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A CONTRACTING COMMUNITY:

AMERICAN PRESBYTERIANS, SOCIAL CONFLICT, AND HIGHER EDUCATION

1730-1820

by
Guy Howard Miller

Volume I

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
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ABSTRACT

A CONTRACTING COMMUNITY:
AMERICAN PRESBYTERIANS, SOCIAL CONFLICT, AND HIGHER EDUCATION
1730-1820

by

Guy Howard Miller

Chairman: Gordon S. Wood

A study of American Presbyterianism between the colonial Great Awakening and the Great Revival of the early nineteenth century, this dissertation analyzes the Presbyterians' changing attitude toward social conflict as reflected in their institutions of higher education. Before the Great Awakening the Presbyterians defined society as an organic unit in which conflict between competing groups was to be subordinated to the "common good." That view, however, was momentarily superseded in 1741 when the denomination split into an Old and a New Side during the religious turmoil of the Awakening. Although both sides tentatively defended disunion in the Great Schism, by 1758 the denomination was reunited. Led by their allegiance to social union, the Presbyterians reunited in order to rid American society of selfishness and contention and to find community in a Christian commonwealth made up of Protestant Britain and a reformed

America. To furnish secular and sacred leadership for that commonwealth, the Presbyterians established Princeton College, a cosmopolitan instrument of social reformation and integration. In its curriculum, disciplinary system, and sources of support, Princeton reflected the broad vision of its founders.

While the Presbyterians had only hoped to rid colonial society of conflict, during the Revolutionary period they believed that seemingly impossible task had been accomplished. The Americans seemed to unite before a common enemy, while at the same time they appeared to be "republicans by nature." At the "morning of the world" the Americans appeared virtuous enough to sustain a republic, which the Presbyterians believed had to be a peculiarly Christian polity. In that united Christian republic the Presbyterians sought community. During the Revolutionary period the Presbyterians established the predecessors of modern Hampden-Sydney College, Washington and Lee University, Dickinson College, Transylvania College, Washington and Jefferson College, and the University of North Carolina. These schools and Princeton were viewed as instruments of republican regeneration and were intended to inculcate the public and private virtue deemed necessary to the republic's survival. Their curriculum and disciplinary system were based on the Scottish philosophy of common sense, which was the foundation of the Presbyterians' faith in the regenerative powers of republican education.

If the immediate effect of the Revolution was to unify

American society, in the long term it caused the Presbyterians to accept the inevitability of social conflict. Faced with radical manifestations of the revolutionary emphasis on equality and union, many Presbyterians--especially the clergy--elaborated a theory of society that resembled the Presbyterians' defense of disunion in the Great Schism. The radical Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776 and Jefferson's effort to separate church and state completely in Virginia forced many Presbyterians to abandon their revolutionary expectations and to defend conflict in order to oppose those measures. The Presbyterians further renounced their revolutionary ardor during the chaotic 1790's, a decade marked by such domestic convulsions as the Whiskey Rebellion. They were momentarily heartened as the Great Revival in the West flared up after 1800, but the Presbyterians quickly denounced the enthusiasm and disorder generated by the revival. Sadly they concluded that Americans were no more virtuous than any other people and reluctantly accepted social discord as inevitable in American society. But at the same time the Presbyterians turned inward and began to make of their denomination the united, organic community that neither the Christian commonwealth nor the republic had become. As the Presbyterians retreated into denominationalism after 1795, they transformed their broadly conceived colleges into bastions of orthodoxy that above all else were to serve as instruments of denominational competition. The stultifying institutions of 1820 reflected the major change in the Presbyterians' attitude toward society.

PREFACE

When the young Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville observed American society in the 1830's, he discovered a condition so unusual that he coined a word to describe it. In Democracy in America, published in 1835, de Tocqueville analyzed a phenomenon he called "individualisme." The Americans, he announced, exulted in their equality and fiercely struggled to rise in a society where contention and conflict seemed endemic and competition the natural state of man. Impetuously they cast off all that would impede their rise in the free New World and flung themselves into the wilderness in search of success. There they lived in isolation, seeking to find in themselves and their families the sustenance once obtained from stable and well-defined communal relations. But de Tocqueville also perceived that the isolated Americans were an anxious, even a frightened people. The same society that left them free to rise, left the Americans just as free to fall. Moreover, they often failed to find within themselves the stabilizing forces that had been provided by an organized community. Therefore, the Americans sought in a pervasive conformity a secure retreat from the terrifying instabilities that accompanied freedom and unbridled competition.

That conformity, I contend, was the Jacksonians' surrogate for the organic community that had been the social ideal of eighteenth century America. But how did it happen

that the Jacksonians found themselves looking back longingly to one social ideal while daily living by another, more terrifying, one? How had the Americans come to renounce an almost medieval concept of society in which social conflict was abhorred and then to embrace a view of society in which conflict and competition were accepted as unavoidable evils, if not praised as positive goods? These questions were the starting point of this study of the American Presbyterians between 1730 and 1820, roughly the period between the two great revivals known as the first and second Great Awakenings. In those years the denomination underwent transformations that helped produce the anxious men described by de Tocqueville. From the colonial Great Awakening, through the American Revolution, and into the Great Revival of the early nineteenth century, the Presbyterians slowly evolved a view of society very different from that which obtained in the early eighteenth century. It is the purpose of this study to describe that changing view of society.

I chose to study the Presbyterians because they made up a numerous and significant segment of American society in the eighteenth century. Moreover, possibly more than any other denomination in America, the Presbyterians had a group identity, making them a relatively manageable body with which to work. But, most important of all, in the 1740's and again in the first decade of the nineteenth century, the Presbyterians engaged in thorough debates over the nature of society and the legitimacy of social conflict. Those

debates afford an opportunity for estimating the changes in one group's view of society in the revolutionary last half of the eighteenth century.

I have chosen to approach the Presbyterians principally through their institutions of higher education for several reasons. In my research it quickly became obvious that their schools were institutional expressions of the Presbyterians' ideas. As those ideas changed, so did the colleges. Educational institutions have usually been established to affect society in some way--either to sustain or change it. And college founders have generally indicated the ways in which they hope their schools will affect society. In voicing those hopes, they have elaborated their ideas of the nature of society. Furthermore, the study of educational institutions enables the historian to get beyond men's rhetoric. Once established, institutions have an existence of their own, apart from the rhetoric of their founders. As well as reflecting their founders' ideas, institutions frequently wrench those ideas into unanticipated forms. The study of educational institutions, then, allows the historian to attempt the imperative historical task of bringing together the ideas and acts of men.

I would like to express my appreciation for the encouragement and criticism of my committee and especially of my chairman, Gordon S. Wood. I am also indebted to the staffs of the libraries of Princeton University, Princeton

Theological Seminary, Hampden-Sydney College, Washington and Lee University, Dickinson College, Washington and Jefferson College, Transylvania College, Union Theological Seminary (Richmond), the University of Pittsburgh, Louisville Theological Seminary, the University of Michigan, and the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia. I am particularly grateful to the staff of the William L. Clements Library of the University of Michigan and to Mrs. Martha Slotten, the Assistant Curator of the splendid Special Collections of Dickinson College. My wife, Ruth, assisted ably in each stage of the dissertation's preparation and is largely responsible for any literary merit it may have.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

D.C.L. - Dickinson College Library, Carlisle, Pennsylvania

H-S.C.L. - Hampden-Sydney College Library, Hampden-Sydney, Virginia

P.U.L. - Princeton University Library, Princeton, New Jersey

T.C.L. - Transylvania College Library, Lexington, Kentucky

W.J.C.L. - Washington and Jefferson College Library, Washington, Pennsylvania

W.L.C.L. - Washington and Lee University Library, Lexington, Virginia

P.H.S. - Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

U.T.S. - Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia

JPHS - Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society

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PART ONE

REFORMATION: 1730-1775

CHAPTER I

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AS A SOCIAL UNION

America began with an act of social disunion. The puritan settlers of New England wrenched themselves away from English society to establish their holy community in the American wilderness. Although they had ruptured English society, the puritans attempted to establish in the New World a community free of any further social conflict and dissension. They were the first in a long line of Americans who would rend the fabric of one social unit and then seek security and identity in a smaller, more closely-knit, homogeneous unit. The American Presbyterians desired such a society free of conflict and dissension. And like the puritans, they found their ideal more easily imagined than achieved. In the second quarter of the eighteenth century they debated fully their view of the nature of society in general and of social conflict in particular. That debate reveals the tension between their commitment to an almost medieval concept of society as an organic community and their efforts to accomodate that concept to an increasingly contentious American society.

1. A Garden Enclosed

The Presbyterians' attitude toward society was manifest as they established their first churches in America. In the first quarter of the eighteenth century the Presby-

terians erected in the middle colonies of British North America "a Garden enclosed." Situated between the Anglicans of the South and the Congregationalists of New England, the Presbyterians nurtured their infant church, a struggling branch of the Church of Scotland. They were successful because for twenty years the strongly hierarchical form of presbyterian church government proved capable of controlling social forces just beginning to emerge in America. The Presbyterians' "garden" thrived not because the soil was particularly good or the climate hospitable but because its cultivators hastily erected around it a "Hedge of Discipline" strong enough to keep its workmen in and its enemies out.

The first Presbyterian churches established in America were essentially congregational in all but their names. The small churches founded in the middle colonies by Francis Makemie, the Scottish father of American Presbyterianism, were too weak and remote from each other to organize a presbytery immediately. They therefore existed as autonomous congregations united only by the Scottish itinerant missionaries who spasmodically ministered to them.[1] Likewise, the Presbyterian churches on Long Island were strongly influenced by the congregational background of their many members from New England. These churches called their own ministers, maintained discipline themselves, and generally concentrated on surviving. Ostensibly missions of the Church of Scotland, they were anomalous institutions: Presbyterian churches without a presbytery.

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[1]See Robert Pickens Davis, "The Makemie Churches in the First Presbytery," JPHS, XXIX (June, 1951), 115-125.

It did not take long for the Presbyterian inclination toward hierarchy and union to alter this extraordinary situation. In 1708 the scattered Presbyterians established the Presbytery of Philadelphia, thus instituting the fundamental requirement for a presbyterian form of ecclesiastical government. Henceforth, the presbytery would superintend the calling of ministers, establish and enforce unified rules of church government, and arbitrate all disputes among its member churches. The churches would concentrate on carrying out the directives of the presbytery, on maintaining orthodoxy, union, and peace among their members, and on providing an adequate stipend for their ministers. Together, the presbytery and its churches would maintain the unified and ordered society that the presbyterian hierarchical system was supposed to produce.[2]

The presbyterian system was deemed capable of producing a unified society because it provided a framework for ascertaining, establishing, and protecting the "general good" or the "general will" of a society. Within the individual churches the elders, making up the "sessions," cooperated with their ministers to determine the needs and wishes of the congregations. These were sometimes determined by directly consulting the members. At other times the elders and min-

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[2]Also in 1708 some of the New England Congregationalists adopted the Saybrook Platform, setting up a system of "consociations" that would function informally as presbyteries did in arbitrating and settling disputes brought before them. See Perry Miller, The New England Mind: From Colony to Province (Boston, 1961), pp. 266-267.

ister decided upon the general will in private convocation. The Presbyterian ecclesiastical system was manifestly not democratic. Because of their wealth, social position, education, and visible piety, the minister and elders were deemed better qualified than other members to determine the common will or good of the congregation. In the presbytery the same deliberative process took place. There the ministers and selected elders of all the churches debated and finally arrived at the common will of the larger body. They then advised their churches of presbyterial policy and enforced that policy. Ideally, the system permitted the churches to influence the decisions of the presbytery and thus to prevent it from becoming tyrannical. At the same time, the hierarchy gave the presbytery the opportunity to rise above the interests of individual churches and to legislate in the best interests of the entire society.[3]

By 1716 the best interests of American Presbyterianism seemed to dictate that the hierarchy be strengthened. In that year the Presbytery of Philadelphia was divided into three presbyteries over which was placed the Synod of Philadelphia. This move was prompted by an increase in the number of Presbyterian churches and by the ecclesiastical rule that a group of churches large enough to support three presbyteries

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[3]There is no adequate discussion of presbyterianism as a decision-making or an administrative system. However, sessional, presbyterial, and synodical records provide ample material for such a study. The Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia has succeeded in assembling virtually all eighteenth century records in some form.

should also establish a central synod. It was simply in the nature of Presbyterians to eventually create a synod.

The synod was to be to the presbyteries what they were in turn to the churches. At its annual meeting in Philadelphia it gathered representatives from New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and occasionally even Virginia. There the representatives attempted to adopt an intercolonial perspective and to resolve disputes over ministerial qualifications and presbyterial and sessional boundaries. They also heard complaints brought against ministers and congregations and sought to mediate between the Scottish and the New England members of the synod. They did not always succeed, but this should not obscure the fact that almost synonymously with its birth American Presbyterianism established a system charged with unifying and fostering the common interests of an ever increasing portion of colonial society.[4]

During the first twenty years of its existence the Presbyterian hierarchical system fulfilled the expectations of its founders. United with their elders, the ministers were able to maintain their congregations' unity and to enforce strictly the rule that no member would separate from a settled congregation without his minister's leave. In 1728 the pastor at Abington, Pennsylvania, Malachi Jones, summarily excommunicated six of his members for breaking away from his church without his permission. The six appealed to the synod,

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[4]The best treatment of colonial Presbyterianism remains Leonard J. Trinterud, The Forming of an American Tradition (Philadelphia, 1949).

but they were forced to return to Jones' care after acknowledging that their action had been a "disorder and a fault for which they were very sorry . . . ."[5] The clash between Jones and the new synod on one side and the renegade parishioners on the other illustrates the increased strength of ecclesiastical authority when it was incorporated into a working hierarchy.

Crucial to the increase of ecclesiastical authority was the presbytery's control over the placement of ministers. In the presbyterian system the minister was usually selected for the congregation by the presbytery, which dispatched one of its senior members to preside over the drawing up of the call. The presbytery's representative insisted that the call of the congregation be unanimous. If it were not, the presiding minister often delivered a sermon on the necessity of union in the work of God and brought the recalcitrants around. He then insisted that all male members pledge a stated amount to the prospective minister's support. If unanimity was not achieved in the call, or if the congregation failed to pledge an adequate salary, the presbytery refused to forward the call to the minister, who, as a member of the presbytery, could not accept the call without its consent. The process of calling a minister, then, was an extremely formal and legalistic one in which the members of the congregation were made quite

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[5]Sept. 23, 1728, Presbyterian Church in the United States, Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America . . . (Philadelphia, 1841), p. 92; William J. Hinkle, ed., "Church Records of Neshaminy and Bensalem, Bucks County, 1710-1738," JPHS, I (May, 1900), 129.

aware of their responsibilities toward their pastor and of his extraordinary position in their society.[6]

The minister arrived among his congregation clothed in the authority of the presbytery and the synod and immediately became the source of essentially unquestioned authority. This authority was derived fundamentally from the divine origin of his position. Although the minister was appointed by the presbytery, the office he occupied came immediately from Christ, declared Jonathan Dickinson, respected minister of the Newark Presbyterian Church. Therefore, the minister had been "appointed and authorized by God . . . and act/ed/ in his name and stead . . . ."[7] In his position as ruler in the household of God, the Presbyterian minister superintended the morals of his members as best he could and supervised the catechizing of both young and old. Depending upon his skill and industry, he could become very influential in molding the views of his members and of an entire village. Especially was this true in those areas, such as New Jersey and Long Island, where the Presbyterians were the majority or at least a strong minority and where the Presbyterian minister was a central and commanding figure in the social structure of both village and countryside.

The powers of catechizing, teaching, and preaching that

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[6]For a similar (because temporary) increase of ministerial authority following the adoption of the Saybrook Platform in Connecticut, see Richard L. Bushman, From Puritan to Yankee . . . (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), pp. 147-163.

[7]Jonathan Dickinson, A Sermon Preached at the Opening of the Synod of Philadelphia . . . 1722 . . . (Boston, 1723), pp. 5-6.

gave the minister much of his authority were informal ones and varied appreciably with the skill and personality of the individual. His powers over the church session, on the other hand, were formal and not so dependent upon personality for their efficacy. The election of worthy elders was the first duty demanded of a new congregation by the presbytery, for the labors of the elders enabled the minister to maintain his authority and, consequently, preserve the congregation's unity. Presided over by the minister, the church session in fact served as an ecclesiastical court that, in the absence of local courts, heard cases of adultery, theft, assault, lying, and business fraud, especially those dealing with land transactions. Presbyterians were expected to seek the decision of their session before going to civil court, and the synod hoped that this would abate the colonists' proclivity for hauling each other into court at the slightest pretext.[8] The session, of course, heard only cases dealing with Presbyterians, whom it had the power to censure, suspend, or expel from church privileges. Furthermore, the session's power to call before it any member of the congregation made it a unifying force as long as the elders were united among themselves and with their minister.

The session rarely disagreed with its minister, because the creation of the presbyteries and the synod strengthened greatly the power of the minister over his elders. The presbyteries were invariably controlled by their clerical members.

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[8]Sept. 22, 1729, Presbyterian Records, p. 96.

Furthermore, not all of the elders could attend the meetings of the presbytery at once, and the minister usually decided which ones would attend. Consequently, while the clerical element of the presbyteries remained relatively stable and, hence, powerful, the lay element was constantly changing and remained subordinate to the ministers. For these reasons Rev. Jones' recalcitrant parishioners had no chance of succeeding in their attempt to leave his care without his permission. Even had they disregarded his excommunication, no Presbyterian minister or session would have accepted them into a church without a certificate of dismissal from their former pastor. While the machinery of the hierarchy worked smoothly, the ministers exercised their authority essentially unchallenged and maintained their churches as organic units.

Just as the ministers sought to preserve the unity of their churches on the local level, so the presbyteries endeavored to maintain that unity on a larger scale. Already in the early eighteenth century the integrity of older congregations was being threatened by factions within the membership who wished to establish separate congregations. These factions were motivated sometimes by antagonism toward the minister or another faction, less frequently by doctrinal scruples, but most often by a simple desire for a more convenient meetinghouse. In 1708 the united congregation of New Castle and White Clay Creek in Pennsylvania was threatened by such a split. The White Clay Creek members of the congregation lived in the countryside outside the village of New Castle and requested the Presbytery of Philadelphia's permis-

sion to erect a new meetinghouse closer to their homes. Immediately the New Castle members asked the presbytery to refuse permission, that the "meetinghouse and congregation . . . may not be damaged by the rupture." The presbytery refused to allow the division, and for the next twenty years it recorded no other attempt by a congregational faction to divide its church's unity.[9] The presbyteries also sought to foster unity by insisting that no minister preach within their bounds without permission and that no minister interfere with another's congregation. After 1716 the synod, along with the presbyteries, also sought to protect the churches from the "unqualified" Irish itinerants who came from the Old World to plague the New.

Thus, the Presbyterian hierarchy functioned during the first twenty years of its existence to preserve the peace and unity of the denomination. The practical result closely approximated the Presbyterian ideal of an organic unit dedicated to a common end. According to John Thomson, the Presbyterian minister at Lewes, Delaware, the American Presbyterian Church in 1728 was "one entire organized Body or Society of Christians, united together by Order and Government, according to the Institution of the Word . . . ."[10] Each part of the society existed for the good of the other parts, and all were actuated by concern for "the Publick Good." In 1727 Joseph Morgan, the minister at Freehold, New Jersey, pointed

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[9]May 20, 1708, ibid., pp. 11-12.

[10]John Thomson, An Overture Presented to the Reverend Synod of Dissenting Ministers . . . 1728 . . . (Philadelphia, 1729), p. 27.

out that the public good was the only legitimate end of all societies, ecclesiastical or civil. In the latter the farmer raised food for the entire society, the tradesman supplied what was needed in the land, the merchant brought into the country what it desired and disposed of its "Superfluities," while the teacher promoted knowledge for "the Publick Good." All of this, Morgan affirmed, was the result of man's need for "a Communion for the good of each Party, to show by Similitude the Heavenly Communion." The parts of the Presbyterian church likewise should function together to further this common good. Only love and forebearance, he concluded, were needed to make of the church an earthly prototype of that "Heavenly Communion."[11] For, as Jonathan Dickinson said, the church was "a Garden enclosed, a Fountain sealed, . . . [and] a Vineyard given out by Parcels, to proper keepers . . . ," who erected around it a "Hedge of Discipline."[12] So long as the hedge held and the workers did not quarrel among themselves, the garden would prosper.

2. An Army with Banners

In the 1730's Presbyterians ceased to use botanical metaphors to describe their infant church. Instead, martial images began to appear in their sermons and synodical deliberations.

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[11]Joseph Morgan, Love to our Neighbours Recommended, and the Duties thereof Importunately Urged . . . (New London, Conn., 1727), p. 13.

[12]Dickinson, Sermon . . . 1722, p. 14. For another example of the often used botanical metaphor see especially, Synod of Philadelphia, An Examination and Refutation of Mr. Gilbert Tennent's Remarks Upon the Protestation Presented to the Synod of Philadelphia . . . (Philadelphia, 1742), p. 126,

The hedge of discipline fell and was trampled as the gardeners became warriors, fighting not against a common foe but among themselves. By 1741 the church was split into two bitter factions. It had become, in the metaphor most frequently used to describe its new condition, "an army with banners." With increasing frequency and ferocity the members of congregations in the early 1730's fell to arguing among themselves while their pastors proved unable to preserve ecclesiastical unity. For instance, in 1732 part of the Middle Octorara congregation in Pennsylvania refused to join with the rest of the membership in presenting a call for a minister. The issue was placed before the Presbytery of Donegal, which was able to restore a semblance of unity to the church only with great effort.[13]

The Donegal Presbytery at first vacillated in the face of congregational divisions. In 1734 it sadly denounced the "Evil Spirit of contention . . . [and] wrangling" that had taken possession of its churches.[14] But in the following year the presbytery reluctantly decided to allow the people of the Forks of the Brandywine in Pennsylvania to establish a separate congregation. The presbytery, though, insisted on preventing any injury to settled congregations. The congregation was to submit for its minister's inspection a list of all who planned to separate. If he wished to prevent any from leaving his care, he could. Furthermore, a committee of the presbytery was appointed to perambulate the congregation

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[13]Oct. 7, 1732, Minutes of the Donegal Presbytery, I, 2-3 (Microfilm in U.T.S.). Hereafter cited as Don. Pby. Min.

[14]June 7, 1734, ibid., I, 35.

to estimate the damage it would sustain by a separation. If the committee found the location of the new church "inconvenient" in relation to the rest of the once united congregation, the new building would have to be moved. The dissidents had to pay all arrears to their former pastor before leaving his care. And, finally, they were forbidden to bury anyone in their new cemetery until the committee's decision had been made.[15]

For approximately five years the Presbytery of Donegal was able to deal with the schisms on an individual basis. When a minister was unable to resolve a difficult situation, the presbytery dealt with it on an ad hoc basis. Almost immediately, though, the presbytery began to strengthen the institutional means of resolving conflict. In 1733 it instructed each session to keep a record of its proceedings to be inspected annually by the presbytery. At the same time the presbytery decided to hold each of its meetings in a different church, at which time it would inspect the affairs of that particular congregation. At these meetings the relations among the congregation, the session, and the minister would be examined.[16]

At the same time the synod took steps to reduce contention within its churches. In 1735 the synod ordered each presbytery to examine annually its ministers and congregations. These procedures were meant to maintain unity and

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[15]Apr. 4, 1735, ibid., I, 58; June 11, 1735, ibid., I, 64; Sept. 18, 1735, ibid., I, 82-83.

[16]May 15, 1733, ibid., I, 7.

amicable relations in each church. It soon became obvious, however, that they were having an opposite effect.[17] The presbytery's visitation became the occasion for accusations, interminable disputations, and even physical violence.[18] For three years, for example, the Presbytery of Donegal sought to restore unity to the fractured congregation in Nottingham, Pennsylvania. After hearing endless charges brought by the congregation and its minister concerning the minister's arrears, everybody's morals, illegal land transactions, threats of bodily harm, and proposed separations, the presbytery ruled in 1736 that it would hear no more. Instead, it demanded that, for the Lord's sake, the people were to "lay aside & bury in oblivion all their sinful resentments ag[ain]st one another & Endeavour by all means to restore Mutual amity in Charity among themselves."[19]

In the latter half of the 1730's the presbyteries grew very reluctant to allow separations. Donegal Presbytery refused to allow separations because a new church would be too close to old ones or because congregations were not always united in their request. The dissidents usually were told to remain under their minister's care and to be grateful for their present privileges.[20] By 1741 the Donegal Presbytery

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[17]Nov. 1, 1733, ibid., I, 10, 12; Sept. 24, 1734, Presbyterian Records, p. 111.

[18]Apr. 2, 1734, Don. Pby. Min., I, 13; Sept. 2, 1735, ibid., I, 68-69.

[19]May 26, 1736, ibid., I, 121.

[20]May 4 (?), 1738, ibid., I, 162; June 19, 1739, ibid., I, 179; Sept. 4, 1739, ibid., I, 182; May 31, 1740, ibid., I, 192.

had even denied a request for separation by stating simply that the reasons cited for the separation were "false & groundless."[21] In William Tennent's church at Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, the Presbytery of Philadelphia even institutionalized perpetual conflict rather than allow a separation. When the congregation divided over whether the aged Tennent should hire an assistant, the presbytery demanded that an assistant be hired and that each party remain in the church and support the minister or his new assistant. As vacancies occurred in the church's membership, they were to be filled by equal numbers from each side.[22]

When the presbyteries did allow separations, they insisted that all possible precautions be taken to protect existing congregations. Committees were appointed to measure the distance from old to proposed new congregations, and dissidents were required to swear that they would build only in a location agreeable to the old congregation.[23] At all times the rights of the official minister were to be protected. At one point the Donegal Presbytery even ordered each man who wished to separate from a certain congregation to produce a certificate establishing that he had paid his arrears to his former minister and then to swear this before the civil magistrate. All who refused would be declared disorderly

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[21]Apr. 8, 1741, ibid., I, 216.

[22]Oct. 25, 1738, Minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, II, 63 (Microfilm in P.H.S.); hereafter cited as Phil. Pby. Min.

[23]Oct. 25, 1738, ibid., II, 64, 65; Nov. 19, 1735, Don. Pby. Min., I, 110; Sept. 2, 1736, ibid., I, 129; June 23, 1737, ibid., I, 148; Nov. 16, 1737, ibid., I, 154.

and unworthy of church privileges.[24]

The presbyteries were especially adamant about protecting a settled congregation which complained that a new congregation threatened it. In such cases all affected parties were ordered to appear before the presbytery, which would appoint a committee to perambulate the contested area. All parties were required to attend the perambulation and to check on the committee's impartiality. If the presbytery decided to grant the new establishment, explicit instructions were given as to the boundaries of the new congregation. At times trees were marked to make sure that no member strayed from his appointed pastor's care. If too many objections were made to the new establishment, the presbytery simply would not allow it.[25]

But by 1740 the presbyteries were fighting a losing battle. Their efforts to maintain unity in the churches only caused the congregations to split even faster into warring factions. To a great extent the ecclesiastical machinery that was intended to reduce friction acerbated the situation. For in each decision it made concerning a separation, a presbytery added its authority to one of the two sides, thus alienating the other. Furthermore, the necessity of winning the presbytery's support often intensified each faction's propagandistic efforts. And, finally, the meeting of the presbytery quickly became not a forum for ordered and rational discussion of

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[24]Apr. 14, 1736, Don. Pby. Min., I, 113-115.

[25]Sept. 1, 1737, ibid., I, 149; Oct. 18-19, 1738, ibid., I, 169, 171; Apr. 4-5, 1739, ibid., I, 174-175; June 21, 1739, Phil. Pby. Min., II, 73.

differences but an arena for unrestrained combat. So long as there was a recognizable common good to be established and protected, the presbytery served an important function in furthering it. But when unanimity of interest vanished, the presbytery became something to gain control of to further a "party" interest.

Thus, many ministers gradually lost control of their congregations while the presbyteries became the objects of heated competition for their control. The struggle for control of the synod was even more spirited. That struggle became intense when in 1729 the older Scottish members of the denomination sought to force each minister to subscribe publicly to the Westminster Confession of Faith. The New Englanders and the younger Scotsmen refused on the basis that a subscription was an infringement upon liberty of conscience. In the 1730's the two groups split further on the questions of ministerial examinations and qualifications, the relation of piety to learning, ministerial itinerations, and, most important, the divine origin of the revivals after 1735. By 1740 the lines were drawn, and the hierarchical machinery began to break down at the synodical level. Just as churches began to disdain the authority of the presbyteries, some of the latter were no longer willing to accept unchallenged the synod's authority in all cases.

The most significant failure of the presbyterian system was the breakdown in communication among its constituent parts. When session, presbytery, and synod no longer communicated with each other, there was no way of preserving a mutuality of

interest. This was particularly true when members of each side began to denounce each other in the public press. The pamphlets issued by both sides constituted an extraordinary means of communication not through the hierarchy but in public. Their appearance documents the crucial fact that neither side any longer trusted the hierarchy to serve its end or to unify the denomination. Thus, John Thomson as early as 1728 felt compelled to publish a pamphlet containing the "truth" about the transactions of a synodical meeting. He no longer trusted the ministers and elders to carry the "truth" back to their churches from the meeting. He believed that it was important for the people to receive information "first hand" rather than by "the imperfect Relation of others, wherein there is so much Danger of an unfair Representation of the Matter, according as the Relator affects or disaffects . . . ."[26] Still in 1728 most of Thomson's colleagues were willing to continue using the hierarchy to inform and unify the denomination. By 1740, however, partisans of both sides had abandoned the machinery of the hierarchy and had joined the truculent Thomson in print. At that point, disunion became a strong likelihood.

3. In Defense of Schism

In 1741, amid a heated pamphlet war and acrimonious synodical debates, the Presbyterians split into factions called the Old and New Sides. The split was part of the turmoil in colonial churches occasioned by the arrival in 1740 of the English evangelist George Whitefield and the beginning of the

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[26]Thomson, Overture, p. 5.

revival known as the Great Awakening. From the Carolinas to Maine great revivals of piety followed the itinerations of Whitefield and his disciples, and the pulpits of virtually all colonial churches were opened to the revivalists. But within a year the enthusiastic reception given to Whitefield was tempered by growing criticism of the excesses of the revivals and, more especially, of the revivalists' proclivity for preaching uninvited in the congregations of settled ministers. Church after church divided into opponents or supporters of the revival; the schism in the Presbyterian church was the most spectacular of those divisions.

The Presbyterians did not easily abandon their traditional emphasis on ecclesiastical peace and unity, the ideal of their church as an organic unit proving remarkably resistant to the forces of schism. In 1741 George Gillespie, a leading Old Side minister, preached a sermon against division within the church and used as his text I Corinthians 1:11-12. In that scripture the apostle Paul denounced the Corinthian Christians for splitting into factions upholding either his teachings or those of Apollos or Cephas. All are of Christ, declared the apostle. Gillespie echoed Paul and added that as there was no division in Heaven, neither should there be contention below. "In the Church of Christ triumphant in Heaven, there are no Divisions; but a perfect Unity and Holy Harmony."[27] The only way to maintain that harmony was following the "gospel of reconciliation," affirmed Jonathan Dickinson,

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[27]George Gillespie, A Sermon Against Divisions in Christ's Church . . . (Philadelphia, 1740), p. 1.

a leading New Side minister, in 1739. The opportunity to reconcile the warring children of God was man's greatest privilege and his most solemn duty. "By this we are instructed in our Duty and Interest, and guided in all the Ways of Righteousness, Peace and Comfort. By this we are put under the best Advantages to be Favourites of Heaven, and to be the Children of God, to be happy in this World, and to be happy forever."[28] Reconciled by the love of Christ, his followers formed one body. Why, asked Gillespie, should Christians rail against each other? "We would esteem that Man mad, that would be tearing the Flesh, and eating the Members of his own Body."[29]

Presbyterians on both sides stoutly affirmed that they had no intention of dividing the church by their sermons and pamphlets. Their actions, however, belied their words. The subscription controversy of 1729, for instance, precipitated a pamphlet war anticipating in rancor the one accompanying the Great Schism. In a pamphlet published in 1729 John Thomson denounced in the most inflammatory language those who opposed the Subscription Act. But then he blandly stated that he would greatly regret it if his pamphlet proved "an Occasion of any Heat or Contention among Us . . . ."[30] When the New Side's Samuel Blair rushed into print to defend his side's case, he staunchly affirmed that he would far prefer to tend his own flock than spend any of his time contending with his

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[28]Jonathan Dickinson, Danger of Schisms and Contentions . . . (New York, 1739), p. 4.

[29]Gillespie, Sermon Against Divisions, p. 16.

[30]Thomson, Overture, p. 25.

brethren.[31] Robert Cross, a leading Old Side minister, began his attack on the New Side by piously asserting his revulsion from schism but then proceeded to identify his enemies as the foes of God, a move hardly calculated to foster peace.[32] The Old Sides further protested that printing their grievances against the New Sides in no way jeopardized the peace. Indeed, it paved the way for peace "by making known the Grievances of that Side when the other Side had done the like before in several Forms."[33] Clearly each side had abandoned the machinery of the hierarchy and had taken its case to the public.

While protesting that they sought only peace, both sides attempted to prove that the Bible sanctioned contention in the defense of truth. During the subscription controversy of 1729 Thomson began to picture the Presbyterian church in America as under attack from without and within. Employing martial images he declared that "the Church of Christ [ought] to fortify itself against all Assaults and Invasions that may be made upon the Doctrine it professeth according to the Word of God." The "secret Bosom Enemies" of the Church had to be ferreted out and marked so they could no longer deceive. The churches of Ephesus and Smyrna had done just that and prospered for it, but the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira had not--to

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[31]Samuel Blair, A Vindication of the Brethren who were unjustly and illegally cast out of the Synod of Philadelphia . . . (Philadelphia, 1744), pp. 4-5.

[32][Robert Cross], A Protestation Presented to the Synod of Philadelphia . . . (Philadelphia, 1741), p. 13.

[33]Synod of Philadelphia, An Examination and Refutation of Mr. Gilbert Tennent's Remarks . . . (Philadelphia, 1742), p. 6.

their ruination. Therefore, the Bible sanctioned the use of tests and confessions to find who the true followers of Christ were. Anticipating the charge that imposed subscriptions and oaths would inevitably lead to schism, Thomson affirmed that quite the contrary would follow. Subscriptions would in fact foster unity by establishing a "common mind." But even if disunion did follow, subscription would be only the "occasion" but not the "cause" of the schism. Had not Christ said that he came not to send peace but a sword, fire, and division upon the earth? But, Thomson concluded, Christ was only the occasion, not the cause of conflict.[34]

Jonathan Dickinson immediately challenged the idea that the scriptures sanctioned contention and schism. His rebuttal indicates that in 1729 this future New Side leader was more firmly committed to peace and union than was John Thomson, the future Old Side spokesman. Following Thomson's logic, Dickinson declared, inevitably led to the conclusion that "it's our Duty to maintain the Truths of the Gospel, by Schisms, Contentions and Confusions; and even the total Subversion of our Congregations." The imposition of enforced subscriptions and oaths would manifestly lead to schism and could not be defended by scripture. The scripture that pictured Christ as a sword-bearing troublemaker had long been rejected by many godly men as leading inevitably to countless rents and divisions. Consequently, it should not be used to justify them.[35]

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[34]Thomson, Overture, pp. 12, 26-27.

[35]Jonathan Dickinson, Remarks Upon a Discourse Intituled An Overture . . . (New York, 1729), pp. 6, 24.

By 1739 Dickinson had not modified his views, but most of his colleagues by then at least tentatively agreed that the Bible sanctioned disunion. While lecturing a congregation torn apart by internecine conflict, Dickinson still maintained that "Nothing can be more contrary to the Spirit and Tenour of the Gospel, than divisive Principles and Practices."[36] Likewise, the young New Side minister, Samuel Finley, insisted upon unity in the church: "For if it were divided against itself, it would destroy itself by intestine Broils, and become an easy Prey to a foreign Enemy." But elsewhere in the same sermon Finley noted that those who charged the New Sides with creating divisions forgot that the opponents of God had made the same charge against Paul and Elijah. He then went on to quote the scripture invoked by Thomson and rejected by Dickinson: Christ had come with a sword to divide each family against itself.[37]

It remained for the controversial New Side leader, Gilbert Tennent, to put into its definitive form the argument that the Bible sanctioned conflict and schism. In his famous Nottingham sermon Tennent in 1740 equated the opponents of the Great Awakening with the Pharisees of the New Testament and with all that impeded the progress of the Kingdom. For Tennent the "unconverted" ministers were nothing less than the offspring of the serpent with whom the descendants of Eve were in eternal conflict. Thus, the contentions of the 1730's

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[36]Jonathan Dickinson, Danger of Schism, p. 12.

[37]Samuel Finley, Christ Triumphing and Satan Raging . . . (Philadelphia, 1741), pp. 10, 30.

were the fulfillment of the divine judgment of Genesis 3:15: "The enmity that is put between the Seed of the Woman & the Seed of the Serpent, will now and then be creating Jarrs."[38] Tennent in 1741 granted that "Divisions are to be lamented . . . because of the Guilt hereby contracted, and the Prejudice hereby occasioned, to inconsiderate and unregenerate Sinners." However, the Bible clearly stated that the gospel would always be attended to a greater or lesser degree by divisions. Tennent quoted in full the scripture referring to Christ's coming with a sword but then assured his hearers that the gospel was not "the proper Cause of such Divisions; no but the innocent Occasion only." Obviously the first cause of the present divisions was the Old Side's opposition to the progress of Christ's cause. At any rate, even for the sake of peace and union Christ's true followers could not sacrifice the interest of truth and justice. Tennent agreed with Martin Luther that "an honourable and necessary War was preferable to a mean and ignoble Peace."[39] This attitude on the part of the New Side made schism predictable, for the Old Sides also cited Biblical justifications for schism. In harsh rebuttal to Tennent, Thomson summed up his argument for disunion by simply reminding his hearers that Christ had enjoined his followers

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[38]Gilbert Tennent, The Danger of An Unconverted Ministry . . . in Alan Heimert and Perry Miller, eds., The Great Awakening (Indianapolis, 1967), p. 77.

[39]Gilbert Tennent, Remarks Upon a Protestation Presented to the Synod of Philadelphia . . . (Philadelphia, 1741), pp. 13, 40.

to withdraw from all who were "disorderly."[40] Since the definition of "disorderly" was left to mortals, the injunction was a blanket permission for schism.

Even if both sides decided that scripture permitted disunion, it is quite doubtful that they would have separated as long as they felt a shared mutuality of interest. But by 1741 both sides believed that they were simply too different to remain in the same union. In 1740 Tennent asked, "Is not the visible Church composed of Persons of the most contrary Characters?" How can such disparate parts harmoniously co-exist? "Can Light Dwell with Darkness?"[41] The Old Sides answered that if they were as evil as he presented them, then by all means the New Side should separate from the Old.[42] The disagreements of the 1730's had made disunion unavoidable, contended Robert Cross.

> In sum, a continued Union, in our Judgment, is most absurd and Inconsistent, when it is so notorious, that our Doctrine and Principles of Church Government, in many Points, are not only diverse, but directly opposite: For, how can two walk together, except they be agreed?[43]

In the end, the Presbyterians embraced disunion not because a tortured reading of a few scriptures permitted it but because each side became convinced that the union no longer served any purpose. There was no longer any discernible

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[40]John Thomson, The Government of the Church of Christ, And the Authority of Church Judicatories, established on a Scripture Foundation . . . (Philadelphia, 1741), p. 69.

[41]Tennent, Unconverted Ministry, p. 93.

[42]Syn. of Phil., Examination, pp. 5, 35.

[43]/Cross/, Protestation, p. 13.

common goal or general will for the presbyterian hierarchical system to further. In the words of the Old Sides: "Disagreement then, in the Fundamentals of social Union, dissolves the Bond of Society, unapt to answer its End." As far as the Old Sides were concerned, "united Schism . . . [was] much worse than orderly Separation."[44]

The Presbyterians abandoned all pretense at peace and union in 1741 and divided amidst rancor and ill will. No more an "army with banners," much less a "garden enclosed," American Presbyterianism became, in fact, two distinct bodies. Division seemed the only solution to almost insoluble problems. "Peace" and "Unity" are "sweet and beautiful, when joined with Truth and a good Conscience," Thomson had observed in 1729. But, he concluded, "Truth and a good Conscience" were to be desired over "Peace" and "Unity."[45] By 1741 virtually the entire denomination agreed with him. Old and New Side alike believed that

> a regular Separation, tho' the last Remedy, would be less hazardous to Truth, Peace, and good Order, among us, than such a schismatical Union as hath subsisted among us for some Years past. For the last Remedy is a Remedy still, and much better than a desperate Disease, which threatens no less than the whole Constitution.[46]

4. The Nature of Authority

The differences that separated the Old and New Sides were many and fundamental. In the debates between 1729 and 1741

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[44]Syn. of Phil., Examination, pp. 44, 65.

[45]Thomson, Overture, p. 12.

[46]Syn. of Phil., Examination, p. 43.

spokesmen for the two sides debated nothing less than the nature of social union and social authority. In 1729 the Presbyterian church had been a functioning social unit. As it ceased to function, the leaders of both sides attempted to explain why it had failed. In their explanations they revealed very different ideas concerning social authority, and the New Sides began to formulate a revolutionary theory of social authority.

To the Old Sides authority was indivisible. While the sessions and presbyteries might retain certain rights, they were ultimately controlled by the undisputed authority of the synod. To contend that final authority might be located in two or more bodies was to suggest the absurd. In 1741 John Thomson outlined the Old Side's case. Authority was clearly "a power invested in one Person or Party, to command, oblige, and require another to do such a Thing, tho' it be contrary to his own Will, Judgment or Inclination, and what he would not do, were he at his own Command." To divide ultimate authority was to "sap and overthrow the very Fundamental Laws of all Societies in the World: For how is it possible that any Society can stick together unless . . . all be Subject to the Authority of one . . . ?" Furthermore, if the synod did not have the power to bind its members in all matters, then it had power to bind them in none. As Thomson said, "if the Synod hath no Power to make any Rules or Orders which shall bind their members, then certainly all Rules made by them are null and void of themselves." Ultimate authority was to rest in one body--the synod. To suggest otherwise was "most

evidently absurd, contrary to the Word, to Reason, to Government in general, and the Presbyterian Government in particular."[47]

The Old Sides insisted that final indivisible authority rested in the synod because all Presbyterians were represented in it. The sessions sent their minister and some of their elders to the presbyteries, which then sent all of their clerical and some of their lay members to represent them in the synod. All constituent parts of the hierarchy were represented first in the presbytery and then in the synod. In the case of the elders at the sessional and presbyterial level, the representation was actual; that is, they were literally elected by the people whom they represented. At the synodical level each minister and elder was assumed to represent his individual church and presbytery in a literal sense. But in a larger sense they were believed to represent all Presbyterians because all were assumed to share a common interest. As a judicatory, Thomson declared, the synod represented "the whole collective Body" of the Presbyterian church. Therefore, when the synod made a decision, the decision was made by the whole church through their representatives. The synod's decisions must be obeyed because "they are the Conclusions of a just Representative of that Body; and consequently are virtually the Conclusions of the Whole . . . ." The synod could make no decisions detrimental to the liberties of its churches because its members were members of the churches also and would be harmed by any synodical act detrimental to the churches'

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[47]Thomson, Church of Christ, pp. xii, 5, 55, 56.

liberties. Obviously, Thomson declared, men cannot make laws that harm themselves: "no Church Judicatory will ever encroach upon what they judge to be the just Liberties of the Church or Body Collective which they represent."[48] The Old Side theory of indivisible authority was predicated on the belief in the existence of a common good and general will shared by all members of the denomination and furthered by their representatives-rulers. For only if the people and their rulers shared mutual interests and common goals could the people be protected from the possibility that their rulers might become tyrants who heedlessly disregarded the people's rights while pursuing their own selfish and distinct interests.

The Old Sides' belief in indivisible authority was buttressed by their belief that authority should be used to defend truth as they perceived it. Moreover, they insisted that truth be formalized into a creed for all to subscribe to. A creed was a powerful unifying force, they insisted, because it stated areas of mutual belief that gave a union validity. Thomson in 1729 stressed the need for a confession of faith because every society "whether Ecclesiastical or Civil, must have some Bond of Union, by which the several Parts are joyned [sic] together, to make or constitute them one entire whole . . . ."[49]

A publicly subscribed creed was deemed essential by the Old Sides because it set their denomination apart from other

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[48]Ibid., pp. 7, 63.

[49]Thomson, Overture, pp. 8, 11, 15, 29.

religious groups. Thomson declared that a "particular" church must publicly adopt a specific set of doctrines composed particularly for that church. Those doctrines formalized into a creed drew the members closer together while also declaring to the world the ways in which the Presbyterians differed from other Christians. For that reason, the Old Sides rejected the New Sides' suggestion that the scriptures alone could serve as the denomination's creed and that men in the same denomination could agree on fundamentals while disagreeing on specifics. Thomson noted that all Christians "owned the scriptures." For the Presbyterians to do no more than accept the scriptures, then, would not set them apart from other Christians. For the Old Sides the denomination could never be "a mixt Communion of different Perswasions [sic]; who yet hold the Foundation . . . ."[50] The denomination must declare its interpretation of divine truth in order for its members to protect it from enemies both within and without the denomination.

It became obvious during the 1730's that the future Old Sides were more concerned with the enemies of revealed truth within the denomination than without. Thomson urged the synod to impose a subscription act because it was the duty of all Presbyterians to defend the "Truths" of Christianity as interpreted by the synod.[51] Furthermore, the subscription act must be passed immediately because in a few years the

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[50]Finley, Christ Triumphing, p. 30.

[51]Thomson, Overture, pp. 8, 28.

"friends of Truth" would probably be too few to pass it in the synod. Consequently, corrupted men could enter the ministry, and men already in the ministry could preach "error" because "the Truth was never publicly received among us."[52]

The Old Sides believed that the "truth" was knowable at all times. Therefore, it obviously was a simple matter to know who was "right" and "wrong" in ecclesiastical and doctrinal debates. In the scriptures God had supplied a yardstick by which all ideas and actions could be accurately judged. Consequently, in each debate one side must be right and the other wrong. Without an infallible guide, such precision would be impossible; with it, godly men could easily attribute error to its correct source. The Old Sides reminded the New Sides in 1741 that in all debates "one Side must be wrong."[53] Their attachment to this view made the Old Sides very reluctant to compromise their positions. When the New Sides chided the Old for the stubbornness with which they held to the most insignificant of their ideas, Thomson retorted, "If the Opinion we maintain be true and right, surely it's no Fault to be stiff in it . . . ."[54] Thus, when some New York Presbyterians sought to reconcile the two warring factions in 1744, the Old Sides rebuffed their attempt. Surely, they declared, "one of the parties at least, must be certainly and really in the fault . . . ."[55]

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[52]Ibid., pp. 25, 29, 32.

[53]Syn. of Phil., Examination, p. 11.

[54]Thomson, Overture, p. 22.

[55]May 24, 1744, Presbyterian Records, p. 174.

The Old Sides' view that truth was knowable and that authority must protect truth made them less than enthusiastic defenders of liberty of conscience. They reasoned that if truth and right were obvious, then no one in the denomination had any excuse for embracing error. No liberty of conscience could be allowed as far as the essentials, as enumerated in the proposed creed, were concerned. Such toleration would serve to establish and protect error as well as truth. In this patently untenable situation, the Old Sides declared, "the conscientious Errorist" would be as free as "the most sound and orthodox Minister." To allow men to choose which of the church's doctrines they would obey was no way to make the church "the Pillar of Truth, and the House of Order."[56]

The New Sides challenged the Old Sides' views on authority at all points. They implicitly rejected the idea that there existed a bond of mutual interest uniting the people of the denomination and their leaders. Consequently, they asserted, authority of the leaders must be limited and, more important, divided. "Is there no Authority besides absolute and unlimited? or that which is very near it?" demanded Samuel Blair in 1744. He answered his question emphatically: there is a "proper Medium between Tyranny and Anarchy; between unjust Oppression and lawless Confusion." The New Sides rejected only the extremes of both.[57] In the decade after 1729 the New Sides had objected to almost every attempt by the Old

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[56]Syn. of Phil., Examination, p. 62.

[57]Blair, Vindication, pp. 8, 21.

Sides to expand the powers of the synod at the expense of the presbyteries and the consciences of many ministers. They successfully opposed the subscription act and forced the repeal of laws that forbade ministerial itineration and that required all ministerial candidates to be examined by a synodical committee. While the Old Sides sought to make acquiescence in each of these laws a prerequisite for synodical communion, the New Sides objected simply that the synod had no authority to pass such "legislation."

The New Sides first pointed out that the scriptures furnished absolutely no basis for increasing synodical power. As early as the 1720's Jonathan Dickinson constantly pointed out the sufficiency of the scriptures as the basis for all ecclesiastical authority and denounced any power not explicitly based upon the Bible. In 1722 he had challenged the Old Sides to show him where the Bible positively enjoined subscription.[58] Tennent later reaffirmed Dickinson's stand. To enact new ecclesiastical rules was to doubt the sufficiency of the scriptures, he declared. Therefore, the synod should act only when it had specific scriptural authority.[59] Just so, agreed Samuel Blair; when a scriptural precedent cannot be found, then the synod must only advise, not legislate.[60] The New Sides insisted that the synod invaded Christ's prerogative if it imposed any rules that lacked scriptural sanction. Those

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[58]Dickinson, Sermon . . . 1722, pp. 3, 11; Remarks Upon . . . an Overture, p. 16.

[59]Tennent, Remarks Upon a Protestation, pp. 31, 67.

[60]Blair, Vindication, p. 46.

"proud worms" who seek to make additions to the system Christ laid down in the Bible usurp divine privilege, declared Dickinson. All such unscriptural additions must be denounced, even if they are "painted over, with the fair Colours of Apostolick Tradition, Antiquity, Order and Decency, the Band of Union and Communion, the Well-Government or greater Good of the Church, or whatever other Pretence . . . ."[61]

Like the Old Sides the New Sides believed that the broad outlines of presbyterian systems were of divine origin. For all he knew, Dickinson declared, the system appeared to be "the most conformed to the Laws of Christ, of any whatsoever; and does . . . as exactly quadrate with the Rule, as may be hoped for in this state of Imperfection."[62] But, unlike the Old Sides, Dickinson stressed the "state of Imperfection" and cautioned against rigorous insistence upon the divine origin of every aspect of the presbyterian ecclesiastical system. Christ had left only a broad indication of this divine system in the Bible and had made very few specific instructions. Consequently, mere mortals must be very careful about claiming divine authority for man-made innovations. Devising and imposing "any PART or MODE of Worship that wants a Divine Institution, is a Legislature that we have no just claim to . . . ," declared Dickinson in 1722.[63] Nineteen years later Gilbert Tennent archly reminded his opponents that the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England also had

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[61]Dickinson, Sermon . . . 1722, p. 2.

[62]Ibid., p. 15

[63]Ibid., p. 12.

enacted all sorts of trivial religious laws concerning the liturgy, the hierarchy, and the ordinances. They too had insisted in the name of "Order" and "Decency" that all accept them as divinely inspired. For the Presbyterians to do the same thing seemed to set at naught the whole Protestant Reformation. Both Tennent and Dickinson agreed that if the Presbyterians had the right to impose man-made ecclesiastical laws upon unwilling members, so did the Anglicans and even the Catholics.[64] Samuel Blair also attacked the synod's attempts to "legislate" and denounced his opponents' efforts to apply general scriptural injunctions to specific situations. In such a situation, he claimed, they could only assert that the law "tended" in the "general direction" of the scriptures and that they were good expedients for producing some good in the church. Such laws, he affirmed, must never be made part of the church's terms of communion.[65]

In 1729 Dickinson challenged Thomson to produce one word in the Bible that proved that the Presbyterian interpretation of the Word was infallible. For every scripture that Thomson could produce, Dickinson declared, another sect could produce two to show that its interpretation was also infallible. If all sects had the right to impose their beliefs as infallible, then men would be forced to accept contradic-

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[64]Tennent, Remarks Upon a Protestation, p. 63.

[65]Blair, Vindication, pp. 17, 20; Dickinson, Remarks Upon a Discourse, p. 28.

tions without end. Therefore, none could be allowed that right.[66] Taking Dickinson's assertions further, Tennent attacked the fundamental basis of all ecclesiastical judicial power. To give a judicatory, be it the presbytery or synod, the power to legislate and to impose its rules on all upon pain of excommunication was to say one of two things: either judicatories cannot possibly enjoin error--a patent absurdity--or they are free to enjoin error. In either case, this power when exercised by fallible men was manifestly "built upon the Ruins of human Nature."[67]

The New Sides insisted that the synod could require obedience only in those few instances where the scriptures gave directives so specific and direct as to admit of universal agreement. However, Tennent declared, when the synod seeks to enforce by coercion its particular version of a broad, general truth capable of various constructions, it only opens the way for "a Succession of Schisms in the Church of God." Good men are always apt to have "different Minds" about those broad scriptural truths. Each will be "conscientiously inclined" to act according to his best light. Therefore, "so long as there is Conscience and Courage on the Earth . . . a sad Scene of Debate and Division is opened." In the Old Sides' scheme, Blair charged, all must accept the church's definition of all truths or else "the Church must be rent

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[66]Dickinson, Remarks Upon a Discourse, pp. 23, 26-27; A Sermon . . . 1722, p. 20.

[67]Tennent, Remarks Upon a Protestation, pp. 30, 61.

and torn into no Body knows how many Crumbs and Pieces."[68]

The charge that their opponents were making schism unavoidable was perhaps the New Sides' most effective weapon against the Old Sides' confessions, creeds, and subscriptions. Dickinson in 1729 insisted that the Old Sides' effort to protect the church from error would inevitably lead to disunion, saying "what has a natural Tendency to Disunion and Division, can't . . . be propos'd as a Bond of Union." He then turned to the history of the church to prove that confessions and creeds had invariably ruined the unity of the church. Before the Council of Nice the church had been preserved not only as a "Garden enclosed, but a Garden of Peace." After the Council imposed its creeds, though, the church fell into innumerable schisms and became infested by heresies as never before. Confessions had been the traditional engine of papal tyranny, and a subscription controversy had virtually ruined the Church of Ireland. Furthermore, the confessions did not even do what they were supposed to do, that is, insure doctrinal purity. They were not needed for confirming the real Christians, and hypocrites would subscribe to anything, Dickinson declared. All Christians subscribe to the scriptures, but is not Christianity a "Babel Confusion of Sectaries?" he inquired. A creed would not produce doctrinal uniformity because each member would subscribe to it in his own sense.[69] This is, of

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[68]Ibid., pp. 58-59; Blair, Vindication, pp. 32-33.

[69]Dickinson, Remarks Upon a Discourse, pp. 9-13, 20, 24; Blair, Vindication, p. 30; Tennent, Remarks upon a Protestation, p. 30.

course, what the denomination allowed to happen in 1729 when it momentarily ended the controversy over creeds by passing the Adopting Act. This allowed each member to adopt the Westminster Confession while omitting any objectionable section not deemed "essential" by the synod.

The New Sides insisted that a loose agreement on the essentials of Christianity and on the general methods of worship and discipline were the most effective bonds of union. After Dickinson showed that creeds had always been detrimental to union and peace, he demonstrated that the church had historically been most united when its external bonds had been loose and when no one group sought to impose its views on others. Convinced that insistence upon uniform subscription to all synodical rulings was neither the way to insure peace nor to develop a denominational identity, Dickinson pled for mutual forebearance and Christian love as the only means of unifying the church: "Can't we live peaceably with those who live peaceably with us . . . without breaking in upon their Consciences; and destroying their Right of judging for themselves?"[70]

The Old Sides answered some of the New Sides' charges more easily than others. For instance, they quickly dismissed the New Sides' charge that they were imposing new and unscriptural rules on unwilling members. Far from being "legislative, supreme, or dictating," Thomson affirmed, the authority of the synod to make rules is "declarative" of what is already in the

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[70]Dickinson, Remarks Upon a Discourse, pp. 20-22.

Bible, "subordinate" to God, and "executive," as opposed to innovative. Judicial decisions never contained anything new. Rather, they contained only "a new Application of the old infallible standing Rule of the Word to new Cases and Emergencies intended by it, and comprehended under the Regulation of it." The subscription act and the laws forbidding itinerancy and requiring a synodical examination of all ministerial candidates were not innovations but only interpretations of divinely inspired scriptures. They were, therefore, perfectly legitimate results of "ministerial, executive and declarative Power, by which the general Rule of the Word is authoritatively explained and applied to the Business in Hand."[71]

Thomson did not accept the New Sides' charge that such a theory would lead directly to tyranny. For the Old Sides it was only the "Abuse and not the righteous Use of this Authority to make Rules" that produced the unhappy effects described by Blair, Tennent, and Dickinson. However, Thomson continued, the members of a union must submit to its rules, "whether they approved of these Rules or not." Even when a ruler errs, members can only remonstrate and try to change their ruler's mind. If they fail, they must submit if they can without sin or, if not, they must separate in peace. They manifestly can not judge the justness of their rulers: "the Judicatory are the first rightful Judges of their own Conclusions and judicial Determinations." The people are not "the proper Judges of Rulers [sic] Authority, or Justness of the Commands, but

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[71]Thomson, Government of the Church of Christ, pp. 60, 63, 69.

only of their Duty to obey . . . ." This view enabled the Old Sides to uphold absolute synodical authority while satisfying themselves that they restricted no one's liberty of conscience. While a man could not judge his rulers, he still could decide whether to obey them. And, Thomson assured all, "it's better to separate than sin."[72]

Thomson did not so readily answer the New Sides' charge that the Old Sides' views would have precluded dissenting from the Church of England. The Old Sides were aware that their opposition to liberty of conscience placed them in an awkward position in relation to the Reformation. After much fumbling and backtracking, though, Thomson lamely suggested that, unlike the synod, the Church of England had sought to alter the fundamentals of religion.[73] In such a situation dissent was imperative. The New Sides, of course, vigorously disagreed with their opponents as to what the fundamentals of Christianity were. They, for instance, contended that neither the question of itinerancy nor the problem of ministerial exams touched on fundamentals. The Old Sides were forced to agree, even though their agreement put them in the awkward position of seeking to make non-essentials prerequisites for synodical communion.[74] Ultimately, the controversy between the two sides became a debate over the right of the majority of the synod to decide what the fundamentals of religion and the prerequisites for synodical communion were and its right to impose

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[72]Ibid., pp. 6, 64, 89, 91, 107. [73]Ibid., p. 81.

[74]Syn. of Phil., Examination, p. 49.

these on a reluctant minority. Thus, the controversy over authority narrowed to a debate over the rights of the majority and the minority in a society.

5. Majority and Minority

Neither the Old nor the New Side was initially comfortable discussing majorities and minorities. In a society assumed to be an organic unit in which all served the common good, there was no place for competing majorities and minorities. And in the pre-Awakening church, there was little discussion of majoritarianism. Since all members of the union were believed to share mutual interests, there was no feeling that a numerical majority must prevail. Rulers were supposed to determine not what the "majority" of the people wished but what the "general will" of the people was. Thus, in 1732 the Presbytery of Donegal granted the request of the minority of the Middle Octorara congregation to call a new minister. It granted the request because those members had acted in an orderly fashion and because in the view of the presbytery they embodied the "general will" of the congregation, "notwithstanding . . . [the] superiority of numbers in the other part who oppose them."[75]

In 1741 during the schism both sides demonstrated their unwillingness to accept strict numerical majority rule as the final arbiter of social disagreements. In June of that year at the annual meeting of the synod the Old Sides brought the two years of continual friction to a shattering climax. They

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[75]Oct. 7, 1732, Don. Pby. Min., I, 2.

presented to the synod a protest against the New Sides' itinerations and their attacks on the Old Sides. When the New Sides demanded a vote to decide which group was the majority, the Old Sides declared that the New Sides "had no right to sit whether they were the major or minor part."[76] The Old Side spokesman, Robert Cross, immediately asserted that if the Old Sides' protest was the occasion of schism, the Old Sides nevertheless "shall be accounted in no wise disorderly, but the true Presbyterian Church in this Province; and they shall not be look'd on as guilty of Schism . . . ."[77] In other words, numerical superiority did not automatically guarantee legitimacy or supremacy. Rather, the Old Sides felt that they were the synod--even if a minority--simply because they were right and represented true Presbyterianism.

In the immediate aftermath of the New Sides' expulsion, both sides proclaimed their abhorrence of merely mustering numbers to support their case. The New Sides pointed out that the only justification that the Old Sides could give for the law against itinerancy was that supposedly a majority of the synod supported it. Yet, Tennent charged, it was made as binding as if prefaced by "Thus saith the Lord." Furthermore, Tennent continued, majorities may change their views. Thus, if every act of a majority becomes an essential term of communion, there is no guarantee that the person who could acquiesce in the majority's decisions one year could also submit

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[76]June 1, 1741, Presbyterian Records, pp. 158-159.

[77][Cross], Protestation, p. 9.

the next. Therefore, he may still be excluded unless he "can swallow all the after-Canons, which shall be contrived by the Majority."[78] The Old Sides asserted that their protest was not based on numbers but upon the venerable rules of Presbyterianism.[79] The Old Sides further demonstrated their belief that numerical superiority did not necessarily connote legitimacy when the New Sides offered to allow two members of the synod to sit in on a presbyterial examination of a ministerial candidate and to bring charges if they found the presbytery's examination deficient. The synod would agree only if the two synodical representatives could act as a majority. Again, those who were "right" would overrule those who were "wrong" even if the latter were more numerous.[80]

At the same time that the mustering of numbers was denounced, though, each side eagerly sought to prove that it was in fact the numerical majority. In practice each side demonstrated that it would like to appear the majority, even if that did not guarantee superiority. Even as they asserted that their protest was based on the traditions of Presbyterianism, the Old Sides also contended that they were the majority of the synod after the schism.[81] But the Old Sides could not claim to be the majority of the whole synod, Tennent retorted, because when the New Sides were expelled in 1741, the Old Sides were in the minority. Those expelled were at least

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[78]Tennent, Remarks Upon a Protestation, pp. 14-15, 40.

[79]Syn. of Phil., Examination, p. 137.

[80]Ibid., p. 22.

[81]Ibid., p. 137.

"equal to those that cast them off."[82] He was quite correct.

The Old Sides quickly revealed their uneasiness after the expulsion of the New Sides, a move almost universally recognized as arbitrary if not illegal. Even by the Old Sides' admission, at least half of the synod had not joined in the actual protest against the New Sides. There were eighteen protesting Old Side ministers and elders and ten New Side members out of a synod of forty in attendance, twelve of whom took no part in the expulsion. A majority of these twelve later joined the New Sides. The Old Sides contended that the New Sides had first demanded a roll call to establish that they were in the majority in order to expell the Old Sides. In fact, Cross asserted, the New Sides would have done just that had the vote gone the other way.[83] Tennent vehemently denied Cross' charge and quite correctly pointed out that had the New Sides wanted to disrupt the union, they could have long ago and with much less acrimony.[84]

Both sides further revealed their ambivalent attitudes toward majorities and minorities as they sought to define just what the synod was and who constituted it. The Old Sides' justification of the New Sides' expulsion was published not by "the synod" but by "some of the Members" of the synod. Yet in this pamphlet the Old Sides continually referred to "the synod" as a unit in which the expelled men of

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[82]Tennent, Remarks Upon a Protestation, pp. 20, 34, 52.

[83]Syn. of Phil., Examination, pp. 135, 136, 143; [Cross], Protestation, p. 15.

[84]Tennent, Remarks Upon a Protestation, p. 35.

the Presbyteries of New Brunswick and New Castle had no further part. The Old Sides were convinced that they were the synod, but they were reluctant to say so boldly.

The New Sides sensed their opponents' reluctance and gleefully exploited it. Tennent noted that the Old Sides claimed to be the synod, albeit reluctantly. But, he noted, the Old Sides had also presented a protest against the New Sides to the synod. How, he asked, could the Old Sides present a protest to themselves: "Does not their offering a Protest before the Synod, signify, that the Synod were a Number distinct from them in their own Judgment?"[85] The New Sides declared that they were still members of the synod, but they never claimed to be the synod exclusively. Rather, they saw the synod as an entity that existed outside the two warring factions. Embryonic in the New Sides' theory was the idea that government somehow did exist as a separate entity outside the parts of a society and that control of government was the legitimate end of conflict between differing parts of the society. Thus, the conflict should have been committed "to the deliberate Judgment of the Synod, exclusive of the two Parties accusers and accused."[86] The Old Sides, on the other hand, could not conceive of the synod outside of themselves. They saw the Presbyterian society as a unit, the members of which must be joined by uniform beliefs. Above all else, uniformity had to be maintained. If a portion became

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[85] Ibid., p. 34.

[86] A Declaration of the Presbyteries of New-Brunswick and New-Castle . . . (Philadelphia, 1743), pp. 2, 7.

heterodox, it must be removed because no conflict could be allowed to shatter the unity of the society. The government of the society did not exist outside of its parts but was an entity resulting from the union of those parts.

In a sense, the Old Sides' attitude toward majority and minority was the result of their almost immediate rejection of the justification of conflict and schism elaborated by both sides in the 1730's. After expelling the New Sides, the Old Sides quickly moved to prevent further conflict within their own ranks. The synod's defense of its actions revealed that it would allow no further continuing conflict. The minority, it declared, either must submit to the majority or separate from it. "Or else, what but Contention and Confusion can be expected in such a Society."[87] For the Old Sides society could not be an entity in which equal minorities struggled for power and in which one might be as "right" as the other.

At all times the acts of the majority must be considered the acts of the synod, declared the Old Sides. Otherwise, voting would be to no end, and there would be no way of resolving conflicts. If out-voted by the majority, the minority had to submit if the votes of the majority were to have "their due Weight and Force." The terms of synodical communion could be left only to the decision of the majority because in the "Multitude there is safety."[88] The minority must submit to the majority, Thomson declared, because for the majority to submit to the minority would be contrary to "the natural Order

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[87]Syn. of Phil., Examination, p. 127.

[88]Ibid., p. 56.

of Things," and would overthrow all authority and government in the Presbyterian church and "also all social Government whatsoever."[89] The synod also believed that for the minority to fail to acquiesce in the majority's rule was to threaten secular as well as sacred order: "If this were a Rule for a Society, we must all turn Levellers; and so no Prince in the State, nor Minister in the church, hereby, can have any Authority over the meanest Subject, or Member, when all are equal in this Count."[90] The synod's use of hierarchical and authoritarian images demonstrates that their emphasis on majority rule, in fact, masked an effort to return to an earlier time when majorities did not rule. After all, they might not always be the majority.

The Old Sides' arguments clearly revealed that their embracing of unopposed majority rule was a frantic effort to restore the shattered pre-Awakening world of due subordination, the common good and the general will. The "majority will" for them now stood in the stead of the "common will," and the Old Sides tried as best they could to explain away the necessity for ignoring the rights of minorities. They first insisted that majority rule was made necessary by the venerable Presbyterian insistence upon the equality of all ministers. If all were equal, then the way to arrive at just decisions was to count heads and see where the majority lay. This majority, Thomson insisted, must "sway or determine the Minority, or no

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[89]Thomson, Church of Christ, p. 55.

[90]Syn. of Phil., Examination, p. 62.

Union can subsist, as it is in all social Covenants." The government of the church was to be in the hands of a "plurality of equal ministers." And when the church was governed by more than one body, it was to be managed by "a due Subordination of inferior or smaller Judicatories to greater or superior, from a Session of congregational Consistory to an oecumenical Council . . . ."[91]

But the Old Sides were most uncomfortable with the idea that fifty-one percent approval somehow granted authority and legitimacy. This obviously opened the way for all sorts of contention from the discontented forty-nine percent. Also, majorities could be notoriously fickle and transitory. The Old Sides, therefore, sought to prove that decisions of the majority were in fact decisions of the whole. In short, they neatly turned "majority will" into "common will."

As described by Thomson, the process of obtaining the majority's will closely resembled the traditional method by which the general will of a society had been agreed upon. He did not emphasize the clash between majority and minority will. For him the ideal deliberative process was the gathering of genteel and naturally superior social leaders charged with ascertaining the common good of society without reference to majority and minority. They were to be guided only by their natural instincts as to what was best for the society.

When the Old Sides were forced by circumstances to recognize the existence of majorities and minorities, Thomson

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[91]Thomson, Church of Christ, pp. 58-59, 71.

contended that every act made by a society was the act of both majority and minority. He used historical examples to demonstrate that the laws passed by rulers of nations had always been called the acts of the entire society, not the acts of a majority or a minority. The minority, he affirmed, participates in raising and debating issues. By submitting them to a vote, the minority, as well as the majority, implicitly agrees to abide by the outcome of the vote. Thus, the minority agrees to be "determined" by the majority. This must be so, or all union and authority is overthrown. When the minority dutifully acquiesces in the will of the majority, stated the Old Sides, then a genuine common will arises and can be supported by all. Moreover, the mutuality of interests among all members would make all such "majority decisions" possible and comprehensible.[92]

Having shown that the decisions of the majority were in reality the judgments of the entire society, the Old Sides proceeded to disarm the minority even further. They insisted that they had deprived no one of his liberty of conscience. However, they also asserted that conscience is a completely private matter and "cannot be a Rule to any Community, as a Community to walk by." In other words, a man might dissent privately and quietly, but he was not free to join with other dissenters to form a "party" to oppose the obvious common will of the society as judged by society's leaders. After he had engaged in debating and had cast his vote, the dissenter

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[92]*Ibid.*, pp. 62, 64, 67, 80.

could only quietly and individually register his disapproval. At that time organized opposition would become impossible. A minority could not really have a "private judgment." Only the individuals making up the minority had "private judgments." The majority, on the other hand, was characterized by an institutionalized "private judgment" that was, in reality, the "common will" of the society. Obviously, the Old Sides ressoned, the private judgment of only one dissenter could not be allowed to overturn that of the entire society, which in reality comprehended that of the dissenter, if he but knew it.[93]

The Old Sides protected themselves against the inevitable charge that the minority had as much right to "private judgment" as the majority. Allowing the minority a modicum of actuality, the synod stated merely that if the minority reserved the right to dissent on terms of conscience, then the majority had every right to censure it for the same reason. After all, the synod had as much right to think for itself as did the dissenting brethren.[94] The majority was as much bound by its conscience as the dissenters were by theirs, Thomson claimed. In the end, he admitted, disunion inevitably resulted if both sides claimed liberty of conscience. But he wasted little sympathy on the dissenters. After all, the majority suffered as much from losing the minority as the latter did from being expelled.[95] At any rate, Thomson had

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[93]Syn. of Phil., Examination, pp. 61, 64.

[94]Ibid., pp. 67, 70.

[95]Thomson, Church of Christ, p. 63.

stated in the subscription controversy, "it's a pity to deprive a whole Church of the Benefit of such an excellent Confession, for the Scruples perhaps of a few . . . ."[96] Thus, the Old Sides evolved a theory of majority rule that allowed them to stress numbers when they were assured of a majority or to insist that those who were "right" constituted the majority when they were not sure of numerical superiority.

In 1741 Thomson petulantly remarked that to the New Sides "majority" and "minority" seemed to have "something of a Spell or Charm in them invisibly to bear down all Things against which they are brought . . . ."[97] The Old Sides' spokesman believed that the New Sides had devised a complete theory of minority rights and were using it almost as an incantation to oppose the will of the majority. Actually, the New Sides were no more confident than their opponents concerning the rights of minorities and majorities.

After the New Sides' expulsion, Tennent loudly, even belligerently, defended the rights of the minority and of individual conscience. He flatly denied the right of a majority to impose upon a reluctant minority any rule not explicitly required by the scriptures. Furthermore, it was not enough for the majority simply to state that the rules were based on the scriptures or that they "tended" toward obvious scriptural meanings. Both Blair and Tennent agreed that the minority must be allowed to decide if rules were consistent

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[96]Thomson, Overture, p. 24.

[97]Thomson, Church of Christ, p. 108.

with God's word. Without this right, Tennent concluded, the minority was forced to adopt an "implicit Faith, and blind Obedience . . . ." He opposed such subjection no matter what "Epithets of Order and Government" were urged in its support.[98]

In important ways, though, the New Sides were reluctant to allow the social conflict that would result from giving minorities complete freedom. Blair stated that the minority must absolutely acquiesce in the will of the majority when it could without sinning. The minority must always submit in cases which by their very nature must be decided in one way or another, such as in an examination of a ministerial candidate or in some scandal. This, according to Blair, along with forebearance on the majority's part, was the only way to preserve the peace of Christ's church.

> So long as Men are in this imperfect fallible State, subject to such Diversity of Judgments, I do not see how the Peace and Order of Churches can subsist, unless the minor Part be subject to the judicial Determinations of the Major in all Cases wherein they can be subject without Sin.[99]

Just as the Old Sides could not wholeheartedly embrace the notion that a numerical majority must always rule, their opponents would not insist that the will of the minority must invariably be respected. Despite the antagonisms and conflicts of the 1730's, neither side completely abandoned the idea that the church was an organic unit in which contention should be eliminated in the pursuit of a common good. Neither

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[98]Tennent, Remarks Upon a Protestation, pp. 17-18; Blair, Vindication, p. 36.

[99]Blair, Vindication, pp. 24, 26.

side was able to define clearly the rights of majorities and minorities, and in the 1750's all concerned repudiated these justifications of conflict and schism. In the end, the more surprising fact about the Great Schism was not that it lasted so long but that it ended so quickly.

6. Reunion

The issues that divided the Presbyterian church from 1741 to 1758 were fundamental. In the debates leading to the Great Schism each side had branded the other as nothing less than the enemy of all that was godly. The issues of ministerial qualification, the nature of conversion, and the form of ecclesiastical government split churches, presbyteries, and finally the synod into vigorous partisans of contending views. Yet in 1758 the denomination was reunited. There are several explanations for this reunion. Some of the harsher partisans of each side, such as John Thomson, died shortly after the schism. The New Sides soon far outstripped the Old Sides in attracting new members; consequently, the Old Sides quickly found themselves in the minority position and were no longer eager to stress the rights of the majority. Fundamentally, though, the schism ended because neither side was able to completely repudiate the idea that their society should be an organic unit. Since the beginning of the eighteenth century the Presbyterians had attempted to establish in America a community free of contention and conflict. And as strong as the forces of disunion were, they were not potent enough to undermine permanently that ideal of harmony and community.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the Presbyterians simply could not accept the existence of two equal and competing Presbyterian churches.

The first efforts at reunion were made by Aaron Burr, Jonathan Dickinson, and other moderate men of the Presbytery of New York. Between 1741 and 1745 they tried unsuccessfully to persuade each side to retreat from its extreme position.[100] But by 1745 they were thoroughly alienated by the Old Sides' intransigence and had united with the more evangelical New Sides to form the Synod of New York. Almost as the new synod was being established, though, the New Sides began to seek ways to heal the schism. In 1749 the man whose Nottingham sermon had been crucial to the schism preached another sermon that to a large degree repudiated his earlier stands and gave impetus to the movement for reunion. In "Irenicum Ecclesiasticum" Gilbert Tennent sought to restrain the more belligerent of his followers and offered peace to his opponents in the hope of unifying Christ's church. By 1758 the most powerful leaders of both sides favored reunion. Indeed, by that time the rhetoric of Tennent was indistinguishable from that of Francis Alison, who succeeded Thomson as the Old Side spokesman.

The first thing the Presbyterians did was dismantle their previous defense of conflict and schism and replace their earlier description of a martial Christ with a more pacific one. God, Tennent declared in 1749, is not the "Author of Confusion, but of Peace, and therefore of Order . . . ."

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[100]May 30, 1743, Presbyterian Records, pp. 169-170.

Therefore, the harmony and order that was the essence of the deity was to be imitated by his followers.[101] Alison joined Tennent in embracing the Pauline emphasis on domestic order and peace in the church and stressed the "peaceful religion of Jesus." Christ, he contended, could not inspire uncharitableness, hatred, or schism. All Christians have "one father, and belong all to the same family."[102] Both Tennent and Alison compared the church to an army, but the troops were now united against a common enemy: "a Band or Company of Soldiers, well instructed in the Art of War, and in good Order, gather'd together into a close compact Body . . . ."[103] No longer fighting each other, Presbyterians "are all enlisted under the same banner, [and] have all the same dangers and the same enemies."[104] Finally, Tennent directly repudiated the scripture that had buttressed the earlier defense of schism: "CHRIST never intended to have his religion propagated by fire and sword . . . ."[105]

Tennent and Alison replaced the earlier martial metaphor with one that would have done credit to medieval schoolmen. Using a New Testament metaphor for society, they compared the church to a human body with Christ as its head.

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[101]Gilbert Tennent, Irenicum Ecclesiasticum . . . (Philadelphia, 1749), p. 10.

[102]Francis Alison, Peace and Union recommended . . . (Philadelphia, 1758), pp. 12, 41-42.

[103]Tennent, Irenicum, p. 8.

[104]Alison, Peace and Union, p. 12.

[105]Gilbert Tennent, The Blessedness of Peace-Makers . . . (Philadelphia, 1765), p. 17.

Just as the members of the body "are all appointed for mutual service," so must the members of the church exist to serve each other, Alison stated. No one part can operate without the others. "The eye has need of the hand, and the foot, for they are the useful and active members of the same body."[106] Though some parts might not be as honorable as others, Tennent declared, they must all exist in union: "one part should not say to the other, I have no need of thee."[107] In Tennent's opinion, opposition to reunion was contrary not only to "right Reason and to the Christian Revelation," but also to the obvious will of God. All men "need the Assistance of Society for Instruction, Comfort and Defence, and hence the Almighty has form'd a natural Inclination in us, thereto."[108]

The Presbyterians repudiated their earlier defense of contention and disunion. But reunion became possible only when both sides agreed that the causes of the 1741 split had been, if not trivial, at least of minor importance. This amazing about-face was executed with relative ease. In 1749 Tennent declared that the two sides had disagreed only on some "prudential Acts and Rules, not express'd in the sacred Scriptures, or our Directory . . . ." In substance, they had never disagreed. He then proceeded to quote from Thomson's 1741 harangue to prove that the Old Sides had really supported

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[106]Alison, Peace and Union, pp. 21, 34, 39.

[107]Tennent, Blessedness of Peace-Makers, p. 9.

[108]Tennent, Irenicum, pp. 81, 103.

and gloried in the late revival.[109]

In the 1750's both Old and New Sides further rejected the idea that essentials divided the denomination, and the Old Sides increasingly supported the New Sides' position that only the basic elements of Christianity ought to be prerequisites for synodical communion. Alison warned that no one must "promote parties, nor the peculiar SHIBBOLETHS of any of the contending denominations of christians, which are of the lesser matters of religion, and without any foundations in the holy scriptures." In a reversal of the Old Sides' belief Alison suggested that agreement on all things is impossible. Therefore, "acts of uniformity in religion are of no use, but to fetter the conscience, and . . . harass Christ's subjects." Men may honestly and sincerely disagree and still serve God. Consequently, the Presbyterians "must maintain union in essentials; forebearance in lesser matters, and charity in all things."[110]

If the minority Old Sides reversed their position, the New Sides also moderated many of their more extreme views. Tennent denounced the intemperate "rash-judging" of others that had accompanied the revivals. He admitted that only Christ could really know if a man was truly converted and warned that any person who sought to judge another's soul violated a holy prerogative. He further condemned the censoriousness of some New Sides who tended toward self-righteousness.

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[109] Ibid., pp. v, 87-88.

[110] Alison, Peace and Union, pp. 17-20.

To these he recommended charity: "tho' Charity be not quite blind, yet it has not the sharp Sight of the Lynx, in spying others Faults, while it is blind to its own . . . ."[111] Finally, he even condemned the itinerations that had so upset the Old Sides. In Newtonian images he reminded his brethren that the New Sides must "mind our own business, and . . . beware of encroaching on the provinces of others . . . ." While men "keep within their proper spheres, order and harmony are preserved; but the contrary, like elements out of their own orb, produces confusion and misery!"[112]

While they sought to heal the schism, the Presbyterians also searched for its fundamental causes. When the spokesmen for the Old and New Sides sought these causes, they did not talk about authority, society, or minorities. Rather they spoke of the human heart. Old and New Sides alike, the Presbyterians were convinced that selfishness, which they believed dominated colonial society, was the ultimate cause of all their troubles. As he introduced a sermon by David Bostwick, a young New Side minister, Gilbert Tennent in 1758 announced that selfishness is "the most egregious, enormous, and blasphemous villainy! pregnant with numerous and crimson iniquities, and the fatal source of all that train of evil and calamities, that have innundate /sic/ this lower world . . . ." In the sermon Bostwick inveighed against the selfishness of the merchant, the tradesman, the soldier, and all who assid-

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[111]Tennent, Irenicum, pp. 17, 24, 42.

[112]Tennent, Blessedness of Peace-Makers, p. 14.

uously seek to accumulate the goods of the world. In describing selfishness as "man's original Apostacy," Bostwick rendered a perceptive definition of what Alexis de Tocqueville would term American "individualism" in the nineteenth century. Man departs from God and, "retiring into himself as his last and ultimate end," he falls prey to

> an habitual disposition to treat himself, in the same manner that he ought to treat the God Of Heaven; i.e. to love himself supreamely, and seek himself ultimately and finally, and set up himself in one shape or another as the grand center to which all the lines of his busy thoughts, anxious cares, and subtile projects, bend and terminate.[113]

In the same year Alison also located the source of the schism in selfishness, pride, and avarice. Like Bostwick and Tennent, he was convinced that peace and union could be restored by nothing short of a fundamental reformation in the character of American Presbyterians. Pride, self-righteousness, and selfishness must be replaced by humility, meekness, and self-denial. Selfishness must give way to a Christ-like love for all mankind. In Tennent's words, "Love is the Bond of Souls . . . the Cement of Societies, without which they cannot continue or subsist comfortably, or profitably in a State of Union."[114] And by 1758 both the Old and New Sides agreed that the Presbyterian community should be reunited by whatever cement necessary.

In their effort to unite their denomination the leaders of the Old and New Sides purposefully deemphasized the very

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[113]David Bostwick, Self disclaimed and Christ exalted . . . (Philadelphia, 1758), pp. viii, 13-15.

[114]Tennent, Irenicum, p. 37.

real problems that had separated the two factions. They did this because by dividing the Presbyterian community the schism threatened the realization of a new vision of American society that was slowly emerging from the Great Awakening. In the two decades following the Great Awakening the Protestant clergy mounted a full attack on the selfishness and social conflict marring American society and sought to bring to fruition in America something approaching the Kingdom of God on earth. In such an effort the divided Presbyterian church stood as a portent of inevitable failure. The denomination had to be reunited to make it a suitable tool for reforming American society.

CHAPTER II

THE PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER AS SOCIAL LEADER

By the mid-eighteenth century many Americans were growing alarmed by disturbing trends in colonial society. At the upper reaches of society men worried about the growing restiveness at the lower levels of society. At the same time that they feared trouble from below, they also became convinced that entry into the highest level of society was becoming accessible only to those with royal connections. They were frightened by those below them who demanded advancement but were themselves afraid of failure. At the lower levels of society men caught by severe economic dislocations inveighed against rulers who seemed to ignore or even to aggravate their miseries. Goaded by the knowledge that they were missing opportunities in America, they demanded emissions of paper money and the creation of land banks to facilitate their rise in the world. Their demands, in turn, only heightened existing social tensions. At all levels of society colonists thought that their success was threatened by men actuated by boundless selfishness. The Great Awakening can be viewed as a grand attempt to substitute for this selfishness and social conflict a new order marked by peaceful selflessness and dedication to bringing in a new era in American society. The new order was to be led by a new kind of social leader whose characteristics were outlined in the Presbyterian controversy

over ministerial qualifications.[1]

1. At Ease in Zion

As has been indicated, before 1730 few Presbyterians questioned ministerial authority or debated the nature of ministerial qualifications. The minister's office was recognized as divine and his right to unquestioned obedience was unchallenged. This situation did not survive the decade of debate that culminated in the Great Schism. As early as 1734, for instance, the Donegal Presbytery found it necessary to censure two laymen for speaking contemptuously of their respective ministers and for interrupting them while they preached. The presbytery hoped that no one else would "offer any disrespectful, unbecoming language to his pastor."[2] They hoped in vain. As the decade progressed, congregation after congregation brought charges against its minister, indicting him most often with immorality, usually intemperance.[3] The Presbytery of Philadelphia was also besieged with charges against minis-

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[1]For a somewhat dated discussion of New England's Great Awakening as a social conflict see John C. Miller, "Religion, Finance, and Democracy in Massachusetts," New England Quarterly, VI (1933), 29-58. For a weak refutation of Miller see Edwin S. Gaustad, "Society and the Great Awakening in New England," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series, XI (Oct., 1954), 566-577. The best treatment of the Great Awakening as an effort at social reformation is Alan Heimert's over-enthusiastic discussion of the Calvinist clergy in Religion and the American Mind (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), especially Chapter III.

[2]June 7, 1734, Minutes of the Presbytery of Donegal, I, 34 (Microfilm in U.T.S.); Oct. 17, 1734, ibid., I, 48.

[3]Sept. 2, 1735, ibid., I, 72; Oct. 10, 1739, ibid., I, 187; Nov. 5-6, 1740, ibid., I, 200, 202; Apr. 7-8, 1741, ibid., I, 212-213.

ters brought by disgruntled or enraged parishioners.[4] The hierarchical machinery that had been intended to insure the presbyteries' control over their churches in fact encouraged members of the congregations to complain about their ministers. As a presbytery made the rounds of its churches, inquiring into the relations of the congregation with its minister, the central body found a growing number of people eager to bear witness against their pastor. At first confused, the presbyteries soon learned to listen to the complaints and then to dismiss them as unfounded or trivial and then to censure the complainers.[5]

The churches also began to revolt against the right of the presbytery to impose on them ministers of its choice. In 1736, for instance, the people of Paxton, Pennsylvania, refused to obey the Donegal Presbytery's order to allow Alexander Craighead to supply their pulpit. Craighead was forthwith censured by the presbytery for not forcing himself upon the people of Paxton, whether they wanted to hear him or not. When he questioned the presbytery's authority in this and other cases, he was brought to trial. However, the trial was interrupted by members of his own congregation "rising into a tumult, and railing at the Members in the most scurrilous . . . terms." The presbytery members were forced to flee the church where they deliberated, declaring as they went that

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[4]Dec. 4, 1739, Minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, II, 79-80 (Microfilm in P.H.S.); Apr. 23, 1740, ibid., II, 86-87; June 20, 1740, ibid., II, 91.

[5]Dec. 4, 1739, ibid., II, 79-80; Aug. 28, 1734, Don. Pby. Min., I, 37.

they had seen nothing like this "since we have been capable to mark any thing on the world."[6] The congregation's rising against the Donegal Presbytery was only an extreme example of the churches' growing reluctance to accept ministers imposed by the presbytery. In the case of the united congregation of Maidenhead and Hopewell, New Jersey, the Philadelphia Presbytery was forced in 1738 to allow part of the congregation to hear another candidate before it agreed to accept the one recommended by the presbytery.[7]

Much of the popular dissatisfaction with the clergy found expression in a celebrated sermon delivered by Gilbert Tennent in 1740 in Nottingham, Pennsylvania. Tennent's sermon was a blistering attack on the complacency and spiritual degeneracy of much of the clergy. They were, he declared, "natural" or unconverted men who could never impart saving grace to others because they had never received it themselves. They were enemies to a belief in original sin and justification by faith, and they preached a legalistic gospel totally devoid of the vital religion that throbbed with a heartfelt awareness of sin and absolute dependence upon the deity. Rather, Tennent charged, they keep

> Driving, Driving, to Duty, Duty, under this Notion, That it will recommend natural Men to the Favour of GOD, or entitle them to the Promises of Grace and Salvation: and thus those blind Guides fix a deluded World upon the false Foundation of their

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[6]Oct. 27, 1736, Don. Pby. Min., I, 137-138; Nov. 11, 1740, ibid., I, 208, 210.

[7]Mar. 14, 1738, Phil. Pby. Min., II, 52.

own Righteousness . . . .[8]

Tennent agreed with Samuel Finley that the ministrations of most of the clergy were but a "dry Formality." While Christians grew "careless, unholy, unguarded," and while the ordinances of the church were performed as lifeless and powerless duties, the complacent clergy did "in general seem at Ease in Zion."[9] These spiritual eunuchs, Tennent affirmed, were "stone-blind" and "stone-dead" and were solely responsible for the lack of vital religion in the church. Moreover, when "the Life of Piety" came near their churches, they would "rise up in Arms against it, consult, contrive and combine in their Conclaves against it, as a common Enemy, that discovers and condemns their Craft and Hypocrisie." In the final analysis, Tennent concluded, they stood condemned of the ultimate sin, for their every act tended to exalt Self rather than to magnify the Lord and to edify His church.[10]

Tennent charged that many Old Side ministers' obsession with salaries was the grossest manifestation of their unbounded selfishness. He described those ministers as men "whose chief desire," was, like Judas, "to finger the Pence, and carry the Bag."[11] So vigorously did many Presbyterian ministers insist upon adequate remuneration that they became

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[8]Gilbert Tennent, The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry . . . in Alan Heimert and Perry Miller, eds., The Great Awakening (Indianapolis, 1967), pp. 79, 82.

[9]Samuel Finley, Christ Triumphing and Satan Raging . . . (Philadelphia, 1741), p. 24.

[10]Tennent, Unconverted Ministry, pp. 79, 82, 98.

[11]Ibid., p. 83.

vulnerable to the charge of avarice. It was not at all unusual for a pastor to go to court to compel his parishioners to pay arrears.[12] At one point in 1736 the Donegal Presbytery even forced one minister to collect his salary from people he believed unable to give any more. The Rev. Boyd declared that most of his people gave and that those who did not were in "pinching circumstances." Nevertheless, the presbytery demanded that he draw up a list of all delinquents and give it to his elders, who would go through the parish and collect the arrears. The session would then admit to communion only those who had paid their part of the minister's salary. The same presbytery also refused to condemn a minister after his congregation complained that he was personally demanding each family's share of his stipend.[14]

As the 1730's drew to a close, the Old Side clergy's emphasis on ministerial salaries alienated many who believed ever more strongly that the first concern of the minister should not be his pocketbook. In 1738 James Anderson, the Old Side pastor of New York City's First Presbyterian Church, presented a proposal to the Donegal Presbytery that illustrates the Old Sides' concern with their salaries. He noted that many ministers were reluctant to sue at civil law for arrears because they feared offending their members. Consequently, many members refused to support their minister,

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[12]Apr. 14, 1736, Don. Pby. Min., I, 112.

[13]Apr. 13, 1736, ibid., I, 111-112.

[14]Nov. 5, 1740, ibid., I, 199.

creating an unacceptable situation. Anderson recommended that members who were unable to support their minister should "study frugality & guard against prodigality and extravagance . . . . Especially let them beware of Profuse & needless Spending in publick houses." All who failed to support their minister should be declared disorderly by their session and denied communion. This would either goad members to do their duty or expose the disorderly. At all times, though, the ministers should stress that "'tis God's glory and the good of peoples' Souls, more than our private Interest, we have most at heart."[15] The rate at which Presbyterians deserted the settled clergy in the 1730's suggests that many members were not convinced of their ministers' altruism.

2. Success and the Greater Good

Many Presbyterians, though, believed that the clergy should be adequately supported. Had the ministers' concern for their salaries been the only thing that bothered their members, it is unlikely that churches would have split over the issue. But for the New Sides and their followers the Old Side clergy's concern for the things of this world was symbolic of more serious affronts to the sacred calling. In the final analysis, the New Sides condemned the Old Side ministers because they were not successful. The debate over the characteristics of a successful minister and about the origin of his success cut to the essence of the two sides' disagreement over the prerequisites of social leadership. It was in

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[15]Apr. 11, 1738, ibid., I, 159-162.

this debate that the New Sides introduced the revolutionary ideas that the people were the proper judges of their rulers and that leaders must earn the right to rule.

The New Sides realized that they were recommending a radical innovation when they enjoined the people to judge their ministers' qualifications and to depart from those who were unconverted. Tennent urged that itinerations and divisions were necessary only in those deplorable times when the church was bereft of a faithful ministry. During those extraordinary times Christians must look to their own salvation. For "when Persons have their Eyes opened, and their Hearts set upon the Work of God; they are not so soon satisfied with their [ministers'] Doings, and with want of Success for a Time." The criterion, then, by which a minister was to be judged was not his education, wealth, or eloquence but rather his success in bringing souls into the Kingdom.[16]

For the New Sides success was the direct result of a minister's own experience with God. Without the assistance of the Lord no man could successfully impart the gospel to others. "Such as the Lord sends not . . . shall not profit the People at all," declared Tennent. Men could not expect "GOD's blessings upon their Ministry, that are not called and sent of GOD into the Ministry." Using a metaphor from the Bible, Blair asserted, "By their Fruits ye shall know them; says our Lord; do men gather Grapes off Thorns? or

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[16]Gilbert Tennent, Remarks Upon a Protestation Presented to the Synod of Philadelphia . . . (Philadelphia, 1741), pp. 19-20; Unconverted Ministry, p. 81.

Figs off Thistles?"[17] The converted minister was concerned not with his salary and his comfort or with dry formalities but with the spiritual well-being of the society over which he presided. If that society languished, there was obviously something wrong with the minister. In this way the New Sides began to relate the worthiness of a social leader with his abilities and with the results of his efforts.

Tennent was very careful to concede that a sovereign God could use any instrument, including an unconverted minister, to further the Kingdom. However, he concluded, sad experience verified the usual failure of a graceless minister. "Look into the Congregations of unconverted Ministers, and see what a sad Security reigns there; not a Soul convinced that can be heard of, for many Years together; and yet the Ministers are easy; for they say they do their Duty!" Admittedly, only God could change a man's heart, but surely there was a difference in the instruments he used to effect the change. A greater blessing must reasonably be expected from the most suitable means or instrument. "Otherwise, the best Gifts would not be desireable, and GOD almighty . . . by not acting according to the Nature of Things, would be carrying on a Series of unnecessary Miracles; which to suppose is unreasonable."[18] Although success originated with God, it was fundamentally dependent upon the minister's abilities and the

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[17]Tennent, Unconverted Ministry, p. 80; Samuel Blair, A Vindication of the Brethren who were unjustly and illegally cast out of the Synod of Philadelphia . . . (Philadelphia, 1744), p. 57.

[18]Tennent, Unconverted Ministry, pp. 24, 81, 95, 88.

condition of his soul. These, the New Sides insisted, were to be judged by the people.

After exhorting the people to judge their ministers as leaders, Tennent did not shrink from advising them to flee those who proved to be unconverted. He advised those "who live under the Ministry of dead Men, whether they have got the Form of Religion or not, [to] repair to the Living, where they may be edified." Even if his pastor was a "pious Minister of lesser Gifts," a Christian was free to seek out a better minister. Tennent's advice threatened the system of boundaries that the Presbyterians had so carefully attempted to construct. Rather than a church divided into tiny stultifying units ruled by lifeless ministers, he envisioned a vital, unfettered organism drawing strength from the ministrations of all true clergymen. God's people had the right to the talents of all worthy ministers, he asserted, even if they had to go "a few Miles farther than ordinary, to enjoy those, which they profit most by . . . ." Had not hearers flocked to hear Christ even though some were the followers of John the Baptist? "Isn't the same Word preach'd out of our Parish? and is there any Restriction in the Promises of the Word to those only, who keep within their Parishline ordinarily?"[19]

The New Sides insisted that the minister meet the same standards of competency demanded of leaders in other areas of life. These standards included a first-hand acquaintance

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[19]*Ibid.*, pp. 97, 87, 89-90.

with vital religion and an overwhelming concern for the spiritual state of the society the minister served. He must be able to lead others to share the salvation he had experienced himself. "To trust the Care of our Souls to those who have little or no Care for their own, to those who are both unskilled and unfaithful, is contrary to the common Practice of considerate Mankind, relating to the Affairs of their Bodies and Estates . . . ."[20] Again Tennent stressed the duty of the people to judge their ministers' qualifications and to apply to them the same standards that they would in selecting a competent lawyer. No one yet contended that the ministry was merely another profession, but it was obvious that the New Sides' emphasis on success weakened the once unchallenged dictum that all ministers exercised divine authority.

Tennent especially urged people to desert their unsuccessful ministers when more successful ones were near. He pointed with undisguised pride to the crowds that followed the itinerant revivalists, who "find themselves spirited to uncommon Labours, and perceive those attended with uncommon Successes."[21] Blair insisted that itinerations were apparently justified because the Lord was "succeeding his Word in an uncommon Degree," and because so many unsuccessful ministers opposed them. When the Lord plainly blessed one man's ministrations more than another's, Blair concluded, the successful

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[20]Ibid., p. 90.

[21]Tennent, Remarks Upon a Protestation, p. 20.

one was obviously more worthy of support than the unsuccessful one.[22]

For the New Sides the reason for the relationship between the minister and his members was not the security and comfort of the pastor but the "greater good" of the members. The revivalists' emphasis on the individual's greater good was perhaps the most radical of the New Sides' ideas. The idea tended to make each man's own well-being the center of his universe and to make the individual the judge of everything that touched his life. The idea carried within it the seeds of rampant selfishness, and the New Sides realized it. Therefore, they stressed that each individual must humbly seek the greater good of his society as well as his own soul and not cause contention and separation in the church for trivial or selfish reasons. Tennent insisted that dissatisfied Presbyterians must first do all they could to receive benefits from their lawful minister. Only after they made such an effort were they justified in seeking their pastor's permission to leave his congregation. If he refused, however, they were free to leave anyway.[23]

In the end Tennent accepted the radical implications of his advice but sought to mute them with an appeal to "natural reason" and "common sense." All creatures, he insisted, have a natural instinct for choosing the greater good. "Natural reason" declares that good is desirable for its own sake;

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[22]Blair, Vindication of the Brethren, p. 58.

[23]Tennent, Unconverted Ministry, p. 87; Remarks Upon a Protestation, p. 29.

consequently, the greatest good is manifestly the most desirable. God himself enjoins man to "covet earnestly the best Gifts" and to "prove all Things, and hold fast that which is good." If there exists a variety of means, then the best is to be chosen. If one does not choose the best, the choice is not a rational one. In short, the decision does not conform to common sense. Surely, Tennent insisted, no minister would object if a member sought the greater good of his own soul and refused to function as a "senseless Stone, without Choice, Sense, and Taste."[24]

A great many ministers did object, though, and not all of them were Old Sides. Although he would eventually become one of the New Sides' most articulate leaders, in 1739 Jonathan Dickinson was opposed to Tennent's defense of the people's right to judge their ministers. Dickinson is representative of the many Presbyterian ministers who were torn between an ingrained devotion to ecclesiastical order and an awareness of that order's vulnerability on numerous counts. In 1722 Dickinson had declared that the people had an "indispensible Obligation" to accept as the word of God their minister's teaching when he preached gospel truths. However, when clergymen taught anything else, they taught in their names alone. The ministers must justify their interpretations to their hearers and thereby lay them "under Obligations to Observance and Obedience."[25] Dickinson conceded, though, that the people

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[24]Tennent, Unconverted Ministry, pp. 87-88, 92, 95.

[25]Jonathan Dickinson, A Sermon Preached at the Opening of the Synod of Philadelphia . . . 1722 . . . (Boston, 1723), pp. 20-21.

had the final right to decide if their ministers preached the word of God.

By 1739 Dickinson was most uncomfortable with the practical results of this idea. In an important sermon preached in that year he severely limited the people's right to judge and to leave their lawful ministers. He began by attacking the idea that the skills of a minister were his most important prerequisite for leadership. Some ministers obviously have "brighter Capacities, and more eminent Degrees of Learning, Knowledge, Grace, and other useful Furniture for this sacred Trust" than others. Not all were equally animated, sagacious, and eloquent. This was not important, though, for all ministers were but tools used by God to change the hearts of sinners. One tool was as good as another. Those who praised one minister and condemned another on the basis of skill sinned "in giving the Honour to the Instrument, which belongs only to the principal Agent; and [in] not ascribing to the Sovereignty of Gods free Grace, all the Blessings that he is pleased to afford to the means of his Grace." Men who gathered great hosts of converts were lauded as successful, "as tho' by their own Power and Holiness they could convince Men to God." Others, Dickinson noted, were "decry'd as unsuccessful and therefore culpable" simply because the crowds do not follow them. Such censurings were unscriptural, he insisted. Had not Paul declared, "I have planted, Apollos watered: But God gave the encrease"?[26]

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[26]Jonathan Dickinson, Danger of Schisms and Contentions . . . (New York, 1739), pp. 7, 10, 21, 24, 11.

If the manifestly unequal skills of ministers were of little significance, Dickinson continued, then leaving one minister to seek a more skilled one was unscriptural and thus unwarranted. Even if his minister had "not such superior Capacities or desirable Qualifications, as we see or imagine in some others," he continued, the "Way of God and Duty" demanded that the Christian remain under his lawful minister's care. There was, in fact, no duty more explicitly enjoined by scripture than support of one's regular minister. If people were allowed to seek other ministers, eventually there would be "no such Thing as an united Congregation left; nor any such Thing as a religious Society in the World." A person simply could not leave his minister to seek out a more successful one. "For this is to go out of God's Way, and consequently out of the Way of his Blessing."[27]

Dickinson could insist that Christians support their ministers because he fundamentally disagreed with the idea that the members' primary responsibility was to seek their greater good. For him the preservation of the ecclesiastical order should be each member's and each minister's primary concern. He flatly denied that "we are bound to seek our greater Edification; and consequently to desert that Ministry under which we cannot find equal advantage to our Souls." Dickinson went so far as to assert that if a Christian did not find edification under a faithful minister, it was his own fault, not the minister's. He therefore appeared to deny the Christian any

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[27]Ibid., pp. 11, 27, 14-15, 26.

real means of leaving even an unconverted minister.[28]

Dickinson's sermon was delivered to a deeply divided congregation, and he stressed the evil effects of division and praised the happy results of peace, union, and order. However, within the sermon was the qualification that linked Dickinson to his previous stand in the subscription controversy and anticipated his views in the Great Schism. He used the word "faithful" to describe the minister who must be invariably obeyed and supported. When the minister ceased to be "faithful," separation was justified.

> When our Consciences are imposed upon by sinful Terms of Communion, or what we esteem to be such; when our Minister is openly vicious or immoral; or his Doctrines heterodox and subversive of the Fundamentals of Christianity, and of vital Piety . . . I think a Man may than have a Call to peaceably withdraw from such a Ministry, and lift himself under another.[29]

Dickinson retained the right of the Christian to be the final judge of his minister's spiritual condition. He simply insisted that few ministers were yet vicious enough to deserve such harsh treatment. At any rate, in no instance should the matter of his "success" be the criterion by which the minister was to be judged.

The Old Sides disagreed fundamentally with both Tennent and Dickinson. They denounced any emphasis on success and constructed a theory of ministerial tenure that essentially precluded the members' ever ridding themselves of an unconverted minister. As they outlined the Old Sides' view of social authority, John Thomson, Robert Cross, and George

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[28]Ibid., p. 14. [29]Ibid., p. 16.

Gillespie also elucidated their side's attitude toward the prerequisites of social leadership.

The Old Sides first sought to answer the charge that they were complacent and comfortable men who had never suffered for their beliefs. Thomson indignantly denied ever saying that the godly could live without persecution. However, he continued, there had been times in its history when the church had been free of persecution. The present happened to be such a time.[30] His complacent reply could only have infuriated the New Sides, who called for intercolonial exertions to usher in a new era of colonial society. Such an effort would certainly invite persecution of the faithful at the hands of their enemies. Thomson, then, merely reinforced his opponents' belief that the Old Side ministers epitomized and encouraged the selfishness threatening colonial society. The Old Sides' insistence on being paid a good salary further fed the New Sides' suspicions. Consequently, when Cross complained that because of the New Sides' itinerations the Old Side ministers no longer could enjoy "that Comfort, or have that Success . . . which otherwise we might, and which we enjoyed heretofore," the New Sides noted that comfort preceded success in their opponents' priorities.[31]

Any mention of the Old Sides' former success struck Gilbert Tennent as peculiar. This was the first time, he

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[30]John Thomson, The Government of the Church of Christ, and the Authority of Church Judicatories, established on a Scripture Foundation . . . (Philadelphia, 1741), p. 22.

[31]/Robert Cross/, A Protestation Presented to the Synod of Philadelphia . . . (Philadelphia, 1741), p. 10.

observed, "that ever we have heard of the success of most of them."[32] Tennent was quite right. Not only had most of the Old Side clergymen failed to hold their congregations, but they also belligerently asserted that "success" as defined by the New Sides was not their goal. Thomson asserted that, judged by New Side standards, prophets like Elijah and Jeremiah would be judged failures. No great crowds followed them to hang on their every word. Nor did the prophets cause their few hearers to cry out and disturb the peace of those around them. Thomson's Old Testament history was shaky, but his meaning was clear. If crowds of screaming people signified success, the Old Sides wanted none of it.[33]

Even when success was defined strictly as the simple day to day winning of souls, the Old Sides insisted that it was still not an adequate standard for judgment. Gillespie contended that a godly minister might be unsuccessful in winning souls for any number of reasons. His congregation might not include a large percentage of those foreordained for salvation, or he might not be their pastor when their predestined time for conversion came around. In fact, Christ had been an unsuccessful minister because he had never converted as many people as Peter did on the day of Pentecost. After identifying the Old Sides with the Son of God, Gillespie shielded them further from the charge that they were unsuccessful:

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[32]Tennent, Remarks Upon a Protestation, p. 23.

[33]Thomson, Church of Christ, p. 19.

"Ministers are only the moral and instrumental [secondary] Causes of Conversion, not the Efficient [primary] Causes . . . ."[34]

The Old Sides' denigration of success as a standard of judgment for the ministry rested on their belief that God was the source of all success. Consequently, the abilities of a minister had little to do with his success. In fact, the synod argued, the Lord sometimes gives the wicked success to test the godly. "Doth not God oft give wicked Men great success for the trial of better Men than themselves? And do not godly Men as oft meet with Crosses and Disappointments for their great Trials?" Thus, at the same time, the Old Sides answered the charge that they escaped persecution and assumed the role of long-suffering, holy martyrs set upon by godless persecutors.[35]

The Old Side defenders also rejected the New Sides' contention that a minister's success was directly affected by his spiritual state. George Gillespie conceded that no presbytery should knowingly license or ordain an unconverted man. But, he noted, it was possible for an unconverted man to deceive a presbytery and to become an ordained minister through hypocrisy. Gillespie saw this as no cause for alarm, though. He contended that since the minister was only the secondary means of conversion, it was possible for a hypocrite to be an effective soul-winner if God decided to use him. In fact, a

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[34]George Gillespie, A Sermon Against Divisions in Christ's Church . . . (Philadelphia, 1740), pp. 23-24.

[35]Synod of Philadelphia, An Examination and Refutation of Mr. Gilbert Tennent's Remarks . . . (Philadelphia, 1742), p. 10.

learned hypocrite might even be a more effective minister than an unlearned but converted minister. He often could explain scripture and doctrine better and preach more powerfully than his gracious brethren, who, though they might have saving grace, could pass it on to no one. While he admitted that gracious ministers generally were more likely to win souls than graceless pastors were, Gillespie also used the example of Judas Iscariot to demonstrate that even Christ had called hypocrites into the ministry.[36]

The Old Sides sought to downgrade all emphasis on success, but they were not able to ignore completely the assertion that the truly godly minister was the successful minister. Indeed, a favorite ploy of the Old Side clergy was to insist that the New Sides were successful only because they reaped where others had sown. The synod asserted that the success of revivalists like Tennent and Whitefield could be explained in no other way: "Men should have a due Regard, to the publick Peace, the common Interest, and even the usefulness and Characters of orthodox and regular Ministers, who planted and watered Congregations, in which upstart Intruders proclaim their Success." If the truth were known, then, the laudable aspects of the Great Awakening were the results of the selfless efforts of the Old Side clergy.[37]

The Old Sides did occasionally admit that they might not be doing all they could to further the Kingdom. Thomson

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[36]Gillespie, Sermon Against Divisions, pp. 25-30.

[37]Syn. of Phil., Examination and Refutation, pp. 90, 106.

joined with his opponents in decrying the low state of religion, and Gillespie acknowledged that "some of us have certainly been in a deep sleep, and very unmindful of our poor Flocks . . . ."[38] In 1738 James Anderson presented to the Donegal Presbytery a petition that illustrates the problems men had in ascribing success to God when they suspected that individual talents and effort were the real source of success. Anderson stated that if the Lord would follow the gospel "with more efficacy, in [the] conversion & regeneration of Souls," the people would have no cause to complain about having to support their ministers. However, Anderson's suggested solution was not to pray harder to God for success. Rather, he recommended that ministers examine their "private, personal [affairs and] our domestick & public capacities & management" to see if "the little success of a preached gos[pe]l . . . may not be lying at our door . . . ."[39]

In the main, however, the Old Sides attributed their lack of success to the separations fomented by the New Sides. They insisted that no member had the right to judge or leave his minister. Gillespie condemned the tendency of Christians to "cry up one Minister, and cry down another," and to build the reputation of one on the ruins of another. For a member to leave his pastor was to threaten the stability of the fixed gospel ministry and, therefore, ordered society. Gillespie insisted that after a minister was called, no one

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[38]Thomson, Church of Christ, pp. 29-30; Gillespie, Sermon Against Divisions, p. i.

[39]Apr. 11, 1738, Don. Pby. Min., I, 160-161.

could leave his care as long as the minister remained moral, regular, and faithful. These sentiments might sound similar to those of Dickinson except that for the Old Sides the possibility of a regularly ordained minister being proved immoral and irregular was virtually nonexistent.[40] Thomson insisted that dissatisfied members could not charge their ministers of anything resulting from "human Frailty, and the sinful Infirmities that in some Measure cleave to the best of Christians . . . ."[41] And even if serious charges were brought against a minister, the matter should be handled by the presbytery, not by irregular actions by individual members of a congregation.

The Old Sides emphatically denied that a Christian had the right to separate from his minister even to seek his "greater good." Their denial resulted from their contention that all ministers were merely instruments of divine grace with some, however, having more talents than others. God alone was the source of salvation, said Gillespie in his sermon of 1740. To separate from a minister because he lacked the skill and eloquence of another was obviously unlawful because it would promote further divisions. Since Christ was the source of ministerial differences, he would "not approve of separation because of inequality of Gifts." Whereas Tennent had used the existence of unequal talents of ministers to justify separations, Gillespie used it to demonstrate that

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[40]Gillespie, Sermon Against Divisions, pp. 3, 9-10, 14.

[41]Thomson, Church of Christ, p. 1.

Christ abhorred all judging of ministerial talents. Such judgments produced separations that served only the cause of Satan. A legal reason for separation must be evident and rational, Gillespie concluded. For a man to state that he separated to seek his own greater good was neither. In the end Gillespie rejected the plea for the "greater good" because any man could give that excuse at any time, thus threatening the very foundation of all social order. In this way the Old Sides clearly rejected the New Sides' assertion that the individual had the right to judge his minister's efforts as they related to the member's own existence.[42]

3. Visible and Invisible Saints

Although the Old Sides were disturbed by the New Sides' assertion that members should judge the performance of their ministers, they were dismayed at the corollary of their opponents' assertion. To the Old Sides the New Sides seemed to be saying that each Christian also had the right to delve into the recesses of his minister's soul and to pass judgment on the cleric's spiritual state. Such an assertion seemed not only to violate divine prerogative but also to undermine further the foundations of all ordered society. For the New Sides demanded both that social leaders be skilled and, therefore, successful and that they demonstrate publicly and explicitly their worthiness of public obedience.

When the New Sides began to urge Christians to judge the worthiness of their ministers, they opened the way for

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[42]Gillespie, Sermon Against Divisions, pp. 10-12.

several complications. They were, in effect, urging church members to judge the condition of their minister's soul. But both the New and Old Sides were heirs to a tradition that a person's true inner state could be known only to God. This belief had conflicted in the seventeenth century with the New England puritans' efforts to establish "purified" churches made up only of true Christians. But how could men decide if a person was a true Christian if the real state of his soul could be known only to God? After much debate the puritans arrived at a workable solution. There was, they declared, both an "invisible" and a "visible" church made up of "invisible" and "visible" saints, respectively. The visible church was made up of those Christians who publicly professed a saving faith and led exemplary lives. Those visible saints might or might not be true Christians, but their lives suggested that they were. The invisible church, on the other hand, was made up of all true Christians, past, present, and future. The members of that church were known only to God and, hence, were invisible saints. Thus, men were not capable of telling who the invisible saints were and could tell who the visible saints were only by observing outward conduct.[43] In the debates preceding the Great Awakening the Old Sides adhered staunchly to this traditional view, while

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[43]For a thorough study of the idea see Edmund S. Morgan, Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea (New York, 1966). The most thorough explication and defense of the distinction between visible and invisible saints is found in one of the great neglected works of the seventeenth century, Thomas Hooker, A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline (London, 1648).

their opponents began fundamentally--if cautiously--to alter it.[44]

According to the Old Sides, one man did not have the right to judge another's soul because God had not given to Christians any "ordinary Rule . . . to know when Men's Mouths and Hearts do agree." Therefore, to require a minister to give a public narration of his internal religious experience was "inconsistent with all regular Trials for the Ministry in a Gospel-Way."[45] The practice of examining men's internal experiences was an inquisitory process that led men to make "vaunting Boasts of . . . [their] Experiences of Grace, Comforts--and Visions . . . ."[46] None of this was scriptural or legal, Thomson declared, for "None has Right to know the secret Intercourse between me and my God . . . ."[47] Nor did the Old Sides believe that an individual could be assured of his own gracious condition, much less that he should use this knowledge to judge others. Both Thomson and Robert Cross objected to Tennent's assertion that a Christian could be as conscious of his gracious state as he could be of a "stab or wound" and that he should be able to describe in detail the time and manner of his conversion.[48] Likewise Thomson

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[44]Syn. of Phil., Examination and Refutation, p. 62; Thomson, Church of Christ, pp. 19, 23.

[45]Syn. of Phil., Examination and Refutation, pp. 14, 115.

[46]Ibid., pp. 18, 85.

[47]Thomson, Church of Christ, p. 48.

[48]Thomson, Church of Christ, pp. 22, 32; [Cross], A Protestation, p. 11.

declared "a Rediculous /sic/ falsehood" the New Side contention that the Christian's assurance of his own salvation was a standard by which to judge even his minister.[49]

Rather, the Old Sides insisted, a man must be judged by external appearances only. All that was required of a minister, Thomson assured the Old Sides, was a "Competency of Knowledge," an "unblemished Character," and a "Profession of sincere Resolution to engage in and keep Covenant with his God and Saviour." Consequently, Thomson stressed the importance of externals such as observing the Sabbath and engaging in frequent private prayers. He readily granted that these might be feigned by graceless persons but maintained that to be "constant" in them was a "good probable Sign or Symptom." After all, no one could claim to have correct "internal marks" without producing a "competent Proportion of congenial Fruits."[50] At any rate, the externals were all that could be judged. Thomson simply dismissed the New Sides' rebuttal that nothing was more easily affected than those external "congenial Fruits." The synod also asserted that the emphasis on externals was much more likely to catch hypocrites than an examination of "internals": "as we judge according to Appearance, we see just Cause to alter our Judgment and Conduct, when Men's fair Declarations are contradicted by their foul Acts."[51]

The Old Sides, though, were willing to censure ministers

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[49]Thomson, Church of Christ, p. 18.

[50]Ibid., p. 41.

[51]Syn. of Phil., Examination and Refutation, p. 79.

for obvious, sometimes blatant, breaches of decorum and morality. These offenses, after all, were a matter of externals and were legitimate objects of official, though not unofficial, inspection and discipline. They refused, however, to take action against a minister charged by his congregation with "internal" sins. Therefore the presbyteries and the synod were notoriously reluctant to condemn ministers charged with being graceless or incompetent but were ready to vent all of their official fury on ministers accused of intemperance or fornication. Thomson, for instance, readily admitted that far too many ministers were given to strong drink but would not concede that any duly ordained ministers were "unconverted" as the New Sides charged. Likewise, while the Donegal Presbytery refused to separate a minister from a congregation with which he had been openly at war for years, it forced him to make a public apology for his drunkenness.[52]

Just as they stressed the importance of externals, the Old Sides also insisted that a ministerial candidate should not be subjected to an extensive examination of his personal religious experience. It was sufficient, Thomson asserted, that a candidate acknowledge the Westminster Confession and pledge to remain orthodox. To require him to describe the work of regeneration in his own soul was to exceed presbyterial authority. In a sermon or in private conference he could give evidence of his acquaintance with the doctrines of the church "without declaring his own personal Interest

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[52]Thomson, Church of Christ, pp. 34-35; Nov. 5, 1740, Don. Pby. Min., I, 198-201.

in the Particulars he is discoursing about . . . ." To force him to describe the ways in which those doctrines personally affected him was to infringe illegally upon his privacy. In fact, Thomson continued, if the examiners knew the candidate well, there was really no reason to examine his character thoroughly at all.[53]

Thus, for the Old Sides the clergy was essentially immune to almost all criticism and was to be granted essentially unchallenged obedience. The New Sides fundamentally disagreed. Whereas the Old Sides sought to adhere to the traditional idea that only God could tell who the "invisible" saints were, their opponents sought ways to find out for themselves. The New Sides insisted, however, that the "internal" evidence they sought was just another kind of "external" evidence. Samuel Finley insisted that the New Sides judged men only "from what appears to us, in so far as we know of their Manner of Life, and Christian Experiences." But the Old Sides were correct in charging them with innovation. For later in the same sermon in which he had renounced "internal" judging, Finley clearly stated that outward evidence was simply insufficient as proof of a man's gracious condition.[54] When Tennent in 1735 had presented a petition to the synod calling for stricter examination of the clergy, he had not even mentioned drunkenness, fornication, or sabbath-breaking. Rather, he asked that the synod

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[53]Thomson, Church of Christ, pp. 24-25.

[54]Finley, Christ Triumphing, pp. 20-21, 34.

> particularly inquire into the conversations, conduct, and behavior of such as offer themselves to the ministry, and that they diligently examine all the candidates for the ministry in the experiences of a work of sanctifying grace in their hearts, and that they admit none to the sacred trust that are not in the eye of charity serious Christians.[55]

The New Sides' insistence on a discerning judgment of a minister's spiritual condition was based on their conviction that a true Christian could be assured of his salvation. Although they might fall from it, Tennent contended, all gracious people "ordinarily have a lesser or greater Degree of comfortable Perswasion [sic] of their gracious State . . . ."[56] After a person has experienced conversion, Finley asserted, he knows "what Emotion of Heart he has in such and such Frames, [and] he will the more readily discern, when another speaks, prays, or preaches with the same Relish of divine Things . . . ." Consequently, a true Christian "cannot but know, when another speaks skillfully, feelingly, and distinctly of his own Case; and also when it is ignorantly, insipidly, indistinctly, and powerlessly spoken of."[57] Only those who are not truly converted, Tennent observed, would wish to avoid such an examination. Only hypocrites "are against all Knowing of others, and Judging, in order to hide their own Filthiness; like Thieves they flee a Search, because of the Stolen Goods." He acknowledged that true

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[55]Sept. 24, 1734, Presbyterian Church in the United States, Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America . . . (Philadelphia, 1841), p. 111.

[56]Tennent, Remarks Upon A Protestation, pp. 28-29.

[57]Finley, Christ Triumphing, p. 19.

Christians were not infallible judges, but he maintained that they could make a "near guess" as to which ministers were truly converted by observing their "Method of Praying, Preaching, and Living."[58]

Nor was it enough simply for the members to judge their ministers. They were to take action if they found the minister unconverted. Tennent indicted those who remained under the charge of such a minister: "such who are contented under a dead Ministry, have not in them the Temper of that Saviour they express."[59] Thus the New Sides' emphasis on the Christian's right to judge his minister served as the basis upon which an entire congregation could be judged. If the society tolerated an ungodly leader, then its members must also be graceless.

It would be misleading to insist that the Old Sides invariably opposed any examination of the clergy and that the New Sides always insisted upon judging the ministry. As has been noted, the Old Sides championed thorough investigations into a minister's orthodoxy while the New Sides opposed any such examinations. The New Sides, however, insisted that a minister's success and spiritual state were legitimate objects of close scrutiny. Both sides declared that they were interested in examining only "external" evidence. Both also staunchly maintained that some areas of a minister's personality and experience were above scrutiny. For the Old Sides

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[58]Tennent, Unconverted Ministry, p. 98.

[59]Ibid., p. 86.

all questions pertaining to a man's success and the internal state of his soul were unlawful. Their opponents, on the other hand, insisted that a man's orthodoxy should not become the subject of an "inquisition." Both sides were slightly uncomfortable debating publicly the qualifications for social leadership. All involved in the arguments preceding the schism seemed vaguely aware that debates over the prerequisites of social leadership should neither be aired in the public press nor occasion ecclesiastical division. Both sides, however, were highly motivated by concerns that enabled them to stifle their qualms. The Old Sides championed those examinations designed to preserve standards, protect orthodoxy, and maintain social order; the New Sides championed those examinations designed to revitalize a dead piety and produce a more deserving and responsive leadership for colonial society.

In the interest of unity the two sides in the 1750's deemphasized their differences on ministerial examinations. The issue sharply re-emerged, however, in 1766 in the form of a newspaper debate between the New Sides' John Blair, the son of Samuel Blair, and Patrick Allison, the leader of Baltimore's Old Side Presbyterians. Both sides seemed to have mellowed. In the previous decade even Gilbert Tennent had denounced "rash-judging" as an invasion of divine prerogative.[60] And now Allison — speaking for the Old Sides — could acknowledge that it was necessary to examine the performance of a minister.

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[60] Gilbert Tennent, The Blessedness of Peace-Makers . . . (Philadelphia, 1765), pp. 5-6.

In fact, he even suggested ways in which a congregation or its commission could judge the probable performance of a prospective minister.[61] Blair expressed his surprise that Allison had seen fit to appear in print at all, since the question of ministerial examinations had been settled by compromise in the reunion of 1758.[62]

It was obvious from the heated exchange between Blair and Allison, however, that the issue was far from settled. While allison appeared to make concessions to the New Sides, the totality of his argument reveals that he did not. Although he insisted that ministers must demonstrate to examiners, either those of a church or a higher ecclesiastical body, "what knowledge and sense they have of the various experiences of grace and duties of religion . . . ," he soon forgot the "experiences of grace" and concentrated almost exclusively on the "duties of religion." These were to be judged by the minister's daily conduct and conversation, for "an even course of blameless, holy conversation is the best evidence [that] can be had of the goodness of men's hearts and principles . . . ." Examiners should certainly seek to ascertain a man's holiness, but they were not to force him to describe the inner workings of his soul. Therefore, the

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[61]Patrick Allison, Thoughts on the Examination . . . of Candidates for the Sacred Ministry (Philadelphia, 1766), pp. 3,4.

[62]John Blair, Animadversions on a Pamphlet, entitled Thoughts on the Examination and Trials of Candidates for the sacred Ministry, in a Letter to the Unknown Author (Philadelphia, 1766), pp. 4-5.

examiners must rely principally on the candidate's learning and "gifts." For Allison "gifts" meant the way in which the minister performed the external duties of his office. Explicitly grounding his ideas in the tradition of the visible and invisible churches, he insisted that "it is not the reality of a man's piety that is tried, but whether he has the marks and conduct of a good man." Allison simply ignored the contention that a minister should be truly holy, not just appear to be. It was not a question of what a man ought to be, but a question of what could be used to judge a man's qualifications. Finally, Allison restated the Old Sides' contention than an all-wise God could "for some wise ends" allow unregenerate men to enter the ministry and "still over-rule and order all this for good."[63]

Blair was not taken in by Allison's apparent concessions. The New Sides, he declared, would be very pleased if they could be convinced that Allison and the Old Sides were not "putting us off with a mere parade of words by way of argument, but really mean and prosecute the strictness of trials you here propose . . . ."[64] Blair insisted that a minister must be converted and that no unregenerate man could be successful in the ministry. One could just as easily lead a man born blind to understand colors by describing them to him as one could make a man "conceive truly of the holy exercises and sensations of a heart, who has never felt them . . . ." A man's "pious heart"

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[63]Allison, Thoughts on the Examination, pp. 5-7, 10-11,20.
[64]Blair, Animadversions, p. 9.

was to be revealed in a narration not only of the doctrines he holds but also of the impressions they have made on his heart. The credibility of the narration was to be judged by comparing it with the scriptures and with the minister's conduct. If the narration was found "essentially defective," the minister was to be rejected no matter how amiable his "outward carriage." Whereas Allison had formed an opinion of the goodness of the "heart and Principles" of a man by his "general profession" and outward conduct, Blair would not take this relationship between heart and conduct for granted.[65]

Blair readily agreed that one man could not infallibly know the state of another's soul. But like his father he was ready to argue that a man could surely know the promptings of his own heart and could use this knowledge as a standard with which to judge the gracious condition of another. Nor would he admit that this constituted unscriptural "internal" judging. Rather, the narration gave evidence only of the "<u>visibility</u> or <u>credible</u> <u>appearance</u> of the person's holiness . . . ."[66] For Blair and the New Sides true holiness existed not in the faithful performance of the externals of Christianity but in a "holy temper, in scriptural dispositions and affections, under the influence of gospel-truth apprehended by a lively faith."[67] This "holy temper" alone led sinful men to renounce selfishness and to nourish a consuming concern for the well-

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[65] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 14, 16, 18-19.

[66] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 20, 25, 11, 16, 24.

[67] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 22.

being of their fellow man and the reformation of society.[68]

From the funeral sermons preached by the New Sides in the 1750's there emerged a portrait of the ideal minister, one who through selfless concern, experience, and skill earned the respect of his people and the right to rule them.[69] His right to rule was based not on his wealth or his orthodoxy but on his usefulness, success, and selfless piety.[70] In 1757 Aaron Burr, the President of Princeton College, preached a sermon that epitomized the New Sides' ideal of social leadership. In somber tones Burr eulogized his friend, Jonathan Belcher, the late governor of New Jersey. Belcher was above all else a selfless man, Burr declared. He disdained the "sordid avaricious Methods of enriching themselves and Families, which Governors have too often taken at the Expense of . . . the true Interest of the People." Furthermore, Belcher realized that the true interest of society demanded that the contentions tearing apart colonial society had to be stilled. Consequently, upon arriving in New Jersey, he had immediately sought to remove by "steady, wise and prudent Measures" the "Confusions," "Tumolts," and "riotous Disorders" that had plagued the province.

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[68]For another discussion of the idea see David Bostwick, Self disclaimed and Christ Exalted: A Sermon, preached at Philadelphia, before the Reverend Synod of New-York, May 25, 1758 (Philadelphia, 1758).

[69]See especially John Pierson, The Faithful Minister . . . (New York, 1746) and Caleb Smith, Diligence in the Work of God, and Activity During Life . . . (New York, 1758).

[70]For the emphasis on usefulness see Sept. 2, 1735, Don. Pby. Min., I, 71, 78-79; Aug. 10, 1737, Phil. Pby. Min., II, 47; May 26, 1737, Presbyterian Records, p. 132.

Throughout his administration he had "steadfastly pursued, with unwearied Pains, and disinterested Views" the best interest of the colony. This meritorious man had successfully served society because he had been a true Christian.

> It was evident, his Religion was not a meer[sic] nominal, formal Thing, which he received from Tradition, or professed in bare Conformity to the Country where he lived; but real and genuine, such as commanded his Heart and governed his Life.

With its emphasis on success, usefulness, and a heart-felt pervasive piety, Burr's eulogy of Belcher was a perfect description of the New Sides' ideal of social leadership. [71] Only such men, the New Sides were convinced, could lead the reunited Presbyterian community in its effort to reform American society.

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[71] Aaron Burr, A Servant of God dismissed from Labour to Rest . . . (New York, 1757), pp. 14-16.

CHAPTER III

A COSMOPOLITAN VISION

In 1754 Samuel Davies, a leading New Side minister, wrote

> 'Tis but little that so useless a Creature can do for God during the Short Day of life; but to be instrumental . . . /in/ laying a Foundation of extensive Benefit to Mankind, not only in the present but in future Generations, is a most animating Prospect . . . .[1]

Davies' words and the circumstances under which he wrote them are doubly revealing. His emphasis on extensive usefulness to mankind reflects the New Sides' determination to rid America of selfishness. Moreover, Davies' thoughts were recorded in a diary of a trip to Great Britain from 1753 to 1755. The Virginia pastor journeyed to the British Isles to raise money for Princeton College, established by the New Sides in 1746. The trans-Atlantic voyage of the Virginia minister in support of a school in New Jersey suggests the cosmopolitan nature of the New Side Presbyterians and of American Presbyterians after the reunion of 1758. For the New Sides were not only determined to reform American society but also hoped to find in a trans-Atlantic Christian commonwealth a community to replace the contentious and selfish society of America.

1. The Christian Commonwealth as Community

The Great Schism had been healed largely because neither the Old nor the New Side found community within itself. Both

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[1]George W. Pilcher, ed., The Reverend Samuel Davies Abroad . . . (Urbana, Ill., 1967), May 7, 1754, p. 83.

of the factions continued to view the denomination as an organic whole, the unity of which must be restored if American society was to be reformed. In the generation following the Great Awakening the New Sides especially were anxious that not only the denomination but all of colonial society be united in an effort to rid the land of selfishness and contention and to usher in the Christian commonwealth. The New Sides became particularly determined in their efforts when, just as the Great Schism was healed, British North America was threatened by the Antichrist itself, papist France.

The struggle between France and Great Britain for much of North America seemed to the Presbyterians to intensify all that was wrong with American society. Most important of all, it revealed the Americans' indifference to the needs of society. "Alas!" cried Samuel Davies in 1755, "our country has been sunk in a deep sleep: a stupid security has unmanned the inhabitants; they could not realize a danger at the distance of two or three hundred miles . . . ." As the possibility of a French victory increased, Davies grew ever more alarmed at the inactivity of his fellow Americans. In "The Crisis," published in 1756, he condemned the "spirit of security, sloth, and cowardice" that prevailed in the colonies. And in 1758 he charged that the Americans were resting in selfish luxury, making no exertion to serve the larger community.[2]

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[2]Samuel Davies, "Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of a Good Soldier," Sermons (Boston, 1864), III, 95; "The Crisis; or, the Uncertain Doom of Kingdoms at Particular Times," Sermons, III, 131; "The Happy Effects of the Pouring out of the Spirit," Sermons, III, 220; The Curse

New Side ministers like Davies condemned Americans not only because they seemed oblivious to the needs of their fellow man, but also because many colonists seemed intent upon profiting from the ills besetting colonial society. While Indians preyed upon western settlers, merchants in the east gleefully sold munitions to the French, openly trading with the enemy. If one goes about the country, Davies observed in 1755, one sees, "Avarice hoarding up her useless treasures, dishonest Craft planning her schemes of unlawful gain, and Oppression unmercifully grinding the face of the poor." In 1758 he cursed those who took advantage of the country's plight to live "in Ease, Idleness and Pleasure, and enrich themselves at the public Expense." Especially did the New Side minister excoriate the man who affected to take up arms but then turned profiteer, serving himself "under Pretence of serving his Country."[3]

The selfishness of his fellow Americans as displayed in the war particularly disturbed Davies because it appeared simultaneously with the ostentatious emergence of a self-conscious American aristocracy. One sees "Prodigality squandering her stores," he asserted, while "Luxury [is] spreading her table, unmanning her guests . . . ." Great men neglected the good of society while sedulously indulging

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of Cowardice . . . (Boston, 1759), pp. 13, 22. For a similar condemnation of American individualism see Samuel Finley, The Curse of Meroz; or, the Danger of Neutrality, in the Cause of God, and our Country . . . (Philadelphia, 1757), p. 8.

[3]Davies, "Religion and Patriotism," Sermons, III, 112; Curse of Cowardice, pp. 6-7.

in card games, backgammon, horse racing, and cock-fighting. Moreover, these negligent social leaders were imitated in their luxurious dissipation by "little, low-lived sinners." "How unseasonable is this taste for pleasure and diversions, at such a time as this!" Davies cried in 1757. There was, he contended, "all the furniture of luxury and festivity, as if they acted upon the epicurean maxim, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.'"[4]

The advance of selfishness and luxury portended for Davies the dissolution of American society if not checked. Corruption, injustice, treachery, and discord spread relentlessly through the colonies, destroying public spirit, patriotism, unanimity and "all the social and heroic virtues which naturally tend to strengthen, defend, and advance a people." American society was, he concluded, a great putrefying organism:

> Our body politic is a huge mass of corruption! the whole head is sick; and the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but all full of wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores.[5]

Even when forecasting its imminent destruction, though, Davies described American society as an organic whole. Although diseased, the organism had a head, heart, and feet in the best medieval tradition. The different parts of the body simply no longer functioned as a whole; rather each part

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[4]Davies, "Religion and Patriotism," Sermons, III, 113; "Happy Effects of the Pouring out of the Spirit," Sermons, III, 206-207.

[5]Davies, "The Crisis," Sermons, III, 143, 144.

sought its own aggrandizement. Only if each member of the body politic served the interest of the whole could that body survive, asserted Samuel Finley. No part could abandon another part, agreed Davies. The westerners were members of the same body politic as the easterners. They therefore had a right to expect aid from their brothers in the east when attacked by the French and their Indian allies. This postulation underlay all reasons for social union. If members did not aid each other, Davies asserted, they "might as well have continued in a state of nature, as be united in a society . . . ."[6]

Davies' solution for the ills of colonial society was a deceptively simple one--love. In one of his most important sermons, "God is Love," he advanced a theory of social union that essentially defined love as the force holding society together and that defined as virtuous the man who valued the interests of society more highly than his personal desires. Love was defined as one's concern for his fellow man evidenced in a willingness to forego economic and social advancement for the sake of a larger whole. No longer an abstraction, love became a weapon to counteract the destructive and divisive force of American individualism. Without love, Davies declared, "the great community of the rational universe would dissolve, and men and angels would turn savages, and roam apart in barbarous solitude." He asked, "Can a social creature

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[6]Finley, Curse of Meroz, p. 13; Davies, "Religion and Patriotism," Sermons, III, 95.

be happy in eternal solitude or in a state of society, while ill-affected towards the other members of society or while they are ill-affected towards him and he to them, hateful, and hating one another?" The answer was obvious. The same forces that made imperative the reunification of Presbyterianism also dictated that Americans must cease their selfish and contentious ways and establish a Christian commonwealth.[7]

When Davies became the President of Princeton in 1759, he was convinced that only selfless service could halt the fragmentation of American society. In a 1760 commencement address entitled "Religion and Public Spirit," he translated the ideas of "God is Love" into a valedictory for his young charges. To them he recommended the example of King David, who had been motivated not by the sordid passions of avarice, ambition, or revenge but by a desire to deliver his people from their oppressors. A man without the advantages of birth, education, or the wiles of the courtier, David nonetheless rose "to the Height of human Grandeur, and became an extensive Blessing to the Church and his Country." What knowledge he gained he dedicated to the service of his generation, and he did not indulge in idle and ostentatious speculations. So should Princeton's graduates serve their own generation, Davies asserted. Whether in the "sacred Desk," the bar, the "chambers of Affliction," or in private life, he declared, "Live not for your selves, but [for] the Publick." Only when one understands that Davies and other New Sides thought such

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[7]Davies, "God is Love " Sermons, I, 465-466, 476.

selfless servants were the only hope for American society does his entreaty take on great significance.[8]

The primary duty of all men, according to Davies, was to exert themselves strenuously in order to reform society. Yet this New Side emphasis on exertion ran counter to their equally emphatic belief in predestination and the absolute sovereignty of God over the affairs of men. The New Sides found themselves in the awkward position of urging people to exert themselves for social reformation and at the same time telling them that those exertions would be in vain if contrary to the will of God. The Holy Spirit, asserted Davies, was "the original fountain of all the real goodness and virtue which is to be found in our degenerate world . . . ." When the Lord chooses to pour out his blessings, "the cause of religion and virtue is promoted, almost without means . . . ." Davies cited Pentecost and the sudden appearance of the Great Awakening amid prosperity and security as two examples of God's arbitrary, unexpected, and undeserved visitations to men. Only God could give men grace to repent of their sins, and if men attempted "this work with the pride of imaginary self-sufficiency," disappointment and failure would be the inevitable results.[9]

When the French were defeated in 1761, the New Sides

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[8]Samuel Davies, Religion and Public Spirit. A Valedictory Address to the Senior Class delivered in Nassau-Hall, September 21, 1760 (Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 1762), pp. 5, 4, 6, 7.

[9]Davies, "Happy Effects of the Pouring out of the Spirit," Sermons, III, 208, 216-218; "The Crisis," Sermons, III, 144.

were quick to insist that all credit for the victory go to the deity. Ignoring the sermons in which he had identified virtuous exertion with assured victory, Davies in "A Thanksgiving Sermon for National Blessings" informed his audience that God had granted success only because his honor and good name were at issue. God, he insisted, had allowed the English and the colonists to prevail, "not for our own sake, but for his own name's sake . . . ." But the sermon is important because it also presented God as bound in an unbreakable covenant with the Americans:

> . . . the honour of God may be so intimately concerned in the protection of a people, that he may work deliverance for them, even when they deserve to be cut off; and when it would be just and fit to give them up into the hands of their enemies, were it not that he has assumed such relations, and come under such engagements to them.

Even while stressing God's sovereignty, then, Davies blunted its deterministic implications and intimated that there was enough virtue resident in America to force the deity to always protect the land. Davies therefore could consistently urge his people to virtuous exertion while at the same time reserving to God the undisputed--but unused--right to withhold success from them. Thus, despite their adherence to a staunch belief in Calvinistic determinism, the New Sides inextricably connected virtue with exertion in behalf of one's country and the Kingdom of God on earth. Such exertion, the New Sides believed, would make the two synonymous in a Christian commonwealth that included not only America but the

Protestant British Isles.[10] It was to further that Christian commonwealth that the New Sides established their first institution of higher learning.

2. Education and Stabilization: The Old Sides

The New Sides' cosmopolitan nature and their efforts to find community in a reformed American society are revealed in their attitude toward the cultural function of higher education. That attitude in turn is best understood after comparison to that of the Old Sides. While the New Sides saw selfishness and contention as the most dangerous threats to American society, the Old Sides were most alarmed by the social disorder caused by itinerant exhorters and the social heterogeneity resulting from increased German immigration in the 1730's and 1740's. Their alarm caused the Old Sides to use education to professionalize the ministry and thereby, to stabilize and preserve--rather than reform--colonial society.

In their efforts to professionalize the ministry, the Old Sides prescribed for the first time in colonial America the process whereby men entered one of the learned professions.[11] They first attempted to insure that no unknown person enter the ministry. After 1735 all potential candidates were required to present credentials and letters of recommendation

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[10]Davies, "A Thanksgiving Sermon for National Blessings," Sermons, III, 372, 370.

[11]For a stimulating and suggestive illustration of the use of professionalization as a means of historical analysis see David H. Calhoun, Professional Lives in America: Structure and Aspriation, 1750-1850 (Cambridge, Mass., 1965).

from well-known ministers before being admitted to candidacy. This requirement was intended to reduce the flow of unqualified Irish exhorters into the middle colonies. At the Old Sides' insistence the synod ruled that no "foreign" candidate was to preach within a presbytery's bounds until he had presented his credentials to that presbytery, preached before that body, and received its approval. The synod enforced its ruling in 1736 by refusing to admit any Irish candidate who failed to present adequate letters of recommendation.[12]

Under Old Side pressure the synod in 1735 devised another method for bringing the potential candidate under the scrutiny of the profession to which he aspired. In that year the synod ruled that no person could become a ministerial candidate until he "repair[ed] into the dwellings . . . of at least most of the ministers of the Presbytery to which he offers himself, and thereby [gave] them an opportunity to take a view of his parts and behaviour."[13] In those informal meetings with the Presbyterian ministers the hopeful candidate was questioned on his salvation, his orthodoxy, and his reasons for entering the ministry.[14] By emphasizing a young man's reasons for wanting to enter the ministry, the Old

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[12]Sept. 22, 1735, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America . . . (Philadelphia, 1841), pp. 118-119; Sept. 18, 1736, ibid., p. 128.

[13]Sept. 22, 1735, ibid., p. 119.

[14]See, for example, June 7, 1734, Minutes of the Presbytery of Donegal, I, 32 (MSS in U.T.S.); Oct. 10, 1735, ibid., I, 96.

Sides hoped to keep from the profession anyone whom they considered unworthy or unqualified, thus elevating the position of the ministry and stabilizing society.

The first way in which the Old Sides attempted to elevate the profession was to lengthen the time spent in candidacy and to make the ministerial trials more difficult. In 1736 one of the Philadelphia Presbytery's candidates completed his trials in less than one year.[15] In the following year, however, a young man began a candidacy that would last four years.[16] After the Great Schism the presbytery usually required a candidacy of at least two and usually three years. In the same period the presbytery increasingly emphasized the candidate's scholarly ability and orthodoxy, often at the expense of his piety. Candidates were examined on the "learned" languages, literature, natural philosophy (the rudimentary natural sciences), and moral philosophy (the rudimentary social sciences), and theology. The purpose of these exams was to "get a view of . . . [the candidate's] Knowledge and Orthodoxy." The latter was further tested when the candidate delivered a series of lectures, exegeses, and sermons before the presbytery. These performances were deemed quite important, and in 1765 the Presbytery of Philadelphia even required a candidate to leave his notes for the

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[15]May 12, Sept. 20, 1736, Minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, II, 15, 24 (MSS in P.H.S.).

[16]Sept. 13, 1737, ibid., II, 49; Sept. 7, Nov. 11, 1741, ibid., 101, 103-105.

inspection of those members not present.[17]

Shortly after they began to raise the standards for candidates at the presbyterial level, the Old Sides sought ways to formulate those standards at the synodical level. All of their efforts centered on establishing a synodical school, for the Old Sides felt keenly the lack of a college in the middle colonies. William Tennent, Sr., had established a "Log College" at Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, in the 1730's especially to prepare young men for the ministry.[18] But by the late 1730's the Log College had become one of the centers of the incipient revival, and as such was not looked upon favorably by the Old Sides. Consequently, in 1738 the Old Sides of the Lewes Presbytery proposed that no one be admitted to candidacy unless he either presented a diploma from a New England or a European university, or submitted to a synodical examination of his scholarship. The proposal was suffused with forebodings of the consequences of an uneducated ministry. The central point of the proposal was that only a learned and orthodox clergy could preserve the stability of society in the middle colonies and sustain the flagging reputation of the Presbyterian denomination. Only

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[17]Nov. 30, 1736, ibid., II, 20; Sept. 9, 13, 1737, ibid., II, 42-43, 49; July 12, 1739, ibid., II, 74-75; Nov. 4, 1740, ibid., II, 100-108; May 25, 1765, ibid., III, 65.

[18]For the "Log College" see especially Thomas C. Pears, Jr. and Guy S. Klett, compilers, "Documentary History of William Tennent and the Log College," JPHS, XXVIII, nos. 1, 2, 3 (Mar., June, Sept., 1950), 37-64, 105-128, 167-204; Archibald Alexander, Biographical Sketches of the Founder, and Principal Alumni of the Log College . . . (Princeton, 1845); and Elijah R. Craven, "The Log College of Neshaminy and Princeton University," JPHS, I (Mar., 1902), 308-314.

a synodical examination, the synod asserted, could "prevent unqualified men from creeping in among us . . . in these remote parts of the earth . . . ."[19]

The Old Sides, however, proved unwilling to trust only in a synodical examination for protection against uneducated and disorderly ministers. In 1739 they proposed that the synod establish a college in which trustworthy ministers might be trained. A committee was appointed to pursue the affair, but the schism prevented any further action until 1743. In that year the Presbyteries of Philadelphia, Donegal, and New Castle recommended that the synod, now free of the dissident New Sides, establish a school completely controlled by the synod. In 1744 the synod followed their recommendation and made Francis Alison head of an academy in New London, Delaware, where he was to teach the languages, philosophy, and divinity.[20]

The Old Sides insisted that Tennent's Log College was an inadequate facility because of the elder Tennent's lack of competence in the arts and sciences. It is to their credit--and an indication that they were sincerely interested in raising ministerial standards--that they also recognized Alison's inability to teach all subjects adequately. In 1746 the trustees of the synodical school attempted to persuade

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[19]May 29, 1738, Presbyterian Records, p. 141; May 24, 28, 1739, ibid., pp. 145, 146.

[20]May 29, 1739, ibid., p. 149; Apr. 5, 1739, Don. Pby. Min., I, 177. For the Old Side academy see George H. Ryden, "The Newark Academy of Delaware in Colonial Days," Pennsylvania History, II (Oct., 1935), 205-224.

Yale to accept Alison's graduates and to allow them to complete their ministerial education in New Haven. The Connecticut college had just been torn into factions over the Great Awakening and had expelled the saintly David Brainerd and other supporters of the revival. Firmly controlled by Old Light Congregationalists who thoroughly sympathized with the Presbyterian Old Sides, Yale seemed to be the logical place for Alison to send his graduates. The synod sought to convince Yale's President, Thomas Clap, that the Tennent faction was sympathetic with the Yale dissidents (as they indeed were). The trustees then assured Clap that their efforts at professionalization would strengthen the forces of order and regularity in the colonies. Thus, the attempted union with Yale was plainly a defensive move intended to "prevent our being overrun with ignorance and confusion."[21]

Internal problems at Yale led Clap to decline the trustee's request, so the Old Sides sought other ways to prevent the triumph of "ignorance and confusion." They despaired of maintaining an organic society in a region that yearly absorbed a large number of Dutch, German, French, and Welsh immigrants, who all too frequently abandoned their Old World churches once in the New World. The Old Sides were especially disturbed by the lack of qualified ministers to serve these recent immigrants. Consequently, the Old Sides endeavored to persuade the local Dutch and German Calvinists to support the

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[21]Synod of Philadelphia to Thomas Clap, May 30, 1746, Presbyterian Records, p. 188.

New London academy and to join with the Presbyterians in benefiting from the more homogeneous and stable population that would inevitably result from the growth of an educated ministry.

Synonymously with their overture to Yale the Old Sides began a correspondence with the Dutch Classis in Holland, which supervised the Reformed Church's missionary activities in America. The Presbyterians bewailed "the present great want of ministers among the High and Low Dutch," and urged the Classis to assist the synod in promoting "the common interests of religion among us" by encouraging an educated ministry. Neither the Dutch nor the German Calvinists could keep up with the flow of immigration. Therefore, reasoned Francis McHenry, the Old Side synod's moderator, "we must adjust to matters among ourselves the best we can." Without the stable leadership of an educated ministry, he continued,

> there will not be found among them in a short time, much pure or steadfast religion . . . /and they will be/ in danger not only of becoming lukewarm and unskilled, but also of being tempted and misled, by deceitful and erring sentiments which are found abundantly in this region.[22]

McHenry based his plan for assistance on his concern for the destitute Dutch and German churches in America. However, in a letter to a Mr. Kennedy, a Presbyterian agent in Holland, the moderator revealed the major source of his concern. While he was sincerely troubled by the plight of the Dutch and

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[22]Francis McHenry to Dutch Classis, June 4, 26, 1744, in James L. Good, ed., "Early Attempted Union of Presbyterians with Dutch and German Reformed," JPHS (Sept., 1905), 124, 125, 127.

German churches, especially insofar as the immigrants remained unassimilated, he was also deeply concerned about the barbarism he saw encroaching upon his own denomination's churches. There "are found many vacancies among us," he informed Mr. Kennedy, "and seem likely still more to increase, since the numbers of those who confess Presbyterian sentiments in this and surrounding Provinces over which the care of our Synod extends, greatly multiply." When coupled with the alarming influx of immigrants, this view of encroaching barbarism on the opening frontier appalled the Old Sides and was the central impetus for the founding of the New London academy.[23]

In the decade after 1746 the Old Sides demonstrated that in their hands professionalization of the ministry and the education that was essential to that process were means to a homogeneous and stable population in the immediate environs of Philadelphia rather than instruments of serving a broader cultural goal or a more extensive constituency. The Old Sides ignored as best they could the frontier, where contributions "are small, the labors and the difficulties are great, [and] the places are poorly cultivated, even to discouragement . . ." Tentative and irregular attempts were made to send missionaries to western Virginia, but their synodical records are noticeably devoid of extensive missionary appointments.[24]

At the same time that they ignored the frontier, the Old Sides worked mightily to use education to stabilize society

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[23]McHenry to Rev. Kennedy, June 26, 1744, ibid., p. 128.

[24]Robert Cross to Kennedy, Oct. 16, 1746, ibid., p. 133.

in and around Philadelphia. To that end they cooperated readily with Philadelphia's would-be aristocracy. In the generation before the Revolution many well-to-do colonists sought ways in which to set themselves off from their fellow colonists. Mindful of pressures from below and from men as wealthy as they--and fearful that social status was becoming wholly dependent on royal preferment--these incipient aristocrats sought a means of defining aristocracy in a society in which many people were equally wealthy and in which no one was willing to give up power, prestige, or position to another. In a frantic search for symbols of their aristocratic station, uneasy urbanites especially at the mid-century bought elaborate coaches, vacationed at newly-established spas, traveled widely, and in general displayed their claims to social preferment with ostentatious and competitive gusto. Their campaign for recognition as members of the elite was frequently climaxed by a highly visible conversion to the Church of England.[25]

It was with the Philadelphia branch of this uneasy aristocracy that the Old Side Presbyterians cooperated. Many of the civic improvements begun by Benjamin Franklin were supported by this gentry. Indeed, the doing of good works became yet another symbol of social status. They tended to support most enthusiastically those civic improvements that had as their goal the assimilation of the city's foreign elements and the elevation of professional standards. The establishment

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[25]See especially Carl Bridenbaugh, Cities in Revolt: Urban Life in America, 1743-1776 (New York, 1964), Chapter IX.

of the Old Sides' school, which was intended to do both, heartened many Philadelphian patricians, who also supported Franklin's efforts to establish a college in the City of Brotherly Love. Immediately the Old Side Presbyterians, especially the wealthy lawyer William Allen and Francis Alison, sought to coordinate the educational efforts of the New London academy and the College of Philadelphia. The Anglican aristocrats cooperated fully with the Old Sides' efforts to teach English to the German and Dutch children and to assimilate them into the population of the city. The two groups established schools for children for that purpose, and Mr. Allen served on the Board of Trustees with the Anglican minister-educator Richard Peters, Benjamin Franklin, and Rev. William Smith, the Anglican Provost of the College of Philadelphia. In a tract describing a fictional and ideal college in the land of "Mirania," the Provost had cited as a reason for the school the Miranians' alarm at the number of foreigners in their midst. They feared that "many distinctions were forming upon . . . [the foreigners'] different customs, languages and extractions, which by creating separate interests, might, in the issue, prove fatal to government." Provost Smith insisted that Philadelphia's all-too-real foreign element must be assimilated just as the foreigners in Mirania were, through education. Consequently, when the Old Side synod decided to request royal aid for the schools, the Provost took the petition to London.[26]

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[26]The best discussions of the relationship between the New London academy and the Philadelphia school remain the works

In 1755 the cooperation between the Old Sides and the Anglicans was fully consumated when Francis Alison left the Old Side academy and became the Vice Provost of the College of Philadelphia. The aristocratic Alison found most congenial the urbane fellowship of the Anglican gentry. The Old Sides' support of social authority and hierarchy and their insistence on an educated ministry found sympathetic reenforcement among the Philadelphians who wished to strengthen all authority and accentuate social distinctions and who recognized the importance of education as a means to those ends. On the other hand, the Old Sides were surely attracted by Provost Smith's elitist conception of the function of higher education. Smith demanded that his ideal college reflect the unalterable divisions of Miranian society. The college must provide one kind of education for an elite, which would enter as a matter of course the "learned" professions and another kind of education for the "remaining people of the country," who would be satisfied as part of the "mechanical" professions. Such a division was "absolutely necessary" if the Miranian youth were to be content with their "proper sphere."[27]

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of Carl Bridenbaugh. See Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics, 1689-1775 (New York, 1965), Chapter V; and Rebels and Gentlemen: Philadelphia in the Age of Franklin (New York, 1965), Chapter II. For the cooperation in the German schools see June 2, 1755, Presbyterian Records, p. 219; May 27, 1756, ibid., p. 223; May 26, 1757, ibid., pp. 226-228. For the description of the College of Mirania see William Smith, "A General Idea of the College of Mirania," The Works of William Smith, D.D. Late Provost of the College and Academy of Philadelphia (Philadelphia, 1803), I, 163-229; quote on p. 175.

[27]Smith, "College of Mirania," Works, I, 180.

Both the Anglicans and the Old Side Presbyterians, then, wished to use education to raise professional standards, especially in the ministry, and thereby to stabilize society. These ends could theoretically have produced vital and successful institutions, but in the hands of the Old Sides they resulted in stagnation and failure. While it raised standards and sought to assimilate immigrants, the Old Side synod virtually died. In 1745 that synod numbered twenty-five ministers while the new Synod of New York numbered twenty-one. By 1758, though, the Synod of Philadelphia had even lost three members while the New Side synod had trebled its membership. Education, when used by the Old Sides to promote professionalization, assimilation, and stabilization did not advance social reformation; nor was it intended to.

3. Education and Reformation: The New Sides

The New Sides, however, did intend to use education as a means to reform society. And they rejected the Old Sides' charge that the revivalists opposed all learning. Gilbert Tennent did assert his opposition to the "Metaphysical Niceties and sublime critical Disquisitions" that he believed too often displaced "the Defence of Gospel-Truth, and the saving Instruction of immortal Souls" in the sermons of the Old Side ministers. His fellow student at the Log College, Samuel Finley, likewise disdained those ministers who possessed only mere morality and "Head-Knowledge." The New Sides were particularly disturbed to find that the same

men who insisted on indivisible and absolute authority and who demanded that all ministers should be uniformly obeyed also stressed the importance of a minister's education. Those attitudes in combination seemed to the New Sides a pernicious and ominous threat to the revival. Tennent and Finley, however, did not denigrate learning; they simply insisted that it not ally with authority and deference to oppose the work of God.[28]

The New Sides continued to insist that the fundamental prerequisite of the faithful minister was a heart atuned to the promptings of God and the spiritual needs of mankind. But they also agreed that the servant of God and the spiritual man must be a man of knowledge. He must "apprehend Things clearly, Methodize his Conceptions regularly, and Reason solidly," Finley affirmed in 1749. That a man has "good natural Parts" was not sufficient. These must be cultivated by an acquaintance with the learned languages, rhetoric, and philosophy. These studies, however, must at all times be subservient to "Divinity, his main Study." Like the early Puritan advocates of the "plain style" the New Sides insisted that the minister should not "fly" above his hearers. He should "Study . . . to speak instructively /rather/ than learn'dly; and suppress a Thousand flowery Expressions for the sake of one that is pertinent and level to the Capacity

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[28]Gilbert Tennent, Remarks Upon a Protestation Presented to the Synod of Philadelphia, June 1, 1741 (Philadelphia, 1741), p. 51; Samuel Finley, Christ Triumphing and Satan Raging . . . (Philadelphia, 1741), p. 20.

of his Hearers." A plain style must be adopted if the minister was to achieve the "usefulness" that was the ultimate end of the New Sides' concept of the ministry: "but what is the Fruit of the Labours, while they go beyond the reach of their Audience?"[29]

The New Sides' concern for an educated ministry, however, did not lead to the same institutional manifestations nor serve the same cultural ends as did the Old Sides'. The New Sides, for instance, did not view education primarily as a means of professionalizing the ministry. From its inception the New Side Presbytery of New Brunswick examined a candidate on the learned languages, the arts, and the sciences, but the presbytery equally emphasized the "Experience of a Work of converting Grace in his Soul . . . ."[30] The Old Sides, of course, also examined a man's conversion experience, but they tended to emphasize the more tangible evidence of scholarship and creedal subscription. Moreover, the same time that the Old Sides were attempting to lengthen ministerial candidacy and to make entry into it more difficult, the New Sides were moving dramatically in the opposite direction. John Rowland's candidacy lasted from August, 1738, to October,

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[29]Samuel Finley, The Approved Minister of God . . . (Philadelphia, 1749), pp. 6-7. For a similar explication of the New Side clergy's attitude toward a learned ministry see John Pierson, The Faithful Minister . . . (New York, 1748), pp. 7-8. For the puritans' emphasis on the "plain style" see Perry Miller, The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century (Boston, 1961), pp. 331-362.

[30]Aug. 25, 1738, Minutes of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, I, 2 (MSS in P.H.S.). Hereafter cited as N. Bruns. Pby. Min.

1739, but he was licensed within three weeks of entering candidacy.[31] In the following year Samuel Finley was licensed two months after becoming a candidate.[32] This trend toward abbreviated candidacies continued during the 1740's and reached a climax in the late 1750's and 1760's. By those dates it had become customary for a young man to be licensed within two months of entering candidacy and to be ordained a year later.[33] The young men were required to attend each presbytery meeting in addition to preparing for examinations and supplying vacant pulpits. By 1761 the pace of candidacy had become so frantic that three harried candidates "represented to the Presby/tery/ their great Fatigue, and continued Hurry, in riding from Place to Place, and begged to be excused from making Exegesis, as usual before ordination." The request was granted.[34]

It would be a mistake to assume that the New Sides' abbreviated candidacies were the result of a wholesale lowering of standards. On the contrary, the New Brunswick Presbytery continued to emphasize a candidate's competency in the languages, arts, and sciences. In fact, in 1749 it took the virtually unprecedented step of declaring a candidate's

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[31]Aug. 25, Sept. 7, 1738, ibid., I, 1-3; Oct. 12, 1739, ibid., I, 12-13.

[32]June 3, Aug. 4, 1740, ibid., I, 18, 20.

[33]See the candidacies of William Kirkpatrick and Alexander McWhorter, June 14, Aug. 15, 1758, ibid., II, 31, 34; July 4, 1759, ibid., I, 40; James Hunt and James Caldwell, Mar. 12, July 29, Sept. 17, 1760, ibid., II, 52, 62, 65; and Enoch Green, Apr. 29, Dec. 29, 1761, ibid., 80; Oct. 1, 1762, ibid., II, 108.

[34]Oct. 21, 1761, ibid., II, 94.

performance inadequate for admission to candidacy. For all their stress on learning, the Old Sides had never refused to admit a young man to candidacy because of poor performance on his examinations.[35]

The New Sides were able to shorten the length of candidacy simply because they were more vigorous than the Old Sides. From its inception in 1745 the New Side synod actively supported an expansive and aggressive missionary program that was a marked contrast to the limited and defensive efforts of the Old Sides in Philadelphia. One of the first actions of the new synod was to respond enthusiastically to the "wide door that is opened for the preaching of the gospel in . . . [Virginia], with a hopeful prospect of success." And two years later the Synod of New York appointed a missionary to spend an extended time in Virginia. Much of the synod's time after 1748 was consumed in attending to those missionary activities.[36] The presbyteries were also engaged in supporting those endeavors and in ministering to the many new congregations established during and after the Great Awakening. The press of this business forced the New Brunswick Presbytery to gradually increase the number of its meetings. While the Old Side Presbytery of Philadelphia met only once in 1744 and 1745 and transacted almost no business, the New Brunswick Presbytery began to meet at least quarterly and even more

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[35]Dec. 7, 1749, ibid., II, 129; May 18, 1750, ibid., II, 138; May 24, 1751, ibid., II, 172.

[36]Sept. 19, 1745, Presbyterian Records, p. 234; May 19, 1748, ibid., p. 237; May 16, 1750, ibid., p. 241; Sept. 27, 1754, ibid., p. 262.

frequently in order to expedite its many activities. The presbytery's abbreviated candidacies were an unplanned by-product of these frequent meetings, which gave the presbytery more opportunities to examine the candidates.

The main reason the New Sides were able to abbreviate candidacy while maintaining standards was because they immediately established a vigorous school charged with the responsibility for facilitating ministerial education. Princeton was established in 1746 by the men of the Synod of New York, who were joined in their endeavor by the supporters of the Log College after the death of William Tennent in that year. The school was founded principally by Aaron Burr and Jonathan Dickinson, two sons of Yale who were most displeased with their alma mater's adverse reaction to the Awakening in general and to Yale's dismissal of Brainerd in particular. The college was intended primarily to prepare New Side ministers for the proliferating churches growing out of the revival. "The great & chief design of erecting the College," declared Dickinson shortly before the first charter was granted, "is for the Education of pious & well qualified Candidates for the Ministry, that vital Peity [sic] may by that means be promoted in our Churches, and . . . Religion may be transmitted to Posterity."[37]

But the New Sides' school was to be much more than a provincial theological seminary. It was a broadly conceived

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[37]Quoted in Francis L. Broderick, "Pulpit, Physics, and Politics: The Curriculum of the College of New Jersey, 1746-1796," William and Mary Quarterly, VI (Jan., 1949), 56.

intercolonial instrument of social integration and reformation. From its inception the men of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania were determined that their New Jersey school would be an intercolonial and cosmopolitan institution as Harvard, William and Mary, and Yale had never been. When the Synod of New York appealed to the Scottish Presbyterians for aid for its college, it stressed that the churches of six colonies depended upon Princeton for their ministers. When the college's trustees appealed to the English dissenters for assistance, they reminded them that the college served not only the middle colonies but all of British America.[38] Moreover, the trustees sought to increase the college's intercolonial nature and emphasized this quality effectively when approaching eminent men about the presidency. In 1768 the Board wooed the renowned Scottish parson, John Witherspoon, to the New World by emphasizing the importance of the college to "Religion & Learning in general thro' out all the Colonies" and especially the "seven extensive Provinces" that depended immediately upon it for civil and sacred leadership.[39] When Witherspoon arrived in America, he found that the trustees had not exaggerated Princeton's intercolonial student body.

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[38]Synod of New York to the Presbyterian General Assembly of Scotland, Oct. 3, 1753, Presbyterian Records, p. 257; A General Account of the Rise and State of the College, Lately Established in the Province of New-Jersey, in America: And of the End and Design of its Institution (New York, 1752), p. 4.

[39]William Peartree Smith to John Witherspoon, Nov. 19, 1766, in Lyman H. Butterfield, ed., John Witherspoon Comes to America: A Documentary Account Based Largely on New Materials (Princeton, 1953), p. 8; John Rodgers to Witherspoon, Dec. 24, 1766, in ibid., pp. 21-22.

In his classes he found young men not only from all the colonies but from Canada and the West Indies as well.[40]

Its founders intended that the school should attract a cosmopolitan student body so that it might also foster a more integrated colonial society. Like the Old Sides the New Sides noted the influx of immigrants into the colonies. In 1752 the Board of the college advanced as one of its reasons for founding the school the hope that "national Prejudices may be removed, and . . . [the Germans] more easily incorporated with the rest of His Majesty's Subjects."[41] In the same vein the New Brunswick Presbytery in the preceding year had expressed its concern for "the Broken State of the German Churches in these Parts . . . ."[42] The New Sides' concern, unlike the Old Sides', did not stem from a fear of the strange. Rather, they were afraid that national animosities would impede the progress of evangelical religion and social reformation in America. The New Sides filled German and Dutch pulpits on occasion and attempted to work with both groups to establish a joint professorship of divinity at Princeton. But they did not engage in defensive attempts at cultural assimilation as did the Old Sides and the Anglicans among

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[40]For a particularly intriguing view of a New Englander's introduction to Princeton see Samuel Livermore, Account book in manuscript, with diary of trip from Chelsea, Massachusetts, to the College of New Jersey at Newark, 1751-1752, P.U.L.

[41]To the Worthy and Generous Friends of Religion and Learning. The Petition of Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Davies, in the Name of the Trustees of the Infant College of New Jersey . . . (London, 1754), p. 2 (Typescript in P.U.L.).

[42]Nov. 6, 1751, Pby. of N. Bruns. Min., I, 185.

Philadelphia's increasingly resentful and distrustful German population. Instead, the New Sides concentrated on making their new college a broadly defined institution for preparing not only godly ministers but also social leaders of all ethnic backgrounds. The frequency with which German and Dutch names appeared on the school's early rosters documents their success.

The breadth of the school's cultural functions resulted partly from the circumstances surrounding its chartering. Princeton was established under a charter granted to a group of Presbyterians by an Anglican monarch. Consequently, no mention was made in the charter of preparing a godly ministry in the school. Since the founding of Harvard College in 1636 American colleges had been established for the purpose of providing both lay and clerical leaders.[43] And in the colonial period the training of lay leaders gradually superseded ministerial education as the principal cultural function of a college. The establishment of Princeton was an important milestone in this process. For if a great many of its early graduates entered the ministry, the majority of them did not. Only 108 of the 221 graduates from 1748 to 1766 entered the ministry.[44] After granting that an important function of early Princeton was ministerial education, its eighteenth century historian, Rev. Samuel Blair, Jr., noted that the

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[43]Samuel Eliot Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard, 1636-1936 (Cambridge, Mass., 1946), Chapter I.

[44]"Aaron Burr," The Presbyterian Magazine, III (Jan., 1853), 35; "Samuel Finley," ibid., III (Mar., 1853), 145.

school was intended to fill broader cultural functions.

> Affairs of state also became embarrassed for want of proper direction, and a competent number of men of letters, to fill the various political offices. The bench, the bar, the seats of legislation, required such accomplishments, as are seldom the spontaneous growth of Nature, unimproved by education.[45]

In announcing his confidence in education's capacity for improving the natural state of society, Blair was emphasizing the Presbyterians' principal reason for depending upon the school to integrate and reform American society. Americans had previously stressed their confidence in the power of education to form and reform society. Indeed this confidence had been an important impetus behind the founding of at least Harvard and Yale. However, the power of education to affect social development became crucial at that moment in colonial history when many Americans became convinced that their society was beginning to settle into patterns that were at the same time dictated by royal preferment and challenged by the expansive forced at work in post-Awakening America. Any institution that was believed to affect fundamentally the way in which society settled into those patterns was bound to become a source of contention.

The Presbyterians' belief in education's social powers was most thoroughly documented in the controversy over the chartering of King's College in New York City in the early 1750's. When that city's Anglican minority attempted to

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[45]College of New Jersey /Samuel Blair, Jr.7, An Account of the College of New-Jersey. In which are described the methods of government, modes of instruction, manner and expenses of living . . . (Woodbridge, N. J., 1764), pp. 5,6.

monopolize control of the proposed school, three Presbyterian laymen closely allied with the New Sides launched a campaign for a completely non-sectarian college. The arguments of William Livingston, William Smith, Jr., and John Morin Scott are good examples of the reaction of a group of men who felt that society was beginning to solidify in ways unacceptable to large portions of that society. Crucial to their fears and hopes was the conviction that a college could profoundly alter the direction of social development.

Leading the campaign against the Anglican monopoly in the Independent Reflector and in a series of articles entitled "The Watch-Tower" in the New York Mercury, William Livingston stressed the social significance of education. Knowledge, he argued, was essential to the preservation of liberty. "Knowledge among a People makes them free, enterprizing and dauntless; but Ignorance enslaves, emasculates and depresses them . . . ." Where education has been neglected, "triumphant Ignorance hath open'd its Sluices, and the Country been overflowed with Tyranny . . . ."[46] In his Thoughts on Education, published in 1752, William Smith (no relation to Provost Smith) proclaimed the importance of education to the formation of society:

> For Education the great Fountain is
> From whence Life's Stream, must clear or turbid flow.[47]

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[46]William Livingston, et al., The Independent Reflector . . . , ed. Milton M. Klein (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), L, Nov. 8, 1753, 419.

[47]William Smith, Some Thoughts on Education . . . (New York, 1752), p. 26.

Livingston stressed that in their youth societies are infinitely malleable. He pictured society as an inert but ductile organism that could be manipulated by various groups for their own selfish interests. But, Livingston insisted, society must not be shaped according to the interests of only one part of society. And he noted that a school was among the most powerful instruments with which interest groups could manipulate society because it could shape the character of society's future leaders. The principles learned at the school would "run thro' a Man's whole future Conduct, and affect the Society of which he is a Member, in Proportion to his Sphere of Activity . . . ."[48] Especially was this true in a new, sparsely settled country.

> A College in a new Country, and especially in a Province of such scanty Limits as ours, will necessarily make a vast alteration in our Affairs and Condition, civil and religious. It will, more or less, influence every Individual amongst us, and diffuse its Spirit thro' all Ranks, Parties and Denominations.[49]

So convinced was Livingston that "a Nursery of Learning, may be a Blessing or a Bane to the Society in which it is erected," that he recommended doing without one rather than establishing one that would advance the interests of only one part of society.[50]

Livingston insisted that a flourishing school established

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[48]Livingston, Independent Reflector, XVII, Apr. 26, 1753, 175.

[49]Ibid., L, Nov. 8, 1753, 421.

[50]Ibid., XLVI, Oct. 11, 1753, 395; XVII, Mar. 22, 1753, 172-173.

on a "catholick scheme" would attract students from all colonies and alleviate many of the ills plaguing colonial society.[51] A school "lighted up" by the "inextinguishable Lustre" of the "glorious Flame of PATRIOTISM" would serve one interest only, "the common Good."[52] It would do this by serving the "true Use of Education":

> 'Tis to improve their Hearts and Understanding, to infuse a public Spirit and Love of their Country; to inspire them with the Principles of Honour and Probity; with a fervant zeal for Liberty, and a diffusive Benevolence for Mankind; and in a Word, to make them the more extensively serviceable to the Common-Wealth.[53]

This emphasis on the training of virtuous social leaders paralleled Samuel Blair's assertion that the college in New Jersey aimed at adorning the young men's minds

> with useful knowledge and virtue, whereby the rude and ignorant are civilized and render'd humane persons, who would otherwise be useless members of society, are qualified to sustain with honour, the offices they may be invested with, for the public service, and reverence of the deity . . . .[54]

In calling for virtuous, skillful, and selfless social leaders, Livingston and Blair were essentially echoing the views expressed by the New Sides in the debate over social leadership that attended the Great Schism. All of these Presbyterians were determined to eradicate the selfishness and contentiousness that marred American society. In 1749, for

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[51] Ibid., XVIII, Mar. 29, 1753, 182-183.

[52] Ibid., XXII, Apr. 26, 1753, 213.

[53] Ibid., XVII, Mar. 22, 1753, 172.

[54] "A short account of the rise and state of the College in the province of New Jersey, in America," The New American Magazine, XXVII (Mar., 1760), 103.

instance, Livingston had proposed establishing a college to rid the colony of its reputation for money-grubbing. Instead of amassing fortunes, men would "devote the vigour of their Youth to the Study of the Sciences, and enriching their Minds with the inestimable Treasures of Knowledge." A school would curb the excesses of the dissolute youth who increasingly plagued the city's streets, declared Livingston in terms that indicated his uneasiness about the dissipation overtaking the sons of New York's leading citizens. "Religion will be in the highest Repute; and Learning an incontested Mark of genteel Distinction."[55] Furthermore, a school would usher in an "Age of good Sense and Learning" in which political preferment would result from disinterested virtue and merit, not from connivance and flattery.[56] The resulting revolution in politics would fill public offices with "Lovers of humankind; Men of Virtue who adore Liberty and Truth, and abhor Falshood [sic] and Iniquity; who despise little Acts, and expose bad ones."[57]

When combined with the millenial expectations of their ministerial allies in the Synod of New York, the visions of the New York Triumvirate were a heady concoction indeed. But these were not mere dreamers. For example, the Triumvirate's

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[55] [William Livingston], Some Serious Thoughts on the Design of erecting a College in the Province of New-York . . . (New York, 1749), pp. 2, 5.

[56] Ibid., p. 8; Livingston, Independent Reflector, XLIII, Sept. 20, 1753, 359-365; "Of Popularity," in "The Watch-Tower," No. XV, New York Mercury, Mar. 3, 1755; "Of Addresses," in ibid., No. XVII, New York Mercury, Mar. 17, 1755.

[57] [Livingston], Serious Thoughts, p. 6.

rhetoric was matched by practical efforts to raise the level of the legal profession in the city. These efforts did not reduce entry into the profession, nor were they prompted by ethnic or class interests.[58] Although they failed to prevent the Anglicans from gaining control of King's College, the New Yorkers joined with the New Sides to make Princeton a cosmopolitan instrument of social reformation.

4. "Party-College" or "Catholick Foundation"?

In the organic society that still served as the New Sides' ideal, institutions of higher learning theoretically served the interests of an entire society, not of one segment only. It is true that Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary served established denominations that were considered coterminous with their respective societies, the Congregational church in Massachusetts and Connecticut and the Anglican church in Virginia. In the middle colonies, however, there were no established churches. Consequently, the needs and interests of one denomination were not defined as synonymous with those of society. And Princeton was not conceived primarily as an instrument of denominational competition; its Presbyterian founders endeavored to demonstrate that Princeton served not only their denomination but all of society.

When the New Sides endeavored to establish a cosmopolitan

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[58]For a discussion of the professions see Livingston, Independent Reflector, XII, Feb. 15, 1753, 135-143; XXVIII, June 7, 1753, 250-257; XXXV, July 26, 1753, 299-306; and Milton M. Klein, "The Rise of the New York Bar: The Legal Career of William Livingston," William and Mary Quarterly, XV (1958), 334-358.

non-sectarian school, they were participating in the reaction against established religions that had been generated by the Great Awakening. Particularly did the Presbyterians react against the Anglican church. But that church was not established in all of the colonies, and the Presbyterians' attitudes toward it varied greatly. Those attitudes are crucial to their ideas about sectarian education.

Only in Virginia did the Presbyterians face a legally established Anglican church. When the first Presbyterians began to move into the Virginia back country in the late 1730's, the Synod of Philadelphia requested Governor William Gooch's assurance of toleration for them. The governor, happy to have settlers to protect the west from Indian attack, assured them they would have no trouble as long as they conformed to the Act of Toleration.[59] For twenty years the Presbyterians enjoyed a somewhat privileged position on the frontier, and Old and New Sides alike reciprocated by assuring each new Virginia governor that they would "chearfully submit to the usual Tests of Loyalty & orthodoxy imposed by Authority upon Protestant Dissenters . . . ." The new Presbytery of Hanover, established by Samuel Davies, assured Gov. Loudoun in 1756 that they appreciated the benefits derived from an established religion. Established churches provided uniformity, unity, and stability, and, as long as they were tolerant, were the best support of ordered society. The Presbyterians, after all, were part of the "established Church of

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[59]May 29, 1738, Presbyterian Records, p. 142; May 28, 1739, ibid., p. 147.

Scotland . . . ."[60]

So satisfied were these sophisticated Presbyterians with the toleration granted them by a benevolent Anglicanism that when the other colonies, particularly those to the north, began to express concern over the threat of an Anglican bishopric, the Virginians expressed outraged surprise at the opposition. Assuring the Bishop of London (incorrectly) that he spoke for the Synod of New York, Davies castigated the New England Congregationalists' petty opposition to the proposed bishopric. He found their opposition "hardly consistent with a spirit of toleration" and so unreasonable as to be incomprehensible. When the leader of England's dissenters, Dr. Benjamin Avery, criticized Davies' views, the latter took refuge in the "simplicity" of his heart. He had intended only to favor a bishopric for Virginia, where the Anglican church was established, because there the bishop might serve to raise the level of the dissolute Anglican clergy.[61] In the fifties and sixties Davies led the struggle of the Virginia Presbyterians for religious toleration. But they sought only toleration as loyal dissenters. Not once did they attack the establishment of the Anglican church. Nor did they support the Baptists of the colony when that denomination was

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[60]July 7, 1756, Minutes of the Hanover Presbytery, I, 11; July 12, 1758, ibid., I, 3-5; Sept. 27, 1758, ibid., I, 11 (MSS in U.T.S.). Hereafter cited as Han. Pby. Min.

[61]Davies to the Bishop of London, Jan. 10, 1752, in The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review, XII (Apr., 1840), 195; Davies to Benjamin Avery, n.d., in John Maclean, The History of the College of New Jersey . . . (Philadelphia, 1877), I, 222-226.

harrassed for demanding complete religious freedom.[62]

Quite different was the reaction of New York Presbyterians to aggressive Anglicanism in that colony. While Davies assured the Bishop of London of the Virginia Presbyterians' satisfaction with toleration from an Anglican establishment, the Presbyterian triumvirate demanded complete separation of church and state and described the Anglican church as but one of many groups competing in a pluralistic religious community. The Anglicans of New York City demanded control of that city's college because, according to their spokesmen, their church was established and because the Anglicans represented a substantial portion of the colony, including the best and wealthiest men in New York.[63] The Anglican church was not a mere faction but, like all established churches, encompassed and served the interests of the entire society. Since the Anglican church was the established church, reasoned "John Englishman," the dissenters of New York would be protected by

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[62]For Davies' leadership in the struggle for toleration see especially Pilcher, Davies Abroad, Jan. 19, 1754, Feb. 27, 1754, pp. 78-79; Davies to /Samuel?/ Stennett, Apr. 25, 1755, Collection of Autographs of Princeton Presidents in the Scheide Collection, P.U.L.; Davies to College of New Jersey Board of Trustees, Oct. 18, 1758, Samuel Davies MSS, P.U.L.; Oct. 6, 1753, Presbyterian Records, p. 258n. The best secondary account is George W. Pilcher, "Samuel Davies and Religious Toleration in Virginia," The Historian, XXVIII (1965), 48-71. For two unfavorable treatments of the Virginia Presbyterians' laggard conversion to favoring complete religious freedom see Charles F. James, Documentary History of the Struggle of Religious Liberty in Virginia (Lynchburg, Va., 1900); and R. Freeman Butts, The American Tradition in Religion and Education (Boston, 1950), pp. 41-42. The best discussion of the colonial reaction to the threat of an Anglican bishopric remains Part Two of Carl Bridenbaugh's Mitre and Sceptre.

[63]"The Watch-Tower," No. IV, New York Mercury, Dec. 16, 1754; New York Mercury, Jan. 27, 1755.

the Act of Toleration, just as English dissenters were. The Anglican establishment was universally known as a benevolent one, he insisted; and if a dissenter really wanted to become the president of the college, he could always become an Anglican.[64]

William Livingston meticulously dismantled the Anglican defense of established religion and sectarian control of education. He first insisted that the Anglican church was not established in New York and devoted pages of the "Watch-Tower" to disproving the historical claims of the Anglicans.[65] He sarcastically dismissed the claims for Anglican leniency and traced in lurid detail that church's history of persecution.[66] And he continually pointed out that the Anglicans constituted only a tiny minority of the colony's population.[67] But the greater part of the Independent Reflector and "The Watch-Tower" was devoted to elaborating a radical vision of a cosmopolitan society in which education was controlled by the state and dedicated to the advancement of the entire society. In such a society no one sect would control education because that group would invariably use as an "Engine . . . for the Purpose of a Party" that which had been "constituted

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[64]New York Mercury, Jan. 27, 1755; Mar. 3, 1755.

[65]"The Watch-Tower," Nos. V, XII, XX, XXIV, New York Mercury, Dec. 23, 1754; Feb. 10, 1755; Apr. 7, 1755; May 5, 1755.

[66]"The Watch-Tower," Nos. V, XIX, XVIII, XXIX, New York Mercury, Dec. 23, 1754; Mar. 31, 1755; June 2, 1755; June 9, 1755.

[67]"The Watch-Tower," Nos. II, IV, V, New York Mercury, Dec. 2, 16, 23, 1754.

for general Use, for the public Benefit . . . ." This would lead to the establishment of the favored sect, which might--or might not--"graciously" favor with "a bare Liberty of Conscience" those who "faithfully continue their annual Contributions, their Tythes and their Peter-Pence."[68] Interestingly enough, Livingston described perfectly the relationship of the Virginia Presbyterians to that colony's Anglican establishment.

Livingston opposed sectarian education because it made impossible that social unity and stability that he saw as essential to social reformation. If one sect controlled the college, all other sects would strive against it, bringing on a "general Discontent and Tumult." The wealthy members of other sects would send their children to neighboring colonies to imbibe sectarian education; those who could not afford this would simply not educate their children.[69] Either way, society was the ultimate loser. Livingston insisted that the only way for a heterogeneous population like that of New York to remain stable was for it to make its heterogeneity an asset rather than a curse. In homogeneous provinces, like those of New England, education might be controlled by one sect to the "universal Satisfaction of the People." But in a colony that abounded with different denominations, that was impossible. If the Anglicans were granted control of the school, a

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[68]Livingston, Independent Reflector, XVIII, Mar. 29 1753, 181; "The Watch-Tower," Nos. II, VII, New York Mercury, Dec. 2, 1754; Jan. 6, 1755.

[69]Livingston, Independent Reflector, XVIII, Mar. 29, 1753, 179-180.

minority would be able to tyrannize the majority. But if each sect had its share in the college's government, "the Jealousy of all Parties combating each other, would inevitably produce a perfect Freedom for each particular Party." Thus did Livingston deal with the perplexing problem of New York's heterogeneous population. By making it impossible for one group to tyrannize over other groups, diversity led directly to liberty.[70]

Because the college must serve all parts of New York's population, Livingston insisted that it be chartered and controlled by the people's representatives in the colonial legislature. In extended dissertations he outlined the changes that would result from a royal charter that could be withdrawn at the crown's discretion or that would lead inevitably to Anglican domination.[71] Furthermore, Livingston insisted that the Anglican church was an agency of the crown only and did not speak for or serve the interests of the entire society. Rather than being controlled by one sect the college must be controlled by those who represent the entire society. This was necessary partly because the college would immediately affect the entire province. Its sole purpose was to

> capacitate the Inhabitants of this Province, for advancing their private and public Happiness; of which the Legislature are the lawful Guardians: To them, therefore, does the Care of our future Seminary of Learning properly and only belong.

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[70]"The Watch-Tower," Nos. II, IV, New York Mercury, Dec. 2, 16, 1754; Livingston, Independent Reflector, XX, Apr. 12, 1753, 195.

[71]See especially Livingston, Independent Reflector, XIX, Apr. 1, 1753, 184, 90.

Livingston further insisted that the people's legislators control the school because the ends of the college were defined in quite broad terms. The school would affect nothing less than "the Rise of Arts, the Improvement of Husbandry, the Increase of Trade, the Advancement of Knowledge in Law, Physic, Morality, Policy, and the Rules of Justice and civil Government" in the colony. Of such broad goals only the legislature could be the proper instigator and guardian.[72]

Livingston's insistence upon legislative charter and control was based fundamentally on the right and responsibility of civil authority to direct the education of society's youth. The founders of Harvard, William and Mary, and Yale had insisted that their colleges served broad cultural functions, but the governments of Massachusetts, Virginia, and Connecticut had never felt responsible for providing non-sectarian education aimed primarily at producing virtuous citizens rather than orthodox Congregationalists or Anglicans. "Societies have an indisputable Right to direct the Education of their Youthful Members," Livingston insisted. With that right went the responsibility for teaching the individual that he "was not designed solely for his own Happiness, but also to promote the Felicity of his Fellow-Creatures." This was so evident as to be a "Bond of Nature." To that bond the institution of civil government had added an additional obligation on the individual. Every person born into a civil society became the subject of that community and had to be

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[72] Ibid., XVIII, Mar. 29, 1753, 182; XX, Apr. 12, 1753, 194, 192.

taught to inhibit "those Actions which, tho' tending to his own Advantage, are injurious to the public Weal." Consequently, the rightful guardians of that public good must have control of society's instruments of education.[73] The founding of a college was an "entirely civil affair" and must be superintended by the people's representatives. Out of the conflict between the various interests represented in the legislature would emerge a public good that would be viable because it represented the concessions and compromises of all parts of the population. The product of conflict, this public good was the only means Livingston could see of holding together New York's heterogeneous and combative population. To this end a non-sectarian college was an absolutely essential means.[74]

The men who established Princeton stood somewhere between the Virginia and New York Presbyterians on the issue of separation of church and state. The school's charters were granted by an Anglican king who endowed the dissenter-controlled Board with remarkably broad powers. This fact doubtless resulted from Presbyterian strength in New Jersey and perhaps even reflected a royal effort to favor the Presbyterians, who were receiving fairly rough treatment at the

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[73] Ibid., XX, Apr. 12, 1753, 191; "The Watch-Tower," No. XVI, New York Mercury, Mar. 10, 1755.

[74] "The Watch-Tower," No. XXVIII, New York Mercury, June 2, 1755; Livingston, Independent Reflector, XVIII, Mar. 29, 1753, 182; XX, Apr. 12, 1753, 195-196. For the royal charter that finally granted the Anglican monopoly in 1755 see Elsie W. Clews, Educational Legislation and Administration of the Colonial Governments (New York, 1899), pp. 257-269.

hands of New York City's Anglicans. The Board was surely fortunate to have in Governor Belcher an urbane friend who spared no effort to assist the school. The trustees could hardly complain about a governor who assured them that "you will be sure of all my Protection," and who secured for them their generous charter.[75] Belcher declared that it was his intention "to promote the Kingdom of the great Redeemer, by taking . . . [Princeton] under my Countenance & Protection as a Seminary of true Religion & good Literature."[76]

There is every reason to believe that the men who established Princeton shared their Virginia brethren's appreciation of the benefits accruing from a benign and tolerant established religion. The men of New Jersey and Pennsylvania paid allegiance to a church that was firmly established in Scotland. Furthermore, men like Burr did not join Livingston in his campaign against the Anglican monopoly of King's College. Nor did the Synod of New York or the Presbytery of New Brunswick, which both sponsored the Virginia missionaries, ever suggest to those men that they join the Baptists in demanding an end to the Anglican establishment in Virginia. Finally, even the fiery Gilbert Tennent in 1759 intimated that those who complained of established religions probably were actuated by an unattractive persecuting zeal. He found toleration very "agreeable to rational churches, who through mercy grow more

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[75]Jonathan Belcher to Ebenezer Pemberton, Jan. 24, 1748, in Maclean, College of New Jersey, I, 83.

[76]Oct. 13, 1748, Minutes of the Boards of Trustees of Princeton University, I, 12 (MSS in P.U.L.). Hereafter cited as Pr. Bd. Min.

and more moderate . . . ." Furthermore, he continued, "divers" among the members of established churches "through [an] increase of light, abhor persecution in every form" and favor a "mildness which is so agreeable to the temper of Christ himself, and the genius of his religion . . . ."[77]

The variation of the Presbyterians' reactions to the problem of church and state and state control of education appears to have been determined by the strength of the Anglicans and by the diversity of a colony's population. In a homogeneous population, like that of Virginia, in which the church was firmly established, the Presbyterians acquiesced in that establishment. In a very heterogeneous population, like that of New York, in which the Anglicans were a small but militant minority, at least some Presbyterian laymen actively opposed the Anglican efforts at domination and outlined a radical theory of separation of church and state. In a mixed population, like that of New Jersey, the Presbyterians enjoyed considerable power and in effect operated as an unofficially established church in maintaining Princeton. But even in Princeton the Presbyterians, operating partly from necessity and partly from inclination, sought to erect a school in which sectarian differences were minimized and state control avoided. Both were considered essential if the school was to attract an intercolonial, interdenominational student body.

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[77]Gilbert Tennent, The Blessedness of Peace-Makers represented and the Danger of Persecution considered . . . (Philadelphia, 1765, 1765), p. 46.

The charters granted to Princeton in 1746 and 1748 were the first given to a college in a colony in which there was no established church. For this reason, and because the charters were granted by an Anglican king, all denominations were guaranteed religious freedom in the school. The trustees were to see that "no person . . . [was] debarred of the privileges of the said college on account of any speculative principles of religion . . . ." The school, in short, was founded on the "most catholic foundation."[78]

The college's claim to a broad base was not merely rhetorical. Of the twenty-three trustees named by the first charter, thirteen were from New Jersey, six from Pennsylvania, and four from New York. Although half were Presbyterian ministers, the Board included one Welsh and one Dutch Calvinist, two Anglicans, and two Quakers.[79] Governor Belcher furthered the Board's broad character by raising the number of laymen from the three named in the first charter to the eleven named by the charter he secured for the school in 1748.[80] The only requirement the charter placed on the Board's membership was that twelve of its members be residents of New Jersey. No percentage of the membership was required to be Presbyterian

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[78]Philadelphia Pennsylvania Gazette, Aug. 13, 1747. New American Magazine, (Mar., 1760), p. 103. See also [Blair], College of New-Jersey, pp. 8-9; and To the Worthy and Generous Friends of Learning, p. 1.

[79]Pa. Gaz., Aug. 13, 1747; New York Gazette, Aug. 20, 1747. See also Clews, Legislation and Administration, p. 321; Varnum L. Collins, Princeton (New York, 1914), pp. 15, 26-27.

[80]Collins, Princeton, p. 29.

clergymen; the President was not legally required to be a Presbyterian; nor did the school's worship services have to conform to Presbyterian forms.[81] Finally, although the school was established by Presbyterian ministers for the principal purpose of educating ministers, the school was not mentioned in the records of the Synod of New York until 1751.[82]

The Old Sides' school at New London, on the other hand, was a thoroughly ecclesiastical institution completely controlled by the Philadelphia Synod. During the Great Schi m that synod had argued that it was neither unscriptural for the church to have the means of education under its direction nor unreasonable for the synod to inspect its school's progress.[83] Consequently, when the synod established its school in 1744, the trustees were instructed

> to inspect into the master's diligence in, and method of, teaching; consider and direct what authors are chiefly to be read in the several branches of learning . . . and in sum, to order all affairs relating to said school as they see expedient, and be accountable to the Synod, making report of their proceedings and the state of the school yearly.[84]

The synod annually named a committee to inspect the school in accordance with this directive and appointed the faculty of

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[81]"The Watch-Tower," No. II, New York Mercury, Dec. 2, 1754; ibid., No. IV, New York Mercury, Dec. 16, 1754.

[82]Presbyterian Records, pp. 244-245.

[83]Synod of Philadelphia, An Examination and Refutation of Mr. Gilbert Tennent's Remarks . . . (Philadelphia, 1742), pp. 53, 70.

[84]May 25, 1744, Presbyterian Records, p. 176.

the school as vacancies arose.[85] The men who championed indivisible and absolute social authority deemed it necessary to control tightly the institution charged with the education of those who were to wield that power.

No such intimate relationship existed between the New Side synod and Princeton. The school's Board was self-perpetuating and acted independently of the synod. The college's president was chosen by the Board and answered to no one for his teaching methods or his ideas. Their reluctance to dictate to the president stemmed from the New Sides' commitment to limiting unrestrained synodical authority and to exerting a cosmopolitan college that would minister to all of colonial society. It would be misleading, of course, to suggest that the Presbyterian influence at Princeton was not overwhelming. Of the twenty-three trustees named in the charter of 1748, all but four were either Presbyterian laymen or ministers. After the completion of Nassau Hall at Princeton in the mid-1750's the Presbytery of New Brunswick frequently met in the imposing structure and attended the college's annual commencement. And the presbytery supplied the pulpits of ministers who traveled to raise money for the school.[86] Most important of all, the synod selected the recipients of several funds established in the school in the 1750's. This required the synod to examine the nominees,

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[85]May 27, 1748, ibid., p. 194; May 29, 1752, ibid., p. 208; May 24, 1753, ibid., p. 210.

[86]Oct. 25, 1757, Pby. of N. Bruns. Min., II, 22; Mar. 11, 1760, ibid., II, 49; May 27, 1758, Presbyterian Records, p. 283.

but that was as close as the ministers came to examining either the students or the faculty.[87] Thus, despite the overwhelming Presbyterian influence at the college, Princeton's founders were quite justified in boasting of its catholic foundation.

5. Cosmopolitan Finances

Perhaps colonial Princeton's cosmopolitan nature can be demonstrated in no better way than through its finances. At no time were the presbyteries or their churches the college's principal source of income. No recommendation for aid was made by the synod until 1751 and only then did the Board of the college appeal to that body for direct support.[88] The synodical gifts were used only for the support of "poor and pious" students and did not assist the school in meeting its operational expenses. The money was collected in the churches annually and given to the presbyteries, which conveyed the funds to the college. In its initial form, the operation was quite decentralized, with the synod only instigating the collections. The synod and its presbyteries also frequently neglected to carry through on their proposals to raise money for the college. Poor attendance at synodical and presbyterial meetings frequently led to the postponement of collections, and at least the Hanover Presbytery found the synod's call for a collection "quite impracticable . . . considering

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[87]For a representative action see Oct. 3, 1755, Presbyterian Records, p. 266.

[88]Sept. 27, 1751, ibid., p. 246.

the present impoverish'd State of the Colony, in general, & our Congregations in particular . . . ."[89]

Denominational support for Princeton was lessened further because the school had to compete with several other synodical endeavors for the denomination's financial resources. In the 1750's the synod established funds for the relief of widows and orphans of ministers, for indigent ministers, and for mission work with the Indians. The Board of the college had to compete with each of these worthy causes and their sponsors for the synod's funds; sometimes it did not prove to be the best competitor. In 1761, for instance, the synod noted regretfully that the demands of "several useful designs" forced deferring "to a more convenient season" the Board's request for assistance in establishing a divinity professorship.[90]

The synod began to centralize and institutionalize its aid to Princeton in the mid 1750's. In 1755 the presbyteries were instructed to send their collections to the next synod meeting, from which the funds would be sent to the college. In the following year the synod appointed a committee to obtain from President Burr a receipt for the money deposited by the synod with the school. After 1765 the efforts of the synod and presbyteries were focused on providing funds for the education of ministerial students and for the endowment

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[89]Dec. 3, 1755, Han. Pby. Min., I, 2. See also Apr. 18, 1769, N. Bruns. Pby. Min., II, 310-311; Oct. 3, 1753, Presbyterian Records, p. 251; Sept. 26, 1754, ibid., p. 259.

[90]May 22, 1761, Presbyterian Records, p. 309.

of a divinity professorship. The latter received much less of the denomination's funds and attention than the former in the colonial period. The synod agreed to foster special collections for the professorship but would not commit itself to a guaranteed annual contribution.[91]

Not only did the Presbyterians' support not make Princeton a sectarian college, but its intercolonial and interdenominational nature was actually strengthened by the far flung trips made in the college's behalf by many Presbyterian ministers and laymen. These men, dispatched by the Board and by the presbyteries and synod, were frequently gone for six months or more. In 1769 the Board sent the Rev. James Caldwell first to Long Island and then to Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. In the south he collected the equivalent of £1,000 for the school, and since much of it was in produce, the synod was obliged to dispatch a small vessel to Charleston to bring it north. At the same time the Hanover Presbytery sent men out by twos to raise money in Virginia and North Carolina.[92]

The arrival of John Witherspoon in America in 1768 further intensified the intercolonial nature of the Presbyterians' efforts to raise funds for Princeton. His arrival and inauguration as the college's sixth president made, in his view, "a great deal more than enough of noise" throughout

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[91]Oct. 2, 1755, ibid., p. 264; May 27, 1768, ibid., p. 303; Sept. 29, 1760, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 154.

[92]For representative actions see Aug. 5, 1769, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 161; and Oct. 12, 1769, Han. Pby. Min., II, 2-3.

the colonies, and Witherspoon proposed that the Board take advantage of the publicity and "set on foot a general subscription through the whole Presbyterian denomination . . . ." The Board requested the synod's aid, and the central body authorized the publication of 500 copies of a statement of the school's condition. At the same time the synod assigned twenty-five ministers to travel through the middle colonies and Virginia to inaugurate subscription drives that could be carried on by local ministers. But Witherspoon himself proved the school's most effective fund raiser. Between 1770 and 1774 he traversed virtually the entire Atlantic seaboard, broadening his own outlook, acquainting thousands with the school at Princeton, and raising more than £7,000.[93]

Like the support of the Presbyterians, the private philanthropy given to Princeton reflected and intensified the school's intercolonial and interdenominational nature. Some of the men who left money to the school did attempt to influence the direction of the school's development. Men from Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia left the school money with which to train poor and pious youths for the ministry and consequently to strengthen the school's sectarian identity. But other men left legacies in varying amounts that were not

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[93]John Witherspoon to Benjamin Rush, Oct. 8, 1768, in Butterfield, ed., Witherspoon Comes to America, p. 80. Dec. 10, 1767, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 143-144; Apr. 6, 1769, ibid., I, 164; Oct., 1768, Pby. of N. Bruns. Min., II, 295; May 23, 25, 1769, Presbyterian Records, pp. 396, 398. For an example of the promotional literature written in behalf of the college, see John Witherspoon, Address to the Inhabitants of Jamaica . . . (Philadelphia, 1772).

intended to do either. The largest single gift of the colonial period was the £535 given by William Phillips and his brothers of Boston, and the money was to be kept separate and used for unspecified causes. It was not to be used to educate Presbyterian ministers.[94] As in so many other respects, in the matter of philanthropy Jonathan Belcher served as the Presbyterians' model. Just before the school moved to Princeton the Congregationalist governor from Massachusetts gave to the Presbyterian school his library of 474 volumes, his coat of arms, his portrait, and ten portraits of British royalty. In expressing their appreciation the Board members applauded the "disinterested Motives, which activate every part of your Excellency's Conduct . . . ." Responding in phrases that did credit to the ideal of selfless and virtuous citizenry that he had come to symbolize, the governor modestly assured the Board that his benefactions were intended only to encourage learning and piety in the province and to polish the manners of its citizens.[95]

While he was governor, Belcher did all in his power to obtain governmental aid for Princeton, but he was singularly unsuccessful. In the end his failure redounded to the benefit

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[94]Sept. 25, 1766, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 112; Sept. 27, 1749, ibid., I, 18; Apr. 5, 1769, ibid., I, 160.

[95]Sept. 24, 1755, ibid., I, 41-42; Sept. 29, 1756, ibid., I, 44-45; /Blair/, College of New Jersey, p. 16. For general discussions of colonial philanthropy see especially Robert H. Bremner, American Philanthropy (Chicago, 1960), Chapters I and II; Merle Curti and Roderick Nash, Philanthropy in the Shaping of American Higher Education (New Brunswick, N. J., 1965), 4-61.

of the school because it gave validity to the school's claim of independence from the state as well as the church. In 1747, though, he had urged Jonathan Dickinson to join him in laying "something before the Assembly for the service of the embryo College, as a Lottery, or any thing else."[96] From 1748 to 1762 the trustees petitioned the colonial legislature, framing their requests in the broadest of terms. They reminded the legislators of the other colonies' educational efforts and of other schools' ability to draw from New Jersey both students and money. The proposed lottery, they insisted, would bring money into the province because tickets would be sold outside of New Jersey also. Finally, stressing that the lottery was to be a "public" one, not a "private" one, the Board assured the assembly that the college was founded upon the most catholic of foundations and welcomed all Christians.[97]

When the New Jersey legislature refused this 1753 petition, President Burr turned in disgust to the Connecticut assembly, in which his uncle, Andrew Burr, was a powerful member of the upper house. When that colony agreed to allow a lottery, Burr praised the legislature as "inspired with a noble greatness of Spirit, which looks down with Disdain upon those petty Jealousies which are too apt to actuate publick Bodies . . . ."[98] The Board also held lotteries in

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[96]Belcher to Dickinson, Oct. 8, 1747, in Maclean, College of New Jersey, p. 82.

[97]May 23, 1753, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 35-36.

[98]Aaron Burr to the Governor, Deputy Governor, Assistants, and Deputies of Connecticut, May 8, 1754, Burr

Philadelphia, New Castle, and on an island in the middle of the Delaware River! Finally even New Jersey allowed a lottery in 1762.[99] The lotteries produced very little revenue and were often the source of endless litigation. Especially in the case of Connecticut, however, they did enlarge the college's bases of support. That lottery resulted from the personal friendships of President Burr. Such intercolonial relationships on the part of many of the college's founders were an important factor in broadening the school's constituency. In the words of his eulogist, Rev. Caleb Smith, Burr had many friends throughout the colonies, and he used them "particularly very much to the advantage of the College."[100]

The college had international as well as intercolonial friends. For Princeton was conceived as part of a trans-Atlantic community that constantly impinged upon the school and its founders with uniformly broadening results. Men like Burr not only had extensive intercolonial relationships but also counted as friends and correspondents citizens of London, Glasgow, Dublin, and Edinburgh.[101] These connections

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Collection, P.U.L. (Photostatic copy of original in the Connecticut Archives); Princeton Bd. Min., May 8, 1754, I, 37. See also William Hamersley, The Beginning of Princeton as Illustrated by its Benefactions (Privately printed, n.d.). For a reproduction of one of the Connecticut lottery tickets see James W. Alexander, Princeton--Old and New: Recollections of Undergraduate Life (New York, 1898), p. 71.

[99]Feb. 17, 1758, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 69; Sept. 30, 1762, ibid., I, 99.

[100]Caleb Smith, Diligence in the Work of God, and Activity During Life . . . (New York, 1758), p. 32.

[101]For a general discussion of this community see Michael Kraus, The Atlantic Civilization: Eighteenth Century Origins (Ithaca, 1966).

influenced the school's development as soon as it was established. In 1747 Belcher assured friends in Boston that he had written "to several of my rich friends in England of this noble design, and I doubt not of obtaining some donations from them . . . ." Two years later Burr wrote to an English friend desiring that he assist Jeremiah Allen, who had agreed to solicit for the school while in London on business.[102]

In 1753 Davies and Gilbert Tennent embarked upon the most ambitious of the trans-Atlantic efforts to raise money for Princeton. The two ministers sailed for London armed with a multitude of personal recommendations and introductions, a petition to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland assuring that body of the school's dedication to the "public good," and the personal endorsement of a group of New England pastors.[103] The trip was enormously successful. The Scottish Assembly promised its aid; a Scotsman gave Tennent £300 to support either an Indian or a white man studying to teach the Indians at Princeton, and several Englishmen donated a substantial fund for ministerial education.[104] The two ministers returned to America with

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[102]Belcher to Mr. Walley, Oct. 2, 1747, in Maclean, College of New Jersey, p. 148; Burr to Thomas Foxcroft, Oct. 26, 1749, Thomas Foxcroft Correspondence, P.U.L.;Sept. 7, 1749, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 18.

[103]Oct. 3, 1753, Presbyterian Records, p. 256; To the Worthy and Generous Friends, pp. 2, 4.

[104]Pilcher, ed., Samuel Davies Abroad, May 27, 1754, pp. 95, 96; Sept. 29, 1756, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 53, 54; Oct. 3, 7, 1755, Presbyterian Records, pp. 265-266, 269.

over $3,000 dedicated to a variety of causes. The efforts to facilitate those causes in the following two decades were responsible to a large extent for Princeton's breadth.

The Davies-Tennent trip to Great Britain was the most visible indication in the colonial period of the cosmopolitan nature of the New Sides' school at Princeton. Founded at the height of the Great Schism, Princeton was intended by its founders not to acerbate the divisions created by that conflict but to bring to fruition a new vision of American society emerging from the Great Awakening. That society would be free of class conflict, sectarian strife, and individual contention. And it would provide the lately divided Presbyterians with an organic community, which in the late colonial period remained their social ideal.

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[105]Pilcher, ed., Samuel Davies Abroad, Apr. 7, 1753, p. 85; Aaron Burr to David Cowell, Aug. 5, 1754, in William L. Ledwith, "Six Letters of President Burr," JPHS, I (Sept, 1902), 322; Collins, Princeton, p. 41; Curti and Nash, Philanthropy, p. 32.

CHAPTER IV

COLONIAL EDUCATIONAL PATTERNS

The New Side Presbyterians were determined that Princeton should produce the citizens and leaders of the anticipated Christian commonwealth. That determination was reflected in the educational patterns established in the school during the late colonial period. Whether developing a theory of education, deciding on the school's location and curriculum, or devising a system of discipline, the Presbyterians were motivated fundamentally by their conviction that only selfless and virtuous men could lead the united denomination and community they believed would emerge from the revivals of the 1740's. During the Great Schism the New Sides had outlined a theory of social leadership; the educational patterns established at Princeton between 1750 and 1770 were intended to make that theory a dynamic reality.

1. Education and Virtue

The founders of Princeton believed that the inculcation of virtue had to be the basis of any attempt to develop selfless men. References to "virtue" marked the Presbyterians' description of the school, its curriculum, and its faculty. At the funeral of Aaron Burr in 1757, William Livingston asserted that the late president had never neglected "any opportunity of imbuing the minds of his pupils with the seeds of virtue, at the same time that he enriched them, with the treasures of learning." Likewise the school's promotional

literature assured the public that at Princeton the "utmost care is taken to discountenance vice, and to encourage the practice of virtue . . . ."[1] To the modern reader such assertions seem to be predictable and pro forma, and indeed they sometimes were. A student speaking at the college's 1764 commencement simply assumed that his hearers would agree that virtue was "a Disposition of Mind to whatever is morally good" and that it "consists in the Love of God and Man . . . ."[2] He felt no need to define further an attribute so universally esteemed. But it would be a mistake to assume that the idea of virtue was a static concept at the mid century or to attribute to it only modern connotations.

Colonial educational theorists agreed that, whatever else virtue was, it had its origin in some form of religion. Provost Smith indicated that in the College of Mirania religion and virtue were inculcated simultaneously. In New Haven Thomas Clap asserted that it was impossible to teach the arts and sciences, let alone virtue, without the aid of religion. And even though William Livingston rejected sectarian control of education, he insisted that the virtuous citizens educated in his non-sectarian school would be indoctrinated with an

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[1]William Livingston, A Funeral Elogium on the Reverend Mr. Aaron Burr . . . (New York, 1757), p. 16; "A short account of the rise and state of the College in the province of New-Jersey in America," The New American Magazine, XXVII (Mar., 1760), 104.

[2]The Process of the Public Commencement in Nassau Hall, September, A.D. 1764, Samuel Finley MSS, P.U.L.

innocuous version of orthodox Protestantism.[3]

These theorists agreed that before a young man could become virtuous, he must become sober and reflective. To both these ends, religion was the indispensable means. The Miranians, Provost Smith stated, sought "to contrive and execute a proper scheme for forming a succession of sober, virtuous, industrious citizens, and checking the course of growing luxury."[4] William Livingston would have agreed with the Miranians' goals; indeed, he suggested that such ends would be served by daily (non-sectarian) prayers in the proposed College of New York City. Forcing the students to rise early for chapel, he asserted, would have "a strong Tendency to preserve a due Decorum, Good Manners and Virtue amongst them, without which the College will sink into Profaness /sic/ and Disrepute."[5] Unless religion was the foundation of an educational system, "RA" observed in the New York Mercury, colleges "are likely to do /as much/ Hurt, as Good; if not more so." But, insisted Livingston, a properly established college would immediately strengthen morals, because there the "liberal Sciences are vastly subservient to the course of

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[3]William Smith, "A General Idea of the College of Mirania," The Works of William Smith, D.D. Late Provost of the College and Academy of Philadelphia (Philadelphia, 1803), I, 214; Thomas Clap, The Religious Constitution of Colleges, Especially of Yale-College . . . (New London, Conn., 1754), p. 13; William Livingston, et al., The Independent Reflector . . . , ed. Milton M. Klein (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), XXI, Apr. 19, 1753, 199-206.

[4]Smith, "College of Mirania," Works, I, 175.

[5]Livingston, Independent Reflector, XXI, Apr. 19, 1753, 202.

Religion . . . ."[6]

The Presbyterian founders of Princeton assured the public that in their college religion would always have the premier position. Caleb Smith noted that President Burr "took indefatigable Pains to cultivate the Hearts of his Pupils, as well as their Heads; and equally concerned himself to dismiss them at once good Christians and good Scholars."[7] Again, the Presbyterians appear to be speaking pro forma. A survey of the promotional literature of all colonial colleges reveals a uniform pledge that each school would cultivate the mind, rectify the heart, and produce virtuous citizens. However, at Princeton each of these claims began to take on a new sense of urgency in the years preceding the Revolution. As the New Side Presbyterians attempted to reform colonial society, so did they begin to redefine virtue and the school's relation to that changing concept. Far from being pro forma, the Presbyterians' reiteration of the need for public and private virtue reflects a growing concern for a society desperately in need of reformation.

Before the Great Awakening virtue had been defined largely in rather formal and mechanical terms. Virtue consisted of doing one's duty, obeying one's superiors, and cheerfully functioning in one's alloted place in the social order.

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[6]New York Mercury, Mar. 25, 1755; [William Livingston], Some Serious Thoughts on the Design of erecting a College in the Province of New-York . . . (New York, 1749), p. 3.

[7]Caleb Smith, Diligence in the Work of God, and Activity During Life . . . (New York, 1758), p. 28. See also New American Magazine, XXVII (Mar., 1760), 104.

Such a definition was highly congenial to the Old Sides but was quickly attacked by the New Sides.[8] Samuel Davies attacked a central tenet of the pre-Awakening definition of virtue in a sermon delivered to his students and the townspeople of Princeton in 1760. His sermon, "The Rejection of Gospel-Light the Condemnation of men," was a powerful attack on the widely-held assumption that education inevitably inculcated virtue. Addressing the "inhabitants of the enlightened parts of the earth," he described the happy condition of a country blessed with many schools. The "light of human literature . . . shines with unusual splendors upon our age and nation; and lo! it illuminates this little village, and extends its beams through the land." The college's students had only to bask in the rays of knowledge and "polish . . . [their] minds, as it were and render them luminous." But, he warned, too many boys thirsted only for the "light of knowledge" and rejected the more important "light of the gospel." Though a student had a "turn for speculation" and delighted in every branch of knowledge, yet too often he shunned self-knowledge and refused to acknowledge his sins. Desiring a soft and easy religion that required "no vigorous exertion, and [that was] attended with no dubious conflict," the boy preferred to immerse himself in business, trifling, and study rather than to struggle manfully with the convictions

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[8]See especially Alan Heimert, Religion and the American Mind . . . (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), Chapters I and VI.

of his own heart.[9]

Davies concluded his sermon by warning his students of "the sins of men of learning and knowledge, the most daring and gigantic sins this side [of] hell . . . ." Conjuring up images of the fallen Lucifer and his followers, Davies warned the students not to emulate those celestial beings, who had "vast intellects," but who were evil incarnate. Of what good was an institution that produced "sinners of great parts [and] fine geniuses . . . ?" he asked. What good was knowledge to a man who lost his soul? If such men were produced by Princeton, Davies warned, society would look in vain to the school for able secular and sacred leaders. Rather than the "bright meredian of glory and blessedness," the country would become "the land of darkness and the shadow of death . . . ; the gloomy dungeon of infernal spirits . . . ." Far from inculcating virtue, education untempered by religion could raise to power haughty men whose inevitable downfall would also destroy the society they led.[10]

If the inculcation of virtue could be stifled by an overemphasis on the intellect, the New Sides argued, so could it be subverted by the temptations of wealth. The founders of Princeton quickly observed that the school attracted the sons of wealthy men from New York City and Philadelphia. Presidents Dickinson, Burr, Davies, and Finley, all of middle class

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[9]Samuel Davies, "The Rejection of Gospel-Light the Condemnation of Men," Sermons on Important Subjects . . . , 6th ed. (Philadelphia, 1794), II, 463-465, 472, 466.

[10]Ibid., II, 472, 464.

origins, found themselves charged with educating the sons of the Shippens and Bayards of Philadelphia and the Smiths and Livingstons of New York City. Many of the school's students were from well-to-do families, and all of the presidents feared the danger wealth posed to the inculcation of virtue and religion. Increasingly in the post-Awakening period wealth was believed to produce an undue desire for the luxuries of the world and to lead to dissipation and effeminacy. These fears the Presbyterians voiced in their frequent condemnations of "luxury." The officials of the school were especially fearful when colonial aristocrats insisted on lavishing upon their sons ostentatious signs of the family's social status, such as fine clothing and large allowances. In 1757 the school's Board moved to discourage parental indulgence by empowering any tutor or official to forbid a student to contract any "needless" or "harmful" debt.[11] While preaching at the school in 1758, before he became its president, Davies noted that the students exhibited a "Spirit of Pride and Contention"; and the sons of the rich particularly seemed unable to grasp that they were also sinners. There were at the college no "public Outcries, but a decorous silent Solemnity." But, Davies hopefully noted, God in his wisdom had made very ill the son of a wealthy New Yorker.

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[11]Sept. 27, 1757, Minutes of the Boards of Trustees of Princeton University, I, 63 (MSS in P.U.L.). For the trouble Princeton's most illustrious graduate had making do with his very generous allowance see James Madison, Jr., to James Madison, Sr., Sept. 30, 1769, July 23, 1770, William T. Hutchinson and William M. E. Rachel, eds., The Papers of James Madison (Chicago, 1962-), I, 46, 50.

The boy became seriously afflicted with an oppressive sense of his sins, and his apprehensions were quickly communicated to his classmates. Soon President Burr and Davies were delighted to see that the sons of the rich "were made to mourn for sin, and cry and long for Jesus." Indeed, in the revival that followed some students became so distressed that Burr and Davies decided to use no further "Arguments of Terror in Public, lest some should sink under the Weight . . . ."[12]

Davies deemed it very important that Burr's wealthy charges had become aware of their sins, and he never mentioned the revival's effect on other students. The rich students were believed to be particularly susceptible to dissipation, and their conversion appeared to be a triumph of virtue over luxury, the benefits of which would accrue to the entire student body.[13] Davies' strictures against luxury reveal his uneasiness over the scramble for wealth and position that attended the largely unrestrained development of the American economy. The wealth resulting from the economic exertions of the students' fathers endangered not only their sons' souls but also the fate of the society dependent upon them for leadership. Consequently, Davies began to define virtue in

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[12]Samuel Davies, Little Children Invited to Jesus Christ . . . With an Account of the late remarkable Religious Impressions Among the Students in the College of New Jersey, 4th ed. (Boston, 1762), pp. 21-23.

[13]For other accounts of the state of religion at Princeton see "Samuel Finley," The Presbyterian Magazine, III, No. 3 (Mar., 1853), 145; John Maclean, History of the College of New Jersey . . . (Philadelphia, 1877), I, 155, 273, 311; Edward Crawford to James Crawford, Aug. 3, 29, 1774, Papers of Rev. James Crawford (Bound MSS in P.H.S.).

terms that were at least incipiently anti-materialistic.

If virtue had to be redefined because of the colonists' economic exertions, it also had to be reconsidered in relation to American urban life. From its inception the founders of Princeton harbored a deep aversion to America's small urban centers as fit locations for educational institutions. While located in Newark, New Jersey, the school held classes at the county court house in much the same way as medieval university bodies had met in the markets of great cities amidst the activity of urban life. The situation, however, soon proved intolerable to the American Presbyterians. According to Samuel Blair, Jr., the urban location was attended by many "difficulties and danger" to the "morals and literary improvements of the youth . . . ." Only President Burr's extraordinary vigilance prevented them from succumbing to the temptations of city life. Consequently, the school was moved to the village of Princeton, where the young men might escape the problems of urban life and breathe the pure and salubrious air of the countryside.[14] Once in Princeton, though, President Burr began to draw up plans for a dormitory, which would protect the boys from the village's temptations.[15] Even after the boys had moved into Nassau Hall, one concerned mother would allow her son to enroll in the college only if

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[14]College of New Jersey /Samuel Blair, Jr./, An Account of the College of New-Jersey . . . (Woodbridge, N.J., 1764), pp. 11-12.

[15]Aaron Burr to William Hogg, Dec. 3, 1755, The Aaron Burr Collection, P.U.L.

he could live with President and Mrs. Burr.[16]

The more urbane Presbyterians of New York City found themselves in the position of having to defend urban centers as fit locales for virtuous education. In an extraordinary pamphlet, Some Thoughts on Education, William Smith, a Presbyterian layman, neatly answered every objection against education in urban areas and adumbrated a radical theory in which education was seen as participation in the daily activities of community life. Education, Smith contended, was more than a matter of acquiring knowledge of mathematics, languages, and philosophy. The future leaders of society must know "Men and the World." Europeans had provided for the contact of students and the world by establishing universities in great cities and by encouraging students to travel extensively. American students could not travel widely, so they should attend colleges in urban centers in "the politest Part of our Province." There they could acquire "some Knowledge of Men and Things." Furthermore, if the school were located in a city, all members of society could observe closely "both . . . the Fidelity of the Master and industry of the Scholars." Thus society could superintend the education of its future leaders. Smith cited an ancient precedent that illustrates the distance between him and his fellow Presbyterians who moved Princeton from Newark to escape the temptations of court day. The virtuous Romans, he reminded his readers, required students to recite not elaborate legal

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[16]John Eliot to Aaron Burr, n.d., John Eliot MSS, P.U.L.

theories but to describe from personal observation cases that were being adjudicated in the courts of the Republic. Such an experience would ably equip a future judge or legislator; but it could not be had in a "sour Retreat from the World."[17]

By 1772 most Presbyterians probably took a position somewhere between Smith's enthusiastic defense and Burr's blanket condemnation of cities. John Witherspoon in that year endeavored to persuade West Indian nabobs to send their sons to Princeton rather than to Oxford or Cambridge. He warned the planters that in British cities wealthy youth were preyed upon by all and were tempted by a "constant succession and variety of intoxicating diversions, such as Balls, Concerts, Plays, Races, and others." Moreover, since an acquaintance with all those diversions was considered essential to good breeding, their sons would enthusiastically embrace each. Princeton, on the other hand, was a village "so small that any irregularity is immediately and certainly discovered and therefore easily corrected." However, Witherspoon acknowledged that there were advantages to being located near, but not in, an urban center. The college, he asserted, was close enough to New York City and Philadelphia "so as to be a center of intelligence, and have an easy conveyance of every thing necessary, and yet to be wholly free from the many temptations

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[17]William Smith, Some Thoughts on Education . . . (New York, 1752), pp. 9, 8, 11. Franklin also insisted that Philadelphia's college be established "if not in the Town, not many Miles from it . . . ." Benjamin Franklin, "Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania," Autobiography and Selected Writings, ed., Larzer Ziff (New York, 1963), p. 208.

in every great city, both to the neglect of study and the practice of vice." Finally Witherspoon even answered William Smith's objection that only in a city could students profit from the most polished company. To the college's annual commencement came a "vast concourse of the politest company" from New York City and Philadelphia. While the young men rusticated in virtuous solitude, the civilizing elements of the cities came to them, thereby saving them from urban contamination. Thus, the Presbyterians adjusted their idea of the city slightly and tentatively decided that virtue might be inculcated within the outer perimeters of urban centers.[18]

2. The Colonial Curriculum

The changes in the Presbyterians' definition of virtue and its relation to education were dictated by their desire for selfless leaders of a reformed American society. That same motivation also led them to make changes in Princeton's curriculum during the late colonial period. Most of the changes were tentative because the Presbyterians were attempting to give life to a theory of social leadership that was utopian in the extreme. But changes they were, and they were pregnant with implications for the future.

One of the most pronounced changes in regard to the curriculum was related to the idea of class education. Provost Smith of the College of Philadelphia insisted that the

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[18]John Witherspoon, Address to the Inhabitants of Jamaica, and other West-India Islands, in Behalf of the College of New Jersey (Philadelphia, 1772), pp. 12, 24, 17. Madison, Jr., to Madison, Sr., Sept. 30, 1769, Hutchinson and Rachal, eds., Papers of Madison, I, 45.

curriculum of the ideal college would both stratify and tranquilize society. Dividing all society into "learned" and "mechanical" classes, the Provost advanced an elitist theory of education designed to keep all men in their proper places. While the sons of the aristocracy studied philosophy, science, and the learned languages, the sons of the "mechanical" element of society would be content with the "most plain and useful parts" of the curriculum, such as husbandry. At the basis of Smith's idea was the belief that men of different social classes had differing amounts of that attribute called "taste," the cultivation of which was one of the principal functions of higher education. The man who had only the rudiments of taste, he insisted, was almost of another species from the man who had a thoroughly cultivated and enlarged taste. But, regardless of the extent of one's taste, it should be cultivated to its limit. The cultivation of taste was "the cement of society" and insured the tranquility of society. It was particularly important that the rudimentary taste of the lower classes be cultivated because only in this way could they be made to accept their position in society. No man whose taste had been cultivated could be a "boisterous subject . . . or an unruly and turbulent man." The curriculum of a college, Smith concluded, was to be selected so as to elevate one class while reconciling another to its natural subservient role.[19]

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[19]William Smith, "College of Mirania," Works, I, 181-182, 190-193.

Like Smith the founders of Princeton were no democrats. In 1755 Davies noted what he considered the natural differences among men. To some God gave a "turn for intellectual improvement," to others a "genius for trade," and to others a "dexterity in mechanics." But unlike Smith, Davies did not attempt to erect a different curriculum for each differing part of society. His evangelical obsession with unifying society to prepare for the Kingdom prevented this, as did his emphasis on aggressive exertion. Davies' own middle class background and the knowledge that education had aided his rise in the world kept him from viewing education as a means to inhibit social mobility. Finally, far from hoping to tranquilize society, Davies hoped to use education to arouse it from its lethargy.[20] The Presbyterians realized that in order to arouse and reform society, the education at Princeton had to be available to all classes. Society could not be unified if its constituent parts received differing kinds of education.

If the Presbyterians insisted that education be a unifying rather than a disruptive force in society, they also began to demand that the traditional method of instruction be altered to allow greater contact between student and teacher. The institutional manifestation of this demand was an emphasis on recitations as opposed to lectures. The Princeton faculty boasted of its Socratic method of free dialogue and insisted

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[20]Samuel Davies, "Religion and Patriotism, the Constituents of a Good Soldier," Sermons (Boston, 1864), III, 100.

that no teacher resorted to lectures of dogmatic discourses.[21] Rather than "burdening the memory, and imposing heavy and disagreeable tasks," the "intention is engaged, the mind entertain'd, and the scholar animated in the pursuit of knowledge." The arts and sciences were thereby "convey'd into the minds of youth, in a method the most easy, natural, and familiar."[22] The Presbyterians believed the recitation system to be far superior to what they considered the impersonal lecture system. Samuel Blair stated that the system of recitations gave the students opportunity "thoroughly to impress upon their memories" a particular precept. Moreover, the system allowed the teachers frequent contact with their students, thus enabling the former to supervise personally not only the boys' intellectual growth but also their maturity in virtue.[23] Nor were the students upset at the emphasis on memorization. In 1751 Joseph Shippen, Jr., informed his father that he hoped to see a demonstration of electrical apparatus several times in order to have the theories being demonstrated more deeply imprinted upon his memory.[24]

When young Shippen told his father of his plan to impress upon his mind certain sensory perceptions, he, perhaps

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[21]A General Account of the Rise and State of the College, Lately Established in the Province of New-Jersey, in America . . . (New York, 1752), p. 6; William Livingston, Funeral Elogium, p. 16.

[22]New American Magazine, XXVII (Mar., 1760), 104.

[23]/Blair/, College of New-Jersey, pp. 27-28.

[24]Joseph Shippen, Jr. to Joseph Shippen, Sr., June 10, 1751, Joseph Shippen, Jr. Letter Book, 1750-1751, P.U.L.

unknowingly, endorsed an already venerable theory of cognition. The Princeton curriculum was based on the assumption that the mind was divided into distinct faculties, which functioned interdependently to make up a student's mental "furniture." The variety of the faculties was demonstrated in David Bostwick's description of the "uncommon [mental] Furniture" of Davies:

> A large and capacious Understanding,--a solid unbiased and well regulated Judgment,--a quick Apprehension,--a Genius truly penetrating,--a fruitful Invention,--an elegant Taste,--a lively, florid and exuberant Fancy, were all happily united in Him.[25]

Every student at Princeton was assumed to possess each of these faculties--in their rudimentary forms, to be sure. The minds that contained these faculties were assumed to be infinitely impressionable, and the educational process was believed to consist of exercising the faculties and implanting knowledge in the receptive brain. William Livingston stated in 1753, "The Enlargement of our reasoning Powers depends entirely upon the Exercise of them . . . ." "A youthful Mind," he continued, "is susceptible of almost any Impression. Like the ductile Wax, it receives the Image of the Seal without the least Resistance."[26]

Based on the Lockean idea that the mind received sensory

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[25]Samuel Davies, A Sermon delivered at Nassau-Hall, January 14, 1761 . . . To which is prefixed a brief Account of the Life, Character, and Death, of the Author. By David Bostwick . . . (New York, 1761), ii.

[26]Livingston, Independent Reflector, XXXVII, Aug. 9, 1753, 315; XVII, Mar. 11, 1753, 173. See also Davies, Little Children Invited to Jesus Christ, p. 4.

impulses from the natural world, this theory of cognition had been adopted by many colonial thinkers, including Jonathan Edwards. For the first twenty years of its existence Princeton accepted enthusiastically Edwards' theory of cognition. The great Puritan acknowledged the fall of man but insisted that from that catastrophe had been salvaged a remnant of man's intellectual powers. To strengthen those remnants was the end of education. The crucial mental faculties in Edwards' system were the reason and understanding. The reason received the sensory impulses that Edwards, like Locke, believed the mind received from the natural world. But only the understanding could relate those impressions to the ideals that were the supernatural reality behind the natural world. The reason could gather sensory impressions from such natural phenomena as rainbows and spiders, but only the understanding could glean from those impressions glimpses of the absolute ideal behind all creation. Consequently, strengthening the understanding was the primary function of the collegiate curriculum.[27]

Because they were believed particularly capable of exercising the mental faculties, the ancient and modern

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[27]The clearest summary of Edwards' thought is the introduction to Clarence H. Faust and Thomas H. Johnson, eds., Jonathan Edwards: Representative Selections . . . , rev. ed. (New York, 1962). For a New Side adaptation of Edwardian epistemology see Davies, "God is Love," Sermons, I, 483.

languages were the foundation of Princeton's curriculum.[28] William Livingston best expressed the Presbyterians' reasons for stressing language study: the study of languages, he contended, was the best subject for young boys because it first depended upon the memory, "a Faculty of the Mind which is generally exercised the first of any others in Youth." Moreover, language study prepared the mind for advanced subjects. As the students progressed, their "Capacities [were] gradually opened--their Curiosities raised--their Powers strengthened--their Views extended, and their Minds familiarized to Inquiry . . . ."[29] Language study, then, exercised most of the faculties from the simplest to the most complex.[30]

In addition to exercising the mental faculties, language study was considered valuable because, according to Livingston, it taught the "Plain Rules of Morality and History."[31] A knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, of course, enabled the student to read the scriptures in their original forms, thus opening a crucial source of moral instruction. But

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[28]For the first admissions requirements see Nov. 9, 1748, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 14. For the curriculum in 1764 see [Blair], College of New Jersey, p. 24. For the emphasis on French see John Witherspoon to Henry Lee, Dec. 28, 1770, The John Witherspoon Collection, P.U.L.

[29]Livingston, Independent Reflector, L, Nov. 8, 1753, 424-425.

[30]For an example of the rote-oriented textbooks used at the college see Robert Ross, The American Latin Grammar . . . revised and corrected . . . by the late Presidents Burr, Finley, and others . . . , 5th ed. (Providence, R. I., 1780).

[31]Livingston, Independent Reflector, L, Nov. 8, 1753, 424.

studying the ancient languages also opened to the student the world of classical antiquity, which exercised a marked influence on higher education at the mid century. One reason for this influence was the widely-held belief that the ancient Greeks and Romans had been peculiarly virtuous and that their virtue had sustained the freest governments ever known to man.[32] By reading the lives and works of these virtuous ancients, the student would be led to emulate their selfless and noble actions. Furthermore, the exertion required to read their works in the original, without benefit of translations, would indelibly imprint upon the students' minds the ideas of those virtuous ancients. Hugh H. Brackenridge, politician, jurist, novelist, and 1771 Princeton graduate, insisted that in studying a difficult language slowly, "the turn of thought became more deeply impressed upon my mind."[33]

The Princeton faculty stressed the importance of examples because they made concrete the ideals to be inculcated upon the students. Davies, therefore, asserted to his charges that "if we would shine in any Sphere, we must propose to ourselves some illustrious Examples." Although he recommended David as such an example, Davies attributed to the Jewish monarch those traits that also characterized the Roman

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[32]For the classics in colonial America see Richard M. Gummere, The American Colonial Mind and the Classical Tradition (Cambridge, Mass., 1963). For an important corrective to the overestimation of the classical impact on the colonial mind see Bernard Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), pp. 23-26.

[33]Hugh Henry Brackenridge, Modern Chivalry, ed. Claude M. Newlin (New York, 1962), p. 43.

republicans: virtue, selflessness, and patriotism. General precepts, Samuel Finley observed in 1749, were useful because they told men their duty, but specific examples assured men that those duties were capable of being performed. "General Precepts form abstract ideas of Virtue, but in Examples, Virtues are made visible, in all their Circumstances."[34]

But the Presbyterians increasingly sought to make education practical as well as classical. William Livingston stated in the Independent Reflector that "what ever literary Acquirement cannot be reduced to Practice . . . is in Reality no more than a specious Kind of Ignorance."[35] Livingston had reference to broadly defined subjects, such as philosophy and science, which could be made to serve society by preparing social leaders. With this view the men at Princeton thoroughly agreed and frequently voiced their opposition to useless learning. And almost coincident with the college's foundation, demands were made that it teach practical subjects to prepare social leaders--and anyone else--for the contingencies of a growing capitalistic society. In 1753 the irrepressible trustee Edward Shippen sent to his nephew at the college several books dealing with navigation and mercantile mathematics. Joseph Shippen understood the broad

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[34]Samuel Davies, Religion and Public Spirit. A Valedictory Address to the Senior Class delivered in Nassau-Hall, Sept. 21, 1760 (Portsmouth, N.H., 1762), p. 3; Samuel Finley, The Approved Minister of God . . . (Philadelphia, 1749), p. 14n.

[35]Livingston, Independent Reflector, XVII, Mar. 22, 1753, 172.

hint and expressed his gratitude to his uncle for the books. But he regretted that "I cannot employ my thoughts in studying anything of them, as I am fully engaged in the necessary exercises of the College."[36] By the 1770's, however, the college's definition of social usefulness had expanded sufficiently to allow instruction in such subjects as Edward Shippen had suggested. In 1770 Edward Crawford, a ministerial student from Virginia, advised his brother James on how to prepare for Princeton. Along with Latin, Greek, and geography he advised James to become familiar with the rules of interest, rebate, equation of payments, barter, and loss and gain.[37]

The Presbyterians' concern that the students at Princeton become socially useful was perhaps best illustrated in the increased emphasis on oratory in the curriculum. Samuel Davies was particularly influential in this development. Davies, who was one of the most distinguished orators in the colonies, in 1753 attended student orations at the Academy of Philadelphia. He was disturbed to find that the orators, especially those who recited the flaming speeches of Brutus and Mark Anthony "were extremely languid and discovered Nothing of the Fire and Pathos of a Roman Soul." He found this lack of a Roman spirit "one great Defect of modern

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[36]Joseph Shippen to Edward Shippen, July 25, 1752, in Maclean, College of New Jersey, I, 142.

[37]Edward Crawford to James Crawford, Aug. 29, 1774, James Crawford Papers, P.H.S.

Oratory; a Defect few seem sensible of, or labour to correct."[38] As president of Princeton Davies endeavored to instill in his students the spirit of the virtuous Romans and to teach them to communicate that spirit to the society they were to lead. The students read from Cicero, Demosthenes, and Livy and then recited memorized orations before their class and before Davies, who corrected their faults. On Sunday student orators frequently spoke before an audience of students and townspeople "in order to habituate them early to face an assembly, as also for the other important and religious ends, to which they are found conducive." At the college, asserted Samuel Blair, a "good address" and "agreeable elocution" were "accomplishments so ingratiating, and so necessary to render a public speaker . . . popular; and consequently useful, that they are esteemed . . . as considerable parts of education . . . ." According to Blair, this training and the influence of religion were the main reasons that many of the college's graduates quickly appeared "upon the stage of public action, employing their talents to the honour of the supreme Bestower, and in promoting the good of mankind."[39] Witherspoon continued Davies' emphasis on orations and insisted that the students should compose their own speeches. In that way, they would feel that the approbation of the audience was for the speaker and not for Brutus, Mark

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[38]George W. Pilcher, ed., The Reverend Samuel Davies Abroad . . . (Urbana, Ill., 1967), Oct. 8, 1753, pp. 19-20.

[39]/Blair7, College of New-Jersey, pp. 26, 25, 46.

Anthony, or one of the tutors.[40]

The study of languages, the emphasis on practical education, and the stress on orations were intended to inculcate virtue and to prepare the boy for social usefulness. But it was left to the study of religion and science to provide a larger intellectual framework into which all the other parts of the curriculum could be fitted. Far from being antithetical, Newtonian science and religion as taught at Princeton at the mid century were joined into an intellectual system that set the tone for the entire curriculum. The college might use the Bible for its divinity courses, but Joseph Shippen could also find himself in need of Isaac Watt's Astronomy. President Burr might train ministers, but he also arranged for dazzling demonstrations of the "electrical fluid" and in his spare time taught several young men to calculate eclipses. The college might spend large sums to Christianize the Indians, but in 1751 Burr also spent the equivalent of thirty students' tuition on scientific equipment. Finally, the school persuaded an American scientist, David Rittenhouse, to construct an orrery to depict the wonder of God's amazing creation. Installed in Nassau Hall in 1771, the orrery depicted in meticulous detail the movements of all the bodies of the known universe, and was one of the

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[40]John Witherspoon to Benjamin Rush, Oct. 8, 1758, in Lyman H. Butterfield, ed., John Witherspoon Comes to America: A Documentary Account Based Largely on New Materials (Princeton, 1953), pp. 80-81.

wonders of the colonial world.[41]

The New Sides' attitude toward the relation between science and religion can be illustrated by the reaction of their most representative leader to a series of most uncommon natural occurrences in the mid 1750's. When an unusually long drought and a serious epidemic were succeeded in 1756 by an earthquake, Samuel Davies sought to explain the events to his distressed Virginia congregation. It was the explanation of a man who could no longer accept a totally supernatural explication of causality but who also could not accept the explanations of those who denied the deity any part in causation. Science was for Davies a static body of laws, verified by reason and experiment, that explained the ordinary workings of the divine creation. The universe was for him a marvelous machine cleverly designed by God, who ordinarily worked his will in the universe not by miracles but through moral and physical agents. At extraordinary times, though, God set aside those agents and the laws of nature and directly intervened in natural history. His agents he ordered to "stand still and see the works of God . . . ." But this divine intervention did not disrupt the divine order of the universe. Davies neatly regularized the irregular: "All

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[41]Joseph Shippen to Edward Shippen, May 12, 1750; Sept. 14, 1751; May 23, 1752; Dec. 2, 1751; in Maclean, College of New Jersey, I, 141-143; Pr. Bd. Min., Sept. 29, 1769, I, 169; Francis L. Broderick, "Pulpit, Physics, and Politics: The Curriculum of the College of New Jersey, 1746-1796," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., VI (Jan., 1949), 52. The most thorough treatment of the purely factual aspects of colonial science is Theodore Hornberger, Scientific Thought in the American Colleges, 1638-1800 (Austin, Tex., 1945).

the exigencies of such periods were known to the omniscient Creator when he first formed this vast machine, when he wound it up and put all its wheels in motion . . . ." The creation was full of signals and hidden springs that the creator in his wisdom had foreordained to go off to deal with a foreseen extraordinary situation. Therefore, Davies was able to retain a Calvinistic belief in an absolutely sovereign God who foreknew all at the same time that he rejected an increasingly vulnerable belief in miracles.[42]

Davies castigated the "set of little, conceited smattering philosophers" who insisted that the earthquake was caused by natural causes only and who refused to see that those causes "were first formed, and are still directed, by the Divine hand." He believed that those philosophers were intellectually proud men who used their knowledge to set themselves apart from the rest of humanity. There could be no greater perversion of scientific knowledge, as far as Davies was concerned, than to use it to further divide society. Such philosophers also proved to Davies the truth of Roger Bacon's assertion that a little scientific knowledge encouraged atheism while deep learning inculcated virtue and a veneration of the deity.[43]

When an earthquake had last shaken the colonies in 1727,

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[42]Davies, "The Signs of the Times," Sermons, III, 173-174; "The Religious Improvement of the Late Earthquakes," ibid., III, 264.

[43]Davies, "Religious Improvement," ibid., III, 263-264; "Signs of the Times," ibid., III, 188. For a similar idea see [Livingston], Serious Thoughts, p. 4; Funeral Elogium, p. 16.

the clergy had uniformly attributed it to providential causes and had seen it as punishment for the sins of society. Davies saw the 1756 earthquake in somewhat more sophisticated terms. In searching for the cause and meaning of the earthquake, he was representative of an age that was beginning to seek in the embryonic natural and social sciences new ways of explaining why things happened in the world. He was also a man of his times when he looked to history for enlightenment and interpreted what he found in a scientific way. History, he insisted, showed that there was a "kind of sympathy between the natural and moral world." An unusual occurrence in the natural world had usually portended some revolution in the moral world. This observation was validated by the scientific principle that "When an hypothesis is supported by experiments and matters of fact, it ought to be received as true." The earthquake, then, was an extraordinary signal sent in a planned and regular way by God to portend an important event in the world. For Davies it obviously portended the millennium. Using what he called a "double" view, Davies enlisted the experiences of the past to predict the future. An obvious use of history to modern man, the "double view" was far from obvious to men who had been accustomed to explaining and discussing all causation solely in providential terms. The ultimate cause of the earthquake was still providential, but the method Davies used to arrive at that cause was a crudely scientific and historical one.[44]

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[44]Davies, "Signs of the Times," Sermons, III, 181, 188, 175.

Davies was able to accept Newtonian science because it presented a universe created and controlled by God. That universe was but another divine revelation, the fixed laws of which could serve as models for constructing a social order as well-regulated and harmonious as the cosmic order. Moreover, science applauded man's ability to ferret out the rules of the divine order. Consequently, Davies was able to preach a sovereign God while marvelling at the efficacy of man's reasoning powers. Davies' science was rational, not empirical; his thinking deductive, not inductive. Students under his tutelage learned laws and rules and marvelled at their regularity and predictability. They did not question the laws or seek new hypotheses. Newtonian science never got out of hand; it elevated man's position in the natural order; and it was thoroughly Christian. For these reasons the Presbyterians at Princeton welcomed it enthusiastically and forced all of their other subjects to conform to "scientific" methods. In practice that meant that each subject was dedicated to elucidating the natural, social, and spiritual laws that operated in a universe thoroughly subject and responsive to the will of God. When Samuel Springer was called upon to defend before his classmates Newton's system of astronomy, he began bravely. But the marvelous system was too much for him. He was soon "overwhelmed with a sense of the Divine Majesty, and burst into tears . . . [and] was unable to proceed."[45]

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[45]Quoted in Samuel Davies Alexander, Princeton College During the Eighteenth Century (New York, 1872), pp. 145-146. See also Heimert, Religion and the American Mind, pp. 68-75.

3. Education and Freedom of Inquiry

The Presbyterians insisted that the curriculum they devised would produce virtuous and selfless leaders only if it was taught in an atmosphere of free inquiry. They announced that it was their intention at Princeton

> to cherish a spirit of liberty, and free inquiry; and not only to permit, but even encourage . . . [the students'] right of private judgment, without presuming to dictate with an air of infallibility, or demanding an implicit assent to the decisions of the preceptor.[46]

The Presbyterians' view can best be understood when compared and contrasted with the views of their more radical brothers in New York City and of the reactionary rector of Yale College.

In the early 1750's Thomas Clap attempted to make Yale solely a ministerial school and to establish a collegiate pulpit, which he would fill. In a pamphlet entitled The Religious Constitution of Colleges he asserted that colleges are societies in and of themselves and cannot allow unrestrained freedom of inquiry within their bounds. Therefore, the students must attend only one church, situated on campus. If they dispersed to churches on their own or their parents' choice, they would "break up all order in the Society, and defeat the Religious Design, and Instructions of it." Truth had been embodied in the instructions of the founders in 1701, and special effort should be made "not to suffer . . . [the students] to be Instructed, in any different Principles, or Doctrines . . . ." In denying free inquiry and expression

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[46] [Blair], College of New Jersey, p. 28.

of differing opinions in the school, Clap insisted that he was merely protecting the rights of "all free, and Voluntary Societies of Men; which is to determine, their own Design, amongst themselves . . . ." Denying that he trampled on freedom of inquiry, he insisted that collegiate education was a "Property" bestowed by the Proprietor or Donor who founds a school under whatever conditions he chooses. The freedom of conscience of the recipient extends only to determining if he will accept education on the donor's terms.[47]

Despite the blatantly sectarian nature of his arguments, Clap asserted that the college he described would serve the majority of Connecticut's society. He could not allow any of New Haven's churches to receive his students because there the boys might be subjected "to such Preaching, as would be contrary to the Minds, of the Generality . . . ." The rights of minorities, who were taxed to support the school, would have to be subordinated to the rights of the Congregational majority. Indicating that he agreed with the Old Side Presbyterians' equation of the majority and the whole, Clap asserted, "the Benefit, of each Individual, should be consulted, so far, as it is consistent, with the general Design, and the Good of the whole, or the Majority."[48]

To Clap's view may be contrasted that of William Livingston. The New York Presbyterian disagreed fundamentally with the Connecticut Congregationalist's assertion that a college

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[47]Clap, Religious Constitution, pp. 4, 7, 9-10, 16, 15.

[48]Ibid., pp. 12, 19.

should present any body of facts as final truth. At most schools, Livingston declared, the students accept their teachers' dogma as truth and prepare to defend it against all challenges. Freedom of thought never penetrated those schools, he continued, and the ideas of the students were "circumscribed within the narrow Limits of Party-Prejudice . . . instead of being enlarged by Observation and /Experience/."[49] Far from being a nursery for ministers, the school should not even teach divinity. No professor could teach that subject without imposing his views on impressionable youth, who were incapable of making a "judicious Choice in this matter . . . ." Livingston confidently proclaimed that "Truth is Omnipotent, and Reason must be finally victorious," but he was not willing that the college become the battleground in which reason would triumph--at least in the highly controversial field of theology. He insisted that morning and evening prayers be in such "forms as all Protestants can freely join in," but beyond this he would have religion completely banished from the curriculum. He would not allow the majority to dictate any religious instruction, so all such instruction was to be abolished. In homogeneous Connecticut Clap invoked the interests of the majority to throttle the freedom of inquiry of all students. In New York City Livingston asserted that in a heterogeneous population such a

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[49]Livingston, Independent Reflector, XVII, Mar. 22, 1753, 174-175; "The Watch-Tower," XXV, New York Mercury, May 12, 1755.

practice was unconscionable.[50]

The Presbyterians at Princeton stood somewhere between the Connecticut Congregationalists and the New York Presbyterians. As one of Princeton's greatest historians, Varnum Collins, cautions, Blair's statement that freedom of inquiry was not only permitted but encouraged "must not be accepted too literally."[51] It is quite obvious that religion was fundamental to the curriculum and that the theology taught was Presbyterian.[52] But the Presbyterians insisted that the virtuous man should tolerate the views of others. Davies was eulogized as "strict, [but] not bigoted; conscientious, [but] not squemishly scrupulous . . . , [a man who] gloried more in being a Christian, than in being a Presbyterian . . . ." Of Burr, Livingston remarked, "However steady to his own principles, he was perfectly free from every appearance of BIGOTRY."[53] The New Sides' struggles with the Old Sides during the Great Schism suggests that their claims were more than perfunctory rhetoric.

The Princeton faculty could not dismiss theology from the curriculum as Livingston could. But neither were the

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[50]Livingston, Independent Reflector, XXI, Apr. 19, 1753, 203, 202; XVIII, Mar. 29, 1753, 180; XXII, Apr. 26, 1753, 209; XXVIII, May 31, 1753, 242-249; New York Mercury, Jan. 20, 1755.

[51]Varnum Collins, Princeton (New York, 1914), p. 173.

[52]Will Herberg, "Religion and Education," in James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jameson, eds., Religious Perspectives in American Culture in Religion in American Life (Princeton, 1961), II, 18.

[53]Davies, Sermons on Important Subjects, 5th ed., xxiv; Livingston, Funeral Elogium, p. 8.

Presbyterians animated by Clap's narrow insistence that the students be shielded from all but a confining orthodoxy. Rather, the school's students appear to have been stimulated by the efforts of their godly professors to open to them the Newtonian universe. The students were assured that the scientific laws they learned could serve as guides to human happiness and social harmony. Moreover, the students were exhilarated as their teachers led them to slough off what were considered superstitions of the past. If anything, the young men appear to have rather smugly decided that their minds had been liberated from all ancient prejudices and could now ferret out truth in a logical, systematic, scientific manner. In 1751, for instance, Joseph Shippen informed his brother Neddy that in his treatise on logic Mr. Watts had thrown out "all the Jargon & trappings of Art of the ancient Schools . . . ." The students had likewise "made . . . [logic] a part of our Study, as well to direct us to judge aright ourselves as to detect Falsehood . . . in others."[54] Enamored of a scientific method that neatly explained the universe and promised increasing human felicity, the students at Princeton had little reason to accuse their teachers of stifling free inquiry.[55]

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[54]Joseph Shippen to Neddy Shippen, June 21, 1751, Joseph Shippen, Jr. Letter Book, P.U.L.

[55]Richard Hofstadter in Academic Freedom in the Age of the College (New York, 1955) treats only of Lehrfreiheit, the right of the teacher to teach free of coercion. Because of the clerical and denominational nature of the faculty, this was no problem at colonial Princeton.

4. Education for a Deferential Society

The students at Princeton accepted the teachings of their preceptors partly because men like Davies and Burr were able to inspire in the boys a sense of awed excitement by presenting to them a universe to be examined and understood. But young men at the mid century were expected to defer to authority, even if those who possessed it were uninspiring. Samuel Blair asserted unabashedly that the college's system of discipline was intended to "habituate . . . [the students] to subjection, and yet maintain their respective ranks without insolence or servility . . . ." This end was achieved partially by requiring the students to stay one year in each of the four classes, "giving and receiving, in their turns, those tokens of respect and subjection, which belong to their standings, in order to preserve a due subordination."[56] Deference to constituted authority was as much a mark of the virtuous man as a concern for the welfare of society.

The Presbyterians, however, were not obsessed by deference and discipline. Students at Princeton, for instance, were never ranked according to social standing as they had been at Harvard. Each boy was required to make a copy of the school's rules upon entrance and was supposed to keep it with him at all times.[57] This rule was not intended primarily to make the student constantly aware of the school's

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[56] [Blair], College of New-Jersey, pp. 23-24.

[57] Nov. 9, 1748, Pr. Ed. Min., I, 14.

rules but rather to provide him with ready proof of matriculation. Moreover, the college's rules of moral conduct, though strict, were quite conventional. They were not proclaimed in shrill rhetoric that tied constant obedience to the individual's salvation. Nor was the boy made to feel that the fate of Christianity depended upon his every action. They were simply stated and, with few exceptions, just as simply obeyed.

The school's officials were quite proud of its disciplinary system and insisted that it was completely scientific. Rather than relying on force, Blair insisted, the rules were meant "to work upon the nobler principle of humanity, and to move the more honourable springs of good order and submission to government." Seeking a medium between "too great a licentiousness on the one hand, or an excessive precision on the other," the Board erected a disciplinary system that attempted to fit punishment to misdeed, to treat each offense individually, and to provide mercy for the truly repentent. The students must agree to be governed by the principles of honor and shame or leave, insisted Witherspoon in 1772. As a result Edward Crawford in 1772 could boast of the school's "laws and regularity," echoing Finley's earlier assertion that "Perhaps there can hardly be found so large a Number of Youth together, equally Sober, concordial, regular, & Studious."[58]

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[58] /Blair/, College of New-Jersey, pp. 20, 19, 22, 21; Jdn Witherspoon, Inhabitants of Jamaica, p. 18; Edward Crawford to James Crawford, Nov. 25, 1773, James Crawford MSS, P.H.S.; Samuel Finley to Eleazer Wheelock, Samuel Finley MSS, P.U.L.

The Presbyterians also evolved an ideal authority figure who measured justice with mercy. Livingston and Bostwick described that ideal disciplinarian as they eulogized Burr and Davies. Burr "had the art of leading the will by invisible chains; and 'making reason, no less prevalent in authority';" while Davies had "the peculiar Art, of mingling Authority and Lenity in such a due Proportion, as seldom or never failed of the desired Success."[59]

This is not to say that disruptions did not occur. But when they did, they were handled with restraint by the faculty and Board. For instance, in one of the few serious breaches of discipline in the colonial period, the freshmen and grammar students in 1758 presented a petition to the Board requesting dismissal of a tutor and the grammar school master because neither was "sufficiently qualified for the Business of Instruction." The Board found no truth in the charge, but by the end of the year both men had been discharged for "the benefit of the Society." Moreover, when the student slated to make the salutatory speech at the 1774 commencement made so bold as to lead a riot against the honorable Tory governor of Massachusetts, Thomas Hutchinson, the Board merely voiced its high disapproval and requested Witherspoon to provide a more discreet speaker to salute

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[59]Livingston, Funeral Elogium, p. 17; Bostwick in Davies, Sermon . . . January 14, 1761, p. 10. See also Smith, Diligence in the Work of God, pp. 28-29; Anonymous, "A Contemporaneous Account of Jonathan Edwards," JPHS, II (Dec., 1903), 125-135, and Benjamin Rush's description of Finley in Rush to Mrs. Rush, July 31, 1791, L. H. Butterfield, ed., Letters of Benjamin Rush (Princeton, 1951), I, 601.

the class of '74.[60]

The paternalistic attitude of the school's faculty toward the students reveals insights into the Presbyterians' attitudes toward education, virtue, and the family. From the foundation of the school the Board and faculty accepted Franklin's advice that a school's officials should "look on the Students as in some Sort their Children, [and should] treat them with Familiarity and Affection . . . ." Samuel Davies gloried in calling the student body "that collected Family" over which he presided.[61] Until the college moved to Princeton, many of the students boarded with Presidents Dickinson and Burr; in fact, this arrangement continued after the construction of Nassau Hall. After the dormitory's completion no student was allowed to board in the village without a physician's excuse. The founders of the college evidently agreed with William Smith that virtue was best preserved when the boys lived together under the beneficent supervision of men they respected.[62]

The New Side ministers who superintended Princeton were acutely aware of young people because the Great Awakening had frequently been most spectacularly successful among youth. Jonathan Dickinson in 1740 sensed that the lethargy of his congregation might be broken if he animated his young

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[60]Feb. 17, 1758, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 68-69; Nov. 23, 1758, ibid., I, 76; Apr. 20, 1774, ibid., I, 203-204.

[61]Franklin, "Education of Youth," p. 208; Davies, Sermon . . . January 14, 1761, p. 10.

[62]June 26, 1766, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 114; Smith, Thoughts on Education, pp. 6-7.

people. Consequently, he gathered a group of them and delivered a message prepared especially for them. He slowly caught the youthful spirit of his auditors and moved them deeply. He was soon delighted to see many of the youth coming to him for spiritual advice, and within three months he counselled more young people than he had in the previous thirty years. At Newark Aaron Burr had a similar experience; after hearing Burr preach, numbers of young people came to him asking, "What shall we do to be saved?"[63] This awareness of the potentiality of youthful exuberance was one reason for a largely unnoticed but crucial result of the Great Awakening. The New Sides stressed ministering to a congregation's needs, and they were concerned especially with the spiritual life of the young people.[64] Consequently they ever more frequently entered into the home to discuss a child's welfare with his parents. This sometimes had the effect of introducing into the family a figure of authority that competed with the father.

One effect of this development was that the minister sometimes strengthened the hand of a mother who wanted to prepare a son for the ministry against a father who still needed him on the farm. One such woman was the mother of Samuel Davies. Samuel's father tried to keep him on the

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[63]Charles Hodge, The Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Philadelphia, 1839-1840), Part II, 31-32; Smith, Diligence in the Work of God, p. 24.

[64]See especially Elwyn A. Smith, The Presbyterian Ministry in American Culture: A Study in Changing Concepts, 1700-1900 (Philadelphia, 1962), p. 45.

farm until the youth's persistent attraction toward books forced him to give in to his wife's entreaties that their son be educated.[65] The future founder of Washington College, William Graham, was also opposed by his father in his plans to enter the ministry until aided by his mother and pastor, John Roan.[66] Caleb Wallace, future minister and jurist, was the eldest of four children, the son of a farmer in the Valley of Virginia. He was influenced as a boy by two of his pastors, Robert Henry and Samuel Davies. Converted by Davies in a revival in 1756, Wallace was encouraged to continue his rudimentary domestic education by James and David Caldwell, two neighborhood youths who had graduated from Princeton. When Davies became the president of the college in 1761, Wallace enlisted his aid and that of the Caldwells in persuading his father to allow him to further his education. The combination was eventually successful, but not until his son was twenty-five years old was the elder Wallace willing to forego his services on the farm.[67] Some future ministers, such as John McKnight, Robert Cooper, and Alexander McWhorter, were raised without fathers at all and were

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[65]Hezekiah Davies, "History of the united congregations of Great Valley, Charleston, and West Chester," JPHS, II (Sept., 1904), 337.

[66]Henry Ruffner, "Early History of Washington College, Now Washington and Lee University," Washington and Lee University, Historical Papers, No. 1 (1890), (Baltimore, 1890), 61.

[67]William H. Whitsitt, Life and Times of Judge Caleb Wallace (Louisville, 1888), pp. 9-13.

strongly influenced in their career plans by their mothers.[68]

It is perhaps not too much to say that the intrusion of the post-Awakening New Side ministry into families weakened the paternalistic character of some colonial families. To the extent that this is true, so far did that development undermine a most essential institution of a deferential society, the strongly authoritarian family.[69] In a more subtle way it further weakened the deferential nature of colonial society. By persuading poor young men to leave the farm and begin ministerial education, the New Side ministers made of their profession a significant instrument of social mobility.

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[68]William B. Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit . . . (New York, 1860), III, 371, 271, 208, 409, 216, 382; Joseph Smith, History of Jefferson College . . . (Pittsburgh, 1857), p. 414. As these citations show, other men, like the fathers of James Hall, Stephen Bloomer Balch, and John Ewing, were eager for their sons to receive an education and assisted them to the best of their abilities. Indeed, some men, like John McMillan, the founder of Jefferson College, were dedicated to the sacred service before birth by their fathers.

[69]One student contends that the traditional view that a strongly authoritarian family broke down in America may need revising. See Philip J. Greven, Jr., "Family Structure in Seventeenth-Century Andover, Massachusetts," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser., XXIII (Apr., 1960), 234-256. Greven seems to follow an English student's suggestion that English society in the pre-modern period was quite disordered and that American society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries may well have been more ordered than English society. See Peter Laslett, The World We Have Lost (New York, 1965). For further discussions of the American colonial family see David J. Rothman, "A Note on the Study of the Colonial Family," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser., XXIII (Oct., 1966), 627-634; Edmund Morgan, The Puritan Family . . . (New York, 1966) and Bernard Bailyn, Education in the Forming of American Society (New York, 1960). The most masterful discussion of the family in western culture remains Philippe Aries, Centuries of Childhood . . . , trans. Robert Baldrick (New York, 1962).

Just as some young men proved unwilling to defer to their fathers' dictum to remain on the farm, so did many refuse to return to the farm upon graduation. By entering the ministry instead, these graduates contributed to the growing social mobility that was slowly undermining the deferential nature of colonial society.

The sons of the lower class mingled at Princeton with the sons of colonial aristocrats. However, the two groups of students were separated not only by social class but also by age and career plans. In the class of 1761 graduated one Isaac Handy, who was eighteen years old. The son of a wealthy planter of Princess Anne County, Maryland, Isaac returned to that county upon graduating and practiced law for the rest of his life. Among Isaac's classmates was David Rice, the son of a Welsh farmer. Converted by Davies at twenty, Rice raised tobacco and taught school to earn money for his education. At Princeton he received aid from one of the scholarships established by English dissenters. When he graduated in 1761, he was twenty-eight years old. Also in the class was David Caldwell, who served as a carpenter's apprentice until age twenty-four and graduated at thirty-six. And a Scotch-Irish immigrant, John Rosbrugh, left his trade after his wife's death and entered the college, sponsored by the fund for poor and pious youth. But he was no youth; he graduated in 1761 at the age of forty-four. These men were substantially older than young Handy, and the educational experiences of Rice, Caldwell, and Rosbrugh

differed from his in that they had been schooled intermittently. That Handy should be educated at college was taken as a matter of course; for Rice, Caldwell, and Rosbrugh the acquiring of education was a problematical process. Most important of all, while Handy entered legal practice, each of the three older students entered the New Side ministry.[70]

The class of 1761 may be taken as representative of other classes. To the college came the sons of the Livingstons, Stocktons, Smiths, and Lees, who entered college at an early age and as a matter of course, and graduated to enter the legal or medical profession or to retire to private life. But the sons of farmers and poorer merchants also found their way to Princeton, often under the guidance of their ministers. Usually older than their classmates, they in effect created a separate student body in the college, and as divinity students under Witherspoon after 1768, they essentially became graduate professional students.[71] A few

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[70]Samuel Davies Alexander, Princeton College, p. 71; Robert Davidson, History of the Presbyterian Church in the State of Kentucky . . . (New York, 1837), pp. 65-66; Sprague, Annals, III, 263-264, 254.

[71]Further examples of the ministerial students may be found in the careers of John Clark ('58), John Carmichael ('59), Joseph Smith ('64), Hezekiah Balch ('62), James Power ('66), Thomas Reese ('68), Joshua Hart ('70), Nathaniel Irwin ('70), Samuel E. McCorkle ('72), Thaddeus Dod ('73), James Dunlap ('73), William Graham ('73), James Hall ('74), Alexander McWhorter ('57), Hugh Knox ('54), and Hugh McAden ('53). For their wealthier and generally younger classmates consult the careers of Benjamin Youngs Prime ('51), William Shippen ('54), David Purviance ('54), Joseph Shippen, Jr., ('53), Nicholas Bayard ('57), Peter Faneuil ('57), James Smith ('57), Henry Sherbourne ('59), Benjamin Rush ('60), Tapping Reeve ('63), Oliver Ellsworth ('66), Luther Martin ('66), Gunning Bedford ('71), James Madison ('71), William

young men from the lower classes had always entered the ministry and gone to Harvard to acquire an education. But in colonial Princeton their numbers rose dramatically as the Presbyterian New Sides attempted to supply the pulpits of a burgeoning denomination.

Princeton, then, was the institutional expression of ideas and forces that were suddenly released by the Great Awakening. The utopian nature of those ideas and forces has been greatly underestimated if not dismissed by historians. At best the New Sides are seen as terribly naive: surely the Presbyterians did not actually believe that they could halt the relentless progress of individualism and the resulting social conflict in America. Yet they did believe just that. Their belief forced them to reunite with men they opposed on many basic issues. Moreover, the belief led them to elaborate a theory of social leadership to serve the Christian commonwealth that they expected to follow the reunion. And at Princeton they established an institution to make that theory a reality. The Presbyterians of the late colonial period only awaited a sign that the beginning of the millennium was at hand. That sign was not long in coming.

Smith Livingston ('72), William Bradford ('72), Henry Lee ('73), and Nicholas Bayard Van Cortlandt ('74). All are discussed either in Volume III of Sprague's Annals of the American Pulpit or in Alexander's Princeton College in the Eighteenth Century.

PART TWO

REVOLUTION: 1775-1795

CHAPTER V

THE REPUBLIC AS COMMUNITY

The American triumph in the war for independence appeared to be the sign the Presbyterians awaited. The colonists' amazing military success was attended by what the Presbyterians believed to be an even more astonishing transformation in colonial society. As Americans won their independence, they also became republicans, and the creation of the republic appeared, almost miraculously, to end the disorder and conflict that had plagued colonial society. The rapidity and enthusiasm with which the Presbyterians embraced the ideology of republicanism and their extravagant visions of the republic's future are extraordinary. They believed that the Revolution had ushered in a new era of history in which the vicious, selfish, and contentious society of the recent past would give way to a virtuous, ordered, and godly society. The Presbyterians had turned their backs on the trans-Atlantic Christian commonwealth and now sought community in a distinctly American republic.[1]

1. The Easy Travail of Zion

In December of 1783 Israel Evans, a distinguished Presbyterian minister, chaplain, and 1772 Princeton graduate, addressed a military and civilian audience gathered in New

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[1]See especially Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic (Chapel Hill, 1969), Chapter III.

York City to give thanks for the triumph of America. Looking back over the war for independence, Evans was astonished at the rapidity with which a thorough revolution had been effected in American society. Future historians, he predicted, would try to prove that "a revolution of such a magnitude, could not possibly be accomplished in so short a time by such an infant people . . . ." But, he concluded, "their assertions will be . . . destitute of truth . . . ." In Philadelphia George Duffield, pastor of the Pine Street Presbyterian Church, almost simultaneously echoed Evans' astonishment at the rapidity with which the American republic had been born. Quoting the prophet Isaiah he asked, "Who hath heard such a thing . . . ? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? shall a nation be born at once?" The American Zion was not to be born after the forty year sojourn in the wilderness or after the "long continued sense of arduous dubious struggle" that attended the birth of Israel and Rome respectively. Rather, Duffield marveled, "almost as soon as our American Zion began to travail . . . she brought forth her children . . . ."[2]

Duffield stressed the ease as well as the rapidity with which American independence had been won. The American Zion had been born "without experiencing the pangs and pains which apprehensive fear expected . . . ." One could only marvel

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[2]Israel Evans, A Discourse Delivered in New York . . . On the 11th December, 1783 . . . (New York, 1784), p. 10; George Duffield, A Sermon Preached in the Third Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, On Thursday, December 1, 1783 . . . (Philadelphia, 1784), pp. 3,5.

that the Americans had prevailed in "so short a space of time, and with so small a share of difficulty in comparison of what might have been expected . . . ." Granting that there had been trials and inconveniences, Duffield could only conclude in 1783 that the price had not been as great as anticipated.[3]

The American triumph appeared all the more remarkable to the Presbyterians when they recalled the overwhelming military strength of England. A common theme during and after the war was the contrast between the bloated, corrupt, and over-confident English and the spare, virtuous, and humble colonists. The two sides were frequently compared to David and Goliath.[4] Just as the young amateur had defeated the giant professional, so the yeomen farmers of America had routed the hired armies of England. According to John Witherspoon, the "boasted discipline of regular and veteran soldiers [was] . . . turned into confusion and dismay before the new and maiden courage of freemen in defense of their property and rights." In a very revealing way Witherspoon attributed to the British soldiers those characteristics that had only recently been used to describe the colonists. The enemy's armies were obviously filled by "effeminate and delicate soldiers, who are nursed in the lap of self-

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[3]Duffield, Sermon, 1783, pp. 5, 3, 24-25.

[4]See especially Israel Evans, A Discourse Delivered on the 18th Day of December, 1777 . . . (Lancaster, Pa., 1778), pp. 7, 8; Robert Davidson, An Oration, on the Independence of the United States of America, Delivered on the 4th of July, 1787 (Carlisle, Pa., 1787), pp. 10-11.

indulgence . . . ." Despite the fact that most British soldiers were pitiful members of the lower classes impressed into military service, Witherspoon pictured them as gay blades who had only temporarily vacated the drawing room to slaughter innocent colonials. Opposed to those fops were clear-eyed, selfless, brave young colonists sacrificing their all for the common good. The fact that England employed mercenaries only strengthened the Presbyterians' belief that the war was fought between paragons of public spirit and despicable thugs who sold their patriotism to the highest bidder.[5] The war had also been fought between the wise and the stupid. Duffield found it a "matter of wonder and praise" that while the colonists were treading a "difficult and dangerous path, their mistakes and errors have been so few." On the other hand, Israel Evans noted that the foolish acts of the British at Saratoga could only have been the results of divine intervention.[6]

The Presbyterians, of course, were quick to point out the divine origin of all the Americans' blessings. Evans gave God all the credit for the victory at Saratoga and in 1783 attributed to divine providence the final American triumph. Similarly, Witherspoon spoke of "the singular interpositions of providence" in American affairs.[7] Evans in 1777 stated, "We now look back with pleasing amazement, and

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[5]John Witherspoon, The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men . . . (Philadelphia, 1776), pp. 34, 57.

[6]Evans, Discourse, 1777, pp. 12, 19.

[7]Ibid., pp. 5-6; Evans, Discourse, 1783, p. 12; Witherspoon, Dominion of Providence, p. 34.

say, this is the work of the Lord, and marvellous in our eyes." He warned his audience that the victory at Saratoga had not been due to their own patience, perseverance, and courage. But Evans could not restrain his exuberance and in a revealing afterthought added that those virtuous qualities had been "much greater than we could have flattered ourselves they would be . . . ."[8] When one remembers the Presbyterian clergy's gloomy estimation of Americans during the French and Indian War, the Presbyterians' surprise becomes understandable. Indeed, during the Revolution many Presbyterian ministers seem to have decided that the Americans were more virtuous than they had appeared to be during the colonial period.[9]

2. Transformed Americans

The Presbyterian clergy's descriptions of Americans during the French and Indian War and during the American Revolution are remarkably different. During the first conflict the colonists were accused of trading with the enemy, of neglecting the duties of social union, and even of profiting from the misfortunes of others. The clergy apparently believed that the Revolution had brought about a great transformation. Faced with British tyranny, the colonists seemed to become the selfless citizens so longingly described by the clergy during the colonial period.

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[8]Evans, Discourse, 1777, p. 10.

[9]See especially Perry Miller, "From the Covenant to the Revival," Nature's Nation (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), pp. 90-120.

The Presbyterian clergy professed to find that the colonists reacted to British encroachments by renouncing luxury and money-grubbing. The Swiss-born Presbyterian minister John Joachim Zubly was delighted to find that his adopted countrymen were turning their thoughts from "trade, and the means of acquiring wealth, to agriculture and frugality . . . ." Witherspoon, another immigrant, was gratified to observe the change in the colonists. He noted that a people are "apt to grow remiss and lax in a time of prosperity and seeming security . . . ." But adversity would invariably bring them back to the path of frugality and virtue: "when the vanity and passing nature of all created comfort is discovered, they are compelled to look for something more durable as well as valuable." George Duffield painted a glowing portrait of selfless Americans engaged in such a search. Indeed, it appeared that the Presbyterians welcomed the war because it seemed to halt the encroachment of vice and to promote the cause of virtue. In 1777 Benjamin Rush expressed his hope that the military struggle would not end before the concommitant moral reformation had been completed. "A peace at this time," he asserted, "would be the greatest curse that could befall us . . . . Liberty without virtue would be no blessing to us."[10]

If the Revolution appeared to halt the spread of luxury,

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[10]John Joachim Zubly, The Law of Liberty . . . (Philadelphia, 1776), p. xv; Witherspoon, Dominion of Providence, p. 18; Duffield, Sermon, 1783, p. 10; Benjamin Rush to John Adams, Aug. 8, 1777, Lyman H. Butterfield, ed., Letters of Benjamin Rush, (Princeton, 1951), I, 152.

it also seemed to the clergy to promote social unity. British cruelty, Witherspoon observed, had united the colonists as never before. For any group or individual who broke that unity Witherspoon predicted "eternal infamy." Robert Davidson, the Presbyterian minister at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in 1787 remembered that during the Revolution "Every friend of his country embraced another of the same spirit . . . strangers to national or party distinctions." Israel Evans praised the spirit of unity that obtained in the armed forces: "Oh happy union, where all strove to excel in bravery, and the service of our common cause and interest." To this happy state he contrasted the deep divisions between the German and English soldiers in the British army. The military struggle promoted union in the civilian population as well as within the army. Duffield asserted that the prospect of war had brought together America's "numerous husbandmen, her merchants and mechanics; and her sons of the learned professions, and students in every science." Witherspoon even insisted that the war had erased almost all areas of contention among the colonial denominations and charged that only cynical British machinations kept them alive at all.[11]

So impressed were the Presbyterians by American unity that they refused to believe anyone would aid the cause of liberty for merely selfish reasons. George Duffield was

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[11]Witherspoon, Dominion of Providence, pp. 43, 45-46; "On the Controversy about Independence," The Works of John Witherspoon . . . (Edinburgh, 1815), IX, 78, 81; Davidson, Oration, 1787, pp. 10, 8-9, 14; Evans, Discourse, 1777, p. 15; Duffield, Sermon, 1783, p. 18.

adamant even in defending the French king's decision to aid the Americans. To those who accused Louis XVI of acting in his own self-interest, Duffield heatedly rejoined that no such unworthy motives sullied that monarch's aid to the rebel republicans. Furthermore, he continued, there was really no distinction between duty and self-interest. "God has connected duty and interest, by indisolluble /sic/ bonds; nor may either . . . assume the name alone." Thus, the Presbyterians' desire to believe that all combatants were selflessly united in a common cause led them to insist that the manifestly self-interested French monarch was actuated by disinterested, even altruistic, motives.[12]

The most concrete evidence the clergy had for insisting that the colonists had been transformed was the relative stability that attended the collapse of government in many locations during the war. On the eve of the Revolution Witherspoon sensed that the Americans were becoming increasingly "public-spirited." As local governments fluctuated and died, he found that "there has been so great a degree of public spirit, that we have much more reason to be thankful for its vigour and prevalence, than to wonder at the few appearances of dishonesty or disaffection." Though government was weak, he concluded, "yet has there been, by common consent, a much greater degree of order and public peace, than men of reflexion and experience foretold or expected." Neither he nor his colleagues saw fit to change their opinions during

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[12]Duffield, Sermon, 1783, pp. 12, 13.

the course of the conflict. In fact, at the end of the war Evans was convinced that the stability of society could be explained only by the secret activities of citizens who wanted no public applause for their efforts. Consequently, the history of the "astonishing" revolution would surely "unfold many things, at present of a secret nature, which will raise the astonishment almost to the summit of unbelief."[13]

Of course the Presbyterians did not insist that all of the evils of colonial society had evaporated in the face of British tyranny. Witherspoon admitted to being disturbed by "some ostentatious, vaulting expressions in our news papers" that failed to give to God his due credit for military victories. But when he enumerated specifics, he merely condemned the practice of giving ships such names as "Victory," "Thunderer," and "Terrible Firebrand." These he saw as symptoms of "the national character and manners very unfavourable, and not likely to obtain the blessings of the God of Heaven." Witherspoon was also insistent that the Americans must revolt for pure motives only, and when he criticized their impure motives, he did so in the same terms that had been used to criticize colonial society. The Americans must not, he warned, rise

> from a seditious and turbulent spirit, or a wanton contempt of legal authority; from a blind and factious attachment to particular persons or parties; or from a selfish rapacious disposition, and a

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[13]Witherspoon, "Reflections on the Present State of Public Affairs," Works, IX, 72; Dominion of Providence, pp. 45-46; Evans, Discourse, 1783, p. 10.

> desire to turn public confusion to private profit . . . .[14]

It is quite obvious that the Presbyterian clergymen sincerely believed the Revolution had changed the behavior of many colonists. Moreover, there are many reasons to believe that their observation was somewhat justified. But their extravagant claims for a fundamental and instantaneous change resulted from a passionate, even desperate, desire to believe that such a change had in fact occurred. Their assertions measure not the extent of real change but the depth of the Presbyterians' concern about the course of American social development.

3. "The Morning of the World"

The Presbyterians' desperate belief that the Revolution was working a fundamental transformation in many Americans was a necessary prerequisite for their expansive vision of the new republic's future. In 1752 New York's William Smith had traced the course of empire and liberty from the ancient east, through Greece and Rome, to England. Safe in Britain for ages, empire and liberty had been forced to flee even England by the Stuart tyranny. Attracted by the promise of the west,

> Empire and Liberty their radiant Wings
> Expand to quit the sluggish eastern world;
> And cross the vast Atlantic meditate
> Their airy Passage to these western Climes,
> In quest of some Retreat to sojourn safe
> Till Time shall end . . . .

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[14]Witherspoon, Dominion of Providence, pp. 35-38, 45, 47, 57-58; quotations on pp. 35, 38.

Smith then depicted liberty and empire happily sojourning in the west and bringing numerous blessings to the Americans. But his poem ended with the demise of the American empire as even the virtuous westerners succumbed to luxury, dissipation, and the ineluctable cycle of history.

> Empire and liberty would sojourn in America only
> until again (when we
> Diseas'd and sunk, are ripe for Death) they're call'd
> By Fate to bless a Race of more Desert.

Inevitably empire and liberty resumed their westward course. America was simply one of many stages in the rhythm of history.[15]

In 1771 two young Princetonians, Philip Morin Freneau and Hugh Henry Brackenridge, collaborated on a commencement poem in which they described a very different view of history and of America's role in history. A Poem on the Rising Glory of America was suffused with an ecstatic vision of America as the culmination of history. The two Princetonians, like Smith, traced the course of empire through Egypt, Greece, Rome, and England. They then followed liberty and empire across the Atlantic to America where virtuous sons of Britain would in due course raise on the Ohio and Mississippi empires to rival Greece and Rome. For Freneau and Brackenridge, though, history was not cyclical. Rather, all the past had been prelude to the day now dawning in America:

> 'Tis out the morning of the world with us
> And science yet but sheds her orient rays.
> I see the age[,] the happy age roll on,

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[15]William Smith, Some Thoughts on Education . . . (New York, 1752), p. 23.

Bright with the splendours of her mid-day beams.

Rather than another epoch in the cycle of history, America was the penultimate stage in the upward progression that would culminate gloriously in nothing less than the millennium.

> They sing the final destiny of things,
> The great result of all our labours here,
> The last day's glory,
> and the world renew'd.
> Such are their themes[,] for in these happier days
> The bard enraptur'd scorns ignoble strains,
> Fair science smiling and full truth revealed,
> The world at peace, and all her tumults o'er,
> The blissful prelude to Emanuel's reign.[16]

The youthful enthusiasm of Freneau and Brackenridge was shared by more sedate, older, and graver Presbyterians. In 1776 George Duffield proclaimed America the last "city of refuge" for freedom, already banished from Asia, Africa, and Europe. John J. Zubly agreed that America was "the last asylum of liberty." Duffield in 1783 stressed the westward progress of knowledge that would spread across the North American continent following independence. Israel Evans in the same year hailed America as "the new theatre" and "the last concluding scene," of the perfection of art and science. John Witherspoon noted that many saw the westward movement of religion, riches, literature, and the arts as leading inevitably to America's future glory. While he admitted that this was a matter of conjucture, he noted, "if your principles are pure,--and if your conduct is prudent, you need not

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[16] [Freneau, Philip M. and Hugh H. Brackenridge], A Poem on the Rising Glory of America . . . (Philadelphia, 1772), pp. 34, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27; quotations on pp. 24, 25.

fear the multitude of opposing hosts." And America's principles were surely pure because her cause was that of "justice, of liberty, and of human nature."[17]

The enthusiasm of Witherspoon about the future of America is significant because it had led him to relinquish a secure living in Scotland to unite his fate with that of the colonies. A staunch Calvinist who firmly believed in the depravity of human nature, the Scotsman nevertheless waxed eloquent on the subject of America's future, be it in the classroom at Princeton, in public print, or in the Continental Congress, where he served as that body's only clerical member. Reflecting that the growth of America had been "next to miraculous," he described

> A country growing every year in beauty and fertility, the people growing in numbers and wealth, arts, and sciences, carefully cultivated, and constantly advancing . . . .

In the Congress he risked sounding "visionary and romantic" by declaring that he expected in the colonies "a progress, as in every other human art, so in the order and perfection of human society, greater than we have yet seen . . . ." He went so far as to make the very uncalvinistic statement that "There have been great improvements, not only in human knowledge, but in human nature . . . ." These improvements, he asserted, would flourish best in a free and virtuous America,

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[17]Sermon by George Duffield, April, 1776, quoted in Herbert Adams Gibbons, "Old Pine Street Church, Philadelphia, in the Revolutionary War," JPHS, III (June, 1904), 73; Zubly, Law of Liberty, p. xvii; Duffield, Sermon, 1783, p. 17; Evans, Discourse, 1783, p. 8; Witherspoon, Dominion of Providence, p. 40.

upon which the "state of the human race through a great part of the globe, for ages to come" depended.[18] If the "morning of the world" was dawning in America, in other parts of the world darkness was quickly descending.

4. The American as Republican

The Presbyterians' belief that they lived in the "morning of the world" was strengthened by the fact that within one decade the Americans embarked upon two unprecedented experiments. The Declaration of Independence and the federal Constitution seemed to the Presbyterians innovations that opened a new era and demanded the utmost exertion of Americans. A country "newly planted, and every day advancing to a maturer state," Witherspoon declared, "affords the highest delight to a contemplative philosopher, and is, at the same time, the strongest invitation to activity and usefulness." Witherspoon's friend Benjamin Rush agreed with his mentor. To John Adams Rush affirmed in 1788, "We live in an important era and in a new country." In America an individual might accomplish much for the good of mankind. "America has ever appeared to me to be the theater on which human nature will reach its greatest civil, literary, and religious honors. Now is the time to sow the seeds of each of them." And in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, the Presbyterian minister John King enjoined the members of the Franklin Society to study civil

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[18]Witherspoon, "Reflections on the Present State of Public Affairs," Works, IX, 67, 70; "Speech in Congress Upon the Confederation," Works, IX, 139-141; "On Conducting the American Controversy, Works, IX, 87.

government because they had the unique chance of starting a new and perfect political and social system.[19]

The system to which King referred was, of course, republicanism.[20] The enthusiasm with which the Americans embraced republicanism was remarkable and indicates that the republican ideology seemed to provide answers to fundamental colonial problems. Looking back to the ancient republics of Greece and Rome, the colonists idealized a system of representative government that appeared to mediate between the excesses of alternative political systems. In a republic the people participated in the political system through elected officials, who were theoretically the most virtuous men of the polity. These men were supposed to prevent the excesses into which a pure democracy would inevitably run. At the same time they were supposed to check the naturally tyrannical tendencies of a monarchy. They thus promoted a judicious balance between anarchy and tyranny. It was for this reason that the colonists were convinced that only in a republic could liberty survive.[21]

The colonists' attachment to republicanism was intense despite the universal acknowledgement that republicanism was

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[19]Witherspoon, "The Druid, No. 1," Works, IX, 230; Rush to John Adams, July 2, 1788, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 468-469; Carlisle Pennsylvania Gazette, May 25, 1789.

[20]See especially Wood, Creation of the American Republic, Chapter II.

[21]Benjamin Rush, "A Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools . . . To Which Are Added, Thoughts upon the Mode of Education, Proper in a Republic," in Frederick Rudolph, ed., Essays on Education in the Early Republic (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), p. 15.

the most vulnerable of all political systems. When they looked back to the ancient republics, the colonists saw that both Greece and Rome had decayed and perished.[22] Moreover, when the Americans sought republican models in the eighteenth century, they found only struggling miniscule states surrounded by ambitious monarchies. Benjamin Rush in the 1780's sought ways to increase the life of a republic "far beyond the terms limited for them by history or the common opinions of mankind." John Witherspoon accepted the belief that republics were short-lived but insisted that such a government could be established on "the best principles, and in the wisest manner" and that at least it would last "as long as the nature of things will admit."[23]

Republics were believed to be of short duration because they were particularly intricate and delicate systems. The relations between the electorate, the representatives, and the society's ruler were of necessity more complicated than the tyranny of an unrestrained monarch or the anarchy of an uncontrolled democracy. Moreover, those intricate relations afforded numerous opportunities for corruption and the neglect of duty. A representative might gain election by appealing to the prejudices of the electorate; or the people might succumb to the blandishments of an artful demagogue. Beyond these problems, the delicate system of balances and

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[22] Car. Gaz., Aug. 10, 1785.

[23] Rush, "Establishment of Public Schools," Rudolph, ed., Essays, p. 15; Witherspoon, "Speech in Congress Upon the Confederation," Works, IX, 139.

checks within a republic might be subverted by evil men. Thus, Charles Nisbet, the first President of Dickinson College, could speak of "the intricate Business of Government"; and the college's Board could refer to the Americans' "peculiarly complicated Form of Union and Government."[24]

Ultimately republics were thought to be precarious polities because they were dependent upon a virtuous citizenry for their success. Only virtuous men were capable of choosing the best qualified men for positions of leadership and of resisting the emotional appeals of scheming demagogues. Only virtuous men could rise above selfish interests and seek a larger common good. Only virtue, Nisbet insisted, in 1789, could balance the interests and ambitions of individuals. Even if virtuous men were elected to positions of leadership, Rush stated in 1786, public bodies in a republic could do no more good than the public would allow. If citizens were not virtuous, it mattered not how virtuous their leaders were. Vice, Witherspoon stated, made any people "ripe for destruction." Good government could halt the process for a time and "hold the rotten materials together for some time . . . ." But "beyond a certain pitch even the best constitution will be ineffectual, and slavery must ensue." Virtue, on the other hand, would save the nation from all its enemies. A virtuous people, according to Witherspoon, was an invincible

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[24]Charles Nisbet, Extract of a Sermon preached at Carlisle, May 11, 1786, Charles Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.; Dickinson College Board of Trustees to John Dickinson, Sept. 29, 1784, in Charter and Proceedings of the Trustees of Dickinson College, I, 133 (Typescript of MSS, D.C.L.). Hereafter cited as Dick. Bd. Min.

people. In the Carlisle Pennsylvania Gazette "Philo" agreed with the Presbyterian educator as did Benjamin Rush. "Philo" asserted that only public virtue and knowledge could preserve a republic, while Rush declared that "where the common people are ignorant and vicious, a nation, and above all a republican nation, can never be long free and happy." By 1789 the relation between virtue and republicanism was so well established in the public mind that Nisbet could state with no fear of contradiction that "A Republic can never be just till a great Majority of her Citizens are virtuous."[25]

Because they were dependent upon public virtue, republics obviously had to be instituted when the people were the most virtuous. In 1776 Thomas Paine had warned the colonists that "the time hath found us," and part of the impact of Common Sense derived from its sense of urgency. Paine urged the colonists to declare their independence while they were still virtuous enough to institute and pursue a common good. "Youth," he asserted, "is the seed time of good habits, as well in nations as in individuals." In fifty years the colonies would be old, feeble, and corrupt--like England. Nations have but one chance to form the correct form of government; therefore Paine urged the Americans not to miss theirs.[26]

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[25]Nisbet, Commencement oration, June 2, 1789, p. 20, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.; Rush to Richard Price, Apr. 22, 1786, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 386; Witherspoon, "The Druid, No. 1," Works, IX, 231; Dominion of Providence, p. 51; Car. Gaz., Aug. 10, 1785; Rush, "To the Citizens of Philadelphia: A Plan for Free Schools," Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 413.

[26]Thomas Paine, Common Sense and the Crisis (Garden City, N.Y., 1960), pp. 43, 49.

The Presbyterians shared Paine's sense of urgency. Indeed, in the years after 1776 they became convinced that the activity and exertion accompanying the Revolution provided the perfect opportunity for instituting republican government and that to hesitate would be to miss that crucial time described by Paine. In the early days of the Revolution Witherspoon observed that troubled times had an extraordinary effect on a people. "In times of public commotion," he asserted, "the human mind is roused, and shakes off the incumbrances of sloth and self-inculgence." After independence had been won, the Presbyterians believed that Americans, no longer slothful and self-indulgent, were possessed of a flexible frame of mind that would allow fundamental changes in American society. King lauded the "spirit of inquiry, and that noble elevation of soul" that characterized revolutionary Americans, while Rush spoke of the "spring which the human mind acquired by the Revolution . . . ." It was as if the Revolution had been a searing flame that had softened the usual forms of habits of colonial society. Sensing the malleability of an agitated society, men like Rush were insistent that changes be made immediately before society again hardened and reform became impossible. Rush asserted that the "minds of our people have not as yet lost the yielding texture they acquired by the heat of the late Revolution." Now flexible, the colonists could receive "new impressions and habits of all kinds," whereas in even three years the situation would be very different. The time had indeed found the Presbyterians, and Rush feared that the time alloted America for

creating a virtuous government and society was much shorter than the fifty years predicted by Tom Paine.[27]

Not all Presbyterians were convinced that Americans were virtuous enough to sustain a republican government. If Benjamin Rush was supremely confident of the virtue of Americans, Charles Nisbet remained unconvinced. The relationship between Nisbet and Rush is a very significant one because the men represented the two extremes of the Presbyterians' attitudes toward the capacity of Americans to sustain a republican government. When the Dickinson College Board began to seek a president for the new school in 1783, Rush immediately suggested a Scottish minister, Charles Nisbet, who he believed would serve the new school with the same vigor which characterized Witherspoon's administration of Princeton. In 1783 Rush implored Nisbet to follow Witherspoon across the Atlantic; "Come, sir," he cried, "and spread the influence of science and religion among us." In glowing terms Rush depicted a ductile society waiting to be developed to the height of human perfection.

> Here every thing is in a plastic state. Here the benefactor of mankind may realize all his schemes for promoting human happiness. Human nature here (unsubdued by the tyranny of European habits and customs) yields to reason, justice, and common sense.

In this happy condition, Rush continued, America "seems destined by heaven to exhibit to the world the perfection which

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[27]Witherspoon, "The Druid, No. 1," Works, IX, 230-231; Car. Gaz., Mar. 25, 1789; Rush to Richard Price, Oct. 15, 1785, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 371; Rush, "Establishment of Public Schools," Rudolph, ed., Essays, pp. 22-23.

the mind of man is capable of receiving from the combined operation of liberty, learning, and the gospel upon it."[28]

Rush had every reason to believe that Nisbet would reply affirmatively to his invitation. The Scottish parson had supported the colonists during the war for independence, and he had been in the forefront of the effort to rid Scottish politics of patronage and corruption. To his friend the Earl of Buchan, Nisbet in 1782 had acknowledged that his opponents thought him visionary to expect from men virtues that are found only in Plato's republic. "But surely," he asserted, "it is no utopian dream to expect a much higher degree of virtue and public spirit than is presently the ton among great men."[29] Both the Scottish minister and the American physician agreed, then, that men could be made more virtuous this side of utopia.

Nisbet sailed to America in 1784 and was warmly received and grandly entertained by the cosmopolitan society of Philadelphia. Upon arriving on the frontier at Carlisle, though, he began to realize just how far from utopia he actually was. He was appalled at what he considered the selfishness rampant in America, and as for public virtue, he could find none. "America will doubtless be a great and flourishing empire," he assured the Earl of Buchan in 1785, "but it must undergo a great change before it becomes so. They must have

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[28]Rush to Charles Nisbet, Dec. 5, 1783, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 316.

[29]Nisbet to Earl of Buchan, Nov. 12, 1782, in Samuel Miller, Memoir of the Rev. Charles Nisbet . . . (New York, 1840), pp. 96-97.

more virtue, more industry, and more confidence in one another than at present." As Nisbet ever more vehemently criticized America, Rush's warm enthusiasm for the Scotsman quickly became glacial scorn. As this became obvious to Nisbet, he reciprocated. In icy tones he announced to Rush his decision to return to Scotland. Nisbet was persuaded finally to remain in America, but he never recovered the enthusiasm that had led him to cross the Atlantic in 1784. Perhaps, he stated, "I was too vain of the Opportunity that was offered me of disseminating right Notions and sound Doctrine over a large Country."[30]

When he suggested that the size of America had prevented the promotion of virtue, Nisbet echoed Montesquieu's dictum that republics could succeed only in small, homogeneous areas. In large, heterogeneous areas the system of representation broke down, and the polity inevitably succumbed to anarchy, which was usually followed by the imposition of a despotic absolute ruler. Nisbet was sure that this process was under way in America, where men of various backgrounds moved about a huge country and lost all sense of community. To a friend in Scotland he stated in 1787,

> As this new world is unfortunately composed . . . of discordant atoms, jumbled together by chance, and tossed by inconstancy in an immense vacuum; it greatly wants a principle of attraction and cohesion.[31]

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[30]Nisbet to Earl of Buchan, Dec. 15, 1785, in ibid., p. 139; Nisbet to Rush, Aug. 18, 1785, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.

[31]Nisbet to Rev. James Paton, Jan. 10, 1787, in Miller, Memoir, p. 167.

By 1787 Nisbet was convinced that the Americans were not made of the stuff of republicans. In that year he publicly attacked Rush and the Dickinson College Board, calling America a country completely devoid of honor, justice, and public faith. He warned his students that in a republic there were no artificial distinctions between men; consequently, all public order depended upon "industry, knowledge, and virtue." These, he constantly informed his charges, were totally lacking in America. "By the abuse of liberty and independency since the late revolution," he declared in 1788, "all outward restraints have been taken away from men." Consequently, knaves were preferred to the most virtuous men for public office. But, he declared in 1789, such things, "must be expected in Republics, especially in a corrupt State of morals and taste, which unfortunately is the case with us at present in this Country."[32]

While Nisbet condemned all Americans as unvirtuous and uncivilized, Benjamin Rush, believing that Americans were virtuous, busied himself with a multitude of projects that were intended to make them ever more civilized. By 1795 he could only marvel at the solid progress made by the new republic. To the Earl of Buchan, who was his friend as well as Nisbet's, he exclaimed,

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[32]Mr. Hall to Rush, Sept., 1787, Correspondence of Benjamin Rush relative to Dickinson College (Microfilm in Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia); hereafter cited as Rush Corr.; Nisbet, October Vacation Oration, 1788, pp. 20-21, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.; Second Commencement Oration, May 7, 1788, pp. 9-10, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.; Third Commencement Oration, June 2, 1789, p. 22, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.

> The United States continue to demonstrate by their internal order and external prosperity the practicability, safety, and happiness of republican forms of government among a people too educated for monarchical principles and habits.

Nothing could have been further from the pessimism of Charles Nisbet, who in the previous year had described to his friend Ashbel Green the latest election campaign in Carlisle. In biting sarcasm Nisbet explained that the local shoemaker, who was also the sheriff, had been persuaded to run for the United States Congress because of his unchallenged expertise in arousing mobs and conducting Liberty Pole meetings. In the year of the Whiskey Rebellion, Nisbet expected the shoemaker-sheriff to carry the day.[33]

Rush and Nisbet in 1783 had shared an enthusiasm for erecting in Carlisle a school to provide virtuous citizens for the American republic. But within two years the men became hopelessly alienated and bitterly attacked each other. Rush found Nisbet despicable because the Scotsman failed to seize enthusiastically the opportunity to educate young republicans. Rush stated in 1786 that Nisbet was unable--even unworthy--"to inspire young men with the heroic principles of good republicans, or good christians!" The Scotsman, Rush charged, lacked the very virtue and public spirit he accused the Americans of not having. Disgusted by Nisbet's constant complaints about his salary, teaching conditions, and the climate of Carlisle, Rush could only wish that the Scotsman

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[33]Rush to Earl of Buchan, June 25, 1795, Butterfield, ed., Letters, II, 761; Nisbet to Ashbel Green, Oct. 14, 1794, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.

possessed the "disinterested benevolences--the active public Spirit, and the fortitude in duty" that had characterized Finley, Burr, and Davies, the giants of colonial Presbyterianism. Nisbet, on the other hand, berated Rush for luring him to America with false estimates of the American character. In the end each man accused the other of having the same basic flaw. Each accused the other of lacking the expansive selflessness necessary for the success of the republic. Rush knew just to whom Nesbet referred when the Scotsman pointedly observed in 1785 that "There seems to be a want of Virtue and publick Spirit somewhere."[34]

Without that virtue and public spirit, Nisbet believed that the republican experiment was doomed to failure. Looking back to the selfishness and contention of Americans during the French and Indian War, many Presbyterian ministers were inclined to agree with him. But these same men--men like Witherspoon and John King--also believed that they saw a fundamental change taking place in American society; consequently, they shared some of Rush's enthusiasm for the republic's future.

5. The Republican as Christian

Charles Nisbet's pessimism about the future of America was tempered somewhat by two events that occurred almost simultaneously in 1789. In that year George Washington was inaugurated as the first President of a united republic, and

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[34]Rush to John Montgomery, Oct. 18, 1786; Rush to Montgomery, Apr. 29, 1786, Rush Corr.; Nisbet to Rush, July 23, 1785, Rush Corr.

the leaders of American Presbyterianism established a General Assembly to unite the denomination's members throughout the new nation. The conjunction of the two events seemed providential to the Presbyterians. They stressed the structural similarities between the ecclesiastical system of presbyterianism and the political system of republicanism. In both systems ultimate power resided in the people, who elected representatives to ruling bodies that were subject to written constitutions and that operated through majority rule. The Presbyterians firmly believed that their system was the surest defense against religious tyranny, just as republicanism was the best protection against civil absolutism. Consequently, they embraced one as enthusiastically as the other.

But the Presbyterians knew well the dangers involved in adopting a republican government, and all were not as convinced as Rush that Americans were virtuous enough to sustain such a political system.[35] Still in the person of Washington they found reassurance. For the President was not merely a republican; he was a Christian republican. The new General Assembly directed Witherspoon and his son-in-law

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[35]For discussions of the equation of republicanism and presbyterianism see William P. Breed, Presbyterians and the Revolution (Philadelphia, 1876), pp. 1-25; Walter B. Posey, Frontier Mission . . . (Lexington, Ky., 1966), p. 144; Thomas C. Pears, Jr., "Presbyterianism and American Freedom," JPHS, XXIX (June, 1951), 78-79; and William B. Miller, "Presbyterian Signers of the Declaration of Independence," JPHS, XXXVI (Sept., 1958), 139-180. For a more pointed and informed discussion see Alice M. Baldwin, "Sowers of Sedition: The Political Theories of the New Light Presbyterian Clergy of Virginia and North Carolina," The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., V (Jan., 1948), 52-76.

Samuel Stanhope Smith to compose an address to Washington, expressing the Presbyterians' confidence in the republic's success under his leadership. In the address the Presbyterians expressed succinctly the basis for their confidence: "Public virtue is the most certain means of public felicity; and religion is the surest basis of virtue." The new federal government and the new ecclesiastical body would flourish because in the final analysis they were dependent not upon republicans, but upon Christian republicans.[36]

The relationship between republicanism and Christianity was not an obvious one. The ancient republics of Greece and Rome manifestly had not been Christian, and the paganism of the first republicans frequently proved an embarrassment to their eighteenth century admirers. However, just as Samuel Davies had endowed King David with Protestant virtues, so did the revolutionary Presbyterians stress those attributes which the ancients shared with orthodox Calvinists--a veneration of a supreme being, devotion to the common good, and patriotism.

Benjamin Rush was among the most enthusiastic Presbyterian defenders of republicanism, and he also most thoroughly equated republicanism with Christianity. This equation he based on his conviction that "All truths are related, or rather there is but one truth." To Jeremy Belknap he asserted in 1791 that "Republicanism is a part of the truth

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[36]Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly . . . From A.D. 1789, to A.D. 1802 . . . (Philadelphia, 1803), 1789, p. 5.

of Christianity." And to John Adams in 1789 he observed, "The precepts of the Gospel and the maxims of republics in many instances agree with each other." To be a republican one had to be a Christian. This unity of truth greatly strengthened the Presbyterians' confidence in the republic and enabled them to refute those who predicted its early demise. For in the heady first days of the republic it was obvious to the Presbyterians that the God who had aided in the war for independence now reigned over a thoroughly Christian nation.[37]

Rush insisted that since republicanism and Christianity were but parts of a unitary truth, one would follow the other if the law of nature was allowed to take its course. At one point he saw republicanism as preceding Christianity. In 1791 he stated to Elhanon Winchester, "Republican forms of government are the best repositories of the Gospel: I therefore suppose they are intended as preludes to a glorious manifestation of its power and influence upon the hearts of men." The voice of "these free and equal governments" seemed to Rush to be like the voice of John the Baptist preparing the way for the Messiah. But to Thomas Jefferson he described Christianity preparing the way for republicanism: "I have always considered Christianity as the <u>strong ground of republicanism</u> . . . ." Regardless of which preceded the other, he insisted that "It is only necessary for republicanism to

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[37]Rush to Jeremy Belknap, June 5, 1791, Butterfield, ed., <u>Letters</u>, I, 584; Rush to Adams, July 21, 1789, <u>ibid</u>., I, 523.

ally itself to the Christian religion to overturn all the corrupted political and religious institutions in the world."[38]

The Christian republican was the only truly effective defender of liberty, Rush asserted. Without religion, he stated, "there can be no virtue, and without virtue there can be no liberty, and liberty is the object and life of all republican governments." Consequently, he would rather a boy be taught a pagan religion than no religion at all. Religion, particularly the Christian religion, was essential to republicanism because it impressed upon men the fact that they were part of a larger community to which they owed certain duties. "A Christian . . . cannot fail of being a republican, for every precept of the Gospel inculcates . . . humility, self-denial, and brotherly kindness . . . ." In short, Christianity taught that no man "liveth to himself."[39]

6. "No man liveth to himself."

The Presbyterians believed that the success of the American republic would be decided not on the settled seaboard but on the trans-Appalachian frontier. The Presbyterians' response to the more limited frontier of colonial America had been mixed. The New Sides tended to respond enthusiastically to the opportunities it offered, while the Old Sides stressed the danger it represented to ordered society. In the Revolutionary period the frontier became of crucial

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[38]Rush to Elhanon Winchester, Nov. 12, 1791, ibid., I, 611; Rush to Thomas Jefferson, Aug. 22, 1800, ibid., II, 821.

[39]Rush to Adams, Apr. 13, 1790, ibid., I, 545; Rush, "Establishment of Public Schools," Rudolph, ed., Essays, pp. 10-11.

importance because it seemed to menace the success of the republican experiment. Just as the Presbyterian ministers convinced themselves that the colonists were uniting and abandoning their former ways, the opening frontier began to lure men away from ordered society into the wilderness, where selfishness was rampant and where, it was feared, each man did in fact "live to himself."

The Presbyterians responded to the frontier with the same sense of urgency that characterized their response to the need for a new political system. In 1779 the Presbytery of Hanover reported to the synod that "there appears at present in many parts of . . . [Virginia] a very favourable disposition towards religion in general, and towards the Presbyterian church in particular . . . ." The presbytery therefore urged the synod to send missionaries to Virginia immediately. If the synod acted quickly, the presbytery reasoned, the congregations that would be established would be "permanent and fixed," whereas if the Presbyterians hesitated for only a few years, the opportunity would be "utterly lost by the prevalency and pre-occupying of many ignorant and irreligious sectaries . . . ." Just as the Americans must embrace republicanism while society was still pliable, so must the Presbyterians become missionaries while the frontier was still capable of being saved.[40]

The most urgent task for the Presbyterians on the frontier was the maintenance of a sense of community.

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[40]May 21, 1779, Records of the Presbyterian Church . . . (Philadelphia, 1841), p. 484.

Dangerously weak in the settled areas, the community was threatened with extinction on the frontier. The Presbyterians argued that without a strong sense of communal identity and obligations, the frontiersman would immediately succumb to selfishness and contention. Virtue would perish and with it the republic. Only Christianity could avert this catastrophe. In 1792 the new Presbytery of Transylvania in Kentucky expressed the interrelation between religion and social union. When one of its churches requested permission to divide into two churches, the presbytery refused on the grounds that such a division would cause men to consider their own interests above that of a larger unit. Christianity, it stated, "strongly and directly leads us to mutual love and good will and to consult the true interests of one another as individuals or societies, looking everyone not on his own things, but on the things of his neighbour . . . ." Only religion could force men on the frontier to consult the good of a larger whole over their own selfish desires.[41]

The Presbyterians were divided as to whether Americans were virtuous enough to sustain this indispensable sense of community on the frontier. Again Rush and Nisbet may be taken as representative of the extremes of the differing attitudes. Charles Nisbet did not realize the extent to which America was still a frontier society when he sailed from Scotland in 1784. Moreover, his first contact with the genteel culture

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[41]Oct. 6, 1792, Minutes of the Transylvania Presbytery, p. 75 (Microfilm in U.T.S.).

of the Quaker capital ill-prepared him for life on the frontier. It was not until he had traveled the 150 miles west to Carlisle that he began to regret his emigration. Upon arriving in Carlisle he began a tirade against the American frontier that did not cease until his death in 1804. Indeed, the very essence of his pessimism concerning America was his conviction that the frontier could not sustain communal life and that the frontier was synonymous with American society.

In a series of letters to his friend Alexander Addison, an attorney in Pittsburgh, Nisbet in 1786 outlined his attitude toward the American republican as frontiersman. The frontiersmen Nisbet found to resemble "the wandering Arabs." He regretted the "loco-motive tendency" of the frontiersmen but found it impossible to convince them that it was in any way prejudicial to their own best interests. Their desire for extensive farms and wide pastures, he contended, "throws them so far from one another, as to bar social Intercourse" and deprives them "of all the Advantages and Pleasures of Society." If some way could be found to persuade them to love each other and live nearer each other, "they would be mutual Helps, instead of distant Enemies to one another."[42]

Isolated on his individual farm, each man ceased to function as part of an orderly whole. That process began when he was no longer stimulated by others with whom he shared a communal interest, according to Nisbet. The separation from

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[42]Nisbet to Alexander Addison, Oct. 21, 1786; Jan. 26, 1786, Letters of Charles Nisbet to Alexander Addison, 1786-1803, University of Pittsburgh Library.

society actually affected the mental processes: "The Minds of Men separated from Society, increase in ignorance, Prejudice and Indolence, being deprived of that Stimulation which is necessary to excite their active Powers and convey Information to their Minds." From weakening the mental faculties, social separation advanced to diminishing the moral faculties, which were dependent upon the mind for their strength. "The Restraint of Conscience must wear off," Nisbet warned, "and evil Appetities gather Strength in an imperfect and Scattered Society." When conscience is weakened, Nisbet continued, it is only a matter of time until the frontiersman ceases to attend to the duties of religion upon which all social order hangs. This immediately "unhinges Credit, overturns Decency, and destroys the Habits of Order and the Sense of Public Spirit." Without order and public spirit the republic could not be sustained.[43]

Nisbet firmly believed that the Americans lacked the virtue to sustain a community voluntarily. He therefore recommended that they be coerced into doing so. He noted that necessity had forced the New Englanders to settle in small, tightly-knit, homogeneous communities. He longingly looked back to the privations and dangers that had dictated this laudable pattern of settlement and actually despaired that the removal of the Indian threat now allowed men to fly off in all directions. If ever virtue and order were to prevail on the frontier, the settlers, he asserted, must be driven

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[43]Nisbet to Addison, May 26, 1786; Jan. 26, 1786; Oct. 21, 1786, ibid.

together by force and by a sense of common danger. The Jews, the Greeks, and Romans under Romulus and Numa had been forced into organic communities by "military Discipline, civil Polity, and the Laws of Religion . . . ." America was just past the bellicose formative age of Romulus, but, Nisbet warned, if order and unity were not revived--by force if necessary--the republic would never enter the splendid peaceful age of Numa.[44]

Benjamin Rush, of course, shared Nisbet's concern about the frontier and was vitally aware of the frontier's importance to the success of the republic. He was particularly concerned that Scotch-Irish Presbyterians composed the bulk of Pennsylvania's immigrants to the frontier, and he tried to limit the flow to "the wilderness of the Ohio or Kentucke." He particularly sought to convince the Scotch-Irish to stay in one place long enough to establish roots and a sense of community. To William Linn in 1784 he stated, "I wish to see the paternal house and farm more valued by our people . . . ." And the fastidious Rush was always horrified at the state of disrepair of Scotch-Irish farms and recommended to his fellow Presbyterians the omnipresent example of the tidy Germans.[45]

But, unlike Nisbet, Rush did not view the frontier in apocalyptic terms. Rather, he saw the taming and civilizing

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[44]Nisbet to Addison, May 26, 1786, ibid.

[45]Rush to William Linn, May 4, 1784, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 333; "To American Farmers About to Settle in New Parts of the United States," ibid., I, 503.

of the frontier as a process of three stages of pioneers, the first two quickly giving way to the third stage, when the frontier became indistinguishable from the rest of society. Rush granted that in the first phase the frontier was settled by vicious men who usually had been forced to flee from civilization. On the frontier they degenerated and refused to give up any of their rights for the good of the whole. But even these men Rush could praise for their friendliness and for their ability to help each other in a crisis. In the second phase the frontiersman owned a little property and began to take an interest in the larger community, even if he did spend too much time drinking and politicking. Rush felt that the Pennsylvania frontier was in the second phase of development in the 1780's. And he expected the third type of settler soon to begin moving to the frontier. He was a man of property and character, usually the ambitious son of a respected family of the more settled areas. He farmed scientifically and "In proportion as he increases in wealth, he values the protection of the laws." He therefore pays taxes and supports churches and schools "as the means of promoting order and happiness of society."[46]

Rush, then, believed that virtuous, industrious, and sober Americans would quickly settle the frontier and make

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[46]Rush to Thomas Percival, Oct. 26, 1786, ibid., I, 401-404. See also Guy S. Klett, "The Presbyterian Church and the Scotch-Irish on the Pennsylvania Colonial Frontier," Pennsylvania History, VIII (Apr., 1941), 97-109.

of it an ordered and prosperous part of American society. The Christian virtue that would sustain the republic would do so by conquering selfishness and contention on the frontier. The pessimism of Nisbet was totally uncongenial to Rush's enthusiasm about the future of America. Between these extremes were the majority of Presbyterian clergymen, many of whom shared some of Nisbet's doubts but who wanted desperately to believe that Rush was the more accurate prophet.

A CONTRACTING COMMUNITY:

AMERICAN PRESBYTERIANS, SOCIAL CONFLICT, AND HIGHER EDUCATION

1730-1820

by
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CHAPTER VI

REPUBLICAN TENSIONS

The main thrust of colonial Presbyterianism had been a sustained effort to rid American society of social conflict. During the Great Schism both sides momentarily justified such conflict in the turmoil attending the Great Awakening. But the imperatives of social union proved strong enough to heal even that acrimonious division. During the era of the American Revolution the eradication of conflict from American society was seen as a prerequisite for the success of the republican experiment. That experiment, however, produced tumults even more severe than those that accompanied the Great Awakening. The revolutionary turmoils again precipitated divisions among American Presbyterians, and the divisions, in turn, led some Presbyterians to embrace once more a justification of social conflict. More so than in the colonial period the divisions within Presbyterianism were related directly to the question of the cultural function of higher education. The tensions occasioned by the republican revolution are reflected in the Presbyterians' efforts to define republican education and to discover the relation of social conflict to higher education.

1. Institutions and the Revolution

The Presbyterian founders of Princeton intended the school to be a dynamic instrument of social reformation and

integration. During the Revolutionary period the Presbyterians had every reason to believe that under Witherspoon their school was beginning to have the desired effect on the development of American society. For between 1775 and 1785 graduates of Princeton laid the foundations of what amounted to a Presbyterian educational empire. In the Shenandoah Valley and the South Side of Virginia, in western Pennsylvania, and in the Bluegrass country of central Kentucky, revolutionary America felt the impact of a vital social institution as the sons of Princeton established frontier colleges.[1]

In Virginia the arrival of two Princeton graduates jarred the Hanover Presbytery out of its lethargy and inspired the Presbyterians to revitalize an existing school and establish a new one. In 1749 a Presbyterian minister, Robert Alexander, had established the Augusta Academy near Lexington, Virginia, for the purpose of training local young men for the ministry. For the next quarter century the school served no other purpose. In 1774 William Graham, a native of Pennsylvania and a 1773 graduate of Princeton, appeared in the Valley and immediately urged the necessity of a vigorous school under the presbytery's control. The presbytery responded immediately to the enthusiasm of the young man and reported that it considered a school "for the liberal Education of Youth" to be "of great and immediate Importance." At Graham's urging the presbytery officially assumed

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[1]See particularly Donald Robert Come, "The Influence of Princeton on Higher Education in the South Before 1825," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., II (Oct., 1945), 359-396.

responsibility for the Augusta Academy and placed the young Princetonian in charge of the school.[2]

Just as the presbytery assumed charge of the Augusta Academy, Graham was joined in Virginia by his classmate, Samuel Stanhope Smith, who was Witherspoon's most promising student and future son-in-law. The handsome and eloquent Smith all but mesmerized the men of the Hanover Presbytery. It is not too much to say that they created a school for him in order to keep him in their midst. They carefully delimited Graham's school to the area west of the Blue Ridge and established a school east of the Blue Ridge in Prince Edward County for Smith. Opening its doors on January 1, 1776, the academy was named Hampden-Sydney for two heroes of the English civil war, John Hampden and Algernon Sydney.[3]

Hampden-Sydney was founded in the year of the Declaration of Independence; Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania was established as a thanks offering to God for the American success in the war fought to vindicate that document. Again a Princeton graduate was the principal moving force behind the school's creation. Benjamin Rush, who had graduated under Samuel Davies, began efforts in 1782 to establish a school in Carlisle. Those efforts were "providentially revived" in 1783 by the winning of American independence, and

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[2]Oct. 13, 1774, Minutes of the Hanover Presbytery, II, 55 (Photostat in U.T.S.)

[3]Oct. 14, 1774, ibid., pp. 57-58; William H. Whitsitt, Life and Times of Judge Caleb Wallace (Louisville, 1888), p. 63.

the school was established in that year.[4]

Princeton graduates also established colleges on a frontier that opened suddenly after the Revolution. John McMillan, Joseph Smith, and Thaddeus Dod in the early 1780's established in Washington and Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, two schools that were intended to serve the growing Presbyterian population around Pittsburgh. At about the same time immigrants from Virginia established Lexington, Kentucky, in the center of the Bluegrass country. Immediately Presbyterians moved to establish an institution of higher learning, and again Princetonians were in the forefront of the effort. Rev. David Rice, another of Davies' graduates, who also had been instrumental in founding Hampden-Sydney before moving to Kentucky, led the effort by the Transylvania Presbytery to establish Transylvania Seminary. He was assisted by Caleb Wallace, a Princeton graduate who had helped establish both Presbyterian schools in Virginia before immigrating to Kentucky.

The spate of colleges founded immediately before and after the Revolution reflects the Presbyterians' increasing awareness of the importance of institutions to social development. Colonial Presbyterians had lived in a society in which social institutions did not frequently impinge upon

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[4]Dickinson College Board of Trustees to Charles Nisbet, Sept. 29, 1784, in Charter and Proceedings of the Trustees of Dickinson College, I, 133 (Typescript in D.C.L.); James Armstrong to Benjamin Rush, Apr. 15, 1783; John Montgomery to Rush, Apr. 16, 1783, Correspondence of Benjamin Rush relative to Dickinson College (Microfilm in Historical Society of Pennsylvania).

their existence. The republican revolution, however, forced Presbyterians to consider seriously the role of institutions in society. Painfully aware of the fragile and susceptible nature of republican governments, the Presbyterians became increasingly appreciative of the heavy burden placed on social institutions in a republic. The "Management of our own peculiarly complicated Form of Union and Government," the Dickinson Board declared, made a republican college in Pennsylvania absolutely necessary.[5] In order to preserve the "peculiarly complicated" government of the republic, the Presbyterians endeavored to establish institutions that were "peculiarly" republican and that would train leaders for the new republic.

The republican revolution made necessary a thorough reexamination of American institutions and attitudes, Benjamin Rush declared in 1787. "It is high time to study our own character--to examine the age of our country--and to adopt manners in everything that shall be accommodated to our state of society and to the forms of our government."[6] To the

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[5]Dickinson Board to John Dickinson, Sept. 29, 1784, Dick. Bd. Min., I, 133; Dickinson College Charter, in ibid., p. 4. See also John Dickinson's address to the Board, Apr. 6, 1784, in James H. Morgan, Dickinson College . . . (Carlisle, Pa., 1933), p. 25.

[6]Benjamin Rush, "Thoughts upon Female Education," Frederick Rudolph, ed., Essays on Education in the Early Republic (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), pp. 36, 27. See also Jean S. Straub, "Benjamin Rush's Views on Women's Education," Pennsylvania History, XXXIV (Apr., 1967), 147-157. Straub fails to note that the most significant reason for Rush's insistence on women's education was that women could then mitigate the dangerous passions of the men who ruled the fragile republic. See especially Rush, "Female Education," p. 36. See also Hyman

Dickinson Board in 1786 he declared, "It has pleased God to call us into existence at an important era." The new form of government adopted by the Americans in that important era gave to the "business of education" a "new complexion," he asserted in an essay on republican education. Americans consequently must examine their "former habits upon this subject" and upon every subject. For although America had changed her form of government, he wrote to Richard Price in 1786, "it remains yet to effect a revolution in our principles, opinions, and manners as to accommodate them to the forms of government we have adopted."[7]

Rush firmly believed that republican institutions could produce rapidly the desired reformation in America. In fact he tended to view the process of producing republicans as a mechanical one. It was possible, he once asserted, to "convert men into republican machines."[8] Most Presbyterians tended to agree with Rush that republican institutions would produce the anticipated reformation, but some were less inclined to see the process as an inevitable, mechanical one. Some, like Samuel Stanhope Smith, shared Rush's enthusiasm but sought to temper it, allowing time for institutions to

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Kuritz, "Benjamin Rush: His Theory of Republican Education," History of Education Quarterly, VII (Winter, 1967), 433-451.

[7]Rush to Dickinson Board, Oct. 21, 1786, L. H. Butterfield, ed., Letters of Benjamin Rush (Princeton, 1951), I, 398; Rush, "A Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools," Rudolph, ed., Essays, p. 9; Rush to Richard Price, May 25, 1786, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 388.

[8]Rush, "Establishment of Public Schools," Rudolph, ed., Essays, p. 17.

work on the contours of society. In 1787 Rush sent to Smith, now a tutor at Princeton, a copy of his essay on the education of young women, in which he spoke exuberantly of the transforming power of educational institutions. Smith lauded Rush's ideas but cautioned him against hoping for too much too soon. "It requires experience and Time to modify . . . [the ideas of a country], and to accommodate Them to new situations and states of society," he warned. "And it is not . . . effectually done till genius, prompted by virtuous zeal, and blessed with perseverance matures the system, and recommends it to Justice."[9]

Although Smith and Rush disagreed over the rapidity with which republican institutions would transform American society, they agreed that such institutions were absolutely necessary to give direction to the early development of the republic. The Presbyterians believed that the first impressions made upon a society were the most lasting. Joseph Smith, one of the founders of the two academies in western Pennsylvania, insisted that a "right direction [be] given to communities in the standard of public and private morals, and the prevalent tone of religious sentiment . . . ." Especially was this urgent, he continued, "when those communities are destined to germinate into mighty and wide-spread republics . . . ."[10] Before moving to Kentucky, where he actively

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[9]Samuel Stanhope Smith to Rush, Aug. 27, 1787, Samuel Stanhope Smith Collection, P.U.L.

[10]Quoted in "Life and Times of the Rev. Joseph Smith," Presbyterian Magazine, III (Oct., 1853), 478.

supported Transylvania, Princeton graduate Rev. James Crawford was reminded by his teacher that "the State of the Gospel for some Ages may in some measures depend upon the first teachers."[11] John McMillan's mentor, Rev. Robert Smith, urged the young minister to raise on the frontier republican Christians who would give the right direction to social development in western Pennsylvania.[12] That McMillan felt he was heeding his teacher's advice is evident from his remarks at the opening of the Canonsburg Academy in 1791:

> This is an important day in our history, affecting deeply the interests of the church, and of the country in the West; affecting our own interests for time and for eternity, and the interests . . . of thousands and thousands yet unborn.[13]

McMillan expressed concisely the Presbyterian belief that on the frontier they were raising institutions that would transform a society made malleable by the Revolution and give permanent direction to the republic's development.

2. Education and Social Conflict: The Pennsylvania Revolution

The Presbyterians' determination to establish republican institutions found expression in ways other than establishing schools. In Pennsylvania, for instance, the struggle over the state's new political institutions was of crucial importance. The struggle over adoption of the Constitution of 1776 produced a fundamental division among Pennsylvanians:

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[11]Rev. Wilson to Rev. James Crawford, Aug. 25, 1785, Papers of Rev. James Crawford, P.H.S.

[12]Joseph Smith, History of Jefferson College . . . (Pittsburgh, 1857), pp. 416-417.

[13]Quoted in ibid., p. 26.

most notably it divided the Presbyterians into bitter factions. That division produced a heated debate over the nature of republican education; that controversy in turn revealed a change in some Presbyterians' attitude toward the legitimacy of conflict and competition in republican society.

The adoption of the Pennsylvania Constitution was the high point of radicalism in the American Revolution.[14] The controversial Constitution provided for a unicameral legislature, a multiple executive, frequent rotation of public officials, and for public discussion of bills before final approval by the legislature. It was written by a group of radicals, new to political leadership, whom the Revolution catapulted to power. The Constitutionalists, as they were called, replaced the traditional political leadership of the state and instituted the most democratic government that grew out of the American Revolution. The Constitutionalist party was essentially a Presbyterian party. Its leadership was strongly Presbyterian and was dominated by a Presbyterian Philadelphia merchant, George Bryan, and was influenced by Rev. John Ewing, professor of mathematics at the College of Philadelphia and pastor of Philadelphia's First Presbyterian

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[14]The Pennsylvania Constitution is reprinted in Samuel Eliot Morison, ed., Sources and Documents Illustrating the American Revolution, 1764-1788 . . ., 2nd ed. (New York, 1965), pp. 162-176. For a highly factual account of the adoption of the Constitution and the reaction to it see Robert L. Brunhouse, Counter-Revolution in Pennsylvania, 1776-1790 (Harrisburg, Pa., 1942). A more analytical discussion is in Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1969), especially pp. 83-90, 226-237, 438-446. A less satisfactory interpretation may be found in Elisha P. Douglass, Rebels and Democrats . . . (Chicago, 1965), chap. 12-14.

Church. Moreover, the Constitutionalists' principal support came from the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of the frontier. The party, consequently, sometimes was referred to simply as the Presbyterian party. But by no means did all Presbyterians support the Constitution. Indeed, the opposition Republican party was led by Presbyterian Benjamin Rush. The anti-Constitution party was supported by most of the state's old, displaced leadership, most Anglicans, some Presbyterian laymen, and most of the Presbyterian clergy, such as John King and John Black.

The Constitution's most controversial aspect was its provision for a unicameral legislature. In refusing to provide a bicameral legislature, the radical Presbyterians challenged the traditional defense of bicameralism, that the two houses represented different interests in society and protected liberty by allowing each house to check and balance the other. The Constitutionalists insisted that only the inequalities of past societies had made bicameral legislatures desirable. Social inequalities had resulted in social distinctions, which had been represented in the legislature. The legislature then became an arena in which the representatives of differing interest groups warred with each other for power and wealth.

The Constitutionalists insisted that no separate interests existed in Pennsylvania and warned that a bicameral legislature would insure their immediate appearance. An upper house would produce social "distinctions" and create "separate, and jarring interests," thus producing conflicts that would

endanger the liberties of all. Men, the Constitutionalists maintained, were "naturally on a level" and should not be separated into competing interest groups by a bicameral legislature. Rather, the representatives of the equal freemen of Pennsylvania should meet in a unicameral legislature, which would be animated only by the pursuit of the public good and would be immune from the selfish jarring of competing interests. In a land of equality and social unity such a government could be so conducted "as to unite [all] into one point of action . . . and form a legislative authority commodiously fit for action without anarchy or confusion . . . ."[15]

The democratic aspects of the Pennsylvania Constitution influenced the political thought of Presbyterians outside of Pennsylvania. In 1784 William Graham was asked to draft a constitution for the state of Franklin, which was being carved out of land ceded to the Confederation Congress by North Carolina. Graham consciously modeled his draft on the Pennsylvania Constitution and made a cogent defense of unicameralism. He rejected the contention that a legislature should reflect social divisions and dismissed as illusory the notion that competing interest groups in a bicameral legislature would serve as salutary checks on each other. "Men agitated with a spirit of jealousy and contention are in no very promising situation to examine and judge of the tendency of measures to promote the public good . . . ." There was

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[15]Philadelphia Pennsylvania Packet, Oct. 22, Apr. 22, May 20, 1776; Wood, Creation of the American Republic, pp. 226-237.

no more sense in having a "monied" or a "landed" interest than in having a "sheep" or a "Negro" interest. The only legitimate business of a republican legislature, he concluded, was the ascertaining and promoting of the public good. This could not be accomplished if distinctions were made between parts of government that continually competed with each other for power.[16]

The Constitutionalists' sudden rise to power prompted an educational revolution as thorough as the political revolution that initiated it. One of the Constitutionalists' first acts was to abrogate the charter of the College of Philadelphia and to replace its basically Anglican Board of Trustees with an interdenominational body and its Anglican provost, William Smith, with John Ewing, a Presbyterian.[17] The Constitutionalists' attack on the College of Philadelphia was consistent with their condemnation of social conflict and competition. Ewing asserted that under the Anglicans the school had become a narrow sectarian institution that served the interests of only one segment of society. The new provost noted that whereas his position could have been filled only by an Anglican under the old charter, it could be held by any Christian under the Constitutionalists' charter. Moreover, the new interdenominational Board of Trustees rendered the College

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[16] [William Graham], An Essay on Government By a Citizen of Frankland (Philadelphia, 1786), pp. 21-22; A Declaration of Rights, also the Constitution . . . of the State of Frankland . . . (Philadelphia, 1786), pp. 10, 13.

[17] George B. Wood, Early History of the University of Philadelphia, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia, 1896), pp. 86-87.

of Philadelphia accessible to all denominations. Under the radicals the college presented "an instance of moderation in the use of power, seldom found," asserted Joseph Reed, a leading Constitutionalist, in 1783. All denominations are on "an equal foot of its rights and advantages," instead of the "narrow and partial" rule of the Anglicans.[18]

The Constitutionalists attacked the college not only as a narrow, sectarian institution; they condemned it also as a corporate body. The radicals argued that all corporate grants were repugnant to the spirit of republicanism. Corporate grants endowed special groups, such as the Boards of the college and of the Bank of North America, with extraordinary privileges and consequently were subversive of social equality. Dedicated to fostering the interests of one group, the school's Board constituted an intolerable government within a government. It had the power to hold large estates, "as against the spirit and policy of democracy . . . ." Such a monster, the Constitutionalists warned, would produce "an indirect, yet firm aristocracy over the state, before we be aware of the mischief."[19]

The revolutionary changes at the College of Philadelphia precipitated a dramatic reaction among the opponents of the Constitution. After being imprisoned for a short time,

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[18]Minutes of the Council of Censors, Aug. 27, 1784 in Phila. Pa. Gaz., Sept. 15, 1784; The Freeman's Journal, Feb. 9, 1785; Joseph Reed, Remarks on a Late Publication . . . (Philadelphia, 1783), p. 50.

[19]Pa. Gaz., Sept. 15, 1784; Wood, Creation of the American Republic, pp. 400-402.

Provost Smith went into voluntary exile in Maryland. There he established the first schools founded in direct opposition to the Pennsylvania Revolution. Assisted by Baltimore's leading Presbyterian minister, Patrick Allison, and other conservative Presbyterians, Provost Smith helped establish Washington and St. John's Colleges on the East and West Shores of Maryland, respectively. Likewise, the founding of Dickinson College by Presbyterian Republicans was in great part a reaction to the Constitutionalists' attack on the College of Philadelphia. Finally, in 1785 the Philadelphia Anglicans attempted to establish an Episcopalian academy to compete with the College of Philadelphia.

The Constitutionalists attacked all of the schools established in reaction to the Pennsylvania Revolution as divisive, aristocratic instruments dedicated to fostering social disorder and conflict. In Maryland Presbyterian supporters of the Pennsylvania Constitutionalists led the opposition to Washington and St. John's Colleges. The colleges were condemned as sectarian and denounced as class institutions. Both schools were to receive the tax on marriage and liquor licenses and most common law fines. Therefore, they were denounced as institutions for the rich supported largely by the taxes of the poor. One critic complained that the Anglicans "mean to establish ranks among us, and begin their scheme by founding a College, wherein the lordly sons of our future nobility will be trained up, uncontaminated by a mix-

ture with boys of plebian mould . . . ."[20] Likewise Ewing charged that Dickinson College was an aristocratic institution established on a narrow "bottom" that would excite divisions immediately among the sects. He was joined by many other Presbyterians, who insisted that all members of that denomination should unite behind Ewing in the College of Philadelphia.[21]

When the Episcopalians attempted to establish an academy in Philadelphia in 1785, the Constitutionalists again attacked their plan as destructive of social unity. One radical writing in The Freeman's Journal chose the pseudonym "Uniformity," which anticipated his argument. The proposed academy, he asserted, was to be established "in opposition" to the College of Philadelphia and therefore could not be countenanced. The term "Episcopal academy" he found a "declaration of hostilities" to all other sects. What had "Episcopal" to do with "academy"? The term had no more meaning than a "Quaker ship" or an "Episcopal brewry." Schools simply should have no connection with any sect. It is quite

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[20]Baltimore Maryland Gazette, June 17, 1785, quoted in Philip A. Crowl, Maryland During and After the Revolution (Baltimore, 1943), p. 86. See also Commemoration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of St. John's College (Baltimore, 1890), pp. 59-128; Bernard C. Steiner, "The History of University Education in Maryland," Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, 9th ser., III (Mar.-Apr., 1891), 145-181; Steiner, History of Education in Maryland (Washington, D.C., 1894), pp. 69-117.

[21]Freeman's Journal, Mar. 2, 1785; Armstrong to Rush, Jan. 6, 1789, Rush Corr.; Rush to Montgomery, Aug. 27, 1784, ibid.; King to Montgomery, Mar. 24, 1783, ibid.; Wm. Linn to Rush, Sept. 25, 1783, ibid.; Rush to Montgomery, Nov. 15, 1783, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 314.

time, Joseph Reed insisted in 1783, "to drop religious distinctions in Pennsylvania, and meet on the equal foot of generous catholicism . . . ." He who would attempt to revive them, he warned, "will rouse a sleeping lion . . . ."[22]

The Constitutionalists did more than attack the anti-Constitutionalist schools. They advanced their own theory of republican education and vigorously supported it. Above all else, they insisted that republican education be non-sectarian and "catholic." The only way to insure catholicity was for the state to control education. After "so great and recent a revolution" it was necessary for the state to place the province's college under the control of thorough republicans. In the future it would be the duty of the state to protect the college from men hostile to the revolution, liberty, and equality. In the school young republicans must be "early inspired with a love of their country, respect for its laws, and a taste for the principles and maxims of the state . . . ." None of this could be achieved in a narrow, divisive sectarian institution.[23]

The Constitutionalists were ready to use vigorous state action to prevent social conflict. In politics they sought to accomplish this by the use of an extremely controversial test act that disenfranchised those who would not swear to support the Constitution of 1776. And the Constitutionalists attempted to prevent the establishment of any school that

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[22]Freeman's Journal, Jan. 19, 1785; Reed, Remarks on a Late Publication, p. 49.

[23]Phila. Pa. Gaz., Sept. 15, 1784.

would compete with the College of Philadelphia. "Uniformity" was ready to use the power of the state to prevent the chartering of the Episcopalian academy in Philadelphia. He suggested a drastic course of action to deal with those who "cannot be compelled to submit to the catholic spirit of our university . . . ." In the interest of social union he proposed that the legislature rule it treasonous to establish any school not "licensed" by a majority of the supreme court or by the Provost and five Trustees of the College of Philadelphia.[24]

The Republicans found it very difficult to answer the Constitutionalists' charges and counter their attack. The difficulties in the Republican position were revealed clearly in Benjamin Rush's thorough criticism of the Constitution of 1776. Rush gingerly approached the sensitive problem of the unicameral legislature and the social equality the Constitutionalists insisted it reflected. The Constitution, he noted, supposes a "perfect equality, and an equal distribution of property, wisdom and virtue, among the inhabitants of the state." Rush admitted that there were in Pennsylvania none of the "artificial distinctions" that divided European society. But, he continued, "superior degrees of industry and capacity, and above all, commerce, have introduced inequality of property among us . . . ." That inequality in turn had produced "natural distinctions of rank in Pennsylvania, as certain and general as the artificial distinctions

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[24]Freeman's Journal, Jan. 19, 1785.

of men in Europe." These distinctions had to be represented in a bicameral legislature.[25]

The Constitutionalists pounced on such statements and charged that the Republicans favored an upper house because it would represent and protect the rich of Pennsylvania much as the English House of Lords represented the English aristocracy. "Demophilus," possibly George Bryan, sarcastically referred to the Republicans as "our gentry, to whose ears the words Liberty, Independence, Common-Wealth, /and/ Free Constitution, have always been ungrateful sounds." The Constitutionalists used the Republicans' statements about "superior degrees" and "natural distinctions of rank" to brand their opponents as aristocrats who would fatally divide society by making artificial divisions based on property. Those divisions would then be institutionalized in the bicameral legislature where the aristocrats of the upper house would overawe the plebians in the lower.[26]

Rush denied vehemently the charge that the Republicans advocated a House of Lords for Pennsylvania. Unlike the English House of Lords, which drew its authority from the Crown, the proposed Pennsylvania Senate would receive its power from the people. But at the same time Rush described the Senate as an aristocracy of merit and virtue. Moreover, he noted, their smaller number would make the senators personally

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[25] /Benjamin Rush/, Observations Upon the Present State of the Government of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1777), pp. 3, 4, 9, 10.

[26] Phila. Pa. Packet, Oct. 22, 1776.

responsible for their actions.[27] Rush likewise insisted that a senate did not threaten social unity. Far from representing only the rich, an upper house would, in fact, represent all of the people. Its members would be elected by the people in the same way as were the members of the lower house. Each house, Rush asserted, would be "the annual breath of the people . . . ." "Who would believe," he asked, "that the same fountain of pure water, should send forth, at the same time wholesome and deadly streams?" The upper house, in short, provided for "a double representation of the people."[28]

But, the Constitutionalists countered, if the Senate was only a second means of representing the people, was it not superfluous? The question went straight to the ambiguities in the Republicans' position. They were quite unwilling to abandon the traditional concept of bicameralism with its checks and balances, but they could not justify it without appearing to endorse social conflict. Rush, for instance, in the same pamphlet in which he described the Senate as a "double representation of the people" also asserted that in a bicameral legislature each house would check the usurpations of the other. In short, he described the bicameral legislature as essentially a battlefield in which opposing social interests clashed.[29]

Eventually, the Republicans were able to answer the

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[27] /Rush/, Observations, p. 10. See also the similar comments of Republican Samuel Howell in Phila. Pa. Packet, Nov. 5, 1776.

[28] /Rush/, Observations, pp. 8, 12.

[29] Ibid., pp. 12, 10.

Constitutionalists' charges only by turning the accusations against the men who made them. When charged with favoring aristocratic rule, Rush countered by alleging that in fact unicameralism, not bicameralism, led to rule by an elite. The new government, Rush noted, was called a "simple democracy." But in it "a foundation is laid . . . for the most complete aristocracy that ever existed in the world." Rush observed that rich men would win elections to a unicameral legislature as easily as to a bicameral one. The rich would soon control the single house, and Pennsylvania, like Europe, would then have only "two sorts of animals, tyrants and slaves." The only way to prevent the growth of this unrestrained power was to institute an upper house, which would serve as a check on the lower. The Republicans, capitalizing on the Americans' fear of any unrestrained power, pictured the Constitutionalists as power-mad tyrants, abandoned any discussion of aristocracies, stressed the benefits of political competition, and succeeded in putting the Constitutionalists on the defensive.[30]

The Republicans' attitude toward education underwent the same transformation as did their attitude toward political conflict. Just as they insisted that the proposed Senate would not be socially divisive, so did the Republicans reject the charge that their schools would produce social disunity. On the contrary, they insisted that republican education should reduce social conflict and thereby promote social

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[30]Ibid., pp. 5, 8, 9; Phila. Pa. Packet, Nov. 15, 1776.

union. An uneducated man, Charles Nisbet informed his students in 1786, sees society as "so many loose, independent and unconnected individuals, having each a separate interest, and [being] naturally disposed to make war with one another." Such a view, he continued, tends "to nourish a selfish spirit, a neglect of the duties of society, and a total indifference for the public." Nisbet concluded that only republican education could provide a corrective for such "inaccurate" opinions. A republican educator should explain to his students the advantage of "association and concord among men," and describe the "strength and security which every individual derives from the protection of society." Nisbet and his colleague at Dickinson, Robert Davidson, frequently described the goals of republican education in Newtonian terms. In 1788 Nisbet rhapsodized on "that beautiful order of things established by the great Author of nature," which the republican educator was to present to his students. The students would then appreciate the inestimable value of a society in which "all are useful for the benefit of the Whole . . . ." Davidson was more explicitly Newtonian and likened the ideal republican society to "the Solar System, where every obedient planet moves on its proper path . . . ," rotating in perfect unison with the whole.[31]

While equating republican education and social unity,

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[31]Charles Nisbet, The Usefulness and Importance of Human Learning . . . (Carlisle, Pa., 1786), p. 10; Second Commencement Address, p. 1, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.; Robert Davidson, An Oration, on the Anniversary of the Independence of the United States (Carlisle, Pa., 1787), p. 15.

the Republican Presbyterians and Anglicans vehemently denied that the schools they established in the early 1780's were instruments of social division founded on "narrow bottoms." To Carlisle's General John Armstrong, Rush declared groundless the assertion that Dickinson was the "offspring of personal resentments and party vices . . . ." The school's Trustees, he assured the General, included both Republicans and Constitutionalists (there was actually one Constitutionalist on the Board). To Nisbet he boasted that all sects were represented on the Board (at best a half-truth), thus proving that the Presbyterians were not "strangers to toleration."[32] The Anglican founders of the Maryland schools pointed out the clauses in their charters that pledged complete religious freedom at St. John's and Washington. William Smith noted that the latter's officers and faculty were chosen only on the basis of their "literacy and other necessary qualifications," not because of their religious preferences. Patrick Allison likewise praised the Maryland school's liberality and insisted that both Washington and St. John's Colleges were established on the most catholic of foundations.[33]

The Republicans maintained that, far from being socially divisive, their schools would actively foster social union. Benjamin Rush noted that the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians and

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[32]Freeman's Journal, Feb. 23, 1785; Rush to Armstrong, Mar. 19, 1783, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 296; Rush to Nisbet, Apr., 1784, ibid., I, 322.

[33]Annapolis Maryland Gazette, Dec. 16, 1784, Mar. 31, 1785; William Smith, An Account of Washington College in the State of Maryland (Philadelphia, 1784), p. 10; Patrick Allison to Rush, Feb 12, 1783, Rush Corr.

the German Calvinists too frequently existed as separate and conflicting units in Pennsylvania's society. Dickinson College, he hoped, would bring them together, mitigate the more obnoxious of their faults, and render them "more homogeneous." To Nisbet in 1784 he expressed the hope that Dickinson would serve to

> soften the tempers of . . . [the turbulent Scotch-Irish], to inspire them with liberal sentiments in government and religion, to teach them moderation in their conduct to other sects, and to rescue them from the charges of bigotry and persecution that are so often brought against them.

Rush frequently condemned the Scotch-Irish as wasteful men who worked a farm carelessly while the soil remained fertile and then moved further west. He hoped that the thrifty and industrious habits of the more stationary Germans would have salutary effects on the Scotch-Irish with whom they would be educated at Dickinson. At the same time, Rush expected Dickinson to mitigate the Germans' obssession with making money. Their greed, Rush observed, often isolated the Germans from society as effectively as their wandering isolated the Scotch-Irish. The college was to show the Germans that "men should live for other purposes than simply to cultivate the earth and to accumulate specie."[34]

If Dickinson was to foster social union, it was also to

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[34]Rush to Nisbet, Aug. 27, 1784, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 337; Rush to Montgomery, Apr. 15, 1784, Rush Corr.; Rush to Dickinson College Board, May 23, 1785, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 353. For Rush's comparison of the Germans and the Scotch-Irish see Butterfield, ed., "Dr. Benjamin Rush's Journal of a Trip to Carlisle in 1784," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography., LXXIV (Oct., 1950), 445-446.

be a Presbyterian stronghold. Rush was convinced that the public reaction to the test acts would lead inevitably to the destruction of the Presbyterians, Republicans as well as Constitutionalists. Consequently he urged the Presbyterians to unite behind Dickinson and to prepare there an educational retreat against the day when the public's wrath fell upon all Presbyterians. "It is time," he declared in 1783, "for us to fortify before we are driven beyond the Mountains. I view the College . . . as our principal bulwark. Let us adopt it as the Asylum of our hopes." The school, he assured the Rev. John King, would be a "bond of union to our whole society." By creating and cementing new friendships and loyalties it would make the Presbyterians more permanent settlers. By conveying a uniform system of religion and knowledge throughout the denomination, the school would teach its members "to accent Shiboleth[s] alike." By promoting agriculture and manufactures, it would give "system and consistency to our society however extended or scattered."[35]

Almost immediately, then, Dickinson's sectarian nature began to assert itself. At the same time, the Germans proved reluctant to patronize the school at Carlisle and began to establish a school of their own at Lancaster. Rush immediately supported their efforts, having decided that, after all, the Germans would be better off in a school of their own. The young Germans would become republicans only when their ignorance and prejudices were removed, he reasoned. This

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[35]Rush to ? , July 30, 1785, Rush Corr.; Rush to King, Apr. 2, 1783, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 298-299.

would be accomplished most easily if they were instructed in their own language and in familiar cultural settings. After graduating they would unite with the English and Scotch-Irish settlers "to form with them one homogeneous mass of people." Rush insisted that social unity was his ultimate goal; however, he became convinced that his goal would be gained most readily by stressing the distinctions of the components of society and by allowing them to compete discreetly with each other.[36]

Rush's shift is indicative of a gradual change in the Republican Presbyterians' attitude toward sectarian education. As they formed the schools in opposition to the Pennsylvania Revolution, they indeed stated as their goal "one homogeneous mass of the people." But the experience of founding new institutions in opposition to an established one led the Republican Presbyterians and Anglicans to adumbrate a defense of sectarian education that was very different from anything advanced by colonial Presbyterians. They began by attempting to prove that they were not innovators. The various sects, they insisted, had long maintained their own educational institutions. An Episcopalian writing as "Liberty of Conscience" in 1785 denounced "Uniformity's" attack on sectarian education by noting that the Quakers, Lutherans, and Presbyterians had long maintained sectarian schools. As another Episcopalian pointed out in the Freeman's Journal, the idea

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[36]Rush, "To the Citizens of Pennsylvania," Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 365-367. See also Frederic Shriver Klein, "The Spiritual and Educational Background of Franklin College," Pennsylvania History, V (Apr., 1938), 65-76.

of separate schools for separate parts of society was hardly new to America.[37]

While sectarian education was not new to America, a thorough defense of it was, and the Republican Presbyterians and Anglicans knew it. They were, therefore, at great pains to indicate that social unity was indeed the ultimate end of their defense. They insisted simply that unity could best be attained if each sect educated its own young. "A Friend to Liberty" warned "Uniformity" that "a body of Christians of different persuasions . . . could never unite in a form of worship, or a set of articles for their pupils." It was necessary and highly desirable, then, for each sect to arrive at its own form of education.[38] All of "Uniformity's" critics agreed that religion could be safely transmitted to the young only through sectarian schools. "An Episcopalian," for instance, asserted that if a boy was to have "strong prejudices" toward religion, he must be educated in the doctrines of a particular sect. In this way, Rush agreed, religion and learning were more "intimately connected." A boy who does not "chuse his principles" until he is twenty-one, "An Episcopalian" warned, "generally turns out a libertine or a Deist."[39] "A Friend to Equal Liberty" observed that sects, like families, "agree best, when they are kept (to a

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[37]Phila. Pa. Gaz., Jan. 26, 1785; Freeman's Journal, Jan. 26, 1785.

[38]The Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer, Jan. 22, 1785.

[39]Freeman's Journal, Jan, 26, 1785; Rush, "Free Schools," Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 414.

certain degree) separate from each other." And John King insisted that, like a family, each sect should have the power to govern, preserve, and advance itself, "without prejudice to others," of course, and "in subservience to the common good." If each of these families educated its own youth, Rush predicted in 1785, "the whole republic must soon be well educated."[40]

The Republicans rejected the charge that sectarian education invariably produced competition, conflict, and bigotry among denominations. Far from fostering social conflict, Rush insisted, sectarian education would promote social union by "removing young men from those opportunities of controversy which a variety of sects mixed together are apt to create and which are the certain fuel of bigotry." Protected from contention, then, the young republicans would imbibe the tenets of their own sect. Thus firmly indoctrinated, they could then lead their denomination to cooperate with other groups for the good of the republic. Those united efforts would produce a society in which "the different religious sects, like the different strings in a musical instrument, shall compose a harmony delightful in the ears of Heaven itself!" Far from competing for power, the sects would unite for the common good while retaining their rich diversity.[41]

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[40]Phila. Ind. Gaz., Jan. 22, 1785; King to Rush, Jan. 16, 1785, Rush Corr.; /Rush/, "An Address to the Citizens of Pennsylvania of German Birth and Extraction," Carlisle Pa. Gaz., Sept. 21, 1785.

[41]Rush to Armstrong, Mar. 19, 1788, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 294; Rush, "To the Citizens of Pennsylvania," Ibid., I, 367-368. For a further discussion of Rush's views

As described by the Republicans, the new sectarian schools would be peaceful sanctuaries where future leaders of the republic could be educated away from the jarring of competing interests. On the other hand, they charged that a young man in Ewing's college would find himself torn between groups competing for his allegiance. Abhorring the catholicity of the College of Philadelphia, Rush warned that it must soon "yield to the variety of its composition" and disintegrate into warring factions.[42] Rush argued, then, from an apparent concern for social union. He feared that non-sectarian education would introduce into the schools and then into society itself endless contentions that would destroy social order.

But if the Republican Presbyterians and Anglicans abhorred rivalry among different sects within an individual school, they cautiously defended as a positive good competition among the schools of differing denominations. Writing in the Freeman's Journal in 1785, "An Episcopalian" defended the novel idea of a collegiate market place. Parents, he suggested, should choose from existing schools the one that would indoctrinate their son in the teaching of their denomination. If they did not agree with the religious sentiments taught at a school, they could always send the boy elsewhere. Further rejecting the radicals' contention that republican

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on diversity and unity see Donald J. D'Elia, "The Republican Theology of Benjamin Rush," Pennsylvania History, XXXIII (Apr., 1966), 187-203.

[42] Freeman's Journal, Feb. 23, Jan. 26, 1785.

education must be non-sectarian and uniform, "A Friend to Equal Liberty" insisted that sectarian education was preferable because it would encourage "the competition of the different societies with each other." Likewise Rush maintained that he welcomed any school that would compete with Dickinson. By "exciting emulation and increasing a taste for literature," the competing schools would increase Dickinson's enrollment, "just as the cultivation of wheat on the Juniata [River] has increased the price of it in Lancaster County."[43]

There were, however, limits to the Republicans' acceptance of sectarian competition. Those limits were revealed by the reactions of the founders of Washington and St. John's Colleges to the establishment of Dickinson College. The three schools were founded in reaction to the Pennsylvania Revolution. The founders of each insisted that the Pennsylvania radicals had violated the charter rights of the College of Philadelphia's former Board, and they all abhorred in varying degrees the catholicity of the new Board, although they uniformly rejected the charge that their respective schools were established to further the interest of one party. But when Rush moved to establish and raise funds for Dickinson, both the Anglicans and the Maryland Presbyterians led by Patrick Allison charged him with instigating a "party scheme." From Baltimore Allison frantically warned Rush that the plan for Dickinson "spreads an immediate alarm." It excited

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[43] Ibid., Jan. 26, 1785; Phila. Ind. Gaz., Jan. 22, 1785; Rush to Montgomery, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 412.

> Surprise and distrust everywhere concerning the whole . . . /Presbyterian denomination/, whose Members in this Instance betray a party partial Spirit, and who by an unequivocal act are first in awakening those destructive animosities, which might otherwise have still laid dormant.[44]

Although the Maryland schools had been founded in opposition to the Pennsylvania Revolution, Allison found useful the ideas that had animated that Revolution when he attacked the founding of Dickinson. A "liberal and tolerant Spirit" was springing up in the wake of the Revolution, he warned Rush. Men were beginning to realize that toleration was "perfectly reconcilable with the public Good." In this enlightened day, he continued, differing sects should not watch each other like "rival kingdoms, when one cannot build a Fort or equip a Fleet, but the other must do the same." Allison's colleague John Boyd agreed that the school would "certainly be called a party Business."[45]

But the Maryland Anglicans and Allison's Presbyterians were not as concerned about the new "liberal and tolerant Spirit" as they were angered by the competition Rush's "Fort" offered to their own "Kingdom." Carlisle was just above the Maryland border and would take students from the Maryland schools. Moreover, Provost Smith and Allison were unwilling to distinguish between "good" and "bad" Pennsylvania Presbyterians. To the Marylanders they all appeared to be supporters of John Ewing and the College of Philadelphia. Smith and

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[44]Patrick Allison to Rush, Feb. 12, 1783, Rush Corr.

[45]*Ibid.*; John Boyd to Rush, Feb. 17, 1785, *ibid.*

Allison were provoked particularly by the efforts of some Maryland Presbyterians to get St. John's charter revoked. They answered that attempt in terms directly opposite to the radicals' theory of republican education. St. John's, they insisted, was not a public institution. Its charter constituted a contract that could not be terminated by the legislature without the consent of every man who had contributed to the school. According to the St. John's Board, the school was a private institution completely free of state control. Rejecting the catholicity of the College of Philadelphia, the Board fought every effort of the state to force St. John's to broaden its own foundation.[46]

In Pennsylvania and Maryland, then, some Presbyterians endorsed enormously controversial measures to rid the state of conflict and competition while others began to accept in a limited way competition and conflict as positive goods. But each side was tentative in its conclusions. The Constitutionalists found it difficult to deny that, in the name of social unity, they were abrogating the political rights of all who refused to accept the test acts. On the other hand, the Republicans found it equally difficult to defend competition and conflict without appearing to renounce the ideals of the Revolution. But in the turbulent days of that Revolution traditional ideas of unity and conflict were beginning to change, and they would continue to change at an accelerating pace.

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[46]George (Lux?) to Rush, Feb. 28, May 14, 1785, Rush Corr.; An Address of the Visitors and Governors of St. John's College to the Senate of Maryland (Baltimore, 1784), pp. 3-4.

3. Religious Freedom and Social Conflict: The Virginia Revolution

In Virginia the Revolution also resulted in a reexamination of the Presbyterians' traditional attitude toward conflict and competition. The reexamination was prompted by the efforts of Jefferson and Madison to introduce complete religious freedom into Virginia and by Jefferson's attempt to restructure the College of William and Mary. Still the President of Hampden-Sydney, Samuel Stanhope Smith wrote to Governor Jefferson in 1779 concerning Jefferson's plan to change fundamentally the curriculum, organization, and government of William and Mary.[47] Smith did not attack Jefferson's plan to drop theology from the curriculum, to divide the college into four schools, and to replace the Board of Trustees with a much smaller Board of Visitors. Moreover he applauded the governor's attempt to extend representation on the Board to non-Anglicans. Smith protested, however, that the Anglican Church still retained a favored position at William and Mary although the Anglican establishment had been substantially weakened since the adoption of the Bill of Rights in 1775 had ended prosecution for religious beliefs in Virginia. Smith warned Jefferson that the Presbyterians therefore would surely

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[47]The bills enumerating the changes are in Julian P. Boyd, ed., The Papers of Thomas Jefferson (Princeton, 1950-), II, 526-524. There are no satisfactory monographic treatments of Jefferson's educational thought, but see Charles Flinn, ed., Thomas Jefferson and Education in a Republic (New York, 1930), especially chapters III and IV; and John C. Henderson, Thomas Jefferson's Views on Public Education (New York, 1890), especially Chapter I.

oppose the school.[48]

It pained Smith to deliver an ultimatum to Jefferson because his "extreme love of peace" and the "benevolence" and the "enlarged and liberal inquiry in matters of science" supported by his church made him reluctant to embrace conflict or competition of any kind. "The partialities of sects," he declared, "ought to have no place in a system of liberal education. They are the disgrace of science and would to Heaven it were possible utterly to banish them from the society of men." He had hoped that the Revolution would eradicate denominational conflict by ending the Anglican establishment. He realized now, though, that "the speculations of the closet are often very wide of the sentiments and manners of actual life." Even in a virtuous republic it appeared that the "opposition of parties" will make all sects "solicitous for their own preservation and jealous of their antagonists . . . ."[49]

Smith's reactions to the existence of conflict and competition in a republic were contradictory. He acknowledged that differences of external forms and names will always "preserve the same distrustful, narrow, and contentious spirit, equally detrimental to religion and to learning." Noting that some had begun to praise competition because it forced competing groups to better themselves in order to

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[48]Samuel Stanhope Smith to Jefferson, Apr. 19, 1779, Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, II, 254.

[49]Smith to Jefferson, Mar., 1779, Apr. 19, 1779, ibid., II, 247, 253.

survive, Smith warned that emulation would invariably be directed "to the defense of their characteristic peculiarities, and thus contract the free spirit and the sphere of science, and substitute bigotry and prejudice in the room of true philosophy." Asserting that he had "no ambition to become the leader of a sect," Smith rejected on the theoretical level denominational conflict and competition. He suggested to Jefferson instead a union between the Anglicans and Presbyterians in Virginia. The latter were, he warned,

> a numerous body, and not destitute of learning, whose concurrence may be found necessary on the present occasion, and whose opposition may embarrass, if not disconcert any general scheme of education wherein they are neglected, and likely to be undermined.

To allay Presbyterian opposition Smith suggested a "coalition of the principal religious sects, and as many others as were willing to unite upon the same catholic foundation." Renouncing any desire for a legal establishment, Smith sought only a union of Protestants that would end divisiveness and sectarian contention. But when he descended from the theoretical to the practical, Smith embraced the very idea of salutary competition he had just denounced. Protesting that William and Mary would still draw her Visitors from the Anglican Tidewater, Smith insisted that the competition of a school further west would only benefit religion and science: "Would not two universities by their emulation have a favourable influence on learning?"[50]

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[50]Smith to Jefferson, Mar., 1779, Apr. 19, 1779, ibid., II, 248, 253, 254.

The same ambiguities and contradictions that marked Smith's correspondence with Jefferson came to characterize the Presbyterians' reactions to the efforts of Jefferson and Madison to secure complete religious freedom in Virginia. After having enjoyed toleration by the Anglicans during the colonial period, Presbyterians as late as November of 1774 insisted that they were in no way hostile to the idea of an established church and asserted that they wished only "an unlimited, impartial toleration."[51] Following the beginning of hostilities, however, they became most enthusiastic supporters of all efforts to disestablish the Anglican Church. When pressed to defend their change of position, the Presbyterians said that they had supported the establishment because it contributed to social order by minimizing sectarian conflict. They had submitted to the establishment "for the sake of good order, [being] always willing to stand up with the foremost in support of government . . . ."[52] In the first days of revolution the Presbyterians decided that social order could be maintained without a religious establishment. The Hanover Presbytery declared that "religious establishments are highly injurious to the temporal interests of any community" because

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[51]Petition of Hanover Presbytery to Virginia legislature, Nov. 11, 1774, in Charles Fenton James, Documentary History of the Struggle of Religious Liberty in Virginia (Lynchburg, Va., 1900), pp. 46-47.

[52]Petition of dissenters in Albemarle, Amherst, and Buckingham Counties, Oct. 22, 1776, in ibid., pp. 69-70. James is surely correct in identifying this as a Presbyterian petition. See p. 75. The sentiments are identical to those expressed by the Hanover Presbytery to the legislature on Oct. 24, 1776. See p. 71.

they "greatly retard population, and consequently the progress of arts, sciences, and manufactures." Christ had renounced all dependence upon the power of the state, and his gospel should not need civil assistance.[53] On the contrary, contended Caleb Wallace, in those parts of America where there was no establishment the gospel flourished much more than in Virginia. The end of the establishment, he continued, would produce a healthy competition among sects, "every one . . . [being] left to stand or fall according to merit . . . ." Only this variety of sects could promote "freedom of inquiry and liberal sentiments."[54]

The Presbyterians declared themselves as opposed to a general assessment for the support of religion as they were to the Anglican establishment. Just as the gospel did not require the protection of the state, neither did it require the forced contributions of the state's population. Christ would provide for his own, asserted the Presbytery of Hanover. Any support the state gave to the church carried with it the possibility of state control. Moreover, the presbytery argued, if the state could levy a tax for the support of all churches, it could just as easily revive a single establishment. Since the concerns of religion were beyond state control, the presbytery concluded, it would "act a dishonest, inconsistent part" if it accepted "any emoluments from human

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[53] Ibid., p. 72.

[54] "Queries on the Subject of Religious Establishments," Pinckney's Williamsburg Virginia Gazette, Oct. 18, 1776; Wallace, "Memorial of Hanover Presbytery," in Whitsitt, Caleb Wallace, p. 49.

establishments for the support of the gospel."[55] In the early days of the Revolution, then, the Virginia Presbyterians appeared to discard their traditional equation of social order with a religious establishment and to embrace the revolutionary idea that denominational competition was a positive good.

As the Revolution ended, it became obvious that many Presbyterian clergymen were having second thoughts about complete separation of church and state. Jefferson wryly observed that between 1777 and 1779 many Presbyterian ministers, "having now secured their particular object," by weakening the Anglican establishment, had begun to advocate a general assessment for the support of religion.[56] There were no Presbyterian petitions supporting Jefferson's bill of 1779, which called for total separation of church and state and complete religious freedom. A Presbyterian Representative, James Henry, from the Eastern shore even introduced a bill calling for a general assessment in the same year.[57] Not only in the Virginia legislature did Presbyterian clergymen begin to repent of their endorsement of complete separation, but also their reactions produced a persistent rumor that the Presbyterians would attempt to become the new nation's established church. The rumor's persistence forced the synod in 1783 to deny publicly that the denomination held "intolerant principles." The Presbyterians "solemnly and publicly"

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[55]Petitions of Hanover Presbytery, June 3, 1779, Apr. 15, 1777, in James, Documentary History, pp. 90, 226-227.

[56]Quoted in ibid., p. 81.

[57]Ibid., pp. 185-186.

declared their abhorrence of intolerance and affirmed their belief that "every peaceable member of civil society ought to be protected in the full and free exercise of their religion." John Witherspoon likewise assured the public that the Presbyterians desired no more protection and aid from the state "than may be necessary for protection and security, and at the same time may be equal and common to all others."[58]

The tentative nature of the Virginia Presbyterian clergy's support of complete separation of church and state was revealed fully in its reaction to two bills introduced in the Virginia legislature in 1784. One bill would have incorporated the Protestant Episcopalian Church as a legal body; the other would have levied a general assessment for the support of religion. In their uniform opposition to the former, the Presbyterians staunchly defended the idea of competition among absolutely equal denominations. The Hanover Presbytery asserted that it had expected the Revolution to produce "an equal share of the protection and favor of the government of all denominations of Christians . . . ." Therefore, for the legislature to grant special privileges to one sect would be "unworthy of the representatives of a people perfectly free . . . ."[59]

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[58]May 22, 1783, Presbyterian Records, p. 499; [John Witherspoon], A Draught of a Plan of Government and Discipline . . . (Philadelphia, 1786), p. iii. For an extravagant claim for the Plan of Government as the model for the First Amendment to the Federal Constitution see James H. Nichols, "John Witherspoon on Church and State," JPHS, XLII (Sept., 1964), 170-172.

[59]Petitions of Hanover Presbytery, May 26, 1784; Oct., 1784, in James, Documentary History, pp. 227-228, 233-234.

If the Presbyterian clergy had been content to oppose special privileges for the Episcopalians, its position would have been essentially the same as it had been in 1777. But in 1784 their opposition to special privilege was linked with support for a general assessment for the support of religion. The irony in their shift was not lost on James Madison, sponsor of the bill for complete separation of church and state against which the Presbyterian clergy was uniting in 1784. Madison wryly observed to James Monroe that the Presbyterians "seem as ready to set up an establishment which is to take them in as they were to pull down one that shut them out." Pointing out the "shameful contrast" between the Presbyterian petitions in 1777 and 1784, Madison rightly perceived that the Presbyterian clergy was among the most formidable of his opponents.[60]

Madison oversimplified the Presbyterian ministers' motives, though. They supported a general assessment not because they wished the Presbyterian church to be established but because they firmly believed that public support of religion was absolutely essential to social order. The Revolution, they feared, had undermined drastically that support. The preamble to the general assessment bill made explicit the relation between religion and social union. The "general diffusion of Christian knowledge," it declared, had a "natural tendency to correct the morals of men, restrain their

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[60]James Madison to James Monroe, Apr. 12, 1785, quoted in William C. Rives, History of the Life and Times of James Madison (Boston, 1859-68), I, 630.

vices, and preserve the peace of society . . . ."[61] Led by William Graham, the Hanover Presbytery supported the bill, which was championed by Patrick Henry and supported by Washington and John Marshall. The presbytery acknowledged that religion, "as a Spiritual System" was "not to be considered as an object of human legislation . . . ." But it may "in a civil view" be seen as "preserving the existence and promoting the happiness of Society."[62] Religion was "absolutely necessary to the existence and welfare of every political combination of men in society" because it tended "to preserve the veneration of an oath, or an appeal to heaven, which is the cement of the social union." For that reason, the legislator had the right to levy a general assessment, but only on "the <u>most liberal plan</u>." It should not be used to support religion as a "spiritual system." No attempt should be made "to point out articles of faith that are not essential to the preservation of society . . . ."[63] But in order to preserve society every man, "as a good Citizen," should be required

> to declare himself attached to some religious Community, publicly known to profess the belief of one God--his righteous providence--our accountableness to him--and a future State of rewards and punishments.

And each man should be taxed by the state to support the

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[61]Preamble to General Assessment Bill, Dec. 3, 1784, in James, <u>Documentary History</u>, p. 129.

[62]Oct. 28, 1784, Han. Pby. Min., II, 178.

[63]Petition of Hanover Presbytery, Oct., 1784, in James, <u>Documentary History</u>, pp. 234-236.

minister of his choice.[64]

The Presbyterian ministers were somewhat amazed--and embarrassed--to find that most Presbyterian laymen in Virginia did not equate public support of religion with social order. Presbyterian laymen met at Bethel in 1784 to protest the presbytery's support of the general assessment bill. In their protest the laymen acknowledged "the happy influences of Christianity upon the morals of men . . . ." But, they continued, religion had been most effectual "when left to its native excellence and evidence to recommend it, under the all-directing providence of God, and free from the intrusive hand of the civil magistrate."[65] From Augusta County laymen demanded to know what the word "liberal" meant in the presbytery's call for a general assessment on "the <u>most liberal</u> plan." The presbytery was unable to withstand concerted lay pressure and voted unanimously to revert to its stand of 1777 and to oppose any general taxation for the support of religion.[66]

In the late 1780's and 1790's the Presbyterian clergymen in Virginia grudgingly accepted the defeat of the general assessment. But they also intensified their efforts to insure that society was visibly Christian. In his proposed constitution for Franklin Graham suggested that the new state take steps to see that "the citizens be visibly and really

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[64]Oct. 28, 1784, Han. Pby. Min., II, 178.

[65]Quoted in James, <u>Documentary History</u>, p. 238.

[66]May 19, 1785, Han. Pby. Min., II, 186.

religious" and that respect for God be "regularly inculcated." He suggested no establishment since all faiths would be "useful to the State." The various denominations would teach the "essential principles of temporal peace and happiness" and cooperate with the "great end of government, in strengthening the weakness of moral obligation." To that end Graham proposed banning "whoremongers," swearers, drunkards, gamesters, and Sabbath-breakers from holding office.[67] Likewise, the Franklin Constitution provided that "Laws for the encouraging of virtue, and preventing and suppressing of vice and immorality, shall be made and constantly kept in force . . . ." Graham, then, rejected an establishment of religion but insisted that the state use its power actively and publicly to support religion.[68]

The Virginia clergy also took official action to insure that society was visibly Christian. In 1791 the Synod of Virginia, noting that the godly observance of Sunday was a "Matter of essential importance to the peace[,] order and happiness of Society," instructed its members to "enjoin it upon all Magistrates in our communion to put the Laws in this respect strictly into execution within their respective spheres of observation." Any Presbyterian magistrate who refused to do so and any Presbyterian who refused to assist

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[67] [William Graham], An Essay on Government By a Citizen of Frankland (Philadelphia, 1786), pp. 11, 12, 17, 32.

[68] A Declaration of Rights, also the Constitution or Form of Government . . . of the State of Frankland . . . (Philadelphia, 1786).

him were to be publicly censured by their minister.[69] Within two years the presbyteries had moved to follow the synod's instructions. The Hanover Presbytery even improved on those instructions by refusing communion to all, including public magistrates, who profaned the sabbath.[70] Deeply disturbed by the removal of all state support for public religion, the Presbyterian clergymen attempted through their own powers of withholding communion and through the magisterial powers of Presbyterian office holders to force the public to adhere to what the clergy deemed acceptable social behavior.[71]

The efforts of the Presbyterian clergy in Virginia to compensate for the defunct relation between church and state reached something of a frantic peak during the Whiskey Rebellion.[72] Present at a meeting of the Synod of Virginia in Winchester during the Rebellion in 1794 were William Graham,

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[69]Sept. 30, 1791, Minutes of the Synod of Virginia, I, 77 (Microfilm in U.T.S.); hereafter cited as Va. Syn. Min.

[70]Oct. 29, 1791, Han. Pby. Min., III, 117; May 1, 1729, Minutes of the Lexington Presbytery, I, 134 (Microfilm in U.T.S.); hereafter cited as Lex. Pby. Min.

[71]The Presbyterians' reluctance to accept complete separation of church and state and their efforts to informally insure that America was thoroughly and visibly Christian support William McLaughlin's assertion that Isaac Backus' ideas on separation of church and state, which the Presbyterians' ideas strongly resemble, are closer to the traditional American stance than those of either Roger Williams or Thomas Jefferson. See McLaughlin, "Isaac Backus and the Separation of Church and State in America," American Historical Review, LXXIII (June, 1968), 1392-1413.

[72]For the Pennsylvania Presbyterians' reaction see Nisbet to William Young, July 29, 1794, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.; Dwight R. Guthrie, John McMillan (Pittsburgh, 1952), pp. 159, 162-163; and Ronald W. Long, "The Presbyterians and the Whiskey Rebellion," JPHS, XLIII (Mar., 1965), 28-36.

graduate of Witherspoon's Princeton, and one of Graham's students, Moses Hoge, who had graduated from Liberty Hall in 1778. The young Hoge reacted violently against the Whiskey Rebellion and moved that the synod prepare an official address to its members reminding them of their "duty of obedience to the Laws of their Country." Graham, however, was very reluctant to condemn the right of citizens to dissent from the actions of their government. While he desired a government that was uniformly Protestant and visibly religious, just as Hoge did, Graham insisted that government must allow social protest. After a brief but fierce debate the synod narrowly defeated Hoge's proposed address. The synod did recommend, however, an immediate fast in which the ministers were instructed to admonish people "to be subject to the powers that be . . . ."[73]

Graham's stand brought immediate disapproval from his congregation and many of his colleagues. Dispirited, in 1796 he resigned his position at Liberty Hall and purchased a plot of land on the Ohio River. There he attempted to establish a utopian community in which like-minded Christians would live in a godly and thoroughly democratic community. A notoriously bad judge of character, Graham chose his colonists poorly and the scheme was an immediate failure. Graham's effort to establish a small, holy democracy in the West reflects the tensions existing in Presbyterianism in the revolutionary era. He enthusiastically endorsed the political

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[73]Sept. 24, 26, 1794, Va. Syn. Min., I, 126, 140.

democracy that resulted from the Revolution, but he was very disturbed when that democracy appeared to threaten social order and public religion, as it did in the Whiskey Rebellion. Some Presbyterians, like Hoge, soundly condemned the rebels and called for strong governmental action to enforce the law. This Graham could not do. But neither could he accept perpetual social conflict. He set out, then, to establish a democratic Christian community in which there would be no conflict. He sought Presbyterians who would constitute a society in which there would be no jarring of interests, a society in which godly leaders could easily ascertain and pursue the common good of the small society. The society he sought was the professed ideal of all Presbyterians. However, many of them were beginning to realize that a society devoid of conflict was impossible in America, and some were beginning to defend that conflict as a positive good.

4. Homogeneity, Social Conflict, and Education

When William Graham planned his tiny democracy on the Ohio, he considered a homogeneous population the most crucial prerequisite for its success. No political maxim was more generally accepted by Americans during this period than the dictum, best expressed by Montesquieu, that a republic should be composed of a small, homogeneous population. Only in such a population could the concern for the public good that sustained republicanism be nourished. In a large, heterogeneous population, it was believed that conflicting interests would prevent that public good from even being ascertained, much

less served. The population of some parts of America in the Revolutionary era was very homogeneous; that of other parts was not. In some areas the Presbyterians were the great majority; in others they were a tiny minority. These facts influenced greatly their concept of republican education and their attitude toward social conflict.

In the South Side of Virginia the Presbyterians coexisted with a substantial and wealthy Anglican population. Consequently, the members of the Hanover Presbytery established Hampden-Sydney in cooperation with the Anglicans, including Patrick Henry and James Madison. The Presbyterians were aware that the school would flourish only if it had Anglican as well as Presbyterian support; therefore, they stressed the school's broad foundation. In 1790 several students charged that the school's faculty was proselytizing for the Presbyterians. The Trustees moved quickly to disprove the charge and met in an extraordinary session to examine a broad spectrum of the student body. The students uniformly agreed that

> no such attempts have ever come under their observations, but that an enlarged and liberal policy respecting religious parties had invariably been observed in conducting the seminary of Hampden Sidney during their residence at that place.[74]

The Presbyterians were a tiny minority among the Anglican gentry and the unchurched frontiersmen who settled Lexington, Kentucky. Therefore, they also stressed the

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[74]Apr. 14, 1775, Han. Pby. Min., II, 62; Mar. 1, 16, 1790, Alfred J. Morrison, ed., The College of Hampden-Sidney, Calendar of Board Minutes, 1776-1876 (Richmond, 1912), pp. 37, 38.

catholicity of Transylvania Seminary. In 1787 "Catholicus," possibly Transylvania Trustee Caleb Wallace, declared that no one denomination should dominate the new school lest an institution designed for the common good be perverted into serving one sect. "A Transylvanian" agreed with "Catholicus" and added that "superstition and party spirit" had too often caused youth to be enlisted "from their cradle . . . for the service of some sect or interest in church or state."[75]

Despite their minority status, there were in Lexington Presbyterian defenders of sectarian education. "A Sectarian" blasted the "disinterested and liberal" "Transylvanian" and contended that the "superstitious" and the "party spirited" sought to control education only "out of mere compassion and a benevolent regard to the public." He told the tale of "A" and "B", two young men who had been reared in a school controlled by the superstitious and those animated by party spirit. "A" transferred to a school controlled by the liberal and disinterested, where he was visited by "B". "B" found to his horror that under the care of the liberals his former colleague had become "An extravagant spendthrift and vile sodomite." Relieved to have escaped "A's" fate, "B" fled back to "the seat of superstition and party spirit." Many Presbyterians probably agreed with "A Sectarian." But before 1794 at any rate, most more nearly subscribed to the broad views of an Anglican, John Filson, Lexington's most respected citizen. In 1788 he expressed the hope that in a broadly

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[75]The Lexington Kentucky Gazette, Sept. 1, 1787, Nov. 10, 1787.

based school the greatest encouragement would be given to "the spirit and practice of virtue," while all efforts would be made to explode "party spirit."[76]

In other areas the Presbyterians were the majority in a remarkably homogeneous population. In the area around Carlisle and Pittsburgh and in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians accounted for at least 80% of the population. In each of these areas the Presbyterians established schools that were markedly more sectarian in nature than those in areas of more heterogeneous populations. The population of Lexington, Virginia, was virtually Presbyterian, and Liberty Hall Academy was thoroughly Presbyterian. The Virginia legislature transferred control of the school from the Presbytery of Hanover to the Board of Trustees when Liberty Hall was chartered in 1782. But the school subsequently was maintained in full accordance with the desires of the presbytery, which continued to examine and support the school.[77] The population of Washington and Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, was almost as Presbyterian as that of Lexington, Virginia. And the Boards of both Washington and Canonsburg Academies were thoroughly Presbyterian, although in neither school was the denomination given any official privileges.

When the Synod of Virginia in the early 1790's began to

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[76] Ibid., Dec. 22, 1787, Jan. 19, 1788. See also Alvin F. Lewis, History of Higher Education in Kentucky (Washington, D.C., 1899), pp. 36-38, 45.

[77] Oct. 24, 1782, Han. Pby. Min., II, 158; Jan. 30, 1783, Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Washington College, p. 17 (Microfilm in W.L.U.L.); hereafter cited as Wash. Bd. Min. (Va.)

consider locations for its first theological seminaries, it decided to establish them at the two most sectarian of its schools--Liberty Hall and Canonsburg Academy. In 1792 the synod established a theological department at Liberty Hall, which began to train young men in a course of study "calculated to educate persons designed for the Gospel Ministry." The school was to indoctrinate the boys with a "course of religious instruction," which was to be "continually adhered to during their residence there according to the Principles of our Church." The Board of the school agreed to fill its vacancies from the Presbytery of Lexington, which in turn agreed to support and periodically examine the school.[78] A similar arrangement was worked out between the Canonsburg Academy and the Redstone Presbytery.[79]

The Republican Presbyterians' decision to establish Dickinson College in Carlisle surely was influenced by the fact that virtually every family in that frontier village in 1780 was Presbyterian. In defending the Presbyterian nature of the school in 1785, Rush noted that the homogeneous population of Cumberland County (Carlisle) made it inevitable that Dickinson would be patronized chiefly by Presbyterians. But even an undue number of Presbyterians on the Board, he

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[78]Sept. 30, 1791, Va. Syn. Min., I, 74; Petition to the Synod of Virginia, 1792, Wash. Bd. Min. (Va.), p. 34; Apr. 26, 1792, Lex. Pby. Min., I, 127; Apr. 24, 1793, ibid., II, 12.

[79]Oct. 21, 1791, Minutes of the Presbytery of Redstone . . . (Cincinnati, 1878), p. 81; Apr. 18, 1793, ibid., p. 96. See also Smith, Jefferson College, pp. 11, 20, 25, 134; Helen T. Coleman, Banners in the Wilderness: Early Years of Washington and Jefferson College (Pittsburgh, 1956), p. 45.

insisted, was justified if it led one young man to a regard for religion--even at the risk of inculcating a bias for a particular sect. However, Rush remained uneasy about the school's obvious denominational nature. He insisted, therefore, that the school's charter was "catholic" even if the school was not.[80] Thus, even in those areas where they were a substantial majority, the Presbyterians of the Revolutionary period were disturbed by the contradictions between the widely held belief that republican education would be expansive and integrative and the obvious fact that at least half of their schools were quite constrictive and thoroughly sectarian.

5. Republican Finances

The increasingly denominational nature of some of the Presbyterian schools was a partial reflection of the Presbyterians' increasing emphasis on their denominational identity in the 1780's. The Presbyterians in the post-war period had the strongest denominational identity of any religious group in the new nation. That identity was largely the result of the centralization and consolidation of the ecclesiastical hierarchy that had begun during the colonial period. This consolidation had served and in fact been stimulated by the expansive efforts of the New Sides to reform American society in the decades following the Great Awakening. But the Revolution produced a new emphasis on consolidation and centralization and a stress on denominational identity wholly foreign to the cosmopolitan vision that had created Princeton.

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[80] Freeman's Journal, Feb. 23, 1785.

In 1789 the Presbyterians' denominational identity was given institutional form by the creation of the General Assembly with three synods and their presbyteries ordered in ranks beneath it. The General Assembly, according to Witherspoon, was to be "the bond of union, peace, correspondence, and mutual confidence, among all our churches."[81] While the practical necessities of serving churches scattered from New Hampshire to Georgia were important reasons for its creation, the General Assembly was also the result of Presbyterians' fears about the fate of the church in the new republic. In a crucial statement to the synods in 1789 the General Assembly pointed out the central importance of preserving "our character as a body; and our consequence in the republic, in comparison with other denominations of christians." Without a "common intelligence" and concerted action, the statement continued, "our respectability will be diminished; and our efforts for the public good, and for the promotion of religion, will be weakened by becoming divided."[82]

In order to preserve the church's "character as a body," the General Assembly and the synods began to emphasize the necessity of closely supervising the development of the presbyteries and their sessions. The New Brunswick Presbytery, for instance, at the Synod of Philadelphia's prompting, insisted that each session meet twice a year and make annual

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[81] [Witherspoon], Plan of Government, p. 18. The best discussion of the creation of the General Assembly is L. J. Trinterud, The Formation of an American Tradition (Philadelphia, 1949), chapter 16.

[82] Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly (Philadelphia, 1803), 1789, p. 7.

reports to the presbytery. That body sought to strengthen further its communication with its churches by promulgating a plan

> for communicating more generally and effectually among the several churches under our care, a knowledge of the business and views of this Judicatory, and for interesting and engaging them with union and zeal to aid our views and strengthen our endeavours . . . .

The synods and presbyteries displayed a growing concern that all reports be sent to the General Assembly--in duplicate--and that the churches be "particularly attentive to prescribed forms" when preparing reports. In a truly remarkable display of its concern for form and ritual, the General Assembly published a series of nineteen points to be followed by a church in handling contention and a series of sixteen steps to be followed in bringing charges against a minister. Moreover, it published an elaborate, word for word description of required ordination and installation services.[83]

The Presbyterians' increasing emphasis on denominational identity, however, had to compete with the expansive forces released during the Revolution. This conflict is well illustrated by the Presbyterians' efforts to finance their institutions of higher learning after the Revolution. The immediate reaction of Presbyterians to the end of the war with England was to renew their efforts to gain European assistance. The Boards of both Dickinson and Princeton in 1783

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[83]Sept. 16, 1795, Minutes of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, IV, 357-359 (Microfilm in P.H.S.); /Witherspoon/, Plan of Government, pp. 26-31, 40-47.

sent representatives to Great Britain to raise funds for their respective institutions. John Witherspoon was dispatched by the Princeton Board, while the Dickinson Board prevailed upon William Bingham to solicit aid for the new school at Carlisle. Both Boards believed that America's independence and its reputation as a refuge for freedom would cause Europeans to contribute generously to the American colleges. The Princeton Board noted that the "Favourable disposition" of Europeans to America made an immediate subscription drive a necessity, while the Dickinson Trustees anticipated unbounded largess from Europeans, who were members of the "same republic of humanity and literature" as the Americans. Benjamin Rush actively promoted the idea that an international union of republicans would spring up in the wake of the Revolution and that friends of republicanism would support generously republican higher education in America. In words reminiscent of the colonial Presbyterians' emphasis on a trans-Atlantic Christian commonwealth, Rush prophesied that the Revolution would bind the "friends to truth and simplicity in worship and church government in every quarter of the world into a great Christian republic . . . ." Therefore, he expected large gifts to Dickinson from dissenting churches in Great Britain and Holland.[84]

European friends of both colleges warned the two Boards that European fund raising endeavors would fail. An English

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[84]Oct. 22, 1783, Minutes of the Boards of Trustees of Princeton University, I, 240 (MSS in P.U.L.); Sept. 15, 1783, Dick. Bd. Min., I, 86; Dickinson Board to William Bingham, nd. Rush Corr.; Rush to King, Apr. 2, 1783, Butterfield, ed. Letters, I, 300.

supporter of the American Revolution, Richard Price, cautioned Rush that few Englishmen favored the new republic, while a Scottish friend warned Witherspoon that the economic hardships caused by the Revolution had cooled many Scots' ardor for America. And from Paris Benjamin Franklin warned Princeton's President that French aid was not only hopeless but harmful to America's best interest, insofar as it suggested that the new nation could not support its own institutions. The predictions of failure proved quite accurate. From London Bingham advised the Dickinson Board that "the present circumstances and disposition of the people" precluded his obtaining funds for the college. Likewise, the Princeton Board, contemplating the £5.14 Witherspoon raised, concluded that the European venture "upon the whole, was very unsuccessful."[85]

When the Princeton Trustees realized that no funds were to be hand in Europe, they addressed to the General Assembly a petition suffused with an air of offended petulance. The European venture, the Trustees declared defensively, had been surprisingly unsuccessful. Consequently, the Board would turn again to Americans, for whom, after all, the school had been founded. The Trustees intended to appeal to each of the presbyteries through their moderators and

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[85]Richard Price to Rush, Jan. 1, 1783, Rush Corr.; Margaret W. Ross to Witherspoon, Feb. 17, 1784, Ashbel Green Collection, P.U.L.; Benjamin Franklin to Witherspoon, Apr. 5, 1784, The John Witherspoon Collection in Photocopy and Typescript, P.U.L.; Bingham to Dickinson Board, Dec. 29, 1783, in Apr. 7, 1784, Dick. Bd. Min., I, 112; Sept. 30, 1784, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 246.

promised to mount a subscription campaign throughout the synod.[86] In the decade following the end of hostilities each of the Presbyterian schools mounted such a campaign. Solicitors for the schools traveled from New England to Georgia raising funds in the Presbyterian churches and thereby assisting in the creation of a strong denominational sense of identity.[87]

This sense of denominational identity was strengthened in the Revolutionary period by efforts to standardize and systematize subscription drives. At Dickinson John King suggested that ministers and trustees be sent in twos from congregation to congregation, spending at least a week in each. The church's minister could then collect and forward the contributions to the presbytery. In varying degrees all of the schools and presbyteries used the method of ministerial subscription drives. The effort at standardization and centralization reached a high point in 1794 when the Transylvania Presbytery ordered each family head in its churches to give two shillings and three pence for the support of Transylvania Seminary. It then ordered that the moderator of each session keep records of each man's compliance with the directive.[88]

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[86]Oct. 1, 1784, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 246-247.

[87]Oct. 1, 1791, Va. Syn. Min., I, 81-82; Aug. 14, 1793, Wash. Bd. Min. (Va.), pp. 39-40; Nov. 9, 1793, Han. Pby. Min., III, 167; Apr. 24, 1794, N. Bruns. Pby. Min., IV, 278; Feb. 29, 1792, Minutes of the Transylvania Presbytery, I, 52 (Microfilm in U.T.S.); hereafter cited as Trans. Pby. Min.

[88]King to Rush, Jan. 12, Mar. 19, 1784, Jan. 16, 1785, Rush Corr.; Apr. 7, 1784, Dick. Bd. Min., I, 110-111; Apr. 24, 1794, Trans. Pby. Min., I, 113.

The growth of denominational support resulted immediately in conflicts over the question of denominational control. This conflict reached a climax at Princeton in the first half of the 1790's. In 1791 the General Assembly requested that the Princeton Trustees prepare a report of the way in which the interest of the Tennent-Davies fund was being used. The General Assembly asserted its right to name the recipients of the fund's interest at Princeton and claimed authority to decide how the funds were to be spent. The Trustees agreed that the General Assembly had the right to name the recipients for the fund's interest but denied that it had the right to dictate how the money was to be spent. Ashbel Green, Presbyterian minister and Princeton graduate and trustee, vigorously denounced the Board's claims and insisted that final control of the funds rested with the General Assembly. Between 1794 and 1796 both sides made claims and counter-claims, but the issue was never resolved. The General Assembly's efforts to dictate policy to the Board was perhaps the first indication of a constriction of the Presbyterians' generally expansive educational policy during the Revolutionary period. But the Assembly's constrictive efforts to assert control over the New Jersey school clashed with the efforts of Witherspoon and Samuel Stanhope Smith to further broaden its constituency and to strengthen its non-denominational character. For the moment the Scotsman and his son-in-law prevailed.[89]

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[89]Sept. 27, 1791, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 292; Apr. 10, 1793, ibid., I, 300-312; Apr. 10, 1794, ibid., I, 330-331.

Both the Assembly and the Board claimed to be carrying out the expressed intentions of the Englishmen who had generously responded to Tennent and Davies' subscription drive in the early 1750's. As has been noted, most philanthropists in the colonial period did not attempt to shape the development of Princeton with their gifts, and this trend continued into the Revolutionary era. In 1787 Princeton received a bequest of £100 from one William McConkey with only the stipulation that it be used to educate deserving poor boys. And in 1794 Princeton graduate Azariah Horton directed his executors to purchase United States stocks, the interest of which was to be used for the education of poor and pious youth. Neither of these benefactors stipulated that the recipients of their bequests be trained for the Presbyterian ministry. In 1785, however, the Princeton Trustees assured anyone who wished to give money to support ministerial education that his gifts would be "sacredly appropriated for that purpose alone . . . ." And in 1792 the school received its first large bequest specifically for training Presbyterian ministers. Princeton graduate and New York merchant James Leslie left to his alma mater £4500, the interest of which was to be "appropriated to the Education of poor and pious youth of the presbyterian denomination, for the work of the gospel ministry."[90]

This trend toward strengthening the school's denominational identity gained force in the 1780's and 1790's from

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[90]Apr. 18, 1787, ibid., I, 262; Sept. 26, 1792, ibid., I, 299; Apr. 10, 1793, ibid., I, 313-314; Apr. 8, 1794, ibid., I, 325.

their b[illegible] efforts to increase the amount of benefactions left to the schools. In 1790 the Princeton Trustees directed that the name of each benefactor be kept in a book made especially for that purpose. The Dickinson Trustees made a similar ruling in 1797 and further stipulated that each benefactor's name be read at commencement, followed by a student oration in praise of giving to literary institutions.[91] At the same time, the Dickinson and Hampden-Sydney Boards moved to regularize and systematize their efforts to attract gifts for their respective schools.[92] In the 1790's Samuel Stanhope Smith began the first concerted effort to interest Princeton's alumni in their alma mater's welfare and circulated petitions among Princeton graduates urging them not only to give themselves but to raise money in their community for specific needs of the college. Efforts to systematize subscription drives tended to increase Princeton's denominational identity because such drives were usually carried out by Presbyterian ministers within the local churches. Moreover, Smith's efforts among the alumni built up a loyalty to the school among an overwhelmingly Presbyterian group of educated social leaders.[93]

Thus, toward the end of the Revolutionary period the nature of gifts to the Presbyterian schools began to change.

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[91]Oct. 1, 1790, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 286; June 21, 1797, Dick. Bd. Min., I, 236.

[92]Dickinson Board to Rush, Dec. 23, 1789, Rush Corr.; Rush to Montgomery (?), May 10, 1788, ibid.

[93]See two surviving petitions to Dr. James Sproat and to William Crawford in Samuel Stanhope Smith Collection, P.U.L.

Thereafter philanthropy would become a means of strengthening the schools' denominational identity. As the Presbyterians gradually accepted the legitimacy of sectarian competition, they also began to make of their schools instruments of denominational conflict. The increasingly sectarian nature of the gifts to the schools was an important part of that trend.

But if philanthropy began to contribute to the schools' denominational character in the Revolutionary period, it also sustained and intensified their republican identity. Perhaps the most important fact about philanthropy during the Revolutionary period was the extent to which it was intended to create republican institutions and the extent to which Americans expected the republic's leaders to contribute to the support of republican education. The gifts of public figures were invariably sensed as being of an extraordinary nature and as obliging their recipients to strive toward developing broad and non-sectarian educational institutions. For instance, Nisbet realized that the support of John Dickinson, Pennsylvania's famed republican, would help to allay fears that Dickinson was a thoroughly denominational school. He was, consequently, overjoyed when Dickinson agreed to have the school named for him and to contribute land and 1,500 volumes to its library. Enraptured, Nisbet assured the "Pennsylvania Farmer" that "Great and liberal Minds alone can thus combine public Patriotism with private Generosity." In 1782 Dickinson gave Princeton £100 to be used to provide silver and gold medals for orations on subjects that almost

invariably dealt in some way with republicanism.[94] The republican identity of Dickinson College was further strengthened in the public's mind by large donations announced by Robert Morris, William Bingham, and James Wilson.[95] In western Pennsylvania the Washington Academy Trustees prevailed upon Benjamin Franklin to make a contribution to their school and purchased with the gift books emphasizing republicanism.[96]

The gifts of George Washington to the Presbyterian schools during the Revolutionary period best illustrate the symbolic and real impact that the republic's leaders had on republican education through their gifts. Washington's connection with Presbyterian higher education began in 1783 when Princeton played host to the Continental Congress for six months. In appreciation for the splendid reception given him by the Board, Washington donated 50 guineas to Princeton. The Trustees agreed to accept the gift only if it were used to commission a portrait of the General for the school. Washington agreed and sat for the portrait by Charles Willson Peale that hangs in the faculty room of Nassau Hall. Thus, Washington's first gift to Presbyterian higher education

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[94]Phila. Pa. Gaz., Oct. 27, 1784; Rush to Montgomery, June 27, 1785, Rush Corr.; Nisbet to John Dickinson, July 13, 1785, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.

[95]Most of this money never materialized, though. Rush to Montgomery, Feb. 17, 1784, Rush Corr.; Morgan, Dickinson College, p. 33.

[96]The Pittsburgh Gazette, May 2, 1789; Dec. 24, 1792, Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Washington (Pa.) College, I, 17-18 (MSS in W.J.C.L.); hereafter cited as Wash. Bd. Min. (Pa.). Coleman, Banners in the Wilderness, pp. 31-32.

purchased a virtual icon intended to instill in all who saw it the republican virtues so nobly represented by the great general.[97]

Washington's first benefaction went to the least sectarian of the Presbyterian schools and provided it with a thoroughly republican symbol. His second gift was to thoroughly denominational Liberty Hall and precipitated a major crisis in that school's history. In 1784 the Virginia legislature presented to Washington one hundred shares of James River Canal Stock. The General accepted them on the condition that he could apply them to "objects of a public nature." The stock remained unproductive for the ten years in which the canal was under construction, but in 1796 Washington announced his intention to bestow the stocks, worth $20,000, upon a "public" institution of higher learning in the west of Virginia. The Liberty Hall Trustees immediately directed Rector William Graham to apply for the funds. In the letter he drafted for the Board to Washington, Graham completely ignored the school's sectarian character and represented it as a broadly-based "public" institution. Graham insisted that a republican institution that was to be "of permament [sic] duration, and general utility" should be actuated only by concern for the public good, just as Washington was. Any effort to secure the funds as a "matter of honor or emolument" to the school, he insisted, would be "selfish and invidious, and inconsistent with . . . that mind which always overlooks

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[97]Sept. 25, 1783, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 236.

private interest to embrace and secure the public good . . . ." No mention was made of the school's Presbyterian Board or of its special relation with the theological department still maintained by the Synod of Virginia.[98] Washington was satisfied and bestowed the fund on the school.[99]

The Washington bequest prompted a direct confrontation between the proponents of sectarian and non-sectarian education in Virginia. The Virginia legislature in 1796 was controlled by Jeffersonians, who opposed sectarian education in general and Presbyterian control of Liberty Hall in particular. As soon as Washington announced his decision, members of the legislature began to draw up plans for rechartering and remodeling the school. The plans closely resembled those suggested by Jefferson for William and Mary in 1779. The college was to be divided into four schools, the theological school was to be discontinued, and a Board of Visitors was to be given the power to remove faculty members. Moreover, the new Board of Visitors would contain no Presbyterian or clerical members. Unwilling to trust the Presbyterians to broaden their school's base, the legislature used the Washington bequest as an excuse to do it for them.[100]

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[98]Jan. 5, 1796, Wash. Bd. Min. (Va.), p. 58; Liberty Hall Board to George Washington, Dec. 7, 1796, Liberty Hall MSS, W.L.U.L.

[99]Washington to Liberty Hall Board, June 17, 1798, John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., The Writings of George Washington (Washington, D.C., 1931-44), XXXVI, 293.

[100]Henry Ruffner, "Early History of Washington College, Now Washington and Lee University," Washington and Lee University, Historical Papers, No. 1 (1890), (Baltimore, 1890), pp. 68-69.

Reaction from the Liberty Hall Board was swift. Declaring the legislature's act tyrannous and a violation of the sanctity of contracts, the Board prepared a remonstrance to that body and appealed for aid from Lexington's representatives and from their sister school in Prince Edward County. The two Presbyterian institutions presented a united front to the legislature, and the offending bill was repealed in 1797.[101] The Virginia Presbyterians found themselves in the same dilemma as their coreligionists in Pennsylvania. Like the men of Dickinson College they were torn between the practical necessity of appealing to as broad a constituency as possible and an increasing desire to strengthen the denominational character of their school. In the controversy occasioned by the Washington bequest they were caught between a desire for an expansive, integrative institution and the urge to strengthen the one part of society with which they were most closely identified. In the end, like Rush, they decided that republican education was by definition sectarian. The Washington bequest can be seen as the culmination of republican philanthropy. The controversy it initiated ushered in a period very different from the Revolutionary age.

If private philanthropy during the Revolutionary period tended to produce tensions between expansive and contractive forces in the Presbyterian schools, their efforts to secure

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[101]Morrison, ed., Calendar, Nov. 27, 1797, p. 48; Jan. 31, Apr. 20, 1797, Wash. Bd. Min. (Va.), pp. 66, 71. See also James M. Hutcheson, "Virginia's 'Dartmouth College Case'," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LI (Apr., 1943), 134-140.

state aid invariably strengthened the former. As each new school was established, their Boards immediately solicited the aid of their respective state legislatures.[102] There was no feeling that their denominational nature precluded requests for public assistance. Dickinson College, for instance, justified its petition for state aid by pointing out that the Carlisle area had suffered heavily during the Revolution and that the school was of "evident importance and promising Usefulness to a vast and growing western Territory . . . ." But after pointing to these reasons connected with the winning of independence and the promulgation of republicanism, the Trustees inserted a new reason: the state should aid Dickinson because it had also subsidized the College of Philadelphia.[103] But the Board was uneasy with demanding aid for one part of society simply because another group was assisted by the state. This seemed to legitimize unbridled competition for the favors of the state and to threaten social order and union. Consequently, the Presbyterians insisted that they represented a majority of the state. Thirty-one men of Susquehannah County presented to the legislature a petition stating that Dickinson was supported by "a people probably the most numerous in the State . . . ." Moreover, Dickinson bore "directly on the great mass of the

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[102]Sept. 26, 1776, Morrison, ed., Calendar, p. 20; Feb. 19, 1778, Wash. Bd. Min. (Va.), p. 14; Nov. 15, 1787, Wash. Bd. Min. (Pa.), p. 9; June 21, 1786, Records of the proceedings of the Board of Trustees for the Transylvania Seminary (MSS in T.C.L.); hereafter cited as Trans. Sem. Bd. Min.

[103]Apr. 8, 1784, Dick. Bd. Min., I, 116; June 16, 1785, ibid., I, 144.

middling class from whence our common schools must derive their teachers."[104] The state legislatures made no finer distinction between "private" and "public" schools than did the colleges themselves. All of the Presbyterian schools received some aid from the state legislatures during the Revolutionary era, usually in the form of land or permission to hold lotteries.[105]

The liberalizing effect of state aid was most obvious in the case of Princeton. That school received no aid from the colonial government of New Jersey, and its only efforts at gaining state and federal aid before 1796 were limited to requests for military exemptions for students, for reimbursement for the severe damages sustained by Nassau Hall during the war, and for exemption of all college property from taxation.[106] In a "Memorial" written in 1784 Witherspoon noted the reasons for the Board's reluctance to solicit direct financial grants from the new state government. Princeton, he stated, had been established by ministers and "private gentlemen" for the purpose of promoting religion and learning. The Trustees feared that purpose would not be served if the school were to receive state aid, which could lead to

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[104]Copy of a printed form petition, n.d., in Rush Corr. See also Saul Sack, "The State and Higher Education," Pennsylvania History, XXVI (July, 1959), 242-243.

[105]Jan. 7, 1795, Morrison, ed., Calendar, p. 44; July 20, 1793, Wash. Bd. Min. (Va.), p. 18; Apr. 10, 1797, ibid., pp. 22-23. Bills passed by the Virginia legislature granting aid to Transylvania are appended to Trans. Sem. Bd. Min.

[106]May 24, 1777, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 215; Apr. 16, 1778, ibid., I, 218; May 31, 1781, ibid., I, 226.

state control.[107]

By the mid 1790's Princeton's worsening financial situation led its Trustees to reconsider their attitude to direct state aid. When Samuel Smith became President in 1794, he immediately began to campaign for a grant from the state, and in 1796 the Princeton Trustees presented to the New Jersey legislature an appeal for a total of $1,800.[108] The Trustees claimed the state's assistance because of the hardships Princeton had undergone in the cause of the republic. Moreover, by conducting education with "skill, fidelity, attention to moral discipline, and yet liberty in religious opinions," the school had "attracted both reputation and wealth to the State" and had produced citizens and leaders who attested to its "utility." The Trustees emphasized most emphatically the benefits Princeton would bring to New Jersey in the future. By attracting students from North and South, Princeton would become the Athens of the new republic, furnishing it with jurists and statesmen and bringing to New Jersey influence in the councils of America far disproportionate to its size. Finally, the school would provide "an easy access to the most enlarged and liberal education" that alone made republicans obedient to the laws and "capable of

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[107]Memorial for the College of New Jersey, 1784, Witherspoon Collection in photocopy and typescript, P.U.L.

[108]Jan. 13, Apr. 13, Sept. 26, 1796, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 357, 365, 418; Smith to Ashbel Green, Feb. 13, 1796, Samuel Stanhope Smith Collection, P.U.L. For Smith's petition, which anticipated the Board's 1796 petition, see Samuel Holt Monk's discussion of Smith in Willard Thorp, ed., The Lives of Eighteen From Princeton (Princeton, 1946), pp. 101-102.

promoting the public interest."[109]

The Princeton Trustees' petition was suffused with the belief that republican education must be non-sectarian, broadly based, and supported by the state, for which it was intended to prepare virtuous citizens and leaders. But the committee charged with lobbying for the petition met opposition from those who contended that Princeton was "under the sole and exclusive control of one denomination of Christians . . . ." The charge "was used with great force against the application" and was stilled only when the committee in effect admitted that it had been true in the past. In order to gain state aid the committee granted that Princeton had been controlled by one sect during the colonial period when Britain, "by her partial influence, supported the invidious distinctions among different denominations of Christians . . . ." The Revolution had removed the divisive English influence, though, and the committee assured the legislature that the Board "had determined hereafter to act upon all proper occasions, and particularly in the choice of Trustees, on a plan of most extended liberality." To the Trustees the committee then reported that they were now personally responsible to the state to carry out the pledge made in the Board's name. If they did not, no aid would ever be granted Princeton by the state again. Mollified by the committee's assurances, the legislature granted the funds, the only

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[109]College of New Jersey, To the Honourable the Legislative-Council and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey . . . (Trenton, N.J., 1796). Printed in full in Maclean, College of New Jersey, II, 13-17.

direct financial aid Princeton has ever received from the State of New Jersey.[110]

In their efforts to finance their institutions of higher learning, then, the Presbyterians revealed some of the same ambiguities and contradictions that had marked their reactions to the Pennsylvania Revolution and to the move for religious freedom in Virginia. Convinced that the Revolution was a unique opportunity to reform American society, they embraced the revolutionary ideology of republicanism with its emphasis on social union and selflessness. But when that ideology produced the radical Constitution of Pennsylvania and Jefferson's efforts to separate church and state completely, many Presbyterians repented of their early ardor. In the face of such radical experiments these Presbyterians began cautiously to defend social conflict as a positive good. Their educational institutions reflect that change.

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[110]Maclean, College of New Jersey, II, 13-14.

CHAPTER VII

REPUBLICAN EDUCATIONAL PATTERNS

During the Revolutionary era the Presbyterians debated thoroughly the nature of republican education and revealed an extravagant faith in the regenerative capacity of the education they defined as republican. The patterns of republican education which they evolved were different from the patterns of colonial education, and the principal reason for that difference was the arrival in America of the Scottish philosophy of common sense. That philosophy, when combined with the revolutionary ardor and utopian expectations of the Presbyterians, had a liberating influence on the schools.

1. The Plain Road of Common Sense

In 1796, his last year at Liberty Hall, William Graham lectured, as usual, on human nature. As his students dutifully recorded his every word, he meticulously and ruthlessly attacked the arrogance and intellectual pretensions of most philosophers, past and present. Discussing the nature of the human will, he castigated all writers who obscured that subject with specious reasoning, refined analogies, and all manner of pernicious obfuscations. If men would only follow "the plain road of common sense," he declared, understanding the human will would be no more difficult than comprehending a simple law of mechanics.[1] Graham's lectures were almost

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[1]William Graham, Lectures on Human Nature, notes taken by Joseph Glass in 1796, p. 65 (Microfilm in U.T.S.).

verbatim copies of the lectures Witherspoon gave at Princeton in the years immediately preceding the American Revolution. Witherspoon brought to America the Scottish version of the Enlightenment and trained an entire generation of Americans in what was called the philosophy of common sense. That philosophy, as expounded by his students throughout the middle colonies and the upper south, was the basis of the Presbyterians' extravagant faith in the regenerative and reforming capabilities of republican education.

When Witherspoon arrived at Princeton in 1768, he found entrenched there the philosophical system of Jonathan Edwards as interpreted by Samuel Hopkins, Joseph Bellamy, and the younger Jonathan Edwards. Witherspoon found that system disturbingly similar to the philosophical idealism of George Berkeley, against which he had contended in Scotland. At issue in Witherspoon's quarrel with the idealists, or the "immaterialists," as he called them, was the nature of the process of cognition. Men, the idealists contended, are conscious only of the impressions of their minds; they can have no knowledge of matter, but only of their ideas and impressions of matter. To Witherspoon the idealists appeared to deny the existence of matter. Any idea, he insisted, "implies and supposes something external that communicates it, and cannot be separated from . . . [it]." How can whiteness be experienced in the absence of some white thing? he asked. How can one know "roundness" without coming into contact with some round thing? Obviously, one could not. One comprehended roundness by seeing a ball, by feeling a globe, in

short by utilizing one's own senses. The ball did not mysteriously exude the idea of "roundness" to the brain, as the idealists would contend. It was true that the end product of both processes was an "idea" of roundness, but, argued Witherspoon, when the idea was the result of actual sensory experience it was a true idea because it was the result of a natural cause and effect relationship verified by common sense. The idealists seemed to deny this absolutely essential cause and effect relationship. "The truth is," the Princeton President concluded, "the immaterial system is a wild and ridiculous attempt to unsettle the principles of common sense by metaphysical reasoning . . . ."[2]

At the basis of Witherspoon's quarrel with idealism was a disagreement over the passivity and activity of the mind. To the President and his students the idealists appeared to view the mind as an inert receptacle of active ideas. There was no interaction between the mind and the sources of stimulation in an external material world. The passive mind merely received "ideas," which were defined as the active element in the process of cognition. Witherspoon, on the other hand, insisted that the mind--not disembodied, evanescent ideas--was the locus of energy and activity in the process of cognition. Graham even had recourse to grammar to demonstrate the active nature of the mind. He asserted that the universal use of transitive verbs indicates that

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[2]John Witherspoon, "Lectures on Moral Philosophy," in The Works of John Witherspoon . . . (Edinburgh, 1815), VII, 22-23.

all men had grasped the active nature of the mind. In fact, he insisted, passive verbs also denoted an active mind. If "I am distressed," he concluded, "I perceive my distress through the actions of my mind."[3]

Witherspoon and his students attacked the subtleties of idealism either by ignoring them or by heaping ridicule and sarcasm on them. When a young man swallowed a hot drink too quickly and scalded his tongue, the President dryly observed that the student had been burned not by a hot toddy but by the "idea" of a hot toddy. His approach was most effective: a quarter of a century later his student William Graham was still ridiculing those philosophers who argued that hot and cold existed only as ideas. Graham assured his students of the existence of a material world that excited the senses. This obvious fact would never have been denied, he charged, but for the efforts of a "few wrong-headed metaphysicians" who denied that the material world existed simply because they could not prove that it did. The wise man, he concluded, should be guided not by the opinions of metaphysicians but by "the common sense of mankind." At Dickinson College Charles Nisbet likewise attacked the contention that ideas are "the only object of knowledge." Ideas, he explained to his students in lectures on logic, "are produced by objects, so the existence of the effect involves the existence of the cause."[4]

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[3]Graham, Lectures on Human Nature, p. 15.

[4]Ibid., pp. 103, 11-13, 15, 19; Charles Nisbet, Questions and answers on Logic and Metaphysics, n.d., p. 8 (MSS in D.C.L.) See also [William Graham], An Essay on Government. By a Citizen of Frankland (Philadelphia, 1786), p. 6.

Witherspoon and then his students ridiculed the notion that all principles must be proven. There were some principles, they declared, so basic as to require no proof. The first principles advanced by recent Scottish writers could no more be "proved" than a mathematical axiom, Witherspoon asserted. Graham observed that some principles, like the fact that two and two equal four, are, like faith, too simple for definition and too basic for proof. They are, in short, "so plain that all men perceive the truth of them."[5]

These self-evident principles, Graham asserted, must be the foundation of all subsequent reasoning. Upon that foundation men must build systems of thought based solely on sensory perception, repeated experimentation, and the common experience of mankind. "All reason must be resolved into the testimony of our senses," Graham declared. Taking for granted the existence of his senses, Graham believed that when he saw a man, that man was actually there. All life, property, and human relations, he warned, depend upon the universal acceptance of sensory perceptions. Those senses, Graham continued, must be utilized in constant observation and experimentation. When discussing motivation, Graham rejected "metaphysical reasoning" and asserted that "nothing but experiment will do"; he would discover truth only "by accurately observing the operations of . . . [his] own mind." Particularly was it important for a man to make many experiments to prove his assertions if what he was to assert contradicted "the common

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[5]Witherspoon, "Lectures on Moral Philosophy," Works, VII, p. 47; Graham, Lectures on Human Nature, pp. 5, 17, 53, 55.

sense of mankind." Backed by repeated experiments, his assertions would not appear "mere sensations of the brain, but what all men have believed to exist and do still continue to believe." Samuel Stanhope Smith echoed the beliefs of his father-in-law and of his classmate in a letter to James Madison, yet another student of Witherspoon: "Experiment in morals as well as in physics is the only proper source of truth, and guide of reasoning."[6]

The belief that the mind and its external surroundings interacted in the process of cognition served as the immediate basis of the Presbyterians' faith in the regenerative capacity of republican education. If exposed to the proper external stimuli, they reasoned, the mind would develop in a predictable direction. "The cognition of man is formed for the world in which he acts," Graham observed, "and he is found susceptible of influence from the various objects with which he is conversant . . . ." Samuel Stanhope Smith likewise insisted that every simple idea or impression is derived from the interaction between the active mind and "some [o]bject actually existing in nature . . . ." At Dickinson Nisbet congratulated his graduating students on having studied the operations of the human mind. They had seen how simple ideas and impressions came from the mind's active perception of material objects and had been led to discover "those laws of

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[6]Graham, Lectures on Human Nature, pp. 9, 11, 13, 17, 73, 75; Samuel Stanhope Smith to James Madison, Nov. 1777-Aug. 1778, William T. Hutchinson and William M. C. Rachal, eds., The Papers of James Madison (Chicago, 1962-), I, 199. See also Witherspoon, "The Druid, #IV," Works, IX, 255-257.

Nature, according to which the mind exercises its rational powers and [had seen] in what manner it is affected by truth and falsehood."[7]

If the mind was surrounded by virtue and merit, the Presbyterians reasoned, it would develop habits of virtue and merit. The more frequently the mind was exposed to virtue and merit, the more pronounced and rapid would be that development. Particularly effective was the operation of a series of related ideas on the mind's development, Samuel Stanhope Smith observed. "We usually think in a train and every idea almost is suggested by the one immediately before." Those ideas, or stimuli, are "sug[ge]sted and linked together by the relations which objects bear to each other . . . ." If virtuous examples, then, were repeatedly presented to the active mind, in combination, they would produce virtuous action in a scientifically predictable fashion. Even when vice had gained the upper hand, Smith continued, repeated contemplation of virtue and merit could still overcome that evil. By "repeated, and . . . painful exertion" of the mind to recall the "lost images of virtue," by repeatedly contemplating them, and by "using them as motives of action," those images would "at length acquire the habitual superiority."

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[7]Graham, Lectures on Human Nature, p. 39; Smith to Madison, Nov. 1777-Aug. 1778, Hutchinson and Rachal, eds., Papers of Madison, I, 203; Charles Nisbet, Second Commencement Oration, pp. 5-6, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L. See also Nisbet, Lectures on the Dead Languages, notes taken by David McConaughy, 1794, p. 25 (MSS in W.J.C.L.); Nisbet, Lectures on Moral Philosophy, notes taken by John Young, Jan. 17 to Mar. 7, 1787, p. 1 (MSS in D.C.L.); John King, Oration to the Franklin Society of Franklin County, Carlisle Pennsylvania Gazette, Mar. 25, 1789.

This, above all else, Smith concluded, demonstrated "the great importance of an early virtuous education."[8]

Smith and other Presbyterians believed that "an early virtuous education" would train the active mind to recognize the truths that were consistent with "the common sense of mankind." The mind was aided in that process by the inner connections that existed between truths. Smith, in a sermon on the utility and necessity of learning, stated that the mind must be habituated to examining "the connexions and dependencies of things," thus introducing system and order into its inquiries. All truths, he declared, are "consistent with one another," while errors stand out "from the general system, . . . refusing perfectly to coalesce with it . . . ." Consequently, error was "more easily detected."[9] Nisbet likewise spoke of the "agreement of our Ideas with each other," and asserted that the truth of those ideas could be determined with either mathematical or moral certainty because of their relationship with each other.[10]

Enthusiastically embracing the "common sense" philosophy expounded by Witherspoon, the Presbyterians during the Revolutionary period outlined a theory of cognition that rejected the passivity of idealism and stressed the interaction between

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[8]Smith to Madison, Nov. 1777-Aug. 1778, Hutchinson and Rachal, eds., Papers of Madison, I, 203, 205, 208, 209. See also Graham, Lectures on Human Nature, pp. 39, 19.

[9]Samuel Stanhope Smith, "On the Utility and necessity of learning in a minister of the gospel," p. 17, Samuel Stanhope Smith Collection, P.U.L.

[10]Nisbet, Questions and Answers on Logic, p. 41.

the active mind and the stimuli of the external, material world. The development of the mind was to be scientifically controlled by the careful selection of the external stimuli presented to it. By surrounding the young republican with examples of virtuous republican behavior, they believed that they could turn that young man into a "republican machine." The firmness with which they held that belief is revealed in their selection of a republican curriculum.

2. Instruments of Republican Regeneration

The example of the past was deemed one of the most powerful of the stimuli that could be brought to bear on the minds of young men; consequently the study of history was accorded a crucial place in the republican curriculum. In 1784 Witherspoon assured his students at Princeton that they should study history because it was useful, delightful, and presently in very high repute. Around 1789 his student Thaddeus Dod expressed a similar thought to his students at Washington Academy in western Pennsylvania. He described history as a subject that was "easy[,] pleasant, profitable and by the peculiar happiness of this age fashionable."[11] Witherspoon and Dod voiced a sentiment widely held: the study of the past had a particular relevance to the young republic. Many of Witherspoon's lectures on history were blatantly antiquarian and were suffused with the dates of the reigns and

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[11]John Witherspoon, Lectures on History, p. 1, notes taken by Abel Johnson, 1784 (?), (MSS in P.U.L.); Thaddeus Dod, Introductory Lecture to Divinity Students, p. 21 (MSS in W.J.C.L.).

battles of ancient kings and emperors. But his lectures also evidenced his desire to use the past to comment on the present and to predict the future--to use John Joachim Zubly's method of "comparing past times and proceeding with these that are present . . . ."[12]

By "comparing past times" the Presbyterians hoped that republican students would better understand and then be able to reform "these that are present." Rush recommended highly "the history of the ancient republics and the progress of liberty and tyranny in the different states of Europe."[13] And Nisbet noted that the study of history affords a view of the virtuous men of the past and opens to the student the wisdom of the ages. Indeed, by studying history the dedicated student could learn as much as if he had lived since time began. Nisbet's endorsement of the study of history sprang from his belief that concrete examples were more effective as teaching instruments than were abstractions. "The power of example in forming and assimilating the characters of men, is universally acknowledged to be superior to that of precept," he asserted. Nisbet argued that good men were worthy objects of study even if they lived in evil times, for their virtue was accentuated by the evils of their surroundings.[14]

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[12]John Joachim Zubly, The Law of Liberty . . . (Philadelphia, 1775), p. 2.

[13]Benjamin Rush, "A Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools . . . ," in Frederick Rudolph, ed., Essays on Education in the Early Republic (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), p. 19.

[14]Charles Nisbet, The Usefulness and Importance of Human Learning . . . (Carlisle, Pa., 1786), pp. 11-13. On the uses of history see George H. Colcott, "History Enters the Schools,"

When Nisbet spoke of the good men who lived in evil times, he was referring broadly to the Greeks and Romans, virtuous republicans who unfortunately had lived in pagan societies. Nisbet believed that the languages and history of the classical republicans should be the basis of all higher education. That opinion had obtained throughout the colonial period but during the Revolutionary period came under a rather broad attack from several quarters.[15] The usefulness of a classical education became a favorite topic for the debating societies of the Presbyterian schools, and efforts were made to limit classical studies in the curricula of those schools.[16] But the classics had their defenders, and Nisbet was among the strongest of them.

Nisbet assured his graduates that they had been taught Greek and Latin not only because of the "elegance, regularity and antiquity" of those languages, but also because they would "excite and exercise your taste and judgment . . . ." In the classics, he continued, the student was introduced to

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American Quarterly, XI (Winter, 1959), 470-483. Colcott fails to see the ways in which eighteenth century Americans quite seriously used education, and the study of history, for very specific ends. The Presbyterian educators, at any rate, bear little resemblance to the dilettantes he describes.

[15]For a general discussion of the classics in the secondary schools of New England see Robert Middlekauff, Ancients and Axioms: Secondary Education in Eighteenth-Century America (New Haven, 1963). Middlekauff is not adequately sensitive to the dynamics of the opposition to the classics in the Revolutionary period.

[16]See, for example, Hampden-Sydney College, Union Society Minutes, Aug. 31, 1792, Mar. 14, 1794 (MSS in H-S.C.L.); Dec. 7, 1797, Jan. 7, 1799, Washington College (Pa.), Philo Literary Society Minutes, I, 29, 113 (MSS in W.J.C.L.).

men "of a larger size, and sentiments and actions of much greater magnanimity, than can be found in the present dregs of time." The example of the great ancients has "an assimilating effect on the manners of men," he declared "and teaches them by imitation and the principles of society . . . to detest and abhor vice, disorder and indecency, and to exercise justice and benevolence to all . . . ." To begin to admire the great and virtuous ancients "is the first dawn of virtue" he concluded. If "properly improved," that admiration of virtue "will lead to the love and imitation of it."[17]

Because the classics were to direct the development of the young republican's mind, Nisbet and other Presbyterians suggested that language study should begin as soon as possible. Nisbet, for instance, insisted that only the young mind was flexible enough to interact with stimuli and thus to acquire wisdom and virtue. If a young man left Dickinson without receiving the salutary effects of an exposure to the classics, he warned, never again would that young man be susceptible to the impressions of virtue and wisdom. Samuel Stanhope Smith agreed with Nisbet that childhood was best spent in studying languages because the youthful mind was particularly capable of memorization, the main element of language training. After their minds had been exercised by language training, the boys would be qualified to begin more difficult scientific studies, Smith concluded. The classics, then, were to exercise the

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[17]Charles Nisbet, Second Commencement Oration, pp. 2-3, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.; Nisbet, October Vacation Oration, 1787, p. 13, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.

mental faculties as well as excite the young republican to virtuous actions; hence the insistence with which Nisbet urged a classical education.[18]

Nisbet's defense of the classics did not stop when he asserted that they exercised the mind and inspired virtuous actions. He insisted that they were of utilitarian value also. He observed to his students that "some old fool" may have warned them that there was no profit in studying a dead language in a new and bustling country. On the contrary, it was in such countries that the wisdom of the ancients was most urgently needed. He noted that some boys wished to study only science and ignore the classics. He warned them that they would find it necessary to study the languages later in life in order to acquire knowledge that could be had no other way. But the classics would not have as salutary an effect in later life as they would if studied in youth. Consequently, he urged that a thorough grounding in the classics precede scientific studies. Along with stressing their practical value, Nisbet also insisted that the classics did not teach abstractions at the expense of concrete realities. He was reacting to the charge that language study taught mere "words" at the expense of "men" and "things." In the broadest sense, the charge was part of the emphasis on experience and the attack on idealism. Nisbet insisted that the ancient writings introduced the student to the most virtuous of men

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[18]Nisbet, October Oration, 1787, p. 2, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L; Samuel Stanhope Smith to Benjamin Rush, Nov. 10, 1794, Samuel Stanhope Smith Collection, P.U.L.

and exposed them to the most sublime thoughts the world had ever known. In no sense were these thoughts mere "words." Indeed, by introducing into the republic the most virtuous of examples, they served an absolutely essential and thoroughly utilitarian function.[19]

Nisbet insisted that the classics were thoroughly consistent with republicanism, as well as being virtuous and utilitarian. He noted that nothing could be more proper for the sons of free men than to "initiate them in the authors of Greece and Rome, who had the most distinct knowledge of the rights of mankind . . . ." The "grandeur of their sentiments," their knowledge of human nature, and the "propriety and powers" of their language, Nisbet asserted, "will always recommend the study of the classics to all who are not barbarians and will render their duration coeval with that of the world."[20] He granted that there were some evil and immoral men and practices described in the classics; the Romans and Greeks were, after all, pagans. Nisbet noted, however, that "the discreet Master will pass over certain passages, or convey the Antidote with the poison, and warn Youth against the temptations to which they are exposed." His lectures reveal that Nisbet scrupulously followed his own advice and thoroughly sanitized the ancient pagans.[21]

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[19]Nisbet, October Oration, 1787, pp. 1, 2, 5, 7, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.

[20]Nisbet, Lectures on Moral Philosophy, p. 219.

[21]Nisbet, October Oration, 1787, p. 13, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.; Nisbet, Lectures on the Dead Languages, pp. 47-48.

Charles Nisbet defended classical learning because he believed the virtuous pagans provided examples worthy of emulation by young republicans. The words he used to describe the ancients--"virtuous," "patriotic," "selfless," "disinterested," "noble"--described those characteristics Nisbet believed were sorely lacking in America. He hoped that by exposure to the classics young Americans would be inculcated with those virtues he believed had made the ancient republics successful. He also believed that a classical education would prevent the young republicans from indulging in "unclear thinking, thus harming [the] public by falling prey to demagogues." Nisbet clearly believed that only republicans firmly grounded in classical thought could save the young American republic from those demagogues he saw as an inevitable result of the democratic thrust of the Revolution.[22]

The most thorough Presbyterian attack on the classics was that of Benjamin Rush. Like Nisbet's defense Rush's attack was based on the theory of cognition growing out of common sense philosophy. Like Nisbet, Rush viewed the mind as actively responding to external stimuli, but unlike the Dickinson President he did not think that the classics were the proper stimuli in a republic. Rush charged that the study of Latin and Greek taught only the meanings of words and neglected to teach the student about "men" and "things." He pointed out that students "know" most "things" before they know the names of those things. The teacher who filled the

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[22]Nisbet to Jonathan Ingham, Jan. 14, 1793, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.

student's mind with words without attempting to teach the student about the thing for which the word stood endangered that boy's ability to acquire ideas about those things at a later time. The mind became capable only of memorizing words and incapable of making connections between words and the things for which they stood. The study of the classics, then, gave the mind "an oblique direction," Rush charged. In crippling the mental functions the classical study threatened the success of the republic, for it weakened the capacity of the mind for change and improvement. Rush insisted that the process of cognition was a complicated one. The mind first comprehended substances, then actions, then qualities, and then the degrees of the "order of nature." In the end the student should be able to "combine remote ideas upon plain subjects . . . ." Classical study simply was not adequate preparation for this complicated process. Rush recommended that the student first learn about the world immediately around him by studying "simple and truly delightful" natural history. By learning about the things in his immediate environment, the student would begin to learn the relationship between "words" and "things," the absolute prerequisite for Rush's theory of republican education.[23]

Rush rejected the idea that the classics exercised the mind and taught clear, logical thinking and contended that

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[23]Benjamin Rush, "Observations upon the study of the Latin and Greek languages . . . ," Essays, Literary, Moral and Philosophical, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1806), pp. 22, 47-49; Rush to Rebecca Smith, July 1, 1791, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 586.

the classical languages should not be taught to children. He viewed the classical languages as instruments essential only to the learned professions and therefore recommended that they be taught only to boys who had decided to enter a profession. If a fifteen year old decided he wished to become a doctor, minister, or lawyer, he could then acquire in one year the requisite reading knowledge of the classics.[24] Rush's contention that childhood should not be spent in learning Latin was also based on his awareness of the distinctive nature of that period of life. The study of Latin and Greek, he asserted, makes miserable "that innocent period of life, which seems exclusively intended for happiness." He told the story of an eleven year old who declared that he wished he had never been born into a world of trouble that required him to prepare two Latin lessons daily. The boy was not a lazy child, either, Rush added, but one who studied natural history, inquired after all knowledge, and never asked an impertinent question. Rush cautioned that some boys became disgusted with the classics, left school, and embraced low company. Debased and vicious, these young men then became threats to public order. Finally, Rush noted that when the classical languages were the first subject encountered by school boys, a failure to conquer them often soured the boys on all learning. They too then would flee the schools of the republic.[25]

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[24]Rush to James Muir, Aug. 24, 1791, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 606-607.

[25]Rush, "Observations," Essays, pp. 21, 23-24.

Before the Revolution almost no American challenged the assumption that the virtuous ancients were models eminently worthy of emulation. Rush's contention to the contrary, then, was the most revolutionary aspect of his attack on the classics. He observed that the classics taught only vice and diminished "respect for the unity and perfections of the true God." By recounting tales of royal murder and military might, the classics had led to a "universal preference of the military character to all others." To John Adams he declared that "by enabling us to read agreeable histories of ancient crimes," a classical education "often leads us to imitate or to tolerate them." He would henceforth view the study of the classics with slavery and liquor as "unfriendly to the progress of morals, knowledge, and religion in the United States." Rush recounted to Adams an experience he had had recently with one of his sons. After reading Ovid at school, the boy approached his father and asked him if there really was a Nile River in a place called Egypt. Horrified, Rush expressed his

> hearty disapprobation of the mode of education which makes the first knowledge of boys to consist in fables, and thereby leads them to reject truth, or to esteem it no more than the gross errors and fictions of the ancient poets.

Though they might delight the imagination, the ancient "fables" clearly damaged the moral faculties. At any rate, he concluded, the morals of these works were too obscure to be appreciated by the young.[26]

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[26] Ibid., pp. 24, 34; Rush to John Adams, June 15, 1789, July 2, 1789, Feb. 24, 1790, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 516, 518, 535.

Rush ridiculed the notion that the ancients were the only models of virtue worthy of emulation. Did Nature "exhaust herself in Greece and Rome"? he asked. Answering his own question, he declared that men would never excel the ancients until they stopped studying them. Writers, educators, and statesmen must take advantage of the discoveries made since the time of the ancients, he declared. Shakespeare and Swift had done so and had succeeded because they looked forward rather than back to Greece and Rome.[27] Rush also rejected the contention that a knowledge of the classics was a prerequisite for understanding English. No one had taught the Greeks to understand their language through a foreign language, he observed. The Greeks were great thinkers precisely because they did not waste their time learning foreign languages. They had something unusual in "the blood, or in the structure of . . . [their] nerves" that had raised them above the level of ordinary men. They had not allowed that unique characteristic to be smothered by learning dead languages.[28]

Rush believed that, like the ancient Greeks, the Americans had something unique in their blood. In relation to Europe America was like "a new planet, with respect to those, whose revolutions have long been described in the solar system." America was a new country with new and boundless opportunities, he declared. To spend five years in learning two

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[27]Rush, "Observations," Essays, pp. 27-28.

[28]Ibid., pp. 26-27, 31. See also Rush to Muir, Aug. 24, 1791, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 604.

dead languages was "to turn our backs on a gold mine, in order to amuse ourselves in catching butterflies." While the young of Europe studied the ruins of Palmyra, disputed Greek grammar, and practiced Latin conjugations, he asserted, Americans should study only those subjects that "increase the convenience of life, lessen human misery, improve our country, promote population, exalt the human understanding, and establish domestic, social, and political happiness." He noted that posterity might wonder how the wise and virtuous men who made the American Revolution could have been so blindly attached to the classics. Rush hoped, however, that some historian would record that "many of the most active and useful characters in accomplishing this revolution, were strangers to the formalities of a Latin and Greek education."[29]

His conviction that the Revolution had ushered in a new society in America led Rush to denounce classical education as elitist education and consequently repugnant to republicanism. The mysteries of Latin and Greek were open only to a few, he charged, while in a republic it was necessary that the entire citizenry be educated. To reject classical education would make scholars less inclined to lord it over the uneducated populace and would thereby destroy common prejudices against schools. College enrollments would consequently increase and universal knowledge would spread throughout the republic. The rejection of the classics, he concluded, would

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[29]Rush, "Observations," Essays, pp. 35, 39, 40-41; "To Friends of the Federal Government: A Plan for a Federal University," Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 495.

lead to nothing less than "a revolution in science, and in human affairs."[30]

The attack upon the classics in the Revolutionary period was not merely theoretical. As early as 1778 Samuel Stanhope Smith reported to Madison that several parents had requested that their sons be "exempted from learning the greek" at Hampden-Sydney. Seven years later the Board of that school provided that a student could substitute French for Greek. The provision was rescinded two years later, but the amount of Greek required at Hampden-Sydney was drastically reduced. Finally, in their last session of the eighteenth century, the Princeton Trustees inaugurated what amounted to America's first Bachelor of Science degree. They provided that a young man could receive a certificate (not a diploma) from Princeton for completing all the usual requirements for the B.A. except the ancient language requirement.[31] The new certificate

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[30]Rush, "Observations," Essays, pp. 25, 36-37, 43-44; Rush to Adams, July 21, 1789, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 524. The standard work on the classics in colonial America suffers very much from its essay format. See Richard M. Gummere, The American Colonial Mind and the Classical Tradition (Cambridge, Mass., 1963). Gummere's Seven Wise Men of Colonial America (Cambridge, Mass., 1967) is no more satisfactory. His chapter on Rush (pp. 70-80) advances only the thesis that Rush was opposed to the pedantic presentation of the classics. A far more adequate approach may be found in Meyer Reinhold, "Opponents of Classical Learning During the Revolutionary Period," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, CXII (Aug., 1968), 221-234. See also Frank Klassen, "Persistence and Change in Eighteenth Century Colonial Education," History of Education Quarterly, II (June, 1962), 83-99.

[31]Smith to Madison, Sept. 15, 1778, Hutchinson and Rachal, eds., Papers of Madison, I, 257; Sept. 7, 1785, Alfred J. Morrison, ed., The College of Hampden-Sydney, Calendar of Board Minutes, 1776-1876 (Richmond, 1912), p. 33; Mar. 9, 1787, ibid., p. 35; Sept. 26, 1799, Minutes of the Boards of Trustees of Princeton University, II, 33; Sept. 23, 1800, ibid., II, 41 (MSS in P.U.L.).

was a dramatic, and controversial, break with the past and was the institutional climax of the revolutionary attack on the classical foundation of higher education.

The revolutionary attack on the classics was accompanied by a marked emphasis on oratory. To Charles Nisbet the two drives were intimately related. The boys at Dickinson wanted to study oratory above all else, he complained, but they did not wish to study the languages necessary to perfect that art. The students in all the Presbyterian schools shared the Dickinson students' enthusiasm for rhetoric. Rush contended that eloquence was the finest accomplishment in a republic and asserted that oratory had been as important as the sword in winning American independence. The Philo Society at Washington Academy debated whether "eloquent speaking" or the "faculty of composing eloquently" was the most important asset of a minister and decided on the former. When the Liberty Hall Board dispatched Graham to New England in 1785 to purchase books for the school, they listed as their first priority books necessary to teach oratory. In Princeton, as elsewhere, provisions were made for commencement orations and for oratorical contests. And at Dickinson "Philemon and Eugenio" offered to the Board a verse paean to oratory: students at Dickinson

> Fir'd with a patriot zeal, shall rise sublime,
> To spread and cherish freedom's sacred flame;
> And with a manly eloquence explain,
> What freedom is, and how she's best secured.[32]

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[32]Nisbet to Jonathan Ingham, Jan. 14, 1793, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.; Rush, "Establishment of Public Schools," Rudolph, ed., Essays, p. 19; Oct. 3, 1798, Washington College (Pa.), Philo

The intimate relationship between freedom and oratory was revealed in a petition of the Hampden-Sydney Board to the Virginia legislature in the early 1780's. The petition was drafted by young John Blair Smith, who succeeded his brother Samuel as President of Hampden-Sydney in 1780. The Board expressed its desire to build a Common Hall for "the public academical exercise of the students." More especially, their "principal design" in building the hall was "to promote the useful and ornamental practice of speaking with ease in public." In short they wished to build a hall with a stage from which student orators might perfect their art. The Board dared to ask the legislators for assistance because the latters' "experience in the business of the state" had undoubtedly convinced them of "the importance of an early habit and address in oratory" in a republic. The Board assumed that the legislators would "cheerfully encourage any useful plan for the cultivation of it in this government." The legislators' experience with a free republican government was believed to have demonstrated to them the importance of oratory to the maintenance of the fragile form of government.[33]

Lit. Soc. Min., I, 99; Sept. 14, 1785, Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Washington College (Va.), p. 24 (Microfilm in W.L.C.L.); Laws of the College of New-Jersey . . . (Trenton, N.J., 1794), p. 26; J. P. Williams, Academic Honors in Princeton University, 1748-1902 (Princeton, N.J., 1902), pp. xi, xiv; "Philemon and Eugenio," in Correspondence of Benjamin Rush relative to Dickinson College (Microfilm in Pennsylvania Historical Society).

[33]Morrison, ed., Calendar, p. 28. Rev. Manesseh Cutler observed that a similar stage for oratorical exercises existed in Nassau Hall in 1787. John Maclean, History of the College of New Jersey . . . (Philadelphia, 1877), I, 347.

Oratory was considered crucial to the success of the republic because the orator presented ideas directly to the citizens of the republic. There was no more effective external stimulus to the mind than the immediate spoken word. The skillful orator, then, had immense power to mold and direct the development of the American mind. The "power of persuasion," Witherspoon informed his students, was more powerful than genius and great knowledge and was more to be admired than military prowess and political wisdom. The orator had the power to do immense evil or good. Consequently, he must exercise the "greatest reserve and self denial" in the use of his power.[34]

In lectures on rhetoric delivered to the students at Dickinson, Robert Davidson reduced the art of oratory to a science and demonstrated its relationship to the common sense theory of cognition. Davidson stated that the orator might address his argument to any one of three parts of the mind. If he wished to instruct, he addressed the "reason"; if he wanted to persuade, he spoke to the "moral sense"; if he desired to please, he aroused the "affections," or the passions. He cautioned his students against appealing to the wrong part of the mind. It was "fair" to address the "passions" only if the "reason" was first enlightened and if proper attempts had been made to convince the "moral sense." "To excite pity for the distressed or raise the hearers indignation against

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[34]John Witherspoon, "Lectures on Eloquence," Works of the Rev. John Witherspoon . . . (Philadelphia, 1800-1803), III, 377, 379.

injustice is certainly proper and necessary." But, Davidson cautioned, the passions are "the great springs of action," and should be used sparingly.[35]

Oratory, then, was a crucial instrument of republican regeneration because the orator could address himself directly to the mind and urge it to virtuous action. Moreover, the ideal orator was described in terms that also described the perfect republican. He should, according to Witherspoon, have "great literature and extensive knowledge." He should possess a "strong and lively imagination," but it should be "reined in by a correctness of judgment." Possessed of "an open countenance, a graceful carriage, [and] a clear articulate strong melodious voice," the perfect orator-republican should above all else have "a thorough knowledge of the human heart . . . ." Such a paragon could result only from an education based on the plain road of common sense and would be the perfect instrument of republican regeneration.[36]

3. The Science of Discipline

The same man who more than anyone else brought the common sense philosophy to America also advocated a system of discipline thoroughly grounded in that philosophy. Just as the common sense philosophy came to be the basis for the Presbyterians' extravagant faith in the regenerative capabilities

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[35]Robert Davidson, Questions and Answers on Rhetoric, Student Notebook of G. D. Foulk, 1799, pp. 1, 4 (Typescript in D.C.L.).

[36]Witherspoon, "Lectures on Eloquence," Works (1800-1803), III, 381.

of republicanism, so did Witherspoon's science of discipline serve as a principle means of accomplishing the process of regeneration. At Princeton and in the schools founded by Princeton graduates the Scottish parson's ideas provided the foundation for a system of discipline that better than anything else reflects the Presbyterians' belief that Americans could be transformed into virtuous "republican machines."

Witherspoon outlined his science of discipline in a series of letters that were published posthumously in 1797. He looked back upon a "former age" when all education had been carried on by the "mere dint of authority," a "savage and barbarious method," that had been "terrible and disgusting" to all students. To this savage system Witherspoon contrasted a science of discipline worthy of an enlightened age and the new republic. Witherspoon viewed the young mind as endlessly pliable and susceptible to every pressure. "You may bend a young tree and make it receive almost any form," he declared. And, like Nisbet, he was convinced that the mind was much more strongly affected by concrete examples than by general precepts, which "however justly stated or fully proved," seldom leave a "strong or lasting impression." Example, on the other hand, was "the most powerful instruction" and was "necessary to give meaning and influence to all other instruction." The examples we see every day, he declared, have "a constant and powerful influence, on our temper and carriage." Children observe the actions of their parents and begin to connect those actions with certain ideas. By "connecting the idea with the sign," children "acquire

many sentiments of good and evil, right and wrong, in that early period of their life." They slowly build up "a great number of particulars," ideas which taken separately may be of little moment, but which, "by their union or frequent repetition, produce important and lasting effects." In fact, Witherspoon concluded, those ideas are the source of "national characters and national manners, and every characteristic distinction of age and place."[37]

With the power to mold the national character in their hands, parents must approach the problem of discipline cautiously and scientifically, Witherspoon declared. They must constantly be aware that their "whole visible deportment will powerfully, though insensibly" influence their child's opinion and future conduct. The child, as early as eight months, should begin to learn that the parents' will must always prevail. Witherspoon suggested a method he used with his own children. He selected something to take away from the child every day and under no circumstances would give it back for a certain period of time. He repeated the process every day at the same time and did not contradict the child at any other time. In this way he established in the child's mind the idea that the parents' will must always prevail. In so doing, he was never forced to deal harshly with any of his children. Therein lay the meaning of the curious statement--so frequently made--that discipline should be arbitrary so as

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[37]John Witherspoon, A Series of Letters on Education . . . (New York, 1797), pp. 26, 76, 55, 53; "The Religious Education of Children," Works (1800-1803), II, 254, 258, 253.

not to be severe. Witherspoon also insisted that the mother and father agree on a single course of action and present a united front to the child. Under no circumstances should they present to the child two differing examples, for that would only lead to the formation of conflicting ideas in the child's mind. Discipline should be always rational. It should proceed from a "sense of duty" and be "directed by conscience." It should never be the result of parental rage, for the child would surely see it as a result of weakness. And, finally, discipline should always be directed to the child's sense of honor and conscience. The essence of rational behavior, Witherspoon's science of discipline based on repetition of stimulation and emulation was the perfect concomittant to the common sense curriculum at Princeton.[38]

Benjamin Rush made even more explicit than Witherspoon the relation between discipline and rationality. In discussing the discipline best suited for a republic, Rush insisted that any republican discipline system must be directed toward the reason and moral sense of the child. He branded the schoolmaster the last despot in an otherwise free society. Condemning corporal punishment as contrary to the spirit of liberty, he asserted that if he could make only one law for the republic, it would be to make striking a student as serious a crime as striking an adult. Children, he observed, are fully able to feel the force of reason and moral obligation

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[38]Witherspoon, Letters on Education, pp. 76, 68, 55, 33, 39, 34, 47-48.

by the time they begin school. If they are punished wrongly and harshly, their moral sense of what is improper and immoral is dangerously impaired. Harsh treatment, he continued, only destroys the sense of shame and, consequently, moral sensibility. No longer, then, can the boy be dealt with rationally, and he becomes a threat to the republic. Rush insisted that the master's authority be absolute, as the father's is absolute. But, like Witherspoon, he also asserted that "strictness of discipline will always render severity unnecessary . . . ."[39]

Witherspoon's science of discipline was applied by one of his students to the problems of rising juvenile delinquency in America's largest city. Ashbel Green believed that more and better police would not rid Philadelphia of the gangs of teenage hoodlums that threatened the reputation, if not the domestic safety, of the City of Brotherly Love. In a speech Green assured the public that if "the minds of youth be formed to sobriety, obedience, industry, self-denial and virtue, severity will be unnecessary, [and] rigorous laws will want an object . . . ." He urged parents, teachers, ministers, and magistrates to "utilize" moral means and domestic discipline to deal with the problem. The use of force, he warned, would produce a "very partial and temporary reformation."[40]

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[39]Rush, "Thoughts upon the Amusements and Punishments Which are Proper for Schools," Essays, pp. 63, 64, 68, 67; "Establishment of Public Schools," Rudolph, ed., Essays, pp. 16, 33.

[40][Ashbel Green], An Address . . . Respecting the Better Government of Children . . . (Philadelphia, 1795), pp. 9, 10.

Ashbel Green had served under Witherspoon as a graduate tutor in the 1780's and had been influenced directly by the Scotsman's ideas on discipline. "Govern . . . govern always," Witherspoon once warned him, "but beware of governing too much." Do not commit the authority of the school to laws not essential to its welfare, he cautioned, and distinguish between "youthful follies and foibles, and those acts which manifest a malignant spirit, or intentional insubordination."[41] Witherspoon's enlightened geniality appears to have prevailed at Princeton during the Revolutionary period. The Board proudly noted that discipline at Princeton was "wholly of the moral kind, and addressed to the sense of duty and the principles of honour and shame . . . ." Indeed, the boys took the Trustees at their word. One suspended student applied for readmission on the grounds that the punishment was "only inflicted for the reformation of the offender." He was now reformed and should be readmitted. He was--there was no belief in the Revolutionary period that discipline was intended to protect the school from evil influences. It was intended to reform the offending students, who were almost invariably readmitted after the few times when some were suspended. The few suspensions resulted from the revolutionary students' sensitivity about their rights and honor. In 1793 a group of Princeton boys decided that their characters had been "very much stigmatized by a late resolution of the faculty," and requested permission to leave the school. The faculty refused

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[41]Quoted in "Ashbel Green," Presbyterian Magazine, IV (Oct., 1854), 471-472.

and most of the boys gave up. Two boys did not and were expelled--only to be readmitted on the following day.[42]

Witherspoon's science of discipline was posited on the central importance of the daily impressions received by the student. The ramifications of this fact were revealed in the efforts of Presbyterians to decide where to house their students. Princeton opted early for housing the boys under one roof in Nassau Hall, and the Board constantly stressed the advantage of being able to closely supervise the students' morals when they were in one place. The Trustees and faculty were constantly forcing young men to return to Nassau Hall from the village, where they had illegally taken lodgings in private homes and the taverns in search of female company and more palatable food.[43] The Princeton Board occasionally allowed a student to board outside Nassau for reasons of health, that is, if he could produce a doctor's certificate to the effect that college fare would undermine his physical well-being.[44]

Other Presbyterians, particularly Rush, were convinced that dormitory life would ruin more than the student's health. Dormitories, he charged, were the remains of "monkish

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[42] Laws of the College of New Jersey, p. 31; Resolves and Minutes of the Faculty [of the College of New Jersey], June 11, 1794, Mar. 15, 16, 1793 (MSS in P.U.L.); hereafter cited as Pr. Fac. Min.

[43] Two representative actions are in Pr. Fac. Min., Jan. 8, 1794, and in Sept. 28, 1791, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 213; Apr. 10, 1794, ibid., 332.

[44] John Watson to John McMillan [1796?]. John Watson MSS, W.J.C.L.

ignorance" and were as useless in improving minds as monasteries were in promoting true religion. Boys should live in private homes because there they could be made better "men, citizens, and Christians." Separating them from other boys secures them from corruption "while we improve their manners by subjecting them to those restraints which the differences of age and sex naturally produce in private families." Rush consented to allow his son John to attend Princeton only after arranging for the boy to stay with Professor Minto. He urged Minto to keep a constant eye on John and to allow the boy to enter Nassau Hall only for classes. When John was caught playing cards in Nassau Hall on Sunday, his father immediately withdrew him from Princeton. His son's downfall he blamed on "the temptations and opportunities of vice which are inseparably connected with a number of boys herding together under one roof without the restraints which arise from female and family society." George Clymer, a Philadelphian who signed the Declaration of Independence, even moved to Princeton for two years to superintend the education of his two sons and to enable them to live at home. And at Dickinson Robert Davidson reported that students live in "good private homes" where they have the "polishing influence of the fair sex . . . ."[45]

Rush, Clymer, and Davidson were anxious that the correct

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[45]Rush, "Establishment of Public Schools," Rudolph, ed., Essays, p. 17; Rush to Walter Minto, Mar. 24, Apr. 30, Sept. 19, 1792, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 613, 615, 622; Samuel D. Alexander, Princeton College . . . (New York, 1872), p. 233; Robert Davidson, A brief State of the College . . . , 1791. Robert Davidson MSS, D.C.L.

impressions be presented to the minds of their charges and sons. The same concerns led many Presbyterians to oppose cities as sites of republican education. If young men were to be converted into republican machines, it would be necessary to remove them from the vices that attended city life. Rush condemned even the village of Princeton as a den of iniquity and had no hope for any young man who was to be educated in Philadelphia. "Philemon and Eugenio" likewise disdained the city and rhapsodized over the benefits of the secluded location of Dickinson College:

> Here too, as in the groves of Academus,
> Far remote from scenes of noise and strife,
> We musing walk, and happily indulge
> The Philosophic thought; secure we trust
> From fatal vice, and all her gloomy train.

The Boards of at least Dickinson and Princeton took corporate action to see that Princeton and Carlisle resembled ancient Academus as nearly as possible. In both villages the schools' trustees exerted political pressure to refuse licenses to tavern owners who sold drinks to their students. Those actions, asserted the Princeton Board, "will not only promote the good government of the college, but also the peace and good order of the town." And in Lexington, Virginia, the Liberty Hall Trustees resisted offers of financial assistance if they would move their school into the town's limits. They chose rather to keep the school pristinely situated just out of the reach of iniquity.[46]

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[46]Rush to James Armstrong, Mar. 19, 1783, Rush to John Montgomery, June 27, 1783, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 295, 302; "Philemon and Eugenio," Rush Corr.; Oct. 1, 1790, Pr. Bd.

On the other hand, some Presbyterians argued that the towns of America were suitable locations for republican seminaries. Most of the schools, after all, were at least in villages. Only Hampden-Sydney was far removed from a community of some size. Consequently, Robert Davidson boasted that Carlisle was "free from luxury, and other evils, to as great a degree as perhaps any other town or village in the United States." And in Lexington, Kentucky, the town's leaders raised a fund to build a home for Transylvania if that school would pledge to remain in that city and make of it the educational capital of the West. The urbane John Filson even contended that towns produced more moral citizens than could the country. In the country, he noted, a school boy gets away with a great deal because "no eye beholds him." In a "respectable town" he would be forced to fear "the contempt of ridicule" that ill-bred behavior would elicit. There a boy can know mankind and become a gentleman as well as a scholar. Both the attack on and the defense of cities, then, were based on a desire to provide a setting that would present to the young mind those impressions most likely to produce virtue and honor.[47]

4. Extending the Limits of Education

The Presbyterians believed that in a republic dependent

Min., I, 278; June 21, 1797, Charter and Proceedings of the Trustees of Dickinson College, I, 206 (Typescript in D.C.L.); Jan. 30, 1783, Wash. Bd. Min. (Va.), p. 19.

[47]Davidson, State of the College, Davidson MSS, D.C.L.; Lexington Kentucky Gazette, Jan. 19, 1788.

upon public virtue it was necessary for all citizens to become virtuous and honorable. Consequently the Revolutionary period saw the Presbyterians make a concerted effort to extend the scope of higher education and to make it more readily available to a larger part of the citizenry. Perhaps the strongest impetus behind the effort to enlarge the limits of education was the knowledge that republican governments were notoriously complicated, particularly when adapted to large nations. Young people, therefore, must be taught their duty and responsibilities to society in the schools of the nation if the republic was to succeed. Benjamin Rush, when urging Nisbet to emigrate to America in 1784, stated that "our statesmen wish to see our youth formed for the various duties they owe to the republic." Therefore, Rush asserted, "A course of lectures on government, including not only the principles of constitutions but practical legislation will be very acceptable in this country and very necessary in our republic." In his essay on republican education Rush warned that in a society in which any man could become a legislator, the art of politics had to be taught systematically in the schools, as it was too important a subject to be left "to solitary study or to a fortuitous acquaintance with books." Moreover, he suggested that all colleges should be established in towns with courts to enable the students to see the republican system in operation.[48]

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[48]Rush to Nisbet, Apr. 19 (?), 1784, Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 323-324; Rush, "Establishment of Public Schools," Rudolph, ed., Essays, p. 20.

The Dickinson College Board shared Rush's conviction that republicanism should be the foundation of the new school. In a 1785 edition of the Carlisle Gazette "Philo" informed the public that the traditional classics and natural philosophy would be taught at Dickinson. But, he continued, the curriculum was to be broadened to include "a beautiful branch of ETHICS" the foundation of which would be "the principles of legislation, law, government, and etc. . . . ." The Board took very seriously its responsibility to see that the school inculcated upon the young men of Dickinson a thorough knowledge and appreciation of republicanism. In the public graduation exercises of 1797 the Board attempted to examine the students on republican politics, but the gentlemen were informed that the boys had just begun to study that subject. In righteous indignation a Trustee informed the chagrined boys that "this subject in a Republican Gov't. deserves your most profound attention; your country is interested in the formulation of these important principles by which your future conduct may be regulated." A good republican, he continued, "must be a Republican from a just appreciation of it advantages over every other." Not content with publicly scolding the students, the Board took official action to insure that the young men at Dickinson would be made aware of the natural superiority of republicanism over all other political systems. In 1798 the Board required the Professor of Belles Lettres to lecture extensively on republicanism.[49]

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[49]Car. Gaz., Aug. 10, 1785, Mar. 29, 1797; June 25, 1798, Dick. Bd. Min., I, 250-251.

It is difficult to understand how a Dickinson student could have been unable to answer any question about republicanism. The lectures of Nisbet are suffused with discussions on the subject. Even Robert Davidson's lectures on grammar served as vehicles for political indoctrination. Davidson agreed with Nisbet that the ancient republicans were worthy models of emulation. Consequently, when he taught adverbs, Davidson also extolled the virtues of the ancients: "Cicero was eloquent, Pliny was moderately eloquent, Virgil wrote admirably." When he taught conjunctions, Davidson also demonstrated the connection between ambition and slavery: "Rome was enslaved. Caesar was ambitious. Connect them by the conjunction because and then it will be Rome was enslaved because Caesar was ambitious." To demonstrate the conjunction "or," he stated, "manners must be reformed or liberty will be lost . . . ." To illustrate the "natural" order of syntax Davidson used a sentence that also warned of the dangers of a standing army: "In every kingdom where arbitrary power supported by a standing army prevails we hear daily complaints of cruel measurers [sic]."[50] Thus was the curriculum extended to inculcate upon the student a "just appreciation" or republicanism.

At the same time the Presbyterians extended the curriculum to include subjects of a manifestly utilitarian nature. At Princeton the classical curriculum was extended not only

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[50]Robert Davidson, Lectures on Universal Grammar, student notebook of George D. Foulk, 1799, pp. 46, 56, 84, 85 (Typescript in D.C.L.).

to include lectures on politics and the law but also to embrace navigation, surveying, and scientific agriculture. Ashbel Green trooped his young charges out of doors and taught them how to plot a field, while Witherspoon used the available man power to farm scientifically his estate just outside of Princeton. The Pittsburgh Gazette and the Carlisle Gazette reported that in Canonsburg Academy and Dickinson College a young man might study mensuration, gauging, surveying, navigation, dialing, the conic sections and single and double entry bookkeeping adapted to the merchant, mechanic, or any other profession. Similar subjects were taught by William Graham at Liberty Hall, and the Union Society debating society at Hampden-Sydney decided that a knowledge of "mechanisms" was of more "utility" than a "liberal education."[51]

The emphasis on "mechanisms" and practical education was not generally viewed as being different from a "liberal education." Rush, for instance, felt that, along with republicanism, subjects of utilitarian value were among the most important parts of the college curriculum. Indeed, he believed those two parts of the curriculum were intimately connected. Surveying, mensuration, gauging, navigation,

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[51] Laws of the College of New-Jersey, p. 37; Anonymous, Journal at Nassau Hall, 1786, Feb. 24, 1786 (Photostat in P.U.L.); Car. Gaz., Feb. 1, 1786, Mar. 22, 1786; Pittsburgh Gazette, Sept. 1792; Robert Davidson to Dickinson Board, May 10, 1786, Robert Davidson MSS, D.C.L.; May 6, 1793, Wash. Bd. Min. (Va.), p. 38; Union Society Min., July 10, 1795. See especially Thaddeus Dod's synopsis of "Parallel" and "Middle Latitude" Sailing in Thaddeus Dod, Notes on Navigation (MSS in W.J.C.L.).

bookkeeping, etc., were absolutely essential to developing the commercial and manufacturing enterprises that alone would give the infant republic strength in a world of hostile monarchies. Moreover many of the same skills were necessary for successful military operations to protect the republic from those monarchies should they become belligerent. Finally, he contended, agriculture was the "only true basis of national prosperity and of private happiness." If the Americans promoted agriculture, "we shall effectually establish the liberties--independence and what is more--the virtue of our country." But, in the largest sense, Rush supported "practical" education because it fit his criterion for republican education: it made men publicly useful and privately happy.[52]

Perhaps the most dramatic and, in the long run, significant extension of the curriculum in the Revolutionary period was the amazing growth in the importance of the natural and mathematical sciences. In 1787 the Princeton Board appointed Walter Minto as the school's first Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, and in 1795 the Scotsman John Maclean became Princeton's first Professor of Chemistry. At Dickinson Rush engaged the services of a Dr. Noyes to deliver a series of scientific lectures, which Rush hoped would accustom students and citizens alike to "breathe the free air of science." At Liberty Hall Graham conducted rather elaborate

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[52]Rush, "Plan for a Federal University," Butterfield, ed., Letters, I, 493; Rush, "Observation on the Study of Latin and Greek," Essays, pp. 47-50; Rush to Montgomery, July 1, 1786, Rush Corr.

scientific experiments, which were witnessed by townspeople as well as by students. All of the Presbyterian schools expended a major portion of their resources on scientific equipment, or "philosophical apparatus," such as eletrical machines, solar telescopes, microscopes, thermometers, prisms, and sets of terrestrial globes. And, finally, in the first graduation of the nineteenth century, Princeton awarded to three young men that school's first Bachelor of Science degrees.[53]

Superficially the sciences appear to have become popular simply because they provided an innovation to a curriculum that in the colonial period had tended to be somewhat stultifying.[54] But there were deeper reasons. The new scientific knowledge was perceived as having a particular affinity with the new republic. Both science and the American republic seemed to offer new solutions to old problems, particularly to men who believed that the rules of the natural sciences could serve as prototypes for laws of the embryonic political sciences. Benjamin Rush, for instance, approached the study of chemistry with something like awe. It seemed to him to unfold the mysteries of art and the wonders of nature. It was particularly important in the new republic,

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[53]Sept. 27, 1787, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 270-271; Oct. 1, 1795, ibid., I, 355; Sept. 23, 1800, ibid., II, 41; Rush to John Montgomery, Mar. 18, 1785, Rush Corr.; Archibald Alexander, "Address Before the Alumni Association of Washington College, June 29, 1843," Washington and Lee University, Historical Papers, No. 2 (1890), (Baltimore, 1890), 132.

[54]See Brook Hindle, The Pursuit of Science in Revolutionary America, 1735-1789 (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1956).

he contended, because it formed the basis for scientific agriculture. Samuel Stanhope Smith likewise asserted that chemistry, because it could be applied to agriculture and manufacturing, was "useful in every country, but especially in a new one."[55]

Perhaps the most important reason for the sciences' popularity and significance was their intimate relation to the common sense philosophy and the theory of cognition that grew out of that philosophy. This relation was illustrated in a pamphlet written in 1796 by Princeton's John Maclean. In the pamphlet the Scotsman attacked the theories and experimental techniques of that group of scientists who asserted that combustion could be explained only by the existence of an element called phlogiston. Phlogiston, they asserted, was an invisible substance that was released during combustion, and its release accounted for the otherwise unexplainable loss of weight that occurred when a metal rusted or burned. The main thrust of Maclean's attack was his contention that the experiments of the phlogistonists were unscientific, limited, and shoddy. Those experiments of the anti-phlogistonists, on the other hand, were "neither . . . ambiguous . . . nor few . . . ." Those of several French chemists "were performed with the greatest care and nicety," he asserted. His own theories were "simple, consistent, and sufficient," while those of the phlogistonists were "complicated,

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[55]Rush, "Establishment of Public Schools," Rudolph, ed., Essays, pp. 19-20; Newark Gazette and New Jersey Advertizer, Nov. 11, 1795, quoted in Maclean, College of New Jersey, II, 10.

contradictory, and inadequate." But the most important thing about his theory, Maclean declared, was that it was not founded on an "ideal principle" and was "no creature of the imagination . . . ." It was prompted "by no random conjecture"; it was dependent upon "nothing whose existence cannot actually be demonstrated." Its properties could be "submitted to the most rigorous examination"; its quantity could be determined "by the tests of weight and measures." Like the attack on philosophical idealism, Maclean's attack on phlogiston would admit of nothing that could not be empirically demonstrated to the senses.[56]

Even more so than the orator, the scientist performing scientific experiments for amazed boys and adults was the Revolutionary generation's ideal educator. Like the orator he could appeal immediately to the senses of his audience; but, unlike the orator, the scientist worked in a world of laws and rules. The student could see that a certain action--placing two chemicals together--produced an infallibly predictable result. The absolutely essential cause and effect relationship was demonstrated graphically.

It was only a step from those scientific rules to the laws that governed social and moral behavior. The Presbyterian educators invariably took that step. Walter Minto, like his colleague Maclean, rejected "hypotheses and metaphysical visions" and sought to establish the science of nature on the "eternal foundation of facts or experiment." And he

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[56]John Maclean, Two Lectures on Combustion . . . (Philadelphia, 1797), pp. 68, 71.

contended that studying the rules and laws of science inspires in the student a sense of "order, regularity, and of dignity." These powerful influences on moral conduct enabled scientists to "bridle the sallies of imagination, to moderate our passions and our temper, and to estimate things according to their intrinsic value." Charles Nisbet noted that the study of mathematics had forced his students to "contemplate in the material world the eternal relations, analogies, connexions and dependencies of things." Their minds had "been accustomed to abstract reason, and the relations of general ideas." And, Nisbet concluded, studying the rules of the mathematical sciences led the student to appreciate the laws that governed the moral relations of men and the universal order of the supreme deity:

> In the certain and determined relations of numbers, lines and figures, you have been led to discern a specimen of that nice order and exact proportion in which God has created all things, and which we may trace in all the works of nature, in proportion as we are acquainted with them.

The study of the sciences prepared the student to appreciate the rules and laws governing the physical and spiritual worlds. Such an appreciation was deemed essential to the success and preservation of a republican society.[57]

Most Presbyterians applauded the increased emphasis on republicanism, utilitarian subjects, and the sciences, but the extension of the scope of education during the Revolutionary period produced some results that troubled many of the

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[57]Walter Minto, An Inaugural Oration, pp. 8, 13 (MSS in P.H.S.); Nisbet, Second Commencement Oration, p. 4, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.

denomination's educators. They were concerned particularly about the Revolution's effect on educational standards. Charles Nisbet was appalled to find that in Dickinson there was no provision for classifying students according to age and educational progress. The grammar school and the college met in one room, he lamented, and confusion was total. "To erect a College in the Corner of a grammar school," he observed to Rush, "is a scheme that never was thought of in any other Age or Place in the World." Moreover, he found that boys entered school any time they chose and also left at their convenience.[58] At Liberty Hall there was no required curriculum, and students were allowed to study in areas of their own choice. In Tennessee the Transylvania Board ruled that boys who could write a "legible hand" and read the Spectator or a novel with "tolerable propriety," should be admitted by the English teacher, their "ages or sizes" being immaterial. At Hampden-Sydney the Board ruled that boys who did not wish to go through the regular course of study might join any class and study "those parts of science which they wish to obtain the knowledge of." And at Princeton the Board found it necessary to proclaim that a traditional two year residence requirement was henceforth to be

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[58]Nisbet to Rush, Jan. 30, 1786, Rush Corr.; Nisbet to Rush, July 18, 1785, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.; Nisbet to Alexander Addison, Feb. 23, 1797, Letters of Charles Nisbet to Alexander Addison, 1786-1803 (Photostats in Univeristy of Pittsburgh Library); Nisbet to James Allison, 1791, quoted in James Henry Morgan, Dickinson College . . . (Carlisle, Pa., 1933), p. 145.

strictly adhered to. It was not.[59]

The lack of classification and standardization during the Revolutionary period was largely the result of student and parental pressure. At Washington Academy Thaddeus Dod observed to his students that "When Students begin to learn how things ought to be done, they are apt at all times to be passing their judgment of the Manner instead of improving the matters of public instruction." In the period after the Revolution young men apparently believed they had learned "how things ought to be done" and passed their judgment on the manner as well as the matter of public instruction. One Princetonian decided that tutor Ashbel Green was incapable "of giving us but very little more than our books would teach us" and so "omitted" a "useless" two hour recitation on navigation. At Hampden-Sydney a group of thirty students succeeded in having one of their tutors dismissed, while at Dickinson the Belles Lettres Society decided in debate that Davidson's lectures on natural philosophy were not "an eligible way of acquiring a knowledge of that science." At Princeton Samuel Stanhope Smith in 1786 was confronted by a group of students who demanded extra time to review for examinations, as their subjects "were many, and some of them difficult." Unperturbed by their unprecedented demand, Smith, in the words of one student, "very forcibly convinced us how inexpedient he thought it, by appointing us recitations which

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[59]Committee report, Nov. 9, 1793, Transylvania University MSS, T.C.L.; "Laws and Ordinances," 1784, Morrison, ed., Calendar, pp. 29-30; Sept. 24, 1788, Pr. Bd. Min., I, 274.

would faithfully employ us for a week to come." The young men at Dickinson exploited the very strong antipathy between the Trustees and Nisbet and complained that the President required them to take down every word of his lectures. The Trustees informed Nisbet that Dickinson was getting a reputation for academic severity and was consequently losing students to other schools. They therefore requested the President to lighten the boys' work load, without sacrificing essentials or quality, of course.[60]

Faced with this extraordinary situation, the Presbyterian educators surmised that the turmoil attending the Revolution had encouraged both the students and their parents to demand lower standards and a shorter course of study. In short, they seemed to be demanding an educational revolution to match the political one. Witherspoon blasted "the mistakes of parents and their desire to precipitate the education of their children," and resolved to admit to Princeton only those who were in good standing in one of the classes and to graduate only those who completed the entire course of study. Samuel Stanhope Smith echoed the sentiments of his father-in-law. He complained that American parents alloted a ridiculously short time for the education of their children and viewed education only as a means to equip their sons to make money quickly. The students, according to

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[60]Dod, Lecture to Divinity Students; Anon., Journal at Nassau Hall, June 8, Sept. 1, 20, 1786; Morrison, ed., Calendar, Apr. 28, 1786, p. 34; C. B. Swisher, "The Education of Roger B. Taney," Bulwark of Liberty . . . (New York, 1950), p. 154; Apr. 17, 1794, Dick. Bd. Min., I, 205.

Smith, came from homes where they heard nothing but business discussed for years and therefore had no notion of the honor of scholarship. Because the students had very little elementary education, Smith continued, their parents demanded that the colleges be turned into grammar schools for the "great babies." Charles Nisbet concluded that the "great babies" at Dickinson had "no ambition to acquire Knowledge" and that they seemed concerned only to find how little was required of them. Nisbet also believed that the boys only reflected the deplorable attitudes of their parents. To Rush he complained of a father who demanded that his son be enrolled in Dickinson's senior class and graduate in one year, which, Nisbet sighed, "it is impossible for him to do in a rational Manner, and to his Advantage."[61]

Much to his dismay, Nisbet found that during the 1790's the demand for a one year course of study grew constantly stronger. In 1797 he informed his friend Alexander Addison that the school's Board was considering a one year degree so that Dickinson could compete with the University of Parkinson's Ferry, a fictional school Nisbet created to express his contempt for the state of higher education in America. In 1798 the Board overruled Nisbet's vehement objections that the one year course would produce "only raw and ignorant Graduates, to the Hurt of Society," and provided for just such a course. In 1799, 1800, and 1801 young men graduated

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[61]Witherspoon to Nicholas Van Dyke, May 12, 1786, John Witherspoon Collection, P.U.L.; Smith to Rush, Feb. 25, 1790, Samuel Stanhope Smith Collection, P.U.L.; Nisbet to Rush, Aug. 26, 1790, Rush Corr.

from Dickinson College after studying for one year. The experiment was the climax of the attack on academic standards in the Revolutionary period and was the result of parental as well as student pressures.[62]

The issue of standards in the Presbyterian schools also was affected by a controversy over ministerial educational qualifications during the Revolutionary period. In the year of the Declaration of Independence the synod responded to an overture from the Presbytery of New Castle concerning the propriety of admitting young men to candidacy who did not have a college degree. While declaring its aversion to legislate for the presbyteries, the synod praised "the superior advantages attending on education in public seminaries . . . ." The synod therefore found it "highly expedient to encourage the young men to finish their academical studies in such institutions as means of securing a learned ministry . . . ." The 1780's, however, produced a move to lower the educational requirements for the ministry in order to fill new pulpits on the frontier and to combat the general decline of religion that followed the Revolution. Samuel Stanhope Smith warned that the amount of learning required of a minister

> ought to be regulated by the demands of the church, the state of society, the progress of letters, and by many circumstances that will occur to wise and good men . . . .

In 1785 many "wise and good" Presbyterians believed that the

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[62]Nisbet, State of Dickinson College, 1789, p. 3, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.; Nisbet to Addison, Feb. 23, 1797, Nisbet-Addison Corr., University of Pittsburgh Library; Nisbet, State of Dickinson College, 1799, pp. 1-3, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.

present state of America required a lowering of educational standards. To the synod they presented an overture that asked whether in the present state of the church and society the synod ought to relax "the literary qualifications required of entrants into the ministry."[63]

The effort to relax the educational requirements for ministerial candidates soon clashed with an equally powerful attempt to raise those standards. One of the first results of the emphasis on consolidation and centralization that also followed the Revolution was an effort to extend the length of time a ministerial candidate was required to study theology with a minister or in a college prior to entering candidacy. In 1792 the new General Assembly recommended that the presbyteries consider "whether it would be proper to extend the time necessary for young men to apply to the study of divinity before they be taken on trials, to three years at least." The presbyteries responded with a unanimous "No." The New Brunswick Presbytery stated that if the General Assembly or one of the three synods could require three years of study, it could require seven. In Tennessee the Transylvania Presbytery expressed the sentiment of all the presbyteries on the frontier by stating that the change "would by no means suit the state of our country and of our churches in the remote parts of the United States." The Presbytery of Philadelphia was no less opposed. The General Assembly was

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[63]May 28, 1776, Records of the Presbyterian Church . . . (Philadelphia, 1841), p. 475; Smith, "Utility and Necessity of Learning," pp. 15, 16; May 21, 1785, Presbyterian Records, p. 511.

forced to concede that a "considerable majority" of the presbyteries (in fact every one of them) opposed the extension.[64]

The presbyteries not only refused to allow the General Assembly to lengthen candidacy; they also sought to abbreviate it further. The Hanover Presbytery's efforts are representative of those attempts. In 1778 that presbytery recommended that its members "mature their thoughts" on a plan to "shorten and reform the mode of Education" in order to make the pulpit "more accessible to pious Youth, who are advanced in Years before they have entered a Course of Learning." Two years later the presbytery ordained John Montgomery even though he had no formal education in order that he might be "more extensively useful." During the 1780's the presbytery feared that a new central governing body would lengthen candidacy and complained that the proposed General Assembly would have too much power over the regulations of the "learned qualifications" for ministerial candidates. And in 1789 the presbytery elaborated fully its rationale for lowering those qualifications when William Moore, a former Methodist minister, asked to be taken on trial by the presbytery, "notwithstanding his want of a liberal education." The presbytery agreed to admit him and felt compelled to state the reasons

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[64] Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly . . . (Philadelphia, 1803), 1792, p. 12; 1793, p. 9; Apr. 25, 1793, Minutes of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, IV, 224-227 (Microfilm in P.H.S.); Oct. 6, 1792, Minutes of the Transylvania Presbytery, I, 75 (Microfilm in U.T.S.); Apr. 17, 1793, Minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, III, 191 (Microfilm in P.H.S.); Apr. 19, 1793, Minutes of the Presbytery of Redstone (Cincinnati, 1878), p. 99; Sept. 19, 1792, Minutes of the Presbytery of Lexington, I, 153 (Microfilm in U.T.S.); Oct. 6, 1792, Minutes of the Hanover Presbytery, III, 142-143 (Photostat in U.T.S.).

for its decision. A liberal education, the presbytery reasoned, was intended to "furnish the mind with knowledge, and thus to prepare us for usefulness . . . ." Mr. Moore, however, was already experienced and thus useful. Consequently, the presbytery decided that in a period in which men of both education and piety were hard to find, it was "proper to recede from the General rule adopted by our Church, which required its ministers to possess a classical education." However, the members solemnly declared "their approbation of that rule in general, and [affirmed] their intention to preserve a regard to it as extremely useful, and perhaps necessary."[65] The other presbyteries shared the Hanover Presbytery's desire to abbreviate the length of candidacy. During the Revolutionary period that time was uniformly shorter than it had been in the colonial period.[66]

The presbyteries also attempted to lessen the emphasis on the classical languages during the Revolutionary period. In 1776 the New Brunswick Presbytery examined a young candidate and found that he "manifested a competent skill in the languages." However, he seemed "almost wholly unacquainted

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[65]Oct. 30, 1780, Han. Pby. Min., II, 99; Apr. 25, 1780, ibid., 106; Apr. 30, 1787, ibid., III, 23. See also May 20, 1783, Phila. Pby. Min., III, 15; and Oct. 7, 1796, Trans. Pby. Min., II, 123.

[66]The average length of time between admittance to candidacy to licensure was 13 months; the average time from admittance to ordination was 29 months. There was no significant differentiation from presbytery to presbytery. The averages for the presbyteries were Hanover, 10 months and 32 months; Redstone, 13 months and 30 months; Transylvania, 17 months and 32 months; Lexington, 12 months and 31 months; New Brunswick, 16 months and 26 months; and Philadelphia, 11 months and 29 months.

with several of the most important of the liberal arts and Sciences, and also greatly defective in his knowledge of Divinity . . . ." His sermon demonstrated that his knowledge of Latin and Greek had not taught him to think logically. Consequently the presbytery recommended that he spend one year studying logic, natural and moral philosophy, divinity, and English composition. Those subjects, the members reasoned, would lead the young man "to acquire a more clear and perspicuous method of communicating his Ideas . . . ." They were obviously more interested in his ability to communicate with his hearers than with his classical knowledge and just as clearly did not think the latter would aid in the former.[67] The presbyteries did not frequently articulate their reasons for doing so, but in the 1780's they gradually began to cease requiring their candidates to prepare a Latin exegesis as part of their trials and began to emphasize trial sermons.

Finally even the General Assembly yielded to the exigency of the times. In 1800 the central body agreed that "an order of men under the character of catechists" might be inaugurated to serve Indians, blacks, and frontiersmen who had no church. They were to be chosen "from among men of piety and good sense," but they were not required to have a liberal education. The men were not to be "clothed with clerical functions" and were to be supervised closely by the presbytery in whose bounds they operated. Even the General Assembly by 1800 had endorsed cautiously the idea that at least on the frontier

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[67]Oct. 19, 1776, N. Bruns. Pby. Min., III, 134.

the limits of the ministerial profession should be extended and that lack of education should not be a barrier to entry into that profession.[68]

The General Assembly's action in part reflected the fact that during the Revolutionary period entrance into the learned professions became generally easier and more accessible to larger parts of American society. This extension was largely the result of the extension of educational opportunities in the same period. As has been noted, during the colonial period increasing numbers of small farmers' sons found their way to Princeton, often with assistance of their Presbyterian pastors. They generally graduated at a relatively advanced age and frequently entered the Presbyterian ministry. Existing with this conspicuous pattern of social mobility was a pattern in which the sons of the colonial aristocracy also entered Princeton, graduated at an earlier age, and entered the legal or medical professions or entered politics or business. In the Revolutionary period these two patterns became much more pronounced. By 1795 it was quite obvious that Princeton was serving two very different social classes and was advancing two quite dissimilar sets of social expectations.

On the one hand Princeton continued to prepare the sons of the aristocracy of the middle states and the upper South for the learned professions and social leadership. In the class of 1773 was Morgan Lewis, the eighteen year old son of Francis Lewis, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

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[68]Minutes of the General Assembly, 1800, p. 8.

Lewis became a lawyer and served as the Attorney-General and Governor of New York. The seventeen year old scion of the great Livingston family, Edward, graduated in 1781 and entered upon a legal career that saw him become a Congressman, a District Attorney, a U. S. Senator, the Mayor of New York City, Secretary of State, and Minister to France. The class of 1792 included the eighteen and twenty year old sons of the Willing family of Philadelphia and the Lee dynasty of Virginia. George Willing entered his father's counting house, while Henry Lee became a gentleman lawyer. Benjamin Rush's son Richard, who graduated in '97 at age 17 and entered the law, attended classes with a son of the Governor of Delaware, who would graduate at 19, and the son of a Georgia Huguenot family who returned to the South with a Princeton degree at the age of 15.[69]

The Revolutionary period also saw the emergence of a new group of students at Princeton. During that period the sons, grandsons, and nephews of Presbyterian ministers enrolled at Princeton in increasing numbers. These young men did not come from the upper classes, but their educated

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[69]For other examples of the sons of the upper class at Princeton consult the careers of George Clarkson, Henry Kollack, John B. Wallace, who all graduated in the Revolutionary period at age 16; James A. Bayard, Joshua B. Wallace, and Abner and Aaron Woodruff, who all graduated at 17; Jacob Burnet, John H. Hobart, Robert Ogden, John C. Otto, George W. Reed, David Stone, Robert J. Taylor, and George W. Woodruff, who all graduated at 18; and Henry Clymer, William Branch Giles, Charles F. Mercer, and Richard N. Venable, who all graduated at 19. All of these students became lawyers, merchants, or doctors, although Kollack and Hobart subsequently entered the ministry. All are discussed in Samuel Davies Alexander, Princeton College During the Eighteenth Century (New York, 1872).

fathers usually endeavored to begin their education at an early age. Consequently, many of them were able to graduate as early as did their wealthier colleagues. These students were often the beginning of virtual dynasties of Presbyterian ministers, and their heirs would attend and support Princeton throughout the nineteenth century. Most of the sons of ministers followed their fathers into the clerical profession; others, of course, like Aaron Burr, Jr., did not. Like the sons of the aristocracy, these sons of the clergy did not utilize Princeton as an instrument of upward social mobility. That step had usually been taken by their fathers in the previous generation.[70]

On the other hand, Princeton continued to serve as an instrument of social mobility for a significant number of students. As in the colonial period, this was particularly true of the sons of farmers who came to Princeton to prepare for the Presbyterian ministry. These young men frequently were considerably older than either the sons of the aristocracy or of the Presbyterian ministers. Joseph Clark, for instance, was trained to become a carpenter in his home in Elizabethtown, New Jersey. But encouraged by his minister, James Caldwell, and by his mother, Clark entered Princeton at the age of twenty. After serving in the revolutionary

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[70]For examples of the ministers' sons consult the careers of Robert Finley, who graduated at 15; Aaron Burr, Jr., and John D. Blair, who graduated at 16; George S. Woodhull, who graduated at 17; Robert H. Chapman, Joseph Caldwell, and Thomas Craighead, who all graduated at 18; and Samuel Finley Snowden, who graduated at 19. All are discussed either in Alexander, Princeton College or in Vol. III of William B. Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit . . . (New York, 1860).

army, he graduated in 1781 at the age of thirty. Licensed by the Presbytery of New Brunswick, he served the Presbyterian Church of Allentown, Pennsylvania, for twelve years. Born in western Pennsylvania in 1771, John Watson was orphaned at nine. While working in a tavern in Washington, Pennsylvania, he was noted by Judge James Allison, who brought him some Latin books to study and introduced him to McMillan at the Canonsburg Academy. He studied there from 1794 to 1795 and was then sent to Princeton where he graduated first in his class at the age of twenty-eight. An ordained minister, he was named the first President of Jefferson College, the successor to the Canonsburg Academy.[71]

Watson's experience demonstrates the crucial role that the frontier schools and the Presbyterian ministry played as instruments of social mobility in the Revolutionary period. At the Canonsburg Academy, for instance, McMillan, Dod, and Joseph Smith encouraged many young men like John Watson to abandon their farms or their trades to embark on a new career at twenty-five or even thirty. One such young man was Thomas Marquis, the fourth son of an Irish farmer, who died when Thomas was a boy. Living with his uncle, a Presbyterian

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[71]Consult also the careers of William Boyd and John Collins, who both graduated at 20; Matthew Wallace, who graduated at 21; James Grier, who graduated at 22; James F. Armstrong, Henry Axtell, Hugh H. Brackenridge, and James McKee, who all graduated at 23; John Linn and Nathaniel W. Sample, who graduated at 24; David Breck, who graduated at 26; Stephen Bloomer Balch, and Andrew King, who both graduated at 27; and John Springer, who graduated at 31. All are discussed in Alexander, Princeton College, and Sprague, Annals, Vols. III and IV. For Balch see especially Thomas W. Balch, "Notices of Six Presbyterian Divines Bearing the Name of Balch," JPHS, III (June, 1905), 79-85.

elder, Thomas was apprenticed to a weaver at the age of thirteen. After receiving a crude elementary education, Marquis moved to western Pennsylvania in 1775. There his piety attracted the attention of the members of the Presbytery of Redstone, who urged him to prepare himself for the ministry. Finally, he gave in and at thirty-six began to study with Smith and McMillan, leaving his wife to care for the farm while he studied. After ordination he served the Presbyterian Church at Cross Creek for thirty-two years. Thomas Marquis, though, was only one of several young men whose social status--indeed whose entire life--was changed drastically by the establishment of the two Presbyterian academies in western Pennsylvania.[72]

In central Pennsylvania Dickinson College affected the lives of young men in a similar manner. Nisbet's school enrolled an exceedingly large number of older students; of the 148 students who graduated before 1800 only twenty-two were under twenty, and eight were over twenty-five. William Stewart, a ministerial student, graduated in 1795 at the age

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[72]For Marquis and other examples of the young men at Canonsburg and Washington Academies see Sprague, Annals, Vols. III and IV. See especially the discussions of Joseph Patterson, who studied with McMillan at the age of 32; Samuel Porter, who finished his theological studies at the age of 30; Joseph Stockton, who finished his studies at 20; James McGready, who was licensed at 30; Elisha McCurdy, who graduated from the Canonsburg Academy in 1799 at 36; George Hill, who completed his theological studies at 27; and John Brice, who studied with McMillan at the age of 25. For Samuel Tate, who graduated from Canonsburg Academy when he was about 27, see Henry C. McCook, "The Presbyterian General Assembly of 1802," JPHS, I (June, 1902), 301.

of forty-six.[73] Typical of the older students was Robert Cunningham, a North Carolinian, whose desires to obtain an education met the strong resistance of his farmer father. However, with the aid of his minister, Robert Finley, Cunningham left the farm at the age of twenty-two and began his education in several schools held in the homes of Presbyterian ministers. He entered Dickinson in 1787 and graduated two years later at the age of twenty-nine. Ordained into the Presbyterian ministry, he served churches in Alabama and Tennessee.[74]

The Presbyterian schools in Virginia and Tennessee likewise served as the means of social mobility for young men who entered the ministry. Hampden-Sydney, for instance, served the wealthy local planters by preparing the teenage sons of the Cabells, Carringtons, and Harrisons to enter the law school at William and Mary. But it also allowed young adults like Drury Lacy, James Blythe, and Moses Waddell to leave the small farms of their fathers and to prepare for a professional career in the ministry and in education.[75] Possibly

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[73]Joseph B. Smith, "A Frontier Experiment with Higher Education: Dickinson College, 1783-1800," Pennsylvania History, XVI (Jan., 1949), 10.

[74]See especially the sketches in Sprague, Annals, Vols. III and IV of Samuel Rannals, age 27; Robert G. Wilson, age 22; Henry R. Wilson, age 18; James Gilliand, age 23; and Joshua Williams, age 28.

[75]Lacy graduated from Hampden-Sydney at about age 28, Blythe at 24, Waddell at 21. Consult also the careers of Richard Bibb, who graduated at about age 24; John Makemie Wilson, age 22; Nash Legrand, age 20; and David Smith and William Hill, both age 19. All are discussed in Sprague, Annals, Vols. III and IV, Joseph P. Eggleston, "The Hampden-Sydney Boys of 1776-1783" (Microfilm in H-S.C.L.), or General Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Hampden-Sydney College, Virginia, 1776-1906 (Richmond, Va., 1906).

because there was no real planter class in the Valley of Virginia in the late eighteenth century, Liberty Hall served almost exclusively the small farmers of the Valley and functioned as the vehicle whereby many of their sons entered the professional classes through the Presbyterian ministry.[76] That Transylvania Seminary served the same function in central Kentucky is demonstrated by the career of Archibald Cameron. Born in Scotland, Cameron was brought to western Pennsylvania by his parents at an early age. Moving to Bardstown, Kentucky, in 1781, he began his education with his older brother. He was converted at nineteen by Rev. Terah Templin and determined to enter the ministry. Encouraged by Templin he left his father's modest farm and entered Transylvania, graduating about the age of twenty-four.[77]

In 1797 President Samuel Stanhope Smith preached a sermon "On Industry" to the assembled students of Princeton College. Lauding the unprecedented opportunity for a young man to rise in society, he assured his young charges that only their exertions were required to insure their success in

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[76]Representative young ministers and the approximate ages at which they graduated from Liberty Hall are Daniel Blair, 22; Samuel Carrick, 25; Benjamin Grigsly, 19; Samuel Houston, 22; John Lyle, 25; Matthew Lyle, 23; Robert Marshall, 25; Samuel Graham Ramsey, 23; Adam Rankin, 25; Samuel Brown, 25; Moses Hoge, 28; and Andrew McClure, 30. All are discussed in Sprague, Annals, Vols. III and IV; William H. Ruffner, "The Lyle Chapter in the History of Washington and Lee University," Historical Papers, No. 3 (1892), 129-167; and William McLaughlin, ed., "Sketches of Trustees," ibid., pp. 85-128. See also Thomas C. Wilson, Jr., Washington and Lee University Alumni Directory, 1749-1949 (Lexington, Va., 1949).

[77]Sprague, Annals, IV, 168-172.

bettering their estates. Although Smith cautioned against an unseemly ambitious drive to break out of one's place in society, he asserted that a true republican would assiduously apply himself to making the best of all available opportunities for advancement. He could not believe, Smith declared, that a Princetonian would "prove so unworthy and degenerate as to be contented to drag through the inferior grades of society useless and undistinguished and to yield the palm of excellence and merit wholly to others."[78] Many young men took such rhetoric at face value in the first years of the republic.

After recovering from the physical ravages of the war, Princeton and other Presbyterian schools saw their enrollments steadily increase as the new century grew nearer. Such an extension of the limits of education was deemed absolutely necessary when the success of society depended upon transforming citizens into "republican machines." Thus, the Presbyterians' institutions of higher learning in the Revolutionary period became essential instruments with which their founders expected, in varying degrees, to effect finally a thorough reformation of American society.

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[78]Smith, "On Industry," Sermons (Newark, N.J., 1799), pp. 160-163.

PART THREE

RETROGRESSION: 1795-1820

CHAPTER VIII

THE DENOMINATION AS COMMUNITY

Even a cursory comparison of the records and correspondence of American Presbyterians between 1775 and 1795 with similar documents of the period from 1795 to 1820 will reveal a marked contrast. The documents of the Revolutionary period are concerned with the establishment of the republic and with its future impact on the problems of American society. The documents of the post-Revolutionary period, however, are preoccupied with another social unit. Whereas the colonial Presbyterians had sought community in a reformed Christian commonwealth and the Presbyterians of the Revolutionary period had looked to the republic as community, the Presbyterians of the post-Revolutionary period turned from both and sought in the denomination the community that had heretofore proved distressingly illusive in America.

1. ". . . the morning cometh, and also the night."

In 1804 the venerable David Rice addressed the Synod of Kentucky for what he believed was the last time. "Father" Rice, the acknowledged leader of Kentucky Presbyterianism, looked back on the century just past and forward to the century that had begun with Mr. Jefferson's inauguration. He gloried in the Revolution Jefferson had helped to effect in America, but in 1804 Rice was also deeply disturbed by the direction the new republic was taking. He took for his text

Isaiah xxi:11-12: "Watchmen, what of the night? The Watchman said, the morning cometh, and also the night." For Rice the morning was the birth of the republic and the sudden appearing of a great revival in the west at the turn of the century. But already he sensed the approach of night. "A dawn of national prosperity is often succeeded by great national judgments and sore afflictions," he warned, "and so a time of revival in religion is frequently followed by great error and delusion."[1]

Rice's sense of foreboding, shared by many of his fellow Presbyterians, stands in stark contrast to the optimism of the Revolutionary era. In fact the period after 1795 saw many Presbyterians renounce that revolutionary optimism as ill-founded and dangerously naive. A corollary of that renunciation was acceptance of the idea that Americans were not "republicans by nature." Rice noted that during the Revolution the "necessity" of circumstances had made the Americans "wise and faithful." Likewise Samuel Stanhope Smith at Princeton lauded the "exploits and sacrifices" of the Americans during the Revolution, "when the pressure of imminent danger repressed almost every other passion among them but love of the public." During that glorious time, he continued, "the public will anticipated the resolutions of the legislature--every citizen contended who should serve his country best, and who should make to it the most illustrious sacrifices." The revolutionaries had "fondly hoped" that this

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[1]David Rice, A Sermon on the Present Revival of Religion in this Country . . . (Washington, Ga., 1804), p. 3.

was the virtue "not of the occasion, but of the people--that it was peculiar to their country--and that when she should be emancipated it would be eternal."[2] But, sighed Smith, they had been deceived. The "illustrious men" who established the republic had not realized that they were witnessing only "revolutionary virtue." They forgot that "it is the character of great and generous passions to draw every other principle to their service, and to elevate human nature to their own dignity." They failed to anticipate "those unjust, and selfish principles which take possession of the human heart in the ordinary state of society . . . ." Consequently, both Rice and Smith agreed, when the unifying force of common danger disappeared, so did the Americans' extraordinary virtue. They began to "jar and clash," Rice asserted, "and the Americans did not appear to be wiser than other people."[3]

The Presbyterians' renunciation of their revolutionary optimism appears to have been only partially the result of that "other" revolution in France. It is true that many, like Charles Nisbet and his son Alexander, inveighed against the follies and excesses of the French,[4] but most Presbyterians

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[2]Ibid., p. 39; Samuel Stanhope Smith, The Lectures . . . on the Subjects of Moral and Political Philosophy (New York, 1812), I, 325; Smith, The Divine Goodness to the United States . . . (Philadelphia, 1795), pp. 12, 13.

[3]Smith, Divine Goodness, pp. 11-13; Rice, Sermon on the Present Revival, p. 39.

[4]See, for example, Charles Nisbet to Alexander Addison, Nov. 5, 1790, Letters of Charles Nisbet to Alexander Addison, 1786-1803 (Photostats in University of Pittsburgh Library); Nisbet to William Young, Apr. 5, 1797, Charles Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.; "An Oration delivered by Alexander Nisbet . . . 4th of July, 1798," Carlisle Pennsylvania Gazette, July 11, 1798.

were disturbed by spiritual declension and social chaos in America, not by the course of a revolution gone wrong across the ocean. In the decade following the Whiskey Rebellion most Presbyterian ministers apparently came to believe that rebellion was to be the permanent condition of the republic. The correspondence of Charles Nisbet is replete with sarcastic references to "the Sovereign People," whom he described as "mere four-footed Beasts" that "will be the End of the World." A society composed of such beasts was not "properly a Nation," he asserted, "but a randon [sic] Assemblage of loose and unconnected Individuals, collected from sundry Nations, having no common Faith or Bond of Union."[5]

As Samuel Stanhope Smith assessed the situation in the late 1790's, he was forced to agree with Dickinson's President that the bonds of society in America were disintegrating. Like Nisbet he attributed that disintegration to the democracy unleashed by the American Revolution. When Ashbel Green suggested to Smith that the works of Witherspoon be collected and published, the Princeton President sadly objected that the works of that virtuous revolutionary would find no market in the society that had succeeded the Revolution. Religion and morals, he declared, have been "efectually [sic] supplanted in this country by politics, infidelity, and frivolous entertainment." Smith warned in 1797 that many of the lower class, encouraged by demogogues who sought to form

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[5]Nisbet to Addison, Nov. 8, 1793, Aug. 6, 1795, Nisbet-Addison Corr.; Nisbet to William Marshall, Feb. 16, 1799, Guy S. Klett, ed., "Letters of the Rev. Charles Nisbet to the Rev. William Marshall," JPHS, XXXIX (Mar. 1961), 57.

parties among the people, had left "honest, though humble occupations" and their families to "saunter and tipple" and become "ridiculous politicians." In their "pretended wisdom" they sought to regulate the affairs of state "while their own trades are falling into decay." At the turn of the century Smith condemned Jefferson's appeals to the "short sighted and misjudging populace." To Senator Jonathan Dayton he warned that if the United States followed Jefferson and the example of France, all good men would be forced to retire from office. This, he trusted, would not be allowed to happen: "May the patricians yet be able to save the republic, when the tribunes shall urge it to the brink of ruin!"[6]

Alarmed by the Whiskey Rebellion, the increasingly acrimonious political divisions in the country, and what they considered the precipitous increase in vice and immorality, the Presbyterians in the 1790's once more, as in the 1750's, began to proclaim days of fasting, humiliation, and prayer. When outbreaks of yellow fever began to plague the land, the Presbyterians' alarm increased proportionately.[7] That alarm

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[6]Samuel Stanhope Smith to Ashbel Green, Mar. 20, 1796, Samuel Stanhope Smith Collection, P.U.L.; Samuel Stanhope Smith, "On Industry," Sermons (Newark, N.J., 1799), p. 151; Smith to Jonathan Dayton, Dec. 22, 1802, Samuel Stanhope Smith Collection, P.U.L.

[7]For representative calls for fast days see Sept. 18, 1793, Minutes of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, IV, 244 (Microfilm in P.H.S.); Apr. 23, 1796, Minutes of the Hanover Presbytery, IV, 8 (Photostats in U.T.S.); Oct. 22, 1795, Minutes of the Presbytery of Redstone (Cincinnati, 1878), p. 119; Oct. 9, 1795, Minutes of the Transylvania Presbytery, II, 89 (Microfilm in U.T.S.); Oct. 1, 1796, Minutes of the Synod of Virginia, I, 173 (Microfilm in U.T.S.). See also Marshall Smelser, "The Federalist Period as an Age of Passion,"

turned to despair as the nineties waned and the Presbyterians began to consider the significance of the passing of the eighteenth century. Significantly, they did not hopefully stress the dawn of a new era but rather they concentrated on the gloomy portents of the expiration of the old. As early as 1793 Nisbet exclaimed that "We live in an expiring Century and a decaying World, and our Piety seems to be worn out by Length of Years." In the last year of the century he predicted that America's iniquities, if not repented of, "must soon bring forth our Destruction." In the same year the Virginia minister Drury Lacy gloomily observed that "Dark prospects hang over the church. Infidelity is ready to overwhelm the Land--the Bible to be entirely rejected, and the Christian name to be forgotten." At their last meeting of the century the members of the Synod of Virginia noted that an unusually large number of ministers had died during the year. Their deaths the synod saw as portents of the triumph of rampant iniquity and vice. To forestall that triumph the synod appointed a day of fasting and humiliation in which all Presbyterians would humble themselves

> to bewail their numerous and aggrevated crimes, and to offer up their fervent supplications to Almighty God that he would be pleased to arrest the progress of iniquity in our land, that he would revive his work in the midst of these years of deep declension.

The synod believed that the Lord was taking to Heaven his most faithful followers to spare them from the triumph of

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American Quarterly, X (Winter, 1958), 391-419; and Perry Miller, "From the Covenant to the Revival," Nature's Nation (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), pp. 90-120.

iniquity. This belief was strengthened by the death on December 14, 1799, of the very personification of republican virtue, George Washington.[8]

Despondent and convinced of the imminent triumph of vice in the new century, the Presbyterians were amazed to find that the first great event of the nineteenth century was the beginning of a revival of religion on the frontier of Kentucky and Tennessee.[9] A revival of modest proportions had flared up in Hampden-Sydney in the late 1780's and spread quickly to Liberty Hall and from there to southern and western Virginia. That holy flame, however, had been snuffed out rather quickly during the turbulent nineties. The conflagration that spread across the frontier at the turn of the century would not be so easily extinguished. In huge clearings in the wilderness masses of pioneers gathered to hear impassioned Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist ministers

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[8]Nisbet to Young, Aug. 7, 1793, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.; Nisbet to Marshall, Feb. 16, 1799, Klett, ed., "Letters," p. 57; Drury Lacy to William Williamson, July 24, 1799, William Williamson MSS, P.H.S.; Sept. 29, 1799, Va. Syn. Min., II, 30-31. For a representative sermon on the death of Washington see Samuel Stanhope Smith, An Oration, Upon the Death of General George Washington . . . (Trenton, N.J., 1800).

[9]There is no full scale monographic discussion of the Second Great Awakening. Its western, and most colorful, phase is rather sketchily treated in a purely narrative work by Catharine C. Cleveland, The Great Revival in the West, 1795-1805 (Gloucester, Mass., 1959). Its New England phase is treated somewhat more analytically in Charles R. Keller, The Second Great Awakening in Connecticut (New Haven, 1942). Still useful is the relevant section of William W. Sweet, Revivalism in America (Gloucester, Mass., 1965). These works should be read in conjunction with T. Scott Miyakawa, Protestant and Pioneers: Individualism and Conformity on the American Frontier (Chicago, 1964) and especially Donald G. Mathews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process, 1780-1830: An Hypothesis," American Quarterly, XXI (Spring, 1969), 23-43.

exhort sinners to repent and Christians to renew their covenant with God. The camp meetings of the western phase of the Second Great Awakening were an astonishment both to those who participated in them and to those who read embellished accounts of those truly extravagant events.

In the initial phase of the revival the Presbyterians were among its staunchest supporters. The General Assembly noted in 1801 that the Lord was manifesting himself in Kentucky and Tennessee in a "very extraordinary manner," and that throughout America "infidelity does not assume that bold and threatening aspect which it did for some years past . . . ." The Presbytery of New Brunswick exulted that the "American Zion" was expanding with "unexampled rapidity," while the Synod of Kentucky declared that the Lord had "made the wilderness a fruitful field," and that "the prospects of vital religion in America, are more favorable and encouraging, than at any period within the last forty years." In 1804 the General Assembly joyfully announced that the great revival had begun to move northward. Throughout the synods of New York, New Jersey, and Albany "Trophies are continually raised to the grace of the Redeemer . . . ."[10] The Great Revival,

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[10]Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., General Assembly, Acts and Proceedings . . . 1801 (Philadelphia, 1801), pp. 9, 8; Presbytery of New Brunswick, A Pastoral Letter . . . (New Brunswick, N.J., 1807), p. 6; Synod of Kentucky, A Serious Address . . . to the Churches Under their Care (Lexington, Ky., 1804), p. 3; A Circular Letter . . . (Lexington, Ky., 1803), p. 6; Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., General Assembly /Ashbel Green/, Glad Tidings . . . (Philadelphia, 1804), pp. 3, 4. See also Synod of the Carolinas, A Pastoral Letter . . . (Salisbury, N.C., 1802), p. 6; Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., General Assembly, Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly . . . 1807 (Philadelphia, 1807), p. 154.

carrying all before it, appeared to herald an unexpected reversal of the spiritual declension threatening America; consequently it was embraced both officially and unofficially by American Presbyterianism as the dawn of a new day at the beginning of a new century.

The Presbyterians' jubilation was short lived. As the news spread eastward that the west was being secured for Christ, disturbed Presbyterians also began to hear tales of men, women, and children fainting, jumping, barking, and jerking in mad deliriums during the mass camp meetings. John Montgomery in 1801 relaid to Benjamin Rush the fantastic stories he had heard about the camp meeting in Kentucky's Bourbon County. Montgomery granted that a revival was needed, particularly on the frontier, but he found the manifestations of the camp meeting so extraordinary that he was at a loss "what to think of it." But, he concluded, the Ruler of the Universe had "his own ways of Conducting those things . . . which often appears misterious [sic] to us . . . ." It was now the Christian's duty to "waite and hope for the Best." Rush agreed. Noting that he had heard stories of similar camp meetings in North Carolina, Rush replied that "The novelty of the Scenes which are described, should not discredit them." The Lord, he affirmed, "seems of late to have appeared . . . in a manner unprecedented in former ages." Did not the Bible declare that a nation could be born in a day? In the same length of time, Rush concluded, a sinner might be immediately transformed, even if that transformation was accompanied by some rather extraordinary physical

manifestations.[11]

The "wait and see" attitude of Montgomery and Rush did not long characterize official Presbyterian reaction to the great western revival. While he did not doubt the divine origin of the revival or the Christian's duty to thank the Lord "for so rich a shower of his grace," by 1802 Samuel Miller, a powerful Presbyterian minister in New York City, had begun to note the "very singular" occurrences that appeared suspicious "to those who have been accustomed only to the still, small voice of the gospel . . . ." In the following year the Synod of Kentucky ominously noted that "some who once were under great awakenings, and appeared to bid fair for the kingdom of heaven, have since turned aside to the paths of the destroyer . . . ." By 1804 the General Assembly felt compelled to condemn all "antic gestures, ridiculous contortions . . . , and apparent levity" that accompanied the revival, while the Lexington Presbytery ordered its members to prevent in their churches "all extraordinary bodily exercises which appear voluntary and ostentatious." By 1805 the General Assembly had adopted the official attitude that the excesses of the revival immediately threatened to abrogate any benefit that had been expected from it. "God is a God of order, and not of confusion," the central body declared. And while it thanked the Lord for the outpouring of his spirit, the General Assembly warned that "bodily affections have been

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[11]John Montgomery to Benjamin Rush, Sept. 15, 1801, Correspondence of Benjamin Rush Relative to Dickinson College (Microfilm in Pennsylvania Historical Society); Rush to Montgomery, Jan. 9, 1802, ibid.

of such a nature, and proceeded to such lengths, as greatly tended to impede the progress and to tarnish the glory of what, in its first stages, was so highly promising."[12]

The General Assembly's aversion to "bodily affections" was not the only, and perhaps not even the principal, reason for its growing opposition to the revival. The Presbyterians were alarmed to find that many of the ministers whose impassioned rhetoric was producing the unseemly bodily exercises were also preaching doctrines directly opposed to the Presbyterian doctrine of predestination. Particularly Baptists and Methodists, but even a few Presbyterians, were preaching that Christ died for all men, not just the foreordained few, and that men may believe on Christ and be saved at any time. Moreover, they were telling the frontiersmen that each individual had within him an "inner light" that enabled him to interpret the Bible and that each man's interpretation was as valid as those interpretations institutionalized in the creeds of organized churches. Far from reforming society, the Presbyterians cried, such teachings only intensified the Americans' tendency to put individual needs and wills above the needs and will of society. If each man was to live by an "inner light," they warned, society would surely disintegrate,

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[12]Samuel Miller to Ashbel Green, Mar. 8, 1802, Papers of Samuel Miller, P.U.L.; Syn. of Ky., Circular Letter, p. 3; Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., General Assembly, Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly . . . 1804 (Philadelphia, 1804), p. 66; Nov. 8, 1804, Minutes of the Presbytery of Lexington, Virginia, IV, 151 (Microfilm in U.T.S.); Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., General Assembly, Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly . . . 1805 (Philadelphia, 1805), pp. 93, 92.

and the century that had begun in revival would soon see America sink into chaos and barbarism. No man, David Rice declared, can make of the "exercises" of his mind a "new or an additional revelation from heaven." Such doctrines, he continued, smelled "too strong of antinomianism," others were obviously arminian, and still others were "a heterogeneous mixture of both." By 1807 the General Assembly could only deplore the "obviously increasing dereliction of truth; which, in some parts, pervades all classes of society . . . ." That dereliction was obviously the result of the revivalists' emphasis on free will, they reasoned. That doctrine inevitably led to the prevalence of unbelief, "that state of mind which is enmity against God, reproaches his truth, and contemns the amiable glories of redeeming love."[13] So dangerous a doctrine obviously had to be opposed, and oppose it the Presbyterians did.

2. The "natural and salutary collisions of parties"

The Presbyterians' opposition to what they considered the excesses and heresies of the Second Great Awakening produced the first schism in that denomination since the Great Schism, which had accompanied the Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century. The schism of the early nineteenth century dramatically revealed the changes that a half century had made in the Presbyterians' attitude toward denominational competition specifically and toward social conflict in

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[13]Rice, Sermon on the Present Revival, pp. 8-9, 25; Gen. Ass., Extracts, 1807, pp. 155-156.

general. More especially it revealed that the revolutionary experience had vastly accelerated those changes.

As had been the case in 1740, the schism on the Kentucky frontier was the result of basic disagreements over the nature of social union and authority, the legitimacy of social conflict, and the right of dissent. All of these issues came to a head within the bounds of the Synod of Kentucky between 1802 and 1805. At the height of the revival part of the Presbyterian congregation of Rev. Richard McNemar became disturbed by what they considered their pastor's arminianism. The aggrieved Presbyterians immediately fed their complaint into the intricate ecclesiastical hierarchy that had already been established on the frontier. They expected McNemar to be tried by the presbytery and then by the synod and finally by the General Assembly, if necessary. Much to everyone's surprise, however, McNemar, after being examined and censured by the Presbytery of Washington, denounced that body's actions as illegal and refused to appear before the higher judicatories of the hierarchy. McNemar and other revivalists momentarily formed the nebulous Presbytery of Springfield, but within a matter of months dissolved that body. At the parallel stage of the first Great Awakening the New Sides had formed a synod and had claimed to be as thoroughly Presbyterian as the Old Side synod. Moreover, within five years leaders of both parties had begun to seek ways to end the schism for the sake of Christian union. The course of the frontier schism was very different. After a brief pamphlet war, the synod--almost gratefully--allowed the erring

brothers to go in peace. And the erring brothers went, not to establish a parallel synod but to establish two entirely new denominations, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Christian Church.

The differences in the course of the schisms accompanying the First and Second Great Awakenings are basic. Fundamentally, they stem from the fact that, while the colonial Presbyterians only tentatively defended the legitimacy of conflict and then hastily retreated from that defense, on the frontier both sides from the beginning accepted and lauded the benefits of competition and conflict. The Synod of Kentucky based the defense of its actions not on the need for Christian unity but on the urgent necessity for that uniformity and orthodoxy within the Presbyterian denomination that would enable it to compete effectively with other denominations. The synod insisted that it did not intend to "foment divisions," and denounced the "pernicious tendency" of the dissidents' "present disorganizing plan." But it did intend "to establish the minds of sincere enquirers on the firm basis of truth." That truth was contained in the Creed and Confession of the Presbyterian church and must be subscribed to by all who ministered in the name of that church.[14]

The synod assured the dissidents that it had no desire to keep people from interpreting the scriptures. On the contrary, its members declared, "it is our ardent desire that

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[14]Gen. Ass., Extracts, 1805, pp. 85-86. See also William H. Black, "The Cumberland Presbyterian Church . . . ," JPHS, I (Dec. 1901), 189-204.

knowledge be encreased [sic] in this way." The synod reserved only the right to examine all of the scriptural interpretations its members made. If the members were found to be "honest enquirers after truth," the synod would "acquit them with honor" and repair any reputations that might have been damaged by the synodical examination. If, on the other hand, the examination revealed that a member harbored heretical views, the synod would have no alternative but to follow the Biblical injunction to cast him out.[15]

Such severity was necessary, the synod declared, to protect the denomination's unity. The synod divided all men into those who "believe the truth" and those "whose creed exhibits the most glaring errors and contradictions . . . ." Both groups, insisted the synod, obviously cannot unite in one body. "Can light and darkness have fellowship together?" they asked.[16] The colonial Presbyterians had asked themselves the same question and for a few years had answered it in the negative. But faced with the task of reforming American society and still motivated by a desire for Christian unity, both sides in the Great Schism had decided that perhaps the denomination could be expanded to include a variety of beliefs. Most Presbyterian ministers in the early nineteenth century would make no such concession. Always on the defensive in a society increasingly marked by denominational competition, those ministers demanded that their fellow

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[15]Syn. of Ky., Circular Letter, p. 20.

[16]Gen. Ass., Extracts, 1805, p. 87.

ministers unswervingly adhere to Presbyterian orthodoxy as stated in that denomination's creed. That creed, they declared, should not be changed or questioned because that would allow infidels to declare that there were no revealed truths and thus confuse weak believers. Moreover, it would accustom people to changes and thus lead to "lasting uneasiness, constant altercations, and, finally to the adoption of errors . . . ."[17]

The synod belligerently declared that it was not ashamed of adhering to a creed. Indeed, its members proudly confessed their creed openly "as children of the light." They did so to insure orthodoxy and strengthen uniformity. Also, a creed appeared to them essential in a society in which denominations were forced to compete with each other for members. If the church had to compete in the denominational market place, the synod reasoned, it should provide prospective members with a clear statement of its tenets. Such a reason had not been advanced in 1740, but by 1800 it was deemed a compelling reason for a clearly enunciated and scrupulously followed creedal statement. The synod noted that Christians who chose to unite with the Presbyterian church would enter into the "most tender and endearing bonds" with the synod. That body, therefore, could not leave those prospective members "at a loss to know whether we believe or disbelieve what they esteem the essential doctrines of

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[17]Gen. Ass., Extracts, 1804, p. 54.

christianity . . . ."[18]

A creed, then, should provide a clear statement of the denomination's tenets; those doctrines a member would be expected to adhere to upon joining the Presbyterian church, thus lending strength to the church as it competed in the denominational market place. The logical extension of these beliefs was revealed when the Abington Presbytery complained to the Synod of Virginia that some members of the presbytery were preaching heterodox views. The synod ruled that so long as the ministers remained in the presbytery, they should uniformly and enthusiastically preach its published doctrines. If they could not in good conscience do so, then they should withdraw from the presbytery and the church. Once the dissidents entered the denominational market place and either joined another denomination or started a new one, the Presbyterians could tolerate them--and compete with them--as they did with all other denominations. The presbytery, of course, renounced religious controversy for its own sake. But it asked, "was it not an apostle who said contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints?"[19]

Yet in the final analysis, the synod insisted that the dissidents had not been expelled from the church because they preached heretical doctrines. Rather, they had forfeited their right to membership in the denomination by spurning its judicial authority and by holding in contempt the hierarchical

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[18]Syn. of Ky., Serious Address, p. 5.

[19]Oct. 19, 1820, Va. Syn. Min., IV, 290, 292.

structure that embodied that authority. In other words, the dissidents' most grievous sin was not their defense of free will but their refusal to appear before the synod to be tried for preaching free will. The frontier schism did not produce the detailed debates on the nature of authority that the Great Schism of the eighteenth century did. The Old and New Sides of the mid-eighteenth century had cautiously and tentatively sought a definition of authority that would accommodate a situation in which authority was obviously being weakened by social ambitions, economic exertions, and religious enthusiasm. The Revolution that succeeded the Great Awakening was one huge affront to authority, and the turbulent nineties appeared to many to be the horrible logical extension of that affront. Consequently, when the Kentucky Synod came to defend the idea of authority in 1802, it did so at a time when that idea seemed discredited by the revolutionary past of the republic. It therefore adopted a high line of defense that not even the colonial Old Sides had used. The synod flatly insisted that its authority must be obeyed because it acted as the surrogate of God. In a statement that sent the dissidents scurrying to the history of the Reformation for rebuttal, the synod declared that "whatever the ambassadors of Christ or rulers of his church, do in his name, agreeably to his word, is to all intents and purposes as valid as if he had done it in his own person . . . ." In short, to despise the authority of the synod was to despise Christ.[20]

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[20]Syn. of Ky., Circular Letter, pp. 22, 23, 26.

For the synod authority remained indivisible even though shared by four separate parts of the hierarchy--the church session, the presbytery, the synod, and the General Assembly. The parts of the hierarchy were not equal: each higher part had authority over the lower parts. Only by acceptance of the authority of one part over the other could indivisible authority be maintained. Consequently, when the dissidents refused to appear before the synod, they threw into disarray the intricate hierarchical machinery that the Presbyterians were meticulously constructing. That machinery was intended to increase denominational identity and strength. It could do neither if men refused to submit to its procedures and abide by its judgments.

The revivalists thoroughly disagreed with the synod's extravagant defense of authority and attacked it by using the ideas of the colonial New Sides and the natural rights idea that had animated the Revolution. In 1805 the Springfield Presbytery issued An Apology for Renouncing the Jurisdiction of the Synod of Kentucky in which its members fully elaborated their objections to the synod's theory of authority. They denied that the synod's--or any government's--authority was absolute. If there was "a sovereignty in government, unlawful to pry into," they warned, then men must be content to "reason not but resign." This they were unwilling to do. They asserted that "it is the inalienable right of every moral agent to withdraw from any society, when he thinks the rights of conscience are invaded." If the synod "deprives its subjects of this privilege," they

continued, "it must be tyrannical."[21]

When the colonial New Sides renounced the authority of the Synod of Philadelphia, they had invoked the right of conscience and had branded as tyrannous any abridgment of that right. At all times, though, the New Sides had considered the Presbyterian church an organic unit and had decried the painful necessity of rending the fabric of that unit. At no time did they describe the denomination as a voluntary association that they could enter and leave at will. The Kentucky revivalists, on the other hand, described the denomination in just those terms. "All judicial authority," they asserted, "which any society had over an individual, is in consequence of a voluntary compact tacitly or explicitly made . . . ." That compact connects the individual with that society and puts him under its laws. However, that compact may be dissolved "at any time, by the voluntary act of the individual . . . ." At that time, insisted the revivalists, "the authority ceases of course."[22]

Richard McNemar, the revivalists' leader, declared that the synod's authority over the dissenters had ended when the synod attempted to examine the doctrines of the revivalists and to expel them on the basis of that examination. McNemar asserted the right of all Christians to interpret the Bible "according to their own proper sense." The Christian was

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[21]Presbytery of Springfield, An Apology for Renouncing the Jurisdiction of the Synod of Kentucky . . . (Carlisle, Pa., 1805), pp. 22, 37.

[22]Ibid., p. 38.

able to interpret the Bible, he continued, because "the will of God was made manifest to each individual who honestly sought after it, by an inward light, which shone into the heart." When each Christian could interpret the word of God according to his own light, the revivalists reasoned, it was tyrannous for the synod to insist upon the right to examine those interpretations and to punish those deemed heterodox. Consequently, they would appear before neither the synod nor even the General Assembly "so long as human opinions were esteemed the standard of orthodoxy."[23]

The revivalists also rejected the synod's contention that doctrinal uniformity was necessary for denominational strength. Therefore, they proudly confessed to preaching free will and universal atonement. They themselves had "laboured and travailled to gain some solid hope of salvation; and had ventured their souls upon the covenant of promise, and felt the living seal of eternal love . . . ." They dared not, then, "preach that salvation was restricted to a certain <u>definite number</u>; nor insinuate that any being which God had made, was, by the Creator, laid under the dire necessity of being damned." The love "of a Saviour," they concluded, "constrained them to testify, that one had died for all."[24]

Just as they attacked the synod's claim to absolute

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[23]Richard McNemar, <u>The Kentucky Revival</u> . . . (Albany, N.Y., 1808), pp. 11, 29; Pby. of Springfield, <u>An Apology</u>, p. 23.

[24]McNemar, <u>Kentucky Revival</u>, p. 27. See also Pby. of Springfield, <u>An Apology</u>, pp. 6-7.

power, the revivalists also condemned that body for accepting factional conflict and for fostering that conflict by stressing the peculiar tenets of Presbyterianism. McNemar noted that the name "United States" promised "peace and happiness" to all. But in reality America was "A great Christian empire, divided into a thousand little kingdoms, all inclosed in the bowels of a great republic, and each contending for the mastery." America, he continued, exulted in her health, liberty, and equality, but in reality was "full of worms, biting and devouring one another, each pursuing a distinct cause to which he presumes all others must finally give way." Each sect hoped to "reduce the whole commonwealth" under its laws and government. This ferocious competition, McNemar concluded, came from the "grand mistake" of "converting the Bible into a civil law-book."[25]

The revivalists loudly denounced all creeds, which the synod considered the prerequisite of denominational competition. McNemar declared that he would be bound by no system but the Bible and asserted that "systems" were "detrimental to the life and power of religion."[26] To the General Assembly in 1805 the revivalists declared that "We feel ourselves citizens of the world: God our common father: all men our brethren by nature, and all christians our brethren in Christ." This principle of "<u>universal love to christians</u>," they continued, "gains ground in our hearts, in proportion as we get

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[25]McNemar, <u>Kentucky Revival</u>, p. 105.

[26]Pby. of Springfield, <u>An Apology</u>, p. 6.

clear of particular attachments to party." Therefore, in a most remarkable "last will and testament" the Presbytery of Springfield in 1804 willed itself out of existence to insure that it would not become the standard around which a party could form.[27]

The revivalists, then, appeared to abhor party strife and denominational conflict. They insisted that they left the synod from necessity, not from choice, and loudly disclaimed any intentions of establishing a party.[28] Superficially they appear to have been poles apart from the synod's defense of competition and insistence on denominational orthodoxy and uniformity. But the two sides were not so far apart. Indeed, the revivalists weakened the idea of Christian unity every bit as much as did the synod. The revivalists contended that "merely forming a separate association, is not schism: provided that association be not intended to dissolve the union and communion of the church." But, they continued, the synod insisted that "a separation from their rev[erend] body, is a separation from the church; thus implicitly declaring, that they are the only church on earth." As a matter of fact, the synod expelled the dissidents precisely because it realized that the Presbyterian church was <u>not</u> the only church on earth. Because of that disturbing fact, the synod set out to purge its membership of all

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[27]Gen. Ass., <u>Extracts, 1805</u>, p. 84; Presbytery of Springfield, <u>Observations on Church Government</u> (Albany, N.Y., 1808), pp. 21-23.

[28]Pby. of Springfield, <u>An Apology</u>, pp. 30-31.

elements that would prevent it from competing effectively with the increasing number of denominations in the United States. But the dissidents chose to divert attention from their own schism and practical endorsement of denominational conflict. They insisted that although they had renounced the jurisdiction of the Synod of Kentucky and the Presbyterian church, they had not seceded from the larger, immaterial entity that constituted the one true Church.[29]

The revivalists further weakened the idea of Christian union by insisting that the abolition of all creeds would not result in anarchy within the denomination. McNemar assured his readers that "all who received the true light of the spirit in the inner man, and faithfully followed it, would naturally see eye to eye, and understand the things of the spirit alike, without any written tenet or learned expositor." The inner light, then, posed no threat to order because all honest inquirers could and would receive the same impressions from their inner lights. No belief could have been further removed from the synod's insistence on creedal subscriptions, but both beliefs had the same practical effect. They both justified schism and the formation of associations of Christians that would function as one.[30]

Finally, the revivalists justified their schism by insisting that social union could be effected only by spiritual forces. They took the ancient analogy between society and

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[29]Ibid., p. 44.

[30]McNemar, Kentucky Revival, p. 30.

the human body and gave it a new meaning. The parts of the human body, they reasoned, required "no bond of union to cause them to act in concert, or to keep them from quarreling and separating" other than "that spirit which animates the whole." Mankind is not "bound together like the parts of a machine, nor put in motion by external force," the Presbytery of Springfield asserted; rather, men "must be influenced by motive, and that motive must be in the heart." Likewise the church is bound together only by the spirit of Jesus Christ. It does not need creeds and tests of orthodoxy to bind it together, and it is always united even though it has external differences among its members.[31]

Thus the Second Great Awakening produced the second great schism in the history of the American Presbyterian church. But curious differences exist between the frontier schism and the Great Schism that followed the first Great Awakening. The Great Schism was much more acrimonious than the frontier schism. It enlisted the passions of the entire leadership of the denomination and inaugurated a long lived pamphlet warfare. The frontier schism did neither of these things, despite the fact that the Second Great Awakening was as traumatic and widespread as was the colonial revival. While the embryonic hierarchy in the colonial period had worsened the Great Schism by becoming a weapon for which both sides contended, the more intricate and widespread machinery at the turn of the century served to contain the

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[31]Pby. of Springfield, Observations on Church Government, pp. 15, 16.

repercussions of the frontier schism, even though it could not prosecute the schismatics. But even though it was very acrimonious, the Great Schism was healed within a decade, and Presbyterianism entered the Revolutionary period a firmly united denomination. The less acrimonious frontier schism, on the other hand, proved to be permanent and resulted in two new denominations. No more dramatic evidence could be found that in the last half of the eighteenth century the Presbyterians had accepted gradually social conflict in general and denominational competition in particular. Whereas the Old and New Sides could not accept the anomaly of two distinct and competing Presbyterian synods in America, the Synod of Kentucky, on the other hand, allowed the revivalists to go in peace simply because society and the church were no longer viewed as organic units animated by a common good to which all selfish interests must be subordinated. Rather society was seen as a collection of interest groups in which the Presbyterian church had to compete for members and power. In order to compete effectively the denomination had to be united and firmly orthodox. Those elements which threatened that union and orthodoxy were summarily expelled, and they did not attempt to return. Rather, they established new units to compete in the denominational market place.

At the end of the Revolutionary period Samuel Stanhope Smith indicated that the mainstream of American Presbyterianism was beginning to accept the idea of denominational competition that had heretofore been elaborated only in extraordinary situations, such as during the Great Awakening and

during the Revolution, especially in Pennsylvania. In 1795 he asserted that

> A fair and generous competition among the different denominations of christians, while it does not extinguish their mutual charity, promotes an emulation that will have a beneficial influence on the public morals.

That Smith's acceptance of denominational competition was paralleled by a growing acceptance of political conflict was indicated in Samuel Miller's Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century. In a section on the press Miller worried about the proliferation of politically oriented newspapers in the 1790's. He feared that these newspapers would poison "the principles of society" and give "the most brutal violence and ferocity" to "the natural and salutary collisions of parties." What is extraordinary about Miller's concern is not that he should worry about the violence and ferocity of party conflict but that he should think that there was anything "natural and salutary" about "the collisions of parties." Miller was still a long way from the unabashed acceptance of political conflict of Jacksonian America; but he was equally distant from the America of John Thomson and the elder Aaron Burr.[32]

3. The "platform of both civil and ecclesiastical authority"

The Presbyterians began to accept the necessity of

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[32]Samuel Stanhope Smith, The Divine Goodness to the United States . . . (Philadelphia, 1795), pp. 32-33; Samuel Miller, A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century . . . (New York, 1803), II, 254. For a discussion of the Brief Retrospect see Gilbert Chinard, "A Landmark in American Intellectual History: Samuel Miller's A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century," The Princeton University Library Chronicle, XIV (Winter, 1953), 55-71.

denominational competition in the 1790's and the early nineteenth century partly out of sheer necessity. In the decades following the Revolution it became obvious that no one denomination was strong enough to become the established church of the new republic. All denominations, including those like the Presbyterians that were not opposed to establishment in principle, demanded that no church be established. Faced with practical necessity, the Presbyterians after 1795 lauded the benefits of the separation of church and state as vigorously as they once had extolled the virtues of an "unlimited toleration." Smith insisted, for instance, that where religion was not officially supported by the state it became less haughty and more worthy of public support. In 1795 he noted that in America religious truth "is left to propagate itself by its native evidence and beauty." Smith was glad to see religion stripped "of those meretricious charms that, under the splendor of an establishment, intoxicate the senses . . . ." It then possessed "only those modest and simple beauties that touch the heart," he concluded. The Presbytery of New Brunswick was sure that the unestablished churches of America closely approximated the condition of first century churches, for no church demanded or received "any civil protection, but depends, as in the first age of christianity, on the voluntary bounty of its disciples." Likewise the Synod of Virginia in 1814 exulted that "Happily for use, while the State is bound to protect all Christians in the exercises of religious worship, she is not particularly connected with any

church . . . ."[33]

In addition to making a virtue of necessity, the Presbyterians reluctantly accepted denominational competition because they were determined to see that the society in which that competition occurred became thoroughly and visibly Christian. Indeed, the shrillness with which they insisted that America be visibly Christian may be taken as a measure of their reluctance to accept denominational conflict. The Presbyterians, who were frequently accused of seeking to become the established church, were the most active participants in the effort to make American society visibly Christian. Their efforts centered on forcing the government to support unofficially the religion it could not support officially. From leading the effort to appoint Congressional chaplains to petitioning (successfully) Presidents Washington and Adams to proclaim national days of fasting and humiliation, the Presbyterians labored to replace with voluntary and informal acts the official legislation that was not possible in the republic. The pulpits of Presbyterian churches also frequently rang with clerical pronouncements--usually pro-Federalist--on affairs of state.[34]

The General Assembly ably and thoroughly delineated in

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[33]Smith, Divine Goodness, p. 32; Presbytery of New Brunswick, A Pastoral Letter . . . (New Brunswick, N.J., 1807), p. 14; Oct. 29, 1814, Va. Syn. Min., III, 53. See also [John Witherspoon], A Draught of a Plan of Government and Discipline for the Presbyterian Church in North America (Philadelphia, 1786), p. v.

[34]See especially John McMillan's plans for a sermon on the Jay Treaty in a letter to Albert Gallatin, May 5, 1796, John McMillan MSS, W.J.C.L.

1801 the Presbyterians' reasons for insisting that there be a highly visible if unofficial connection between church and state. As part of its missionary program, the General Assembly published an address to the citizens of the Mississippi Territory. In that address the Assembly noted that patriotism, honor, private interest, and even "the tried principles of philosophy" had been "too capricious in their nature, as well as too feeble, effectually to promote public utility and social happiness." Therefore, the Assembly continued, "all governments in civilized nations have made it their business to inculcate religion on their citizens as well with a view to the interest of the public as to personal happiness." The Presbyterians intended to insure that the American government adhered firmly to the example of all civilized nations.[35]

The Presbyterians' efforts received something of a setback during the administrations of Thomas Jefferson. When Samuel Miller, for instance, asked Jefferson to declare a national day of fasting and mourning in 1808, the President declined. Jefferson's reasons indicate that he understood perfectly the informal relationship which his old Presbyterian foes sought between church and state in the republic. He stated to Miller that the Constitution did not give him the authority to recommend a fast day. Such a recommendation would "<u>indirectly</u> assume to the U[nited] S[tates] an authority over religious exercises which the Constitution has

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[35]Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., General Assembly, <u>Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly . . . A.D. 1789, to A.D. 1802 . . .</u> (Philadelphia, 1803), 1801, p. 22.

directly precluded them from." The recommendation might not carry with it the sanction of a fine or imprisonment, the President continued, but the citizen who refused to comply with it would encounter "some degree of proscription perhaps in public opinion." To enjoin fasting and praying was an "act of discipline," Jefferson concluded. And if Miller objected that Washington and Adams had proclaimed fast days, the President rejoined simply that his predecessors had been ill advised to begin the precedent.[36]

In 1808, though, "Mad" Tom retired to Monticello and was succeeded by James Madison, who reverted to tradition in order to enlist the Deity (and his Federalist followers in New England) in the cause of the republic in the war with Great Britain. Consequently, the post-war period saw the Presbyterians launch a concerted campaign to strengthen the informal ties between church and state. They operated in the spirit of a pamphlet published by the Synod of the Carolinas in 1802. That body declared the Bible the "platform of both civil and ecclesiastical authority." Moreover, both authorities were intended "to answer the same purpose." No less than the church, the synod asserted, the state was to suppress "those crimes which are destructive of the peace and good order of human society" and was to "encourage those virtues which tend to meliorate the social state, and qualify mankind for happiness in a future state of existence."

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[36]Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Miller, Jan. 23, 1808, Paul L. Ford, ed., The Writings of Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1892-1899), IX, 174-175.

Finally, the synod appealed directly to magistrates and all other elected public officials to suppress all vice and public immorality.[37]

One evidence of public immorality that the Presbyterians concentrated on was the delivery of the mails on Sunday. The Synod of Pittsburgh's campaign was representative. Throughout the first decade of the nineteenth century the synod instructed all Presbyterian postmasters under its jurisdiction to refuse to deliver mail on the Sabbath. Those instructions illustrate the Presbyterians' inability to conceive of a complete separation of church and state. A man might be a postmaster, but if he was also a Presbyterian, he was subject to exclusion from the church if he failed to consider his church's stand on the performance of his public duties. In fact, in 1809 the Synod of Pittsburgh excluded from membership a Presbyterian postmaster who insisted on delivering mail on Sunday. In 1810 the synod petitioned Congress to abolish all Sunday mail services. The delivery of mail, the synod insisted, disturbed the services of Christians gathered for worship. Moreover, mail service profaned the Sabbath by making newspapers available for reading on the Lord's Day. The synod warned that the effects of Sunday mail service would cause "good" men to resign their jobs in the postal services, and that those jobs would then be filled by scoundrels who would consent to profane the Sabbath. All in all, the synod concluded, the delivery of the mails on Sunday

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[37]Synod of the Carolinas, Pastoral Letter, p. 15.

would surely bring the wrath of God down upon the republic. The Presbyterians were successful in diverting the divine wrath: by the time Jackson entered the White House the American Sabbath was no longer being sullied by the delivery of the mails.[38]

Faced with the immutable fact of extreme religious diversity in America, the Presbyterians reluctantly accepted denominational competition as inevitable and even began to laud it as a positive good. But for the Presbyterians to give up their idea of the Church supported officially by the state was a very traumatic experience indeed. The depth of that trauma may be measured by the intensity of their demand that the government unofficially support religion.[39] It may also be measured by the extraordinary efforts of the Presbyterians to make of the denomination the united, closely-knit community that the republic lamentably had failed to become.[40]

4. From Republic to Denomination

In the Revolutionary period the Presbyterians had sought

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[38]Oct. 5, 1809, Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh . . . (Pittsburgh, 1852), p. 62; Oct. 5, 1810, ibid., pp. 74-75.

[39]If the reluctance of Presbyterians to accept denominational competition fed their shrill demands for a Christian America, perhaps a similar fear of political conflict fed an equally strident demand for first a republican and then a democratic America.

[40]See Perry Miller, The Life of the Mind in America . . . (New York, 1965), pp. 36-72. Miller's discussion is masterful, but he tends to concentrate on developments after 1825 without paying comparable attention to the period between 1790 and 1825. Consequently the discussion of "The Evangelical Basis" is one of the few portions of Miller's magnificent opus that lacks a sense of development.

in the ideology of republicanism a means of unifying the American people and of ending the contention and divisiveness that continually plagued American society. Predicated on the innate virtue of a distinctive people, the ideology of republicanism as evolved by Americans promised to usher in the righteous community that Presbyterians from the Great Awakening on had seen as the only salvation of American society. During the 1790's, however, and increasingly in the early nineteenth century, Presbyterians turned from their extravagant optimism of the Revolutionary era. As they did, they turned inward, and the energies that had been expended in analyzing republicanism and in establishing republican institutions now went into making the denomination a community that gave the Presbyterians a group identity in an increasingly competitive society and provided the institutional framework that allowed the Presbyterians to compete effectively in that society.[41]

The Presbyterians, of course, entered the post-Revolutionary period with a strong denominational identification that was the result of their increasingly complex hierarchical machinery. This identity gave them a distinct advantage over all other denominations, an advantage that the Presbyterians exploited in the early nineteenth century. In the period

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[41]Several scholars have noted the importance of the denomination as community, but have not seen this development as a reaction to the extravagant expectations of the Revolutionary period. See Miller, Life of the Mind, pp. 9-14, 36-72; William W. Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1765-1840 (Gloucester, Mass., 1963), chapters III and IV; H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America (New York, 1959), chapter V; Mathews, "The Second Great Awakening"; and Miyakawa, Protestants and Pioneers, Part I.

between 1795 and 1820 they labored mightily to increase that identity. Especially was this true on the frontier. In Kentucky and Tennessee the Presbyterian missionaries and ministers sought out Presbyterians and ministered solely to that tiny minority, ignoring the throngs of people among whom the few Presbyterians were interspersed. The General Assembly in 1807 noted approvingly that settlers from central Pennsylvania had banded together to form a tightly-knit Presbyterian congregation on the southwestern frontier. It is true that the Presbyterians cooperated with Baptists and Methodists in the early stages of the frontier revivals, but they quickly withdrew that support. The rich mixture of sects in the camp meetings was as much a cause of their withdrawal as were the excesses of the revival. David Rice saw the great revival as begun by and completely for the benefit of "professors" and saw it not as a means of saving sinners but of reclaiming backsliding Presbyterians. Likewise the Synod of the Carolinas in 1802 exulted not that the Lord had saved many souls in the revival but that he had shed his blessings upon "many societies of his professing people." The revival was praised because it seemed to be cementing Presbyterian communities more firmly together. On the other hand, when it threatened to tear them apart, it was opposed.[42]

Just as they ministered only to Presbyterians, so did the Presbyterian clergymen insist that all Presbyterians on

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[42]Gen. Ass., Extracts, 1807, p. 154; Rice, Sermon on the Present Revival, pp. 19-20; Syn. of the Carolinas, Pastoral Letter, p. 6. See also Frederick Kuhns, "Religious Rivalries in the Old Northwest," JPHS, XXXVI (Mar., 1958), p. 21.

the frontier must be connected with a Presbyterian congregation. In order for the denomination's hierarchical machinery to maintain the congregation as community, it was deemed essential that every Presbyterian submit himself to the authority of an established congregation and its session. In that way he came under the jurisdiction of the most fundamental part of the hierarchy and became available to the rest of the judicial system of the church. The Transylvania Presbytery, for instance, in 1816 expressed its concern that there was a growing number of Presbyterians in its bounds who were connected with no church. It instructed its members to see that all Presbyterians were brought under the jurisdiction of a session, but in 1818 it was forced once more to deplore the growing number of "scattering individuals calling themselves presbyterians, but not connected with any of our churches." Once again the presbytery enjoined its members to remedy the anomalous situation.[43] For the presbytery a Presbyterian outside a church was as unthinkable as a republican outside of society had been during the Revolutionary period. In both instances the individual was defined only in terms of his relation to a larger whole.[44]

The session of the local Presbyterian church was frequently a very important instrument of law enforcement, especially on the frontier. In its judicial capacity the

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[43]Sept. 5, 1816, Min. of Trans. Pby., IV, 98-99; Apr. 21, 1818, ibid., IV, 122.

[44]See especially Ben Merchant Vorpahl, "Presbyterianism and the Frontier Thesis: Tradition and Modification in the American Garden," JPHS, XLV (Sept. 1967), 180-192.

session, usually composed of some of a town's most influential citizens, was a potent instrument for forcing upon a locality the Presbyterian views of moral and social behavior.[45] This, of course, had been true in the colonial period. But on the frontier in the early nineteenth century the Presbyterians attempted to broaden the scope of the sessions' powers of discipline. As early as 1787 one of the presbyteries had complained that the new form of government proposed for adoption did not provide the sessions with adequate powers of discipline. The only means of discipline provided was to bar a member from taking the sacraments. But, asked the Presbytery of Philadelphia, what if the member did not apply to take the Lord's Supper or to be baptized? How then was he to be disciplined? The Synod of Virginia was also plagued with requests from its presbyteries and their members for a ruling on the powers of sessions to discipline non-members. Usually the questions concerned people who had been baptized as infants but who had never become adult members of the church. But on some occasions the questions concerned men and women who had no connection with the church at all. The synod realized, of course, that to extend the authority of sessions to include cases dealing with non-Presbyterians would cause an immediate public clamor against that denomination. Although the sessions still insisted on a ruling, the synod never gave it. In 1798 it deferred consideration of

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[45]A particularly good discussion of the session as court and a lengthy transcript of a case are in Miyakawa, Protestant and Pioneers, pp. 21-32.

the question. The following year it sought to sidestep the issue by referring it to the General Assembly. But the central body also refused to rule on the controversial problem and declared that it was "decidedly" of the opinion that all questions were adequately answered in the book of discipline. For a few years the synod was spared the embarrassment of facing the problem, but in 1809 one of the presbyteries again demanded that the synod rule on the power of sessions to try non-members. Consideration of the demand again was deferred.[46] Obviously the Presbyterians would willingly have extended the sessions' power over non-members if they had been able. The higher levels of the hierarchy, at least, recognized that such an extension was impossible.

The Presbyterians' efforts to strengthen the congregation as community included a markedly increased emphasis upon the sacraments and ceremonial occasions. These occasions included periods of what was very revealingly called "social prayer." On those occasions the congregation met as a unit in an extraordinary session at a time appointed by either the presbytery or the synod to pray for a special blessing. The significance of the communal gatherings on the frontier can hardly be overestimated. The Synod of Virginia reported in 1799 that religion might be languishing elsewhere but that it was flourishing "where particular attention had been paid to the exercise of social prayer, especially in the stated

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[46]Apr. 12, 1787, Minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, IV, 58 (Microfilm in P.H.S.); Sept. 27, 1798, Va. Syn. Min., II, 8; Sept. 26, 1799, ibid., II, 25; Oct. 19, 1809, ibid., III, 62-63.

seasons recommended by the Synod."[47]

The presbyteries and synods recognized the power of the sacraments to foster discipline and a sense of community. In the early nineteenth century they ever more adamantly demanded that admission to the sacraments for their children be used to force Presbyterian parents to accept the discipline of their church's session. The Presbytery of New Brunswick, for instance, ruled that the sessions must require "the worship of God in the family . . . as a necessary duty, in order to admit their children to the ordinance of Baptism." The Redstone Presbytery likewise insisted that it was the duty of a minister not only to request but to require parents to perform certain duties before he baptized their child.[48]

The presbyteries and synods also realized the unifying power of the sacraments as ceremonial occasions. They therefore recommended that the sacraments be conducted as solemn rites performed only on periodic stated occasions. The Synod of Virginia, for instance, insisted that the ministers baptize only on stated occasions so as to impress the people with "the solemnity of Covenanting with God therein" and to impress parents in particular "with a sense of their duty."[49]

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[47]Sept. 26, 1799, Va. Syn. Min., II, 24. See also Syn. of the Carolinas, Pastoral Letter, p. 16.

[48]Oct. 16, 1787, N. Bruns. Pby. Min., IV, 83; Aug. 13, 1788, Min. of the Redstone Pby., p. 41. See also Apr. 15, 1812, Trans. Pby. Min., IV, 15-16; Oct. 25, 1799, Han. Pby. Min., IV, 50-51; Apr. 21, 1815, Lex. Pby. Min., VI, 44-45; Oct. 2, 1790, Va. Syn. Min., I, 60; Gen. Ass., Extracts (1794), p. 15.

[49]Oct. 1, 1790, Va. Syn. Min., I, 59-60; Sept. 29, 1791, I, 67; Oct. 18, 1790, Han. Pby. Min., III, 79-80; Oct. 28, 1790, Lex. Pby. Min., I, 68.

On the frontier at least the celebration of the two sacraments of the church became almost mystical rites whose powers of unification were not overlooked by the Presbyterian clergy.

The frontier revivalists far surpassed the settled Presbyterian ministers in the use of the sacraments as mystical rites of union. The high point of the camp meeting was always the taking of the Lord's Supper and baptismal ceremonies. In the wilderness clearings thousands of Christians partook of the Saviour's body and blood and solemnly watched the baptismal waters wash away the sins of hundreds of converts. Significantly David Rice objected to these mass meetings. He deplored the emphasis on large gatherings at the expense of family worship and private meditation. But Rice was really objecting to a large and therefore uncontrollable community and opting for a community of more manageable proportions. For it was as temporary communities that the camp meetings were most attractive to the isolated--and often fearful--frontiersmen. Descriptions of the camp meetings always stressed their size, and observers marveled at the way in which the frontiersmen immediately transformed the hugh clearings into ordered communities. Richard McNemar noted that there had been 4,000 at a meeting in Bourbon County and 20,000 at Cane Ridge. But, he continued,

> How striking to see hundreds who never saw each other in the face before, moving uniformly into action, without any preconcerted plan, and each without intruding upon another, taking that part assigned him by a conscious feeling, and in this manner, dividing into bands over a large extent of ground, interspersed with tents and wagons . . . .

He considered it "one of the greatest wonders that ever the

world beheld" that "persons, so different in their education, manners and natural dispositions, without any visible commander, could enter upon such a scene, and continue in it for days and nights in perfect harmony . . . ." Obviously many frontiersmen hungered for community. The Presbyterians insisted only that the community be more amenable to control than a camp meeting revival.[50]

In an effort to establish just such control the Presbyterians sought to unite the congregations into a powerful denominational community. In 1797 the Synod of Virginia in an address to its presbyteries asked all Presbyterians to consider the advantages to be derived from "strict uniformity" in the beliefs and actions of the denomination's members. "Hereby," the synod declared, "the hands of Members would be much strengthened, Christ's Body edified," and the cause of religion greatly advanced. The synod's call may be taken as indicative of the post-Revolutionary Presbyterians' determination to insure that their beliefs and actions were above all else strictly uniform.[51]

As has been noted, their determination to present a unified--and orthodox--front in the denominational market place was an important reason for the Presbyterians' acquiescence in the frontier schism. In the decade following the great western revival the Presbyterians increasingly demanded doctrinal uniformity within the denomination. As early as

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[50]Rice, Sermon on the Present Revival; McNemar, Kentucky Revival, pp. 24, 26, 31.

[51]Sept. 28, 1797, Va. Syn. Min., I, 82.

1791 the Synod of Virginia ruled that its churches should not hold even occasional communion with Christians who did not agree with the Presbyterian view of the essentials of Christianity or who refused to submit to Presbyterian discipline. By 1820 the synods and presbyteries were drawing up extended lists of heretical doctrines, which were intended to supplement the rather extended creedal statement in the confession of faith. The Abingdon Presbytery, for instance, warned its members against ministers who preached universal atonement and who denied the universality of original sin and the atoning power of Christ's death. And the Synod of Pittsburgh instructed its members to deny communion and fellowship to all who denied the depravity of human nature and salvation through the blood of Christ.[52]

Important as they were, the efforts of the Presbyterians to insure doctrinal uniformity were not as crucial to their achieving a strong denominational identity as was a great flurry of organizational efforts. The first--and perhaps the most important--of these efforts was the creation of the General Assembly itself. In 1785 the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, the capstone of the hierarchy at that time, bewailed the poor attendance at its meetings. The synod feared that its members would become strangers to each other and that their congregations would become isolated from each other because of a lack of mutual counsel and shared

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[52]Sept. 30, 1791, ibid., I, 76; Oct. 19, 1820, ibid., IV, 287-291; Oct. 5, 1820, Records of the Syn. of Pittsburgh, p. 163.

information. In short the synod feared the "entirely moulder-ing away of the body."[53] The creation of the General Assembly quieted those fears. Within a quarter century of its creation, new synods and presbyteries were created in all parts of the nation. Each of these new parts of the hierarchy brought the authority of the General Assembly closer to the individual churches and thus vastly increased the central body's ability to mold the denomination into a unified whole. The power of the hierarchy was revealed at the height of the frontier schism in 1805. The General Assembly sent a committee to Ken-tucky to investigate the situation and to prevent wavering Presbyterians from joining the revivalists. The committee members reported that their appearance in the west "had a beneficial influence on the public mind . . . ." Their com-ing seemed to manifest "the solicitous concern of the General Assembly, for a distant and suffering member of their body." For that reason it had the "happy tendency to reclaim some, and establish others, who were wavering and seemed to 'halt between two opinions.'"[54] Even the extracts of minutes of the General Assembly, which were published yearly after 1803, had a unifying effect. They carried uniform information to all parts of the denomination and were quoted frequently in the circular letters prepared by the synods and presbyteries for their members. In that way news of deliberations in Philadelphia quickly found its way to Charleston, Cincinnati,

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[53]Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Philadelphia, 1841), May 19, 1785, p. 509.

[54]Gen. Ass., Extracts, 1805, p. 90.

and Nashville.[55]

The decision to publish extracts from the minutes of the General Assembly was followed quickly by moves to publish denominational magazines. In 1802 the Synod of Pittsburgh voted to publish a synodical magazine, and in the following year the Synod of Virginia determined to do likewise. In 1804 the General Assembly discussed for the first time the possibility of publishing a magazine "sacred to religion and morals." All of these periodicals, of course, were described officially as benevolent attempts to further the cause of religion in general. But they were more obviously intended to unite the denomination and to serve as a weapon of denominational competition. Samuel Miller expressed his hope to Ashbel Green that the General Assembly's proposed periodical would offset the effects of the magazine the Episcopalians had begun to publish. And when the Synod of Virginia finally did begin to publish its magazine, The Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine, it ordered that above all else the periodical must "promote the diffusion of Christian knowledge, according to the doctrines and discipline of the Presbyterian church . . . ."[56] At the same time that they attempted to establish denominational periodicals, the Presbyterians also began to discuss the writing and publication of the histories

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[55]See, for example, Syn. of the Carolinas, Pastoral Letter, pp. 4-5; and Syn. of Ky., Circular Letter.

[56]Oct. 2, 1802, Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh, p. 13; Oct. 14, 1803, Va. Syn. Min., II, 124; Gen. Ass., Extracts, 1804, p. 53; Samuel Miller to Ashbel Green, Mar. 12, 1805, Samuel Miller Papers, P.U.L.; Oct. 28, 1816, Va. Syn. Min., III, 120.

of the several parts of the hierarchy. By recreating (or creating) a common past the Presbyterians hoped to foster a denominational identity and to give legitimacy to their admittedly young denomination.[57]

Even more important than their efforts to distribute common knowledge of the past and present were the Presbyterians' remarkable attempts to establish numerous societies to carry out denomination wide operations. During the colonial period the only society within the denomination had been the society for aiding the widows and orphans of Presbyterian ministers. But during the post-war period Presbyterians established societies to promote missions, to distribute free copies of Presbyterian literature, hymnals, and Bibles, to aid the poor, to minister to slaves and Indians, to establish church libraries, and to promote morality and piety in general. This amazing burst of energy was the beginning of the Presbyterians' struggle to impose order and authority over a society that to them was desperately in need of both. It was at the same time an outgrowth and a reenforcement of the Presbyterians' hierarchical structure. It was one more way in which the Presbyterians hoped to unify their denomination. And, finally, by organizing themselves into voluntary organizations within their denomination, the Presbyterians desperately hoped to stave off the encroaching immorality and contention that the Revolution had apparently only

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[57]Gen. Ass., Extracts, 1804, pp. 45-46; Apr. 5, 1793, Han. Pby. Min., III, 146.

momentarily halted.[58]

The Presbyterians did not rely on voluntary associations alone to impose order and authority on their denomination. In the quarter century following the Revolution they erected an ecclesiastical system that contradicts every assertion that American institutions were weakened by being hurled into the frontier. The fact is that the Presbyterians' ecclesiastical system was much stronger in 1820 than it was in 1790. By 1820 the Presbyterians had institutionalized thoroughly the process whereby each session, presbytery, and synod presented to the hierarchical element above it the record of all its proceedings. Each superior element up to the General Assembly examined those records and saw that any unorthodox practices were summarily dealt with.[59] At the same time that they closely checked the proceedings of inferior units in the hierarchy, the presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly carefully drew the boundaries between each geographical unit in order to prevent unseemly jurisdictional disputes that would disturb the unity and peace of the church.[60]

Perhaps the most significant of the Presbyterians' efforts to mold the denomination into an organized unit were

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[58]Sept. 17, 1794, N. Bruns. Pby. Min., IV, 302-303; Sept. 27, 1800, Va. Syn. Min., II, 51-53; Oct. 20, 1806, ibid., II, 179-185; Apr. 11, 1801, Han. Pby. Min., IV, 74; Dec. 15, 1808, Trans. Pby. Min., III, 70; Gen. Ass., Extracts, 1804, pp. 51-52.

[59]The sixth volume of the minutes of the Lexington Presbytery (1811-1814) illustrates this process especially well.

[60]Sept. 27, 1793, Va. Syn. Min., I, 109; Sept. 26, 1799, ibid., II, 25-26; Oct. 29, 1791, Han. Pby. Min., III, 119.

their efforts to supervise closely the movement of ministers within that unit. During the Great Schism the issue of itinerant preachers had been a crucial one, and the New Sides had opposed effectively the Old Sides' efforts to proscribe those itinerations. It is indicative of the vastly increased strength and complexity of the Presbyterian hierarchical and ecclesiastical system that itineration was not a prime issue in the Second Great Awakening. By 1815 the Presbyterians had erected an elaborate system of supervising the placement of ministers and were enforcing it vigorously. The first step the Presbyterians took to insure an orderly and regulated movement of ministers within the denomination was to insist that each minister unite with the presbytery within whose bounds he served. The Presbyterians of the post-Revolutionary period considered a minister outside a presbytery as anomalous and as dangerous as a Presbyterian layman unconnected with any congregation. Consequently, the Hanover Presbytery in 1803 refused the request of Conrad Speece to be dismissed from the presbytery without assigning him to another specifically stated presbytery. Speece then obtained a request from the Baltimore Presbytery that he be released to that presbytery. The Hanover Presbytery granted the request. The presbyteries also expected a minister to join immediately the presbytery to which he was dismissed. Hence in 1786 the Presbytery of New Brunswick called before it Rev. Richard Treat to explain why he had not united with the presbytery after being assigned to its jurisdiction by the Presbytery of New York. And in 1802 the Synod of Pittsburgh noted that a member of

the Ohio Presbytery dismissed to join the Redstone Presbytery had not done so. The synod, ever mindful of the need for an orderly movement of ministers within the denomination, warned that it highly disapproved of the minister's remaining in his present "disconnected state."[61]

In their enthusiasm to regulate ministerial movement the presbyteries insisted that every minister dismissed from a presbytery be presented with a letter stating the reasons for his dismissal. The presbyteries then would refuse to accept into their membership any minister without such a letter of dismissal. The Hanover Presbytery in 1792 asserted that the Transylvania Presbytery did not have the right to accept James Moore because the Hanover Presbytery had not yet dismissed him. Consequently, the Kentucky presbytery refused to accept Moore until he obtained a letter of dismissal from the Virginia presbytery. On December 11, 1798, the Redstone Presbytery, on the Pennsylvania frontier, refused to accept James Henderson simply because he had forgotten to bring with him to the presbyterial meeting his letter of dismissal from the Carlisle Presbytery. He was not admitted to membership until April 9, 1799, when he presented the letter.[62]

After 1790 the presbyteries required of a minister

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[61]Apr. 7, 1803, Han. Pby. Min., IV, 104; Sept. 8, 1803, ibid., IV, 108; Oct. 18, 1786, N. Bruns. Pby. Min., IV, 64; Sept. 30, 1802, Records of the Syn. of Pittsburgh, p. 9.

[62]July 30, 1792, Han. Pby. Min., III, 135; Dec. 11, 1798, Min. of Redstone Presbytery, p. 145. See also Sept. 11, 1795, Lex. Pby. Min., III, 43; Sept. 20, 1792, N. Bruns. Pby. Min., IV, 203; Oct. 19, 1820, Va. Syn. Min., IV, 298.

seeking admission not only a letter of dismissal but also letters of recommendation from well known members of the presbytery from which he came. In the colonial period most of the presbyteries had established committees to inspect the credentials and the letters of recommendation of all ministers desiring membership, but in the post-Revolutionary period those committees' functions became increasingly important. In a representative action, the committee of the Redstone Presbytery in 1791 refused to accept the credentials and letters of one Thomas Cooley from the Presbytery of Charleston, South Carolina. The committee had never heard of the Presbytery of Charleston and recommended that the presbytery not accept the credentials. The presbytery turned the credentials over to the Synod of Virginia, which, in turn, presented them to the General Assembly, which declared them "spurious." Cooley, in the meantime, had refused to write for letters of recommendation from Presbyterian ministers in South Carolina who were well known to members of the Redstone Presbytery. The presbytery, then, refused to admit him into its membership. Thus did the entire hierarchical system function to protect the Pennsylvania presbytery from fraud.[63]

The General Assembly even ventured into tentative cooperation with New England Congregationalists in an effort to protect Presbyterian congregations from fraudulent or undesirable ministers. A conference committee of the General

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[63]Dec. 21, 1791, Min. of Redstone Presbytery, pp. 82-83; Oct. 17, 1792, ibid., p. 91; Oct. 17, 1793, ibid., p. 102; Sept. 27, 1792, Va. Syn. Min., I, 91; Sept. 25, 1793, ibid., I, 102.

Assembly and the General Association of Connecticut recommended in 1792 that the two bodies establish a joint committee to inspect the testimonials of any minister entering their bounds and to require any such minister to present a recent testimony of his character and orthodoxy from his presbytery or association. In 1794 the committee recommended that private letters between members be used as testimonials rather than form letters, which were easily forged. The Presbyterian members of the committee noted that their denomination had used for some time such private letters to detect unfit foreign ministers and recommended that they now be used to regulate "the admission of those who may come from distant parts of our nation." Even if no one in the town which a minister left knew anyone at his destination, the committee reasoned, "sufficient intercourse prevails between intermediate places, to admit of his being regularly handed, and sufficiently recommended, till he reach the object of his destination." The two bodies then appointed a number of well known men, "most conveniently situated for the purpose," to authenticate the certificate of any minister passing through their towns. The name of at least one of those men had to appear on his certificate before a minister could be accepted by a new presbytery. Thus the Presbyterians made it virtually impossible for a minister to move from Portsmouth to Charleston or from Baltimore to Louisville and escape the institutionalized surveillance of the denomination's hierarchy.[64]

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[64]See Sept. 26, 1794, Va. Syn. Min., I, 133; Apr. 14, 1797, Han. Pby. Min., IV, 17; Oct. 4, 1797, Trans. Pby. Min.,

The hierarchy of the post-Revolutionary period was equally as determined to see that ministers were well supported as it was to supervise their movements within the denomination. This concern with salaries, of course, had been a principal source of New Side complaint during the Great Schism. But the Presbyterians of the post-Revolutionary period appeared even more concerned with salaries than their colonial predecessors. After the Revolution the minutes of all units of the hierarchy began to bristle with references to "the difficulties under which gospel ministers labour, for want of liberal maintenance from the congregations they serve."[65] Determined to remedy the situation the Presbyterians took actions that invariably caused them to appear to be money hungry. The Lexington Presbytery, for instance, in 1787 ruled that the members of any vacant congregation supplied by members of the presbytery should be ready to pay for the supply in cash and be prepared to pay extra if they wanted the supply to either baptize or celebrate communion. Similar actions by the same and other presbyteries[66] made the Presbyterians look very mercenary when compared in the public mind to the Methodist and Baptist ministers, who frequently

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II, 157-158; Oct. 17, 1799, Lex. Pby. Min., III, 164; Apr. 28, 1795, N. Bruns. Pby. Min., IV, 332; Apr. 20, 1796, Min. of Redstone Presbytery, p. 121; Oct. 18, 1786, Phila. Pby. Min., IV, 48.

[65]May 17, 1782, Presbyterian Records, p. 495; May 23, 1783, ibid., p. 499.

[66]Oct. 25, 1787, Lex. Pby. Min., I, 20-22. See also Apr. 19, 1817, ibid., VI, 131; Apr. 5, 1823, Trans. Pby. Min., IV, 194; Apr. 30, 1825, Records of Syn. of Pittsburgh, p. 132.

ministered without pay. The public reaction to the Presbyterian clergy's image is reflected in a poem written by a Tom Johnson, the local wag of Danville, Kentucky. Johnson's poem was occasioned by David Rice's refusal to celebrate communion until his arrears were paid and was posted by the author in Gill's Tavern in Danville.

> Ye fools! I told you once or twice,
> You'd hear no more from canting R--e;
> He cannot settle his affairs,
> Nor pay attention unto pray'rs,
> Unless you pay up your arrears.
> O how he would in pulpit storm,
> and fit all hell with dire alarm!
> Vengeance pronounce against each vice,
> And, more than all, curs'd avarice;
> Preach'd money was the root of ill,
> Consign'd each rich man unto hell;
> But since he finds you will not pay,
> Both rich and poor may go that way.
> 'Tis no more than I expected--
> The meeting-house is now neglected:
> All trades are subject to this chance,
> No longer pipe--no longer dance.[67]

The Presbyterian ministers were, of course, no more avaricious than any other group of men. But the Presbyterians believed that a minister must labor full-time in order to be effective, and even on the frontier they insisted that their ministers hold no secular employment.[68] A full-time ministry was deemed as crucial to preserving Christianity as was the unofficial support of religion by government. Without it, Alexander Addison contended in 1803, "we shall then see

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[67]Quoted in John Opie, "The Melancholy Career of 'Father' David Rice," JPHS, XLVII (Dec., 1969), 296.

[68]May 24, 1783, Phila. Pby. Min., IV, 17; May 18, 1784, ibid., IV, 25; Apr. 21, 1813, Min. of Redstone Presbytery, p. 259; Oct. 7, 1813, Records of Syn. of Pittsburgh, p. 99; Rice, Sermon on the Present Revival, pp. 14-15.

congregations multiply and pastors decrease, or congregations starving their pastors." Likewise the Presbytery of New Brunswick warned that unless "their situation be rendered tolerably easy," the best men would not be attracted to the ministry, with lamentably predictable results for the church and the republic.[69] Consequently, the presbyteries and synods after the Revolution devoted an inordinate proportion of their time to insuring that ministers were adequately supported. These attempts were an important element in their efforts to unify and strengthen the denomination.

The final way in which the post-Revolutionary Presbyterians molded their denomination into a unit was by crushing a contention advanced by the New Sides during the Great Schism and advanced again briefly during the frontier schism. Like the colonial New Sides the Presbyterian frontier revivalists unsettled their fellow Presbyterians by describing an "internal call" to the ministry. Like their colonial predecessors the dissidents attacked the settled clergy as cold, lifeless men who, by their own admission, often were strangers to the gospel they preached. Richard McNemar charged that the settled Presbyterian ministers were "proud, aspiring, contentious men, striving who should be the greatest, overlooking common people as an inferior rank of beings--deeply immersed in the cares of the world--eager after salaries . . . ."[70] Such men, the revivalists declared, were not

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[69]Oct. 7, 1803, Records of Syn. of Pittsburgh, p. 20; Apr. 22, 1783, N. Bruns. Pby. Min., IV, 10.

[70]McNemar, Kentucky Revival, p. 12.

fit to minister to the Lord's church. Much less, then, should they be allowed to decide if other men should be allowed to enter the clergy. McNemar and his colleagues insisted that the true minister was called directly into the ministry by the Lord. When the representatives of the church examined that man, they declared, they can only "inquire into that validity and authority which he professes to have received from God." They cannot judge the original call and surely cannot annul it.[71]

The disruptive nature of the "internal" call was all too obvious to the post-Revolutionary Presbyterians and was denounced thoroughly by them. Like the Old Sides the General Assembly asserted that only God could judge the validity of an "inner" call; therefore it could not be a satisfactory criterion of judgment. The "inner" call was indistinguishable "from the visionary impulses of enthusiasm," the Assembly contended. Consequently, the "judicatories of the church can judge only of the life and conversation of men; their knowledge and their talents to teach." In other words, orthodoxy was the only acceptable criterion of judgment. The Synod of Kentucky condemned the idea that ministers are ordained of God and not of men. Obviously, God did not choose ministers immediately "but mediately, that is, by the instrumentality of a certain description of men, to whom the business is assigned." Even Christ had not begun preaching until he had been baptized by John the Baptist, the synod

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[71]Pby. of Springfield, An Apology, p. 39.

reminded the dissidents.[72] In the heat of revival, the General Assembly noted, men "who are destitute of any liberal culture of mind; and often even of any considerable natural talents" conclude that they have "peculiar and extraordinary gifts . . . which ought not to be suffered to lie useless and unemployed." They lead unsuspecting men astray until their ardor has cooled. Then they reveal "all their barrenness, and defect of furniture for the whole ministry, and the sound interpretation of the sacred scriptures . . . ." If such men want to do good, the General Assembly retorted, let them do it in the sphere "in which they appear destined by providence to move." Therein lay true benevolence, for in his proper sphere "every christian[,] the poorest and the humblest; has ample scope to exercise his pious and benevolent dispositions, and exert his talents, whatever they may be." The only alternative, the Assembly concluded, was to throw open the gates of the church to "weakness and ignorance" and to see it "overflowed with errors, and with the wildest disorders."[73]

The Presbyterians of the post-Revolutionary period were above all else determined to see that the church was not "overflowed" by error and wild disorder. Their determination led them to take constrictive actions that were at great variance with their expansive actions in the period between the Great Awakening and 1795. This change was momentous,

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[72]Gen. Ass., Extracts, 1805, p. 87; Extracts, 1804, pp. 47-48; Syn. of Ky., Circular Letter.

[73]Gen. Ass., Extracts, 1804, pp. 47-49.

fundamental, and permanent. It can be explained only as a great reaction to the disillusionment that succeeded the extravagant expectations of the Revolutionary period. The ideology of republicanism proved unable to end contention and strife in America. Consequently, the Presbyterians reluctantly accepted them as inevitable within the republic. But they then turned to the denomination, and within that smaller unit vigorously began to establish a community that would at the same time be free of contention and conflict in itself and enable the denomination to compete in a society that was soon to be defined in terms of competition.[74]

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[74]In 1801 the Presbyterian General Assembly and the Congregational General Association of Connecticut entered into a "Plan of Union" providing for cooperation between the two denominations in settling the West. The Plan of Union and other interdenominational activities in which the Presbyterians cooperated in no way invalidate the thesis advanced in this chapter. The Plan of Union had literally no effect south of the Ohio and only a limited effect in the Old Northwest, the area in which it was most effective. The Plan was effective only until real differences arose between the Congregationalists and Presbyterians. And the Presbyterians cooperated in interdenominational activities only so long as they did not feel their denominational interests were affected. In general the interdenominational activities of the early nineteenth century have been overemphasized at the expense of emerging denominational patterns. This is one reason why, as in Perry Miller's Life of the Mind, frequently strident denominationalism appears to emerge full-blown from nowhere around 1825. The Plan of Union may be found in Gen. Ass., Acts (1801), pp. 6-7.

CHAPTER IX

THE COLLEGE AS DENOMINATIONAL WEAPON

In 1822 Thomas Jefferson addressed a biting attack on American Presbyterians to Thomas Cooper, the President of South Carolina College. Cooper had been nominated to a professorship at Jefferson's Univeristy of Virginia but had been forced to resign that post by Virginia Presbyterians who were appalled at his deistic leanings. He was particularly well-equipped, then, to appreciate fully the former President's bitter denunciation of the Presbyterians. Because of the Presbyterians, Jefferson charged, the "atmosphere of our country is unquestionably charged with a threatening cloud of fanaticism." Jefferson admitted that in Charlottesville, where the Presbyterians were only one of several sects, they took their turn with the Episcopalians, the Methodists, and the Baptists in using the court house for services. But, he warned, the Presbyterians' "ambition and tyranny would tolerate no rival if they had power." They are "systematical in grasping at an ascendency over all other sects . . . ." Their ambition, Jefferson concluded, leads the Presbyterians to seek to control all educational institutions, renders them "hostile to every institution which they do not direct," and makes them "jealous at seeing others begin to attend at all to that object."[1] Jefferson very astutely gauged the

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[1]Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Cooper, Nov. 2, 1822, Paul Leicester Ford, ed., The Writings of Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1892-1899), X, 242-243.

temperament of American Presbyterianism in 1822. For perhaps the most marked results of the Presbyterians' turn from republicanism to denominationalism in the first quarter of the nineteenth century were their efforts to control public education and to make of their colleges weapons of denominational competition.

1. The Triumph of Sectarianism

Thomas Jefferson believed that the Presbyterians would have demanded to be established had they been a majority in America. He was probably right. But the Presbyterians, to their discomfort, discovered that they were even more of a minority after the Second Great Awakening than before it. The revival had increased enormously the membership of the more evangelical Baptist and Methodist churches, but the Presbyterians' aloofness from the revival did little to increase their membership, especially on the frontier. Consequently, just as they began to feel embattled by the forces of infidelity, they discovered that the adherents of those forces greatly outnumbered orthodox Presbyterians. In the colonial and Revolutionary periods their minority status had led the Presbyterians to stress toleration and interdenominational cooperation. In the post-Revolutionary period that status caused the Presbyterians to embrace a virulent form of sectarianism. That change is illustrated by the development of two new schools established by the Presbyterians in the 1790's.

It is significant that the first thoroughly denominational

Presbyterian school was established at a point far into the frontier where the Presbyterians were a tiny minority. From 1785 to 1794 the Presbyterians of Kentucky cooperated with Anglicans and religious skeptics in supporting the tiny Transylvania Seminary in Lexington. Through the Transylvania Presbytery the Presbyterians effectively controlled the school during the first decade of its existence. But in 1794 the non-Presbyterian element of the school's Board of Trustees proved strong enough to elect as President Henry Toulmin, an English-born Unitarian strongly influenced by the religious and political ideas of Joseph Priestley and Thomas Jefferson. The Presbyterians' reaction to Toulmin's election is the first indication of a fundamental change in their attitude toward denominational education.[2]

The Presbyterians were appalled at the prospect of a Unitarian governing the one college in a new land. They had established Transylvania and had intended that it would train a class of virtuous Christian leaders to rule Kentucky and transform it into a thoroughly orthodox Christian community. But for the first time their control of the institution was threatened. Moreover, it was threatened by the very forces of infidelity that appeared also to menace Christianity itself. Frightened and defensive, the Presbyterians responded with a constrictive and socially destructive act. To secure an instrument of denominational union, they destroyed the

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[2]The following discussion of the struggle for control of Transylvania relies heavily on Niels H. Sonne's excellent Liberal Kentucky, 1780-1828 (Lexington, 1968).

union of a larger community, the coalition of Christians that had governed Transylvania for a decade.

At Toulmin's election the Presbyterians abandoned Transylvania to the non-Presbyterians and established the Kentucky Academy, a school directly controlled by the Transylvania Presbytery. The Board of Trustees of the academy was appointed by the presbytery, which required that one half of the school's Board always come from the presbytery's membership. The presbytery also insisted in the school's charter that the president at all times be a Presbyterian minister, a member of the presbytery, and a zealous promoter of the "interest of real and practical religion." The presbytery reserved the right to appoint all professors, to inspect the school as often as necessary, and to prescribe texts for its use. The charter of Kentucky Academy contained the usual claim that "No endeavours shall be used by the president or other teachers, to influence the minds of any student to change his religious tenets, or embrace those of a different denomination . . . ." But the presbytery added a significant qualifying clause: no effort would be made, that is, except that which "is consistent with the general belief of the gospel system, and the practice of vital piety." Kentucky Academy was to be a school where the Presbyterians' children could safely acquire an education without endangering their orthodoxy and morals. The "religious public," a euphemism for the Presbyterians, could have no confidence in Toulmin, stated a later Presbyterian apologist. Therefore, with an "indignant frown," they declared to the governors of

Transylvania, "if you appoint men who despise our religion and religious institutions, rather than endanger the morals of our children, we will abandon you." And when the presbytery abandoned the school and established its own, it began an energetic program to persuade Presbyterians to support Kentucky Academy by sending their children there and nowhere else. Such presbyterial action was unprecedented.[3]

The ease with which the Presbyterians split the Transylvania Seminary anticipated the ease with which they would divide the denomination during the frontier schism. In both cases the Presbyterians proved willing to fracture the unity of a frontier institution, first of the seminary and then of the denomination itself. And in both instances the Presbyterians replaced the fractured institution with a more firmly united one dedicated to expelling all dissidents in order to retain that unity. As would be the case in the frontier revival, the presbytery in 1795 was willing to sacrifice union on a broad scale for orthodoxy and strength within a smaller social unit, the denomination.

Unlike the frontier denominational schism, however, the division between the new Presbyterian school and the original Transylvania Seminary was bridged temporarily. After existing as separate and competing entities for four years, the two schools were reunited in 1799 as Transylvania University.

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[3]Apr. 24, 1794, Minutes of the Transylvania Presbytery, II, 112, 116-117; Feb. 17, 1795, ibid., II, 166-168 (Microfilm in U.T.S.); Act for establishing the Kentucky Academy . . . . Also minutes of meetings of trustees . . . . , pp. 3, 5 (Bound MSS in P.H.S.; hereafter cited as Ky. Acad. Bd. Min.); [John McFarland, ed.], The Literary Pamphleteer . . . (Paris, Ky., 1823), I, 10.

The reunion was largely a practical necessity because neither school could afford to function alone. But, even more important, it resulted from the efforts of Judge Caleb Wallace, a Princeton graduate who had left the ministry to become Kentucky's leading judge. Wallace, who had been influential in establishing both Hampden-Sydney and Liberty Hall as well as Transylvania, was still imbued with the Presbyterians' earlier emphasis on Christian union as the only means to reform American society. Wallace was able to override the opposition of David Rice and other Presbyterians and finally to get the Kentucky legislature to sanction the reunion in 1799.[4] By 1804 the Presbyterians regained virtual control of the school. They retained control until 1817, when the non-Presbyterian part of the Board proved strong enough to elect as President another eastern Unitarian, Boston's renowned Horace Holley.

The Presbyterians were driven from Transylvania in 1817 because their attitude toward church and state became increasingly unpopular in Kentucky in the years between 1800 and the War of 1812. That attitude was expressed at length by Rev. James Blythe, the acting President of Transylvania, in a sermon delivered on a National Fast Day at the conclusion of the War of 1812. The burden of Blythe's harangue, "Our Sins Acknowledged," was that Christianity and public morality were inseparable and that the reason for the decline of the latter was the lamentable fact that America, and

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[4]Oct. 1798, Ky. Acad. Bd. Min., p. 85; Oct. 1, 1798, Records of the proceedings of the Board of Trustees for the Transylvania Seminary, p. 168 (MSS in T.C.L.; hereafter cited as Trans. Sem. Bd. Min.).

especially Kentucky, had ceased to be visibly Christian during the administrations of Jefferson and Madison. Although America was "confessedly a christian nation," Blythe could find no recognition of "God the Saviour" in "our great national decrees, our national proclamations, [or] our messages of our governors . . . ." The Kentucky legislature met, legislated, and adjourned "without once acknowledging God in all their ways, that he might direct their steps." The late war, Blythe concluded, was merited punishment for America's dereliction of duty and obedience to God. He somberly criticized the widespread opinion that there should be no connection whatever between religion and politics because such unions in the past had proved "highly injurious to the liberties of the people, and the free exercise of conscience . . . ." Blythe hoped that just because he spoke of "the intimate, and indeed, indissoluble union there is between a manly and ardent piety, and an equitable administration of our government," no one would think he advocated an establishment of religion. "No one would deprecate more sincerely than would I," he declared, "any thing that might have, though it should be but remotely, the effect of an establishment." The "celestial goddess" of religion had no need of a feeble establishment, for she could captivate "by her own charms" and govern "by her own power." "But the poor imperfect systems of human government," Blythe sighed, "cannot stand upon their own feet without the aid of religion."[5]

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[5]Quoted in Sonne, Liberal Kentucky, pp. 119-123.

Blythe's sermon provoked from the Presbyterians' opponents an immediate outcry, which revealed the depth of public animosity toward the minority denomination that controlled the state's only college. One particularly cogent rebuttal appeared anonymously in The Kentucky Palladium and was intended to convince the public that Blythe had advocated an established religion. The reviewer of Blythe's sermon noted that the governments of the United States and Kentucky could not "with constitutional propriety perform any official act the object of which is religion." To criticize those governments for not recognizing Christ as saviour was "downright sectarian bigotry." The reviewer reminded Blythe that there were "other religions beside the Christian" in the republic and that there were Christians "who do not agree with him, as to the importance of recognizing God the Saviour." The reviewer denounced all connections between politics and religion and dismissed Blythe's disavowal of established religion as "vile, hypocritical canting." While Blythe claimed he desired no establishment, the reviewer charged, he revealed his true intentions by demanding that "in our national, political, or sovereign capacity, we are bound to be religious--that the government is bound to be religious--to sanctify the Sabbath, and keep it holy--by law of course."[6]

To the potent charge that the denomination sought an establishment, the Presbyterians' critics added the equally effective accusation that the Presbyterians were turning

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[6]Quoted in ibid., pp. 125-127.

Transylvania into an aristocratic institution controlled by a tiny minority of the state's population. In fact, in an adult population of 327,137 the Presbyterians in 1815 numbered only 2,700.[7] Such a tiny minority--fewer than one in one hundred--should control no public institution, the Presbyterians' opponents contended. When combined with the public's displeasure at the Presbyterian clergy's opposition to the War of 1812, those charges were enough to drive that denomination from power in Transylvania in 1817.

The Presbyterians reacted violently to their expulsion from power by instituting a vigorous defense of their own administration of the school and by attacking viciously the ensuing regime of Dr. Holley. Both the defense and the attack reveal the extent to which Presbyterians on the frontier were alarmed by what they considered the influx of infidelity and the lengths to which they were willing to go to halt that influx. Moreover, they illustrate the change in the Presbyterians' attitude toward sectarian education. The most thorough defense of the Presbyterian position was advanced by John McFarland in the six issues of The Literary Pamphleteer, published in 1823.

McFarland began his defense by admitting that a change had occurred in traditional Presbyterian attitudes toward education. He used the example of Princeton to prove that even in schools they controlled the Presbyterians heretofore had not used education to proselytize for their church.

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[7]Ibid., p. 199n.

Rather, they had cooperated with others to advance the common good in all institutions of higher learning. However, the triumph of infidelity at Transylvania, McFarland declared, had forced the Presbyterians to abandon their traditional stance of cooperation and to attempt to drive the infidels from that school.[8] McFarland insisted that the Presbyterians did not wish to drive the liberals from Transylvania in order to transform the school into a denominational institution in which Presbyterian doctrine was taught as the only truth. He found it difficult, however, to answer the charge that the Presbyterians were a minority and had no right to control a public institution. The Presbyterians themselves admitted their minority status when it served to illustrate the desperate condition of Christianity in Kentucky. A writer in the denominational magazine The Evangelical Record in 1812 noted that the population of Kentucky was divided into Christians and infidels. And, while he could not estimate the number of each part "with any precision," he was disposed to think "that the infidel part has a considerable majority." Kentucky, he sadly concluded, "is not a Christian but a heathen land."[9]

But when they attempted to justify their administration of Transylvania and to expel Holley, the Presbyterians found it necessary to appear the majority in Kentucky. McFarland in The Literary Pamphleteer set out to accomplish that seem-

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[8]Literary Pamphleteer, I, 3-4.

[9]The Lexington, Kentucky, Evangelical Record and Western Review, II, 10.

ingly impossible feat. He began by asserting that Holley was a Socinian, one who denied the divinity of Christ. Under Holley that heresy had been taught as the only truth in the school. Moreover, after 1818 the state legislature had appointed to the school's Board only men who adhered to the infidel doctrines taught by Holley. They had, in short, inaugurated an "irreligious Test" in place of a religious test for all Trustees and had virtually established infidelity at Transylvania.[10]

Although the Presbyterians loudly bewailed the existence of a majority of infidels when lamenting the threat to Christianity on the frontier, they were not at all inclined to admit that Holley's ideas represented those of a majority of Kentuckians. When they discussed control of the college, the Presbyterians preferred to revert to James Blythe's contention that America and Kentucky were "confessedly christian." Furthermore, they referred most often to Holley not as a liberal, a skeptic, or even an infidel but as an avowed Socinian, of whom there were admittedly few in Kentucky. It was this tiny Socinian minority, charged McFarland, that was in control of Transylvania.[11]

To the Socinian minority McFarland opposed what he considered the majority in Kentucky. Not even a determined partisan like McFarland could assert in the face of obvious facts that the Presbyterians alone constituted a majority in

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[10]Literary Pamphleteer, I, 13; II, 5.

[11]Ibid., III, 3-5.

the state. He therefore asserted that there existed in Kentucky a majority of orthodox Protestants who agreed with the Presbyterians' basic principles of religion and morality. McFarland declared that the Baptists, Methodists, and Episcopalians should make common cause with the Presbyterians and that those denominations united would constitute a majority in Kentucky. As the state's majority they obviously had the right, indeed the duty, to control and manage Transylvania. "Infidel, Atheistical and Socinian parents, and communities can never unite and harmonize in education with those who are really christian," he insisted, because "they exhibit sentiments . . . essentially different." They should obviously then have separate schools, McFarland concluded. He graciously noted that, should the state's majority change, control of the school should change with it. No one of the denominations should control the school, McFarland insisted. Such an establishment would outrage "the principles of the social compact" and should not be tolerated. But, he asserted, representatives of the Protestant denominations ought to constitute a majority of Transylvania's Board and must determine the doctrines to be inculcated in the school's course in moral philosophy. In that way, he concluded, even though a particular theology "cannot consistently be established," the majority would always be assured that religion would not be separated from the other parts of the course of education. Such a separation, McFarland warned, would produce a "very

illiberal and contracted education."[12]

McFarland, then, appeared to advocate a common front of orthodoxy against infidelity. Well he might in a situation in which the Baptists and Methodists outnumbered the Presbyterians seven to one and in which all church members numbered fewer than 50,000 in an adult population of more than 300,000.[13] But the other Protestants did not respond to the Presbyterians' calls for interdenominational cooperation. The Baptists and Methodists had only to read The Literary Pamphleteer to find adequate reasons to doubt the sincerity of the Presbyterians' offer of cooperation. McFarland made it quite obvious that on the frontier the Presbyterians had become determined advocates of sectarian education. Their determination was based on their belief that the Lord had revealed to them those doctrines that pleased and displeased Him. McFarland asserted that the Presbyterians would not be stopped from teaching those ideas in their schools just because they were branded as intolerant and bigoted. If a denomination had received the truth, McFarland reasoned, how could it fail to support it and oppose all contrasting beliefs? It followed that if one had received the truth, one could invariably recognize error. "I am at a loss to determine," he confessed, how "one can believe a proposition, and at the same time not disbelieve its opposite . . . ."[14]

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[12]Ibid., I, 6-7; II, 2; III, 9; V, 16.

[13]Sonne, Liberal Kentucky, p. 199n.

[14]Literary Pamphleteer, III, 9-10.

The Presbyterians' belief that each sect should defend its version of revealed truth led McFarland to make a condemnation of Dr. Holley that is at first perplexing and then highly revealing. On the one hand, McFarland charged that the President was sedulously inculcating Socinianism at Transylvania. But, on the other hand, he had to admit that a great many people in and around Lexington insisted that they had no idea what Holley's religious beliefs were because he never discussed them either in the school or in public. They were, of course, quite correct. The genial Unitarian scrupulously practiced what the Presbyterians loudly preached. He taught no sectarian doctrines at Transylvania and refused to take part in the interminable controversies between liberals and Presbyterians in the press. For this McFarland reprimanded the President severely. That Holley's creed was a matter "of doubt, or dispute," was a deplorable fact, he charged. No one knew if the President was a Socinian or what. Holley ought, therefore to "speak honestly and openly for once, and let the public who are to patronize him, know satisfactorily what he is." Most especially did McFarland condemn Holley's "extreme caution not to appear in a tangible form from the Press . . . ." The Presbyterians obviously had accepted fully the idea of a collegiate market place in which each sect clearly stated its tenets and then competed with each other for students. They, of course, loudly protested that they favored only the most liberal and non-sectarian schools, but their opposition to the man who made such a school of Transylvania reveals their dedication to a system

of fiercely sectarian education. The Presbyterians, McFarland boasted, at least "own their sect and defend it openly."[15]

While the Presbyterians carried on their eventually successful effort to drive Holley from Transylvania, they also attempted to establish at Danville, Kentucky, a college that would be controlled completely by the Synod of Kentucky. After blasting the Transylvania Board and Holley in 1818, the synod decided to take steps to afford "the youth of the West the opportunity of obtaining a liberal education under circumstances to guard their morals and best interests from those snares which are at present planted in the principal seat of science among us." At the same time the Transylvania Presbytery appointed a committee to consider ways of establishing a "literary and biblical institution of learning under the patronage of the Synod." The Presbyterians petitioned the state legislature for a charter for a school in Danville to be called Centre College. The liberal-dominated legislature granted the charter, but to the Presbyterians' chagrin stipulated that "No religious doctrines peculiar to any one sect of Christians, shall be inculcated by any professor in said college . . . ." The Presbyterians loftily retorted that the charter "did not embrace the principles contemplated by the Synod of Kentucky in their plan for establishing a college."[16]

From 1819 to 1823 the college operated independently of

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[15]Ibid., III, 5, 8.

[16]All quotes are from Norman L. Snider, "Centre College and the Presbyterians: Cooperation and Partnership," The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, LXVII (Apr. 1969), 106-108.

the Presbyterians. But in 1823, at the height of the campaign against Holley, the synod attempted to make of the school a "Seminary of Learning . . . entirely under its direction and control," which would teach "a course of Biblical and Religious Instruction according to the Confession of Faith in this Church." They were successful. In exchange for a promise of $20,000 the Trustees delivered control of the Board to the synod, and in 1824 a more cooperative legislature changed Centre's constitution to accommodate the change. The synod was never able to raise the money, but in 1824 Centre became as thoroughly sectarian as Kentucky Academy had been. Three years later Holley gave in and fled Kentucky, leaving that state's institutions of higher learning controlled completely by the smallest of all the major denominations.[17] Thus, just as the Presbyterians gradually changed their view of society, so did they alter their attitude toward sectarian education. When society was no longer viewed as an organic whole animated by a common good, the prime function of education was no longer the furtherance of that good. As society began to be defined in terms of competing interest groups, the principal function of education became the service of those competing groups.

By the time the Presbyterians drove Holley from Transylvania, the necessity of sectarian education was admitted even by those Presbyterians who sincerely feared its divisive effects on American society. One such Presbyterian was the

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[17] Ibid.

Rev. Philip Lindsley. A Princeton graduate, Lindsley in 1824 became the President of Cumberland College in Nashville, the ancestor of George Peabody College. Lindsley deplored the effect of sectarian competition on education and declared sectarian colleges a "grievous and growing evil" and an imposition on the public. Colleges should be no more sectarian than penitentiaries, banks, or road and canal corporations, he continued. Are they to teach "sectarian Greek, sectarian mathematics, sectarian logic, history, rhetoric, [and] philosophy?" Must the state have as many colleges as it had religious sects? Lindsley was forced to admit that in the 1820's both questions must be answered in the affirmative.[18]

Lindsley sadly acknowledged that sectarian competition was an unavoidable condition of American life that had to be reckoned with. Christianity, he declared, "breathes a pure angelic charity, and is as much a stranger to the strife, and intrigue, and rancour, and intolerance, and pharisaism of party, as science and philosophy can be." But, he continued, as long as men will not be "honest Christians" but rather "zealous Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Quakers or Romanists," sectarianism must be considered in any plan for higher education.[19]

Lindsley then outlined his ideas about the differences between "private" and "public" education. In the colonial

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[18]Philip Lindsley, "Baccalaureate Address . . . 1829," The Works of Philip Lindsley, L. J. Halsey, ed. (Philadelphia, 1859-1866), I, 202-203.

[19]Ibid., I, 205-206.

and Revolutionary periods, the term "public" had been used to describe almost any school that was conducted outside the home. Lindsley himself sometimes used the term in this way. But increasingly in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, as sectarian competition came to be accepted, men used "private" to describe sectarian schools and "public" to describe those schools they hoped would not become sectarian. Lindsley maintained that he did not object to private denominational schools as long as their sectarian nature was openly and distinctly avowed. He noted that heretofore when a sect gained a charter for a school, the college became "all of a sudden, wondrously liberal and catholic," and the denomination's members, declaring themselves free of the "odious taint of sectarianism," pledged that no student would be proselytized at their school. "This is very modest and very specious and very hypocritical," Lindsley asserted. "Their college is sectarian, and they know it. It is established by a party--governed by a party--taught by a party--and designed to promote the ends of a party."[20]

Lindsley charged that the state legislatures were responsible for allowing sects to foist their schools upon the public as liberal "public" institutions. The legislature allowed the sect to place in its charter a pledge of toleration and liberality that would never be honored in practice. The "sectarian manufactory [then] goes into operation under the smiles, patronage and recommendation of the people's

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[20]Lindsley, "Inaugural Address," ibid., I, 14; "Baccalaureate Address . . . 1829," ibid., I, 203.

representatives." The sectarians then insist that their liberal charter is "the talisman that is to guard the people against every insidious attempt at proselytism . . . ." The bait is seized, and the unsuspecting student finds himself at a school in a "small village or retired part of the country" under the exclusive control of a sect where he is required to attend prescribed religious services. And in the meantime the sectarians who publicly "profess the greatest liberality" privately "boast among themselves of the converts which they have made from their dissenting pupils."[21]

Lindsley's primary concern was that the sectarian nature of each private school be clearly understood. He had no objection to each denomination's maintaining a college to serve its community as long as it did not attempt deceitfully to lure the sons of other denominations to its school. Above all else, he maintained, the doctrinal beliefs of a young man must not be attacked and changed when he enters college. Lindsley was not a Jeffersonian in his educational philosophy. He did not think that religious instruction should be divorced from education. But in a land of competing denominations, he insisted that the religious instruction at each school be explicitly labelled and conspicuously advertised. The same views informed his ideas about "public" colleges. In addition to private denominational schools Lindsley believed that each state should have at least one "public" college, that is, a "literary and scientific college designed

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[21]Lindsley, "Baccalaureate Address . . . 1829," ibid., I, 204, 203, 205.

for the public generally . . . ." Such a school, he insisted, must be "independent of all religious sectarian bias, or tendency, or influence." But again Lindsley was concerned that the school be, above all else, safe. "Public seminaries of learning," he declared, must be organized so "all may intrust their sons to them without fear of danger to their religious faith."[22] Lindsley believed, then, that it was the primary goal of the private school to foster denominational community by teaching unifying doctrines. On the other hand, he insisted that those doctrines not be threatened when a young man entered a "public," non-sectarian college. In either case, his leading motive was the preservation of the denomination as community.

In North Carolina the distinction between "public" and "private" schools became the subject of a crucial court case. In 1789 the legislature of the new state chartered the first state university in the United States. In its charter the legislature declared the state's particular responsibility for supporting liberal education in a republic. In 1794 the state acted on this responsibility and granted to the school's Board all of the land escheated to the state. Although the state claimed a responsibility for the school, the main impetus for establishing the University of North Carolina came from the Presbyterian clergy. By 1800 the Presbyterians so thoroughly controlled the school that pressure was brought upon the legislature by other denominations and by deists to

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[22] Ibid., I, 205, 206.

annul the land grant. As in Kentucky the Presbyterians' opponents argued that the Presbyterians were a tiny minority and should not control in any way the state university. The Presbyterians, it was argued, had taken a charter granted for the public good and used it to advance the good of only a small segment of the population. The legislature was persuaded to repeal the land grant, and immediately the Board brought suit against the state. In 1805 the Supreme Court of North Carolina ruled in the Board's favor. The Court ruled that all corporations were by nature established for the public good--a corporation established for private good was a contradiction in terms. It then rejected the charge that the Presbyterians had perverted the intention of the charter. The school had been founded to promote the public good and was doing so. But at the same time the Court ruled that the school was the private property of the Board and that the charter was an inviolate contract between the Board and the legislature. The school, it was argued, had been created by the Constitution, the permanent expression of the people's will; therefore, it could not be destroyed by the legislators, who only temporarily represented the people. Moreover, the Court ruled that the Constitution also required the legislature to support the university.[23]

By ruling in favor of the Board the Court put the University above the control of the legislature that created it and made of the University of North Carolina virtually a sectarian

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[23]Edgar W. Knight, "North Carolina's 'Dartmouth College Case,'" Journal of Higher Education, XIX (Mar., 1948), 121-122.

Presbyterian school. The decision, of course, also anticipated the result of the Dartmouth College case of 1819. When Daniel Webster successfully argued that the charter of Dartmouth College was an inviolate contract and that the school was the private property of its original Board, he used the North Carolina case as a judicial precedent. The effect of that decision, he declared, was to make sacred all charter grants and to make of all chartered institutions "private property, and to clothe . . . [them] with all the security and inviolability of private property."[24] When Chief Justice Marshall ruled in Webster's favor, he also gave the highest judicial sanction to developments that by 1819 had made of the Presbyterian schools sectarian institutions whose primary function was to foster denominational unity and to serve as weapons of sectarian conflict.

2. Professionalization and Sectarianism

One of the most significant developments in the transformation of the Presbyterian schools in the first decades of the nineteenth century was the interaction between two parallel movements. While the Presbyterians attempted to make fiercely denominational institutions of their schools, they also endeavored to further professionalize the ministry. That endeavor led them to attempt either to turn each of their

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[24]Quoted in ibid., p. 122. See also Luther L. Gobbel, Church-State Relationships in Education in North Carolina Since 1776 (Durham, N.C., 1938), pp. 13-26; and Merle Borrowman, "The False Dawn of the State University," History of Education Quarterly, I (July, 1961), 6-22.

schools into a theological seminary or to establish such a seminary in conjunction with each school. Consequently, at the same time that disillusionment and fear were prompting the Presbyterians to develop the sectarian nature of their schools, their efforts at professionalizing the ministry also tended to increase the colleges' denominational character.

The Presbyterians' efforts to professionalize the ministry had an immediate impact on their schools because central to that effort was the question of ministerial education. In the colonial and Revolutionary periods many ministerial students had attended one of the Presbyterian schools, but their theological training frequently had been acquired under a minister who had no connection with an institution of higher learning. For instance, although many ministerial candidates studied theology with President Witherspoon after receiving their B.A.'s from Princeton, many returned to their hometowns to study with their local pastors. In the post-Revolutionary period, however, the Presbyterians brought these two parts of ministerial education together in the college.

The first manifestation of the Presbyterians' efforts to bring together undergraduate and theological education was their attempt to establish a theological professorship at Princeton. In the eighteenth century the presidents of the Presbyterian colleges had taught theological or "divinity" courses along with their other duties, but no professor had been responsible for teaching that course only. The Princeton Board, then, took an unprecedented step when in 1803 it moved to establish a theological professorship and offered

it to Ashbel Green. Green refused the appointment, but Rev. Henry Kollack, a 1794 graduate of Princeton, agreed to become his alma mater's first Professor of Theology.[25] With the arrival of Kollack President Smith announced to the public that the school was better able than ever to fulfill its primary function of training gospel ministers.[26] Moreover, the Princeton Board immediately made special arrangements for the theological students expected to study under Kollack. The theological students were not required to pay tuition and were charged only half as much for their board as were the regular undergraduates. In 1805 the Board determined to furnish a house "for the reception of the Students of Divinity," and in 1808 they waived the usual firewood charge for at least one theological student.[27]

The theological professorship at Princeton had been intended to increase the sectarian nature of that school, thus reversing its eighteenth century interdenominational nature. But the school's broad base proved momentarily resistant to the Presbyterians' constrictive designs. Despite the Board's efforts, Rev. Kollack's services were not in great demand at Princeton. For that reason, among others, many

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[25]Sept. 30, Dec. 8, 1803, Minutes of the Boards of Trustees of Princeton University, II, 111-112, 117-118 (MSS in P.U.L.); Samuel Stanhope Smith to Ashbel Green, 1803 (?), Samuel Stanhope Smith Collection, P.U.L.

[26]Samuel Stanhope Smith, Announcement of the Restoration of Nassau Hall (Broadside in P.U.L.).

[27]Sept. 27, 1804, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 147-148; Apr. 3-4, 1805, ibid., II, 154; Apr. 7, 1808, ibid., II, 230; Apr. 10, 1811, ibid., II, 313.

Presbyterians began to be very dissatisfied with Smith's administration of the school.[28] In 1806 Rev. Kollack resigned his professorship, complaining of the lack of students.[29] In the following year occurred the Great Rebellion, which saw a majority of the school's students expelled, and which completed the process of alienating many Presbyterians from Princeton. Convinced that Princeton was beyond redemption, the Presbyterians moved to establish a theological seminary totally separate from the college. As early as 1805 Samuel Miller had expressed to Ashbel Green his doubts about establishing a theological seminary within Princeton.[30] "I fear," he confessed, that "the theological students would not be better for habitual intercourse with the students in the arts." He therefore recommended that in order to protect the seminary from contamination and "to have its government unfettered and its orthodoxy and purity perpetual," the school should be established separate from the college.[31] Benjamin Rush agreed that a separate seminary "will prevent candidates for the ministry being infected with the follies and vices of young men educated for secular professions or

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[28]The reasons for this dissatisfaction will be discussed thoroughly in Chapter X.

[29]Sept. 25, 1806, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 184.

[30]Samuel Miller to Green, Mar. 12, 1805, Samuel Miller Collection, Princeton Theological Seminary Library.

[31]Quoted in Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, "The College of New Jersey and the Presbyterians," JPHS, XXXVI (Dec., 1958), 215.

ridiculed by them for their piety."[32]

After the 1807 riot Miller and Rush were even more firmly convinced that Princeton College was not a fit locale for a seminary. "Is it to be purged and elevated, or totally destroyed?" Miller asked after the Princeton riot.[33] The Presbyterians momentarily did neither. Between 1808 and 1812 they essentially boycotted the school. "Princeton has lately lost its popularity among us," Rush admitted in 1808. And in 1810 Ashbel Green sent his son not to riot-torn Princeton but to Dickinson College, now safely headed by the stern Rev. Jeremiah Atwater, former President of Middlebury College.[34]

Impelled by their alienation from Princeton, the Presbyterians, then, determined to establish a theological seminary completely separate from the college. The Presbyterians were further motivated to establish such a school by their desire to form a community of Presbyterian clergymen. As early as 1799 Presbyterians had begun to agitate for closer bonds of unity between the denomination's clergymen. In that year Rev. Drury Lacy lamented the lack of correspondence between Presbyterian ministers and contrasted that lack of interaction with the voluminous correspondence between merchants and between members of the other learned

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[32]Benjamin Rush to Green, May 22, 1807, Lyman H. Butterfield, ed., Letters of Benjamin Rush (Princeton, 1951), II, 946.

[33]Quoted in Wertenbaker, "College of New Jersey," p. 215.

[34]Rush to John Montgomery, July 5, 1808, Butterfield, ed., Letters, II, 970; Jeremiah Atwater to Rush, July 4, 1810, Correspondence of Benjamin Rush relative to Dickinson College (Microfilm in Pennsylvania Historical Society).

professions. Samuel Stanhope Smith in the same year emphasized the importance of bringing ministers together at stated occasions to foster a sense of professional as well as denominational identity. At such times, he insisted, ministers should impress on each other an awareness of the evils with which they had to contend. Smith noted that he had already begun to use the meetings of church judicatories for that purpose.[35]

The Presbyterians' efforts to establish a theological seminary were the result of the concern for professional intercourse expressed by Lacy and Smith. The depth of that concern was revealed by a debate over the number of seminaries to be established. Some Presbyterian ministers favored establishing more than one seminary because they feared that a single seminary would be too distant from many parts of the country to enable some young men to attend. Moreover, they contended that a single seminary would have too much power and would force upon the denomination its own version of orthodoxy. Samuel Miller, the leading advocate of a single seminary, attempted to assuage those fears. Miller insisted first of all that if ministerial education was to be directed with "order and uniformity" it must be directed by the church and not left to "individual enterprize and caprice." In other words, denominational unity and uniformity required the end of the apprentice system whereby young men

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[35]Drury Lacy to William Williamson, July 24, 1799, William Williamson MSS, P.H.S.; Smith to Jedidiah Morse, Feb. 24, 1799, Samuel Stanhope Smith Collection, P.U.L.

prepared for the ministry by studying with individual ministers. That system was obviously too productive of heterodox opinions. Miller insisted further that the church must at all times be able to inspect and control the education of its ministers. Theological seminaries, then, could not be established in those colleges in which the Presbyterians had to cooperate with other denominations. Finally, in a theological seminary completely controlled by the Presbyterians the ministerial candidate's piety could be cultivated "by placing it in circumstances favourable to its growth, and by cherishing and regulating its ardour . . . ."[36]

Miller assured the opponents of a single seminary that none of their fears of the seminary's power were warranted. In the first place, he noted, a ministerial candidate would not have to graduate from the seminary in order to qualify for the ministry. Moreover, the presbyteries would retain final authority over ordination and would therefore always prevent the seminary from acquiring inordinate formal or informal powers.[37] But Miller's defense of a single seminary made it quite clear that he favored it for precisely those reasons for which some feared it. It was above all else to centralize power and to use that authority to enforce doctrinal orthodoxy and ecclesiastical uniformity throughout the denomination. The seminary was to accomplish this by

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[36]Samuel Miller, A Brief Account of the Rise . . . of the Theological Seminary . . . At Princeton . . . (Philadelphia, 1822), pp. 4, 16-17.

[37]Ibid., p. 9n.

two methods. First of all, it was "to promote harmony and unity of sentiment among the . . . [clergy], by educating a large body of them under the same teachers, and in the same course of study." Under the same professors and pursuing the same studies, the students at a single seminary would acquire "an enlightened attachment, not only to the same doctinres, but to the same plan of government."[38]

Equally important, Miller stated, would be the "early and lasting friendships" that would be formed by the students at a single central seminary. Such friendships, he observed, have been found "productive of confidence and mutual assistance in afterlife among the ministers of religion," and are "conducive not only to personal happiness, but to the perfecting of inquiries, researches and publications advantageous to religion." In a denomination scattered over "so large a tract of country" ministers do not know each other and seldom meet together, Miller observed. But, he continued, graduates of a single central seminary would know each other and would be eager to meet with old friends at meetings of the presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly. Already agreeing "in sentiments and practice," the seminary's alumni would band together at each level of the ecclesiastical hierarchy to insure the strengthening of orthodoxy and uniformity throughout the denomination.[39]

For all of his conviction of the desirability of a

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[38] Ibid., p. 17.

[39] Ibid.; Miller to Green, Jan. 23, 1810, Samuel Miller Collection, Princeton Theological Seminary Library.

single central seminary, Miller was well aware that many Presbyterians favored several such institutions, which would be more directly controlled by the presbyteries. In fact, he admitted to Green in 1810, a "large majority" of the clergy opposed the plan to erect a single seminary. Consequently, he suggested that the issue be settled in the General Assembly by a method other than majority rule. Miller insisted that Green anonymously write a pamphlet to be mailed to every Presbyterian minister in the United States, stating the arguments for a single seminary. Miller assumed that since Green was a "man of sense," he would favor the single seminary, and that if he did not, he surely ought to. The pamphlet was written, and the matter of the seminary never came to a straight vote. Thus the single seminary was established at Princeton despite the objections of many Presbyterians. By 1822 Miller was content to reason that since many of those objections were based on "misconceptions," the majority of Presbyterians actually favored the single seminary but just did not realize it.[40]

The creation of the Princeton Theological Seminary in 1812 was a singular triumph of institutional centralization at a time in which historians have contended that American institutions were being weakened and decentralized. The General Assembly created at Princeton a single theological seminary to serve Presbyterian churches throughout the denomination. The central authority of the denomination retained

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[40]Ibid.; Miller, Brief Account, p. 9n.

complete control of the seminary, reserving to itself the right to appoint the Board's twenty-one clerical and nine lay members. To insure clerical dominance at each meeting of the Board, its quorum was set at nine, providing that five of those nine were ministers. The Board was given the authority to inspect and regulate the doctrines taught by the faculty and to govern the morals of the students.[41] In 1813 the General Assembly agreed to locate the seminary permanently at Princeton, and the Princeton Board agreed not to hire a professor of theology while the seminary remained there. In that way the General Assembly guaranteed that the professor of theology at the seminary would receive no competition from a similar professor at Princeton College.[42]

In addition to serving as the center of a professional community of ministers, the Princeton Seminary was intended to compete with theological seminaries that were being established by other denominations. In the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first of the nineteenth, the Dutch Reformed, the Associate Reformed, and the Congregationalist churches established denominational theological seminaries. In 1805 Samuel Miller warned that every Presbyterian must be made aware of the "aggressive intentions" of other denominations. And he later credited the other denominations' seminaries with forcing the Presbyterians to establish the seminary at Princeton. The other denominations, he asserted,

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[41] Ibid., pp. 19, 20, 23-24.

[42] May 5, 1813, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 378, 380.

were taking steps to elevate the level of ministerial education and to strengthen denominational union. Unless the Presbyterians did likewise, he warned, that denomination would "inevitably decline, and fall into a state . . . [of] discouraging weakness, inferiority, and comparative uselessness."[43]

The Presbyterians' fear of the "aggressive intentions" of other denominations led them to increase the denominational identities of each of their schools, as well as to establish the Princeton Seminary. At Dickinson Jeremiah Atwater had attempted to align that school more closely with the Presbyterians by campaigning actively for Carlisle as the site of the seminary. Upon arriving at Dickinson in 1809, he began immediately to suggest Dickinson as an alternative to Princeton. He was extremely gratified to learn that Green favored the Carlisle location and was even more pleased when Green sent his son to Dickinson rather than to Princeton. "I should rejoice," he assured Rush in 1810, "to have this institution aid the cause of religion, and be of assistance, in particular, to the Presbyterian church--in connection with a theological institution."[44] Atwater, of course, failed to get the seminary located at Dickinson, but he continued to stress the principal responsibility of the school to train Presbyterian ministers. He granted that colleges have an obligation to train young men for the professions. But he

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[43]Miller to Green, May 13, 1805, Samuel Miller Papers, P.U.L.; Miller, Brief Account, pp. 4-6.

[44]Jeremiah Atwater to Rush, Apr. 22, 1810, Rush Corr.; see also Atwater to Rush, Dec. 27, 1809, ibid.

noted that "it is by the special countenance of the clergy, that such institutions have flourished and must continue to flourish." And, he concluded, it was the principal responsibility of schools to replenish and sustain the clergy.[45]

At Liberty Hall, called Washington Academy after receiving the Washington bequest in 1796, the school's already strong denominational character was sustained undiminished through the post-Revolutionary period. Students were required to attend Sunday worship services, and since there was only a Presbyterian church in Lexington, they were, in effect, required to attend it. The Synod of Virginia continued to support the school and to refer to it as "our seminary," while the Lexington Presbytery continued to examine the school's students in the synod's behalf.[46] Thus the synodical and presbyterial control that had followed the establishment of the theological department in the 1790's was continued into the nineteenth century.

The other school in which the Synod of Virginia had established a theological department in the 1790's was Canonsburg Academy in western Pennsylvania. The denominational character of that school markedly increased in the first decades of the nineteenth century. For example, in 1800 the Board of Trustees ruled that only Presbyterians could preach

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[45]Jeremiah Atwater, An Inaugural Address . . . September 27, 1809 . . . (Carlisle, Pa., 1809), p. 12.

[46]Sept. 25, Oct., 1801, Minutes of the Synod of Virginia, II, 46, 63, 79; Oct. 2, 1802, ibid., II, 105-106 (Microfilm in U.T.S.); Apr. 15, 17, 1795, Minutes of the Presbytery of Lexington, III, 17; Sept. 24, 1796, ibid., III, 52-53; Nov. 10, 1805, ibid., IV, 116 (Microfilm in U.T.S.).

in the college.[47] The ruling was predictable because the Board was completely controlled by Presbyterian ministers. In the period from 1798 to 1802 thirteen of the academy's twenty-one member Board were Presbyterian ministers. When the school was rechartered as Jefferson College in 1802, that clerical predominance was reduced somewhat. Only eight of twenty-one trustees were ministers, but the charter contained a new stipulation requiring that clerical membership on the Board never fall below that number.[48] And when the quorum was set at only eleven, ministerial control of the Board was assured, since the ministers were much more faithful in attendance than their lay counterparts.[49]

The Presbyterians thus retained firm control of Jefferson College. The Synod of Pittsburgh supported John McMillan as the school's Professor of Theology and sent ministerial candidates to study with him. In 1814 the Jefferson College Board voted to petition the synod to establish a "Divinity Hall . . . to be connected with this College," and for a decade the synod and Board endeavored to establish a

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[47]Joseph Smith, History of Jefferson College . . . (Pittsburgh, 1857), p. 54n; Charter of Jefferson College, Jan. 15, 1802, p. 1 (MSS in W.J.C.L.).

[48]Oct. 30, 1800, Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Canonsburgh Academy and Library Company, p. 21 (Transcript in W.J.C.L.).

[49]In representative meetings in April and October of 1803, for instance, six and then seven of the eight ministers were present, as compared to eight and six of the lay majority. Apr. 27, Oct. 27, 1803, Minutes of the Transactions of the Board of Trustees of Canonsburgh Academy [and Jefferson College], pp. 43, 45 (MSS in W.J.C.L.; hereafter cited as Jeff. Coll. Bd. Min.).

theological seminary in conjunction with the school. However, the forces of centralization that had created the seminary at Princeton defeated the forces of localism in western Pennsylvania for the time being. In 1822 the synod reported that it could not hope to duplicate the advantages to be had at Princeton. The synod, however, did enlarge the theological library at Jefferson College.[50] By 1820 Jefferson College had become the center of a strong Presbyterian community intended above all else to train that denomination's clergy. The Board, when reproached about the school's sectarian nature, merely cited "the apparent necessity for adopting the principle of ecclesiastical supervision in the founding of new institutions, in those parts of our country where all other denominations are pursuing the same course . . . ."[51]

At Hampden-Sydney the Presbyterian-dominated Board succeeded during the post-Revolutionary period in making of that school a sectarian institution that was a vivid contrast to the broadly based eighteenth century college supported by Madison and Henry, and superintended by Samuel Stanhope Smith. In 1805 the school's Board and the Hanover Presbytery began to formulate plans for a theology department in the Virginia college. Such a department came into being with the appointment of Moses Hoge to the presidency in 1807. Under Hoge's direction the school became essentially a Presbyterian

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[50]Apr. 26, 1814, Jeff. Coll. Bd. Min., p. 84; Oct. 4, 1822, Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh . . . (Pittsburgh, 1852), pp. 197-198. See also Oct. 5, 1820, ibid., p. 167; Oct. 4-5, 1821, ibid., pp. 177-178; Oct. 9, 1824, ibid., pp. 207-208.

[51]Quoted in Smith, Jefferson College, p. 135.

theological seminary. By 1819 more than half of the college's forty students were ministerial students, and the number of young men studying for the secular professions was decreasing rapidly.[52] At the same time that he was transforming Hampden-Sydney, Hoge headed a committee of the Synod of Virginia to draw up plans for a synodical theological seminary. Hampden-Sydney was chosen as the site of the seminary, and by 1815 the members of the synod were budgeting funds to pay "their" Professor of Theology, Moses Hoge. In that year the synod appointed a Board to control the proposed seminary at the direction of the synod.[53] Between 1816 and 1821 the theological department existed informally within Hampden-Sydney, exerting a tremendous impact on the nature of the school. By the latter date the theological department had all but taken over the college.[54]

Around 1820 the effort to establish a theological seminary at Hampden-Sydney began to take a different course from the earlier effort to establish the seminary at Princeton. The earlier seminary had been intended to strengthen denominational unity and community by bringing together and uniformly educating the denomination's leaders. While the

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[52]Sept. 25, 1806, June 20, 1808, Alfred J. Morrison, ed., The College of Hampden-Sidney, Calendar of Board Minutes, 1776-1876 (Richmond, 1912), pp. 61, 63; Joseph D. Eggleston, "The Department of Theology at Hampden-Sydney . . . ," pp. 4, 6-7 (Microfilm of unpublished essay in U.T.S.).

[53]Oct. 23-24, 1812, Va. Syn. Min, III, 157; Oct. 21, 1813, ibid., III, 159-160; Oct. 13, 16, 1815, ibid., III, 14-19, 87, 91-92.

[54]Oct. 28-29, 1816, ibid., III, 125, 144, 151, 160; Oct. 17-18, 1817, ibid., III, 191, 194-195; Oct. 15-17, 1818, ibid., IV, 202-203, 218; Oct. 25, 1819, IV, 271, 280.

movement for the Princeton seminary had begun at the presbyterial level and then ascended the hierarchy to become a denomination-wide effort, the effort to establish the seminary at Hampden-Sydney began at the synodical level. But that movement quickly moved down instead of up the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In 1819 the synod ruled that the members of the proposed seminary's Board should not be selected from each presbytery; the Board should consist of "the most suitable characters that can be found living contiguous to the location of the Seminary." Such men, it was argued, would be best suited to provide the seminary with leadership because they would best know its needs. Three years later the synod voted to give the presbytery complete authority over the institution. And in 1823 the Presbytery of Hanover established at Hampden-Sydney the Union Theological Seminary.[55]

Union was not established to compete with the seminary at Princeton, but in 1825 the Virginia Presbyterians noted that they wished the seminary to be more than a merely local institution.[56] Union was the almost inevitable result of the institutional maturity of one of the oldest presbyteries in the denomination. From the days of its founding by Samuel Davies in the 1750's the Hanover Presbytery had stressed presbyterial organization, and in the post-Revolutionary

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[55]Oct. 25, 1819, ibid., IV, 268; Oct. 24, 1822, ibid., V, 15-17; Oct. 23, 1823, ibid., V, 45-47; Mar. 17, 1823, Minutes of the Board of Directors of Union Theological Seminary, p. 1 (Microfilm in U.T.S.; hereafter cited as Union Bd. Min.). See also R. C. Beale, "Sketch of Hampden-Sydney College . . . " (Microfilm of unpublished essay in U.T.S.).

[56]Oct. 27, 1825, Va. Syn. Min., IV, 111-112.

period it was in the forefront of the move to create presbyterial societies to enforce uniformity and orthodoxy and to lend strength and respectability to the Presbyterian denomination. The creation of Union was only the most visible and important expression of that movement in Virginia. At another level, the Princeton seminary was established for identical reasons. Both seminaries, then, in 1825 stood as concrete manifestations of the Presbyterians' search for community at all levels of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The creation of theological seminaries was but one way in which the post-Revolutionary Presbyterians endeavored to professionalize the ministry. No matter how much time a candidate spent at Princeton College and then at Princeton Theological Seminary or at Hampden-Sydney and Union, he finally had to come before a presbytery, go through trials, and be licensed and ordained. And, of course, there were many ministerial candidates who could go to neither of the seminaries. Consequently, the process of ministerial trials as well as the seminaries became the focus of concerted efforts to raise the level of ministerial education.

The proponents of higher standards for ministerial education were at great pains to prove that they did not favor a learned ministry over a fervently pious one. Samuel Miller especially insisted that the creation of a theological seminary did not prove that the Presbyterians were more concerned with learning than with fervent piety. He insisted that the latter was more necessary in a minister than the former and declared that "our great object, is not merely to make a

learned ministry, but a fervently pious one--and one favourable to revivals of religion."[57] The Presbyterians insisted, however, that a minister must be educated if he hoped to appeal to an educated audience. Thaddeus Dod in the 1790's told his ministerial students at Washington Academy that it was very difficult for persons of "Literature and Taste" to receive religious instruction delivered in a "slovenly" way by an uneducated minister. And at Princeton Samuel Stanhope Smith stressed the importance of eloquence and learning in a minister. Eloquence, he noted, opens both the heart and understanding to the gospel, while crudeness only repels the sensitive hearer. The cause is always associated with its advocate, he warned; consequently if the gospel was to appeal to the sensitive man, it must be advocated in a pleasing and eloquent manner by an educated minister. The aristocratic basis of Smith's ideas was obvious. The Presbyterians were quite correct in noting that the style of a minister limited his appeal to a certain audience. They consciously chose to appeal to the educated and "sensitive" and to leave the uneducated and insensitive to the enthusiastic Methodists and Baptists.[58]

The Presbyterians' increased emphasis on professionalizing the ministry by maintaining and even raising educational

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[57]Miller, Brief Account, pp. 11-12, 3; Miller to Green, Jan. 23, 1810, Samuel Miller Collection, Princeton Theological Seminary Library.

[58]Thaddeus Dod, Introductory Lectures to Divinity Students, n.d., pp. 13, 22 (MSS in W.J.C.L.); Samuel Stanhope Smith, "On the Utility and necessity of learning in a minister of the gospel," pp. 17-18, Samuel Stanhope Smith Collection, P.U.L.

standards was most pronounced on the frontier, where the Presbyterians most feared the triumph of infidelity and enthusiasm. While Baptist and Methodist ministers with little or no education were preaching to throngs of frontiersmen and swelling the membership of the more evangelical denominations, the Transylvania Presbytery in 1803 began to increase drastically the presbyterial examinations of ministerial candidates. From 1803 to 1806 virtually no candidate could satisfy the presbytery. One Alexis J. Rice was admitted to trials in 1805 and in 1806 submitted a written discourse to the presbytery. It was found "defective in point of composition" since Rice "did not give the most natural exposition of his subject . . . ." And when Rice gave his oral discourse, the presbytery decided to drop him from trials, declaring that "he does not possess that aptness to teach which the nature of that office requires" and noting that he had no prospect of "ever obtaining the degree of literary knowledge and distinctness of expression which would make him an edifying minister of the word . . . ."[59] Even when it eventually did license a candidate, the presbytery put him through a most rigorous candidacy. William Gray, for instance, was admitted to trials in October of 1805. In April of the next year his examination on Latin and Greek was not accepted, and his English exegesis was found "defective for not embracing the main points of the subject . . . ." In October neither of his discourses was accepted and the

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[59]Apr. 11, 1805, Trans. Pby. Min., III, 110; Oct. 16, 1805, ibid., III, 120; Apr. 8, 9, 1806, ibid., III, 126.

presbytery decided to dismiss him because of his "apparent imbicility [sic] of mind and a want of a just sense of his own deficiency . . . ." Gray persuaded the presbytery to reconsider, and he was put under the tutelage of a committee. In 1809 his discourses and examination were accepted, and finally in 1810 a bare majority of the presbytery agreed to license him. The length of his candidacy was not typical, but its rigor was.[60]

The presbytery paid a price for its rigor, for between 1806 and 1816 it licensed very few candidates. In 1816 the presbytery established a fund to support one ministerial student at a time at the Princeton Seminary. And for a decade at no time did the presbytery have more than one candidate under its care. Thus its own stringent demands and the creation of the seminary worked to restrict entry into the ministry. The contrast to the vigorous efforts of the colonial New Sides to open the profession is great indeed.[61]

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[60]Oct. 2, 1805, ibid., III, 118; Dec. 26, 1809, III, 245; Apr. 5, 7, 1810, ibid., III, 251, 255, 256-267.

[61]Ibid., Vol. IV, 1811-1824, especially the years between 1816 and 1822. That the Transylvania Presbytery was typical is demonstrated by the candidacy of Thomas Davis, an elder in the Second Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. He was encouraged to enter the ministry by several members of the Redstone Presbytery in 1820. Because of his age he was licensed and ordained within two years. Experiences like his had been frequent during and immediately following the Revolution, but in the early nineteenth century a significant part of the presbytery wished to reconsider his admission to candidacy, believing it was "not strictly constitutional." The presbytery finally decided that his lack of education and his abbreviated candidacy should be considered an extraordinary case because his hopes had been raised by some overly eager members and because he had worked so diligently. The presbytery sternly noted, however, that Davis' case was not

The creation of the theological seminaries also resulted in a very marked increase in the professional nature of the subjects required of ministerial candidates by the presbyteries and synods. The Synod of Virginia insisted that at Union the student must learn to defend the essentials of religion against "every assailant." The synod loudly declared that while the student must not "spend his time in turning over large volumes of religious controversy," he should be equipped to defeat any infidel in any debate. Consequently, it demanded that the seminary stress "Jewish antiquities" and the learned languages in order to use obscure incidents and passages to confound skeptic and infidel alike. The synod recommended that a two year course in biblical criticism, systematic theology, languages, and ecclesiastical history would serve that purpose.[62]

In the early 1820's the seminaries' influence began to be reflected in the candidacies of ministerial students. For the first time they were examined on ecclesiastical history and government, "didactic theology," and the "evidences of Christianity." The Lexington Presbytery even divided its examination on church history into two parts divided by the

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to set a precedent, and, in the context of the presbytery's usual procedures, it was a distinctly unusual one. Oct. 8, 1820, Minutes of the Presbytery of Redstone . . . (Cincinnati, 1878), pp. 312, 316; Jan. 18, 1821, ibid., p. 318; Apr. 17-18, 1821, ibid., pp. 320-323, Nov. 6, 7, 13, 1822, ibid., pp. 330.

[62]Oct. 29, 1816, Va. Syn. Min., III, 132-137; Oct. 25, 1819, ibid., IV, 272.

end of Revelation.[63] The creation of the seminaries also brought to an end the presbyteries' practice of requiring only English exegeses of their candidates. During the Revolutionary era Lain exegeses had all but disappeared, especially on the frontier. But, for example, as soon as the Transylvania Presbytery began to support candidates at Princeton Theological Seminary, they began to require those candidates to prepare Latin as well as English exegeses. Moreover, the synods began to crack down on those presbyteries that did not require Latin exegeses.[64]

The Presbyterians, of course, were not blind to the dearth of ministerial candidates and did attempt to recruit suitable candidates for the ministry. The Presbytery of New York, for instance, in 1805 noted that the deficiency of educated ministers had become a "serious and alarming" problem affecting not only a thousand vacant congregations on the frontier but also well established eastern congregations that could find no minister. Consequently, the presbytery issued a circular address to its churches urging parents and ministers to search for promising youths and urge them into the ministry.[65]

The Philadelphia Presbytery also noted that the cry

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[63]Apr. 25, Sept. 12-13, 1823, Lex. Pby. Min., VIII, 38, 58-62, 64-65; Apr. 22, 1824, ibid., VIII, 73.

[64]Apr. 3, Oct. 2, 11, 1824, Trans. Pby. Min., IV, 205, 210; Oct. 28, 1816, Va. Syn. Min., III, 101.

[65]Presbytery of New York, An Address from the Presbytery of New-York to the Churches Under Their Care . . . (New York, 1805), pp. 3-4, 6.

"Give us Ministers," came not only from the frontier but also from "many large and important congregations, in our most populous cities and towns." And in 1806 that presbytery moved to alleviate the problem in Pennsylvania. But the presbytery's suggested remedy for the problem reveals the attitude that had already doomed the Presbyterian church to failure as a competitor with the more evangelical denominations. The presbytery reacted with an institutionalized response. In 1806 it created a "Standing Committee for the education of pious youth for the Gospel ministry." Chaired by Ashbel Green, the committee was charged with inaugurating a presbytery-wide effort to locate and financially support young men who were suitable for the ministry. And the committee clearly defined the characteristics of a suitable candidate. He must have above all else a "vigorous and Improved intellect." No matter how pious, a "weak or illiterate" minister could be of no assistance to the Presbyterian church, the committee warned. For in that denomination's congregations, learning and eloquence had become "indispensable to the acceptance, the influence, and the success of her public teachers." If ministers were merely pious and not educated, the committee concluded, "the multiplication of those who hold that office will be rather an incumberance than an aid."[66]

Because the committee's ideas were shared by a great many Presbyterians, the Presbyterian ministry did not multiply.

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[66]Minutes of the proceedings of the Standing Committee of the Presbytery of Philadelphia for the education of pious youth for the Gospel ministry, Apr. 21, 1806, p. 3 (MSS in P.H.S.).

Instead it was rendered increasingly professional. In the colonial period the New Sides' efforts at professionalization had coexisted with a vigorous effort to expand the ministry. During the Revolutionary period efforts at professionalization had at times a confining and at other times an expanding effect on the denomination. But in the post-Revolutionary period the Presbyterians' efforts to professionalize the ministry were almost invariably constrictive and stultifying in their impact. Educated in colleges that were increasingly sectarian and molded into a phalanx in denominational theological seminaries, the members of the Presbyterian clergy were intended to make of the denomination a unified community free of dissent and conflict. They were remarkably successful.

3. Sectarian Finances

The increasingly denominational character of the Presbyterian schools was partially the result of a marked change in the sources of the colleges' financial support. One of the most significant of those changes was the increase in denominational support for the schools. Unlike the colonial and Revolutionary periods, denominational support during the early nineteenth century became the Presbyterian colleges' principal source of income outside of student tuition. The increase in denominational support resulted from the proliferation of denomination-wide agencies and societies during the early nineteenth century. Just as they formed themselves into societies to support missions and other causes, the Presbyterians at the sessional, presbyterial, and synodical levels

organized societies for supporting the education of "poor and pious" youth for the Presbyterian ministry.

The Presbyterians' efforts to support their schools began to increase at the turn of the century and reached a climax around 1820. The efforts of the Synod of Virginia, for instance, were first directed toward urging the presbyteries and sessions in general terms to raise funds for ministerial education.[67] In the period after 1812, however, its methods of raising funds became more explicit and systematic. Committees were appointed, subscription papers drawn up, and agents appointed to circulate those papers among the presbyteries and churches. As the synod attempted to establish a seminary in its bounds, the efforts to raise funds became even more focused. In 1813 the synod established a fund for the seminary out of the contributions of its churches and in the following year made it a standing order that all ministers should do all in their power to raise money for the seminary. In the next step the synod required each minister to give an annual report of his efforts in the seminary's behalf. When the seminary's Board made its first report in 1816, it recommended that each presbytery and then every session be formed into societies for the expressed purpose of raising funds for ministerial education. By 1818 committees of the synod were visiting every church in the state to check on their efforts. In the following year one such committee jubilantly reported that the cause of ministerial education was being

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[67]Oct. 1, 1801, Va. Syn. Min., II, 63; Oct. 16, 1804, ibid., II, 145-146.

supported by "those benevolent associations which have been the invention of the present age, and [which] have given it so precious a character."[68]

With little variation the efforts of the other presbyteries and synods followed the pattern of the Synod of Virginia. By 1808 the Synod of Pittsburgh was urging its presbyteries to collect funds for ministerial education, and by 1815 all of its presbyteries were doing so.[69] By 1819 the Lexington Presbytery had formed itself into a benevolent association for the support of ministerial education, and in the following year the Redstone and Transylvania Presbyteries did likewise.[70] From Philadelphia to the frontier of Kentucky, the Presbyterians erected a complex institutional framework within which they gradually strengthened their control of the colleges they had created in the eighteenth century. The institutional framework was part of the Presbyterians' response to the disillusionment of the post-Revolutionary period and to the threat of infidelity and barbarism on the frontier. For by increasing the sectarian nature of the schools, the institutional apparatus at the same time strengthened the denominational community into

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[68]Oct. 21, 23, 1813, Va. Syn. Min., III, 13-15, 23-24; Oct. 29, 1814, ibid., III, 65; Oct. 13, 1815, ibid., III, 76-77; Oct. 17, 1818, ibid., IV, 220; Oct. 25, 1819, ibid., IV, 258.

[69]Oct. 5, 1808, Records of Syn. of Pitts., p. 49; Oct. 5, 1815, ibid., p. 103.

[70]Sept. 23, 1819, Lex. Pby. Min., VII, 77-79; Apr. 18, 1820, Min. of Redstone Pby., p. 305; Apr. 5, 1820, Trans. Pby. Min., IV, 149.

which the Presbyterians were retreating.

The Presbyterian schools responded to the growing denominational support by asking for more and by stressing their denominational nature in order to get it. This was especially true of Dickinson and Princeton. In 1802 and 1803 the main building of each college was destroyed by fire, and both Boards appealed to their local presbyteries for aid in rebuilding. In addition the Princeton Board appealed directly to the General Assembly for aid. Only four years previous to 1802 the Board had stressed the school's catholic nature when applying for state aid. But now the Board represented the school as a thoroughly sectarian institution when appealing to the General Assembly for aid. Princeton, the Trustees declared, had been "the child of piety and individual munificence." By the "same causes by which it was established," the Board hoped the school would be restored. If not, the school was doomed: "it has no other resources." Consequently, the Board was obliged to resort "to the aids of that munificent piety by which the Institution was originally [created] and apply to your body as the fountain which puts its stream into motion over so large a portion of this Continent . . . ." The Board did not appeal in vain. The General Assembly voted to "raise liberal contributions for rebuilding the Edifice and replenishing the Library" of Princeton College and did not fail to act on its resolve.[71]

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[71]May 19, 1802, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 67-68; Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly . . . 1789 to 1802 . . . (Philadelphia, 1803), 1802, p. 5. For representative calls

If the Presbyterian colleges increasingly looked to the various levels of the church's ecclesiastical structure for aid, they also turned to individual Presbyterians as prospective benefactors. And, just as the sessions, presbyteries, synods, and General Assembly responded with generosity, so did their wealthier members in a private capacity. At the same time that the denomination erected an institutional framework through which the schools were supported, so did the colleges themselves elaborate a philanthropic structure through which wealthy Presbyterians gave large bequests that were quite openly intended to increase the sectarian nature of the schools.

This process was, of course, most obvious at the most mature school, Princeton, but took place at each of the Presbyterian schools. At Princeton virtually all monetary bequests made to the school in the first two decades of the nineteenth century were explicitly intended to prepare young men for the Presbyterian ministry. In 1809 the Board noted that the interest from the eighteenth century Leslie and Richards bequests was to be distributed by the faculty "if youth of hopeful piety and promising talents of the Presbyterian denomination shall offer themselves as candidates for the charity." And in the following year the Board began

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for denominational support from other schools see Apr. 6, 1803, Charter and Proceedings of the Trustees of Dickinson College, I, 300 (Typescript in D.C.L.); July 18, 1814, Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Hampden-Sydney College, p. 305 (Microfilm in U.T.S.); Apr. 27, 1805, Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Washington College (Va.), p. 123 (Microfilm in W.L.C.L.); Sept. 25, 1806, Jeff. Coll. Bd. Min., p. 58; Mar. 11, 1795, Ky. Acad. Bd. Min., p. 2.

to clear the way for a ruling that would allow it to use all charity funds to support theological students. The Trustees ruled that the charity funds could be given either to an undergraduate or a graduate student studying theology at Princeton.[72] In 1813 and 1814 Princeton received two large bequests from two Presbyterian laymen, Hugh Hodge and Jasper Smith, intended "for the promoting of real religion" by educating Presbyterian youths for the ministry.[73] Those bequests prompted a continuing effort on the part of the Board to find a way in which all of the college's charity funds could be used informally to support ministerial students at Princeton or at Princeton Theological Seminary.[74] By 1818 the Board had perfected a rationale for using the funds in that way. The Trustees noted that the Hodge and Leslie funds had been given explicitly to finance ministerial education. But, the Board argued, the Trustees had the power to decide where the money should be spent. They could even use the money in a school other than Princeton if they considered it better adapted to training Presbyterian ministers. Consequently, they concluded, Princeton's philanthropic funds could be used in either the college or the new Princeton Theological Seminary.[75]

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[72]Sept. 28, 1809, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 278; Sept. 26, 1810, ibid., II, 302.

[73]Sept. 29, 1813, ibid., II, 387; Apr. 14, Sept. 29, 1814, ibid., II, 407, 416.

[74]Sept. 28, 1815, ibid., II, 438; Sept. 25, 1816, ibid., II, 450-451.

[75]Oct. 1, 1818, ibid., II, 483-486.

As at Princeton the gifts of philanthropists accelerated the rate at which Hampden-Sydney became a sectarian institution. In 1805 a group of Prince Edward County citizens established a fund "for the purpose of supporting the Gospel at the College Hall." The fund was to be used to strengthen the theological instruction at Hampden-Sydney and was the first impetus toward installing Moses Hoge as Professor of Theology in 1807. By 1810 the Hampden-Sydney Board cooperated with the Hanover Presbytery in preparing a "Form of a legal devise or Gift in favour of the Theological School established by the said Presbytery at Hampden Sydney College . . . ."[76] And in the following decade Presbyterians in Virginia and New York used that form to give to the college and then to Union Theological Seminary bequests ranging from a few books to endowed scholarships and professorships.[77]

In the second decade of the nineteenth century the Boards of the colleges and seminaries at Princeton and Hampden-Sydney began to campaign actively for philanthropists who would endow professorships and scholarships. And the trustees for the first time appealed to the vanity of prospective benefactors. Each Board listed the price of an endowed professorship or scholarship and promised to name the endowment for the philanthropist giving it to the school. The Hampden-Sydney Board even promised to allow the donor to

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[76]Apr. 25, 1805, H-S. Bd. Min., p. 238; Mar. 19, 1810, ibid., p. 279.

[77]For a representative bequest see Oct. 17, 1818, Va. Syn. Min., IV, 217.

name the professor to fill the chair he was endowing--subject to the Board's approval, of course.[78]

Appeals to Presbyterian philanthropists' vanity often proved fruitless, but the huge and far flung subscription drives launched by the Presbyterian schools to raise funds were enormously successful. Such campaigns were invariably more successful than similar efforts had been in the colonial and Revolutionary periods. The obvious differences in the post-Revolutionary period was the growth and maturation of the Presbyterian denominational structure. When representatives of the Princeton, Hampden-Sydney, or Dickinson Boards ventured forth in the early nineteenth century to raise funds for their respective schools, they did not wander airlessly over the countryside. Rather, they worked through the intricate relationships of session, presbytery, and synod, going from town to town recommended on their way from one local elder to another. Thus the same machinery that functioned to unite and protect the denomination also served to facilitate the raising of funds within the denomination for the support of its schools. The system worked remarkable well. Thus, even though he called himself "the worst beggar in the world," Samuel Stanhope Smith raised $8,000 in the vicinity of Princeton alone before he left for a tour of the southern states during which he was to raise no less than

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[78]Nov. 24, 1818, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 491; Sept. 29, 1820, H-S. Bd. Min., II, 8-9; Miller, Brief Account, p. 37.

$100,000 for his school.[79]

The increase of organized and individual denominational support for the Presbyterian schools was accompanied by a marked unwillingness of state legislatures to support those colleges financially. There was, however, no diminution in the Presbyterians' belief that the state should support their schools. On the contrary, Jeremiah Atwater voiced a widely-held conviction when in his inaugural address at Dickinson he spoke of the "intimate connexion of religion with civil government." While government, he continued, "is disposed to patronize Colleges . . . there is a sort of national acknowledgment of a belief in the importance of Christianity."[80] Moreover, some of the Presbyterian schools continued to press their services to the public as sufficient justification of their requests for state aid. Both of the academies in western Pennsylvania in the last years of the eighteenth century petitioned for state aid, assuring the legislature that it would be "a public injury" to allow the academies to perish "after having been productive of so much good" and after their usefulness had been "so well established."[81] And all of the Presbyterian schools continued to appeal for state

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[79]Smith to Rush, Mar. 20, 1802, Samuel Stanhope Smith Collection, P.U.L. For representative subscription drives see Apr. 12, 1803, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 92; May 8, 1815, H-S. Bd. Min., p. 307; Apr. 29, 1802, Jeff. Coll. Bd. Min., p. 34; June 28, 1823, Union Bd. Min., p. 1; John Montgomery to James Hamilton, Dec. 12, 1807, John Montgomery MSS, D.C.L.

[80]Atwater, Inaugural Address, p. 13.

[81]Quoted in Smith, Jefferson College, p. 47.

aid regularly, sometimes stressing their public usefulness, sometimes not.[82]

But the Presbyterians found that the state legislatures were beginning to differentiate between "public" and "private" institutions. It is true that the legislatures did occasionally aid the Presbyterian schools. This was especially true in those states, such as in North Carolina after 1805, where the Presbyterians firmly controlled both the state legislature and what was supposed to be the state univeristy. But in states where the Presbyterians were not in political control, they found the state legislators increasingly unwilling to grant public funds to obviously private institutions.[83]

The legislators' willingness to distinguish between private and public institutions was most obvious in their reluctance to grant charters to various Presbyterian organizations. As has been noted, charters of incorporation in perpetuity had been regularly granted in the eighteenth century to organizations because they were conceived as serving the public good and not private interests. But in 1811 the Synod of Pittsburgh found that the Pennsylvania legislature would charter the synod's missionary society for only twenty-one years. Moreover, the legislature insisted on making the

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[82]Oct. 9, 1800, Records and Proceedings in the Board of Trustees of the Transylvania University, p. 63; May 5, 1802, ibid., p. 218 (MSS in T.C.L.); Jan. 8, 1811, Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Washington College (Pa.), p. 66 (MSS in W.J.C.L.); July 20, 1803, H-S. Bd. Min., p. 228; Nov. 24, 1818, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 492; Mar. 13, 1806, Dick. Bd. Min., I, 329; Sept. 14, 1797, Ky. Acad. Bd. Min., p. 57.

[83]Atwater to Rush, Apr. 22, 1810, Rush Corr.

charter so restrictive that the synod could use the society's funds for no other purpose than for missionary work. Outraged, the synod refused the charter.[84] The legislature considered the missionary society a private interest group that benefited the Presbyterian denomination only, but the synod was not yet willing to make that distinction.

The full implications of the changing concept of private and public institutions were brought out when the Synod of Virginia attempted to secure a charter for its new seminary from the Jeffersonian Virginia legislature in 1816. Under no circumstances could the Presbyterians assert that the seminary was anything but a denominational institution. When they had requested charters for their colleges, the Presbyterians could stress the usefulness of such schools in training secular as well as clerical leaders. But the sole reason for a theological seminary was the education of ministers for a single denomination. Consequently, the legislature firmly refused to charter the presbytery's seminary. Obviously the Presbyterians' frenzied opposition to Jefferson's proposed university was a factor in the legislature's refusal. But that refusal was also indicative of a changing concept of social conflict. The idea that all corporations fostered the public good was part of a social view that made no allowances for social conflict between differing interest groups. In the post-Revolutionary period that view of society began to be replaced by one in which social conflict was

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[84]Oct. 4, 1811, Rec. of Syn. of Pitts., p. 83.

at least accepted as legitimate, if not a positive good. The Presbyterians' efforts to make of their schools instruments of denominational conflict indicate that they at least had begun to accept that change.[85]

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[85]Oct. 28, 1816, Va. Syn. Min., III, 124; Oct. 8, 1817, ibid., III, 164; Oct. 24, 1822, ibid., V, 14.

CHAPTER X

POST-REVOLUTIONARY EDUCATIONAL PATTERNS

At one o'clock on the night of March 6, 1802, the interior of Nassau Hall was gutted by a fire of suspicious origin. At Dickinson Charles Nisbet sarcastically noted that "The Students of Princeton College have shown a noble Spirit by burning the Place of their Confinement . . . ." Perhaps, he concluded, the "Burning of Colleges is a part of the new Order of things . . . ."[1] Nisbet was wrong. The "new Order of things" in the early nineteenth century was dominated not by students burning buildings but by trustees and presidents instituting regimes of repression. That repression, in turn, fomented student rebellion of unparalled intensity, which appeared to Presbyterian educators to justify more repression. The early nineteenth century, then, saw the gradual unfolding of a self-perpetuating cycle of repression and rebellion from which none of the Presbyterian colleges emerged unchanged. That cycle in turn intensified the Presbyterians' efforts to transform their colleges into narrow bastions of denominational orthodoxy.

1. The Science of Discipline Abandoned

The Nassau Hall conflagration appeared to be much more than a simple fire to Princeton's Presbyterian masters. The

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[1]Charles Nisbet to Alexander Addison, Mar. 16, 1802, Charles Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.

Board of Trustees pronounced the fire a "frown of divine providence," but that conventional explanation served merely as preface to the Board's opinion of the fire's cause and significance. A committee appointed to investigate the fire's origin reported immediately that Nassau Hall "was intentionally set on fire." The committee and the Board were no less certain that the arsonist or arsonists had been encouraged to set the fire by the deplorable state of American society in 1802.[2] President Smith assured Jedidiah Morse that those best acquainted with the circumstances of the case believed firmly that the fire was "one effect of those irreligious and demoralizing principles which are tearing the bonds of society asunder, and threatening . . . to overturn our country." Smith compared the situation at Princeton to that at William and Mary, where students recently had "obliged the faculty to renounce the right of interrogating a student on any part of his conduct, or his studies . . . ." In the "exultation of their victory over old prejudices," the President continued, the Virginia students broke into the church and burned the Holy Scriptures. "These, my friend," Smith sadly concluded, "are some of the signs of the days which are coming upon us."[3]

But Smith's view of the situation was not wholly apocalyptic. He pledged that Nassau Hall would be rebuilt

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[2]Mar. 16-19, 1802, Minutes of the Boards of Trustees of Princeton University, II, 60-69 (MSS in P.U.L.)

[3]Samuel Stanhope Smith to Jedidiah Morse, Mar. 10, 1802, Samuel Stanhope Smith Collection, P.U.L.

immediately, "probably in a better state than it was . . . ." Among other things, discipline in the school would be "rendered still more strenuous and exact, to meet the spirit of the times." The "friends of religion and old principles" from New York and Philadelphia "seemed to be touched" by the school's plight and were contributing generously to the school's reconstruction. Princeton was the "last bulwark of old principles" south of Massachusetts, Smith asserted, but he had every confidence that the school nurtured by his father-in-law in the eighteenth century would prove equal to the challenges of the nineteenth.[4]

Less than two months after President Smith made his cautiously optimistic remarks, Trustee Ashbel Green stood before the students, faculty, and Board of Princeton and delivered an oration that revealed the growing distance between the ideas of the President and of the Board. Like Smith, Green believed that the burning of Nassau Hall was the result of the loose morals, irreligion, and lax parental discipline of the 1790's. But, unlike Smith, Green insisted that the fire necessitated vigorous and repressive countermeasures. The fire was nothing less than a "warning voice" from God, telling the Board to "purge the seminary of the dross which it now contains, and to provide for its future purity."[5] Within the following decade Green led the Board in a successful

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[4] Ibid.

[5] [Ashbel Green], An Address to the Students and Faculty . . . May 6th 1802 (Trenton, N.J., 1802), p. 5.

campaign to "purge" Princeton of its "dross" by forcing Smith's resignation and by instituting a period of repressive disciplinary actions. His campaign to provide for Princeton's "future purity" was reproduced in virtually all of the Presbyterian schools with uniform results--unprecedented student rebellions followed by a reduction in size in the schools' enrollments. The most serious rebellions occurred at the University of North Carolina and Princeton in 1805 and 1807 respectively, when more than half of each school's student population either left or was expelled.

The discipline practiced by Presbyterian educators in the early nineteenth century represented an abandonment of the eighteenth century "science of discipline." That science had been predicated on the belief that young men could be rendered useful and virtuous republicans if they were surrounded by the proper stimuli and impressions. Fundamentally opposed to the mindless tyranny of past systems, men like Witherspoon and Rush envisioned a system based on rationality that would enable the student to see the logic and inherent rightness of each disciplinary act. Such a system would instill in the student an appreciation of justice at the same time that it convinced him of the equally important need for the order that could come only from justice rationally and fairly applied. But the science of discipline could not withstand the Presbyterians' disillusionment of the post-Revolutionary period. The optimism upon which it had been constructed turned to deep pessimism as the Presbyterians concluded that their revolutionary expectations had been

impossible of fulfillment. The selfless and virtuous republic had become a hotbed of rebellion, avarice, and licentiousness. The Presbyterians despaired of imposing order upon that turbulent whole, but they were determined to make of the denomination an ordered, moral society. And the easiest place to begin that operation was in their colleges. Of those small, self-contained communities the Presbyterians were determined to make the prototypes for a united denomination, and they willingly sacrificed Witherspoon's science of discipline to that end.

The Presbyterians first rejected the idea that discipline should be rational and self-evidently just. Rather, they insisted that all laws constituted by any authority be thoroughly obeyed without reference to their rationality or justness. This applied to even the most insignificant regulation. In 1803 the Princeton faculty decided to make an example of a student caught drawing on the walls of Nassau Hall. He was summarily suspended. And in the aftermath of the 1807 rebellion the faculty members became even stricter. In 1809 they suspended a boy who was caught drinking, although he had an otherwise perfect disciplinary record at a time when such records were rare. The faculty admitted to being uneasy about such severity but recorded its reluctance to appear lenient in turbulent times. The faculty had good reason to fear appearing lenient, for the Board insisted on the utmost severity. In his speech in 1802 Green, for instance, explained to the Princeton students the new laws drawn up by the Board after the fire. The Board, he declared,

is "ready to dismiss the whole college rather than suffer the least infringement or contempt of its authority." Green was not making an idle threat. After the 1807 rebellion, admittedly no slight infringement of its authority, the Board did dismiss more than one half of the school's enrollment.[6]

If the trustees insisted on absolute obedience to all laws, they also asserted that all officers of the school were invested equally with the Board's corporate authority. Green began his 1802 speech by telling the students that the opinions he delivered were not merely "the opinions of an individual" but were "the collective sentiments of the guardians of the college" and were therefore "clothed with their authority . . . ." And the "guardians of the college" took measures to insure that the faculty was sufficiently rigorous in exercising the authority with which it was invested. In a new section added to the revised laws in 1802 the Board noted that since each faculty member was "clothed with sufficient authority to make himself and the laws respected," he was "never to suffer any violation of a law known to him, to pass without its due reprehension or punishment."[7]

Clothed in the Board's corporate authority, each member of the faculty from the President to the youngest tutor was to be obeyed uniformly. In 1813, one year after he succeeded

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[6]Resolves and Minutes of the Faculty, 1787-1810, Aug. 29, 1803, Feb. 24, 1809, n.p. (MSS in P.U.L.); [Green], An Address, p. 4.

[7][Green], An Address, p. 3; Laws of the College of New Jersey . . . 1802 (Philadelphia, 1802), p. 17.

Smith as Princeton's President, Green assured the Board that the junior tutors at the college were being obeyed as readily as he was. At North Carolina the Presbyterian President, Joseph Caldwell, even invested some students with the authority of that school's Board. In an effort to control his students more firmly Caldwell appointed a few of the eldest to be "monitors," to spy on their classmates. Those students could inform on anyone in the school or forbid all "irregular" and "indecent" behavior, and they made weekly reports to the President. It was made a misdemeanor to insult or injure the monitors, and they were to be paid the respect due to a faculty member. Nothing could have been further from Witherspoon's contention that authority, to be effective, must be invested only in men who can command the respect of those whom they rule. The appointment of the monitors was the immediate cause of the Great Secession from North Carolina in 1805 when virtually the entire student body voluntarily left the school rather than submit to the student monitors.[8]

As had been the case in the administration of the sacraments in their churches, the Presbyterians in the early nineteenth century began to emphasize in their colleges the ceremonial and symbolic aspects of institutional authority. Prior to 1802 each Princeton student had been given a copy of the school's rules, which served more as an identification card

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[8]Ashbel Green, Report to the Princeton Trustees, April, 1813, p. 16, Green Family Papers, P.U.L.; Kemp P. Battle, History of the University of North Carolina, 1789-1868 (Raleigh, N.C., 1907), I, 204.

than as a reminder of his duties to Princeton. But after the fire of 1802 the Board required each boy to subscribe annually to an oath prescribed by the Board and stated explicitly in the 1802 revision of the school's laws. That step was taken, the trustees declared, "to impose stronger ties on the minds of all the students to good order and application to their studies . . . ." Moreover, each boy was given a copy of Green's 1802 speech, which was also published in many of the newspapers of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. After the 1807 rebellion the Board demanded that each boy sign his name in a specially prepared book indicating his willingness to obey all of the laws of the school. And when he came to power in 1812, Green took steps to impress further upon the students their obligation to obey the rules of the school. He made of the exercise in which the boys subscribed to the Board's oath an elaborate and solemn ceremony conducted with "studied gravity and emphasis." During the ceremony he informed the boys that the oath was not a formality but rather a sacred obligation. No such ceremonies were ever conducted by Witherspoon or Smith.[9]

One of the most marked results of the abandonment of the science of discipline was an almost complete reversion to the use of corporal punishment in the Presbyterian schools.

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[9]Laws of the College of New Jersey, pp. 25-26; Mar. 19, Sept. 30, 1802, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 69-70, 85; May 7, 1807, ibid., II, 206; Green, Report, 1813, pp. 15-16, Green Family Papers, P.U.L. For similar developments see Dec. 21, 1819, Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Hampden-Sydney College, p. 349 (Microfilm in U.T.S.); and May 3, 1803, Records of the Proceedings in the Board of Trustees of Transylvania University, pp. 249-250 (MSS in T.C.L.).

During the Revolutionary period the Presbyterian schools had ended corporal punishment, usually on the theory advanced by Benjamin Rush, that discipline administered by force was totally ineffective in reforming a delinquent. But in 1801 the Transylvania Board ruled that boys under fourteen could be whipped at a teacher's discretion with the concurrence of the President. At Virginia's Washington Academy the Presbyterian Board in 1804 exempted only "small" boys from corporal punishment, thus freeing the faculty to whip large boys under twelve. The Hampden-Sydney Board's reversion to corporal punishment in 1804 brought an outcry from one man, who charged that his son had been "improperly and passionately" whipped in the school. For the "peace of the College" the Board ruled that no boy over fourteen could be whipped unless in the presence of the President and faculty. The ruling, however, was rescinded within a year.[10]

Other parents frequently complained of the increasing severity of discipline in the Presbyterian schools. Indeed, most of the parents of the students who left North Carolina in the Great Secession aligned themselves with their sons and did not force them to return to the Presbyterian-dominated school.[11] The Presbyterian educators granted the right of

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[10]Apr. 4, 1801, Trans. Bd. Min., p. 75; May 1, 1804, Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Washington College (Va.), p. 109 (Microfilm in W.L.C.L.); Jan. 4, 1804, Alfred J. Morrison, ed., The College of Hampden-Sydney, Calendar of Board Minutes, 1776-1876 (Richmond, Va., 1912), p. 57; Apr. 25, 1805, H-S. Bd. Min., p. 240.

[11]John L. Conner to his brother, Sept. 23, 1805, in Battle, Univ. of N. Car., I, 210. For an example of parental concern at Princeton see Sept. 26, 1805, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 163.

parents to keep their sons away from the colleges. But, as Green bluntly put it to the Princeton boys in 1802, when their parents enroll them after being informed of the rules, they "give you up to us." A parent could always remove his son, but while he remained, he and his parents must abide by the school's laws. Green assured the students that, like good parents, the trustees would allow "every indulgence consistent with your good and the good of the seminary." But, he continued, unlike most parents, the Board "will not suffer you to ruin yourself by vice, nor to waste your time in idleness, nor to contract habits of extravagance, disorder, disobedience or resistance to lawful authority."[12]

As they instituted a more rigorous disciplinary system, the Presbyterian educators insisted that they were doing no more than the times demanded. Green assured the Princeton students that if the school's new rules seemed too rigorous to them, they must conclude that they have been corrupted and require severe laws to purify themselves. The new laws will not bother the virtuous, he continued. Only the vicious will rail against them, and the vicious obviously need to be bothered. Green concluded that some restraints must be placed on the liberties of the virtuous that would not be necessary if all were virtuous. Each student must submit for "the general good, and as the condition on which alone he can himself receive the benefits of society."[13]

The Presbyterians staunchly defended their repressive

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[12] [Green], An Address, pp. 7-9.

[13] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

measures and insisted that they would make Princeton more attractive to the virtuous. Green assured the students at Princeton in 1802 that if the Board dismissed the entire student body for "unseemly" conduct, the act would so impress the friends of virtue and piety that within a few months the school would be filled with the most virtuous youth in the nation.[14] At North Carolina the President of the Board was a little less confident. He suggested that if the students who left the school in 1805 did not return, the Board would be forced to do away with the student monitors; however, he insisted that they must be reinstalled when the enrollment rose again.[15] President Caldwell was unwilling to make even that concession. He dogmatically asserted the Presbyterians' absolute determination not to yield to the criticisms of vicious students and their weak-willed parents:

> If so many of the youth of our country can so easily sacrifice the opportunity of science and aim with so little reluctance a fatal blow at the very existence of the University, it is for those who know by greater experience the value of such an institution to baffle the waves of adversity and steer the bark safely from the storm which assails it.[16]

From the Presbyterians' rhetoric one could assume that the educators during the 1790's had been confronted by massive provocations from their students. Such was hardly the case. The Presbyterians' repression, beginning around 1800, was

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[14] Ibid., p. 5. [15] Battle, Univ. of N. Car., I, 206.

[16] Joseph Caldwell to Richard Henderson, quoted in ibid., I, 205.

not in response to a sudden change in student behavior. Rather it was a reaction to what they perceived as the degeneration of American society in general, and it measured their determination to purge their schools of any trace of that degeneracy. The students, however, did respond violently to the new repressive regime, and the Presbyterians' reaction to that violence set off a pattern of escalation that eventually all but ruined their colleges.

The students reacted vigorously to the new repressive measures because those measures seemed to repudiate the ideas that had sustained the late Revolution. Moreover, in the initial phase of the unrest, the boys were at great pains to demonstrate their abhorrence of violence.[17] In the beginning of the disorders at Princeton, for instance, the students "respectfully" protested the suspension of four boys by presenting to the faculty a thoroughly subservient petition. The students "humbly" suggested that the faculty had heard only prejudiced witnesses before deciding to suspend the four. The remonstrants assured the faculty that "With you we detest Jacobinism. With you we love subordination. We are convinced that it is indispensably necessary to our common interests and comfort." But, the students concluded, "respectful remonstrance" is not the same as Jacobinism, which "does not delight in such decorum." Consequently they had resorted to petitioning instead of

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[17]For a representative entertaining but unenlightening discussion of student riots see Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, Princeton, 1746-1896 (Princeton, 1946), pp. 138-143.

rioting because it was "more regular and respectable."[18]

The Princeton students further disassociated themselves from violent ideologies by basing their petition firmly in the principles that had sustained the American Revolution. The students gladly acknowledged that the experience and position of the faculty "alone entitle you to our highest respect." But, they insisted further, "For the preservation of order and harmony in a society it is essential that there should be correspondent duties and rights." The boys had acknowledged their duty to be subordinate, but demanded that the faculty had a duty to be fair and not arbitrary. They insisted that the school was a civil society and that all parts of it had recognizable rights that must not be infringed upon by other parts. And at North Carolina one student believed that the debates over a student remonstrance reflected the triumph of republican principles in that school.[19]

These principles, of course, had been taught in the Presbyterian schools as justifying the American Revolution. But the educators were extremely reluctant to admit their validity when applied by students to the Presbyterian schools. In a broadside published after the 1807 rebellion the Princeton Board noted that in their petitions the students had spoken "much of rights." They had compared the college to a civil society "in which the people, if they are dissatisfied

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[18]Pr. Fac. Min., Jan. 2, 1802; Princeton Board of Trustees, To the Public, 1807 (Broadside in P.U.L.).

[19]Pr. Fac. Min., Jan. 2, 1802; John L. Conner to his brother, Sept. 23, 1805, in Battle, Univ. of N. Car., I, 209.

with the government, have a right to rise and resist, or even overturn it." The Board admitted that the analogy would be correct had the students founded the school and appointed its officers. But the trustees asserted that the school was their property, and the students were there at the Board's pleasure. If they did not like it, their only right was to leave. And at North Carolina the Presbyterian lay founder of the school, William R. Davie, noted that that school's remonstrants spoke much of the "sacred regard to their rights," the "high and imposing duty of remonstrance," and more of the "general Slang of the times culled from the columns of Newspapers . . . ." Those ideas, and even the words used to express them, he concluded, "are attended with the most mischievous consequences."[20]

But the students at the Presbyterian schools were not moved to rebellion by the "general Slang" of the newspapers or the examples of French revolutionaries or Jeffersonian democrats. Rather they were motivated by the Presbyterians' adherence to a practice thoroughly repugnant to the science of discipline of the Revolutionary period. The Presbyterian educators in the early nineteenth century became increasingly obsessed by the need to gather information about the boys under their care. Accordingly, after 1800 they demanded that the students testify before the Boards concerning their own actions and those of their peers. In 1805 the Hampden-Sydney

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[20]Pr. Bd., To the Public; William R. Davie to John Haywood, Sept. 22, 1805, in Kemp P. Battle, ed., "Letters of William R. Davie," James Sprout Historical Monograph (Chapel Hill, 1907), p. 60.

Board ordered that all students must testify when ordered to do so by the president or the trustees. Five years later the Princeton Board enacted a similar ruling, requiring students to give evidence in cases under the faculty's or the Board's consideration.[21] The Washington Academy Board in 1804 even began to seek the assistance of the citizens of Lexington in securing information about the activities of the school's students. In the same year that Board began to correspond with the Boards of the state's other colleges in an effort to find "some more effectual mode of obtaining evidence for the purpose of preserving order in literary institutions than has heretofore been adopted."[22] By 1807 the Boards of Washington Academy, Hampden-Sydney, and William and Mary had agreed on such a plan. In that year the three schools jointly petitioned the state legislature for a law forcing any student or citizen to testify under oath whenever a Board decided that the interests of its college demanded it.[23] And at North Carolina in 1805 the Board appointed its ill-fated student monitors to spy on the students, while the Transylvania Board in 1803 had accomplished the same purpose by ruling that "it shall be the duty particularly of the senior students to cooperate with the officers in the preservation

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[21]July 25, 1805, Morrison, ed., Calendar, p. 59; Sept. 26, 27, 1810, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 298, 306.

[22]Apr. 28, 1804, Wash. Coll. Bd. Min. (Va.), p. 119. For a similar effort at Princeton to get the villagers to inform on the students see Aug. 10, 1807, Pr. Bd. Min., p. 199.

[23]Sept. 23, 1807, Wash. Coll. Bd. Min. (Va.), p. 131; Dec. 21, 1807, Morrison, ed., Calendar, pp. 62, 63.

of order and decorum in the University."[24]

The Princeton Board epitomized the new spirit of intense surveillance when in 1810 it questioned a boy who refused to tell who had created a disturbance in the refectory. The trustees assured Daniel Fitzhugh that they required no boy to become a spy. But, they sternly continued, they had the right to examine anyone in their charge. If he refused to yield to that right, he would be expelled. He did and he was.[25] The Boards insisted that they had no choice but to force students to testify against one another in the face of the students' refusals to do so voluntarily. Charles Nisbet reported in 1802 that students at Dickinson had begun refusing to testify against each other. The minutes of all the Presbyterian college Boards are replete with entries like the one appearing in the Hampden-Sydney Board's minutes for August 26, 1806. On that day the trustees attempted to question a student charged with shooting a pistol near the campus. The boy "showed the utmost contempt of the Board, by leaving their presence, and telling them they might do what they could."[26] The Princeton Board insisted that the students' determination not to testify against each other was the real cause of the 1807 riot because that refusal made necessary the close official surveillance against which the

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[24]May 3, 1803, Trans. Bd. Min., pp. 254-255.

[25]June 6, 1810, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 292-293.

[26]Charles Nisbet to Dickinson College Board, Oct. 18, 1802, Nisbet MSS, D.C.L.; Aug. 26, 1806, Morrison, ed., Calendar, p. 61.

students were protesting. And, finally, Benjamin Rush in the penultimate year of his life lent his enormous prestige to the effort to "prevent or abolish the obligation the students enter into not to inform of each other." That determination, he assured Ashbel Green, was wholly pernicious in its tendencies and was based on "a deep-seated immoral principle."[27]

These moves by the Presbyterian Boards appeared to the students to be an unwarranted reversal of policy, a threat to the students' right against self-incrimination, and thoroughly inconsistent with the spirit of republicanism. At North Carolina Henry Chambers, the leader of the Great Secession, observed after the appointment of the monitors that "Every friend to science must lament the injudicious conduct of the Trustees in passing so odious a law." Students at Princeton charged that the faculty was advocating actions they themselves recently had branded as reprehensible. The faculty had contended, the students charged, that any boy who informed on his friends was considered by the faculty and the trustees as dishonorable. Now, when the boys refused to testify against their peers, they were expelled by those same faculty members. The Princeton remonstrants also contended that the efforts to force the boys to testify against each other contradicted the faculty's assurances that they wished to treat their students as their own sons.

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[27]Pr. Bd., To the Public; Benjamin Rush to Green, Dec. 31, 1812, L. H. Butterfield, ed., Letters of Benjamin Rush (Princeton, 1951), II, 1174.

If the faculty really wished to cultivate a father-son relationship with them, the students stated, they would join with the boys to "avert the rigour of the Inquisition."[28]

The students were not alone in charging the Presbyterian educators with turning inquisitors. William Davie, who had served as the governor of North Carolina as well as the University of North Carolina's staunchest lay friend, objected strenuously to the appointment of the student monitors at the college. The monitors were "not a species of Magistrates, but real spies," he charged in 1805. Human nature, he observed, "revolts from the principle of Espionage in every shape." The vices of great European cities made it necessary for their police forces to spy, but not even the most depraved wretch would accept the job as a public office in America. Like the Princeton remonstrants Davie advised the school's trustees to make a reality of their boast that the school's discipline was of a "domestic" nature. No man would enact a great deluge of laws to govern his family, he observed. Nor should the Board seek to regulate every movement of the student body by anticipatory legislation. To do so only transformed the students into "lawyers and legislators" who were constantly "deliberating, remonstrating, and revolting." He was convinced that the "best governed Colleges" were those with "the most respectable Faculties, and the fewest written laws . . . ." The North Carolina Board,

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[28]Henry Chambers to John Steele, n.d., Battle, Univ. of N. Car., p. 208; Pr. Fac. Min., Jan. 2, 1802.

he concluded had "committed a serious error in making an ordinance for every thing, or in other words legislating too much."[29]

Despite advice from men like Davie, the Presbyterian educators continued to legislate for everything and to retreat from the delicate and intricate science of discipline of the eighteenth century. By 1810 the Princeton Board had established a Committee of Visitors to insure that President Smith enforced the rigorous discipline they demanded. In 1812 the genial Smith was literally driven from the presidency to be replaced by Ashbel Green, whom the Trustees could trust to do all their bidding and more. Within one year he reported that he had dismissed three boys on the admittedly general grounds of bad conduct, because he could find no other reason to dismiss them. He did note that some unruly boys had not been dismissed since the school had an obligation to try to reform at least some of its delinquents. But he acknowledged another reason for not dismissing all students. The school needed their money.[30]

2. Certificates and Fences

On September 24, 1806 the Princeton trustees voted to hire four men to stand guard as they met in Nassau Hall. On the next day they decided to hire the same men to guard the

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[29]Davie to Haywood, Sept. 22, 1805, Battle, ed., "Letters of Davie," pp. 58-59, 62, 60.

[30]Apr. 5, June 5, 1810, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 287-288, 290; Green, 1813 report, pp. 26-27, 46-47, Green Family Papers, P.U.L.

building on commencement day and on any other necessary occasion to prevent "all riotous and disorderly practices" in the college.[31] The trustees' actions are significant because they epitomize the Presbyterians' efforts to erect legal and sometimes physical fences around their schools in order to keep out the pernicious forces that they believed were responsible for the students' riotous behavior.

The first step the Presbyterians took to shut off their colleges from the contamination of the outside world was to make certain that undesirable students were prevented from enrolling in the schools. In 1801 the Board of Virginia's Washington Academy ruled that the Trustees or the Rector could refuse to admit anyone who they feared might prove injurious to the school. And in 1804 the same Board permitted the faculty to refuse readmittance to any student without giving a reason for the refusal. In the same year the Hampden-Sydney Board passed a similar ruling, permitting the faculty, with the permission of two Trustees, to refuse admission to any boy who they believed threatened the school's best interests. In 1813 the Board ruled that the faculty no longer needed the concurrence of the Trustees to turn away anyone who could not give "satisfactory evidence of a disposition to obey the Laws of the College."[32]

If the faculty did agree to admit a student, he first

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[31]Sept. 24, 25, 1806, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 180, 181, 191.

[32]June 16, 1801, Wash. Coll. Bd. Min. (Va.), p. 89; Oct. 29, 1804, ibid., p. 120; Mar. 22, 1804, H-S. Bd. Min., p. 234; May 13, 1813, ibid., p. 303.

had to present a certificate attesting to his moral character. Such a procedure had been followed informally in the eighteenth century, but the suspensions and dismissals following the riots and rebellions of the early nineteenth century released a flood of transfer students, against which the Presbyterians took immediate steps to protect themselves. After the 1802 fire the Princeton Board ordered that any transfer student must produce a statement from the head of his previous school attesting that the student left without censure. If a boy forged the certificate or lied about being a transfer student, he was to be expelled immediately upon being discovered. The clerk of the Board was ordered to prepare a stamp with which to mark all of Princeton's honorable dismissals and to correspond with other schools regarding the resolution. In 1805 the Hampden-Sydney Board passed a similar law.[33]

After the 1807 rebellion the Princeton Board renewed its efforts to keep undesirable boys out of the school and to prevent Princeton's delinquents from being admitted to other schools before being punished by Princeton authorities. In the "general interest of science, morals, subordination and order," the trustees requested the Boards of all American colleges to refuse admission to former Princeton students who could not present a certificate stating that they had made "suitable satisfaction" to the Princeton Board. In the same

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[33]Apr. 13, 1803, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 100-101; Sept. 25, 1805, Morrison, ed., Calendar, p. 60.

year the Washington Academy Board passed a law stating that all transfers must present certificates of good behavior from their former schools. And the North Carolina Board requested a list of all students who had been expelled from or who had deserted any college in America. With that list the Presbyterian Board swore to prevent all such "vicious" youths from entering the University of North Carolina.[34]

As has been indicated, the Presbyterians had no qualms about summarily expelling any "vicious" student who might find his way into their schools. But the educators found to their extreme annoyance that frequently an expelled student refused to leave town. Rather he might loiter around the school and village, tempt the students into mischief, and generally prove a greater threat out of the college than in. To remedy the situation the Princeton Board first threatened to publish the names and offenses of all expelled students who refused to leave town. After the 1807 riot the Board took firmer action to force expelled students to leave town, and during Green's regime the college made use of the civil authorities in protecting the college from the expelled students. But in 1822 the Board was still worrying over the problem.[35]

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[34]Apr. 11, 1807, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 201; Oct. 21, 1807, Wash. Coll. Bd. Min. (Va.), p. 134; Battle, Univ. of N. Car., p. 215. For similar provisions see Dec. 21, 1819, H-S. Bd. Min., p. 347; Oct. 10, 1805, Trans. Bd. Min., p. 294.

[35]Pr. Fac. Min., Feb. 28, 1804; May 8, 1807, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 206-207, 211; Apr. 8, 1808, ibid., II, 233; Apr. 11, 1822, ibid., II, 562-563. See also Dec. 21, 1819, H-S. Bd. Min., p. 359.

The problem of protecting the college from the expelled students was part of the larger problem of how to insulate the schools from the evil influences of the villages and towns in which they were located. During the early nineteenth century the Presbyterians made feverish efforts to insulate their schools from the sins of "urban" America in general and from the temptations of the local tavern in particular. Particularly in the schools of western Pennsylvania did the Presbyterians have difficulty preventing boys from boarding in the taverns in and around Canonsburg and Washington. Finally the Board of Washington College in 1816 threatened to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law any innkeeper who allowed students to engage in "riotous" or "indecent" behavior in his tavern.[36] The Princeton Board caused the New Jersey legislature in 1815 to pass a bill prohibiting innkeepers from selling liquor and providing "entertainment" to minors at the state's educational institutions. Seven years later the trustees determined to prosecute under this law a local innkeeper charged with entertaining boys from Princeton. So determined were the trustees to keep the boys out of taverns that in 1819 they had the steward hire at the boys' expense carriages to pick them up at Nassau Hall on the last day of classes, thus making unnecessary any delay

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[36]Dec. 2, 1816, Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Washington College (Pa.), p. 87 (MSS in W.J.C.L.). See also Oct. 28, 1802, Minutes of the Transactions of the Board of Trustees of Canonsburgh Academy [and Jefferson College], p. 40 (Microfilm in W.J.C.L.).

during which the boys could go to the taverns.[37]

In order to regulate the village's affairs further in accordance with the college's wishes, the Princeton Board in 1802 decided to unite with the villagers in petitioning the state legislature to incorporate the village of Princeton. The Board hoped that an incorporated government for the village would make it a more orderly and therefore a more respectable location for the college. Incorporation would enable the trustees, in their opinion, to "more effectually protect and promote the interests of the College."[38] The village's eventual incorporation was largely the result of the efforts of the college's Board of Trustees.

The Presbyterian educators believed, however, that the greatest threat to their schools came not from taverns or even from immoral students. Rather, it came from the students' parents, who generously provided the extravagant allowances that led the boys into immorality. The educators were aware also that the evil influence of parental indulgence could not be restrained by the erection of fences, the requiring of certificates, or the enactment of laws. They resorted, then, to extensive publicity campaigns in which they attempted to convince parents of the evil consequences of their liberality.

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[37]Apr. 11, Oct. 1, 1807, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 203, 215; Apr. 6, 1808, ibid., II, 228; Apr. 5, Sept. 27, 1815, ibid., 424-425, 435; Oct. 1, 1818, ibid., II, 487; Apr. 14, 1819, ibid., 500.

[38]Mar. 19, Sept. 30, 1802, ibid., II, 73, 87; Sept. 28, 1820, ibid., II, 529.

The campaign at Princeton was triggered by the Nassau Hall fire. Two weeks after the fire the Board agreed that a limit should be set on the amount of money a student could receive, that a circular stating that amount should be sent to parents, and that before admission each student should be forced to swear to spend no more. In a circular letter to all parents of Princeton students the Trustees noted that "Few things corrupt the heart of a young man more than the power of gratifying his vanity or his passions whenever he pleases . . . ." Moreover, if some students have the funds to fulfill their every whim and others do not, the latter easily "become discontented and impatient." The Board charged that some students "imposed upon the fond partiality of their parents" by grossly misrepresenting the funds necessary at Princeton. This situation the Board hoped to remedy by stating publicly the exact amount required to support a young man "genteely and prudently" at the school. The Board also urged that parents not pay the bills incurred by their sons, nor should they appoint a guardian at Princeton to oversee their son's finances. Experience had shown that a student could get around a resident guardian as well as a parent by complaining of "rigidity" every time an advance was refused. Nothing but parental restraint would do, it seemed.[39]

The Board's efforts were totally ineffective. In 1807 the Trustees asserted that the "remote" cause of the rebellion

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[39]Mar. 19, 1802, ibid., II, 70-72. For the circular letters see the one dated November, 1804, addressed to Nathaniel Ellmaker, Samuel Stanhope Smith Collection, P.U.L. See also Smith to John Irwin, Nov. 5, 1804, ibid.

of that year was "the almost unlimited allowance of money, or of credit" given to the students. In 1819 the Board admitted that nothing in the previous two decades had been able to prevent the students' parents from giving their sons superfluous money.[40] Even a strict father like Benjamin Rush never refused his son James' requests for funds at Princeton. In 1802 the doctor sent his son five dollars with the general admonition to "Avoid borrowing and running in debt for cash articles, as you value your independence." He would always supply James' "reasonable wants," Rush promised, but he urged his son to "always remember, the size of your father's family." In fact, Rush regularly sent the boy money in rather large sums.[41]

The Presbyterian educators' resistance to parental indulgence bordered on the fanatical. To them the money was evil because it perverted the boys' morals. But, even more important, the money was a disruptive force in the college. It set the rich against the not so rich; it gave the boys the wherewithal to leave the campus and to encounter differing models of moral behavior; and it probably made the poorly paid educators a little jealous. But, worst of all, it strengthened the bond between the student and his parents. The Presbyterians were convinced that lax domestic discipline

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[40]Pr. Bd., To the Public; Apr. 13, 1819, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 494, 496. For similar expressions of concern see Oct. 10, 1805, Trans. Bd. Min., p. 299; Dec. 21, 1819, H-S. Bd. Min., p. 360.

[41]Rush to James Rush, Jan. 25, 1802, Mar. 29, 1803, Mar. 27, 1804, Butterfield, ed., Letters, II, 842, 860, 879.

was at the root of all their problems. And they saw parents persist in encouraging laxity even after they had delivered their sons into the educators' care. Familial indulgence, then, was viewed as the most pernicious of all the evils threatening the Presbyterian schools. And there was absolutely nothing the educators could do about it.

3. The Attack on "Unrestrained Philosophy"

The Presbyterian educators could not control parental extravagance, but they could, and did, vigorously regulate the curriculum of their colleges. Green's statement in 1802 that "this hour a new era commences" at Princeton applied equally to the curriculum of the school as to its government and discipline. "The friends of piety and rational education," he asserted, are "looking round them with more than ordinary anxiety, and asking where they may send their children with safety and advantage . . . ." They seek a refuge where they might send their children with "a reasonable expectation that their religious principles will be guarded, their morals carefully inspected, the habits of order, industry and due submission to superiors formed . . . while science shall enlighten their minds and exertion invigorate their faculties . . . ." Green and the Board promised the denomination to make Princeton such a school--"an asylum for the soundest principles of religion in an age in which they find so many bold and determined enemies, in which indeed, the hosts of impiety are directing against them their whole

force."[42] The Presbyterians kept their pledge. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, as they abandoned the science of discipline, they also launched a vigorous attack on what they called "unrestrained philosophy." That pejorative term was used to convey the Presbyterians' conviction that somehow learning had gotten out of hand during the Revolutionary era.

In the early nineteenth century the Presbyterian educators continued to chant the now traditional litany describing the central importance of learning to the republic's success. In his 1809 inaugural address at Dickinson Jeremiah Atwater echoed the wisdom of the past century, now a cliché: "knowledge has ever been acknowledged to be the very life, and ignorance the bane" of a republican form of government. "In such a government," he continued, "where all power emanates from the people, and where men in public office are always responsible to the people for the faithful discharge of their trust, it is important, now indispensable, that the people be enlightened." But the traditional words no longer conveyed a sense of expectation and urgency. And when Joseph Caldwell spoke to his graduates at North Carolina in 1802, he significantly delivered not an address but a lengthy and labored sermon. He declined to even mention the relationship between education and republicanism; indeed, he did not mention the republic. Rather, he repeatedly stressed in somber terms the necessity for duty, control, and due subordination

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[42] [Green], An Address, 3-5; Mar. 19, 1802, Pr. Bd. Min, II, 68.

on the students' part.[43]

Their growing reluctance to link the success of the republic to learning was partly the result of the Presbyterians' retreat from the eighteenth century belief in the transforming powers of education. That retreat, in turn, was precipitated by the assertions of William Godwin and others that men were capable of almost infinite improvement through education and better living and working conditions. The Presbyterians were all the more alarmed by this "perfectionism" because it appeared that Samuel Stanhope Smith was teaching it at Princeton. He did, in fact, assert to his students that "I consider man . . . as susceptible of improvement." Moreover, in his lectures he related that improvement to the rise in the levels of differing cultures. He then used the theme of improvement as an organizing principle around which he discussed the development of human communication. Needless to say, Smith was no disciple of William Godwin, but he did adhere to the eighteenth century conviction that the "state of society" of differing cultures produced differing levels of human improvement and that education was central to that process.[44]

Other Presbyterians were convinced that such beliefs denied the innate depravity of man and encouraged human

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[43]Jeremiah Atwater, An Inaugural Address delivered . . . September 27th, 1809 . . . (Carlisle, Pa., 1809), pp. 9-10; Joseph Caldwell, A Discourse Delivered . . . July, 1802 (Raleigh, N.C., 1802).

[44]Samuel Stanhope Smith, The Lectures . . . Which have been delivered . . . in the College of New Jersey . . . (New York, 1812), I, 100.

pride and atheism. In his Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century, published in 1803, Samuel Miller attacked the belief that man may be significantly improved by education and better living conditions as "unsupported by any facts; it is contrary to the experience of mankind; it is opposed to every principle of human nature, and it is scarcely necessary to add, to the plainest dictates of Revelation." He denounced as fanciful and dangerous the idea that education has a "kind of intellectual and moral omnipotence" and that "to its different forms are to be ascribed the chief, if not all the differences observable in the genius, talents, and dispositions of men . . . ." Miller observed that "luxury, fraud, violence, unprincipled ambition, and vicious intercourse of the sexes, and the various kinds of intemperance" are no less frequent among the "polished and enlightened" Europeans than among the "untutored natives of America." Therefore, he concluded, it is not "generally true, that the most enlightened are the most virtuous . . . ."[45]

The Presbyterians' educational theory during the Revolutionary era had been posited on the belief that republican education would produce virtuous citizens capable of sustaining a republican government. The process, indeed, had appeared to be mechanical to theorists like Rush. For instance, Rush had demanded that schools should be located only in court towns. There the boys might observe the

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[45]Samuel Miller, A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century . . . (New York, 1803), II, 29, 295, 297-298, 300.

daily functions of the judicial leaders of the republic and become aware of the necessity for virtuous leadership in that precarious polity. But by the early nineteenth century the Presbyterians no longer viewed as mechanical the relationships among virtue, education, and republicanism. This shift in attitude was revealed in their changed opinion of the courts as instruments of education. The Charter of the University of North Carolina explicitly stated that the school could not be located within five miles of the state capital or courts of law or equity. In 1809 the Hampden-Sydney Board created something of a furor by reversing the republican precedent of having the students attend court days. In that year the trustees ruled "that a Resort of the Students of this Seminary to publick Meetings at the Court House on Court day[,] Musters and etc. is a loss of time, generates vice and a corruption of Morals and ought not to be tolerated." Henceforth, no student was to go to the Court House unless legally compelled to. Within a month the Board noted with alarm that the law had created misapprehensions among the public, and within three years it was forced to back down. The President was given leave to grant students permission to go to the Court House on no more than two "particular occasions." In 1813 this provision was amended to allow only one visit a semester. The Trustees believed that the hurly-burly of court day threatened the morals of their students, but many citizens just as firmly believed that observation of the functioning of republicanism

was an indispensable part of a republican education.[46] Obviously the Presbyterians had become more concerned with protecting students from contamination than with educating virtuous republicans.

Like the money from their parents, the crowds and litigations of Court Day freed the students momentarily from their ecclesiastical masters, who in turn feared and opposed the money and the court days. The Presbyterians feared the money and the crowds of the outside world because they no longer had faith in the process of education within their colleges. They saw enemies both without and within the schools. No one had had more faith in education in the 1780's than Benjamin Rush. But in 1807 he observed that a learned education in the present state of American society should be considered a luxury and "placed only within the reach of persons in easy circumstances." He insisted of course that practical knowledge in a republic should "be as common and as cheap as air." Not so, though, with "learning." "Should it become universal," he declared, "it would be as destructive to civilization as universal barbarism."[47]

What had happened to effect such a change in Rush? He and most Presbyterian educators were convinced that in the years after the Revolution "philosophy" or learning had

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[46]Battle, Univ. of N. Car., I, 7; Aug. 4, Sept. 29, 1809, H-S. Bd. Min., pp. 275, 276, 278; Mar. 12, 1812, ibid., p. 287; Nov. 19, 1813, ibid., p. 299.

[47]Rush to John Montgomery, July 3, 1807, Correspondence of Benjamin Rush concerning Dickinson College (Microfilm in Pennsylvania Historical Society); Rush to James Hamilton, June 27, 1810, Butterfield, ed., Letters, II, 1053.

become "unrestrained." In the eighteenth century Presbyterians had described "power" as something masculine and aggressive that was forever threatening feminine, retiring "liberty." In much the same way Presbyterians of the early nineteenth century described voracious "unrestrained philosophy" as threatening defenseless "religion." In short, the Presbyterians had come to fear learning. Presbyterians traditionally had insisted that faith and intellect must always be balanced, but in the early nineteenth century they became convinced that the latter had grasped the ascendency and was seeking to vanquish religion. They described the unrestrained philosopher as a man overleaping all bounds and reaching for forbidden goals. John Henry Hobart, a tutor at Princeton in 1796, described "mere Philosophy" to his friend Joseph Caldwell in those terms: "There is no knowing . . . where mere Philosophy will lead men. Unfortunate indeed is her influence when she exalts the pride of human reason and extinguishes those lights which only can guide her to truth." The Literary Pamphleteer in Kentucky even more vividly described the vaunting career of the young man who sought only to improve his intellect. The Pamphleteer pictured "the ardent and aspiring youth rising in a splendid balloon, piercing the clouds, where cold storms toss and drive him in wild career, until precipitated with awful horror, into the arms of death."[48]

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[48]John Henry Hobart to Caldwell, Nov. 30, 1796, quoted in Luther L. Gobbel, Church-State Relationships in Education in North Carolina since 1776 (Durham, N.C., 1938), p. 20; "Essay on Education, #III," The Literary Pamphleteer . . . , ed. John McFarland (Paris, Ky., 1823), IV, 16.

Jeremiah Atwater in 1809 asserted that "There is no study . . . from which, through perversion, evils may not flow." But Atwater and other Presbyterian educators knew what study had been the most perverted and consequently the most productive of evil. In the expanding sciences the Presbyterians found their most fearsome enemy. Samuel Miller singled out the chemists for special censure. They used their science "to account for all the phenomenon of motion, life, and mind . . . ." And, he charged, on those facts "which clearly prove wise design, and the superintending care of an INFINITE INTELLIGENCE," the chemists "have attempted to build a fabric of atheistical philosophy." Atwater had similar criticism for mathematicians. Those men, he charged, frequently demand proof "in cases where demonstration is not to be expected." Those demands inevitably lead to skepticism in religion, he charged. Many of the truths of life fall short of demonstration, he observed, but men must act, "not waiting for the certainty of mathematical demonstration." And at Princeton Smith asserted that modern "philosophers of the mind" frequently leave "the plain but tedious road of experience and fact" and, under the guise of science, plunge into "the region of conjecture, where philosophy has often wandered, and perhaps, must always wander in inextricable error." But, most important of all, scientists had attempted to "pry into the essential constitution of things," in direct contradiction to nature and God, who had placed that secret

"beyond the reach of the human faculties . . . ."[49]

Smith's criticism of unrestrained philosophy is significant, because it was at his Princeton that the Presbyterians decided science was becoming most aggressive and destructive. In the last session of the eighteenth century the Princeton Board had approved a non-language diploma for those young men who wished to study only the sciences. But in a notably symbolic act in the first meeting of the nineteenth century the Board decided to suspend consideration of the granting of diplomas to "irregular" students. The Board, however, did grant a few such diplomas during the first decade of the nineteenth century, until in the aftermath of the 1807 riot the Board's dislike for the scientific degree matured into a firm determination to be rid of it. The first professor to be dismissed in the reduction of the faculty in 1808 was Alexander Hunter, the Professor of mathematics and astronomy.[50] In that same year trustees Archibald Alexander and Ashbel Green were actively campaigning for the abolition of the scientific diploma. Before the General Assembly Alexander thundered that

> The great extension of the physical sciences, and the taste and fashion of the age, have given such a shape and direction to the academical course that I confess it appears to me to be little

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[49]Miller, Brief Retrospect, I, 110; Atwater, Inaugural Address, p. 6; Smith, Lectures, I, 124, 126. See also Caldwell, Discourse, 1802, p. 6.

[50]Sept. 24, 1800, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 44; Sept. 29, 1801, ibid., II, 53; Apr. 7, 1808, ibid., II, 229-230.

> adapted to introduce youth to the study of the Sacred Scriptures.[51]

In 1809 the Board officially discontinued the scientific diploma, and in 1812 both Smith and chemistry professor John Maclean were essentially forced to resign their positions.[52]

In light of the Princeton Board's opposition to Smith, his views on science are of crucial importance.[53] They were, in fact, those of his father-in-law and were firmly based in the philosophy of common sense. To his students he insisted that in all scientific investigation one must follow "the method of analysis" and "reason from particular facts, collected by extensive and careful observation." Such investigation produces a "uniformity of a multitude of facts" in the object being observed. That uniformity indicates, in turn, "some principle or power in that subject, which, tho' unknown in its essence, we conclude, from our experience of the constancy of nature, will, in similar circumstances, always operate in the same way." That uniformity and predictability constituted a law of nature, and only those laws enable the

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[51]Quoted in John Maclean, History of the College of New Jersey . . . (Philadelphia, 1877), II, 131.

[52]Sept. 27, 1809, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 273-274. Similar scientific diplomas were given at Virginia's Washington Academy and Transylvania. See Oct. 21, 1807, Wash. Coll. Bd. Min. (Va.), p. 133; Oct. 17, 1809, ibid., p. 135; Oct. 10, 1805, Trans. Bd. Min., p. 298.

[53]For two laudatory discussions of Smith see Winthrop Jordan's introduction to Samuel Stanhope Smith, An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), and William H. Hudnot, "Samuel Stanhope Smith: Enlightened Conservative," Journal of the History of Ideas, XVII (Oct., 1956), 540-552.

scientist "to infer the future from what we know of the past."[54]

In attempting to "infer the future" from the knowledge of the past, Smith refused to be trammeled by a blind adherence to orthodoxy. In 1788 he had asserted, "I do not intend to wrap myself in the shroud of orthodoxy with lifeless acquiescence in established systems."[55] That open-mindedness he had attempted to pass on to his students at Princeton. Moreover, he refused to make the Bible a scientific textbook. Rather, he brought to bear on unresolved questions an impressive grasp of the embryonic natural and social sciences that he had studied under his father-in-law in Revolutionary Princeton. His use of those sciences was discriminating and rigorous, and his investigations were intended to discover laws and truths supported by scientific observation, not to reenforce orthodox religious beliefs at the expense of observed truth.

Many examples of his use of the social and natural sciences may be found in his published lectures at Princeton. One particularly revealing example involved his treatment of the biblical account of the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel. Most writers who discussed that event, he observed, had referred too little to the "laws and economy of the natural, or moral world." They had recourse only to the biblical story and thus concluded that this obviously natural event could have only a supernatural explanation, the miraculous

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[54]Smith, Lectures, I, 10, 11, 14, 15, 122.

[55]Quoted in introduction to Smith, An Essay on the Causes . . . , p. xxvi.

confusion of tongues. To that explanation Smith opposed a sophisticated analysis that reflected both his erudition and his sensitivity to the dynamics of his own world. He first made use of the eighteenth century increase of knowledge concerning ancient languages and architecture. Citing the fragments and illustrations of scriptures in Calmet's dictionary of the Bible and referring to Greek accounts of the ancient temples of Belus (Baal), he established that the tower was to have been a place of idol worship. He then had recourse to the "state of society" in the ancient fertile crescent. He noted that the builders of the tower hoped to establish an empire over the entire world, and "according to the prevalent ideas of those early eastern nations," they determined to build a central place of worship to unify their people.

Smith's explanation of the confusion at the tower reflected his command of eighteenth century theories of societal development. He noted that the tower was built before the rise of absolute power. Consequently, a "great division of sentiment, and violent contests" born of political and religious dissension sprang up among the people. Groups were alienated from each other; however, the alienation was not caused by a miraculous confusion of language but by differences in "sentiments, projects, and designs, which created violent and conflicting parties that ended, at last, in total separation from one another." Finally, Smith noted that there were errors of translation in the biblical account of the tower. In the first place the original stated that the top of the tower was consecrated to Heaven, not designed to

reach Heaven. And the Hebrew word translated as "tongue" more frequently meant "sentiment" or "opinion."[56] Obviously, if Smith was willing to admit that there were translation errors in one part of the King James Bible, he would--and did--admit that there were others.

Smith was equally open-minded in his attitude toward the science known as the "philosophy of the mind." An advocate of the Scottish philosophy of common sense, Smith condemned alike the idealism of the eighteenth century and the increasingly popular theory of "materialism" of the nineteenth. Idealism was "too subtle, and too far removed from the apprehensions of common sense, to be true," he insisted. He essentially dismissed the controversy over cognition by asserting that no matter if an object was connected with the brain by an image or an idea, it was beyond doubt "the object itself, not its idea, which is discerned by the sense . . . ." To believe otherwise was to "annihilate the spiritual no less than the material world" and to usher in "universal skepticism."[57] Smith no less severely condemned the materialists. If the soul was reduced to "the condition of perishable matter," he reasoned, "the most reasonable foundation of gratitude to our creator for existence is removed; the most powerful encouragements to virtue, and restraints from vice are effectually destroyed," and mankind loses "the natural hopes, and apprehensions of a future being."[58]

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[56]Smith, Lectures, I, 104-105n.

[57]Ibid., I, 20, 137, 138-139.

[58]Ibid., I, 127-128.

Ashbel Green and the other Princeton trustees were also adherents of the philosophy of common sense, but their understanding of that philosophy was different from Smith's. Smith's philosophy looked back to the eighteenth century and Witherspoon's Princeton. There the common sense philosophy had been a dynamic vehicle of change. Its emphasis on systematic observation, sensory perception, and the common sense of mankind had been central in forming the political philosophies of men such as James Madison. On the other hand, the common sense philosophy adhered to by Green proved to have a remarkable affinity for justifying and preserving the status quo. The evidence of the senses was admitted only if it vindicated revealed truth and contributed to social order. If it did not, it was rejected as "speculative," "superficial," and "unsystematic." Moreover, the appeal to the "common sense of mankind" gave way to the considered opinions of men duly charged with systematizing revealed truth as perceived by the Presbyterians.[59]

The difference between the conceptions of "common sense" held by Smith and the Trustees was most obvious in their attitudes toward science. The eighteenth century had systematized the discoveries of Newton and had venerated that great man. Indeed, the science of Smith was nothing if not systematic. But it was also flexible, open, and committed to finding truths untrammeled by orthodoxy. For men like Samuel Miller and Ashbel Green, though, an ossified version of

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[59]See especially Green, 1813 Report, Green Family Papers, P.U.L.

Newtonian science held the answer to all past, present, and future problems. In 1803 Miller stood in awe of a science "founded on principles so precise, connected and firm" that it explained with "luminous clearness" all previous and subsequent astronomical discoveries.[60]

Miller was able to venerate Newtonian science because it was controlled. The celestial spheres of Newtonian astronomy described their rounds in orbs appointed by a sovereign and omniscient deity. The science of Newton as seen in the early nineteenth century by Presbyterian educators was static and orderly, and in that system man was given the central position. But most important of all Newton had been a Christian scientist. With the "humble disposition" that befitted the scientist, Newton had had recourse at all times to the word of God, "the unerring standard of truth."[61] Like Smith, Miller was well versed in the eighteenth century sciences. But unlike the Princeton President, Miller insisted that those sciences be used to vindicate and strengthen the "unerring standard of truth." "Enlightened minerologists, practical miners, and patient experimenters" have been gathering information from all over the world that proves there was a great flood, he declared in 1803. Moreover, he continued, those devout scientists have found that the age of the earth approximates that given in the Bible. Thence, he concluded, "has arisen a new presumptive argument in support of the

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[60]Miller, Brief Retrospect, I, 12, 62.

[61]Atwater, Inaugural Address, p. 6.

authenticity of that Volume, which contains the most ancient, and the most precise of all records." And as the geological sciences vindicated the Scriptures, so did the discoveries in anatomy make "more apparent the absurdity of atheism" and furnish "new demonstration of the existence and wisdom of the GREAT FIRST CAUSE."[62]

Such assertions were thoroughly foreign to Smith because he believed that to tie science to religious orthodoxy was to squelch true scientific investigation. A writer in The Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine, possibly John Holt Rice, in 1818 defended subordinating scientific inquiry to scriptural truths. To submit all scientific investigations to the Scriptures would not repress the "boldness of the human mind" or dampen the "ardour of discovery." Rather, such submission would promote truth because it "prevents that rashness of decision, that overweening confidence in our own powers, which invariably drives man into error . . . ."[63] A writer with such convictions would never admit that there might be mistakes in translation of the holy Scriptures.

Thus the Presbyterians insisted that science be harnessed to the service of Christianity and greatly reduced in importance in the college curriculum. Ashbel Green captured the essence of their determination in 1802. He urged the Princeton students always to remember the "somewhat peculiar"

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[62]Miller, Brief Retrospect, I, 184, 186-188, 248.

[63]"Remarks on the Study of Natural Philosophy," Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine, I (June, 1818), 263.

original designs of Princeton's pious founders--"the promotion of science in union with evangelical fervor." Science without religion, he warned, can be most dangerous. Likewise, religion without science is "apt to run into enthusiasm, fanaticism, superstition, bigotry and persecution . . . ." Together, he concluded, they form "a respectable and happy individual, who is also the blessing and ornament of society."[64]

But in the Presbyterian schools of the early nineteenth century the subordination of science to religion neither promoted science nor increased evangelical fervor. On the contrary, it led to stultifying orthodoxy and to a drastic reduction of what freedom of thought had existed in the schools in the eighteenth century. James Moore, Transylvania's President, reflected this change when in 1800 he urged his students to have confidence in their professors. That confidence will "save you from the hesitation and anxiety of perplexing doubts." The school, of course, did not require "your assent to any doctrine without the conviction of your own minds," he added. Typically, Ashbel Green would not make even that meaningless concession. "We are not . . . going to turn inquisitors, and to search your minds, or require you to avow your secret sentiments," he told the Princeton students in 1802, but, he added in a thought that capsulized the spirit of post-Revolutionary Presbyterianism, "if any student voluntarily avows opinions hostile to

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[64]Green, An Address, p. 9.

revelation[,] he must leave this institution."[65]

4. The Triumph of the Classics

In addition to the attack on "unrestrained philosophy," the early nineteenth century also saw in the Presbyterian colleges the triumph of the classical languages over the criticism that had emerged during the Revolutionary era. The two developments, of course, were closely related. At Princeton the scientific diploma had been accompanied by an effort to relax the requirement that all students study Greek as well as Latin to qualify for the B.A. In 1801, for instance, the Princeton Board agreed to grant a B.A. to a student "on account of his extraordinary talents and behavior . . . notwithstanding his not having read the Greek Language as required . . . ." But after the abolition of the science diploma in 1809, the Board returned the classical languages to the center of the curriculum. And the first act of Joseph Caldwell as the President of the University of North Carolina, was to do away with the six year old rule abolishing required classical languages for the B.A. Under Rev. Caldwell the students at North Carolina were required to conquer Greek as well as Latin.[66]

There were still those in the early nineteenth century who attacked the emphasis on the classics in the college

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[65]The Lexington Kentucky Gazette, May 15, 1800; Green, An Address, p. 11.

[66]Sept. 29, 1801, Pr. Bd. Min., II, 53; Apr. 5, 1810, ibid., II, 285-286; Kemp P. Battle, Sketches of the History of the University of North Carolina . . . (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1889), pp. 42-43.

curriculum. By and large their criticisms were those that had been raised in the Revolutionary era. Shortly after the merging of Transylvania Seminary and Kentucky Academy as Transylvania University in 1799, there appeared in the Kentucky Gazette a lively and prolonged debate over the place of the classics in the curriculum. The debate occurred as the Presbyterians and the liberals vied for control of the united school. The liberals were represented by "Philanthropist," who first appeared in print in 1802. "Philanthropist" based his attack on the belief that subservience to the past was inconsistent with the revolutionary present. "This is an age in which men have dared to think," he declared. "We discover errors in government, we alter laws, and dispute almost at the point of the sword for the minutest political right . . . ." But, he sadly concluded, "in our systems of education, we are content to sit down in the same errors which our ancestors taught two centuries ago."[67]

"Philanthropist" made much of the charge that language study taught a knowledge of "words" rather than "things." Learning only words, he charged, "tends to keep the mind vacant . . . ." Besides, he noted, the meanings of words change rapidly, and new words are being constantly invented. It makes little difference what a phrase once meant, or means in another culture, he concluded, so long as the writer knows what it currently means in his own culture.[68] An almost

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[67]Ky. Gaz., Apr. 3, 1802.

[68]Ibid., Apr. 16, May 7, May 14, June 1, 1802.

inevitable corollary of "Philanthropist's" deprecation of "words" as opposed to "things" was his rejection of the idea that a classical education was a prerequisite to the study of English. He noted that English was derived from several languages and that if it was necessary to study one to understand the language, then surely it must be necessary to study all. The student, then, should master not only Latin and Greek but French, Anglo-Saxon, and Dutch as well. That was obviously impossible, he concluded. He insisted that no language study need be undertaken before one began studying English. One learned philosophy by studying philosophy and French by studying French; therefore, he concluded, "if we learn English, we must study that language, and that only." The mastery of the native language, he assured his readers, "is the surest means of gaining influence and applause in a free republic."[69]

"Philanthropist" was fundamentally rejecting the idea that language study was valuable because it exercised the mental faculties at an early age. Those who asserted that language study should begin at an early age because the faculties were then too immature to handle scientific thinking he branded as slanderers. Surely, he insisted, a boy was capable of reasoned thinking before age fifteen. Moreover, he pointed out the contradiction in contending that language training was difficult and therefore exercised the faculties and then insisting that language study was simple

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[69]*Ibid.*, Apr. 16, May 7, 1802.

enough to precede all other study. At any rate, he noted, the fact that arithmetic, an admittedly difficult subject, was taught at an early age obviously indicated that young boys are capable of more than language study. Rather than forcing young boys to study the classics, "Philanthropist," like Rush, suggested that the early years of life be recognized as distinct and highly significant and that they be spent by the boy in studying the world immediately around him. He recommended the study of geography, biography, and natural history, and stressed the importance of learning about the world and the people who populate it.[70]

"Philanthropist's" articles elicited a flurry of responses, most of them almost certainly from the Presbyterian clergy. The respondents made the traditional claims that language study exercised the faculties and prepared the mind for more demanding sciences, that a knowledge of the classics was necessary to understand English, and that the classics must be the basis of all education.[71] But the most revealing defense of the classics had been made in the Gazette two years earlier under the pseudonym, "Philologus," possibly Rev. James Blythe. "Philologus," like "Philanthropist," spent little time on the power of the classics to exercise the faculties. Rather, he concentrated on their capacity to produce a certain kind of man. And the man described by "Philologus" in 1800 as the product of a classical education

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[70] Ibid., May 7, May 14, June 1, 1802.

[71] Ibid., Apr. 23, 1802.

was the same man most Presbyterian ministers feared was being driven from social leadership by Mr. Jefferson's "revolution of 1800."

"The principal object of Education is to make youth wise and virtuous citizens and thereby qualify them for being useful members of society," began "Philologus" traditionally enough. But he then moved to a rather new emphasis. The classics, he asserted, are "exceedingly well-calculated" to achieve that object because they furnish "excellent precepts of morality, sage observations, wise maxims, and prudent directions, for the regulation of our passions, and for the conduct of our lives." The ancient historians examined the past and held up that which was virtuous for emulation and that which was not for scorn. The classical orators used oratory only in the cause of humanity and patriotism, and rather than stirring the ill-bred mob to vicious acts of destruction, they aroused the faculties of lethargic citizens to acts of benevolence. The poets in like manner presented virtue in the most becoming garments and portrayed vice in a manner that invited the reader's disgust. A classical education, then, was above all else intended to produce right conduct inspired by the example of the virtuous ancients.[72]

Of course, the defenders of the classics in the Revolutionary period had asserted that they inculcated virtue and benevolence and led to right conduct. But in "Philologus'"

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[72] Ibid., June 5, 1800.

article in 1800 the classics were invested with an almost mystical power to produce young men immune to the blandishments of democracy. A classical education, "Philologus" pledged, "humanizes the wildness of nature, and tranquilizes the passions of youth." Studying the Greeks and Romans somehow would make a boy honest and simple, not easily dazzled by outward appearances or overly fond of the graces. Moreover, "Philologus" observed, a boy who can read the classics always has readily available to him an innocent form of amusement; consequently, rather than seek out low company, he can entertain himself intellectually in the privacy of his own study. And finally, he noted, when that young man reaches maturity, he will be able to judge men and things not from superficial appearances but from "the intrinsic merit of their actions." He will be able to overcome the prejudice of mobs and will not be fooled by show, always "preferring real merit in rags, to ignorant audacity in brocade."[73]

Like Nisbet in the Revolutionary era "Philologus" insisted that the classics be thoroughly scrutinized and expurgated before being presented to students. He believed that there was little immorality in the classics, and even that small amount was more the fault of greedy publishers than of the virtuous ancients. In fact, "Philologus" went beyond Nisbet in demonstrating that the Greeks and Romans were really Christians ahead of time. The poets like Ovid, he admitted, sometimes wrote of the popular religion of the

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[73]Ibid., June 5, June 19, June 26, 1800.

pagans, but the great philosophers had clung stubbornly to a purer religion based on a belief in one supreme God. Moreover, they taught the immortality of the soul and a system of rewards and punishments in an afterlife. In short, the pagans had practiced a religion closely approximating the "outlines of natural and revealed religion" and had elaborated a system of morality very close to that of the Gospels.[74]

Thus were the sanitized Greeks and Romans thrown into the breach to save the republic from the unleashed mob that had put Mr. Jefferson in the White House. The man who had been educated in the classics was described by the Presbyterians as virtuous, temperate, just, discriminating, somewhat aloof, and in complete control of his passions. He was the man who had traditionally ruled American society but whose right to rule was being challenged in a society reluctant to honor his classical virtues. As much as anything else, their awareness of this fed the Presbyterians' efforts to tighten the discipline in their schools; to isolate those schools from the contamination of the outside world; to restrain the alarming emphasis on the sciences; and finally to restore to the center of the curriculum the study of the ancient pagans.

5. Decline

When the Princeton Board dismissed 125 of the school's 200 students after the 1807 rebellion, one of the trustees remarked, "We will probably have fewer students . . . but a

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[74] Ibid., June 5, 1800.

few under discipline is better than a mob without any."[75] He was only partially correct. The school did indeed have fewer students after 1807, but they proved surprisingly resistant to Green's program of repression. The years between 1812 and 1825 were marked by rebellions only slightly less serious than the one of 1807. In those years Princeton fell into a period of stultification and decline from which it did not recover before the Civil War. The same was true of every one of the Presbyterian schools. The two schools in Virginia became stagnant centers of orthodoxy increasingly dominated by Union Seminary. The two schools in western Pennsylvania became absorbed in competing with each other in producing Presbyterian ministers. In Kentucky Transylvania Seminary never recovered from the Presbyterians' assault on the administration of Dr. Holley, while Centre College had to fight for survival in a growing field of fiercely denominational schools.

The decline of the Presbyterians' schools was epitomized at Dickinson. Shortly after Atwater's arrival at the dying school in 1809, several members of the Board convinced their colleagues that the school could be saved by hiring as Professor of Chemistry the famous Thomas Cooper. The coming of the liberal scientist precipitated four years of rancor and ill will that split the Board, alienated most of the Presbyterians, and drove Atwater nearly mad. Finally in 1815

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[75]Quoted in Thomas Jefferson Werterbaker, "The College of New Jersey and the Presbyterians," JPHS, XXXVI (Dec., 1958), 214.

the faculty resigned en masse, and shortly thereafter the college at Carlisle closed its doors. When they reopened in the late 1820's, the school was controlled not by the Presbyterians but by the Methodists.[76]

The Presbyterian schools, then, in 1820 were stultifying bastions of orthodoxy, dedicated to advancing Presbyterianism in the fierce sectarian competition that characterized American religious life. They were, therefore, quite different from the broadly-based, energetic college established in colonial Princeton by the cosmopolitan New Side Presbyterians. Nor did the sectarian schools resemble closely the republican institutions established by the united Presbyterians during the Revolutionary period. The New Sides had conceived of Princeton as the center of a Christian commonwealth and intended it to assist in the reformation of American society, while the Revolutionary Presbyterians had been convinced that the schools they established would sustain a moral revolution to accompany the political revolution the Americans had successfully prosecuted. But the reformation never came, and the Revolution, indeed, threatened to devour its own children. In the wake of that turbulent experience, the Presbyterians renounced their revolutionary ardor and changed fundamentally their institutions of higher learning.

But these later Presbyterians were more revolutionary than they knew. For by 1820 they had, albeit reluctantly,

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[76]James Henry Morgan, Dickinson College . . . (Carlisle, Pa., 1933), pp. 185-189.

embraced a view of society radically different from the view that had sustained American society from its inception. Slowly the Presbyterians in the eighteenth century abandoned their vision of an America free of selfishness and contention. First the Christian commonwealth and then the republic failed to become the organic community that was the Presbyterians' social ideal. Gradually the Presbyterians evolved a view of society that allowed them to accept as inevitable the social conflict and competition that appeared to be endemic in America. But at the same time, they made of their denomination the organic community they had failed to find in commonwealth or republic. That community would compete with other denominational communities, with little apparent concern for what in the eighteenth century had been called the common good of society. After a half century of struggling with conflict and competition in American life, the Presbyterians in the early nineteenth century, then, finally abandoned their allegiance to an organic view of society, fortified their denominational community, and entered the fray. No change could have been more revolutionary.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

American Presbyterianism

Any study of American Presbyterianism should begin with two indispensable bibliographies. Nelson R. Burr, A Critical Bibliography of Religion in America, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961) is a masterful guide to the literature on American religious life in general, while Leonard J. Trinterud, A Bibliography of American Presbyterianism During the Colonial Period (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1968) lists virtually everything published by American Presbyterians between 1706 and roughly 1788. The value of the book is enormously enhanced by Trinterud's inclusion of each document's number in the American Antiquarian Society's microcard reprint series of the titles in Charles Evans' American Bibliography.

Trinterud's bibliography was published by the Presbyterian Historical Society and is one indication of that society's emergence as a notable center of historical research and publication. The Society is endeavoring to collect all the records of the various components of the Presbyterian hierarchy in America. These sessional, presbyterial, and synodical records are an extremely valuable and as yet virtually unused source for the study of American cultural history. For this study the Society's microfilm of the minutes of the Presbyteries of New Brunswick and Philadelphia was invaluable. In addition, the Society's Shane

Collection contains a wealth of material on Presbyterianism in the trans-Appalachian west. Particularly useful were the William Williamson, James Crawford, and James Blythe manuscripts.

Like the Presbyterian Historical Society the Library of Union Theological Seminary (Richmond) is making a major effort to gather sources for the study of American Presbyterianism. Under the direction of Howard M. Wilson, the Library is cooperating with the Synod of Virginia in collecting records of sessions and presbyteries connected with the latter. The project has produced an enormous collection of microfilmed documents, including the minutes of the synod and of the presbyteries of Donegal, Hanover, Transylvania, and Lexington.

In addition to these manuscript records, I have also utilized several volumes of published minutes. Minutes of the Presbytery of Redstone . . . (Cincinnati: Elm Street Printing Co., 1878) and Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh . . . (Pittsburgh: Luke Loomis, 1852) are valuable for Presbyterianism in western Pennsylvania. And after 1803 the General Assembly published annual extracts of its meetings, which are reprinted in the Shaw-Shewmaker continuation of the Evans' Bibliography after 1800. But the major primary source for the study of eighteenth century Presbyterianism remains the Records of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. . . . (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1841), which contains the minutes of the early Presbytery of Philadelphia, the Synod of Philadelphia, the schismatic

Synod of New York, and the United Synod of New York and Philadelphia until the creation of the General Assembly in 1788. Thanks to Edwin S. Gaustad, this valuable record is to be reissued by the Arno Press. It is quite clear that any major reinterpretation of the development of Presbyterianism and its relation to larger cultural patterns in America will have to be grounded in the vast amount of material being collected by the denomination's various agencies.

And a new interpretation is needed. The nineteenth century histories usually were either polemics or exercises in filiopiety. William Henry Foote's Sketches of Virginia Historical and Biographical, First Series (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966), first published in 1850, found in Virginia's Presbyterians the source of all that was good and noble in the American character, while Robert Davidson and Robert H. Bishop provided the same service for the Kentucky Presbyterians in History of the Presbyterian Church in Kentucky . . . (New York: Robert Carter, 1837) and in An Outline of the History of the Church in the State of Kentucky . . . (Lexington, Ky.: Thomas T. Skillman, 1824), respectively. Charles Hodge, The Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 1839, 1840) is a polemic intended to vindicate the conservative position in the mid-nineteenth century Presbyterian division.

The denomination has fared somewhat better at the hands of its twentieth century historians, who have been greatly influenced by the works of William Warren Sweet. In

Revivalism in America: Its Origin, Growth and Decline (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1765-1840 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), and especially in The Presbyterians: A Collection of Source Materials, Vol. II of Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1840 (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1964), Sweet has applied the frontier thesis of Frederick Jackson Turner to the development of American religious life. In his effort to illustrate the democratizing impact of the frontier on the Presbyterian denomination, Sweet emphasizes an, admittedly crucial, increase of individualism in the frontier churches. But he ignores the equally significant ways in which the Presbyterians, at least, formed communities of like-minded people on the frontier. Sweet's work has been augmented by the useful but essentially unanalytical monographs of Walter B. Posey: The Presbyterian Church in the Old Southwest, 1778-1835 (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1952), Religious Strife on the Southern Frontier (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), and Frontier Mission: A History of Religion West of the Southern Appalachians to 1861 (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1966). As the subjects of Posey's works suggest, Sweet's influence has produced a strange situation in which we know much more about Presbyterianism as a frontier church than as an urban institution.

There are, though, several works that either avoid altogether or minimize Sweet's emphasis on the frontier. The first volume of Ernest T. Thompson's Presbyterians in the

South, 1607-1861 (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1963) is an admirable effort to deal with southern Presbyterianism in all of its institutional aspects, including such urban activities as benevolent societies. But Thompson's work is neither a new analytical effort nor a broad cultural interpretation of American Presbyterians. More satisfactory are the two most provocative books yet published on the Presbyterians. In The Forming of an American Tradition: A Re-examination of Colonial Presbyterianism (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), Leonard J. Trinterud attempts with varying degrees of success to relate denominational developments to larger patterns of colonial culture. His emphasis on the crucial impact of New Englanders on the colonial church is particularly useful as a corrective to an early overemphasis on the Scotch-Irish influence. And in The Presbyterian Ministry in American Culture: A Study in Changing Concepts, 1700-1900 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962) Elwyn A. Smith suggests, if he does not always follow, ways in which a broadly conceived study of the ministry as a profession could illuminate largely ignored areas of inquiry. But thus far nothing has been written that would relate the profession to larger questions, such as Daniel H. Calhoun has suggested in his strangely neglected Professional Lives in America: Structure and Aspiration, 1750-1850 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965).

The absence of any truly imaginative and innovative studies of Presbyterianism points up a similar weakness in the study of eighteenth-century American religious history

in general. Neither of the two Great Awakenings nor the religious aspects of the American Revolution has received incisive analysis. The colonial Great Awakening is discussed with uniformly disappointing results in Edwin Scott Gaustad, The Great Awakening in New England (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), Charles H. Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1920), and Wesley M. Gewehr, The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790 (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1930). Alan Heimert's introduction to Alan Heimert and Perry Miller, eds., The Great Awakening (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), and Perry Miller's essays on the Awakening in Errand into the Wilderness (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956), and in Nature's Nation (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), provide a more satisfactory introduction to the Awakening. But thus far only Heimert has attempted to go beyond that introduction. In Religion and the American Mind from the Great Awakening to the Revolution (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), he has undertaken the task of analyzing virtually every religious article published by American Protestants in the last half of the eighteenth century. Heimert's division of the Protestants into "Calvinists," who were social and political liberals, and "Liberals," who were conservatives, is at times compelling but raises more questions than it answers. Heimert's work appears to be at best premature. We simply do not know enough yet about the intricate relationships between religious life and broader cultural

patterns to warrant the kind of sweeping study that Heimert has undertaken. More urgently needed are imaginative denominational studies that pose more modest, but perhaps more profitable, questions.

Perhaps even less is known about the impact of religion on the American Revolution than about the colonial Great Awakening. Alice M. Baldwin's The New England Clergy and the American Revolution (New York: F. Ungar, 1958, first published 1928) attempted to relate the activities of the "black regiment" to the revolutionary movement, and her "Sowers of Sedition: The Political Theories of Some of the New Light Presbyterian Clergy of Virginia and North Carolina," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., V (Jan., 1948), 52-76, investigated some Presbyterians' activities specifically. But neither treatment is adequate. Again Heimert offers a detailed analysis of the Revolutionary period along his Calvinist-Liberal interpretation, but his work does not seem as helpful as Perry Miller's stimulating essay, "From the Covenant to the Revival," in James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jameson, eds., The Shaping of American Religion, in Religion in American Life (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), reprinted in Nature's Nation. Miller's emphasis on the Revolution as an attempted moral reformation has been expanded by Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), and was the starting point of this dissertation.

If study of the colonial Great Awakening and the influence of religion on the Revolution is inadequate, serious

works on religion in the early republic and on the Second Great Awakening are virtually non-existent. A notable exception, however, is Conrad Wright, The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America (Boston: Stan King Press, 1955). But the only study of American deism is G. Adolph Koch's entertaining but heavily biographical Republican Religion: The American Revolution and the Cult of Reason (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1964, first published, 1933). Particularly needed are studies of the impact of the Second Great Awakening on the churches of the eastern cities and of the relationship between the Awakening and the formation of benevolent "voluntary associations."

Social Conflict

Some of the most exciting work currently being done in early American studies deals with the colonists' view of society in general and of social conflict in particular. There has been no sustained treatment of the Americans' changing concept of society, but there have been several recent noteworthy works that deal in part with that subject. Particularly significant are two works by English scholars. In The World We Have Lost (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), Peter Laslett describes English society at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution and suggests that the Englishmen who emigrated to America came looking for a more stable society than the turbulent world Laslett describes. And J. R. Pole in Political Representation in England and the Origins of the American Republic (New York: St. Martin's

Press, 1966) analyzes at length the colonists' attitude toward majorities and minorities, representation, and authority.

But it is the demographically-oriented students of New England society who are making the most significant contribution to the study of American views of social conflict. In his superb From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), Richard L. Bushman set a fine example for the studies that quickly followed his pioneering work. Bushman concentrated on a relatively small area and analyzed in depth its cultural growth over an extended period of time, using economic, political, and religious sources to reconstruct a rich social order. His example has been followed. Kenneth Lockridge, A New England Town . . . (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970) discusses the social configurations of Dedham, Massachusetts, from 1636 to 1736, using town records and other demographical tools. But the most significant contribution has been Michael Zuckerman, Peaceable Kingdoms: New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970). Zuckerman advances a theory very like the central thesis of this dissertation: that is, that at least some Americans were more concerned with maintaining a sense of community than with pursuing what later became known as individualism and that they were actuated by an organic view of society in which social conflict was abhorred and to be muted at all costs.

It is in the context of these works dealing with social views that I believe the study of American denominationalism

can be most profitably made. The major study of American denominationalism, Sidney E. Mead, The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), is enormously suggestive for the nineteenth century. But Mead's emphasis on "space" as the determinative factor in forming American religious patterns is, it seems to me, of little use for the eighteenth century. His interpretation cannot explain the Great Schism, which was largely an urban affair, nor can it illuminate the differences between the results of the First and Second Great Awakenings, as I have attempted to do. More useful are those studies that stress the importance of the denominations as communities. Particularly helpful have been Timothy L. Smith, "Congregation, State, and Denomination: The Forming of the American Religious Structure," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., XXV (Apr., 1968), 155-176; Donald G. Mathews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process, 1780-1830: An Hypothesis," American Quarterly, XXI (Spring, 1969), 23-43; and T. Scott Miyakawa, Protestants and Pioneers: Individualism and Conformity on the American Frontier (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1964).

The parallels between the Americans' acceptance of social conflict and their equally reluctant acceptance of the legitimacy of political parties are obvious. And there are many similarities between the services Americans grew to expect from the religious denomination and the organized political party. We now have an excellent discussion of the Americans' reluctant acceptance of political parties in Richard

Hofstadter, The Idea of a Party System (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

Perhaps the most useful and provacative of all efforts to understand the American Revolutionaries' view of society is Gordon Wood's Creation of the American Republic. In his discussion of representation, authority, and equality in the Americans' ideology of republicanism, Wood comes as close as anyone to capturing the agonizing reluctance with which the Americans abandoned their allegiance to an organic view of society. My scholarly debt to Wood's work is evident throughout the second part of the dissertation.

The records of presbyteries and synods again provided a crucial primary source for those parts of the dissertation dealing with social conflict. To those records were added several colonial papers, all of which are on microfilm or microcard. Especially useful were The Philadelphia Pennsylvania Packet, The Pittsburgh Gazette, The Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer, The Freeman's Journal (Philadelphia), The Annapolis Maryland Gazette, The Carlisle Pennsylvania Gazette, The Lexington Kentucky Gazette, The Philadelphia Pennsylvania Gazette, The Weyman's New-York Gazette, The New-York Mercury, and John McFarland's short-lived Literary Pamphleteer. Of crucial importance for New York was William Livingston, et al., The Independent Reflector, ed. Milton M. Klein (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963). But the most significant sources for the study of social conflict were the sermons and orations listed in a select list of full titles following this essay. Polemic and studied

analysis alike, they all document the Presbyterians' changing view of society and are virtually all available on microcard in either the Evans or Shaw-Shewmaker Series.

Higher Education

The study of education in early America has not suffered from neglect. As Bernard Bailyn has observed in his significant essay, Education in the Forming of American Society (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), antiquarians and educators as well as amateur and professional historians have studied extensively the schools and scholars of early America. But much of their work, though indispensable for later writers, has been narrowly conceived and executed. This has been particularly true of works on higher education. With few notable exceptions, histories of early American colleges have been either filiopietistic defenses of sectarian education or anachronistic efforts to find eighteenth century proponents of higher education. In neither instance have writers realized the potential for enlightenment available from a broad approach to the study of educational institutions.

Perhaps the most helpful introductions to the study of American education are the works of Frederick Rudolph and Richard Hofstadter. Rudolph's The American College and University: A History (New York: Random House, 1962) is a useful survey, while Hofstadter's Academic Freedom in the Age of the College (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955) is more broadly conceived than its title suggests and

is, in fact, the best work yet done on early American higher education. Two works that deal specifically with the social function of education, Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators (Paterson, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams and Co., 1959) and Rush Welter, Popular Education and Democratic Thought in America (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962) are well conceived but disappointing in their sections on the pre-1800 period. A more provacative approach is Robert W. Wiebe's suggestion in "The Social Function of Public Education," American Quarterly, XXI (Summer, 1969), 147-164, that schools be viewed as institutional expressions of the ideas of the men who established them. As obvious as Wiebe's suggestion appears, it is a concept that has not been exploited in the study of educational institutions. One major exception to that statement, however, is Michael B. Katz, The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), a superb example of the history of education.

Several studies of specific aspects of American education merit brief mention. Donald H. Tewksbury, The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War . . . (New York: J. J. Little and Ives Co., 1932) deals only with institutions in their first years and vividly points up the amazing numbers of schools that failed to survive. The colleges of the South are dealt with in a rather general way in the first volume of Charles William Dabney, Universal Education in the South, 2 vols. (Chapel

Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina, 1936) and in Albea Godbold, The Church College of the Old South (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1944). Luther L. Gobbel deals with a crucial aspect of one state's educational history in Church-State Relationships in Education in North Carolina Since 1776 (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1938), while Elsie W. Clews investigates colonial support and control of education in Educational Legislation and Administration of the Colonial Governments (New York: Columbia University Press, 1899).

With the exception of Hampden-Sydney, all of the Presbyterian schools discussed in this dissertation have been the subject of modern histories of varying value. The best of these is Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, Princeton: 1746-1896 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1946). Also of value is Niels H. Sonne, Liberal Kentucky, 1780-1828 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), which in a few chapters treats Transylvania more sensitively than does a later history of the college, Walter W. Jennings, Transylvania: Pioneer University of the West (New York: Pageant Press, 1955). Dickinson College has not fared as well. James H. Morgan, Dickinson College . . . (Carlisle, Pa.: J. Horace McFarland, 1933) is a remarkably pedestrian work and should be read in conjunction with Bulwark of Liberty: Early Years at Dickinson. The Boyd Lee Spahr Lectures in Americana, Vol. I, 1947-1950 (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1950). The bicentennial history of Dickinson, however, is being written by Charles Coleman Sellers,

biographer of the Peale family and librarian-emeritus of the college. Joseph Smith, History of Jefferson College (Pittsburgh: J. T. Shryock, 1857) has been superseded by Helen T. W. Coleman's essentially non-analytical Banners in the Wilderness . . . (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1956). And Ollinger Crenshaw's General Lee's College: The Rise and Growth of Washington and Lee University (New York: Random House, 1969) is a genial but unenlightening account of that school's history to 1930.

Material for much more satisfactory studies of each of these schools exists in great abundance. Several of the schools are approaching their bicentennials and are gathering a great deal of information about their past for that reason. Especially is this true of Dickinson. In addition to the minutes of the Board, that school's Special Collection includes the manuscript lectures of Charles Nisbet and of Robert Davidson. Also of considerable value is the correspondence of Nisbet and Jeremiah Atwater and of several of the school's earliest benefactors, including Francis Gurney, Henry Lyon Davis, William Bingham, John Armstrong, John Dickinson, and especially John Montgomery. An unusually helpful source for Dickinson history is the collection in the Pennsylvania Historical Society of the correspondence of Benjamin Rush relative to that school. One manuscript Nisbet lecture is in the Washington and Jefferson Library, while the University of Pittsburgh Library has an important collection of correspondence between Nisbet and Alexander Addison.

The Washington and Jefferson Library has a significant

collection, also. The manuscript minutes of the Washington and Canonsburg Academies, Washington College and Jefferson College, and Washington and Jefferson College have been preserved in the school's Historical Collection. In addition, the school has many of the lectures and letters of Thaddeus Dod as well as the few remaining letters of John McMillan and John Watson. A particularly valuable collection at Washington and Jefferson includes the minutes of both of the school's literary societies. The early societies have been ignored in this study but are a potentially rewarding subject of inquiry. They appear to have been much more than merely social organizations.

The collections at Hampden-Sydney, Washington and Lee, and Transylvania are not as impressive. Each school has its Board's minutes, and both Washington and Lee and Transylvania have small manuscript collections. Washington and Lee also has a very important manuscript lecture on human nature by William Graham, which is also available on microfilm from Union Theological Seminary. The minutes of the Union Society at Hampden-Sydney provide an instructive parallel to the Society minutes at Washington and Jefferson. The minutes of the short-lived Kentucky Academy are in the Shane Collection of the Presbyterian Historical Society.

The most extensive collection, of course, is at Princeton. The Princeton Library has not only the Board minutes but also the faculty minutes from the late 1780's. The two records in conjunction provide an invaluable source for studying the school's history, especially since the two bodies

frequently approached problems in very different ways. Equally important, though, are Princeton's manuscript collections. Each of the early presidents--with the exceptions of Jonathan Dickinson and Jonathan Edwards--is represented by collections of some magnitude. The John Witherspoon Collection is quite extensive as are both the Ashbel Green Collection and the Green Family Papers. The Samuel Stanhope Smith Collection is relatively small, but its contents are quite significant. More modest and less valuable are the Samuel Davies MSS, the Samuel Finley MSS, and the Aaron Burr Collection.

In addition to its presidential collections, the Princeton Library has several significant collections of papers of trustees, friends of the school, and students. By far the most important of these is the immense collection of Samuel Miller's papers. (This collection should be augmented by the Miller Collection in the Princeton Theological Seminary Library.) The papers of Thomas Foxcroft, John Eliot, Richard Stockton, William Paterson, and Edward Shippen were particularly useful, while the diaries and letters of students Joseph Shippen, Jr., Joseph C. Breckenridge, and John Croes provided an interesting insight into eighteenth century collegiate life.

Several printed sources were helpful in augmenting the available manuscript sources. Alfred J. Morrison, ed., The College of Hampden-Sydney, Calendar of Board Minutes, 1776-1876 (Richmond, Va.: The Hermitage Press, 1912) is a readily available synopsis of that Board's minutes. Three works

provide at least rudimentary biographical information about students: General Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Hampden-Sidney College, Virginia, 1776-1906 (Richmond, Va.: Whittet and Shepperson, 1908), Thomas C. Wilson, Jr., ed., Washington and Lee University Alumni Directory, 1749-1949 (Lexington, Va.: Washington and Lee University Press, 1949), and Samuel Davies Alexander, Princeton College During the Nineteenth Century (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph Co., 1872). Useful for the University of North Carolina was Kemp P. Battle, ed., "Letters of William R. Davie," James Sprout Historical Monograph (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1907), pp. 24-75. And two printed works made readily available the correspondence and one essay of Benjamin Rush: Frederick Rudolph, ed., Essays on Education in the Early Republic (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965) and L. H. Butterfield, ed., Letters of Benjamin Rush, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1951).

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