 187.

⁸ "Experimental" religion -- meaning "experiential" religion -- was the term used by Puritans to define faithfulness and piety in an individual life.

and Jonathan Edwards of Northampton, were among the principal figures in exchanging ideas with British correspondents.⁹

While the Great Awakening produced invaluable contributions to Christian leadership through such men as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, it nevertheless became a catalyst in the division of churches in the American colonies. Within New England, those ministers and lay people who supported the revival were identified as New Lights.¹⁰ New Light men and women welcomed the sense of a shared community with others within their region and with those in far-away places. They saw the Great Awakening as a useful tool in the hand of God. Although extreme expressions, such as those of James Davenport of Connecticut, were not to be condoned, the New Light message to their generation was this: the increase in spiritual renewal should not be ignored. Ignored by whom? In particular, the ministers and lay persons who uneasily viewed the Great Awakening as a dangerous mixture of doctrinal error and social disorder. These critics, known as Old Lights, saw little of real religious substance in the revivals. Nevertheless those associated with the Old Light perspective did not always fit into neat categories. Many Old Lights still held the theological position that spiritual regeneration came through God's grace. On this point, they were in agreement with New Light Calvinist doctrine. One area where the two sides disagreed concerned the role of the human will in the conversion process. By acknowledging that, in some way, individuals may respond to the gospel message by their own volition and not completely by God's grace, the Old light view carried forth the tradition of Arminianism -- a tradition the New Light Calvinists could not abide. The emphasis on the role of the will represents one school of thought within

⁹ Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, p. 172, see also pp. 167-179.

¹⁰ See Edwin Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England*, p 67f.

Arminianism. This school emerged in the eighteenth century after the death of its founder, Dutch theologian, Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). It is a form of theological liberalism, picking up on Arminius' stress on the freedom of the will, and prepared the way for the latitudinarian theology of deism. However, the central dispute between Arminianism and Calvinism concerned the efficacy of Christ's death. For Arminius, it was an issue of Christ suffering for all of humanity; for the Calvinists, Christ's death was the necessary atonement for the salvation of a preordained number (the elect), not all of humanity.¹¹

Another area of dispute for the Old Light faction was its unacceptance of the extreme New Light emphasis on an emotional response as a determinative measure for true regeneration. While a majority of New Lights did not accept this radical position concerning the emotions, many Old Lights nevertheless tended to categorize all the pro-revivalists as emotionally oriented in their theology. Puritan theologians, however, such as William Perkins, Richard Sibbes, and Thomas Hooker, were among the principal ministers who studied at great length the conversion process. They taught that conversion included a series of identifiable stages that increasingly transformed the human soul. Moreover as a consequence, conversion integrated both intellectual and emotional facets in the whole process.¹²

¹¹ Jonathan Edwards responded to the Arminianist view and addressed the issue of the will from a Calvinist perspective in *A Careful and Strict Inquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions of that Freedom of Will, Which is Supposed to be Essential to Moral Agency, Virtue, and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame*, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, with a memoir by Sereno E. Dwight, revised and corrected by Edward Hickman* (Edinburgh, Scotland, first published, 1834; reprinted, 1990), I:3-93.

¹² See Charles Lloyd Cohen, *God's Caress: The Psychology of Puritan Religious Experience* (New York, 1986), pp. 76-95. See also William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism: Or The Way to the New Jerusalem As Set For In Pulpit and Press From Thomas Cartwright to John Lilburne and John Milton, 1570-1643* (New York, 1957), pp. 84-127; Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals* (New York, 1971), pp. 63-64; *Thomas Shepard's Confessions* George Selement and Bruce C. Walley, ed. (Boston, 1981), pp.1-25; David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, 1972), pp. 60-64 and p. 156ff; and Norman Pettit, *The Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life* (New Haven: 1966).

This model of Calvinist conversion was not meant to be a rigid formula; but instead, it was designed to serve as a guide for those who were seeking greater understanding of their salvation. This model was also useful to pastors who then met privately with people for counselling relevant to their conversion. Edwin Gaustad carefully identified a gradation of positions within the Old Light association: "The traditional orthodoxy, that which existed before the Awakening and which tried desperately to maintain itself after, came to be known as 'Old Calvinism'... [and] the Liberals, comprised a left wing within the older orthodoxy which spoke with new vigor and clarity."¹³ Charles Chauncy, the leading critic of the Great Awakening, is probably the prime example of an Old Light minister, but even he had "Old Calvinist" leanings before he publicly turned to Arminianism in 1758.¹⁴ Therefore, within the spectrum of positions about the Great Awakening, we can identify the New Lights as those who held to traditional Calvinist theology and, relying on Puritan teachings concerning salvation, accepted emotional experience as a part of -- but not determinative of -- the conversion process. The leading voice in this view was Jonathan Edwards. He worked to identify the pro-revivalists' position on emotionalism and distinguish it from an overemphasis on emotions which was found in the radical wing of the New Lights. The middle position of the Old Calvinists, is less clearly definable. The Old Calvinists also believed in the conversion experience as a crucial measure of true spirituality. However, they did not identify with the enthusiasm of the New Lights and found its acceptance of emotionalism as unreliably dangerous. The Old Lights could not accept the New Lights' claims of spiritual renewal as genuine and, instead, viewed them as without

¹³ Edwin Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England*, p. 128. David Harlan employs the category of "Old Calvinists" to those ministers who "were not analytically minded theologians" and were motivated "by the vision of clerical unity." See David Harlan, *The Clergy and the Great Awakening in New England* (Ann Arbor, 1980), p. 4.

¹⁴ Edwin Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England*, p. 127ff.

reason and logic. In its wake the Great Awakening created multifaceted positions, each of which was attempting to determine the essence of spiritual renewal -- and the propriety and value of personal piety.

The greatest excitement generated by the prospects of a tour by George Whitefield occurred in New England. Anticipation to hear Whitefield preach had been building up in the region for a long time.¹⁵ New Englanders had been reading in the Boston newspapers about George Whitefield's extraordinary preaching during two previous tours of 1740 -- one, that spring in New York and Pennsylvania; the other in the summer through the Middle Atlantic region.¹⁶ After these tours, Whitefield received many invitations to come to New England; but, it was Dr. Benjamin Colman, minister of the Brattle Street Church in Boston, who had first corresponded with Whitefield, and who was most instrumental in bringing him to the area. While Brattle Street Church was founded in 1699 as a more liberal church than those churches having a Puritan legacy, Benjamin Colman's theology upheld the tenets of the Westminster Confession.¹⁷ He was a supporter of the Great Awakening and a careful chronicler of its events.¹⁸ From the reports of Jonathan Edwards, many knew of the revivals in Northampton and were hoping to see spiritual renewal again.¹⁹ When, on September 14, 1740, Whitefield arrived at

¹⁵ Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival*, 2 vol. (Edinburgh, 1979), I: 527.

¹⁶ Charles E. Clark, *The Public Prints: The Newspaper in Anglo-American Culture, 1665-1740* (New York, 1994), pp. 259-265.

¹⁷ Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan: The Life of Increase Mather* (Middletown, CT, 1988), p. 298-299.

¹⁸ Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, pp. 70, 153, 175-178. In addition, when Jonathan Edwards reported the series of revivals in the Northampton region, he wrote to Benjamin Colman (see note 19).

¹⁹ Patricia Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor: Religion and Society in Eighteenth-Century Northampton* (New York, 1980), p.31. See Edwards' *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God, in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls, in Northampton, and the Neighboring*

Newport, Rhode Island, people were anticipating "a revival even mightier than that of former years."²⁰

While many New England ministers welcomed Whitefield, some in Boston strongly objected to his visit. Although Charles Chauncy is identified as the most prominent leader of the opposition, he was not in fact immediately among the critics. Whitefield left New England in late October, 1740. He then convinced Gilbert Tennent, from New Jersey, to go to New England to help the further development the spiritual renewal in the region. At the same time Tennent was involved in his preaching, "Chauncy was engaged in some cautious evangelistic efforts himself."²¹ On June 4, 1741, Chauncy preached a sermon in which he said, "You hang, as it were, over the bottomless pit, by the slender thread of life, and that moment that snaps asunder, you sink into perdition."²² One month later in Enfield, Connecticut, Jonathan Edwards preached his most famous sermon, *Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God*, in which he echoes Chauncy's metaphor: "That God holds you over the pit of hell much as one holds a spider over a fire... that dreadful pit....You have nothing to stand upon, nor anything to take hold of. There is nothing between you and Hell but the air."²³ At this point, Chauncy and Edwards

Towns and Villages of New Hampshire, In New England; in a Letter to the Rev. Dr. Colman, of Boston, in The Works of Jonathan Edwards, I:344-364.

²⁰ Arnold A. Dallimore, I: 527.

²¹ Richard Warch, Introduction to *Charles Chauncy, D.D., Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England* (reprint edition, Hicksville, NY), 1975, p. 3w.

²² H. Sheldon Smith, Robert T. Handy, and Lefferts A. Loetscher, *American Christianity, Interpretation and Documents*, 2 vol. (New York, 1960), I:399; quoting Charles Chauncy, *The New Creature* (Boston, 1741), p. 20.

²³ Jonathan Edwards, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, II:7-12. The metaphor of hanging by a thin thread over the pit of hell seems to have played a popular role in the Puritan mindset. For example, Thomas Shepard, who was the minister at Cambridge, MA, before moving to Connecticut, used the imagery when he told his congregation their spiritual dilemma was as if "one rotten twined thread of thy life over the flames of hell". (See David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* [New York, 1989], p. 134.)

appear to be in the same spectrum of evangelical light. However, it is well documented that within two years of Whitefield's tour, Chauncy became the foremost critic of the Great Awakening.

That which seems to have provoked Chauncy was the fanaticism of itinerant preachers who tried to follow the hortatory style of Whitefield. During the period between 1740-1742 ministers and lay persons who supported the Great Awakening became unacceptable "distant cousins" of those who were suspicious and opposed the revivals. The most notorious itinerant preacher was James Davenport, of Connecticut. Charles Chauncy was appalled at Davenport's preaching which influenced people to extreme reactions, such as trembling, fainting, and screaming.²⁴ In July, 1742, Davenport visited Chauncy and "...inquired about [Chauncy's] spiritual state". This effrontery, and Davenport's activities in general, caused Chauncy to publish a sermon, *Enthusiasm Described and Caution'd Against*.²⁵ In this treatise Chauncy observed that "'Tis well known, no preacher in the New Way has been more noted for his inflammability in producing shriekings and faintings and tremblings, than the Reverend Mr. James Davenport."²⁶ Davenport's behavior scandalized New Light ministers as well. His abusive preaching and ranting exacerbated the division between the Old Light and New Light ministers of New England. While Davenport was preaching in Ipswich, in 1742, the Massachusetts Grand Jury found sufficient cause to draw up an indictment against him for disrupting the order of churches and libeling their ministers. He was tried and found guilty of claiming that the preaching of the ministers "...was as destructive to the Souls of those who heard them, as swallowing

²⁴ Charles Chauncy, *Seasonable Thoughts*, p. 96.

²⁵ Richard Warch, Introduction to Charles Chauncy, *Seasonable Thoughts*, p. 4w.

²⁶ Charles Chauncy, *Seasonable Thoughts*, p. 96.

Rats Bane or Poison was to their Bodies, praying the Lord to pull them the said Ministers down and put others in their place."²⁷

In May, 1743, Congregational ministers met in Boston for their annual meeting. But, there was a low attendance "and the anti-revivalists found themselves in a bare majority."²⁸ The anti-revival faction published a treatise in which they criticized the frequent emotional outbursts which had become synonymous with the itinerant style of preaching. No doubt they had Davenport in mind when they declared in section II of the paper, "As to Disorders in Practice...the Itinerary...go from Place to Place, and without Knowledge or contrary to...stated Pastors..., assemble their People to hear themselves preach, arising, we fear, from too great an Opinion of themselves [and] and uncharitable Opinion of those pastors..., is a Breach of Order Contrary to Scriptures, I Peter 4:15. "Though we deny not that the human Mind under the Operation of the Divine Spirit may be overborn with the Terrors and Joys; yet, many confusions that have appeared in some places, from the variety of Mind and ingoverned Passions of People, either in Excess of Joy or Sorrow....As to Advice...we are not unsensible that...which has exposed some injudicious People among us, is that illiterate Men may be serviceable and admirable Preachers, and 'though some unlearned men have become useful to the Interests of Religion, yet no man ever decried, but was an Enemy to Religion, whether he knew it or no."²⁹ One year later, Davenport published his *Confessions and Retractions* and acknowledged that he had "...done much Hurt to Religion by

²⁷ Thomas F. Waters, *Ipswich in Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1700-1917* (Ipswich, MA, 1960), p. 119. The Massachusetts Grand Jury delivered its conviction with some mercy, however, as Davenport was judged to be "*non compos mentis*".

²⁸ C. C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening* (New Haven, 1962), pp. 31-32.

²⁹ *The Testimony of the Convention of Minister, May 25, 1743: Against Several Errors and Disorders* (Boston: Rogers, 1743), pp. 8-12.

encouraging private Persons to a ministerial and authoritative Kind or Method of exhorting."³⁰ Despite Davenport's retraction, however, his earlier efforts continued to have ramifications, and in Ipswich, Davenport's ideas and example about the rights of itinerant preachers to enter pulpits uninvited had long-term effects.

Eleazer Wheelock, a minister of the North Society of Lebanon, Connecticut, was "Connecticut's most energetic supporter of the movement."³¹ In 1741, he began a preaching tour in Rhode Island and Massachusetts and invited Daniel Rogers, from Ipswich, Massachusetts, to join him.³² Daniel Rogers was the son of the Rev. John Rogers, Jr., the pastor of the First Church in Ipswich, and the brother of the Rev. Nathaniel Rogers, the assistant pastor at the First Church. The Rogers name had a long-standing reputation in New England. Daniel and Nathaniel were grandsons of the fifth president of Harvard College, John Rogers, Sr., and members of the Rogers family were ministers of Ipswich's First Church from 1638-1775.³³ The Puritan heritage ran deep in the family's veins.

In September, 1742, Daniel Rogers, without Wheelock, went to Marlborough, Massachusetts, to preach. In a later account, Rogers' evangelistic meetings were

³⁰ James Davenport, "Confessions and Retractions", *The Great Awakening: Documents Illustrating the Crisis and Its Consequences*, Alan Heimert and Perry Miller, eds. (New York, 1967), p.260.

³¹ Edwin Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England*, p. 45. Later, Wheelock's commitment to work with American Indians led to the founding of what was to become Dartmouth College in New Hampshire.

³² Edwin Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England*, p. 46. Gaustad describes Daniel Rogers, as "Harvard tutor turned itinerant"; his brother, Nathanael [sic], also was an itinerant preacher in 1742. pp. 46, 47.

³³ According to Frederick Lewis Weis, the Rogers were descendants of one of the Protestant martyrs during the reign of Mary Tudor; Frederick Lewis Weis, *Colonial Clergy of New England* (Baltimore, 1977), pp. 175-176. Christopher Jedrey, however, states that the family was in error about their relationship to the martyr; Christopher Jedrey, *The World of John Cleveland*, p.101. See also John, Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs (The Acts and Monuments of These Latter and Perilous Days*, 1563), (Springdale, PA, 1981), pp. 200-201, 391-392.

described as highly emotional "...with cryings and screamings and many evidences of mental distress."³⁴ It is not clear that Rogers was traveling with Wheelock in 1742; but in 1743, there was a positive report by the pastor of the First Church in Marlborough, Aaron Smith, concerning the preaching of Wheelock and Rogers: "There had been above Two Hundred in a Judgement of Charity savingly wrought since November 1741. Diverse before that had been met under Rev. Daniel Rogers and Rev. Mr. Wheelock not included in this number."³⁵ It is difficult to assess whether Rogers was fully as careless as purported to be, or whether he was simply misled by his enthusiasm and tried to emulate the example of James Davenport's preaching in Ipswich. Nevertheless, apparently once Daniel Rogers met with Wheelock in Marlborough, the caustic effect of his preaching was lessened, so much so that his second visit to the town yielded a good report.

Although there were legitimate criticisms of itinerant ministers during the Great Awakening, there was genuine spiritual renewal. The revival transformed individuals' lives. For New Light ministers, the goal of preaching was to help engender spiritual renewal. But this preaching also delivered a sense of personal responsibility --balanced with God's sovereign grace -- so that assurance of God's redemption was more readily understood by the lay person.³⁶ Following the admonitions of earlier pastoral manuals, such as Richard Baxter's *Reformed Pastor* (1656), New England ministers relied on Puritan tradition for assistance in giving order to the Great Awakening. But the effect of the Great Awakening also gave to

³⁴ *The Celebration of the Two-Hundredth Anniversary of the Organization of the Congregational Church and Parish in Essex, Massachusetts, August 19-22, 1883* (Salem, 1884), p.18.

³⁵ Thomas Prince, *The Christian History, Containing Accounts of the Revival and Propagation of Religion in Great Britain and America, for the Year 1743*, Boston, 1744, p. 171.

³⁶ Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, pp. 200-222; Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, pp. 260-264.

individual parishioners greater opportunity to discover their own spiritual state and to act accordingly.³⁷ Many New England ministers attested to the greater spirituality in their congregations. At a Boston conference of over one hundred ministers from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, who met on July 7, 1743, numerous reports recalled the effects of a "happy and great revival". The ministers publicly attested to God's work in New England in *The Testimony and Advice of an Assembly of Pastors of Churches in New England*. "We whose names are annexed, pastors of churches in New England, met together in Boston, think it our indispensable Duty (without judging or confusing such of our Brethren as cannot at present see things in the Same Light with us) in this open and conjunct Manner to declare to the Glory of sovereign grace, our Full Persuasion either from what we have seen or have received Testimony, that there has been a happy and remarkable revival of Religion in many parts of this Land [and] an Uncommon divine Influence after a Long Time of great Decay and Deadness....Some had had extraordinary degrees of previous Distress and Subsequent Joys. But many, we suppose the greater Number, have been wrought on in a more gentle and Silent Way, and without any other appearance than are common and usual at other Times, when Persons have awakened to [the] Solemn Concern about Salvation." These ministers also acknowledged that "Irregularities and Extravagancies have been permitted to accompany [the Great Awakening]."³⁸ They strongly urged that any confusing behavior was to be avoided and guarded against.

In response to the criticisms of the May, 1743, assembly, the overwhelming emphasis of the July assembly was to demonstrate how much good the revivals had done. At the end of *The Testimony*, all the ministers who attended signed their

³⁷ Patricia Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven*, pp. 68-72.

³⁸ *The Testimony and Advice of an Assembly of Pastors of Churches in New England, at Boston, July 7, 1743* (Boston, 1743), pp. 5, 16.

names. Among them were Nathaniel Rogers, of the First Church of Ipswich, the Rev. John Warren, of the First Church in Wenham, and the Rev. Jedidiah Jewett, of the First Church of Rowley (towns bordering just south and north, respectively, of Ipswich). Samuel Wigglesworth, pastor of the Third Church in Ipswich, was on the conference committee that produced *The Testimony* and his name is also among the signers. Wigglesworth saw the promising effect of the Great Awakening at his own church. The church's records for the years between 1714 and 1740 show an average of six people were added as communicants. (The years, 1727-1728, were an anomaly, however, when the 1727 regional-wide earthquake brought many to a spiritual awakening; for the Third Church, 107 persons were added.) During the years, 1741-1742, fifty-six were admitted.³⁹ Those ministers who could not attend the Assembly wrote letters which were to be included with *The Testimony* of those who could attend. It was probably a disappointment for John Rogers, Jr., that he could not go, because of "Age and Weakness of body". Nevertheless, it was his letter of July 2, 1743, which was the first cataloged in *The Testimony* of the July meeting. "...[W]ell knowing that there can never be too much or enough spoken or written by Man to magnify the Mercy of God in this visiting His people....And now desire I as I have utmost reason to bless God who has given me power and Grace particularly in this Place and since the Rev. Mr Whitefield and Tennent came among us; wherein great numbers of our young People and others of more advance Age give clear Evidence of a saving Change wrought in them and by the Fruits of the Spirit, shown they are born of the Spirit....This I have Found by my best Observations, in general and more intimate Conversation with many of these scores yea, I think I may say, Hundreds living here and in the Neighborhood and with several from distant places, who universally speak the same language, all

³⁹ The listing of communicants added to the Third Church are incomplete and stop with the year 1742. See Records of the Third Church of Christ in Ipswich, Hamilton, MA.

giving testimony by their Experience to the Truth of the Gospel Doctrines of Grace." ⁴⁰

Ipswich had been deeply affected by Whitefield's preaching. The Rogers family was enthusiastically supportive of his visit and Whitefield stayed in the home of Nathaniel Rogers. On September, 1740, Whitefield preached at the First Church. Of that day he wrote, "The Lord gave me Freedom, and there was a great melting in the congregation."⁴¹ John Rogers, Jr., invited Whitefield (and later, Gilbert Tennent) and the church "engaged heart and soul in the work."⁴² Between 1740 and 1745 "...during the ministry of father and son, 143 were added to the church, of whom 123 were a direct result of the revival."⁴³ In 1746, it was estimated that there were 304 members of the church. In five years, then, the First Church of Ipswich nearly doubled in size. No doubt John Rogers found the ministry of the itinerant evangelists to be clear evidence of a divine work. The numbers themselves would have been impressive, but for Rogers (and for fourteen other ministers who wrote of their observations in *The Testimony*), the accounts of personal renewal was the greater source of joy. He enthusiastically endorsed the Great Awakening and sent his sons out on their own itinerancy with his blessing. His support of itinerants, however, would also play a role in the division of a neighboring church, the Second Church of Ipswich.

When James Davenport toured Massachusetts in 1742, he visited Ipswich and

⁴⁰ *The Testimony and Advice of an Assembly of Pastors of Churches in New England*, p. 16.

⁴¹ *Celebration of the Two-Hundredth Anniversary*, p. 116; and, according to local legend, "it is said that Satan himself was so discomfited that he rushed up the steeple stairs and leaped down, landing on a rocky ledge [next to the church] where his massive footprint is still found", p. 116.

⁴² *History of Essex County*, I:585.

⁴³ Thomas Prince, *The Christian History*, p. 187.

stayed with Nathaniel Rogers. Theophilus Pickering, the minister of the Second Church of Ipswich, the Chebacco Parish, apparently anticipated trouble if Davenport preached. Pickering refused to let him into the pulpit of the Chebacco Church. Pickering has been described as "distinguished for the moderation and coolness of his temper and steadiness of his conduct."⁴⁴ Most likely, his resistance to Davenport had more to do with his personal aversion to the emotional outbursts caused by Davenport's fiery delivery and the disorder resulting in its wake than with a doctrinal position against spiritual renewal. In 1742 Pickering wrote that "Numbers have been awakened to a careful inquiry into their spiritual state, and many convinced of their sin and danger and stirred up to duty, in a deep concern for their eternal salvation...that I am free to acknowledge, it is to the glory of God."⁴⁵ In spite of his conviction of the importance of personal salvation, Pickering grew critical of the preaching of the New Light evangelists. He viewed their message as suspect and saw their style as too wild and emotional. He also thought that they incited people to such a pitch of excitement that they could not accurately determine the evidences of real spirituality. Pickering visited the Rogers' church in Ipswich. He wrote to Nathaniel Rogers on February 5, 1742, "You believe the Holy spirit has of late remarkably descended upon many places. Would to God that it might be...[B]ut, I am somewhat afraid that you have too great a dependance upon the remarkable effect of occurrences so often seen in your meetings at two of which I was present."⁴⁶

Pickering therefore was cautious about applying a standard of emotional

⁴⁴ *Celebration of the Two-Hundredth Anniversary*, p. 58.

⁴⁵ *Celebration of the Two-Hundredth Anniversary*, p. 60.

⁴⁶ Theophilus Pickering, Letter of February 15, 1742, *The Rev. Mr. Pickering's Letters To the Rev. N. Rogers and Mr. D. Rogers of Ipswich: With their Answer to M. Pickering's First Letter: As Also His Letter to the Rev. Mr. Davenport of Long-Island*, Boston, pp. 6-7.

outbursts as proof of spiritual renewal. But he was not alone in his assessment. The July, 1743, meeting of ministers in Boston demonstrated that New Light ministers did not view emotionalism either as unusual or as a determinative norm. These supporters of the Great Awakening concurred with Jonathan Edwards, who meticulously researched the effects of the revivals. Edwards observed in his sermon, *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* (1741) that, "A work is not to be judged by any effects on the bodies of men; such as fears, trembling groans, loud cries, agonies of body or the failing of bodily strength. The influence persons are under is not to be judged of one way or other by such effects on the body; and the reason is because the Scripture no where gives us any such rule. We cannot conclude that persons are under the influence of the true Spirit because this is not given as a mark of the true Spirit; nor on the hand, have we any reason to conclude, from any such outward appearances that persons are not under the influence of the Holy Spirit of God, because there is no rule of Scripture given us to judge of spirits by, that does either expressly or indirectly exclude such effects on the body nor does reason exclude them."⁴⁷ This kind of balanced assessment characterized a majority of ministers who supported the revivals. These men were grateful to see a "happy and remarkable revival of Religion" and to know that persons within their congregations had come to genuine faith. Nevertheless, the evidence of that faith, because it was so diverse, needed to be studied by the affected individuals and, ideally, in conjunction with the counsel of their pastors.

Itinerant preachers were welcomed by New Light ministers in New England, but when an itinerant entered uninvited into a meetinghouse to preach, tensions

⁴⁷ Jonathan Edwards, *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God, Applied to that Uncommon Operation That Has Lately Appeared on the Minds of Many of the People of New England in The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, II:261. This sermon examines Scriptural evidence of true spirituality and in many ways precludes Edwards' subsequent lengthier treatise *Religious Affections* (1746).

ensued. For the Chebacco parish, this scenario would mean trouble. Daniel and Nathaniel Rogers preached in Pickering's church without his approval in March, 1741. Their action, however, was welcomed by a number of people in the Second Church. Nevertheless, Pickering complained to the Rogers brothers that they had called him a "Blind Minister" before his own congregation, and needed spiritual renewal. In a letter to them, he further argued, "[Y]ou and your brother [Daniel] (without advising with me, or any consent of mine first obtained) came last *March* in my Parish, and held several meetings in the House for public Worship: and have moreover been pleas'd to pray for me in your Assemblies -- *That God would open mine Eyes* -- and *that the Scales might fall from 'em*, yea, one of you tho't fit, publickly in the Hearing of my People to call me their *Blind Minister*." This effrontery caused a bitter division between the Rogers and Pickering that would never be reconciled. The Rogers' move was the type encouraged by Davenport -- and Davenport was well known for exhorting evangelistic speakers to go into the pulpits of other ministers, as was declared by the Massachusetts Grand Jury indictment against him. Pickering further complained, "Therefore for you to invade my *Peculiar* [church] (without open Council and fair Trial) is evidently subversive of the *Order of the Gospel and Peace of the Churches*."⁴⁸ With such an attitude of distrust toward these New Light supporters of the revival, it is no surprise that Pickering was adamant in refusing the notorious James Davenport admittance into his church in 1742. Pickering detailed his reasons for censuring Davenport. He noted that the General Assembly of Connecticut had ordered him out of the colony because of his "*Behaviour, Conduct, and Doctrine*"; that at a recent assembly, on July 1, 1742, pastors in Boston and Charlestown "*judge[d] it to be their present Duty, not to invite you in their Places of publick Worship, as otherwise they might*

⁴⁸ Theophilus Pickering, Letter of July 16, 1742, *The Rev. Mr. Pickering's Letters To the Rev. N. Rogers and Mr. D. Rogers of Ipswich*, p.8.

have readily done, that so they may not appear to give countenance to the forementioned Errors and Disorders "; that Charles Chauncy had cautioned Davenport in a recent treatise to acknowledge his obnoxiousness and pride; and that even Gilbert Tennent was urging Davenport to "deny the Facts, or confess your Faults".⁴⁹

But Pickering's troubles did not stop there. Certain members of his congregation were supporters of the revival and, during his 1742 visit, had invited Davenport to preach. Once Pickering had thwarted their plans, he cut off this faction's allegiance to him. They were committed to the movement of spiritual renewal that was encompassing the whole of the American colonies and the world beyond. Now it seemed to them that their hopes for continued renewal were being subverted by their own minister. The New Light faction could abide this disdain no longer and complained about Pickering's lack of piety. His resistance to their ideals prompted close to half of his congregation to become suspicious of his spiritual vitality. On March 12, 1744, they notified him of their grievances in a written pronouncement signed by twenty-six of the sixty-three numbers. In this statement Pickering was charged with "...not preaching the distinctive doctrines of the Bible, with a want of interest in his ministerial work, with worldliness of spirit and conduct and with opposition to the work of the grace going on among them."⁵⁰ Then on September 22, 1744, this disaffected faction requested of their pastor a church council. Pickering refused. Out of frustration, the alienated members of

⁴⁹ Theophilus Pickering, "For the Rev. Mr. James Davenport of Long-Island, now at the Rev. Mr. N. Rogers's in Ipswich", *The Rev. Mr. Pickering's Letters To the Rev. N. Rogers and Mr. D. Rogers of Ipswich* , August 9, 1742, pp.18, 19.

⁵⁰ John Cleaveland, *The Chebacco Narrative: Rescue'd from the Charge of Falshood and Partiality And a Reply to the Answer...by Order of the second Church in Ipswich and Falshood and Partiality fix'd on said Answers, by a Friend of Truth* (Boston, 1748), pp. 48ff. Anne S. Brown also notes that Pickering sued his congregation for defamation during March; see Anne S. Brown, "Visions of Community in Eighteenth-Century Essex County: Chebacco Parish and the Great Awakening", *Essex Historical Collections*, 125 (1989), 258.

the Chebacco Church went to Samuel Wigglesworth. Wigglesworth had a reputation for being a mediator in church disputes because he was respected for his knowledge of ecclesiastical matters. He often was asked to intercede in problems that emerged out of church disputes.⁵¹ "[W]e tried the third way of communion, got the pastor, Mr. Wigglesworth, of the Third Church to call on him [Pickering]." After considering the complaints, the Third Church then sent a letter to the Second Church, urging them to reconcile their problems.⁵² Wigglesworth visited Pickering and, with two other ministers, visited him a second time. Nevertheless, Pickering ignored their suggestions.

Throughout the year 1744, Samuel Wigglesworth and the parish of the Hamlet Church tried to encourage this dissatisfied group from Chebacco and Pickering to reconcile. But it was not meant to be. On March 18, 1745, Pickering offered to the aggrieved faction a church council, as advised by the Third Church. When the council was not called by the summer, the Third Church sent a letter to the Second Church to remind them of their obligations. It looked as if the Second Church was going to comply, but then Pickering threatened to resign if they did. That year, Pickering wrote to George Whitefield and blamed him for his troubles. "I suppose you can't be ignorant of schisms, variance, emulations, strife, railings, and evil surmisings things very different from the fruits of the Spirit, that have been rife among us more than four years ago. It is my real sentiment according to the best judgment I can form that you are, at least, some unhappy occasion of our troubles."⁵³ The tension was so bad that on January 13, 1746, sixteen members of

⁵¹ Thomas F. Waters, *Ipswich in Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1700-1917*, p. 262; D. Hamilton Hurd, *History of Essex County, Massachusetts, with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Prominent Men*, Vol. I and II, 1888, II:1213-1214.

⁵² Thomas F. Waters, *Ipswich in Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1700-1917*, p. 262.

⁵³ *Celebration of the Two-Hundredth Anniversary*, p. 62.

the Chebacco Church voted to secede if Pickering did not leave.

Wigglesworth's efforts were in vain. On January 20, 1746, thirty-eight men of the Chebacco Parish resolved to disassociate themselves from the Second Church and form their own society. On May 20, a council of nine ministers from neighboring churches met in Salem to examine the causes of the division. Wigglesworth was a member of this council and John White, of the First Church, Gloucester, also a supporter of the revival and a signer of *The Testimony* of 1743, was its moderator. The council concluded their investigation and, on June 10, issued their views. They recognized Pickering as a man of piety and supported the general character of his preaching. Pickering was not wanting "...of interest...in his ministerial work, or of a neglect of pastoral visits; that there was no reason for doubting his piety, for believing that he had been worldly in spirit...and they fully endorsed the evangelical character of his preaching. [However, the council did conclude that Pickering was:]...negligent about examining candidates for admission to the church respecting their religious experiences, that he had failed to examine early and thoroughly into the nature of the religious experiences among his flock, as he ought to have done; and that his treatment of the aggrieved at first had given them such satisfaction that they ought to forgive him."⁵⁴ The members of the council regarded the secession "...as unjustifiable and reproachful...and in setting up a separate assembly for worship [the seceders were] contrary to the known order of the churches. They further exhorted the two parties to "put away what had been 'unchristian-like' in spirit and behavior, and carefully endeavor a reunion."⁵⁵ Four months later, Pickering became fatally ill, and on October 7, 1747, died at the age of forty-seven.⁵⁶ How much his death was directly caused by the stress of the

⁵⁴ *Celebration of the Two-Hundredth Anniversary*, pp. 58-63.

⁵⁵ *Celebration of the Two-Hundredth Anniversary*, p. 63.

⁵⁶ *Celebration of the Two-Hundredth Anniversary*, p. 63.

remonstrance against him is unknown. But it is probable that the anxiety and disappointment over what he feared most occurring within his church was catalytic in the deterioration of his health.

The tragedy of this situation is that, as far as it can be determined, Theophilus Pickering most likely was a theologically conservative minister -- here, he was on common ground with the pro-revival faction in his church. But he was a cautious man and maintained his evangelical ministry on a more quiet scale than did the dynamic Rogers brothers. He could not, therefore, fulfill the faction's expectations. Pickering was ineffectual in exercising his leadership without a schism between himself and the dissenters, who were dedicated to a particular way of expression concerning the evidences of spiritual renewal. Pickering's "Old Calvinist" moderation is evident, in that he was committed to spiritual renewal and preached about it. But when it came to examining candidates for membership, he was lax. Perhaps he felt it was no longer appropriate to question people concerning their conversion experience. Nevertheless, the New Light faction at the Chebacco Church wanted more of Pickering than he was willing to give. They wanted their minister to pastor his flock and, through careful and sensitive probing, help individuals to discern where they might be in the process of regeneration. Puritan ministers had long been following the model of Richard Baxter, who exhorted them to be trained in understanding the human mind and heart, as much a counsellor as a spiritual guide and teacher.⁵⁷ Perhaps this was Pickering's real failure.

About two years before Pickering's death, the New Light separatists had formed their own church, the Fourth Church of Ipswich, and called John Cleaveland, a young minister from Canterbury, Connecticut, in January, 1746.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of this dual role as a counselor and a teacher-guide, see David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd*, pp.3-71.

Cleaveland had begun his studies at Yale in the midst of the Great Awakening and was expelled in 1744, for supporting lay ordination of preachers.⁵⁸ His support of the revival and the clear preference by the disaffected group for his Calvinist doctrines and his emphasis on individual piety put him in a difficult position before Pickering. Nevertheless, Cleaveland was not a radical New Light. Both he and the members of the new Fourth Church were seen as "prudent, moderate men", who tried to reconcile with Pickering.⁵⁹ The Fourth Church gave members greater power, including the right to remove a pastor and the right to express their minds without hindrance".⁶⁰ Cleaveland became a respected member of the ministerial community. In 1775, the two factions joined together, with Cleaveland as their pastor, under a new covenant that reflected the principles of a church committed to Calvinist theology and "experimental religion".⁶¹ The Fourth Church expired and the Second Church remained, with a wholly new emphasis in its sense of community.

To help reconcile the two factions within the Second Church, Samuel Wigglesworth's efforts included visiting Pickering and the Chebacco church over several years. Probably he served as a friend for Pickering in the council meetings which examined the Second Church's dispute. However, as *The Testimony* of July, 1743, indicates, Wigglesworth was a supporter of the Great Awakening. His sermons contained the standard language for spiritual renewal and the sovereignty of God's grace. Here he honored his Puritan legacy and the ideals of his father,

⁵⁸ Christopher Jedrey, *The World of John Cleaveland*, New York, 1979, p. 46; pp. 39-40. In 1763, Yale awarded Cleaveland his degree, p. 167.

⁵⁹ Christopher Jedrey, *The World of John Cleaveland*, p. 51.

⁶⁰ Anne S. Brown, "Visions of Community in Eighteenth-Century Essex County: Chebacco Parish and the Great Awakening", *Essex Historical Collections*, 125 (1989), p. 259.

⁶¹ Christopher Jedrey, *The World of John Cleaveland*, p. 55.

Michael Wigglesworth, who called all of New England to repent. John Rogers, Jr., and his sons clearly were New Lights who did not wince at the volatile itinerancy of James Davenport. Nevertheless, they too, honored their Puritan heritage and worked hard to encourage true religion in Ipswich and New England. When John Rogers died, in 1746, Wigglesworth preached at his funeral. For over thirty years Wigglesworth knew Rogers and he described Rogers as a man of "sound judgment; was of a thoughtful and inquisitive Temper of Mind...a *Guide of the Blind...a Teacher of the Babes, yea, of Men and Fathers too...in his Doctrine, shewing Uncorruptness, Gravity, sound Speech, that could not be condemned... [he] preach'd a Saviour, with whom he had a blessed experimental Acquaintance...[and he was] as great a Christian as a Divine.*"⁶²

When Rogers and his sons supported and participated in taking over another minister's pulpit, however, they helped prepare the way of division in a church already at odds with its pastor. No council was called nor was any action taken to reprimand the Rogerses and this probably had to do with the stature of the family in New England. Wigglesworth was thus caught between an Old Calvinist, Pickering, who was more sympathetic with the Old Light position concerning the social authority of the minister over his church, and the New Light Rogers family, who embraced the whole effect of the Great Awakening, including its more radical sides. Nevertheless, Pickering's former members, who organized the new Fourth Church, took this action only after failing to convince Pickering that he should hear their complaint. Here, Wigglesworth worked at facilitating some type of a reconciliation and tried to persuade Pickering to listen to their grievances. When the two churches reunited in 1775, the Second Church was transformed by the empowering effects of the Great Awakening. It adopted the formative system of

⁶² Samuel Wigglesworth, *A View of the inestimable Treasure of the Gospel as repositied in Earthen Vessels, and thereby displaying the Excellent Power of God* (Boston, 1746), pp. 20-21.

the Fourth Church which gave more authority to the members to determine the course of their church. Samuel Wigglesworth died in 1768, before he could see the two factions reunite. In all likelihood, Wigglesworth would have delighted in the reconciliation. And although he certainly was reluctant to see the Chebacco Parish split, he would have been inclined to support the reunited church's New Light minister, who directed his people in "experimental religion". Here, he would have been on common ground with his father, Michael, in a mutual commitment to persuade people to come to faith according to the benefits of the covenant and based on the importance of the individual soul in its pilgrimage of faith.

CHAPTER V

A MAN OF THE OLD WAY MADE NEW

As the Bay Colony's most famous poet, Michael Wigglesworth had left to his second son, Edward, a theological legacy that proved to contain some difficult premises for him to continue to profess in the eighteenth century. Michael Wigglesworth's work had been highly popular in the seventeenth century and continued to sell well long after his death.¹ Michael's fame endured², just as Edward was beginning his work at Harvard College. *The Day of Doom* (1662) was a didactic poem targeted for the popular readership and in it Michael Wigglesworth made his convictions clear. God's sovereignty over all of human dealings cannot be thwarted and, ultimately, there will be an end to this world and a judgment of its inhabitants. We all, he warned, must stand ready for this day. Michael's next major published work, *Meat Out of the Eater* (1669), prescribed thoughtful reflection on daily worries and was a handbook for understanding life's troubles. This collection grew out of his empathy for the suffering of everyday life. In it, Michael sought to counsel people to keep going, not to give up hope because hope could be found. How then should Edward reconcile his father's keen sense of communicating an evangelical message with his own burden of new teaching responsibilities? His father had been a pastor to the congregation at Malden -- but in effect, through his poems, all of New England had become his congregation and he its pastor.

¹ Ronald A. Bosco, ed., *The Poems of Michael Wigglesworth* (Lanham, MD), p. 306.

² In 1936 Samuel Eliot Morison noted, "A little over a century ago there were old people in New England who could repeat the whole of [*The Day of Doom*] by heart", *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England*, Westport, CT, reprinted, 1980, p. 215. See also John Ward Dean, *The Sketch of the Life of Reverend Michael Wigglesworth, A. M.* (Albany, NY, 1863), p.1 n, for the popular acceptance of *The Day of Doom* in nineteenth century .

Edward's life's work, however, was not that of a pastor, but of a teacher of pastors. In 1722, Edward became Harvard College's first Hollis Professor of Divinity and entered a world of defining terms, addressing problems to their logical conclusion, and weighing the implications of theological presuppositions and arguments. In one sense, it was the luxury of intellectual precision. And yet, it was not possible to stand too far beyond his father's shadow. How might Edward make his mark? In the end, it would be through the life of an academician -- reading, researching, and communicating theological and metaphysical subtleties to a select group of young men. He trained his students, who in turn became New England's pastors, so that through them, he would reach out to New England. Thus Edward's vision of his work differed from that of his father's. His father labored to reach the people of New England. New England was his church. For Edward, however, reaching New England's future church leaders emerged as his way of affecting the region, and this work to guide New England's fate directed his tenure at Harvard. Consequently, when it came time to determine the justness or defectiveness of the Great Awakening, Edward's commitment to the New England Way would not waver and he held fast to its theological underpinnings. The traditions and order of the congregational church structure were fundamental to Edward's view of God's work in New England. Along with others who felt that the revivals undermined the essential nature of the New England churches, Edward took up the challenge of defending tradition, in part, to speak for ministerial authority and, in part, to lead his student-pastors in the right direction.

Like his father, Edward Wigglesworth kept a personal diary. In the same volume that holds Michael's last extant diary, Edward began his own personal and intimate account. In this volume, Michael's last entry is dated November 27, 1687, seventeen years before his death. However, between Michael's last entry and Edward's first (dated January 21, 1711), another entry is found. Although the

handwriting is not that of Edward, the writer expresses what were his sentiments. This "interim" diary entry is a heartfelt farewell and expresses grief over losing a father when that person's presence was achingly longed for: "It pleases the almighty Disposer of all things, in his wise providence to exercise me with such an afflicting dispensation thereof, as the bereaving of him who should have been the Guide of my Youth by causing my father to rest from his labours on the Lord's Day June the 10, 1705, in the seventy-fourth year of his age."³

In his diary, Edward reflected on his parents' piety and devoted considerable time tracing the process of his spiritual conversion. In 1711 he wrote, "I have been terrified and admonished when my father hath been setting life and Death before me and when telling me that if I chose death rather than life he would appear as A witness against me in the great & horrible day of the Lord and I have been melted into tear att my Mothers affectionate charges and entreating...[These efforts touched] my affections, yet they never reached my heart, so as to leave any abiding impression there." Concern over the spiritual destiny of one's children was a heartfelt worry for many parents. It was common within Puritan culture for parents to warn their children with dire warnings of their impending doom if they lacked faith in God. In one case, Increase Mather met with six- and seven-year-old children from his congregation and admonished them that if they died "and be not first new Creatures, better you had never been born: you will be left without excuse before the Lord, terrible witnesses shall rise up against you at the last day.

³ Indeed, a few pages later, this time in Edward's own handwriting, this quotation is repeated. The mystery remains, however, as to who the original writer was. Although there is no certainty, perhaps the entry was from Samuel, Edward's older half-brother by three years. There are fewer examples of Samuel's handwriting than that of Edward's, but Edward's is of such a distinguished small, tight script that the "interim" entry clearly is not his. Edward was fifteen when Michael died; at eighteen, perhaps Samuel also wished for his father's presence in his life. Perhaps he spoke for both brothers. *Diary of Michael Wigglesworth*, Manuscript Collection of the New England Historical Genealogical Society.

Your Godly parents will testifie against you before the Son of God at that day."⁴ Quite poignantly before Michael died, Edward wrote that his father gave his blessing and a "solemn charge". "'Thou my son, know thou the god of thy fathers and Serve him with A perfect heart and a willing mind, if thou seek him he will be found of thee but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off forever.'" Edward regarded his father's admonition with "fear and trembling" and noted again that "these things thus touched my affections, yet they never touched my heart."⁵ Over the next few years, Edward described himself as having followed his own "desires and cravings to gratify my corrupt nature." Several times before and after his father's death he had "some awakenings of conscience conser[ning] eternity". These self-examining periods caused Edward so much unease and distress, however, that he resorted to "read[ing] History to divert my mind".⁶

About seven years after his first diary entry, Edward wrote on September 13, 1718 (when he was twenty-four years old), that he was in remorse over his sins. He "resolve[d] God's will be my [Master]" and was determined to follow Christ. "I Renounce my own Wisdom, and Resign Myself to his Instruction, as to a Teacher sent by God...I renounce my own Will and take his Will for a Law unto me". Poignantly, Edward identified his conversion in Calvinist terms: "...God is a consuming Fire unto Sinners, and since None can be Interested in the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ, but those who with Hearty Willingness Receive Him, in his own way and upon his own Terms; I do therefore Profess that I not only Believe but with all the Sincerity I am able (Lord help my Inability) I Consent unto, all that

⁴ Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan: The Life of Increase Mather* (Middletown, CT, 1988), pp. 142-143.

⁵ Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, Manuscript Collection of the New England Historical Genealogical Society.

⁶ Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, Manuscript Collection of the New England Historical Genealogical Society.

Christ hath done and suffered for Sinners, and all that He Offers to Become unto them. I Renounce all worthiness and righteousness of my own, and I Account it all My Salvation, and Make it all my Desire that I may be found in Him, not having mine own Righteousness, which is of the Law but that which is thrô the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith....I know by sad experience that my own Heart is deceitful above all things and deservably evil....I acknowledge I am Utterly Unable in my own Strength to keep Covenant with Thee."⁷ He also looked to his Puritan heritage to understand his salvation and life within the context of the covenant of grace. "And now most Gracious and Holy God, thrô thy good Hand upon Me, my Heart hath been Enclined of Day, thus to consent to the Terms, and to bring Myself under the Bonds of Covenant by my Own Act and Deed....But Lord I Undertake these things by not Means in my Owne Strength....I acknowledge that I am Utterly Unable in my own Strength to keep covenant with Thee, so I am also Utterly Unworthy in Myself to be admitted into Thy covenant."⁸ Thus Edward understood his salvation in terms of the Reformed tradition, maintaining complete dependency on God's grace, and he viewed the covenant of his faith as the only means for his future hope. Just as he desired (and his father had hoped), Edward would stand with his father in the Last Day. Nevertheless, these fundamental elements of Puritan faith would be challenged in the later years of his career at Harvard.

By the time Edward Wigglesworth began his career in 1722, New England church leaders were suspicious of Pelagian and Arminian principles which were percolating out of the latitudinarian movement that emerged in the latter part of

⁷ Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, Manuscript Collection of the New England Historical Genealogical Society.

⁸ Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, Manuscript Collection of the New England Historical Genealogical Society.

the seventeenth century. After the Stuart Restoration, some English divines encouraged a greater emphasis on the authority of reason and in the usefulness of a quiet tolerance of other views, stressing God's reasonableness and benevolence. An early example of this antidogmatic intellectualism may be found in the movement of the Cambridge Platonists. Prominent Cambridge Platonists included Henry More, of Christ College, John Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Joseph Glanvill, the rector of Bath. In general, these Anglican theologians reacted against the narrow certainty of Puritanism doctrines and explored the rational tenets that Arminianism offered. Meanwhile, by the early eighteenth century, John Leverett, who was president from 1708-1724, and William Brattle, minister of the Cambridge Church and tutor and fellow at Harvard, introduced Cambridge Platonist authors to the college community. For example, John Tillotson's works were well accepted and widely read in America and Henry More's *Enchiridion Ethicum* (1679) was used as a textbook in the ethics branch of the Harvard curriculum and challenged the college's traditional use of Aristotelian ethics. John Leverett's respect for Henry More was so great that he required a "handwritten Précis of...[the] *Enchiridion Ethicum* ".⁹ Norman Fiering noted that "[w]hatever the case may be concerning the inner affinities between New England Puritanism and Cambridge Platonism, the success of More's ethics in New England was undeniable. The *Enchiridion Ethicum* seems to have been used continuously at Harvard until about 1730."¹⁰ If this was the case, it is certain that Samuel (H.C. 1707) and Edward (H.C. 1710) Wigglesworth studied Henry's More ethics in their academic training. Nevertheless, an uncomfortable recognition of More was

⁹ Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan*, pp.284-286.

¹⁰ Norman Fiering, *Moral Philosophy at Seventeenth-Century Harvard: A Discipline in Transition* (Chapel Hill, 1981), p. 251. For a discussion of Henry More, see also pp. 240-279.

emerging because he represented an intellectual link to the naturalist moral philosophy of the Third Earl of Shaftsbury. The Cambridge Platonists' emphasis on rationalism opened the door for a naturalistic, rather than a Christo-centric ethical system. Thus the popularity of the Cambridge Platonists and other latitudinarian influences disturbed many church leaders in New England.

In 1722 Timothy Cutler left the rectorship of Yale for the Anglican Church and in doing so, created havoc in the newly-formed orthodox college. Cutler's desire to be reordained in the Anglican orders necessitated a trip to England. Cutler absolutely shocked orthodox New Englanders -- for his stand was in utter contradiction to Puritan ideals about ecclesiastical authority. Puritan New England churches originally founded their authority in the local gathered church, which ordained and appointed their ministers.¹¹ By the middle of the seventeenth century, the presiding local clergy also took responsibility for the process of selecting church leadership. Thus by removing himself to the Bishop of London, Cutler literally removed himself from the tradition and the authority of Congregational Puritanism. The problem had long been festering in New England. In Boston the first Anglican house of worship, King's Chapel, was built in 1686. Furthermore, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel -- whose missionaries were initially welcomed by Puritan New England, but whose efforts eventually were viewed as highly suspect by those who balked at the idea of seeing themselves as candidates for proselytizing -- was searching for the means to ordain more Anglican clergy. When the new charter for Massachusetts was approved under William and Mary, it was a compromise for the Puritan influences, especially that of Increase Mather. Contained in the charter was the toleration of religious sects recognized by the Crown -- including, of course, the Church of England. What this

¹¹ David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC), 1972, pp. 79-86.

seemed to amount to was the certain arrival of a bishop in the American Colonies, an unwanted and dreaded event. Although this Puritan fear was not realized, in 1722 the establishment of Christ Church confirmed the encroachment of the Church of England in Boston. Christ Church received the sanction of the Hanoverian line and, most appalling for Puritan Boston, Timothy Cutler was installed as its rector in 1727. As long as the Church of England was present, the threat of the episcopacy loomed large in Puritan minds.¹² After a century, the light from the City on a Hill seemed to dim and the purpose of the original Bay Colony was languishing in the wake of Anglican progress.

Not coincidentally, on August 22, 1721, the conditions for the first endowed chair in divinity were entered into the Harvard College records. The first "rule" on the ledger stated, "that the Professor be a Master of Arts, and in communion with some Christian Church of one of three denominations Congregational, Presbyterian or Baptist"¹³ Beginning with this priority Thomas Hollis, a wealthy London merchant, realized his vision of having a designated professor at Harvard who would deliver "lectures of Divinity publickly in the Hall"¹⁴ When compared to the two endowed chairs which he ultimately supported and the hundreds of books he bought for the college library, Hollis' initial plans were modest: the support of ten student scholars, each at £10 per year.¹⁵ But John Leverett, the president of the

¹² Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (New York, 1986), pp. 199-209, and Carl Bridenbaugh, *The Mitre and the Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics* (New York, Oxford), 1962.

¹³ Harvard College Papers, Vol. 1-3 (1650-1796). On occasion, Hollis also used the term "Independent" which is synonymous for Congregational. In England an "Independent" church referred to one with a Congregational polity, in contrast to those churches that were organized according to Presbyterian polity.

¹⁴ Letter of Thomas Hollis to President John Leverett and Benjamin Colman, February 21, 1721/22, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

¹⁵ In 1727, Hollis ordered and paid for the instruments that the new Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, Isaac Greenwood, needed for the school's laboratory. In total, Hollis spent £120/7/0 on science equipment (Thomas Hollis' Letter to Edward

college, and Benjamin Colman, pastor of the Brattle Street Church and one of the leading ministers of Boston, wrote to Hollis and asked if he would consider expanding his commitment to include a sponsored chair of divinity. Hollis was somewhat puzzled at this request because he thought that Harvard was already well situated with its faculty. "You propose to my consideration, that I should appropriate an Income to make an honorable Stipend for a Professor of Divinity to read Lectures in the hall to the Students. At first I was much surprized at the Motion, not doubting but your college of so long standing had been well furnisht with Professors as well as Tutors. And indeed it has caused many tho^{ts} in my Mind."¹⁶ What compelled Hollis to endow the Professorship of Divinity was his acute interest in the theological welfare of New England coupled with a commitment to see young students receive support for their studies in divinity. Upon Leverett's and Colman's recommendation, Hollis agreed to Wigglesworth's appointment to the chair of divinity.¹⁷

From across the Atlantic, Thomas Hollis maintained a lively correspondence with Harvard's president and was careful to express his ideas and conditions for his projects. The "rules", or qualifications, for the Professor of Divinity required that the individual be associated with one of three Christian denominations: "I am thinking to insert, & pray your consideration, to limit that our Designed Professor - shall be always One in actually in Commun^{io} with some church - one of the three

Wigglesworth, July 27, 1727, Pusey Library, Harvard University). Hollis also supported the salary of a treasurer at £5 to handle the accounts of the professors of divinity and natural science and the ten student scholars (Letter of Thomas Hollis to President John Leverett and Benjamin Colman, February 21, 1721/22, Pusey Library, Harvard University).

¹⁶ Letter of February 24, 1720/21, to John Leverett and Benjamin Colman, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

¹⁷ Letter of Thomas Hollis to President John Leverett and Benjamin Colman, February 21, 1721/22, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

denominations Independent, Presbyterian, or Baptist".¹⁸ This condition surprised the College's corporation since the faculty consisted of Congregationalists whose Puritan roots reached back to the founding of the Bay Colony. Nevertheless, Hollis himself was a Baptist and was interested in seeing that Harvard practice a toleration of other sects so that trained Baptists could also enjoy the benefits of a college education. In fact, his hope was that some of the ten students would be Baptist, though he did not expect that many would come to Harvard.¹⁹

What Hollis was concerned about was the dividing -- and especially in the past a sometimes violent -- distinction which Baptists maintained in their manner of administering baptism. From the enthusiasm of the Reformation, early Baptists distinguished themselves by waiting until individuals were adults before being baptized in order to signify their "new life" of faith. Congregationalists, however, followed the long-standing tradition in church history of baptizing their children when they are young, hence they were "pedobaptists". Thus Hollis was attempting to assure Wigglesworth and his colleagues at Harvard that he was not a strict Baptist, but accepted other traditions -- as he hoped they would respond in kind. Of course, if the college refused Hollis' conditions, they jeopardized losing the benefits of a generous patron. Nevertheless, when no Baptist student could be found, Hollis resigned himself to accepting the college's candidates.²⁰ Hollis also directed that the selection of students be those "pious young Students, devoted to the work of the Ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but who cannot comfortably proceed without some charitable assistance...[Harvard is to avoid nominating] Dunces or Rakes....I

¹⁸ Letter of Thomas Hollis to President John Leverett and Benjamin Colman, February 21, 1721/22, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

¹⁹ Letter of Thomas Hollis to President John Leverett, June 6, 1722 and Letter of Thomas Hollis to President John Leverett, February 4, 1723/4, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

²⁰ Letter of Thomas Hollis to Edward Wigglesworth, February 18, 1723, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

order and appoint, that in the nomination of Students for to receive my bounty, no distinction be made between such as are for the practice of Adult Baptism only, & others; but that all due Incouragement be given them equally with the Pedobaptist".²¹ Though disappointed that his initial goal of educating Baptist divinity students did not materialize, Hollis was faithful to his commitment to endow two chairs and ten student scholarships. With recurrent generosity he continued his interest in the state of the orthodoxy in the American colonies.

Demonstrating his ubiquitous concern for details, Hollis required that Wigglesworth accept this oath at his inauguration in 1722: "That he [the professor of divinity] repeat his Oaths to the Civil Government/ That he declare it as his beleif that the Bible is the onely and most perfect Rule of Faith & Manners, and that he promise to explain & open the Scriptures to his Pupils with integrity and faithfulness according to the best Light that God shall give him/ That he promise to promote true Piety and Godlines by his Example and Instruction/ That he consult the good of the college & the Peace of the Churches on all Occasions - and/ That he Religiously observe the Statutes of his Founder".²² Hollis corresponded with Edward Wigglesworth and was keen on establishing a regular basis for communication, so that he could know the progress of his dream for Harvard's training in divinity.²³ When informed of Wigglesworth's nomination for the faculty

²¹ Record of Benjamin Wadsworth, April, 1730/1, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

²² Letter of Thomas Hollis to John Leverett and Benjamin Colman, February 24, 1720/1, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

²³ Hollis was upset with Wigglesworth's crimped handwriting and complained about the difficulty he had in attempting to read it. "I have rec[orded] your letter dated July.11. wch I doubt not is very good, but so small a character I must guess at the sense, I beseech you if you write me my business as required an answer never write to me any more so, if you will not write larger for I doubt not but you can) get some one to transcribe it in a character I may read--or else never write to me again--it is a paine to me who vallue Mr Wigglesworth to think or find I cant read his letter" Letter of Thomas Hollis to Edward Wigglesworth, September 28, 1723, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

position, Hollis personally wrote to Wigglesworth that he accepted the choice of the Corporation and Board of Overseers. Hollis also took advantage of the moment to charge Wigglesworth to engender his own personal vision for the spiritual welfare of the school. "I do Intreat you sir to be diligent and faithful in the discharge of this Trust, and I conceive hopes that you wil do so, for the glory of God, by instilling useful knolege into the Mindes of your Students, promoting serious Religion and practical godlines by your Doctrine and by our own Example whereby you wil have inward Peace and credit the chaire on your indevors may be a shining pattern to them, who long hence may succeed you"²⁴ Such intensity must have instilled in Wigglesworth respect for his patron and, probably, not a little pressure to preach and teach in such a way that Hollis would approve. But however high Hollis' expectations of Wigglesworth were, he was too far away to be immediately overbearing. In fact, Hollis' conclusions to his letters to Wigglesworth are quite personal and endearing. Typically, his closure has a promise of his prayers for Wigglesworth and the phrase, "your Loving Freind Thomas Hollis". From the letter of July 1, 1724, for example, Hollis concluded, "and pray give my Love to all the Students on my foundation, tell them it is my hearts & prayer that they all may be saved, that they may growe in Grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord -- and in due time, impart the Savour of that Doctrine unto Others My humble Service to Mr President -- and all the Corporation -- Your Loveing Freind Thomas Hollis"²⁵ Given his religious nature, such language may be expected of Hollis. Nevertheless, Hollis' choice of words in his letters' conclusions are very specific. Furthermore, he does not show this kind of intimacy in his letters to President

²⁴ Letter of Thomas Hollis to Edward Wigglesworth, June 6, 1722, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

²⁵ Letter of Thomas Hollis to Edward Wigglesworth, July 1, 1724, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

Leverett. To Wigglesworth, he confessed, "You and I are acting our parts as under Rowers, to impart a little wisdom and useful knowlege to Youth."²⁶ Thomas Hollis had taken on both the role of a patron and of a partner. In addition, Edward Wigglesworth felt comfortable enough with Hollis to share some personal troubles he had upon marrying Sarah Leverett, daughter of John Leverett. Sarah Leverett Wigglesworth suffered from some kind of illness and this condition interfered with their sexual relationship. Hollis responded with compassion, "[W]hile in the same paragraff you add the trouble you meet with in the flesh by her continued indisposition; I sympothize with you and her under the afliction & pray God it may be removd, sanctified to you both, & in due time she may be not onely spared but -- restored to health -- that you both may be comforted and enjoy the fruit of the institution, a holy seed to serve the Lord."²⁷ Hollis' concern is almost fatherly, perhaps because he remembered that Wigglesworth was orphaned at the age of fifteen.

In 1724, two years after his installation as the Hollis Professor of Divinity, Edward Wigglesworth was offered the position of becoming the rector of Yale. Wigglesworth declined, probably because he could not ignore how quickly Harvard responded to the news of Yale's offer by promptly doubling his salary to £80. Moreover, Wigglesworth felt a strong obligation to his benefactor. Originally, Thomas Hollis intended his chair of divinity to be a five-year appointment. In 1724 (possibly because Wigglesworth had already received the Yale offer), the Corporation and Overseers of Harvard wrote to Hollis to request that he permit

²⁶ Letter of Thomas Hollis to Edward Wigglesworth, March 1, 1722/23, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

²⁷ Letter of Thomas Hollis to Edward Wigglesworth, July 27, 1727, Pusey Library, Harvard University. Unfortunately, Sarah died on November 9, 1727, fifteen months after she and Edward were married. Two years later he married Rebecca Coolidge, of Cambridge, by whom he had two children who survived to adulthood. His son, Edward Wigglesworth, Jr., succeeded him as the second Hollis Professor of Divinity.

Wigglesworth to remain in the position. Hollis was quite happy to agree. While Wigglesworth had yet three more years until the end of his appointment, Hollis' letter implies that there might have been some anxiety on Wigglesworth's part to maintain the position as the Hollis Professor of Divinity.²⁸ Perhaps the prestige of the Harvard chair and the accompanying salary was important enough to Wigglesworth to make his desire for a secure tenure known to the Corporation of which he was now a member. In all probability, however, this request was initiated on the part of the Corporation and the members simply wanted to keep a good scholar content and away from Yale.²⁹

Hollis had directed that the occupant of the divinity chair should be Presbyterian, Congregational, or Baptist. Explicitly, Hollis ordered that, "my present guard -- as example for future is -- against an Episcopalian so called".³⁰ Like many in New England, Hollis was concerned about the "defection" at Yale, when Timothy Cutler shocked New England by adopting Anglicanism. Hollis' comments to John Leverett reveal that he was quite disturbed about the implications of Cutler's example to other ministers in the colonies, that he wished to see New England's pastoral leadership honor its Protestant heritage, and that Anglican strength bode ill news for Independents and Baptists. "I am greatly grieved to heare

²⁸ Letter of Thomas Hollis to Edward Wigglesworth, January 5, 1724/5, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

²⁹ Several biographers have attributed Wigglesworth's deafness as the reason for his declining the Yale offer. But Harvard's quick action to secure him tenure, the doubling of his salary, and Thomas Hollis' intensely personal interest in him probably had more to do with his decision. Regardless of where he worked, he would have had to deal with his disability. (See Rick W. Sturdevant, "Edward Wigglesworth (1693-1765)", *American Writers Before 1800: A Biography and Critical Dictionary, Vol Q-Z*, James A. Levernier and Douglas R. Wilmes, eds. (Westport, CT, 1983), p. 1589; *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, Samuel G. Drake, ed., Vol. XV (Boston, 1861), pp. 335-336; Clifford K. Shipton, *Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College, Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, Vol. 5 (Cambridge, MA), 1933-1945, p.550.

³⁰ Letter of Thomas Hollis to John Leverett, August 31, 1721, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

that any Ministers in New England should return to the discipline & Ceremonies of the Church of England, from whence their Fathers Reformed, how melancholly is the thought! We have now had for a number of years at London our publick meetings for Religious Worship undisturbed blessed be God, but I feare should that Clergy recover power as formerly, our numerous Assemblys would soon be greatly thin'd the rising generation not having studied the reasons of our Separation and by the Rest the Churches enjoyd possibly Parents, have been deficient in the instructing their familys....Dummers management for Yale College gave me grounds to suspect a Snake the grass I am sorry to see it verified, and it Justifies me Sir when I wrote to you about my Professor and the reasons why I guarded and limited so as I did".³¹ Hollis met Cutler in London and found him to be a powerful advocate for Anglicanism: "D^r Cutler is now returnd for Boston... he goes over reordaind -- but I think not rebaptized -- for want of wch -- according to or by his narrow uncharitable and Dodwelian Principles, I do not see how he can rightly Baptize others & and he ought to be pusht & made to Doubt -- I have urged him to a larger charity -- & for Peace -- according to my Tallent in word & deed -- this mans character is to be treated among you in different manner, from the common and vicious Missionaries -- He was reputed one of your faith & order--but Demas like, he has loved the World, and is departed from you -- and as a bold Schismatick becomes the head of a Party -- and dares you fairly, he is above board, he will do all he is able to bring men over to his beloved nations of Episcopal ordination [sic] & as necessary -- and he has a great advantage of many, by his calmness & sedateness in his disputing -- I have seen him pusht to an absurdity, and yet not appeare ruffled

³¹ Letter of Thomas Hollis to John Leverett, January 18, 1722, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

or discountenanced -- he told me he could wish he could Convert me".³² Thus due to a combination of reasons -- some representing Wigglesworth's personal goals and others, symbolizing Thomas Hollis' watch against encroaching Anglicanism at Harvard -- Edward Wigglesworth saw the beginning of his third year of his appointment as confirmation of his worth to the College, both in the prestige of his tenure and in remuneration of his work.

Edward Wigglesworth's theological positions concerning church government, the sovereignty of God, and the application of grace in the plan of salvation may be traced through a series of published sermons and lectures. In contrast to his father, who attempted to reach New England through his poetry, or his brother, Samuel, who ministered to a local congregation thirty miles to the north, Edward Wigglesworth's aim was to teach and lead a select group of Harvard students, many of whom would become pastors in the region. On the event of his "occasional" sermons, such as his election sermon and Dudleian Lecture, Edward's audience presented to him an interesting mix: students, the Corporation of Harvard, its Board of Overseers, and Boston's leading ministers and public officials.

In 1724, just two years after the Cutler "defection" to Anglicanism, Wigglesworth's *Sober Remarks On A Book Lately Re-printed* confronted a recently republished treatise that advocated the episcopacy as the best form of church government.³³ In *Sober Remarks*, Wigglesworth undermined the argument of the pro-Anglican treatise and demonstrated that the congregational form of ecclesiastical government was well supported in Scripture and in church history. He summed up his presentation by pronouncing the authoritative position of the local minister. "*Episcopacy and Presbyterian Parity* are very well reconcilable: for

³² Letter of Thomas Hollis to John Leverett, September 28, 1723, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

³³ The pro-Anglican author, John Checkley, defended his position in *A Modest Proof...* (see note below).

I know no difference between a Congregational *Bishop*, and an Independent *Pastor*...there's no solid proof of any Rule in the sacred Scriptures, for this Consecration of Bishops, as different fro the Ordination of Presbyters...*That every Congregation may have its own particular Bishop; and then that all Bishops are upon the Level, having equal & independent Authority.*"³⁴ In speaking for the New England ministry, Wigglesworth also had immediate (and eminent) tradition to support his view of congregationalism. The Cambridge Platform of 1648 defined the foundation of church government for New England by upholding the independence of the local congregation. Wigglesworth's treatise, *Sober Remarks*, affirmed the distinctiveness of the New England Way. And if representatives of the Anglican Church were being considered for Harvard's Board of Overseers³⁵, Wigglesworth dismissed any possibility of this infiltration with force and clarity.

In the sermons associated with the first thirty years of Wigglesworth's tenure at Harvard (1722-1765), it is clear that he examined carefully reformed doctrines and taught in the mainstream of reformed theology. Some scholars have designated Wigglesworth as eventually accepting the Arminian school of "conditional" salvation.³⁶ It is true that near the end of Wigglesworth's career we do see a subtle shift, but it was to a more mild form of Calvinist doctrine rather than toward Arminianism. Within Calvinism there are several positions concerning the logical order of God's decrees which result in some fine, but critical, distinctions concerning his decision to save some humans (the elect) and to limit (or not limit)

³⁴ Edward Wigglesworth, *Sober Remarks On A Book Lately Re-printed at Boston, Entituled, A Modest Proof of the Order & Government settled by Christ and his Apostles in the Church* (Boston: 1724), p.32, also pp. 55, 71.

³⁵ Rick W. Sturdevant, "Edward Wigglesworth (1693-1765)", p. 1588.

³⁶ See Rick W. Sturdevant, "Edward Wigglesworth (1693-1765)", pp. 1586-1589; Clifford K. Shipton, *Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College, Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, pp. 549-550. See also Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (Amherst, MA, 1981), p. 23.

the atonement. Stated briefly, Calvinist and Arminian positions on soteriology seek to answer the question, "For whom did Christ die?" How narrow or how broadly the atonement may be applied is the basis for the different emphases found in the supralapsarianism, infralapsarianism, and sublapsarianism schools in Calvinism. Supralapsarian and infralapsarian Calvinism affirm that God's decree to save some (election) logically preceded his decision to provide salvation, resulting in a limited atonement. However, sublapsarian Calvinism and Arminianism maintain that God's decision to provide salvation logically preceded his decision to save some, thus rendering the atonement unlimited. An important difference between Calvinism and Arminianism to note, however, is "...whether the decree of election is based solely upon the free, sovereign choice of God himself (Calvinism) or based also in part upon his foreknowledge of merit and faith in the person elected (Arminianism)."³⁷ In light of these doctrinal distinctions, it is clear that Wigglesworth, as the only professor of divinity in New England³⁸, held an especially influential position since the possibility was quite real that the whole region might be guided in some measure by his teachings. Indeed, near the end of his life, he brushed closely to Arminianism by acknowledging that human actions may help the means of preparing the heart for grace. Nevertheless, this must be seen in the context of Wigglesworth's own confession that he found the sublapsarian form of Calvinism as "much more agreeable to the Scriptures, and to our natural notions of the divine perfections."³⁹

In general, Wigglesworth presented to his audiences lectures that dealt with

³⁷ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1983, 1984, 1985), p. 835.

³⁸ Clifford K. Shipton, *Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College, Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, Vol., 5, p. 551.

³⁹ Edward Wigglesworth, *The Doctrine of Reprobation Briefly Considered: Being the Substance of some Lectures In Harvard College* (Boston: 1763), p. 17; P. 28.

classic difficulties in orthodox Puritan theology: the punishment of the wicked, original sin, reprobation, and God's sovereignty.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, he lived during a dynamic time in colonial history and we find that he employed the language of the eighteenth century in his public discourse. For most of the seventeenth century, American culture was relatively isolated from England, which was consumed by civil war and the power struggle between Parliament and the Stuart kings. By the end of the century, however, the royal government gradually began to increase its control over colonial political and economic affairs. When Massachusetts lost its charter in 1686, the Crown sent over its first royal governor, Edmund Andros, and the first Anglican congregation, King's Chapel, was established. Correspondingly, New England's political, religious, and mercantile interests acquired a greater need to work under English control -- and thereby, within English ways and culture -- to a degree not seen before. This process of interacting with direct English culture (anglicization) greatly affected members of American elite classes, who took to emulating certain practices and ideas so that they "...took pride in the extent to which those [American] societies were coming increasingly to resemble that of the [English] metropolis".⁴¹ Increasingly, New England intellectual leaders, including those of the church, accepted English influence and "transformed" their thinking. "No well-read provincial could escape the excitement [Newton, Locke, Addison, and Tillotson] were generating in science, literature, epistemology, ethics; nor could they resist English influence in dress, speech, literary style, or architecture. For New England elites, England supplanted standards of urbanity, sophistication and

⁴⁰ Three treatises that deal with discerning false spirits and George Whitefield and the Great Awakening will be discussed in chapter six.

⁴¹ Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill, 1988), p. 168; see also Greene's model of colonial social development (described as "simplification", "elaboration", and "replication") on pp. 166-169.

broad-mindedness to be emulated for both intellectual and social reasons."⁴² In this vein of academic excitement, New England clergy also read the important works of English leaders (including the liberal latitudinarians) and adopted the language of the day to describe to their people the attributes of God and the process of conversion and sanctification. The "new language" gave to many, including Edward Wigglesworth, a fresh way of presenting the doctrines of orthodoxy.

In an early sermon Wigglesworth addressed a difficult theological topic: sin as the source of eternal damnation. *A Discourse Concerning The Duration of the Punishment* (1729) balances reason and passion in its deliberation of fallen human nature. "[A]ll the duties which God requires of us are so reasonable and amiable in themselves, and so manifest a Natural Tendency to promote either our Personal Happiness in this present World,...that those who live in Contradiction to them, are generally convinced, that they ought not to do it. But these arguments are too faint and lifeless to be opposed to Sense & Passion."⁴³ Wigglesworth explained that God mercifully views the human race's deplorable state of sin. "This God observes with Bowels of Compassion. He knows our Frame, our Circumstances and our Danger; He sees our Fondness of the Pleasures of Sins of the World, the Variety of Temptations we are exposed to, the Proneness of our Hearts to comply with them, the Insufficiency of depraved Reason to curb our Lusts and Passions, and the Weakness of any Temporal Consideration to secure us from the Power of Temptation, to preserve us steady and constant in our Duty, and prevent us from falling into those Sins, which would be the Ruine of Ourselves."⁴⁴ While salvation

⁴² Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York, 1985), p. 127.

⁴³ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Discourse Concerning The Duration of the Punishment of the Wicked in a Future State* (Boston: 1729), pp. 1-2.

⁴⁴ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Discourse Concerning The Duration of the Punishment....*, p.2.

provides happiness, sin causes the wicked will perish: "And this Eternal Happiness, Sin not only meritoriously forfeits, but [also]...renders Men unfit for, and incapable of. For it is impossible for Men to arrive to Eternal Happiness, without being made Partakers of the Divine Nature, and filled with an ardent Love to God, and a most delightful Sense of His everlasting favour and Love to them...no Man, without a Likeness and conformity to the Divine Being can possibly be Happy." Wigglesworth then carefully argued for the logical conclusion that eternal punishment of the wicked, then, is "in exact Proportion to the Evil of Sin."⁴⁵ "Reasonable and amiable", "Personal Happiness", "Sense & Passion", "ardent Love", "a most delightful Sense" -- these are new phrases employed to express the traditional orthodoxy. Like his father in *The Day of Doom*, Edward presented to his hearers some very bad news concerning eternal punishment and the need for redemption and grace. His message was no less simple or dogmatic than that of his father's. But he used the "new" language of the eighteenth-century to convey to his more sophisticated audiences theological doctrines that were rooted in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In *An Enquiry into the Truth* (1738), *The Sovereignty of God* (1741), and *Some Evidences of the Divine Inspiration* (1755) Wigglesworth continued his exposition of fundamental doctrines concerning sin, salvation and redemption. In *An Enquiry into the Truth*, Wigglesworth presented a dialog between a Calvinist and an Arminian in order to examine the opposing views of original sin (as it is defined by the Westminster Confession). Wigglesworth's treatise was so balanced, however, that his original hearers had difficulty knowing which position was

⁴⁵ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Discourse Concerning The Duration of the Punishment...*, pp. 11-12. Wigglesworth upheld the doctrine of eternal punishment and maintained that there were degrees in the severity of the punishment according to the assessment of a person's wickedness.

stronger or which side he took until the very end.⁴⁶ This even-handed manner of dealing with an opponent's viewpoint might lead one to conclude that Wigglesworth was well on his way to Arminianism.⁴⁷ But this is not the case here. Here, he firmly upheld the doctrines of the covenant, predestination, and federal theology.⁴⁸ Likewise in *The Sovereignty of God* Wigglesworth tackled the apparent contradiction of how a just and loving God may "harden the hearts" of certain individuals. Maintaining a supralapsarian view, he discussed how the atonement is limited to those whom God has elected to salvation, that circumstances will cause hearts to harden, not God, and that individuals thus are responsible for their own obstinacy. Most significantly, Wigglesworth also criticized universalism and warned that it was based on "dangerous Deductions of divine Mercy".⁴⁹ Another sermon, *Some Evidences of the Divine Inspiration*, assured the reader of the trustworthiness of the Old Testament and argued for the divine source of all canonical books.⁵⁰ (In contrast to the infallibility of Scripture, Wigglesworth argued two years later against the claim of the infallibility by the Roman Catholic Church and vindicated Protestantism against Catholicism.⁵¹)

Where Wigglesworth may be seen as encroaching into the Arminian school of thought is in his last extant sermon, *The Doctrine of Reprobation* (1763). Rather

⁴⁶ Edward Wigglesworth, *An Enquiry into the Truth of the Imputation of Adam's first Sin to His Posterity* (Boston: 1738,) "The Preface".

⁴⁷ Rick W. Sturdevant, "Edward Wigglesworth (1693-1765)", pp. 1588-1589.

⁴⁸ Edward Wigglesworth, *An Enquiry into the Truth*, pp. 38, 76, 84, 88.

⁴⁹ Edward Wigglesworth, *The Sovereignty of God in the Exercises of his Mercy; And how He is said to Harden the Hearts of Men* (Boston, 1741), pp. 14, 28, 55; p. 6n.

⁵⁰ Edward Wigglesworth, *Some Evidences of the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, From the Testimony of Jesus Christ and his Apostles in the New*, (Boston: 1755), pp. 5,6, 12, 13-15.

⁵¹ See Edward Wigglesworth, *Some Thoughts Upon The Spirit of Infallibility, Claimed By The Church of Rome: Offer'd At The Anniversary Dudleian-Lecture* (Boston: 1757).

than seeing this treatise as a "gradual compromise between orthodox Calvinism and Arminianism"⁵², however, it is critical to view certain comments made by Wigglesworth in light of the moderate Calvinist position he advocated. He also wrote a letter responding to questions about the treatise and this letter traces the development in his thinking concerning the Calvinist doctrines of election and reprobation.

The doctrines of election and reprobation are theological positions that deal with fundamental issues concerning salvation and the freedom of the will. In *The Sovereignty of God* (1741), Wigglesworth taught the supralapsarian position concerning the atonement. Twenty years later in *The Doctrine of Reprobation*, however, he shifted his position and supported the sublapsarian view, because he found it to be based in Scripture and "reasonable". What has been controversial, however, is an ambiguous statement near the end of his treatise in which he stated, "[T]he bigger part of those who attain the mercy of God unto eternal life, may have been chosen to it, upon a foresight not of their faith and repentance, but of their diligent improvement of the means of grace, and earnest prayer for the aids of God's holy spirit. And so notwithstanding any thing in the decrees of God, there may be a certain connection between *striving to enter in at the strait gate, and admission into it.*"⁵³ This statement may seem as if Wigglesworth accepted the Arminianist position, that it is possible to induce salvation partly from the action of an independent and free will. But if this interpretation were the case, then Wigglesworth contradicted himself several times in *The Doctrine of Reprobation*. For example, he said, "Now if we were elected, not by what [God] foresaw that we

⁵² Rick W. Sturdevant, "Edward Wigglesworth (1693-1765)", p. 1587. See also Clifford K. Shipton, *Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College, Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, Vol., 5, pp. 549-550.

⁵³ Edward Wigglesworth, *The Doctrine of Reprobation*, p. 48.

would be; so that his grace is not efficacious by its own force, but by the good use of that we make of it; then the glory and praise of all the good we do, and of God's kind purposes to us, were due to ourselves....The whole strain of the scripture in ascribing all good things to God, and in charging us to offer up the Honour of all to him, seems very expressly against such doctrine."⁵⁴ Moreover, Wigglesworth ultimately supported the Calvinist position that divine grace is irresistible since "...we may resist the grace or favour of God; but we can never withstand him when he intends to overcome us."⁵⁵ The appealing aspect of sublapsarianism to Wigglesworth is that "...while with the *Arminians* they utterly deny any *determinative* divine influence to evil action, do at the same time with Supralapsarians earnestly maintain the efficacy of divine grace,...and the necessity of its influence in order for our being and doing good."⁵⁶ The sublapsarian position, then, allows God to be source of all that is good and, and at the same, it does not make God the cause of evil. God permits humans to exercise their free will, and "hath ordained certain men to condemnation upon a foresight of their ungodliness and infidelity".⁵⁷ Wigglesworth may have shifted away from an acute case of ultra-Calvinism, but a Calvinist he remained.

The year following the publication of *The Doctrine of Reprobation*, Wigglesworth responded in a letter to a Massachusetts clergyman about the controversial statement he made at the close of his treatise. Here, we have the benefit of Wigglesworth interpreting his own lecture. In the letter he repeated his notion that while salvation comes only from divine grace, individuals may have

⁵⁴ Edward Wigglesworth, *The Doctrine of Reprobation*, pp. 26-27.

⁵⁵ Edward Wigglesworth, *The Doctrine of Reprobation*, p. 29.

⁵⁶ Edward Wigglesworth, *The Doctrine of Reprobation*, p. 36.

⁵⁷ Edward Wigglesworth, *The Doctrine of Reprobation*, p. 46; see also pp. 43-44.

some sort of a role in the process. "[Y]ou seem to think I had asserted, that the bigger Part &c; are chosen upon a Foresight of their diligent Improvement of the Means of Grace & earnest Prayer for the Aids of God's Holy Spirit; but in this you have mistaken me. All that I asserted was, that what had been said in the preceding page [God's sovereign rule over election and reprobation] did not hinder, or forbid such a Supposition. -- If you say, however, I have expressed my self in such a Manner, as if I thought the things supposed to be true; I freely own, that I think it highly probable: Which I should not do, if I perceived any Inconsistency between such a Supposition, & the Texts to which you defer me....So conclude, why may not a great Multitude...have been chose upon a foresight of their diligent Improvement of the Means of Grace, & earnest prayer for the Aids of God's Holy Spirit? I hope I have sufficiently shewn above, that the Choice of such will give them no Cause for *boasting*, or Pretense of Merit, nor make the Election of God to depend upon the Will of man."⁵⁸

Since Wigglesworth supported the sublapsarian position, there remains the question of how to interpret his statement concerning the role of "the diligent Improvement of the Means of Grace". One way to understand this paradox is to see it as a final encouragement on Edward Wigglesworth's part. That is, he was at the close of his treatise and he was offering assurance that salvation is at hand for those who seek it. In fact, the final words of *The Doctrine of Reprobation* paraphrase Matthew 7:9-12, that, as any parent will give good gifts to their children, God will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask; and Proverbs 2:3-5, that any one who truly seeks for understanding and the knowledge of God will receive it. We may see then that his thinking was based in the Puritan tradition of evangelical

⁵⁸ Edward Wigglesworth, "...[T]he Doctor's vindication of a Passage in the Lectures, in answer to a letter which he received from a neighboring clergyman", July 25, 1766, Harvard College Corporation Records, Vol. VIII, Pusey Library, Harvard University.

preparationism⁵⁹, in which one attends to those actions -- such as praying, meditating, reading the Scriptures, and listening to sermons -- which will play a part in one's conversion. (A popular aphorism of the Puritan culture was that one more likely would meet God in a church pew than on a tavern seat.) God's predetermined design for salvation is thus a process, in which individuals will conscientiously do as much as possible to prepare their hearts, all the while knowing that their salvation comes only from divine grace. Because Wigglesworth encouraged his readers to seek and ask for knowledge, it is likely that he was referring the evangelical role that preparative actions -- "Means of Improving Grace" -- have in the conversion process. In this way, Wigglesworth reached back to his Puritan roots to help explain how the human will may be free and independent, and yet at the same time, how salvation and conversion come from no merit of one's own actions.

Michael Wigglesworth's life gave his sons an example of the type of consuming devotion found in Puritan piety. Through his diaries and publications, Michael left a model of "experimental" religion -- a religion that burned in the heart. We know from Edward's diary that the sons' conversions were of eminent importance to their father and that he yearned to see them stand with him in the Day of Judgement. This overwhelming desire affected Samuel and Edward (we know it seared Edward's conscience). Eventually, both sons would come to make the same claim of faith that belonged to their father. With all his conviction and

⁵⁹ Preparationism has several meanings within Puritan theology, in that it may refer to those actions that are included in the conversion process and also to those actions which prepare the converted for living a holy life. See Charles Lloyd Cohen, *God's Caress: The Psychology of Puritan Religious Experience* (New York, 1986), p. 78, note 9; pp. 76-95. See also Robert Middlekauf, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals* (New York, 1971), pp. 63-64; *Thomas Shepard's Confessions* George Selement and Bruce C. Walley, ed., Boston, 1981, pp.1-25; and Norman Pettit, *The Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life* (New Haven: 1966).

heart-felt anguish in print, Michael emerged as a figure of an evangelist and pastor to the old Puritan Colony -- and he became New England's own poet. Edward also reached out to New England's soul, but his influence emerged in a more vicarious way. As New England's only professor of divinity, he trained the next generation of pastoral leadership. While in his thinking of divine things, Michael remained well within the Puritan theological tradition and espoused a limited atonement of election, Edward shifted to a more gentle form of Calvinism and found that faith was reasonably grounded in moderate sublapsarianism. Despite the inroads of the new moral philosophy of Henry More and the liberal ways of the Cambridge Platonists into Harvard (all of which was quite dazzling because of the new intellectual and scientific insights that were transforming the western world), Edward stood his ground in Calvin. And although he was more moderate in speech than his father and applied an evangelism of careful and rational persuasion, he believed -- and preached -- the old orthodox doctrines of original sin, the efficacy of Christ's atonement, and the certainty of the final judgement. Through his poems, Michael spoke in the tradition of the "plain style" of preaching so revered by the great Puritan divines. Edward, however, proclaimed the old truths in the "new" language of his age, an age which reflected the growing importance of England's sophistication to New England's culture. When the time came, however, Edward held his own against the encroaching tide of the Anglican Church and, along with his benefactor Hollis, reminded New Englanders just what they were about -- the congregational way. How Michael Wigglesworth most clearly reached his son, however, was in the deeply rooted beliefs and traditions of seventeenth-century Puritanism that were transferred to Edward's eighteenth-century mind. He affirmed the rightness and the goodness of the Cambridge Platform because it kept the church's pastors free and powerful, rather than controlled and stunted in an episcopal hierarchy. And although Edward was careful to give full attention to

Arminian doctrines, his understanding of them did not mean that he completely agreed with them. He advocated the old way of preparationism, because he saw that it was beneficial to those uncovering the delicate path to salvation. Edward thus looked to the past of his father to affect the future of his people.

Thomas Hollis died in 1731. Had he lived longer, he would have been impressed with Edward Wigglesworth's thoroughness and open-mindedness as he interpreted controversial theological doctrines. However, there is good reason to think that where they would have parted company, would have been in the midst of the Great Awakening. In England, Hollis was part of a movement of non-conformists who worked for and anticipated a great reviving of religion. In all likelihood, when that revival shook up both sides of the Atlantic, Hollis would have been in the thick of it. But Edward was a cleric. To him, too many good pastors were being rejected by their congregations and their fundamental authority challenged. He could not abide the upheaval and confusion that was created out of the momentum of the Great Awakening. Quite possibly, the Great Awakening is also the point where Edward would have lost touch with his father. Michael called out to New England to consider their way before God and repent. Years later when people did so, they turned the world of New England upside-down. In this scenario, Michael would have welcomed the harvest of his work, while Edward was scathed by its brash and harsh ways. Edward could not condone its disorder and he would react viscerally to it.

CHAPTER VI

THE ITINERANT'S BLAZE

While his brother, Samuel, was attempting to resolve the immediate crisis of the Chebacco Church schism in Ipswich, Edward Wigglesworth became thoroughly enmeshed in the larger and more public debates over the fundamental nature of a true religious revival and the biblical validity of an itinerant ministry. In the 1740's, New England was roiling in the aftermath of George Whitefield's preaching. After each turbulent visit from Whitefield, the socially conservative members of Boston's church leadership grew increasingly suspect of his corrosive impact on the institutional structures of ecclesiastical New England -- the local churches, in general, and Harvard College, in particular. Moreover, Edward's tenure at the school was marked by an invigorated period of intellectual and cultural activity that long had been underway throughout the New England region and the American colonies as a whole. The process of anglicization transformed early eighteenth-century colonial culture in social, political, and economic terms. Most clearly, the educated and mercantile communities in seaboard cities could not help but be changed by the discoveries in science, the restructuring of the royal government, and the increasing wealth of British commercialism. At the same time, intellectual currents in philosophy and religion swept into the American colonies. New England was caught up in this surge of new ideas and, in its religious center, Boston, a new church leadership would emerge by the time of the Great Awakening. Cotton Mather served as a transitional figure between the Puritan hegemony of the seventeenth century and the innovative forces of the eighteenth century. Mather firmly upheld the reformed orthodoxy of his Calvinist heritage; nevertheless, he immersed himself in the intellectual impulses from Britain and distilled what was

best in new scientific and moral thought. Although the new charter of 1691 permanently dissolved the colony of the founding fathers (at the hand of his own father, no less), Mather tried to impress upon New England the spiritual hope that characterized the Puritan commonwealth. He valued the pietistic traits of other traditions in Christianity, which included patristic, medieval, Counter-Reformation forces,¹ and especially, the writings of German Pietist August Hermann Francke². Ultimately Mather, and others of his generation, hoped to see a widespread revival and worked for that end.

After Mather's death in 1727, Benjamin Colman (1673-1747) of the Brattle Street Church emerged from Boston's ministerium to represent a mediating position between the rationalistic trends of English latitudinarianism and the Calvinist traditions of New England theology. Colman was perfect for this role. He had a conciliatory nature that Mather lacked. Most impressively, he could work with members of opposing sides of the Great Awakening, including Charles Chauncy, the "arch-critic" of the revival, and George Whitefield, its "arch-evangelist". Brattle Street Church's organizing discipline adhered to the Westminster Confession and was a solidly Calvinist church. Nevertheless, relative to other churches in Boston, its operating principles were liberal. Membership did not require a public examination, but only a private meeting with the minister³. The minister of the

¹ Richard Lovelace, "Cotton Mather", *Eerdman's Handbook to Christianity in America* (Grand Rapids, 1983), p. 100.

² Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace: Colonial New England's Revival Tradition in Its British Context* (New York, 1991), p. 65.

³ According to Edwin S. Gaustad, Brattle Street Church "eliminated" any personal testimony for membership, indicating that this was because there was little substance to relate; however, it was the public confession (or "relation") that was removed as a condition. Candidates for membership still met with the minister on a private basis. See Edwin S. Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England* (New York, 1957; Gloucester, MA, 1965), p. 14; c.f., Robert Middlekauf, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals* (New York, 1971), p. 219; Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan: The Life of Increase Mather* (Middletown, CT, 1988), p. 298.

church also could admit anyone whom he deemed to be qualified to participate in the Lord's Supper. Furthermore, any child might be baptized, not just the children of those adults who were baptized when they were infants. Colman's liberal character was represented by the occasion of his ordination in London in 1698. There, he was ordained by a nonconformist group, the United Brethren. In part, Colman's British ordination was designed to offset opposition in Boston from Increase and Cotton Mather.⁴ The United Brethren was made up of like-minded English Congregational and Presbyterian ministers, who shared the belief in the need for spiritual renewal. (Ironically, this group that was used to shield Colman had, as one of its founders, Increase Mather.)⁵ After returning to America, Colman remained a man of English ways and was an avid importer of books. He corresponded with many British ministers and, in 1731, "received the highest Puritan accolade"⁶, a D.D. from the University of Glasgow. An important result of Colman's British connection was the establishment of the first chair of divinity at Harvard. Colman and the president of Harvard, John Leverett, successfully persuaded Thomas Hollis of London to endorse a chair of divinity and to accept their nomination of Edward Wigglesworth.⁷ In 1728

⁴ Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York, 1949; Amherst, MA, 1981), p. 8; Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan*, p. 293-294; Harry Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England*, (New York: Oxford University, 1985), p. 130.

⁵ Robert Middlekauf, *The Mathers*, p.219; Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan*, pp. 293-299.

⁶ Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, p.17.

⁷ Letter of Thomas Hollis to President John Leverett and Benjamin Colman, February 21, 1721/22; Letter of Thomas Hollis to President John Leverett and Benjamin Colman, February 24, 1721/22; Pusey Library, Harvard University; Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, pp. 8, 17. Sibley gives some background to this connection, as well: "When [Increase] Mather went to England, according to Cotton Mather, 'he carried his Care of his beloved *College* with him...It was His Acquaintance with...THOMAS HOLLIS, that Introduced his Benefactions unto that *College*; to which his Incomparable Bounty...flow'd unto such a Degree, as to render him the *Greatest Benefactor* it ever had'." Clifford K. Shipton, *Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College, Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, (Cambridge, MA, 1933)1.423.

Colman published in England a series of sermons on the Lord's Supper, *Some Glories of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* and dedicated them to Hollis for his generosity in creating two professorships and ten student scholarships.⁸

In the early part of the eighteenth century, New Englanders still attended church and "liked nothing better than a vigorous sermon".⁹ Nevertheless, something seemed amiss. There was a sense that true "experimental" religion had waned. Along with Colman, a number of American ministers informed their British colleagues about their concern for the spiritual state of the colonies. By this time, a vast transatlantic network had ensued and it included, to name a few, Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edwards, and Isaac Watts. Through Mather, Robert Wodrow, a minister of Scotland, became acquainted with Benjamin Colman. Colman admitted to Wodrow his apprehension that religion in New England was in a general state of decay. A strong Calvinist, Wodrow also was concerned about religious affairs, most notably the increasing influence of Arminianism in Britain. After Edward Wigglesworth was appointed to the Hollis chair, Wodrow began to write to him in order to learn about developments at Harvard. Wodrow's correspondence with Colman lasted until he died in 1734; Colman then continued this communication line with Wodrow's son, John Wodrow, Jr.¹⁰ Like many of his colleagues in Britain and America, Colman long had been calling for a spiritual awakening.¹¹ When Jonathan Edwards wrote to Colman about the revivals in Northampton, Colman

⁸ Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, p. 68.

⁹ Patricia Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (New York, 1986), p. 69.

¹⁰ Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, pp. 65-69.

¹¹ Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, p.19. Miller described Colman as a "rationalist who luxuriated in emotion" and a "Calvinist sentimentalist". See also, Edwin S. Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England*, p. 55-56. Gaustad described Colman as a "constant friend of the Awakening", p. 50.

was happy to arrange for the first publication of the accounts, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*, in London in 1736.¹² Concurrently, in a letter to Robert Wodrow, Jr., Colman informed him of Edwards' Connecticut River Valley revivals.¹³ This transatlantic communication, of which the Colman-Wodrow-Hollis-Wigglesworth nexus is but one example, implies that a number of theologically conservative British clergy and laymen shared great interest in the direction of Harvard's education. Calvinist in their orientation, they viewed with apprehension the rise of latitudinarianism at English universities. Thus, in one sense, Harvard symbolized to them the future hope of Calvinism in America. In 1730, Wigglesworth was granted a D.D. from the University of Edinburgh (which Perry Miller described as the "citadel of Calvinism no less than Glasgow").¹⁴ The transatlantic connection also suggests that Colman participated in this vision for America with his British associates. His efforts to secure a chair of divinity at Harvard and his endorsement of Wigglesworth demonstrate a pledge to spiritual renewal in New England and a commitment to Calvinist doctrine that he and his British colleagues had in common.

Like Cotton Mather, Benjamin Colman was hoping to fuse piety and reason into an invigorated Christian faith and the first inklings of revival from Northampton were a promising sign. Colman and George Whitefield began a correspondence. In 1739, Whitefield's accounts about his evangelistic work in Britain were reprinted in the American colonies, with "half of the total number published being printed in Boston"¹⁵. Americans eagerly read his sermons and journal accounts. Likewise,

¹² Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, pp.136-137.

¹³ Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, p. 70.

¹⁴ Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, p. 24. Miller also cited Wigglesworth's statement from the *Doctrine of Reprobation* ("there may be a certain connection between striving to enter in at the strait gate, and admission to it"), which he interpreted as Wigglesworth's gradual acceptance of Arminianism, see pp. 23-24. This view of Wigglesworth's Arminianism, however, is discussed and challenged in chapter five.

¹⁵ Edwin Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England*, p. 26.

Americans participated in increasing the public interest in Whitefield by having their own letters published to express their anticipation at his arrival in America. A torrent of material about Whitefield soon filled newspapers and booksellers stalls. Concurrently, Colman was pleased to learn that Whitefield accepted his invitation to come to New England in the fall of 1740. Upon Whitefield's arrival in Boston, Colman invited him to speak from the pulpit at Brattle Street Church.¹⁶

No minister of the eighteenth century ever received such anticipation and heightened interest at his arrival than George Whitefield (1714-1770). He was considered the most outstanding preacher of the colonial era. His rhetorical skill was admired and celebrated, and he drew crowds of sometimes tens of thousands, who, when necessary, endured blistering humidity or cold rain to hear him. Lord Chesterfield's comment, that to hear George Whitefield utter the word "Mesopotamia" was enough to produce tears in one's eyes, "was not so much an exaggeration as a humorous way of stating an undoubted fact".¹⁷ Benjamin Franklin observed that Whitefield "articulated his Words & Sentences so clearly that he might be heard and understood at a great Distance." In a well-known account, Franklin, so impressed with the power of Whitefield's voice, calculated that a crowd of thirty thousand could hear him plainly.¹⁸ Whitefield was a dramatic as well as a dynamic speaker and could excite crowds in a wholly new way. After he delivered his first sermon in 1736, some fifteen people in England purportedly went

¹⁶ Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival* (Westchester, IL, 1980), I.532.

¹⁷ *George Whitefield's Journals (1737-1741). To Which Is Prefixed His "Short Account" (1746) and "Further Account" (1747)*, reproduction of the William Wate edition (1905), William V. Davis, introduction (Gainesville, FL, 1969), from an appreciation by Canon Hay Aitken, p. 8.

¹⁸ Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography and Other Writings*, Kenneth Silverman, ed. (New York, 1986), pp. 119-120.

mad.¹⁹ Whitefield was not known just for his celebrated speaking style, however. He had a remarkable ecumenical spirit, as he, a minister of the Church of England, was ready to work and worship with Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Quakers. To Whitefield, the Christian message was not exclusive to one denomination. Whitefield had a compassion for people and an unaffected manner. The son of a tavern keeper, he preached to any one, regardless of race or class. From slaves in Philadelphia to the governor of Massachusetts, masses of people came to him and heard the message of reconciliation with God.

Nevertheless, not everyone was drawn to to this itinerant preacher of the Great Awakening. Whitefield had difficulties with the Bishop of Gloucester, who asked him not to preach except at the parish where he was appointed. Whitefield ignored him and this noncompliance would lead to sharp and bitter criticisms from New England's oldest school, Harvard College, which soon burned from the heat of his itinerant blaze.

When Whitefield returned to New England in 1744, opposition to him was fueled by two events which were played out in the public eye. One, a misunderstanding, occurred in 1743 between Jonathan Edwards and Thomas Clap, the rector at Yale. A protracted series of statements, accusations, and attempted clarifications resulted from a report by Clap that (according to Edwards' understanding) Whitefield planned "a design of turning out of their places the greater part of the ministers of new England, and of supplying their pulpits with ministers from England, Scotland, and Ireland." In the end, Edwards did his best to assert that it all was a statement of his own -- that he "*supposed* that Mr.

¹⁹ Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 1991, pp. 151-152.

Whitefield was formerly of the opinion, that unconverted ministers ought not to be continued in the ministry; and that he himself *supposed* that Mr. Whitefield endeavoured to propagate this opinion, and a practice agreeable to it; and that all he had ever stated to any one was, his own opinion merely, and not any *declared design* of Mr. Whitefield".²⁰ Upon Whitefield's arrival in Boston, however, a number of his prominent supporters were anxious to meet with him to know his view on the matter. Thomas Foxcroft of the First Church, Joseph Sewall and Thomas Prince of the Old South Church, and Benjamin Colman went to him and expressed their concern and dismay. Whitefield said that he "was sorry if anything I wrote had been a means of promoting separations, for I was of no separating principles, but came to New England to preach the Gospel of peace."²¹ In a strong gesture of support, Colman invited Whitefield to preach at Brattle Street and, the following week, had Whitefield assist him in the serving of Communion. These steps on Colman's part were a sign to the public of his endorsement of Whitefield; but, because "Whitefield was so bitterly disliked in some quarters, [they] brought Colman under strong reproach".²²

Suspensions were raised further from a second account, published from Whitefield's journal. In an imprudent moment, Whitefield wrote that at both Harvard and Yale, "Their Light is now become Darkness, Darkness that may be felt."²³ immediately, the faculty and president of Harvard, Edward Holyoke, responded in a broad attack against Whitefield's presumptive declaration. In A

²⁰ *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, with a memoir by Sereno E. Dwight, revised and corrected by Edward Hickman (Edinburgh, Scotland, 1834; reprinted, 1990), I.lxxvii-lxxviii.

²¹ Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, II.194.

²² Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, II.195.

²³ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield By Way of Reply To His Answer to the College Testimony against him and his Conduct*, (Boston, 1745), p. 32.

Testimony from the President, Professors, Tutors and Hebrew Instructors of Harvard College against the Reverend Mr George Whitefield (1744), the first charge against Whitefield was that he was an "enthusiast", a type of religious "pied piper" who led away the innocent and left behind a world in confusion. "First then, we charge him with *Enthusiasm*...we mean by an *Enthusiast* , one that acts, either according to Dreams, or some sudden Impulses and Impressions upon his Mind, which he fondly imagines to be from the Spirit of God, perswading and inclining him thereby to such and such Actions, tho' he hath no Proof that such Perswasions or Impressions are from the holy Spirit." The Harvard authors cited Whitefield's own journals in which he recalled on one occasion that God revealed to him the danger of traveling "and bad Weather [came] accordingly". Another example of Whitefield's "enthusiasm" was demonstrated when he suddenly was impressed to change his sermon, claiming that "the holy Spirit hath...let him into the Knowledge of divine Things and hath directed him in the minutest Circumstances".²⁴ This mystical reliance upon a vague spiritual sense ought to have been enough to have discredited Whitefield as far as their argument was concerned. But there was more.

The authors continued to build a detailed case against him. They accused Whitefield of being "uncharitable, censorious, and slanderous" when he, upon announcing that "spiritual darkness" had fallen on Harvard and Yale, withheld from naming his sources. "[T]his [darkness] is complain'd of by the most godly Ministers. Here we are at a loss to think whom he [Whitefield] means by *the most godly Ministers*. Certainly not the Rev. Gentlemen of the Town of *Boston*...for they are in the Government of the College." They also charged Whitefield with "deluding" people because funds raised for an orphanage in Georgia purportedly were not

²⁴ *The Testimony from the President, Professors, Tutors and Hebrew Instructors of Harvard College Against the Reverend Mr George Whitefield* (Boston, 1744); republished in *The Great Awakening: Documents Illustrating the Crisis and Its Consequences*, Alan Heimert and Perry Miller, eds. (New York, 1967), pp. 342-346.

carefully managed. The final charge was that Whitefield preached extemporaneously and was an itinerant evangelist, both of which were unscriptural. The danger, they claimed, was that Whitefield preached without the preparation and study that was necessary in order to exegete the passage correctly. As a result, his messages were "rash" and -- most ominously -- reeked of the "Antinomian scheme". This was a serious charge.

The "Antinomian scheme" referred to the Antinomian Crisis of 1636, when a small number of Puritans, more mystically oriented in their piety than the regular clergy, claimed that assurance of one's salvation was something that one could come to "know". While the Puritans agreed that piety was critical, they concluded that this inner spiritual life would be reflected in a person's behavior, so there would be "evidences", or "signs", such as a desire to read the Bible, to pray, and to attend worship services. This more rational approach was meant to be a safeguard.²⁵ In Whitefield's case, Harvard accused him of improperly handling the Scriptures through his extemporaneous preaching. Thus, he created misleading or dangerous doctrines, just as Anne Hutchinson had. And by his practice of itinerancy, he bucked at the system of ecclesiastical authority, just as Hutchinson had. Thus, the "Itinerant Manner of preaching [was] of the worst and most pernicious Tendency...[because] the People have been thence ready to despise their own Ministers, and their usefulness among them, in too many Places, hath been almost

²⁵ The term, "antinomian", is translated as "against the law". Theologically, it referred to the Old Testament tradition of keeping the law to assure one's righteousness before God. The Antinomians interpreted the Puritans' use of "evidences" as regulations that must be adhered to. They opposed any type of regulation, however, because it would mean that they would be trapped in the Old Testament dilemma of keeping the law to assure one's salvation. This, they maintained, contradicted Scripture and thwarted true spirituality. As a woman and as one accused of being a principal leader of the Antinomians, Anne Hutchinson created a crisis of immense proportions for the Puritan social hierarchy. She upset the precarious balance of social order and, by doing so, became an intolerable threat to the young colony's sense of community. See David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York, 1989), pp. 95-108.

destroy'd".²⁶

Mystic, slanderer, deluder of people, perverter of doctrine, and schismatic -- this was Harvard's litany of sins against Whitefield. Moreover, *The Testimony* was peppered with sarcasm, revealing that the Harvard faculty was chafing at Whitefield's impudence. "The whole tends to perswade the World (and it has done so with respect to many) that Mr. W. had as familiar a Converse and Communion with God as any of the Prophets and Apostles, and such as we all acknowledge to have been under the Inspiration of the Holy ghost."²⁷ The sarcastic language of *The Testimony* is significant for another reason. It contained the same type of phrasing and the same tone of self-righteousness which we will see in *A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield*. The primary author of that second response to Whitefield was Edward Wigglesworth. It is quite plausible, then, that Wigglesworth also wrote *The Testimony*. If not, there is little doubt that he contributed a great deal to its arguments. The criticisms found in *The Testimony* had substance; but, they most clearly represented how deeply insulted the faculty felt by Whitefield's callousness. Their disdain -- especially that of Edward Wigglesworth -- lingered for years.²⁸

Whitefield responded to these charges in a letter to Harvard on February 19, 1745. He stated that he would continue to preach in churches where he was invited; but when necessary, he would preach outside. Nevertheless, he admitted that "[s]ome unguarded expressions in the heat of less experienced youth I certainly did drop. I was much too precipitate in hearkening to and publishing private

²⁶ *The Testimony*, pp. 342-352.

²⁷ *The Testimony*, p. 346.

²⁸ According to Arnold Dallimore, the harshness of the *The Testimony* and Whitefield's subsequent letter of apology to Harvard disturbed one college tutor so much that he resigned. (See Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, II.200.)

informations, and thereby, Peterlike, cut off too many ears....At the same time I ask pardon for any rash word I have dropped, or anything I have done or written amiss. This leads me also to ask forgiveness, gentlemen, if I have done you or your Society, in my Journal, any wrong. Be pleased to accept unfeigned thanks for all tokens of respect you showed me when here last. And if you have injured me in the 'Testimony'...(as I think you have) it is already forgiven, without asking."²⁹ No doubt Whitefield was sincere throughout his apology; however, he probably thwarted his case in the closing line. In doing so, he set Harvard's teeth on edge.

Several ministers published pamphlets supporting Whitefield before Harvard's complaint. Thomas Foxcroft of Boston's First Church, William Hobby of Reading, and William Shurtleff of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, all wrote in defense of him. They did not, however, condone his brashness.³⁰ What is important about Whitefield's defenders is that Thomas Foxcroft was Charles Chauncy's colleague at the First Church. After hearing Whitefield in 1740, Foxcroft gave a lecture on the usefulness of the evangelist's style: "We have in a fresh Instance seen this Pauline Spirit and Doctrine remarkably exemplify'd among us. We have seen a preacher of Righteousness, fervent in Spirit, teaching diligently the things of the Lord."³¹ Foxcroft's endorsement and subsequent defense of Whitefield must have rattled Chauncy. Despite taking opposing sides with respect to Whitefield and the Great Awakening, however, "amicable relations" between the two survived.³² Nevertheless, in the thick of the Harvard-Whitefield debate, Chauncy was engaged in his own "pamphlet wars" with Jonathan Edwards about the true nature of a

²⁹ Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, II.199-200.

³⁰ Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, II.199-200.

³¹ Edwin Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England*, p. 57.

³² Edwin Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England*, p. 149, n. 65.

spiritual revival.³³ One of the pamphlets, *Enthusiasm Described and Caution'd Against*, Chauncy published in 1742 as a criticism of itinerant preaching. *The Testimony* (1744) echoed part of Chauncy's argument in its condemnation of enthusiasts who bring disorder to the churches.³⁴ It did not take long, and it should not be too great a surprise, that Harvard promptly published a reply to Whitefield's February, 1745, letter. This time the author named himself, Edward Wigglesworth.

In *A Letter to the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield by Way of Reply to his Answer to the College Testimony Against him and his Conduct* (1745), Edward Wigglesworth elaborated on many of the arguments found the year before in *The Testimony*. What is interesting is that, as an expanded version of the *The Testimony*, this treatise demonstrates how much of the first attack of Whitefield came from Wigglesworth's own thinking. Wigglesworth began *A Letter to the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield* by recalling the charge of enthusiasm. In his published journal, Whitefield discussed a number of occasions during which he wondered about the meaning and import of his dreams. To Wigglesworth, this kind of speculation was alarming and, certainly, does not belong to the rational mind of a Christian minister.³⁵

Another issue that Wigglesworth raised was Whitefield's accusation that Harvard's general lack of piety had turned it into a bleak place. Based on information that Whitefield gathered from "some persons", he said that the spiritual state of Harvard was "'not far superiour to our Universities' ". In order to

³³ Their famous pamphlet debate went this way: Edwards published *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* (1741); Chauncy responded with *Enthusiasm Described and Caution'd Against* (1742); Edwards replied with *Some Thoughts Concerning the present Revival of Religion in New-England* (1743); this was immediately followed by Chauncy's *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New-England* (1743).

³⁴ Charles Chauncy, *Enthusiasm Described and Caution'd Against* (Boston, 1742), republished in *The Great Awakening: Documents Illustrating the Crisis and Its Consequences*, Alan Heimert and Perry Miller, eds. (New York, 1967), p. 229. Compare with *The Testimony*, p. 341.

³⁵ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield*, pp. 3, 5-9.

understand this statement, Wigglesworth investigated Whitefield's works and found a previous remark in which he described the English universities: "...Most of our English Schools and Universities are sunk into meer Seminaries of Paganism. Christ or Christianity is scarce so much as named among them."³⁶ This was the dreary standard by which Whitefield was now measuring Harvard. Wigglesworth then responded to Whitefield's derogatory remark: "And yet we may with great Truth, and without Immodesty, affirm, that *the Knowledge of the only true God and of Jesus Christ whom He hath sent*, is earnestly recommended to the Students as that, in Comparison whereof they, out to account all other Things but Loss and Dung. And...that any *credible Person*, who *well knew the State* of our Society, ever told you any Thing, from which he will own you could fairly gather, that it was 'not far superior for Piety and true Godliness, to such Universities as are sunk into *meer seminaries of Paganism* '." Wigglesworth then complained (as it originally was done in *The Testimony*) that Whitefield did not reveal his sources: "Produce the *credible Person* who gave you this Information, or take the vile Slander upon yourself, and let Confusion cover you, till you have given that Satisfaction for it, which the Laws of Christ, our King and Judge, require."³⁷

To be fair to Whitefield, Wigglesworth admitted that the faculty was concerned about the students' spirituality. Significantly, he risked further disgrace and publicly admitted that a tutor was dismissed, as was one of the professors "for Immoral and scandalous Practices"³⁸. The unnamed professor would have been Isaac Greenwood, Wigglesworth's scientific counterpart. Greenwood was the Hollis

³⁶ *George Whitefield's Journals (1737-1741). To Which Is Prefixed His "Short Account" (1746) and "Further Account" (1747)*, reproduction of the William Wate edition (1905), William V. Davis, introduction (Gainesville, FL, 1969), p. 109.

³⁷ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield*, pp. 27-29.

³⁸ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield*, p. 32.

Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy and was dismissed for drunkenness in 1738.³⁹ As a means of defending the college's integrity, Wigglesworth noted that students read the works of important Puritan divines: "Owen, Baxter, Flavel, Bates, Howe, Doolittle, Willard, Watts, and Guyse, Shepherd [Shepard?], and Stoddard". His implication was that all of these great writers were well known by the student body. Wigglesworth then repeated the charge that extemporaneous preaching was intolerable, "But you say that these were Sermons which you had *never meditated and studied* before, then you acknowledge, that you sometimes practise *that extemporaneous* Way of Preaching which we condemn and which you yourself have not attempted to justify".⁴⁰

Another criticism concerned Whitefield's lack of consideration of others. In his published journal he revealed his musings about private conversations he had had with two ministers. Wigglesworth was upset that Whitefield could callously handle their personal lives in this manner. "Was this a likely Way to do any Good to the Men themselves? or was it not rather the Way to irritate their Passions, and so prevent the Good they might otherwise have gotton, by your private Dealing with them?"⁴¹ Whitefield's inconsideration, Wigglesworth believed, showed that he held a blithe disregard of the effect that his published journal entries had on innocent parties.⁴²

Ultimately, the crucial point to Wigglesworth's whole argument was the lack of

³⁷ During 1737, Harvard officials repeatedly reprimanded Greenwood for his "excessive drinking" and "gross Intemperance", causing "great hurt and Reproach of this Society". Finally, he was dismissed on July 13, 1738. Later that year, John Winthrop, Jr., was voted as the new Hollis Professor of Mathematics and Natural Science (Harvard College Papers, Vol. 6, at the Pusey Library, Harvard University). See also Clifford K. Shipton, *Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College, Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, 10.240-64.

⁴⁰ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield*, pp. 31.

⁴¹ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield*, p. 23-25; 48-60.

⁴² Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield*, p. 44.

any biblical basis for his "commission to go and preach the Gospel". "Is not just such conduct as might be expected from any bold Deceiver, who was conscious to himself, that he could give no Account of his present Way of acting, which would bear examination?"⁴³ (The need for a biblical affirmation of a minister's work was also a major portion of the argument that Wigglesworth used in an earlier sermon from 1735, *A Seasonable Caveat against believing every Spirit: with some Directions for trying the Spirits, whether they are of God*, in which he warned that not all who preach speak for God.) Furthermore, Wigglesworth protested, there was no need for an evangelist to go into an area where churches already existed. It was redundant and caused disruption, since evangelists "thrust themselves into other Men's Labours". (Perhaps at this point, Wigglesworth was remembering the problems at the Chebacco Church that his brother faced.) Wigglesworth argued that the only biblical examples of evangelists were those who went to new areas where the gospel was unknown; thus, Whitefield's itinerant activities have no scriptural sanction.⁴⁴ Wigglesworth also criticized Whitefield for doctrinal ambiguity and dogmatism. At one point, Wigglesworth complained, Whitefield stated he was a Calvinist and that he preached, "no other Doctrines than those which our pious Ancestors, and the Founders of *Harvard College* preached long before [he] was born' -- We assure you, Sir, that the same Doctrines are at this Day preached in *Harvard College*, which were preached by our pious Ancestors. We have no Controversy with you so far as you are a Calvinist in Principle...You [also] told us ...that you 'utterly detest Antinomianism, both in Principle and Practice.'" When Whitefield enthusiastically quoted from a proponent with Antinomianist tendencies, however, Wigglesworth saw this contradiction as hypocrisy. If Whitefield can find useful teachings from

⁴³ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield*, p. 13.

⁴⁴ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield*, pp. 48-60.

Antinomian material, then why cannot Harvard students be exposed to the Bishop Tillotson's works, which lean in support of Arminianism? Wigglesworth summed up his view of Whitefield by saying that he was a manipulator of people who might cultivate their "devotion" and "esteem"; but who would then "tack about" and preach according to an opposing line of theology.⁴⁵

Wigglesworth closed his treatise by complaining to Whitefield that his apology of February, 1745, lacked any real substance. Citing Whitefield's statement to the college, that he felt compelled to ask forgiveness "'if I have done you or your Society, in my Journal any wrong.'", Wigglesworth argued that Whitefield's remark was based on "General Terms" and ambiguous intentions. "[Y]ou don't acknowledge in them, that you have drop'd any rash Word, or wrote or done any Thing amiss; nor do you acknowledge that you have done us, or our Society any Wrong."⁴⁶ By this declaration, Wigglesworth was making the point to Whitefield that his apology was not recognized by Wigglesworth or by any of his colleagues at Harvard. Moreover, he stressed that Whitefield made no confession nor did he demonstrate regret of having done wrong. Whitefield's use of the word "if" placed all of his intentions (as far as Wigglesworth was concerned) into the realm of insinuation and made what he claimed to be an apology, instead a sham. Wigglesworth closed his treatise by arguing that all of Whitefield's statements were made known to the public through the printed copies of his journals; therefore, "no private conference" could serve to give "Satisfaction"⁴⁷. Just as Whitefield made his accusations in public, so must he issue his apologies in public.

The final treatise that related to the Great Awakening was *Some*

⁴⁵ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield*, pp. 58-59.

⁴⁶ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield*, p. 61.

⁴⁷ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield*, p. 61.

Distinguishing Characters Of The ordinary and extraordinary Ministers of the Church of Christ. Wigglesworth prepared this in response to Whitefield's 1754 visit to Cambridge, Massachusetts. Originally, the discourse was addressed in two lectures to Harvard students, many of whom would become ministers in the region. Because Whitefield was speaking in Cambridge, however, Wigglesworth felt compelled to present his views of the evangelist's work as a caution. Although the excitement of the Great Awakening had been waning for some ten years, George Whitefield's fame and influence had not.

Some Distinguishing Characters focused on one main issue, the biblical context of the office of an evangelist. Wigglesworth wanted to demonstrate that, while the office of evangelist once had a purpose in the early Christian church, it no longer did. He began with the premise that the specific church offices were delineated in Eph. 4:11. They included those which were extraordinary (apostles, prophets, and evangelists) and those which are ordinary (pastors and teachers). During the apostolic age, God provided these positions in the church for its expansion, nurture, and organization. For example, said Wigglesworth, there were evangelists in the early church; but there are none now. The practical function of the evangelist office, however, may still be seen in efforts of missionaries "who are employed, in the service of Christ, are Offices of the same Sort with the Evangelists", but differ from them in some "important respect".⁴⁸

One difference was that the evangelists of the apostolic age were sent by the apostles to attend to specific tasks; but, "*the Itinerants and Exhorters, who have once and again overrun this and the neighbouring Provinces and Colonies, were no Evangelists in the scripture Sense of the Word, as some [here Wigglesworth specified George Whitefield in a footnote] of them have pretended to be*". The apostolic

⁴⁸ Edward Wigglesworth, *Some Distinguishing Characters Of The ordinary and extraordinary Ministers of the Church of Christ* (Boston, 1754), p. 6.

evangelists also had no particular church to which they were related; however, "the *Itinerants* among us", are appointed to a particular local church. Another distinction between the apostolic evangelist and the modern itinerant is that the "the emergencies of the Churches made such an Officer as an *Evangelist*, at that *Time*, highly needful"; whereas the "*Apostle did not thrust himself into other Men's labours*", the modern itinerant does and he preaches where the Gospel is "fully and faithfully preached". Modern itinerants also have participated in the division of colonial churches, "this uninstituted and very disorderly and pernicious Practice, twelve, or thirteen Years ago." They are participants in "Enthusiasm, Error, Contention, and Confusion"; they wander after the Flocks of their Brethren...[and] are such *Busy-bodies, in other Men's Matters*, Poisoning them (as some have done) with pernicious Principles."⁴⁹ Evangelists, then, did not cause the kind of problems or pose the type of danger that itinerants now do. As far as Wigglesworth was concerned, this extraordinary ecclesiastical office is closed.

At this point, Wigglesworth ended his discourse, but he began a lengthy footnote to explain how George Whitefield was a "busybody", who "poisoned men's souls". Wigglesworth repeated his complaint from *The Testimony*, that Whitefield had not publicly apologized for his "Errors" in print. To Wigglesworth, "thousands and tens thousands have seen, and will see his Errors in Print, who will never know any thing of those verbal retractions." The errors will spread like an "Infection" until he recanted them in writing.⁵⁰ While he was at it, Wigglesworth raised another old complaint, that Whitefield never retracted the statement in which he said that many churches were "dead" because they have "dead men" preaching to

⁴⁹ Edward Wigglesworth, *Some Distinguishing Characters*, pp. 11-13, 29-31.

⁵⁰ Edward Wigglesworth, *Some Distinguishing Characters*, pp. 31-34.

them.⁵¹ Nine years later, Wigglesworth still remained irritated at Whitefield. Despite Whitefield's apologies in conversation and letters, the much-desired public apology was still wanting. Wigglesworth would not let this issue go.

In 1764, the library at Harvard College was destroyed by fire. Over the next few years, Whitefield organized an effort to help the college recover. Several times, he presented to Harvard replacement books and money for purchases for the library. In 1768, Harvard officially expressed their thanks: "At a meeting of the President and Fellows of Harvard College. The Rev. Mr. George Whitefield having, in addition to his former kindness to Harvard College, lately presented to the Library a New Edition of his Journals, and having procured large benefactions from several benevolent and respectful gentlemen: VOTED, That the Thanks of the Corporation be given to the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, for these instances of Candour and Generosity."⁵² The college which at one time condemned him, now honored Whitefield with their thanksgiving twenty-four years later.

After the momentum of the Great Awakening abated and despite Wigglesworth's judgement against him, Whitefield continued his work as an evangelist in the American colonies. By raising funds and securing books for Harvard College when it was in a time of distress, Whitefield demonstrated that he had grown in his respect for the college and that his concern for its welfare was genuine. Wigglesworth died in 1765, just as Whitefield's efforts to help were beginning and the college had not yet honored him with their declaration of thanksgiving. As a professor at Harvard for over forty years, however, Wigglesworth must have been appalled by the destruction of library books -- especially those that were donated, some at his own request, by Thomas Hollis. The

⁵¹ C.C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening* (New Haven 1962), p. 49.

⁵² Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, II. 429.

loss was dreadful. Assuming that Wigglesworth must have been aware of Whitefield's initial work on Harvard's behalf, the question remains, however, as to whether or not Wigglesworth continued to be as adamantly opposed to Whitefield during the last ten years of his life as he was for the previous fifteen. Even if Wigglesworth maintained that the itinerant ministry was without biblical support (there is good reason to think that he did), was he finally able to set aside his bitter resentment and accept the man? While Whitefield came to learn from his earlier imprudent assessment of Harvard, it may be that Wigglesworth never could get beyond his grudge. How ironic that, when Harvard honored Whitefield, Whitefield in turn presented to them his *Journals* -- one of the collections from which the bitter criticism and condemnations by Wigglesworth (the college) first were generated. One cannot help but consider Wigglesworth's dismay, if he had lived, at the thought of that gift.

The Great Awakening brought to the American colonies a great deal of good. There is no denial that the revival transformed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, allowing them to cultivate their devotion to God. In New England, the Great Awakening brought people, who in genuine piety, returned to the Puritan roots of an "experimental" religion. In addition, the revitalization of communities was generated by the commitment of people to lead virtuous lives and to improve society, as a mark of divine work. (Benjamin Franklin was delighted to see "the Change soon made in the Manners of our Inhabitants".⁵³) In education, for example, the evangelical origins of the College of New Jersey at Princeton, Dartmouth College, Rhode Island College (later Brown University), Queen's College (later Rutgers), and the University of Philadelphia (later, University of

⁵³ Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography and Other Writings*, p.116.

Pennsylvania) -- if we acknowledge quasi-evangelical roots found in the friendship of Franklin and Whitefield⁵⁴ -- sprang from the reformed legacy to fuse piety and reason. But the Great Awakening also, as C. C. Goen remarked, "thrust a sword into New England".⁵⁵

The Great Awakening also released a resurgence in Calvinist theology and, most significantly, contributed to the vigorous intellectual environment from which Jonathan Edwards assiduously produced his works of profound acuity. Nevertheless, the encroachment of Arminianism (which Calvinists feared and worked to prevent), meant that direction of theology would not follow a coherent way, but rather, divergent paths. Arminianism found great strength from the rationalistic course of eighteenth-century intellectualism. On one hand, the Arminian-Deist-Universalist link emerged from the reconsideration of the doctrines of the atonement and the Trinity, and helped to create Unitarianism. On the other hand (and in a curious twist), Arminianism, as adopted by John Wesley and the Methodists, gave way to a new genre of Christian spirituality that, while rejecting the Calvinism of Whitefield, nevertheless emulated his itinerancy -- as evidenced in the work of early nineteenth-century Methodist revivalist Charles Grandison Finney during the Second Great Awakening.

As J. William T. Youngs, Jr., has demonstrated, the Great Awakening challenged and strained the structures of traditional ecclesiology.⁵⁶ The danger that

⁵⁴ Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography and Other Writings*, pp. 131-133; Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, II. 445-446. (In recognition of the university's relationship to Whitefield, a statue of him was erected on the school's grounds. Whitefield is caught in a flamboyantly animated pose: his robe is flying off his shoulders, his right foot thrust forward, and his left hand pointing heaven-ward to God. It captures a real sense of the power and drama of his preaching style, by which he was made famous.) For a summary of the founding of these institutions, see Edwin S. Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England*, p. 108.

⁵⁵ C. C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800*, p. 68.

⁵⁶ J. William T. Youngs, Jr., *God's Messengers: Religious Leadership in Colonial New England, 1700-1750* (Baltimore, 1976); see especially chapter five, "The Failure of Clericalism".

the Congregational clergy had become too hierarchical was represented not just in the shifting leadership style of ministers (which Youngs suggests) or in the surge of church divisions, but also at the mainline institution where Congregationalist ministers had always received their training, Harvard College. Here is where we may uncover Edward Wigglesworth's role. In his criticisms of the Great Awakening, he was giving voice to the Old Light leadership. To him, there was no biblical basis for the type of explosive itinerancy that characterized the Great Awakening. It usurped the authority of the local minister over his own people and, most tragically, led to contempt of a God-ordained position. Itinerancy wrecked local harmony in the churches and set "its assault upon the self-containment of the homogeneous congregational unit".⁵⁷ This is what Wigglesworth was fighting for. While Wigglesworth remained a moderate Calvinist (and this is where he differed from Charles Chauncy's Arminianism), he and Chauncy were in the same school of thought when it came to problems in ecclesiology. They saw the necessity of honoring the sanctity of the local church and, thus honored the tradition of the Cambridge Platform and its Puritan origins. In this sense, Edward was the more conservative of the Wigglesworth brothers. As far as social hierarchy was concerned, his was a conservatism based on institutional tradition. In contrast, Samuel Wigglesworth was more liberal, welcoming the spiritual changes that the Great Awakening brought. Although Samuel worked to prevent a schism at the Chebacco parish, he did not condemn the dissenting church members or their new pastor, John Cleaveland. Perhaps he recognized that part of the effect of the Great Awakening was to break down social hierarchy when a minority within a church had a legitimate complaint and met with repeated opposition from a truculent minister. Samuel, then, saw the priority of individual persons over church institutions. Thus,

⁵⁷ Michael Zuckerman, *Peaceable Kingdoms: New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1970), pp. 111-112.

while Samuel was theologically more conservative than Edward, he was more liberal in matters of ecclesiology, stressing the rights of the individual. Likewise, Edward although the more liberal Calvinist of the two, was more conservative -- reactionary, even -- when it came to preserving pastoral authority. The brothers did not agree about the Great Awakening and we may apprehend the reason. While Samuel stressed the individual over the institution, Edward stressed the institution over the individual.

CONCLUSION

From the time of its origins, Christian theology has evolved from a history of being molded by a pattern of ecclesiastical crises and by the existing needs of the institutional Church. When, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a major retooling of Christian doctrine was underway by Protestant reformers, several primary components of theology emerged, based on the recovery of the preeminence of the individual experience of faith. This recovery of the individual's importance meant a shedding of medieval practices that encumbered the soul's pilgrimage to God and a return to the essential liberating nature of Christian thought. Building upon the reformers' work, the Puritans continued the design of Calvin by working through the tensions of the paradoxes integral to the balance between individual faith and the nature of the institutional church

The covenant, for example, embodied an individual and a corporate nature of Christian faith. Puritan reformers used the covenant, in both the individual and corporate sense, as the best fulcrum to engage all Christian thought and practice. For the individual, the covenant meant a personal transformation and a radical reorientation. This is an apt description of the Puritans' emphasis on the individual covenant, for whom "radical" meant searching the *radix*, or the "root" of the Christian faith. The Puritans returned to patristic and especially Augustinian traditions in order to ferret out essential Christian doctrines. Encompassing the work of earlier reformers, Puritan divines taught that individuals were called to respect fundamental Christian premises concerning sin and judgment. Renewed direction was given through the promise of redemption and forgiveness was found in the covenant of faith. For the Puritans, an inner transformation began by returning to the roots of Christian theology. The "experimental" and personal

aspect of this transformation also meant that conversion was not just a one-time experience, but a process of personal growth and maturity, so that conversion was "always in some ways incomplete -- but it did possess faculties inclined toward a holy life".¹ In this sense, conversion integrated the maturing of one's faith with the maturing of one's nature and Puritans saw conversion along a life-long continuum of faith.

The corporate nature of the covenant was the second element of spiritual significance and offered a complementary emphasis to the individual covenant. Ultimately for American Puritans, this corporate sense of the covenant became the catalytic force for transplantation in North America. Once individuals were restored by faith, God promised a renewed sense of this world in anticipation of the wholly new transformation of the next world. In this way, an eschatological vision was incorporated into Puritan thought concerning the covenant, as the covenant represented the end for which God's present design was originally initiated.² In Puritan thought, however, without a sense of community the process of inner transformation found in conversion would be sterile. The Puritan emphasis on the corporate nature of the covenant was the basis for the attempt to complete the Reformation of the Church of England in the remote territories of New England. The Puritan migration and settlement represented a typology of the Israelites' experience in the Sinai, whereby they were set off in an alien land for God's purposes. The Puritans assumed a corporate, or federal, theology as signified by John Winthrop's "city on a hill". In the reformed tradition, then, Puritan divines

¹ Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals* (New York, 1971), p. 63-64.

² Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers*, pp. 324-329. See also David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, 1972), pp. 275-276; and Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan: The Life of Increase Mather* (Middletown, CT, 1988), pp. 275-276, 325-326.

used both Augustinian and Calvinist teachings³ to link the the role of Christ as the federal head (or source) of human salvation to the federal covenant as a people divinely appointed for God's glory. This dual emphasis of the covenant, begun as an individual inner transformation and unfolded as a community of the federal covenant, encompassed all of Puritan christology and ecclesiology.

Within this culture of reason and logic, piety and devotion, let us consider the example of Michael, Samuel, and Edward Wigglesworth -- a family that bridged the Puritan seventeenth century to the pluralistic eighteenth century. Through his works, and despite illness and depression, Michael Wigglesworth indelibly and surprisingly assumed the role of New England's prophet-poet. As Michael Wigglesworth served the New England public, he fulfilled the twin ministerial styles of the "faithful shepherd", as identified by David D. Hall. The minister's way was first pastoral, in that he was a rational, persuasive, patient, and nurturing leader.⁴ The Puritans looked to the Apostle Paul who assumed a pastoral model encompassing masculine and feminine roles, based upon 1 Thess. 2:7,11: "we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her own children....For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory". These vocational attributes derived from a logical, ethical, and empathetic commitment and became the basis for pastoral trust and respect. For without that trust and respect, the second ministerial style turned unbalanced, harsh, and ruthless, because the minister also was appointed by God and stood for the righteousness of God's ways. Thus, a minister also needed to be a zealous

³ William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism: Or The Way to the New Jerusalem As Set For In Pulpit and Press From Thomas Cartwright to John Lilburne and John Milton, 1570-1643* (New York, 1957), pp. 84-91.

⁴ David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd*, pp. 15-17.

prophet for the purity and piety of the church.⁵ Turning to Hebrews 4:12, the Puritans cited the minister's ability, when necessary, to employ preaching as an instrument to pierce an individual's heart, "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart". Just as a surgeon can finely slice between the sinew and tendons of muscle, so God's people may learn, guided by their pastor/prophet, how to judge with acumen the motives of the human heart and subtleties of the human condition. To balance the pastoral work with the prophetic work -- herein was the tension and paradox of a minister's vocation.

From the body of Michael Wigglesworth's major accomplishments, *Meat Out of the Eater* (1669) embodies most fully his "pastoral" work. This collection's subtitle poignantly reveals Wigglesworth's intention: "All Tending to Prepare them for and Comfort Them under the Cross". Here Michael Wigglesworth reached out to his his readers to encourage and lead them through the perplexities and hardships of life. His message is repeated over and over again: the faithful are not alone, bewildered by their problems and overwhelmed by their cares, for they may find strength and inner peace by habitually appropriating into their lives a godly perspective. *The Day of Doom* (1662) and *God's Controversy with New England* (1662) encompass Wigglesworth's "prophetic" works. *The Day of Doom*, while not neglecting the federal covenant, focuses more on the individual covenant with God. The Puritan view that conversion is a process that develops throughout an individual's lifetime is seen by the poem's probing self-analysis; that is, has one obtained true faith or has complacency set in? Wigglesworth pushes his readers to practice a lively and "experimental" faith, so that they will be numbered among

⁵ David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd*, pp., 18-19.

God's people. With its graphic descriptions of the certainty of the punishments of hell, earlier historians have assumed that Wigglesworth fulminated his message without remorse. But that is not the case. He took no pleasure in a thunderous message. In his long introduction and post-script Wigglesworth confessed his personal concerns to his readers in order to persuade them of his own agonies and relate his fatherly concern:

Nor speak I this to boast;
 But make apology
 For mine own self, and answer those
 That fail in Charity...
 Nor speak I this, good Reader to torment thee
 Before the time, rather to prevent thee
 From running head-long to thine own decay⁶

Here is no self-righteous prelate, but a fellow pilgrim and a sympathetic guide.

God's Controversy with New England is valuable because it offers additional insight into Wigglesworth's mentalité concerning the federal covenant and God's justice. In this poem, Wigglesworth reminded his readers of the utmost priority of the federal covenant and affirmed its honor in New England's history and future. In seventeenth-century New England, Wigglesworth lived just at the cusp of the first generation's ministerial leadership and at the beginning of the second generation's assuming of their predecessors' mantle. The poem reverberates with Wigglesworth's hope and passion to see New England take up the cause of their founders and restore the luster the colony had lost. Michael Wigglesworth was not alone in his desire for a renewed commitment to the federal covenant, for even local representatives carried this concern. Indeed, in 1670, the Massachusetts government, through the deputies of the General Court, responded to a petition

⁶ *The Day of Doom, The Poems of Michael Wigglesworth*, Ronald A. Bosco, ed. (Lanham, MD, 1989), pp. 7, 77.

from freemen of Hadley and Northampton to publicly investigate the "causes of God's displeasure against the Land".⁷ As a prophet to his people, New England, Michael Wigglesworth could not ignore the duties of his office. He wrote for his readers' ear so that he could cajole, not chastise, his people. At times, the obligations seemed to have broken his heart, as he took the role of a suitor rejected by his lover:

Ah dear New England! dearest land to me;
Which unto God hast hitherto been dear,
And mayst be still more dear than formerlie...
Cheer on, sweet souls, my heart is with you all,
And shall be with you, maugre Sathan's might;
And whereso'ere this body be a Thrall,
Still in New-England shall be my delight.⁸

If we are therefore to understand the pastoral example that Michael Wigglesworth left to his sons, we must see him in that complex capacity as a pastor/prophet. Wigglesworth was a tortured yet compassionate man, whose love for God and whose commitment to duty touched New England profoundly. He was also a man steeped in the theology of the individual and federal covenant. He strove to restore the Puritan covenantal framework within the hearts of his people. In the next century, issues concerning the identity of pastoral and ecclesiastical authority, which emerged from the New England covenantal system, were tested by the Great Awakening. When the transforming effects of the Great Awakening swept across the American landscape, New England's religious culture was permanently rearranged. Accordingly, Samuel and Edward, as they made their own way as ministers and leaders, did not ignore their father's example nor did they

⁷ David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd*, p. 234. See also Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York, 1985), pp. 20-23 and 76-82.

⁸ *God's Controversy With New-England, The Poems of Michael Wigglesworth*, Ronald A. Bosco, ed., p. 102.

escape the revival's tinge.

In his position as a pastor in Ipswich, Massachusetts, Samuel Wigglesworth more readily adopted the twin roles of pastor/prophet than did his brother who, after ordination, became a college professor rather than a settled minister. Samuel was a prophet to his people, declaring both their need for salvation and adherence to the covenant. In 1714 he was first minister for the newly-formed Third Church of Ipswich and, undoubtedly, guided the members in their composition of their covenant as a gathered church:

Acknowledging Jesus Christ to be our Savior and Lord, and accepting the Holy Scriptures as our rule of faith and practice, and recognizing the privilege and duty of uniting ourselves for Christian fellowship, the enjoyment of Christian ordinances, the worship of God, and the advancement of His kingdom in the world, we do now in the sight of God and invoking his blessing solemnly covenant and agree with each other to associate ourselves to be a Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, as warranted by the Word of God.⁹

Herein is the compact among the church members, including Samuel Wigglesworth, which stressed the individual and federal covenants. Appropriating the New England Way, Samuel Wigglesworth as the Hamlet Church's pastor, was both appointed by God and chosen by a local gathering of God's people. The New England Way meant that the calling of a minister was based on a spiritual and a human element.¹⁰ The ministry was an ordinance of God, established by God's will, and the recognized office from among the gathered church of God's elect. Paradoxically, the minister was both the preordained shepherd of God's people and

⁹ *The Records of the Third Church of Christ in Ipswich, Massachusetts*, Ipswich Savings Bank, Ipswich, Massachusetts.

¹⁰ John Calvin, *Institutes of The Christian Religion*, Henry Beveridge, trans. (Grand Rapids, MI), 1983, II.325-326.

one from among the priesthood of all believers. Accordingly, Samuel Wigglesworth had to acknowledge that he was participating in and agreeing with the covenant as a fellow church member, while in fact, he was the divinely-chosen leader of that church. In his tenure of fifty-four years at the Hamlet Church, Samuel Wigglesworth exhorted his people to know God and engage in the individual covenant; he stressed their need to study the Bible and to examine it carefully.¹¹ Thus, he supported the seventeenth-century emphasis on the long-term process of conversion and with the Puritan tradition of an "experimental" faith. He upheld the doctrine of the Trinity in face of the encroaching deism of the eighteenth century and provided orthodox New England with a model of reason and clarity.¹² He was a pastor and prophet to his people.

The Great Awakening, however, challenged Samuel Wigglesworth's perception of the federal covenant. When the neighboring Second Church of Ipswich split, it violated the trust between minister and congregation and thrust a wedge between the divine calling of the minister with the collective choice of the congregation. While Wigglesworth endorsed the general direction of the Great Awakening, with regard to the Chebacco Church, he was caught up in the very real tensions of the revival's sometimes bitter spirit. Wigglesworth could not condone the faction's decision to split off. Nevertheless, he dealt fairly with both sides and had great sympathy for the minority group because he supported their endorsement of the revival and their desire to return to a simple yet strict seventeenth-century structure for their church polity. The example of the Chebacco Church supports J.

¹¹ Samuel Wigglesworth, in the manuscript collection of his sermons, expounded on everyday issues that pull down one's faith and that require personal examination and consideration; Samuel Wigglesworth, *Sermons, 1739-1743*, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

¹² Samuel Wigglesworth, "Mr. Wigglesworth's Sermon At the Annual Dudleian Lecture At Harvard College in Cambridge, May 14th 1760", Harvard University Archives.

William T. Young's thesis concerning the change in church members' decision-making capacities in the wake of the revival.¹³ After twenty-seven years apart, the Chebacco Church reunited with the faction that had split off. Accordingly, the new church covenant gave more authority to the laity. They had the right to express their opinions without hindrance and, most significantly, they had the right to dismiss the pastor. This assertion of lay authority reenforced the Second Church's commitment to the Cambridge Platform of 1648 which affirmed the sanctity of the local church's polity. The Chebacco reunion occurred in 1774 and the new covenant also helped to establish the precedence of applying the right of certain freedoms within an ecclesiastical setting to the right to certain liberties in the broader context of the social and political spheres of the American colonies in the second half of the eighteenth century.¹⁴

The Chebacco Church division and reunification exemplified the evolving priority of individual rights over institutional stability. In this conflict, Samuel Wigglesworth served as pastor, prophet, and mediator within his church and community. With respect to ecclesiastical issues, however, Samuel Wigglesworth came to accept the importance of individual freedom over institutional preservation. To him, the federal covenant was critical; nevertheless, the individual came before the institution. That the church was built upon many individual covenants meant individual voices were gaining more respect within the congregational system. The Great Awakening was a unique phenomenon. In general, it would be difficult to

¹³ J. William T. Youngs, Jr., *God's Messengers: Religious Leadership in Colonial New England, 1700-1750* (Baltimore, 1976).

¹⁴ For further discussion of the ways in which the Great Awakening influenced the call for political reforms in the eighteenth century, see Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind* (Cambridge, MA, 1966); Harry Stout, "Religion, Communications, and the Ideological Origins of the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 34 (1977), 519-541; Christopher M. Jedrey, *The World of John Cleveland: Family and Community in Eighteenth-Century New England* (New York, 1979); and Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (New York, 1988).

see Samuel Wigglesworth in support of a church schism. But, the Great Awakening compelled him to come to a position when a neighboring church no longer could remain intact. Ultimately, by supporting the minority faction and their stand for the individual covenant over the corporate church covenant, he was, in this case, rejecting the model of the Cambridge Platform. Nevertheless, along another vein of historic tradition, Wigglesworth was embracing the original call of the reformer Martin Luther, who saw that the individual covenant of faith had precedence over the larger institutional church. Here, Samuel Wigglesworth was right in step with his reformed heritage. The tensions between the individual and the institution also had a role in Edward Wigglesworth's professional standing. In contrast to his brother, Edward's positions about these issues had greater public ramifications because he spoke for two institutions of New England society: its church and the oldest college for its leaders.

Whereas Samuel Wigglesworth was a pastor, first and foremost, Edward Wigglesworth was a teacher and scholar. Although both were men of the church, their different vocations concomitantly led them to different priorities. Samuel, more than Edward, was a preacher to the people of God. In a sense, Edward also was a preacher but to a unique congregation of student-pastors, whom he was to train professionally. In Samuel's mind the question was, how shall these individuals respond to God's Word? For Edward, the test was how shall these individuals respond to God's Word and eventually become themselves capable teachers of it? Whereas Samuel had his congregation over a long time (often for the course of whole lifetimes), Edward had his students between four and six years. This difference meant that Samuel earned the trust and respect of his congregation as the years passed -- as he baptized, counselled, married, and buried his people. Edward, however, did not have such temporal luxury; so, he asserted his authority by using those historic institutions which granted him a professional standing in the

first place. Edward was an academician and a precisionist who used the university to explore the doctrines of the church (thus following the example of the English Puritan divines). In his analyses, he sought to comprehend and defend the teachings and institutions of the church. He concluded that the congregational polity, giving precedence to the local church and the federal covenant, signified a divine compact and encompassed God's plan for a well-ordered commonwealth.¹⁵

The position of the first Hollis Professor of Divinity gave Edward Wigglesworth a broad platform from which he was able to teach and expound his theological convictions. Nevertheless, his benefactor Thomas Hollis, in the face of the liberal Cambridge Platonist movement and the encroaching Arminianism of the Anglican Church, was a formidable influence on Harvard. Hollis might have ruffled the college's congregational traditions as a Baptist, but he was deeply committed to the orthodoxy of Protestant doctrine. This is where he and the Harvard Corporation met on common ground. In one sense, Hollis was a liberal, pluralistic man who accepted other dissenting churches in England. He was, however, absolutely orthodox and theologically conservative. Partly due to the conditions at home, he was prompted to endow a chair of divinity abroad (perhaps hoping that the Baptist tradition would not be extinguished completely). Dutifully, Edward Wigglesworth defended the orthodoxy of his patron and challenged the validity of the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches. An important line in Edward Wigglesworth's reasoning is found in the biblical justification of the local churches' autonomy to select their pastors and teachers (c.f., Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 3:1-13, 17-22; Tit. 1:5-9).¹⁶

¹⁵ See B. Richard Burg, "A Letter of Richard Mather to a Cleric in Old England", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 29 (1972), 81-98; and Robert F. Scholz, "Clerical Consociation in Massachusetts Bay: Reassessing the New England Way and Its Origins", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 29 (1972), 390-414.

¹⁶ Edward Wigglesworth, *Sober Remarks On A Book Lately Re-printed at Boston, Entituled, A Modest Proof of the Order & Government settled by Christ and his Apostles in the Church* (Boston, 1724); and *Some Thoughts Upon The Spirit of Infallibility, Claimed By The Church of Rome: Offer'd At The Anniversary Dudleian-Lecture, at Harvard-College in Cambridge, May*

As much as Edward Wigglesworth desired to see New England exemplify the best in church polity, the Great Awakening turned askew his well-defined world. Alarmed at the more radical manifestations of the revival, Wigglesworth, normally an open-minded theologian, could find very little within the movement to endorse. Second to Charles Chauncy, Wigglesworth became its most prominent critic in the region, using the stature of his position as New England's only chair of divinity to stress his contempt. The sorest issue for Wigglesworth was the example of the itinerant preacher, the epitome of which was George Whitefield. Wigglesworth could barely conceal his disgust at the confusion that itinerants caused. Usurping another minister's pulpit was wrong, for it violated the ethic of the local church in the calling of a minister and, in doing so, cast aspersion on the Cambridge Platform. Itinerants speaking in the open air was yet another problem. To Edward, both forms of preaching brought additional offense because they divided the loyalties of church members and allowed dangerous teachings to be promulgated without check. Such disorder Edward could not tolerate.

Where Edward thus differed from his brother, Samuel, was less on issues of theology than on issues of ecclesiastical organization and institutional preservation. If we identify them theologically, Samuel and Edward were Calvinists. Edward could clearly articulate the Arminianist view; but, he could never endorse the position and, by the end of his life, emerged as a moderate sublapsarianist. Nevertheless, Edward was the more liberal theologian of the two brothers. In contrast, we may designate Samuel as the more liberal and open-minded brother with respect to the social ramifications of the Great Awakening. While Samuel did not endorse excessive New Light behavior, he worked and prayed for the revival's coming. As J. William T. Youngs noted, the Great Awakening came about not

11, 1757 (Boston: 1757).

because of itinerant preachers' brief visits but because regular parish ministers long had been faithfully teaching and nurturing the gospel message.¹⁷ The role of the itinerants was to serve as catalysts of spiritual awakening which was built upon the preparatory work already done by the settled pastors. Like his father, Michael, Samuel Wigglesworth sought for a spiritual revival and anticipated a joyful and widespread renewal of faith. Samuel was more liberal than his brother in that he accepted change to the congregational system, whereas Edward shuddered at its damage and impact. When Samuel tolerated the Chebacco schism, he did so after acknowledging that the minister, Theophilus Pickering, had broken the trust of his congregation and had so damaged his relationship with them that reconciliation was futile. Significantly, the Chebacco faction claimed that their withdrawal was for the sake of local autonomy, thus returning to "more original way of the early Puritans".¹⁸

But Edward never regarded the Great Awakening in this vein. George Whitefield was his stumbling block. From rash statements Whitefield made in 1740, Wigglesworth never forgot Whitefield's public insult of Harvard's desolate spiritual state. And Wigglesworth went after Whitefield on two grounds. First he criticized the unscriptural rationalization for the itinerant style of preaching. Second, he chafed at the itinerant's call for an immediate conversion.¹⁹ Edward Wigglesworth

¹⁷ J. William T. Youngs Jr., *God's Messengers*, p. 63.

¹⁸ C. C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening* (New Haven, 1962), p. 159. See also Patricia Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America*, New York, 1986, p. 153. David D. Hall, observed that, "Not until the Great Awakening of the 1740s did thousands find that what they were experiencing as a work of grace was condemned by their ministers as 'enthusiasm'", in *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York, 1989), p. 143.

¹⁹ Edward Wigglesworth, *The Testimony from the President, Professors, Tutors and Hebrew Instructors of Harvard College Against the Reverend Mr George Whitefield* (Boston, 1744), republished in *The Great Awakening: Documents Illustrating the Crisis and Its Consequences*, Alan Heimert and Perry Miller, eds. (New York, 1967), pp. 340-353; Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter To the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield By Way of Reply To His Answer to the College*

endorsed spiritual regeneration; but, it had to be based on time, reason, and reflection, not on an emotional impulse. Here, Edward echoed the seventeenth-century Puritan conversion process and carried over, in one sense, his father's call for self-examination and self-knowledge that is found in *The Day of Doom*.

What is perplexing about Edward's visceral reaction to the Great Awakening and to George Whitefield, in particular, is that Edward was reputed to be a thoughtful and tolerant person. He could never accept, however, Whitefield's later retractions as a true public apology and always seemed to hold Whitefield in contempt. Whitefield did not just insult Harvard, however. He also successfully left behind disparaging remarks in the wake of his 1740 visit at Yale College. Yale's rector, Thomas Clap, nevertheless forgave Whitefield's imprudence, "had become very friendly", and warmly welcomed him in 1764 to visit and preach.²⁰ Benjamin Franklin, hardly in agreement with Whitefield over the necessity of conversion, nevertheless became a close friend, who admired and defended Whitefield's reputation.²¹ William Pepperell sought Whitefield's counsel when he was asked to lead and raise a military force in 1745 against the French at Fort Louisburg. He agreed because of Whitefield's advice and asked Whitefield to write a motto for the expedition.²² A majority of the Boston clergy -- Benjamin Colman, his associate William Cooper, Thomas Foxcroft (interestingly, Charles Chauncy's associate), and

Testimony against him and his Conduct, (Boston, 1745); and Edward Wigglesworth, *Some Distinguishing Characters Of The ordinary and extraordinary Ministers of the Church of Christ* (Boston, 1754).

²⁰ Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival* (Westchester, IL, 1980), II.433.

²¹ Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography and Other Writings*, Kenneth Silverman, ed. (New York, 1986), pp. 120-121.

²² Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, II.202. The motto that Whitefield composed was *Nil Desperandum, Christo Duce* ("Never despair, Christ leads."). See also Charles E. Clark, who observed that Whitefield "was a personal hero of the colonel's, and perhaps the one man Pepperrell [sic] respected above all others", in *The Eastern Frontier: The Settlement of Northern New England, 1610-1763* (New York, 1970), pp. 288-289.

Thomas Prince -- all desired and welcomed Whitefield's visits, even after his blundering and unfortunate faux pas. Thus, when a number of influential and prominent people (whom we may assume were hardly dim-witted) accepted Whitefield's apology and sincerity, it is striking that Edward Wigglesworth did not. For Edward, however, the issue was not the content of the itinerant's message, but his style -- and that style corroded pastoral authority. The tradition of the New England Way, which was deliberated upon by the first generation of ministerial leadership and upheld by the Cambridge Platform, affirmed the sanctity of the local church as the source of pastoral authority. Edward sought to maintain this tradition and protect pastoral authority. The paradox is that Edward, while a degree more liberal theologically, used well-developed and historic precedence for his position -- he therefore was more conservative than his brother in light of the encroaching institutional challenges brought by the Great Awakening. Edward thus asserted pastoral authority and institutional preservation over the needs of the individual. Samuel, on the other hand, asserted pastoral leadership. He moved forward with the Great Awakening and used it to help men and women come to Christ and enter into an individual covenant with God. Whereas Samuel viewed the Great Awakening as a movement that restored individual faith, Edward saw it as a movement that eroded church institutions. Yielding to tradition, Edward was a pastor of pastors, supported pastoral authority, and never forgot the revival's intrusion. Samuel, on the other hand, was a pastor of people, typified pastoral leadership, and never lost sight of the primacy of the individual.

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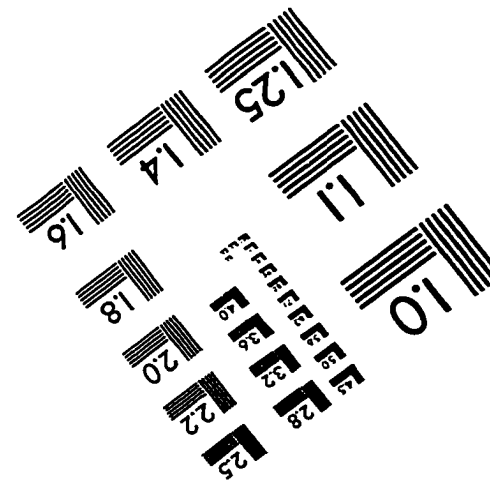
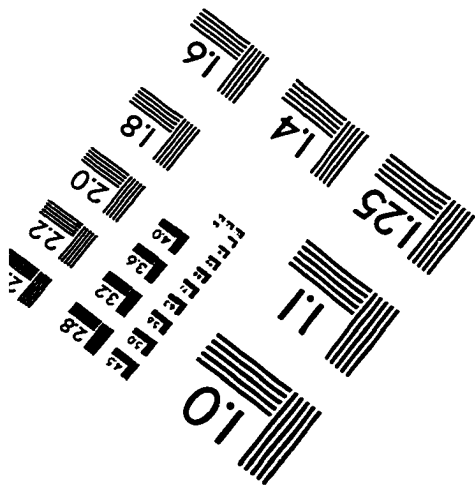
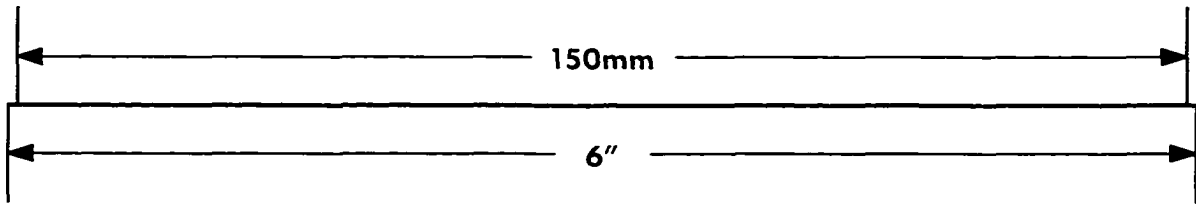
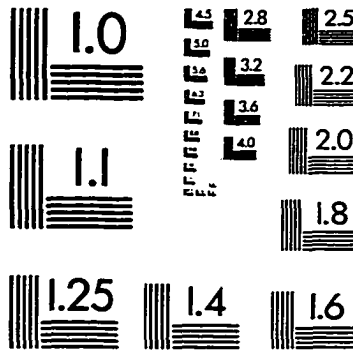
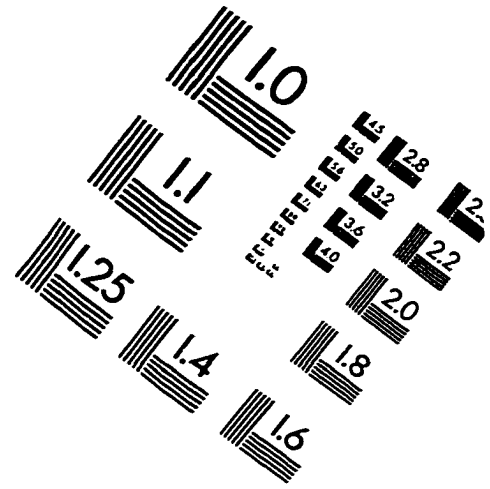
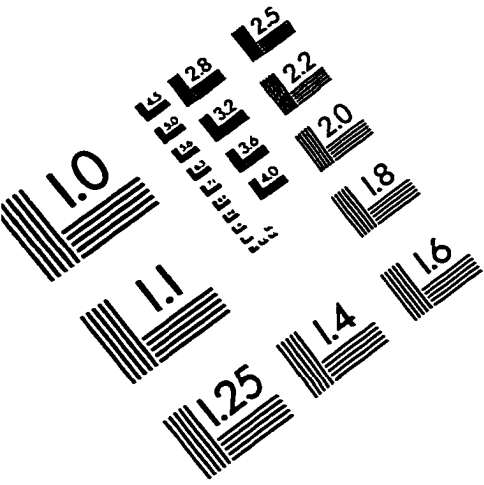
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