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Samuel Davies: Promotor of "Religion and Public Spirit"

Alan Dale Strange
College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

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SAMUEL DAVIES: PROMOTER OF "RELIGION AND
PUBLIC SPIRIT"

A Thesis

Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
the College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Alan D. Strange
1985
APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Approved, October 1985

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As always, soli Deo gloria.

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PREFACE

In the literature on the Great Awakening, Virginia has not received the attention that New England has and the life and work of Samuel Davies has not called forth massive studies as has Jonathan Edwards's. Yet the long-term consequences of the Awakening were certainly as important in Virginia as they were in New England, and Davies's leadership in the South was as vital as Edwards's was in the North. Historians have argued that those affected by the various stages of the Awakening, which in all its aspects lasted from the 1730s to the 1770s, played a key role in the Revolution. While those who experienced the crisis-conversions prevalent during the 1740's Awakening and their spiritual heirs of the Baptist and Methodist movements of the 1760s and 1770s provided important support for the overthrow of British rule, perhaps their most obvious contribution was the part that these groups assumed in urging the disestablishment of religion and the separation of church and state.

Davies accepted the Presbyterian pastorate in Hanover County, Virginia in 1748 and presided over the revivals that accompanied his ministry until his departure from the colony in 1759. During these years, he witnessed the conversion of many in the Piedmont and the Northern
Neck who had all of their lives been Anglican. Davies's preaching won him converts; his legal defense of the dissenters and his enlisting the favor of Virginia officials by strongly supporting the colonial war effort in the Seven Years' War won religious toleration for the nonconformists. Davies proved to the colonial officials that he could successfully challenge established religion without challenging the civil establishment.

'Davies partially paved the way that when fully completed extended beyond toleration to full religious liberty. It seems likely that the Separate Baptists of the 1770s would have had less success and far more governmental persecution had Davies not provided a model of moderate opposition at a time when colonial officials were accustomed to no challenge to the established order at all. Had they never experienced such a challenge, repression of the Separate Baptists may well have been much harsher.'

While Davies never held the egalitarian ideas of the Separate Baptists, he espoused a Whig philosophy that greatly valued religious liberty. While many of the Baptists' actions may have repulsed him, it is not illogical to see them as seizing Davies's arguments and using them to effect their own more radical goals. Erasmus only hoped for reform within the Roman Catholic Church and did not desire to inspire a Martin Luther to split the church. Yet, it is not invalid in searching for intellectual antecedents for Luther to say that Erasmus laid the egg that Luther hatched. Davies laid the egg that the Separate Baptists hatched.
It is not the purpose of the work to examine the Separate Baptist movement—Rhys Isaac and other recent historians have ably performed that task. ‘The Awakening of the Baptists had an antecedent in the Presbyterian church, the theological home of the Great Awakening in Virginia. And Samuel Davies was the Presbyterian who accomplished more in affairs of church and state in Virginia than any other figure.’ It is the life and work of this man of "religion and public spirit" with whom this paper is concerned.
for my parents
SAMUEL DAVIES: PROMOTER OF "RELIGION AND PUBLIC SPIRIT"
CHAPTER I

DAVIES'S EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Samuel Davies's grandfather, Morgan David, settled in Pennsylvania in 1684. David had come over with a group of fellow Welsh settlers, many of whom were Baptists, hoping to enjoy the religious liberties that William Penn had promised to those who settled in his newly established colony. When David sailed in 1684, the Glorious Revolution and Act of Toleration were yet several years in the future. Dissenting sects in Britain still suffered under the Five-Mile Act and other religious restrictions. Many dissenters were accordingly more comfortable and less noticed in such corners of the realm as Wales, although the Act of Uniformity and other measures of ecclesiastical control were in force there. Baptists still suffered greatly from their identification with their continental predecessors of the Radical Reformation, the Anabaptists. The continental Reformers had not lost any love on the Anabaptists; neither had the Church of England on the Baptists. That Penn's offer of freedom of worship and abundant land appeared attractive to David and other Welsh Baptists is hardly surprising.

Morgan David's two sons, David and Shion, inherited their father's small Pennsylvania farm in 1695. Following
the death of David David's bride in 1716, the brothers sold the farm and moved to New Castle County, Delaware, to a new Welsh settlement. 'Their success as small farmers in Pennsylvania had paid off, and the brothers were able to purchase jointly a four-hundred-acre tract.' David lost no time in filling the void left by the death of his bride. He married Martha Thomas of the Welsh Tract even before consummating the purchase of land with his brother. <Around this time variations began to appear in the spelling of the brothers' surname: they began to use the name Davis or Davies instead of David.>

Martha Davis, following the example of Hannah in the Old Testament, prayed earnestly for a son. <Her prayers were answered on November 3, 1723.> As did Hannah, Martha named her son Samuel—"asked of God." In later years Samuel Davies noted the significance of his naming:

I am a son of prayer, like my namesake, Samuel the prophet, and my mother called me Samuel, because, she said, I have asked him of the Lord. This early dedication to God has always been a strong inducement to me to devote myself to him as a personal act, and the most important blessings of my life I have looked upon as immediate answers to the prayers of a pious mother.

Davies always held his mother in the highest esteem, crediting her piety with having a formative influence on his life. <Martha Davis's expulsion from the Baptist church and her joining the Presbyterian church was the decisive step that prepared her son for a ministry in the Presbyterian church.> She was accused of "rebellion" against the Baptist church "by carrying unconnected
pieces of what was talked in the [Baptist] church to
the Presbyterians to have their opinions upon them."
She was further charged with "despising advice offered
... by the brethren ... and the church."<\!
Since
Davies's biographer Henry Foote described Martha as
"possessed of superior natural abilities," she may have
felt more comfortable with the Presbyterians, who, unlike
the Baptists, strongly encouraged learning and required a
learned ministry.>

\(<\textit{Davies received the "rudiments of education" from
his mother. She recognized his keen mind at an early age.}
He commenced a course of classical study under the
Reverend Abel Morgan, minister to the local Welsh Baptist
congregation. It is unlikely that he continued his study
more than a year or two under Morgan's tutelage after his
mother's 1732 expulsion from the Baptist church.}\)
\(\text{He}
then studied under the local Presbyterian minister at St.
George's, where his mother was a member and where he became
a member in 1736.\>

\(\text{During his formative years Davies did not exhibit
the religious and intellectual precocity of a Cotton Mather
or a Jonathan Edwards. Although in his early 'teens he
made a habit of "secret prayer," asking the Lord to fit him
for the gospel ministry to which his mother had committed
him, in later years he felt that while away at St. George's
for school he had "lost some of the deep impressions"
earlier imparted by his mother's "teaching, example, and}
prayer." But he was by no means a profligate. Davies's later estimation of his lapse into religious indifference as a child was typical of pious ministers. He admitted that he made "great progress in his learning" at St. George's, while confessing that he had grown "somewhat more careless of the things of religion." He experienced a spiritual awakening near the end of his time at St. George's, when he was twelve. After about two years of "perturbation over his soul's condition and future," he "reached a state of calm and assurance and made his confession of faith."

Having exhausted the resources of the church school by 1738, Davies faced a dilemma. He could become a Presbyterian minister only by continuing his studies, since ordination to the ministry required further education. But his parents had little money, making the colonial colleges—Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary—inaccessible, and the Scottish, Irish, and English universities unthinkable. Indeed, most of the youth reared as Presbyterians in the middle colonies, where there was not yet an institution providing an education acceptable to the majority of the ministers in the synod, could not afford to go to New England or abroad for their education; consequently, those Presbyterian churches which demanded a university degree had to rely on the natives of New England and the British Isles to migrate to the colonies and supply the vacant pulpits. The lack of a university in
the middle colonies prevented some of the area's native sons from filling its pulpits. Other Presbyterian youth, however, availed themselves of the opportunity which William Tennent's undertaking afforded.

The problem posed by the lack of an indigenous educational institution for training ministers was partially solved by William Tennent Sr. in 1726. In that year Tennent was called to pastor a church in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, on Neshaminy Creek. He was a respected classical scholar, having received his education at Trinity College, Dublin. What probably began merely as Tennent's instruction of his three sons, who all became Presbyterian ministers, had, by the mid-1720s, become a school extending to all the neighboring youth who were interested in joining the ministry. Tennent constructed a log cabin to house what had by 1726 grown into a classical academy, derisively tagged "The Log College." The scholars trained at Tennent's school were ordained into the Presbyterian ministry as if they had obtained a regular university degree, although many ministers complained the Tennent's schooling did not provide the equivalent of a university degree. The Tennents and other supporters of the Log College rejoiced that young men in the middle colonies had access to the ministry through this school and that the church did not have to rely on ministers from abroad or those wealthy enough to attend a university to supply the pulpits.
Samuel Blair was one of the first and most eminent of the scholars to graduate from the Log College. He accepted a call from the Presbyterian church at Fagg's Manor in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1739, and in that same year opened a classical academy modeled after William Tennent's. Shortly after the school opened, Samuel Davies enrolled. He was willing to endure the odium of the school's opponents because its low costs and proximity made it the only realistic opportunity Davies had for continuing his education.

While the precise curriculum of Blair's school is unknown, the young scholars were certainly in competent hands. A contemporary attested that Blair was an "indefatigable student, a calm and impartial searcher after truth," with "a considerable store of critical learning." Blair was proficient not only in divinity, logic, and classics but also in "several branches of the mathematics" and natural philosophy. The quality of students whom the school produced is undoubtedly indicative of good instruction. Davies certainly emerged with a firm grasp of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, divinity, rhetoric, logic, ethics, metaphysics, and natural philosophy. He also imbibed from Blair the evangelical fervor of the "New Lights," the Presbyterian supporters of the Great Awakening. Davies completed his course of studies at Fagg's Manor in 1746, shortly after which he was licensed by the New Castle Presbytery.
While Tennent and his followers established schools to provide a training ground for the Presbyterian ministers at home and to inculcate the teachings of the Great Awakening, many in the church did not support the venture. In fact, the highest body of the Presbyterian church, the Synod, located in Philadelphia, never officially recognized the Log Colleges. This refusal was based partly on the contention that they did not provide the kind of thoroughgoing education that the Directory for the Ordination of Ministers required. Some ministers questioned whether attendance at a Log College met the Directory's requirement that ministerial candidates must present testimony showing "what degrees . . . [the candidate] hath taken in the university." Opposition to the schools also stemmed from Tennent's adherence to what had become known as "New Light" Presbyterianism.

The Log College alumni were called "New Lights" because they taught that a divine infusion of spiritual "light" into the soul was necessary for eternal salvation. The Holy Spirit was the author of this light, illuminating the Holy Scripture and effecting a spiritual rebirth in the recipient of grace. They believed that the imperative of the gospel was the command to repent, to experience spiritual regeneration through faith in Christ. Tennent and his followers cried out against what they perceived to be dead orthodoxy in the Presbyterian church. They did not charge that their fellow Presbyterians were doctrinally
unsound: both Old and New Lights fully accepted the Westminster Confession of Faith. The New Lights maintained, however, that conformity to the "externals" of religion was insufficient for salvation. Salvation was an inward work of the Holy Spirit, stemming from His revelation of the person of Christ to the repentant soul. This revelation was not effected through an immediate vision of Christ but by a mediate vision, a vision of faith, through the Scriptures.  

<The Log College alumni, as the chief proponents of New Light Presbyterianism, believed that a minister must have experienced spiritual regeneration, or the "new birth," for his ministry to be acceptable to God. Gilbert Tennent gave clear expression to the New Lights' requirement for regenerate ministers in his famous 1740 Nottingham sermon, "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry." He denounced the unconverted ministry of the colonial churches and called for a purging of the ministerial ranks. Candidates for the ministry should give evidence of the new birth before being licensed and ordained; Tennent believed that more than mere orthodoxy was required.>  

Old Light Presbyterians, finding themselves under attack, concentrated their opposition and attacked the bastions of New Light Presbyterianism, the Log Colleges. In 1738 the Synod ruled that no presbytery should license a minister until he had passed an examination on his academic studies before a committee of the Synod. Since "most of the friends" of the Log College had just succeeded in
getting a presbytery in New Jersey set off, the New Brunswick Presbytery, they considered the Synod's order as meddling in affairs which should be handled by the Presbytery. The New Brunswick Presbytery asserted that it was the prerogative of the presbytery and not the Synod to examine and license ministers. The Log Colleges also felt that this synodical stipulation was aimed at them since they were the only institutions of education at this level in the colony.  

At their first meeting in August 1738, the New Brunswick Presbytery examined a Log College alumnus and later licensed and ordained him. The Synod refused to recognize his ordination, since the presbytery had circumvented the Synod. The action of the presbytery may have been rather highhanded. The New Lights failed to understand that members of the Synod invoked this rule for several different reasons and not only to block the presbytery's right of examination. They had passed the examination rule partly in response to a 1738 request from the Lewes Presbytery. Citing a number of complications involved in obtaining a university degree, the Lewes Presbyterians had suggested that young men unable to travel to Europe or New England might submit themselves to the examination of the Synod, whereby a certificate of approval might be issued, lacking a university degree. 

In response to Tennent's Nottingham sermon and the continued refusal of the New Brunswick Presbytery to submit
its ministerial candidates to the Synod for approval, a group of Old Light ministers entered a protest against the New Brunswick brethren. They charged that the New Brunswick ministers "have at present no right to sit and vote as Members of this Synod . . . [since they] continue to license and ordain men to the Ministry of the Gospel, in opposition to, and in Contempt of said Act of Synod." The protesters also objected to itinerant ministers, to the condemnation of many ministers by the New Lights as "carnal, graceless, and enemies to the work of God," and to the preaching of "the Terrors of the Law in such a Manner and Dialect as has no Precedent in the Word of God." While genuinely concerned over the quality of education in the Log Colleges, they were in the final analysis most concerned about the emotional excesses of the Awakening. Although the Log College men had condemned such excesses, the protesters concentrated on these in attacking the New Lights. They accused the New Light ministers of "so industriously working on the Passions and affections of weak Minds, as to cause them to cry out in a hideous Manner, and fall down in Convulsion-like fits."

Shortly after this protest was read into the minutes of the Philadelphia Synod, the New Brunswick Presbytery, realizing that it had been stripped of its authority, joined with the other New Light presbyteries and formed a new synod, the New York Synod. Samuel Blair and Gilbert Tennent were the leaders of the "rebellion" that caused the
protesters to call for the expulsion of the New Brunswick
Presbytery. Davies fully supported his mentor Samuel
Blair, but regretted that the break occurred. Gilbert
Tennent himself regretted that the split had occurred
and immediately began to work for reunion. The New York
Synod justly argued that they had been expelled without a
trial and charged that the protesters and not the New
Lights were schismatics. Both sides were at fault in one
way or another. Tennent must bear a good deal of the blame,
however, for the censorious and uncharitable spirit of
the Nottingham sermon. The Old Lights can be faulted for
refusing to recognize the good that the Awakening produced
by dwelling only on its excesses. At any rate, the split in
the church was to have important ramifications for Davies
and for his ministry among the people of Hanover, Virginia.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER I


2 The Five Mile Act, passed in 1664, was a part of the religious settlement imposed on England by Charles II during the Restoration, stipulating that no dissenting minister should live within five miles of a town. Along with the Five Mile Act, the Corporation Act of 1661, the Act of Uniformity of 1662, and the Conventicle Act of 1664 all made up the Clarendon Code, the set of religious restrictions placed on the worship of dissenters during Charles II's reign. Lacey Baldwin Smith, This Realm of England (Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1976), p. 274.


3 The Clarendon Code applied to Wales as well as England.


5 Pilcher, p. 4.

6 Davies's copy of the Old Testament in the Virginia Historical Society contains this entry in Davies's hand: "Born in New-Castle County Pennsilvania Nov. 3, 1723."


Foote, p. 157.

Pilcher, pp. 5-6.


Quoted in Foote, p. 158.

Quoted in Pilcher, p. 7.

Quoted in Bost, p. 10.


Alexander, p. 16.

Alexander, pp. 7-23.

Alexander, pp. 171-72.

Alexander, p. 164; Pilcher, p. 11.

Bost, p. 11.

Minutes of the Presbyterian Church in America, 1706-1788, Guy S. Klett, ed. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1976). The only time the Log College is alluded to is in the events leading up to the 1741 split of the church.

Westminster Confession of Faith, p. 413.

The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry...

PCA Minutes, p. 188.

Alexander, pp. 44-5.

Alexander, p. 48.

Alexander, pp. 45-6.

PCA Minutes, p. 188.

The New Light position that those who experienced emotional excesses were under a "dangerous Delusion" was maintained throughout the Great Awakening and was a definite point of agreement between Old Light and New Light in the 1758 reunion of the church. PCA Minutes, p. 336.

PCA Minutes, p. 189.

PCA Minutes, New York Synod, p. 1.

Alexander, p. 47; Pilcher, pp. 11-12.
CHAPTER II

THE GREAT AWAKENING IN VIRGINIA

Old Light Presbyterianism gained a firm foothold in Virginia with the influx of thousands of Scotch-Irish into the Shenandoah Valley after 1717. These immigrants came because the land was cheaper, the Indians were fairly peaceful, and the valley afforded easy access into Virginia through Maryland. It was not until 1739 that the Presbyterian Church was organized in the valley, and even then the churches were run by elders and the pulpits supplied by itinerants. After the Presbyterian church split the Old Lights sent ministers to the Scotch-Irish, which was appropriate, for many of the Scotch-Irish were highly traditional Presbyterians and opposed to the "innovations" and the fervent evangelical appeal of the New Lights.

The Church of England was the established church in Virginia. The church had no challenge to its hegemony, the few Quakers and other religious groups present possessing no organizational structure through which to channel their dissent. The Presbyterians coming into the Valley were quickly granted religious toleration by Governor Gooch. No one seriously objected to granting them toleration because they were not a threat to the established church.
in either the piedmont or the tidewater, separated from these two areas by the Blue Ridge Mountains. Indeed, the colonial government was grateful to have these hearty Scotsmen in the Valley because the governor and burgesses saw them as a barrier between the hostile Indian tribes and the French. Instead of the piedmont being the first line of attack, the valley became the first line of attack and thus the first line of defense. The Virginia colonial government was glad to have this defensive "cushion" in the Valley.

New Lights did not settle in the Valley until some years later. While the Old Lights were settling the Valley in the early 1740s, New Light Presbyterianism had yet to make its appearance, and when it came on the scene it did not receive the welcome that the Old Lights had. The New Lights first appeared in the piedmont not as Presbyterians but as disgruntled Anglicans seeking something that the Anglican church was not providing. During the late 1730s and early 1740s several stages of spiritual "awakening" occurred, causing some established churchmen to question the preaching they heard. As New Lights had found the Presbyterian church orthodox yet spiritually dead, these frustrated Anglicans discovered their church to be in the same condition.

In the late 1730s several Hanover County Anglicans began to absent themselves from their parish church. One of the members of this small group, Samuel Morris, invited
the others over to his house on Sundays, where they read
the works of Boston, Baxter, Bunyan, and Flavel instead of
attending church. > Morris, evidently a good speaker, simply
read aloud the works of these seventeenth-century divines.
Word of this group spread among the members of the
Hanover parish, and more church members began to attend
Morris's readings. The number in attendance was soon such
that Morris could not accommodate them in his house and
built a special "reading house" behind his residence.
Morris obtained a copy of Luther's Commentary on Galatians;
the group was so pleased with the work that they later
professed themselves Lutherans.

Davies described Morris as one "who had for some time
been very anxious about his own salvation, who after
obtaining blessed relief in Christ became zealous for the
salvation of his neighbors and very earnest to use means to
awaken them." A spontaneous religious awakening occurred in
Hanover, a revival not yet flamed by the fiery preaching
that characterized the Awakening in the other colonies.
The first revivalist to come through Virginia was the
well-known Anglican itinerant George Whitefield. < Whitefield
visited Williamsburg in 1739 at the invitation of the Bishop
of London's commissary, James Blair. 9 Whitefield preached
at Bruton Parish Church on the text, "What think ye of
Christ?" His "extraordinary Manner of Preaching" called
him to the attention of the awakened Anglicans in Hanover.
Although no one from Hanover made the sixty-mile trip to
Williamsburg to hear Whitefield, news of his preaching greatly encouraged Morris and his friends. Morris was determined to learn more about Whitefield and was delighted when, in 1743, he was able to procure from a friend in Glasgow a book of Whitefield's sermons.

Morris invited his friends to hear him read Whitefield, commenting that "the plainness and fervency of these discourses being attended with the power of the Lord, many were convinced of their undone condition, and constrained to seek deliverance with the greatest solicitude." This mini-awakening that was occurring in Hanover soon spread to the surrounding counties, constraining Morris to travel "a considerable distance" and speak. Morris noted that during this 1743 revival, "A considerable number met to hear these sermons every Sabbath and frequently on weekdays."

The Reverend Patrick Henry, uncle of the future patriot, noticed a drop in attendance at his church, St. Paul's, Hanover, the church to which Morris and his friends belonged. Virginia law stipulated that anyone "willfully absenting himself or herself from divine services at his or her parish church or chappell the space of one month" should be fined. Royal Governor Gooch called Morris and several of his associates before the General Court and asked them to explain their absence from the services of St. Paul's. Gooch asked them if they belonged to a dissenting denomination, knowing that the Act of Toleration and Virginia
law did not require properly approved non-Anglicans to attend the services of the established church.\textsuperscript{15} Morris, remembering his delight in reading Luther, replied that they were Lutherans.

According to several accounts, while on their way to stand before the General Court in Williamsburg, a thunderstorm forced Morris and company to seek shelter in the home of an old Scotsman in New Kent County. The old man recognized the beliefs which they discussed with him as Presbyterian. He gave them an old copy of the Confession of Faith of the Scottish Presbyterian Church. After talking with Governor Gooch, Morris presented the book to him. Gooch, of Presbyterian heritage himself, recognized the volume for what it was and declared that Morris and his followers were not Lutherans but Presbyterians. Presbyterians were recognized as dissenters under British law and were thus exempt from attending Anglican services.\textsuperscript{16}

Morris and his friends still did not know the implications of the governor's pronouncement that they were Presbyterians. They did not institute Presbyterian church polity, but they did petition two New Light presbyteries, New Brunswick and New Castle, to send them a minister.\textsuperscript{17} In response to this request William Robinson preached in Hanover for less than a week. Robinson preached four days successively to the dissenters, Morris remarking that "the congregation was large the first day and vastly increased the three ensuing." His preaching was accompanied with
great spiritual power and was able to "arrest some ... mistakes" which Morris had committed and set forth a few points of good church government. Robinson persuaded the group that instead of merely reading sermons they should begin and end their meetings with prayers and the singing of psalms.18

<Spiritually hungry churchmen now called upon Morris to ride a circuit extending thirty to forty miles distant from his home.> Soon reading houses were erected in those areas and readers selected to carry on the work. Although the Hanover Presbyterians petitioned the Synod of New York for a permanent pastor, a shortage of ministers allowed the New Light synod to send only temporary ministers.19 John Blair, brother of Davies's teacher Samuel Blair, arrived in Hanover shortly after Robinson's visit. Blair's preaching was most affecting, prompting Morris to comment, "One night in particular a whole houseful of people were quite overcome with the power of the Word . . . , and they could hardly sit or stand, or keep their passions under any proper restraints."20

The Presbyterians waited until the winter of 1744-45 before another minister came their way: John Roan, sent by the New-Castle Presbytery. If the previous ministers had denounced the Anglican clergy, Morris gave no evidence of it in his account of the revival. Morris did stress, however, the vigorous opposition which Roan encountered because of his "speaking pretty freely about the degeneracy of the clergy
in this colony." When it was reported that Roan had "utter[ed] blasphemous expressions in his sermons," an indictment was drawn up against him and presented to the grand jury of the General Court. In his charge to the grand jury, Governor Gooch called Roan and his followers "Workers of a deceitful work," and accused them of "blaspheming our sacraments and reviling our excellent liturgy." The grand jury indicted Roan for "reflecting upon and vilifying the Established Religion in divers sermons." Roan was charged with speaking before a numerous audience in the words following, to wit, "At church you pray to the Devil"—and "That your good works damn you and carry you to hell"—"That all your ministers preach false doctrine, and that they, and all who follow them, are going to hell, and the church is the house of the Devil. . . ." Morris claimed that it was a "perfidious wretch" who gave that damning testimony to the grand jury. Whatever Roan actually said, little doubt remains that his speech was unguarded and his vehemence excessive. Morris reported that the six witnesses called upon to prove the indictment against Roan presented depositions in his favor. At any rate Roan left the colony before his case came before the grand jury. He apparently never returned to Virginia and was consequently never brought to trial. The incident is important in that in his charge to the grand jury, Gooch had reiterated his support for the Toleration Act, arguing that if Roan had been properly licensed as a dissenter and had not attacked the established church, he could have preached unmolested.
Reports of Roan's misconduct and the governor's displeasure elicited a response from the Philadelphia Synod. The Synod had earlier been granted toleration in the valley, provided its ministers were licensed by the colonial government and had registered their preaching points. Fearing a withdrawal of the privileges enjoyed under toleration, the Philadelphia Synod was quick to ensure the governor that Roan and his kind never belonged to our body, but are missionaries sent out by some, who by reason of their divisive and uncharitable doctrines and practices were excluded from our Synod . . . and have industriously sent abroad persons whom we judge ill qualified for the character they assume, to divide and trouble the churches.

The Synod asked that their ministers be granted continued toleration since they complied with the law and had not stirred up trouble as the New Lights had.  

Gooch promised the Philadelphia Synod that their ministers would continue to enjoy toleration "because it is what by law they are entitled to." Gooch assured the Synod that he would never be "so uncharitable as to suspect men of your education and profession [to] be guilty of unchristian expressions." Rather it was the "wicked and destructive doctrines and practices of itinerant preachers [that] ought to be opposed and suppressed by all who have concern for religion." Gooch was perfectly willing to grant toleration to "missionaries producing proper testimonials, complying with the laws, and performing divine service in some certain place appropriated for that purpose, without
disturbing the quiet and unity of our sacred civil establishments."\textsuperscript{27}

After the attacks on the clergy by Roan and by other dissenting itinerants, the Anglican clergy began to call more stridently for repression. The Reverend Patrick Henry lashed out at Roan and the Hanover dissenters with a harshness characteristic of a pastor who perceives that a portion of his flock has rejected him. He despised the assurance which the New Lights possessed, scoffing that both preachers and people are great boasters of their assurance of salvation. They are so full of it here that the greatest number of those who have lately left the church and followed those Enthusiastick Preachers do confidently assert that they are as sure of going to Heaven at last, as if they were there already.\textsuperscript{28}

Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Finley were sent by the New Brunswick and New-Castle Presbyteries to mend the New Light Presbyterians' relationship with Governor Gooch. They were able to obtain a license from Gooch and preached in Hanover for about a week, during which "the people of God were refreshed and several careless sinners were awakened."\textsuperscript{29}

Morris writes that after Tennent and Finley left, "we continued vacant for a considerable time, and kept up our meetings for reading and prayer in several places. . . ." Morris was again "repeatedly fined in court" for absenting himself from church. The dissenters' worship was never considered legal unless a minister approved under the Toleration Act presided at the services. Even though the Hanover Presbyterians did not have a minister, they
continued to flourish. William Tennent and Samuel Blair visited Hanover in 1745. On October 4 of that same year, George Whitefield arrived in Hanover and preached for several days. His preaching was a means of "encouraging others to the Lord, especially from the Church people, who received the Gospel more readily from him than from the ministers of the Presbyterian denomination." After Whitefield's departure, the Hanover Presbyterians were destitute of a minister until Davies supplied their pulpits for a few weeks in the spring of 1747. The Presbyterians saw Davies's coming as providential because shortly before he came, according to Morris, "A proclamation was set up at our Meeting House, strictly requiring all magistrates to suppress and prohibit all itinerant preachers."

Davies remained in Hanover for only about six weeks. He returned to his parents' home in Delaware, where he "spent near a year under melancholy and consumptive languishments, expecting death." Davies's wife also died during this time, his terse Bible entry reading, "September 15, 1747, separated by death and bereaved of an abortive son." Davies's "melancholy" only increased, and he was certain that his life was near its end, and was thus reluctant to return to Hanover or to take up any permanent charge. He did not stop preaching during this time, however, speaking wherever he had opportunity. In the spring of 1748 a special messenger delivered a petition bearing the signatures of 150 heads-of-household in Hanover
who implored Davies to return. Davies’s health was still precarious, but he viewed this petition as a call from God. Frail though he was in body, Davies accepted the call, determined to preach to his Hanover people as a "dying man to dying men."
NOTES FOR CHAPTER II


2 Scott, p. 73.


4 Gewehr, pp. 40-1.

5 Samuel Davies, The State of Religion Among the Protestant Dissenters in Virginia (Boston, 1751), pp. 4-6.


7 Gillies, p. 429.

8 Davies in Gillies, p. 429.


10 Virginia Gazette, Friday, December 21, 1739.

11 Gillies, p. 430.

12 Morris in Gillies, p. 430.


15 For a discussion of the traditional Virginia application of the Toleration Act see Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, Vol. I, pp. 245-72.
16 Pilcher, p. 29.
17 Foote, pp. 124-8.
18 Morris in Gillies, p. 430.
19 Morris in Gillies, p. 430.
20 Foote, pp. 132-3; Morris in Gillies, p. 430.
21 Quoted in Foote, p. 135.
22 Quoted in Foote, p. 136.
23 Quoted in Foote, p. 137.
24 Gillies, p. 430.
25 Gooch fully supported the Toleration Act, see Brydon, Vol. II, p. 173, ftn. 11.
26 Quoted in Foote, p. 139.
27 Quoted in Foote, p. 139.
28 Quoted in Gewehr, pp. 59-60.
29 Quoted in Gillies, p. 431.
30 Pilcher, p. 33.
31 Virginia Gazette, Thursday, October 10, 1745.
32 Quoted in Gillies, p. 431.
34 Quoted in Gillies, p. 431.
35 Davies's Old Testament in VHS.
36 Davies to Thomas Gibbons, quoted in Bost, p. 59.
CHAPTER III

THE "GRACIOUS QUALITIES" OF A HUMBLE MAN

Davies continued to walk in "the valley of the shadow of death" throughout the remainder of his life. Ill health plagued him during his Hanover ministry and the fight for the recognition of dissenters' rights under the Toleration Act. He seemed to have little immunity to disease and often suffered with viruses and other diseases that were more debilitating in the days of pre-modern medicine than now. In the interim between his first visit to Hanover and his return to hold the pastorate permanently, he was accompanied on his preaching trips throughout the middle colonies by his parents. He apparently relied heavily on the advice of his parents and entrusted the care of his health to them. After his October 1746 marriage to Sarah Kirkpatrick, she took over the watch-care function of his parents. When her death separated him from her only months later and when the distance between Hanover and New Jersey separated him from his parents, the twenty-four-year-old newcomer to Virginia must have felt lonely indeed. Davies's need for conjugal love and companionship was soon fulfilled in a most propitious marriage.¹

On October 4, 1748, shortly after settlement in Hanover, Davies married Jane Holt, daughter of former
Williamsburg mayor William Holt. It is not surprising that he contracted this marriage so soon after settlement, for such a hasty courtship and quick marriage were a frequent occurrence in Virginia, especially in the frontier areas like Hanover. What is somewhat surprising is that he married into a prominent Church of England family from Williamsburg rather than into one of the dissenting families in the Hanover area. This marriage may well have prepared his entrance into Virginia society and have won him favor and acceptance among some colonial officials, particularly the head of the colonial Virginia government, Sir William Gooch. As Davies's biographer George Pilcher wrote, "Certainly, his marriage to Jane Holt did give him a certain measure of acceptance that he otherwise might not have had."²

Spiritually and emotionally, Davies's second marriage provided him with the companionship that he desired after the loss of his first wife and child. Since he thoroughly immersed himself in spiritual pursuits, his wife helped in managing the temporal affairs and caring for his health. Although he pastored a very loving congregation, as the only dissenting minister east of the Blue Ridge Mountains, he was very much alone in the work of his ministry. He could not seek advice from older neighboring ministers. As the only dissenting minister in the piedmont and tidewater regions, he was the focus of the attacks that colonial and church officials made on the dissenters. Thus his need for
a pleasant home life was more acute than if he had enjoyed the company of sympathetic fellow clergymen.

An inviting home life served to ameliorate the abuse which Davies suffered at the hands of the Reverend Patrick Henry, Peyton Randolph, and other clerical and governmental officials. His home was a haven where, in the arms of his Chara (as he affectionately called his wife), he could find solace and comfort. His home served as a buffer, keeping out the often hostile world around him and allowing him to create the kingdom of God in miniature in his home. Contrasting the hustle and bustle of his brother-in-law John Holt's life in Williamsburg with his more placid life in the country, Davies wrote:

Amid the Hurries of a busy Life, and the refined Nonsense of the polite Vulgar, of which you have copious Entainments, I believe at Times it may give you the Pleasure of Variety to hear from a happy Preacher, whose life differs from yours as a Mole's or an Oyster's from the Aerial Eagle's or a polite Lap-Dog's. I can tell you that I am as happy as perhaps the Creation can make me: I enjoy all the Necessaries and most of the Conveniences of Life; I have a peaceful Study, as a Refuge from the Hurries and the Noise of the World around me; the venerable Dead are waiting in my Library to entertain me, and relieve me from the Nonsense of surviving Mortals; I am peculiarly happy in my Relations, and Providence does not affect me by afflicting them. In short, I have all a moderate Heart can wish; and I very much question if there be a more calm, placid and contented Mortal in Virginia.

This passage reveals Davies's sense of humor, his contentment in Hanover, and his satisfaction with the life of contemplation.

Davies's brother-in-law John Holt served in Williamsburg as journey man to Virginia's public printer
William Hunter. Through his connection with Holt, Davies had published several sermons and treatises in Williamsburg. Although the type of Calvinistic writing which he produced often found a wider market in Scotland and England, he was always keenly concerned with issues at home, preaching sermons and writing essays that were of interest to all intelligent Virginians. Even though eminent English and Scottish publishers expressed an interest in publishing Davies's sermons, he wrote in his last letter to Holt, shortly before he died, "I always intend for you the first offer of all my little business as an author."^6^-

Davies and Holt maintained a cordial relationship with one another throughout their lives, though each remained firm in his own religious beliefs. Holt was a staunch Anglican and from an upper class background. & Both men agreed on many of the basic issues of the Christian faith; on disputed matters they retained a catholic spirit. Holt published some of Davies's poems in the *Virginia Gazette*, and in 1752 published a volume of fifty of his poems (which were used in worship services as hymns) under the title, *Miscellaneous Poems.* Davies, along with Philip Doddridge and Isaac Watts, was one of the first hymn writers in western Christendom, being greatly assisted by Holt in the daring undertaking of singing hymns rather than psalms. As biographer Pilcher wrote, "Davies trusted Holt's judgment completely, allowing him to edit and publish his efforts whenever and however he liked. It was Holt who decided
whether an article should be printed in whole, in part, or at all.\(^7\)

Davies's warm and genuine friendship with John Holt is typical of his attitude towards the differences between Christian denominations. His attitude is manifest in a 1751 letter to Holt in which he writes: "I care but little whether men go to Heaven from the Church of England or Presbyterian, if they do but go there; but Oh! Multitudes of both denominations must experience a great change before they obtain it."\(^8\) He preferred to witness vital godliness in his fellows rather than merely to observe men become Presbyterians. As he wrote to New England minister Joseph Bellamy, "it would inspire me with much greater joy to see a pious churchman, than a graceless Presbyterian." Grace is that which must be present in a man's life if he is ever to enter heaven; lacking grace, conversion to the staunchest Calvinism was insufficient. Davies was no party man. He would rather see a swelling of the ranks of those who would enter heaven than a swelling of the ranks of those who would be Presbyterian. He was not concerned with the external form which religion assumed, but with the internal work of God's spirit that invariably produced holiness, regardless of the convert's denomination. He summed up his view of conversion, writing to Bellamy, "I think the Alteration of Men's Principles and Practice with respect to these things only [the externals of religion], without being born again of God, is a wretched conversion."\(^9\)
While traveling through Great Britain in the mid-1750s, Davies's catholicity gave him broad appeal and made his preaching attractive to Lutherans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and even Baptists and Methodists. He once "preached for . . . a Baptist Congregation," and thought highly of "a good old Lutheran minister" who served as "his Majesty's Chaplain." After meeting some Lutheran ministers in Pennsylvania, he exclaimed, "How pleasing it is to see the Religion of Jesus appear undisguised in foreigners! I am so charmed with it, that I forget all national and religious Differences; and my very Heart is intimately united to them."

Perhaps two sermons are the best illustrations of Davies's comprehensive spirit: "The Sacred Import of the Christian Name," and his funeral sermon. In the former, Davies pleaded, "Let us consider the Christian name as a catholic name intended to bury all party-denominations." He warned his brethren against "this mischievous spirit of party" that led men to consider themselves "Lutherans, Calvinists, Arminians, Zwinglians, Churchmen, Presbyterians, Independents, [and] Baptists," acting as if "to be a Christian is not enough now-a-days, but a man must also be something more and better, that is he must be a strenuous bigot to this or that particular church." He concluded that "by turning the attention of men from the great concerns of eternity, and the essentials of Christianity . . . , the Christian is swallowed up in the partisan, and fundamentals
lost in extra-essentials." Davies, of course, did not preach his funeral sermon, but he did choose the text--Romans 14:7, 8--which Samuel Finley his successor at Princeton, delivered. This text, expressing that every man belongs to the Lord, is part of Paul's great discourse on personal liberty, and is perhaps more than anything indicative of Davies's attitude: his fellow man stood not before him to be judged, but before the Lord.

Davies was a sincere supporter of evangelical religion in the established church and hoped that the Awakening would spread throughout the Anglican communion. He felt the truth as taught by the partisans of the Awakening was not in the sole possession of any denomination and longed for the established church to be filled with men of Whitefield's ilk. He believed that a resident bishop would strengthen church discipline and better the spiritual health of the church in Virginia. As Bost wrote: "So sincere was Davies that he favored a bishop for the church in Virginia at a time when most non-Anglicans in the colonies were strongly antagonistic to the appointment of an American bishop." In favoring an American bishop, Davies found himself in agreement with only a handful of the clergy, both dissenters and Anglicans alike fearing that an episcopal appointment "would strengthen the power of the Church of England in the colonies." Dissenters opposed any increase of the church's hegemony because they imagined that their own influence would be diminished and that
non-Anglicans might not receive their due protection under the Toleration Act, the application of which in Virginia many churchmen argued was unlawful. Anglicans did not want a bishop because the churches were controlled in large part by a twelve-member governing body, the vestry. Vestrymen realized that some of the responsibilities that they had fallen heir to lacking a bishop would be assumed by a bishop upon his taking office.

Davies's catholicity stemmed primarily from humility: that frame of mind which disposed him to recognize his own fallibility and thus to realize that agreement on the nonessentials of religion was unnecessary, because impossible. His humility expressed itself in the pentient garb of miserable sinner Christianity. His repeated cries of "O! What a sinner I am!" in his public and private writings might be dismissed as literary convention if it were not for the abundant evidence that Davies was indeed a humble man. An extended quote from one of Davies's letters to Thomas Gibbons evidences this spirit of humility and the attitude in which Davies conducted his entire ministry.

As for myself, I am just striving not to live in vain. I entered the ministry with such a sense of my unfitness for it, that I had no sanguine expectations of success. And a condescending God (O, how condescending!) has made me much more serviceable than I could hope. But alas! my brother, I have but little, very little, true religion. My advancements in holiness are extremely small. . . . It is an easy thing to make a noise in the world, to flourish and harangue, to dazzle the crowd and set them all agape; but deeply to imbibe the spirit of Christianity, to maintain a secret walk with God, to be holy, as he is holy—This is the labour, this the work. I beg the
assistance of your prayers in so grand and important an enterprise. The difficulty of the ministerial work seems to grow on my hands. Perhaps once in three or four months I preach as in the sight of God, and as if I were to step from the pulpit to the supreme tribunal. I feel my subject. I melt into tears, or I shudder with horrors, when I denounce the terrors of the Lord. I glow, I soar in sacred ecstacies, when the love of Jesus is my theme, and, as Mr. Baxter was wont to express it . . . , "I preach as if I ne'er should preach again and as a dying man to dying men." But alas! my spirits soon flag, my devotions, languish, and my zeal cools. It is really an afflictive thought that I serve so good a master with so much inconstancy.  

In a sermon on Isaiah 66:2 entitled "Poor and Contrite Spirits the Object of the Divine Favour," Davies gives an extended description of the marks of the true Christian. The very essence of Christianity for him was humility and self-abasement. His description here of the humble man accords with others' description of him.

The poor man on whom the God of heaven condescends to look is mean in his own apprehensions; he accounts himself not a being of mighty importance. He has no high esteem of his own good qualities, but is little in his own eyes. He is not apt to give himself the preference to others, but is ready to give way to them as his superiors. He has a generous sagacity to behold their good qualities and commendable blindness toward their imperfections; but he is not quick to discern his own excellencies, nor sparing to his own frailties.

Davies confirmed this attitude of humility in his own life. When asked by the Trustees of the College of New Jersey (later Princeton) to undertake a journey to Great Britain to raise money for the erection of needed buildings, he was most reluctant, protesting a "Want of Qualifications for so important an Embassy." Only after repeated applications from the Trustees did he consent to go, still arguing that he believed himself "so unfit (alas! I feel
myself so) for the Business." He was greatly relieved to learn that Gilbert Tennent would accompany him, for Davies thought that Tennent would provide the experience and wisdom that he lacked. Davies admitted that his nature was "pliable" and he was always willing to give the elder Tennent rather than himself the preference, calling him his "Spiritual Father."^{19}

"Instead of being dazzled with the splendour of his own endowments or acquisitions," wrote Davies, the humble man, "is apt to overlook them with a noble neglect, and is sensible of the weakness and defects of his nature."^{20}

Writing to Gibbons near the end of his life, Davies remained unimpressed by any of his own accomplishments, commenting, "I have hardly any hopes of ever making any great attainment in holiness while in this world, though I should be doomed to stay in it as long as Methuselah." He confessed that God has "superior orders that can perform him more worthy service" than he.^{21} The "gracious qualities" of the humble man, he preached, "appear small, exceeding small to him, when he considers how much they fall short of what they should be, they as it were vanish and shrink away into nothing." Over and again, his expressed estimation of himself is slight, yet this is not to say that he is discontent with this estimation of himself. <Davies desires the lowest place of service, writing, "O! if I might but untie the latchet of his shoes, or draw water for the service of his sanctuary, it is enough for me."^{22}>
As the Psalmist wrote, "Every man at his best state is altogether vanity," Davies observed of the Christian in the recognition of his depraved state:

How cold does his love appear to him in its greatest fervour! How feeble his faith in its greatest confidence! How superficial his repentance in its greatest depth! How proud his lowest humility! And as for the good actions he has performed, alas! how few, how poorly done, how short of his duty do they appear! After he has done all, he counts himself an unprofitable servant. After he has done all, he is more apt to adopt the language of the publican than the pharisee, God be merciful to me a sinner.23

Time and again Davies exclaimed in like manner, "Alas! I have been perplexed this day with the vigorous Insurrections of sin in my heart; but my Resistance and Humiliation has not been proportioned. Oh wretched man that I am, etc."24 This confession matches perfectly with his sermon description of the humble:

He that is poor in spirit has also an humbling sense of his own sinfulness. His memory is quick to recollect his past sins, and he is very sharp-sighted to discover the remaining corruptions of his heart, and the imperfections of his best duties. He is not ingenious to excuse them, but views them impartially in all their deformity and aggravations. He sincerely doubts whether there is a saint upon earth so exceeding corrupt; and though he may be convinced that the Lord has thus begun a work of grace in him, and consequently, that he is in a better state, than such as are under the prevailing dominion of sin, yet he really questions whether there has been such a depraved creature in the world as he sees he has been. He is apt to count himself the chief of sinners and more indebted to free grace than any of the sons of men. He is intimately acquainted with himself; but he sees only the outside of others, and hence he concludes himself so much worse than others; hence he loathes himself in his own sight for all his abominations.25

<To count oneself the chief of sinners and the least of saints creates the kind of humility which nurtures
catholicity. As Davies wrote to his fellow English dissenter Philip Doddridge, "If men are walking the heavenly road, it affords me but little uneasiness that they are not of my mind about every circumstance." Davies did not seek perfection in his fellows because he understood in the keenest sense his own imperfections.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

1Pilcher, pp. 15-19.

2Pilcher, pp. 35-6.

3Davis frequently referred to his wife as Chara (Greek, for dear) in his private writings. When traveling in Britain in the 1750s to raise money for the College of New Jersey, he continually longed to be with his wife, who was in poor health, and ever lamented that home—"That dear place"—contained "all that is dearest to me in the World, my Congregation, my Friends, my Parents, my Children, and especially my dearest Chara. Alas! My Heart breaks at the Thought." While traveling he also complained, "I am extremely uneasy in my Situation. I long to be at Home in my Study, and with my dear Family; for the Character of a Recluse Student suits me much better than that of a man of business." George William Pilcher, ed., The Reverend Samuel Davies Abroad: The Diary of a Journey to England and Scotland, 1753-55 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967), pp. 73-74. Hereinafter, Diary.

4Quoted in Pilcher, p. 37.

5The English minister and publisher Thomas Gibbons published the first collections of Davies's sermons in 1766. For the many requests of English and Scottish hearers to have individual sermons published, see Diary, p. 54, passim.


7Pilcher, p. 38.

8Davies to Holt, August 13, 1751, Rush MSS, Quoted in Bost, p. 48.


10Diary, pp. 45, 52.

11Diary, p. 13.

12"The Sacred Import of the Christian Name" (1845), I, pp. 215-18.
"Funeral Sermon by the Rev. Samuel Finley, D.D." Sermons (1964), I.

Bost, pp. 30-1.

For Anglican opposition to granting broad toleration to dissenters, see James Maury to Thomas Dawson, October 6, 1755, and George Trask to Thomas Dawson, December 9, 1758, in the Dawson MSS, Library of Congress.


Quoted in Bost, p. 59.


Diary, pp. 3-6.


Quoted in Foote, I, p. 306.

"Poor and Contrite Spirits," p. 220.

"Poor and Contrite Spirits," p. 220.

Diary, p. 11, passim.

"Poor and Contrite Spirits," p. 221.

CHAPTER IV

THE STRUGGLE FOR RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

Even Davies's catholic spirit could not lead him to deny that the New Light Presbyterians were more congenial to evangelical religion than the Anglicans. Circumstances propelled the naturally peace-loving Davies into the fray between churchmen and dissenters almost immediately after his arrival in Hanover. The rector of St. Paul's, Hanover, the Reverend Patrick Henry, grew increasingly perturbed about the burgeoning dissenter movement that threatened to "ensnare" more of his members and sap the church of its strength. Davies quickly learned that although he expressed no desire to make men Presbyterian, such a profession carried little weight among the established clergy, who knew that the Presbyterians made gains only at the expense of the Anglicans. Shortly before Davies's 1748 arrival in Hanover, Henry had printed in Virginia a sermon by John Caldwell entitled An Impartial Trial, which was a stinging indictment of the "enthusiasm" of the New Lights. Caldwell had originally preached this sermon against the partisans of the Awakening in both New England and the middle colonies. Now that the Awakening had reached Virginia, Henry thought it worthwhile to
reprint it and add to it a preface that applied Caldwell's strictures against enthusiasm to the Hanover Presbyterians.

In the preface, Henry wrote, "Itinerants [who] pass here for Presbyterian ministers, are, in reality, a set of incendiaries, enemies not only to the established church but also common disturbers of the peace and order of all religious societies wherever they come." He charged that the New Lights were schismatics in the Presbyterian church, and that, unlike the Old Lights, were unlettered hayseeds. He also accused the New Lights of being itinerants and entering into other men's pulpits uninvited.

Davies did not refuse to take up the gauntlet which Henry had thrown down. Realizing that he was the only ministerial spokesman for the New Lights in Virginia, he published, under the auspices of John Holt, a reply entitled The Impartial Trial, Impartially Tried, and Convicted of Partiality. Henry had charged that the New Lights were seducers who had lured poor, ignorant men to their own sects from the established church. Davies asked that if the converts to Presbyterianism were deluded, "Wherein or from what have we deluded them?" He wonders if they were deluded "from truth to error? From morality and good works to licentiousness?" With biting sarcasm, he asks if perhaps they have rather been "deluded" from profanity to sobriety? from sin to holiness? from cards to the Bible? From horse-racing to run with patience the race set before them in the
Gospel? From swearing, drinking, and other flagitious vices to religious duties? . . . Profitable delusion! May they never be delivered from it.

Davies asserted his oft-repeated claim that he and other godly Presbyterians sought converts for heaven rather than for their own party. If his evangelical preaching drew men away from the established church, it was not because of anything inherently wrong with the church but that her own ministers did not preach her doctrines. He asked, "Have we done anything else than preach the principle doctrines contained in the Articles of the Church of England?" He then examined some of the principal points of the Thirty-nine Articles, concentrating on Articles IX-XII, arguing that the New Light Presbyterians preached these doctrines to the fullest. He contended that he and his followers were better Anglicans than the Anglicans themselves. Aside from what he felt were "irregularities" in church government and differences in other matters "non-essential," he argued that what he opposed in the church of England was not her Articles nor her "excellent constitution," but the "languid" and "cool" discourses of her ministers, sermons not calculated to awaken the sinner to his need of salvation but rather to confirm him in his life of sin. Davies contended that "people flock after us" not because they despised the English church but because the doctrines of the church were not being taught. Indeed, he argued that "such are not true Ministers of the Church of England, who expressly or consequentially contradict or
refuse to inculcate any of her fundamental articles."

Although many of the Anglican clergy may have considered themselves loyal churchmen because they tenaciously adhered to "her peculiar Rites and Ceremonies," yet, Davies reasoned, those who do not "use all her Rites and Ceremonies," but who nonetheless "believe and inculcate all her fundamental Articles, are much nearer the true Church of England," than those who are zealous for the nonessentials.5

To Henry's charge that the New Light Presbyterians were schismatics, Davies responded that they had been accused "unjustly without trial, [and] cast out of communion." The Old Lights had expelled the New Lights and had thus broken fellowship with them. To Henry's charge that the New Lights were itinerants, Davies replied that a lack of ministers in the Synod of New York and its constituent presbyteries forced him to fill the pulpits in the surrounding dissenters' meeting houses. He declared that he would welcome more Presbyterian ministers to join him, allowing each church to have its own pastor.6

The education afforded Presbyterians first at the log colleges and then the College of New Jersey ensured that her ministers would be learned. The New Lights were as well educated as the Old Lights and the clergy of the established church.7 The arduous trial that Presbyterian ministers were put through before the presbytery licensed them makes hollow Henry's accusation that they were enthusiasts opposed to learning. An examination of the "tryals for the
gospel ministry" of John Martin, a typical candidate of the Hanover presbytery, reveals the qualifications they sought in their preachers. On 18 March 1756, Martin presented himself before the presbytery and "delivered a Discourse upon Eph. 2:1, which was sustained as a Part of Tryal; & he was also examined as to his religious experiences, & the reasons of his desiring the ministry, which was also sustained." As to his academic qualifications, "He was . . . examined in the Latin & greek languages, & briefly in Logick, ontology, Ethics, natural philosophy, rhetoric, geography, and Astronomy; in all which his answers in general were very satisfactory." This was only the beginning of his "tryal." 

The ruling presbyter instructed Martin to prepare a sermon on I Corinthians 1:22, 23 and "an exigesis on this question, Hum Revelatio supernaturalis fit Necessarias? to be delivered at our next" meeting. His sermon and Latin oration were approved by the committee, which "proceeded to examine him upon the Hebrew, in sundry extempore questions upon the Doctrines of Religion & some Cases of Conscience: his answers to which were sustained." They appointed him to preach a sermon on Galatians 2:20 and deliver a lecture on Isaiah 61:1-3. The scriptural text in each sermon assignment exceeded in difficulty the previous assignment. The committee "highly approve[d]" of his sermon on Galatians 2:20 and assigned further sermons. Finally, after over five months of examination Martin was
given tentative approval. On 10 August,

The Presbytery farther examined Mr. Martin in sundry extempore Questions upon various branches of Learning & Divinity & reheard his religious experience, & upon a review of sundry Trials he has passed thro they judged him qualified to preach the gospel; & he having declared his Assent to an Approbation of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Catechisms, and Directory, as they have been adopted by the Synod of New York, the Presbytery do license and authorize him to preach as a candidate for the ministry of the gospel, & recommend [him] to the acceptance of the Churches.

He had to undergo further trials, and only after successfully pastoring a church for several months was he admitted as a full member. ⁹

Davies concluded his defense of the New Lights, asserting that if he had any success in the preaching of the gospel in Virginia it was only because the established church was not satisfying its members. ⁹ Having denied that New Light Presbyterian ministers were schismatics, itinerants, and ignorant, he also denied that they were proselytizers, contending that they only wanted the right to preach the gospel and enjoy the religious liberty due them. Appended to Davies's Impartial Trial was "The Right of the Synod of New York to the Religious Liberties allowed to Protestant Dissenters by the Act of Toleration." This was his first published argument that the Hanover Presbyterians were entitled to the rights granted dissenters by the Toleration Act of 1689.

The Toleration Act was passed shortly after William and Mary ascended the throne and was one of the more substantial fruits of the Glorious Revolution. The
Act was to serve as "an effectual means to unite their Majesty's Protestant Subjects in Interest and Affection." All laws that had been passed from Elizabeth I through Charles II that completely prohibited the worship of dissenters no longer applied to those whom the Act recognized as lawful non-conformists. Every dissenter who swore a declaration of fidelity to William and Mary and subscribed to a profession of faith that declared, inter alia, belief in the Trinity and the divine inspiration of Scripture was exempted from civil penalties or prosecution in any ecclesiastical court. Dissenters could gain legal exemption from Church of England services by paying a fee of not more than six pence to have their name entered on the registry of the justice of the peace in the county, after which they received a certificate attesting to their compliance with the law. Dissenting preachers and teachers were to follow the same procedure as laymen and were additionally required to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles, with the exception of Articles XXXIV through XXXVI, and part of Article XX. Anabaptists did not have to subscribe to the articles pertaining to infant baptism. Additionally, the place of worship for dissenters was itself to be certified by the bishop of the diocese in which it was located or by the county justices. Many religious restrictions yet remained. Roman Catholics, Unitarians, and all non-Christians were not exempted from paying tithes, or church taxes.
In 1699, the Virginia General Assembly, in passing a law requiring church attendance, specifically exempted "any person or persons dissenting from the church of England being every way qualified according to one act of parliament . . . exempting . . . protesting subjects dissenting . . . from the penalties of certain laws." On the basis of this 1699 appropriation of the Toleration Act to Virginia and on the basis of a 1744 statute allowing for dissenters to attend their own churches, Davies claimed that the dissenters who complied with the provisions of the Act were exempt from penalties. In Virginia, since there was no bishop or ecclesiastical courts, the duty of certifying dissenters fell to the General Court. The reason that the justices of the peace were not allowed to assume this responsibility, as they did in Britain, is unclear. When Davies had appeared before the General Court on 12 April 1747, on his first visit to Hanover, he registered three meeting houses in Hanover County, in addition to fulfilling the Toleration Act requirements for dissenting ministers. The General Court, which consisted of the governor and his council (the twelve-member legislative "upper house") acting as the highest court in Virginia, approved Davies's credentials, licensing him as a dissenting minister qualified to preach at the registered places.

On 1 November 1748, Davies again appeared before the General Court. He registered three additional preaching
points, one each in Louisa, Goochland, and Carolina Counties. In 1750, "Protestant Dissenters of the Presbyterian denomination" in New Kent County petitioned the New Kent Court to "license for our public use . . . a place on the land of William Compton." On 12 April 1750, the New Kent County Court granted their petition, certifying all the dissenters and licensing Davies to preach in the meeting house. The General Court shortly thereafter revoked the license granted by the New Kent Court, arguing that "this affair is not within the jurisdiction of County Courts."

As Davies himself noted, colonial Virginia's governor, Sir William Gooch, had been the driving force behind the Council's initial granting of toleration to Davies and its later granting of additional preaching points. Gooch returned to England in 1749 because of poor health. In the absence of a governor or lieutenant governor, the Council was headed by its senior member, or president. From September 1749 through November 1750, Colonel Thomas Lee served as the Council's president, and, unlike Gooch, was unsympathetic to the New Lights. It was Lee who pushed through the decision nullifying the New Kent County Court's ruling. <The ecclesiastical officials both on and off the Council who had complained of the alarming spread of the dissenters' teachings were in some measure vindicated.>

Davies had always had his enemies on the Council. Even with Gooch present, he had not been able to have his
friend John Rodgers appointed to help him in the ministry. Rodgers, a fellow classmate and close personal friend of Davies, accompanied him to Virginia in 1748. Although Gooch was able to wring from the Council the concession of additional preaching points, he could not persuade them to license Rodgers as Davies's assistant. Indeed, when the governor informed them that he had been unable to procure a license for Rodgers, he confided that it was only with the "greatest difficulty" that he had prevented the recall of Davies's initial license. Davies and Rodgers reminded him that they asked for no privileges from the Court, but only for their rights under the Toleration Act. They correctly argued that the Act did not limit the number of ministers who could qualify under its provisions. Gooch agreed with their interpretation but confessed that he could do nothing other than abide by the decision of the majority of the Court.18

With Gooch gone, the little restraint that he had exercised on the Council was removed. The reason the General Court had ruled that it alone and not the county courts had the authority to register meeting houses is unclear, especially since the Toleration Act designated justices of the peace in the county as the proper licensing body. Peyton Randolph, Attorney General of Virginia, was one of the leading opponents on the Council of the dissenters. Only the moving oratory of Davies convinced Randolph that the Toleration Act applied to Virginia. But
he was never able to convince either Randolph or other recalcitrant Council members of his and Gooch's interpretation. He made an impassioned appeal for religious toleration before the General Court, arguing that he was not the cause of dissent in Hanover and reminding them that dissent had arisen without the aid of preachers. He contended that the 1699 law and subsequent laws passed by the General Assembly provided for toleration. The majority of the Council did not dispute that the Toleration Act extended to Virginia, but they maintained that it severely limited both the number of meeting houses that should be registered and the number of preachers who should be licensed. He argued that the Act contained no such restrictive measures. He noted that the ministers of the established church in Hanover and other counties often had two or three preaching points, because their parishes were so extensive and the population so sparse. If dissenting preachers discovered that their members were similarly spread out, they too should be able to minister to them in their own areas. Davies ironically added that if the Court would only license additional Presbyterian ministers, then the charge of itinerancy would be eliminated.

Davies wrote in 1751,

My congregation is very much dispersed, and not withstanding the number of meeting-houses, some live twenty, some thirty, and some forty miles from the nearest. Were they all compactly situated in one county, they would be sufficient to form three distinct congregations.
His opponents on the Council maintained that the granting of a license to him and the registering of seven preaching points was enough: to allow Rodgers to assist Davies or to allow the New Kent Court to register a meeting house would be to encourage dissent, which was not the purpose of the Toleration Act. The Council charged that it was dangerous to allow the existence of congregations which would receive instructions only infrequently from one who was little more than an itinerant minister in any one of his preaching points. Understandably, when the counselors witnessed dissenting congregations appearing in areas that before had been solely the domain of the established church, they believed that Davies and company were proselytizing. The General Court may well have been correct in that a dissenter should not hold multiple preaching points, but they were not correct in believing that the Toleration Act in any way limited the number of dissenting ministers who could be certified.  

On 11 May 1750, Council President Thomas Lee wrote to the Board of Trade in London, one of the governing bodies in colonial affairs, asking for advice on Davies, who was, he wrote, "a Presbyterian preacher [who] came hither to make proselytes." Noting that Davies already had seven preaching points and desired additional ones, Lee observed that Davies's liberal interpretation of the rights of dissenters was "not within the words or intent of the Toleration Act and gives great uneasiness to the clergy
and people." He asked the Board "how to conduct this affair for his Majesty's Service and the peace of the colony." The Lords of Trade replied:

With regard to the affairs of Mr. Davies the Presbyterian: A Toleration and free exercise of Religion is so valuable a branch of true Liberty, and so essential to the improving and enriching of a Trading Nation, it should ever be held Sacred to his Majesty's Colonies. We must therefore earnestly recommend to your care that nothing be done which can in the least affect that great point.

While the letter went on to encourage the Council to warn Davies not to "afford any just cause of complaint," the tone of the letter was quite friendly to him and his construction of the Toleration Act.

The tone of other official correspondence was not as positive for Davies as was the Board of Trade's letter. The Council directed one of its members, the commissary, to seek the advice of his ecclesiastical superior, the Bishop of London. The Bishop of London had, since the end of the seventeenth century, assumed ecclesiastical control over the colonies in British North America. A commissary represented the bishop in the colonies in which the Anglican church was established. The duties of the commissary consisted of the "oversight of the lives and character of the clergy," the authority to appoint investigative boards into clerical conduct, and the power to call clerical convocations. The commissaries were not empowered to ordain ministers or confirm members, these powers resting solely in the bishop. The weakness of the commissary was one reason Davies thought that a bishop was
needed in Virginia. When Davies arrived in Virginia, William Dawson was commissary.

Writing to the Bishop of London on 27 July 1750, Commissary Dawson noted that the seven meeting houses which Davies had been licensed to minister in were spread over five counties, while in those same five counties there were eight established clergymen. He asked the bishop "whether in licensing so many houses for one teacher they have not granted him greater indulgence than either the King's instructions, or the Act of Toleration intended?" Dawson painfully added, "I cannot forbear expressing my own concern to see Schism spreading itself through a colony which has been famous for uniformity in religion."  

Colonel Lee informed Davies that the bishop had been consulted, prompting Davies to write to Dawson requesting from him a copy of his letter to the bishop. Davies asserted that "each party in such a case has a legal right to know the true state of it." And he was preparing his case for the dissenters, a case which he soon presented to Philip Doddridge, head of a committee in Great Britain that promoted the rights of Protestant dissenters. On 2 October 1750 he wrote a letter to Doddridge much like the one that he later wrote to Joseph Bellamy (published as The State of Religion in Virginia). He acquainted Doddridge with the rise and progress of the Awakening in Virginia. He wrote that although the Presbyterians had been "willing to comply with the Act of Toleration (As I
have actually done), yet the Government under a variety of
umbrages has endeavored to infringe upon my Liberties and to
exclude my brethren from settling here." He then stated
the predicament: "It has been alleged that the act of
tolleration does not extend to this Colony . . . and the
Counsel have lately determined that a dissenting minister
has no right to more meeting houses than one. . . ." He
pleaded for Doddridge's opinion, asking Doddridge to inform
him "whether a dissenting Minister is tollerated with you
[in Great Britain] to have more meeting houses than one in
case the bounds of his congregation require it." He noted
that Lee and Dawson had written to the Bishop of London
requesting him to "lay the affair before the King and
Council for advice." Although he had never received a
response from Dawson, Davies was sure that his
"representation" of the Virginia dissenters was
"defective."²

Shortly after he wrote of the plight of the
dissenters, Davies sent Doddridge a letter for him to
deliver to the Bishop of London at his discretion.
Doddridge wrote back to Davies, explaining to him that he
had laid the dissenters' case before the bishop, and
enclosed a "large extract" from Davies's letter. Doddridge
assured Davies the Virginia dissenters were protected under
the Toleration Act. He questioned Davies's understanding
and use of the Act, however, noting that in their attempt
to secure a license from the New Kent County Court, that
the dissenters only needed to qualify under the Act and register for themselves a place of meeting for worship without specifying that Davies would be the preacher.

He wrote:

I know nothing of licensing . . . the use of particular places, nor persons to preach in such and such a place; a minister licensed according to the law has a right indifferently to preach in any licensed place whatsoever and every licensed place is open to every qualified minister whom the proprietor or tenant will employ.

Doddridge recommended that dissenters desirous of registering a meeting house should not specify who was to preach there but simply to draw up a certificate for presentation to the court stating,

We . . . being Protestant Dissenters under the denomination of Presbyterian do hereby signify . . . that we intend to make use of such and such a place situate in such and such a parish as a place of publick worship, and we do hereby demand that this our certificate be registered according to the law.

If the court refused to register dissenters who had thus presented themselves, wrote Doddridge, "those whom I have consulted on this occasion apprehend that you will have just matter of complaint in our court." 3

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Davies and his followers had erred when they applied for certification of the New Kent County meeting house "under the ministerial care of the Rev. Mr. Davies." If the meeting houses were applied for in his name, then the charge of clerical and colonial officials that he was an itinerant seemed valid. With Davies specified on the applications, it appeared as if he were assuming the role of a "super-pastor" under whom others would minister.>  John
Rodgers had specifically applied for a license as Davies's assistant, not as a minister in his own right who would have charge over a congregation. The established clergy and colonial officials were legitimately concerned about so many meeting houses being under one man, who, through the limitations of sheer physical possibility, could not be a ubiquitous shepherd to all his scattered flock.  

His correction of Davies's interpretation of the Toleration Act notwithstanding, Doddridge's letter was encouraging to him. Doddridge assured him that the Archbishop of Canterbury did not intend "Dissenters [to] suffer any injustice that he can prevent," and that King George II was "so strenuous an asserter of the religious rights of all his subjects that none must think of recommending themselves to him by invading them." This good news was not unmixed: He enclosed a copy of the 27 July 1750 letter of Commissary Dawson to the Bishop of London. Especially displeasing to Davies was Dawson's accusation: "I had almost forgot to mention his [Davies's] holding forth on working days to great numbers of poor people who generally are his only followers." Dawson concluded:

This certainly is inconsistent with the religion of labour whereby they are obliged to maintain themselves & their families; & their neglect of this duty if not seasonably prevented may in process of time be sensibly felt by the government.  

Also enclosed in Doddridge's letter was an extract of the bishop's reply to Dawson. The bishop wrote that he
believed Attorney General Peyton Randolph's interpretation of the Toleration Act was correct, as the Act "confines the preachers to a particular place to be certified and entered, and so the practice here has been." The bishop admitted that the confirmation of the Act during Queen Anne's reign did empower a dissenting minister occasionally to preach in a county other than the one in which he was licensed. Tenth Anne 6, section IX provided that

any such Preacher or Teacher so duly qualified according to the said Act shall be and is hereby allowed to officiate in any congregation although the same be not in the county wherein he was so qualified provided that the said Congregation or Place of Meeting hath been before such officiating duly certified and registered or recorded according to the said Act.33

Randolph and others argued that the law had never been adopted by the General Assembly as had the original Toleration Act. But was not Parliament the supreme legislature of the empire and were not its laws considered in force throughout its realms? Davies had earlier successfully argued against Randolph that if the Toleration Act did not extend to Virginia, then neither did the Uniformity Act. Without the Uniformity Act there was no established church and religious liberty reigned. While his argument had carried the day in Williamsburg and earned him the admiration of the colony's attorneys, who knew that the legal profession had lost an excellent lawyer when Davies was ordained into the ministry, his more solid argument was that the Toleration Act in Virginia rested
specifically upon the 1699 enactment of it by the General Assembly. If the Queen Anne extension of the Act were passed into the law by the General Assembly, Davies believed that his problem would be solved.

The bishop supported the General Court in its nullification of the county court's certification of the meeting house while at the same time writing of the licensing power as vested in the county court. If it were up to the county court to license, as the bishop, the original Toleration Act, and the 10th Queen Anne supplement confirmed, then by what authority did the attorney general and the Court act in overriding an action which was solely the prerogative of the lower court and not subject to review? (It appears that legally the justices of the peace could license as many meeting houses as met the provisions of the Toleration Act. On the other hand if the General Court wished to reserve that function to itself, then, since its jurisdiction was colony-wide, any minister so licensed would be qualified to preach in any county of Virginia.)

The bishop also objected to allowing Davies "to gather congregations where there were none before." He observed that one of the licenses that had been issued Davies permitted him "to assemble . . . at several meeting houses to be erected on the lands" of one of the Presbyterians. To London this meant that Davies had
proselytized Anglicans who then wished to erect a meeting house and worship as dissenters. 35

The bishop further stated his views on the "Davies's case" in an 11 May 1751 letter to Doddridge, which Doddridge forwarded to Davies. 36 Writing with candor and kindness, the bishop maintained that his own construction of the Toleration Act was correct. "If you judge the liberty granted not sufficient," he wrote, "and that you, and every body, have a natural right to propagate their opinions in religion in such a manner as they approve themselves, that is quite another point, and in which Mr. Davies, who claims under the Act of Toleration, has no concern." The bishop wondered what Davies's real intentions were:

If the Act of Toleration was desired for no other view than to ease the consciences of those who could not conform . . . , how must Mr. Davies conduct be justified, who, under the colour of a toleration of his own conscience, is labouring to disturb the consciences of others, and the peace of a church acknowledged [by Davies and Doddridge] to be a true church of Christ?

London clearly did not understand how dissent had arisen in Virginia. Writing of Davies he remarked:

He came three hundred miles from home, not to serve a people who had scruples [about abiding by all the ceremonies of the Church], but to a county where the Church of England had been established from its first plantation, and where there were not four or five dissenters within one hundred miles of it, not above six years ago.

He apparently did not know that dissent occurred not at the behest of dissenting ministers, but through the action of
disgruntled Anglican laymen. London wondered if the Toleration Act was meant to favor one who, in light of his preaching in so many counties, was an itinerant and who had made converts of otherwise loyal church members. The bishop wrote as if Davies possessed some strange charm by which he seduced unsuspecting dupes away from their mother church. He gave the citizens of Virginia little credit as thinking people who were quite competent to decide between opposing religious views.

Doddridge answered the bishop immediately upon reception of his letter. Doddridge confessed that peculiarities might exist in Virginia of which he was unaware that would alter the conditions of the Toleration Act there; at any rate he maintained that his Lordship did not appear to be aware of the application of the Act even in England. He assured the bishop that the English practice did not limit a licensed preacher to any one preaching place, noting that in his own town, Northampton, dissenting ministers regularly preached in more meeting houses than one. He also acknowledged the legitimacy of the bishop's concern over colonial, and especially New England's, opposition to a colonial Anglican bishop. Doddridge agreed that the desire for a resident diocesan by supporters of the episcopacy seemed quite reasonable.37

Davies, having had time to digest all the material which Doddridge sent him, composed a mammoth letter to the bishop on 10 January 1752. His letter in print runs twenty
pages with a post script of six pages. Although neither Doddridge nor his successor as chairman of the dissenters' committee delivered this letter, they transmitted the gist of it to the Bishop. The letters of Lee and Dawson prompted him to write his letter to the bishop setting forth the dissenters' case, lest Lee and Dawson had made a "representation" that was "imperfect." Davies explained that the Synod of New York was unable to supply the number of ministers necessary for all the dissenting congregations to have settled pastors. Only from the lack of ministers had the need arisen for him to officiate in so many places and thus make himself vulnerable to the charge "itinerant." He asked if the Presbyterians should not risk the charge of being itinerants rather than risk letting those who desired their ministrations "perish through a famine of the Word of the Lord." He wondered "whether contiguity of residence is necessary to entitle dissenters to the liberties granted by the Act of Toleration?" Since his congregations were separated by distance were they thus to be denied toleration? Davies reminded the Bishop that he had admitted that the intent of the Act was to permit dissenters to worship in their own way. How are dissenters to worship in their own way if they must travel forty and fifty miles on Sunday to hear their minister? At this point, the bishop must have mumbled that anyone who lived that far from a dissenting meeting house was not a dissenter and had only been stirred up in opposition
against the established church by some troublemaking itinerants who wished to gain a foothold in an area previously happy with the ministrations of the church.  

Davies asked if a man could not be considered a settled minister even though he preached at more than one place. He noted that although the Anglican ministers were certainly considered settled pastors, the dispersion of their people throughout their parish divided their labors between their main church and smaller congregations, called "chapels of ease." Davies wrote of "the Rev. Mr. Barrett, one of the ministers in Hanover, who has three churches situated in two counties, and whose parish is perhaps sixty miles in circumference." Was Barrett not, asked Davies, "as properly a settled parish minister, as a London minister whose parishioners do not live half a mile from his church?" He noted that ministers like Barrett were common in the frontier counties where the population was spread over a large area. He argued that since his congregation was spread out as wide as those of many established clergymen, the refusal to certify his outlying meeting houses would simply result in the dissenters in those areas not attending church. Failure to attend church at least monthly was punishable by fines and imprisonment. Davies reasoned that since his members would not attend the Church of England, to deny them the right to have a meeting house would put them in violation of the law. To attend the Anglican church would violate their conscience;
to attend an unregistered meeting house or not to attend church for lack of a registered meeting house would violate the law. <Davies made it clear to the bishop that the New Light Presbyterians would violate the law before they would violate their consciences.>

Considering the spontaneous nature of the dissenters' withdrawal from the Anglican church, Davies sought finally to acquit himself and the other Presbyterian ministers who passed through Hanover with making men dissenters who were not such already. Davies asked, "had not these people [the original dissenters of Hanover] a legal right to separate from the Established Church, and to invite any legally qualified minister they thought fit to preach among them?" The bishop had earlier seemed to argue that the Toleration Act applied only to men who were dissenters by birth and education. Did this mean that no one could be converted and that only those reared in dissent were properly dissenters? This would mean that only those dissenting at the time the Toleration Act was passed and their offspring could receive the liberty granted by the Act. 40 Davies wondered

whether the laws of England enjoin an immutability in sentiments on the members of the Established Church? And whether, if those that were formerly conformists, follow their own judgments, and dissent, they are cut off from the privileges granted by law to those that are dissenters by birth and education?

Davies also endeavored to correct any false notion which the bishop might have regarding the character and
morality of the New Lights. He assured London that representations such as those made by enemies like Patrick Henry were untrue. Davies may have had in mind an "Address to the Burgesses" made shortly after his coming to Hanover by Henry, Robert Barret, and other established clergymen. This address charged that the original Hanover dissenters were "lay enthusiasts" whose zeal was enflamed by "strolling pretended ministers." Since they did not come from the Philadelphia synod, "they have no just claim" to the name "Presbyterian," the clergy asserted.\footnote{Davies claimed that the Hanover dissenters had been converted not from one party to another, but from sin to holiness. He noted that it was not the purity of the church's doctrine that the dissenters questioned, but the purity of the church's practice.} An anonymous letter to the Bishop of London from a self-professed staunch Anglican praised the character of the Presbyterians. Writing in 1754 the correspondent noted that Davies and John Todd (who was licensed as a Presbyterian minister by the General Court in 1752) were "men of considerable learning, strictly virtuous, and of exemplary lives."\footnote{Because most Anglicans, the laymen at least, seemed to hold Davies in high personal regard, and because Dawson himself was often quite friendly to Davies, Davies confessed that he was deeply hurt by the commissary's charge that his "holding forth on working days" was contrary to "the religion of labor."} He
defended his preaching during the week, noting that since his people were spread out, the only time that he had to minister to some was on a weekday. He noted that a number of those who heard him during the week had slaves and did not perform heavy labor. Their attending divine services was preferable to the idle diversions that slave owners generally engaged in, he argued. Interestingly this refuted Dawson's and others' notions that Davies's only hearers were the poor. Davies wryly noted that even if someone did miss a day of work now or then because of his preaching such an absence did not exceed those missed by churchmen in observing all the holy days. Davies pointed out that his followers were successful in their work precisely because "The Religion of Labour is held sacred among us." 

Davies, in his earlier letter which Doddridge had presented to the bishop, had written of the character of the laity and clergy of the established church. Writing now with apparent reluctance, Davies exclaimed that he wished he had only good things to write about the clergy. But he could not deny his senses: "I can see, I can hear, with certainty. I cannot be so infatuated with prejudice [as a Presbyterian] as to be incapable of distinguishing between a religious and a profane life." Davies admitted that "there are sundry of the laity in the sphere of my acquaintance in the church of England, who are . . . sincere Christians, whom I cordially love." He also
confessed that "sundry of the Established clergy are gentlemen of learning, parts and morality, and I hope honestly aiming at the salvation of men." "The majority" of the clergy, however, "have at best but a name to live and are dead." He reasoned that if he found most laymen "grossly ignorant of the nature of Living Christianity and many of the most important doctrines of the gospel," then the nurture which they have received from their ministers must be deficient. He continued with a catalog of the sins of Virginia, including gaming, cock fighting, horse racing, excessive drinking, swearing, profanation of the Sabbath, lack of prayer and Bible reading, neglect of public worship, and a general apathy about "the spiritual states." And, worse of all, lamented Davies, many of the clergy joined the laity in the commission of these sins. A lack of vital religion producing the fruit of holiness was for Davies the chief reason dissenters who were formerly conformists had abandoned the Anglican church.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

1 John Caldwell, An Impartial Trial of the Spirit Operating in this Part of the World... (Boston, 1742; rpt. Williamsburg, 1748).

2 Henry's Preface to Caldwell, pp. v-vi; Bost, pp. 70-71.

3 Davies, Impartial Trial Impartially Tried, pp. 5-6.

4 Davies, Impartial Trial, pp. 5-6; The extent of support which Davies gave to the Thirty-nine Articles is revealed in a letter to Commissary Dawson and Patrick Henry, April 21, 1747, Dawson Papers. When subscribing the loyalty oath and professing his faith before the General Court as was required of dissenters, Davies gave a full statement of his agreement or dissension from each article. Since he supported the vast majority of the articles his primary difference with the established clergy was not about the basic doctrines of the church.

5 Davies, Impartial Trial, pp. 7-9.

6 Davies, Impartial Trial, pp. 11-13, 15.

7 Davies, Impartial Trial, p. 17.

8 Minutes of the Hanover Presbytery, Union Theological Seminary Library, Richmond, Virginia, p. 6. Hereinafter, HPM.

9 HPM, pp. 7-12.

10 This summary was made from the Act itself, in The Statutes of the Realm (1810; rpt. London: Dawson of Pall Mall, 1963), 1st William and Mary 18.

11 Henning, Statutes, III, p. 171.


13 Fulham Papers, Permit of 1 November 1748.
14 Foote, I, p. 169.
15 Dawson to the Bishop of London. 27 July 1750, in Perry, Historical Collections, I, p. 366.
16 Gillies, p. 431.
17 Brydon, II, pp. 163-4.
18 Foote, I, p. 165.
19 Foote, I, p. 171.
20 Gillies, p. 431.
21 Bost, p. 184; Brydon, II, pp. 163-7.
22 Brydon, II, p. 164.
24 Brydon, I, p. 231.
25 Perry, Historical Collections, I, p. 366.
26 Foote, I, p. 173.
27 Perry, Historical Collections, I, pp. 368-71.
28 Foote, I, pp. 174-5.
29 Dawson to Bishop of London, undated, in Perry, Historical Collections, pp. 384-6; Brydon, II, p. 163.
30 Foote, I, p. 176.
31 Perry, Historical Collections, I, p. 366.
32 Bishop of London to Doddridge, December 25, 1750, Dawson MSS.
33 Statutes of the Realm, 10th Queen Anne 6.
34 Bost, p. 184.
35 Bishop to Doddridge, December 25, 1750.
36 Foote, I, p. 178.
37 Perry, Historical Collections, I, pp. 374-7.
In Foote, I, pp. 180-206. All following paraphrasing and quotes are from this letter, unless otherwise noted.

See letter from Benjamin Avery to Davies, in Foote, I, pp. 211-12.

While most colonial officials believed that the Hanover dissenters were entitled to at least some of the protection afforded by the Act, some still maintained that it did not apply, as an anonymous writer wrote in his MS notebook entitled "Observations on Mr. Samuel Davies his [?]," "The Act of Toleration ... was made for Dissenters already numerous, and formed into Congregation; and not for a few straggling Families, in order to give them an Opportunity of disseminating their Religion and destroying Uniformity of Worship," Library of Congress, MS Division.

Perry, Historical Collections, I, pp. 381-3.

1 February 1754, Fulham Papers.

Perry, Historical Collections, I, p. 366.

Foote, I, p. 198.

Unfortunately this lengthy letter was never received by the Bishop, but was an expansion of Davies's earlier letter which Doddridge had shown to the Bishop.
CHAPTER V

THE CHALLENGE TO THE ESTABLISHED ORDER

The Bishop of London may well have believed that Davies's charge of clerical misconduct was a partisan attack by a defensive dissenter resentful of the privileges granted the ministers of the favored church. Davies's assertion of ministerial misbehavior, however, was not merely "sour grapes" on the part of one who by virtue of his training, intellect, piety, and oratorical ability was every bit the equal if not the superior of the best of the established clergy. Correspondence that corroborates Davies's testimony with the Bishop of London abounds, illustrating the state of religion in Virginia and the reputation which the clergy in general enjoyed.

The excesses of earlier historians in exclaiming the degeneracy of the established clergy have been refuted by subsequent historians. Evidence exists to make the case either for a "good clergy" or a "bad clergy." Enough of the latter exists, especially in the official correspondence of the Bishop of London, to confirm that there were a number of unsavory characters among the clergy. Frequent queries from the Bishop of London to various clerical and colonial officials concerning the character of the clergy elicited a wide array of responses.
Francis Fauquier, lieutenant governor of Virginia, responded in 1765 to such a query and wrote favorably of the ministers of the church:

As for the clergy in general in this colony; tho' there may be some few among them who do no honor to the cloth; yet there are many others who are very worthy men, and who from a conscientious discharge of their Duty have justly obtained the Esteem and Respect of their parishioners and all men in their circle of acquaintance.  

An earlier query by the Bishop requesting the correspondent's estimation of the "State of religion in Virginia," produced quite a different response than Fauquier's. John Lang, pastor of St. Peter's parish in New Kent County, observed, "The people here [are] generally very zealous for our Holy Church, as it is established in England." Yet, at the same time, Lang wrote, they are ignorant in the very principles of Religion, and very debaucht in morals: This, I apprehend, is owing to the general neglect of the clergy in not taking pains to instruct youth in the fundamentals of Religion, or to examine people come to years of discretion before they are admitted to partake of Church privileges.

Lang elaborated on the ignorance that had developed as a result of clerical neglect:

I have already with Terror observed Some upon a death bed, others on a sickbed, though requiring to have the holy Sacrament of the Supper administered, so wofully ignorant, that upon examination & tryal they could not rehearse the Articles of our Christian faith, nor the Lord's prayer and commandment, nor give any solid account of the nature and use of the holy sacrament.

Such a lack of spiritual knowledge produced sin: "Others offer to come to the Lord's Table on Christmas day, whom I
discovered to live in incest as Marry'd persons." Lang lamented this "very deplorable blindness."

Lang was unhesitant in placing the blame on the clergy for the laity's sins: "Ther's few ministers in the colony . . . who take any pains in catechizing youth at church, or ever preach or read prayers more as once a Sunday." The "great cause" of this low state of religion, Lang "conceived to be in the clergy," noting that they were even leaders in sin: "the sober part [of the clergy] being slothful & negligent; and other's so debaucht that they were the foremost and most boastful in all manner of vices." Lang enumerated the sins: "Drunkeness is the common vice, & brings with it other indecencies which among the ignorant creates disrespect to the Character and indifferency in Matters of Religion: I shall only hint at a little of the great deal which I have undoubted authority to believe." Giving no names, Lang wrote, "Were I charg'd by your Lordship [I] could name the men and condescend upon their vices & the witnesses of the Lewdness & debauches." Lang lamented:

How dreadful is it to think that men authorized by the Church to preach repentance & forgiveness through Christ, should be first in the very sin which they reprove: this is an infallible Means to keep people in Infidelity & Impenitence, & to Sooth them on to destruction.

He concluded by giving several graphic illustrations of his own parishioners living together unmarried, commenting that
"adultery and fornication seem here but venial in respect of what they ought to be judged."  

An Anglican layman wrote in 1754, comparing Davies and his fellow Presbyterian minister John Todd with the Anglican clergy of the colony, to the disadvantage of the latter. Listing examples, the correspondent noted that "Mungo Marshall [St. Thomas's, Culpepper County] was one of the most ignorant men (not to say Clergymen) I ever conversed with." He also described George Purdie (St. Andrew's, Brunswick County) and Robert McLaurin (Southam, Cumberland County) as "the former both ignorant and immoral, to a Scandalous Degree; the other remarkable only for his ignorance and folly." Lest the bishop think him prejudiced against all clergy, he acknowledged, "We have indeed men of piety, and Literature in the church here"; adding "but these I have named with some others I might take notice of are a reproach to Religion in general as well as to the order which they belong."  

Perhaps these negative views of the character of the clergy contributed to the general anti-clerical sentiment that prevailed in certain parts of Virginia from the 1750s through the Revolution. An incident popularly known as the Parsons' Cause revealed something of the antipathy which both the gentry and the lower classes harbored towards the clergy. The onset of the Seven Years' War heightened Virginia's already precarious monetary problems: tobacco, Virginia's principal medium of exchange,
did not exist in sufficient quantity to meet the exigencies of wartime, and the colonial government found it necessary to issue a paper currency to make up for the paucity of tobacco which had occurred as a result of the war and drought. Laws passed in 1755 and 1758 provided that a number of public debts, including ministers' salaries, should be paid at the rate of two pence per pound of tobacco. Ministers customarily received a salary of 16,000 pounds of tobacco annually. With tobacco prices inflated as a result of the war and massive crop failure, the financial burden on the parishes would have been quite heavy if payment were required in tobacco that was selling on the market at four to six pence, two to three times the average crop price.

Laws restricting the tobacco prices were not unusual, having been passed in earlier times of crop failure, and effecting the payments of debts other than clerical salaries. Seventeen clergymen strenuously objected to the law, however, and viewed its passage as an attack on the Virginia church. In two letters to the Bishop of London, these clergymen expressed concern that as they had already had to settle for a low salary in the years when tobacco was abundant and prices low, the only concern of the Assembly now must be, they caustically wrote, whether the clergy "shall be supported in a penurious manner or starved outright." The clergy feared that no one could be secured to fill vacant pulpits at such a low salary, adding
prophetically that, although clerics might abandon their profession, "the people here are not like to be long without instructors, because certain Dissenting teachers amongst us cannot but be thought ready and eager enough to succeed the Established Clergy." They also warned that as "Dissenters . . . make it their business not only to divide our Church & seduce the unwary from our communion, but miss no opportunity of raising their own reputation upon the ruin of that of the established clergy," that the two-penny act had become "the best opportunity for them [dissenters] to exult and triumph." In these lengthy letters, the clergy cogently made their case, and quite clearly were correct in arguing that since the king had approved the laws regarding clerical maintenance that any modifications in the law required the approval of the monarch and his Privy Council.

John Camm, one of the primary drafters of the letters, was appointed by the others to take their case to the King. <The King disallowed the laws. Camm returned to Virginia bearing a rebuke from the King to his governor, Francis Fauquier, for allowing the passage of the bill. Camm and the other ministers suing for damages were surprised when the courts ruled that the King's nullification of the Virginia law was not retroactive. Since the General Assembly had restricted the two-penny acts to the years 1755 and 1758, they were no longer in effect, making the King's action meaningless unless it were retroactive.>
Camm and the others appealed the rulings of the county courts to the General Court, then to the King and Council. For various reasons, these appeals were eventually thrown out because of "technical defects." The disgruntled ministers had succeeded in raising the ire of the governor and leaders in the Burgesses, however. Fauquier was outraged by the King's stern reproof, and Colonel Richard Bland and Colonel Landon Carter were upset at what they thought was a clear British usurpation of the prerogatives of Virginia's colonial legislature. Bland and Landon engaged in an acrimonious pamphlet war that revealed the deep-seated resentment of Virginians against some of the clergy, who, the laity thought, were unwilling to share the cost of the war.\(^1\)

The case of the only minister who did prevail in court, the Reverend James Maury of Louisa County, also revealed that among the lower classes discontentment was rife because of clerics perceived as seeking their own enrichment. Although the county court, with Patrick Henry Sr.'s brother presiding, had ruled that Maury was entitled to back pay amounting to the difference between the two-pence-per-pound price and the fair market price, the persuasive oratory of the presiding judge's son, young Patrick Henry, convinced the jury to return a sum of only one pence to the minister. Clearly, Henry had played on the anti-clerical sympathies of the jury, some of whom were either dissenters or sympathetic to dissenters. Henry, riding high
on the crest of this wave of popularity that resulted after news of his jury speech spread, swept into the House of Burgesses to begin his brilliant career.  

Cam and his supporters were maligned by many Virginians who were resentful of the privileges granted clergymen and thankful for an opportunity to deny them those benefits in some measure. The protesting clergy, however, were not merely greedy pastors who cared little for the suffering that the war had brought on their people and who were willing to exact their due regardless of the cost. They viewed the legislature's action as a slap in the face and only one in a series of abuses that the clergy had to suffer. They were genuinely concerned about attracting to and keeping good clergymen in Virginia. It had always been difficult to attract clergymen to Virginia, many pulpits in the 1750s were unfilled, and it was feared that news of dissenter successes and legislative restrictions on salaries would only worsen the ministerial shortage. Already prospective ministers who lived in the colonies had to make the arduous journey to Great Britain for ordination, or, if they lived in England, had to abandon the comforts of home, family, and friends to minister in what was still a frontier area. Because of these difficulties, the commissary often had to take whomever he could get, and he rarely got the top graduates of Oxford and Cambridge or those hoping to receive any higher ecclesiastical appointments. Sometimes the men who
filled the pulpits of the Virginia church were not very learned, not very pious, and not very moral.}

The two-penny act also revealed the resentment of the clergy at being under the control of the "great men" of Virginia and having to answer to them rather than to a bishop. This gentry class composed the vestries and pulled the "strings" which controlled parish operations. This is not to say that the clergy were mere marionettes for the gentry, but they did often rely on the good will of this class to retain their pulpit. Vestries would often appoint ministers temporarily, confirming their appointments annually if they were pleased with the ministers' performance, keeping him almost as a retainer rather than appointing him as a permanent pastor as was done in England. Clergymen in Virginia particularly resented being treated as subordinates of the gentry, because in England clergymen were treated as gentlemen and not as inferiors. The colonial clergy wanted so badly to be of the gentry class that they especially despised those gentry who refused to afford them such treatment. The colonial clergy received criticism from both sides in Virginia: from the gentry who did not think the Virginia clergy their equal and from the dissenters who attacked them for aping the gentry, which meant participating in the diversions of the gentry.

Many clergy would not agree with Davies's charge that they had fallen in with the gentry: they were the gentry as much as any wealthy landowner. While Davies
and other supporters of the Awakening denounced cock-fighting, horse racing, and gambling as sins, many among the clergy and the gentry relished indulging in these "harmless diversions." The majority of the clergy would not have risked alienating the class on whom they depended by attacking the gentry's pastimes. Besides, they believed moderate enjoyment of these activities was certainly no sin. And the established clergy were certainly not fearful of offending the dissenters by a game of cards or a wager on a cock fight. On the whole, the dissenters were composed of the "lower orders," with whom most clergy felt they had neither stake nor kinship of class. The clergy could not regard gentlemen who were dissenters with the same indifference as they did their inferiors, because of the power that all gentlemen possessed by virtue of their social status. Since such gentry were already in the other camp, most ministers would have to "write off" any offense against dissenting gentry, lest they offend the much larger number of gentry who at least nominally supported the ministers. The gentleman of the established church expected no questioning of his lifestyle by his minister and scoffed at those among the established clergy who did rebuke them. At any rate, for the clergy to attack the gentry as a class would be to attack themselves, since they were aspiring gentlemen.

The established church maintained the distinction between social classes and did not challenge the order of
things as did the dissenters in their attacks on the
gentry's lifestyle. <The gentleman, the yeoman, the
indentured servant, the slave: each had his own section
in the church and each heard the minister proclaim that
the social order was divinely ordained. Men were not to
question their superiors, but rather were to defer to their
wishes. A man retained whatever titles or offices he held
wherever he was: the established church repudiated the
notion that all men who had come in to worship were equal.
When a man entered the sanctuary, he did not deposit his
office or his title with the steward at the door as he
would his cloak or his pistol.\textsuperscript{18}>

<Davies did not challenge the established order in
the way that the more radical dissenters, principally the
Baptists of the 1760s and 1770s, did; as leader of the
first sizeable group of dissenters in Virginia (excluding
the Valley), however, he did make the initial fissure which
later groups widened and by which dissenters were eventually
able to shatter Anglican unity.\textsuperscript{19}> He did not call for
complete religious liberty but only for the recognition of
disserter rights as provided for by the Act of Toleration.
But by attacking the sins of those who epitomized the
established order and by focusing some attention on
clerical degeneracy, he did prove to be a threat to the
established order, just as clergymen and colonial officials
had feared.\textsuperscript{20} While the social ramifications of Davies's
thought were certainly unlike the radical egalitarianism of
the Baptists, his desire to treat all those who entered the sanctuary as fellow worshippers, or more properly, in his Calvinistic parlance, as sinners before God, he moved in the direction of tearing down the walls that the established church attempted to keep in good repair between the social classes.

Davies's appeal to blacks was also a specific challenge to the established order. The Baptists are famous for having opposed slavery for a short time after the Revolution. A number of those who became Baptists in the 1760s testified that they were first aroused to opposition to the established church by hearing Davies speak during one of his frequent tours through the Virginia countryside, in which he often preached in the woods. While Davies himself owned at least one slave and never opposed slavery as an institution, the importance that he placed on the conversion and welfare of the black and the influence that he exerted over future Baptists at least enhanced the status of the black. Davies wrote to Bellamy in 1751 of having over three hundred blacks in his congregation. By 1756, Davies ministered to over a thousand blacks in his various congregations. His efforts to educate the blacks were often quite successful, and he secured a fairly large amount of money from Britain to aid in his attempts to provide for their material and mental well-being, as well as their spiritual. As oppressed as Virginia blacks were, any acknowledgment of their dignity as
fellow human beings, any bestowal of rights or any raising of their expectations through education threatened the precarious union between whites of the upper and lower classes that had existed since Bacon's rebellion of 1676. Since that time the slave had become the gentry's response to lower class whites' cries of deprivation. The gentry could argue that the lower classes were not at all deprived, relative to the painfully obvious deprivation of the slave. As long as the gentry could maintain hegemony over the lower classes by pointing to the slave as one so much lower than the lowest white class, the tacit arrangement that allowed American freedom to be built on the back of American slavery remained in place. Davies may not have intended to upset this arrangement by disturbing the foundation, but the practical effect of his attitude toward blacks moved in that direction. And the Virginia establishment knew it.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER V

1George Brydon's Magnum opus on the established church in Virginia is the most complete apologia of the colonial clergy, refuting much of the nineteenth-century Episcopal bishop William Meade's work, Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia (Virginia Diocese of the Episcopal Church, 1897). The Reverend Francis Hawks also published an Episcopal history in 1837. Both Hawks and Meade presented only the dark side of the colonial clergy.


39 September 1765, Fulham Papers.

4John Lang to Bishop of London, 7 February 1776, Fulham Papers. Lang was the newly appointed rector of St. Peter's.

5Lang was ready to act and asked the Bishop how he should undertake the prosecution of his sinful parishioners.

6Anonymous to Bishop of London, 1 February 1754, Fulham Papers.

7Good discussions of the Parsons' Cause are found in Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, pp. 288-320, and in Rhys Isaac, "Religion and Authority: Problems of the Anglican Establishment in Virginia in the Era of the Great Awakening and the Parson's Cause," WMQ, 3d Ser., XXX (1973), 3-36. The general account given here follows Brydon primarily.

8The Clergy of Virginia to the Bishop of London (signed by eight clergymen), November 29, 1755 in Historical Collections, I, p. 434.

9The Clergy of Virginia to the Bishop of London (signed by ten clergymen, nine different than in Note 8), February 25, 1756 in Historical Collections, I, p. 445.

James Blair to Bishop of London, 25 May 1725, and 14 May 1731 expressed the commissary's concern about the lack of clergy and the unattractive inducements offered to a minister settling in Virginia; Walter Jones to Bishop of London, 27 March 1733 also complained of a lack of clergy; and Bar Yates to Bishop of London, 23 July 1726 wrote that the frontier conditions and low pay made for clerical insecurity. All letters are in the Fulham Papers.

J. Wm. Giberne, Lunenburg Parish, to Bishop of London, 31 May 1764, Fulham Papers, charged that candidates for the ministry were hastily recommended and approved and not given sufficient examination. He also wrote that the shortage of English clergymen forced Virginia to rely on Scottish ministers to fill the pulpits.

Giberne, a minister in Richmond, complained of the incompetence of the vestries and the hegemony that they exercised over the church. Clearly Giberne felt that they usurped the ministers' prerogatives. See citation in Note 14.

For an excellent discussion of the clergy's strivings to be recognized as gentlemen and their indignance at being relegated to an inferior position by the "great men" of their parishes, see Rhys Isaac, The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), pp. 143-147.

For the pastimes and lifestyle of the gentry, see Isaac, Transformation, p. 14 passim, but especially pp. 81-85, 100-104. For deference of clergy to their parsons among the gentry see pp. 268-9. For dissenters' denunciations of gentry pastimes see pp. 85-86.

See Isaac's Transformation, pp. 58-65 for a good discussion of the "condescension" of the upper to the lower classes, and the consciousness which men retained of maintaining rank, even in worship services.
Petitions poured into the General Assembly from Presbyterian and Baptists in 1776 supporting "an act for exempting the different societies of Dissenters from contributing to the support and maintenance of the church as by law established." Hening's Statutes, IX, pp. 164-7. This act was the first of a series that dismantled the established church, culminating in Jefferson's 1785 "act for establishing religious freedom." Hening's Statutes, XII, 84-6. The machinations that produced disestablishment are examined in H. J. Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia (Richmond, 1910) and Thomas E. Buckley, Church and State in Revolutionary Virginia, 1776-1787 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1977).

After the shattering of Anglican unity, the Episcopal Church found itself in competition with the evangelical church and in nineteenth-century Virginia became evangelical itself. For the post-war evangelicalism and the transformation that it produced in public and private writing, see Jan Lewis, The Pursuit of Happiness: Family and Values in Jefferson's Virginia (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 1-68 especially.

Not only do the fears frequently expressed by clergymen in letters to the Bishop of London or to the Commissary indicate that Davies was a perceived threat, but in the late 1750s and early 1760s, prominent Anglicans became dissenters, forcing the legislature to pass a law regarding the "many [emphasis mine] vestrymen in this colony [who] have, since the time of their election, dissented from the communion of the church of England, and joined themselves to a dissenting congregation," requiring them to resign from the vestry. Hening's Statutes, VII, p. 302.

Foote, I, pp. 215-6. Bost quotes from an unsigned article in the Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review, IX (1837), 364: "As the Baptists spread over Virginia, their converts often testified that their religious awakening began when they heard Davies preach."

See Pilcher, Davies, pp. 101-115.

Gillies, p. 431; Bost, p. 139.


Edmund Morgan provides the best and most stimulating discussion of the white alignment that occurred after Bacon's rebellion and which laid the foundation for freedom on slavery, in American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1975).
CHAPTER VI

"A PERFECT MODEL OF THE MOST MOVING
AND STRIKING ORATORY"

While even the moderate attitude and actions of Davies set in motion the forces that later effectively challenged the social order, as the Separate Baptist movement did, his most obvious difference with the establishment was not his view towards blacks or the lower classes, but his style of preaching. Davies's chief objection to the established clergy was not their moral character, for the church did have moral preachers, but the way in which the ministers addressed themselves "to perishing multitudes in cold blood." Davies complained to the Bishop of London that Virginia's clergymen "do not represent their [parishioners'] miserable condition in all its horrors; do not alarm them with solemn pathetic and affectionate warnings, and expostulate with them with all authority, tenderness, and pungency of the ambassadors of Christ to a dying world." In short, they were not preachers of the Awakening.

The "cool and languid" sermon of the established clergy assumed its style of delivery from the theology that it embodied. The sermon consisted of a modified Arminian theology that taught that man participated in his salvation: the bestowal of God's grace was contingent on
leading a moral life. Obviously the established church's standard of morality was not the same as the New Lights', who eschewed many of the pleasures that upright churchmen considered to be innocuous amusements. If the clergy's Sunday address, "a sermon seldom under and never over twenty minutes," did not evoke an emotional response from its auditory, the reason the congregation remained unmoved was that the clergy did not intend to stir them up. Unlike the preachers of the Awakening, they found nothing alarming about man's condition, nothing that a little effort on man's part could not cure. They trusted that the majority of their listeners, as baptized Christians and generally upright and patriotic citizens, were headed towards the celestial city. If everyone just remembered their place in the social order, obeyed the magistrate, paid their tithes, attended church, loved their families, and lived as morally as they knew how, heaven would open wide to such conscientious folk.

The preaching of the Awakening challenged this comfortable view that a good life and belief in the tenents of Christianity opened heaven's portals to receive the upright multitude. The Awakening preachers cried that the mouth of hell gaped wide to receive the majority of perishing mankind. Man's urgent need was salvation from this damnation, a salvation produced only by the divine operation of the Holy Spirit in man's inner being. These revivalists taught that a man must experience an intense
awareness of his own sinfulness, and recognize the insufficiency of his own works to contribute to salvation. They demanded repentance, a radical change of attitude, which, along with faith, constituted conversion. God was right and man was wrong: the recognition of this by a man who repented of his wrongness and took God's side effected a "new birth," an occurrence whereby the once-fleshly, now-spiritual man saw everything from such a new perspective that he entered into a new life.

A passionate oratory characterized the Awakening preachers. A hortatory style came naturally to those whose main concern was that sinners should be reconciled to God and that now was God's time of salvation. This message had an urgency calculated to awaken the unconverted, convert the awakened, and encourage the converted to live a holy life. Unsurprisingly, the awakening had its greatest success among the lower classes: vital religion, as opposed to formal religion, has always appealed to those who do not have the economic cushions of the higher classes. Money served as this cushion and afforded the upper classes diversions to distract them from pondering their eternal destiny and it provided a superior lifestyle (better food, shelter, health care, education, and more leisure time) that dulled the sharp edge of a world in which men faced death daily. Awakening preaching, with its message of eternal life and the glories of the world beyond, hit home with those who were acutely aware of the drudgery of this life and who
possessed little of this world's goods, to whom the world to come meant escape from this world. The men and women of the frontier, realizing how precarious their existence was on the edge of civilization, were especially responsive to this message. The message of the Awakening was eminently practical in that it addressed men in need and proclaimed that the sufferings of the godly in this world would be rewarded in the next.

Critics of the Awakening charged that its ministers appealed solely to the emotions. The Reverend Patrick Henry in a 1745 letter to Commissary Dawson complained that the New Light preachers in Hanover threatened their hearers with such a vivid description of the hell that was their sure doom if unrepentant that "the weaker hearers being scar[e]d, cry out, fall down & work like people in convulsion fits." The preacher was the cause of all this commotion as he "exalts his voice [and] puts himself into a violent agitation stamping and beating his desk unmercifully." Apparently some of the preachers who preceded Davies did engage in pulpit pyrotechnics; after Davies's coming, however, Virginia was spared from the emotional excesses of the Awakening. Davies apparently realized that men's physiological reactions sometimes reflected a disturbed emotional state such as the "awakened sinner" experienced. While Davies never stirred up his hearers to elicit responses like violent crying or bodily jerking motions, he recognized that individuals
under extreme stress sometimes manifested their anxiety by emotional outbursts, although he and the majority of New Lights never approved of any radical expressions of emotions.\(^8\)

In a 1752 sermon before the New Castle Presbytery, Davies cautioned the ministers to strike a balance between "the wild reveries of enthusiasm," characteristic of the hyper-emotionalists, and "the droaning Heaviness and serene Stupidity" of the Anglicans and the Old Light Presbyterians. \(\text{Davies urged ministers to deliver their sermons "with a grave and affectionate solemnity."}^{3}\) He apparently adopted this style himself. Clearly Davies set for himself a middle course, concerned never to let his sermon descend to the level of "enthusiastical extravagances" or to preach "with much oratorical freedom," and yet fail to deliver his message with "much Christian Solemnity and Affection."\(^{10}\) Davies via media won him the applause of his contemporaries.

Many testified of Davies's dignified pulpit style. One hearer, according to Alexander, noted that the "sight of the man . . . made a deeper impression on him than all the sermons he had ever heard before."\(^{11}\) Foote commented: "He never seemed to make a gesture; he only uttered his sentiments with becoming motions of his body, and tones and modulations of his voice."\(^{12}\) Another contemporary attested that Davies's "talent at composition, especially for the pulpit, was equalled by few, and perhaps exceeded by none."
His taste was judicious, elegant, and polite, and yet his discourses were plain and pungent, peculiarly adapted to pierce the conscience and affect the heart." He retained his dignity and almost regal bearing at all times:

His diction was surprisingly beautiful and comprehensive, tending to make the most stupid hearer, sensibly feel as well as clearly understand. His manner of delivery, as to pronunciation, gesture, and modulation of voice, seemed to be a perfect model of the most moving and striking oratory. Considering the extremes of the over-emotional, irrational New Light and the dry delivery of the Old Lights, Davies had indeed discovered the golden mean of affective preaching and thus presented a model for later generations to emulate.

Davies's sermons did indeed serve as a model for several generations. As Richard B. Davis has noted, "Davies' sermons, with the possible exception of Jonathan Edwards, were until our Civil War, the most popular colonial religious discourses in print." (Between the first edition of Davies's Sermons on Important Subjects, published by Thomas Gibbons in England in 1766, and the last edition of the Sermons, published in Edinburgh in 1867, twenty or more editions of these sermons appeared in sets ranging from two to five volumes.) The sermon sets were published in America over a dozen times, in addition to the countless imprints that appeared during and after his life. The various incarnations generally included a corpus of between sixty and seventy sermons.
Part of the reason for the popularity of his sermons for so many years was the study that was behind each one. Davies confided to a friend that he normally spent four full days in sermon preparation, reading commentaries, researching the Hebrew and Greek, and analysing linguistic, historical, and other philosophical challenges presented by a text. Davies customarily transcribed his entire sermon before delivering it, reading it from the pulpit only when he had not had time to memorize it. Even though he believed that to talk nonsense for the Lord was a dangerous thing, he did freely extemporize when he felt moved, and was not bound to the written text. In a sermon preached before the New Castle presbytery, he reminded his fellow preachers, "Let us not affect to extemporize to such an Excess, as to render our Sermons a Chaos of Embryo thoughts, maimed arguments, and rude expressions." But he praised the "extempore Eruptions of an affectionate Zeal," adding, "A warm heart has always a fruitful invention." Because of the fecundity of his thought and the sublimity of his language, Davies ensured his sermons' popularity, although he could not have known that they would receive the amount of praise which they did.

Moderate Calvinism was the warp and woof of Davies's being, and his sermons were the primary medium through which he expressed and developed this theology. Davies considered himself primarily a preacher, rarely engaging in ontological or epistemological speculations, but concentrating chiefly
on soteriology. While Davies was not a systematic theologian, he was a massive occasional theologian in that he addressed the full range of theological issues with the immediate concerns of his congregation in mind. Even when Davies engaged in speculative theology, his exposition was firmly based in the Scriptures and directed toward fulfilling the needs of his auditory.

In the few sermons in which he treated the doctrine of God exclusively, Davies was more speculative than in the remainder. In one such sermon, Davies examined how God's attributes bestow blessing on mankind. He preached on the "glorious incommunicable perfections of God," noting that "he is self-existent and independent; that his being is necessary; that he is eternal; and that he is unchangeable." He proceeded to prove these contentions with inexorable Calvinist logic, showing himself familiar with the cosmological, ontological, and anthropological proofs for God's existence of Aquinas, Anselm, and Descartes. He combined all these approaches in his own ingenious proof, even adding a lucid teleological argument. These proofs all gave way, however, to his simple doctrine of the knowability of God: the primary reason that he knows God exists is because he knows Him personally. Davies was not content to present an abstraction or an impersonal god to his listeners, but the God of heaven, who, through his glorious attributes, revealed that man ought to be in submission to such a transcendent and holy being. Even
in the more esoteric doctrines, then, Davies discovered comfort for the believer and admonitions for the unbeliever.

Davies preached that man's "innate depravity and corruption of the heart" made him unfit to enjoy communion with God, although he believed that before the fall of Adam man had a capacity to enjoy and understand the deep things of God. The fall plunged the race into sin and restoration became necessary if man was to have any degree of fellowship with his Creator. Man's "depravity and [the] corruption of his nature" was a familiar theme with Davies. This sinfulness warranted God's wrath and if man were to be saved from eternal destruction, then he needed God's salvation. He argued, however, that "there is no absolute necessity that sinners should be saved; justice may be suffered to take place upon them. But there is the most absolute necessity that the ruler of the world should both be and appear to be holy and just." Therefore, to fulfill the demands of His own justice and, at the same time, to extend mercy to a chosen number, God sent his Son into the world to save His people. Christ fulfilled God's demand for righteousness on the behalf of helpless mankind and paid the penalty for their sins. The sins of the elect were imputed to Him and His righteousness was imputed to the elect. On the basis of the substitutionary atonement of Christ, men could in some measure be restored and enjoy communion with God, although their regenerated spirits remained within a sinful body.
Davies replicated the soteriological scheme of Calvinism to some degree in every sermon. Invariably, he pleaded with his unconverted listeners, "Be ye reconciled to God." The test of whether one was reconciled or not was a holy life. Faith and assurance were major components in his sermons, and he frequently asked his listeners to examine their hearts and lives and see whether they bore the marks of a Christian. He hoped to employ "convictive methods to undeceive them" who were "full of the hopes of heaven [but] who can give no scriptural evidences of them to themselves or others." He listed characteristics of a holy man and admonished his hearers to see whether they were Christians or "perishing sinners." Davies agreed that "True Christians are far from being perfect in practice," noting that the deep desire to do the will of God, despite "remaining imperfections," was the hallmark of holiness. He encouraged his listeners to "be impartial and proceed according to the evidence" in judging their own spiritual state, urging "if we find them not [the marks of holiness], let us exercise so much wholesome severity against ourselves, so honestly to conclude we are unholy sinners, and must be renewed before we can see the Lord." This practical approach pervaded all his preaching: the Christian desired to live upright and the unbeliever did not.

Davies felt his task in Virginia was to be used by God to awaken men to their natural hatred of God and
holiness, to convince them of their need of deliverance from this state, and to preach Christ as the only Deliverer. When man was freed from the bondage of the life of sin he entered into the freedom of the life of holiness; that redeemed man was thus equipped to reform both church and state. If the established church was not proclaiming the absolute necessity of a holy life, this alone for Davies was sufficient reason for opposition. Davies was the voice crying in the wilderness, calling upon Virginia to repent. To stifle dissent was to stifle this voice. Thus, Davies knew that freedom for the dissenters to preach must be secured if they were to have the opportunity to publish abroad their message of salvation.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER VI

1Foote, I, p. 204.


5See Davies, "Thing Unseen to Preferred to Things Seen," in Sermons (1818), I; and "Indifference to Life Urged from its Shortness and Vanity," in Sermons, II; Pilcher, p. 65.

6Patrick Henry to Commissary Dawson, 13 February 1745, Dawson Manuscripts.

7Pilcher, pp. 59-60.

8The basis of the New-Old Light reunion in the Presbyterian Church was partly that both groups condemned emotional excesses, PCA Minutes, p. 342.


10Diary, pp. 86-7.


12Foote, I, p. 303.

13Quoted in Pilcher, p. 80.


15Pilcher, pp. 80-1.

16Quoted in Bost, p. 238.

17New-Castle Sermon, p. 10.
18"The Divine Government the Joy of our World," and "The Name of God Proclaimed by Himself," in *Sermons* (1864), both in I.


23"The Method of Salvation through Jesus Christ," *Sermons* (1818), I, p. 54.


26"Sinners Entreated to be Reconciled to God," *Sermons* (1864), I, especially pp. 155-9; the plea for reconciliation appeared in most of his sermons.


30"The Divine Authority and Sufficiency of the Christian Religion," *Sermons* (1818), I, p. 2--because of the lax preaching of the "polite world . . . infidelity makes extensive conquests under the specious name of deism," giving rise to the religious moribundity of Virginia.
CHAPTER VII

THE SHIFTING ATTITUDE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT

In Davies's continuing struggle with Virginia and English authorities for religious toleration, Doddridge's successor on the British committee for promoting dissenters' interests, the Reverend Benjamin Avery, sent Davies encouraging news. Avery enclosed the opinion of Sir Dudley Ryder, the British Attorney General, who confirmed Doddridge's earlier opinion that "when you certify places as designed for religious worship, you are not obliged to say who is to officiate in that place," cautioning Davies that "your unnecessarily saying that has furnished the gentlemen who refuse and oppose you with a handle." Avery sent Ryder's opinion, "hoping that when his excellency your worthy Governor and the Council shall see, peruse, and consider it," they would no longer oppose Davies's requests for additional preaching places. While the licensing of John Todd as Davies's assistant provided some hope that the Council planned further relaxations of its interpretation of the Toleration Act, Davies dejectedly wrote to Avery that previously the authorities had refused "to license any more meeting houses, where either of us might officiate occasionally, in such places as are inconvenient to the meeting houses already licensed." Still
Davies was thankful that Todd's "settlement will tend in a great measure to remove the odium that has been unjustly flung upon me as an itinerant, because of my officiating at so many places." Dawson, perhaps fearful that Todd's appointment would appear to his superior as if the commissary had neglected the interests of the church, apologetically explained to the Bishop of London that the Council had licensed Todd "judging it more convenient for the people to be under the care of two than of one." Davies had petitioned the Governor and Council to adopt a law making the 10th Queen Anne extension of the Toleration Act valid in Virginia. Dawson wrote that if the law were passed, he would "desire a proviso might be added, That there be a settled teacher of such Congregations," so that "one teacher" may not be allowed "to ramble all over a Country." Dawson attacked Davies's argument that since Church of England clergymen often held two or more benefices, dissenting ministers should receive the same privilege: Dawson attacked pluralities in the Anglican church and wondered why this error need spread to the Presbyterian church. He observed that a "minister constantly residing amongst" his congregations "within parochial bounds" was "always ready to instruct them." Enumerating the numerous pastoral duties vital to the physical, emotional, and spiritual welfare of the parishioners, and noting that one whom the people saw and heard only every few months could not fulfill these duties,
Dawson warned, "The people who hear a teacher but once in 7, 8, or 10 weeks are in greater danger of becoming Heathens, than they, who hear a minister once a week, a fortnight, or a month." Interestingly Dawson, unlike the bishop or the majority of the Council, was willing to allow "as many meeting houses" as the dissenters were able to provide with settled ministers. According to Dawson, Davies applied in June 1753 for a meeting house in St. Peter's parish, the place formerly licensed by the justices of New Kent County. Even though Davies showed them Ryder's opinion, "the Governor and Council positively refused him." Avery had already written that Davies could appeal from "your governor and Council . . . to the King and Council," adding, "but redress this way cannot be readily and speedily procured." Finally, Avery lamented, "Such appeals must be attended with very great expense." Davies had somehow procured the means to go to Britain, however, causing Dawson to fear that perhaps he would appeal to the King, and warning the bishop of Davies's coming.

By 1753, Davies had exhausted all legal remedies available in the colony for dissenter relief. But he had also accepted an appointment by the Board of Trustees of the College of New Jersey to embark upon a fund raising trip to Britain to procure monies needed for College building projects. The Trustees had appealed to him for almost two years to undertake the mission. He hesitated for personal
reasons: he did not feel qualified to represent the College's interest, and he did not want to leave his family, friends, and congregation. The appointment of Gilbert Tennent to accompany him, and the promise of "a proper person to supply my pulpit during my absence," prompted Davies to accept the embassage. Davies wrote, "What has the most weight with me," was not the encouragement of his family and friends or the supplying of his regular salary and necessary provisions by the Synod and the College, but the need to "seek a Redress" for the "Dissenters in Virginia [who] lie under such intolerable Restraints." Considering making an appeal to English authorities for toleration, Davies believed that "now is the only proper Season for it and that none can manage this Affair as well as myself, who am concerned in it, and so well acquainted with it."\(^7\)

Davies's main responsibility was, of course, to raise money for the College. The College had emerged from the classical academies of Tennent, Blair, and others, when in 1746 alumni of the academies and of Yale completed their plans for establishing a college that would serve in the middle colonies as Harvard and Yale did in New England and William and Mary did in Virginia. While New Light Presbyterians established the College to provide an education emphasizing both experimental religion and classical learning for ministers of the New York Synod, the 1748 charter issued by New Jersey governor, Jonathan Belcher,
"provided for an equal number of clerical and lay trustees, and it permitted members of differing religious bodies to become members of the governing board." Thus were laid the foundations for what was to become Princeton University.

Leaving from Philadelphia on November 18, 1753, Davies and Tennent arrived in London on Christmas Day and immediately began soliciting funds for the College. Davies met an astonishing number of people during his year in England and Scotland. He preached between sixty and seventy times while in both countries and made a marked impression on his hearers, many of whom requested that he publish his sermons. Although Davies was often quite pessimistic about the likelihood of success, he and Tennent assuaged the fears of those who envisioned this new college in America as under the control of irresponsible religious fanatics. They assured the Britons of the catholicity of the college, even though its theological foundation was Calvinistic. Since the Philadelphia Synod had earlier sent William Smith to solicit funds for their own academy, which later became the University of Pennsylvania, Davies and Tennent encountered obstacles that Smith had erected upon hearing of their fund raising mission.

Smith had distributed copies of Tennent's controversial Nottingham sermon to warn Englishmen of the kind of fanatics that Tennent and his companion were. The many objections that prospective donors raised
regarding Tennent's vitriolic sermon on an unconverted ministry did not prove insuperable. Davies and Tennent successfully diffused the near-catastrophe caused by the desertion of those offended by Tennent's sermon, by assuring their subscribers that Tennent regretted the vituperative language of the sermon and was an ardent supporter of the reunion of the Old and New Light Presbyterians. In the end, they raised between £3,000 and £4,000, achieving a stunning success that allowed the nascent college to begin its imperative building program.

Unfortunately Davies was not as successful in forwarding the interests of the Virginia dissenters. Shortly after his arrival in England, Davies met with the Committee for the Management of the Civil Affairs of Dissenters. At their meeting of 30 January, the Committee told Davies that "they had no time to consider the case of the oppressed Dissenters in Virginia," but promised to take up the matter at their next meeting. Davies attended their next meeting on 27 February. "They had been consulting the Virginia laws," Davies wrote, "and reading the Papers I had sent them; and they told me that they were all heartily engaged in my Interest, but after the best Deliberation, they were apprehensive that the Act of Toleration was not so adopted as to become a proper law of Virginia. . . ." The Committee believed that only that part of the Act "which exempts Dissenters from Penalty for exempting themselves from the Established Church" was
applicable in Virginia. Davies was quite disappointed, confiding, "This surprised me, as I still think my reasons for my former opinions are unanswerable." The committee, nevertheless, did advise him to prepare a petition for the King and Council, to be signed "by the Dissenters in the frontier Counties, which they apprehended would be of more Weight than one from Hanover, because they were educated [reared] Dissenters, and were a good barrier against the French and Indians."  

On March 15, Davies took his petition to Avery for correction. The committee advised him that they had since decided not to present any petitions to the King's Court at a time when the controversy raged over "the Project of sending a Bishop over to America." The committee was also hesitant, wrote Davies, because "my old Adversary" Peyton Randolph was in London. Davies did discover that Samuel Stennet, a Baptist minister and committee member, was most sympathetic and offered to present the matter to officials, Davies noting that Stennet had "a great deal of Influence in Court."  

Davies was greatly disappointed by the committee's failure to help him. He commented: "As the majority of them [on the committee] are of the new Scheme [Arminianism or Socianianism], they cannot look upon the dissenting Interest in Virginia as a religious Interest, because founded upon principles which they disapprove." He was upset that the committee viewed their dilemma as an essentially political rather than a religious problem. He
observed: "The Courtiers are so regardless of Religion, abstracted from Politics, that it will be difficult to carry such a point with them, especially as the whole Weight of Government in Virginia will lie on the other side." His hope was that the committee would either secure licenses for the dissenters in the bishop's court or present the petition to the king despite their objections. Apparently, he never reaped any discoverable benefits from all his efforts in Britain on behalf of the Virginia dissenters. The committee never presented the petition. 17

While Davies prodded an unresponsive committee in Britain and promoted the dissenters' cause through private appeal to influential figures, the dissenters in Virginia languished. Shortly after the return of their champion, however, and a visit by George Whitefield, the dissenters revived, provoking Commissary Dawson to comment that "the new Lights seemed to be in a declining condition during the absence of Mr. Davies but upon his Return they revived,--at least they make much noise." 18 Though the Assembly had not passed the law supplementing the Toleration Act that Davies supported, Dawson was worried that colonial and English officials had done nothing to stem the further spread of dissenters. He complained in 1754 that he had not yet received a reply from the Bishop of London regarding "the unreasonable application of the dissenting teachers for greater indulgences." 19 William Dawson died in early
1755 and was succeeded by his brother, Thomas, who was even less friendly toward the dissenters.

Governor Dinwiddie and the Council soon dashed any hopes that Thomas Dawson had of restricting the dissenters' rights. Earlier restrictions began to fall away as the Court licensed other Presbyterian ministers to preach. The courts of Lancaster and Northumberland counties also certified meeting houses without their decision being overruled by the General Court. Even though Westmoreland County officials refused to certify a meeting house, dissenters worshipped there nonetheless, unimpeded by government officials.

As dissenting congregations burgeoned, the Synod of New York appointed Alexander Craghead, Robert Henry, John Wright, and John Brown, the four newly licensed ministers, along with Davies and Todd, to form a "new Presbytery in Virginia on September 8, 1755." With their own presbytery, the dissenters in Hanover and the surrounding areas now had a base of operations to which all requests for Presbyterian preaching in the South could be directed.

On December 3, 1755, the new presbytery appointed Davies as its first moderator and John Todd as clerk. Requests for Presbyterian preaching poured in, such as the petition from "people living near Albemarle," whose "destitute circumstances" left them "in the want of gospel ordinances." The presbytery received a petition from over eighty people in Prince Edward County and requests for
ministers in Orange, Chesterfield, and the counties in North Carolina. Davies and his colleagues' services were in demand throughout the state. The rapid spread of New Light Presbyterianism is no mystery: dissent had spread even during the period of government repression and now that the colonial government no longer hindered it, they accelerated their dissemination of evangelical religion. But why did the colonial officials relax their restraints on dissent?

Colonial officials loosened restrictions on dissenters because of the support which they gave to the British and colonial war effort in the Seven Years' War against France. Now that the French had stirred up their Indian allies and threatened raids extending not only into the Valley but into the piedmont as well, the politicos of the tidewater region knew that the dissenters were all that stood between them and an attack of the combined forces.

Davies's moderate, dignified, yet earnest style of preaching won religious converts; his strong support of the war won him the support of the colony's political leaders.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER VII

1Foote, I, p. 213.
2Foote, I, p. 208.
3Perry, Historical Collections, I, pp. 384-6.
4Perry, Historical Collections, I, p. 407.
5Foote, I, p. 213.
6Perry, Historical Collections, I, p. 407.
7Davies, Diary, pp. 2-5.
8Pilcher, pp. 136-7.
9Diary, pp. 28-29; p. 42.
10Diary, pp. 45, passim.
11Diary, p. 59.
12Diary, pp. 60-1.
14Diary, p. 65.
15Diary, p. 79.
16Diary, pp. 82-3.
17Diary, p. 134.
18Dawson to the Bishop of London, 13 August 1755, Dawson Manuscripts.
19Perry, Historical Collections, I, p. 409.
20Pilcher, p. 160.
21Minutes of the Hanover Presbytery, 8 September 1755.
22HPM, pp. 2-5.
23 Pilcher, pp. 158-70.
The conflict between France and Britain occurred as both nations were attempting to maintain colonial empires. The two nations had long struggled for control of the fisheries, land, and the Indian trade of North America. Virginia had a particular interest in the Indian trade, claiming two million acres on the upper Ohio River in order to protect its fur trade. Governor Dinwiddie had a special interest as a member of the Ohio Company in keeping the Trans-Allegheny trade with the Indians open. When the French, seeking to drive the British out, established armed posts in the Ohio region near the Alleghenies, Dinwiddie sent George Washington to discover French intentions. France intended to stay. Both France and England continued to play the Indians off against one another in accordance with their longstanding colonial policies. The French captured Colonel Trent's and Colonel Washington's parties sent by Dinwiddie to erect a fort on the Ohio for use as an advance base against the French. As the French and their Indian allies pressed down on the middle and southern colonies, a cry arose in Virginia calling for the raising of troops. In spite of initial inaction, Samuel Overton of Hanover County answered that...
call to arms by raising an independent company of
volunteers in 1755. Davies preached a rousing sermon in
August of that year to boost support for Captain Overton's
volunteers.²

In the sermon Davies declared:

Our situation in the middle of the British colonies
and our Separation from the French, those eternal
Enemies of Liberty and Britons on the one side by the
vast Atlantic, and on the other by a long ridge of
mountains have . . . for many years been a barrier
to us.

But no more. Davies understood both the immediate parochial
consequences of the war and its longer-term global
consequences. He said: "Our Territories are invaded by the
Power, and Perfidy of France; our Frontiers ravaged by
merciless Savages, and our Fellow-Subjects there murdered
with all the horrid Arts of Indian and Popish Torture." He
asked his listeners to consider with what comfort they have
lived "because the Indians were at a distance of 2 or 300
miles." He shamed the citizenry for allowing their
fellow-Virginians to "fall a helpless prey to Blood-thirsty
Savages, without affording them proper assistance, which as
members of the same body politic they had a right to
expect." He then launched into a predictable vilification
of the Indians which was undoubtedly exaggerated. When such
tortures have been inflicted on fellow-subjects, he
reasoned, should not the citizens of Hanover take up the
cause of their mother country and repel the hated enemy?
If any were inclined to pacifism, Davies reminded his
listeners: "Our Holy Religion teaches us to bear personal
Injuries without private Revenge: But National Insults and Indignities ought to excite the public Resentment."³

Davies expressed his hope that among Overton's volunteers some possessed a martial spirit, acknowledging that it was probably good that only a few in the "generality of mankind" were so fitted. But now was the time for those with a martial spirit to put it to good use by faithfully serving in the army. In an interesting aside in the printed sermon, revealing a keen ability to assess a man's worth, Davies noted: "As a remarkable Instance of this [martial spirit rightly used], I may point out to the Public that heroic Youth Col. Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner, for some important service to his country."⁴ Davies could never have imagined what "important service to his country" Washington was to perform.

Davies used the sermon not only to prepare Overton's troops for battle, but also to lament the sinfulness of the Virginia colonists. In typical New England jeremiad fashion, Davies discovered the "real" cause for the war: "We and our countrymen are sinners; aggravated sinners; God proclaims that we are such by his Judgments now upon us, by withering fields, and Scanty Harvests, by the Sound of the Trumpet and the Alarms of War." He then listed the sins of the Virginians.
You see cards more in use than the Bible, the Backgammon Table more frequented than the Table of the Lord, Plays and Romance more read than the History of the Blessed Jesus. You see trifling and even criminal Diversions become a serious business; the issue of a Horse-race, or a Cock-fight, more anxiously attended to than the fate of our country.

Davies also blasted the Virginians for their drunkenness, swearing, avarice, oppression, prodigality, luxury, vanity, and sensuality. Coming from a dissenter, this recitation of sins was an indirect attack on the established church, which had allowed such sin to go unrebuked. It was also a rebuke of the gentry who led the churches. Davies pleaded: "If you would avoid all [the ravages of war] that is terrible, and enjoy everything that is dear and valuable, REPENT, and turn to the Lord." Davies implied that the failure of the Anglican clergy to demand righteousness had in some degree precipitated this crisis. It was now left to the dissenting ministers to lead in both the call for repentance and the call to arms.

On 6 October 1755, the Reverend James Maury of Louisa County wrote to Commissary Dawson to tell of the "Intrusions upon me" made by Davies and Todd. Maury complained that they were not licensed to preach in his parish. Apparently they came, he wrote, "at the Request of Capt. Overton to Mr. Davies, & of Capt. Fox to Mr. Todd, to preach an occasional sermon to their respective Companies, at the time of their departure to range upon our Frontiers." Maury noted that most of Overton's company were from Hanover and should have gone to Davies' meeting house for
the sermon. Fox's company was largely from Louisa, and Maury was upset that Fox asked Todd to preach the sermon. Maury seemed oblivious to the support given by Davies and Todd to the men who were risking their lives for the defense of the colony. Maury's call for the repression of those who were supporting the war effort fell on deaf ears. His "Doubt . . . whether the Act of Toleration extends to the Plantations" was a legal quibble that the exigencies of wartime had made passe. The colonial officials probably wondered why this clergyman, who professed to uphold the establishment, was not himself preaching rousing war sermons instead of attacking those who by their lives evidenced their support of the government.

Davies enhanced his reputation both as an awakener and a promoter of what the colonists called "patriotism" by publishing two discourses prompted by a severe drought and the defeat of General Braddock. Davies saw an integral link between those two providential occurrences. Having just returned from a tour of Hanover, Goochland, and Albemarle counties, he reported, "I have seen the staff of life just broken in most places." Corn and tobacco plants were "parched and fading." He realized that since the drought also affected Pennsylvania, "the granary of America," it would cause hardship throughout the British empire, since the West Indies depended on Pennsylvania for wheat. In his travels Davies had heard "also a general complaint of the Stagnation of Trade, the scarcity of Money, the Weight
of the various Taxes, the high Price of Goods, and the low Price of your Staple Commodities." During this time the Assembly passed the act restricting the worth of tobacco paid to the clergy. The colonial officials resented that some of the clergy were unwilling to sacrifice at such a time of crisis.

As if the dolorous agricultural and economic situation created by the drought were not enough, Davies mourned,

We have received the melancholy Confirmation of the news we were so unwilling to believe, concerning the Fate of a great Part of our Army. Our brave General is no more, near fifty of our best officers, and near six hundred of our men are killed or wounded.

These men, Davies declared, "suffer for our sake" and "suffer for our sins," not only the sin of "neglecting our defenses," but all the sins that have called down the wrath of God. This defeat and drought combined made for "the most melancholy and calamitious year that Virginia has ever seen." Why all this affliction? "Divine providence" working through "secondary causes" had brought it all to pass. "The treacherous French and savage Indians have routed our army," he proclaimed, "but it was all ordered by the Providence of God, and all the causes of it were disposed by him." To teach Virginia that He is Lord and King, the colony "is now languishing with Drought and alarmed with the Terrors of War." If Virginia will only recognize the rule of Christ, Davies pleaded, "then He will sheathe His sword." Once again he recited the sins of
which Virginia was guilty, calling on all his listeners to repent. Making a fervent appeal to all groups, regardless of denomination, he preached,

I shall rejoice to see Christianity, pure, practical Christianity, Christianity free from the Encumbrance of Party-Names flourish, and increase; and without this, it is but little matter what Party is uppermost or has the sorry Sanction of a civil Establishment.

Davies believed that by the judgment that God had sent, he either wanted to "amend" them or "destroy" them. If the colonists would repent of their sins, rouse themselves from their lethargy, and support this righteous war, God would heal the land and grant success to their efforts. Davies believed that it was time to shake off civil and religious indolence. Warning that "your Liberty, your Property, your Religion, your Lives, your All, are at stake," he encouraged his listeners to "Furnish yourselves with Arms and Ammunition, as well as their present scarcity will allow." In short, "FOLLOW THE PATH OF DUTY: wherever it leads." He warned them not to excuse themselves from participation because of spiritual uneasiness, assuring them "You can be converted now." Whether his people needed saving grace or grace to take up arms, he encouraged them, "Let this be a season of prayer and supplication among us." While Davies longed for the salvation of all Virginians, both spiritually and defensively, he most keenly desired his own followers to further the dissenting cause not only by personal repentance, but also by defending the government. Addressing dissenters in particular he concluded:
Shew the World that you have a God to go to in your Difficulties, and that you can cheerfully live or die under his shelter. I am solicitous for the Behavior of my Countrymen in general, at this Juncture: But I must tell you, I am particularly solicitous that you my Brethren of the Dissenters should behave with Honour and Spirit; and shew yourselves worthy of those Privileges you enjoy, and of those you claim.15

Davies's followers responded to his repeated call to arms. <Hanover County raised more than its share of troops and did so before other counties. Hanover's success was due in no small part to Davies's sermonizing, which the colonial officials highly appreciated.16 Davies continued his encouragement, preaching to the militia of Hanover County at a general muster in May 1758, "with a view to raise a company for Captain Samuel Meredith." He thus moved beyond support for the troops to actually preaching a sermon in which he asked men to enlist in Meredith's company. Lest any question the propriety of a minister inciting men to practice war, he agreed that to "follow peace with all men is one of the principal precepts of our Holy Religion." But when "Ambition and Avarice would rob us of our Property, for which we have toiled . . . , when they would enslave the freeborn mind . . . and tear from our eager grasp . . . our religion . . . , must peace then be maintained?" In a time of such danger "the sword is, as it were, consecrated to God; and the Art of War becomes a part of our Religion. . . . Blessed is the Defender of his country and the Destroyer of its enemies." Davies warned, "The Frontiers are approaching every Day nearer and nearer
to us, and if we cannot stand our ground now, when we have above an hundred miles of thick-settled Country between us and the enemy," much less would they be able to hold their ground when the enemy closed in. Clearly, Davies was not hesitant to fight when he thought the situation demanded it; neither were the citizens of Hanover. He noted with pride, "Hanover had the Honour of sending out the first company of volunteers that were raised in the colony."

This was the company sent out under Captain Overton immediately after General Braddock's defeat in July 1755.17

Davies reminded the prospective soldiers that they could no longer complain that they were "arbitrarily thrust under the command of foreign, unknown, or disagreeable Officers: for the Gentleman that has the immediate command of this company and his subordinate officers, are of yourselves, your neighbours, and perhaps your old companions." He here probably referred to the bad treatment which colonial volunteers often received when serving under British officers. Even colonial officers were slighted, as George Washington quickly learned. The Hanoverians resented being treated by the British regulars as second-class citizens.18

<During these years, another figure who later spoke out against slighting British treatment often attended Davies's church: Patrick Henry, nephew of the well-known rector of the Anglican church in Hanover. Henry's mother and his two sisters Lucy and Jane had joined Davies's church during the earlier 1740's awakening.> Apparently Mrs.
Henry's father, Isaac Winston, who in October 1745 was indicted for permitting John Roan to hold services at his home, convinced his daughter that "the parish minister was not preaching the true gospel." Even though her husband was a judge and a powerful vestryman and her brother-in-law parish rector, these factors did not outweigh her spiritual need that she believed the Presbyterians fulfilled.

Although the younger Patrick Henry remained an Anglican, he regularly attended services in Davies's church for over ten years with his mother. While driving her home, Henry was required to recite all the main points of the sermon. Davies's oratorial and rhetorical skills greatly affected Henry. His leading biographer wrote: "Henry, who either in Virginia or at the Continental Congress, listened to many of the best speakers in America, always said that Davies was the greatest orator he ever heard." Davies's patriotism and willingness to fight for a cause he thought right was also not lost on Henry. When the political speech replaced the sermon as the primary medium of communication with the masses, Henry, the greatest political orator of colonial America, learned how to rouse the people to action by recalling the example of the greatest pulpit orator of the period, Samuel Davies.

Davies's pulpit oratory was at its peak during his delivery of the war sermons, some of which assumed an apocalyptic tint as Davies viewed the war in eschatological terms. He considered the war with France not only a holy
war, but also a possible harbinger of the millennium. Preaching a fast day sermon in 1756, he contended that the "beast" and the "Whore of Babylon" mentioned in St. John's Revelation, and the "little horn" discussed in the book of Daniel, all typified "the idolatrous persecuting power of popery, seated at Rome." He then examined several passages in Daniel and Revelation using numerology, each time arriving at the figure "1260 days." Davies argued that the 1260 days indicated the length of the "time of the Gentiles," which he indicated as the "duration of the popish tyranny and of the oppression of the saints, and the cause of the truth." He reasoned that 1260 days really meant 1260 years, if for no other reason than 1260 days had certainly passed under "popish tyranny" many times over. He wondered when this popish tyranny began: Was it when the Emperor Phocas invested the pope with universal ecclesiastical authority in 606 A.D.; or was it perhaps when Pipin, King of France, added civil authority to the pope's ecclesiastical authority in 756 A.D.?\textsuperscript{21}

Davies frankly admitted confusion over the multitude of prophetic interpretations and professed no ability to discern the divine "timetable." To know when the time of the Gentiles would end, he believed, "would help us to determine what will be the event of the present war, whether the oppression of the protestant cause, or the downfall of the bloody power of popery." John's Revelation taught that the two witnesses against popish power must be slain and raised
from the dead. Davies wondered who these two witnesses were and if their murder and resurrection had already occurred. If the extirpation of the Albigenses and Waldenses was the slaying of the witnesses, then the Reformation must have been their revival. If so, he reasoned, "Now who can tell, but the present war is the commencement of this grand decisive conflict between the lamb and the beast, i.e., between the protestant and the popish powers." Davies thought it appropriate that Pipin as king of France had invested the pope with civil authority and that France "should also take the lead [in this war], and be, as it were, the general of his [the pope's] forces in the last decisive conflict for the support of that authority." 

Davies saw the war in global terms: "France and her allies are all papists; and Britain and her allies are all protestants; and consequently whatever party falls, the religion of that party is likely to fall, too." The war would solve conclusively the dilemma of the slain witnesses:

If France and her allies should prove victorious, then we may conclude that the period for slaying the witnesses is just coming. But if Britain and her allies should prove victorious, then we may conclude that the time is past and the time is just come when it shall be proclaimed, "Babylon is fallen! is fallen."

Davies explicitly placed the destiny of the world on the success or failure of the British cause. Identifying God's cause with the success of Britain was a marked shift from the millennialism of Edwards, who thought that the
nationally indiscriminate global working of the Spirit would bring about the millennium. Davies had entrusted the "sacred cause of liberty" to his government, just as many of Davies's followers were later to entrust the "sacred cause" to colonial government, when Britain appeared as oppressive as France once had. When the screws of British imperial policy were tightened after Davies's death, and when the Proclamation of 1763 threatened to deny the Virginians the fruit of their labors in the Seven Years' War, the American pulpit began to depict Britain as the Antichrist. The Seven Years' War was clearly the transitional phase in American millennial thought, when "spiritual" millennialism gave way to "civil" millennialism, preparing clerical and congregational response to the Revolution.

Davies's depiction of the enemy forces as those of the Antichrist intensified dissenter support for the war. His sermons, Religion and Patriotism and the Curse of Cowardice, went through a number of printings and were popular with both dissenters and churchmen. The anti-clerical forces in the colonial government that the Parson's Cause exposed did not want to hamper Davies's efforts. Even though some clergymen continued to complain of "the Evil Consequences of a Dissenter's Preaching Among Us," Davies preached and the dissenters multiplied without government interference. As Foote observed, "the Attorney General could scarcely venture to throw
impediments in the path of the best recruiting officer of the province."  

Governor Dinwiddie returned to England in 1758 and Francis Fauquier became governor. The Hanover Presbytery, wanting good relations to continue, sent Fauquier a petition pledging their support of his government and a vigorous prosecution of the war effort. The petitioners desired to "secure and continue to them all the peaceable and unmolested enjoyment of the Liberties and Immunities of the Act of Toleration." The governor, pleased by the loyalty already demonstrated by the Presbyterians, assured them that his administration would uphold their legal rights under the Toleration Act.  

Less than a year after Dinwiddie left, Davies also left to become president of the College of New Jersey. Both Davies's departure and the 1758 reunion of the Old and New Light Presbyterians weakened the Presbyterian churches in the Hanover region. In attempting to solve this mysterious waning, one historian has pointed out that the more emotional New Light preaching was "given up in favor of the reunited church," as a concession to the Old Lights. Many of these New Lights accordingly found a home among the Methodists and Baptists when these churches entered the community. Davies's own "awakened" and emotionally charged congregations may well have served as an important source for some of the later Baptist churches, which, as Rhys Isaac discovered, played a seminal role in the transformation
of Virginia. New Lights, whether Baptists, Presbyterians, or Methodists, were certainly the constituency to which Patrick Henry and other "new order" politicians who shaped and were shaped by this transformation appealed.}

If Davies had been reluctant to undertake the fundraising mission to Britain, he hesitated even more before accepting the Board of Trustees appointment as president. A special meeting of the Hanover Presbytery, called by Davies on September 13, 1758, acknowledged that the Board's election of Davies was wise in view of his qualifications and the service that he had already rendered to the College, but declared that because of "Mr. Davies' Importance here, [the members] can by no means agree to his Removal, or they forsee consequences very dangerous to the important Interests of Religion among us." Davies was understandably ambivalent, realizing the interest that he had in the welfare of both the dissenters and the College.30

After the elapse of over eight months since the Board's initial offer, Davies received his third offer, and wrote that "it should be referred to the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, whether I should accept the place."31 On May 17, 1759, the Synod received an application "from the Board of Trustees of the College of New Jersey, for the Liberation of Mr. Davies from his pastoral charge that he may accept the Presidency of sd College." Additionally, "A Supplication was also bro't in from Mr. Davies's Congregation earnestly requesting his Continuance wt them."
The Synod "having seriously Considered the Congregation's application & fully heard all Reasoning for & against Mr. Davies's Liberation," decided that as real as the Hanover Presbytery's need was for Davies's continuance, the need for Davies to assume the presidency, vacant for the past two years, was even greater. \(^32\)

Davies arrived at Princeton on July 26, 1759 and remained there until his death on February 4, 1761. During his short tenure at the College, he continued the building program inaugurated with the funds raised in Britain, added substantially to the school's library, and proposed an end to automatic advancement by implementing the passage of stricter examinations. \(^33\) Perhaps greater than these accomplishments was the influence that Davies exerted within the Presbyterian church and among the faculty and students. The Presbyterian church was the bastion of moderate Calvinism in colonial America and Princeton was the disseminator and defender of its philosophy. As Henry May wrote: "Moderate Calvinism was one of the main avenues to power" in governmental affairs, and was "a mainstay of the moderate Whig cause in the American Revolution." \(^34\) As president of Princeton, Davies was effectively the leader of the moderate Calvinists and had ample opportunity not only to hone his oratorical skills in the many speeches that he was called upon to deliver, but also to provide in those addresses a model for his students—a model of well-reasoned and attractively
delivered didactic and polemical speech in support of one's belief, whether the subject was Calvinism or Whig politics. Davies increasingly turned to speeches that emphasized civic responsibility, all flavored with a good dose of Whig politics. <Davies's influence in the church and the college was such that one of his students, future physician and statesman Benjamin Rush, wrote to future Princeton president John Witherspoon that from his office of president Davies was "as it were the Bishop of all our American churches."

The most refined expression of Davies's Whig philosophy is probably in the address he delivered on the death of George II. The king had been "the guardian of laws and liberty, the protector of the oppressed, the arbiter of Europe, the terror of tyrants and France." To Davies, George had been a good king because he realized and accepted the limits of a constitutional monarch: he "meditated no invasions upon the rights of the people; nor attempted to exalt [himself] above the law." George was "great" because he was "unambitious," and consulted the rights of the people as well as of the crown, and claimed no powers but such as were granted to him by the constitution; and what is the constitution but the voluntary compact of sovereign and subject? and is not this the foundation of our mutual obligations?

Thus Davies expressed not a divine right theory of kings, but a rather explicit contract theory of government in which a "voluntary compact" existed between sovereign and
subject, resulting in "mutual obligations." Among those listening to this address were future members of the Continental Congress, future signers of the Declaration of Independence, and future members of Congress. President Davies's convictions undoubtedly influenced them.

Davies also enunciated the Whig's theory of religious liberty in this sermon. He argued that the monarch himself should not "usurp the prerogative of heaven by assuming the sovereignty of conscience or the conduct of the human understanding in matters of faith and religious speculation." He lauded George II as one who "could well distinguish the civil rights of society and the sacred rights of religion," meaning that he did not interfere with dissenters' worship. He declared, "The imposition of uniformity in minute points of faith, or in the forms of worship and ecclesiastical government was [in]consistent with free inquiry and the rights of private judgment."

Praising George II further, Davies noted that in his reign the state was not the dupe of aspiring churchmen, but the guardian of Christians in general; nor was the secular arm the engine of ecclesiastical vengeance, but the defence of the dissenter as well as the conformist; of the toleration as well as the establishment.

Clearly, Davies valued highly the government that respected the rights of the dissenter and in which the dissenters, who to a man were Whigs, had a voice.

Davies believed that the House of Commons was "best acquainted" with the state of the nation, and George,
to his credit, had left "the interests of the country to their deliberation. The times when parliaments were troublesome restraints are forgotten, or remembered with patriot's indignation." George was a success because he left liberty alone, especially in the colonies: "The monarch himself frowned upon the principles of arbitrary power; and was an advocate for the liberties of the people." In fuller realization of George's merit, Davies cried out, "How different would have been our situation under the baleful influence of the ill-boding name of Stuart." Davies hoped that the House of Hanover would continue to uphold liberty; if so, "George the Third will be dearer to us, as he bears the ever-memorable name of our great deliverer." He encouraged his auditors to "transfer to him [George III] the loyalty, duty, and affection we were wont to pay to his amiable predecessor." If George III would only uphold the legacy of his father, based "upon principles truly British," then he would be a good king. 39 <Many of the revolutionaries were later to claim that they only sought government based upon "principles truly British," as had been established in the Glorious Revolution. To the revolutionaries, George, and not they, was unfaithful to true British principles.40> Perhaps Davies already sensed a slight change in imperial policy shortly after the end of the Seven Years' War. The hope which he expressed for George III's success was not unqualified. "The most promising posture of affairs
may put on another form," he warned, "and all the honours and acquisitions of a well-conducted and successful war, may be ingloriously lost by the intrigues of negotiation and a dishonourable peace." Not only were the colonists unable to exploit the Canadian gains as they wished, but they were also soon to be forbidden to settle across the Alleghenies which they regarded as the rightful spoils of their part in the struggle. The great hope that Davies had for George would not be realized because Davies died in 1761. Many of Davies's students who lived on did not realize that hope either. Many believed that his warning had come true: "The best kings . . . may have evil counsellors, and evil counsellors may have the most mischievous influence, notwithstanding the wisdom and goodness of the sovereign." When George refused to remove his counsellors and to receive the colonists' petitions, many of the colonists began to wonder if George as well as his ministers might not be mischievous. When Davies said, "Liberty, the Protestant Religion, and George the Third are inseparably united," he could not have known that some colonists would soon contend that these things had separated.

At the end of his address, Davies encouraged the students to act upon their principles and to practice their political creed. He called the College of New Jersey "a nursery for the state, as well as the church." As college president and teacher, Davies tended that nursery,
Preparing men to graduate into state service, men who would later employ a philosophy like Davies's when forming and running the government of the United States.

In a valedictory address to the senior class delivered less than five months before his death, Davies encouraged the students to embrace vital religion and to cultivate a "public spirit." In this address, entitled *Religion and Public Spirit*, Davies spoke of two matters which were to him of the greatest importance. By "public spirit" Davies referred not only to the kind of patriotism that he had exhibited during the Seven Years' War, but everything done for the service of mankind. Davies believed that religion and public spirit, if rightly adhered to, were inseparable. He proclaimed:

> Public Spirit and Benevolence without Religion is but a warm Affection for the Subjects to the Neglect of their Sovereign; and Religion without Public Spirit and Benevolence, is but a sullen, selfish, sour and malignant Humour for devotion, unworthy that Sacred Name.

Davies pleaded with his listeners to devote themselves to public service, concluding,

> Whatever, I say, be your Place, permit me, my dear Youth, to inculcate upon you this important instruction, IMBIBE AND CHERISH A PUBLIC SPIRIT. Serve your Generation. Live not for yourselves, but the Publick. Be the Servants of the Church; the servants of your Country; the Servants of all. Extend the Arms of your Benevolence to embrace your Friends, your Neighbors, your Country, your Nation, the whole Race of mankind, even your Enemies. Let it be the vigorous unremitted Effort of your whole Life, to leave the World wiser and better than you found it at your Entrance.

Although Davies lived only slightly more than thirty-seven
years, his life was remarkably full and his accomplishments numerous. Davies's influence as a sermonizer can hardly be overestimated: he inspired both men of "religion" and men of "public spirit," affecting not only the preaching style of ministers who sought to achieve his balance between passion and reason, but also the secular oratory of a man like Patrick Henry, who influenced other Southern politicians, providing countless generations of outstanding orators for the United States Senate. While working tirelessly to win religious toleration, he strongly supported the colony's war effort, proving that his followers could dissent from the established church and yet remain loyal supporters of the government. His efforts to educate blacks and his contention that he should be able to preach anywhere in the colony laid a foundation upon which the Separate Baptists were later to build. The Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians of the late 1760s and 1770s nourished Davies's "child," religious toleration, helping it to grow and to mature into full religious liberty. And at Princeton Davies influenced students to devote their lives to "religion and public spirit," many of whom were later willing to sacrifice their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor to uphold the idea that they may have heard congrantly expressed for the first time by Samuel Davies.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER VIII


2Religion and Patriotism, the Constituents of a Good Soldier (London, 1756).

3Religion, pp. 2-4, 7.

4Religion, pp. 10, 12.

5Religion, pp. 27-9, 34.

6Maury to Dawson, 6 October 1755, Dawson Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

7Virginia's Danger and Remedy (Williamsburg, 1756).

8Virginia's Danger, pp. 5-7.

9Virginia's Danger, pp. 7-8.

10Virginia's Danger, p. 12.


12Virginia's Danger, p. 37.


14Virginia's Danger, p. 44.

15Virginia's Danger, pp. 47-8.

16Pilcher, p. 159.

17The Curse of Cowardice (London, 1758), pp. 3-5, 17.


19Meade, Henry, p. 67.

20Meade, Henry, p. 71.

21Davies's Sermons (1818), V, pp. 253-6.
22 Sermons, V, p. 258.
23 Sermons, V, p. 258.

24 For a good discussion of Edwards's eschatology, see Alan Heimert, Religion and the American Mind (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 63-4; Heimert fails to understand the significance of the Seven Years' War to millennialist thought, however.

25 Nathan O. Hatch, The Sacred Cause of Liberty (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 21-54 contain an excellent discussion of the importance of the Seven Years' War and the role that it played in bringing about the shift to a "civil millennialism."

26 Edwin Conway to Commissary Dawson, 3 March 1758, Dawson Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

27 Foote, I, p. 296.

28 Hanover Presbytery to Francis Fauquier, HPM, 12 July 1758 and 27 September 1758.

29 Brydon, II, p. 170.

30 HPM, 13 September 1758.

31 Davies to Cowell, 12 March 1759, Manuscript in PHS, quoted in Pilcher, p. 175.

32 PCA Minutes, p. 348.

33 Pilcher, pp. 177-183.


35 May, p. 62.

36 Sermons (1818), V, pp. 197-8.

37 Pilcher, p. 183.

38 Sermons, V, pp. 200-205.

39 Sermons, V, pp. 199, 206.


41 Sermons, V, p. 209.
42 *Sermons*, V, p. 212.

43 *Sermons*, V, p. 212.


45 *RAPS*, p. 5.

46 *RAPS*, p. 7.
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