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Constructing Orthodoxy in the Great Awakening

by

Nathan Aaron Friend

A Dissertation

Presented to the Graduate and Research Committee

of Lehigh University

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

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Constructing Orthodoxy in the Great Awakening

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ABSTRACT

The Great Awakening was important as a transforming event in print culture in the British Atlantic during the end of the 1730s and early 1740s. A number of ministers collectively constructed a transatlantic correspondence network that communicated about revival-related events to each other and to a wider audience. However my study argues that outside ideological challenges were central in motivating Calvinist evangelical ministers to also utilize this network to develop a specific theology of revival. Moderate Calvinist evangelical ministers developed flexible revival orthodoxy in the Great Awakening in their print networks while in debate with other revivalists and antirevivalists. My dissertation examines what kinds of doctrines these ministers invented and how they reached agreement for what constituted normative revivalism versus what they deemed enthusiastic error. Calvinist revivalism gradually came into being around a number of loosely held ideas as ministers defended the ideas in publications with each other and in response to their opponents. The ministers experimented with how to build shared principles across denominational boundaries.

At the beginning of September 1741, the itinerant minister James Davenport (1716-1757) with his mercurial temperament and radical revivals arrived at Yale College. During Davenport's visit, Yale students experienced religious meetings lasting deep into the night with praying, laughing, screaming, crying, and bodily shakes. Davenport joined in the ruckus by exuberantly singing hymns with his head thrown back and his eyes closed. His behavior was particularly notable because it was done in the middle of the town, at the top of his voice, and in the middle of the night. The students who attended these meetings listened to Davenport's followers attest to dreams and spiritual visions, where God's personal hand directed their lives in special revelations. The official leadership of the college found all these events alarming. They grew even more concerned when Davenport labeled the college minister Joseph Noyes a "wolf in sheep's clothing" and urged the student body to avoid attendance at Noyes' New Haven church and instead attend pure, separate meetings of the godly. In response to the attack upon the authority of the ordained ministry, Yale's President, the Rev. Thomas Clap (1703-1767), issued an emergency decree banning students from attending the revival meetings of any would-be wandering minister like Davenport. Clap also prohibited students from further undermining established authorities by publicly judging any of the Yale faculty to be spiritually unconverted. The decree was to be enforced with the expulsion of any student who violated the decree on any two occasions. By the time Davenport departed from Yale, returning to his Southold parish on Long Island, he left a torn and divided institution in his wake.¹

¹ George Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 232-233.

On September 10, 1741, soon after Davenport's departure, the well-known revivalist Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) addressed an agitated crowd at Yale College. Edwards had been invited to give the Yale student commencement sermon and to offer a moderate revivalist counter to Davenport. Edwards presented an address that was in many ways an irenicon for the revival-related conflicts roiling New England and the wider British Atlantic. For the mid-eighteenth-century world of polite society, bodily shakes, fainting, and spiritual cries were beyond the pale of acceptable religious behavior. Even with New England's Puritan religious tradition emphasizing the importance of conversion and spiritual introspection, many educated New Englanders recoiled from such revival behaviors, arguing that they smacked of false religious enthusiasm.² Jonathan Edwards acknowledged that while individuals, because of the frailties of their peculiar physical constitutions, might manifest these negative behaviors as they converted to Jesus Christ, such signs did not necessarily invalidate the revivals themselves as a genuine and extraordinary outpouring of God's Spirit. In fact, the revivals produced positive "marks of the Spirit," including recognition among the new converts of the supremacy of Christ and a greater regard for the truth of the Holy Scriptures as the ultimate guide through life. Moreover the revivals led to converts obtaining spiritual and moral virtues manifested in loving acts toward God and neighbor. Such actions increased spiritual and social harmony among local communities. In his Yale address, Edwards attempted to minimize the social divisiveness of the revivals themselves, casting them into his own pattern of revival and conversion established in an

² Enthusiasm was a very damaging insult in the eighteenth-century British Atlantic, and was a synonym for fanaticism. It referred to someone who falsely claimed inspiration from God. See Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing religion and explaining experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 16-17.

earlier published account of the 1734-35 Northampton awakening. The account was successively published in 1736, 1737, and 1738. Edwards's 1741 Yale address was an attempt to channel the religious message in the Atlantic revivals and shut out Davenport's revivalism as unacceptable. It was a way of advocating a particular type of religious revival in an age of religious innovation.

Edwards's Yale address was subsequently enlarged, published, and disseminated across the Atlantic. Within a year following Edwards's address, *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* had been printed in Boston, Philadelphia, London, Glasgow, and Edinburgh.³ George Whitefield (1714-1770) attested to being the one "chiefly concern'd in publishing" Edwards's account in London.⁴ Additionally, there were two complementary forewords written for the treatise. First, a foreword by the Rev. William Cooper (1693-1743) in a November 1741 Boston edition praised Edwards's ideas. Cooper's foreword was soon followed by the Rev. John Willison's (1680-1750) foreword in a June 1742 Edinburgh edition, which likewise remarked upon Edwards's perspicuity and insight.⁵

³ Jonathan Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative in The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 4, The Great Awakening*, ed. C.C. Goen (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 90, hereafter referred to as WJE.

⁴ George Whitefield, *A Vindication and Confirmation of the Remarkable Work of God in New-England* (London: 1742), 4, in Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University Library, accessed Aug. 6, 2014,

http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW122971993&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticle&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

⁵ William Cooper, preface, *Distinguishing Marks*, in WJE 4: 215-225; John Willison, preface to the Scots Reader, in *The Christian history, containing accounts of the revival and propagation of religion in Great-Britain & America for the year 1743* (Boston: N.E., 1744-45), 81-85, in Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University Library, accessed August 15, 2014,

http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW123124161&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticle&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE hereafter referred to as *The Christian history*.

Moderate Calvinist evangelical ministers published several editions of Edwards's text in a shared religious print network. The endorsements from 1741-42 of Edwards's *Distinguishing Marks* revealed that a particular clique of ministers sought to create a consensus of thought and practice concerning revivals in the British Atlantic World and to criticize their opponents. Moreover, Whitefield, Cooper, and Willison independently corresponded with each other as well as with Jonathan Edwards. Indeed Willison in his June 1742 edition published Cooper's November 1741 preface alongside his own and attached some letters from Boston's Benjamin Colman (1673-1747). Colman was Cooper's co-pastor at the famous Brattle Street Church and had been the initial literary agent and editor responsible for circulating Jonathan Edwards's first trans-Atlantic publication on revival, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of many hundred souls in Northampton and the Neighbouring towns and Villages of the County of Hampshire, in the province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New-England*.

Additionally, the terminology that Edwards utilized in his 1741 Yale address of "testing the spirits"⁶ for evidence of the genuine presence of God's Spirit in revivals and conversions became typical in the publications of two revival periodicals. They were published from Boston and Edinburgh, respectively titled *The Christian History* (1743-45) and *The Christian Monthly History* (1743-46). The periodicals had as their editors the Rev. Thomas Prince Jr. (1721-1748) and the Rev. James Robe (1688-1753). The real source behind the Boston publication, Thomas Prince Jr.'s father the Rev. Thomas Prince Sr. (1687-1758), was friend and ally to Edwards, Whitefield, Cooper, Colman, and Robe.

⁶ 1 John 4:1 KJV

Likewise, Robe was friends with Whitefield, Willison, Cooper, Colman, and Edwards. This glimpse of the trans-Atlantic publication process for a single religious text reveals a series of deeply intertwined intellectual and spiritual relationships among a set of Calvinist revivalists. The widespread transmission of Edwards's sermon demonstrates that a number of Calvinist evangelical ministers, through networks of correspondence, attempted to construct, develop, and maintain certain religious doctrines against excesses of revivalism and alternative theological interpretations during the Great Awakening.

I argue that ideological conflicts with opponents led to both the growth of a Calvinist evangelical network of ministers and to the development of their revival doctrines in the Great Awakening. First, Calvinist ministers published Jonathan Edwards's *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* as a text that renewed Reformed doctrines and attacked Arminianism. Later, in response to the introduction of other revivalisms and to attacks upon revivalism generally, Calvinist ministers codified a specific form of revival orthodoxy as a means of promoting Calvinism and individual spiritual redemption across the British Atlantic. Originally, the etymology of the word orthodoxy is a combination of the words *orthos* and *doxa*, which means 'correct opinion.' However, I am using the term as a phenomenon that is constructed, maintained, and revised. Simply put, orthodoxy reveals more about the people who develop doctrines, and their hopes and fears in their cultural context, than it does about any metaphysical or religious truth. In the Great Awakening many traditional Calvinist ministers found a revivalism compatible with their understanding of the faith and created a means to offer an imprimatur of approval for their revivalism, namely revival orthodoxy. Ministers searched for a vital center that united them in conveying a shared revivalism to the

public. I contend that challenges from alternative revivalisms and antirevivalism was the catalyst for developing moderate Calvinist revivalism as ministers modified their doctrines in response to different threats. In essence, ministers tried to transmit Calvinism into a new age and battle their opponents through utilizing the techniques of letter writing, sharing and promoting published sermons, revival narratives, theological treatises, and creating new evangelical magazines. Additionally, a number of ministers also created an original kind of millennialism that envisioned the revivals as signs pointing to God's final work in history whereby he would call in his elect from the four corners of the earth, defeat the Papal beast, convert the Jews, and return his son Jesus Christ to an earthly, thousand-year reign. But the new millennialism was not accepted by most Calvinist revival ministers and a process of further conflict hammered out its specific meaning. Moderate Calvinist revival ministers' also restated older norms of community management in response to "the chaotic leveling extremes that the awakenings produced."⁷ The ministers' received, questioned, or rejected ideas depending on whether they thought the concepts helped them in their disputes. Meanwhile they inaugurated an orthodoxy expressed in new printed communications that reached across denominational boundaries.

Throughout the end of the 1730s and the 1740s, in a series of clashes, all the major features of public revival orthodoxy were gradually put in place through continuing debates. From 1736-1738 Calvinist ministers invented the first revival narrative. Edwards's initial revival text conveyed a vision of a restored community initiated through individual affective conversion. Other ministers read it as an amazing instance of God's

⁷ Thomas Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), xiv.

Spirit poured out. It created spiritual expectations among ministers and helped establish a Calvinist revival network. Moderate Calvinist evangelicals ran into difficulties in the early 1740s however, as a series of radical notions supporting lay itinerancy, bodily motions among converts, attacks upon an unconverted ministry, and converts' trust in special revelations and ascertaining their own new birth emerged and challenged the new paradigm. Moderate ministers responded by creating an explicit doctrine of cessationist revivalism through new publications (the belief the Holy Spirit's signs of power expired with the death of the apostles including the ability to speak in unlearned languages, foretell the future, and engage in extraordinary healings). Additionally, a specific understanding of Scripture's preeminence guided the revivalism of moderate Calvinist evangelicals who were suspicious of radicals embracing continuing revelations supplementing Scripture. In response, moderate Calvinist ministers published revisions to their revivalism. They appropriated Edwards's suggestion from *Distinguishing Marks* of using "marks of the spirit" to interpret conversion whereby the convert's good estate was assured only by a continuous practice of good works observed by the local minister and the larger community. In this way, moderate ministers attempted to keep the revivals grounded in observable public behavior to support the formation of the ordered spiritual communities they envisioned as one of their goals. From 1740 onwards, there was a growing and different problem for moderate revivalists, due to the anger and disdain arising among certain ministers with the spiritual and social excesses generated by the revivals. In response, Calvinist evangelical ministers focused on debating antirevivalists about the doctrine of Original Sin and the importance of individual regeneration. Moderates also developed a new Scriptural hermeneutic with the aim of establishing

public respectability for bodily motions in conversion. Specifically, they accepted bodily motions among converts in the revivals and developed a history of bodily motions among various sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth century Protestants. Finally, moderate Calvinist ministers were never in complete doctrinal agreement among themselves and a relative elasticity continued in a mutual toleration of differences provided there was a general commitment to promoting a certain kind of revivalism.

The parameters of my study span the period from 1734 to 1751 as a unique moment for the emergence of conflicting revivalisms, where rival networks struggled with each other over conveying revivalism to the public. In the process, each group had to contend with a series of antirevival works, which attempted to dismiss all the revivals as enthusiasm and social subversion. Calvinist ministers originally created their revivalism as way to counteract Arminianism. But later they had to discuss how to defend their revivalism from radical interpretations and from attacks upon revivalism generally. They likewise supported their Calvinist theology by deriding the doctrines of non-Calvinist evangelicals such as the Moravians and the Wesleyan Methodists. Calvinist evangelicals worked throughout the Great Awakening to promote and renew their changing revivalism in various confrontations in a new interdenominational environment.

An important scholarly literature investigates the development of the Calvinist network and revivalism in the Great Awakening. Of first importance is how the literature wrestles with the Great Awakening's usefulness. The "Great Awakening" is a hotly debated term. A Protestant minister from the nineteenth century, Joseph Tracy, first used it to describe a revivalism that swept through New England and the Middle Colonies

from 1739 to 1745.⁸ In the early 1980s, Jon Butler argued for the oddness of describing the Great Awakening as a unified movement seeing it as an interpretive fiction linking little revivals together, each of which drew on older Calvinist and pietistic practices.⁹ In *Awash in A Sea of Faith*, he stressed how the revivals were less important (regarding the religious lives people led) than the simultaneous growth of the colonial Anglican Church.¹⁰ The implication of Butler's thesis was that the so called "Great Awakening" was relatively insignificant in contrast to other events and trends.

However, the Great Awakening remains important as a dramatic invention in print culture. As many scholars have persuasively argued the Calvinist revivals of the 1740s were of key significance in shaping public discourse. Lisa Smith noted in her *First Great Awakening in Colonial American Newspapers* that contemporaries in the colonies ardently discussed the revivalists' different doctrines. In the early 1740s there were eleven colonial English newspapers that stretched from New England to the Carolinas and all of them debated the revivals.¹¹ Between the advent of Whitefield's second colonial preaching tour and the end of his third colonial tour (1739-1748), colonial newspapers printed 1598 notices related to the Awakening and no other contemporary event came close to receiving the same coverage.¹² Additionally, Susan O'Brien suggested that recognition of the revivalists' correspondence networks outside of America offers a broader picture of the Great Awakening's importance and "could have

⁸ Joseph Tracy, *The Great Awakening: A History of the Revival of Religion in the Time Of Edwards and Whitefield* (Boston: Tappan and Dennet, 1842).

⁹ Jon Butler, "Enthusiasm Described and Decried: The Great Awakening as Interpretive as Interpretive Fiction," *Journal of American History* 69 (1982): 309-310.

¹⁰ Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 99-102.

¹¹ Lisa Smith, *The First Great Awakening in Colonial American Newspapers: A Shifting Story* (New York: Lexington Books, 2012), 2-3, 5, 12-13.

¹² *Ibid.*

provided Butler with a further angle from which to question the “American-ness” of the Awakening.”¹³ Michael Crawford thought the Great Awakening was important as a moment when a new language developed in print describing revival as “an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on a community.”¹⁴ Finally, Frank Lambert suggested “that colonial revivalists themselves constructed The Great Awakening—not the term, but the idea of a coherent, intercolonial revival” in their publications.¹⁵

Calvinist ministers certainly created a Great Awakening in print, but they also modified their theological doctrines of revival through their correspondence networks while in conflict with opponents. While Crawford and Lambert acknowledged how ministers offered an invention of revivalism, I pursue exactly how Calvinist evangelical ministers used their print networks to develop doctrines.¹⁶ My work complements that of Susan O’Brien, who suggested that “ministers showed a desire to define and categorize the workings of grace” and noted that “in the American and Scottish magazines” special attention was “given to the work of Jonathan Edwards.”¹⁷ She suggested that “this possibly indicates something about the religious education and theological background of the converted.”¹⁸ A network of ministers invented a Great Awakening and the same ministers established a Calvinist revivalism in contrast to other kinds of revivals. They successfully established flexible doctrinal orthodoxy across denominational lines. They demarcated acceptable revivalism (their version) versus unacceptable revivalisms (other

¹³ Susan O’Brien, “A Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network,” *The American Historical Review*, 91 (October 1986): 812.

¹⁴ Michael Crawford, *Seasons of Grace: Colonial New England’s Revival Tradition in Its British Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3.

¹⁵ Frank Lambert, *Inventing the “Great Awakening”* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 6.

¹⁶ Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 125-128, 184-186; Lambert, *Inventing the “Great Awakening,”* 3, 7-8.

¹⁷ O’Brien, “A Transatlantic Community of Saints,” 822; Susan Durden, “A Study of the First Evangelical Magazines, 1740-1748,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 27, no. 3 (1976): 269.

¹⁸ Durden, “A Study of the First Evangelical Magazines, 1740-1748,” 269.

versions). Revealing the contours of their disagreements is essential to a right understanding of the way in which the Great Awakening was actually invented, namely as an ideologically fraught process in which moderate Calvinist evangelicals built a revivalism.

There has been a significant amount of scholarship detailing George Whitefield's innovations in the Great Awakening, but I see the contributions as part of a continuing tale of ministerial conflict over doctrine in their print networks. Harry Stout discussed the growth of early eighteenth-century Arminian theologies emphasizing good works over Calvinist doctrine.¹⁹ He showed in *The Divine Dramatist* how Whitefield aimed to reverse Arminianism and revitalize Calvinism in the American colonies and Scotland.²⁰ Frank Lambert revealed how Whitefield simultaneously used new commercial techniques to promote his revivalism.²¹ And Thomas Kidd recognized that Whitefield was the most important individual in history until Billy Graham to use the concept of the “new birth.”²² But while Whitefield's successes thrilled other Calvinist evangelical ministers, they also labored to channel his theological message. They produced more publications created in their journals that guided his innovations into support for ministerial authority and traditional social renewal. George Marsden gestured at these goals in his superb biography on Jonathan Edwards, writing, “the awakenings were, in fact, as in Edwards' case, notable means of gaining control over parishioners. They were first of all about

¹⁹ Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 127-147

²⁰ Harry Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), x-xvii.

²¹ Frank Lambert, “*Pedlar in Divinity*”: *George Whitefield and the Transatlantic Revivals, 1737-1770* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 4-9.

²² Thomas Kidd, *George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 48.

salvation, but also about authority—ultimately God’s authority but also the authority of his spokesmen.”²³ While Whitefield was a key factor in Calvinist revitalization, he was also the minister who introduced the troubling doctrine that the lone individual could ascertain his or her new birth apart from community oversight, and other ministers struggled to contain this innovation.

I argue that a whole spectrum of disagreements between different groups was a catalyst for creating revival orthodoxy. Initially, Calvinist evangelical ministers reshaped revivalism in the late 1730s as an intellectual counterblast against what they perceived as a dangerous and growing Enlightenment rationalism. They shaped their revivalism further in published debates with other revivalists and in response to antirevivalist attacks. Ministers went into detail about revivalism’s doctrines because of challenges from others both within and without the evangelical camp. The development of the Great Awakening’s revivalism also led to an exploration of millennialism. Thomas Kidd’s *The Protestant Interest: New England after Puritanism* described how anti-Catholic millennialism was translated into the religious hopes of a larger Protestant British community by the beginning of the eighteenth century.²⁴ The specific interpretation some members in the moderate Calvinist network added in the Great Awakening was identifying millennialism with the new revivals. While there is a rich literature on millennialism there is not an analysis on how different millennial interpretations generated disagreements between allied ministers. My dissertation’s contribution is to chart the details of the creation of revivalist millennialism by moderate Calvinist

²³ Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 209-210.

²⁴ Thomas S. Kidd, *The Protestant Interest: New England after Puritanism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 18, 55, 66, 72, 79, 139-148.

evangelicals. Comprehension of the birth of the Great Awakening leads to the recognition of an inherently contested moment in which a moderate Calvinist ministerial network disseminated their doctrinal ideas across the Atlantic.

Narrating the struggle over revivalism's creation and codification requires explaining the meaning of the "Calvinist evangelical network." Early eighteenth-century English-speaking Calvinists understood the Greek noun *euangelion* to be the 'gospel,' specifically the gospel of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection as payment for humanity's sins and the new life in God's kingdom that he offered. They also accepted Martin Luther's (1483-1546) positions on justification by grace through faith in Christ alone, a reliance on the final authority of the Biblical Scriptures as read by all believers and not simply as interpreted by the institutional church, a belief in the priesthood of all Christians instead of that of only ordained priests, and a robust conviction in Original Sin. They also emphasized the renewal of the individual's inward spiritual life as manifested through daily Bible reading, daily prayer (both of an individual and corporate nature), an emphasis on missions (taking the gospel to other individuals and societies), and the importance of an individual's conversion to Christ.²⁵ Eighteenth-century evangelicalism complemented Calvinism through "dramatically increased emphases on *seasons of revival, or outpourings of the Holy Spirit.*"²⁶ An additional qualification is that the Calvinist ministerial network was only a subset of evangelicals, including only the ministers who subscribed to explicitly Calvinistic theology. Thus, the centers of this network lay in New England, lowland Scotland, and the Middle Colonies. Whitefield

²⁵ Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 16-19.

²⁶ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, xiv.

himself had an important base in London, England, but England was not where the real strength of the Calvinist network lay, since the non-Calvinist, evangelical Weslyans successfully competed with them there. While the Calvinist evangelical network drew spiritual sustenance from certain non-Calvinist sources, specifically from German pietism and Methodism, by the later 1730s the ministers in this network were self-consciously disassociating themselves from the Wesleyan Methodists and the pietistic Moravians.

The most important members of the moderate Calvinist ministerial community who developed, disseminated, and defended their revivalism were the bookish Jonathan Edwards and the peripatetic George Whitefield. Yet, a larger group of ministers and the occasional layperson were also important. In New England, they included Josiah Willard (1681-1756), the Secretary of the Massachusetts province, and the ministers Benjamin Colman, William Cooper, Thomas Prince Sr., his son Thomas Prince Jr., Thomas Foxcroft (1697-1769), Joseph Sewell (1688-1769) Joshua Gee (1723-1748), John Webb (1687-1750), David Brainerd (1718-1747), Joseph Bellamy (1719-1790), and Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803). In the middle colonies, members included the ministers William Tennent Sr. (1673-1746) his sons Gilbert Tennent (1703-1764) and William Tennent Jr. (1705-1777), Samuel Blair (1712-1751), Jonathan Dickinson (1688-1747), Samuel Finley (1715-1766), Aaron Burr Sr. (1716-1757), and Theodorus Frelinghuysen (1692-1747). In the south, Calvinist revivalists included the Virginia Presbyterian revivalist Samuel Davies (1723-1761) and the South Carolinian Minister Josiah Smith (1704-1781). In England, essential actors included Isaac Watts (1674-1748), John Guyse (1680-1761), Whitefield's media man William Seward (1702-1740), his printer John Lewis (worked as Whitefield's printer from 1741 to 1747), and Whitefield's patron Selina the Countess of

Huntingdon (1707-1791). In Wales, a key man is the preacher Howell Harris (1714-1773). Additional important figures included Scottish ministers James Robe, William McCulloch (1691-1771), John MacLaurin (1693-1754), John Willison, John Erskine (1721-1803), and Thomas Gillespie (1708-1774).

New England ministers such as William Williams (1665-1741), Henry Messinger (1695-1750), Elias Haven (1714-1754), William Hobby (1707-1765), and Stephen Williams (1693-1782) belonged to the group more peripherally. Additionally, the South Carolinian Baptist minister Isaac Chanler (1700-1749) and the Englishmen Philip Doddridge (1702 –1751) and Daniel Neal (1678-1743) were also more marginal. James Ogilvie (1695-1776) and Alexander Webster (1708-1784) in Scotland exerted only limited influence. Meanwhile colonial ministers like Eleazar Wheelock (1711-1779), Benjamin Pomeroy (1704-1784), Samuel Buell (1716-1798), John Rowland (?-1747), and John Cross (?-1748) were influential, but embraced some radical ideas.

A number of other ministers were important catalysts honing the revivalism of the moderate Calvinist evangelicals. Important non-Calvinist revivalists were John Wesley (1703-1791), his brother Charles (1707-1788), and the Moravian leader Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760). Radical Calvinist ministers like James Davenport, Andrew Crosswell (1709-1785), Timothy Allen (1715-1806), Daniel Rodgers (1706-1782), Solomon Prentice (1705-1773), Nicolas Gilman (1708-1748), and John Cleveland (1722-1799) created situations where moderate ministers had to draw lines of separation between acceptable and unacceptable revival ideas and behaviors. Likewise, twelve Scottish Calvinist ministers (the Marrowmen) ironically ended up attacking revivalism after George Whitefield rebuffed their separatist tendencies. Among them, Ralph

Erskine (1685-1752), his brother Ebenezer (1680-1754), and James Fisher (1697-1775), wrote works that contributed to forcing the moderate Calvinist network to give defenses of their revivalism. Finally, there was a disparate group of rationalistic, Arminian ministers that forced the moderate Calvinist network to defend the validity of revivalism. The men included congregational New Englanders like Charles Chauncy (1705-1787), Jonathan Mayhew (1720-1766), and Ebenezer Gay (1698–1787); English dissenters like John Taylor (1694–1761); Scottish rationalist Presbyterians like George Wishart (1703-1785); and colonial Anglicans like Alexander Garden (1685-1756) and Timothy Cutler (1685-1765).

Methodologically I investigate the written culture of these ministers. I compare and contrast their writings over a period of fifteen years and tract doctrinal developments and changes. I then search source texts written by radical revivalists, non-Calvinist revivalists, and antirevivalists in order to document how their ideas influenced developments and changes in the doctrines of the moderate Calvinist evangelical ministers. In the documents, it is proven that Calvinist moderate evangelical ministers decided certain doctrines were necessary for acceptable revivalism while other doctrines were optional. An important interpretive idea I borrow comes from the work of Michel Foucault who in his *Order of Things* spoke of a universal language system that structured discourse.²⁷ I have found that moderate Calvinist revivalists while differing as to some of their beliefs, all accepted a common language used to describe revival and conversion shaped in their print networks. They developed a common vocabulary to describe the

²⁷ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 63.

revivals which then made it easier for them to recognize revival-related doctrines and phenomena.

Five chapters using thematic and chronological frameworks explore the Calvinist network's creation of revivalism and orthodoxy. Chapter 1 investigates how the publication process of Jonathan Edwards's *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (1736-1738) led to the invention of a revival narrative used by Calvinist ministers. Edwards took older ideas on conversion and covenant renewals and translated them into a new framework that captured the imaginations of some ministers in New England, England, and Scotland. The ministers looked to the Northampton event as an extraordinary instance of God's Spirit being poured out and hoped to repeat the experience in other locations. The Northampton narrative also exemplified the local minister controlling the revival with Calvinist doctrine. Edwards's publication became the popular blueprint for the evangelical Calvinist network throughout the 1740s.

Chapter 2 examines how George Whitefield from 1739-1741 took the ideas from *A Faithful Narrative* and popularized them pioneering his theology of the new birth that the Calvinist network used to further promote their revivalism. Additionally, Whitefield succeeded in uniting ministers collectively as perceiving themselves to be part of a great spiritual event. Nevertheless, I argue that while Whitefield was useful and loved, he was also problematic in introducing his concept of the new birth. Whitefield changed Calvinist revivalism. In response, many of his ministerial allies worked to direct his alterations back into the framework originally suggested by Edwards. The ministerial attempt at gently correcting Whitefield's errors took place from 1740 to 1744, most

prominently in revival periodicals that outdid Whitefield's changes by duplicating Edwards's contrasting ideas.

Chapter 3 explains how from 1741 onwards the revivalism inaugurated by the Calvinist network expanded beyond their control and from 1741-1749 the network created an explicit orthodoxy, excluding certain radical ideas. George Whitefield and Gilbert Tennent offered subtle changes to the revival template that would come back to haunt moderates when radical ministers used the modifications to attack moderates as insufficiently spiritual. Moderate evangelicals attempted to limit the radicals' influence, drawing lines to demarcate radical enthusiasm from acceptable revivalism. Indeed, the ministers published works that appropriated Edwards's suggestions from *Distinguishing Marks* to interpret conversion as external signs whereby the convert was assured of their good estate only by a continuous practice of good works. The convert would only be able to judge their election if the local minister and community ascertained that the right conversion signs were present. Ministers likewise supported their Calvinist theology against non-Calvinist revivalists.

1740 and 1741 saw the emergence of antirevival attacks and Chapter 4 reveals how in response, moderate evangelical ministers focused on establishing what they took to be public respectability for their revivalism. The response involved publishing defenses of traveling revivalists, especially Gilbert Tennent and George Whitefield. Moderates aimed to distinguish their ministers from enthusiasts. While moderate evangelicals agreed with antirevivalists that Scripture excluded the acceptability of continuing revelations to a believer, special miracles, and wonders, they asserted in contrast that Scripture allowed bodily motions. Indeed, moderates were at pains to

publish works that demonstrated a prior history for bodily motions. The importance of precedent for English society and jurisprudence was undoubtedly a factor in the collective drive to establish such a history. Cumulatively, moderates printed defenses asserting the revivals were legitimate and proper. A final response to antirevivalists was moderates establishing the first evangelical college in New Jersey to train ministers who would promote more revivals.

From 1739 onwards selected Calvinist ministers coupled anti-Catholic millennialism to revivalism and Chapter 5 describes how the process inaugurated an original history envisioning the collective progress of the kingdom of God. The history was used by some of the ministers in the 1740s to justify a larger meaning for Atlantic revivalism. But disagreement was present where some ministers within the network thought something important was happening, but the majority of ministers did not engage in millennial creation. The chapter investigates how millennial debates contributed to forming continuing adaptability and intellectual innovation in the revivalism of Calvinist evangelicals.

Through an analysis of the philosophical positions, arguments, and counterarguments in personal letters, printed sermons, treatises, and revival narratives I examine how Calvinist evangelical ministers constructed their revivalism. My investigation reveals how there gradually emerged criteria for defining right revivalism. In the documents, a story unfolds of how Calvinist ministers decided what acceptable revivalism was. Part of their basis for their decision rested on if the revivalism conformed to the tenets of Calvinism against rationalistic Arminianism and if the revivalism established the controlled communities the ministers envisioned as ideal. Also

argued is that the ministers, many of whom never met one another, constructed friendships and loyalties from their shared camaraderie. In links of correspondence, they offered each other advice, financial aid, and revealed a care and concern for each other over specific issues in daily life. Especially important was that they verify their correspondents' good reputations in missives to allied third parties. In such a context, ministers cemented their loyalties and strengthened a new interdenominational revivalism across an Atlantic community.

Chapter 1

The Beginnings of Calvinist Revivalism

“So strange and surprising a work of God that we have not heard anything like it since the Reformation,” wrote Isaac Watts, the well-known dissenting English minister, in a letter to Benjamin Colman in a February 1737 letter.²⁸ The previous November Colman, the chief minister of Boston’s Brattle Street Church, had published an abridgement of Jonathan Edwards’s account of a spiritual awakening in the town of Northampton in the Connecticut River Valley. The awakening occurred in 1734 and 1735 and astounded Watts and his fellow dissenting minister John Guyse. Both men wanted a fuller description of the “surprising work of God.” Watts asked Colman to give him a copy of Edwards’s manuscript and published an unabridged version of the story that year in London. Edwards’s chronicle told how a spiritual event had completely reformed his community. Colman, Watts, and Guyse were excited about the possibilities of sharing the account to help them promote the types of religious doctrines and practices of which they approved.

Calvinist ministers published Jonathan Edwards’s *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* as a new spiritual text. It conveyed a vision of a restored community initiated through affective conversion. Edwards’s account transformed ideas on conversion, small groups, and covenant renewals into a new framework and captured

²⁸ Watts was an independent English minister who began to build a sensibility for evangelical revivalism in an eighteenth-century context. He was a dissenting minister, which meant something slightly different from what it meant a century before when a dissenting minister typically meant one who was simply a Protestant, English minister who was not a member of the Anglican Church. By the eighteenth century, dissenting ministers had also split between conservative and liberal theological wings, with the liberals denying the Trinity and subscribing to more rationalistic theology. Watts was himself (in the 1730s) a more conservative dissenting minister and looked to Edwards’s revival narrative as a solution to the liberal problem.

the imaginations of ministers in New England, England, and Scotland. This chapter argues that *A Faithful Narrative* was more than a chronicle of what Edwards saw happening, but was produced as a collective interdenominational negotiation among ministers to promote specific doctrines. The process indirectly created a context to begin Calvinist revivalism and build a ministerial community. Some ministers saw Edwards's description of the Northampton revival as recounting an amazing instance of God's Spirit poured out and subsequently created expectations among them for how a revival should occur and what language described it. Although Edwards's editors disagreed with him on the procedure of how conversion should take place, they wholeheartedly embraced his vision of a renewed community. By the end of 1738, Edwards's revival narrative had been printed in several different editions across the British Atlantic and became an important text that helped establish a new Calvinist community.

While the scholarly literature has extensively acknowledged the importance of Edwards's narrative establishing Calvinist revivalism, the literature has not detailed how prior conflicts provided the impetus for ministers' seizing upon the account as a tool to refurbish their own position. Michael Crawford acknowledged how *A Faithful Narrative* "exported" revivalism to "English evangelicals."²⁹ Frank Lambert saw the text as "a cooperative if at times contentious" construction between Edwards, Colman, Watts, and Guyse.³⁰ Mark Noll thought the text was influential because it was published "in London, the mecca of religious intelligence" and supported "by the respected ministers, Watts and Guyse."³¹ And Thomas Kidd said the account "dramatically heightened

²⁹ Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 126-127.

³⁰ Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening,"* 69.

³¹ Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 91.

expectations in Britain and America for new awakenings” and “provided a framework for local pastors to use to promote revival.”³² Yet a possible reason for Edwards’s text becoming the urtext for revivalism is because allied Calvinist ministers were excited about sharing the account to help them combat Arminianism and promote their own doctrines. George Marsden alluded to this as a possible reason when he wrote, “the extraordinary Connecticut Valley awakening of 1734-35 took place in the midst of theological controversy,” going on to ask “what relation did the controversy have to the revival?”³³ I think the answer to Marsden’s question is that the controversy was necessary for the very birth of revivalism, since revivalism was an innovation used by Calvinist ministers in their continuing theological battles with opponents.

The chapter lays out the roots of revivalism in fears, hopes, and earlier controversies. It is important to describe the prior context in New England where Edwards developed his ideas and explain what the major parts of his revival narrative were. The chapter continues with the according development of revivalism in the publication process of Edwards’s Northampton text from 1735 to 1738 as Calvinist ministers used correspondence links in Boston, London, and Edinburgh to publish Edwards’s account. The Northampton story appealed to some ministers as an extraordinary event that spiritually revived a congregation.

Roots of Revivalism

³² Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 23.

³³ Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 175.

In the early eighteenth century a number of ministers introduced into New England ideas that modified Puritan conversion, revived the practice of conventicals,³⁴ and offered a new form of a community covenant. Edwards utilized the ideas in his published Northampton narrative as he transformed the Puritan idea of an ordered conversion through steps into conversion through affective signs. Likewise revived small groups and covenant renewals offered a new vision of restoring the moral life of a local community and Edwards used both concepts, blending earlier ideas. Additionally, Calvinist ministers reacted to the growth of Arminian sentiments in the British Atlantic and groped for a successful tool (ultimately revival) with which to respond.

Seventeenth-century Puritans before the Halfway Covenant thought that the church should be composed of individual believers who had testified to a personal conversion through a series of steps and made a solemn covenant to aid each other in their new shared life in Christ.³⁵ Norman Pettit noted the importance of salvation stages writing, “In earlier Puritanism, as we have seen, the stages were essentially guideposts for the individual conscience, while biblical prescription was invoked to support felt experience.”³⁶ Similarly Charles Cohen wrote that the Puritans thought “people who turn to God undergo an ‘affective cycle’ that begins before faith and stretches beyond the actual moment of its implantation.”³⁷ Conversion steps were part of a collective religious

³⁴ Puritan small groups or conventicals had emerged in the late sixteenth century where dissenting laypersons forsook the papist rituals of the Church of England and testified to a personal conversion to Christ. In England, there were three Acts of Parliament passed to prohibit the Puritan meetings in 1593, 1664, and 1670.

³⁵ Edmund S. Morgan, *Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England*, New Edition Revised and Enlarged (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 134-135.

³⁶ Norman Pettit, *The Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 109.

³⁷ Charles Cohen, *God's Caress: The Psychology of Puritan Religious Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 76.

framework augmented by devotional texts offering a particular interpretation of Scripture. Lewis Bayly's *Practice of Piety* (1611), Richard Baxter's *A Call to the Unconverted* (1658), and John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) were some of the influential texts promoting salvation stages. In the seventeenth century, New England Congregationalists, English dissenters, Scottish Presbyterians, and Scandinavian, Dutch, German, and Swiss pietists eagerly consumed Puritan devotional writings.

Between 1660 and 1720 German pietists became avid readers of Puritan writings and probably influenced Calvinist revivalists as well. One scholar referred to the process of Puritan influence on German pietism as the "victory march of English devotional literature in the Lutheran church."³⁸ Two pietistic pastors, Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705) and August Hermann Francke (1663–1727), were inspired by Puritan writings and developed an emotional spirituality in response. They also negatively reacted to a growing rationalism in their churches. In the late seventeenth-century, Spener contended that pastors needed more than a literal knowledge of the Bible; they needed the grace and illumination of the Holy Spirit to convey spiritual truths personally.³⁹ Spener organized "schools of piety" for training the laity in proper religious emotions. On the continent, the *collegia pietatis* were meetings where Christians studied Scripture, devotional literature, sang hymns, and prayed. The meetings began in Frankfurt in 1670 and comparable societies emerged in London in the 1690s. Believers gathered in similar kinds of meetings in New England in the first decades of the eighteenth century.⁴⁰

³⁸ John Coffy, "Puritan legacies," in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, eds. John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 335.

³⁹ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture (since 1700)*, vol. 5 of *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 53.

⁴⁰ Cotton Mather, *Proposals for the Revival of Dying Religion, by well ordered societies for that purpose* (Boston: Samuel Kneeland, 1724), 1-5, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800,

Spener's followers soon included the redoubtable and talented August Herman Franke.⁴¹ Complementing Spener, Francke advocated a new fervent conversionism that required more than the believer's assent to doctrinal propositions contained in Lutheran and Calvinist catechisms, but taught that right emotion was also needed for meeting Christ.⁴² Similarly, Francke stressed that while a minister's theological erudition was not to be despised it was his tender heart that was of the greatest value.⁴³ One of Francke's enthusiastic students was a young Saxon count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, who in 1722 offered a spiritual home on his estates to Bohemian refugees, later known as Moravians.

Various Calvinist ministers probably borrowed pietistic ideas as a tool to respond to their ideological opponents. Francke certainly influenced the English dissenter Isaac Watts as well as the New England divine Cotton Mather (1663-1728), both of whom became his correspondents.⁴⁴ Jonathan Edwards and Gilbert Tennent were likewise connected through friendly correspondence with German pietists. German pietists urged their English-speaking conferees to follow them down their chosen path of personal godliness.⁴⁵ Such affective experiences appealed to Calvinist ministers frustrated with a growing rationalistic Arminianism that threatened to reduce God to a distant and "reasonable" lawgiver. Michael Crawford noted, "Pietism's direct appeal to the emotions

Lehigh University, accessed November 10, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 2558 \(filmed\)](#); Michael Crawford, "Origins of the Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Revival: England and New England Compared," *Journal of British Studies* 26 (October 1987): 380. New England eighteenth-century meetings were similar to Philipp Jakob Spener's schools in their religious practices, but had a different historical lineage. It is certainly possible that the German pietistic example influenced the religious practices of revived New England small groups at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

⁴¹ Noll, *Rise of Evangelicalism*, 62.

⁴² Crawford, "Origins of the Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Revival," 384.

⁴³ Pelikan, *Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture*, 54.

⁴⁴ Crawford, "Origins of the Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Revival," 383-384.

⁴⁵ Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 64.

attracted ministers frustrated by an inability to halt secularization of their societies.”⁴⁶

Moreover, Crawford noted a stress on “rationality” at the expense of emotion was a trend “evident in Latitudinarianism and in the movement toward Unitarianism in Britain and America.”⁴⁷ Many Calvinist ministers reacted with distaste to the new rationalizing trend and groped for an alternative.

New England publications from 1684 to 1724 by ministers Increase Mather (1639-1723), his son Cotton Mather, and Solomon Stoddard (1643-1729), reveal a gradual prioritizing of affective spirituality over conversion steps. Increase Mather was the senior divine in Boston at the turn of the eighteenth century and his theology, and that of his son Cotton Mather, dominated the educational framework for Harvard College where most eastern Massachusetts ministers trained. In *Some Important Truths Concerning Conversion* (1684), Increase Mather neatly summarized the important steps necessary for a classical Puritan conversion that recapitulated both Calvinist theology and the exercise of the convert’s holy habits of faith. He wrote that the individual’s “conversion is of absolute necessity in order to obtaining the Kingdom of Heaven.”⁴⁸ In this conversion, Mather affirmed that: 1) the individual must be “turned to God in Christ”; 2) it is God who “alone is the author of Regeneration”; 3) the Scriptures are “the instrumental means of conversion”; and 4) conviction of sin is the “first step towards conversion.”⁴⁹ Increase Mather insisted that the process of conversion repeats itself writing, “The Holy Spirit doth sometimes go over the work of conversion in all the steps

⁴⁶ Crawford, “Origins of the Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Revival,” 384.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 382.

⁴⁸ Increase Mather, *Some Important Truths Concerning Conversion, and the Improving Seasons of Grace; as also about Prayer in Families, and in Secret: Delivered in Several Sermons* (Boston: Printed by Samuel Green for John Griffin, 1684), 2, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University, accessed November 10, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 374 \(filmed\)](#).

⁴⁹ Ibid., 12, 4, 6, 8.

of it, in the hearts of his children, and that again and again.”⁵⁰ Most of the publication was consistent with seventeenth-century Puritan dogma. There was a series of steps in an individual’s progressive humiliation of sin and then there was the gradual recognition by the convert of God’s grace. What was new in the publication was the greater emphasis Mather gave to the dispositional nature of the convert. Noting a “new heart” and the will “wonderfully changed,” Increase urged his readers to test the emotional character of the convert to “know whether [they] be converted or no.”⁵¹ Thus, Increase Mather devoted about seven pages to a series of signs, psychological states, and emotional practices of the true convert.⁵² The idea of observing affective signs instead of looking at salvation steps would later be embraced by Calvinist evangelicals in New England, England, and Scotland.

Solomon Stoddard also offered changes to the meaning of conversion. From Northampton, Stoddard dominated public spiritual developments in the Connecticut River Valley in the early eighteenth century through his powerful personality, the wide dissemination of his published sermons, and in his political influence over local communities.⁵³ In two sermons published in 1714 and 1719, Stoddard further added affective changes to the Puritan salvation schema. In the 1714 *A Guide to Christ, Or the Way of Directing Souls That Are under the Work of Conversion*, the primary purpose of the tract was not to promote steps to salvation, but to emphasize the convert’s depth of feeling. Stoddard described individuals agonizing over their sins and being flooded with

⁵⁰ Ibid., 24.

⁵¹ Ibid., 27, 55.

⁵² Ibid., 55-62.

⁵³ Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 260. In the Saybrook Platform (1708), colonial Connecticut politically enacted some of Solomon Stoddard’s ideas, establishing an advisory control board over local congregations.

raptures of delight without a particular concern for the order in which this occurred. Stoddard emphasized that individuals had to feel this process, because “a notional conviction of the insufficiency of one’s own righteousness to save him, without an experimental conviction of the badness of his heart, will not deliver him.”⁵⁴ For Stoddard, more important than testifying to steps, was that one feels sin and grace. Puritan spirituality had always had a strong affective dimension, but the emotionalism had been demarcated by a precise order of steps to salvation. In other words, God’s caress of the believer was ordered.⁵⁵ For Michael Crawford, the loss of rational conversion steps was a central move from Puritanism to evangelicalism: “The role of emotional appeal in eighteenth-century revivalist preaching was new. There had always been a strong pietistic strain in Puritanism that emphasized the emotions, in particular, existential experience of God’s love. But Puritanism’s mainstream had subordinated the emotions to intellect.”⁵⁶ Part of the reason for the change, I contend, was that Calvinist ministers were reacting to Arminianism. In a publication from 1719, *A Treatise Concerning Conversion: Shewing the Nature of Saving Conversion to God, and the Way wherein it is wrought* Stoddard said preparation achieved nothing, writing, “preparatory work is no part of conversion.” Conversion had become an affective change “made at

⁵⁴ Solomon Stoddard, *A Guide to Christ. Or the Way of Directing Souls That Are under the Work of Conversion. Compiled for the Help of Young Ministers: And May Be Serviceable to Private Christians, Who Are Enquiring the Way to Zion* by Solomon Stoddard (Boston: Printed by J. Allen, for N. Boone, at the Sign of the Bible in Cornhill, 1714), 23, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University, accessed November 10, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 1716 \(filmed\)](#).

⁵⁵ Charles Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Williamsburg: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 6, 20, 68; Cohen, *God’s Caress*, 76.

⁵⁶ Crawford, “Origins of the Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Revival,” 382.

once in the soul; it is wrought in the twinkling of an eye.”⁵⁷ In the two writings, Stoddard placed the affections in a central locus and deconstructed the Puritan order of salvation.⁵⁸

Jonathan Edwards, Stoddard’s grandson, swept away the last vestiges of Puritan preparation in his Northampton revival narrative, arguing that conversion could either be a long process or an instant event. What mattered were signs of the believer’s dispositional change. Edwards wrote in his account that “Some are more suddenly seized with convictions; it may be by the news of others' conversion, or something they hear in public, or in private conference, their consciences are suddenly smitten, as if their hearts were pierced through with a dart. Others have awakenings that come upon them more gradually.”⁵⁹ There was already a shift away from salvation preparation in the reflections of the young Edwards. In his diary in the early 1720s Edwards revealed he “cannot speak so fully to my experience of that preparatory work, of which the divines speak,” specifically because “I do not remember that I experienced regeneration, exactly in those steps, in which the divines say it is generally wrought.”⁶⁰

Early eighteenth-century New England spirituality did not just modify the traditional Puritan conversion cycle, but revived older devotional groups (perhaps from the German pietistic example). Michael Crawford has noted “One group of preachers, centered in Boston and led by Cotton Mather, was gradually moving away from traditional Puritan emphasis on formal reason and logic and urging the kind of vital piety

⁵⁷ Solomon Stoddard, *A Treatise Concerning Conversion: Shewing the Nature of Saving Conversion to God, and the Waywherein it is wrought; together with an exhortation to labour after it* (Boston: Printed by Franklin for Henchman, and Sold at his Shop over against the Brick Meeting House, 1719), 2-3 in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University, accessed November 11, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series I, no. 2073 \(filmed\)](#).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

⁵⁹ Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative* in WJE 4: 160.

⁶⁰ Jonathan Edwards, “Diary” in *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 16, Letters and Personal Writings* ed. George S. Claghorn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 759, hereafter referred to as WJE.

described in Francke's writings."⁶¹ Perhaps the same ministers also borrowed Spener's model of pietistic small group practice. Whatever the case, in *Proposals for the Revival of Dying Religion by Well Ordered Societies for that Purpose* (1724), Cotton Mather offered his support for similar kinds of devotional groups. Mather suggested small groups were the way to maintain proper Christian practice writing, "It is very certain that where such *private meetings* under a good conduct, have been kept alive, the Christians which have composed them have like so many *coals of the altar* kept one another alive and kept up a *lively Christianity* in the neighbourhood."⁶² Cotton proceeded to outline his program for establishing the spiritual laboratories:

It is to be proposed that about a *dozen families*, more or less of a vicinity, agree to meet (the men and their wives) at each other's houses once in a *fortnight*, or a *month*, at such a time as may be agreed upon, and spend a convenient quantity of time together, in the *exercises of religion*. The *exercises of religion* for a meeting, are; for the brethren to begin and conclude with prayers in their turns; for Psalms to be sung; and for sermons to be repeated. It were desirable, for the *ministers* now and then, to afford their presence at the meeting, and pray with them, and instruct them, and exhort them, as they may see occasion.⁶³

By the 1720s, it is possible that the pietistic experiment in religious prayer groups had crossed the ocean to revitalize older, New England small groups. The groups became widespread vehicles for disseminating religious excitement in contrast to rationalism and would play a central role in generating the 1734-35 Northampton awakening.⁶⁴

Covenant renewals also signaled a discomfort with contemporary New England religious practice. The events first appeared in eastern New England in the 1680s.

Differing from conversion, covenant renewals were a collective promise by a community

⁶¹ Crawford, "Origins of the Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Revival," 385.

⁶² Mather, *Proposals for the Revival of Dying Religion*, 1-2.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁴ Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 148.

to be on the right road towards individual conversion. The proceedings were a response to ministers' jeremiad sermons directed at the third and fourth generations of New Englanders who were failing in sufficient numbers to become church members, and therefore, from the perspective of nervous ministers, failing to convert.⁶⁵ Ministers viewed the renewal of baptismal promises as an event that connected the young with the first generation of settlers in a covenant with God.⁶⁶ The process conveniently elided the difficulties of New England's Halfway Covenant and revised franchise laws (1657, 1662, and 1664), which had restructured the Puritan polity in a more secular way.⁶⁷ Through covenant renewals, young adults affirmed their converted status, thereby justifying their rights to halfway church membership. While covenant renewals were not considered sufficient evidence to qualify a person for full church membership, they were often accompanied by individual professions of faith in Christ and the according granting of full church membership. The renewals, which Increase Mather referred to as an

⁶⁵ The term "jeremiad" derives from the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, who in the seventh century B.C. attributed the calamities overwhelming Israel to the abandonment of its covenant with God. The jeremiad became a favorite literary device used by Puritan preachers who likewise saw themselves as a covenanted people. A long moralistic and religious harangue, a jeremiad bitterly lamented society's decay combined with a prophecy for society's downfall. Some of the first Puritan jeremiads are Increase Mather's *Day of Trouble is Near* (1674) and his *A Renewal of Covenant the Great Duty Incumbent on Decaying and Distressed Churches* (1677).

⁶⁶ Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety*, 247-249.

⁶⁷ Nathan Friend, "Halfway Covenant" in *Encyclopedia of US Political History, Volume 1: Colonial Beginnings through Revolution, 1500 to 1783*, Andrew Robertson ed. (CQ Press: 2010), 153-155. The Halfway Covenant, adopted by two gatherings of New England Puritan divines at synods in 1657 and 1662, changed the nature of church membership. It permitted the baptism of infants whose parents had themselves been baptized but had not been admitted to full church membership (i.e., they had not publicly witnessed to a saving conversion in Jesus Christ). An actual vetted conversion experience was still required for full church membership. The adoption of the Halfway Covenant ultimately changed the requirements of the franchise from church membership to property ownership. The first significant step in this direction was the 1664 franchise law, which allowed the admission of wealthy non-church members to political rights through the payment of a 10-shilling fee. This 1664 law was the political side of the ecclesiastical decisions of 1657 and 1662.

individual's "season of grace" and Samuel Wakeman (1635-1692) as the community's "day of grace," became a special time of blessing.⁶⁸

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, covenant renewals had spread west to the Connecticut River Valley (the future location of Edwards's Northampton revival three decades later) and Solomon Stoddard offered his own twist to the practice. Stoddard had broken in 1700 from earlier New England precedent in his views of communion as a converting ordinance. Specifically, he thought that taking communion could convert an individual, thereby suggesting in *The Doctrine of the Instituted Churches* that all those who professed Christ and were free from scandalous sin should partake in communion as a tool for their further internal conversion. The more inclusive ecclesiology modified the covenant renewals, turning them into events directed toward conversion for those outside the formal church. The spiritual outpouring became connected with the entire town. As Thomas Kidd has noted, "Stoddard helped foster a sense that churches along the Connecticut and Thames Rivers in western New England could begin a great new revival of religion, and a number of his younger colleagues began to promote awakenings in the 1710s and 1720s."⁶⁹ Stoddard and a set of younger ministers created a regular experience of fervent emotional outpourings in western New England.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Mather, *Some Important Truths Concerning Conversion*, 70; Samuel Wakeman, *Sound Repentance the Right Way to Escape Deserved Ruine; or a Solid and Awakening Discourse, Exhorting the People of God to Comply with His Counsel, by a Hearty Practical Turning from Sin to Himself and His Service Thereby to Prevent Their Being Made Desolate by His Departing from Them* (Boston: Samuel Green, printer, 1685), 101, in the Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University, accessed November 11, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series I, no. 398 \(filmed\)](#).

⁶⁹ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 8.

⁷⁰ Paul R. Lucas, "Solomon Stoddard and the Origin of the Great Awakening in New England," *Historian* 59, no. 4: (1997), 741-758.

Part of the reason other British Atlantic Reformed ministers gave widespread acceptance to Edwards's revival narrative was because their own religious history was similar, especially among Presbyterians. Congregational New Englanders shared a religiously kindred spirit with Presbyterian Lowland Scots.⁷¹ Both regions had emerged from the English Reformation opposed to episcopacy while embracing a strict Calvinism. Moreover, the Scottish national church or "Kirk" was the social glue that held together Lowland Scottish identity, much as the Congregational church permeated New England society. Both societies enjoyed a high level of literacy and theological sophistication as men, women, and children regularly read their Bibles and engaged in awakenings throughout the early eighteenth century.⁷² The awakenings struck Scotland with a cyclic regularity that paralleled that of early eighteenth-century New England, with one notable difference being that traveling preachers were common in Scotland's awakenings. Similarly, in early eighteenth-century Scotland, a conversion process emerged that was akin to the one developed in New England.⁷³

Through their labors, the Tennent family exported Scottish religious practices in the 1720s and early 1730s to Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The Tennents settled in Pennsylvania in 1718, and in 1726 the family patriarch William Tennent Sr. began training candidates at his "Log College" seminary in Bucks County in reaction to what he saw as a loss of godliness and a growth of Arminianism at Harvard and Yale. Later after a number of major modifications, the institution became Princeton University. Of the

⁷¹ The Scottish Highlands with their Roman Catholicism, clan loyalties, and political Jacobitism were culturally and religiously different from the Lowlands and from New England.

⁷² Harry S. Stout, "George Whitefield in Three Countries" in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, ed. by Mark Noll, David Bebbington, and George Rawlyk (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 63-64.

⁷³ Margo Todd, "The problem of Scotland's Puritans," in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, 182.

nineteen men William Tennent Sr. trained, eighteen became Presbyterian revivalists.⁷⁴ Similarly, William's sons Gilbert Tennent and William Tennent Jr. helped the Dutch pietist pastor Theodorus Frelinghuysen in a 1734 awakening in New Jersey's Raritan Valley.⁷⁵ It was also that same year that Gilbert Tennent won approval from the Philadelphia Synod for ministers to examine the laity for signs of converting grace before admitting them to the Lord's Supper and for individual presbyteries to require that ministers regularly preach a conversionist message.⁷⁶

Yet in one important respect Presbyterians differed from New Englanders in their inclination for a sacramental communion. The communion season or "holy fairs," became the apex of Scottish revivalism. Communion literature developed in eighteenth-century Scotland, setting it apart from other Reformed communities as the annual parish communion became the center of popular devotion. The tradition reached its apogee in the writings of John Willison of Dundee, who in publications in the 1710s, 1720s, 1730s, and 1740s offered a new visionary character for Scotland's revivals, which reached their apex in the great 1742 Scottish communion seasons at Cambuslang and Kilsyth. Additionally, through the efforts of Gilbert Tennent and William Tennent Jr., communion sessions were exported to New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York.⁷⁷

Calvinist ministers' dislike of Arminianism also contributed to their shared religious identity.⁷⁸ Arminianism, originally named for the followers of Jacobus

⁷⁴ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 31.

⁷⁵ Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 120; Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 18; Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening"*, 55-56.

⁷⁶ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 35-36.

⁷⁷ Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communion and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 20-21, 45-46, 53-54.

⁷⁸ Crawford, "Origins of the Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Revival," 382; Stout, *The New England Soul*, 127, 130-131.

Arminius (1560-1609), had in the English-speaking world of the early eighteenth-century become an attitude that chiefly emphasized human moral effort in spiritual matters. Calvinists, following the dictates of St. Paul, St. Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, disagreed vehemently, arguing that humans were intrinsically morally deformed and required supernatural rescue before they could act in a morally appropriate way. In fact, Calvinist eighteenth-century ministers often grouped Arminianism with more radical Arian, Socinian, and deistic ideas.⁷⁹ Arminians would question the truth of doctrines like total depravity and predestination, but would accept the Trinity. Arians, Socinians, and deists rejected traditional Trinitarian and Christological formulas. Other scholars have argued that early eighteenth-century Calvinist ministers perceived rationalist clergyman stressing that Christianity was primarily a matter of one being moral and reasonable rather than being holy. George Marsden noted Arminians defined true religion as “the most reasonable of things.”⁸⁰ Marsden interpreted Arminians to understand “reason” being what “all mankind says is right,” as opposed to special revelations from God.⁸¹ The ruling Arminian principle was “universal truths of reason and morality should be the standards by which to interpret Scripture.”⁸² Arminians dismissed or reinterpreted Scriptural mandates that contradicted universal human experience. Arminian rationalistic ideas filtered into the writings of English nonconformists and among selected members of the ministerial establishments in Scotland and New England. The historian Harry Stout

⁷⁹ Arians and Socinians denied the belief that God was a Trinitarian relation of three persons. Deists denied that God actively intervened in the world at all.

⁸⁰ Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 433.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, 434.

noted the growth in Arminianism among clergyman in the British colonies as part of a broader process of the “Anglicization” of the peripheries by the imperial center.⁸³

What made the theology upsetting to the minds of Calvinist ministers was their perception of its successful spread.⁸⁴ A famous example was in 1722, when Rector Cutler of Yale University publically converted to an Arminian form of Anglicanism. In that year, Cutler closed the Yale commencement ceremonies with a phrase from the Book of Common Prayer “and let all the people say amen.” George Marsden noted this event was “as though in a later era, at an NAACP rally, the president had unfurled a Confederate flag.”⁸⁵ In response, Benjamin Colman, the pastor of Brattle Street Church in Boston and a guardian of Calvinist orthodoxy, berated Jeremiah Dummer, for overloading Yale’s library with Arminian authors.⁸⁶ Colman requested that the famous nonconformist English minister Isaac Watts send his collected writings to Yale as a response to this “Arminian” influence.⁸⁷ In England, theologians publishing works using an Arminian approach to interpreting Scripture began to achieve popularity, especially

⁸³ Stout, *The New England Soul*, 127, 130-131.

⁸⁴ The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion are the defining statements of doctrine for Anglicanism (1563), which explicitly stressed the Reformed ideas of human total depravity and individual salvation through the grace of Christ as appropriated solely through personal faith. Thus, Calvinism, was the traditional starting point for Anglican theology (and even more so for Congregational and Presbyterian theology), a starting point that eighteenth-century Arminianism rejected.

⁸⁵ Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 83.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 140. Jeremiah Dummer (1681-1739) was an important New England colonial figure who’s *Defense of the New England Charters* (published in 1721) defended to the British House of Commons the charters of Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. Dummer’s financial contributions to Yale College were important for the solidification of the institution, securing donations from Elihu Yale, Isaac Newton, and Richard Steele. Especially famous was Dummer's securing of 700 books for the college's library, which became the “Drummer Collection.”

⁸⁷ Isaac Watts, March 4, 1729 letter to Benjamin Colman, *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Second Series, Vol. 9, [Vol. 29 of continuous numbering] (1894 - 1895), 332, in JSTOR: The Scholarly Journal Archive, Lehigh University, accessed August 6, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25079771>, hereafter referred to as PMHS.

works by the dissenting clergyman John Taylor (1694-1761) who challenged the idea that St. Paul had embraced the doctrine of Original Sin.⁸⁸

By the beginning of the 1730s a series of concepts and practices had been born in New England, Scotland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, which Calvinist evangelical ministers later used as the component parts of a new revivalism. In the early eighteenth century, some Calvinist ministers reinvigorated seventeenth-century Puritan ideas of conversion and Christian small groups, especially as translated through the filter of German pietism. Conversion became more affectively centered and less doctrinally precise and small groups' revived older pious practices.⁸⁹ Secondly, ministers offered covenant renewals, which was a new community context modifying the conversion process. Finally, many Calvinist ministers disliked and attempted to stop Arminianism's further growth throughout the British Atlantic and groped for a tool by which this could be achieved.

Existing ministerial connections were later decisive in publishing Edwards's revival account. By 1730, the two co-pastors at the Brattle Street Church in Boston, Benjamin Colman and William Cooper had created a vigorous correspondence with ministers in Scotland. Cooper corresponded with John MacLaurin, a pastor in Glasgow and Colman wrote to John Willison, the minister in Dundee who created Scotland's communion literature.⁹⁰ Colman was also appointed an American correspondent for the Society of Scotland's Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SSPCK).⁹¹ Later during the

⁸⁸ Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 435.

⁸⁹ While doctrine was still very important for Calvinist evangelicals in the conversion process, by the 1730s it did not require a series of conversion steps explained and elucidated.

⁹⁰ Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, 46-47.

⁹¹ Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 70.

early 1740s, connections between Scotland and New England solidified and other ministers shared news about revivals as “personal associations . . . multiplied.”⁹² Additionally, from 1723-1747, Benjamin Colman and Isaac Watts exchanged roughly fifty letters and served as each other’s literary agents on their respective sides of the Atlantic.⁹³ Frustration about Arminianism pervaded their correspondence and in letters Watts sent to Colman in 1723 and in 1729 he revealed that he had, per Colman’s request, sent his collected writings to the budding Yale College to fight Cutler’s Arminianism.⁹⁴ Watts noted with relief in an April 11, 1723, letter to Colman that Arianism had not grown among the English dissenters for the previous several years, and in a July 6, 1726, letter he noted that his writings on the Trinity were not meant to offend any New England ministers but rather were written “against the late Arian oppositions.”⁹⁵ When Benjamin Colman received Jonathan Edwards’s revival narrative from Edwards’s uncle, the Rev. William Williams of Hatfield and published an excerpted version of it in Boston in 1736, he sent it on to Watts, who with the minister John Guyse oversaw its publication in full in London in 1737. The three ministers aimed to use Edwards’s narrative as a tool to revive Calvinism.

The First Revival Narrative: Jonathan Edwards’s Northampton Account

Jonathan Edwards’s Northampton publication recounted how Calvinist revival arose and transformed a town. According to the account, the period following the death of Solomon Stoddard (1729) was a time of disorder. Northampton had received several

⁹² Ibid., 172.

⁹³ Ibid., 68.

⁹⁴ Watts, April 11, 1723 and March 4, 1729 letters to Benjamin Colman, PMHS, 339, 332.

⁹⁵ Watts, July 6, 1726 letter to Colman, PMHS, 340.

spiritual harvests under Stoddard's pastorate, including a final one in 1727 when Edwards was the junior pastor. Yet, there arose a period of great immorality among the congregation following his grandfather's death. Young people assembled at night for gossip and games in what Edwards referred to as frolicks. He said the youth frequented taverns instead of church groups.⁹⁶ The nocturnal outings were an example of a larger social struggle playing out in eighteenth-century Massachusetts between tavern and church culture. David Conroy noted, "The politics of taverns flew in the face of every cherished ideal, every definition of virtue, every traditional point of reference that colonists possessed. For the clergy, these developments were the most visible manifestation of the colony's slide into corruption and apostasy."⁹⁷ Edwards wrote how the revival began, "a sensible amendment of these evils; the young people shewed more of a disposition to hearken to counsel."⁹⁸ Ideally Edwards thought the Northampton community should function in mutual covenants of church and town. But he saw the community increasingly fractured and godly institutions in decline. Despite such difficulties, Edwards labored to offer a spiritual awakening to Northampton as the solution to their problems.⁹⁹ The first spiritual yielding came at the end of 1733:

It had been too long after their [Northampton's young adults] manner to make the evening after the Sabbath, and after our public lecture, to be especially the times of their mirth and company-keeping. But a sermon was now preached on the Sabbath before the lecture, to shew the evil tendency of the practice, and to persuade them to reform it ... the young people declared themselves convinced by what they had heard from the

⁹⁶ Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4:144-146.

⁹⁷ David Conroy, *In Public Houses: Drink and the Revolution of Authority in Colonial Massachusetts* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 226.

⁹⁸ Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 147.

⁹⁹ Mark Valeri, introduction, in *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 17, Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733* ed. Mark Valeri (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 44, hereafter referred to as WJE.

pulpit, and were willing of themselves to comply with the counsel that had been given.¹⁰⁰

Edwards's perception was that his pulpit persuasion worked, and there emerged the beginnings of a community renewal through Edwards's utilization of events. In April of 1734, a young man in "the bloom of his youth" suffered a "sudden and awful death" by pleurisy.¹⁰¹ Edwards, who himself had nearly died from pleurisy as a young man at Yale, took the occasion to preach a funeral sermon on Psalm 90:5-6 about how life is like grass that grows up in the morning, but is cut down in the evening. The Northampton pastor stressed how inappropriate it was to be engaged in a life of frivolity because God might suddenly bring on death and a moral accounting. The contrast between general blushing health versus grey-hued and gasping death had a profound effect on the town's youth.¹⁰² At nearly the same time, a young married woman who had been in doubt as to her salvation sickened and died but gained a full assurance of her good estate on her deathbed. In June, Edwards preached a funeral sermon from Ecclesiastes 7:1, which may have been for the departed. Edwards contrasted this sermon's joy with the gloom of his prior funeral sermon. The two sermons may have acted to create what Edwards noted as "more of a religious concern on people's minds."¹⁰³ Edwards then encouraged his congregants undertake the formation of new devotional groups. Edwards suggested that young adults spend "evenings after lectures in social religion, and to that end divide

¹⁰⁰ Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 147.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Jonathan Edwards, Sermon on Ps. 90: 5-6 (April 1734) in *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online, Volume 49 Sermons, Series II*, accessed November 24, 2014,

<http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdwaglsby9nZXRvYmplY3QucGw/Yy40Nzo5LndqZW8=>, hereafter cited as WJE Online.

¹⁰³ Edwards, Sermon on Eccles. 7:1 (June 1734) in WJE Online 49, accessed November 24, 2014,

<http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdwaglsby9nZXRvYmplY3QucGw/Yy40Nzo5OC53amVz>; Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 155.

themselves into several companies to meet in various parts of the town.”¹⁰⁴ By the fall of 1734, the schools of piety were in place and acted as an institutional bridge uniting church, town, and inhabitants, spurring on continuing religious fervor.¹⁰⁵

The Northampton revival reached full force in December 1734 as an ideal Calvinist blast against Arminianism. A young woman who had been “one of the greatest company-keepers in the whole town” was converted.¹⁰⁶ Edwards wrote how she proclaimed that “God’s infinite power and sovereign grace” had worked out her conversion.¹⁰⁷ Edwards feared a negative public reaction to such an extraordinary conversion from a public sinner, but noted that her testimony had the effect of becoming “the greatest occasion of awakening to others.”¹⁰⁸ There emerged discussions all over town concerned only with “spiritual and eternal things” as “flocks of souls” came to Jesus Christ and the town’s young people spoke only of “the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ.”¹⁰⁹ Edwards made explicit a rejection of Arminian ideas in the woman’s conversion, noting that “God’s sovereign grace” was the catalyst. He stressed it was God’s action through his Spirit that lay at the root of Northampton’s revival. He reiterated the Calvinist theme of humanity’s grave moral inadequacy, opposing confidence in unaided human abilities. Moreover, the woman’s conversion occurred less than a month following Edwards’s well-received November sermon, *Justification by Faith Alone*, preached against the Arminian salvation scheme.¹¹⁰ Also Edwards, in his

¹⁰⁴ Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4:148.

¹⁰⁵ Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 156

¹⁰⁶ Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4:149.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 149.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 150-151.

¹¹⁰ Jonathan Edwards, introduction in *Discourses on Various Important Subjects in The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 19, Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, ed. M. X. Lesser (New Haven: Yale University

May 30, 1735 letter to Benjamin Colman announced the town's "party spirit" had disappeared and individual conversions had resulted in an "overruling" of the "great noise" that began in the country "for the promoting of Arminianism."¹¹¹ Additionally, that same summer, Edwards, William Williams, Stephen Williams, and Samuel Hopkins sent a joint letter on behalf of the Hampshire Association of ministers opposing the ordination of Robert Breck at the First Church of Springfield, Massachusetts because of his Arminian doctrines.¹¹² The very same ministers who opposed Robert Breck also attested to the Northampton revival being from God's Spirit.¹¹³

Edwards connected the Calvinist awakening to other geographical locations. First he saw the town's revival influencing the rest of the Connecticut River Valley, writing that many outsiders "had their consciences smitten and awakened, and went home with wounded hearts and with those impressions that never wore off till they hopefully had a saving issue."¹¹⁴ Edwards's uncle the Rev. William Williams attested to Benjamin Colman in early 1735 that the revival had spread throughout the Connecticut River Valley. Additionally, Edwards was given information from the Presbyterian pastor William Tennent Jr. of awakenings in far off New York and New Jersey where Presbyterian pastors John Cross and Gilbert Tennent and the Dutch pastor Theodorus

Press, 2001), 794, 797, hereafter referred to as WJE; Wilson H. Kinnach, "Edwards as preacher," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, 113. Edwards published an extended form of the sermon at Boston along with several others in 1738 as *Discourses on Various Important Subjects* at the urging of his congregation who underwrote the publication cost. Additionally, Edwards used the preface to attack the Arminian scheme of justification, which he wrote "tis plainly contrary to the certain and demonstrable doctrine of the gospel, as contained in the Scriptures."

¹¹¹ Edwards, May 30, 1735 letter to Colman, in WJE 16: 49-50.

¹¹² August 7, 1735 letter to Col. John Pynchon, in WJE 16: 58-60.

¹¹³ *Attestation from Six Hampshire Ministers*, in WJE 4: 143.

¹¹⁴ Benjamin Colman, introduction 1736 Boston abridgement of *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 118-119, 152.

Frelinghuysen were overseeing their own awakenings.¹¹⁵ Edwards saw the events as part of the same shower of divine blessing. Edwards wrote:

But this shower of divine blessing has been yet more extensive. There was no small degree of it in some parts of the Jerseys ... especially the Rev. Mr. William Tennent, a minister who seemed to have such things much at heart, told me of a very great awakening of many in a place called The Mountains, under the ministry of one Mr. Cross; and of a very considerable revival of religion in another place under the ministry of his brother, the Rev. Mr. Gilbert Tennent; and also at another place, under the ministry of a very pious young gentleman, ... whose name as I remember was Freelinghousa.¹¹⁶

The Northampton event became a great public story.

The awakening subsided at the end of May 1735 due to two events. First Joseph Hawley, Jonathan Edwards's uncle-in-law, took his own life by cutting his throat.

According to Edwards, Satan had taken advantage of Hawley's despair over his spiritual state.¹¹⁷ In a private postscript to Benjamin Colman, dated June 3, 1735, Edwards explained that Hawley had been suffering constant insomnia for two months.¹¹⁸

Whatever the factors that led to Hawley's suicide, the event caused a negative shift in the town's sensibilities.¹¹⁹ Additionally, the awakening cooled because of an outbreak of what Edwards called "two remarkable instances of people led away with strange enthusiastic delusions."¹²⁰ "Enthusiasm," a religiously loaded term in the eighteenth-century, conjured up visions of social and political disorder due to overly aggressive expressions of personal faith. Frank Lambert suggested enthusiasm was a pejorative term used to identify people who took their overheated imaginations for religious

¹¹⁵ Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 155-157.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 155-156.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 206.

¹¹⁸ Edwards, June 3, 1735 letter to Colman, in WJE 16:58.

¹¹⁹ Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 206-207.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 207.

revelations.¹²¹ In both the 1737 London and 1738 Boston editions of *Faithful Narrative*, Edwards tied enthusiasm to personal revelations exceeding Scripture's dictates. In one of the cases he mentioned, Edwards highlighted a man who thought God had instructed him to give medical relief to another man suffering from depression by recommending praying in order specific words from Psalm 116:4.¹²² Edwards wrote his "delusion was that he thought himself divinely instructed to direct a poor man in melancholy and despairing circumstances, to say certain words in prayer to God, as recorded in Psalms 116:4, for his own relief."¹²³

But despite the awakening's end Edwards asserted positive changes remained and his story of the town's transformation appealed to other ministers. The town's changes included converts persevering in their religious attitudes and attending the new schools of piety. Additionally, the town's youth did not return to their frolics.¹²⁴ The people of Northampton were "a reformed people" as an outpouring of God's Spirit healed a split and fractious society.¹²⁵ While Edwards's account was in many ways astounding, he drew from older antecedents. The initial publisher and editor of Edwards's account, Benjamin Colman, had himself published a sermon from a larger series, *Sermons on Early Piety* (1721), in which Colman envisioned religious awakening to be a reformation of the entire set of relationships among parents, children, masters, servants, clergy, and laity. Colman had written that what was important was that awakening renews the dignity of the pastoral office. He wrote, "Your faithful pastors ... you must account of

¹²¹ Noll, *Rise of Evangelicalism*, 55; Lambert, *Inventing the Great Awakening*, 109.

¹²² "Then I called upon the name of the LORD: O LORD, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul!" Psalm 116:4 KJV.

¹²³ Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 207.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 207-208.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 209.

them as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God which show the way of salvation.”¹²⁶ Edwards’s account may have appealed to Colman as an extraordinary instantiation of an awakening where the pastor oversaw the process. It was certainly an account that appealed to other ministers in the doctrinal support it offered to Calvinism.

The Northampton revival occurred through individual conversions, and Edwards was quick to stress the new affective spirituality took multiple forms. For some people, there was a penal terror of hell, while for others there was an attraction to Christ’s beauty, loveliness, and excellency.¹²⁷ Unlike the older Puritan salvation scheme, no particular set of steps was required. In creating his account, Edwards was undoubtedly influenced by his grandfather Stoddard and also by his father Timothy Edwards, whose pastoral flexibility in discerning different kinds of emotionally-oriented conversions was important in Edwards’s own writing. In effect, *A Faithful Narrative* drew from earlier eighteenth-century ideas to provide a future design for how Calvinist evangelical ministers would understand conversion as an emotional experience and not as arid rational understanding.¹²⁸

Publishing the Northampton Narrative: 1735-1738

¹²⁶ Benjamin Colman, “The Nature of Early Piety as it Respects Men,” in *A Course of sermons on early piety. By the eight ministers who carry on the Thursday lecture in Boston. With a preface by the Reverend Dr. Increase Mather, and also clos’d with a discourse lately had by him to young people* (Boston: Printed by Kneeland, for N. Buttolph, B. Eliot, and D. Henschman, 1721), 26, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University, accessed November 12, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series I, no. 2256 \(filmed\)](#).

¹²⁷ Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4:185.

¹²⁸ David Laurence, “Jonathan Edwards, Solomon Stoddard and the Preparationist Model of Conversion,” *Harvard Theological Review* 72 (July 1979): 267-283; Jerald C. Brauer, “Conversion: From Puritanism to Revivalism,” *The Journal of Religion* Vol. 58, No. 3 (July 1978): 227-243. The relevant point to grasp is the emergence of a liminal moment in the late 1730s where a definite transition occurred from a Puritan to an evangelical sensibility and Edwards’s published Northampton account helped initiate the process.

Between 1735 and 1738, Calvinist ministers published Jonathan Edwards's narrative as a tool to renovate their own doctrinal position. Tracing the publication process reveals how Edwards and his publishers reached agreement in creating a polemical Calvinist revivalism. Benjamin Colman published an abridged account in Boston in 1736, and Isaac Watts and John Guyse published an unabridged one at London and Edinburgh in 1737. In 1738, Watts and Guyse's edition was reprinted in London and Edinburgh, and William Cooper, Thomas Prince Sr., Joseph Sewall, and John Webb published a new unabridged edition in Boston. Also in 1738, Johann Adam Steinmetz, the editor of the works of the pietist Philipp Jakob Spener, published a German translation of Watts and Guyse's edition in Magdeburg.¹²⁹ By 1738, Edwards's ideas for what constituted a revival were attracting an impressively disparate and interdenominational Atlantic audience, an audience unified by their opposition to rationalistic enemies. Within three and a half years various ministers, editors, and translators published Edwards's account across the Atlantic (additionally it was published in Holland in Dutch in 1740).¹³⁰ *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of many hundred souls in Northampton* helped establish collective expectations for what revivalism should be and what type of language should describe it. Calvinist revivalism asserted individuals have a personal recognition of one's sinfulness and the affective experience of Christ's love that reinforced local community order and attacked Arminianism.¹³¹ Although Edwards's editors had some disagreements with him

¹²⁹ C.C. Goen, introduction in WJE 4: 45; D. W. Bebbington, "The reputation of Edwards abroad," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 242.

¹³⁰ Goen, introduction, in WJE 4: 90; Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 23.

¹³¹ Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 183-185; Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 22-23; Lambert *Inventing the Great Awakening*, 79-81. The importance of Jonathan Edwards's account of the 1734-35 Northampton

about the mechanics of how conversion occurred, they wholeheartedly embraced his vision. Ultimately, larger agreements allowed Edwards and his editors to paper over smaller disagreements. And in fact Edwards had won all of the smaller disputes by the time his third English edition was published at Boston in November 1738.

The process of publication reveals Calvinist ministers gradually agreeing to join in a unified message to promote their collective revival agenda. In April 1735, Edwards's uncle, the Rev. William Williams, the pastor of Hatfield, a town nine miles from Northampton, informed Benjamin Colman of the remarkable Northampton awakening. Colman, the dean of Boston's Congregational pastors and a fervent supporter of evangelical Calvinism, printed a brief account of the event at Boston in the *New England Weekly Journal*, and through Williams, asked Edwards for a further report. In May 30, 1735 Edwards wrote his first letter to Colman announcing the awakening's details. The letter contained the important cultural context for how Calvinist ministers would receive the story. In his letter, Edwards noted that Calvinism had revived.¹³² Edwards likewise stressed that conversion was "affecting all sorts, high and low, rich and poor, wise and unwise, old and young."¹³³ Revival was interpreted to mean a special shower of God's grace that stopped Arminianism, reawakened affective Calvinism, and relieved a community's problems. Colman clearly felt Edwards's narrative was important enough to send across the Atlantic. He sent Edwards's condensed story in a letter to John Guyse and Isaac Watts in London and gave his unqualified endorsement of Edwards's character.

awakening as the key catalyst for beginning the Great Awakening has been extensively commented on by various scholars.

¹³² Edwards, May 30, 1735 letter to Colman, in WJE 16: 49-50.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 56.

Letters exchanged among Calvinist evangelical ministers operated within a larger context of British Atlantic correspondence. As Toby Ditz revealed, eighteenth-century elite male identity and reputation operated within a world of patronage and connection. Forming a public identity involved strategies of self-preservation through letters. Correspondence became a primary site for defining the self and not simply for reporting experience. What mattered most was safeguarding one's reputation in the judgment of peers. In a world with scant institutional support for credentialing, personal correspondence networks set forth character recommendations that established personal ties and cemented reputation. In such epistles, enemies were singled out as villains, while friends were praised. Distinguishing honorable from dishonorable conduct was the most important feature of the process. While good letters gave one credit, bad missives led to loss of reputation. Loss of reputation led to a loss of the ability to act effectively. In such a context, a friend was a trustworthy ally, which between Calvinist evangelical ministers, partly signified a spiritual brotherhood of likeminded religious confreres.¹³⁴ Indeed Watts and Guyse, in their introduction to the published London edition of Edwards's revival account attested to his "pious character."¹³⁵ In the process they validated his account being used as a tool for Calvinist ministers in their doctrinal battles.

Guyse and Watts liked Edwards's story so much that they shared it with their congregations in sermons and together asked Colman for Edwards's permission to publish it.¹³⁶ Watts shared his positive estimation of the account with Colman in a

¹³⁴ Toby Ditz, "Shipwrecked: or, Masculinity Imperiled: Mercantile Representations of Failure and the Gendered Self in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *The Journal of American History* 81 (June 1994): 51-53, 56, 58-59, 63, 68, 70, 73.

¹³⁵ John Guyse and Isaac Watts, introduction 1737 London edition of *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 131.

¹³⁶ Goen, introduction, in WJE 4: 33.

September 1736 letter praising the “joyful success of the work of God begun in the county of Hampshire.”¹³⁷ From the very first moment that Edwards shared his account it became part of the world of publicly disseminated correspondence and excited Calvinist evangelical ministers. They thought it an extraordinary event.

Colman wrote through William Williams to Edwards asking for a more detailed account. Edwards complied detailing the event (November 6, 1736). Colman abridged Edwards’s letter that same month for a Boston publication, placing it (still in the form of a letter) as an appendix to two sermons by Williams on “how to obtain a true conversion to God.” Thus, the published germ of *A Faithful Narrative* first appeared in print as an appendix in the form of an abridgement and coupled the regional awakening to some of Williams’s sermons on conversion.¹³⁸

In Colman’s abridged account, Edwards’s revival story was used in what C.C. Goen called a quintessential “evangelical predilection for telescoping everything into the all-important question of immediate salvation.”¹³⁹ Specifically, Colman utilized Edwards’s account to disseminate hopes contained in the missives Colman had exchanged with Watts and Guyse that the Northampton revival presaged a great work of salvation. Colman announced that the account may serve to “excite under the blessing and power of the divine Spirit, a like general concern in towns and churches, what they shall do to be saved? [Acts 16:30].”¹⁴⁰ Colman’s statement contrasted with greater nuance by Edwards who implied throughout his account that all conversions should be

¹³⁷ Watts, September 13, 1736 letter to Colman, in PMHS, 349.

¹³⁸ Benjamin Colman, introduction 1736 Boston abridgement of *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 112-127; Edwards, May 30, 1735 letter to Colman editorial footnote #1, in WJE 16: 48.

¹³⁹ Goen, in WJE 4: 133.

¹⁴⁰ Colman, introduction 1736 Boston abridgement of *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 112.

checked and that he was not necessarily confident of actual conversions. Thus Edwards wrote, “Let it be noted that what I have undertaken to judge of has rather been qualifications and declared experiences, than persons.”¹⁴¹ In other words, Edwards recounted spiritual experiences, but did not necessarily label them conversions. Indeed, Edwards’s use of his two chief examples of conversion (the spiritual transformation of Abigail Hutchinson in the face of illness and the surprising conversion of the child Phebe Bartlett) attested to his greater caution, and the fact that Colman completely edited them out is significant. For Colman, it seems that the accounts distracted from the larger collective budding revival program. Colman referenced the two converts only indirectly, noting: “This is but a small and broken extract of what the Rev. writer says of the manner wherein souls were wrought on; and he adds a very particular exemplification of it in two instances; too large to be inserted in this appendix.”¹⁴² It seems possible that the excitement of Colman, Watts, and Guyse over Edwards’s account required that there be no news to offer the slightest check to their goal.

On the other hand, Colman embraced the new fluidity and flexibility Edwards brought to the conversion experience. The point was affirmed in another of Colman’s insertions where he approvingly noted “The Rev. writer goes on to speak of the hand of God visible in the quickness of the work, and in the degree of saving light, love and joy experienced by many; and is very large in the vast variety of manner wherein persons were wrought on.”¹⁴³ Additionally, the belief that the revival created harmony between

¹⁴¹ Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 176.

¹⁴² Colman, 1736 Boston abridgement of *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 126.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 122.

different factions in the village and defended Calvinism probably impressed Colman.¹⁴⁴ Colman was happy to publish Edwards's account to further his, Watts, and Guyse's interpretation of the revival.

Jonathan Edwards was displeased with Benjamin Colman's abridgement and Edwards ultimately got a full edition published. Isaac Watts revealed Edwards's displeasure in admitting to Benjamin Colman in a May 31, 1738 letter, that he and John Guyse were "afraid to leave out very much" of Edwards's account in their 1737 edition lest they "should fall under the same censure that Dr. Colman did in his accurate and judicious abridgement."¹⁴⁵ Certainly, other ministers and printers thought it worthwhile to have the entire account published. Colman sent a copy of his abridged appendix to Watts and Guyse, who asked for the unabridged version. In a February 1737 letter, Watts asked Colman for a longer account because of what he saw as the critical import of the narrative for the history of Christianity and the future spread of the gospel.¹⁴⁶ Similarly the publishers of Colman's abridgement, Messrs. Kneeland and Green in Boston, posted an advertisement at the end of their publication offering to those who wished to read more of the story that subscriptions would be taken for it. They wrote, "If the taste here given of Mr. Edwards his excellent letter excite in persons of piety a desire to have the whole of it published; it is hereby notified that subscriptions for that end will be taken in by Messrs. Kneeland and Green, at their printing house in Queen Street, Boston. The whole may be contained in five sheets."¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Colman, "The Nature of Early Piety as it Respects Men," 26.

¹⁴⁵ Watts, May 31, 1738 letter to Colman, in PMHS, 360.

¹⁴⁶ Watts, February 28, 1737 letter to Colman, in PMHS, 353.

¹⁴⁷ Kneeland and Green, advertisement in Benjamin Colman's 1736 Boston abridgement of *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 127.

Watts, Guyse, and sympathetic publishers gradually positioned Edwards's narrative to be a central revival text. To that end, they made sure that it would stand up to outside scrutiny. Watts sought to authenticate the account. In this same February 1737 letter to Colman, Watts asked that Colman verify the truth of Edwards's narrative by getting the attestation of "neighboring ministers" who "can add anything to make it more compleat" to thereby make it "more universally acceptable" to the readership.¹⁴⁸ The next year, Watts wrote to Yale President Elisha Williams asking that eyewitnesses support Edwards's account. He wrote, "I should be glad to see some short account from one or two more of these ministers in New England who were eye and ear witnesses of this great work in some of the neighboring towns, printed in Boston."¹⁴⁹ Colman acknowledged a problem of credibility in a 1738 letter to Watts, commiserating that he was sorry to see "the base treatment offered to you and Dr. Guyse in some of the publick newspapers" that did not believe the account.¹⁵⁰ Six ministers from Hampshire County in the Connecticut River Valley made the attestation to the veracity of Edwards's account in a letter to Benjamin Colman that was attached to the third English edition of *Faithful Narrative* printed in Boston in November 1738 that answered skeptical papers.¹⁵¹ Colman promptly passed on the information to Watts, who in a June 6, 1739 letter professed that the attestation was very agreeable to "Dr. Guyse and myself."¹⁵² This

¹⁴⁸ Watts, February 28, 1737 letter to Colman, in PMHS, 353.

¹⁴⁹ Watts, June 7, 1738 letter to Elisha Williams, in PMHS, 335.

¹⁵⁰ Benjamin Colman, before October 11, 1738 letter to Isaac Watts, in *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online, Volume 32, Correspondence by, to, and about Edwards and His Family*, accessed November 24, 2014, <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdxZGlsby9nZXRvYmplY3QucGw/Yy4zMTo0NDEud2plbw==>, hereafter cited as WJE Online.

¹⁵¹ *Attestation from Six Hampshire Ministers*, in WJE 4: 143.

¹⁵² Watts, June 6, 1739 letter to Colman, in PMHS, 364.

process set in place a larger pattern, namely that third person attestation would be simultaneously published with all future revival narratives throughout the 1740s.

In Watts and Guyse's London 1737 edition, minus two small editorial changes (one inadvertent and one seemingly not), Edwards got his unabridged narrative printed. Entitled *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many hundred Souls in Northampton and the Neighbouring Towns and Villages of New Hampshire in New England*, Watts and Guyse provided a fourteen-page preface as well as marginal notes. They mostly praised the account. In solidarity with Edwards, Watts and Guyse agreed that the Scriptures attested to the fact that genuine conversion could take multiple paths, provided the convert recognize the supremacy of Jesus as Savior from sin.¹⁵³ They agreed with Edwards's move away from a narrower Puritan salvation model. Like Edwards and Colman, Watts and Guyse hailed what they saw as a return by the Northampton populace to social harmony and a lively Christianity. Moreover, (and most importantly) they found in the Northampton revival the "common plain Protestant doctrine of the Reformation, without stretching towards the Antinomians on the one side, or the Arminians on the other."¹⁵⁴ Indeed, Watts and Guyse felt the need to support Edwards's account because he used it to successfully fight against their doctrinal opponents.

While Arminianism as an interpretive term has been explained, Antinomianism encapsulates another set of opponents for Calvinist ministers and is worth some comment. Antinomianism originally meant an extreme manifestation of the Protestant belief in salvation by faith alone. Specifically, Antinomians considered it inessential to

¹⁵³ Guyse and Watts, introduction 1737 London edition of *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4:132.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

adhere to ethical or social norms since it was faith in Christ and not good works that saved. For early New England colonial history, the most notable Antinomian was Anne Hutchinson (1591-1643), who taught that the saved could trust their own personal revelations over the community's scriptural and moral norms. Hutchinson thought only a "conscious feeling of union with God" was adequate for salvation and that the feeling equaled "assurance of salvation."¹⁵⁵ Puritan ministers expelled Hutchinson from the Bay Colony for her views (among other things). Antinomian ideas often were equated by eighteenth-century Calvinist evangelical ministers with religious enthusiasm, whereby the Spirit's personal inspiration trumped Scriptural authority. Watts and Guyse strongly approved of the Northampton revival as inoculating people against both the Scylla of Arminianism and the Charybdis of Antinomianism while disseminating the Protestant doctrines of free grace through Christ. Finally, the two English ministers shared a hope that the Northampton revival would presage a great outpouring of grace among peoples throughout the British Atlantic.¹⁵⁶

Despite their points of harmony with Edwards, Watts and Guyse had some distaste for Edwards's two ideal converts placed at the end of his account, the dying Abigail Hutchinson and the four-year-old Phebe Bartlett. They proceeded to publish the spiritual portraits, but deprecated their importance. Watts and Guyse apologetically asked their readers in their foreword not to blame Edwards for the poor choice of examples:

Though he might have chosen others perhaps, of more significancy in the eye of the world, than the woman and the child whose experiences he relates at large; yet tis evident he chose that of the woman because she was

¹⁵⁵ Pettit, *The Heart Prepared*, 141.

¹⁵⁶ Guyse and Watts, introduction 1737 London edition of *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4:137.

dead, and she is thereby incapable of knowing any honors or reproaches on this account. And as for the child, those who were present, and saw and heard such a remarkable and lasting change on one so very young, must necessarily receive a stronger impression from it, and a more agreeable surprise than the mere narration of it can communicate to others at a distance. Children's language always loses its striking beauties at second hand.¹⁵⁷

It is not precisely clear why Watts and Guyse felt the need to apologize to their readers.

The two spiritual portraits did not bother later Calvinist evangelical ministers. Samuel Blair in his 1744 publication of the 1740 revival at Nottingham, Pennsylvania, explicitly modeled his chief converts' on Edwards's conversion portraits of Abigail Hutchinson and Phebe Bartlett. Frank Lambert suggested that Watts and Guyse's dislike for the accounts was due to the conversions being too sensational, because Edwards relied upon the converts' own depictions of their new birth in Christ.¹⁵⁸ While I think Lambert may have been correct that the ministers' disliked validating conversion solely based on a convert's own testimony, I also think their dislike was because the accounts failed to fit into the model of instant conversion. Later on, in the early 1740s, a believer's inward trust in their own instant conversion, apart from the local minister and parish community's validation, would be collectively labeled enthusiasm by all moderate evangelical ministers.

Indeed, the two accounts reveal conversion validated through time, trials, and character formation. Edwards's portrait of Abigail Hutchinson was of a young woman who suffered from illness and whose spirituality developed remarkably till her death. His portrayal concluded with a deathbed depiction of Abigail's embrace of pain as God's

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 136.

¹⁵⁸ Lambert, *Inventing the Great Awakening*, 73-74.

gift.¹⁵⁹ The scene appears to be an example of the medieval practice of the *Ars Moriendi*, the art of dying well. Devotees insisted on bringing the Christian to embrace her condition in order to evoke a declaration of faith.¹⁶⁰ It was through pain that Abigail's faith was proved. Edwards has Abigail address her sister when her throat was so swelled she could not down liquid, "O Sister, this is for my good."¹⁶¹ The message of spiritual liberation took the form of submission to life's trials. Edwards's account of the conversion of Phebe Bartlett supported character formation as a sign of conversion. Edwards noted how Phebe's intimate love for Christ led her to strict Sabbath-keeping, adoration of the ordained minister, and hatred of theft. Thus Edwards wrote, "she went with some bigger children to get some plums in a neighbor's lot, knowing nothing of any harm in what she did; but when she brought some of the plums into the house, her mother mildly reproved her and told her that she must not get plums without leave, because it was sin: God had commanded her not to steal. The child seemed greatly surprised, and burst out in tears, and cried out, I won't have these plums!"¹⁶² Edwards also noted, "She has manifested great love to her minister: particularly when I returned from my long journey for my health, the last fall, when she heard of it, she appeared very joyful at the news, and told the children of it, with an elevated voice, as the most joyful tidings; repeating it over and over, Mr. Edwards is come home!"¹⁶³ To parents, siblings, and

¹⁵⁹ Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 197-198.

¹⁶⁰ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 315. The importance of practicing the art of dying well in late medieval Christian England is attested to by Eamon Duffy and a similar idea seems to be animating Edwards's conversion portrait of Abigail Hutchinson.

¹⁶¹ Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4:197.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 203

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 205.

neighbors, Edwards remarked that Phebe displayed Christ's love by promoting social harmony through her changed character.

Watts, and Guyse seem to have disagreed with Edwards about the way conversion occurred. Watts and Guyse noted that the Northampton revival was a "heavenly influence [that] shall run from door to door, filling the hearts and lips of every inhabitant with importunate inquiries: 'What shall we do to be saved?' and 'How shall we escape the wrath to come?'"¹⁶⁴ The implication seems to be that conversion occurred instantaneously and could be verified. In fact, the one explicit editorial insertion Watts and Guyse made that Edwards removed from the 1738 Boston edition concerned confidence in ascertaining who was outwardly "saved" in the revival. The 1738 Boston edition had Edwards delete Watts and Guyse's phrase "I had very sufficient evidence of the conversion of their souls through divine grace."¹⁶⁵

The battle over the phrase from the 1737 published edition of Edwards's Northampton account served as a microcosm for a future dispute among evangelicals over signs for salvation. The dispute would, in the early 1740s, split them into radicals like Andrew Croswell who attested to the believer's certain inward assurance of salvation, versus moderates like Jonathan Dickinson and Jonathan Edwards, who stressed the difficulty of ever declaring anyone to have been apodictically saved. In 1737-1738, however, this dispute was more of a difference of degree than an actual split and in the early 1740s ministers published more details for judging a true conversion. In any case, the two spiritual portraits in the Northampton account created minor tensions between

¹⁶⁴ Guyse and Watts, introduction 1737 London edition of *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 132-133; Acts 2:37-38 and Acts 16:30 KJV.

¹⁶⁵ Goen, introduction, in WJE 4: 41-42; Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4:157.

Edwards and his editors, tensions that were resolved because of a larger agreement to promote a successful revivalism. In fact, when the third English edition of Edwards's narrative appeared in print, such disagreements were no longer publicly aired and Edwards seemed to have won the battle.

The Boston November 1738 edition of *Faithful Narrative* reveals a closing of the ranks around Edwards's narrative and a solidifying of the details of the revivalism promoted by an emerging Calvinist evangelical network. The edition had the attestation of the six Hampshire County ministers attached and corrected the phrase Edwards had objected to in Watts and Guyse's 1737 publication. Additionally, the foreword lacked any critique of the conversion stories of Hutchinson or Bartlett and the ministers writing the foreword gave Edwards's account unqualified praise. Four ministers, all from Boston, co-wrote it. Each had participated in co-authoring with Benjamin Colman *Sermons on Early Piety*, which had put forward ideas that Edwards's unique narrative had synthesized and blended. Additionally, each of the ministers played key roles in the revivals of the 1740s; for instance, each minister opened his pulpit to George Whitfield in his fall 1740 preaching tour of New England. One of the ministerial co-writers, William Cooper, was co-pastor with Colman. Cooper would later write the foreword to the Boston edition of Edwards's *Distinguishing Marks*. Another co-writer, Thomas Prince Sr., would later be the driving force behind the publication of North America's first revival periodical, *Christian History*. Prince would later co-write the foreword for Edwards's venture into attempting to provide an eschatological basis for the Atlantic revivals in *Humble Attempt* (1748). The two other ministers who co-wrote the foreword for the 1738 edition were Joseph Sewall and John Webb. Joseph Sewall was co-pastor

with Thomas Prince at Old South Church and John Webb was the pastor of Boston's New North Church. Both men would likewise go on to contribute to the foreword for Edwards's *Humble Attempt*. All of these men were important members of the Boston ministerial establishment and all were Calvinist evangelicals.

In their collective foreword the ministers recognized how Edwards's account had set in place important elements for an emerging Calvinist revivalism. They commended the awakening as part of the ongoing work of the Spirit of God, placing it at the end of a series of four historical moments. They interpreted the moments as progressively building up the Kingdom of God. Beginning with Jesus' disciples at Pentecost, continuing with the Puritan migration to New England, adding an unexpected repentance from a local 1727 earthquake, they concluded with the extraordinary work at Northampton.¹⁶⁶ Ministerial elevation of the Northampton episode helped make it central to the evangelical memory of what constituted a revival, pledging their faith in the veracity of the account in response to critical slights. Their support revealed how important such eyewitness testimony had become, testimony that would complement almost every revival narrative Calvinist evangelical ministers produced in the early 1740s. Additionally, the ministers acknowledged how useful the Northampton story was for disseminating more awakenings. They wrote:

The particular and distinct account which the author has given of God's dealings with the souls of men, at this remarkable season ... we judge may be very useful to ministers in leading weary souls to Christ for rest, and for direction and encouragement of all under the like operations of the

¹⁶⁶ William Cooper, Thomas Prince Sr., Joseph Sewall and John Webb, footnote #1 introduction Third Edition of *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4:138-140.

Holy Spirit ... We hope that the further spreading of this narrative may, by the divine blessing, still promote the conversion of souls.¹⁶⁷

The Northampton revival renewed evangelical Calvinism and drew appreciative comment from beyond New England. The 1738 foreword notably closed with a postscript from a minister from Glasgow, Scotland, possibly the Rev. John MacLaurin, who noted that, “the friends of serious religion here were much refreshed with a printed account of the extraordinary success of the Gospel, of late in some parts of New England. If you can favor me with more particular accounts of those joyful events, when you have opportunity of writing me, it will much oblige me.”¹⁶⁸ Another minister across the ocean, George Whitefield, referred to the Northampton revival when he wrote in a November 16, 1738 letter that, “the seed of the glorious gospel has taken root in the American ground.”¹⁶⁹ Sympathetic ministers on both sides of the Atlantic were beginning to view the Northampton narrative as an awakening story par excellence, which soon led to expectations of duplicating the process. The ministers would get their wish fulfilled in the emergence of the dramatic persona of the traveling preacher George Whitefield the following year.

The period from April 1735 to November 1738, when sympathetic ministers’ engaged in publishing different editions of Jonathan Edwards’s *A Faithful Narrative of*

¹⁶⁷ Cooper, Prince Sr., Sewall and Webb, introduction Third Edition *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 140-141.

¹⁶⁸ Anonymous, introduction Third Edition *A Faithful Narrative*, in WJE 4: 142.

¹⁶⁹ George Whitefield, November 16, 1738 letter, in Volume I of *The Works of the Reverend George Whitefield, M.A. Late of Pembroke-College, Oxford, and Chaplain to the Rt. Hon. The Countess of Huntingdon: Containing all his sermons and tracts which have been already published: with a Select Collection of Letters, written to his most intimate friends, and persons of distinction, in England, Scotland, Ireland, and America, from the year 1734, to 1770, including the whole period of his ministry. Also some other pieces on important subjects, never before printed; prepared by himself for the press. To which is prefixed, an account of his life, compiled from his original papers and letters* (London: Printed for Edward and Charles Dilly, in the Poultry; and Messrs. Kincaid and Bell, at Edinburgh, 1771), 45, in Lehigh University Special Collections, accessed December 14, 2012.

the Surprising Work of God, was the first step in the coalescence of a revivalism that promoted Calvinist doctrines and was produced in a collective negotiation among ministers in different denominations to support a common front. In the process, a new revival sensibility emerged across the Atlantic. The sensibility revealed a growing commitment to a pattern of revival offering affective conversion through a series of signs and a reassertion of a Calvinistic interpretation of converts' spiritual experiences. Edwards's Northampton account became an extremely popular design for revivalism, setting the pace for later developments.

Chapter 2

Popularizing revival and channeling Whitefield's doctrinal innovations

In late 1739, a Philadelphia printer published a pamphlet that contained three admiring letters written by colonial ministers to George Whitefield. Two of them came from the siblings Gilbert Tennent and William Tennent Jr., who praised Whitefield's work in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The ministers said Whitefield's preaching inspired Christians in the colonies and that in "the whole country, so far as I am acquainted there is an earnest longing for your return."¹⁷⁰ The pamphlet included a third letter by Benjamin Colman, who wrote that he loved Whitefield's *Journals* "at first sight" and that God was blessing Whitefield's preaching.¹⁷¹ In February 1740 Jonathan Edwards added his own praise, writing, "I have heard of one raised up in the Church of England to revive the mysterious, spiritual, despised, and exploded doctrines of the gospel," concluding with the exclamation "Blessed be God that hath done it!"¹⁷² Something big was happening. Different ministers in different regions came together to praise Whitefield's work and reputation. The four letters reveal that Whitefield offered a strikingly successful performance to ministers not typically inclined to like Anglican priests. As a traveling preacher, Whitefield united different ministers into promoting his spiritual labors. Nevertheless, Whitefield suggested a new revival direction that troubled many evangelical ministers. In a letter to Thomas Foxcroft, Jonathan Dickinson

¹⁷⁰ Gilbert Tennent, December 1, 1739 letter to George Whitefield, and William Tennent Jr., December 22, 1739 letter to George Whitefield, in *Three Letters to the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield* (Philadelphia: Printed and sold by Ana drew Bradford, 1739), 8, 13, Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-180, Lehigh University Library, accessed August 6, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 4651 \(filmed\)](#).

¹⁷¹ Benjamin Colman, December 3, 1739 letter to George Whitefield, in *Three Letters to the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield*, 2.

¹⁷² Jonathan Edwards, February 12, 1740 letter to George Whitefield, in WJE 16: 80.

commented upon his discomfort at Whitefield's new ideas, writing, "I cannot stand surely for all his sentiments in religion, particularly, his making assurance to be essentially necessary to a justifying faith; and his openly declaiming for a Spirit of Discerning in experienced Christians whereby they can know who are true converts; and who are closet hypocrites."¹⁷³ Dickinson appreciated Whitefield's preaching, but disliked his belief in the believer's own absolute assurance of salvation and in believers' taking it upon themselves to judge the spiritual estates of others. Both Dickinson and Jonathan Edwards would write publications against the believer's assurance and judgment of others' spiritual estates in 1741 and 1742.

Between 1739 and 1741 George Whitefield took the revival ideas from *A Faithful Narrative* and popularized them with his own theology of the new birth. While Whitefield was an Anglican priest who did not come from the same religious culture that Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and dissenting English ministers did, he came to embrace their Calvinism and popularize revivalism.¹⁷⁴ Whitefield got other Calvinist ministers to adopt him into their network as a preacher of uncommon ability. Such ministers happily used Whitefield's preaching to promote their revivalism. Nevertheless, I argue that while Whitefield was useful to such ministers, he suggested ideas on conversion they did not approve of and in response, many of his would-be-allies worked to channel his adaptations back into the doctrinal framework originally suggested by Edwards. In their publications ministers' contained Whitefield's message. They

¹⁷³ Jonathan Dickinson, May 24, 1740 letter to Thomas Foxcroft, Dept. of Rare Books and Special Collections Mss Division, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, hereafter referred to as Thomas Foxcroft Correspondence.

¹⁷⁴ Whitefield came to his Calvinism independently and not from the theological beliefs of his surrounding community. He blended Anglican reverence for the Eucharist with a Calvinist and conversionist message.

portrayed Whitefield's itinerate preaching as the catalyst for communal revivals and assiduously avoided other interpretations of his work. The ministerial effort at gently rectifying what they thought of as Whitefield's gaffes took place from 1740 to 1744, most prominently in periodicals directed by Calvinist ministers in Scotland and New England. Whitefield's preaching was spectacularly successful, but occasionally led in directions other evangelical Calvinist ministers did not wish to go. Calvinist ministers used Whitefield to popularize their revivalism, but contained his innovations.

There has been a significant amount of scholarship detailing Whitefield's religious innovations and explaining the development of the Calvinist ministerial print network in the Great Awakening, but I contend ministers created their publications in part as a way of domesticating Whitefield's message. Harry Stout showed how Whitefield conceived of his life as a public performance. Stout wrote that Whitefield "transformed the traditional sermon" into "a dramatic event capable of competing for public attention outside the arena of churches."¹⁷⁵ Similarly, Frank Lambert revealed how Whitefield used "new commercial techniques to promote transatlantic revivalism."¹⁷⁶ Thomas Kidd recognized Whitefield's use of the new birth message was a "catalyst" helping to "initiate the Great Awakening."¹⁷⁷ Yet many ministers thought Whitefield's new birth conversion was worrying in elevating the convert to have the authority to judge his or her own spiritual state alone and responded by publishing works to reinterpret this message. They did this most prominently in their new journals, journals Susan O'Brien noted were an

¹⁷⁵ Stout, *The Divine Dramatist*, xvi.

¹⁷⁶ Lambert, "Pedlar in Divinity", 7.

¹⁷⁷ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 40; Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 48.

“institutionalization of a largely emotional and sporadic movement.”¹⁷⁸ Indeed it was an institutionalization of revivalism as a doctrinal containment describing “the moral reformation in the town” and combating social “disorders in practice” and connecting them to the individual’s new birth.¹⁷⁹

George Whitefield, the son of English innkeepers joined John and Charles Wesley’s “Holy Club” a society of spiritually-minded students while at Oxford University. After joining the Holy Club, Whitefield began a systematic reading of Puritan devotional works under the supervision of the club’s leader John Wesley, who insisted that all the members follow a prescribed spiritual method, centered on a careful reading of Scripture.¹⁸⁰ In his *Journals* Whitefield attested that the reading program was central in his own conversion. Besides being influenced by Puritan works, William Law’s (1686-1761) *A Serious Call to a Devout Life* (1728) and August Hermann Francke’s *Nicodemus: a Treatise against the Fear of Man* deeply influenced Whitefield, helping lead to his realization that Christian conversion was nothing less than a “new birth.”¹⁸¹ While publically admitting his debt to John Wesley, Whitefield soon departed from his direction, hewing instead to a much more Calvinist theology regarding total depravity and the impossibility of choosing salvation apart from God’s initiative through the Holy Spirit. Indeed, as early as 1740, Whitefield had publically broken with the Wesley brothers.¹⁸² Ultimately the split would likewise divide the English Methodists

¹⁷⁸ Durden, “A Study of the First Evangelical Magazines, 1740-1748,” 255.

¹⁷⁹ Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 185.

¹⁸⁰ The method of spiritual reading was where the name ‘Methodist’ came from that referred to both the people trained and the religious societies they developed.

¹⁸¹ Lambert, *Pedlar in Divinity*, 18.

¹⁸² George Whitefield, in *George Whitefield’s Journals 1737-1741* (Gainesville: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1969), 53. Additionally, during Whitefield’s departure from England for his second American preaching tour in August 1739, John Wesley published his sermon Free Grace, which advocated a series of

into Calvinist and non-Calvinist factions. Following his graduation from Pembroke College (in 1736), Whitefield embraced the life of a traveling revivalist and popularized revivalism primarily from the public sensation he created during his second American journey (October 1739-January 1741) and first Scottish one (August 1741-October 1741).¹⁸³ It was on those tours that Whitefield became the moving center of a Calvinist revival event. The event featured the new birth, which Whitefield hoped would spiritually sweep the provinces of Arminian doctrines.¹⁸⁴ Harry Stout noted that Whitefield's goal was to use techniques he had developed to begin revivals in the principal cities of the British Empire's Calvinist periphery—Philadelphia, Boston, Glasgow, and Edinburgh that would then spread back to London, and from there throughout Europe and the world.¹⁸⁵

In theological terms, Whitefield's preaching, *Journals*, sermons, and personal letters offered a message of the new birth which changed the contours of revivalism particularly as it related to ministerial authority.¹⁸⁶ The new birth was a tidy name that in part, condensed Edwards's earlier ideas and in part, broke new ground. Whitefield's new

anti-Calvinist positions. The sermon occasioned Whitefield's reply, where in contradistinction to Wesley, Whitefield reaffirmed his belief in the total depravity of humanity and that only God can save persons. For more information about the root of this falling out see Lambert, *Pedlar in Divinity*, pp. 15 and following.

¹⁸³ Lambert, *Pedlar in Divinity*, 3; William V. Davis, Introduction, *George Whitefield's Journals 1737-1741*, vii.

¹⁸⁴ Anglicization refers to the process whereby the peripheries of the British Empire were becoming more like their political center in their material culture and in their intellectual orientation (i.e. Addison, the *Spectator*, the Royal Society, an English "republic" of letters), and in numerous other venues as well. For the purposes of this study, it primarily refers to the ways in which rationalistic Arminian theology emerged and stressed the fundamentally benevolent character of all human beings and elided the importance of conversion to Christ and the traditional Protestant emphasis on spiritual justification and sanctification. See T.H. Breen, "'Baubles of Britain': The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century," *Past & Present* 119 (May 1988): 73-104; Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 127-147.

¹⁸⁵ Stout, *The Divine Dramatist*, 134.

¹⁸⁶ The term comes from John 3:16 and had been referenced occasionally among earlier Protestants, but Whitefield was the first individual to truly popularize it.

birth became easy shorthand and his *Journals* applied the term consistently.¹⁸⁷ The new birth remained solidly within the Calvinist paradigm, emphasizing the centrality of justification by faith alone, with the Holy Spirit moving the individual to accept Christ affectively and with a complete recognition of one's sinful condition and inability of choosing salvation apart from God's gracious initiative.¹⁸⁸ Nevertheless Whitefield questioned the traditional model of the local minister overseeing the town's awakening if that minister had not experienced the new birth.¹⁸⁹ Whitefield publically speculated upon unconverted ministers controlling godly parishioners. George Marsden suggested that Whitefield "was a new modern type, the young rebel against authority."¹⁹⁰ Marsden asserted Whitefield's new birth was a "revolutionary message" that "has been well characterized as an inverted jeremiad."¹⁹¹ Specifically Whitefield took the older Puritan jeremiad and said "that the tables might be turned. A spiritual people should challenge the authority of an insufficiently spiritual clergy."¹⁹² Whitefield suggested that an individual could judge their own conversion. Thus in the early 1740s there emerged two different emphases on revival. Jonathan Edwards wrote that revival restored a pre-Enlightenment society with ministers' redrafting converts into an older structure of church, town, and covenant community. Alternatively, George Whitefield suggested that converted individuals might challenge their unregenerate minister.

Collectively, evangelical Calvinist ministers appreciated Whitefield's preaching, but cautiously corrected his path. Additionally, praise of Whitefield's revivalism united

¹⁸⁷ Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals 1737-1741*, 27-28, 36-37, 46.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 53. Whitefield explicitly discussed how he broke from his evangelical friends the Wesley brothers (Charles and John) over this very issue.

¹⁸⁹ Lambert, *Pedlar in Divinity*, 21, 96.

¹⁹⁰ Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 210.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 210-211.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 211.

such ministers into perceiving themselves to be part of a great spiritual movement, creating solidarity in support of continuing cross-Atlantic revivalism. George Whitefield was an extraordinary individual who popularized revivalism. Nevertheless, Calvinist ministers thought Whitefield introduced problematic ideas. For the first few years ministers preferred to contain Whitefield's ideas by keeping them within Edwards's framework. Most ministers favored the model Edwards had formulated, but appreciated Whitefield's successes, liked him personally, and did not wish to rebuke the proverbial goose who laid the golden eggs.

Whitefield had phenomenal success popularizing Calvinist revivalism. Aboard the *Elizabeth* en route to the American colonies in August 1739, Whitefield penned *A Short Account of God's Dealings with the Reverend George Whitefield* published in 1740 in four editions in London, three in Boston, two in Philadelphia, and one in Edinburgh with the text shared extensively among Calvinist ministers. The publication explained Whitefield's preaching as God's repeated call to him to go forth to preach the new birth.¹⁹³ Additionally, at the end of 1738, Whitefield began publishing his *Journals*. They were available in a variety of sizes, containing seven volumes of 485 pages, and spanned the period of his public ministry from December 1737 to March 1741. The *Journals* enjoyed tremendous commercial success with the first volume going through six editions in nine months.¹⁹⁴ In the *Journals* Whitefield reached out to other evangelical ministers by recounting in the publication their own revivals and tying their labors into

¹⁹³ Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals 1737-1741*, 14.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 77.

his religious drama.¹⁹⁵ Additionally, Whitefield began enclosing copies of his journals in packets to important ministers including Benjamin Colman and Jonathan Edwards.¹⁹⁶

Soon Whitefield was accepted by other Calvinist evangelical ministers as a powerful revivalist. Isaac Watts offered praise of Whitefield's ministry in England to Benjamin Colman in a May 23, 1740 letter noting that, "several of these young men who are called Methodists at Oxford have done great service for God and souls."

Additionally, Watts favorably differentiated Whitefield from the rest of the Methodists noting that none of the other ministers had done "so remarkably as Mr. Whitfield."¹⁹⁷

Whitefield's reputation and revival work was also forwarded in Scotland. After his first preaching tour there John Willison publically affirmed Whitefield's character, theology, and mission to a friend at Edinburgh. Willison's October 1741 letter signified Whitefield's place as a member of Scotland's brotherhood of revivalists. Willison noted, "God has bestowed a large measure of gifts and graces upon him for the work he is engaged in, and has made him a chosen vessel to carry his name among the Gentiles, and to revive his work in several other churches."¹⁹⁸ Willison affirmed, "He is thoroughly *Calvinist* and found in the Doctrines of free Grace, in the Doctrine of Original Sin, the

¹⁹⁵ Some Calvinist evangelical ministers Whitefield singled out for praise were William Tennent Sr. Gilbert Tennent, William Tennent Jr., Jonathan Dickinson, Mr. Rowland, Mr. Cross, Samuel Blair, Dr. Colman, Dr. Sewall, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Webb, Mr. Gee, Mr. Foxcroft, Mr. Wheelock, Mr. Pomeroy, and Jonathan Edwards.

¹⁹⁶ Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals 1737-1741*, 357; George Whitefield, Letters CXXVII and CXXVIII November 16, 1739 to Benjamin Colman and Jonathan Edwards, in Volume I of *The Works of the Reverend George Whitefield*; Benjamin Colman, December 3, 1739 letter to Whitefield, in *Three Letters to the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield*, 1-2; Jonathan Edwards, June 1, 1740 letter to Secretary Josiah Willard, in WJE 16: 83.

¹⁹⁷ Watts, May 23, 1740 letter to Colman, in PMHS, 375.

¹⁹⁸ John Willison, October 8, 1741 letter to a friend at Edinburgh, Printed in the *Glasgow Weekly History* No. 13 and reprinted in *The Christian history*, 282-283.

new birth, justification by Christ, the necessity of imputed righteousness, the operations of the Holy Ghost.”¹⁹⁹

Missives evangelical ministers exchanged reveal that they appreciated and used Whitefield’s preaching. Besides the letters testifying to revivals, the letters also became a mechanism for further promoting revivalism. In a March 9, 1741 letter Edwards wrote to Colman he thanked him for the information Colman had given him concerning “the glorious work of God begun at Boston, Charlestown, and Cambridge.”²⁰⁰ The revival had begun the previous September when Whitefield came to Boston to preach. Additionally, Edwards read Colman’s letter to his Northampton congregation and noted they were “sensibly affected with it; and upon it I appointed a lecture to improve it in a sermon.”²⁰¹ Gilbert Tennent also wrote a missive to narrate the positive results of Whitefield’s preaching tours. In an April 1741 letter sent to his brother William Tennent Jr., (but really intended for a public audience) Gilbert Tennent affirmed “multitudes were awakened, and several had received great consolation, especially among the young people, children and Negroes.”²⁰² In his estimation, the conversions revived whole communities, even converting individuals typically considered societal outcasts. He noted how a cadre of ministers successfully transformed communities across New England, Long Island, and Pennsylvania:

My brother William has had remarkable success this winter at Burlington. I hear that there are several religious Societies formed there. Mr. John Cross has had remarkable success at Stratten [Staten] Island, and many I

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 284.

²⁰⁰ Jonathan Edwards, March 9, 1741 letter to Colman, in WJE 16: 88.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Gilbert Tennent, April 15, 1741 letter to William Tennent Jr., *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Third Series, Vol. 53, (1919-1920), 195, in JSTOR: The Scholarly Journal Archive, Lehigh University, accessed August 6, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25080105>, hereafter referred to as PMHS.

hear, have been awakened by the labours of Mr. Rolinson in divers places of the York government. Mr. Mills had had remarkable success in Connecticut, particularly at New-Haven. And I hear that Mr. Blair, has had remarkable success in Pensilvania.²⁰³

Tennent's purpose was to create the perception of revival's spread and testify to its occurrence, supporting the idea that the Great Awakening was a ministerial invention.²⁰⁴

Many ministers modeled Whitefield's innovative practice of itinerate preaching. Gilbert Tennent was one of the first to do so, who (with Whitefield's encouragement) went on a preaching tour of New England in the winter of 1740-41. In Benjamin Colman's words to Whitefield, Colman received Tennent "just as we did you, as an Angel of Christ---He was abundant and fervent in labors, and God has been pleased to own his labors with abundant success."²⁰⁵ Tennent wasn't the only minister who chose to copy Whitefield's itinerate preaching. Another notable copycat was Jonathan Edwards. Edwards was deeply impressed with Whitefield's preaching and after Whitefield had visited Northampton Edwards began to alter his own preaching style in Whitefield's direction, outlining his sermons to achieve the appearance of extemporaneity and shifting his content decisively from heaven to hell.²⁰⁶ The result was his famous July 1741 *Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God*, preached by an itinerating Edwards to the congregation at Enfield, Connecticut. The observing ministers Eleazar Wheelock and Stephen Williams noted the extraordinary effects. As reported by them, the congregation, which was hardly even obeying the rules of common propriety at the beginning of the address, had by the sermon's end degenerated into a wailing mass crying

²⁰³ Ibid., 195-196.

²⁰⁴ Lambert, *Inventing the Great Awakening*, 6.

²⁰⁵ George Whitefield, *A Vindication and Confirmation of the Remarkable Work of God in New-England*, 9.

²⁰⁶ Harry Stout, introduction, *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 22, Sermons and Discourses, 1739-1742*, eds. Harry S. Stout and Nathan O. Hatch (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2003), 31, hereafter referred to as WJE.

out “Oh I am going to Hell!” and “What shall I do for a Christ!”²⁰⁷ The sermon appeared in print that November at Boston and John Willison produced a Scottish edition in 1745.²⁰⁸ A vignette illustrating *Sinners’* power comes from November 1741 when a revival began in Durham, New Hampshire. There the local pastor Nicholas Gilman read aloud extracts of *A Faithful Narrative* and Edwards’s recently published Enfield sermon to his parishioners.²⁰⁹

Nevertheless, despite their appreciation of Whitefield, Calvinist evangelical ministers were frustrated with his doctrinal innovations. As already attested, Jonathan Dickinson wrote to Thomas Foxcroft on May 24, 1740 where Dickinson questioned Whitefield’s idea of judging people as unconverted. Also Isaac Watts complained to Benjamin Colman about assertions Whitefield had made that Watts found ill-advised. Watts bemoaned the bad publicity that had come from Whitefield’s negative characterization of the late Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury John Tillotson (1630-1694). In February 1740, Whitefield had published *Three Letters from the Reverend Mr. G. Whitefield* wherein he condemned most of the Anglican clergy and charged Tillotson with knowing no more about true Christianity than Mohammed. Watts wrote, “I am sorry to find by some of his letters printed in America that he thinks himself bound to defend such an unadvised sentence as that Archbishop Tillotson knew no more of Christianity than Mahomet. . . . I fear he has done himself and his ministry unspeakable hurt by these letters which are now publish’d in our English newspapers by his

²⁰⁷ Editorial preface to the period, WJE 22: 34; Unknown to Unknown July 6-7, 1741 “Sinners” letter and Eleazar Wheelock, July 11, 1741 letter to Lebanon Crank Church, in WJE Online 32: C59a and b.

²⁰⁸ Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 227.

²⁰⁹ Susan O’Brien, “Eighteenth-Century Publishing Networks in the First Years of Transatlantic Evangelicalism,” in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, eds. Mark Noll, David Bebbington, and George Rawlyk (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 38-39, endnote #5 on page 53; Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 164-165.

friends.”²¹⁰ Tillotson’s theology would not have been acceptable to Calvinist evangelicals. Nevertheless Watts depreciated to Colman Whitefield’s rash and hasty judgment of Tillotson. Specifically, Watts revealed discomfort (as also revealed in Dickinson’s letter to Foxcroft) about Whitefield’s determination to proclaim some professed Christians, including deceased ministers, unsaved.

Whitefield’s ministry also bothered Calvinist evangelical ministers because he seemed more interested in promoting individual salvation than in hewing firmly to Calvinism. The point was particularly emphasized in a July 7, 1742 letter Whitefield sent to Willison wherein he offered a response to Willison’s attempt to convince Whitefield to abandon Anglicanism and declare the Wesley brothers’ apostates. Whitefield wrote in response:

Your letter gave me some little concern. I thought it breathed much of a sectarian spirit; to which I hoped dear Mr. Willison was quite adverse. Methinks you seem, dear Sir, not satisfied, unless I declare myself a Presbyterian, and openly renounce the Church of England. God knows that I have been faithful in bearing a testimony against what I think is corrupt in that church. I have shewn my freedom in communicating with the Church of Scotland, and in baptizing children their own way. I can go no further. . . . Though I am a strenuous defender of the righteousness of Christ, and utterly detest Arminian principles, yet I know that God gave me the Holy Ghost, before I was clear in either as to head-knowledge: and therefore, dear Sir, I am the more moderate to people who are not clear, supposing I see the divine image stamped upon their hearts. Mr. Wesley, Mr. L. etc. I take to be holy men of GOD, though they think far widely from me, and from each other in some particular branches of doctrine.²¹¹

Whitefield brought a wider interdenominational breadth to revivalism than many Calvinist evangelical ministers were comfortable with. Most of the ministers excited about Edwards’s Northampton narrative and Whitefield’s preaching were

²¹⁰ Watts, July 16, 1740 letter to Colman, in PMHS, 379.

²¹¹ George Whitefield, July 7, 1742 letter to John Willison, in *Works of the Reverend George Whitefield*, Vol. I, 406.

Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and English non-conformists who were willing to cooperate across denominational boundaries provided everyone involved was a Calvinist. Whitefield's own approach, however, challenged this more particularist revivalism.

From 1740 onwards Calvinist evangelical ministers labored to channel Whitefield's new birth within a more traditional revival framework. The New Jersey minister Jonathan Dickinson in a 1740 publication sought to shape the excitement generated by Whitefield's preaching. Dickinson preached a May sermon to his congregation, published in Boston entitled "The Witness of the Spirit on occasion of a wonderful progress of converting grace in those parts."²¹² Title and topic alluded to Whitefield's ministrations, but Dickinson explicitly cautioned converts about overconfidence in ascertaining their own election. He wrote "this witness of the Spirit is nevertheless distinguishable from any counterfeits and false pretences."²¹³ For Dickinson, true conversion was only manifested in continuing moral conduct and a lack of certainty about one's election. The assurance that one was born again and ready to judge another unconverted (especially a minister) was a "false pretence." Dickinson wrote, "whoever therefore teach such doctrine, that every converted person must necessarily know that he is converted, do offend against the generation of God's children, go contrary to the most constant doctrine of the most eminent Protestant Divines from the Reformation to this

²¹² Jonathan Dickinson, *The Witness of the Spirit. A Sermon preached at Newark in New-Jersey, May 7th, 1740. Wherein is distinctly shewn, in what way and manner the Spirit himself beareth witness to the adoption of the children of God. On occasion of a wonderful progress of converting grace in those parts* (Boston, Kneeland and Green, 1740), title page, 2-3, 4-5, 11, 15, 19-20, Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-180, Lehigh University Library, accessed August 6, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 4504 \(filmed\)](#).

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 20.

day.”²¹⁴ Dickinson worked to affirm the point that the new birth should instill in converts a holy fear, not an overweening confidence.

Benjamin Colman also felt a similar need to channel Whitefield’s preaching.²¹⁵ In a sermon entitled “Souls flying to Jesus Christ pleasant and admirable to behold,” preached on October 21, 1740 and soon printed in Boston, Colman attempted to harness the lay excitement Whitefield’s preaching generated. Colman hoped to translate it into a larger attendance at the Boston ministers’ Sunday sermons and Thursday lectures.²¹⁶ Colman rhetorically asked his congregation if they would continue in their spiritual pilgrimage through submitting to traditional spiritual structures.²¹⁷ He concluded with a vision of the revivals resulting in a reunified community:

High and low, rich and poor, parents and children, ministers and people together! How good and pleasant would this unity amongst us be! ... Come join yourselves to the Lord, in an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten; to keep his Sabbaths, to chuse the things that please him, to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.²¹⁸

Colman also construed the conversions as guided by Boston’s evangelical ministers. He wrote, “How pleasant must it be to your pious ministers, to be instrumental and successful in bringing many souls to Christ.”²¹⁹ In his publication Colman made sure

²¹⁴ Ibid., 22.

²¹⁵ Lambert, *Pedlar in Divinity*, 72. Whitefield through his printer John Lewis published Colman’s sermon in London so Whitefield must not have had major qualms with the way in which Colman was using his preaching.

²¹⁶ Benjamin Colman, *Souls flying to Jesus Christ pleasant and admirable to behold. A Sermon Preach’d to a very crowded audience, at the opening an evening-lecture, in Brattle-Street, Boston, Tuesday, October 21, 1740. By Dr. Colman Printed at the desire of many. To which is prefix, ’d, a preface giving a brief account of the great and remarkable success that has lately attended the labours of the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield, the Reverend Mr. Gilbert Tenant, and others in those parts* (Printed at Boston: 1740), title page, 8-9, Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-180, Lehigh University Library, accessed August 6, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 4490 \(filmed\)](#).

²¹⁷ Ibid., 8.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 25-26.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 16.

that Whitefield's new birth would not be interpreted as a path to allow the laity to discern their own conversion without the help of the local minister.

Additionally, the London 1741 and Glasgow 1742 editions of *Souls flying to Jesus Christ* added a preface that emphasized that the interdenominational inclusion of George Whitefield as a minister in the Calvinist revival network was acceptable only because his preaching renewed Calvinism and attacked Arminianism and Antinomianism.

The writers of the foreword said:

Ministers of the established church should be so far divested of a party spirit, as to admit a minister of another denomination into their churches and pulpits to preach a common salvation. How would our venerable forefathers also rejoice to see (as Dr. Watts and Dr. Guise very justly observe with respect to a late and like work of God at Northampton; in New-Hampshire) that this mighty work is effected by the blessing of God, on the preaching of the plain Scripture doctrine, without the extremes of Antinomian, or Arminian chaff.²²⁰

Whitefield's ecumenism was acceptable as long as it worked against Arminianism and Antinomianism and could fit into the revival model envisioned in Watts and Guise's 1737 preface to Edwards's Northampton account.

A letter written by Massachusetts Secretary Josiah Willard and published by William McCulloch in his periodical *The Glasgow Weekly History* also revealed how Boston's evangelical ministers used Whitefield's preaching to reawaken Calvinism.

²²⁰ Benjamin Colman, *Souls flying to Jesus Christ pleasant and admirable to behold* (reprinted at London for Samuel Mason: 1741), iv, in Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University Library, accessed March 25, 2015, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW119486480&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE; Benjamin Colman, *Souls flying to Jesus Christ pleasant and admirable to behold* (Glasgow: 1742), i, in Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University Library, accessed March 25, 2015, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW120795848&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

Willard wrote that ministers were documenting the presence of right theology in their new converts “Mr. Webb told me last week, that he had five hundred and fifty persons noted down in his book (besides some strangers) that have been with him in their soul troubles within a quarter of a year, and above eighty that are in a state of comfort and peace; and the most, (he is perswaded) upon a good foundation.”²²¹ Willard was more specific about the meaning of Webb’s “good foundation” when he turned to the success of the revival at Harvard College “the new face of things at the College, where ... divers Gentleman’s sons, that were sent there only for a more polite education are now so full of zeal for the cause of Christ, and of love to souls, as to devote themselves entirely to the studies of Divinity.”²²² Willard boasted that Whitefield’s revival transformed Harvard students’ Arminian desires for education into a thirst for Calvinist divinity.

Calvinist evangelical ministers most successfully domesticated Whitefield’s new birth message by publishing more revival narratives, mostly in their periodicals. Before 1740, there had been no evangelical magazines in the Atlantic World. Yet, by the 1790s, the genre had become a standard means of communication.²²³ Susan O’Brien noted how the revival journals created a powerful forum for a shared message.²²⁴ What has not been adequately explored is how from 1742 to 1744 Calvinist evangelical ministers sanitized Whitefield’s revival theology in more printed revival narratives.

In 1742 Calvinists evangelical ministers published the *Cambuslang* and *Kilsyth* revival narratives and both texts followed a similar print process. The revivals began at parishes separated by only 16 miles, located to the southeast and northeast of Glasgow.

²²¹ Josiah Willard, April 25, 1741 letter to Whitefield, PMHS, 197.

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ Susan Durden, “A Study of the First Evangelical Magazines,” 115-119.

²²⁴ O’Brien, “A Transatlantic Community of Saints,” 813-815.

The ministers overseeing the revivals, William McCulloch and James Robe collaborated in offering similar content and both ministers became editors for revival magazines. In December 1741, the *Glasgow Weekly History* entered the publishing world under the editorship of the McCulloch and in November 1743, Robe became the editor of *The Christian Monthly History* at Edinburgh. The Cambuslang account was first published in 1742 at Glasgow, and reprinted in London, Rotterdam, Philadelphia, and Boston. Following the London publication, Hugh Kennedy, a Scottish minister in the Netherlands, had the narrative translated into Dutch.²²⁵ Robe published the Kilsyth account in Glasgow in 1742. It was reprinted in London, and serialized the following year as the primary revival story in Thomas Prince Jr. and Thomas Prince Sr.'s Boston revival magazine *Christian History*.²²⁶

Both narratives offered a revival message that followed the earlier pattern from Edwards's *A Faithful Narrative*. Just like in Edwards's account, the Cambuslang account had parishioners reform through personal conversion, going on to reestablish order in the community.²²⁷ Following the revival, there was the "keeping up [of] divine worship in families" and "the erecting of new societies for prayer, both of old and young." Further,

²²⁵ *The Christian History*, 287-292; James Robe, *A Short Narrative of the Extraordinary Work at Cambuslang, Near Glasgow. Attested by the Rev. Mr. McCulloch, minister of the parish, and by several eminent divines in Scotland. To which is added, A letter from the minister of Kilsyth, (a parish on the other side of Glasgow) to a Gentleman at Edinburgh: Giving some account of the same extraordinary work appearing also in those parts. Printed in the same size, and fit to be bound with Mr. Edwards's Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God. Second Edition* (London: Sold by Samuel Mason, in Woodstreet, 1742); James Robe, *A Short Narrative of the Extraordinary Work at Cambuslang in Scotland, in a letter to a friend with proper attestations by ministers and others* (Philadelphia: Printed and Sold by William Bradford at the Sign of the Bible in Second Street, 1742), in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-180, Lehigh University Library, accessed August 6, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 5046 \(filmed\)](#).

²²⁶ *The Christian History*, 3-56, 77-80, 86-93, 300-336, 341-352.

²²⁷ Robe, *A Short Narrative of the Extraordinary Work at Cambuslang in Scotland*, 7.

there was in “all these things, ardent love to the Holy Scriptures.”²²⁸ Just as in the third edition of the Northampton account, neighboring ministers verified the truthfulness of the story, with the testators including William McCulloch, John Willison, and John MacLaurin. The Kilsyth account followed the same pattern. It began with Robe writing “for some years past there hath been a sensible decay as to the life and power of godliness. Iniquity abounded and the love of many waxed cold.”²²⁹ Revitalization began, when the extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit led congregants to set up new societies for prayer. The revival accelerated when John Willison came to preach and provoked a favorable response. The revival reached its apex when a young woman, who was a notorious sinner, converted. Robe noted that she came “to a very distressing sight of her sin and danger” and was found in a field in great distress “crying out *what must I do to be saved?*”²³⁰ The phrase, taken from Acts 16:30, was beloved by Colman, Watts, and Guyse, in their 1736 and 1737 editions of Edwards’s Northampton account. Finally, Robe concluded noting that the “reformation of the Congregation continues” as “the societies for prayer continued and increased so that at present they are above *twenty-two*, which meet once in the *fortnight*, once in the *week*, and some of them oftener.”²³¹ As in the Cambuslang account, outside witnesses, the elders of the Bailie of Kilsyth and the

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ James Robe, *A Faithful Narrative of the Extraordinary work of the Spirit of God at Kilsyth and other congregations in the Neighbourhood, near Glasgow. With a preface, wherein there is an address to the brethren of the Associate Presbytery, concerning their late act for a public fast* (London: S. Mason, 1742), iii, in Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University Library, accessed August 6, 2014, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW121288579&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

²³⁰ Ibid., 29-30; Acts 16:30 KJV

²³¹ Robe, *A Faithful Narrative of the Extraordinary work of the Spirit of God at Kilsyth*, in *The Christian History*, 342.

minister Thomas Gillespie attested to the revival's veracity.²³² The overwhelming similarities had Mark Noll remark that people were "moving into the same cycle of singing, sermon attendance, and personal conferences" that "followed the narrative originally published by Jonathan Edwards."²³³

One of the purposes for the Scottish publications so closely following the Northampton format was to renew Edwards's revival design. The renewal implicitly contained Whitefield's alternative theology. Calvinist evangelical ministers tamed Whitefield's new birth message by making sure that no parishioners were publicly assessing the certainty of their own conversions apart from community oversight. Especially important was the emphasis upon the role of the parish community and the ordained minister in verifying and guiding the conversion process.

The years 1743 and 1744 saw new revival narratives published in Boston's revival journal *Christian History* as Calvinist ministers' continued to channel revivalism into Edwards's communitarian framework. Three narratives recounted separate events from 1739 and 1740 when George Whitefield preached in the middle colonies and in New England and sparked local revivals. Recounting the details cumulatively attests to a Calvinist evangelical network of ministers containing Whitefield's revivalism.

In October 1743, *Christian History* published *An Account of the Revival of Religion at Newark & Elizabeth-Town in the Province of New-Jersey* in the form of a letter from Jonathan Dickinson to Thomas Foxcroft recounting a revival as a community event and not as independent individuals experiencing the new birth. The revival began

²³² Ibid., 53-56.

²³³ Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 111.

in late 1739 and ended in early 1740.²³⁴ The narrative began with godliness missing in the towns and tavern going besetting the youth. Dickinson wrote, “In these towns religion was in a very low state; professors generally dead and lifeless; and the body of our people careless, carnal and secure; that there was but little of the power of Godliness appearing among us, till sometime in August 1739.”²³⁵ After Whitefield preaches, however, the youth quickly reform, “there was an apparent Reformation among the *youth* of the town: their customary tavern-haunting, frolicking, and other youthful extravagancies, were now laid aside: A new face of things appeared in town: all occasions of religious conversation were improv’d with delight.”²³⁶ Dickinson concluded testifying to the curing of a fractious village society and bringing wayward youths back to godly pursuits. New birth conversion is interpreted by Dickinson as community restoration.

Another narrative *Christian History* published attested to another communal revival in southeastern Massachusetts in 1740, where ministers Henry Messinger and Elias Haven wrote *An Account of the late Revival of Religion in both the precincts of Wrentham, in the county of Suffolk in the Massachusetts-Province*.²³⁷ The ministers detailed decaying religion prior to the revival writing, “just before the descent of these late remarkable showers of divine influence, religion was plainly in a languishing condition.”²³⁸ Whitefield’s visit renews local spirituality through expanding religious societies. Messinger and Haven wrote, “Accordingly the religious societies of young

²³⁴ Jonathan Dickinson, *An Account of the Revival of Religion at Newark & Elizabeth-Town in The Christian History*, 252-258.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 252

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 253.

²³⁷ Messinger and Haven, *An Account of the late Revival of Religion in both the precincts of Wrentham, in the county of Suffolk in the Massachusetts-Province*, in *The Christian History*, 236-252.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 238.

people that were before formed in the town, grew much more numerous; and other societies were set up, and continue in various parts of the town, both among young people and heads of families.”²³⁹ The revival narratives testified to awakenings in Newark, Elizabethtown, Wrentham, and Suffolk, that followed the framework of community organizations guiding individual conversions.

A final narrative that emphasized the importance of Calvinist evangelical ministers using Edwards’s revival program to channel Whitefield’s new birth was Blair’s revival account. Samuel Blair was a graduate of William Tennent Sr.’s log college and published his revival account in Philadelphia in 1744. Thomas Prince Jr. and Thomas Prince Sr. reprinted it the same year.²⁴⁰ *A Short and Faithful Narrative of the late Remarkable Revival of Religion In the Congregation of New-Londonderry, and other parts of Pennsylvania*, explained how religion before the revival was almost dead, noting most “satisfy their consciences just with a dead formality in religion.”²⁴¹ Congregants failed to attend “the public ordinances” of worship, afflicted with a “frothy lightness” in conversation.²⁴² But following Whitefield’s visit a revival occurred. Blair stressed the importance of Scripture’s dictates and Reformed doctrines informing an individual’s conversion, cracking down upon any lone individual’s special inspirations and visions. Especially key for him was that converts did not “seek peace in extraordinary ways, by visions, dreams, or immediate inspirations; but by an understanding view and believing

²³⁹ Ibid., 241.

²⁴⁰ Samuel Blair, *A Short and Faithful Narrative Of the Late Remarkable Revival of Religion: In the Congregation of New-Londonderry, and other parts of Pennsylvania. As the same was sent in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Prince of Boston* (Philadelphia, Printed and sold by Williard Bradford at the sign of the Bible in Second Street, 1754), in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-180, Lehigh University Library, accessed August 6, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 5342 \(filmed\)](#).

²⁴¹ Ibid., 7-8.

²⁴² Ibid., 10.

persuasion of the way of life, as revealed in the gospel.”²⁴³ Blair’s emphasis upon converts not ascertaining their conversion with special revelations is similar to Edwards’s attack upon the men who used a Psalm as a magical incantation to cure depression at Northampton. Blair’s account contrasts with the certainty that Whitefield offered about converts individually being able to know they were born again. Additionally, Blair offered portraits of converts akin to those from Edwards’s narrative. Like Edwards’s Abigail, Blair recounted a young woman who struggled to obtain faith, eventually closing with Christ in spiritual ecstasy. He wrote, “She could have desired with all her heart to have melted and dissolved her body quite away” and was “generally delighting in God.”²⁴⁴ Blair concluded with the convert struggling with a serious illness as Edwards’s Abigail had, the only difference being that the woman in Blair’s account recovered. Blair also wrote about two sisters aged seven and nine who like four-year-old Phebe, cried for love of God.²⁴⁵

By the end of the early 1740s Calvinist evangelical ministers had solidified their revivalism through narratives published in their new periodicals that shared stories of renewed communities redeemed after Whitefield’s providential preaching to them. Conversion was understood to be ascertained by both the local pastor and the larger community. It was unacceptable for a lone individual to testify to their new birth without oversight. Revivalism was undoubtedly aided by the labors of George Whitefield, who between 1739 and 1741 popularized revivalism. But Calvinist evangelical ministers proceeded to utilize Whitefield’s work to promote their interpretation of revivalism. A

²⁴³ Ibid., 19.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 35.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 37, 40-41, 43.

Calvinist ministerial network harnessed revival excitement for purposes of furthering social amelioration. Yet while Calvinist evangelical ministers successfully controlled the major levers of print production and shaped much of the language of the Great Awakening they would ultimately have to contend with alternative interpretations of revivalism. In response, the Calvinist evangelical network would gradually create an orthodoxy designating what was acceptable revivalism and what was erroneous enthusiasm.

Chapter 3

The emergence of revival orthodoxy

In the middle of 1740, Daniel Rodgers was a tutor at Harvard College. He was intent on receiving an appointment to be co-pastor with John Webb at Boston's New North Church. However Rodgers's professional goals changed dramatically that fall. Deeply affected by Whitefield's preaching, Rodgers joined up as a fellow itinerant. In the winter of 1741 and 1742, Rodgers led a revival with his brother Nathaniel in their hometown of Ipswich, Massachusetts. While overseeing the revival, Rodgers recounted congregants' strange spiritual experiences. In his journal from February 1, 1742, he testified to the visions of an adolescent named William Holland:

Young lad William Holland—fell into what is called a trance in which the body is insensible. We left the house about 12 o'clock and about 1 o'clock were sent for, one messenger after another talking to us and the lad was come out of his trance and had told the people he had seen heaven and hell, that he had seen Christ, that the day of judgment was coming which exceedingly moved the people. Some rejoiced [at] the thought of Christ's coming. Several children and some young men who came from Salem were laid with strong convictions. We came and found them in a great tumult, crying out loud in an agony. We examined the young lad who told us much as we had heard – that his spirit had been drawn out and carried up to heaven where he had a view of Christ in glory sitting at the right hand of God and of angels and saints, particularly his grandfather. After this he had a view of hell as a place of dreadful darkness full of devils. The angel told him not to be afraid – moreover had him to declare these things to us and told people – to warn them to repent –and that he'd die in three months.²⁴⁶

The spiritual happenings at Ipswich departed from the format of published revival narratives. Holland experienced special visions and shared them with the congregation.

²⁴⁶ Daniel Rodgers, February 1, 1742, Box 5, "The Diary of Daniel Rodgers 1740-1751," Rogers family papers, 1719-1955, New-York Historical Society Mss Collection, New York, NY, hereafter referred to as The Dairy of Daniel Rodgers.

His visions were used to give directions “which exceedingly moved the people” who modified their behaviors “crying out loud in an agony.” The departure from the idea that Scripture alone should inform doctrine was new. Powerful visions of heaven and hell combined with direct spirit contact became part of this revival. There were other innovations. On January 1 and 2, 1742, Lucy Smith offered prophetic exhortations to the congregation including special prayers for Rodgers’ ministry.²⁴⁷ Rodgers thought women’s public voices were one of the ways the Holy Spirit revealed itself, but one woman soon advocated her moral perfection. While Rodgers was lying sick in bed on February 6, 1742, a “Miss Holiday came to and spoke of many things in the house—not knowing I believe what she said—for she said she was perfect.”²⁴⁸ Spiritual perfectionism was a step too far even for Rodgers, but Rodgers had allowed the laity authority and it damaged his ability to direct the revival. Other ministers reacted negatively to the innovation of public female authority. In a June 1741 letter, Edwards responded to questions from Deborah Hatheway (an eighteen-year-old convert) and told her she was only allowed to privately exhort superiors. He wrote, “When you exhort others that are men, I would advise that you take opportunities for it, chiefly when you are alone with them.”²⁴⁹ The Ipswich revival undermined the story assiduously promoted in the publications of Calvinist evangelical ministers in which revival led to ordered community reform. The Ipswich revival was radical and opened up a theological

²⁴⁷ Rodgers, January 2, 1742, *The Diary of Daniel Rodgers*; Thomas Kidd, “Daniel Rodgers’ Egalitarian Great Awakening,” *Journal of the Historical Society* 7, no. 1 (2007): 116-118, accessed October 15, 2014, <https://medievalchristianityd.wikispaces.com/file/view/DANIEL+ROGERS+EGALITARIAN+GREAT+A+WAKENING.pdf>. The only detail offered on what Smith’s exhortations were is “The Spirit was evident to me and Lucy Smith. Her prayer was answered (I hope for me).”

²⁴⁸ Rodgers, February 6, 1742, *The Diary of Daniel Rodgers*.

²⁴⁹ Jonathan Edwards, letter to Deborah Hatheway, June 1741, in *JWE* 16: 94. The letter was later reprinted in 1807 and became a classic of Christian devotion with at least 328,000 copies issued by 1875.

Pandora's Box creating a backlash.²⁵⁰ Soon publishers printed derisive news reports of wives "filled with the Spirit" who disobeyed their husbands' commands after receiving revelations to go "proclaim the gospel."²⁵¹

Calvinist evangelical ministers struggled mightily in 1741 and 1742 to distinguish their revivalism from what they dubbed radical enthusiasm. Radicals embraced continuing revelations supplementing Scripture, the believer's immediate individual assurance of salvation, a convert's bodily motions in conversion, separation of believers from unbelievers, the right of laity to exhort without qualification, ministerial itinerancy unlimited by a local pastor's permission, and attacked the authority of unconverted ministers. In response, moderate Calvinist evangelical ministers incorporated bodily motions into conversion, but rejected other radical ideas. Out of their publications against radicalism they developed revival orthodoxy. They rejected revelations supplementing Scripture and created an explicit doctrine of cessationist revivalism. They argued that with the completion of the Scriptural canon the Holy Spirit's signs of power expired. Additionally moderates rejected the radical emphasis on church separatism and converts apodictically judging their own spiritual estates or the spiritual estates of others. One was not to look to special visions or to one's inward sensations to judge conversion, but trust in the Scriptures as interpreted by the local minister and community. While conversion could occur in an instant, the convert should submit to the long-term process of being examined for the gradual development of moral virtue as a sign of election. Such ideas were published by Jonathan Edwards in 1741 and by Jonathan Dickinson in 1742.

²⁵⁰ Kidd, "Daniel Rodgers' Egalitarian Great Awakening," 120.

²⁵¹ Smith, *The First Great Awakening in Colonial American Newspapers*, 23.

Moderate ministers also disciplined James Davenport and Andrew Croswell for challenging moderate revival tenets. New revival orthodoxy was published in July 1742 when a collection of Boston evangelical ministers asserted in their *Declaration* against Davenport that he was wrong to judge other ministers unconverted and misguided to offer converts assurance of their good estate. They wrote his chief error was “judging the spiritual state of pastors and people, and too positively and suddenly declaring concerning one and another, that they were in a converted or unconverted estate.”²⁵² The text also condemned Davenport’s followers for engaging in loud singing at night that challenged community norms. Davenport was soon arrested and expelled from Boston. Many of the same ministers who published the *Declaration* also wrote the foreword to Dickinson’s August 1742 publication, where Dickinson likened a trust in one’s inward sense of salvation to enthusiasm. When Andrew Croswell published an October response, lambasting Dickinson’s ideas as pharisaical, Croswell was roundly condemned by the ministers who supported the *Declaration*. In mid-1743, Davenport recanted his previous behaviors. In response, moderate ministers allowed him to preach once again in their pulpits and supported him as a missionary. However, Andrew Croswell persisted in emphasizing that the elect should independently judge their spiritual estate and separate into new churches. Consequently, he found himself shut out of most of Boston’s pulpits.

Finally, in addition to problems with radicals, the moderate Calvinist evangelical network oscillated between being uneasy allies and rivals to non-Calvinist evangelicals. In the early 1740s John Wesley offered an alternative, non-Calvinist revivalism and his

²⁵² *The Declaration of a number of the associated pastors of Boston and Charles-Town relating to the Rev. Mr. James Davenport and his conduct* (Boston: Kneeland & Green, 1742), 4, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University, accessed August 15, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series I, no. 4917 \(filmed\)](#).

publications attacked Calvinism. Calvinist ministers interplay with non-Calvinists helped further define their revivalism. They interacted with non-Calvinists and discovered how far they were willing to stretch their interdenominational cooperation to promote Atlantic awakenings.

The scholarly literature on the Great Awakening has done much in explaining revival as an invention in print culture through a ministerial network; however, the literature has not charted the way ministers developed their specific doctrines. Susan O'Brien suggested that "Calvinist evangelicals on both sides of the Atlantic were highly conscious of one another's activities" and "used transatlantic contacts for the discussion of theological questions."²⁵³ Similarly Frank Lambert investigated how Calvinist evangelical ministers "reported, and memorialized what they referred to as a Work of God."²⁵⁴ Thomas Kidd acknowledged the importance of conflict in developing revivalism writing, "The most interesting question in the first generation of American evangelicalism, then was what kind of movement it would become" and added how "the struggle over these questions played out chiefly between moderate and radical evangelicals."²⁵⁵ Indeed, my contention is that the doctrinal disagreement between the two groups was a catalyst for the creation of revival orthodoxy. I elucidate the specific nature of the doctrines discussed and the ones agreed upon in ministers' publications. Moderate Calvinist evangelical ministers rallied around key conversion doctrines to defend their revival vision. Jonathan Edwards initially suggested the conversion blueprint, but a number of ministers followed suit. The collective goal was to keep the

²⁵³ O'Brien, "A Transatlantic Community of Saints," 813.

²⁵⁴ Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening,"* 11.

²⁵⁵ Kidd, *The Great Awakening,* xv.

revivals supporting the formation of ordered spiritual communities and Calvinism. In the 1740s moderate Calvinist evangelical ministers publically produced a normative understanding for revivalism.

Radical Revivalism's Genesis

In the early 1740s some evangelists challenged the revivalism of moderate Calvinists. The ministers George Whitefield, Gilbert Tennent, John Cross, Jonathan Barber, James Davenport, Daniel Rodgers, Andrew Croswell, Timothy Allen, Nicholas Gilman, Benjamin Pomeroy, Eleazar Wheelock, Solomon Prentiss, and Samuel Buell all flirted with radical ideas, some of them more seriously than others. Thomas Kidd's contention that “radicals articulated two key tenets of the revolutionary age: the freedom of private judgment and the liberty to separate from established powers” seems correct and was driven partly by ministers utilizing lay action.²⁵⁶ Radicalism empowered lay spirituality. For moderate ministers lay empowerment was a mixed development, for while they liked the excitement the laity lent to community transformation, they distrusted the ways lay individuals sometimes undermined their authority and departed from what they considered normative Scriptural standards. The initially close interplay between moderate and radical ideas eventually developed into a dominant moderate perspective and an embattled radical one as a Calvinist evangelical network constructed their brand of orthodoxy in response to a perceived loss of control. From about the middle of 1741 onwards newspapers printed more letters questioning revival practices, fights within the revival camp became newsworthy, and contributors questioned the

²⁵⁶ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 268.

impact revivals were having upon ministerial authority.²⁵⁷ Lisa Smith noted the change in colonial news coverage of awakenings, which until the advent of radical preaching had been primarily positive. The radical turn also led to church schisms among Congregationalists and Presbyterians in New England and the Middle Colonies. From 1741 to 1750, forty church separations occurred in Connecticut and thirty-seven in Massachusetts.²⁵⁸ In response moderate evangelical ministers adopted a more defensive posture and attempted to bring radical ministers back into the fold or, failing this, shut them down.

In 1740, George Whitefield and Gilbert Tennent suggested a convert could correctly judge another's spiritual estate and that the converted should separate from the unconverted. In March 1740, Tennent preached the most divisive sermon of his career, *The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry*. It became an intellectual foundation for radicalism. Preached at Nottingham, Pennsylvania, Tennant argued towns that lacked regenerate ministers should be allowed to have godly ones come visit, and he separated godly laypersons and hypocritical ministers. He suggested congregants had the right to separate from unbelieving ministers and attend different churches.²⁵⁹ Tennent's language was fierce, referring to unconverted ministers as "Pharisee-shepherds ignorant of the new-birth."²⁶⁰ Put into print that year in two Philadelphia English editions by Benjamin Franklin, it went through a 1740 German-language edition in Philadelphia and was reprinted in Boston in 1742. Also, in his fall 1740 New England preaching tour,

²⁵⁷ Smith, *The First Great Awakening in Colonial American Newspapers*, 25.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 30-32.

²⁵⁹ Gilbert Tennent, *The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry* (Philadelphia: Franklin, 1740), 18-19, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University, accessed August 14, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series I, no. 4610 \(filmed\)](#).

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

Whitefield noted, “Most that preach I fear do not experimentally know Christ.”²⁶¹

Whitefield published the statement in his *Journals*. In his October 1740 visit to the Edwards’s household, while in conversation with Edwards and other ministers, Whitefield remarked that Tennent’s Nottingham sermon was unanswerable and “unconverted ministers are the bane of the Christian Church.”²⁶² In response, Edwards questioned Whitefield’s confidence in judging other persons to be unconverted.²⁶³

Gilbert Tennent germinated radicalism in his 1740-1741 winter preaching tour of New England. Daniel Rodgers’ February 1741 entries, written while he was traveling with Tennent, reveal his own growing opposition to the ordered vision of moderate revivalism. From February 10 comes the entry: “Br. Tennent preached at Mr. Webbs upon the vision of the dry bones. Note well: () Pharisees begin to be shaken.”²⁶⁴ Rodgers suggested Tennent’s preaching offered a critique of Boston’s ministers. Rodgers wrote more details about Tennent’s preaching the next day, “He preached a rousing sermon at Old South [Thomas Prince Sr. and Joseph Sewell’s Church] on the Pharisees grumble at [the] publican.”²⁶⁵ February 12’s entry read “Br. Tennent preached a public lecture wherein he boldly exhorted the ministers to come out for Christ. Evening preached at Dr. Colemans with power.”²⁶⁶ On February 13 Rodgers recounted, “He preached [at the] same place [Coleman’s] with great powers—more of the Pharisees are shocked.”²⁶⁷ Rodgers’ commentary is illuminating and his use of the term “Pharisee” is ambiguous, but seems to offer a critique of Boston’s moderate evangelicals.

²⁶¹ Whitefield, *George Whitefield’s Journals*, 485.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 480-481.

²⁶³ Jonathan Edwards, letter to Thomas Clap, October 29, 1744, in WJE 16: 157.

²⁶⁴ Rodgers, February 10, 1741, *The Diary of Daniel Rodgers*.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, February 11, 1741.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, February 12, 1741.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, February 13, 1741.

Traditionally, the Pharisees were teachers from a sect within first-century Judaism and shared significant spiritual ideals with Jesus, but they were harshly rebuked by Christ for spiritual deadness. Tennent took a similar approach in using the term. He preached against spiritual deadness in the congregations of Boston's evangelical ministers. Cooper and Colman at the Brattle Street Church, Prince and Sewell at the Old South Church, and John Webb at the New North Church were all committed Calvinist evangelicals who supported the revivals. They supported Tennent in his tour by opening their pulpits. Yet, Tennent's companion Rodgers was possibly alluding to their Pharisaical nature. Based upon the published *The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry* it made sense Rodgers might think the ministers unconverted.

Daniel Rodgers' diary also revealed how radical and moderate evangelical ministers knew each other and had worked together. Such realities complicated the response by moderates. Complex tensions were spawned between fellow ministers who were allies and friends. From April 1 to April 14, 1742, Rodgers recounted interactions with a number of ministers in the Boston area. He implied he shared similar values with those ministers even though some were becoming radical while others remained moderate. He recounted, "Came to Charlestown [a town outside of Boston] where I met with Br. Crosswell and Buel, the latter preached in the evening with great power upon the resurrection of Lazarus. There was a great appearance of the presence of our Lord in the congregation."²⁶⁸ Here Rodgers recounted his meeting with two important radical ministers. Yet on April 14, he "Dined at Mr. Webbs, had conversation with diverse ministers about the work of God" and then had a "Particular conversation with Mr

²⁶⁸ Rodgers, April 1, 1742, *The Diary of Daniel Rodgers*.

Cooper relating to the work of God.”²⁶⁹ John Webb, pastor of Boston’s New North Church and Rodgers’ erstwhile mentor was a stalwart moderate. So was William Cooper, co-pastor of the Brattle Street Church with Benjamin Colman. The diary entries suggest membership in the radical or moderate evangelical Calvinist network remained relatively fluid in early 1742 and the fact that Rodgers referred positively to both sets of ministers’ testified to important values bonding the groups together.

Nevertheless, public statements by Whitefield and Tennent in 1740 and early 1741 created the context for radicalism. Emboldened by Tennent and Whitefield’s print proclamations, from the middle of 1741 onwards radical ministers began to use an inverted jeremiad to challenge the faith of ministers and called on believing congregants to separate. (In an inverted jeremiad, laity and radical ministers accused other ministers of being unconverted and in need of repentance.)²⁷⁰ For moderate Calvinist evangelicals the inverted jeremiad was dreadful. It threatened to overturn everything they hoped the revivals would promote, particularly respect for Scripture, strengthening established ministers, and restoring community order. Whitefield and Tennant stopped short of endorsing a complete inverted jeremiad. Neither attacked other ministers by name or advocated specific church schisms and both assumed ministerial conversion was a precondition for a revival. More radical ministers like Daniel Rodgers and James Davenport did not assume that the local minister must direct revivals. As Stout and Onuf wrote “Whitefield, following Tennent, attacked unconverted ministers *as a class* ... Davenport discovered that attacks on the spiritual condition of *particular* ministers

²⁶⁹ Ibid., April 14, 1742.

²⁷⁰ Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 210-211.

produced conversions.”²⁷¹ The logic of Davenport’s revivalism was premised on attacking the local minister as unregenerate and stealing parts of his flock.²⁷² Whitefield and Tennent would come to reject the inverted jeremiad, but their early revival tours released the genie of radicalism from the bottle. It would lead moderate Calvinist ministers to respond by excluding radical separatism as beyond the pale of acceptability.

True radicalism first appeared with James Davenport in the summer of 1741. In May 1740, Whitefield met Davenport, who was leading his first revival on Long Island. The meeting energized Davenport and he thereafter began to receive what he considered direct revelations from the Holy Spirit. Davenport began making explicit distinctions between those he regarded as saved versus those he thought damned. He named the saved ‘sister’ or ‘brother,’ and others he termed ‘neighbor.’ Davenport had an impressive pedigree, descending from John Davenport (1597-1670), the founder of the New Haven Colony, and graduating near the top of his Yale class in 1732. Despite this heritage, Davenport would do much to thwart the attempt by moderates to support controlled community revival. Davenport began a dramatic preaching tour of Connecticut in July 1741 where he summoned ministers to him to recount their spiritual experiences so that he might judge whether they were converted. Most ministers refused to come and Davenport denounced them publically urging their congregants to leave them.²⁷³ One minister persuaded by his words was Andrew Crosswell, who decided to take up the pen for radicalism. Davenport’s approach was in some ways an extension of techniques

²⁷¹ Harry S. Stout and Peter Onuf, “James Davenport and the Great Awakening in New London,” *The Journal of American History*, 70, (December 1983): 566.

²⁷² Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 275-276.

²⁷³ C.C. Goen, introduction, in WJE 4: 52.

learned from Whitefield, but he altered their meaning.²⁷⁴ Specifically, Davenport lifted revival out of the context of restoring community and posited an inverted jeremiad. Stout and Onuf noted that “Davenport’s success depended on the unregenerate status of his colleagues. Indeed, in the new order the spiritual pretensions of born-again laymen were inherently more credible than the claims of “hireling” (tax-supported) preachers.”²⁷⁵ Soon most ministers denied Davenport access to their pulpits and he was forced to preach in fields and barns.²⁷⁶ Besides meeting in peculiar places, Davenport’s followers publically announced their regenerate estate and reported trances and visions and sang hymns at all hours, disrupting their neighbors’ sleep.²⁷⁷ The hymns also departed from the traditional notion of conversion as a lifelong spiritual pilgrimage, but instead emphasized the immediacy of the new birth. One song praised the gift of the Holy Ghost singing, “The Comforter is come. Down from above the blessed Dove is come into my breast.”²⁷⁸ Completing the assurance of election was a polemical ending, “Cordial drop revives my heart, once all my joys do spring. Such joys as are unspeakable, and full of glory too; such hidden Manna, hidden pearls as Worldlings do not know.”²⁷⁹ Davenport’s followers expressed special insight, judged their individual election as certain and

²⁷⁴ Stout and Onuf, “James Davenport and the Great Awakening in New London,” 566.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Hedge preaching had roots in the 1566 wonder year in the Netherlands and Howell Harris and George Whitefield helped reintroduce the practice to the eighteenth-century, British Atlantic. But unlike Davenport in his 1741 revival tours, George Whitefield preached in a position of honor in many churches during his 1739-41 colonial revival tours.

²⁷⁷ Stout and Onuf, “James Davenport and the Great Awakening in New London,” 567; C.C. Goen, introduction, in WJE 4: 52.

²⁷⁸ James Davenport, *A song of praise for joy in the Holy Ghost -- A song of praise for peace of conscience* (Boston: Daniel Fowle and Gamalie Rodgers, 1742), 1, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University, accessed August 14, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 4929 \(filmed\)](#).

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 1-2.

condemned the larger community as unregenerate.²⁸⁰

Daniel Rodgers' itinerant preaching was also truly radical and blurred racial boundaries, undermined sexual hierarchies, and empowered female speech. Rodgers believed the Holy Spirit in special and remarkable dispensations blessed social outcasts. In analyzing the phenomenon, Thomas Kidd remarked, "in the heat of the revivals, Rodgers believed that God called him to minister to any receptive audience regardless of social conventions."²⁸¹ In March of 1741, Rodgers preached without distinction to "Negroes and Indians and whites in a hot room."²⁸² Revivals by Rodgers' friend Nicolas Gilman, minister of Durham, New Hampshire, positioned female spiritual power even more prominently.²⁸³ Gilman's congregant Mary Reed publically led her minister and congregation through the spiritual meanings of her dreams.²⁸⁴ Such practices became radical doctrines on continuing revelations and dream mysticism. Altogether radical views combined to shock moderate Calvinist evangelical ministers who would respond by gradually labeling the practices enthusiastic.

Radicals also challenged church unity. Accepting the doctrine that lone individuals were able to ascertain their new birth unaided meant it was a very small step to advocate that the converted should separate themselves into their own churches. Entries in Rodgers' diary from February 3 and 4, 1742, transcribed a contentious correspondence Rodgers had with Theophilus Pickering. Pickering, the pastor of Chebacco parish, led a church adjacent to the revival Daniel Rodgers and his brother

²⁸⁰ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 112. It was at one of Davenport's divisive Connecticut revivals that the future Baptist leader Isaac Backus was converted in 1741.

²⁸¹ Kidd, "Daniel Rodgers' Egalitarian Great Awakening," 111.

²⁸² Rodgers, March 27, 1741, *The Diary of Daniel Rodgers*.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, July 1742.

²⁸⁴ Kidd, "Daniel Rodgers' Egalitarian Great Awakening," 118.

Nathaniel Rodgers (also an itinerant minister) were overseeing at Ipswich. In early 1742, several of Pickering's congregants asked for the two brothers to come and preach, but Pickering was having none of it and banned Daniel and Nathaniel from his church. Over the summer, a number of Chebacco's congregants ignored Pickering's directions and set up separate meetings. Preachers who came to visit the separatists included Nathaniel Rodgers, Daniel Rodgers, and James Davenport. Andrew Croswell also wrote a letter to Daniel and Nathaniel Rodgers on September 23 about Chebacco, praising them for subverting commands by unregenerate ministers who wished to keep people from heaven.²⁸⁵ By early 1746, some of Chebacco's congregants had broken from Pickering and created a new church headed by radical minister John Cleaveland.²⁸⁶

As already attested, Davenport rattled Yale with a week of divisive meetings at the beginning of September 1741. Soon students borrowed his method of judging the spirituality of social superiors as the papers negatively reported on the activities.²⁸⁷ Political and ecclesiastical leaders gathered to stop the disturbance and in early 1742, the Connecticut Assembly, with an eye trained on Davenport's performance, passed a law forbidding Connecticut itinerants from preaching in churches without the pastor's permission and outlawed all non-Connecticut itinerants from preaching in the colony at

²⁸⁵ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 174-176.

²⁸⁶ It is worthy of note that radicalism emerged in New England and the middle colonies and was not a problem in either Scotland or England. Indeed Michael Crawford noted how the Scottish evangelical clergy "recognized enthusiastic tendencies among some of the laity, which they fairly successfully controlled through pastoral counseling and theological instruction." See Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 216. Another possible explanation for why radicalism was absent from Scotland is that the chief group most inclined to be radical revivalists were the Marrowmen. But due to the peculiar situation of Scotland's ecclesiastical situation and a falling out with George Whitefield, the Marrowmen became antirevivalists. The explanation for the Marrowmen's turn to antirevivalism will be further elucidated in chapter 4.

²⁸⁷ Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 233; Smith, *The First Great Awakening in Colonial American Newspapers*, 8.

all.²⁸⁸ Lisa Smith wrote that from 1741 onwards “the increased controversy surrounding the Awakening and the turn toward more negative reporting and more debate changed how the revival appeared in the newspapers.”²⁸⁹ The situation severely damaged the public perception of revivalism and forced the moderate Calvinist ministers to formulate revival orthodoxy to combat what they perceived as error.

The Moderate Calvinist Response

From mid-1741 onwards, colonial newspapers reported on Davenport with glee and often portrayed his personal foibles. This probably added to the urgency with which moderate Calvinist ministers responded.²⁹⁰ Moderate ministers felt a need to disassociate their revivalism from the emerging print portrait and alternatively create an orthodoxy describing right revival beliefs and practices. Jonathan Edwards’s *Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* was the first response. His taxonomy of conversion illuminated what he (and many members of the network) viewed as errors. The text revealed Edwards engaged in the work of explaining true and false signs of conversion. His goal was to ascertain how one could judge if a true revival had occurred and Edwards presented a hastily written draft at Yale in mid-September. His speech attempted to simultaneously mollify an audience irate at Davenport’s visit, distance the revivals from radicalism, and defend what Edwards considered legitimate spiritual experiences.²⁹¹ In

²⁸⁸ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 141.

²⁸⁹ Smith, *The First Great Awakening in Colonial American Newspapers*, 25.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁹¹ Ava Chamberlain, “Self-Deception as a Theological Problem in Jonathan Edwards’s Treatise Concerning Religious Affections,” *Church History* 63, (1994): 541-542. Chamberlain did excellent work explaining how Edwards found himself in a two-front war against radicals and antirevivalists and attempted to walk a narrow line between them. My own work reveals how Edwards’s *Distinguishing Marks* was

cooperation with Boston printer Samuel Kneeland and Minister William Cooper, Edwards published an extended form of the address that November.²⁹²

Edwards divided *Distinguishing Marks* into three parts and reasserted a controlled revivalism and rebutted ostensible signs radicals claimed validated their inspiration. He said it was neither positive nor negative that there were bodily motions in the revivals.²⁹³ He wrote that peak emotional experiences were not necessary for conversion (since the momentary feeling was unreliable) and that it was acceptable not to feel saved. He affirmed that Davenport's followers were fellow believers but depreciated their trust in special inspirations writing, "Some of the true friends of the work of God's Spirit have erred in giving heed to impulses and strong impressions on their minds, as though they were immediate significations from heaven." Indeed, in his 1738 sermon series *Charity and Its Fruits*, Edwards mentioned that the Spirit's special gifts were no longer present writing, "extraordinary gifts of the Spirit are the same with miraculous gifts; such as gifts of prophecy and working miracles ... but since the canon of the Scripture has been completed, and the Christian church fully founded and established, those extraordinary gifts have ceased."²⁹⁴ He also remarked "Scriptures, when they come to the mind, let them come ever so suddenly, and with ever so great impression, are not to be taken as revealing any more to us than is contained in them as they lie in the Bible."²⁹⁵ In *Distinguishing Marks* his language was fiercer. He wrote, "Every text is a dart to torment

embraced by a number of moderate Calvinist ministers who came to see it as the definitive guide for how to judge a true revival in the Great Awakening.

²⁹² Kneeland was an evangelical printer who had already cooperated with Colman in publishing *A Faithful Narrative* in 1736 and 1738, and Cooper was Benjamin Colman's co-pastor.

²⁹³ Jonathan Edwards, *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, in WJE 4: 228-248.

²⁹⁴ Jonathan Edwards, *Charity and its Fruits* in *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 8, Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 153, hereafter referred to as WJE.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 168.

the old serpent: he has felt the stinging smart thousands of times therefore he is enraged against the Bible and hates every word in it . . . accordingly we see it to be common in enthusiasts that they depreciate this written rule and set up the light within.”²⁹⁶ Claiming special revelations beyond Scripture’s writ were satanic error, Edwards asserted it was supremely important that a revival have converts show love and concern for the existing community. He wrote, “If the spirit that is at work among a people operates as a spirit of love to God and man, 'tis a sure sign that 'tis the Spirit of God. This sign the Apostle insists upon from the 7th verse to the end of the chapter: “Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, Knoweth not God.””²⁹⁷ Edwards asserted that radicals condemning their neighbors were offering countersigns to the Spirit’s work.

Edwards’ ideas influenced a number of Yale students and gained the support of moderate ministers. At Yale College, Samuel Hopkins, Samuel Buell, and David Brainerd were won over to Edwards’s perspective. In the November preface, William Cooper praised Edwards as one of a cadre of preachers who “have appeared among us, to whom God has given such a large measure of his Spirit.”²⁹⁸ Cooper felt moved to personally endorse Edwards’s ideas as the way to advance right revivalism. Cooper noted a revival should have a preacher stress human guilt and supernatural rebirth to bring changed moral dispositions and positive social amelioration, including reducing tavern haunting, dancing, and night walking.²⁹⁹ Cooper announced that Edwards’s analysis had been “tried by the infallible touchstone of the Holy Scriptures, and is

²⁹⁶ Edwards, *The Distinguishing Marks*, in WJE 4: 254.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 255.

²⁹⁸ William Cooper, introduction, *Distinguishing Marks*, in WJE 4: 218.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 221

weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, with great judgment and impartiality.”³⁰⁰

Benjamin Colman, William Cooper’s co-pastor, sent copies of the publication to friends in London and Isaac Watts responded to it enthusiastically, “Let a man read Mr. Cooper’s preface to Mr. Edwards’s book of the *Trial of the Spirits*, & the book itself; ... and see if [he] can fairly exclude some uncommon, almighty, converting work of the great God from these scenes.”³⁰¹ Additionally, George Whitefield (chastened and firmly back in the moderate camp) published an edition of Edwards’s text in London in May 1742.³⁰² Two Scottish editions of *Distinguishing Marks* appeared in the late spring. The Scottish preface was written by the Reverend John Wilson of Dundee who praised the discourse as an excellent performance.

A number of Scottish evangelicals followed Edwards’s program affirming the presence of revival signs among their parishioners. In a February 28, 1743 letter to Colman, published in Boston’s *Christian History*, John Willison informed him that while the Scottish revivals occasionally produced conversions with bodily motions, they were nevertheless conversions of the right sort. Willison wrote, “The awakening of people have been in a good many attended with outcryings, fainting and bodily distresses, but in many more the work had proceeded with more calmness. But the effects in both sorts are alike good and desirable, and hitherto we hear nothing of their falling back from what they have proffered at the beginning.”³⁰³ Willison shared a commitment to moral transformation and believed that converts should morally improve and not fall “back from what they have proffered at the beginning.” In an August 16, 1743 letter to

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 223.

³⁰¹ Isaac Watts, September 14, 1743 letter to Benjamin Colman, in PMHS, 401.

³⁰² Whitefield, *A vindication and confirmation of the remarkable work of God in New-England*, 4.

³⁰³ John Willison, February 28, 1743 letter to Benjamin Colman, *The Christian history*, 86.

Edwards (also published in *Christian History*), James Robe stressed that the Scottish revivals had proceeded in the same mode delineated by Edwards. Robe wrote, “What you write about the trial of extraordinary joys and raptures by their concomitants and effects, is most solid; and our practice by all I know, hath been to conform to it.”³⁰⁴ Robe mentioned the correspondence between himself, John MacLaurin, and Edwards concerning the discussion about how to judge what constituted right revivalism and noted the wide dissemination of Edwards’s text throughout Scotland.³⁰⁵ The published Cambuslang and Kilsyth narratives also put new emphasis upon testing a convert’s exercises of grace and stressed that converts must persevere in manifesting positive behaviors and upholding Scriptural authority. In the two published narratives an individual’s new birth was judged genuine only by the attestation of the minister. Indeed because of radical behavior, from 1742 until the end of the decade, William McCulloch set about gathering testimonies from 108 of his parishioners on their experiences in the Cambuslang revival to determine whether an adherent was genuinely saved apart from the individual’s own internal sense. Assembling 1200 pages of testimonies, McCulloch engaged in shared conversation with other moderate ministers and discussed omitting material they considered objectionable and publishing testimony they viewed as exemplary.³⁰⁶ The testimonies were never published, but the larger process of constructing an idealized moderate portrait of conversion continued and culminated in Edwards’s 1749 publication of the *Diary of David Brainerd*. McCulloch’s suggestions for distinguishing people converted from people guilty of enthusiasm were published in a

³⁰⁴ James Robe, extract of August 16, 1743 letter to Jonathan Edwards, *The Christian history*, 359.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 360.

³⁰⁶ Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, 117.

July 14, 1742 letter in his *Glasgow Weekly History* and republished in Boston's *Christian History* where McCulloch followed the signs of conversion suggested by Edwards.³⁰⁷

Ministers used Edwards's distinctions between true and false conversion signs as part of a growing moderate reaction to radicalism. In 1742, 1743, and 1744, William Cooper, Benjamin Colman, Thomas Prince Sr., Thomas Prince Jr., Isaac Watts, John Willison, James Robe, John MacLaurin, and William McCulloch grudgingly affirmed that bodily shakes could occur in revivals, but emphasized that conversion must instill godly dispositions and Scriptural primacy. Since moderate Calvinist ministers controlled the new revival journals, their ideas were carried within the magazines and Thomas Kidd wrote, "Prince's *Christian History* served the interests of moderate evangelicals by downplaying the frequency of bodily exercises and enthusiastic outbursts."³⁰⁸ *Christian History's* January 14, 21, and 28, 1744 issues further emphasized moderate revival when a December 12, 1743 letter Jonathan Edwards sent to Thomas Prince Sr. was serialized and James Robe also published the letter in his *Christian Monthly History* in 1745. In the letter, Edwards delineated how the spiritual renewal at Northampton concluded in the people signing a March 1742 covenant.³⁰⁹ Specifically, the covenant affirmed exacting moral standards that displayed a synoptic vision of what moderates thought a community revival should be.³¹⁰ In the vision, converts, because of the transforming love of Christ, joyfully submitted to rule by the ordained minister with Scripture becoming the norm for guiding behavior. Edwards wrote that conversion could never be ascertained by what the

³⁰⁷ William McCulloch, July 14, 1742 letter on the Sacrament in Glasgow, *Glasgow Weekly History* No. 39, reprinted in *The Christian history*, 294.

³⁰⁸ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 100-101.

³⁰⁹ Jonathan Edwards, December 12, 1743 letter to Thomas Prince Sr., *The Christian history*, 115.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 122-123,

affected individual “supposed to be the first conversion, but that we [minister and community] must judge more by the spirit that breathes, the effect wrought on the temper of soul, in the time of the work, and remaining afterwards.”³¹¹ The 1743 Northampton letter was a way by which ministers verified one was an acceptable revivalist.

In August 1742, New Jersey minister Jonathan Dickinson wrote his own publication defending moderate revival. In 1740 Dickinson had shared his misgivings of George Whitefield’s judging of another’s spiritual estates to Thomas Foxcroft. But in an April 1742 letter to Foxcroft, Dickinson shared a new fear, writing that some of the newer radicals “think me not warm and zealous enough to be in a converted state.”³¹² While continuing to support revivalism, Dickinson bemoaned the failings of radicals and searched for a public means of separating revivalism from the scandal that the public papers started to heap upon revivalists in 1741.

Dickinson was particularly bothered by John Cross’s situation. As testified in Daniel Rodgers’ diary, John Cross was an evangelical minister who owned a barn where Rodgers had a powerful experience of the Spirit in October 1740. George Whitefield, Gilbert Tennent, and James Davenport had all attended the meeting.³¹³ Soon afterwards, Cross was charged by his New Brunswick Presbytery with adultery. More complaints were made throughout 1741 and the Presbytery brought Cross before the Philadelphia Synod, which suspended him from the ministry on June 23, 1742.³¹⁴ Infamously, colonial newspapers reported that Cross told a virgin she had to be a notorious sinner to

³¹¹ Jonathan Edwards, December 12, 1743 letter to Thomas Prince Sr., in WJE 16: 126.

³¹² Jonathan Dickinson, April 1742 letter to Thomas Foxcroft, Thomas Foxcroft Correspondence.

³¹³ Rodgers, November 1740, The Diary of Daniel Rodgers.

³¹⁴ Richard Webster, *A History of the Presbyterian Church in America: From its origin until the year 1760 with biographical sketches of its early ministers* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1858), 413.

receive salvation and then had sexual relations with her.³¹⁵ The coverage hurt the revivalist cause and Dickinson noted to Foxcroft that, “Mr. Cross has doubtless been an unhappy instrument of great prejudice to the interests of religion in these lands. He is at present silent, has left off preaching at present with a view (as I hear) to be reformed by the Synod.”³¹⁶ The Cross affair was bad news for Dickinson, who saw the personal scandals greedily used by antirevivalists to discredit the movement, but it did shake Gilbert Tennent out of his trust in radicalism. In the midst of the scandal (in February 1742), Tennent wrote Dickinson a penitential letter wherein he repudiated his previous behavior and condemned Davenport’s 1741 summer revival tour.³¹⁷ Dickinson noted to Foxcroft, “Mr. Tennent has not lately been abroad ... appears of a cool and catholic Spirit and ready to submit.”³¹⁸ Dickinson probably hoped Tennent’s repentance might heal the evangelical breach in a moderate direction.

With that end in mind, Dickinson published *A Display of God’s Special Grace* in August where he positively portrayed moderate Calvinist revivalism and attacked radical ideas. Dickinson’s publication was supported by Boston’s moderate evangelical ministers who wrote the foreword. In it Benjamin Colman, Joseph Sewall, Thomas Prince Sr., John Webb, William Cooper, Thomas Foxcroft, and Joshua Gee acknowledged that Dickinson was following a path blazed by Jonathan Edwards in laying out marks for how to judge the Atlantic revivals. The Boston ministers wrote:

The Grand question is,----Whether it be a Work of God, and how far it is so? ... Here rightly to distinguish is a matter of no small difficulty; and

³¹⁵ Smith, *The First Great Awakening in Colonial American Newspapers*, 24.

³¹⁶ Dickinson, April 1742 letter to Thomas Foxcroft, Thomas Foxcroft Correspondence.

³¹⁷ Bryan LeBeau, *Jonathan Dickinson and the Formative Years of American Presbyterianism* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 132-133.

³¹⁸ Dickinson, April 1742 letter to Thomas Foxcroft, Thomas Foxcroft Correspondence.

requires both a scriptural knowledge of, and an experimental acquaintance with the things of the Spirit of God. Mr. Edwards's *Discourse* concerning the distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God, has met with deserv'd acceptance, and been of great use.---The following performance, by another dear and reverend brother in a different part of the country, is also, in our opinion, exceeding well adapted to serve the same design, viz. to help people to judge of the present Work, whether, and how far it is of God.³¹⁹

Moderate Calvinist evangelical ministers judged that Dickinson and Edwards authored acceptable defenses of revivalism and excluded enthusiasm.

Dickinson's publication reinforced moderate revivalism and his second section refuted radicalism. In it, there was a dialogue between Theophilus (Dickinson's moderate mouthpiece), Epinetus (who had just experienced the new birth), and Libertinus (a libertine exemplifying the radical position). Theophilus defended the moderate position from Libertinus' attacks that the moderates were not believers. Andrew Crosswell (covertly portrayed as Libertinus) had already published a number of tracts defending a radical position, arguing that doing good works were absolutely of no consequence to salvation, that believers were always certain of their salvation, and charged moderates with Phariseeism, a hypocritical observance of morality without regard for the Spirit.³²⁰ Dickinson had Theophilus defend the point that conversion

³¹⁹ Benjamin Colman, Joseph Sewall, Thomas Prince Sr., John Webb, William Cooper, Thomas Foxcroft, and Joshua Gee, *A Display of God's Special Grace* (Boston: Rodgers & Fowle, 1742), i-ii, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University, accessed August 15, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 4931 \(filmed\)](#).

³²⁰ Andrew Crosswell, *A Letter from the Revd Mr. Crosswell, to the Revd Mr. Turell, in answer to his direction to his people* (Boston: Rodgers & Fowle, 1742), in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University accessed August 15, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 4925 \(filmed\)](#); Andrew Crosswell, *Mr. Crosswell's Reply to a Book lately publish'd, entitled, A display of God's special grace, attested by the seven following ministers of Boston, viz. Dr. Colman, Dr. Sewall, Mr. Prince, Mr. Webb, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Foxcroft, and Mr. Gee* (Boston: Rodgers & Fowle, 1742), in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University, accessed August 15, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 4926 \(filmed\)](#); Andrew Crosswell, *Mr. Crosswell's reply to the Declaration of a number of the associated ministers in Boston and Charlestown, with regard to the Rev. Mr. James Davenport and his conduct. With a short conference between Mr. Crosswell and some of the*

required understanding that one was a sinner and led to the believer's lifelong pilgrimage in grace.³²¹ Libertinus declaimed against Theophilus that "you teach, that men may be true believers, and yet not know that they have saving faith: And on the contrary, that they may have a joyful persuasion they are interested in Christ; and yet be unbelievers."³²² This was precisely the position of Dickinson, Edwards, and other moderate revivalists. Additionally, Dickinson feared the radicals were opening up the gate to social chaos and had Theophilus exclaim "what dreadful Work would those strange doctrines make in the World, if men should be generally acted and influenced by them? The Lord deliver us from such loose and dangerous principles!" And in another passage Dickinson had Theophilus decry the radicals as "Ranters, Muggletonians, and Familists!"³²³

The moderate Calvinist response continued to fear the radicalism Davenport sowed. Davenport returned to Connecticut in May 1742 accompanied by fellow minister Benjamin Pomeroy. The Connecticut Court promptly had Davenport arrested and deported back to Long Island. However, Davenport's deportation did not deter him from setting out for Boston. That July, fourteen moderate Boston evangelical ministers censured Davenport in a *Declaration* and banned him from preaching in their pulpits.

The ministers used the redoubtable Kneeland as their publisher and attacked Davenport

abovesaid ministers relating to the Church of England clergy, &c (Boston: Rodgers & Fowle, 1742), in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University, accessed August 15, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series I, no. 4928 \(filmed\)](#).

³²¹ Jonathan Dickinson, *A Display of God's Special Grace*, 86-87, 89.

³²² *Ibid.*, 90.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 110. The Familists were a sixteenth-century sect asserting all things were ruled by nature and not God (they denied the Trinity). The Ranters were a sect during the Commonwealth Era (1649–1659) who thought God was in every creature, denied Scriptural authority, and called on individuals to hearken to the Jesus within. The Muggletonians were a group that grew out of the Ranters and thought God took no notice of everyday events and would only intervene at the end of the world.

for “leaving his flock so often,” “judging the spiritual state of pastors,” and “stumbling the minds of many and alienating the hearts of others.”³²⁴ They added he had “not acted prudently, but to the disservice of religion, by going with his friends singing thro’ the streets.”³²⁵ Among the signers were Benjamin Colman, Joseph Sewall, Thomas Prince Sr., John Webb, William Cooper, Thomas Foxcroft, and Joshua Gee. Ministers who were central actors in disseminating *A Faithful Narrative* and spreading Whitefield’s fame were struggling to keep their ordered revivalism in place.

Andrew Croswell responded to the *Declaration* in a vigorous printed defense of Davenport that offered a public counter-narrative. Croswell provocatively raised the issue of ministerial hypocrisy since a year and a half earlier the *Declaration* authors had opened their pulpits to similar preaching from George Whitefield and Gilbert Tennent. Croswell charged the *Declaration* ministers with cowardice and a failure to name unregenerate ministers unconverted.³²⁶ From June to August, the level of tension between radicals and moderates increased in Boston as Davenport continued to preach in private homes and several ministers came out in support of him including Samuel Buell, Eleazar Wheelock, Benjamin Pomeroy, and Daniel Rodgers.³²⁷

A picture of growing conflict between moderate and radical revival poles comes into focus with Rodgers’ diary entries from July and August. On July 28, 29, and 31, Rodgers met with a number of Boston’s moderate evangelicals to persuade them to support Davenport. On July 28, Rodgers “Gave a word of exhortation and my testimony

³²⁴ *The Declaration*, 3-4.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

³²⁶ Croswell, *Mr. Croswell’s Reply to the Declaration*, 3-6.

³²⁷ Several radical ministers partook in only a brief sojourn in radicalism and included Eleazar Wheelock and Samuel Buell who both remained friends and correspondents with Jonathan Edwards and who both repudiated Davenport’s actions by the end of 1742.

for Mr. Davenport.”³²⁸ The following day Rodgers went and “Visited Mr Sewall.” Sewall was the co-pastor with Thomas Prince Sr. of Boston’s Old South Church, and during the visit, Rodgers probably tried to persuade Sewall to support Davenport. Rodgers admitted attempting persuasion with Thomas Prince Sr. on July 31, “Visited Mr Prince and discoursed with him relating to the *Declaration* of the Boston ministers concerning Br. Davenport. Received no satisfaction. Dined with the secretary [Josiah Willard].”³²⁹ Rodgers confronting Prince over failing to support Davenport produced negative consequences. With chagrin, Rodgers noted on August 1, “None of the Boston [ministers are] asking me to preach except Mr Morehead, as I understood by Mr. Webb, because I adhered to Mr. Davenport.”³³⁰ Rodgers was shut out of pulpits. The diary entries suggest an agreement among moderate ministers to exclude marked radicals and reflect a growing hostility to Davenport.

Indeed, the majority of Boston’s ministers, both evangelical and non-evangelical, had come to dislike Davenport intensely. From August 19 to 21, 1742, they collectively reached their limit with him. On August 19, Davenport began to list specific ministers as unconverted, putting the moderates Benjamin Colman and Joseph Sewall into the same category of the damned as the antirevivalist Charles Chauncy. On August 20, he labeled nine other ministers unregenerate and on August 21, Davenport was charged with slander, arrested, and locked up.³³¹ In his diary from August 21, Daniel Rodgers grieved, “Brother Davenport was confined at Boston.”³³² On September 2, a Boston court

³²⁸ Ibid., July 28, 1742.

³²⁹ Ibid., July 31, 1742.

³³⁰ Ibid., August 1, 1742.

³³¹ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 146.

³³² Rodgers, August 21, 1742, *The Diary of Daniel Rodgers*.

declared Davenport *non compos mentis* (to not be of sound mind) and sent him back to his parish at Southold, Long Island.

By the fall of 1742, distinctions between radicals and moderates had hardened. That October, Croswell published a scathing denunciation of Dickinson's *A Display of God's Special Grace*. A number of radicals penned the introductory foreword, including Timothy Allen, Timothy Symmes, John Curtis, Eleazar Wheelock, and Benjamin Pomeroy, who stated Dickinson's book, contained "dangerous doctrines destructive to the souls of men."³³³ Specifically, the ministers shared a fear the book was stifling the Holy Spirit through an overreliance on the specific words of Scripture. Additionally, Timothy Allen, Andrew Croswell himself, Timothy Symmes, and John Curtis went further asserting that "putting persons upon finding out their justification by their sanctification (in such a manner as they have done) hath a direct tendency to make the many thousands of strict Pharisees into whose hands that book may come, easy and quiet in their minds."³³⁴ Moderates' use of good works as a sign of conversion was bad and was "putting persons upon finding out their justification by their sanctification." It led to searching for signs of moral improvement, which the radicals viewed as Phariseeism (the spiritual deadness of carnal hypocrites). However both Eleazar Wheelock and Benjamin Pomeroy dissented from affirming the point and both ministers would soon return to the moderate fold. Leigh Eric Schmidt suggested that Andrew Croswell was actually a more central radical than James Davenport since he published more tracts.³³⁵ Croswell's

³³³ Timothy Allen, Timothy Symmes, John Curtis, Eleazar Wheelock, and Benjamin Pomeroy, *Foreword to Mr. Croswell's Reply to a Book*, 3.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

³³⁵ Leigh Eric Schmidt, "'A Second and Glorious Reformation': The New Light Extremism of Andrew Croswell," *William and Mary Quarterly* 43, (April 1986): 214-215.

pamphlets (published in Boston by Rodgers & Fowle) worked to “incite ever more bitter hostility to the Awakening and to temper greatly its support among moderates.”³³⁶

Croswell’s picture of conversion was quite unlike that of Edwards and Dickinson who saw faith as an arduous pilgrimage, but Croswell’s publications complemented Davenport’s preaching in directly attacking the moderate revival vision.

In early 1743, despite warnings from the Connecticut Assembly never to return to the colony, Davenport visited the Shepherd’s Tent at New London. Much like William Tennent Sr.’s Log College, a school which had been established in 1727 in Pennsylvania to train Presbyterian evangelicals, the Shepherd’s Tent (created in 1742) was a Connecticut school for revivalism, but more radical. Overseen by Davenport’s friend Timothy Allen the school encouraged students to partake in dreams, visions, and discounted book learning. Student numbers swelled as disgruntled ex-Yale students and members of the lower orders joined. Historian Thomas Kidd suggested the student body may have even included women and slaves.³³⁷ On the New London wharf on March 6, 1743, Davenport ordered the students to purify themselves through burning idolatrous books and into the fire went works by Increase Mather, Jonathan Dickinson, and Benjamin Colman. The following day, Davenport attempted to throw clothing into the blaze, including his breaches. Yet taking off his clothes led a woman in the crowd to rebuke him and the throng’s fervor dispelled. The Shepherd’s Tent folded soon afterwards (partly from local and moderate pressure).³³⁸

There was a benefit for moderate evangelicals however, in Davenport’s final

³³⁶ Ibid., 222.

³³⁷ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 142.

³³⁸ Ibid., 154.

radical act, for in the middle of 1743, tired and discouraged, Davenport remarked to other evangelical ministers that he regretted his extravagances and was sad antirevivalists had used his behaviors to attack revivalism. A number of Calvinist ministers suggested that Davenport publically testify to his remorse and Davenport agreed, publishing a series of retractions the following year, entitled *Retractions and Confessions* (1744). Davenport's repudiation of radicalism was fully covered by *Christian History* and the *Christian Monthly History*, undoubtedly a strategic move by Thomas Prince Sr., Thomas Prince Jr., and James Robe. In many ways, *Retractions and Confessions* served as the supreme attempt for evangelical ministers to contain the damage from radicalism. Published in Boston, the preface consisted of an August 1744 letter from the Reverend Solomon Williams to Thomas Prince Sr. announcing that Davenport wished to publish his errors. Williams wrote, "He is full, and free in it, and seems to be deeply sensible of his miscarriages, and misconduct in those particulars, and very desirous to do all he possibly can to retrieve the dishonor which he has done to religion."³³⁹ In the text, Davenport affirmed there had been a genuine spirit-inspired revival, but quickly transitioned to bemoaning practices proceeding from a "false Spirit."³⁴⁰ The false spirit had persuaded him to embrace evil ideas including publically exposing ministers as unconverted, advising lay separations from ministers, listening to private impulses without Scriptural parameters, advocating lay exhorting, and singing loudly in the streets at night.³⁴¹

³³⁹ Solomon Williams, *The Reverend Mr. James Davenport's Confession & Retractions* (Boston: Printed by Kneeland and Green, 1744), 2, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University, accessed August 15, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 5374 \(filmed\)](#).

³⁴⁰ James Davenport, *The Reverend Mr. James Davenport's Confession & Retractions*, 3.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 4-6,

Soon after it became known Davenport was publishing his retractions, most moderate ministers received him back into the fold. Moderates were willing to receive repentant radicals back into the network. On July 13, 1744, Jonathan Edwards mentioned to Eleazar Wheelock (Wheelock himself had repented of radicalism the previous year) that Davenport was reformed:

Mr. Davenport is truly very much altered; I am affected to see the happy alteration and change in him; he is quite another man. It has been moving to me to see the grace of God in so subduing, humbling, and enlightening him. He really shows an excellent spirit, much to the honor and glory of God; and I believe he is now much fuller of the Spirit of God than he was in years past, when he seemed to have such a constant series of high elevations and raptures.³⁴²

Responding to Davenport's confession in a published letter, Benjamin Colman wrote that he hoped Davenport's repentance would help stem the tide of church separations "I heartily wish, that the separating brothers and sisters, from our churches may now hearken to Mr. Davenport's sober and solemn warnings to them."³⁴³ And in a March 20, 1745, letter to Benjamin Colman, Isaac Watts remarked that he had "received Mr. Davenport's retractions & your letter. I hope these things may have some good influence."³⁴⁴ Davenport was soon ministering with the approval of the SSPCK in New Jersey and Virginia to further the program of moderate revivalism. Yet Davenport's radical tours had offered another way to conceive of revivalism.

A final way the moderate Calvinist evangelical ministers responded to radicalism was in promoting a portrait of the ideal revivalist in the pages of *The Diary of David*

³⁴² Jonathan Edwards, Letter to Eleazar Wheelock, in WJE 16: 145-146.

³⁴³ Benjamin Colman, *A letter from the Reverend Dr. Colman of Boston, to the Reverend Mr. Williams of Lebanon, upon reading the confession and retractations of the Mr. Reverend James Davenport* (Boston: Printed and sold by Rogers and Fowle, 1744), 3, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University, accessed April 7, 2015, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 5368 \(filmed\)](#).

³⁴⁴ Isaac Watts, March 20, 1745 letter to Benjamin Colman, PMHS, 407.

Brainerd. The work served as the moderate network's attempt to further inoculate revivalism against enthusiasm and instantaneous conversion and strove to make a lifelong pilgrimage to God appealing. Brainerd offered the network an example of proper norms of piety developed through long commitment. The edited diary demonstrated that conversion must spur forward arduous personal change.

David Brainerd did not originally plan for a missionary vocation, but a series of life accidents led to his being chosen as a model of moderate piety. In 1742 Yale expelled him for judging various tutors unconverted. Brainerd quickly repented, but because of the recent law passed by the Connecticut Assembly that forbade ministers to be elevated to pastorates unless they had graduated from Harvard, Yale, or a comparable European institution, he was unable to find a settled pastorate.³⁴⁵ Jonathan Dickinson, Aaron Burr, Benjamin Colman, and Jonathan Edwards all interceded on Brainerd's behalf to allow for his return to Yale, but to no avail. Brainerd became a cause célèbre for revivalists and a symbol of the victimization of the awakened student. The situation added resolve to the moderate goal of founding a college more sympathetic to their needs (which they soon accomplished).³⁴⁶ After his expulsion, Brainerd went to study with the Reverend Samuel Mills of Ripton, Connecticut and in April 1743, Dickinson, Burr, and Colman (the three colonial correspondents of the SSPCK), collectively hired Brainerd as an Indian missionary.³⁴⁷ In June 1744, the Presbytery of New York ordained him and Brainerd preached to the Indians at a Housatonic settlement called Kaunameek (near

³⁴⁵ Norman Pettit, introduction, *The Life of David Brainerd in Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 7, The Life of David Brainerd* ed. Norman Pettit (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 42, hereafter referred to as WJE.

³⁴⁶ The founding of a moderate Calvinist evangelical college will be further detailed in chapter 4.

³⁴⁷ LeBeau, *Jonathan Dickinson*, 170-171

Nassau, New York) to the Delaware northeast of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and at Crossweeksung, New Jersey. His exploits were published in the SSPCK newsletter, in James Robe's periodical at Edinburgh, and in 1746 at Philadelphia by the commissioners of the society in America as *The rise and progress of a remarkable work of grace among a number of the Indians in the provinces of New Jersey and Pennsylvania*. The final publication included Brainerd's narrative from June 19, 1745 until the following June. It also contained contributions by William Tennent Jr. on Indian conversions. In November 1746, when Brainerd became too ill to continue working, he moved in with Jonathan Dickinson in Elizabethtown, New Jersey and a few months later Brainerd travelled to Jonathan Edwards's house at Northampton, Massachusetts where he died.

Brainerd's determination to carry the gospel to remote Indian settlements earned Edwards's admiration and Edwards made Brainerd posthumously famous when he published his edited diary.³⁴⁸ The first intimation Edwards planned to publish Brainerd's Diary came from Edwards's publication of Brainerd's funeral sermon *True Saints, When Absent From the Body, are Present with the Lord* (Boston, 1747). Then in a letter Edwards wrote to David Brainerd's brother John on December 14, 1747, Edwards asked him for positive biographical information to expand upon the Philadelphia publication of Brainerd's missionary work.³⁴⁹ Edwards especially wanted information of "dangers, deliverances, or restorations," from Brainerd's childhood and a "particular account of his mission to the Indians."³⁵⁰ Edwards was gathering materials for composing a Protestant hagiography to support moderate revivalism. In an August 31, 1748 letter Edwards sent

³⁴⁸ David Weddle, "The Melancholy Saint: Jonathan Edwards's Interpretation of David Brainerd as a Model of Evangelical Spirituality," *The Harvard Theological Review* 81 (July 1988): 297.

³⁴⁹ Jonathan Edwards, December 17, 1747 letter to John Brainerd, in WJE 16: 242-243.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 242.

to John Erskine, he asked Erskine to edit his sermon about Brainerd for formulation into a larger piece.³⁵¹ The modified sermon was shared with Thomas Gillespie who praised it in a fall 1748 letter to Edwards writing that he “greatly like What Mr Brainerd said ... as Mentiond I think by You in the Funeral Sermon on him Which I Perusd with a great deal of Pleasure.”³⁵² In 1748, Edwards systematically secured subscriptions for his edition of the Diary getting the support of Eleazar Wheelock, John Erskine, and Joseph Bellamy. In 1749 the diary went to press.³⁵³

Edwards used Brainerd’s diary as an illustration of an ideal convert leading an exemplary life to popularize the moderate interpretation of piety. The publication contained Brainerd’s letters where Brainerd praised the process of searching for abiding signs of character transformation by which to detect the presence of true faith.³⁵⁴ Brainerd’s life became a model of living through a changed character. In an explanatory footnote, Edwards explicitly announced how the publication was a powerful blast against radical revival distortions “what Mr. Brainerd here says of that discourse shows very fully and particularly what his notions were of experimental religion and the nature of true piety, and how far he was from placing it in ... any enthusiastical impulses, and how essential in religion he esteemed holy practice.”³⁵⁵ The diary revealed Brainerd’s unrelenting quest for God regardless of momentary emotions. Edwards framed Brainerd’s life in contrast with radical enthusiasts writing, “Mr. Brainerd’s religion differed from that of some pretenders to the experience of a *clear work* of saving

³⁵¹ Jonathan Edwards, August 31, 1748 letter to John Erskine, in WJE 16: 250.

³⁵² Thomas Gillespie, September 19, 1748 letter to Jonathan Edwards, in WJE Online 32: B73.

³⁵³ Jonathan Edwards April 4, 1748 letter to Joseph Bellamy, in WJE 16: 246; Jonathan Edwards, September 14, 1748 letter to Eleazar Wheelock in WJE 16: 251; Jonathan Edwards, May 20, 1749 letter to John Erskine, in WJE 16: 271.

³⁵⁴ David Brainerd, *The Life of David Brainerd*, in WJE 7: 495.

³⁵⁵ Jonathan Edwards, *The Life of David Brainerd*, in WJE 7: 497.

conversion wrought on their hearts; who depending and living on that, settle in a cold careless, and carnal frame of mind.”³⁵⁶ In other words, Brainerd did not trust his election to his own inward sense, but strove through good works to assure his good estate.

Edwards’s portrait of an evangelical convert was a powerful tool in renewing moderate Calvinist revivalism.³⁵⁷ The diary was immediately popular with the ministers Thomas Gillespie and John Willison. In 1749 Willison wrote to Edwards, “Indeed worthy Mr. Brainerd was, one among a thousand for carrying the Gospel among the heathen, as appears by the account you give of him in your Sermon, & by his Journals which have been published here & prefaced by Dr Doddridge & Dedicated by him to the Society at Edinburgh.”³⁵⁸ Samuel Davies found solace in the pages, noting: “By observing his Conversation, & reading Mr. Brainerd's Life, I have had Clearer Discoveries of my prodigious Defects, than ever I had before.”³⁵⁹ John Wesley urged all his followers to read it and John Erskine published another edition in Edinburgh in 1765.³⁶⁰ A new American edition was published in 1793 and another by Sereno E. Dwight in 1822. Brainerd’s Diary never went out of print and many eighteenth-century missionaries found inspiration from Edwards’s edition.

While parts of the radical enterprise (including lay activism and church separatism) were carried into the future, moderate Calvinist evangelicals were mostly successful in incorporating radical ministers back within their network or shutting down their contrasting ideas in print. After a brief moment in the press in the latter half of

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 500.

³⁵⁷ David Belden Lyman (1803–1868) a missionary to Hawaii was one of many nineteenth-century Americans that named their son after David Brainerd after reading Edwards’s version of the diary.

³⁵⁸ John Willison, March 17, 1749 letter to Jonathan Edwards, in WJE Online 32: B75.

³⁵⁹ Samuel Davies, August 26, 1750 letter to Jonathan Edwards, in WJE Online 32: B92.

³⁶⁰ Jonathan Yeager, *Enlightened Evangelicalism: The Life and Thought of John Erskine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 150.

1742, radical revivalism disappeared from publications and by the middle of 1743 radicalism was almost completely gone from most print mediums. Radical publications vanished and the printed struggle revolved around either embracing moderate revivalism or taking an antirevivalist stance. Indeed, moderate ministers ceased discussing radicalism in print by the end of the 1740s.³⁶¹ While Andrew Croswell continued to hold to radicalism he paid a high price. His correspondence in the later 1740s revealed an increased defensiveness toward former radical ministers who were urging him to return to a more respectable revivalism.³⁶² His 1749 publication *A Narrative of the Founding and Setting the New-gathered congregational Church in Boston* revealed growing panic over professional isolation as many of Boston's revival ministers turned their backs on him. Having taken up a new Boston pastorate the year before, Croswell recounted how Thomas Prince Sr. and Joseph Sewell demonized him in print and erstwhile allies (James Davenport, Eleazar Wheelock, Benjamin Pomeroy, and Samuel Buell) ignored him.³⁶³ Croswell concluded bemoaning to members of Scotland's Associate Presbytery (Calvinist antirevivalists no less) that he was a Calvinist lamb torn by Arminian wolves.³⁶⁴ Croswell stood practically alone in publically espousing the radical position in New England in 1749.

³⁶¹ The evidence of moderates ceasing to discuss radicalism in print and radical publications no longer being issued implies the diminishment of the radical challenge.

³⁶² Andrew Croswell, May 3. 1749 letter to Eleazar Wheelock, in WJE Online 32: C83.

³⁶³ Andrew Croswell, *A narrative of the founding and settling the New-gathered Congregational Church in Boston: with the opposition of the South Church to the minister, his defence of himself before the council, and espostulatory letter to that church afterwards* (Boston: Rodgers and Fowle, 1749), 7-9, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University, accessed August 15, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 6302 \(filmed\)](#).

³⁶⁴ The Associate Presbytery was composed of Calvinist ministers who had split from Scotland's established Kirk in the early 1730s over the Marrow Controversy.

A high level of ministerial cooperation helped moderates to exclude key radical doctrines from the press. Moderate ministers did it in their collective publications as they gradually decided what acceptable revivalism was. Moderates controlled almost all the levers for print production. Other than a brief moment in late 1742, when moderates and radicals publically fractured, moderate revivalism became the only form of revivalism considered in newspapers, periodicals, treatises, and revival narratives. Everything else was labeled enthusiasm, and thereby “othered.” Radicalism was dismissed. The importance of ministerial reputation and concern for social order was another factor contributing to the dismissal. The radicals were too strange and too out of step with larger cultural values in their attacks upon the respected figure of the ordained minister. Antirevivalist attacks upon revivalism, after the radical emergence, probably accelerated the speed with which radicalism was shut down. Additionally, the moderate message linking revivalism with social amelioration successfully carried on. Radicalism started a process of greater lay control of spirituality, but moderate Calvinist revivalism had more success in conveying a print vision of what revivalism should accomplish in ordered community transformation. The early 1740s revealed how evangelical Calvinist ministers gradually worked out the ways they thought revivalism should be and what methods for promoting it were acceptable.

Non-Calvinist revivalism

In the early 1740s, moderate Calvinist evangelicals labeled some aspects of radicalism as outside the bounds of respectability, but non-Calvinist revivalism was different and the response from Calvinist evangelicals to non-Calvinists was more

conflicted. Unlike radicals who repented or became outsiders, non-Calvinists remained in the odd position of having one foot in and one foot out of the Calvinist evangelical network. The influence of non-Calvinist evangelical groups was limited in North America and Scotland. Nevertheless, the Great Awakening witnessed the emergence of key non-Calvinist ideas. Moderate non-Calvinist revivalists like the Wesley brothers, while never completely part of the network were more insiders than were the radicals. Moderate Calvinist evangelicals were aware of non-Calvinist evangelicals and explaining the mixed response to them complicates how the moderate Calvinist network characterized their interdenominational revivalism.

There were two major groups of non-Calvinist revivalists that offered different kinds of revivalism. One group, the Moravians, had a starkly different mystical theology from evangelical Calvinists.³⁶⁵ But Moravians did not situate themselves in opposition to Calvinism and considered fine points of doctrine less important than genuineness of faith.³⁶⁶ Their non-confrontational approach was partly due to working in a foreign British world and trying to avoid provocations that might excite xenophobic hostility. Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf, in a publication translated into English in 1742, explicitly worked to ingratiate his followers with the evangelical Calvinists and intentionally obscured the theological differences between them.³⁶⁷ The second group,

³⁶⁵ Jon F. Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 179-183. The cult of union of the believer with the side wound of Christ being the most infamous example of Moravian mystical theology where Moravians declared their ecstatic union with Christ by swimming up into his side hole to feed upon him.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 176, 179-183, 194-195.

³⁶⁷ Nicolas Zinzendorf, *A Manual of doctrine: or second essay to bring in to the form of question and answer*, Written in High-Dutch, by the author of the first essay; and now translated into English (London: James Hutton, 1742), 3-4, in Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University Library, accessed August 15, 2014, <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGr>

Wesleyan Methodists, grew from John and Charles Wesley's direction at Oxford. They stood in contrast to Methodists subscribing to Whitefield's Calvinism (English Methodism split over the issue of Calvinism in 1740-41 in disagreements between George Whitefield and John Wesley). In the 1740s, the only strident anti-Calvinist evangelical publications came from the pen of John Wesley who supported Christian perfection and attacked predestination, laying the groundwork for an alternative revivalism. He took the writings of the moderate Calvinist evangelicals and transformed them. In late 1738, Wesley read Jonathan Edwards's *A Faithful Narrative* and was deeply impressed remarking that he found his heart strangely warmed, but disdaining the Calvinism in it.³⁶⁸ He ordered his followers to read the writings of Calvinist evangelicals with the goal to incorporate their revival ideas and practices while removing their Calvinist theology.

In many ways Wesley's revivalism would prove to be the most dangerous threat to Calvinist revivalism because it had fewer doctrinal tensions within it. Moderate Calvinist evangelicals were theoretically Monergists and affirmed that an individual cannot cooperate with God in salvation.³⁶⁹ Nevertheless, such ministers implicitly did affirm human ability in achieving salvation in the revivals, partly to give spiritual comfort to their parishioners. Historian Henry May perceptively noted the change in the evangelical Calvinism of the Great Awakening:

The Calvinism of the Great Awakening was a new Calvinism. However much the revival preachers sought to convince their congregations of their

[oupName=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW119356810&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE](http://www.lehigh.edu/~lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW119356810&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE).

³⁶⁸ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 22.

³⁶⁹ Monergism is a position in Christian theology that affirms that God, through the Holy Spirit, works to bring about salvation without cooperation from the individual. The doctrine was proposed by St. Augustine and Martin Luther but is most often associated with Calvinism.

desperate inability to save themselves, they also urged them to make the effort, to throw off their sloth, to cease their resistance. Calvinism on the attack ... emotionalized, had come a long way from Geneva or Westminster.³⁷⁰

Indeed, it was the tension of holding both doctrines that created an intellectual problem for moderate Calvinist revivalism. Wesleyan Methodists would come to exploit the problem in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Typically, Wesley's theology goes by the name of Arminianism, but it is important to distinguish his doctrines from the Arminianism of rationalistic clergymen.³⁷¹ Wesley embraced Original Sin and human moral defect almost as strongly as evangelical Calvinists, but with Wesley, a person could freely act to meet God through Christ, and God offered everyone forgiveness. One simply had to respond, since waiting on the hidden dictates of a sovereign God was absurd. Wesley's doctrine of perfection also reinterpreted conversion since he asserted that while the believer did not receive an exemption from temptations, he could become "free from outward sin."³⁷² Wesley rejected predestination and in a fictional dialogue, asked through his literary mouthpiece, "If God has positively decreed to damn the greater part of mankind, why does he call upon them to repent and be saved?"³⁷³ Such a question emphasized that revival was something humans initiated. Despite his differences with Calvinists, Wesley embraced the other parts of moderate revivalism and thought

³⁷⁰ Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 54.

³⁷¹ Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, Second Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 438-439.

³⁷² John Wesley, *Christian Perfection: A Sermon* (London: 1741), 14, 17, in Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University Library, accessed August 15, 2014, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW122022915&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticle&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

³⁷³ John Wesley, *A Dialogue Between A Predestinarian and his Friend*, Second Edition (London: 1741), 8, in Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University, accessed August 15, 2014, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW123414384&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticle&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

individual conversion should always be interpreted by ordered communities and inculcate holy habits. In *A Dialogue between an Antinomian and his Friend* (1745), Wesley blasted radicals much as Dickinson had in his *Display of God's Special Grace*. Like Dickinson, Wesley set forth a stilted dialogue between a moderate and radical that concluded with the radical coming off as foolish.³⁷⁴ Wesley's revivalism gave human beings the power to fix their moral constitution, and his anthropology would wear well in a nineteenth century that combined revivalism, humanism, and social amelioration.

Various evangelical Calvinists expressed worries about non-Calvinist revivalism at the beginning of the 1740s. Isaac Watts commiserated with Benjamin Colman in March 1741 that Wesleyan and Moravian revivalists were going off-track from experiential Calvinism. He wrote, "I agree and grieve with you that some of the Methodists are gone into some odd opinions, and I think among the Moravian brethren there are also some darkneses in respect of doctrine."³⁷⁵ By 1742 Moravian revivalists were troubling Gilbert Tennent and Jonathan Dickinson as the two ministers believed the group was spreading strange theology and relying overmuch on lay preachers.³⁷⁶ In a February 12, 1742 letter in which Tennent wrote to Dickinson concerning his repentance from radicalism, he also noted his resentment and worry that the Moravians were co-opting revivalism in Pennsylvania and were surpassing the doctrinally correct (though

³⁷⁴ John Wesley, *A Dialogue Between An Antinomian and his Friend*, Second Edition (London: 1745), 2-8, 12, in Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University, accessed August 15, 2014, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW119199046&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

³⁷⁵ Isaac Watts, March 18, 1741 letter to Benjamin Colman, PMHS, 381.

³⁷⁶ LeBeau, *Jonathan Dickinson and the Formative Years of American Presbyterianism*, 134.

splintered) evangelical Calvinists.³⁷⁷ Jonathan Edwards seemed more concerned with the Wesleyans and in his March 1743 publication *Some Thoughts Concerning the present revival of Religion in New-England*, made sure to distance himself from the perfectionism advocated by John Wesley. In a portrait of the ideal convert (covertly his wife Sarah), Edwards emphasized that her times of spiritual illumination never led to perfectionism. He wrote, “Times of the brightest light and highest flights of love and joy, [she found] no disposition to any opinion of being now perfectly free from sin (agreeable to the notion of the Wesleys and their followers, and some other high pretenders to spirituality in these days).”³⁷⁸

Despite the hostility expressed by some ministers, other Calvinist evangelicals thought non-Calvinist revivalism important. Non-Calvinists could occasionally be allies. In his January 1742 publication *The Balm of Gilead*, John Willison noted that Methodists and Moravians were useful instruments for spreading Christ’s kingdom as the groups brought in true converts despite their errors.³⁷⁹ But later that year, Willison joined in damning non-Calvinist evangelicals in a letter to Whitefield. Whitefield, in his July 7,

³⁷⁷ Webster, *A History of the Presbyterian Church in America*, 189; Anonymous, *A Letter From a Gentleman in Boston, to Mr. George Wishart, One of the Ministers One of the Ministers of Edinburgh, Concerning the State of Religion In New-England* (Edinburgh: 1742), bottom of pages 18-20, in Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University, accessed August 15, 2014, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW121184668&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticle&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

³⁷⁸ Jonathan Edwards, *Some Thoughts Concerning The Present Revival Of Religion in New England*, in WJE 4: 341.

³⁷⁹ John Willison, *The Balm of Gilead, for healing a diseased land; with the glory of the ministration of the spirit: and a Scripture Prophecy of the Increase of Christ's Kingdom, and the Destruction of Antichrist. Opened and Applied in Twelve Sermons upon several Texts. By John Willison, M. A. Late Minister of the Gospel at Dundee. The seventh edition. To which is added, five sermons preached upon sacramental occasions, by the same Author* (Glasgow: 1765), 144, in Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University, accessed August 15, 2014, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW122694803&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticle&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

1742 response, affirmed his spiritual brotherhood with John Wesley.³⁸⁰ James Robe mentioned that true religion was renewed in missionary work done by Moravians among Africans in the Caribbean, but Robe demonstrated a similarity to Willison, waxing appreciative of non-Calvinists whenever it suited his purpose of strengthening revivalism generally, but otherwise, he tallied up their errors.³⁸¹ Calvinist evangelicals oscillated between having grudging respect and dislike for non-Calvinist revivalists. Non-Calvinist revivalists could be allies, rivals, and sometimes, confusingly, both.

The Great Awakening was a period when Calvinist evangelical ministers gradually defined revivalism and succeeded in constructing flexible revival orthodoxy. The ministers produced publications that kept conversion grounded in observable moral behavior, used what they judged were Scriptural dictates, and made sure to support revivals that formed ordered spiritual communities. In a convoluted and contested manner, the Calvinist evangelical network gradually labeled some radical revival practices enthusiastic. The network had an even more complicated response to non-Calvinist evangelicals who challenged how far Calvinist ministers were willing to cooperate to forward interdenominational revival. However it is also important to investigate the print battles moderate Calvinists had with antirevivalists which further defined and defended their revivalism.

³⁸⁰ George Whitefield, July 7, 1742 letter to John Willison, in Volume I of *The Works of the Reverend George Whitefield*, 406.

³⁸¹ James Robe, *The Christian monthly history, or, An account of the revival and progress of religion, abroad, and at home* *The Christian monthly history, or, An account of the revival and progress of religion, abroad, and at home* (Edinburgh: Volume V), 6, Microfiche, accessed November 16, 2010, <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/8704380>, hereafter referred to as *The Christian monthly history*.

Chapter 4

Defending Revivalism

On March 24, 1743, *The Boston Weekly News-Letter* advertised Jonathan Edwards's newly published *Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival of Religion in New-England*. On March 31, the paper announced Charles Chauncy's forthcoming *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New-England*.³⁸² That year the two ministers waged a press war, publishing treatises with opposing interpretations of the revivals. The juxtaposition of the publications was not coincidental. It revealed a Boston paper offering opposing perspectives to a public engrossed in the contours of an ongoing struggle judging the meaning of revivalism.³⁸³ The struggle over the meaning of revivalism was pointedly revealed in Chauncy's work, which offered a table of contents the polar opposite of Edwards's publication.³⁸⁴ The publication of the two texts revealed a moment where Calvinist revivalists disputed with antirevivalists in the press over the meaning of the revivals. Antirevivalist attacks forced Calvinist evangelicals to clarify what they considered right revivalism as various ministers continued to collaborate to define a particular view of revival and conversion.

³⁸² *The Boston Weekly News-Letter* was the first continuously published newspaper in British North America (1704 and following). The 1743 editor and printer John Draper filled the paper with revival news from throughout the colonies.

³⁸³ C.C. Goen, introduction, in WJE 4: 81; Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening,"* 187; Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 156.

³⁸⁴ Jonathan Edwards, *Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival of Religion in New-England*, in WJE 4: 290; Charles Chauncy, *Seasonable thoughts on the state of religion in New-England, a treatise in five parts* (Boston: printed by Rogers and Fowle, for Samuel Eliot in Cornhill., 1743), title page, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University, accessed April 18, 2015, [Early American Imprints, Series I, no. 5151 \(filmed\)](#).

<p>Jonathan Edwards <i>Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival of Religion in New-England</i> (published March 1743)</p>	<p>Charles Chauncy <i>Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion In New-England</i> (published September 1743)</p>
<p>Part I Shewing that the Work that has of late been going on in this Land, is a glorious Work of God.</p>	<p>Part I Faithfully pointing out the Things of a Bad and Dangerous Tendency, in the late, and present, religious Appearance in the Land.</p>
<p>Part II Shewing the Obligations that all are under, to acknowledge, rejoice in and promote this Work, and the great Danger of the contrary.</p>	<p>Part II Representing the Obligations which lie upon the Pastors of these Churches in particular, and upon all in general, to use their Endeavours to suppress prevailing Disorders; with the Great Danger of a Neglect in so important a Matter.</p>
<p>Part III Shewing in many Instances, wherein the Subjects, or zealous Promoters, of this Work have been injuriously blamed.</p>	<p>Part III Opening, in many Instances, wherein the Discouragers of Irregularities have been injuriously treated.</p>
<p>Part IV Shewing what Things are to be corrected or avoided, in promoting this Work, or in our Behaviour under it.</p>	<p>Part IV Shewing what ought to be corrected, or avoided, in testifying against the evil Things of the present Day.</p>
<p>Part V Shewing positively what ought to be done to promote this Work.</p>	<p>Part V Directing our Thoughts more positively, to what may be judged the best Expedients, to promote pure and undefiled Religion in these Times.</p>

In response to antirevivalist attacks, Calvinist evangelical ministers renewed their focus to establish a socially-acceptable revivalism. Moderate evangelicals published defenses of Gilbert Tennent and George Whitefield, aiming to distinguish them from separatists. Moderates disagreed with antirevivalists about theology and embraced the doctrine of Original Sin (unlike Charles Chauncy, Jonathan Mayhew, or John Taylor) and stressed the importance of regeneration through affective conversion.³⁸⁵ Calvinist evangelicals judged antirevivalists legal hypocrites who failed to search their own hearts for Christ and created a new academic institution (The College of New Jersey) that would be friendly to conversions. They also created their own Scriptural hermeneutic that excluded the acceptability of continuing revelations to a believer, special miracles, and wonders, but defended bodily motions. Antirevivalists cited bodily motions among converts as an example of enthusiastic practice, but moderates thought there was implicit Scriptural support for them. Evangelical publications suggested a past revivalism that evangelical ministers hoped others would respect. However, antirevivalist ministers typically possessed solid reputations. It was more difficult to discredit antirevivalist critiques than it was for moderates to silence radicalism. The battle was inconclusive. Yet explaining the contours of the print battle revealed how Calvinist evangelicals offered new justifications for revivalism.

³⁸⁵ The English minister John Taylor published in 1740 *The Scripture-Doctrine of Original Sin, Proposed to Free and Candid Examination* in which he argued that the doctrine of Original Sin was a distortion of St. Paul's theology. In 1756 the antirevivalist Congregationalist minister Jonathan Mayhew published a collection of sermons in which Clyde Holbrook noted that "Arminian, and Pelagian overtones" were "mingled in a confused manner." In the 1740s both Charles Chauncy and Jonathan Mayhew expressed approval of John Taylor's work. See Clyde A. Holbrook, introduction, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 3, Original Sin*, ed. Clyde Holbrook (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 2-14, hereafter referred to as WJE.

The Calvinist evangelical defense of revivalism offers a better way to understand the current scholarly literature. Frank Lambert revealed how revival opponents engaged in “counterinventions—that emphasized human machination instead of the work of God.”³⁸⁶ And Lambert portrayed the print struggle between revivalists and antirevivalists over their opposing narratives of the awakenings. George Marsden noted how the antirevivalist campaign of Charles Chauncy led to a “steadily widening rupture among the Congregational clergy” that ended a unified New England ministerial order.³⁸⁷ Thomas Kidd saw the 1743 printed debates between Edwards and Chauncy as defining “the positions of moderate evangelicals and antirevivalist skeptics,” and squeezing out radicals who “had fewer opportunities to defend themselves in print.”³⁸⁸ Finally, Lisa Smith pointed to the changing tone of colonial newspapers from the middle of 1741 onwards as they began to characterize the revivals as “controversial, irrational, and dangerous.”³⁸⁹ However I argue that this contested moment with antirevivalists was essential for moderate Calvinist evangelical ministers to develop further their interdenominational revivalism. I will first recount antirevivalists’ critiques of revivalism and conclude with defenses from Calvinist evangelical ministers.

Antirevivalist Attacks

Among the groups that objected to revivalism there emerged three major ones: Anglicans, Scottish secessionists, and rationalistic modernizers or “Arminians,” who had

³⁸⁶ Lambert, *Inventing the “Great Awakening,”* 183.

³⁸⁷ Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 273.

³⁸⁸ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 158, 156.

³⁸⁹ Smith, *The First Great Awakening in Colonial American Newspapers*, 25.

representatives among all the major British Protestant denominations.³⁹⁰ Frank Lambert noted the “evangelical revival underscored the very different conception of the gospel held by Anglicans and awakeners.”³⁹¹ Not all Anglicans were antirevivalists since they included George Whitefield, Howell Harris, and John Wesley. But generally Anglicanism utilized a different ethic, stressing individuals growing “into an understanding of God’s grace” without a “new birth.”³⁹² Anglican theology was strongly present in the colonial south (South Carolina and Virginia) and dominant in England. Additionally, a peculiar strain of Scottish, Calvinist, antirevivalism emerged among separatist ministers in the Associate Presbytery.³⁹³ In 1733, twelve ministers seceded from the Scottish Kirk to form the Associate Presbytery over disagreements in the “Marrow Controversy.”³⁹⁴ The Marrow Controversy began in 1718 with Minister Thomas Boston’s republication of *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* (originally published in London in 1645 and 1649). In 1720, the Kirk’s Committee for Purity of Doctrine condemned the book because they thought it conveyed the message grace was offered to all. In 1721, twelve ministers submitted a “Representation and Petition” arguing *The Marrow* offered the gospel to all, but with the understanding that only the elect would accept. The Assembly rejected the petition, and in the early 1730s, over an ostensibly

³⁹⁰ While there might have been secular, Enlightenment-influenced skeptics who also objected to the authenticity of the evangelical revivals, they were not notable in print. The deistic Philadelphia printer Benjamin Franklin supported George Whitefield’s revival efforts with detached, good humor. Jonathan Edwards did comment in a private letter to John Erskine about David Hume’s skeptical ideas. Edwards wrote that “I had before read that book . . . of Mr. David Hume's which you speak of. I am glad of an opportunity to read such corrupt books; especially when written by men of considerable genius; that I may have an idea of the notions that prevail in our nation.” Jonathan Edwards, December 11, 1755 letter to John Erskine, in WJE 16: 679.

³⁹¹ Lambert, *Inventing the Great Awakening*, 209.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ The Scottish antirevivalist Seceders also embraced the doctrine of Original Sin and affective conversion. Their disagreement with evangelical Calvinists was unique to their peculiar ecclesiastical situation.

³⁹⁴ Yeager, *Enlightened Evangelicalism*, 75.

different issue, patronage, a number of Marrow ministers left the Church of Scotland. George Whitefield stumbled into the situation of ecclesiastical bitterness in his 1741 preaching tour of Scotland. In 1739, Whitefield began a correspondence with Marrow minister Ralph Erskine. In an August 2, 1739 letter, Erskine invited Whitefield to Scotland making favorable reference to his *Journals*, sermons, and ministry.³⁹⁵ By the middle of 1741 Whitefield was ready to visit, and Erskine informed him that in exchange for the Associate Presbytery's support, the Secessionist ministers demanded he preach exclusively from their pulpits. Whitefield refused to be bound to the limitation and the Marrowmen turned against the revivals, penning a series of attacks that focused primarily on the nature of their church struggles with the established Kirk. These Seceders feared the Scottish revivals because, as Michael Crawford noted, "If the revivals were genuine, then God was owning churches they would not, and the standing churches were not so corrupt as to justify secession."³⁹⁶ But the most serious antirevivalism came from rationalistic sectors within British Protestant churches. Rationalist antirevivalism was published in writings from Scotland, England, South Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New England. Rationalists often found themselves on the defensive, accused by revivalists of neglecting "to preach the great Reformation doctrines."³⁹⁷ Specifically, rationalists gradually departed from acknowledging the doctrine of Original Sin. By the 1760s, rationalists were even questioning the need for supernatural regeneration and reframed salvation to stress Christ as moral exemplar and not the Son of God.

³⁹⁵ Ralph Erskine, *A Letter from the Reverend Mr. Ralph Erskine* (Philadelphia: Franklin, 1741), 2-5, in *Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Database*, Lehigh University, accessed August 15, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 4714 \(filmed\)](#).

³⁹⁶ Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 167.

³⁹⁷ Lambert, *Inventing the Great Awakening*, 206.

Despite the differences, antirevivalists shared points of overlap in their objections to the revivals. Antirevivalists commonly ridiculed their opponents' characters. Associating a minister with enthusiasm effectively damaged one's reputation and ability to act publically. The South Carolina Anglican commissary Alexander Garden, the Congregationalist minister Charles Chauncy, and *Boston Evening Post* publisher Thomas Fleet all used the same technique of mocking and ridiculing revival opponents. Antirevivalists often objected to the revivalists' use of affections and were appalled by the bodily motions among supposed converts. The Scottish Presbyterian James Fisher and the rationalistic Charles Chauncy (who agreed on very little otherwise) both referred in their publications to similarities in bodily motions between enthusiastic, late seventeenth-century French prophets and current supposed converts.³⁹⁸ As Lambert remarked, "To the critics, the revivalists had slipped into the same error as the antinomians: personal experience transcended *Scripture and Reason*."³⁹⁹

Anglican antirevivalists typically lacked precise theological critiques and instead resorted to satire and caricature. The approach complemented the larger governing dispositions of most Anglicans themselves, who felt revivalism transgressed social mores, but were typically not motivated to pursue their objections in a doctrinal idiom.

Anglican hostility reflected an inchoate, but furious response to the ways revivalism

³⁹⁸ James Fisher, *A review of the preface to a narrative of the extraordinary work at Kilsyth, and other congregations in the neighbourhood, written by the Reverend Mr. James Robe* (Glasgow: printed for John Bryce, and sold by him and by Patrick Bryce, 1742), 3-4, in Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University, accessed August 15, 2014, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW118925363&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE; Charles Chauncy, *The wonderful narrative: or, a faithful account of the French prophets, their agitations, ecstasies, and inspirations. To which are added, several other remarkable instances of persons under the influence of the like spirit* (Boston: 1742) 1-2, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University Library, accessed August 15, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series I, no. 4915 \(filmed\)](http://www.earlyamericanimprints.com/series1/4915).

³⁹⁹ Lambert, *Inventing the Great Awakening*, 190.

threatened their beliefs. As early as the beginning of 1739 Anglicans objected to the new birth as preached by their coreligionists Whitefield and Wesley. Thomas Kidd wrote, “Whitefield and John Wesley held an important meeting with a group of their Anglican critics in late January 1739. Whitefield tried to explain the new birth to them and told them about his conversion experience.” As Whitefield recounted, they, “viewed him as a madman.”⁴⁰⁰ Whitefield demanded a stress upon conversion that made most Anglicans uncomfortable. Typically Anglicans believed baptism and the regular use of the sacraments was sufficient for salvation.⁴⁰¹ For most Anglicans personal faith was always to be interpreted in a communal framework. Rhys Isaac noted how the response from the Anglican gentry in Virginia to revivalism in the *Virginia Gazette* revealed “that the elite were expressing alarm and indignation.”⁴⁰² Partly, it was alarm for spiritual experiences felt to be too strenuous for their polite religion.⁴⁰³

South Carolina’s Anglican commissary Alexander Garden was one of the first to pen a publication objecting to George Whitefield’s challenge to a reasonable Anglican faith.⁴⁰⁴ Whitefield met Garden in Charleston in the late summer of 1738 on his first American tour and dubbed him “a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”⁴⁰⁵ The two men formed a pleasant rapport and Garden offered Whitefield the use of his house for religious meetings when Whitefield returned to Charleston in January 1740. However, that

⁴⁰⁰ Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 64.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 149-150.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 146-177. Isaac reported on revivalism undermining the established Virginian and Anglican gentry culture in the late 1740s and then in the 1750s and 1760s.

⁴⁰⁴ An Anglican commissary is a person appointed to exercise the administrative functions of a bishop, but may not perform any of the spiritual functions such as ordination. There was no Anglican bishop in America until after the American Revolution.

⁴⁰⁵ Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 56.

February, Whitefield enraged Garden with the publication of *Three Letters from the Reverend Mr. G. Whitefield*. In it, Whitefield condemned rising Arminian theology within Anglicanism and mocked the beliefs of the late Archbishop Tillotson. Tillotson had suggested that unrepentant sinners were annihilated rather than eternally punished. In response, Whitefield declared Tillotson knew “no more of Christianity than Mahomet.”⁴⁰⁶ Additionally, Whitefield denounced the Charleston gentry for frivolous pursuits (such as dancing, horse racing, and cards) and for their harsh treatment of slaves. Whitefield remarked in the wake of the recent Stono Rebellion (1739) that he was surprised South Carolina’s slaves did not revolt regularly.⁴⁰⁷ Garden rebuked Whitefield for preaching against the clergy and fomenting slave rebellion. If Whitefield did not modify his behavior, Garden threatened, he would forbid him from preaching in his house. Whitefield blithely responded that he regarded the threat as he would a Pope’s Bull.⁴⁰⁸ In response Garden ejected Whitefield from his house, but the Grand Itinerant simply went to Josiah Smith’s Reformed meetinghouse to preach.

From March to July 1740, Garden took his feud with Whitefield into print in a series of six letters carried in the *South-Carolina Gazette*. Later that year, the antirevivalist printer Thomas Fleet published a second edition of the letters in Boston. In his first letter on March 17, Garden denounced Whitefield’s condemnation of clergymen who failed to preach justification by faith alone. He wrote, “If good works do necessarily

⁴⁰⁶ George Whitefield, *Three letters from the Reverend Mr. G. Whitefield: viz. Letter I. To a friend in London, concerning Archbishop Tillotson. Letter II. To the same, on the same subject. Letter III. To the inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, North and South-Carolina, concerning their Negroes* (Philadelphia: Printed and sold by B. Franklin, 1740), 2, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University Library, accessed December 14, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 4651 \(filmed\)](#); Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 55.

⁴⁰⁷ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 69, 72.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

spring out of a true and lively faith, and a true and lively faith necessarily precedes justification, the consequence is plain, that good works must not only follow after, but precede justification.”⁴⁰⁹ Garden argued that because true faith issued in good works and true faith issued in justification, therefore good works issued in justification. Whitefield published a reply the next day saying his “charge against the clergy is just.”

Additionally, Andrew Crosswell (the same year he turned to radicalism) published an extended defense of Whitefield’s position, winning praise from Boston’s evangelicals.⁴¹⁰

Whitefield dared Garden to prove that he preached anything contrary to “the articles of the Church of England,” and if he had “be pleased to let the Publick know it from the Press.”⁴¹¹ In offering the challenge, Whitefield put Garden in an awkward position since the Anglican Church’s *Thirty-Nine Articles* affirmed Whitefield’s theology.⁴¹² In his second and third letters (March 18 and April 8), Garden attempted to extract himself from the awkward position of having opposed the stated doctrine of his Church. He obscured the difference between his position and Whitefield’s. Yet Garden was not alone in his theological departure. Whitefield had the *Thirty-Nine Articles* on his side, but he was swimming against the larger cultural stream within Anglicanism. Calvinist theology,

⁴⁰⁹ Alexander Garden, *Six Letters to the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield*, Second Edition (Boston: Thomas Fleet, 1740), 6, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University Library, accessed August 15, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 4515 \(filmed\)](#).

⁴¹⁰ Andrew Crosswell, *An answer to the Rev. Mr. Garden's three first letters to the Rev. Mr. Whitefield. With an appendix concerning Mr. Garden's treatment of Mr. Whitefield* (Boston: Printed and sold by S. Kneeland and T. Green, over against the prison in Queenstreet, 1741), 1, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University Library, accessed August 15, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 4705 \(filmed\)](#); Schmidt, “A Second and Glorious Reformation,” 217-218.

⁴¹¹ Whitefield, *Six Letters to the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield*, 6.

⁴¹² Article 11 read, “We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by Faith, and not of our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only is a most wholesome Doctrine.” Additionally, Article 13 buttressed the point, “Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ; neither do they make men meet to receive grace.”

technically present in Anglicanism, had been in steady eclipse following the Synod of Dort (1618). Calvinism enjoyed a brief revival after the fall of Laud and in the Interregnum, but it declined after the Restoration.⁴¹³

In letters three, five, and six, Garden returned to the attack, writing that the Anglican clergy only “pretend to preach the true doctrine of justification by faith.”⁴¹⁴ For support, he turned to the current bishop of London Edmund Gibson (1669–1748) who, Garden declared, said “good work” was “a necessary condition” for salvation.⁴¹⁵ For Whitefield in contrast, revival was premised on the individual having an affective recognition that Christ had saved them through faith alone. Transitioning to invective, Garden painted Whitefield in lurid colors of enthusiasm. He asked: “Are you not cast out of the Synagogues;--excluded from Church of England pulpits; and treated as a disciple of Fox or Muggleton?”⁴¹⁶ George Fox (1624-1691), seventeenth-century founder of the Quakers did not have the best reputation in Charleston circles. Fox’s disrepute was surpassed by that of Lodowicke Muggleton (1609–1698), whose Muggletonians “developed out of the aftermath of the English Civil War” as “Radical Puritans.”⁴¹⁷ Garden, when stymied doctrinally, resorted to personal attack, doing his best to paint Whitefield in the nastiest terms:

Who dares dispute when you [Whitefield] pronounce, the Clergy’s falling away from the principles of the Reformation;--that such or such books are founded on the Arminian scheme ... Thus an elder brother of yours, the

⁴¹³ Dewey Wallace, “Puritan polemical divinity and doctrinal controversy,” in *The Cambridge companion to Puritanism*, 206-222. The Calvinist strain within Anglicanism was revived by Whitefield in the eighteenth century and continued into the 21st century embodied by figures like the late Rev. John Stott (1921-2011).

⁴¹⁴ Garden, *Six Letters to the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield*, 8.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴¹⁷ “English Dissenters: Muggletonians,” accessed December 14, 2014, <http://www.exlibris.org/nonconform/engdis/muggleton.html>

ever memorable George Fox, (an infallible also in his day, to whom God had given the true knowledge of the doctrines of grace) bore his testimony concerning the Bible, as only a dead letter; and which was implicitly received by his followers, at least of that age.⁴¹⁸

Garden was sensitive to being challenged by Whitefield in not being faithful to Reformation tenants. In response, he cast Whitefield's revivalism beyond the pale of respectability. In his guilt by association attack, Garden connected Whitefield with George Fox's critique of the Bible. Garden said Whitefield challenged Scriptural authority and looked to his own inner light, akin to Quakerism. While fallacious, Garden's attack accused Whitefield of agreement with unpopular doctrines, questioning Whitefield's character for a larger Atlantic audience.

Garden's attack was undoubtedly partially due to Whitefield's simultaneous attack upon South Carolina's slave practices. Garden claimed Whitefield's charge of slave-owner abuse was unwarranted hearsay. Essentially, Garden worked to formulate an analogy between Whitefield's attacks on slavery and a hypothetical attack upon Whitefield's treatment of children at his orphan-house. He wrote:

God you THINK has a quarrel with them [South Carolina's slave-owners] for their abuse of and cruelty to the poor Negroes. ... But pray, Sir, on what grounds do you bring this charge against the generality of those inhabitants who own Negroes, of using them as bad, nay worse, than as tho' they were brutes? Do you know this charge to be just and honest? Or have you sufficient evidence to support it? No. Would you think it a fair and honest thing in me, should I, on such hearsay or report, print and publish a letter directed to you, pretending a necessity of informing you, that God had a quarrel with you, for your cruelty to the poor Orphans?⁴¹⁹

In his February publication, Whitefield drew attention to the particularly nasty practice of South Carolina slavery. It was an embarrassment for Charleston gentry's culture, and

⁴¹⁸ Garden, *Six Letters to the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield*, 37-38.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 51-53.

something a gentleman did not publically mention. In response, Garden engaged in further character assassination upon Whitefield's reputation, for as Thomas Kidd noted, "the Savannah Orphanage became the center of Whitefield's philanthropic ministry."⁴²⁰ Garden worked to create a connection between Whitefield's orphanage and South Carolina slave-owners to thereby render innocuous Whitefield's attacks upon slavery's practices.

Another pertinent character attack upon Whitefield was an English aristocratic and anonymous lampoon published in 1740 as *The Expounder Expounded or, a short account of God's dealings with the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield*. It was reprinted in a larger run in 1742 as *Genuine and Secret Memoirs Relating to the Life and Adventures of that Arch Methodist Mr G. W.* Using what Thomas Kidd has said was Whitefield's previous confession of masturbation, the piece alluded to Whitefield's other sexual desires.⁴²¹ It took Whitefield's quotations from his *Journals* out of context as a strategy to expose him as a farcical Calvinist preacher and suggested a possible sexual dalliance with his mother. *Genuine and Secret Memoirs* closed with rude verses entitled "The Field Preacher." Following the rhythm of a seventeenth-century ditty "The Queen's Old Courtier," the verses revealed disdain for itinerates and the people to whom they preached. The field preacher was depicted with, "Eyes all white and many a groan / with arms outstreach'd and sniveling tone / and handkerchief from nose new-blown."⁴²²

⁴²⁰ Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 56.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

⁴²² Gentleman of Oxford, *Genuine and Secret Memoirs Relating to the Life and Adventures of that Arch Methodist Mr G. W.* (Oxford: 1742), 83, in Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University, accessed August 15, 2014, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW120914019&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticle&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

Additionally, aristocratic and xenophobic fear of Calvinist influence pervaded the song, “Blind zeal and large devotions; / and prating to the Mob and raising commotions, / and poisoning the people with Geneva potions.”⁴²³ The suggestion was that revivalism was low and foreign and portrayed as dangerous to the social order.

Many Anglican ministers felt threatened by revivalism and thought the best way to stop it was through damaging the reputations of ministers. Certainly Garden resented Whitefield’s revivalism because of his challenge to Garden’s positions with traditional Anglican doctrine and because of Whitefield’s meddling with slavery. While some Anglicans gravitated towards the 1740s Atlantic revivals, particularly through the preaching, writing, and hymn singing of Whitefield, John Wesley, and Charles Wesley, many more would come to resent it. Interestingly, antirevivalist character attacks were limited to infamous radicals (Davenport, Crosswell, Rodgers, etc.), and to the revivalists who began the radical turn such as Gilbert Tennent and George Whitefield. In the very midst of their heated 1743 exchange of opposing treatises, the only personal critique Charles Chauncy leveled at Jonathan Edwards was to grumble he overused philosophy. In response to the character attacks, Calvinist evangelical ministers would engage in a collective defense of both Whitefield’s and Gilbert Tennent’s reputations. However, there were also more substantial theological critiques of revivalism.

Scottish Calvinist antirevivalism engaged in more doctrinally precise critiques of revivalism through the pens of separatist ministers in the Associate Presbytery. In his 1742 publication, Secessionist minister James Fisher attacked James Robe’s claims to the supposed genuineness of the Atlantic revivals in his Kilsyth account and simultaneously

⁴²³ Ibid., 85.

supported the Secessionists against critiques Robe had penned. Fisher's text was entitled *A Review of the Preface to a Narrative of the Extraordinary Work at Kilsyth, and other Congregations in the Neighbourhood, written by the Reverend Mr. James Robe Minister at Kilsyth*, but was later reprinted with a new inflammatory title, *The False Revivals of The Enemies of our Covenanted Reformation: Being a Scriptural Examination of the Work of Satanical Delusion Promoted by George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, James Robe, Gilbert Tennent, and others*. What was peculiar to Fisher's antirevival publication was how the theological points he mustered were governed by an overriding concern to win dominance in a war with the established Kirk.⁴²⁴ He wrote at the end of his publication that Whitefield and Gilbert Tennent's interdenominational revivalism was a demonic tool shattering God's divinely-given Presbyterian model.⁴²⁵ Fisher's piece generally argued the Scottish revivals were an enthusiastic delusion. He wrote, "No Work can be reckoned extraordinary, but what manifests itself to be so by extraordinary Signs and Evidences."⁴²⁶ Fisher saw no substantial signs supporting the revivals being Spirit-inspired. The only evidence he saw were "Effects of it upon the Bodies of the Awakened, which have not been so common at other Times," effects with "Trembling, Fainting, Hystriisms in some few Women, and with Convulsive Motions in some others."⁴²⁷ For Fisher, such effects were not legitimate signs of the Spirit.

Fisher asserted since other evangelical ministers' saw Edwards's *The Distinguishing Marks* as the main text defending the awakenings' genuineness he would

⁴²⁴ "TRUE COVENANTER," last accessed August 9, 2014, http://www.truecovenanter.com/worship/fisher_review_of_preface_to_narrative.html; Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 167-170.

⁴²⁵ Fisher, *A review of the preface to a narrative of the extraordinary work at Kilsyth*, 43.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

attack it and show the bad reasoning therein. He wrote, “For a satisfying Answer to these Objections, he [James Robe] refers them to a Sermon of Mr. Edward's, Minister at Northampton, in New-England, on the *Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*. This Pamphlet of Mr. Edward's is very highly extolled by the Promoters of this Work; Mr. Whitefield says, he sent the first Copy of it to Scotland ... Mr. Willison in his Preface to that Sermon, recommends it most earnestly.”⁴²⁸ Fisher implied that if Edwards’s arguments were found to be specious the claims of Calvinist evangelicals concerning the Atlantic revivals’ genuineness would fail. He noted, “The Fallacy of Mr. Edward's Reasoning, is not so obvious at first View. It would require a Treatise by itself to follow the Chain of Error, both in Philosophy and Divinity ... I shall endeavour to make it appear, that, whatever was the Intention of the Author, yet, the manifest Design of his Work, is to overthrow the very Foundation of Faith, and all practical Godliness, and to establish mere Enthusiasm.”⁴²⁹ Indeed, Michael Crawford noted the importance of Edwards’s ideas as a target guiding Marrowmen antirevivalism. Crawford wrote, “Over the next couple of years Ralph Erskine continued the Seceders’ attack on Edwards, culminating with the lengthy *Faith no Fancy: or A Treatise of Mental Images* (Edinburgh, 1745).”⁴³⁰

Fisher’s attack was based on what he took to be Edwards’s view of imagination, Edwards’s view of a convert’s bodily motions, and Edwards’s interpretation of Scripture. Fisher wrote, “Mr. Edwards tells us, Edinburgh Edition, Page 26, “Such is our Nature, that we cannot think of Things invisible, without a Degree of Imagination” and

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 10.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 11.

⁴³⁰ Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 169.

“according to Mr. Edwards, we can have no Thought of God, without some visionary Form or Shape, represented to our Imagination, which is most gross and abominable.”⁴³¹ Fisher was probably borrowing from Joseph Addison's (1672-1719) idea that imagination is a faculty of visual representation of material objects. Fisher felt Edwards undermined the supremacy of Scripture and the dignity of God by suggesting imagination accompanied a spiritual knowledge. Fisher asserted, “I say, the very reverse of this is true, for the more engaged the Mind is upon any spiritual Object, the more divested will it be, of all imaginary Ideas.”⁴³² Fisher followed with a long harangue against bodily motions and Edwards’s views on the subject. Fisher remarked, “Mr. *Edwards connects* bodily agonies with the *marks of the true spirit*.”⁴³³ Fisher noted the Scriptural dearth of evidence for Edwards’s positions and suggested banning practices Scripture did not specifically endorse. He wrote, “There is no Example of such frightful or delightful Sensations and Imaginations above described, to be found in the Experiences of the Saints of God recorded in Scripture.”⁴³⁴ Fisher acknowledged Edwards had a different position. He said Edwards suggested that, “Tho' there be no Instances in Scripture of such extraordinary Effects upon the Bodies of Men, yet there is no Force in the Objection, if there is not a Scripture RULE excluding such Things.”⁴³⁵ Edwards’s position suggested only banning practices Scripture explicitly excluded. But Fisher disagreed, asserting, “We ought indeed to exclude from our Practice and Imitation, every Thing that wants the Authority of Scripture.”⁴³⁶ Fisher argued for banning all practices

⁴³¹ Fisher, *A review of the preface to a narrative of the extraordinary work at Kilsyth*, 11-12.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

Scripture did not specifically endorse. In a nasty swipe, Fisher said Edwards's hermeneutic was conceptually equivalent to that used by the Papists. He wrote, "It has always been strenuously maintained by Protestants against the Papists, That necessary and evident Scripture Consequences, and all imitable Scripture Examples, are of equal Authority with Scripture Precept."⁴³⁷ And therefore Fisher concluded that since "Convulsions, Hysteric Fits, and bodily Agonies, followed with visionary Representations of seemingly delightful Objects, are not recorded, as attending the spiritual Experiences of the Saints, they are contrary to Scripture Example."⁴³⁸ Fisher concluded that the evidences Edwards presented were "to be excluded by a Scripture Rule."⁴³⁹

The final and most significant group publishing antirevivalist attacks was a network of rationalist ministers (represented in most British Protestant denominations) who had significant reach, publishing in respectable venues with relatively wide circulations. For example, Gilbert Tennent's February 1742 letter to Jonathan Dickinson, wherein he repented his previous errors, was republished by rationalists for the purpose of discrediting revivalism. Thus Lisa Smith wrote, "The letter was widely reprinted, appearing in the *Boston Evening-Post* (July 26, 1742), *American Weekly Mercury* (August 12), *Pennsylvania Gazette* (August 12), and *South Carolina Gazette* (December 6)."⁴⁴⁰ And Smith noted how the republished letter was used, writing, "Revivalist opponent Rev. David Evans, a pastor in Piles Grove, New Jersey, who had been dismissed from his congregation in 1740 because of his opposition to the revival, printed

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 18.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ Smith, *The First Great Awakening In Colonial Newspapers*, 130.

a lengthy letter in the September 2, 1742, *Pennsylvania Gazette* in which he attempted to show how Tennent and the other revivalists, particularly Whitefield, had committed exactly the acts Tennent condemned in his letter to Dickinson.”⁴⁴¹ Additionally, the letter was reprinted an ocean away in November 1742 in Scotland’s *Caledonian Mercury* and in a publication by George Wishart in Edinburgh. Wishart’s publication included a letter from Charles Chauncy wherein Chauncy noted Tennent’s radical spirit. Chauncy said Tennent had labeled ministers he thought unconverted “Pharisees, Hypocrites, and Wretches.”⁴⁴² Yet in addition to penning character attacks upon revivalists of questionable reputation, rationalists offered a new kind of attack through a genealogical account of revivalism. Instead of accepting the revivals being a work of the Spirit of God, rationalistic ministers suggested a counter-history in which revivalism manifested continued progress of enthusiasm. Above all, Charles Chauncy was the most important figure who constructed such printed attacks.

Dull, laborious, and methodical, Chauncy was the quintessential antirevivalist whose message was that the revivals were emotional, irrational, and subversive of all good order. As junior pastor at Boston’s First Church, Chauncy was often in disagreement with his colleague Thomas Foxcroft. Foxcroft was a revivalist and correspondent with Jonathan Dickinson, Isaac Watts, and Jonathan Edwards.⁴⁴³ (It must

⁴⁴¹ Ibid. Gilbert Tennent had suffered attacks upon his character in the division in the Philadelphia Synod. The publication of his letter by antirevivalists was another indignity.

⁴⁴² *A Letter From a Gentleman in Boston, to Mr. George Wishart, One of the Ministers One of the Ministers of Edinburgh, Concerning the State of Religion In New-England* (Edinburgh: 1742), 10-11, 18-20, in Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University, accessed August 15, 2014, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW121184668&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

⁴⁴³ Following Benjamin Colman’s death in 1749, Thomas Foxcroft became Jonathan Edwards’s chief publicist in America.

have been an awkward professional situation.)⁴⁴⁴ In 1742, Chauncy moved to open antirevivalism when James Davenport visited and asked for the reason of the hope that was in him.⁴⁴⁵ Davenport wanted to have Chauncy attest to him of having had an affective conversion experience. It was not a pleasant meeting. And Chauncy instead gave reasons why he thought Davenport was deluded. The list of subscribers to Chauncy's greatest antirevival work, *Seasonable Thoughts* (September 1743) revealed a growing cohort of rationalistic ministers who dubbed Chauncy their champion. Among them were Robert Breck, who had run into difficulties in the Connecticut River Valley in the mid-1730s for advocating Arminianism, Ebenezer Gay of Hingham, often called the father of American Unitarianism, and a young M.A. Fellow of Harvard-College named Jonathan Mayhew.⁴⁴⁶

Chauncy's antirevivalist publications constructed a history of religious enthusiasm that suggested the current revivals continued the same bad behaviors. His first pamphlet, *Wonderful Narrative: or, a faithful account of the French prophets* offered a history of enthusiasm that focused upon the similarities between the behaviors of enthusiasts and revivalists. *Wonderful Narrative* recorded similarities between the revivalists and the sixteenth-century Radical reformers Thomas Müntzer (1489-1525) and

⁴⁴⁴ Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 268; Lambert, *Inventing the Great Awakening*, 186.

⁴⁴⁵ Charles Chauncy, *Enthusiasm described and caution'd against. A sermon preach'd at the Old Brick Meeting-House in Boston, the Lord's Day after the commencement, 1742. With a letter to the Reverend Mr. James Davenport* (Boston, July 1742), i-ii, in Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Lehigh University Library, accessed August 15, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 4912 \(filmed\)](#); Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 272.

⁴⁴⁶ Chauncy, *Seasonable thoughts on the state of religion in New-England*, 3,8,13. The publication erroneously stated Jonathan Mayhew was Joseph Mayhew. However, it mentioned Joseph was an M.A. fellow at Harvard College. Considering that Jonathan Mayhew graduated and spent the next three years at the College as an M.A. Fellow, the name Joseph must have been a mistake.

the Münster Anabaptists (1534-35),⁴⁴⁷ seventeenth-century radicals George Fox and Anne Hutchison,⁴⁴⁸ and early eighteenth century French Prophets, who claimed to be prophets of the Holy Spirit seeing heaven, angels, hell, and having fits and trances. All of the figures were significant markers of enthusiasm to a British, eighteenth-century audience. They were individuals who had threatened the established political and social order. Chauncy's history of the progress of enthusiasm continued in his other publications throughout 1742 and 1743, which interpreted revivalism as improper and subversive.

For Chauncy, any deep religious feeling was enthusiasm and such a view governed his larger Biblical hermeneutic. Religious feeling was, he wrote, "A bad temperament of the blood and spirits; 'tis properly a disease, a sort of madness."⁴⁴⁹ He also wrote, "In nothing does the enthusiasm of these persons discover itself more, than in the disregard they express to the dictates of reason."⁴⁵⁰ In separating emotions from reason Chauncy set himself up for a philosophical confrontation with Jonathan Edwards. The rule Chauncy offered for judging behavior was the Bible, which he thought gave guidance for distinguishing acceptable and unacceptable practices.⁴⁵¹ But as revealed in the interpretive dispute between Fisher and Edwards, however, it was an issue of debate precisely how Scriptural mandates should be interpreted and applied regarding emotion. Chauncy seems to have applied a standard of Biblical interpretation that went beyond

⁴⁴⁷ Thomas Müntzer believed in continuing revelations of the Spirit beyond the limits of Scripture and died in the German Peasants War (1525). The town of Münster was briefly controlled by a sect of radical Anabaptists who believed they were the new people of God and claimed the Spirit's revelation gave them the right to set up a polygamous community. A besieging army eventually occupied the city and destroyed them.

⁴⁴⁸ Chauncy, *The wonderful narrative: or, a faithful account of the French prophets*, 6-7, 72-74, 78-82.

⁴⁴⁹ Chauncy, *Sermon Cautioning against Enthusiasm*, 3.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

James Fisher. Fisher was willing to look for Scriptural evidences (he found none) supporting a convert's emotional visions and bodily motions. Chauncy assumed from the outset that the Scriptures could not possibly countenance religious feelings. Rationalists thought an orthodox view of Scripture meant emotional feeling was inherently irrational, but evangelicals would vehemently disagree and worked to couple affective conversion to a tradition of Biblical interpretation.

Calvinist evangelical responses

One important component in the moderate evangelical defense of revival was extricating George Whitefield from identification with radical separatism and responding with vigor to critiques upon his reputation. As a traveling preacher, Whitefield ministered to large crowds and was central in the creation of Calvinist revivalism. By 1742, radical activity had emboldened antirevivalist critics to claim Whitefield was the cause of all the trouble. Whitefield's return to Boston in October 1744 provided fuel to the fire. A storm of publications arose debating his character.⁴⁵² Charles Chauncy and Yale's President Thomas Clap attacked him and Chauncy urged his colleagues to avoid welcoming Whitefield to their pulpits. Clap delivered a thunderbolt at the 1744 Harvard commencement by charging that Jonathan Edwards had confided to him that Whitefield intended to replace non-revivalist New England ministers with evangelical ones from England, Scotland, and Ireland.⁴⁵³ Such an allegation was poisonous in undermining revivalism by equating it with social subversion.

⁴⁵² Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 169-171.

⁴⁵³ George Claghorn, in WJE 16: 153.

In response, various evangelical ministers publically supported Whitefield. Among his many defenders were radicals like Daniel Rodgers and Nicolas Gilman, erstwhile radicals like Samuel Buell and Benjamin Pomeroy, and moderates like Jonathan Edwards and Thomas Foxcroft.⁴⁵⁴ Edwards moved to vindicate both himself and Whitefield from Clap's allegations in a series of pamphlets that ran from October 1744 until September 1745.⁴⁵⁵ Published in Boston as *Copies of Two Letters Cited by The Reverend Mr. Clap* Edwards denounced Clap's accusations. Edwards wrote Clap, "Rev. Sir, I have often heard that you, when you was down at Boston and Cambridge the summer past, did before many persons, declare that you heard me say, that Mr. Whitefield told me, that he had a design of turning out of their places, the greater part of the ministers in New England, and of supplying their pulpits with ministers from Great Britain and Ireland."⁴⁵⁶ He finished with a defense of his own and Whitefield's reputation writing, "I challenge the whole world besides you, to say that they ever heard me say any such thing. Therefore, I desire you to do me and Mr. Whitefield the justice, as publicly to correct your mistake in this, which you have publicly declared; which I perceive has been very much taken notice of, and has been much the subject of talk."⁴⁵⁷ George Marsden noted the exchange between Edwards and Clap was "hardly edifying" and that "each of the combatants in this ministerial duel of honor was so arrayed with logic and rhetoric that neither could dent the other's armor."⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁴ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 169-172.

⁴⁵⁵ Jonathan Edwards, in WJE 16: 153-162, 163-172, 174-179.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁴⁵⁸ Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 308.

In 1745, Thomas Foxcroft published three letters giving testimonial defense of Whitefield's character. One of the letter-writers claimed the purpose of his writing was "vindicating Mr. Whitefield's name, in relation to some things suggested to his prejudice."⁴⁵⁹ The letter-writer dismissed Whitefield's challenge to unconverted ministers writing, "I can't help observing here, it would be the most abusive wresting of his [Whitefield's] words, to insinuate, that he asserts the total uselessness of unconverted ministers ... for his printed words speak of the success of such ministers."⁴⁶⁰ The writer additionally claimed that Whitefield's references to "carnal persons lacking the spirit of Christ" never mentioned any specific minister.⁴⁶¹ The letter-writer hoped his remarks would "acquit Whitefield as an honest man, and acting a consistent part."⁴⁶² Another of Foxcroft's letter-writers defended the interdenominational quality of Whitefield's preaching writing, "Mr. Whitefield is providentially here in these parts, and dispos'd (so he solely professes) upon the principles of brotherly kindness and charity, and the communion of saints, to cultivate a correspondence with the churches and ministers of New England."⁴⁶³

The evangelical minister William Hobby defended the virtues of Whitefield's preaching. Hobby asserted that St. Paul himself was an itinerant. He wrote, "The apostle Paul, tis evident, preached in some places where Christ had already been named, and so

⁴⁵⁹ Thomas Foxcroft, *An Apology in Behalf of the Revd. Mr. Whitefield: Offering a Fair Solution of Certain Difficulties Objected Against Some Parts of His Publick Conduct* (Boston: 1745), 4, in Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Database, Lehigh University, accessed August 15, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series I, no. 5594 \(filmed\)](#).

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, 13-14.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, 29.

far he entered on other men's labors."⁴⁶⁴ Hobby thought such an action if done in an orderly way was commendable. Indeed, he asserted it was not itinerancy, but opposition to the practice that had created the current disorders "whatever be the judgment of others, I shall ever give it as mine, that tis not the itinerancy, but the opposition to it that has made the confusions of the present day."⁴⁶⁵

Whitefield also published defenses of his own conduct, one of which addressed Chauncy. Whitefield defended himself against charges that his preaching was unnecessary, he was guilty of financial improprieties, and he encouraged church separations.⁴⁶⁶ He wrote, "Did I come unask'd? Nay did not some of those persons who were as well qualified for the Work as I can pretend to be, send me a Letter of Invitation?"⁴⁶⁷ Qualified Boston ministers invited him to preach and Whitefield reasoned that such men would not have invited him unless his preaching was necessary. Therefore Chauncy's description of his preaching as unnecessary was erroneous. On financial matters and always sensitive to criticism of his collections to support his Savannah orphanage, Whitefield tersely noted his collections were a matter of public record.⁴⁶⁸ In response to the charge he promoted separatism, Whitefield wrote: "Whatever you may think my opinion of the Boston ministers was at that time, yet I always recommended them, and instead of encouraging people to separate, constantly exhorted them (as I

⁴⁶⁴ William Hobby, *An Inquiry into the Itinerancy, and the Conduct of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, an Itinerate Preacher, Vindicating the Former Against the Charge of Unlawfulness and the Latter Against Some Aspersions which have Been Frequently Cast upon Him* (Boston: Rodgers and Fowle, 1745), 5, in Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Database, Lehigh University, accessed April 12, 2015, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 5610 \(filmed\)](#).

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁶⁶ George Whitefield, *A Letter to the Reverend Dr. Chauncy* (Boston: Kneeland and Green, 1745), 3-4, 7, 9, in Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Database, Lehigh University, accessed August 15, 2014, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 5711 \(filmed\)](#).

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 7.

would do again) to attend upon their ministrations.”⁴⁶⁹ It was technically correct Whitefield never explicitly encouraged schisms, but he was engaging in some imaginative reconstructions of his actions as he minimized his role in setting the ground for separatism. Chauncy and Whitefield each engaged in distortions of facts, but they engaged in different factual distortions to forward competing interpretations of the Atlantic revivals.

Edwards, Foxcroft, Hobby and others bore cumulative witness to Whitefield’s character but the success of the defense was mixed. A letter Edwards wrote to Robe was published in his *Christian Monthly History* and remarked that the overall reception of Whitefield in 1744 and 1745 was not as positive as in 1739-1741. The unexceptional reception was partly due to unremitting antirevivalist attacks.⁴⁷⁰ Edwards’s essay, “Concerning Mr. Whitefield’s Progress, Reception, and Success in New England” was disheartening news for evangelicals. He wrote:

Mr. Whitefield wrote several things in his own vindication,⁴⁷¹ and several others published apologies for him; the chief of which were those of Mr. Foxcroft of Boston, and Mr. Hobby of Reading, and Mr. Shurtleff of Portsmouth.⁴⁷² But it signified little or nothing to endeavor to oppose and stop the stream that was so violent against him. These apologists were immediately run upon by a multitude, and were ridiculed and lampooned from the press by anonymous authors, in a most scurrilous and vile manner.⁴⁷³

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁷⁰ Robe, *The Christian monthly history*, 259-263.

⁴⁷¹ George Whitefield, *A Letter to the Reverend Dr. Chauncy* (Boston, 1745); *A Letter to the Reverend the President and Professors, Tutors, and Hebrew Instructor of Harvard College* (Boston, 1745); *Some Remarks upon a Late charge Against Enthusiasm* (Boston, 1745).

⁴⁷² Foxcroft, *An Apology in Behalf of the Revd. Mr. Whitefield: Offering a Fair Solution of Certain Difficulties Objected Against Some Parts of His Publick Conduct* (Boston, 1745); William Hobby, *An Inquiry into the Itinerancy, and the Conduct of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, an Itinerate Preacher, Vindicating the Former Against the Charge of Unlawfulness and the Latter Against Some Aspersions which have Been Frequently Cast upon Him* (Boston, 1745); William Shurtleff, *A letter to Those of His Brethren in the Ministry who Refused to Admit the Rev. Mr. Whitefield into Their Pulpits* (Boston, 1745).

⁴⁷³ Jonathan Edwards, letter to friends in Scotland, after September 16, 1745, in WJE 16: 177.

Nevertheless, the print battle established competing public versions of Whitefield's character and work.

Evangelicals also published printed defenses of Gilbert Tennent. *The Testimony of a number of ministers conven'd at Taunton* defended Tennent noting the central role he played in the revivals "we are verily persuaded, that the Rev. Messrs. Whitefield and Tennent were the chief instruments, under God, of the happy revival of religion; and therefore cannot but look upon it with regret and concern, that they have met with such treatment from many in the land."⁴⁷⁴ The Rev. Samuel Finley said the opponents of the revivals were "so bold as to call it the work of the Devil."⁴⁷⁵ He said the same individuals asserted "Mr. Whitefield and the Tennents" were "disorderly brethren."⁴⁷⁶ But Finley responded by asking if "it be the Devil's custom to set the world in an uproar about the state of their souls?" and answered by stating, "If what they say be true, I must change my opinion of Satan, and think he is grown a penitent reformer."⁴⁷⁷ In his *Vindication and Confirmation of the Remarkable Work of God in New-England*, Whitefield listed persons who vouched for Tennent including Benjamin Colman, Secretary Willard, and William Cooper. Whitefield wrote:

The Rev. Doctor Colman in a Letter to me published in the first Weekly Paper printed at Glasgow writes thus of him [Gilbert Tennent] ... He was

⁴⁷⁴ *The Testimony of a number of ministers conven'd at Taunton, in the county of Bristol, March 5. 1744, 5. in favour of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, &c. Giving the reasons of their inviting him into their pulpits. With a letter of the same importance from the Rev. Mr. Maccarty, of Kingston, in the county of Plymouth. [Three lines from Luke] N.B. In the testimony is a proposal of an expedient to remove the prejudices of the hearty friends to the doctrines of grace against one another, and to bring them to act in concert in promoting the truth* (Boston: Kneeland and Green, 1745), 3, in Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Database, Lehigh University, accessed April 12, 2015, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 5693 \(filmed\)](#).

⁴⁷⁵ Samuel Finley, *A letter to a friend* (Boston: 1745), 6, in Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Database, Lehigh University, accessed April 12, 2015, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 5592 \(filmed\)](#).

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., 7.

abundant and fervent in labors, and God has been pleased to own his labors with abundant success.”—The honorable, and truly pious Secretary Willard writes thus, “There has been so evidently the finger of God in directing you into this Province, and (after your departure) the Rev. Mr. Tennent” . . . The Rev. Mr. Cooper in a Letter printed in the *Weekly History* No. 2d, (which the printer has mistaken for Colman,) calls him, “Dear Mr. Tennent—He came” says he “In the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel indeed.”⁴⁷⁸

Cumulatively, the evangelical publications offered a different prism by which to view Gilbert Tennent. Whitefield concluded by doubting the veracity of a pamphlet written against Tennent, noting, “After such a false and scandalous character given of that great man of God Mr. Gilbert Tennent, I think I may justly suspect the truth of all that this writer says.”⁴⁷⁹

Moderate evangelical Calvinists also thought it unacceptable to use Tennent’s February 1742 letter to Jonathan Dickinson to discredit revivalism. Thus, Tennent wrote:

I break open this letter myself, to add my thoughts about some extraordinary things in Mr. Davenport’s conduct. As to his making his judgment about the internal states of persons or their experience, a term of church fellowship, I believe it is unscriptural, and of awful tendency to rend and tear the church. It is bottomed upon a false base,—viz.: that a certain and infallible knowledge of the good estate of men is attainable in this life from their experience. The practice is schismatical, inasmuch as it sets up a term of communion which Christ has not fixed. The late method of setting up separate meetings upon the supposed unregeneracy of pastors is enthusiastical . . . The sending out of unlearned men to teach others upon the supposition of their piety in ordinary cases seems to bring the ministry into contempt, to cherish enthusiasm, and bring all into confusion. Whatever fair face it may have, it is a most perverse practice.⁴⁸⁰

Tennent critiqued the radical stress upon the assurance of election through one’s individual spiritual experience apart from outside observation and bemoaned separatism.

⁴⁷⁸ Whitefield, *A Vindication and Confirmation of the Remarkable Work of God in New-England*, 9-10.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁸⁰ Gilbert Tennent, letter to Jonathan Dickinson, February 12, 1742, in *A Letter From a Gentleman in Boston, to Mr. George Wishart*, 18-20; Richard Webster, *A History of the Presbyterian Church in America*, 190.

He thought an unlearned ministry dangerous. Moderates interpreted the passage as a brief for right revivalism against enthusiasm, but not as an attack upon revivalism itself. In December 1742 James Robe argued antirevivalists were mistaken in alleging Tennent had recanted revivalism. In response to an antirevivalist portrayal of the letter Robe wrote:

The Letter-Writer alleges Page 19th, *That the Rev. Mr. Gilbert Tennent seems to have quite turned about ...* But where is this to be found? There is not the least vestige of it in his letter to the Rev. Mr. Dickinson published in the *Caledonian Mercury*, and republished with the Letter from Boston. It contains no recantation of the principles he preached in New-England, no change of his opinion about the Work there, no accusation of himself for independent and enthusiastic principles and practices.⁴⁸¹

Robe was quick to minimize the implications of Tennent's critique. He noted there were important distinctions made in the letter between revivalism and enthusiasm. Tennent had critiqued the later, but had not inveighed against the former. Robe thought antirevivalists had conflated Tennent's remarks into a broader critique of revivalism generally.

Calvinist evangelicals also portrayed their antirevival opponents as innovators rejecting doctrines from the Protestant Reformers. In this regard, much ink was spilled regarding the doctrine of Original Sin, as "letters in the colonial papers attacked and defended original sin."⁴⁸² The Rev. Josiah Smith framed Whitefield's preaching on Original Sin as restoring orthodox doctrine. Smith wrote, "One of the doctrines which he

⁴⁸¹ James Robe, *Mr. Robe's first Letter to the Reverend Mr. James Fisher minister of the gospel in the Associate Congregation at Glasgow* (Glasgow: Printed for Robert Smith, 1742), v-vi, in Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University Library, accessed August 15, 2014, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW118616263&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticle&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

⁴⁸² Smith, *The First Great Awakening in Colonial American Newspapers*, 34.

[Whitefield] has hardly pass'd over in silence, in any single discourse, is that of Original Sin; a truth so manifest in Scripture, that I am almost of opinion, it is impossible any sincere, diligent and unprejudiced enquirer shoul'd miss it."⁴⁸³ James Robe in his introduction to the reader on November 15, 1743, which inaugurated the *Christian Monthly History*, pursued a similar defense. Robe argued the revivals were a work of God because they fit within the traditional Reformation doctrines of "man's guilt, corruption and impotence; supernatural regeneration by the Spirit of God, and free justification by faith."⁴⁸⁴

Interestingly, Robe also argued revival supporters embraced the traditional empirical method in contrast to antirevivalists. He wrote:

One great reason why the testimony of the friends to this blessed appearance, is to be preferred to that of the unfavorable side, is, that friends have sufficient *causae scientiae* and means of knowledge and information, which the other side altogether, or in great measure want. — The[y] first testify what they have been *eye* and *ear witnesses* of, or have received from them who have been.—The last testify and pretend to prove a negative, in the sense in which such pretences are commonly said to be absurd.⁴⁸⁵

Robe used the term *causa scientiae*, a Latin phrase meaning "cause of knowledge." The term illustrated that revival advocates were direct eyewitnesses, which in an eighteenth-century British Atlantic framework had great appeal as being faithful to Francis Bacon's and John Locke's empirical method. Revivalists were true empiricists, unlike

⁴⁸³ Josiah Smith, *The character, preaching, &c. of the Reverend Mr. Geo. Whitefield, impartially represented and supported, in a sermon preach'd in Charlestown, South-Carolina, March 26. anno Domini 1740* (Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin, 1740), 5, in Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800, Database, Lehigh University, accessed April 13, 2015, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 4601 \(filmed\)](#).

⁴⁸⁴ Robe, Introduction to the Christian reader, *The Christian monthly history*, 7.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

antirevivalists who were not able to evaluate the revivals properly since they were far removed from the scene of action and only received their information secondhand.

James Robe also offered a new Scriptural hermeneutic for justifying bodily motions among converts. In consecutive responses to James Fisher at the end of 1742 Robe claimed Fisher had misinterpreted his remarks about bodily agitations among the converted at Kilsyth and Cambuslang and that a convert's bodily motions were supported by Scripture.⁴⁸⁶ Robe proceeded to offer historical precedents. Especially important were the accounts Robe offered from Robert Fleming's (1630-1694) *The Fulfilling of the Scripture*, which was cited a few months later by Jonathan Edwards as his key source defending a prior history of bodily motions in his March 1743 publication *Some Thoughts concerning the present Revival of Religion in New-England*.⁴⁸⁷ Probably Robe and Edwards were communicating about how to collectively expound a framework for revivalism. In December 1742, Robe asserted that Edwards's 1741 *Distinguishing Marks* was the best text for reconciling bodily motions with a revival. Robe alleged Fisher had completely misunderstood Edwards's positions on the subject. In *Distinguishing Marks* Edwards had said that neither Scripture nor reason outlawed converts' bodily motions. Edwards wrote, "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."⁴⁸⁸ Robe noted (against Fisher) that Edwards's position was not dismissive of Scripture's authority.⁴⁸⁹ Revealingly, Robe connected Edwards's position with Jonathan

⁴⁸⁶ Robe, *Mr. Robe's first Letter to the Reverend Mr. James Fisher*, 13, 15.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 15-17.

⁴⁸⁸ Edwards, *Distinguishing Marks*, in WJE 4: 231.

⁴⁸⁹ James Robe, *Mr. Robe's Second Letter to the Reverend Mr. James Fisher minister of the gospel in the Associate Congregation at Glasgow* (Edinburgh: Printed by T. Lumisden and J. Robertson, 1743), 19-20, 27-30, in Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University Library, accessed August 15,

Dickinson's from his August 1742 publication *A Display of God's Special Grace*. He wrote, "You see, Mr. Edwards hath set aside the Experience of the saints in Scripture no otherwise than Mr. Dickinson hath done.—And if it be an Evidence of a Tendency to support Enthusiasm in Mr. Edwards' Sermon, it must be an Evidence of the same in Mr. Dickinson's Book."⁴⁹⁰ Fisher had used the publication of Tennent's February 1742 letter to Dickinson as evidence for rebuking enthusiasm. And Fisher noted Dickinson was an exemplar of sanity and therefore Robe hoped to force Fisher to acknowledge his error in judging Edwards's view of Scripture wrong since Dickinson testified to the same interpretation of Scripture.

Like Robe, Edwards claimed a prior history for bodily motions and produced a number of test cases. The first came from the life of Robert Bolton (1572–1631), an Oxford scholar awakened by the preaching of William Perkins (1558–1602). Bolton was an individual who had a significant historical reputation, so referring to him for precedent did significant work in equating revivalism with the respectability of the Protestant Reformation. As Edwards wrote, "Converting terrors threw him to the ground, causing him to roar out in pangs of the new birth."⁴⁹¹ Edwards also used Robert Fleming's citation in *The Fulfilling of the Scripture* about how in 1625, whole congregations in Scotland's southwest were seized with terror at the hearing of the Word, fell down, and

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http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW118616291&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 30.

⁴⁹¹ Jonathan Edwards, *Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival of Religion in New-England*, in WJE 4: 307. Robert Fleming's source appears to have been taken from a biographical sketch by Edward Bagshaw (1589–1662) that was appended to Mr. Bolton's *Last and Learned Work* (London, 1632).

had to be carried out of church.⁴⁹² Three notable cases concluded Edwards's argument. He referenced a conversion account by the English Presbyterian John Flavel (1630-1691) published in his *Pneumatologia* (1685), Roger Clap's (1609-1691) conversion published in 1731 by Thomas Prince Sr., and a conversion account from the testimony of the late Rev. John Williams (1664-1729) pastor at Deerfield, Massachusetts.⁴⁹³ All of the cases were good precedents taken from individuals within the spiritual traditions of New England and Scotland that offered evidence for bodily motions. That November, James Robe recommended to his readers in his *Christian Monthly History* Edwards's "excellent book entitled, *Some Thoughts concerning the present Revival of Religion in New-England*."⁴⁹⁴

Four months after Robe's publications against Fisher (December 1742) and the same month Edwards published *Some Thoughts* (March 1743), Thomas Prince Sr. and Thomas Prince Jr. began publishing their *Christian History*. And in their periodical the two ministers regularly mentioned past dignitaries converted while having bodily shakes. Cotton Mather, Richard Baxter, Thomas Hooker, and Thomas Shepard had all engaged in the behavior. Moreover, the editors stressed that publications by James Robe and Jonathan Edwards attested to how to rightly interpret the phenomena.⁴⁹⁵ Indeed the right interpretation of revival behaviors was absolutely essential for moderates to defend what they deemed a correct revivalism.

⁴⁹² Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, in WJE 4: 308-309 and Footnote #7 307-308. James Robe, John Willison, William McCulloch and other Scottish evangelical ministers probably made Edwards aware of the details of the Scottish seventeenth-century revival events. See Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, 21-32, for further information on the revival events from early seventeenth-century, southwestern Scotland.

⁴⁹³ Roger Clap, *Memoirs of Capt. Roger Clap* (Boston, 1731). The work contained a preface by Thomas Prince Sr., see Jonathan Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, in WJE 4: 312-313.

⁴⁹⁴ Robe, Introduction to the Christian reader, *The Christian monthly history*, 12.

⁴⁹⁵ Thomas Prince Sr. and Thomas Prince Jr., *The Christian History*, 71-72, 105, 212, 226.

One event moderates were especially keen to hush up concerned the instant healing of Mercy Wheeler in Plainfield, Connecticut in May 1743. Wheeler had been crippled for seventeen years, but was dramatically healed at her family's home where after some dramatic shaking she proceeded to get up off the bed and walk across the room. Thomas Kidd admirably demonstrated the way the event divided radicals, moderates, and antirevivalists into antagonistic interpretive camps. He wrote, "Radicals seized on Wheeler's healing as evidence of the continuation, or perhaps resumption, of miracles. Moderate evangelicals worried about the episode jeopardizing the long-held Reformed belief in cessationism ... Skeptics jeered that such bogus miracles smacked of Catholic piety."⁴⁹⁶ It was in the same vein of demarcating acceptable and unacceptable ideas that Edwards was emphatic in interpreting his ideal convert's religious experiences in *Some Thoughts* as internal mental visions of Christ discernible only through the eye of faith and not experienced in any actual physical manifestation.⁴⁹⁷

Besides a defense of bodily motions, Jonathan Edwards defended the rationality of converts' affections. In publications from 1741 to 1746 Edwards engaged in a deepening war against radicals and antirevivalists while defending revivals. In formulating a progressively more refined, subtle, and psychologically complex theory of the affections, Edwards came up with a new theory of conversion.⁴⁹⁸ The theory was only fully presented in his 1746 publication *Religious Affections*.

Much as *Some Thoughts* exercised considerable influence in shaping moderate Calvinist evangelical perceptions on how to interpret bodily motions, it seems probable

⁴⁹⁶ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 163.

⁴⁹⁷ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 134.

⁴⁹⁸ Chamberlain, "Self-Deception as a Theological Problem in Jonathan Edwards's Treatise Concerning Religious Affections," 541-543.

Religious Affections exercised similar influence for evangelical ministers interpreting the meaning of conversion. Letters penned by Edwards on May 12, 1746 to his Scottish friends MacLaurin and McCulloch mentioned his *Affections*. And in a much more detailed correspondence between Edwards and the Scottish minister Gillespie, Gillespie announced being able to “give in to your sentiments” as “expressed in the three treatises you have published [*Distinguishing Marks, Some Thoughts, Religious Affections*]”⁴⁹⁹ The celebrated missionary David Brainerd encouraged a fellow candidate for the ministry to “read Mr. Edwards’ piece on the *Affections* again and again; and labor to distinguish clearly upon experiences and affections in religion, that you may make a difference between the gold and the shining dross.” And in another letter had said, “Read Mr. Edwards on the *Affections*, where the essence and soul of religion is clearly distinguished from false affections.”⁵⁰⁰

Near the end of his *Seasonable Thoughts*, Chauncy quoted a passage from Edwards’s *Some Thoughts* he proceeded to attack that formed the basis for Edwards’s response in *Religious Affections*. In the passage, Edwards presented a view he found among antirevivalists he thought wrongheaded. He wrote, “Some make philosophy, instead of the Holy Scriptures their rule of judging of this Work; particularly, the philosophical notions they entertain of the nature of the soul, it’s faculties and affections.”⁵⁰¹ Chauncy misinterpreted the passage. He triumphantly responded that Edwards would “be self-condemn’d” since he “made use of more Philosophy” than any

⁴⁹⁹ Jonathan Edwards, May 12, 1746 letters to John MacLaurin and William McCulloch, in WJE 16: 204-210; Thomas Gillespie, September 19, 1748 letter to Jonathan Edwards, in WJE 2: 498-499.

⁵⁰⁰ David Brainerd, *The Life of David Brainerd* in WJE 7: 497, 495.

⁵⁰¹ Chauncy *Seasonable Thoughts*, 383. Chauncy also references in this passage Jonathan Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, in WJE 4: 296.

other minister⁵⁰² But the actual meaning of the passage was that a philosophy that denigrated the affections was antithetical to Christianity. And in another passage from *Seasonable Thoughts*, Chauncy revealed how he fell directly under Edwards's condemnation. Chauncy wrote, "One of the most essential Things necessary in the new-forming Men, is the Reduction of their Passions to a proper Regimen, i. e. the Government of a sanctified Understanding."⁵⁰³ Edwards thought the passions Chauncy decried were essential for genuine religion."⁵⁰⁴

Religious Affections was a riposte to Chauncy's rationalistic condemnation of spiritual feeling. In the text, Edwards struggled to process the puzzle of converts and enthusiasts intermixed or "weeds among the wheat."⁵⁰⁵ In fact, several personal letters he penned to his Scottish correspondents from 1743 and 1744 revealed his growing sense of how difficult it was for the revivals to produce lasting personal change.⁵⁰⁶ Edwards explained that affections were required for conversion, which was why the unregenerate multitudes were "not affected with what they hear."⁵⁰⁷ Nevertheless, he acknowledged the difficulty in discerning true affections. He thought saints were fully converted individuals who manifested consistent moral behavior, which was a better witness than "excessive declaring or forwardness of tongues."⁵⁰⁸ Edwards reiterated Dickinson's point from his August 1742 publication that judging one's justification by the fruits of continued sanctification was correct. Michael Raposa referred to this as Edwards's

⁵⁰² Ibid., 384.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 326.

⁵⁰⁴ Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, in WJE 4: 296-300.

⁵⁰⁵ Matthew 13: 24-30

⁵⁰⁶ Jonathan Edwards May 12, 1743 letter to William McCulloch, in WJE 16: 106-107; Chamberlain, "Self-Deception as a Theological Problem," 541-543.

⁵⁰⁷ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 2, Religious Affections*, ed. John Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 102, hereafter referred to as WJE.

⁵⁰⁸ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, in WJE 2: 383, 391, 461.

theosemiotic. Namely the theosemotic was conversion where Christ justified the believer secretly and instantly but manifested his grace in observable signs of virtue. Outward behavior was necessary. And Edwards offered a series of signs where one could attempt to ascertain if one were the subject of God's grace.⁵⁰⁹ Edwards's theory allowed for community observation of conversion and attacked Chauncy's rationalism.

A final way Calvinists evangelicals responded to antirevivalism was through a drive to establish their own college. In the later 1740s, many evangelicals pinned their hopes upon control of formal education, seeing it as a way of combating rationalist learning at Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary. The College of New Jersey (1746) became an important model for future colleges including Brown (1764), Queens (Rutgers 1766), and Dartmouth (1769). Indeed, George Marsden in his *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* showed how evangelical colleges became the dominant model of learning in antebellum America.⁵¹⁰ The first American evangelical institution was the Log College located in Warminster, Pennsylvania, founded in 1727 by William Tennent Sr. and operating until his death (1746). However, in 1738, the Synod of Philadelphia decreed that ministers who had not earned a degree from a European college, Harvard, or Yale be examined by a committee on their knowledge of philosophy, divinity, and languages. In March 1745 Calvinist evangelical ministers drew up plans for a new college that in addition to continuing to train ministers would add liberal arts and sciences to the curriculum. The ministers committed to the project included Jonathan Dickinson, Aaron Burr, Samuel Blair, Samuel

⁵⁰⁹ Michael Raposa, "Jonathan Edwards' Twelfth Sign," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 33 (June 1993): 153-162.

⁵¹⁰ George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 56-57, 68-71, 79-84.

Davies, Samuel Finley, Gilbert Tennent, William Tennent Jr., Jonathan Edwards, Thomas Foxcroft, Thomas Prince Sr., John MacLaurin, John Erskine, William McCulloch, James Robe, and George Whitefield. In late 1745, the group's New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York ministers applied to the New Jersey governor Lewis Morris, a zealous Anglican, for a charter. Morris turned them down. However, in May 1746 Morris died and was replaced by the evangelical Gov. Jonathan Belcher who approved the request. In November 1746, Dickinson wrote exultantly to Foxcroft that a charter was granted.⁵¹¹

It is illuminating to examine the correspondence among supportive ministers to see how they thought the college would augment their revivalism. In two letters Jonathan Edwards wrote to John Erskine in 1748 and 1749, he responded to inquiries regarding the health of the college, noting it was in an unsettled state. The state was due to Governor Belcher wishing to intervene directly in the composition of the college's charter and trustee board. Belcher thought the governor should always be the college's president, but Edwards feared the prospect writing, "The ministers are all very willing that the present governor, who is a religious man, should be in this standing. But their difficulty is with respect to future governors, who they suppose are as likely to be men of no religion and deists."⁵¹² Edwards expressed the collective ministerial fear that having spent so much toil creating an academic institution it would slip from their control. Whitefield in a letter to McCulloch on May 14, 1750, shared his hope the institution would produce more revivals, writing, "The present President Mr. Burr and most of the Trustees, I am well acquainted with. They are friends to vital piety, and I trust this work of the Lord will

⁵¹¹ LeBeau, *Jonathan Dickinson and the Formative Years of American Presbyterianism*, 176; Jonathan Dickinson, November 24, 1746 Letter to Thomas Foxcroft, in Thomas Foxcroft Correspondence.

⁵¹² Jonathan Edwards May 20, 1749, letter to John Erskine in WJE 16: 270.

prosper in their hands. The spreading of the gospel in Maryland and Virginia in a great measure depends upon it and therefore I wish them much success in the name of the Lord.⁵¹³”

Radical revival behaviors presented antirevivalists with a wealth of material with which to attack revivalism. The debate with antirevivalists in the 1740s clarified for Calvinist evangelicals what persons, behaviors, and ideas they would support. Antirevival attacks contributed to Calvinist evangelicals further developing their revivalism. The Great Awakening was a period where the Calvinist evangelical network fought antirevivalists in the public press and the conflict led evangelical ministers to stress revivalism’s respectability and doctrinal continuity with the Reformation.

⁵¹³ George Whitefield, May 14, 1750 letter to William McCulloch, in Volume II of *The Works of the Reverend George Whitefield*, 349.

Chapter 5

Evangelical ministers mix millennialism and revivalism

In October 1740, Jonathan Edwards wrote Eleazar Wheelock that Christians should “be awakened and encouraged to call upon God, and not keep silence, nor give him any rest, till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”⁵¹⁴ In *Signs of the Times Consider'd*, John Erskine was bolder, asserting the revivals offered signs of the coming end of the world. He wrote, “Are not Prophecies to be read now, as well as they were under the Old-Testament Dispensation ... And, to what Purpose are they read, if not to discover their Meaning, and to learn from them how God is to deal with his Church to the End of the World. ... And have we not reason to rejoice, that we see a begun accomplishment of these prophecies?”⁵¹⁵ William McCulloch also proclaimed (in a letter to Edwards in August 1743 published in Boston’s *Christian History*) that the revivals brought to his mind eschatological prophecy. He announced, “The happy period in which we live and the times of refreshing ... wherewith you first were visited in Northampton in the year 1736; and then more generally in New-England, in 1740 and 1741; and then in several places in Scotland ... often brings to my mind that prophecy, Isaiah 59:19 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from

⁵¹⁴ Jonathan Edwards, October 9, 1740 letter to Eleazar Wheelock, in WJE 16: 85-86.

⁵¹⁵ John Erskine, *Signs of the Times Consider'd: or, the high probability, that the present appearances in New-England, and the West of Scotland, are a prelude of the Glorious Things promised to the Church in the latter ages* (Edinburgh: T. Lumisden and J. Robertson, 1742), 8, 10, in Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University, accessed August 29, 2014, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW120847584&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticle&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

the rising of the sun.”⁵¹⁶ Indeed, Edwards wrote McCulloch in January 1747, that there was “great hope that God's appointed time is approaching ... beyond all that ever has been before, from the beginning of the world.”⁵¹⁷

One minister not impressed was such speculations Isaac Watts, who in a September 14, 1743 letter to Benjamin Colman noted Edwards’s “reasonings about America want force.”⁵¹⁸ Specifically, Watts was not convinced by Edwards’s suggestion about America’s special role in the divine plan. Additionally, five Boston evangelical ministers, who wrote the foreword to Edwards’s 1747 *Humble Attempt* (Joseph Sewall, Thomas Prince Sr., John Webb, Thomas Foxcroft and Joshua Gee), offered a cautious response. They wrote, “As to the author’s ingenious observations on the prophecies, we entirely leave them to the reader’s judgment.”⁵¹⁹ But the five ministers collectively undercut Edwards’s construal of Revelation 11 in their next sentence writing, “It is the apprehension of many learned men, that there is to be a very general slaughter of the witnesses of Christ about the time of their finishing their testimony to the pure worship and truths of the gospel about 3 or 4 years before the seventh angel sounds his trumpet for the ruin of Antichrist.”⁵²⁰ The five ministers appealed to prior authorities’ to invalidate Edwards’s new interpretation.⁵²¹ The foreword publicly stated differences

⁵¹⁶ William McCulloch, Extract of an August 13, 1743 letter to Jonathan Edwards, in *The Christian history*, 361-363.

⁵¹⁷ Jonathan Edwards, January 21, 1747 letter to William McCulloch, in WJE 16: 221.

⁵¹⁸ Isaac Watts, September 14, 1743 letter to Benjamin Colman, in PMHS, 379.

⁵¹⁹ Stephen Stein, foreword to *Humble Attempt*, in *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 5, Apocalyptic Writings* ed. Stephen J. Stein (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 310, hereafter referred to as WJE.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵²¹ “And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have

among evangelical ministers and suggested ways revivalism could intertwine with millennial speculations. The argument over the passage about the two witnesses in Revelation 11 was whether the two witnesses stood for persecutions that had already occurred and consequently the current revivals were leading straight to Christ's millennial kingdom (the interpretation favored by Edwards, Erksine and McCulloch) versus the interpretation that the killing of the witnesses was yet to come and there would still be a great persecution of the true church (the view of Watts, Sewall, Prince Sr., Webb, Foxcroft, and Gee).

During the 1740s Calvinist evangelical ministers modified their revivalism. Particularly innovative ideas came from select ministers developing a revivalist millennialism. While a handful of ministers thought the current revivals led to a coming millennial kingdom, the majority of evangelical ministers did not embrace such hopes. The current chapter investigates how millennial debates contributed to further forming Calvinist interdenominational revivalism in the Great Awakening. A process of further conflict hammered out the new millennialism's specific meanings.

There is a rich literature on millennialism and an exploration of the different kinds of millennial interpretations generated during the Great Awakening reveals how interdenominational revivalism first offered an eschatological vision. Nathan Hatch discussed how millennialism developed in America from 1740 to 1800 so that "the cycles of republican history and the linear perspective of Christian eschatology became

finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. ... and the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." Revelation 11: 2b-7, 15, KJV.

indivisible.”⁵²² Hatch suggested ministers created a new Revolutionary amalgam of civil millennialism. Hatch’s idea was questioned by Ruth Bloch who saw American millennialism as a more complex phenomenon that undergirded an eighteenth-century belief in an ideal human order. She wrote, “Millennialism provided the main structure of meaning through which contemporary events were linked to an exalted human order.”⁵²³ Like Hatch and Bloch, Susan Juster was concerned with evangelical millennialism, but Juster focused on prophets, ‘doomsayers’ who “wrote and spoke against the grain of much of what passed for public discourse in the revolutionary era.”⁵²⁴

More closely related to my project is the scholarship of Avihu Zakai, who remarked that Jonathan Edwards’s millennial ideas were the primary catalyst for the development of America’s millennialism. He noted that, “by placing revival at the center of salvation history, Edwards conditioned many generations of Protestants in America to see religious awakening as the essence of sacred, providential history. The publication of the *History of the Work of Redemption* ... helped to fuel the transference of religious convictions into the political realm.”⁵²⁵ Joseph Conforti remarked upon the peculiar regional differences connected to the acceptance of Edwards’s revival millennialism in the Great Awakening, writing:

Neither Edwards’s *History of Redemption*, nor his millennial perspective on revivals, appears to have found a secure place in American evangelical culture until the Second Great Awakening. In fact, Edwards’s *History of Redemption* was one of his posthumous works that his New Divinity

⁵²² Nathan Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 3.

⁵²³ Ruth Bloch, *Visionary republic: Millennial themes in American thought, 1756-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), xiii.

⁵²⁴ Susan Juster, *Doomsayers: Anglo-American Prophecy in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 3.

⁵²⁵ Avihu Zakai, *Jonathan Edwards’s Philosophy of History: The Reenchantment of the World in the Age of Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 330.

disciples were unable to place with an American publisher. Jonathan Edwards Jr., shipped the work to Scotland, where it was first issued in 1774. ... Scottish evangelicals proved to be more receptive to Edwardsian works than their mid-eighteenth century American counterparts.⁵²⁶

The ministers most supportive of revival millennialism in the Great Awakening were Jonathan Edwards and a number of Scottish evangelicals, while most evangelicals in New England, England, and the Middle Colonies were cool to the new developments. The division seems to reveal a peculiar set of circumstances that made anti-Catholic revivalist millennialism particularly attractive in Scotland.⁵²⁷ Perhaps Scottish ministerial enthusiasm reveals a stage on the way to the development of what Nathan Hatch referred to as the transition from an older Reformation millennialism (that saw the antichrist as the Papacy) into one that saw the antichrist in oppressive civil government.⁵²⁸ The new revival millennialism of the 1740s saw Antichrist as being both Pope and absolute monarchy and the godly order being both Calvinist and the King in Parliament.

Before exploring the new millennial structures some Calvinist evangelical ministers created, it is important to describe earlier millennialism. Millennialism is an eschatology derived from the twentieth chapter of the Book of Revelation. St. John declared that God would bind the Devil for a thousand years, which would inaugurate the first resurrection of the Christian saints, who would co-reign with Christ. When the thousand years were completed, God would release Satan for a final cosmic battle, which would culminate with the Day of Judgment, a universal resurrection, and a new heaven

⁵²⁶ Joseph Conforti, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Tradition, and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 48.

⁵²⁷ Scottish evangelicals' openness to the new anti-Catholic, revivalist millennialism may have been due to the presence of the continuing Jacobite danger posed to the British King until Culloden (1746). Scotland's evangelicals would have been sensitive to how the Catholic threat could be pinned on them. Therefore they supported an anti-Catholic revivalist millennialism as a way to demonstrate loyalty to the Protestant interest and to the Hanoverian crown.

⁵²⁸ Hatch, *Sacred Cause of Liberty*, 16-17.

and earth.⁵²⁹ In the early sixteenth-century most Christians rejected a literal millennialism. They followed the lead of St. Augustine (354-430), who interpreted the millennium being an indefinite time of the church between Christ's resurrection and his Second Coming. However, in his 1530 preface to his translation of Revelation, Martin Luther began to change the traditional millennial framework. Heiko Oberman noted Luther was motivated by his growing fear that the Pope was the prophetic Antichrist foretold in Revelation and framed his struggle with the Papacy in such terms.⁵³⁰ Identification of the Catholic Church with Revelation's Antichrist soon became central to Protestant belief by the 1550s. The Swiss reformer Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575) took a further step toward millennialism in 1561 when he published a hundred sermons on Revelation dedicated to the English Marian exiles where Bullinger embraced a literal, thousand-year kingdom. In 1627, the English scholar Joseph Mede published his *Clavis Apocalyptica* where he constructed a chronological sequence for all of Revelation's visions and connected the fall of the Papal Antichrist to the seminal event heralding Christ's millennial kingdom, which Mede predicted would begin in 1716.⁵³¹ Mede's general framework, through a series of middlemen, became quite influential among select evangelical ministers in the 1740s.⁵³²

⁵²⁹ Revelation 20-22

⁵³⁰ Heiko Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil* (New York: Image Books, 1989), 64-74.

⁵³¹ Jeffery K. Jue, "Puritan millenarianism in Old and New England," in *The Cambridge companion to Puritanism*, eds. John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 259-276.

⁵³² See Jonathan Edwards's discussion of millennialism in his October 7, 1748 letter to William McCulloch in WJE 16: 257-258. In the letter, Edwards references Francis Potter (1594-1678) an English clergyman, Biblical commentator, and early Fellow of the Royal Society who formed a theory of the Number of the Beast, connecting 25, the approximate square root of 666, with Catholic institutions. Potter's manuscript was read by Joseph Mead, author of the *Clavis Apocalyptica*, who favorably commended upon the discovery, which was then published in 1642 with a posthumous foreword by Mead.

From 1739 to 1774 selected ministers coupled anti-Catholic millennialism to revivalism and created a new religious history. Jonathan Edwards first suggested revival millennialism in a 1739 lecture series and expressed the ideas in several letters to members of the Calvinist network in 1740. Two Scottish evangelical ministers, John Willison and John Erskine, proceeded to offer publications in 1742 interpreting the Atlantic revivals within a millennial framework and in 1743 Edwards published on the same subject. There gradually emerged correspondence on the topic between Edwards and William McCulloch, John MacLaurin, John Willison, Thomas Gillespie, James Robe, and John Erskine. Part of the correspondence was published in Thomas Prince Sr. and Thomas Prince Jr.'s *Christian History* and in James Robe's *Christian Monthly History* (in 1744, 1745, and 1746). In 1748, Edwards published *Humble Attempt*, which addressed the relationship between the Concert of Prayer and revivalist millennialism. The Prayer Concert was embraced by nearly all Calvinist moderate ministers in Scotland and New England as a way to reignite the Atlantic revivals, and many of the promoters tied it closely to their new millennial ideas. It was primarily Scottish ministers and Jonathan Edwards who supported the Concert, but they enjoyed more success in advancing it than they did in forwarding their millennial interpretations. The millennialism in *Humble Attempt* received only a tepid response from Boston's Calvinist evangelicals, but was strongly supported by Scotland's evangelical ministers. Additionally, it was in Edinburgh, through the efforts of Edwards's New Divinity disciples (Edwards's ministerial followers in New England) and John Erskine in 1774, that Edwards's 1739 millennial sermon series was posthumously printed.

After the great success of *A Faithful Narrative* Edwards saw a larger meaning in the Atlantic revivals, and between March and August 1739, he preached a series of thirty lecture-sermons to his Northampton congregation. Historian Avihu Zakai said Edwards's lectures revealed "a space of sacred time designated by God for the execution of his work of redemption."⁵³³ Edwards interpreted the Northampton revival within a larger tapestry where God's sovereign work was bringing forth his kingdom and ushering in the return of Christ. The sermon series was a counter-narrative to emerging trends attempting to remove divine agency from history. Works such as Pierre Bayle's *Historical and Critical Dictionary* (1702), Samuel Pufendorf's *An Introduction to the History of the Principle Kingdoms and States of Europe* (1702), or Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke's *Remarks on the History of England* (1731) revealed a secular turn. It would be wrong, however, simply to equate Edwards's history with pre-Enlightenment models. It did not share Eusebius's (263-339) concern with the church's worldly affairs nor Augustine's focus on the ecclesiastical struggle between the city of God and man. Edwards envisioned revival being the chief means God worked in history. It was a special time when his Spirit left no land or people untouched. Specifically, 'revival' became a special season of God's grace, a unique epoch whereby the Holy Spirit converted nations into his gradual plan for the coming millennium.⁵³⁴ In formulating the notion, Edwards drew upon the ancient Greek notion of *kairos*, dramatic time and contrasted it with ordinary time.⁵³⁵ While Zakai's view challenges the Weberian notion that Protestantism (and especially

⁵³³ Zakai, *Jonathan Edwards's Philosophy of History*, 16.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, 13, 18-20.

⁵³⁵ *Kairos* is the ancient Greek word meaning the supreme moment and signified something very special happening, *kairos* complemented and contrasted with *chronos*, which was the passage of ordinary chronological time.

Calvinism) ‘de-mystified’ time and space, Zakai’s view has the merit of directly explaining the language Edwards and supporting ministers used describing revival as a Spirit-inspired moment. For example, in his May 12, 1746 letter to McCulloch, Edwards shared his hopes the Prayer Concert would inaugurate a “fulfillment of the glorious promises God had made of an abundant outpouring of his Spirit.”⁵³⁶

In his millennial lectures Edwards suggested God acted through regular revivals to bring a people to himself which began with the Fall of Adam, continued through Abraham, Moses, the Israelites, the death and resurrection of Christ, Constantine’s conversion, and the Protestant Reformation. The Spirit was also influencing the growth of worldwide revival that would lead to the final defeat of the Papal Antichrist, the end of history, and the inauguration of Christ’s millennium. Surveying the world scene in 1739, Edwards remarked on the erosion of faith in Protestant lands as Arminians, Arians, and Deists flourished.⁵³⁷ Nevertheless, he was hopeful the previous centuries had seen a great diminishment of Papal power and he waxed positive on the implications of the Holy Spirit’s work of revival. It was contributing to the upcoming millennium which he hoped would begin around the year 2000. Edwards wrote, “By the consent of most divines there are but few things if any at all that are foretold to be accomplished before the beginning of that glorious work of God.”⁵³⁸ In other words, Edwards thought most of the prophecies in Revelation were already completed and while “some think the slaying of the witnesses in the Revelation 11:7–8, is not yet accomplished,” such ministers were

⁵³⁶ Jonathan Edwards, May 12, 1746 letter to William McCulloch, WJE 16: 209.

⁵³⁷ Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 199; Jonathan Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, in *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 9, A History of the Work of Redemption* ed. John Wilson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 438, hereafter referred to as WJE.

⁵³⁸ Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, 456.

mistaken.⁵³⁹ Indeed, Edwards was convinced future history would tell a story of gradual revival successes right up until the coming millennium.

The question of how many people knew about the ideas and how many ministers in the Calvinist evangelical network were influenced by the concepts is a tricky one to answer. In 1740, Edwards wrote in letters to George Whitefield, Josiah Willard, and Eleazar Wheelock about his millennial concepts and the Holy Spirit's promotion of worldwide revival. Writing in February 1740, just as he was encouraging Whitefield to come to Northampton, Edwards revealed the new eschatology he was mulling. He confided his hope that Whitefield's preaching would herald "the dawning of a day of God's mighty power and glorious grace to the world." Edwards concluded with the hope that emulators of Whitefield would help bring on Christ's Kingdom writing, "May God send forth more laborers into his harvest of a like spirit, until the kingdom of Satan shall shake, and his proud empire fall throughout the earth and the kingdom of Christ, that glorious kingdom of light, holiness, peace and love, shall be established from one end of the earth unto the other!"⁵⁴⁰ In June and October 1740, Edwards further revealed his ideas of millennial redemption. In a June letter Edwards wrote to Josiah Willard, he took the picture of a trans-Atlantic revivalism and suggested it was best understood within a millennial form. He wrote, "From what we hear of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield, his great labors and success, together with other things in providence and the present circumstances of the world, taken with what is foretold in the Scriptures, I cannot but hope that God is about to accomplish glorious things for his church."⁵⁴¹ Edwards saw

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ Jonathan Edwards, February 12, 1740 letter to George Whitefield, in WJE 16: 80-81.

⁵⁴¹ Jonathan Edwards, June 1, 1740 letter to Secretary Josiah Willard, in WJE 16: 83.

Atlantic revivalism as part of a bigger schema and asked Willard for news as a means of validating his millennial reading. Finally, in an October letter to fellow Connecticut River Valley minister Eleazar Wheelock, Edwards called on Wheelock to help him push converts to call upon God until “He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”⁵⁴² Here collective prayers were coupled to revivals bringing forth the millennial vision of the New Jerusalem. Scottish evangelicals would embrace the same idea for collective prayer being a tool to forward the millennium two and a half years later.⁵⁴³ Nevertheless, Whitefield, Willard, and Wheelock never responded with interest to Edwards’ ideas. It seems the Northampton sage remained unsupported in his speculations from 1739 to 1741. Yet parts of Edwards’s lecture series, or at least the relevant ideas, were circulating in Scotland. Two publications came out in Scotland in 1742 and offered a similar revival millennialism.

In 1742, two Scottish evangelical ministers offered publications suggesting the revivals presaged the millennium. In January 1742, John Willison published in Glasgow a collection of twelve sermons entitled *The Balm of Gilead for Healing a Diseased Land; with the Glory of the Ministration of the Spirit: and A Scripture Prophecy of the Increase of Christ’s Kingdom, and the Destruction of Antichrist*. The widely distributed publication went through seven editions by 1765. It was supported by another publication that October authored by John Erskine (no relation to the secessionist ministers Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine). Erskine published in Edinburgh *Signs of the Times Consider’d: or, the high probability, that the present appearances in New-*

⁵⁴² Jonathan Edwards, October 9, 1740 letter to Eleazar Wheelock, in WJE 16: 85-86.

⁵⁴³ The Scottish evangelicals in January 1743 had a *Memorial* published in Edinburgh where it was suggested collective prayer could forward the revivals and Christ’s coming kingdom.

England, and the West of Scotland, are a prelude of the Glorious Things promised to the Church in the latter ages. Both works were from members of the moderate Calvinist evangelical network and cited the current revivals as offering evidence for the coming millennium. The works revealed a peculiarly Scottish audience receptive to revivalist, millennial ideas.

In *Balm of Gilead*, Willison asserted revival was a special season offering dramatic signs for the fall of the Antichrist. He wrote, “In the following sermons I have made some inquiry into the times and seasons of the increase of Christ’s kingdom: and because this is greatly connected with the destruction of Antichrist, I have mentioned some conjectures and calculations about the time of his fall.”⁵⁴⁴ Willison saw the revivals as a unique dispensation of grace presaging the end of days writing, “These showers of the Spirit which are falling just now on several places do encourage many to hope they are forerunners of God’s giving a general revival to his work, and of his bringing about the glory of the latter days.”⁵⁴⁵ Willison concluded by musing that the millennium would arrive soon (partly because he agreed with Edwards view of Revelation 11), and in fact Willison was more confident than Edwards about revivalism’s progress and thought the millennium would begin as early as 1866, and combined the

⁵⁴⁴ John Willison, *The Balm of Gilead, for healing a diseased land; with the glory of the ministration of the spirit: and a Scripture Prophecy of the Increase of Christ's Kingdom, and the Destruction of Antichrist. Opened and Applied in Twelve Sermons upon several Texts. By John Willison, M. A. Late Minister of the Gospel at Dundee. The seventh edition. To which is added, five sermons preached upon sacramental occasions, by the same Author* (Glasgow: 1765), iii-iv, in Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, Lehigh University, accessed August 29, 2014, http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.lehigh.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=lehigh_main&tabID=T001&docId=CW122694803&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticle&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 115.

suggested date with antipapal speculations about the Pope's fall.⁵⁴⁶ Like Edwards, Willison was creating a new historical schema and interpreted his "Balm of Gilead" as Christ's blood poured into converts through the Holy Spirit in revivals.⁵⁴⁷

That October John Erskine printed a work declaring the revivals offered signs Christ would soon return. John Erskine (1721-1803), eldest son of John Erskine the legal professor (1695-1768), was a passionate minister, writer, and bibliophile.⁵⁴⁸ While still an undergraduate, Erskine became deeply involved with the revivals and in his second publication *Signs of the Times Consider'd* helped in the creation of revival millennialism. Posing a series of rhetorical questions, Erskine set the ground for his speculations, "Are there not signs given in Scripture whereby to judge of events. And if we disregard these signs, are we not guilty in some measure of contemning the Word of God?"⁵⁴⁹ Erskine attested to the texts of key ministers (Josiah Smith in South Carolina, Jonathan Edwards and William Cooper in New England, and George Whitefield in England) supporting a revivalism leading to the millennium and declared the London and Glasgow *Weekly Histories* were print vehicles carrying forward news about the millennial march.⁵⁵⁰ But Erskine acknowledged the millennium had not yet begun and merely suggested the revivals offered steps towards it, "It must be owned, we have not yet seen the full accomplishments of these prophecies; but it is matter of thankfulness that something may be observed of a tendency that Way."⁵⁵¹ Erskine progressively mustered evidence to support his argument revivalism was gradually leading to Christ's millennium. The texts

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., 145.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., 53-54.

⁵⁴⁸ Yeager, *Enlightened Evangelicalism*, 12.

⁵⁴⁹ Erskine, *Signs of the Times Consider'd*, 7-8.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., 8-10.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., 11-12.

by Willison and Erskine complemented Edwards' 1739 sermon series to collectively invent a millennial revivalism.⁵⁵²

Indeed many of the ideas suggested by Willison and Erskine were reiterated by Edwards in his March 1743 Boston publication *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England*. Edwards asserted the revivals were probably heralding Christ's coming kingdom and suggested it would begin in America. He wrote, "We can't reasonably think otherwise, than that the beginning of this great work of God must be near. And there are many things that make it probable that this work will begin in America."⁵⁵³ One piece of support came from Edwards's interpretation of Isaiah 60:9 which said, "Surely the isles shall wait for Me, and the ships of Tarshish first to bring thy sons from afar, their silver and their gold with them unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because He hath glorified thee." 'Tarshish,' an archaic word for Spain, was at the end of the known world in the time of Isaiah and the historical context led Edwards to reason that the millennium must begin in a distant, provincial periphery and "signified that it shall begin in some very remote part of the world, that the rest of the world have no communication with but by navigation" noting, "I can't think that anything else can be here intended but America."⁵⁵⁴ Edwards asserted the revivals were America's special moment, a temporal *kairos* when the new continent would inaugurate Christ's return.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵² Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening"*, 3-16; Zakai, *Jonathan Edwards's Philosophy of History*, 1-26.

⁵⁵³ Jonathan Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, in WJE 4: 353.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., 355.

It is important to note only a handful of Calvinist evangelical ministers discussed the new millennialism and, other than Edwards, no minister outside of Scotland embraced the views. In the 1740s Edwards and other Scottish evangelical ministers began sharing their millennial revivalism in links of correspondence. The earliest extant letter testifying to Willison and Edwards's millennial correspondence is from 1749, but it is highly probable they had discussions on millennialism before then.⁵⁵⁶ John Erskine began a correspondence with Edwards from the middle of the 1740s and William McCulloch and Edwards were discussing eschatological revivalism by the summer of 1743.

Despite a resounding lack of excitement among non-Scottish ministers, a millenarian interpretation of revivalism got public play in the print organs of the Calvinist evangelical network. The concepts became part of a shared discourse. In their January 14, 1744 issue of *Christian History*, Thomas Prince Sr. and Thomas Prince Jr. decided to publish an extract of Edwards's May 1743 letter to McCulloch on revival millennialism and McCulloch's response in support of it. New millennial ideas were reaching other evangelical ministers and receiving a respectful hearing. Such a reality attests to how evangelical revivalism seemed willing to allow the publication of divergent interpretations of doctrines judged inessential as ministers modified the edges of their revivalism.

Closely related to the growth of revivalist millennialism was the creation of an Atlantic Concert of Prayer. In October 1740, Edwards suggested to Wheelock the importance of corporate prayer forwarding revivalism and millennialism and reiterated

⁵⁵⁶ Stephen Stein, Editor's Introduction, WJE 5: 69; John Willison, March 17, 1749 letter to Jonathan Edwards, in *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online, Volume 32, "Correspondence to Edwards"* (Jonathan Edwards Center: Yale University, 2008), B75, accessed August 29, 2014, hereafter referred to as WJE online.

the same idea in *Some Thoughts*.⁵⁵⁷ Across the Atlantic in early 1743, a number of Edinburgh praying societies and ministers were putting a Scottish Concert of Prayer into practice and in a circulated *Memorial* from January 21st, the societies expressed the intention to “set a day apart for praising and giving thanks to his Name.” During the day, they would celebrate “any remarkable waterings he has given to some spots of his vineyard; and to pray that these may only be the fore-runners of a plentiful shower to refresh the whole.”⁵⁵⁸ With a date set for February 18, 1743 the collective prayer had already occurred when *Some Thoughts* was published. Boston’s evangelical ministers received the news of Scotland’s corporate prayer with gladness and Thomas Prince Sr. and Thomas Prince Jr. published the text of the *Memorial* in their May 14, 1743 edition of *Christian History*.⁵⁵⁹ Encouraged by the positive reception from New England ministers, Scottish ministers proposed an Atlantic-wide Prayer Concert and in October 1744, they suggested a two-year period of united prayer in Scotland and New England. The days were to occur through annual quarterly periods (four selected days a year). The aim was to petition God to revive his church with John MacLaurin the prime promoter of the event in Scotland and Jonathan Edwards its chief organizer in New England.⁵⁶⁰ In many ways, the Prayer Concert had traditional roots in seventeenth-century prayer days, but there had never been an Atlantic-wide prayer event until the Calvinist evangelicals created one. More controversially, in a move that caused disagreement within the network, was that some of the Prayer Concert’s ministerial promoters connected the Concert with their new millennial ideas.

⁵⁵⁷ Jonathan Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE 4: 520-521.

⁵⁵⁸ WJE 5: 37; *The Christian history*, 87.

⁵⁵⁹ *The Christian history*, 87.

⁵⁶⁰ WJE 5: 37, 39.

In correspondence with MacLaurin and McCulloch in 1745 and 1746, published in James Robe's *Christian Monthly History* at Edinburgh, Edwards suggested strengthening the Prayer Concert and revealed his continuing millennial hopes.⁵⁶¹ Edwards's November 1745 letter to MacLaurin offered an interpretation of the King George's War (1744–1748) in light of his new millennial lens, where after an exhaustively long description of the Battle of Cape Breton, Edwards concluded by intimating the end of history was coming and suggested the collective promotion of the Prayer Concert as the best means to bring it about. He wrote, "It now becomes us, and the church of God everywhere, to cry to him, that he would overrule all for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, and the bringing on the expected peace and prosperity of Zion. I desire, honored Sir, that you would ... send me a particular account of things relating to the Concert for joint prayer."⁵⁶² In two other letters (to MacLaurin and McCulloch) on May 12, 1746, Edwards addressed the recent defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie's (1720-1788), where in 1745, Charles attempted to seize his lost royal inheritance, but his forces were destroyed at Culloden.⁵⁶³ For Edwards, the event was significant because Prince Charles was a Catholic supported by the absolutist ruler Louis XV. Edwards saw God spurring on the Scottish people to repel the invasion and return to Christ in revivals. He suggested extending the time for practicing the Atlantic Prayer Concert for another seven years and reiterated his belief the Concert would be the essential tool bringing on the millennium, "God hath lately stirred up so many of his people in Scotland, and some other places, to enter into such a Concert for united prayer

⁵⁶¹ WJE 16: 180, 204, 207.

⁵⁶² Jonathan Edwards, November 1745 letter to John MacLaurin, WJE 16: 197.

⁵⁶³ The Battle of Culloden occurred on April 16, 1746.

for the fulfillment of the glorious promises God has made of an abundant outpouring of his Spirit in the latter days.”⁵⁶⁴ Nevertheless, revival millennialism remained an affair discussed almost exclusively between Edwards and Scottish evangelical ministers.

In late 1746, Scottish and New England evangelical ministers agreed to renew the Prayer Concert for another seven years (October 1746-October 1753), and in early 1748 at Boston, Jonathan Edwards published *Humble Attempt* in support of the renewed Concert while connecting it to his revival millennialism.⁵⁶⁵ Controversially, Edwards offered an interpretation suggesting the slaying of the two witnesses from Revelation 11 had already occurred in the medieval persecution of the true church that expanded upon dissenting English minister Moses Lowman’s (1680-1752) previous work. Lowman had argued in *Paraphrase and Notes on the Revelation* (1737) that the fifth vial of God’s wrath had already been poured upon the seal of the beast from Revelation 16:10 and that now the true church would continue advancing without hindrance until Antichrist’s overthrow. John Willison in his *Balm of Gilead* had likewise argued that the apex of persecution of Christians had occurred in the High Middle Ages and thought the current revivals were the tool of progress till the millennium. Edwards took the relevant ideas by the two men and wove a coherent eschatological tapestry suggesting that since the advent of “Luther, Calvin and others” a process had begun that would resurrect the two witnesses and result in uninterrupted revival success until the “destruction of Antichrist that dreadful enemy that had long oppressed and worn out the saints.”⁵⁶⁶ Edwards

⁵⁶⁴ Edwards, November 1745 letter to John MacLaurin, in WJE: 16, 204-206; Jonathan Edwards, May 12, 1746 letter to William McCulloch, in WJE 16: 209.

⁵⁶⁵ Harold Simonson, “Jonathan Edwards and His Scottish Connections,” *Journal of American Studies* 21 (Dec. 1987): 375; Jonathan Edwards, *Humble Attempt*, WJE 5: 334-343.

⁵⁶⁶ Edwards, *Humble Attempt*, WJE 5: 381.

suggested the sixth vial from Revelation 16:12⁵⁶⁷ was a metaphor for the Papacy's future financial defeats, "the wealth, revenues and vast incomes of the Church of Rome, are the waters by which that Babylon has been nourished and supported; these are the waters which the popish clergy and members of the Romish hierarchy thirst after, and are continually drinking down."⁵⁶⁸ Edwards saw dissident Catholic nations turning towards reason and ceasing to donate money to the Papacy. He thought Protestant military victories were draining resources from Satanic Rome. The work speculated that the millennial kingdom was near and suggested that the Prayer Concert would help move it forward.⁵⁶⁹ *Humble Attempt* served as a defense of the evangelical Prayer Concert and disseminated a history that supported international Protestantism, attacked Enlightenment secularism, and savaged Roman Catholicism. It offered an intertwining of progress and revivalism, a millennial vision that would guide much of evangelical practice in Britain and America in the nineteenth century.

The five Calvinist ministers who wrote the foreword to Edwards's *Humble Attempt* welcomed the promotion of collective prayer, but were wary of the new millennial interpretation. They wrote, "To promote the increase, concurrency and constancy of these acceptable prayers, is the great intention both of the pious *Memorial* of our reverend and dear brethren in Scotland, and of the worthy author of this exciting essay. And this design, we can't but recommend to all."⁵⁷⁰ Yet in the very next paragraph they noted their disagreement with Edwards's eschatology.⁵⁷¹ Boston

⁵⁶⁷ "Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared." Revelation 16: 12 KJV.

⁵⁶⁸ Jonathan Edwards, *Humble Attempt*, WJE 5: 414-415.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 395.

⁵⁷⁰ Foreword to *Humble Attempt*, in WJE 5: 310.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*

evangelical ministers were not on board with Edwards's millennial ideas, but praised his efforts for cross-Atlantic prayer.

Yet Edwards's millennialism received a favorable response from Scottish evangelical ministers. In letters written to McCulloch in January and September 1747, right before *Humble Attempt* went to press, Edwards shared many of his millennial ideas with him. Moreover a similar interpretative ethic developed between the two men utilizing the same set of accepted writers (Mede, Potter, and Lowman) for the same purpose.⁵⁷² Also letters Edwards received from Thomas Gillespie and John Willison in 1748 and 1749 were supportive of his eschatology. In a September 1748 letter, Gillespie noted, "I have read your *Humble Attempt* and with much satisfaction, was charmed with the Scripture of the latter day glory set in one point of light. Do think humbly your observations on Lowman have great strength of reason. The killing of the witnesses, as yet to come, has been to me a grievous temptation; for which reason I perused with peculiar pleasure what you say on that subject."⁵⁷³ Similarly, a March 17, 1749 letter, Willison affirmed his support for Edwards' interpretation, "I approve your Remarks on Mr Lowman. ... I agree wt you that Antichrists fall will be gradual in the way you explain it."⁵⁷⁴ The response by moderate Calvinist revivalist ministers to *Humble Attempt* revealed a split on what eschatological lens to use for interpreting the revivals, but the implicit subtext was continuing solidarity in support of revivalism. By the end of

⁵⁷² Jonathan Edwards, January 21, 1747, letter to William McCulloch, in WJE 16: 220; Jonathan Edwards, September 23, 1747, letter to William McCulloch, in WJE 16: 239-240; Jonathan Edwards, October 7, 1748 letter to William McCulloch, in WJE 16: 257-258. Edwards wrote to McCulloch on October 7, 1748 the following: "All the conjectures concerning the number of the Beast, that I have lit on in my small reading, that of Mr. Potter's seems to me the most ingenious, who supposes the true meaning is to be found by extracting the root of the number." It is clear from the letter's context that McCulloch had also read and been deeply influenced by the same author in forming his millennialism.

⁵⁷³ Thomas Gillespie September 19, 1748, letter to Jonathan Edwards, in WJE Online 32: B73.

⁵⁷⁴ John Willison, March 17, 1749 letter to Jonathan Edwards, in WJE Online 32: B75.

the 1740s, Edwards and a number of other Scottish ministers had come to believe the Atlantic revivals were working with a Protestant military interest to usher in the millennium and used the Atlantic Prayer Concert as a tool for this end.

Efforts by John Erskine in the 1770s led to the final dissemination by Scottish evangelicals of revival millennialism. In 1774, Erskine and William and Margaret Gray at Edinburgh, cooperatively published Edwards's 1739 redemption lecture series, entitling it *A History of the Work of Redemption*.⁵⁷⁵ There was a long gap between production and publication, and in fact by 1755, the time was ripe, with Erskine waiting for Edwards to finish reworking his notes and remarked to Joseph Bellamy that he was looking forward to the publication of Edwards's "intended history of man's Redemption."⁵⁷⁶ And Edwards himself wrote to the trustees at the College of New Jersey in 1757 that he was hesitant to take up the Presidency because of his desire to publish the millennial work with Erskine's help. Published posthumously, *A History of the Work of Redemption* investigated the relationship between revivals and millennialism in a more thorough manner than any previous publication and soon had resonance across the British Atlantic World. In 1776, Erskine, who learned Dutch for doing the very job, translated the 1774 edition for Gijsbert Bonnet, Professor of Divinity at Utrecht, and an American edition was published in 1782.⁵⁷⁷ In America, revival millennialism became somewhat influential by the end of the eighteenth century, as searching for signs of America's providential role in Christ's coming kingdom gradually became a pastoral endeavor.

⁵⁷⁵ Yeager, *Enlightened Evangelicalism*, 166-167.

⁵⁷⁶ Wilson, introduction, in WJE 9: 11.

⁵⁷⁷ D. W. Bebbington, "The reputation of Edwards abroad," in *The Cambridge companion to Jonathan Edwards*, Stephen J., Stein, ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 243; Conforti, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Tradition, and American Culture*, 48.

Samuel Hopkins and Jonathan Edwards Jr., had by the 1770s linked revivals, the millennium, and slavery's abolition.⁵⁷⁸

In the 1740s a handful of Calvinist evangelical ministers created a new interpretive framework for revival millennialism. Nevertheless, the framework was positively received only in Scotland. In the debate over millennialism, what was contested tended to divide based upon geography. Scottish evangelicals embraced the new millennialism, New Englanders interacted with it and rejected it, and evangelicals from elsewhere ignored it. Perhaps because of Scotland's unique political and religious situation, the triumphant narrative of revival millennialism found receptive roots among Presbyterian ministers there.

⁵⁷⁸ Mark Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 271-272; Douglass A. Sweeny "Evangelical tradition in America," in *The Cambridge companion to Jonathan Edwards*, Stephen J., Stein, ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 226.

Calvinist interdenominational revival printing in the Great Awakening

In 1751, the redoubtable evangelical printer Samuel Kneeland published in Boston the Presbyterian revivalist Samuel Davies' *The State of Religion among the Protestant Dissenters in Virginia*. William Tennent Sr. had originally trained Davies in his Log College at Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, and in 1747 Davies began a successful revival in Hanover County, Virginia. Jonathan Edwards testified to the revival's success in 1749 and 1752 in letters to James Robe and William McCulloch, where he attested to Davies' orthodoxy. To Robe, Edwards noted, "I heard lately a credible account of a remarkable work of conviction and conversion among whites and negroes, at Hanover in Virginia, under the ministry of Mr. Davies, who is lately settled there, and has the character of a very ingenious and pious young man."⁵⁷⁹ Edwards also gave evidence to McCulloch that Davies' religion was appropriate, writing "when I was lately in New Jersey in the time of the Synod ... I there had the comfort of a short interview with Mr. Davies of Virginia. From the little opportunity I had, I was much pleased with him and his conversation. He seems to be very solid and discreet, and of a very civil, genteel behavior, as well as fervent and zealous in religion."⁵⁸⁰ Giving testimony of Davies' right thoughts and behaviors created ministerial links for Davies to further revivalism. And through the editorial labors of Joseph Bellamy and Jonathan Edwards, Davies' publication followed the lines set by other Calvinist ministers. To the Connecticut Pastor Bellamy Davies wrote, "As I have no correspondence with any of the Boston Ministers, I

⁵⁷⁹ Jonathan Edwards, letter to James Robe May 23, 1749, in WJE 16: 276.

⁵⁸⁰ Jonathan Edwards, November 24, 1752 letter to William McCulloch, in WJE 16: 544.

have been obliged to impose upon you the trouble of sending it to the Press, if you think it worthwhile. I beseech you, dear Sir to make such corrections as you and Mr. Edwards shall think fit; and be not afraid of offending me by so doing; for I was designedly careless in writing it, as I knew it would pass through your hands.”⁵⁸¹ Davies trusted Bellamy and Edwards (the one a rising star and the other an acclaimed revivalist) to do the necessary editing to get his account into the right doctrinal form.

Throughout the 1750s moderate Calvinist ministers continued to use revivalism as a tool in battle and Joseph Bellamy exemplified the pattern. In 1750, Samuel Kneeland published Bellamy’s *True Religion Delineated; or experimental religion, as distinguished from Formality on the one hand, and Enthusiasm on the other*. The work defended evangelical Calvinism by attacking antirevivalism and radicalism and named Joseph Sewall, Thomas Prince Sr., Thomas Foxcroft, Josiah Willard, Samuel Buell, Samuel Hopkins, and Jonathan Edwards as subscribers.⁵⁸² Indeed Edwards wrote the preface, commending Bellamy as a man trained to delineate true religion from the “Arminian Scheme” and “the people called separatists.”⁵⁸³ Also Scotland’s John Erskine began sending texts (as materials) to Bellamy so that he might engage with evangelical Calvinism’s opponents.⁵⁸⁴ For years scholars were puzzled why Bellamy, the arch-defender of evangelical Calvinism, had such an extensive collection of heterodox books. In fact, Erskine supplied them firmly believing it was his duty to provide printed content

⁵⁸¹ Samuel Davies, July 4, 1751 letter to Joseph Bellamy, in WJE Online 32: C107.

⁵⁸² Joseph Bellamy, author’s preface, *True Religion Delineated* (Boston: Kneeland, 1750), i-vi, Misc. Back Matter [Not Numbered], Database Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-180, Lehigh University Library, accessed February 6, 2015, [Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 6462 \(filmed\)](#).

⁵⁸³ Jonathan Edwards, preface, *True Religion Delineated*, vi.

⁵⁸⁴ Bebbington, “The reputation of Edwards abroad,” 241.

for the intellectual gifts of ministers who would aid the moderate revival network in combating dangerous ideas.⁵⁸⁵

In the Great Awakening, Calvinist evangelical ministers used their new print culture to develop an Atlantic revivalism in response to perceived ideological threats. In the late 1730s ministers first published Jonathan Edwards's *A Faithful Narrative* as a new kind of text that renewed Calvinism and attacked Arminianism. But while certain ministers came to see the affair as a remarkable dispensation of God's Spirit, the publication process involved negotiations between author, editors, and publishers over the meaning of the narrative. Theological specifics were hammered out through the cooperative medium of their written correspondence. Ministers then published their consensus in respective editions of the text. Similarly, gradual agreement was reached in the medium of the evangelical journals. In response to Whitefield's new birth innovations, ministers used their periodicals to contain Whitefield and instead institutionalize the revival pattern found in Edwards's Northampton account. Their new print culture became a means to envision revival as an exceptional time of grace connected with a local community's moral restoration. The ideas invented in the Great Awakening emerged from conflict, and ministers' constructed revivalism through a shared network of new publications.

Many of the same ministers used their new print communications to construct flexible revival orthodoxy as a defensive mechanism in response to those who critiqued their ideas. Calvinist ministers employed letter writing, published sermons, revival narratives and theological treatises to create differences between what they thought were

⁵⁸⁵ Yeager, *Enlightened Evangelicalism*, 180-181, 183.

orthodox and heterodox ideas. They slowly came to agree on theological essentials in response to radical and antirevivalist threats. Moderates labored in their exchanges with each other and with opponents to distinguish their revivalism from revelations supplementing Scripture, the believer's immediate assurance of salvation, and the right of laity to exhort and attack the authority of unconverted ministers. Through publications, moderates explicitly developed cessationist revivalism that excluded miracles and limited converts to only having mental visions of Christ, angels, and demons. They thought actual manifestations of such realities implied lies and superstitions. Supernatural healings and doctrines offered through special dreams also became taboo. Positively, converting experiences were manifested in continuing virtuous behavior that supported Calvinist doctrine, the established minister, and the larger community. Non-Calvinist revivalists also challenged Calvinist evangelical ministers to decide how far their interdenominational revival doctrines would stretch. Meanwhile moderates defended the roving Whitefield, embraced the doctrine of Original Sin, and stressed the importance of regeneration through affective conversion. Moderates also created a new Scriptural hermeneutic that asserted that Scripture did not ban bodily motions and published works demonstrating a prior history for them among converts. Their printed texts supported their own version of revivalism to render it more respectable. Finally, ministers published differences of opinion concerning millennialism and generated new ideas intertwining millennialism and revivalism. Their revivalism was created in a process of disagreement. The diversity of interpretations revealed flexible interdenominational revivalism around a shared doctrinal center. Under attack, moderate Calvinist ministers honed their revivalism in communications and publications. They developed a clearer

vision of what redeemed individuals and society should be, as the ministers accepted, contested, or utterly rejected ideas depending on whether the concepts assisted or hindered them in achieving success. Their new publications created a transatlantic ministerial community.

The First Great Awakening was a moment when assorted revivalisms struggled for supremacy and Calvinist ministers developed transatlantic connections to keep their internal theological message consistent. Their print confrontations provided the catalyst to construct a revivalism that further developed their doctrines. The Great Awakening was important as a time where Calvinist evangelicals used new publishing techniques to discuss theological questions and memorialize a Work of God.⁵⁸⁶ While the Great Awakening began with ministers erecting a shared edifice, it was solidified through conflict. I think controversy was necessary for the very birth of the Great Awakening. In the 1740s moderate Calvinist evangelicals responded to the problem of alternative revivalisms by producing publications to demarcate acceptable revivalism versus error. They established flexible boundaries in print so that by the end of the 1740s Calvinist evangelical ministers had created a set of concepts by which they produced a normative interdenominational revivalism.

My study implies that comprehension of the birth of the Great Awakening's revivalism leads to recognition of an inherently contested moment in which Calvinist ministers disseminated doctrinal ideas across the Atlantic with new print tools to establish a new interdenominational Protestantism. Such a narrative complicates the history of religious movements, particular that of evangelical revivalism. It reinforces the

⁵⁸⁶ O'Brien, "A Transatlantic Community of Saints," 813; Lambert, *Inventing the Great Awakening*, 11.

understanding of the Great Awakening as a liminal event. The Great Awakening was a moment when disagreements and conflicts played a crucial role that formed the evangelical movement. Not only were Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield influential actors, but so were a number of other Calvinist ministers who made their resources (their pens and pulpits) available to developing moderate Calvinist revivalism. Additionally, their opponents were just as influential (if unwittingly so) since their challenges brought the moderates' views into even sharper focus. The conflicts led moderate ministers to more profligate publishing and greater religious fervency.

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