Conflict and Identity in Massachusetts: The Louisbourg Expedition of 1745 *

by S. E. D. SHORTT **

The conquest of Louisbourg by a combined British and colonial force in 1745 represented more than a creditable military victory: for eighteenth-century Massachusetts it became an event of immense symbolic importance. [1] The 1740's brought to a head certain long-term trends in colonial society and in addition, witnessed the sudden unleashing of the Great Awakening, the Land Bank controversy, and the bitter war with France. By destroying the religious homogeneity of Massachusetts, the Awakening removed the traditional basis of the colony's social cohesion. The currency question and threat of military disaster simply added to the chaos of the existing identity crisis. Falling in the middle of this decade of turmoil, the Louisbourg expedition assumed the symbolic attributes necessary for the construction of a new Massachusetts identity. Certainly, the clergy retained somewhat more traditional viewpoints and merit separate consideration. But for the majority in the colony the expedition became a symbol of pride and unity, of a cautious but viable sense of provincial awareness. In less than three decades the legacy of this secular affection for Massachusetts would permanently alter the British colonial system.

I

The original Puritan design to regenerate Europe by the creation of an exemplary "citty on a hill" was rapidly displaced by a desire to conquer America, to construct a "zion in the wilderness." [2] This new focus for Puritan zeal represented an abandonment of certain Winthropian ideals,

* The author wishes to thank Professor G. A. Rawlyk of Queen's University, in whose 1969-70 graduate seminar a version of this paper was presented, for his extensive advice and encouragement.

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1 A number of American historians have adopted symbols as analytic tools. For example: John W. WARD, "The Meaning of Lindbergh's Flight," *American Quarterly*, X, 1958; Henry Nash SMITH, *Virgin Land, The American West as Symbol and Myth*, (New York: 1950); J. W. WARD, *Andrew Jackson, Symbol for An Age*, (New York, 1962); Leo MARX, *The Machine in The Gardin*, (New York, 1967); Roderick NASH, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, (New York, 1967). See also Rush WELTER, "The History of Ideas in America: An Essay in Redefinition", *Journal of American History*, 51, 1965. A very different type of symbols analysis has been undertaken by Richard L. MERRITT in *Symbols of American Community, 1735-1775*, (New Haven, 1966). His research attempts to document the growth of American nationalism by statistical measurement of place name usage in the colonial press from 1735 to 1775. According to Merritt, the years between 1739 and 1748 saw a definite slump in colonial community awareness (p. 156). The following paper takes sharp exception to this statement.

2 See Alan HEIMERT, "Puritanism, the Wilderness, and The Frontier", *New England Quarterly*, 26, 1953.

or in Perry Miller's phrase, "declension in a Bible Commonwealth." [3] Yet if Massachusetts failed in the seventeenth century to realize the original mission, a stable and cohesive society was nevertheless created. By tacit agreement, and with the aid of evolving federal theology, the colonists slowly settled for something less than a community of "visible saints." The result was a patriarchal society, organized in small towns, and deriving legitimacy from communal consensus. By the middle of the eighteenth century, however, this ideal also faced declension. Land was scarce, the family declined as a unit of social control, and, despite increased individual mobility, social stratification had hardened into class distinctions. [4] This disintegration of stable homogeneity in Massachusetts finally became overt, according to Kenneth Lockridge, during the "Great Awakening." He observes: "All the groups thus emerging — religious groups as well as the merchants and land speculators — ... by the middle of the eighteenth century ... had shattered the old politics of Christian corporatism." [5]

If certain long-term social changes peaked in the 1740's, the decade also experienced unprecedented immediate conflict. Most divisive was the Great Awakening. According to the Reverend Charles Chauncy of Boston, the revival "'tis properly a disease, a sort of maddness... POPERY itself hasn't been the mother of more and greater blasphemies and abominations." [6] While defending the Awakening, the Reverend Jonathan Edwards of North Hampton was well aware of its potential dangers. "There is nothing that belongs to Christian experience," he warned, "that is more liable to a corrupt mixture than zeal." [7] What both these clerics feared, despite their

[3] Perry MILLER, "Declension in a Bible Commonwealth," *Nature's Nation*, (Cambridge: 1967). Darrett B. RUTMAN suggests in *Winthrop's Boston, Portrait of A Puritan Town, 1630-1649*, (Chapel Hill, 1965), that the declension was well established by 1650. Other historians such as R. S. DUNN, *Puritans and Yankees. The Winthrop Dynasty of New England, 1630-1717*, (Princeton, 1962) and Bernard BAILYN, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century*, (New York, 1965), set the date at approximately 1700. Cf. Robert G. POPE, *The Half-Way Covenant*, (Princeton, 1969).

[4] See Kenneth LOCKRIDGE, "Land, Population, and the Evolution of New England Society, 1630-1790," *Past and Present*, 39, 1968; Kenneth LOCKRIDGE and Alan KREIDER, "The Evolution of Massachusetts Town Government, 1640-1740," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 23, 1966; Kenneth LOCKRIDGE, *The New England Town, the First Hundred Years*, (New York, 1970); Philip GREVEN, *Four Generations, Population,, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts*, (Ithaca, 1970); R. M. ZEMSKY, "Power, Influence, and Status: Leadership Patterns in the Massachusetts Assembly, 1740-1755," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 26, 1969; Jesse LEMISH, "The American Revolution seen from the Bottom Up," in B. J. BERNSTEIN, *Towards a New Past*, (New York, 1968); Jackson Turner MAIN, *The Social Structure of Revolutionary America*, (Princeton, 1965). Cf. R. E. BROWN, *Middle Class Democracy and the Revolution in Massachusetts, 1691-1780*, (Ithaca, 1955) and Michael ZUCKERMAN, *Peacable Kingdoms, New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century*, (New York, 1970). Note also R. L. BUSHMAN's Study of Connecticut, *From Puritans to Yankees*, (Cambridge, 1967).

[5] LOCKRIDGE, *The New England Town*, 171.

[6] Charles CHAUNCEY, *Enthusiasm Described and Cautioned Against*, (Boston, 1742), reprinted in Alan HEIMERT and Perry MILLER, *The Great Awakening*, (New York, 1967), 231, 243.

[7] Jonathan EDWARDS, *Some Thoughts concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England*, in HEIMERT and MILLER, *op. cit.*, 278.

theological differences, was the destruction of a sense of community. By openly destroying the already weakened structure of federal theology the revival removed the traditional basis for Massachusetts' self-identity and social cohesion. Under the old federal theory personal salvation and national identity had been bound by the connection of the covenant of grace to the civil covenant. After the Awakening, the revivalists, or New Lights, emphasized individual regeneration and rejected the national covenant; national spirit, if it was to exist at all, was forced to reach the Awakened through means outside religion. The Liberal clergy, meanwhile, drifted towards open Arminianism with its concomitant rejection of traditional Calvinist theological assumption concerning the nature of man and his relationship to society. New Lights, Liberals, and Traditionalists vied with each other for doctrinal supremacy, but never again would religion form the basis for Massachusetts identity. As Chauncy lamented of the Great Awakening, "It has promoted faction and contention, filled the Church often-times with confusion, and the state sometimes with general disorder." [8]

Religion was by no means the only divisive issue of the 1740's; of considerable importance as well was the Land Bank controversy. William Douglass, the contemporary historian, considered the colony "in a state of *lawless Bankruptcy*," while another pamphleteer complained "the Times are hard and Money scarce." [9] Indeed, existing paper currency had depreciated by 1739 to one-fifth its face value and Boston's external trade had declined rapidly after 1735. [10] To combat the resulting business depression a group of inland promoters, supported by back-country debtors and violently opposed by most Boston merchants, demanded the establishment of a land bank system of paper currency. [11] The ensuing debate proved both lengthy and acrimonious. Enemies of the scheme labelled the exponents "a few evil-minded Men" who "*Debauched* the Minds of the People, by Instilling unto them some pernicious Principles, destructive of Society and good Government." [12] Obviously the economics of recession spilled naturally into politics. Already Governor Jonathan Belcher of Massachusetts was embroiled in controversy over the enforcement of British forestry laws. By siding with the hard-money group of Boston, he soon found himself opposed to both the newly elected House of Representatives

[8] CHAUNCY, *Enthusiasms Described . . .*, 243.

[9] *An Essay Concerning Silver and Paper Currencies, More especially with Regards to the British Colonies in New-England*, (Boston, 1738), reprinted in Andrew McFarland DAVIS, *Colonial Currency Reprints, 1682-1751*, (New York, n.d.), III, p. 229, and ANON., *A Letter Relating to a Medium of Trade, in the Province of Massachusetts-Bay*, (Boston, 1740), in DAVIS, vol. IV, 4.

[10] Theodore THAYER, "The Land Bank Systems in the American Colonies," *Journal of Economic History*, XIII, 1953, 151; Carl BRIDENBAUGH, *Cities in the Wilderness*, (New York, 1966), 330; A. H. COLE, *Wholesale Commodity Prices in the United States, 1700-1861*, (Cambridge, 1938) Appendix A.

[11] John SCHUTZ, *William Shirley*, (Chapel Hill, 1961), 37-38.

[12] [William DOUGLASS ?], *A Letter to Merchant in London Concerning a late Combination in the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New-England to Impose or Force a Private Currency called Land-Bank-Money*, (Boston, 1740), in DAVIS, Vol. IV, 72 and 76.

and the Council.[13] But the debate extended well beyond the legislature, for the controversy appeared to "spirit the People to *Mutiny, Sedition,* and *Riots.*" In fact, "they had persuaded themselves that the Acts of Parliament [prohibiting the land bank] could not be carried into Execution and even bid Defiance to the Government by their threats."[14] What had begun as an internal economic dispute threatened to errupt into a colonial rebellion.

To religious strife and the bitterness of the currency debate was added the threat of war with France. Governor William Shirley, who had replaced Belcher in 1741, summarized the military chaos which confronted him during his first year in office:

> As to the state of the province, the treasury is empty; Castle William, the chief fortress and key of the province, and all its garrison forts and fortifications are out of repair and are in a defenseless condition and in danger of being desserted by the officers and men to who arrears of wage are due.[15]

Indeed, the Governor had good reason to fear the vulnerability of New England. From Louisbourg on Cape Breton and Quebec on the St. Lawrence, to Frontenac and Detroit in the Great Lakes basin, and finally to Crevecour, Kakaskie, and New Orleans in the Mississippi Valley, the French North American empire encircled the British Colonies. The French and their Indian allies used this extended frontier to harass New England.[16] After 1744 when war finally broke out between France and Britain, the Indian problem was augmented by the activities of French privateers operating out of Louisbourg. In the summer and fall of that year ten New England ships were captured.[17] Clearly defense against New France was a major problem for Massachusetts.

For over a century Massachusetts had been approaching the crises of the 1740's. The old unity and simplicity of patriarchal, theocratic, consensus communities was displaced by a heterogeneous and individualistic colonial society. The Great Awakening revealed an openly divided clergy and arranged the Congregational churches, in Edwards' phrase, "into two armies, separated and drawn up in battle array."[18] Religion, which had long provided the unity that bound citizens to each other and to their province, had become a divisive force. Nor could secular affairs provide

[13] ANON., *An Account of the Rise, Progress, and Consequences of the two late Schemes Commonly call'd the Land-Bank or Manufactory Scheme and the Silver Scheme, in the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay,* (Boston, 1744), in DAVIS, Vol. IV, 305; J. C. MILLER, "Religion, Finance, and Democracy in Massachusetts", *New England Quarterly,* 6, 1, 1933, 41; and for a description of Belcher's see SCHUTZ, 34.

[14] [William DOUGLASS ?], *A Letter* .... in DAVIS, 78 and ANON., *An Account*..., in DAVIS, IV, 287-288.

[15] C. H. LINCOLN, *Correspondence of William Shirley,* Vol. I (New York,) 1912), p. 76, Shirley to the Duke of Newcastle, Oct. 17, 1741.

[16] See G. A. RAWLYK, *Yankees at Louisbourg,* (Orono, 1966), 16-19, for an account of the pervasive fear of Indian raids in the 1740's.

[17] *Ibid.,* 20-21.

[18] Cited in E. S. GAUSTAD, *The Great Awakening in New England,* (New York, 1957), 67.

the material to create a new sense of unity. The land bank issue pitted debtor against creditor, new merchants against old, rural areas against urban. And overshadowing this internal turmoil was the omnipresent fear of war with French. Divided within and threatened without, Massachusetts was set adrift. Until some momentous event provided a focus around which a new collective character could form, the province experienced a severe identity crisis. [19]

II

When the makeshift force of colonial recruits set sail for Louisbourg in the year 1745, they embarked upon a mission of crucial importance. They undertook, in the clergy's phrase, "the avenging of Israel." [20] Initially the French fortress was a symbol of fear representing the entire spectrum of tensions and tribulations afflicting Massachusetts. If the foe were overcome, the victory would signify the vindication of the province. Tempered in battle, the colony could face the future with confidence and unity. For would not success signify that God did not demand religious homogeneity in Massachusetts? And would it not also provide economic advancement as well as military security? Triumph at Louisbourg was in a sense, the symbolic solution to Massachusetts' identity crisis.

Cape Breton was, immediately before 1745, a symbol of fear for the Bay colony. There had been an element of paranoia present in Massachusetts from its founding which periodically became overt — during the Hutchinson and Williams controversies in the 1630's, at the time of King Philip's War in 1675, and most noticably, in the Salem Witch trials during the last decade of the seventeenth century. This emotion stemmed from the circumstances under which the Puritans had set out to plant their "citty on a hill". Harried from England, the founders identified with the wandering and persecuted Israelites. By the mid-eighteenth century, much of this fear was focused on the threat of French aggression. Louisbourg, by its Frenchness, symbolized the decadence of the Old World, especially the evils of Roman Catholicism. At the same time, through the unholy alliance between the Indians and the French, it represented the heathen threat of the New World. With the reduction of Louisbourg, the burden of fear would be largely purged from the mind of New England. Though fear of French assault would return during the 1750's, the stark terror of the previous years had been greatly diminished. Though paranoia would also return, as Bernard Bailyn suggests, during the revolutionary period, [21] this fear would

[19] See Darrett Rutman's perceptive use of Eric H. Erikson's concept of identity crisis in *American Puritanism,* (New York, 1970), especially page 126 where he suggests the Great Awakening was part of such a crisis.

[20] Thomas PRENTICE, *A Sermon on the Reduction of Cape Breton,* (Boston, 1745), 33, and Charles CHAUNCY, *A Thanksgiving Sermon for the Reduction of Cape Breton,* (Boston, 1745), 20.

[21] Bernard BAILYN. *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution,* (Cambridge, 1967), especially Chapter IV.

be of a radically different type. It rested on the premonition that certain diabolical English interests plotted to destroy the rights of a viable colonial society. In 1745 the root of the paranoia was exactly the opposite; the people of Massachusetts, in the throes of an identity crisis, feared the success of French aggression precisely because they doubted the viability of their own divided and dispirited colony. But the success at Louisbourg, through the pride and solidarity it engendered, purged this fear and in fact, provided the rudimentary provincial awareness necessary for the later paranoia described by Bailyn.

Before 1745 much of Louisbourg's terror derived from the fact that it was a very likely base for French expansion into New England particularly if Nova Scotia were considered a part of the latter's territory.[22] Governor Shirley articulated this fear:

> ... if Cape Breton is not reduced, there appears to be a great danger that the French will soon be masters of Nova Scotia, the consequences of which would be the addition of 4 or 5,000 fighting men to the enemy immediately from the inhabitants of that province who, in conjunction with the Indians of all tribes and assistance from Canada, would over-run and destroy all our eastern settlements as far as Plymouth itself... and whether they stop there may be some question.[23]

This fear of the French at Louisbourg was unfounded for the fortress and its garrison were in a deplorable condition.[24] Yet as frequently occurs during periods of acute disorientation, there was in Massachusetts in 1745, a widening gap between objective reality and perceived reality. The people of Massachusetts had, since the late 1730's, yearly anticipated war[25] with what one cleric termed "our natural enemy the French."[26] For a number of reasons the designation of the French as "natural" foes seemed widely accepted. In a period of economic recession in Massachusetts the commercial revival of France was viewed with concern[27] and the competition in trade and fisheries from Cape Breton was considered particularly dangerous.[28] The French and their Indian allies were seen as minions of popery, plotting to destroy the religion of New England and the civil and political liberties of her citizens.[29] Finally, in 1744, Massachusetts had

[22] An anonymous member of the Louisbourg expedition wrote in his journal that the Gut of Canso "cuts of [sic] Cape- Bre -tn from our Eastern shore". L. E. DEFOREST, ed., *Louisbourg Journals, 1745,* (New York, 1932), 5.

[23] LINCOLN, 177, Shirley to Benning Wentworth, January 31, 1744.

[24] Thomas HUTCHINSON, *The History of Massachusetts,* (Boston, 1795), I, 363.

[25] *Ibid.,* 366.

[26] Jared ELIOT, *Sermon Occasioned by the Taking of the City of Louisbourg,* (London, 1747), 24.

[27] W. J. ECCLES, *The Canadian Frontier, 1534-1760,* (New York, 1969), 150.

[28] The economic threat of Cape Breton was greatly exaggerated. In fact, the French were forced to trade with New England for supplies (*Rawlyk,* XVii) and found it cheaper to purchase fish at Canso rather than to catch their own. *Hutchinson,* 366. Nevertheless, the economic threat of Ile Royale was constantly emphasized in Massachusetts. See, for example, the Boston *Evening Post,* May 13, 1745.

[29] Pepperrell PAPERS, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society,* Sixth Series, Vol. X (Boston, 1899), 106, John Gorey to Sir William Pepperrell, February 24, 1744. (Hereafter cited as *Pepperrell Papers.*)

been given vivid proof of the immediacy of defense problems when a French force captured the Massachusetts' fishing outpost of Canso and launched an attack against Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia's tiny capital. [30]

Specific external groups were often considered part of the threat imposed by Louisbourg. The Indians were perhaps the most obvious example. One of Shirley's correspondents wrote of the Six Nations: "These people are very numerous and if they should be drawn to the French interest they will be worse to us than all Canada." [31] To the east, the threat came from Acadia-Nova Scotia, described by a member of the council of Nova Scotia as "a colony of rattle snakes." [32] It was feared that the bucolic Acadians would rise up to expell the English at the least French incitement. [33] A third group feared by Massachusetts were the inhabitants of New France. As early as 1743, Shirley, anticipating trouble on the Western frontier, raised ten companies of "Snowshoe Men" and erected "a line of blockhouses and garrisons around the frontier parts which lie exposed to the French." [34] With Louisbourg as its focal point, and with Indians, Acadians, and *les Canadiens* as specific complements, a sense of fear pervaded Massachusetts in 1745.

In times of earlier crisis Massachusetts had turned to the instrument of the jeremiad for confidence and unity. [35] By 1745, however, the religious homogeneity of the province had been largely shattered and the utility of jeremiads was no longer universally accepted. Instead, New England launched the largest military expedition of its pre-1776 history against the supposed source of its difficulties, Louisbourg, and found, perhaps for the first time, a secular means by which to preserve the province. The result of this secular salvation was a transformation in colonial self-identity. No longer were New Englanders sinners in the hands of an omnipotent and usually angry God; on the contrary, they were proud and pragmatic New Englanders, confident now of their own ability and solidarity. Louisbourg became a symbol, then, around which the new Massachusetts' character could take form.

The symbolic value of the Louisbourg victory was immediately obvious to the colonials. Governor Shirley was confident that the Indians would no longer harass New England when the news of Cape Breton's demise was proclaimed. Explaining two attacks at Broad Bay and George's Fort, the Governor illustrated this assumption:

> We impute this rupture to a false report spread by the French among the Indians y^{et} we were defeated and cut off at Louisbourg, to prevent the ill effects of which I had, before we had an account of the Indians breaking

[30] William McClenachan, *The Christian Warrior: A Sermon,* (Boston, 1745), 10-11.
[31] *Lincoln,* 210, John Stoddard to Shirley, April 24, 1745.
[32] Pepperrell Papers, 435, William Shirreff to Pepperrell, January 17, 1745.
[33] Lincoln, 146, Shirley to Newcastle, Sept. 22, 1744.
[34] *Ibid.,* 115, Shirley to Newcastle. March 19, 1744.
[35] See Miller, "Declension in a Bible Commonwealth".

> out sent an express to inform the Penokscott and Norridgewalk tribes of our success at Cape Breton... But by express arrived at George's Fort one day too late. However, the Indians knew it by this time, and I am apt to think it will have an effect. [36]

In a similar fashion, it was believed that the Louisbourg conquest would quell incipient revolt among the Acadians. Quoting Major Phillips of Annapolis Royal, Shirley reported:

> Inhabitants of Nova Scotia at the first news of Louisbourg being surrendered were in great consternation and at Minas in particular they appeared in tears in public places, where nine months before they had assisted in signing Te Deum on a false report that Annapolis Royal was surrendered to Monsieur Duvivier. [37]

Even the fear of French Canada was mitigated. Though William Pepperrell, the commander-in-chief of the expedition, wrote to Shirley that "the chief, if not only danger of the frontier is from the Canada men," [38] the old element of terror was gone. Benning Wentworth, Governor of New Hampshire reflected this new attitude when he predicted:

> I am convinced the reduction of Louisbourg would so dispirit the enemy that we might make an entire conquest of the French in North America and then the French war would be the happiest war New England ever engaged in. [39]

Louisbourg, initially a symbol of fear and insecurity, had been transformed through conquest into symbol of hope.

The new spirit was illustrated by the tremendous pride which the New Englanders exhibited in reaction to the conquest. Though July 18 was designated as a public fast-day to praise God for victory and references were made to Divine blessing, the majority of celebration rhetoric was overwhelmingly secular. Something of the spirit of the occasion is evident from the Boston *Evening Post's* description of the festivities:

> The inhabitants... laid aside all thoughts of business and each one strived to out-do his neighbour in expressions of joy... the day was spent in firing of cannon, feasting, and drinking of healths, and in preparing fireworks... in the fields were several bonfires for the less polite besides a large one in the common, where was a tent erected and plenty of good liquor for all that would drink. In a word, never before on any occasion, was observed so universal and unaffected joy... [40]

Despite the magnitude of the celebration, God, for the first time in Massachusetts' history, was uninvited. Only the clerics whole-heartedly ascribed victory to vagaries of Divine will.

[36] *Pepperrell Papers*, 339, Shirley to Pepperrell, July 29, 1745.
[37] LINCOLN, 298, Shirley to Newcastle, December 14, 1745.
[38] *Pepperrell Papers*, 348, Pepperrell to Shirley, August 6, 1745.
[39] LINCOLN, 287, Wentworth to Shirley, April 12, 1745.
[40] Boston *Post Boy*, July 8, 1745. Similar, though less exuberant outbursts occurred in other colonies. See, for example, the Boston *Gazette's* (July 23, 1745) account of New York's celebrations.

Instead of thanking Providence, the people of Massachusetts seemed to accept Governor Shirley's opinion that Louisbourg "was won . . . by the bravery and indefatigable toil of his majesty's New-England subjects." [41] More specifically, they viewed the victory as a Massachusetts achievement [42] and were incensed at Commodore Peter Warren's apparent attempt to claim British naval credit for the conquest. Nathaniel Sparhawk, son-in-law to William Pepperrell, observed:

> We flatter ourselves when you shall have the leisure to represent things in their true light, that neither the glory of our country or its General shall receive any eclipse or be in ye least sullied by the proud and aspiring. [43]

Pepperrell himself was anxious concerning credit for his forces and wrote:

> I find many in the army . . . very desirous that some suitable person should go to England that their services in this expedition may be justly and fully represented. [44]

The House of Representatives in an address to Shirley resolved that the Governor's command should not be usurped by Warren nor should the Commodore be allowed to mislead British authorities. [45] The address was superfluous, for Shirley already felt Warren's actions would be "very prejudiced to his majesty's service in all the colonies of New England by putting an end to expeditions from hence for his majesty's service." [46]

The emphasis on New England's achievement resulted in a glorification of the Louisbourg troops. Neglected were the facts that many soldiers had never used a firearm before enlisting, that some recruits were octagenarians, that sickness and disease took many lives, and that shortly after the conquest a spirit of mutiny was apparent in the ranks. [47] Instead, the image of the typical soldier was the prototype of the rough and ready American frontiersman. The courage of the troops was seemingly without equal:

> The French say they are like Devils, for the hotter they fire, the nearer advances they made to their fire; and let what will be said to their prejudice, four times their number of regular troops would not have undergone the Herculean labours of drawing 42 pounders over hills and dales, rocks and swamp 3 or 4 miles. [48]

Though untrained, the colonial militia were very efficient in the use of their weapons:

> . . . being generally good marks-men, [they] picked off the enemy with their small arms from their walls and in the city, in such a manner, that at last they [French] could not show their heads without running a very great risque of their lives. [49]

41 Boston *Gazette,* July 23, 1745.
42 *Ibid.,* and July 16, 1745.
43 *Pepperrell Papers,* 336, Nathaniel Sparhawk to Pepperrell, July 20, 1745.
44 LINCOLN, 232, Pepperrell to Shirley, July 4, 1745.
45 Boston *Gazette,* July 30, 1745.
46 LINCOLN, 236, Shirley to Pepperrell, July 7, 1745.
47 DEFOREST, 5, 21, 65.
48 Boston *Weekly News Letter,* July 25, 1745.
49 Boston *Gazette,* July 16, 1745.

Yet the troops, for all their martial zeal, were not given to "intemperences or universally debaunched in their manners." On the contrary:

> ... for the generality they were men who had upon their minds an awe of God and feared an oath ... willing to venture their lives, not so much to serve themselves as to promote the public good. [50]

The combination of valour and higher purpose which characterized the colonial soldiers led one observer to cry, "I challenge any army in Europe to produce three thousand stouter, braver men, filled with more resolution." [51] Here the confidence of New England is obvious. The entire spirit of pride — almost arrogance — was succinctly captured by a soldier-poet:

> When Christian Lewis comes to hear what's done,
> With his strong fortress on the Isle Breton,
> He'll swear the valour of the British breed,
> In Western climes their grandsires far exceed. [52]

Though New England previously claimed moral superiority over Old England, surely this spirit of secular superiority was something radically new, something produced by the symbolic significance of the Louisbourg conquest.

If pride was a facet in the image of the Louisbourg conquest, so too was a dynamic feeling of community solidarity. Recalling the expedition, Thomas Hutchinson, a future governor of Massachusetts, wrote that it proclaimed "a generous, noble public spirit." [53] According to Governor Shirley, support for the expedition came from "the fishermen in particular and the people of the province in general." He also claimed, "Petitions have been preferred by a considerable number of the inhabitants of this province representing ... the great importance of the reduction" of Louisbourg. [54] The Massachusetts General Court supported the Governor's attitude when it noted "a general disposition in all ranks of people to exert themselves in their several spheres" on behalf of the expedition. [55] In the festivities which followed the conquest, public unity was equally apparent. According to the Boston *Evening Post,* "the churl and niggard became generous and even the poor forgot their poverty," while the *Gazette* reported that "the people of all ranks arose from their beds to joy and thanksgiving, and each one severally contributed their part ... with a surprising decency and good order." [56] Such community spirit was a far cry from the divisive days of

[50] CHAUNCY, *A Thanksgiving Sermon ...*, 14.
[51] Extract from a reader's letter, Boston *Evening Post,* July 15, 1745.
[52] *Ibid.,* July 29, 1745. The British were aware of the colonial pride in their troops and feared its consequences. The Duke of Bedford, first lord of the admiralty, advised against the extensive use of colonial troops in the future due to "the independence it may create in those provinces towards their mother country, when they see within themselves so great an army possessed in their own right by conquest, of so great an extent of country ..." Cited in G. A. WOOD, *William Shirley, A History,* Vol. I (New York, 1920) 318.
[53] *Hutchinson,* 377.
[54] LINCOLN, 161, Shirley to Newcastle, Jan. 14, 1744, and 171, Shirley to Jonathan Law, Jan. 29, 1744.
[55] Boston *Evening Post,* July 15, 1745.
[56] *Ibid.,* July 8, 1745 and Boston *Gazette,* July 9, 1745.

George Whitefield's first visit [57] or the fury of the currency controversy. It was also a new type of unity quite distinct from the civil covenant which had provided social cohesion in previous years. The new spirit was a product of the success at Louisbourg: it was a cautious but viable provincial awareness. [58]

This new colonial identity had less illusive characteristics than pride and sense of community. The Louisbourg conquest was also seen as a basis for the commercial and territorial expansion of Massachusetts. Nova Scotia was already considered a part of New England; together with Cape Breton it was to become a copy of Massachusetts society. The Reverend Benjamin Colman, Pepperrell's brother-in-law, wrote to the Colonel that he had recommended to English authorities:

> that Annapolis might no longer remain an unprofitable and expensive garrison to ye crown, but be put under a civil government, and ye same respecting Louisbourg that families and towns and churches (by ye wil of God) may multiply ... [59]

Writing to the Lords of Trade, Governor Shirley took much the same position. He suggested the settlement of Cape Breton by New England fishermen and soldiers, and argued, because of Louisbourg's proximity to Massachusetts and its beneficial effect on the province's trade, that the new area be placed under his jurisdiction. [60] There are indications that the colonists viewed the annexation of Cape Breton as a stepping-stone to the establishment of a New England hegemony over the northern half of the continent. Pepperrell referred to Louisbourg as "the key to Canada" while Shirley turned his attention — even before the conquest — to plans for attacking the French in Canada. [61] Certainly Shirley's plans were defensive, but he was also very conscious of the economic gains — specifically regarding the fur trade and fisheries — likely to accrue to Massachusetts through the reduction of Canada. [62]

Shirley was not alone in considering the fall of Louisbourg as a harbinger of New England economic gain. According to the Boston *Gazette,* the conquest "must be of as much consequence to the trade and fisheries of these northern colonies, as Gibralter is to the trade of the Mediterranean". [63]

[57] When George Whitefield returned to Massachusetts in the late summer of 1745, the Boston *Evening Post* (Aug. 8, 1745) expressed fear that the religious controversy which was "almost ended" would be rekindled to the detriment of the emerging "harmony and peace".

[58] In his *Cities in the Wilderness,* Carl Bridenbaugh acknowledges the growth of civic consciousness as a result of problems which "required collective rather than individual efforts and powers for their control" (42). This would support the conclusion that a secular provincial awareness was possible by the mid-1740's.

[59] *Pepperrell Papers,* 395, Benjamin Colman to Pepperrell, Nov. 9, 1745.

[60] LINCOLN, 244-245, Shirley to the Lords of Trade, July 10, 1745.

[61] *Pepperrell Papers,* 452, Pepperrell to Paul Mascarene, March 8, 1745, and *Lincoln,* 203, Shirley to Wentworth, April 8, 1745.

[62] LINCOLN, 163, Shirley to Newcastle, Jan. 14, 1745.

[63] Boston *Gazette,* July 9, 1745.

The benefits expected from the victory were often of a negative type, that is, the French would be unable to harass English shipping and fisheries, would no longer possess an entrepôt for their own trade (especially that of the West Indies), and would lose their nursery for seamen. [64] The obvious assumption was that from each of these French disabilities it was Massachusetts which stood to gain. Other persons, however, were more positive in their approach to the economic advantages of conquest. Nathaniel Sparhawk wrote to his father-in-law, Pepperrell:

> I should be much obliged to you for any advices in point of trade between this [Boston] and Louisbourg... and if any fishing rooms may be laid out at Cape Breton and Canso without much cost, say for a small matter, be so good as to secure one at each place for it. [65]

Such opportunism was the essence of Yankee commercialism. It was Louisbourg which acted as a focus for this spirit and provided hope for the revival of prosperity in Massachusetts.

Initially Louisbourg was a symbol of fear. Superficially it represented the threat of French aggression but the overwhelming joy at its reduction indicated its wider significance. Into Cape Breton had been projected all the tensions present in Massachusetts — the results of both long-term social change and the immediate conflicts of the 1740's. The taking of the fortress exerted a cathartic effect on the province, replacing old fears and divisions with a new confidence and spirit of unity. Religious homogeneity, shattered by the Great Awakening, was displaced as the basis of Massachusetts' sense of identity. In its stead, there appeared an incipient "provincial awareness" characterized by secular pride and confidence in the vitality of Massachusetts. [66]

III

For one important group, however, the victory at Cape Breton was primarily a religious symbol. The New England clergy, since 1740 in a position of greatly diminished prestige and authority, found support for their respective schools of theology in the reduction of Louisbourg. The ministers emphasized most of the usual secular themes — the courage of the troops, the unity of all ranks of society, and the beneficial economic consequences — but for them the conquest held a particularly vital significance. It provided concrete evidence for their New Light, Traditional, or Liberal theological views. [67] Louisbourg became a symbol in support of, or in opposition to,

[64] Boston *Evening Post*, May 13, 1745.

[65] *Pepperrell Papers*, 319, Sparhawk to Pepperrell, July 5, 1745.

[66] The Louisbourg victory had symbolic significance similar to American triumph in the Spanish American War. According to David Noble in *The Progressive Mind, 1890-1917*, (Chicago, 1970), 15-19, the defeat of Spain was taken as proof that America had not abandoned her Protestant individualism and liberty for the medieval cultural complexity of Europe, that is, that urban-industrial growth was actually progress rather than cultural complexity.

[67] For example, the Boston *Evening Post* (August 2, 1742), lamenting the revivalist charges against the "unconverted clergy", complained that many people

theories of Divine intervention, Biblical authority, the war against antiChrist, God's purpose, the efficacy of prayer, and ultimately, universal theories of history. In order to understand the temper of New England in the 1740's, these theological symbols shall be examined.

A point of departure for the clerical debate was the question as to whether the Louisbourg victory could be considered proof that God directly intervened in the affairs of man. The New Lights adopted a strict Calvinist position, contending that God "holds all events in his hand, acting above second causes or contrary to the ordinary course of them, at his pleasure". [68] According to the Reverend Thomas Prince, while God operated in the corporal world through natural laws such as gravity, "it is most evident that he confines not himself to these". [69] This conviction reflected the revivalists' belief in an arbitrary and relevant Providence. As well, it illustrated the transformation of federal theology, for Divine absolutism excluded all covenants and consequently, both the doctrine of preparation and the concept of national or civil covenant.

The Liberal position was opposed to such beliefs. According to the Reverend Charles Chauncy, while God accounted for New England's success, an important qualification was necessary:

> Not that God, in getting the victory, immediately exerts his right hand and holy arm. He does it ordinarily by the intervention of second causes, and of such as are naturally fitted in a human way, to accomplish his purpose. [70]

Chauncy expressed the Liberal belief that God had set the world in motion according to certain natural laws and refused to actively intervene in man's affairs. [71] According to such a belief, the civil covenant was again superfluous as was the instrument of the jeremiad. Rather, morality consisted in conformation to the dictates of Divine will as revealed in natural law. Further, the role of man as an immediate cause in controlling his own affairs was greatly enhanced. Accordingly, the Liberal clergy tended to stress the valour of the New Englanders in the expedition against Cape Breton. [72]

In contrast to both the Liberal and New Light clergy, stood the Traditionals. These ministers dismissed what they viewed as the revivalists'

listened so these "unjust and hard speeches belch'd out against their own proper pastors not only with patience but with pleasure". Cited in J. C. MILLER, 38. The clergy which are mentioned in the following pages fall into three general groups: Charles Chauncy and Jared Eliot were "Liberals", Prince and Sewell "New Lights" and Niles, Walter, Prentice and McLenachan "Traditionalists".

[68] Joseph SEWELL, *A Sermon Preached at the Thursday-Lecture in Boston,* (Boston, 1745), 19.

[69] Thomas PRINCE, *Sermon on the Taking of Cape Breton,* (Boston, 1745), 9.

[70] CHAUNCY, *A Thanksgiving Sermon ...*, 7.

[71] Alan HEIMERT, *Religion and the American Mind, From the Great Awakening to the Revolution,* (Cambridge, 1966), 134. (Hereafter cited as *Heimert*).

[72] For example, Eliot (9-20) compiles a much more secular account of the expedition than does *Prentice* (32-38).

excessive and "unfederal" reliance on miracles. The Reverend William McClenachan condemned the

> Infatuated enthusiasts who exercise an unscriptural dependence on Providence, looking for such miracles as were in the days of Joshua [and] neglecting the use of means...[73]

The error in the New Light position was obvious to Traditionalists: it negated the concept of covenants. According to Thomas Prentice, beneficial events must "be in answer to our humilitation and prayers, which imply in them a promise and vow of praise and obedience in case of an answer."[74] Lest any doubted the efficacy of this jeremiad process, the Reverend Nathaniel Walter cited the Louisbourg conquest as proof:

> Not many months are past since we humbled ourselves before the Lord, lay low at his footstool for our crimes, and with utmost ernestness of soul, begged his favour and protection. Kind Heaven lent a favourable ear to the requests of his people...[75]

The various theological pursuasions in Massachusetts, then, fixed upon Louisbourg as a symbol to verify their respective views concerning the issue of direct Divine intervention in human affairs. In so doing, they revealed many of their assumption later be incorporated in differing theories of history.

The clergy were less divided over the question as to whether the expedition against Cape Breton symbolized the confrontation of Protestanism and the forces of antiChrist. Yet the emphasis implicit in their sermon again reflected basic theological differences. Most of the ministers accepted the view that the expedition was designed to relieve the people of Cape Breton of the ignorance arbitrarily imposed by the Papacy. "May his [God's] pure word be published and observed," preached the Reverend Joseph Sewell, "where the Man of Sin has prevailed to take away the Key of Knowledge."[76] Similarly, there appeared to be agreement that the expedition would restore Christ to the position of authority usurped by the Roman Catholic hierarchy. As the Reverend Charles Chauncy phrased it, "May the Man of Sin, that Son of Perdition, be no longer acknowledged Christ's viceregent."[77] The New Light attitude towards the Roman foe was distinguished primarily by opposition to the doctrine of works. Wrote the Reverend Joseph Sewell:

> May the righteousness of Christ, and that only, be published as the meritous cause of our justification before God, and the pernicious doctrine of the merit of our works disappear...[78]

[73] *McClenachan,* 13.

[74] *Prentice,* 22.

[75] Nathanael WALTER, *Sermon on the Character of a True Patriot,* (Boston, 1745), 18.

[76] SEWELL, 32.

[77] CHAUNCY, *A Thanksgiving Day Sermon...,* 22.

[78] SEWELL, 33.

This position, however, was not unique, for it was shared by the Traditional Calvinists. After describing the French attachment to "masses, paternosters . . . Ave Marias . . . saints statues . . . and beads," the Reverend Samuel Niles contemptuously wrote, "These meritorious acts as they pretend, challenge rewards from God's Almighty hand."[79] Together both New Lights and Traditional clergy used the defeat of the Romish doctrine of works to symbolize the battle against the growing Arminianism of the Liberal clergy in Massachusetts. It mattered little to the Traditionalists that "works" grew out of their own doctrine of preparation; what was important was the ultimate incompatibility of Arminianism and federal theology. Once the validity of the traditional covenant of grace was questioned, it was a simple step to revoke the national covenant. The New Lights, in contrast, were entirely satisfied with the demise of covenant theory, but Arminianism struck at the roots of their own brand of Calvinism. Individual regeneration, they held, was instantaneous, emotional, and completely unpremeditated. As such, it was totally contrasted to the Arminian conviction which held that salvation was a slow intellectual process, occasioned by the efforts of the individual to regulate his life according to God's will revealed in the laws of nature.[80] The Louisbourg crusade against Popery, then, was used by the various clerical factions in New England to symbolize the dispute between the Liberal Arminian doctrine of "works," the Traditionalist concept of "preparation", and the Revivalist belief in "New Birth".

If the clergy were divided on the issue of regeneration, they were less so in their desire to depict Louisbourg as a symbol of unity. This consensus reflected the abhorence of all Massachusetts clerics towards the divisive character of the Great Awakening and its degenerating effect on their group prestige and authority.[81] Consequently, the three schools of theology stressed the dual themes of order and unity. The Reverend Jared Eliot best expressed this concept of solidarity:

> If the Upper orders of men had not concurred, the expedition must have failed. If the lower ranks of men had not strongly engaged, the grand design must have come to nothing . . . All orders and degrees of men were so united that there was no schism in the body . . .[82]

The Traditionalists completely endorsed this view of social cohesion, but the New Lights remained silent. Their creed was of a profoundly individualistic character, based on the intimate and emotional relationship between man and God. Further, because the revivalists viewed the Great Awakening as Providentially directed, opposition to the phenomenon was equated with sin.[83] Consequently, the New Lights, while experiencing a communal

[79] Samuel NILES, *Essay on God's Wonder-working Providence for New England,* (London, 1747), 16.

[80] For a discussion of these general ideas, see Perry MILLER, "Preparation for Salvation", in *Nature's Nation.*

[81] See above, note 66. Also HEIMERT, 139, 168-169.

[82] ELIOT, 10. See also *Prentice* 8.

[83] *Heimert,* 88 and 200, Calvinists viewed "Arminians as enemies to the Kingdom."

brotherhood among themselves, [84] exhibited little desire to be associated with "unconverted" Traditionalists or Arminian Liberals.

Despite this difference regarding social solidarity, all three theological persuasions evidenced a desire for increased order. The Traditional Clergy were the most vehement supporters of stability, lamenting on the one hand the "tottering condition" of liberty within the province and the pervasive fear of war, [85] while on the other, urging obedience and respect to rulers and officers. [86] According to traditionalist the Reverend Thomas Prentice, authority was designed by God for the protection of the individual life and fortune. [87] The Liberal clergy had little to say on the topic of order other than to urge that praise be given to civil and military authorities for their selfless and competent leadership. New Light Sewell, however, had very definite opinions concerning such issues, opinions less liberal than the Reverend Mr. Prentice. He first expressed a belief in the Divine right of rulers:

> By him [God] kings reign and princes decree justice. He makes rulers benefactors to their people, or permits tyrants to oppress them in holy displeasure.

Showing little concern for personal liberty, he emphasized the right of poverty:

> Earthly princes have a right to govern, but this doth not give them the property and possession of the estates of their subjects. [88]

Not all ministers, however, were as explicit in their political beliefs as was Sewell. Generally, the clergy attempted to stress the unity resulting from the Louisbourg expedition and evidenced a hope that the disorders which had characterized the province prior to 1745 would subside.

Related to the search for order was the clergy's perception of the results of the fall of Cape Breton. The ministers, regardless of their theological biases, fixed upon the success at Louisbourg as a symbol of a renewed religious faith in New England and as a Divine call to Prayer. According to New Light The Reverend Thomas Prince, because admiration for God

[84] *Ibid.*, 18. Heimert suggests this solidarity among New Lights was a Rousseauean communitarianism, in direct contrast to the individualism of liberal theology, and further, that the implicit democratic spirit was the energizing force for the American Revolution. Two criticisms may be made. First, The New Light concept of regeneration was intensely individualistic as compared to the egalitarian aspect of Stoddardism (see Perry MILLER, *Errand into the Wilderness*, (New York: 1964), 160). Secondly, by their very exclusiveness, the Revivalists pitted themselves against the combined forces of Traditional Calvinists and Liberals and were, therefore, a divisive rather than a unifying force in America.

[85] WALTER, II, and MCCLENACHAN, I.

[86] MCCLENACHAN, 14, and PRENTICE, 27.

[87] PRENTICE, 9-11.

[88] SEWELL, 14-15. If Sewell was in any fashion typical of New Light clerics, it would appear that Allan Heimert's conclusions are challenged. He suggests the Liberal clergy were practically "outright Tories" because they used Lockean rhetorics as "almost a justification for the *status quo*" in their defence of property. In contrast, the New Lights rejected this individualistic aspect of Locke and emphasized natural law and social contract. Sewell hardly falls into the latter category. See HEIMERT, 15-18.

was the most noble of human thoughts, God excited these emotions by extraordinary examples of his Providence. Prince was convinced that he could discern a general disposition to prayer in Massachusetts upon the conclusion of the expedition. [89] While Liberals might doubt the validity of direct intervention, they did not doubt that the Louisbourg conquest was a summons to renewed faith. Preached the Reverend Charles Chauncy:

> This wonderful appearance of God for us, should excite our love, warm our devotion, confirm our faith, encourage our hope and inspire us with the firmest resolution of all holy obedience to the commandments of God. [90]

Like Prince, Chauncy felt he saw a spirit of prayer in Massachusetts and wrote, "it was this that brought us once and again publicly into the house of the Lord." [91] The emphasis of Traditionalists differed slightly from both New Lights and Liberals, largely because the jeremiad style still coloured their interpretation. These clerics insisted that the Cape Breton victory not only produced a spirit of prayer, but was, in fact, the result of prayer. As the Reverend Thomas Prentice explained, the conquest came "in answer to our humiliation and prayers," while the Reverend William McLenachan assured the departing troops, "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." [92] The belief in the efficacy of prayer was a distinguishing feature of the jeremiad form; likewise, the ominous warnings which accompanied divine beneficience were a mark of federal theology. As a result, the Traditionalists cautioned the people of Massachusetts against sinful backsliding. The Reverend Thomas Prentice advised, "let us not be like ungrateful Israel, who when they had sung God's praises, soon forgot his works". The Reverend Nathanael Walter preached on a similar theme:

> What signifies it to rend Heaven with out cries for mercy and help, if we will hold fast to our iniquities? . . . In a word, what signifies good politicks if we are bad Christians? [93]

The Massachusetts clergy, each faction according to its theological assumptions and style, fixed upon Louisbourg as symbol for the revival of faith in their province. Much as they have projected their desire for order and unity into their image of the expedition, so their belief in renewed faith reflected their own aspirations less than reality. New Lights, Traditionalists and Liberals united to proclaim the return of Massachusetts to the House of God.

Louisbourg symbolized clerical attitudes towards direct intervention, the war against antiChrist, social unity and order, and the renewal of faith in Massachusetts. As well, it was used as a focus to examine underlying beliefs concerning the validity of jeremiads and covenants, natural law and Biblical authority, the effectiveness of prayer and the nature of regeneration.

89 PRINCE, 14 and 25.
90 CHAUNCY, 21.
91 *Ibid.*, 8.
92 PRENTICE, 22 and MCCLENACHAN, 15.
93 PRENTICE, 36 and WALTER, 9-10.

These themes were, however, subsumed in the larger debate over varying theories of history. It was assumed to a greater or lesser degree by New Lights and Traditionalists as well as Liberals, that God's will and, consequently his Divine Plan, could be discovered by carefully studying events of the past and present.[94] For the clergy of Massachusetts, the reduction of Louisbourg became a symbolic reinforcement for their particular interpretations of history.

The use of the Cape Breton conquest by the Traditionalists reflected their traditional Puritan attitude towards history. The original settlers had conceived of the historical process in terms of their mission to Christianize the New World and regenerate the Old.[95] Gradually the emphasis shifted and the scope narrowed to New England where the theme of mission was displaced by one of internal declention.[96] The larger Christian interpretation of history assumed a gradual advance from Christ's Resurrection to the Millenium. Many of these Calvinists believed, however, that history had been deflected by Satan and the Papacy; the Puritan mission was to subdue these evil forces.[97] But the first issue had, by 1700, become internal purity. Until a sign was given that God's controversy with New England had finally ended, the Puritan mission — and by implication, history — could not proceed. With this type of outlook, it was natural that Traditionalists should consider the reduction of Louisbourg as an answer to the jeremiad, as proof that God had not abandoned his chosen people in their mission to destroy the anti-Christ.[98] The Reverend Nathanael Walter reflected this conviction. He referred to Massachusetts as "our New England Israel," argued that the conquest was a result of humiliation, confession and prayer, and warned against potential backsliding.[99] Similarily, the Reverend Thomas Prentice considered the victory a sign of God's concern for New England but lamented "We find by sad experience, time is apt very much to wear off a sense of the divine mercies from our minds."[100] Louisbourg, in effect, was a symbol designed to arrest the declension and to return New England to its special mission. If Massachusetts learned the lesson of Cape Breton, Prentice maintained, the Millenium would follow:

> in a short time our warfare shall be accomplished, and we shall quit the field of battle, with honour, and go triumphing in our spirits ... and shall enter the heavenly Jerusalem ... saying, thanks to God who giveth us the victory ...[101]

94 Perry MILLER, *Jonathan Edwards,* (New York, 1959), 314; Harvey WISH, *The American Historian,* (New York, 1960), 4; Stow PERSONS, "The Cyclical Theory of History in Eighteenth Century America", in Cushing STROUT, *Intellectual History in America,* Vol. I, (New York, 1968), 52.

95 WISH, 3.

96 HEIMERT, 62, and MILLER, "Declension in A Bible Commonwealth", passim.

97 WISH, 3.

98 See above, notes 74 and 75.

99 WALTER, 17, 18 and 20.

100 PRENTICE, 23.

101 *Ibid.*, 39.

For the Traditionals, the Louisbourg victory symbolized the return of New England to its proper historical mission.

The Liberal interpretation of history was radically different from the Traditional Calvinist. They argued that God had established the world and set it in motion according to the laws of nature.[102] Consequently, direct Divine intervention was rejected and the role of man in determining his own actions was closely circumscribed. The resulting philosophy of history has been described as "cosmic pessimism"[103] and more concisely, as "the theory of organic cycles."[104] In essence, the Liberals felt that nations rose and fell in cyclical fashion according to the degree in which their behaviour corresponded to the moral implications of natural law. History, then, became a repetitive process and symbolized a constant struggle of reason and goodness against ignorance and evil.[105] While unwilling to admit God's direct intervention the Liberal clergy recognized the New England expedition against the French as part of the continuing struggle against anti-Christian decadence. They were hesitant, however, to assume the Millenium had begun or that Louisbourg was in any way connected to its arrival. Wrote the Reverend Charles Chauncy:

> And may the happy period come on, when nations shall no more lift up sword against nation, nor the alarm of war be heard on earth. This happy time can't be expected until the Lord Jesus Christ has taken to himself his great power and reign; till he is seated King upon God's holy hill of zion and has generally subdued the lusts and passions of men . . .[106]

The Liberals argued, as Chauncy illustrates, that the Millenium was distant, that it would be preceeded by the Last Judgement, and that God, not man, would occasion its arrival. The real symbolic value of Louisbourg for Liberal clerics was that it demonstrated that Massachusetts was on the rising part of an historical cycle. Reduced to its simplest term, it represented the habitual triumph of the good and the reasonable over the ignorant and degenerate.

The New Light interpretation of history differed from both Traditionalists and Liberals. According to the Reverend Jonathan Edwards all events were related as parts of God's greater design had for its purpose the ultimate redemption of the world.[107] Rather than taking the Traditionalist position that the Millenium would follow the apocalypse, in the indefinate future, the New Lights preached that the new age was imminent. With the decisive overthrow of antiChrist,[108] Christ's kingdom on earth would exist for 1000 years at which time, the Last Judgement would consume the world. The important point is that for the New Lights, the Millenium

102 HEIMERT, 74-75.
103 *Ibid.*, 70.
104 PERSONS, 52.
105 *Ibid.*, 52, 54-55.
106 CHAUNCY, 23.
107 MILLER. *Jonathan Edwards,* 312.
108 Peter GAY, *A Loss of Mastery,* (New York, 1966), 94-95.

preceded the apocalypse.[109] This view led to the belief that at any moment Christ's rule might commence.[110] The Great Revival, the conversion of the Indians,[111] and the defeat of Popery at Louisbourg[112] became symbols by which to prove the actual beginning of the Millenium. Massachusetts, in a sense, became the centre of the New Christendom.[113] For that reason each event occurring in the colony was closely examined, in case it was found to herald the new era.

This sense of expectancy is obvious in the New Light reaction to the reduction of Louisbourg. According to the Reverend Thomas Prince, all history flowed towards a single end and he advised his listeners to "attentively mind the various springs and incidents in the run of the whole, and how they all surprisingly conspire to a prosperous issue."[114] This goal was described in historical terms by the Reverend Joseph Sewell:

> Christ makes a wonderful prophesy of the rise and reign of Antichrist, whose coming is after the working of Satan... and then his destruction by the vials of God's wrath poured upon him; and of the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom on the ruins of the papal empire and kingdom of darkness.[115]

It was obvious that the New Lights considered this prophesy about to be realized: the conquest of Cape Breton was a clear indication that the Millenium had begun. Sewell referred to New Englanders as "us who live in the last Ages of the World"[116] and concluded his sermon on the reduction of Louisbourg by proclaiming:

> May the glorious victory be an earnest of our Lord's taking to himself the entire possession of this New World. May the kings of the earth that have given their power to the Beast, have their eyes opened... May Antichrist be utterly destroyed by the brightness of our Lord's coming... and the Kingdom of this world become the Kingdoms of our Lord...[117]

For the New Lights, then, Louisbourg became an important symbol of the impending Millenium.

It is clear that the reduction of Cape Breton was of considerable symbolic significance to the clergy of Massachusetts. New Lights, Traditionalists and Liberals alike, were threatened by the religious controversies in the province from 1740 to 1745. For this reason their sermons about Louisbourg stressed order and social cohesion, anti-Catholicism, and the renewal of faith in the colony. At the same time, however, Louisbourg provided symbolic reinforcement for particular theological doctrines — the nature of Divine rule, the validity of federal theology, the character of regenera-

109 MILLER, *Jonathan Edwards,* 316-317, 319-320.
110 HEIMRT, 62.
111 PERSONS, 49.
112 See HEIMERT, 67 and 13.
113 MILLER, *Jonathan Edwards,* 317; cf. GAY, 103.
114 PRINCE, 15.
115 SEWELL, 5.
116 *Ibid.,* 27.
117 *Ibid.,* 34.

tion, and finally the course of world history. For the ministers as a group Louisbourg provided an optimistic symbol of New England's religious vitality; as members of differing persuasions they found in it symbolic substantiation for their own particular creeds. In either case, it seemed to sanction the new religious heterogeneity and contributed to the growing pride and confidence in the province of Massachusetts.

* * *

John Adams wrote of the War for Independence: "The Revolution was in the minds of the people, and this was affected from 1760-1775 . . ." [118] In fact, the significant change in colonial thinking may have taken place by the middle of the 1740's. The Louisbourg expedition fell at this critical juncture of Massachusetts' history, a decade which saw a shift in the basis of social cohesion from federal theology to a rudimentary provincial awareness. The conquest itself greatly accelerated this trend with monumental implications for the future of New England. Until the 1740's the religious focus of Massachusetts' group identity was a self-image entirely compatible with another role, that of a British colony in North America. When this religious identity was replaced with a secular pride in provincial citizenship, a self-image was created which proved ultimately incompatible with the role of Massachusetts as a colony. Though open conflict was avoided for almost three decades, in 1745 the revolutionary destiny of Massachusetts appeared to have been largely determined.

[118] Cited in BAILYN, *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, I. See also HEIMERT, I: "The intellectual division revealed in the Awakening . . . persisted long after the Revolution, and in that perspective, the struggle for Independence may well have been only an incidental episode."