

Nova Scotia's Sense of Mission

by George RAWLYK and Gordon STEWART *

In the spring of 1630, on the *Arbella*, the flagship of the Massachusetts Bay Company's main colonizing expedition to the New World, John Winthrop enunciated the underlying religious significance of the new colony. The first governor of Massachusetts Bay declared:

We shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; soe that if we shall deale falsely with our god in this worke we have undertaken and soe cause him to withdraw his present help from us, wee shall be made a story and a by-word through the world, we shall open the mouthes of enemies to speake evill of the ways of god...¹

From the beginning of the Massachusetts Bay colony, the Puritan leaders were imbued with a sense of special mission and a conviction that they were key instruments in a crucial cosmic drama. Massachusetts had become the vital centre of the true Christian faith and the colony's God-given role was to lead the Church throughout the world back to the essentials of the faith. This belief in the special destiny of the American people was a significant factor in the religious and secular development of seventeenth and eighteenth century New England.

During the American Revolution, New England's Outpost, Nova Scotia, suddenly attempted to appropriate the New England special sense of Christian mission. Almost overnight, the economic, social and political backwater that was Nova Scotia was transformed, in the minds of many inhabitants, into the actual centre of Christendom. Nova Scotia was the new Jerusalem, the instrument through which the Almighty had decided to revitalize the Church throughout the world.

The religious revival that swept Nova Scotia during the Revolution was not therefore simply "a retreat from the grim realities of the world to the safety and pleasantly exciting warmth of the revival meeting, and to profits and rewards of another character".² Nor was it basically a "reflection of the collapse of the traditional leadership of the Nova Scotia village communities and the development of a great mass movement of

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¹ Quoted in E. S. MORGAN, *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop* (Boston, 1958), p. 70.

² M. W. ARMSTRONG, "Neutrality and Religion in Revolutionary Nova Scotia", G. A. RAWLYK (ed.), *Historical Essays on the Atlantic Provinces* (Toronto, 1967), p. 40.

social protest"³ against the colony's capital, Halifax. The Great Awakening was not merely "a protest against traditionalism, against authority as it was established in the state and the Church".⁴ Rather, Nova Scotia's Great Awakening can be viewed as an attempt by the Nova Scotia Yankees to build a new City on a Hill and a new Wilderness Zion. This dynamic if naive concept of mission, and not pragmatic neutrality, religious escapism or frontier independence, was the heart of the revival led by the charismatic Henry Alline.

Nova Scotia's espousal of its special sense of Christian mission must be seen in its proper historical context. Too many scholars have tended to interpret events during the Revolutionary crisis in the light of what they knew would eventually happen and would be significant rather than to view these events through the eyes of the men and women of the time. It is vitally important to understand, as Professor Goldwin French has so perceptively observed, that :

... religious beliefs and organizations have an independent existence which can never be wholly explained in social or economic terms; and that faith can mould society as well as being moulded by it.⁵

Certainly, during the Revolutionary period in Nova Scotia, religion permeated every aspect of life and the revival had a profound impact upon the colony. The importance of the religious basis of the Great Awakening should not be underestimated in spite of the many attractions of psychological, economic or political interpretations.

During the Revolutionary period, Nova Scotia was little more than a political expression for a number of widely scattered and isolated communities. These stretched from Pictou on Northumberland Strait to Canso, from Canso to Halifax, from the colony's capital to Mungerville on the St. John River. There were approximately 20,000 inhabitants, three-fifths of whom were New Englanders with strong economic, cultural and family ties with their homeland. It was largely to these people, the Nova Scotia Yankees, that Henry Alline directed his gospel appeal.

Alline was born in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1748, and in 1760 he moved with his parents to Falmouth in the Minas Basin area of

³ S. D. CLARK, *Movements of Political Protest in Canada 1640-1840*, (Toronto, 1959), p. 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵ G. S. FRENCH, "The Impact of Christianity on Canadian Culture and Society Before 1867", *McMaster Divinity College Theological Bulletin* (Jan., 1968), p. 16.

Nova Scotia. Like most young people in the settlement, he was brought up in a pious Christian home atmosphere and in March, 1776, he experienced a profound spiritual crisis and conversion. He noted in his Journal :

... O help me, help me, cried I, thou Redeemer of souls, and save me or I am gone for ever; and the last word I ever mentioned in my distress (for the change was instantaneous) was O Lord Jesus Christ, thou canst this night, if thou pleasest, with one drop of thy blood atone for my sins, and appease the wrath of an angry God.... At that instant of time when I gave up all to him, to do with me, as he pleased, and was willing that God should reign in me and rule over me at his pleasure : redeeming love broke into my whole soul with repeated scriptures with such power that my whole soul seemed to be melted down with love; the burden of guilt and condemnation was gone, darkness was expelled, my heart humbled and filled with gratitude, and my will turned of choice after the infinite God... my whole soul seemed filled with the divine being.... O the infinite condescension of God to a worm of the dust! for... my whole soul was filled with love, and ravished with a divine ecstasy beyond any doubts or fears, or thoughts of being then deceived, for I enjoyed a heaven on earth, and it seemed as if I were wrapped up in God.⁶

Compelled to have others share with him this traumatic religious experience, Alline carried his gospel to almost every Nova Scotia settlement. He considered himself to be more than an evangelist or even a prophet; he was Nova Scotia's and the world's Messiah.

Alline's religious views have been described as being "confused and indefinite",⁷ as being a combination of "Calvinism, Antinomianism, and Enthusiasm",⁸ and as being basically "mystical".⁹ However, if one cuts through to the heart of Alline's religious thought, it seems clear that his conceptual framework and his rhetoric were surprisingly similar to that of many Evangelical preachers in New England in the late 1730's and 1740's. Professor Alan Heimert has brilliantly described how Jonathan Edwards, the outstanding eighteenth-century New England philosopher-theologian, and other Evangelical-Calvinist preachers regarded the New Birth. In experiencing regeneration, according to Edwards, the individual achieved a new inner harmony through the discovery of a "divine excellency".¹⁰ For Alline as well, this perception and actual

⁶ H. ALLINE, *Life and Journal* (Boston, 1806), pp. 34-35.

⁷ I. E. BILL, *Fifty Years with the Baptist Ministers and Churches in the Maritime Provinces* (St. John, 1880), p. 14.

⁸ G. PATTERSON, *Memoir of Rev. James Macgregor* (Philadelphia, 1859), p. 351.

⁹ ARMSTRONG, "Neutrality and Religion" in Rawlyk, *Historical Essays*, p. 37.

¹⁰ A. HEIMERT, *Religion and the American Mind from the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), p. 42.

grasping of "divine excellency" was at the root of regeneration. The convert was "Attracted by the love and beauty... in his divine perfections".¹¹ The inner harmony, the "ravishing of the soul", that followed the perception of divine excellence was what Heimert has called the "evangelical version of the pursuit of happiness".¹² In a sense then, the Evangelical heaven was not an abode in the heavens but was to be experienced on earth — in Massachusetts or Nova Scotia — as the convert joined with other visible saints in forwarding God's Kingdom. Alline frequently attacked what he called "mercenary Christians", who felt that conversion was merely a guarantee of happiness in the after-life and emphasized instead that the true Christian enjoyed "a heaven on earth".¹³ Just as many of the New England Evangelical clergy of the 1740's had preached that heaven was in essence "a state of mind" and an "inner harmony" so Alline explained that the soul "must really be made to partake of the divine nature here in this life".¹⁴

From his description of the essential nature of the New Birth, Edwards went on to outline a programme of activity for the true convert. Edwards saw in revivals of religion the means whereby an ever increasing number of the regenerate would form the basis for advancing the Kingdom of God on earth. Alline also stressed the importance of gathering the saints together since he believed that this fellowship of the regenerate would be responsible for quickly spreading the boundaries of Christ's Kingdom "from pole to pole".¹⁵

From the basic premises underlying the nature of the New Birth, there gradually emerged an Evangelical concept of history. "A happy revival of religion"¹⁶ was regarded as the most significant occurrence by the advocates of this historical view. For religious revivals were essential cogs in God's redemptive machinery. In his *History of the Work of Redemption*, Edwards explained how, since the fall of Adam, the Kingdom of Christ had been advanced by revivals during which sinners

¹¹ ALLINE, *Life and Journal*, p. 34.

¹² HEIMERT, *Religion and the American Mind*, p. 43.

¹³ ALLINE, *Life and Journal*, p. 35.

¹⁴ H. ALLINE, *A Sermon Preached to, and at the request of a Religious Society of Young Men... in Liverpool on the 19th November 1782* (Halifax, A. Henry, n.d.), p. 26.

¹⁵ H. ALLINE, *Two Mites on Some of the Most Important and Much Disputed Points of Divinity, Cast into the Treasury for the Welfare of the Poor and Needy and committed to the Perusal of the unprejudiced and impartial Reader by Henry Alline Servant of the Lord to His Churches* (Halifax, A. Henry, 1781), p. 34.

¹⁶ HEIMERT, *Religion and the American Mind*, p. 67.

were drawn back to the divine and to a spiritual state.¹⁷ In his *Anti-Traditionist* Alline described how, since the fall of Adam, the world had been in a state of chaotic disorder and that through revivals, man could return to the "spiritual unity" he had possessed in Paradise.¹⁸ For both Edwards and Alline, then, the course of human history was in reality the history of man's redemption. In their scheme of things, wars between nations were insignificant when compared with a true revival of religion.

Because of the tremendous emphasis placed by Edwards on revivals, he believed that the revival in his church at Northampton in the early 1740's marked out the western Massachusetts settlement as the centre of the real Christian world. For Edwards, New England in the 1740's was not merely a City on a Hill, an example for other nations and people to follow; but Northampton, Massachusetts, was the location where God's Kingdom on earth would be built.¹⁹ In Nova Scotia, during the period from 1776 to 1783, Alline did not consider it absurd or outrageous when he declared that a revival of religion in Cornwallis or Liverpool or Yarmouth was an event of world significance.²⁰ Through a similar process of reasoning as used by Edwards, Alline saw Nova Scotia as the new centre of the Christian world. Thus Alline was able, in the intellectual and emotional sense, to lift the Nova Scotia Yankees from their parochial surroundings and thrust them into the middle of the world stage.

These parallels between the religious thought of Edwards and Alline are striking not because Edwards directly influenced Alline but because they reveal how Alline was dealing with concepts familiar to the Nova Scotia Yankees. There is no evidence to suggest that Alline was in any manner influenced by Edward's theological writing. What Alline tried to do was to tap the reservoir of the New England heritage of the Nova Scotia Yankees and make this heritage relevant to the Nova Scotia situation during the Revolution. Alline was unusually successful in his preaching because he intuitively realized how essential it was for him to cultivate the New England religious heritage of his congregations. Many of the settlers had grown up in New England during the

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

¹⁸ H. ALLINE, *The Anti-Traditionist* (Halifax, 1783).

¹⁹ HEIMERT, *Religion and the American Mind*, p. 96.

²⁰ ALLINE, *Life and Journal*, pp. 68-69.

Great Awakening; and others, who had been born in Nova Scotia, had learned about events in New England in the 1740's and 1750's from their parents.²¹ Alline reformulated assumptions that the Yankees had long held. The revivalistic shibboleths of the 1740's were not used indiscriminately by Alline but rather were carefully adapted to fit the Nova Scotia situation. To the modern reader, Alline's religious views may appear both naive and ridiculous, but they made considerable sense to the Nova Scotia Yankees. Alline shrewdly and perceptively explained and justified the Yankees' unique experience in Nova Scotia in terms they could readily comprehend.

The Great Awakening which began in Nova Scotia in 1776 was not a radically new religious road for the Yankees to take. Rather, the revival was an important element in their rich New England heritage. The Yankees were responding in a positive manner to a drastic change in their circumstances precipitated by the unanticipated Revolutionary War. Many of the Yankees accepted Alline's gospel for this positive reason and not in order to blot out a decade of religious disintegration, or to escape the implications of the Revolution, as Professor M. W. Armstrong has suggested.²²

In his sermons, preached as he crisscrossed the colony, Alline developed the theme that the Nova Scotia Yankees had a special predestined role to play in the crucial cosmic drama that was being played in the Revolutionary crisis. Alline emphasized the point that his converts "appear as Cities on Hills".²³ The regenerate were, he repeated in another sermon, "the salt of the earth, the light of the world and as Cities on Hills".²⁴ Because of their special status, they were under an obligation to their Saviour to form pure Churches that would become the basis for God's earthly Kingdom. Alline considered it essential for the visible Saints to become the new reformed Church since the alternative was to bring "the Pharisees, the Antinomians, Hypocrites and the true Christians into one promiscuous crowd".²⁵ Such a develop-

²¹ See I. F. MACKINNON, *Settlements and Churches in Nova Scotia 1749-1776* (Montreal, 1930), p. 22, and, C. C. GOEN, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England* (New Haven, 1962), pp. 94-95, 186.

²² M. W. ARMSTRONG, *The Great Awakening in Nova Scotia 1776-1809* (Hartford, 1948), pp. 34-39.

²³ H. ALLINE, *A Gospel Call to Sinners, A Sermon Preached by Henry Alline* (Newburyport, Blunt and March, 1795), pp. 30-31.

²⁴ ALLINE, *A sermon . . . Preached . . . in Liverpool on the 19th November 1782*, p. 22.

²⁵ ALLINE, *A Gospel Call to Sinners*, p. 23.

ment would destroy the cutting edge of the revival. Alline was sensitive to the criticism of his enemies that his separation policy would seriously weaken the existing Christian Churches. These critics, warned Alline, "will say that altho' you are among legal ministers and Churches, yet you might not leave them; but remain with them in Hopes to reform them and do them some Good. But for my part I cannot tell where they find either scripture or Reason for Zions staying in Babylon."²⁶ Like John Cotton in Massachusetts Bay in the 1630's and 1640's, Alline believed that a pure Church organization was the only way by which the Redeemer's cause could be advanced. Alline was urging, therefore, that Nova Scotia Yankees fill the depleting ranks of the army of visible saints.

Alline's converts were not to be satisfied with witnessing to their new found faith in the restricted confines of their families, their settlement or even their colony. Theirs was to be a world rôle. The Yankees were aware that a war was raging, a war that involved many of their relatives and close friends, and the burning reality of this fact encouraged them to stress even more the significance of their revival. It was clear to them that "Heaven's indulgent hand" had purposely protected them from the full fury of the war in order to further Christ's course in their land.²⁷ The New England colonies were engaged in a war with Britain, it was argued, for base material ends, while the Nova Scotia Yankees were experiencing God's blessing and favour. The implication was abundantly clear. Nova Scotia was not just a string of isolated and insignificant settlements, but it was a land where "the Gospel was in its meridian and brightness". The Nova Scotia Yankees possessed "a goodly heritage" and were living in "pleasant places".²⁸ And the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as seen in Alline's revival, was a clear sign from the Almighty that the settlers had not wandered from the narrow way of their New England Puritan heritage. Moreover, since the rest of their Protestant world was locked in bitter conflict, was it too much to believe that Nova Scotia alone provided the key to the true and future course of Christian history? Without question the world was "a stage of snares" and it seemed to many Nova Scotians that

²⁶ ALLINE, *Two Mites* . . . , pp. 339-340.

²⁷ H. ALLINE, *A Sermon on a Day of Thanksgiving Preached at Liverpool By Henry Alline on the 21st November 1782* (Halifax, A. Henry, n.d.), p. 22.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

during the Revolutionary period their colony, alone, had been able to escape these snares because it had been given a crucial part to play in forwarding God's purpose in the world.

The idea that Nova Scotia was carrying on the special rôle once held by New England was explicitly developed by Alline. He reminded his congregations that the revival was taking place among a people who had once participated in God's vanguard. The Almighty had not chosen the Yankees of Nova Scotia by accident but by means of the revival was bestowing his imprimatur on his newly chosen people. God has, declared Alline, "a chosen people in the world that have known his voice and are rejoicing to hear of his coming among them by his servants to spread the Honour of his Name and propagate the Redeemers Kingdom in this world". The Nova Scotia Yankees knew who the chosen people were. It was now their responsibility "endowed with some small Degree of that Spirit to come forth as Evidence of the Gospel for the good of them that are blind and know not the difference between Christ and the Anti-Christ".²⁹

It required considerable effort to believe that these isolated settlements, since 1763 a mere backwater even in terms of New England expansionism, had been selected by God for a special purpose. But Alline, striking deep into Puritan traditions that saw self-abnegation and frugality as virtues, and into the New Light heritage that viewed too much education as a barrier to conversion, argued that the poverty and remoteness of the Nova Scotia Yankees had removed them from the then prevailing corrupting influences of Britain and New England. Consequently, Nova Scotia was in an ideal position to lead the world back to God for "wherever you find the Spirit of Christ altho' among the most poor and despised People on earth, believe there is more done in the Cause of Christ there, than in the greatest Corporation with the most Strictest Discipline of the highest orders of men". As far as Alline was concerned the revival was an indication that the Nova Scotia Yankees were "a people on whom God had set his everlasting Love" and their colony was "as the Apple of His Eye".³⁰

It was difficult for Alline to emphasize the importance of the New England spiritual heritage without undermining the entire conceptual

²⁹ ALLINE, *Two Mites . . .*, pp. 208-209.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

basis for the significance this placed upon the Great Awakening in Nova Scotia. If the New England Way had once been the example for the rest of the corrupt Protestant world why was it no longer the example? What had happened since the 1760's? "You will", warned Alline, "be accused of forsaking the good Old Way, turning away from ministers, separating from churches, encouraging separate meetings and the like." These accusations were to be expected, but all those who had come under the influence of the Nova Scotia revival realized that there was no foundation for these charges. As Alline was careful to point out, the visible saints could only be so criticized if they separated for their own selfish ends, to establish closed meetings and wait for the bliss of heaven to engulf them. However, this was not what the Nova Scotia revival was about. Alline urged separatism, not as a negative act, but as a positive way to retain the purity and dynamism of the Christian Church. Separation was the means by which Alline emphasized the uniqueness of the Nova Scotia revival experience by cutting the ties with the corrupt "New England Anti-Christ". Alline had grabbed the mantle of New England mission just at the moment when the Revolutionary crisis was dragging the area into oblivion. It was the New England Church that had turned its back on God. It had "left the good Old Way by sinking into the form of Godliness without the power". As a result the Nova Scotia Yankees were "returning to the liberty of the Gospel and separating from the seats of the Anti-Christ."³¹ The Nova Scotians were the new shock troops of the Christian cause in the world.

In his sermons, Alline attempted to make this special rôle a concern of the community as a whole. Although he proclaimed that his gospel was "a glorious truth for the poor", his appeal was not directed to any one particular social group or class. His preaching may have made more sense to the poor but his aim was to fuse the diverging elements of the community together. Simeon Perkins, perhaps the richest merchant outside Halifax, thought highly of Alline and invited him to dine at Perkins' attractive Liverpool home.³² Moreover, Alline's followers met for workshops in Liverpool at the home of Stephen Smith, one of the original town proprietors and a successful entrepreneur.³³ Alline was neither a

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

³² D. C. HARVEY (ed.), *The Diary of Simeon Perkins, 1780-89* (Champlain Society, Toronto, 1958), p. 102.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 1 n.

“democrat” nor a leveller. He accepted a stratified view of society and stressed that the leading men of the community were not to be despised because of their wealth but rather were to be accepted as leaders by the rank and file. For Alline, the rich were potential “pillars” of the Church and were as “nursing fathers to his people”. The greatest crime the wealthy could commit was not in exploiting the poor but in scorning Godly ways. They had a responsibility to “adorn [their] station by the Grace of God and live as lights to the world”.³⁴ Those wealthy individuals who were regenerate were the natural officers of the shock troops.

From Alline’s sermons, it seems clear that it is both inaccurate and inadequate to interpret the revival as a “democratic movement” or as “an expression of the levelling forces of the frontier”. Alline and most of his followers, at least during the Revolution, were thinking in terms of a stratified society. Furthermore, and of crucial importance, their prime concern was the struggle to lead the world back to Christ. Each in his own station of life was to be an example to his unregenerate neighbour and, in union with other converts, an example and leadership for the entire world. During the Revolutionary years, Alline and the Nova Scotia Yankees regarded their colony as a City upon a Hill, not a City of safety and complacency, but a City that had avoided the snares of a corrupt world. It was a City that showed, even in the crisis years of the Revolution, how God’s chosen people could walk confidently along the narrow road.

For Alline and some of his followers, the Revolutionary War revealed that New England had abandoned its special rôle as a City on a Hill. The Puritan Zion had somehow been driven off the narrow road. Instead of being in the advance guard of God’s earthly Kingdom, New England had descended to the level of Britain and was involved in a vicious worldly squabble. By emigrating to Nova Scotia before 1765, the Yankees had missed a vital decade in New England history. Whereas the New Light element in New England had in the intense political heat of the decade after 1763 come to identify God’s cause with that of the political development of the colonies, the Nova Scotia Yankees were still thinking within the conceptual framework of the 1740’s and 1750’s. The Nova Scotia Yankees continued to see revivals of religion as the most signif-

³⁴ ALLINE, *A Sermon... Preached... in Liverpool on the 21st November 1782*, pp. 25-26.

icant phenomena of the times. In holding this view and in having lost a crucial decade, the settlers had fallen behind the times. Their outlook was, in a sense, anachronistic when compared with that of their former neighbours. The Nova Scotians were therefore unable to understand fully the political stance taken in 1776 by New England. Reacting violently to the Revolutionary rhetoric, they believed that New England had taken the wrong turn.

The fact that it had been the British authorities who had helped to precipitate hostilities did not absolve the New England colonies of any condemnation. In a world ruled by the Providence of God, every event, particularly those involving the true believers, had meaning. Though it may have been difficult to accept, the meaning of the War was unmistakable and obvious. New England was being punished for her sins, for turning away from her mission. It was not the Stamp Act or the Townsend Duties that had brought this calamity to New England; but as Alline stressed, it was "sins that have incurred the lamentable disorder".³⁵

The implication of this conjunction of events, of war in New England and an outpouring of God's Spirit in Nova Scotia, was obvious. God was passing the New England mantle to Nova Scotia. Alline argued that God had been especially kind to the Nova Scotia Yankees "in particular" for He had "called" them "away from the approaching storm that was hanging over your native land and sheltered here from the calamities of a sweeping deluge... and hedged about with the kind Providence of God and screened from the impending storm in this peaceable corner of the earth".³⁶ The use of the word "called" is extremely significant. Alline was apparently trying to show the Nova Scotia Yankees how from the moment of their embarkation they had been part of a divine plan. The experience of the settlers in Nova Scotia in the 1760's and 1770's was now pregnant with meaning.

It was apparent, lamented Alline, that the "great part of the world [was] overspread with heathenish darkness" and "glutted with anti-Christian errors". There was a "growing negligence of the Cause of Christ" and the "Power of Godliness [was] scarcely to be found on the

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

earth".³⁷ These were the horrible consequences of New England's sudden fall from grace.

It is crucial to appreciate the depth of the feeling of crisis in Nova Scotia during the Revolutionary years. With New England gone madly off course, there was apparently no solid base for true Christianity from which Christ's Kingdom could be advanced. With two powerful Protestant nations furiously battling one another, the whole course of events since the Reformation seemed to be ending in a meaningless tangle. In a tremendous outburst of emotion, Alline catalogued the signs of the time :

The great men and kings of the earth grown proud and lofty, all manner of Debauchery spreading like a Flood; Stage Plays, Balls and Masquerades received as an Indulgence from Heaven... while the Heralds of the Gospel, if any hold forth the truth, are accounted as mad men and Enthusiasts; libraries glutted with Tragedies, Comedies, Romances, Novels and other profane histories ... cursing and swearing and blaspheming not only the language of Troops and Mariners but also of Towns and Countries and received as expressions of Politeness; Drunkenness, the rich exalted, the poor trampled in the Dust; Signs and Wonders seen in the Earth, Air and Water; Wars and Rumours of War, yea, the most inhuman wars spreading desolation thro' the world like a Flood; and these most alarming Prodigies... as little regarded as the shadows of the evening.³⁸

So deep was the sense of crisis in Alline's own mind that he thought at times that the end of the world was in sight. But the crisis in Alline's mind was only an acute version of the crisis in the collective mind of the Nova Scotia Yankees. The world was at the most critical juncture of its history. The heart and soul of Evangelical Calvinism in the 1740's and 1750's had been an implicit faith that God intended, in the not-too-distant future, to establish his earthly Kingdom in North America.³⁹ In the eyes of many New Englanders the Revolution was an attempt to accelerate this process. But the Nova Scotia Yankees were unable to grasp this point and regarded the Revolution as a roadblock to the millennium. However, the Nova Scotia revival showed them that God had "called" them to lead all Christians to Paradise.

The Nova Scotia "Yankees", no matter how hard they sinned, could not have produced all the sins catalogued by Alline. And neither Mougerville nor Liverpool or Cornwallis could have risen to the level of "Plays, Balls and Masquerades". Alline's outburst indicates the

³⁷ ALLINE, *Two Mites* . . . , pp. 261-262.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

³⁹ HEIMERT, *Religion and the American Mind*, p. 66.

dimensions of the crisis faced by the Yankees. In the world view of those New Englanders fighting in the Revolution, Old England was corrupt and the Americans were fighting for a righteous and noble cause. There was therefore some meaning for the war. But to Alline the "inhuman war" had no meaning. Or rather, along with all the other signs of the times, it could only mean one thing, that the entire Christian world was deserting the ways of God. In Alline's eyes, piety had disappeared throughout the world, not only in England but even more tragically in New England. There were no revivals in New England after 1775 but only sin, empty forms and brutal war. When Alline advised the Nova Scotia Yankees that New England privateers were a "floating hell"⁴⁰ the implication was that these predatory ships were symbols of New England's spiritual fall.

In 1776, after he had experienced his conversion, Alline had felt it necessary, for a time, to return to New England to learn the "Puritan Way". But in 1783, he was convinced that he had to return to *teach* New England.⁴¹ This change that took place in Alline's mind reveals the dramatic change that had taken place in the mind of the Nova Scotia Yankees during the Revolutionary period. In 1775 Nova Scotia had been the north-eastern frontier of New England. In 1783, Nova Scotia, at least in Alline's eyes, had become the centre of the Christian world. New England gone wrong had presented Nova Scotia with an opportunity to put things right. In 1783, it was Nova Scotia that was leading New England and the rest of the world. During the Revolution, the Nova Scotia Yankees discovered a world mission for their colony. This Sense of Mission was destined to have a profound impact on the development of Nova Scotia well on into the nineteenth century.

⁴⁰ ALLINE, *Life and Journal*, p. 143.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 171.