# CONSISTENCY THROUGH ACCOMMODATION: THE RHETORIC OF THE FAST PROCLAMATIONS IN COLONIAL MASSACHUSETTS

By

ERIC HAZELL

Bachelor of Arts in Education

Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Durant, Oklahoma

1986

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
December, 1989

# CONSISTENCY THROUGH ACCOMMODATION: THE RHETORIC OF THE FAST PROCLAMATIONS IN COLONIAL MASSACHUSETTS

Thesis Approved:

Thesis Adviser

Dean of the Graduate College

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A Master's thesis usually takes a year or so to complete. I am now ending the seventh semester of work on this project. Although it should have been finished long ago, the extra time spent has been most valuable. Further, one incurs many debts over the course of a two and a half year project.

First, I would like to thank my parents, Don and Koula Hazell. They have supported every endeavor upon which I have ever embarked, and their faith and confidence in me, their financial and emotional support, and most of all, their example, have been indispensible in my effort to fulfill whatever potential I may possess. Many historians have also helped. Dr. James Cooper took over the direction of this thesis before he had even met me, and found it at a more inchoate phase than he suspected. However, he has put more time and effort into the project than anyone other than myself. In short, under his direction, this was made into a real thesis. I also owe thanks to Dr. H. James Henderson, my advisor at the MA level up through the early stages of the thesis. His faith in my ability has increased my ability, and he has, by example, given me much to emulate. Dr.

Roger Biles, one of my committee members, has among other things, taught me the value of considering various opinions, outlooks, and/or arguments, and his skill as a communicator has taught me much. Dr. Paul Hiltpold, also a committee member, took the time to be a friend as well as teacher, and he did both well. Dr. Bryant Reagan has offered pertinent suggestions regarding both the thesis and life as a graduate student. Dr. Paul Bischoff read this paper and helped me avoid various mistakes. Dr. James Henretta has also provided worthwhile criticisms, which have improved the thesis and which will serve me well at the dissertation level.

Various friends, whether directly involoved with this paper or not, also deserve thanks. Vernon S. Archer, a fellow graduate student, has listened to my ideas concerning the argument at every stage of its evolution, and offered encouragement, criticism, and suggestions that have pervaded the thesis, and my professional and personal life in general. Barry Roberts furnished needed catharsis, through his sense of humor, general outlook, and many hours behind a ping-pong table. Finally, Bryan France deserves thanks; although he has not been directly involved with the thesis, he has been a help in ways too numerous to mention here. It has been brought to my attention that, in the one space that it is allowed, I have said nothing informal or flippant. Let me quickly add, then, that any mistakes in this paper will be attributed to me whether they are my

TABLE OF CONTENTS

# INTRODUCTION

To the Puritans, the success of the settlement in the New World depended upon God's blessing, and therefore the group strived to win His favor. The Almighty scrutinized their thoughts and actions, which had immediate repercussions on earth; pleasing God brought success, angering God brought hardship. Stained with Adam's transgression and placed in Satan's world, even the elect were certain to arouse divine wrath at times. The resulting adversity demanded a corporate effort to regain God's assistance, and the mechanism was the public fast. Through this ritual, the colony's authorities interpreted the various calamities that Massachusetts endured.

This thesis, in attempting to gauge ideological change in the Puritans' national covenant theology, focuses on the ideas expressed in the public fast proclamations emanating from the governor and council. With a few exceptions, calamity or adversity provided the impetus for these fasts, and the proclamations usually contained commentary regarding the colony's particular hardships. Content analysis reveals elucidation on topics as diverse as events in England and Europe, natural phenomena, farming, fishing,

trading, liberty, war, constitution framing, and Protestantism and Catholicism. The proclamations contained exposition on every crucial event relative to New England.[1]

Ideological change in the fast proclamations, then, reflected ideological change among New England leaders and churchgoers alike. Any adversity serious enough to provoke a public fast affected the majority of the colonists. They probably waited eagerly for news of any development relative to the events, and for explanation and action from their political and spiritual leaders. The authorities drafted the proclamations, and on the designated day, ministers throughout the colony read these official statements to their congregations, and then delivered sermons. Fast sermons more fully interpreted the divine judgments outlined in the proclamations.

New Englanders listened to these proclamations and sermons throughout the colonial era, but did they adhere to the ideas their ministers presented? The fast proclamations provide important insight concerning David Hall's conception of a "collective mentality," or a body of assumptions shared by ministers and churchgoers. In "The World of Print and Collective Mentality in Seventeenth-Century New England," and Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment, Hall reevaluates the relationship between popular culture and the New England ministry,

and concludes that "the case for separate and segregated cultures is yet to be made." He asserts that fasting especially demonstrated this collective mentality, because it drew ministers and churchgoers alike into the actual, otherworldly struggle of the regenerate versus the worldly, the powers of light versus the powers of evil. The ritual and other characteristics endemic to the colony led Hall to conclude that "the world of print in seventeenth-century New England bespeaks collective mentality."[2]

The practice of fasting and the fast proclamations reinforce Hall's assertions. New Englanders responded to every colony-wide adversity from a set of notions contained in the national covenant, a conditional covenant of works between Providence and the Puritans as a group. Through fasting, they strived to act according to covenant ideas that the ministry had developed. Conversely, ministers and churchgoers twice protested what they considered the royal governors' misuse of the fast day. This paper will show that the protests took place because fasting no longer reinforced national covenant ideas, and therefore no longer represented the notions to which most colonists and ministers adhered. The commentary contained in the fast announcements lends insight into those notions.

Obviously, the proclamations demonstrated ministerial mentality. Colonial ministers were involved

at every step in the ritual of the fast, and, as this paper establishes, waged effective protest in those instances when proclamations did not espouse ideas to which they adhered. Therefore, any ideological shift that occurred in the fast announcements would have been a partial reflection of the ministers' changing message. Throughout the colonial period the clergy drafted or were consulted in drafting proclamations. Disagreements often occurred regarding phrasing or emphasis, and ministers refused to disseminate the proclamations through the colony until they agreed upon the contents.

The fast announcements also represented the ideas of the provincial government. Governors wrote some proclamations, and signed all of them; Council members often drafted announcements, and urged ministers and governors to announce fasts; likewise, assemblymen sometimes wrote proclamations, and also commonly requested that ministers, governors, or Council members proclaim fasts. Although various and complicated divisions among the branches, ministers, and people came and went, the drafters nearly always hammered out proclamations that everyone found satisfactory. Fasts always resulted from hardship, and these shared adversities consistently had a unifying effect in a colony that was relatively homogeneous to begin with.[3] The fast proclamations represented a colony-wide, consensual, and, in accordance with Hall's conception,

a collective response to calamitous events that signaled negligence toward the holy mission. The mentality of those responses, in turn, signaled religious change in Massachusetts.

In addition to collective mentality, the proclamations offer insight concerning religious change and the national covenant. The fast proclamations and ceremonies functioned specifically as an opportunity for authoritative commentary on political and social themes. Government officials and ministers used the fast to reinforce the notion of New England peculiarity--the colony's unique status before Providence--as defined in the national covenant. For example, they regularly insisted that the colonists had fallen short of their mission, exhorted a firmer commitment to that errand, and offered assurance that God would bless a nation truly dedicated to Him. Whenever calamity threatened or occurred, the administration at Boston issued announcements that explained events within the context of the national covenant and New England's errand into the wilderness.

The colony's authorities designed all occasions, especially the fast, to reinforce the notion of the New England "nation's" unique status before God. Most simply stated, the national covenant asserted that Providence punished a sinful people and blessed a righteous people. How did this providential world view

change over time, if at all?

Perry Miller's classic The New England Mind set the stage for discussion of the national covenant and ministerial intellectual change in colonial New England. He argued that religious declension--a falling away from the sense of mission and piety of the founders--began during the second generation, and New England ministers preached an increasingly secular message until the Great Awakening revived old Puritan ideas. According to Miller, the national covenant had become obsolete by the 1690s. During the 1670s ministers exploited the punishments and rewards system of the covenant to regain authority among the increasingly powerful merchants. The merchants, agitating for political change that would release them from Puritan restraints, represented the new secularized, bourgeois New England. The ministers used the pulpit, their only weapon, to fight against any political shift that might bring decline in their power or prestige. Theirs was a secular battle clothed in religious terms; the providential paradigm of the national covenant remained only in rhetoric.[4]

More recently, Timothy Breen and Michael Hall have advanced similar arguments. In The Character of a Good Ruler Breen asserts that property and liberty replaced godliness and piety as the fundamental concerns in the Massachusetts world view. According to Breen, New England intellectuals during the Dominion era defended

the overthrow of Andros from a purely political, rather than spiritual basis. By the 1690s, "Religious considerations no longer seemed capable of stirring men to civil disobedience." Puritan ministers began to justify resistance in terms of property rights instead of religion. At the turn of the century, "it was clear that the threat of a broken covenant or angry Lord no longer affected New Englanders as it had in former days."[5]

Similarly, in The Last American Puritan, Michael Hall asserts that Puritanism reached its apex in the 1670s, when "self-awareness was most fully articulated and before the social, political, and intellectual forces that would erode Puritanism had taken effect." For example, during King Philip's War, the Massachusetts General Court treated reform "as if it were as central to the war effort as the 'Ordinances of Warre.'" Increase Mather's history of the war followed the providential interpretation of the national covenant and jeremiad, but the work became "obsolete even in his own day." The Dominion of New England dealt another blow to anyone still clutching to a providential world view. By interrupting what Puritan ministers had perceived as the progressive march toward the millenium, the Dominion changed Mather's thinking away from the providential, representative of the New England shift from the religious to the secular. Most of the clergy accepted

this sweeping, rather abrupt change, which became institutionalized through the new charter.[6]

For Miller and Michael Hall, national covenant and jeremidic logic were all but extinct by the 1720s. According to Miller, Cotton Mather's "do-good" piety was a "form of marketing religion in a bourgeois world," while Increase Mather's An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences represented "a surrender of the idea of the national covenant." Hall asserts that by the early 1700s, the jeremiad had become simply a "literary expression," uncharacteristic of New England thought. The "judgmental Puritanism of the providential world. . . had passed in Massachusetts before [Increase] Mather's death."[7]

Chapter One challenges these theses by tracing the fast in relation to "federal" or national aspects of covenant theology and the development of the sermon known as the jeremiad. Throughout the seventeenth century, the three main ideas that covenant theology articulated and the jeremiad promulgated remained unchanged in the fast proclamations. First, the notion existed that Providence caused all adversity the colonists suffered. Second, New Englanders viewed adversity as the result of sin. Third, the colonists believed that repentance and reform must occur before the punishment ended. The religious concerns and providential interpretations that found expression in

the fast were the same in 1699 as in 1630.

Chapter Two suggest that despite these continuities, subtle changes in proclamation rhetoric developed. These changes did not alter the degree to which pronouncements conformed to national covenant theology. Beginning with Queen Anne's War, adversity stemming from interaction with other groups brought proclamations that focused on the transgressions of those groups; simultaneously, the announcements denounced the colonists' sin and urged repentance and reform. Second, during the French and Indian War, proclamations began stating that God "permitted" or "allowed" hardship instead of directing it. The colonial wars brought an end to Massachusetts' isolation, and to reinforce the national covenant, authorities had to differentiate between the covenanted and the uncovenanted. Instead of declensions, then, the shifts demonstrated rhetorical accommodations.

Accommodations were adjustments in religious thought and practice that became necessary to remain effective in a rapidly changing society. There were many types of accommodation: Demographic change necessitated the new membership policy that later became known as the Half-Way Covenant.[8] The new charter, which changed church-state relations, caused ministers to make typological accommodations that maintained the notion of New England as a "New Israel." And "Anglicization,"

which included toleration and scientific, epistemological, and ethical change, necessitated that ministers accommodate their message to fit a more cosmopolitan, "enlightened" generation.

David Levin advances an accommodation thesis in "Essays to do good for the glory of God: Cotton Mather's Bonifacius." Levin asserts that Bonifacius was "a natural extension of the impulse that led Puritans to establish the New England colonies in the first place." Mather was not, as Miller had asserted, marketing religion, "but bringing religion to the marketplace." Doing good was a way of glorifying God, Mather's ultimate goal. Emphasis on efforts to do good led to alteration, and therefore Mather was able to maintain the sacred Puritan ideals and initiate the needed innovation simultaneously.[9]

Levin demonstrates how Mather reacted to a perceived rise in materialism among New Englanders. The fast proclamations of the colonial wars show how ministers reacted to external threats. Both changes derived from covenant conceptions, suggesting that ministers consistently accommodated to change from a fundamentally providential world view. In times of adversity and public fasting, the sin-retribution logic of the national covenant continued to dominate ministerial messages.

Harry Stout's important book The New England Soul

extends the accommodation thesis through the Revolution. He maintains that historians have limited their sermonic research to printed sermons, most of which were delivered on occasions. Occasional sermons, according to Stout, served political and social purposes, and therefore the message did change as social and political circumstances changed. Regular preaching, though, "remained consistently otherworldly." Salvation continued to be the constant theme of regular sermons throughout the colonial period.

Further, according to Stout, covenant theology provided the impetus for rebellion, rather than civil millenialism, republicanism, or some form of popular ideology. When England demanded total submission from the colonies, it "set itself alongside God's Word as a competing sovereign." To New Englanders, the Revolution was "a battle to preserve their historic identity and unique messianic destiny." The ministerial shift in emphasis from piety to moralism never occurred.[10]

Stout wrote, in part, to refute Nathan O. Hatch's book, The Sacred Cause of Liberty, which points to religious declension in the eighteenth century. Hatch's argument is essentially this: Puritan preachers in the eighteenth century changed their emphasis from individual salvation to national salvation. Civil millenialism advocated freedom as God's cause, "defined

the primary enemy as the antichrist of civil oppression rather than that of formal religion," traced its mythical past "through political developments rather than through vital religion. . . and [focused on] the privileges of Britons rather than a heritage exclusive to New England." The Anglo-French wars had laid the basis for this transformation. New England clergy saw the conflicts in apocalyptic terms, as attempts of Catholic tyrannical forces to overrun the liberty Britons enjoyed. The Bay colonists then simply changed enemies during the Revolution; the clergy had "lost a clear distinction between the kingdom of God and the goals of their own political community."[11]

Revolution Era fast proclamations, the focus of Chapter Three, reinforce Stout's conclusions. Just as regular sermons consistently focused on the Covenant of Grace, occasional pronouncements (the proclamations) focused on the national covenant. Fast announcements, condemning the British as arbitrary and tyrannical evildoers seeking to undermine New England's religious and civil liberties, still reflected the accommodation instituted during the colonial wars. In keeping with the national covenant, proclamation framers depicted war as divine chastisement, advocated reformation, and encouraged the colonists that God blessed those who upheld their covenant obligations. Ministerial messages had not changed significantly, if at all. The clergy

continued to exhort the individual to seek eternal reward through the Covenant of Grace, and urge the "nation" of Massachusetts to gain temporal blessings through upholding the National Covenant.

There are certain limits in a study focusing solely on the proclamations. The first involves generalizations about a "New England mind." Darrett B. Rutman, for example, has demonstrated the problems with such generalizations, criticizing the approach that "finds among one group of New Englanders a given idea, [asserts] that is a Puritan idea, therefore a New England idea, therefore an idea held by all New Englanders."[12] Rutman does not state that there were no "New England ideas"; the fast proclamations, then, do not reject this argument, but they do emphatically suggest that the national covenant was indeed an idea virtually all New Englanders believed.

Also, limitations exist regarding the proclamations themselves. Massachusetts' provincial government announced 248 public fasts between 1630 and 1788.[13] But no first-generation proclamations exist. For information on the fasts previous to 1674, I have relied on Love's work, which contains citations from fasts announced before the 1670s. From the 188 public fasts from 1674 to 1788, 124 proclamations exist, as far as I can ascertain. I have read ninety of these proclamations in totality, and excerpts from twenty-one

others, leaving thirteen announcements I have not reviewed. The only considerable period in which I have studied no proclamation is 1719 to 1726.

Further, no proclamation exists that commented on the Great Awakening. I have relied on secondary sources for my limited analysis of the fast in relation to the revivals. The announcements of 1744 followed the same pattern as those of 1741, though, as the war with Spain reunited the colony. The Awakening permanently changed nothing in regard to the fast proclamations.

The fast announcements examined here, then, appear to be representative of those proclaimed. All of those issued in the seventeenth century, following national covenant logic (discussed more fully below), viewed adversity as God's judgment, bemoaned the sin that caused hardship, and exhorted reformation. All of those issued in the eighteenth century bemoaned sin that caused God to allow adversity, condemned the uncovenanted groups connected with the affliction, and exhorted reformation. In both centuries, every proclamation concerned with natural adversity followed the sin-judgment-reformation pattern of the national covenant. Second, the proclamations for which I have no information are those that did not elicit any known comment, in diaries, histories, or in Love's work. It should be safe to assume that any fast that was extraordinary would have brought commentary.

Other limits regarding interpretations of intellectual change exist in a study limited to the fast, and these concern the occasional nature of fasting. Harry S. Stout has shown that occasional preaching can and has been overemphasized. Standard histories of New England preaching have focused on printed sermons, most of which were occasional. But ministers delivered scores of other sermons during the regular Sunday services throughout the year, and therefore, any treatment of New England sermonology must take regular sermons into account.[14] Nonetheless, in a different manner, fasts were "regular," because they were the consistent response to hardship. A balanced interpretation can therefore result from a study that considers regular sermons and occasional pronouncements.

Also, because the announcements emanated from the provincial government, caution must be observed in applying proclamation statements to New England's collective mentality. Proclamation framers in urban, trade-centered Boston possibly faced different problems than villages or frontier settlements. For example, farmers in Dedham and politicians in Boston often had little in common; ministers in Sudbury and ministers in Boston also often harbored different concerns. But authorities called public fasts in response to colony-wide adversities, and these shared hardships mitigated diversity by bringing something in common to people from

all ranks and locations. King Philip's War, for example, affected Dedhamites and Bostonians alike, as did the earthquakes in 1727, and the War for Independence. Hardship causes people to ponder God, and it also gives something common to people of the most varied interests. Colonial New England provides an illustration of how ideas of special status and providential destiny can affect national identity and action.

## INTRODUCTION NOTES

[1] Even the shortest proclamations are around four hundred words long. Although historians have recognized the importance of occasional sermons, no modern study has limited its examination exclusively to fast proclamations. William Love's The Fast and Thanksgiving Days of New England (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1895), is an extensive study of fast days, but not in relation to covenant theology or the problem of declension. His desire was to "exhibit the pious purpose, persevering courage, and honest faith" of his Puritan forefathers. He argued that the New England fast institution arose from Great Britain's evil system of holy days, and helped increase the loyalty, patriotism, and faith necessary to ward off the tyrannical mother country during the Revolution. He interpreted the changes in the ritual as a struggle to preserve its original purpose, and this assertion is similar to an argument presented here, although more polemical. Love ended his book with an exhortation to New England churches to reinstate the fast according to its earlier purpose. Other than Love's work and a few cursory remarks in Perry Miller's works, references to proclamations are nonexistent. Charles Hambrick-Stowe's The Practice of Piety (Chapel Hill: Unviversity of North Carolina Press, 1982), periodically addresses fasting, but his work relies solely on Love's.

[2] David Hall, "The World of Print and Collective Mentality in Seventeenth-Century New England." In Colonial America: Essays in Politics and Social Development. Stanley N. Kurtz and John M. Murrin, ed., 162-176. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983). Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989). Several other factors figure into Hall's argument. First, emigration consisted largely of the "middling" sort, a group generally more literate and articulate than the "lower" sort; this made for a uniform culture. Also, the clergy shared a common training, and they each lived in the town where they ministered; this enabled maitenance of a homogeneous system. Other elements include widespread anti-Catholicism, a uniform language, and Cotton Mather's success as a preacher and popular writer.

Further, the congregational responsibility so characteristic of Puritanism signifies collective mentality. All authority emanated from the Bible. In a literate, intensely religious colony, a basic knowledge of Scripture

was common. The Cambridge Platform exhorted congregations to submit to the teachings of their ministers, but only insofar as the lessons conformed to the Scriptures. Good Puritans were supposed to make sure that ministers, and all authorities, remained true to biblical doctrines. The Bible bridged "elite" and "popular" cultures. See Harry S. Stout, The New England Soul. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 19. Timothy Breen, The Character of a Good Ruler. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), Chapter One.

[3] In "Social Development," Gary B. Nash states that "at the end of six generations of settlement social differentiation in the interior New England towns remained consideraably less than in most other places in the Europeanized New World." In Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, ed., Colonial British America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 233-261. Quoted at 237.

[4] Perry Miller, The New England Mind: From Colony to Province. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953). Also, see Babette Levy, Preaching in the First Half Century of New England (New York: Russell and Russell, 1945). Joseph Haroutunian, Piety Versus Moralism (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1964). B. Richard Burg, Richard Mather of Dorchester (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1976), Chpt. 4.

[5] Breen, Character of a Good Ruler.

[6] Michael G. Hall, The Last American Puritan: The Life of Increase Mather, 1639-1723. (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1988).

[7] Ibid., 298-306, 361. Miller, Colony to Province, 142-46, 401-02.

[8] The institution of the Half-Way Covenant serves as an excellent example. Declension arguments view the innovation as a futile attempt to bolster a sagging church attendance and membership. Accommodation arguments deem it part of a move from an "exclusive" to an "inclusive" church polity. In easing the requirements for church membership, Puritan religious leaders were able to extend their influence among the previously unchurched. See Robert Pope, The Half-Way Covenant. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969). Also, see John L. Brooke, " 'For Honour and Civil Worship to Any Worthy Person': Burial, Baptism, and Community on the Massachusetts Near Frontier, 1730-1790." In Robert Blair St. George, ed., Material Life in America, 1600-1860 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 463-486.

[9] David Levin, "Essays to do good for the glory of God: Cotton Mather's Bonifacius." In The American Puritan Imagination. Sacvan Bercovitch, ed., 45-55. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974). Various other works, although not concerned specifically with national covenant theology, have advanced accommodation theses in challenge to Miller. For example, see Emory Elliott, Power and the Pulpit in Puritan New England (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). E. Brooks Holified, The Covenant Sealed (New Haven: Yale Universtiy Press, 1974). Norman Pettit, The Heart Prepared (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966). William K. Stoever, "A Faire and Easie Way to Heaven," (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1978), 41, 97. David D. Hall has stated that the difference between declension and accommodation theses lies in the perception of orthodoxy. "The alternative to a static conception of Calvinism is to recognize that Calvinism remained ambivalent in important ways and accordingly could change or grow. . . . The crucial shift. . . is from a rigid to an open-ended understanding of orthodoxy or tradition." In Greene and Pole, Colonial British America, 317-344, quoted at 325. Hall uses the term "active orthodoxy," but I prefer "accommodation," because doctrine and practice seem to react to societal, cultural, and intellectual conditions more than they shape them.

[10] Stout, New England Soul.

[11] Nathan O. Hatch, The Sacred of Liberty (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977). My summary of Hatch's argument draws mainly from Chpt. 1, "The Origins of Civil Millennialism in America." Also reprinted in Colonial America, Kurtz and Murrin, ed., 497-518.

[12] Darrett B. Rutman, American Puritanism: Faith and Practice. (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 1-10.

[13] Love, Fast Days, 464-507.

[14] Stout, New England Soul, Introduction, 156.

# CHAPTER ONE

How long did New England ministers and churchgoers remain true to the original Puritan mission? Distinguished historians such as Perry Miller, Timothy Breen, and Michael Hall have asserted that the providential world view of the clergy and the piety of the colonists had waned significantly by the mid- to latter 1600s. The religious vision of a city on a hill passed with the first generation; ministers after mid-century defended property and political rights rather than covenant theology, and the colonists sought land rather than salavation. These scholars have all demonstrated that certain changes took place in Puritan thought and action. However, the fast proclamations suggest that second- and third-generation settlers continued in the Puritan tradition. The ideas expressed in the national covenant dominated the colonists' thought, as New England clerics and churchgoers alike remained providential in outlook.

The Puritans who ventured to America hoped to establish and direct a society based on the Reformation ideas forged from their desire to know God. That desire found expression most cogently in the theology of the covenant, an elaborate system of doctrine that explained

man's relationship to his maker in terms of a compact. The Puritans used the idea of the covenant to elucidate, among other things, theories on salvation, the Trinity, society, individual churches, and nations. God worked with His people according to various agreements, which, although ordained by Him, also bound Him with certain responsibilities. When the migrants promised as a group to seek first the erection of a city on a hill, they entered into a national, or public, covenant.

To strike balance between God's omnipotence a man's abilities, the Puritans formulated the national covenant, a conditional covenant of works between Providence and the Puritans as a group.[1] Man could not affect his salvation, but groups of men (and women) could determine earthly rewards and punishments.[2] Only those groups existing in the national covenant could be assured that virtue brought blessings, and depravity judgment. The obligations inherent in the national covenant confirmed that, while other countries' fortunes or misfortunes were the result of luck or miscalculation, covenanted societies received blessings and punishments in direct proportion to group righteousness. Prosperity signified that God was pleased. Conversely, adversity meant that Jehovah wanted reform, and therefore the national covenant explained God's wrath, made it intelligible, and gave man the ability to soothe it.

Through "occasions" and "occasional sermons," the clergy reinforced the common purpose embodied in the national covenant. The Puritans instituted occasional sermons, such as election, thanksgiving, artillery, and fast sermons, in order to separate preaching on temporal concerns from preaching on salvation. An occasion signaled to New Englanders that the national covenant, rather than the covenant of grace, would be the focus of instruction. In other words, they heard what deeds were necessary for temporal rewards.

Occasional preaching enabled the clergy to bring all aspects of life within the authority of the sermon. Through occasional sermons, ministers interpreted every significant community event. According to Harry S. Stout, occasions "symbolized New England's claim to peculiar peoplehood and proclaimed that in all events bearing on public life, God's Word would be preeminent." Ministers' social and political commentary told the colonists what they must do to maintain the national covenant. As a ceremony designed to reinforce national covenant ideas, the most common occasion, and probably the most important, was the fast.[3]

The formation of New England fast occasions grew from discontent with England's system of holy days, as the Puritans protested what they considered Henry's and James's blatant desecrations of the Sabbath. Henry VIII had greatly reduced the number of festivals by

abolishing those that occurred during harvest, but he allowed labor and recreation on holy days, including the Sabbath. In 1617, James I issued the "Declaration concerning Lawfull Sports" which allowed dancing, archery, "leaping and vaulting," and other "harmless recreation" after the Sunday morning services. Further, drunkenness and promiscuity often accompanied the games. The Puritans could hardly tolerate Sunday afternoon labor, liquor, and libido, so they abolished all celebrations but the Sabbath, and decided that occasional fasts could replace holy days as acts of humiliation.[4]

As should be expected, Puritan theologians searched the Bible, which describes basically four types of fasts: The "Day of Atonement," for forgiveness of all sins of an entire congregation, fasts which commemorated historical events, days for individual humiliation and repentance, and, most commonly, fasts for times of distress.[5] In the Bible, the last of these was the most common. For example, when the army of Ai defeated the Israelites, Joshua and the elders prostrated themselves before the ark until the next day. After suffering defeat at the hands of the tribe of Benjamin, the Israelites fasted. David fasted when his illegitimate son was sick.[6]

In New England, fasts occurred on Thursdays, rather than Sundays, a signal to churchgoers that the services

would focus on subjects other than salvation. Fast activities lasted the entire day. Early in the morning, family members prepared their hearts, souls, and minds for the day's solemn activities by discussing the specific reasons for the fasting. They then went to church, early in the morning, dressed moderately. The meeting, just as regular services, consisted of Scripture reading, teaching, singing, praying, and preaching, and there was usually more than one sermon and more than one lesson (sermons provided exhortation, and teaching provided education regarding the Scriptures). A preacher from a nearby church often visited as a guest speaker. Also, a collection was often taken for the poor. The minister usually finished by telling the people their responsibilities for the rest of the day, which might include more praying and reading, and possibly individual reflection and contemplation.[7]

The fast employed the logic of the national covenant to connect spiritual reformation and social criticism. The formula remained constant: Ministers admonished New Englanders for neglecting the responsibilities outlined in their national covenant, and attributed all adversity to this neglect. Punishment continued until the dereliction ceased. When reformation occurred, Jehovah restored all the blessings due to a chosen people, and the covenant therefore

remained intact. During fast ceremonies, the clergy repeated this humiliation-reformation-restoration formula hundreds of times, in the sermon Perry Miller termed the "jeremiad."

According to Sacvan Bercovitch, who expanded on Miller's conception, the jeremiad was a "state-of-the covenant address," at once pessimistic and optimistic, despairing and triumphant. It came to fruition during the generational transition of the mid-1600s, but the ideas it espoused had always dominated Puritan thought. Jeremiads offered explanation for adversity: New Englanders had breached the national covenant. Ministers then listed the results of that violation--drought, disease, war, internal division, or some other scourge or combination of scourges. Following the logic of the national covenant, they continued: Hardship existed because sin persisted. Then, the sins were enumerated. Preachers often condemned "oppression," "luxury," and "pride" from the pulpit, or perhaps drinking, swearing, "vanity of apparel," "stubbornness," and a host of other transgressions that had angered a holy God. Ministers warned their congregations that they had only seen a small portion of Jehovah's anger; if the refusal to reform continued, God would send punishments that made the existing ones seem minor. If New Englanders completely turned their backs on God, they would irrevocably sever the national covenant.

But that was only half the story. For those in the covenant, affliction was a temporary necessity for building spiritual character. Indeed, punishment indicated that the covenant remained intact--God disciplined His children, as the Scripture said "to prove them good in the end." As long as reformation occurred, New Englanders could be assured that they would ultimately triumph. As Bercovitch has said, the jeremiad directed "an imperiled people of God toward the fulfillment of their destiny, to guide them. . . collectively toward the American city of God."[8]

Although not limited to fast ceremonies, the jeremiad fit most appropriately there. All "occasions" served to reinforce the national covenant, but because the jeremiad catalogued sins as an explanation for hardship, the adversity-produced public fast-humiliation became the perfect occasion to thunder condemnation from the pulpit. In other words, as Miller aptly put it, "seeking the Lord on a day of humiliation becomes a redefinition of the common purpose."

In sum, jeremiads were the rhetorical device by which ministers, usually during fast ceremonies, connected spiritual reformation and social or political criticism. All social and political matters fell under the aegis of the national covenant, and therefore, reinforcement of the national covenant was the fundamental concern of the jeremiad. The formula of

sin-judgment-reformation served this purpose.

During the seventeenth century, the notions that Covenant theology expressed, the jeremiad repeated, and the fast reinforced, found expression in the public fast proclamations. Fast announcements buttressed national covenant ideas, utilizing the jeremidic style of sin-judgment-reformation. The proclamations originated in Boston, and were official statements from the provincial government. Ministers read them in each church throughout the colony to inform congregations on the date and reasons for the fast, and then elaborated on the information in their fast-day jeremiads. Usually over 500 words long, the proclamations contained commentary on colony-wide concerns. Virtually all of this exposition revolved around national covenant theology, indicating that through the public fast, Puritans during the seventeenth century preserved the ideas that drove them across the Atlantic.

Historians have usually depicted the jeremiad as a second-generation phenomenon, and although it came to fruition during the second generation, it was not created ex nihilo then. The jeremidic formula dominated fast ceremonies and proclamations from the beginning in the New World. For example, in April of 1623 the Pilgrims announced a public fast to alleviate a drought; simultaneously they received news that an expected ship with friends and supplies had wrecked and all aboard had

perished. Providence directed adversity: "The most courageous were now discouraged, because God, which hitherto had [protected and supported us] now seemed in his anger to arm himself against [us]." Evidently, Jehovah had armed himself with disgust over transgression. "Every good man. . . [should] enter into examination with his own estate between God and his conscience, and so to humiliation before him. . . . " They proclaimed the fast in hopes "that the same God, which had stirred us up hereunto, would be moved hereby in mercy to look down upon us and grant the request of our dejected souls." The next day it rained. The rain continued for two weeks, "and [was] mixed with such seasonable weather, as it was hard to say whether our withered corn, or drooping affections, were most quickened or revived." The natives took notice; evidently, "their conjuration, and our invocation" brought different results. Soon after, Miles Standish appeared with supplies, and news that the Pilgrims' friends had made it through the storm, and would be arriving soon.[9] Following the logic of the national covenant, these good circumstances signaled "God's favor and acceptation," just as adversity had indicated His displeasure. Throughout the century ministers similarly inculcated the three notions that judgment arose from sin, and reformation brought relief.

The colonists consistently viewed adversity as

divine retribution. Dissension brought fast proclamations, as did bad weather, outbreaks of sicknesses, fires, crop pests, adverse winds, witchcraft, and even eclipses or comets.[10] In 1630 Bay colonists fasted in response to a spreading sickness, incurred during the voyage. The authorities urged humiliation "to pacify the Lord's wrath."[11] The oldest surviving Connecticut fast proclamation (1668) concerned problems with the wheat crop. It stated: "[We should] humble our souls before the Lord in the sight and sense of our manifold sins, whereby we have caused the Lord to go out against us in those yearly judgments of blasting the increase of the field."[12] Just as God had created the heavens and the earth, just as He later flooded the earth, He rained judgment on New Englanders according to the agreements of the national covenant.

Further, the first generation's fast proclamations, continuing to follow national covenant logic through the style of the jeremiad, all stated that transgression had caused God's anger. In 1638 another epidemic prompted a fast The proclamation bemoaned "the apparent decay of the power of religion, and the general declining of professors to the world."[13] England's civil wars, the resulting stagnation of immigration and trade, and the problems with crops and disease (1640-1670), brought Cotton Mather to state that many had neglected religion for worldly pursuits.[14] The Connecticut proclamation

reflected on "our manifold sins, whereby we have caused the Lord to go out against us. . . ."[15] The proclamations remained consistent: Adversity existed because sin persisted.

The call for reformation completed these jeremidic proclamations. Reformation brought back the blessings of being a part of the national covenant. God punished the nation (externally) as a whole, but because the nation lived in the covenant, it could overcome its misfortunes through repentance and reformation. When the group acted collectively to rectify sin, it could be assured, through the national covenant, that blessings would return. Therefore, from proclamation to jeremiad, fast days became times of humiliation and confidence simultaneously. In the midst of adversity, New Englanders knew that ultimately, joy prevailed.[16]

Finally, the fast proclamations of the seventeenth century indicated the dominance of national covenant theology by making an earnest exhortation for humiliation and reform. For example, a 1648 Massachusetts proclamation encouraged "all persons. . . to abstain from bodily labor that day, and resort to public meetings, [and] to seek the Lord, as becomes Christians in a day of humiliation."[17] The Plymouth proclamation of 1623 urged repentance. The Connecticut proclamation mentioned above recommended humiliation "before the Lord in the sight and sense of our manifold

sins." Minister Charles Morton's reference to a fast of 1664 mentioned that the people were urged to look upon their hearts and lives, discover their sins that were bringing divine displeasure, and repent or reform, so God would not "stir up all his wrath, but yet may delight over them to do them good from the beginning of the year to the end thereof."[18] Even references to fasts followed the pattern of the jeremiad, because people interpreted events in terms of the national covenant. And as always, jeremiads ended positively, reaffirming the colonists' special status.

The last quarter of the seventeenth century, according to Perry Miller and Michael Hall, and others witnessed the downfall of the Puritan religious paradigm.[19] The fast proclamations suggest, on the contrary, New England intellectuals continued to interpret adversity providentially. These years brought one crisis after another to the Bay Colonists. King Philip's War, the Dominion of New England, Salem witchcraft, and the new charter presented ample opportunities for fasting. In spite of the intracolonial strife and conflict these circumstances engendered, the fast proclamations continued to express consistently the national covenant ideas in the form of the jeremiad.

As the first generation grew old and the second began to assume authority, changes occurred in both

society and sermonology. Cries of declension echoed throughout the land. The Stuarts had once again captured the throne, and Charles would surely be a constant nuisance. Many claimed that the innovation of the Half-Way Covenant would eventually wrest purity from the gathered church. The innovation allowed "children of the church"--full members' sons and daughters who had not yet received salvation--to transmit baptism to their children. Divisions arose among ministers, who generally favored the Half-Way Covenant, and congregations, who did not.[20] New Englanders had also experienced an unusual number of epidemics and agricultural disasters. Caterpillars and locusts ravaged crops, and the deadly smallpox claimed the lives of hundreds of colonists. Amidst these hardships, the jeremiad came to fruition.

The adversities caused many New England ministers to believe that the colonists had forsaken the national covenant. Further, young second generation ministers had begun a struggle to establish themselves. The jeremiad became fully developed, as the clergy now began to insist that the colonists had forsaken the errand their fathers had pursued faithfully. An obstinate people, unwilling to submit to the authority of their ministers, had brought God's wrath.

In what David Hall has called "declension politics," a struggle ensued over authority and church

polity. Generally, "purist" ministers, those who opposed the Half-Way Covenant and advocated salvation testimony, allied with deputies against the magistrates and "innovation" ministers, those who advocated an "inclusive" membership polity. Each side blamed the other for the supposed declension. In 1670 the deputies had a committee draft a statement blaming the decline on ministerial innovation, mainly the Half-Way Covenant. The clergy argued that congregational rebellion against clerical authority had caused a pietistic stagnation. To complicate matters further, a sizeable group in Boston's First Church desired a split, and formation of another congregation. These struggles intensified, but then ended quickly when New Englanders had to unite against a powerful confederation of Indians determined to reclaim their land.[21]

Chief Metacomit, known as King Philip, led a group of Narragansetts, Nipmucks, and his Wompanoags in a devastating guerilla warfare. He managed to get within ten miles of Boston, but eventually succumbed to the colonists' superior firepower. Victory came at a high cost for New England: approximately one out of every ten to eleven adult English males died, and thirteen settlements were wiped out and many others badly damaged. The war's cost was about 100,000 pounds.[22]

The war, viewed according to national covenant ideology, provided substance to the cries of declension,

and unity to quarrelling authorities. Ministers had insisted that continued congregational obstinance would eventually bring Jehovah's wrath, and therefore the war enhanced clerical status. The General Court passed laws to reinforce the clergy's call for reformation. Ultimately, King Philip's War reaffirmed the New England Way, reviving corporate fellowship and covenant devotion.[23]

The fast proclamations issued during the war demonstrated this renewed corporate fellowship and persistence of national covenant theology. First, they stated that the Almighty had caused the terrible adversity. A 1675 proclamation began, "upon the serious consideration of the Lord's anger wherewith he has covered this land in the lengthening out of war. . . . " God was "withholding in a great measure his blessing," and threatening "to drive us out of our worldly possessions." Further, He had delivered "us into the hand of the barbarous heathen round about us."[24] A 1676 proclamation stated that God "is reaching forth his hand against us [through] the heathen in the Northern parts."[25] Further, the colonists viewed the Indians, not as national enemies, but impersonal instruments of God's judgments.[26]

Second, the war brought admissions of guilt that would have pleased Jeremiah. The proclamation read on February 21, 1675 stated that "God hath been provoked,"

because his people did not heed the words of their ministers. This terrible war came about through their worldliness, yet still, the people hardened their hearts before the Lord.[27] A proclamation for a day of public humiliation decried "our manifold sins. . . great unthankfulness, [the] leaving of our first love. . . [and] the apostasy of many from the truth unto heresies." And if anyone missed it the first time, the proclamation repeated the fact that "many horrid and scandalous sins," and the insensitivity to God's displeasure abounded.[28] Thus the proclamations completed the negative aspects of their jeremidic lamentations.

The announcements continued to call for reformation and promise blessing. A day of humiliation in Boston in 1675 brought together all the magistrates, elders, and people. The ministers urged humiliation, repentance, and reformation, and promised that Providence would "clear up the righteousness of his judgments before all the world." The proclamation called for confession and change; it stated that repentance would bring God to work against the enemy.[29] Increase Mather's history of the war commented on how Providence had assisted the New Englanders, after "they renewed their Covenant with him. . . . Therefore have we good reason to hope that this Day of Trouble is near to an end."[30] Ultimately, God's nation always stood victorious.

Natural adversity prompted the public fasts between the end of King Philip's War and the Dominion of New England, and the proclamations closely followed the same providential judgment-sin-reformation pattern. A 1678 fast proclamation stated that the Lord, through His mercy, had protected His people "from the malice and rage" of their enemies, "yet in hostility with us [he has] also inflicted distemper of the small pox (daily increasing in our principal towns. . . .)"[31] In 1679, God's wrath brought him to give "a commission to the destroying angel, in respect of a sore and terrible disease," and to cause fires in different places. The people were called to "lament over the doleful ruins and desolations" which Jehovah had caused.[32] In 1680, the Lord moved against the wheat fields "by worms, which his own hand (who is able by the most contemptible of his creatures to stain our glory)" had moved. Further, God had delivered English vessels to "enemies of the Christian name," and had caused shipwrecks and "sudden and unexpected deaths."[33] New Englanders, like Pharaoh, only straightened up until Jehovah ended a plague; when good times returned, they backslid and reneged, forcing God's hand once again. Taking this view of adversity, the colonists assured themselves of God's continuing involvement in their affairs.

Just as it was sin that caused Providence to send

King Philip, transgression now led to natural disaster. The 1679 fast announcement stated that God should "punish yet seven times for our sins" and that there were "awful symptoms of a famine of hearing the word of the Lord."[34] The 1683 proclamation commented that the terrible hardships the Bay colonists were experiencing would get worse, as long as sin continued unabated.[35]

The call for reformation also continued. In a 1678 proclamation, small pox was an affliction "to humble us, and prove us, and do us good in the latter end." The fast day was to be a time to "obtain reconciliation [and] right understanding and favor with the King majesty."[36] A 1679 announcement stated: "[We will] gather ourselves together, in a way of solemn humiliation and repentance." The fast was declared,

> exhorting all the inhabitants thereof [the jurisdiction], not only to confess, but forsake their sins, so that they may find mercy with God through Jesus Christ, and to cry mightily to heaven, as for pardon, so for grace to reform those evils. . . declared to be the provoking, procuring [God's] controversy with New England.[37]

The 1683 proclamation that bemoaned "sword, fire, blastings, losses at sea, sicknesses," deaths, difficulties in public affairs, and the problems of Protestants in the world stated that things would get worse, unless reformation took place soon.[38] Every fast day proclamation in the seventeenth century ended with the positive side of the national covenant and the jeremiad, by offering hope through humiliation,

confession, repentance, and/or reformation.[39]

The Andros regime, and the Glorious Revolution and the new charter, were crucial events for every aspect of New England's existence. The institution of the fast underwent important changes during these years, and the proclamations, as always, reflected and commented on the colony's concerns. The historiography on this period varies greatly: Michael Hall has asserted that King Philip's War represented the apex of Puritan providential thought. When the war ended, the few ministers who still interpreted events according to the logic of the national covenant and the jeremiad no longer spoke for the majority of New Englanders. Similarly, Timothy Breen has argued that Massachusetts intellectuals ceased interpreting adversity providentially; instead, they viewed the Andros regime politically and in relation to property, and justified resistance based on these purely secular concerns. Conversely, Harry Stout argues that, although the charter severed political harmony between church and government, it did not disrupt ideas of covenant peculiarity or religious mission.[40] The fast proclamations remained jeremidic, suggesting that in times of adversity, harmony did exist between church and state. Contrary to Michael Hall's and Breen's assertions, national covenant ideas continued to dominate, both during the Dominion era, and after the

new charter.

In 1684, Charles revoked Massachusetts' charter and established the Dominion of New England, a consolidation of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Plymouth, and later, New Jersey and New York. The resulting anxiety in Massachusetts turned into anger with the appointment of Governor Sir Edmund Andros. Everything about Andros, from his association with the Stuarts to his sumptuous dress and drinking and gambling, alienated him and New Englanders. Debates concerning the proper practice of public fasting became one of the sources of this alienation.

Conflict over proclaiming occasions occurred as soon as Andros arrived in Boston. Arguing that he alone had the authority to make occasional appointments, Andros cancelled a day of thanksgiving set for November of 1687. The next year, he announced a thanksgiving celebration. Although the area churches knew of the appointment, they did not receive formal notice (it is not known why). Ministers took advantage of the situation, and neglected to observe the day. In early 1689, the Andros government attempted to announce a fast and humiliation day in commemoration of the death of Charles I. No church acknowledged the day.[41]

The disjunction between Andros and Boston ministers arose because the occasions no longer conformed with the ideas of the national covenant. For example, Andros's

attempt to institute a colony-wide mourning for the death of Charles contradicted Puritan thought, which viewed the Interregnum as divine intervention. Andros also held Anglican services in Boston's Third Church.[42] In short, his methods denied the colony's claim to peculiar status.

Controversy was the inevitable result, because the colonists still perceived events according to national covenant ideology. Most New Englanders believed that the charter revocation and the Dominion signaled God's wrath.[43] Many churches, acting on the conviction that only reformation could bring relief, began implementing the Half-Way Covenant; they saw the Dominion as evidence of God's displeasure over the growing number of unchurched people.[44] When the Glorious Revolution deposed Andros, public fasting reassumed its function of inculcating national covenant ideology, but not until another conflict arose over the occasion of the fast.

With the new charter, religious cooperation between church and state changed.[45] In theory, fast-proclaiming authority became the sole responsibility of the governor, but in practice, things continued much as before. One of the first acts of the new governor, Sir William Phips, was to order the keeping of a fast that ministers had broached a month before his arrival. Orders for fasts continued to originate as before, as a general concurrence among Boston ministers and the

provincial government.[46]

Royal governors or their secretaries wrote most of the fast announcements, but ministers continued to exert influence. For example, the governor's secretary usually sought the advice of the local clergy in drafting an announcement, and often asked ministers serving in the General Court to author the publications. The Council, secretary, governor, Samuel Sewall, and a local judge all helped write a proclamation during Queen's Anne's War.[47] It seems that, after the clergy grew accustomed to the fact that the government controlled public fasts, the institution reassumed its function as a unifying event.

The transfer of authority did bring momentary conflict, though, and it revolved around the witchcraft at Salem. Only one of the two proclamations drafted during the witchcraft mania survives, and it followed the same style as those issued before the controversies that began with Andros. It commented on "the various awful judgments of God continued upon the English nation," which included disease, war, sickness, and earthquakes. Also, the Lord had shown His wrath "by permitting witchcrafts and evil angels to rage amongst his people."[48] It was not until four years later that a struggle over proclamation phrasing occurred.

For the first years after the executions, most New Englanders simply hoped to forget the tragedy, but

eventually, they desired a fast-humiliation day to atone for mistakes. In response, Cotton Mather drafted a proclamation. He asserted that apostasy had increased far too much since the colony's beginning. The Gospel had been forsaken, the Covenant of Grace "hath been by multitudes not submitted to," those who professed it had not acted accordingly, people were drinking too much, and some were even selling liquor to the natives; "vain swearing and hellish cursing" were excessive, a "vanity in apparel" existed, the Sabbath rest was being neglected, and families were slack in discipline. Mather continued to insist that sin was the cause of disorder, maintaining that New Englanders were guilty of "wicked sorceries," fraud, lack of gratitude toward God for successful harvests, falsehood and slander, and, to Mather's amazement, continued iniquities in the face of "the successive and amazing judgments of God."[49] A city on a hill indeed! It sounded as though he was ready to flee this Sodom and Gomorrah.

The Council found the proclamation too harsh, and rejected it. Another was written, and the Assembly passed it on December 17, 1696. The reference to the witchcraft stated:

> And especially, that whatever Mistakes, on either hand, have been fallen into, either by the body of this People, or any Orders of men, referring to the late Tragedie raised amongst us by Satan and his Instruments, through the awful judgment of God; He would humble us, therefore, and pardon all the errors of his Servants and People that desire to

Love his Name; and be atoned to His Land.[50]

Although not as condemnatory as Mather's, the proclamation admitted God's judgment arising from sin, and desired restoration through humiliation and reformation.

The only important innovation the provincial government made in regard to fasting was the establishment of a predetermined, annual fast. In the absence of particularly distressing events, authorities proclaimed fasts for "the usual interests of Spring and Summer ensuing." Those interests always included agriculture, trade, and fishing, protection from enemies, and a favorable disposition from the mother country.

Although this represented a departure from the adversity-produced fast, it is significant that the colonists fasted in the absence of hardship. Further, the fast practices and proclamations that came before and after these annual humiliations offer no indication that the ceremony had become merely perfunctory. Instead, the colonists seem to have found it necessary to reinforce the national covenant periodically, regardless of the temporal circumstances. The proclamations followed the humiliation-reform pattern even when there existed no immediate sign of God's displeasure. No matter what the situation, New Englanders found it important to examine themselves

before God, as a nation. Further, the annual fast did not become the norm, but the exception. Frequent public fasting continued in times of affliction; the fast proclamation as ideological response to adversity was far from extinct. For example, a 1699 proclamation pondered "the holy and righteous God, threatening to interrupt and take away the present peace and tranquility of this province. . . . " Also prompting the fast were "troubles feared to arise from the heathen. . . and the sore and bitter persecutions wherewith the people of God in France, and some other parts of Europe, are grievously harassed and oppressed, for the profession of Christ and his truth." The announcement urged reformation, manifest through increased fervor in spreading the gospel.[51]

During the seventeenth century, in sum, the sense of religious conviction and mission articulated in the national covenant remained dominant, as the ideas expressed in the fast proclamations did not change. First, there existed the belief that Providence directed both favorable and adverse occurrences. Second, adversity was seen as the consequence of the sin that existed among God's covenanted people; New Englanders believed they deserved every hardship that came their way. Finally, the necessity of repentance and reformation, the disasters sure to come if change did not take place soon, and the hope and joy of a truly

reformed people continued to find expression in all the proclamations. Timothy Breen's assertions that religion was "out of politics," and no longer provided New Englanders with a basis for viewing the world seem overstated at best. Further, the practice of fasting and the fast proclamations simply do not fit in with Michael Hall's "secular," "pluralistic" society. And, as will be evident in eighteenth-century proclamations, the occasional pronouncements and their relation to national covenant theology continued to be a source of concern, and sometimes controversy. In the next century, certain ideas in the fast announcements changed, but fasting consistently followed the theology of the national covenant. When adversity visited, New Englanders believed their sin had caused it, and they sought relief through the corporate examination and reformation associated with the public fast.

## CHAPTER ONE NOTES

[1] Information on the covenant is drawn from Miller, The New England Mind. The Seventeenth Century, 398-99 and Chpt. 16. From Colony to Province, Chpt. 1.

[2] For a discussion regarding the way in which Puritan theologians reconciled free will and predestination, see James W. Jones, The Shattered Synthesis. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973). Also, see Pettit, Heart Prepared.

[3] Stout, New England Soul, 5, 13, 23, 27.

[4] Love, Fast Days, Chpt. 1.

[5] Alexander Cruden, Cruden's Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949), 204.

[6] See Joshua 7: 6-16, Judges 20: 25-26, and II Samuel 12: 15-16.

[7] M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 287, 436. Also, Leonard Bacon, The Genesis of the New England Churches. (New York: Harper and Bros., 1874), 284. Patrick Collinson, The Religion of Protestants. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 247.

[8] Sacvan Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978). Also, David Minter, "The Puritan Jeremiad as a Literary Form," in Sacvan Bercovitch, ed., The American Puritan Imagination. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 45-55.

[9] Miller, Colony to Province, 24.

[10] Love, Fast Days, 80-81.

[11] Miller, Colony to Province, 20.

[12] In Love, Fast Days, 179, 191.

[13] Ibid, 191.

[14] Ibid, 125.

[15] Ibid, 177, 179.

[16] Miller, Colony to Province, 22-30.

[17] Ibid, 27.

[18] In Love, Fast Days, 81, 179, 189.

[19] See Haroutunian, Piety Versus Moralism, and Levy, Preaching in the First Half Century.

[20] See Robert G. Pope, The Half-Way Covenant. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

[21] David D. Hall, The Faithful Shepherd. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972).

[22] Douglass E. Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1958), 243-245.

[23] Stout, New England Soul, 80-82.

[24] Boston Council. A Proclamation for a Fast, 1675. (Boston: Early American Imprints), 39191.

[25] Idem, Fast, 1676 (Imprints 39198).

[26] Stout, New England Soul, 80.

[27] Boston Council. Fast, 1675 (Imprints 39191).

[28] Idem, A Proclamation for a Day of Public Humiliation and Prayer. (Imprints 39188).

[29] Miller, Colony to Province, 32. Boston Council. Fast, 1675 (Imprints 39191).

[30] Miller, Colony to Province," 32.

[31] Boston Council. Fast, 1678 (Imprints 39206).

[32] Idem, Fast, 1679 (Imprints 273).

[33] Idem, Fast, 1680 (Imprints 39216).

[34] Idem, Fast, 1679 (Imprints 273).

[35] Idem, Fast, 1683 (Imprints 39223).

[36] Idem, Fast, 1678 (Imprints 39206).

[37] Idem, Fast, 1679 (Imprints 273).

[38] Idem, Fast, 1683 (Imprints 39223).

[39] See Imprints 529, 482, 39298, 39364 also.

[40] Hall, Last American Puritan, 205. Breen, Good Ruler, 137-150. Stout, New England Soul, 117-122.

[41] Love, Fast Days, 228-237.

[42] Stout, New England Soul, 112.

[43] Viola Florence Barnes, The Dominion of New England. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923), 52-53, 250-251.

[44] Pope, Half-Way Covenant, Chpt. 7. The practice of fasting indirectly disputes the many interpretations of societal declension and materialism. For example, see Darrett B. Rutman, Winthrop's Boston (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965); Bernard Bailyn, The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century (New York: Harper and Row, 1955). Sumner Chilton Powell, Puritan Village (New York: Anchor Books, 1963). New England churchgoers continually supported fasting customs that reiterated national covenant ideology, not only in the seventeenth century, but throughout the colonial period. This emphatically disputes Larzer Ziff's assertion that ministers and their jeremiads had "become separated from the details of daily reality. . . and unresponsive to the realities of their particular congregations." Puritanism in America (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), quoted at 199 and 210.

[45] See Stout, New England Soul, 115-122.

[46] In Love, Fast Days, 265-268.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Boston Council. Fast, 1692 (Imprints 39298).

[49] Love, Fast Days, Chpt. 14.

[50] Ibid, Chpt. 17.

[51] Boston Council. Fast, 1699 (Evans 39364).

# CHAPTER TWO

The ideas expressed in the fast proclamations issued in the first half of the eighteenth century continued to reinforce New Englanders' sense of special status and corporate identity. Proclamations remained providential in explaining adversity. The promulgation of the notion of New England peculiarity, as expressed through the sin-judgment-reformation logic of the national covenant, continued to dominate proclamation rhetoric.

Perry Miller has argued, conversely, that the early 1700s represented a period of declension, when the events in New England dealt a severe blow to the ideas of the covenant and jeremiad. The society "had become like a time-bomb, packed with dynamite, the fuse burning close. It was a parched land, crying for deliverance from the hold of ideas that had served their purpose and died." Recently, Michael Hall has argued similarly, asserting that "the judgmental Puritanism of the providential world. . . had passed in Massachusetts before [Increase] Mather died."[1]

Miller's arguments, especially those concerning the secularization of Cotton Mather's writings and ministerial thought, have been challenged. Harry S.

Stout, for example, disputes the Miller thesis in The New England Soul. Traditional piety to moralism arguments, he asserts, have exaggerated Mather's moralistic teachings and ignored his traditional and straightforward emphasis on conversion. Mather chose his words carefully in "Bonifacius" (the work Miller based much of his argument on), "with an eye to international recognition and. . . New England's right to keep their distinctive Congregational heritage."[2] The covenant of grace and the national covenant remained the constant themes of New England preaching.

The fast proclamations support this revisionist argument by demonstrating ideological continuity expressed in the theology of the national covenant. The jeremidic formula continued to dominate proclamation rhetoric, explaining hardship in terms of sin, and blessing in terms of repentance and reformation. The notion of national peculiarity remained. Proclamation framers reenforced that sense of peculiarity through two rhetorical accommodations that cultural and political conditions made necessary.

First, during the colonial wars, fast announcements began to denounce the empire's enemies, whether they be Indians, Spanish, or French. In the seventeenth century, proclamation drafters had heaped condemnation only on themselves. But beginning with Queen Anne's War

(1702-1713), announcements admonished "perfidious" Indians, and the "barbarous" and "abhorrent" Spanish and French papists. Second, beginning with the French and Indian War, proclamations began stating that God had "allowed" the colonial conflicts. In the previous century Jehovah had "inflicted" or "stretched out his hand," but during the 1750s and after, he "permitted" or "allowed" the treacherous French (and later British) actions.

These two shifts in proclamation rhetoric demonstrate the continuity of national covenant ideology. Spanish and French encroachment threatened New Englanders' spiritual and temporal well-being, or the covenant of grace and the national covenant. Catholic countries represented the Antichrist, and by providing sharp contrast, the proclamations' verbal assaults inculcated and reenforced the colony's covenanted peculiarity. Further, fast announcements still stated that adversity arose from unrepentant sin. Therefore, when drafters asserted that God "allowed" warfare, they were depicting enemies as mere instruments of God's judgments, much like they had viewed the natives during King Philip's War.

Finally, the absence of a rhetorical shift during natural adversities indicated the continuing prevalence of the national covenant. Announcements treated smallpox, drought, crop failures, and earthquakes

exactly as they had during the 1600s: as God's "chastisements" and "inflicted judgments." In all adversities, the jeremidic promulgation of national covenant theology dominated the fast proclamations. While the world of commerce gained importance, the clergy lost prestige, the Enlightenment crept in, and the rigors of early settlement disappeared, the Yankee may have provided a more staunch competition for the Puritan, but he could not yet claim victory.

The hardships that Queen Anne's War brought to New England prompted most of the public fasts in the first years of the century. When Anne assumed the throne in 1702, Massachusetts kept fasts for "the impending war." In June 1703, Governor Joseph Dudley met with various Indian tribes in an effort to avert hostilities. Negotiations failed, and in August the Indians attacked frontier settlements, killing or capturing over a hundred colonists.[3]

A 1703 fast proclamation demonstrated the new style of contrasting enemies against the covenanted. During King Philip's War, when the colonists fought only the native Americans, fast proclamations focused on Jehovah's acts of anger aimed at New Englanders, and only mentioned Indians as agents of God's judgments. In 1703, the wickedness of the Indians--as instruments of the French and therefore the Antichrist--had become a focus. In essence, the new method was an attempt to

differentiate between New Englanders and their enemies. In other words, proclamation phrases were rhetorical accommodations, prompted by the necessity of maintaining national peculiarity and special status. "It has pleased Almighty God," the 1703 proclamation began, "to suffer the perfidious and treacherous Indians, (whom no methods of kindness and good treatment have been effectual) without provocation to them given, to break forth. . . into open rebellion," and to commit "inhumane and barbarous cruelties and murders upon many of her majesty's good subjects. . . ."[4] This new form was unlike any proclamation of the 1600s.

However, what seemed a possible departure from covenant-jeremidic ideas was instead a reaction to involvement in the colonial wars. The Indians had become part of a French design, a scheme of the Antichrist himself. Through their condemnation of them, the Puritans reassured themselves of their prominence among nations. An announcement issued in 1707 reaffirmed the national covenant. The proclamation confirmed the judgment of Providence in "the sovereign pleasure of the righteous God still lengthen[ing] out the troubles of Europe, by the continuance of war with the common enemy of the people of the Christian nations." Also, God had continued New Englanders' troubles with the "French and Indian rebels." An expedition against the French was underway, and the

proclamation urged the people to consider "the just reason we have to implore the divine favor, for the remission of our sins whereby we have justly provoked the holy God." Prayer should be offered "that deliverance may speedily arise to the church of God oppressed with the tyranny of the Antichrist."[5] The domination of national covenant theology, not the downfall, had caused the shift in emphasis.

A 1709 announcement continued in the familiar jeremidic pattern of sin-judgment-reformation: "the just rebukes of heaven upon us, in the scorching drought. . . great losses. . . and the delay of the intended expedition" to Port Royal should cause the New Englanders "to be humbled under the mighty hand" of God, "with fasting and supplication, confessing our sins. . . ." When the expedition, "an affair of [lasting] consequence to these her majesty's plantations," finally began, a fast was announced. The people were to "humbly address almighty God. . . with sincere humiliation for, [and] penitent confession of sin, and fervent supplications."[6] To the colonists, adversity still meant that too much unreformed sin existed; indeed, the authorities announced five public fasts in 1711, more than any one year since King Philip's War.[7]

Harry S. Stout has noted a change in sermonology, first evident during King Philip's War, that further

explains this rhetorical accommodation. The change had its roots in the notion of New England peculiarity and the national covenant. In preparing New Englanders for war with Philip, ministers began to preach artillery and militia sermons--another type of occasional preaching--whose "engrossing themes were righteous anger and unlimited confidence." Faced with the external threats of the Indians, Spanish, and French, these sermons assured the colonists that God fought on their side. "The sin-sick people of the fast became the unconquerable enemy of the Lord."[8] Fast proclamations issued in response to war, then, contained a mixture of the humiliation theme and the "righteous anger" theme.

Natural adversities prompted most of the public fasts between Queen Anne's and King George's wars, and a particular adversity, according to Miller, indirectly dealt a severe blow to the ideas of the national covenant. Smallpox, "the most deadly of scourges in the arsenal of a covenanted Jehovah," visited in 1720. The epidemic worsened, and Cotton Mather urged inoculation, the efficacy of which was unproven at the time. He had convinced Dr. Abdiel Boylston of Boston to begin inoculation, and when the Boston people discovered this, an unprecedented surge of anti-ministerial sentiment occurred. Because inoculation was associated with Mather, another question arose: if he advocated something detrimental, then what authority did he, or

the clergy in general, possess concerning affliction and retribution?[9] In other words, the issue brought into question ministerial authority concerning the national covenant.

The argument over inoculation, according to Miller, permanently severed the once hegemonic conception of a covenanted society. The debate, as debates so often do, turned into one of form rather than substance, a burlesque rather than scientific discourse. The New England Courant effectively satirized Mather's style, and the jeremiad, at least temporarily, was made into nonsense. "Spokesmen for that national [covenant] philosophy," Miller argued, "could no longer contend that what the people suffered was caused by their sins and that repentance alone as directed by hierophants, could relieve them."[10]

Miller further suggested that William Cooper's Letter to a Friend in the Country also represents a sort of turning point from a providential to a secular world view. Cooper called for inoculation before God struck, saying that human effort, just as repentance, should result from instruction. Miller stated, "he had refashioned Calvinism into an activism more Pelagian than any seventeenth-century Arminianism had ever dreamed of." This was Miller's way of saying that man, rather than God, was becoming the center of the universe in the New England mind.[11]

The practice of fasting and the fast proclamations do not sustain Miller's argument. Mather and his inoculation allies engendered antiministerial sentiment because many believed they were challenging the ideas of the national covenant. Writers for James Franklin's newspaper The New-England Courant, Mather's otherwise satirical nemesis, regarded the epidemic as divine retribution for sin, and repentance and reform as the remedy. They condemned "luxury" and "idleness," and urged a return "unto Him who is smiting of us, that so he may turn from the Fierceness of his Anger, and cause his Fury towards us to cease."[12] Ministers were not the only Jeremiahs.

Various scholars have disputed the Miller thesis. Robert Middlekauff takes issue with Miller in The Mathers, arguing that societal secularization had begun during the seventeenth century, but was not complete during Cotton Mather's lifetime. Miller's argument, according to Middlekauff, "does not recognize the deepest impulses of the Pietists whose primary concerns were not social, or even moral, but religious." Third-generation ministers such as Mather viewed "every alteration in society against what they could conceive of its effects on true religion." Similarly, Kenneth Silverman states that in "Bonifacius," Mather had not "drifted into secularism," but struck a balance between the prevailing, more tolerant culture, and the

traditional Puritan ideals. Mather's central purpose in "Bonifacius" was to "advance the Reformation. . . not in a Puritan city on a hill. . . but in a worldwide Pietistic evangelical movement."[13]

These revisionist arguments share the idea of accommodation, made necessary by population increase, renewed contact with Great Britain, colonial wars, and other factors that had changed New England culture. Further, the new charter altered political arrangements. Therefore, third-generation ministers accommodated religion to a shifting cultural and political scene by stressing good works and piety over correct polity. The clergy maintained a balance, or sometimes, tension, between Enlightenment rationalism and providential, revelatory Puritanism.[14] These arguments have demonstrated that deviation from the orthodoxy of the past did not necessarily indicate declension. Michael Hall's recent work, however, is fundamentally opposed to the accommodation theses, in that it presents a secular, rather than providential, society and culture.

The reaction to New England's next natural disaster, though, left little doubt about the continuing strength of jeremidic notions. In October of 1727, an earthquake, roared through the colony; the convulsions continued periodically through January. The morning after the first quake, a spontaneous community fast was held at Cotton Mather's church, the largest in Boston.

The packed meetinghouse heard a quintessential jeremiad: Mather chose Scripture from Micah as his text, "the Lord's voice cries out to the city." He warned that it might get worse, and catalogued specific sins, the worst of which was religious indifference, to underscore his assertion. He finished with Psalm 46:[15] "God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea. . . the Lord of hosts is with us." This fully traditional sin and judgment, reformation and blessing style does not conform to Miller's argument that Mather represented "a shedding of the religious conception of the universe."[16] Rather, Mather's sermon represented a guidebook to national covenant ideology, utilizing the style of the jeremiad.

Miller's, Timothy Breen's, and Michael Hall's assertions are very tenuous when one considers the earthquake reaction. Fundamentally, their arguments are the same: By the third generation, most ministers, and even most New Englanders, had ceased to interpret events providentially. Mather's earthquake sermon indicates otherwise, and supports the interpretations of Robert Middlekauff, Kenneth Silverman, and others, best summarized by Harry Stout: "Third-generation ministers had already extracted the principle that God worked actively through natural causes, [and] used the regular

course of nature to convey his providential care."[17] The proper response to the earthquakes, then, was reformation, and New Englanders obeyed.

The earthquakes resulted in a virtual religious revival, indicating the continuing societal strength of covenant conceptions. After Mather's sermon, Lieutenant Governor Drummer recommended evening services; the church filled, so another meeting took place at South Church. Churches held spontaneous fasts throughout the colony, and even in New Hampshire and Connecticut. Membership increased everywhere; in the year following the quakes, Andover's North Parish admitted 158 new members, John Brown's church at Haverhill admitted 154, and Cotton Mather's church admitted 71, more than any other year of his ministry.[18]

The official response of the colony, the fast proclamation issued in early 1728, further showed the continuing dominance of jeremidic notions. The announcement outlined "the present threatening aspects of divine Providence towards this people," manifest in "repeated shakings and convulsions of the earth" throughout the province, "by which God testifies his righteous anger against us, and calls loudly upon us to prepare to meet him in the way of his judgments." The proclamation urged a "humble and sincere confession of our sins, the just grounds of God's controversy with us." The people were to pray that, "above all, [God]

would pour out his spirit upon us, and make us a reformed and religious people; and that the glorious kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ may be hastened."[19] The judgement-sin-reformation pattern of the national covenant and jeremiad remained throughout the 1720s.

From 1729 to 1735, New Englanders suffered few particularly distressing hardships. Annual fast-humiliation days, held in early Spring, replaced the adversity-produced fast. Because no specific adversity existed, the proclamations made no specific references, but rather general citations regarding the colony's temporal concerns. Although the sense of urgency and immediacy were absent, the proclamations cited belief in divine intervention. For example, an announcement of 1729 began:

> It being our indispensable duty, by humble supplication, to commend all our affairs and interests to the divine favor and protection, and to acknowledge our absolute dependence on the blessing of God for our success therein. . . .[20]

A 1731 proclamation, this one more jeremidic, urged "a sincere and penitent confession of our manifold and aggravated sins whereby God has been provoked to manifest his holy anger against us." The announcement continued, calling people to seek "divine favor for averting the tokens of his just displeasure, and for bestowing on us all needful blessings."[21] Fasts, just as in the seventeenth century, always served as

occasions to inculcate national covenant theology.

The bodies of the proclamations were similar to the introductions. The specificity, urgency, and immediacy were absent; for example, adversity-produced proclamations often began with "Upon consideration of the sore and terrible disease. . ." or "The various awful judgments of God. . . ." The announcements through most of the 1730s did not contain such gloomy lamentations, but covenant ideas remained. Prayer was urged for the King and Queen, the Prince of Wales, and "the other Protestant branches of the royal family," and their dominions. Further, drafters sought Jehovah's blessing concerning peace in Europe, the provincial government, planting and harvesting, merchandise, fishing and navigation, peace and health, and the continuance of civil and religious privileges. Finally, the ubiquitous calls for repentance and reformation, and a desire for Christ to hasten His coming were always expressed.[22] For the first time since the colony's founding, no immediate hardship spurred public fasting. However, the fast proclamations still stated that God directed all affairs of the nation, sin caused hardship, and reformation brought blessings.

The one adversity that did prompt a public fast in the 1730s still caused national covenant-jeremidic laments and hopes. A 1735 proclamation commented smallpox, "which has already greatly wasted our numbers,

and threatens yet more terrible effects, unless prevented by the merciful interposition of providence" The proclamation, adhering to covenant concepts, articulated the belief that the sickness came from heaven. It began: "Upon consideration of the holy anger of almighty God, evidently manifested in the various judgments inflicted on us. . . ." The body of the proclamation was similar to the preceding ones regarding the usual articles of prayer. The only variance, a sign of abnormal adversity, was the hope "that [God] would compassionate [sic] our great distress under the. . . mortal sickness by sanctifying this awful visitation and restoring us to the voice of health."[23] During the first four decades of the eighteenth century, then, Massachusetts authorities continually repeated the national covenant notions that formed the ideological foundation of New England society from the beginning.

The revivals of the 1740s did not alter or damage that foundation. The Great Awakening never challenged the idea of the national covenant. Old and New Lights often debated proper maintenance of covenants, especially the salvation covenant, but never New England's peculiarity. Unfortunately, the one public fast proclamation issued during the height of the Awakening in New England no longer exists. But there seems to be little question that the jeremiad and federal covenant remained.

For example, Jonathan Edwards, at least in terms of the national covenant and the jeremiad, demonstrated continuity with the Puritan past. Edwards fully propounded the idea of New England peculiarity, and the colony's public identity as a people existing in an external national covenant.[24] Further, he promulgated the jeremidic notion of divine "process," the gradual, providential course toward millennial fulfillment. In other words, he confirmed God's continuing, progressive involvement with a people covenantally bound to Him. Edwards believed sacred history was reaching its apex in New England, and, according to Bercovitch, thereby "adopted wholesale the Puritan vision of the New World."[25]

Although the Great Awakening brought more change, in more areas, in a more contentious environment than New England had ever known, consistency remained the most notable characteristic regarding the national covenant. The ministers of the era were more heterogeneous than previous generations, in areas of social and regional background, and in preaching style. But by forming voluntary clerical associations after the revivals to attempt reconciliation, they reached basic points of agreement, which included the doctrine of original sin, the necessity of rebirth, justification by faith, and visible fruits of obedience. The authority of Scripture and the notion of a covenanted society were

two fundamental notions never even called into question.[26]

Further, national covenant ideology provided the foundation for Old and New Light unification during King George's War.[27] Left to themselves, the colonists could bicker over itinerant preaching and the way to conversion, but when their very borders were threatened, New Englanders united against a common enemy that made New Lights (or Old Lights) pale in comparison--the dreaded papists. A 1745 fast proclamation began with a verbal assault on the uncovenanted; just as in Queen Anne's War, a good diatribe contrasted the covenanted and uncovenanted, thereby heightening the "nation's" sense of special status:

> Upon consideration of the unnatural, wicked and traitorous rebellion in Great Britain against his majesty's sacred person and rightful and happy government in favor of a popish pretender to his imperial crown; excited and supported by the powers of France and Spain, for the subversion of our religious and civil liberties, and the introduction of popery and arbitrary power into the British dominions. . .

The conviction that New Englanders were at fault remained, as the authorities bemoaned "the manifestation of the righteous anger" of Jehovah, and "the great infidelity, impiety and immorality abounding among us." The proclamation again lamented the results of the Almighty's "just and holy indignation" against His children, who deserved the punishment of war.[28] Adversity continued to bring ideological unification,

and the jeremiad remained the form of expression.

King George's War had especially distressing effects in Massachusetts,[29] and the practice of fasting and the fast proclamations indicated that the colonists still viewed hardship according to the sin-judgment-reformation pattern. First, the annual fast, instituted during the 1730s when the colony suffered only one distressing adversity, disappeared. Massachusetts returned to the custom of frequent fasting, as the authorities announced sixteen public fasts during the five years of conflict.[30] Second, the proclamations continued to denounce sin. One mentioned "the great infidelity, impiety, and immoralilty abounding among us," and another the rampant "prophaneness and impiety." Another bemoaned "pride, luxury, and intemperance," and yet another, the colonists' "many heinous and provoking sins." Proclamations further reinforced the jeremidic notion of divine retribution. Announcements alluded to God's "just and holy indignation against us," the "evident signs of the just displeasure of Almighty God," the continued "judgments of heaven lying upon us," and God's righteous anger that brought Him to "chastise and afflict this people." Finally, all of the proclamations exhorted confession and reformation. One called the people to plead with God, another demanded a more sincere manifestation of "the true Protestant religion," and another urged "frugality, diligence, and other

virtues which may render us a happy people."[31] The fast proclamations simply lend no credence to the idea of a New England shift from Puritanism to secularism.

The war announcements continued to lambast the uncovenanted, as Massachusetts strived to maintain its peculiarity. One of the most effective ways of maintaining Massachusetts' uniqueness was through contrast with the godless. Besides the above-mentioned proclamation which verbally assaulted France and Spain, a 1745 proclamation attacked the Indians on the near frontier. In spite of "the great patience of this government in enduring many acts of violence, committed by them in open breach of their solemn treaties," they have "perpetuated cruel murders and other outrages" upon frontier inhabitants.[32] The proclamation then continued in the familiar sin-judgment-reformation formula.

From the end of the war to 1755, the council issued general and specific proclamations; both types reinforced national covenant ideology. One fast statement commented on the continued "judgments of heaven lying upon us." The continuing war, "and the many difficulties and embarrassments which attend our public affairs--" specifically, the court-house had completely burned--were evidence that Providence was handing out retribution for sin. The need for reformation, and the disasters sure to come if repentance was not speedy, completed the introduction. The announcement exhorted

all authorities to make sure the fast was observed.[33] In 1749, drought and insects were "instances of [God's] displeasure against this people for their many heinous and provoking sins."[34] In 1752, Jehovah "sent" the smallpox to Boston and other towns; confession of sins, which "are the cause of these and other judgments and calamities inflicted on us," was urged.[35] A 1754 proclamation also expressed the sentiment that God had brought a mortal sickness, and it would get worse unless repentance occurred.[36] Regarding natural adversity, the style of the jeremiad remained intact, as the focus remained on right standing with God--this was no secular society.

The fast proclamations that did not arise from specific adversity continued to be general statements, lacking any sense of urgency, but nonetheless promoting the national covenant. The introductions usually acknowledged an "absolute dependence" on God, mentioned something like "the usual interests of Spring and Summer ensuing," and commented on whatever war was going on in Europe. An acknowledgment of sin and the call for continual reformation was always present. The bodies of these proclamations were also all similar to the above-mentioned 1731 proclamation.[37]

In the 1750s New England found itself in yet another colonial imbroglio, and it was during the during the French and Indian War that the second rhetorical

accommodation began appearing in fast proclamations. During the war, the proclamations began stating that Providence had "permitted" or "allowed" unjust French or Indian invasions. Conversely, previous announcements depicted a more active God, one who "threatened," "inflicted," or "stretched forth his hand." Originally, the change may have simply reflected the style of the new governor, William Shirley. More likely, the shift signified a desire to maintain New England's peculiarity, by heightening the contrast between the covenanted and the uncovenanted. In viewing French "aggression" as something that God permitted, the colonists assured themselves that only their actions had direct repercussions in heaven, a logic that faithfully followed the national covenant. The diabolic papists naturally sought to usurp the covenanted from their rightful possessions, but were kept at bay as long as New Englanders maintained their covenant obligations. When they transgressed, Providence removed His protective hand, thereby manifesting His anger. This permitted the forces of the Antichrist to pursue their evil desires, and begin a war against the chosen people. Ministers were depicting enemies as mere instruments of God's judgments. Sin had brought the adversity. Reformation still provided the only remedy. The national covenant and the jeremiad remained intact.

A proclamation in 1756 first used the word permit,

and also continued to lambast enemies. It closely followed national covenant ideas through the jeremiad: The Almighty was pleased "to chastise us with this grievous judgment of war, and to permit the unjust invasions. . . by the French." With the Indians "as instruments of their cruelty in shedding the blood of multitudes of women and children, as well as men," the French committed atrocities "most abhorrent not only to the true spirit of Christianity, but even to humanity itself."[38] Similarly, in 1757, it pleased God "to permit" the enemy to make advances, "thereby manifesting his righteous pleasure at our provoking sins."[39] The announcements remained true to the jeremiad, condemning sin and demanding reformation.

The formula remained constant throughout the war. One proclamations considered "the awful rebuke of the divine Providence in the late defeat of his majesty's forces at the river Ohio." The expedition had been to recover our rightful land, "wrested from us in the most perfidious manner by our ambitious neighbors." Another expressed hope for an end to the war "which has been prosecuted by a barbarous and perfidious enemy with such cruel carnage." Every proclamation depicted the war as divine judgment; one stated that God "has humbled us, but has now given us a measure of success;" another commented that the calamity of war "manifest[ed]. . . God's wrath." Finally, every announcement urged

humility and reformation. A 1759 announcement exhorted the colonists "to come before him with that repentance which consists in a change of mind." The most positive jeremidic statement came in a proclamation later that year, and it demonstrated both the positive ending of the jeremiad, and the confidence themes expressed during war: "It is not in our own sword, nor in our own arm that we trust; but in his right hand and the light of countenance, when he ariseth to judge the earth."[40] Victory became one in a long list of divine deliverances, and further embedded New Englanders' confidence in war, and in the national covenant.

The fast proclamations issued during the first sixty years of the eighteenth century indicated New England's continuing desire to maintain its peculiarity as expressed in national covenant theology. Authorities expressed that desire by condemning the acts of the uncovenanted groups that struggled against the colony. Through the contrast, New Englanders maintained their identity as a special people, no longer alone in the wilderness, but amidst the forces of the Antichrist--the papists and their Indian allies. Proclamations consistently followed the jeremidic pattern of sin, judgment, and reformation, simultaneously threatening severance of the covenant and assuring its continuance. The War for Independence did not bring a deviation from this consistency.

## CHAPTER TWO NOTES

[1] Miller, Colony to Province, Epilogue. Michael Hall, Last American Puritan, 361.

[2] Stout, New England Soul, 130. See also Richard Lovelace, The American Pietism of Cotton Mather. (Grand Rapids, Christian University Press, 1979). Lovelace asserts that "'Bonifacius' does have a definite propensity toward moralism. . . but the context of these statements is so qualified with doctrinal buttresses that only by ripping them out in isolation can they be turned to proove moralism." Quoted, 164-165.

[3] Love, Fast Days, 275-76.

[4] Boston Council. Fast, 1703 (Imprints 39395).

[5] Idem, Fast, 1707 (Imprints 39451).

[6] Idem, Fast, 1709 (Imprints 39487).

[7] Love, Fast Days, 487.

[8] Stout, New England Soul, 83-85.

[9] Miller, Colony to Province, Chpt. 21.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Silverman, Life and Times, 353.

[13] Robert Middlekauff, The Mathers. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 9, 212, 225. Kenneth Silverman, The Life and Times of Cotton Mather. (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 140-146, 234, 250.

[14] Stout, New England Soul, 130. Middlekauff argues that Cotton and Increase Mather's works represented more than accommodations, in that both were original thinkers, to some degree, and therefore were able to guide change, rather than simply accommodate religion to change. See The Mathers, 9. Also, in Life and Times, Silverman asserts that accommodation to

scientific methods eventually, although not during Mather's lifetime, relegated to an inferior status central Christian tenets, such as revelation. p. 234, 250. Also, see James A. Henretta, The Evolution of American Society, 1700-1815 (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Co., 1973), 95-106, and especially 129-131.

[15] Love, Fast Days, 287-91.

[16] Miller, Colony to Province, 171.

[17] Middlekauff, The Mathers, 9, 212, 275. Lovelace, American Pietism, 41-42, 164-169. Silverman, Life and Times, 70, 140-146, 234, 250, 273, 353. Stout, New England Soul, 177-179.

[18] Love, Fast Days, 293-94. Silverman, Life and Times, 418. Stout, New England Soul, 179.

[19] Boston Council. Fast, 1727 (Imprints 39892).

[20] Boston Council. Fast, 1729 (Imprints 3309).

[21] Idem, Fast, 1731 (Imprints 3567).

[22] Ibid. See also Imprints 3310, 40051.

[23] Boston Council. Fast, 1735 (Imprints 40098).

[24] Stout, New England Soul, 234-237.

[25] Bercovitch, American Jeremiad, Chpt. 4. Bercovitch's argument is a challenge to the one presented by Alan Heimert, Relgion and the American Mind (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), see especially 126.

[26] Stout, New England Soul, 185.

[27] Ibid, 213-214.

[28] Boston Council. Fast, 1745 (Imprints 5632).

[29] Carl Bridenbaugh, Cities in Revolt. (New York: Capricorn Books, 1955), 47-48.

[30] See Imprints 5632, 5634, 5636, 5805, 5806, 6002, 6185, 33186, 6187, 6358, and 6361. Frequent public fasts and the proclamations' lamentations at least qualify William McLouglhin's assertion that, psychologically, the Awakening "may be seen as the traumatic conversion of a whole society from a burden of frustration and anxiety to a buoyant assertion of self-

assurance, self-confidence, and self-righteousness." "Liberty of Conscience and Cultural Cohesion in the New Nation," in Stephen G. Kurtz and James H. Hutson, ed., Essays on the American Revolution (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 197-255, quoted at 200.

[31] Boston Council. Fast, 1746 (Imprints 5636).

[32] Idem, Fast, 1747 (Imprints 6002).

[33] Idem, Fast, 1749 (Imprints 6358).

[34] Idem, Fast, 1752 (Imprints 6882).

[35] Idem, Fast, 1754 (Imprints 7251).

[36] See Imprints 5806, 6361, 6542, 6881, 7056, 40766, and 7477.

[37] Idem, Fast, 1756 (Imprints 7712).

[38] Idem, Fast, 1757 (Imprints 7950).

[39] See Imprints 7478, 7951, 8185, 8406, 8407.

# CHAPTER THREE

Examination of the fast proclamations issued during the era of the American Revolution supports three fundamental assertions. First, struggles over proclamation statements regarding relations with, and sentiment toward, England, demonstrate that proclamation rhetoric had not become simply formal, perfunctory utterances. Fast announcements still reflected ministerial mentality. Second, examination of the practice of fasting from the passage of the Stamp Act to the outbreak of hostilities suggests that the ritual of the fast retained its significance for large numbers of people throughout not only Massachusetts, but New England in general. Fast ceremonies again became frequent and well-attended. Third, fast proclamations indicated that the message that these New Englanders sought was the theme of the national covenant. Great Britain's supposed corruption and tyranny now became the central threats to the covenant, and therefore proclamations commented on the necessity of liberty and the danger of arbitrary aggression. In other words, libertarian themes originated in the national covenant, and were not, as Nathan Hatch asserts, denotive of a secular brand of political millennialism. National

covenant notions and the jeremidic formula of sin-judgment-reformation retained their fundamental position in New England's intellectual life.

Fast proclamations throughout the colonial period reflected the attitude of ministers toward Great Britain. During the seventeenth-century, proclamations all reaffirmed allegiance to England or the monarch, even when relations between mother country and colony became uncertain. Every fast proclamation urged prayer for and exalted the monarch. Although usually repetitive and formulaic, rhetoric regarding the monarchy expressed one central idea, that of the king as protector of the people. In return for the king's protection, the people promised allegiance. The notion of a protector king, according to Richard Bushman, "was felt throughout political life, shaping the underlying patterns of political behavior."[1]

Nearly all of the fast announcements mentioned the monarch and royal family, as the ideas of protection and allegiance remained strong. For example, a 1689 proclamation concerning Indian wars, a harsh summer, and "the present circumstances of the state of Europe." The proclamation specifically urged prayer for William and Mary.[2] A list of the articles of concern in a humiliation and prayer proclamation included exhortation to offer up prayer for the king, so he might defeat his enemies, especially the papists.[3]

Proclamations during the eighteenth-century wars, as should be expected, exhibited similar statements of loyalty. A fast proclaimed in 1702 concerned "her majesty's necessary entrance into a war with the French king."[4] Yet another "just and necessary war," this time against Spain, resulted in a fast. The king, his kingdoms, his person--troubled with "the great and weighty affairs" of the period--Parliament, and the British armies all needed to be matters of prayer.[5] In a 1757 proclamation, the council encouraged prayer for the king, "that after this life he may attain everlasting joy and felicity."[6] Of course, these statements of loyalty were typical of all legal publications. Atypical references to the crown manifested the growing rift between the colonists and England.

In the 1760s, when New Englanders became increasingly discontented with imperial policies, and, eventually, the king, royal governors increasingly controlled proclamation drafting in order to stifle public criticism. Governors evidently realized the importance of the proclamations, and hoped to use them to express royal sentiment. Fasting again became a source of controversy, as the clergy found royal sentiment incompatible with the national covenant.

The first evidence of mutual dissatisfaction occurred in a 1762 announcement, as the drafters reminded the people of the necessity of allegiance in

winning the French and Indian War. It seems, at this point, that the clergy were still involved in determining fasts and writing proclamations. The language of the announcements had not yet devolved into the ritualistic, perfunctory statements characteristic of later proclamations. New Englanders, "being sensible of their duty, [and] mindful of their former obligations," were urged "to contribute all in their power" to support the king "in the just and necessary measures which he is obliged to take for the immediate defense of his people and their rights, and for the final establishment of their peace and security."[7] The exhortation must not have brought the desired effect. A fast proclamation the next year encouraged prayer that God might give "the councils of this government. . . wisdom and understanding, and the people with the spirit of truth and unity. . . being mindful of the great things that have been done for them in war, may make a right use of the blessing of peace."[8] These statements, far from being meaningless to the colonists' experience, instead demonstrated the inchoate schism between Massachusetts and England. The schism, of course, became pronounced with the Stamp Act crisis, and the history of the fast from the Stamp Act to the events at Lexington and Concord manifested the continuing strength of national covenant ideology.

Most New Englanders, in accordance with the

national covenant, viewed the Stamp Act as a divine judgment that demanded repentance. Newspapers such as the "Boston Evening Post" and the "Newport Mercury," and Boston ministers condemned the colonists' "luxury," "dissipation," "immorality," and "profaneness" that had resulted in adversity.[9] At the prompting of churchgoers, ministers requested special public fasts, but Governor Francis Bernard refused. Further, Bernard no longer sought ministerial advice in drafting proclamations, whereas previously, the clergy were not only consulted but often wrote the announcements. Now, Bernard alone drafted proclamations, suggesting that he could no longer count on clerical support.[10] In denying popular and ministerial expression, Bernard interrupted the proclamations' regular enforcement of national covenant ideology. New Englanders acted on their own.

In April 1766, when news of the repeal of the Stamp Act reached Boston, churchgoers held spontaneous thanksgiving celebrations throughout New England. Meetinghouses filled, and ministers assured their congregations that reformation had provided the remedy.[11] The colonists still responded to adversity according to the notions of sin, judgment, and reformation.

Bernard announced a fast "for the usual interests of Spring and Summer ensuing," but most congregations celebrated instead. The proclamation suggests that the

governor became optimistic about an end to the contention. He expressed the desire "that all parts and members [of the British empire] may continue to the end of time, united under one head, beneficial to each other according to their several powers and abilities." He hoped Providence would remove from the province all "fears and jealousies that have lately arisen. . . [and] restore good will and harmony" to the empire.[12]

His optimism was short-lived. The Townsend Duties soon brought widespread protest, and Bernard continued to deny popular expression in fast proclamations--he could hardly allow government announcements to criticize Parliamentary action. His proclamations now began to gloss over the turmoil. For example, introductions to the announcements became highly perfunctory, stating simply that "it has been [the] usual. . . laudable custom of this country to open the business of the year" with a fast. Introductions often simply stated that, because spring approached, it was time for a fast. The bodies of the announcements became as stereotyped as the introductions, urging prayer for the king, "his happiness. . . and the welfare of the royal family." From 1766 to 1769 Bernard announced one fast per year, and each proclamation reiterated virtually word for word the last.[13] The fast proclamations, then, no longer represented the sentiment of most New Englanders.

Bernard's successor in 1770, Governor Thomas

Hutchinson, also wrote superficial proclamations. In a fast announced two days after the Boston Massacre, he made no mention of the disaster.[14] "From a sense of our indispensable duty to seek for the blessing of heaven upon all affairs. . . " comprised the entire introduction of a 1771 proclamation. Hutchinson expressed the same desires that Bernard had for loyalty; he encouraged prayers "that the rulers in the province may be faithful to their trusts," and that the "people may lead quiet and peaceable lives."[15] Announcements no longer served to reinforce national covenant ideology, and the ministers began to adjust phrases according their liking. For example, in a 1771 thanksgiving announcement Hutchinson insisted that the list of prayer concerns contain the phrase "the continuance of our civil and religious privileges." The clergy believed the statement implied that their liberties remained intact, and so many left out the phrase. Some, such as Joseph Sumner of Shrewsbury, modified the phrase by saying "some of" when they read it to their congregations. The Boston Gazette criticized two Boston ministers--one the governor's pastor--who did read the proclamation.[16]

Hutchinson faced similar controversy throughout his governorship,[17] and in 1773 he attempted to turn the humiliation theme of the fast against the colonists. His proclamation commented on how New Englanders had

rendered themselves "unworthy by many and aggravated sins." Also, he bemoaned the loss of "those [mercies] which we have justly been deprived of by the demerit of our open impieties and infidelities."[18] The document was not specific concerning what mercies had been removed; Hutchinson likely referred to the Tea Act and the presence of English troops. But New Englanders probably heartily ignored his attempt to remind them of their sins.

The rift between governor and people grew. In response to the Boston Port Bill, several churches observed individual days of fasting, but Hutchinson refused to announce a public fast. In various towns, even on the frontier, people gathered at town centers to reaffirm their rights and privileges.[19] In contrast, many royal proclamations concerning the bill and Boston Tea Party lambasted the colonists, blaming them for forcing such strict measures by the British government.[20] Therefore, at the suggestion of Charles Chauncey, the Associated Pastors of Boston voted against reading any official proclamations to their congregations, a crucial event. For the first time since the 1680s, colonists disregarded the announcements.[21] In short, when proclamations supported national covenant ideology, New Englanders remained satisfied; when announcements did not reinforce the national covenant, the colonists resisted.

Later in 1774, the General Assembly requested a special fast from the new governor, Thomas Gage. Gage realized that ministers' style of reinforcing the national covenant would incite resistance, and he refused, stating that "the request was only to give an opportunity for sedition to flow from the pulpit." Indeed, sermons prepared for that day included "The duty of a people under the oppression of Man," "Despotism illustrated and improved from the character of Rehoboam," and "The misery and duty of an oppressed and enslaved people." Boston ministers urged congregations to observe a fast despite the governor's order, and churches throughout the colony did so.[22]

By glossing over the turmoil and strife, the fast announcements of this time reflected nothing of Boston's senitments or the colony's. If the newspapers, and spontaneous, "illegal," and well-attended fasts and thanksgivings provide any indication, New Englanders believed corporate repentance was the correct response to affliction, and still viewed hardship as divine judgments. They continued to seek public expression of group reformation. The events relative to public fasting do not sustain Nathan Hatch's assertion that New Englanders had "lost a clear distinction between the kingdom of God and the goals of their own political community."[23]

According to Hatch, the colonial wars of the 1740s

and 1750s helped build an ideological foundation for American resistance against Great Britain. He asserts that a shift in clerical emphasis from heresy to tyranny and liberty occurred during King George's War and the French and Indian War. This deviation signaled the changing concerns of the New England clergy.[24]

The fast proclamations suggest that the concern with liberties and privileges was not a creation of the mid-century wars, nor of the Glorious Revolution.[25] They demonstrate a constant, rather than periodic, concern with liberty. Fast proclamaions during the seventeenth century always mentioned "civil and sacred liberties" on the list of concerns.[26] The same was true for the eighteenth century, during both war and peace.[27] In 1717 Samuel Sewall made a diary entry regarding the drafting of a fast proclamation. He noted that there was extended discussion over whether "civil" or "religious" should be cited first, and whether the term civil encompassed religious.[28] Although the entry offers little exposition, Sewall did find the discussion significant enough to bring comment. The entry further suggests that the proclamation phrases did not represent perfunctory, purely ritualistic rhetoric, but grew from careful consideration, and often debate. The drafters chose their words carefully, and evidently found these phrases meaningful and necessary. Also, this particular fast resulted from a blizzard, and not some type of

adversity connected with extra-colonial groups, suggesting even more strongly that colonial leaders maintained a steady vigilance on the state of liberty.

The practice of fasting fundamentally suggests that New Englanders feared and fought official encroachment because it ultimately posed a threat to the national covenant. If politicians pursued selfish interests at the expense of the peoples' true interests, the people would eventually lose their privileges to their oppressors, and forfeit the right to work, legislate, and worship to their own benefit. Therefore, it was not only necessary to resist official avarice, it was also a sin not to do so. If New Englanders sleepily allowed greedy politicians to usurp their rights, they would lose their covenant status, and become an enslaved people.[29]

During the Revolution, liberties and privileges became focal points in the proclamations. New Englanders in 1776 felt they had been forced "to draw the sword in defense of our just rights and liberties, and to prevent. . . our being reduced to a state of abject slavery and misery." The declaration affirmed the connection between the outcome of the war and the enjoyment and establishment of privileges and rights.[30] Yet again, the proclamation urged prayer that "the security of [our] rights and privileges, both civil and religious, which [we] so highly esteem, may be speedily

and happily accomplished."[31] In the proclamations, liberties and privileges had previously been listed among the articles of prayer concerns. But during the 1760s and 1770s, New Englanders faced their biggest challenge to the national covenant when the king, the ultimate earthly protector of the peoples' rights, began to threaten their liberties. During the Revolution, then, and not before, the desire for their maintenance became a specific reason for announcing a fast, and the proclamations contained more exposition on these subjects.

The fast's new concern with liberty did not reflect secularization, but vigilance in a sacred obligation to maintain the federal covenant and the "proper" state. It must be reemphasized that the national covenant dealt with earthly punishments and rewards; the theory of sin-judgment-reformation explained worldly adversity or blessing. God had punished the colonists through Metacomit, Andros, smallpox, and earthquakes, and now He threatened them with oppression and slavery. The earthly event of the 1770s was the struggle for liberty; therefore, occasional pronouncements, and the occasional pulpit,[32] explained the necessity of privileges, and why they had been threatened. The <u>absence</u> of a shift to libertarian themes would have indicated shifting clerical concerns. Clerical messages changed because the threats to the national covenant changed.

Further, in an effort to accommodate to political change, the New England clergy had always adjusted their typological works to fit present circumstances. Typology shifted, just as occasional pronouncements did, because of the need to reinforce the colony's peculiar status. The first two generations, for example, focused on Israel's divine theocracy, and therefore viewed the New England way as a continuation of the covenant, a new Israel. The clergy of the Revolution era concentrated on Israel's premonarchical period, the time of the Jewish "republic." Anarchy or excessive popular democracy constituted the major threats to Winthrop's hierarchy; external tyranny became the major threat to the evolving American republic. The national covenant, once again, was at stake. As long as the colonists remained true to God, the new Israel could crush these threats as they had done before. Typological writings and sermons, therefore, demonstrated the historical, providential intervention in the affairs of the covenanted. Ministers consistently explained those interventions in the terms of sin-judgment-reformation.[33]

Revolutionary occasional sermons, then, which is Hatch's focus, simply did what they had always done--they gave the necessary conditions for maintenance of the national covenant. The French and Indian War did not represent a turning point, but was simply one

example in a long list of divine deliverances, and one crucial step toward the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. During the Revolution, ministers revived their millennial themes as they had during the Seven Years' War, and during every war. Regular preaching continued to stress individual salvation. Just as during the colony's founding, the clergy consistently used the pulpit to reinforce both covenants.[34]

With the outbreak of hostilities and the absence of a royal governor, New Englanders could once again set public fasts as they desired, and they did so according to the ideas of the national covenant. Massachusetts' Provincial Congress announced a fast during the week of the events at Lexington and Concord, and Rhode Island and New Hampshire observed the same day. Ministers again wrote the announcements, and from 1775 to 1777, New Englanders observed eighteen public fasts a year.[35]

Now restored to the clergy, the fast proclamations, and the jeremiads themselves again highlighted the contrast between the covenanted and uncovenanted, insisting that sin had caused providential judgment, and offering hope by exhorting repentance and reformation.[36] Ministers also distinguished revolution in America from revolution in Europe. Old world uprisings resulted from internal division and led to decadence. But America's resistance originated in the covenant, and was therefore divine in nature.[37] The fast announcements indicate

that ministerial messages regarding the colony's special status had remained consistent over the generations. The ideas of the national covenant survived intact.

During the first three years of the war, Massachusetts fasted frequently. The proclamations still inculcated the sense of national peculiarity by harshly attacking Great Britain's "tyrannous" and "arbitrary" actions, and comparing them to New England's "reasonable overtures" and "just" actions. After lambasting the uncovenanted--for example, by commenting on "this unnatural struggle we have been forced into by a corrupt and despotic ministry,"-- the proclamations repeated the jeremidic formula of the national covenant. The style instituted at the beginning of the century remained. For example, a proclamation issued by "the Colony of Massachusetts Bay" in 1776 acknowledged a "duty to confess and lament our multiplied and aggravated sins," and admitted "total dependence" on the Almighty. The announcement stated that God had "shown his displeasure" against the colonies by "permitting [Great Britain] most arbitrarily to devise. . . such oppressive, ruinous measures. . . after reasonable overtures for love and peace [have been] repeatedly made, and as often contemptuously rejected." The colonists had been forced to "draw the sword in defense of our just rights and liberties, and to prevent, if it shall seem good in God's sight, our being reduced to a

state of abject slavery and misery." The proclamations still ended positively. Should the colonists reform, "the security of [our] rights and privileges, both civil and religious, which [we] so highly value and esteem, may be speedily and happily accomplished."[38]

The message remained the same the next year, as a proclamation simultaneously attacked the British, and sounded jeremidic laments. The introduction was familiar: The Supreme Being "has been pleased in his alwise, righteous, and holy government, to permit the British administration to act so arbitrarily, unrighteously, and cruelly" toward America. Because the colonists had "been compelled, from a principle of self-defense, and for the security of our most valuable rights and liberties" to fight a war that Great Britain started, the authorities announced a fast. The jeremidic body requested humiliation and confession of sins, that "have provoked the anger of heaven, and brought down upon us many and grievous calamities." The drafters exhorted prayer for the prevention of calamities that "we justly deserve for the profanity, injustice, and oppression, and other enormous immoralities which have so shamefully defiled the land." Great Britain had been allowed to treat "our brethren of these United States with savage barbarity;" therefore, God demanded humiliation and reformation. This proclamation ended with "God save the United States of

America!"[39] National covenant ideology and the jeremiad continued to dominate the ritual of fasting.

The war dragged on, the proclamations condemned the mother country more than ever before, and the laments continued. In 1777, the rebels perceived "their liberties being violently attacked and eminently endangered by a powerful enemy." Sin, "by which a holy God is justly provoked, and for which he is holding his correcting rod over a guilty land" had caused the affliction. Hope remained, though, because through reformation, Jehovah would bring the "salvation of our oppressed land, sea coasts, and frontiers. . . animate [our armies] with invincible fortitude in the cause of their injured country. . . [and] crown the arms of. . . the United States by sea and land with success."[40] A proclamation issued later the same year made the acknowledgment that the British and Indians had been successful because of the peoples' abominations before the Lord. Their enemies' success was the "rod of [God's] visible displeasure." The prayers and reformation of "an ungrateful and undeserving people" would be repaid with providential intervention against a "determined and enraged enemy," and as a consequence, "selfishness and oppression may give place to public virtue."[41] Five generations of New England clergy, through the public fast, had consistently preached of adversity it terms of divine judgments and deliverances.

Without exception, unreformed sin brought hardship. Without exception, corporate repentance through public fasting brought peace and prosperity. Without exception, fasting and the fast proclamations during the Revolution continued to and reinforce national covenant ideology, condemning transgression and offering hope through reformation.

The words "permit" and "allow," which ministers used in every announcement offered during the Revolution, further demonstrate accommodation based on the national covenant. Similar to the practice of condemning enemies, the shift to God's permission reflected an attempt to differentiate between the covenanted and the uncovenanted. When speaking of Jehovah's anger, the proclamations still contained active words--God "manifested his displeasure," or "stretched out his hand." Permit and allow, conversely, are passive words, and ministers used them only in reference to New England's enemies. The practice was another way to heighten the contrast between God's chosen people and other nations. God dealt actively, or directly, only with New Englanders, a view that comprised a basic assumption of the national covenant.

Further, Connecticut proclamations suggest that national covenant ideas remained intact throughout New England. A 1776 fast announcement bemoaned the fact that "[God is] permitting the administrators and rulers

or our parent state [to assert] that the Parliament of Great Britain has a right to make laws binding upon the colonies in all cases whatsoever . . . ." As a result, Parliament has "imposed taxes upon us without our consent, deprived one of the colonies of their most essential and chartered privileges. . . destroyed many lives . . . and now threatens us with general destruction . . . ." To retain these threatened "liberties, properties, and privileges, which we believe God and nature, and the British Constitution. . . give us a just right to enjoy, we must offer our sincere repentance and return to Him.[42]

Other Connecticut proclamations explained these adversities according to the covenant notions of sin and judgment. For example, a 1771 proclamation expressed the hope that God might "give repentance to a sinful, backsliding people, and sanctify the frowns and threatenings of his holy providence." A 1774 announcement decried the "contempt of the grace of the gospel, neglect of family prayer, and of public worship. . . and the increase of vice, irreligion, and impiety among us."[43] Connecticut proclamations remained every bit as providential and jeremidic as the Massachusetts announcements.

Beyond calling into question the notion of a revolution born of civil millennialism, the practice of fasting offers other suggestions concerning the nature

of the Revolution in New England. First, it supports the findings of historians who suggest that covenant theology, rather than "country" or "radical Whig" theory, provided the main ideological justification for resistance. Bernard Bailyn argues for the importance of covenant notions in The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, but insists that the writings of opposition theorists "dominated the colonists miscellaneous learning and shaped it into a coherent whole. . . . "[44] But the practice of fasting and the proclamations are virtually devoid of Whig theory, and suggest that ultimately, New England ministers and churchgoers interpreted events according to the national covenant ideas of sin-judgment-reformation. These notions provided a framework within which country ideology, classical republicanism, and Enlightenment rationalism were worked out.

Nor do class or economic arguments fully explain the Revolution in New England.[45] Covenant theology, and especially national covenant theology and the fast mitigated "class consciousness" by uniting people from all ranks of society. Surely, shared adversity and a common enemy resolved many distinctions among New Englanders. A people seeking forgiveness and divine assistance in the midst of an impending war naturally sought to put aside differences and unite against the enemy. The ritual of the fast served to remind the

colonists that most importantly, they were a peculiar people, ordained by God to carry out the Reformation. The frequent, well-attended fast ceremonies indicate that New Englanders had not grown weary of this message.

It appears that a key to understanding the Revolution lies in the economic, social, and political nature of the national covenant. Patricia Bonomi has asserted that the politicization of religion--"denominational politics"--bridged the Great Awakening and the Revolution. After religious fervor waned, the colonists channeled their energy into political debates.[46] Bonomi does not explicity connect denomenational politics and secularization, but she does suggest that a shift occurred. However, the national covenant had from the beginning mixed the religious, economic, and social; after all, the Puritans did refer to occasional sermons as "political sermons."[47] God controlled every aspect of life on earth, as well as a person's eternal fate, and a covenanted nation could expect worldly blessing. Puritan theologians articulated the national covenant specifically for temporal concerns, indicating that they did not make the distinction we do between the "religious" and the "secular." When political issues arose in the colony, ministers became politicized; when social problems increased, ministers used the occasional pulpit for social commentary; when economic disaster threatened,

they preached of how God blessed the husbandry, fishing, or trade of a reformed country. All of these concerns fell under the aegis of the national covenant. Ultimately, then, resistance originated in and was bounded by New Englanders' sense of national peculiarity. Further, national covenant ideology continued to fuel resistance.

As the war shifted to the South and out of New Englanders' back yards, the proclamations became less urgent, but they nonetheless promulgated national covenant notions through the jeremidic style. A 1779 announcement supports the notion some historians have advanced concerning the way New Englanders extended the notion of national peculiarity to the colonies as-a-whole.[48] It exhorted prayer that God would "put an end to the triumphs of tyranny and violence throughout the earth, to the ambitious and destructive schemes of our enemies."[49] A 1780 fast resulting from "the reduction of Charleston" bemoaned England's endeavors "to abuse the innocent and defenseless and. . . to subjugate the American states to the tyranny of the British government."[50] Besides maintaining their special status through comparison with the uncovenanted, New Englanders further advanced national covenant ideology through the familiar sin-judgment-reformation pattern. As Harry S. Stout has said, "England's tyranny was evil to be sure. . . but New England's woes came at least partly in

response to their failure to honor the terms of the covenant."[51] One proclamation denounced "vice and irreligion," and another "profanity, fraud, oppression, and selfish spirits." All of the announcements stated that God had permitted the judgment of war because of New England's transgressions.[52]

These references to oppression, selfishness, and injustice further underscore Richard Bushman's idea of a "sociology of oppression." The colonists revolted, according to Bushman, because they believed that "interest, the force that governed all men, led colonial officials to plunder rather than to protect the people."[53] But these proclamations show that New Englanders also believed luxury and vice abounded among themselves. They had to separate from the corrupting influence of the British. Reformation, as evinced through "piety," "industry," and "frugality," could then overtake luxury, and God would return His blessings to a virtuous people.[54] Once again, these expressions arose from the promise of reformation articulated in the national covenant.

The proclamations continued to end positively, ensuring Jehovah's lasting benevolence toward a reformed people. A 1778 announcement stated that, through reformation, God would bless the region's schools and seminaries, "and make them nurseries of true piety, virtue, and religion." Further, the Almighty "would

strengthen and perpetuate our union, and in His own good time, establish us in the peaceful enjoyments of our rights and privileges."[55] Through repentance and reformation, according to proclamations or 1779 and 1780, Jehovah brought "wisdom, firmness, and unanimity. . . and the blessed effects of God reconciled to man."[56] The announcements consistently affirmed the covenant notion that reformation, and reformation only, brought temporal blessings.

Jeremidic notions continued unabated from 1782 to 1788, when Governor John Hancock--a revolutionary since 1768 when customs officials seized his ship Liberty, confiscated the cargo, and brought him to trial for smuggling--[57] wrote most of the proclamations.[58] The statements were less indicative of the attitudes expressed since the beginning of the war, and more indicative of Hancock's political beliefs; perhaps his political style portended what was to come in later years. In a 1782 document, Hancock stated:

> When the lust of dominion or lawless ambition excites arbitrary power to invade the rights, or endeavor to wrest from a people their sacred and invaluable privileges, and compels them in defense of the same to encounter all the horrors and calamities of a bloody and vindictive war. . . then is that people loudly called upon to fly unto that God for protection who hears the cries of the distressed, and will not turn a deaf ear to the supplication of the oppressed.

Great Britain had pursued "measures repugnant to her own interest and distressing to this country," yet it still

persisted in its design of subjugating the American colonies. France had become "our illustrious ally."[59] However, Hancock supported national covenant ideas. All of his proclamations urged self-examination, repentance, and reformation. A 1782 announcement, after "taking into consideration. . . our multiplied transgressions of the holy laws of our Lord," stated that God's "absolute government of the world" called a nation to seek His favor and protection. The proclamation exhorted prayer that Jehovah might "diffuse a spirit of reformation among all ranks and degrees. . . and make us holy." In the end, "the religion of our divine redeemer, with all its benign influences, may cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." The next year, an announcement called New Englanders to "express our gratitude to almighty God for his numerous and unmerited favors, [and] to humble ourselves before him for our manifold sins." Hancock sounded like any Jeremiah of the seventeenth century, expressing hope that "above all," Providence might be pleased "to give us true repentance, to forgive us all our sins, and imbue us with his grace, that we may amend our lives according to his word." Finally, Hancock urged prayer that God "would over-rule all events to the advancement of the redeemer's kingdom, and the establishment of universal peace and good will among men."[60] These statements demonstrate that either Hancock sought the advice of ministers in drafting

proclamations, or that he adhered to national covenant and jeremidic notions as much as they did. Either way, the consistency of the fast announcements remained.

A fast announced during Shays' Rebellion exhibited the continuing strength of the national covenant and jeremiad. The New England clergy had condemned the rebellion as anarchical licentiousness, and the riotous result of the overconsumption of material goods.[61] In keeping with covenant ideas, they requested a day of fasting and humiliation. The proclamation faithfully followed the sin-judgment-reformation formula, observing "the signal frown of divine Providence in permitting a rebellion to disturb its peace, and bring its safety into hazard." Through the Shaysites, Providence demonstrated his "righteous displeasure against us for our many and aggravated transgressions; and does loudly admonish us of the duty of a speedy and universal repentance and reformation. . . . The proclamation further urged "sincere resolutions of amendment," and prayer that God would "render effectual the measures taken for suppressing the present rebellion." It exhorted the end of "prophaneness and impiety and to that great dissoluteness of manners which, unless we reform them, threaten us with heavier evils."[62] The formula remained the same from 1675 to 1788: Unreformed sin threatened severance of the covenant, and always resulted in adversity. Corporate reformation remained

the sole remedy, and the key to divine blessing.

During the era of the American Revolution, the ideas expressed in the fast announcements continued along lines established at the beginning of the century. The proclamations, through vituperative rhetorical attacks against the mother country, contrasted the covenanted against those supposedly guilty of tyrannical, arbitrary rule. Fast announcements also depicted a God that was active only with New Englanders, and passive with Great Britain. After maintaining their peculiarity, New Englanders bemoaned their own transgression, and demanded public reformation as the only means to perpetuate the covenant. At least in times of fast-producing afflictions, their desire to draw close to God remained.

## CHAPTER THREE NOTES

[1] Richard Bushman, King and People in Provincial Massachusetts (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 11-14.

[2] Boston Council. Fast, 1689 (Imprints 482).

[3] Idem, Humiliation Day, 1689 (Imprints 39214).

[4] Idem, Fast, 1702 (Imprints 39386).

[5] Idem, Fast, 1740 (Imprints 4554).

[6] Idem, Fast, 1757 (Imprints 7950).

[7] Idem, Fast, 1762 (Imprints 41279).

[8] Idem, Fast, 1763 (Imprints 9434).

[9] Edmund Morgan, "The Puritan Ethic and the American Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly 24, 9. Miller, "Covenant to Revival," 327.

[10] Love, Fast Days, 329-332. Also, Morgan, "Puritan Ethic," 9.

[11] Ibid, 329-332.

[12] Boston Council, Fast, 1766 (Imprints 10379).

[13] See Imprints 41279, 9434, 9729, 10060, 10379, 10681, 10963, 11329.

[14] Thomas Hutchinson, Fast, 1770 (Imprints 11728). Also, Imprints 12454.

[15] Idem, Fast, 1771 (Imprints 12118).

[16] Love, Fast Days, Chpt. 23.

[17] Bernard Bailyn, The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974) Chpt. 6.

[18] Idem, Fast, 1773 (Imprints 12852).

was inherent in monarchical ideology itself. . . . The king's legitimacy rested on his success in protecting the people and their rights, and so did the governor's." Political conflict regarding rights and liberties characterized the Massachusetts government throughout the provincial period. The House of Representatives viewed itself as champion of the peoples' rights, and "no quality more endeared a man to the populace than stubborn resistance to arbitrary power." The House argued for liberties every year "as if the safety of the colony depended on them."

[26] A 1679 proclamation for a day of public humiliation and prayer included "civil and sacred liberties" on the list of concerns. Another proclamation the same year contained the phrase "civil and ecclesiastical liberties." 1683 and 1689 declarations contained similar statements. See Imprints 250, 287, 529, 39214, 39216, 39223.

[27] New Englanders fasted in 1710 for the "restoring of liberty to the oppressed and the free exercise of the true Christian religion in those nations where it has been suppressed." A proclamation in 1727, resulting from an earthquake, mentioned "our religious and civil liberties, [that they] may be protected and preserved." 1729 and 1731 proclamations voiced the same concerns. In 1756, the colony fasted, in part, for the recovery of "our rights and properties, by [the French] so unjustly invaded." See Imprints 39505, 39892, 3309, 3567, 6882, 7712.

[28] Samuel Sewall, The Diary of Samuel Sewall. Thomas M. Halsey, ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1973), 850.

[29] Bushman, King and People, 97-99. Richard Bushman argues that this jealous safeguarding arose from a "sociology of oppression," which depicted evil forces at work in government action. Greed, or covetousness, comprised the basis of this malevolence, and "every colony had to combat that insatiable desire." Preventing political plunder became the central purpose of the House.

[30] Idem, Fast, 1776 (Imprints, 14841).

[31] Idem, Fast, 1777 (Imprints 15419).

[32] Stout, New England Soul, 271.

[33] Ministers always revived themes on the millennium during war, because they viewed conflict as a struggle between Christ and the Antichrist. Therefore, millennial themes, as Stout has shown (303-309), revived after hostilities began, and were not used as justification for

resistance previously. The proclamations sustain this argument. Many works on millennial thought have made arguments similar to Hatch's. See James Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought ( New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977). Ruth Bloch, The Visionary Republic (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985). Cushing Strout, The New Heavens and the New Earth. (New York: Harper and Row, 1974). Henry F. May, The Enlightenment in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 155-170. Donald Weber also disputes the Hatch thesis in Rhetoric and History in Revolutionary New England (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 7-8.

[34] Stout, New England Soul, 260-293. Also, Bercovitch, American Jeremiad, 111-131.

[35] Stout, New England Soul, 285. Love, Fast Days, 338.

[36] See Bercovitch, American Jeremiad, 134.

[37] Gordon Wood, The Creation of the American Republic (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), 28-35, 65-69, 107-117.

[38] Colony of Massachusetts Bay. Fast, 1776 (Imprints 14841).

[39] Boston Council. Fast, 1777 (Imprints 15419).

[40] Idem, Fast, 1777 (Imprints 15420).

[41] Idem, Fast, 1778 (Imprints 15422).

[42] Jonathan Trumbull, Fast, 1776 (Imprints 14711)

[43] Idem, See Imprints 12018, 12363, 12733, 13210.

[44] Bernard Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 32-35.

[45] See Joseph Ernst, " 'Ideology' and an Economic Interpretation of the Revolution;" Dirk Hoerder, "Boston Leaders and Boston Crowds;" and Alfred Young, "Afterward." In Alfred F. Young, ed., The American Revolution (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976).

[46] Patricia Bonomi, Under the Cope of Heaven (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[47] Miller, Colony to Province, Chpt. 2.

[48] Bercovitch, American Jeremiad, Chpt. 5 and 6.

[49] Boston Council, Fast, 1779 (Imprints 16358).

[50] Idem, Fast, 1780 (Imprints 16854).

[51] Stout, New England Soul, 285-287.

[52] See Imprints 15897, 16358, 16359, 16853, 16854.

[53] Bushman, King and People, 249.

[54] Gordon Wood, The Creation of the American Republic (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), Chpt. 3.

[55] Boston Council. Fast, 1778 (Imprints 15897).

[56] Idem, See Imprints 16853, 16358).

[57] Robert Middlekauff, The Glorious Cause (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 166-171.

[58] The proclamations are written in first person. And see Love, Fast Days, Calendar.

[59] John Hancock. Fast, 1782 (Imprints 17593).

[60] Ibid. Also, see Imprints 17593, 18024, 18592, 19787.

[61] Wood, Creation, 409-413, 465. Szatmary, Shays' Rebellion, 89-90.

[62] Boston Council. Fast, 1787 (Imprints 20503).

# CONCLUSION

The fast proclamations suggest that colonial New England ministers successfully accommodated the notion of the national covenant to American circumstances. They were able to inculcate and reinforce national covenant ideology through occasional preaching, and especially the public fast. The public fast proclamations demonstrate that the clergy and provincial government filtered colony-wide concerns, whether they be natural, economic, social, or political, through the providential screen of Massachusetts peculiarity and special status. The national covenant passed intact from founding to independence.

The principal rhetorical device for instilling national covenant ideas was the jeremiad, preached most often at fast ceremonies. The jeremiad asserted that adversity existed because sin persisted, and only through a speedy and thorough reformation could disaster be averted. Public fast proclamations utilized the jeremidic formula of sin-judgment-reformation to further reinforce national covenant theology. For 150 years Massachusetts officials used the ritual of fasting, from proclamation to jeremiad, to elaborate on New England's

uniqueness and peculiarity. Five generations of ministers consistently preached thousands of jeremiads to tens of thousands of people, suggesting that the providential, jeremidic notions of the national covenant permeated New England culture.

Contrary to Perry Miller, Timothy Breen, Michael Hall, and others, then, the national covenant survived the early provincial years unscathed. During the era of the Dominion of New England and the formation of the new charter, the public's desire for frequent fasts, the widespread implementation of the Half-Way Covenant, and the post-Charter return to jeremidic proclamations indicated the continuing strength of national covenant ideology. Michael Hall's intellectual erosion of Puritanism cannot be found in relation to the fast. Nor can the Pelagianism or Arminianism, which, according to Miller, began overtaking national covenant ideas during the 1720s. During the earthquakes of 1727, for example, New Englanders fasted spontaneously and frequently, and the proclamations, which represented the official response of the colony, closely adhered to national covenant theology.

Further, the rhetorical change exhibited in the proclamations during the colonial wars demonstrated how New Englanders maintained the national covenant through changing circumstances. As America became involved in the European wars for empire, proclamations verbally

assaulted the colony's enemies in addition to repeating the sin-judgment-reformation theory. The contrast provided an effective method of preserving a sense of uniqueness. The papists--be they French or Spanish--and their Indian allies were instruments of the Antichrist, the exact opposite of the Christ. New Englanders, by contrast, possessed a special, covenanted relationship with Providence. The mutual obligations inherent in that relationship assured the colonists that they alone could overcome adversity. Corporate reformation and the following deliverance further reaffirmed their sense of uniqueness.

During the Revolution, a harsher rhetorical warfare and the persistence of the sin-judgment-reformation theory continued to establish New England peculiarity. The ministers and colonists had struggled to set fasts according to the national covenant, and when royal governors refused, churches eventually ignored them, and held fasts anyway. Just as during smallpox epidemics or Queen Anne's War, New Englanders of the Revolution era fasted frequently, suggesting that the colonists almost instinctively reacted to adversity according to the national covenant ideas that the ministers so continuously preached.

Public fasting practices, then, do not sustain Hatch's argument for a clerical shift from the spiritual to the political. Indeed, New England's increasing

concern with political liberty signified the endurance of the national covenant. Occasions, designed for clerical commentary on earthly events, necessarily changed emphases in order to explain the colony's current experiences. Ministers always interpreted those events according to the sin-judgment-reformation pattern of the jeremiad. Hatch focuses on printed sermons, most of which were occasional. As Harry Stout has shown, regular preaching--by far the majority of lectures New Englanders heard--continued to stress salvation. Just as in the colony's beginning, occasions emphasized the national covenant, and regular sermons the salvation covenant.

The national covenant provided a principal foundation for religious accommodation in colonial New England. Generational transitions, the new charter, colonial wars, Enlightenment rationalism, and the overthrow of a monarch brought tension, anxiety, violence, fear, and, most importantly, change. Every generation of ministers struggled to adapt to change, and provide meaningful religious leadership to their congregations: they shifted typology to demonstrate that the colony represented the new Israel; they changed preaching styles to satisfy evangelistic demands; they renewed ministerial associations to mend clerical and authoritative fragmentation. Accommodations occurred during periods of great tension and relatively rapid

change. These were the very times that New Englanders fasted most frequently, and listened to the most sermons focusing on the national covenant. The national covenant, then, provided stability in the midst of uncertainty, and bounded religious accommodation. Ministers worked out accommodations and simultaneously reminded themselves and their congregations that, regardless of the circumstances, the national covenant remained. As long as the colonists admitted their sin and made an earnest effort to reform--as long as they remained true to their purpose--they would be blessed.

## PRIMARY REFERENCES

The overwhelming majority of primary sources used for this paper has been the Fast, Thanksgiving, and Humiliation proclamations reprinted in the first volume of the Early American Imprints, 1639-1800. Shipton, Clifford K. ed. Worchester, MA: American Antiquarian Society. I have searched numerous diaries, but only those cited in the paper are listed below.

Massachusetts Historical Society, ed. The Diary of Cotton Mather. 2 Vol., 1681-1709, and 1709-1724. New York: Frederick Unger Publishing Co., 1911.

Halsey, Thomas M. ed. The Diary of Samuel Sewall. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1973.

SECONDARY REFERENCES

Allen, David Grayson. In English Ways: The Movement of Societies and the Transfer of English Local Law and Custom to Massachusetts Bay, 1600-1690. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981.

Bacon, Leonard. The Genesis of the New England Churches. New York: Harper and Bros., 1874.

Bailyn, Bernard. The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1967.

Bailyn, Bernard. The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century. New York: Harper and Row, 1955.

Bailyln, Bernard. The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974.

Barnes, Viola Florence. The Dominion of New England: A Study in British Colonial Policy. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923.

Bercovitch, Sacvan. The American Jeremiad. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978.

Bercovitch, Sacvan, ed. The American Puritan Imagination. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

Bonomi, Patricia. Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Boyer, Paul S., Nissenbaum, Steven. Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974.

Breen, Timothy H. The Character of a Good Ruler: A Study of Puritan Political Ideas in America, 1630-1730. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.

Breen, T. H. Puritans and Adventurers: Change and Persistence in Early America. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.

Bridenbaugh, Carl. Cities in Revolt: Urban Life in America,

1743-1776. New York: Capricorn Books, 1955.

Bridenbaugh, Carl. Cities in the Wilderness: The First Century of Urban Life in America, 1625-1742. New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1938.

Bushman, Richard L. From Puritan to Yankee: Character and Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.

Bushman, Richard. King and People in Provincial Massachusetts. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.

Carroll, Peter N. Puritanism and the Wilderness: The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier, 1629-1700. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.

Collinson, Patrick. The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society, 1559-1625. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Cowing, Cedric B. The Great Awakening and the American Revolution: Colonial Thought in the Eighteenth Century. Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1971.

Cruden, Alexander. Cruden's Complete Concordance to The Old and New Testaments. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949.

Davidson, James W. The Logic of Millennial Thought: Eighteenth-Century New England. New Haven: Yale Univerisyt Press, 1977.

Dunn, Richard. Puritans and Yankees: The Winthrop Dynasty of New England, 1630-1717. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962.

Elliot, Emory. Power and the Pulpit in Puritan New England. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.

Ferguson, E. James. The American Revolution: A General History, 1763-1790. Homewood, IL: The Dorsey Press, 1974.

Foster, Stephen. Their Solitary Way: The Puritan Social Ethic in the First Century of Settlement in New England. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971.

Gaustad, Edwin Scott. The Great Awakening in New England. New York: Harper and Bros., 1957.

Goen, C. C. Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-

1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962.

Grant, Charles. Democracy in the Connecticut Frontier Town of Kent. New York: Columbia University Press, 1961.

Greven, Philip. Four Generations: Population, Law, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970.

Greven, Philip. The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience and the Self in Early America. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977.

Grob, Gerald N., and Billias, George Athan, ed. Interpretations of American History. 4th ed. New York: The Free Press, 1982.

Hall, David D. The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972.

Hall, David D. "Religion and Society: Problems and Reconsidedrations." In Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era, 317-344. Edited by Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1984.

Hall, David D. "The World of Print and Collective Mentality in Seventeenth-Century New England." In Colonial America: Essays in Politics and Social Development, 162-176. Edited by Stanley N. Katz and John M. Murrin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983.

Hall, Michael G. The Last American Puritan: The Life of Increase Mather, 1639-1723. Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1988.

Hambrick-Stowe, Charles. The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982.

Haroutunian , Joseph. Piety Versus Moralism: The Passing of the New England Theology. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1964.

Hatch Nathan O. "The Origins of Civil Millennialism in America: New England Clergymen, War with France, and the Revolution." In Colonial America: Essays in Politics and Social Development, 497-518. Edited by Stanley N. Katz and John Murrin. New York: Alfred A.

Knopf, 1983.

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

Heimert, Alan. Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966.

Henretta, James. The Evolution of American Society, 1700-1815: An Interdisciplinery Analysis. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1973.

Henretta, James. "Families and Farms: Mentalite in Pre-Industrial America." William and Mary Quarterly 35, 3-32.

Jones, James W. The Shattered Synthesis: New England Puritanism Before the Great Awakening. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973.

Knappen, M. M. Tudor Puritanism: A Chapter in the History of Idealism. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939.

Leach, Douglass E. Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1958.

Levy, Babette May. Preaching in the First Half Century of New England History. New York: Russell and Russell, 1967.

Lockridge, Kenneth A. A New England Town the First Hundred Years: Dedham, Massachusetts, 1650-1750. New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1970.

Love, William DeLoss. The Fast and Thanksgiving Days of New England. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1895.

Lovelace, Richard F. The American Pietism of Cotton Mather: Origins of American Evangelicalism. Grand Rapids, MI: Christian University Press, 1979.

Lowance, Mason I. Increase Mather. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974.

May, Henry F. The Enlightenment In America. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976.

McLoughlin, William G. "Liberty of Conscience and Cultural Cohesion in the New Nation." In Essays on the American

Revolution, 197-255. Edited by Stephen G. Kurtz and James H. Hutson. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973.

Middlekauff, Robert. The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Middlekauff, Robert. The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Miller, Perry. "From the Covenant to the Revival." In The Shaping of American Religion, 332-368. Edited by James W. Smith and A. Leland Jamison. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961.

Miller, Perry. The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939.

Miller, Perry. The New England Mind: From Colony to Province. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953.

Morgan, Edmund. The Gentle Puritan: A Life of Ezra Stiles, 1727-1795. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962.

Morgan, Edmund. "The Puritan Ethic and the American Revolution." William and Mary Quarterly 24, 3-48.

Morgan, Edmund. Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea. New York: New York University Press, 1963.

Morison, Samuel E. The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England. New York: New York University Press, 1936.

Nash, Gary B. "Social Development." In Colonial British America, 233-261. Edited by Jack Greene and J. R. Pole. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984.

Norton, Mary Beth, et al. A People and a Nation. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1986.

Pope, Robert G. The Half-Way Covenant: Church Membership in Puritan New England. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.

Powell, Sumner Chilton. Puritan Village: The Formation of a New England Town. New York: Anchor Books, 1963.

Rutman, Darrett B. "American Puritanism: Faith and Practice." New York: Harper and Row, 1970. 1-10 reprinted in Grob, Gerald N., and Billias, George Athan, ed. Interpretations of American History. 4th

ed., 54-59. New York: The Free Press, 1982.

Rutman, Darrett B. Winthrop's Boston: Portrait of a Puritan Town, 1630-1649. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965.

Silverman, Kenneth. The Life and Times of Cotton Mather. New York: Harper and Row, 1984.

Stoever, William K. B. "A Faire and Easie Way to Heaven: Covenant Theology and Antinomianism in early Massachusetts. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1978.

Stout, Harry S. The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Strout, Cushing. The New Heavens and the New Earth: Political Religion in America. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.

Szatmary, David P. Shays' Rebellion: The Making of an Agrarian Insurrection. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980.

Vaughan, Alden T. New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620-1675. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965.

Walzer, Michael. The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965.

Weber, Donald. Rhetoric and History in Revolutionary New England. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Wood, Gordon S. The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969.

Young, Alfred F., ed. The American Revolultion: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976.

Ziff, Larzer. Puritanism in America: A New Culture in a New World. New York: Viking Press, 1973.

Zuckerman, Michael. Peaceable Kingdoms: New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970.

# APPENDIX

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE FAST PROCLAMATIONS

## SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PROCLAMATION

At a
General Court
Held at Boston, October 15, 1679.

This court being sensible of the solemn rebukes of God upon his poor people throughout this Land, from year to year, our Doings against the Lord having provoked the eyes of his glory, for as that he hath visited us with the Sword, and since that, hath given a Commission to the destroying Angel, in respect of a sore and terrible Disease, which hath been of long continuance, and more contagious and mortal than in formal times; and his holy Hand is in that way stretched out still over some of our Plantations. And very lately, the Lord God hath called to contend by Fire, which hath devoured a great part of that Town, in whose welfare all New England in concerned; and therefore we have all cause with bleeding hearts, to lament over the doleful Ruins and Desolations, which the Lord for our iniquities hath in one day brought upon us: Especially considering, that at the same time, God is taking away from us the Fruits of the earth, by a greater Blasting than heretofore we have had experience of. And the Lord's watchmen, with the generality of serious Christians, are not without sad thoughts of heart left if we be not reformed by these things, God should punish us yet seven times for our sins, yea, and at last remove our Candlesticks out of their places: and there are already some awful symptoms of a Famine of hearing the Word of the Lord; and other Spiritual Judgments, calling upon us together, in a way of solemn Humiliation and Repentance before the Decree bring forth. Being also sensible that the Churches of Christ abroad in the world, are wrestling with sore distressing difficulties, in this day of trouble, when the children are come to the birth, but there is not strength to bring forth.

Do therefore appoint the second Thursday in December next, to be observed as a day of publick Humiliation throughout this Jurisdiction, earnestly exhorting all the Inhabitants thereof not only to confess but to forsake their Sins, so that they may find mercy with God through Jesus Christ, and to cry mightily to Heaven, as for pardon, so for Grace to reform those evils that have by the late Reverend Synod been witnessed against, and declared to be the provoking procuring cause of the Lord's

Controversy with New England, and also to pray that the Lord would remember his people in Europe, more especially in the Land of our ForeFathers Sepulchres, maintaining his own Cause as the matter may require.

Edward Rawson

Secr.

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PROCLAMATION

By His Excellency

WILLIAM SHIRLEY, Esq;

Captain-General and Governor in Chief, in and over his Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New England

A Proclamation for a public FAST

Whereas it has pleased the Almighty God in his sovereign Providence, to manifest his righteous Displeasure both against our Nation, and Land in the many public and heavy Judgments he has brought upon us in the Course of the Last Year, more especially in the Continuance of the great calamities arising to us from an impoverishing and destructive War, and the manifest Frowns of Heaven thereupon, in defeating our most hopeful Designs against our Enemies, by sickness and other disastrous Events; and also in the great Scarcity and excessive Price of the Necessities of Life; with many other Instances of the Divine Displeasure, which ought to affect our hearts with an holy dread of the majesty of God, and a deep and abasing sense of our manifold and aggravated sins, whereby we have justly provoked him against us; And whereas the Season of the Year calls for our earnest Prayer to Heaven, for obtaining a Blessing on the approaching spring and Summer, and the many other Mercies we stand in need of;

On these Accounts I have thought fit, with the Advice of his

majesty's Council, to order and appoint that Thursday the Eighth Day of April next to be set apart as a day of solemn Fasting and Prayer throughout this Province, earnestly exhorting both Ministers and People in their respective Assemblies, with penitent Confession of their Sins to humble themselves under the Instances of the divine Displeasure, that so the Anger of God may be turned away and his hand no longer stretched out against us; And to put fervent Prayers and Supplications to GOD for the following Blessings; That the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior JESUS CHRIST may be enlarged and established in the world, and the whole earth be filled with his Glory; That the Realms of Great Britain and Ireland, with the Dominions thereunto belonging, may flourish in Religion,

Unity, and Prosperity; That the Life and Health of our Sovereign Lord the King, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the duke, with the rest of the Royal Issue, and other Branches of the Royal Family, may be precious in the Sight of God; that it would please God to direct and succeed his Majesty's Councils for the public Tranquility; that the Lord of Hosts, whose alone is the Power and the Victory, would go forth with his Majesty's Fleets and Armies, and inspire them with Courage and Conduct, and so order all Circumstances and events as to give Success to his majesty's Arms, and in his own Time, to grant a safe and lasting Peace; that the government of this province may by the divine Providence and favor be directed and prospered in the Administration thereof; That our civil and religious Privileges may be continued; That religion and the power of it may be more revived and established among us to all futurity; That Health may be continued or restored; that our Sea Coasts may be defended, and peace continued on our inland Borders; That our Trade and Navigation may be protected and enlarged; That the former and latter rain may be graciously dispensed to us, and that there may be a seasonable seed-time and a plentiful Harvest; And that a manifest Blessing may be on all the Works of our hands, and the light of the divine favor may shine upon us: And all servile Labor, as also Recreations, are forbidden on the said day.

Given at the Council Chamber in Boston, the Fourth day of March 1742. In the Fifteenth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Second, by the Grace of GOD of Great Britain, France and Ireland, KING, Defender of the Faith.

W. SHIRLEY

By Order of His Excellency, the Governor, with the advice and Consent of the Council

GOD Save the KING

# REVOLUTION PROCLAMATION

## State of Massachusetts Bay

## A Proclamation

## For a Day of public Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer

As the supreme Ruler of the World has been pleased in his alwise, righteous, and holy Government, to permit the British Administration to act so arbitrary, unrighteous, and cruel a Part with Reference to the Inhabitants of America; as that we have been compelled, from a Principle of Self-Defence, and for the Security of our most valuable Rights and Liberties, to engage in a WAR which they in the most unnatural and cruel Manner have commenced against us: And as it highly proper for those who Profess Faith in GOD as superintending all human affairs, to acknowledge their Dependence on Him, and with Humility and Reverence to pray to Him for his interposing Help in every Time of Trouble:

We have thought fit, with the Advice of the Council, and at the Desire of the House of Representatives, to appoint, and do hereby appoint Wednesday the Twenty-ninth of this Instant January, to be a Day of Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer, throughout this State; calling upon Ministers of People of all Denominations, publickly as well as privately to humble themselves before the holy GOD, penitently to confess their Sins, whereby they have provoked the Anger of Heaven, and brought down upon us many and grievous Calamities; and earnestly to pray that the Almighty would forgive our Iniquities, remove those Judgments wherewith he has visited us for our Sins, and prevent those greater ones we justly deserve for the Profanity, Injustice, and Oppression, and other enormous Immoralities which have so shamefully defiled the Land: That he would in this day of Danger and Distress direct all entrusted with the Management of our public Affairs, particularly the AMERICAN CONGRESS, the Assemblies of the several States, and of this in an especial Manner:--That he would impart Skill, Wisdom and Valor to our chief Military Commander, and all his Officers; and that our Soldiers may behave with Courage and Resolution, and defeat our Enemies in all their Attempts against us. At

the same Time we recommend it as highly fit and proper that a thankful, religious Notice should be taken of the various signal Interpositions of Heaven, in our Behalf, against the Enemy; as well as that we should be humbled, wherein they have been permitted to treat any of our Bretheren of these United States, with savage Barbarity. And let it be the United Prayer of all, that the Spirit may be poured out from on high on the People of these Lands, so as that a general Reformation may be effected; that the Redeemer's Kingdom may spread over the face of the whole Earth; and that Peace, Liberty, and Happiness, may be enjoyed by all the World.

And all servile Labour and Recreation are forbidden on said Day.

GIVEN at the Council-Chamber in Boston, the Thirteenth Day of January, in the Year of our LORD, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy-Seven

JAMES BOWDOIN,
JEREMIAH POWELL,
ARTEMUS WARD,
WALTER SPOONER,
BENJAMIN GREENLEAF,
BENJAMIN AUSTIN,
CALEB CUSHING,
HENRY GARDNER,
MOSES GILL,
DANIEL DAVIS,
JOHN TAYLOR,
EBENEZER THAYER,
BENJAMIN WHITE,
WILLIAM PHILLIPS,

by their Honor's Command,

John Avery, Jun. Dep. Sec'y

GOD SAVE the UNITED STATES of AMERICA

VITA

James Eric Hazell

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: CONSISTENCY THROUGH ACCOMMODATION: THE RHETORIC OF THE FAST PROCLAMATIONS IN COLONIAL MASSACHUSETTS

Major Field: History

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Sherman, Texas, March 3, 1964, the son of Don and Koula Hazell.

Education: Graduated from Durant High School, Durant, OK, in May 1982; received Bachelor of Arts in Education in Social Studies from Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant in May, 1986; completed requirements for Master of Arts in History at Oklahoma State University in December, 1989; currently in the Doctoral program in history at University of Maryland.

Professional Experience: Teaching Assistant, Department of History, Oklahoma State University, August, 1986, to May, 1988.

Professional Organizations: Phi Alpha Theta, American Historical Association.