

**The Younger Brother Unveiled:
Charles Wesley and Anglicanism in Colonial Boston**
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As Charles Wesley walked up the Long Wharf into Boston on Friday, September 24, 1736 he saw, and later records in his journal¹, a row of houses on one side of the Wharf and “near 200 ships on the other”, acknowledging the economic importance of this colonial New England capital. What he does not mention, and what must have made an impression on the mind of this High Church Anglican Tory, was the massive First Church of the Puritans sitting directly above the seat of colonial government in full view of the wharf and Boston Harbor. By the time Wesley landed in Boston the First Church of the Puritans, the mother church of American Puritanism, was a three story brick edifice and would have matched, and with its spire exceeded, the height of what was then called the Town House. Mark Peterson describes First Church as “strategically placed at the crossroads where people, ideas, and commercial goods moved in and out of New England,” adding that “Boston’s First Church held a powerful and highly visible position as New England’s most important cultural institution.”² Such a blatant connection between the Puritan Church and the Colonial government could not have passed Charles’s notice, nor ever gained his approval.

As it had been for over a century, Puritanism was a strong ecclesiastical force in New England when Charles Wesley arrived in Boston, and Anglicanism, although beginning to gain ground in the region, remained an embattled minority. For the next month of his life Charles Wesley would live as a member of a religious minority; something he had never experienced and would never fully experience again.³ This paper will attempt to paint a picture of the ecclesiastical and political realities that Charles Wesley encountered in the Autumn of 1736 and

¹Special thanks to Randy Maddox for permission to use, and access to, the forthcoming critical edition of Charles Wesley’s journal edited by Maddox, S T Kimbrough, and Kenneth Newport. This new edition will most likely be published by Kingswood Press in late 2007. The Thomas Jackson edition of the journal, which had been the standard edition since its publication in 1849, is, according to Newport “a highly defective source” since Jackson’s “own editorial work leaves much to be desired.” See Newport, *The Sermons of Charles Wesley: A Critical Edition, with Introduction and Notes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 8-10. Jackson omitted sections that he thought too personal or with which he may have disagreed. He used only one of two available manuscripts of the journal. Because the new critical edition of the journal is not yet published the footnotes in this paper will simply supply the journal date for reference purposes where the date has not already been provided within the text itself.

²Mark A Peterson, *The Price of Redemption: The Spiritual Economy of Puritan New England* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 25.

³In the 1740s and 1750s Wesley would make numerous trips to Ireland where the Anglicans were a numerical minority but where they were the established church explicitly connected to the government. The Irish situation was different from the Boston one in that the Anglicans in Ireland were not without power. Thus although Irish Anglicanism was outnumbered by Irish Catholicism it did not, at least in this period, have all the primary characteristics of an embattled religious minority.

within that context to see Charles against the backdrop of that rachis milieu.⁴ During Charles Wesley's month-long visit to Boston he was not only outside of his normal terrain, but he was lifted up and seen as a celebrity by the local Anglican clergymen. Seeing Charles highlighted allows later interpreters the rare opportunity to see Charles apart from the shadow of his older brother. For this month Charles can be seen clearly. The spot light, as it were, was on Charles and this can be seen in the local clergymen's use of him not only in their pulpits but also in the way they toured him around Boston and the towns around it, in some ways showing him off to the Anglican establishment of the time.

The Charles revealed in the journal and the sermons during this period presents a picture of a man without a distinct message. They present what can ironically be termed a "passive Wesley". Charles had departed from the Southern colonies a failure. His time in Georgia was marred by controversy and he doubted many of his earlier assumptions, including at times his own worthiness for the ministry and the assurance of faith he had during his Oxford days as the founder of the Holy Club. The Charles Wesley found in the Boston period is not one that has relinquished his interest and support for what would become the High Church party, but is nevertheless one that is not entirely certain of his purpose. He does not convey in his sermons or journal an agenda of sorts, unlike Whitefield who would in two years time come to Boston with a very distinct evangelical message of conversion. Wesley, at this time, has not yet determined overtly who and what he truly desires to be, although, even in nascent form, his later evangelical emphases begin to emerge.

The Anglican, or Church of England's, status and struggles in an overwhelmingly Puritan, or Congregational, context will be discussed. Charles Wesley would arrive nearly fifty years after the first Anglican parish was founded in Boston and he would find three thriving parishes upon arrival. The contest between Anglicanism and Puritanism was alive and well. Using Charles Wesley's journal as a spring board, I will attempt to delve into the triumphs and controversies that had created the specific Anglican context that Wesley encountered during his brief but active visit. I will also analyze the sermons known to have been preached by Charles in Boston at Christ Church and King's Chapel for signs of his own contributions to the life of New England Anglicanism and for continuity or discontinuity with his later, more widely known, ministry during the Evangelical Revival. The point of any analysis of the sermons within this paper is to examine Charles Wesley's message within its historical context, and likewise to see how the words of Charles may or may not have affected the ecclesiastical environment.

Anglican Beginnings in Boston

Contrary to popular belief one of the earliest, if not the earliest, settlers in what is now Boston was an Anglican priest by the name of William Blackstone (sometimes spelled Blaxton) who settled on what is now Beacon Hill in 1625.⁵ Blackstone settled in Boston five years before the Puritans founded the city in 1630 but fled in the face of Puritan attempts to force him to pay taxes to the Puritan Church. Loading his oxen with supplies, he settled in Rhode Island. Until the founding of King's Chapel in 1686 there was no official Anglican presence, although there were a sizeable number of Anglicans in Boston when the Rev. Robert Ratcliffe arrived to found the Chapel.

Under the Puritan Cromwellian government (1653-1659), also known as the Protectorate, in England, and even before, the colonial government dominated by the Puritans in Massachusetts Bay was safe from royal interference upon government or church affairs, which were often indistinguishable. Within this context the now infamous means by which early Puritans controlled religious dissent were meted out. Edmund Slafter writes that "severe and even cruel measures had been employed to suppress those who differed from the Puritan Church."⁶ This ended, or abated, with the return of the monarchy and the established Church of England under Charles II when Massachusetts was converted to a royal colony, placing the

⁴For another paper on this topic see S T Kimbrough, Jr. "Charles Wesley in Boston" *Methodist History*, 45:2 (January 2007): 111-130.

⁵Dudley Tyng, *Massachusetts Episcopalians, 1607-1957* (Pascoag, R.I.: The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, 1960), 3.

⁶Edmund F. Slafter, *John Checkley: or the Evolution of Religious Tolerance in Massachusetts Bay, In II Volumes* (Boston: The Prince Society, 1867), v.

colony directly under the control of the king. Puritan Church membership was no longer a voting requirement and Trinitarian Protestants were given freedom to worship. The royal charter of Massachusetts greatly effected Puritan control but not the hegemonic influence of this dominant church. According to Dudley, in the next fifty years after King's Chapel was founded over sixty Anglican parishes were established in Connecticut and Massachusetts.⁷ Thus the Anglican insurgency was well on its way by the time that Wesley arrived, although the Massachusetts colony's status in relation to royal governance continued to evolve. After the Anglicans were established in 1686 they remained a permanent fixture within the culture of New England.

Before the Anglicans made a permanent home in Boston the Puritan Church, even with a scattering of dissenting Baptists and Quakers in the city, was little affected by outside ecclesiastical influences or competitors. Arguments over ecclesiastical matters were argued within the Puritan fold. Peterson describes three distinct groups within Puritan Boston that included: the separatists (a strong group at First Church), those who wanted to remain a movement both influencing the world and the Church of England, and those who were evangelicals.⁸ Churches had split from one another, such as Third Church (later known as Old South) from First Church, but these divisions did not entail any denial of essential Puritan theology or polity but rather differing interpretations of what it meant to be truly Puritan.

The Anglican arrival in 1686 complicated civil disputes and with Anglican growth the very means by which discipline had been managed in Boston. With the vast majority of "Bostoneers" within the Puritan fold civil discipline was easily connected to church discipline. Anglicanism was Puritanism's first true competitor for the allegiance of New Englanders not only because of its connection to the English crown, but also because of its ingrained status within English culture and the draw of its liturgy. Indeed Peterson claims that, "The Anglican Church represented not only alternative doctrines and church polity, but also a cultural challenge to traditional Puritan forms of behavior, a challenge that was more dangerous than the austere ways of Quakers and Baptists."⁹

The English liturgy was the target of Increase Matther in 1689 while he was President of Harvard College, when he published *A Brief Discourse Concerning the unlawfulness of the Common Prayer Worship, and the Laying the Hand on, and Kissing the Booke in Swearing*. In this tract he called Prayer Book worship "Popish and heathenish" and wrote that it "cannot bee Practiced without sin".¹⁰ In 1690 Cotton Matther, the son of Increase Mather and an influential Puritan minister in his own right, described King's Chapel's establishment in eschatological and apocalyptic terms, convinced that its founding would have ill affects on Puritan Boston.¹¹

King's Chapel

⁷Dudley, *Massachusetts Episcopalians*, 5.

⁸See Peterson, *The Price of Redemption*, 26-28. It is not entirely certain what Peterson means by the term "evangelical" considering the term has had different meanings in different periods of church history, including the time being discussed previous to the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century.

⁹Ibid., 164.

¹⁰As quoted in Slafter, *John Checkley*, 22.

¹¹Ibid., 24-25.

As already noted, King's Chapel was founded by the Rev. Robert Ratcliffe upon his arrival in Boston in June of 1686. The governor, Anglican Edmund Andros (1636-1714), requested the use of one of the Puritan church buildings for the new congregation but was denied by the town government. Thus the new church met, until its first building was built on its present site in 1689, in the Town House. By October 1686 an assistant was already needed. A letter written to the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Sancroft (1616-1693), described the church and its current needs:

Wee have at present 400 persons who are daily frequenters of our church, and as many more would come too us, but some being tradesmen, others of mechanick professions, are threatened by the Congregational men to be arrested by their creditors, or to be turned out of their work: if they offer to come to our church; under such discouragements wee lye at present, and are forced to address your grace for reliefe.¹²

Relief came to the new congregation temporarily under Governor Andros when he finally demanded the use of one of the Puritan meeting houses and confiscated the keys to the South Meeting House for Good Friday and Easter of 1687. This action angered the already suspicious Puritans who were now actually seeing the effect of the new Anglican incursion.

King's Chapel's first building was a small structure built of wood, which would be replaced by a stone structure in 1754. Wesley would preach in this wooden structure in 1736. The wooden structure was built on land gained by Governor Andros for the use of the new church, again angering the Puritans. With the ascension of William and Mary in 1689 Governor Andros was overthrown and Anglican influence, although secure, was greatly diminished. King's Chapel would remain the only Anglican Church in Boston until Christ Church was built in 1723.

Christ Church and Dr. Timothy Cutler

With both continued population growth in the city of Boston at the beginning of the eighteenth century and continued growth at King's Chapel a new Anglican parish was needed by the 1720s and it was decided that the new church should be built in the northern end of Boston in 1723. The fact that the Anglicans were building a second parish church does not appear to have caused controversy, although it was built with the support of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (the SPG), the newly created entity established in 1701 to promote Anglicanism within English colonies around the world, and seen by many Puritans as an Anglican version of the Jesuits. Charles Wesley was supported by this organization when he came to the American colonies, as were most Anglican missionaries of the time.

The choice of the new rector caused the greatest controversy and controversy that would endure for decades. The Rev. Dr. Timothy Cutler, Sr. (1683-1765) began his ministry as a Puritan minister after graduating from Harvard in 1701. He quickly rose among the ranks of Congregational ministers until he was finally appointed the rector, or president, of Yale College in 1719. Three years later in what later became known as "The Dark Day at Yale"¹³ Cutler and six other Congregational ministers, two of whom were tutors at Yale, declared their allegiance to the Church of England, thus shocking the Puritan world. Winsor wrote that, "It was a grievous thing to the churches when the head of one of their colleges thus turned against them." Adding that, "We can readily imagine the sensation produced in Boston when the tidings reached the

¹²Dudley, *Massachusetts Episcopalians*, 6.

¹³*Ibid.*, 7.

ministers here.”¹⁴ Indeed Henry Wilder Foote, in his *Annals of King’s Chapel*, claims that “it burst like a terrible bomb-shell in the heart of the New England camp.”¹⁵ And Perry Miller observed that due to the defections, “the heavens opened and consternation rained down”.¹⁶ Such language seems overblown, but it conveys to the modern reader a sense of the feelings created by Cutler’s choice to become a clergyman within the Church of England while rector of a Puritan college. Cutler’s appointment to the newest Anglican church in Boston, the heart of New England Puritanism, was seen as yet another affront to the Puritan Church.

Cutler’s description of Anglicanism in Boston upon his arrival is helpful. He describes a distinct growth not only in terms of Anglican membership since the founding of King’s Chapel, but also in terms of economic status. He estimated that by 1723 that there were 3,000 Anglicans in Boston, a city of nearly 20,000 persons.¹⁷ He describes the Anglicans’s economic status, and thus their influence, noting the representation of “the Trade and Business of this Town”¹⁸ among them. By the 1720s the Anglican minority contained many of the business leaders of the city, many of them likely involved with trade via the English government and its navy. The majority of these businessmen, however, attended the more prestigious King’s Chapel. Because of this Christ Church was supported by the SPG long after its founding, although it seems to have had a regular congregation and numerous gifts to the church including a pipe organ, which at the time was a sign of financial success.

Cutler’s arrival at Christ Church was met with hostility by Puritans and Anglicans alike. The Rev. Henry Harris of King’s Chapel, a Whig, voraciously opposed Cutler’s High Church Tory opinions. The divisions that marked eighteenth-century English politics were felt in its American colonies.¹⁹ In many ways, although the Anglicans were small in number, the parties and divisions found in England were well-represented in Boston but on a smaller more personal scale. With the arrival of George Whitefield in 1738 it is possible to add the evangelicals to this ecclesiastical mix. Although Charles Wesley was already known as a “Methodist” by 1729, he did not display many of the characteristics that would later distinguish the Methodists, and even the larger Evangelical community, from the other “parties” within eighteenth-century Anglicanism. In 1736 Charles Wesley was not preaching *ex tempore* sermons.²⁰ Neither was he preaching outdoors as an itinerant. These practices became controversial when used later by George Whitefield during his many visits to Boston and were seen by many as distinctive characteristics of a “Methodist”.²¹

¹⁴Winsor, *The Memorial History of Boston, II*, 213.

¹⁵Henry Wilder Foote, *The Annals of King’s Chapel, in Two Volumes, Vol. I* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1882), 312. All subsequent references are from the first volume.

¹⁶John Frederick Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism in North America* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 128.

¹⁷Dudley, *Massachusetts Episcopalians*, 13.

¹⁸Foote, *Annals of King’s Chapel*, 325.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, See 326-374.

²⁰According to John R. Tyson, Charles Wesley was known to preach *ex tempore* after Oct. 1738 with little dependence on written materials. See Tyson, *Charles Wesley: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989, 2001), 15. Newport notes an earlier turning point on July 11, 1738. See *The Sermons of Charles Wesley*, 35-36.

²¹See *The Testimony of the President, Professors, Tutors and Hebrew Instructor of Harvard College in Cambridge, Against the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield and his Conduct*

Mr. Harris's squabble with Cutler made him look uncharitable and divisive and began a process whereby his conduct and many of his sermons were scrutinized by the Wardens and Vestry of his own congregation. Finally, in order to validate Cutler the Wardens and Vestry of King's Chapel officially declared in December 1, 1724 their support for Cutler.²² Harris's attacks on his fellow Anglican clergymen most likely cost him appointment as King Chapel's rector following Samuel Myles(-1728).²³ Roger Price (1696-1762), who served while Wesley was in Boston, was appointed rector.

Cutler continued to cause controversy with the Puritans in his first few years as rector of Christ Church beginning with his 1724 attempt to become a member of the Board of Overseers of the then Puritan-controlled Harvard College. Indeed until Cutler and six other clergymen had broken from the Puritan ministry at Yale in 1722 the Board of Overseers at Harvard had allowed, and even invited, all clergymen in Boston to attend the meetings of the Board. Both the Rev. Myles and the Rev. Harris had been invited before 1722.²⁴ Cutler's attempts to attend the Board meetings were met with hostility as an affront to Puritan control of the college and thus the training of Puritan ministers. Although Cutler was denied appointment to the Board by his *alma mater* he was determined to use legal means to gain membership to the Board. Not surprisingly his attempts were denied. The legal courts at the time were dominated by the Puritan elites and Harvard soon changed its polity to more explicitly define board membership.

In 1725 Cutler challenged the right of the Standing Order of Congregationalists to meet in a church synod within a royal colony. The royal attorneys-at-law agreed with Cutler and the meeting, which had been held since the earliest days of the colony, was no longer held. This was a huge victory for Cutler and for the Anglican cause in the colony, although it did nothing to

(Boston: Printed and Sold at T. Fleet, 1744), 12. The author finds its "impossible that any Man should be able to manage any Argument with that Strength . ." and thought *ex tempore* preaching "a most lazy Mann" and "little Instructive to the Mind". Not all Puritans held to this opinion of Whitefield. See Nathaniel Appleton's *God and not Ministers to have the Glory of all Success given to the preached Gospel. Illustrated in Two Discourses, from 1 Cor. iii. 6. Occasioned by the late powerful awakening Preaching of the Revd Mr. Whitefield. And Published at the Desire of many of the Hearers* (Boston: Printed by G. Rogers and D. Fowle, for S. Eliot in Cornhill, 1741). Appleton was the minister of the First Church of Cambridge.

²²The Vestry declared, "We, the subscribers, Members of his Majesties Chapel in Boston, do certifie all persons Whom it doth or may Concern, that the Reverend Doctor Timothy Cutler hath to the best of our Knowledge, Ever since his declaring for the Church of England to this Instant, behaved himself after a becomeing and Innofensive manner to all orders and Degrees of Men in this Place, more Especially towards the Reverend Mr. Henry Harris . . ." Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*, 335.

²³Woolverton in his *Colonial Anglicanism in North America* writes that under Myle's leadership the Anglican laity caused controversy of its own with attacks against the Puritans. He writes that ". . . the leading laity at King's Chapel made up a circle of political and literary polemicists who wished to defy personally the Puritans." Adding that, "James Franklin (1697-1735), the older brother of Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), presided over this Episcopalian junta." See 122. John Checkley, although a member of King's Chapel and a "member" of this anti-Puritan group of Anglican laity would go beyond this "Episcopalian junta" and its often sarcastic attacks on Puritanism with theological works attacking Puritan validity, and should thus be seen in a different category.

²⁴Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism in North America*, 345.

make Anglican-Puritan relations any more cordial. It was within the context of these events that the then-layman, John Checkley, caused controversy with his publications against the Puritans, but Checkley's story will be seen within the context of Charles Wesley's visit since Charles specifically mentions Checkley's struggles with the Puritans/Congregationalists in his journal.

Charles Wesley's Entrance into Boston

Charles Wesley came to America with the same naive aspiration as his brother, the aspiration to convert the Native American Indians in Georgia. While John was appointed the minister at Savannah, Charles was appointed as the secretary to Gen. James Oglethorpe (1696-1785). Both Wesley brothers became entangled in forces and politics greater than their individual desires to evangelize the native inhabitants and make high-churchmen of the English, and even German, colonists; and both remained only briefly in the American colonies once they realized that their original intentions were not going to become reality. Charles remained in Georgia for about six months, from February 5, 1736 to August 11, 1736, when he attempted to travel to England. Both Frederick Gill and Newport believe that the "pressures of office and the hardships of colonial life" were too much for Charles to overcome during his time in Georgia.²⁵

Wesley's journey from Charleston, South Carolina was problematic from the beginning. When he boarded the *London-Galley* on August 11 he found that the captain, a Captain Indivine, had given his cabin to another. Despite his sickness at the time, which would plague him throughout his visit to Boston, he was not given suitable quarters for rest and privacy. Wesley writes that, "What was still worse, I then had no asylum to fly to from the captain, the most beastly man I ever saw, a lewd, drunken, quarrelsome fool; praying and yet swearing continually." Wesley's perception of the captain never changed. He wrote that, "The first sight I had of him was upon the cabin-floor, stark naked, and dead drunk." This drunken captain would get his ship stuck twice according to Wesley on a sand bar five miles from Charleston and the damage from this incident would cause the ship to set sail for Boston. According to the journal Captain Indivine was finally persuaded to go to Boston to have the ship repaired after he had slept off his drunkenness. Thus Charles Wesley never intended to go to Boston, his visit there in the fall of 1736 was to be a brief stop for repairs that would be extended, primarily because of weather, into a month-long stay.

After passing through numerous storms and accidentally landing near Cape Cod, Wesley landed in Boston on Friday, September 24, having spent over a month onboard the *London-Galley*. He describes a "pilot" who boarded the ship in order to take the passengers to shore. In the journal he writes, "At two I gladly obeyed [the pilot's] hasty summons, and went into his boat with the other passengers, bidding an hearty farewell to our wretched ship, and more wretched captain, who for the last two days had, most happily to us, lain dead drunk on the floor, without sense or motion."

Wesley thought that New England's landscape was very beautiful and even compared it to the cliffs of Dover. He describes the land around colonial Boston and its numerous hills and passageways which he notes "seemed artificially made".²⁶ The *London-Galley's* passengers must have laid anchor some distance from Boston as Wesley describes landscape and

²⁵See Newport, *The Sermons of Charles Wesley*, 16. And also Frederick C. Gill's *Charles Wesley: The First Methodist* (London: Lutterworth, 1964), 52.

²⁶The term "artificially" was a term of praise meaning "artfully".

fortifications, including the “castle”²⁷, which were three or more miles outside of the city, while aboard the boat that would take him to shore. While his boat was near the castle, Wesley had a clear view of Boston which he described as “stretched out a mile and a half upon the shore, in a semicircle”. William Burgis’s 1728 map of Boston shows a city much as Wesley described with the city extending north and south along the eastern shore of what was then a peninsula with one thin strip of land on its southern end linking it to the rest of the colony. Wesley spent his first night in Boston in one of its public houses.

Initial Acquaintances

Wesley wasted no time connecting with the local Anglican clergymen and some of the leading laity. The morning after his arrival he met with Roger Price who by this time was both rector of King’s Chapel and Commissary for the Bishop of London, thus making him the ranking Anglican clergyman in the northern colonies. Price did not believe that Wesley was a clergyman when he first met him because of his ship attire, but somehow Cutler had informed Price of Wesley’s status before Wesley made a second attempt to speak to him. Wesley was subsequently invited to stay with the Commissary for the remainder of his time in Boston, except “some days” where he apparently stayed with a “Mr Williams”, Dr. Nathaniel Williams (1675-1737/38). Wesley does not indicate how Cutler knew of him, nor does he indicate that they had met earlier.

That Sunday, September 26th, having met these two men the previous day, Wesley preached at both of their churches, in the morning at Christ Church and in the evening at King’s Chapel.²⁸ The sermon that Charles preached was a sermon written by his brother, John, entitled “The One Thing Needful” based on Luke 10.42.²⁹ Newport and Outler disagree on the number

²⁷The “castle” was built on Castle Island which was named even before a castle was built on it. Built in 1634 as a seaward defense against “hostile Indians” whose disappearance marked its neglect, the castle was originally built of mud. It was rebuilt in 1654 of wood but in March 1672/73 the new structure of “pine trees and earth” was struck by lightening and subsequently destroyed by fire. The castle which Wesley mentions in his journal was built on the same site in 1701 and subsequently destroyed in 1775 during the Revolutionary War. See Winsor, *The Memorial History of Boston, Volume I*, 536-537, *Volume II*, 101, and *Volume III*, 180.

²⁸Wesley never refers to “Christ Church” or “King’s Chapel” in his journal but simply to “Dr Cutler’s church” and “Mr Price’s”. This may be the cause of some confusion over whether Wesley ever preached at Trinity Church, the third Anglican church in Boston founded in 1733. Thomas Jackson wrote that “[Charles] preached in two or three of the churches; and once, in a private company.” See Thomas Jackson, *The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A. Sometime Student at Christ-Church, Oxford: Comprising A Review of His Poetry; Sketches of the Rise and Progress of Methodism; Notices of Contemporary Events and Characters. In Two Volumes, Vol. I.* (London: Published by John Mason, at the Wesleyan Conference Office, 14, City-Road; and Sold at 66, Paternoster-Row, 1841), 77. Most sources simply list Christ Church and King’s Chapel as the churches where Wesley preached. I have found no explicit link between Charles Wesley and Trinity Church, although Price’s connection to Trinity at the time makes it impossible for later researchers to entirely dismiss the idea. It is still unlikely that Wesley preached at Trinity.

²⁹See Richard P. Heitzenrater, “John Wesley’s Earliest Sermons,” *The Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 37 (1969-70): 112-13, for a discussion of the authorship of the sermon.

of times Charles preached this sermon. What is clear is that he preached this sermon on numerous occasions and claimed it as his own.³⁰ The sermon lacks the poetic nuances of those sermons written by Charles himself, yet it does convey concepts and ideas inline with Charles's theological outlook. Wesley would preach this sermon on numerous occasions in various places. He preached this sermon in England after his so-called "Pentecost" experience in May of 1738 although Newport argues that Wesley's understanding of the "one thing needful" "seems to have undergone some development with the passing of years".³¹ The sermon text itself was never entirely altered by Charles.³²

Charles was known to have borrowed or transcribed many of John's sermons. Aboard the *London-Galley* he transcribed four of John's sermons.³³ Richard Heitzenrater claims that John wrote sermons specifically for Charles's use when Charles was first ordained in 1735 and newly appointed to serve in Georgia.³⁴ The sermons that Charles borrowed from John are the only explicit influence or incursion that John had in the four weeks that Charles was in Boston. Essentially, Charles's visit to Boston was the first and last time that John would not blaze the way for Charles. Every other aspect of Charles's ministry was either explicitly influenced, edited, or co-ordinated with his brother, John.

The "one thing needful" that Wesley describes in this first sermon was the renewal of humanity's fallen nature. Wesley claims that humanity was created in the image of God. And writes that, "His nature was perfect, angelical, divine. He was an incorruptible picture of the God of glory."³⁵ This was essentially lost in the fall. Wesley writes:

. . . sin hath now effaced the image of God. He is no longer nearly allied to the angels. He is sunk lower than the very beasts of the field. His soul is not only earthly and sensual, but devilish. Thus is the mighty fallen! The glory is departed from him! His brightness is swallowed up in utter darkness!³⁶

Following an Augustinian trajectory Wesley claims that ". . . these chains of darkness under which we groan not only hold us in on every side, but they are within us too."³⁷ Thus he

For John Wesley's text see John Wesley, Sermon 79, "The One Thing Needful," in *Sermons II*, ed. Albert C. Outler, vol. 2 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976-) 360-68. Throughout this paper the sermons of Charles Wesley will be cited from Kenneth G.C. Newport, *The Sermons of Charles Wesley: A Critical Edition, with Introduction and Notes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

³⁰For this reason Newport rightly includes the sermon in his critical edition of Charles's sermons just as Outler included it in the critical edition of John's works.

³¹Newport, *The Sermons of Charles Wesley*, 360.

³²Sermons such as "The One Thing Needful" which were preached both before and after the Wesley's brothers's evangelical conversions in May of 1738 should caution any who would tend to describe those experiences as a "conversion" in the traditional sense of the word; implying too great a distinction between their lives before and after the events. Such a sharp distinction is not necessary nor called for by the available material.

³³See the Introduction to "Sermon 20" in Newport, *The Sermons of Charles Wesley*, 346.

³⁴Heitzenrater, *Mirror and Memory: Reflections on Early Methodism* (Nashville: Kingswood Press, 1989), 155.

³⁵Newport, *The Sermons of Charles Wesley*, 363-64.

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷*Ibid.*, 364.

underscores the totality of humanity's corruption caused by the fall. This original sin, or what would be better termed "inbred sin" from a later Wesleyan perspective, is even seen by Charles as a disease or a leprosy. Salvation is a return to "our first estate"; a return to a pre-fall Adamic perfection. This, as with an insistence upon original sin, would be a theme that would continue throughout the Wesley brothers's careers although the specifics of this restoration would continue to evolve until their later years, even evolving into slightly different interpretations between the two brothers.

Love brings salvation. Wesley writes that "By love man is not only made like God, but in some sense one with him."³⁸ He states that "Love is the health of the soul, the full exertion of all its powers, the perfection of all its faculties," adding that "since the environment of these was the one end of our creation, the recovering of them is the one thing now needful."³⁹ The pre-fallen state of humanity is brought back, although never fully in this life, through a life filled with love. Ironic, especially for the later Wesley who preached this sermon, is an apparent lack of any explicit mention of grace. Individual effort still holds a premier place in Wesley's theological outlook. The later dominant themes of prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace, although not entirely missing from the text if one is searching for them, are not explicit within the text as they will be in later sermons and later hymns.

According to this sermon, God acts providentially providing "providential dispensations".⁴⁰ These influences are the work of the Holy Spirit, but this work is indirect; the cause of other actions leading to salvific acts and not necessarily their direct cause. Regardless, Wesley's vision of salvation is not diminished. His call to the Boston Anglicans was

to be made perfectly whole, to burst every bond in sunder; to attain the fullest conquest over this body of death, the most entire renovation of our nature; . . .⁴¹

Anything less would be the result of a "double-mind" which would result in being cast "into outer-darkness".⁴²

Although it would not be expected from a sermon that was written and transcribed before Wesley's time in Boston and preached two days after his arrival, there is no mention in this or any of the other extant manuscripts preached by Wesley during his month-long stay that refer to events taking place in the Anglican churches in Boston at the time. Comments reflecting Wesley's awareness of current events in the life of Boston's Anglican churches are kept to his private journal, which according to Thomas Jackson was never meant for publication.⁴³ Wesley apparently felt that such divisive issues were best left out of sermons.

John Checkley

³⁸Ibid., 366.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., 365.

⁴¹Ibid., 367.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Thomas Jackson, ed. *The Journal of the Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A., Sometime Student of Christ Church, Oxford. To Which are Appended Selections from his Correspondence and Poetry. With An Introduction and Occasional Notes, by Thomas Jackson. In Two Volumes. Vol. I.* (Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981), i.

On the same day that Charles preached his first sermon in Boston, he mentions John Checkley (1680-1754)⁴⁴, who depending on one's ideological perspective was either an outlandish antagonist or an Anglican hero. He writes in his journal, "In the evening I first fell into company with Mr John Checkley, a right honest zealous advocate for the Church of England, who has on that account, been cruelly persecuted by the Presbyterians." Wesley would record meeting with Checkley on three other occasions during his stay. According to the account Wesley had great esteem for his fellow High-Churchman.⁴⁵

Checkley's struggles with the Puritan establishment and his arguments with them over theological issues spanned nearly forty years until his death in 1754 as an Anglican clergyman in Rhode Island. His debates highlight the essential differences that divided the two ecclesiastical bodies in New England.

Highlighting Checkley's ability to stir controversy, John Woolverton writes that "No son of New England was so fervently detested by the Standing Order as was this American Oxonian."⁴⁶ Not only did the Puritans mistrust Checkley, according to Woolverton, because of his denominational allegiance, but because the "shadow cast by [Checkley's] figure seemed to the older generation of Puritans to resemble an apparition of Archbishop Laud."⁴⁷ Foote describes Checkley, who was a member of King's Chapel, as "the representative of the most extreme opinions of the High Church party, both in Church and State."⁴⁸ Some called Checkley a Nonjuror and Jacobite while others thought he was simply a High-Churchman. The evidence supporting the Jacobite accusation is scant at best.⁴⁹

Checkley published tracts to spread his ideas about church polity and theology and owned a book shop within sight of both the Town House and the Puritan First Church. He began publishing controversial tracts in 1715 with the publication of *Choice Dialogues Between a Godly Minister and an Honest Country Man, concerning Election and Predestination*. This particular tract attacked the Calvinist doctrine of predestination from a modified Arminian perspective and was followed in 1719 by tracts written by the Nonjuror the Rev. Charles Leslie (1650-1722). Publishing Nonjuror material in New England had both religious and political implications as Scottish fugitives after the Pretender's, James Francis Edward Stuart (1688-

⁴⁴Charles Wesley often spelled names of persons and places phonetically and in his journal spells Checkley's name "Chicheley".

⁴⁵See Journal entries for October 12th, 17th, and 25th.

⁴⁶Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism in North America*, 116.

⁴⁷Ibid. Laud's insistence upon church uniformity led to the oppression of many Puritans under Charles I.

⁴⁸Foote, *The Annals of King's Chapel*, 285.

⁴⁹Woolverton claims that Checkley "was in fact a Nonjuror" see 120, although he does not provide supporting evidence to the claim. Checkley never claimed to be a Jacobite therefore the charge cannot be verified. His publication of Nonjuror material could only be used indirectly to make the claim. Jonathan Dickinson (1688-1747), who would later serve as the first president of the College of New Jersey called Checkley a Jacobite in his *A Defense of Presbyterian Ordination. In Answer to a Pamphlet, entitled, A Modest Proof, Of The Order and Government settled by Christ, in his Church* (Boston: Printed for Daniel Henchman and sold at his Shop, over against the Brick Meet-, 1724), iii. In the same tract Dickinson included "Jerome, . . . Ambrose, Augustine, Sedulius, Primasisu, Crysostom, Theodoret, Oecumenius, and Theophilact" among the Arian heretics. See 4.

1766), defeat were flocking to New England for refuge.⁵⁰ Woolverton acknowledges that “except for his vehemence, there was no originality in [Checkley’s] thought”, although Checkley’s “vehemence” was made all the more cogent by means of his caustic and biting wit.⁵¹ In his *Short and Easie Method to which he added A Discourse Concerning Episcopacy* in 1723 Checkley claimed that he would think himself “guilty of the blood of *my child*” if he had the child baptized by the Puritans.⁵²

It was not uncommon for High-Church Anglicans to deny the validity of baptisms performed by those without episcopal ordination. According to Thomas Jackson, Charles Wesley denied the validity of non-episcopal baptism at the time.⁵³ The issue of non-episcopal baptism divided Anglicans themselves. Whigs, who included Henry Harris of King’s Chapel and Edmond Gibson (1669-1748), Bishop of London, afforded dissenting baptism validity.

Checkley claimed that the Puritan Church itself was invalid because it had broken from the historic line of bishops and thus had no apostolic succession. In his *Short and Easie Method* Checkley claims that the Congregationalists “take a view of the Heinousness of their Schism, and not think their crime to be nothing because they have been taught with their mother’s milk to have the utmost Abhorrence to the very name of Bishop, tho’ they could not tell why,” adding that their refusal to acknowledge episcopal oversight imitates “the hardness of the Jews.”⁵⁴

By 1723 the Puritans had begun to respond to Checkley’s tracts with tracts of their own and the Rev. Henry Harris had begun to attack Checkley from within the Anglican fold itself. Foote describes Harris, who was Checkley’s minister at the time, as Checkley’s most vehement opponent, noting that the “line of division was as sharp between the two parties in the King’s Chapel as it was between either of them and the churches around them.”⁵⁵

Checkley’s argument in support of episcopal ordination is best summarized in his *A Defense of a Book lately re-printed at Boston, Entitled, A Modest Proof of the Order and Government Settled by Christ and his Apostles in the Church in a Reply To a Book entitled, Sober Remarks on the Modest Proof, &c. In a Letter to a Friend* published in Boston in 1724. He describes the Cromwellian years as “Anarchy”⁵⁶ and declares that the Church of England “Comes as near the Pattern [of New Testament ministry] as is possible for Imitation.”⁵⁷

⁵⁰Foote, *The Annals of King’s Chapel*, 286.

⁵¹Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism in North America*, 120.

⁵²Foote, *The Annals of King’s Chapel*, 230.

⁵³See Jackson’s *The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley*, 83.

⁵⁴Foote, *The Annals of King’s Chapel*, 289.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 286.

⁵⁶*A Defense of a Book lately re-printed at Boston, Entitled, A Modest Proof of the Order and Government Settled by Christ and his Apostles in the Church in a Reply To a Book entitled, Sober Remarks on the Modest Proof, &c. In a Letter to a Friend* (Boston: Printed by T. Fleet, 1724), 6.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 10. See Ted Campbell’s *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity: Religious Vision and Cultural Change* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991) for a description of the various seventeenth and eighteenth century Anglican perspectives on the relationship between the Church of England and Christian Antiquity. Checkley fits within what Campbell described as the “conservative” perspective that saw the Church of England in stark continuity with the earliest forms of Christianity. According to Campbell this perspective was shared by Samuel Wesley, Sr. and John Wesley before his time at Oxford.

Thomas Walter, the grandson of Cotton Mather, was one of the most vocal Puritans in opposition to Checkley's tracts. In 1723 he published *The Scriptures the Only Rule of Faith and Practice* where he argues that the Anglicans are modern "Judaizers" appealing to tradition, "fathers and councils", "the authority of the church", and "reason and philosophy" to the "Neglect of the Holy Scriptures".⁵⁸ Apostolic succession had little if any proof according to Mather and "when the Vein runs so fine and so indiscernible", he argued, "it is hard to constitute that a *Rule*, which *is itself* to be found and traced with so much Difficulty."⁵⁹ According to Walter anyone who believes in apostolic succession has "a great deal of Faith to spare."⁶⁰

The tract war between Checkley and his opponents did not end with words but expanded into legal proceedings in 1724 when Checkley was charged with libel and with Non-Juror tendencies. He was found guilty of libel against the Puritans for denying their baptisms, but was acquitted of Non-Juror tendencies against the monarch. When attempting to enter holy orders Checkley was again rebuffed by the Congregationalist ministers who were assisted by then Governor Shute, who made accusations in a letter to Bishop Gibson calling Checkley uneducated, an enemy of the churches, and a Non-Juror, and successfully blocked Checkley's ordination.⁶¹ Wesley mentions Checkley's denial by Bishop Gibson in his journal account for October 14 when he writes that he "Was taken up with the clergy in drawing up recommendation of him to the Bishop of London for orders," adding that the bishop had "been formerly frightened from ordaining him, by the outcries of the Presbyterians." Wesley thought the "Presbyterians" were wise in trying to keep Checkley out of holy orders because he was "such a champion for the Church". He also admired Checkley for his piety and compared him to his father, Samuel, who had died the previous year.⁶² In a letter written to John, Charles not only describes Checkley as having "true primitive piety", but asks John in the case of his death on the voyage to England to give Checkley "anything that was mine."⁶³ By May of 1738 Checkley was ordained both a deacon and priest in London.⁶⁴

Wesley, Harvard Fellows, and Further Sermons

On October 3 Wesley records in his journal that after "near two month's want of it" he "again enjoyed the benefit of the Sacrament" which he had at Christ Church, assisting Dr. Cutler. He also records preaching both at Christ Church and at King's Chapel and although he claims to have preached a sermon on "There the wicked cease from troubling, [and] there the weary are at rest" found in Job 3.17, the full text of the sermon is not certain. It is likely that the sermon on

⁵⁸Thomas Walter, *The Scriptures the Only Rule of Faith and Practice. As it was delivered in a sermon at the lecture in Boston, Sept. 5, 1723. By Thomas Walter, M.A. pastor of a Church in Roxbury* (Boston: Printed by B. Green for Daniel Henchman, 1723), 7.

⁵⁹Ibid., 9.

⁶⁰Ibid., 10.

⁶¹See Edgar Leguare Pennington, *The Reverend John Checkley. Soldier and Servant Series*. (Hartford, Connecticut: Church Mission Publishing Company, 1935), 9. And also, Edmund F. Slafter, *John Checkley; or the Evolution of Religious Tolerance in Massachusetts Bay. In II Volumes. Vol. I* (Boston: The Prince Society, 1867), 96-97.

⁶²See journal entry for Tuesday, October 12, 1736.

⁶³Frank Baker, *Charles Wesley as Revealed by His Letters* (London: Epworth Press, 1948), 28.

⁶⁴Slafter, *John Checkley*, 109.

Job was by John Wesley and is either 109 “Death and Deliverance”(written in 1735) or 133 “There the Wicked Cease from Troubling” (written in 1725). The latter is not present in the Jackson edition of Wesley’s collected works. Any manuscript that Charles made of either one of these sermons does not exist and therefore it is difficult to determine if either of these sermons was the sermon preached by Charles on Oct. 3rd, 1736. “Death and Deliverance” is more likely, if in fact it was one of these two sermons as Heitzenrater notes, because of its date of composition and likely availability to Charles in the American colonies.⁶⁵ “There the Wicked Cease from Troubling” has similar themes to “He that Goeth Forth and Weepeth” which Charles preached on Oct. 10 and deals with issues of struggle and mortality but either choice cannot be entirely verified by the available material. Thus I will not analyze either sermon in this article, but use those three sermons which were verifiably preached by Charles in Boston.

The next day, Oct. 4, Wesley was taken by Rev. and Mrs. Price, Dr. Cutler, Cutler’s second oldest son, John Cutler (1713-1771), and the younger Cutler’s Harvard colleague Christopher Bridge (1712-1737 or 1742), who Wesley refers to in his journal account as “Mr Brig”, to see the Rev. Ebenezer Miller (d. 1763), spelled by Wesley as “Millar”, who was the Anglican minister at Braintree, Massachusetts. According to *Sibley’s Harvard Graduates*, Christopher Bridge was a Harvard graduate whose father had been the Parson at King’s Chapel from 1699-1701, but who was forced out by jealousy from the Rev. Myle’s wife caused by the marriage “plate” given Bridge’s wife at their marriage. The elder Bridge was moved to Kingston, Rhode Island, and Rye, New York, where Christopher was born. Parson Bridge would die in 1719, when Christopher was seven. At this juncture he would move in with his grandfather, Judge Foxcroft of Cambridge, and upon Judge Foxcroft’s death with his uncle, Judge Francis Foxcroft, whose appreciation for the Church of England had been tarnished by the treatment of his sister at King’s Chapel in 1701. From then on Christopher was active at the First Church of Cambridge before attending Harvard for both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees.⁶⁶

Although the Puritans had given Bridge a large amount of financial aid toward his education, preparing him for the Puritan ministry, he converted back to Anglicanism in 1735. Bridge would later be ordained in England, along with John Cutler, both of whom traveled from Boston to England with Charles Wesley. Sibley notes that “the opportunity to send Christopher [Bridge] and John Cutler to England under the eye of Wesley was too good for the Episcopalians to miss, so as they took their distinguished guest around the country visiting Church of England clergymen, they gathered letters of recommendation for the boys.”⁶⁷ Addington Davenport (1701-1746), who would later be the assistant at King’s Chapel and in 1740 the first rector of Trinity Church in Boston, whom Wesley met that same evening, is known to have given “the boys” a letter of recommendation. Wesley does not specifically mention writing a letter, although his personal care for Bridge and Cutler’s travels would indicate some measure of

⁶⁵See Heitzenrater, *Mirror and Memory*, footnote 31, page 257. If “Death and Deliverance” is in fact the sermon that Charles preached that day we still do not have the manuscript in his own hand verifying any changes he might have made to the text.

⁶⁶See Clifford K. Shipton, *Sibley’s Harvard Graduates Vol. IX. 1731-1735 Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College in the Classes 1731-1735 with Biographical and Other Notes* (Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1937), 279-282.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 281.

support for the men's endeavor.⁶⁸ Nor does Wesley's journal account give the impression that he saw the visits to other Anglican clergymen as anything but visits to local clergy. He does mention in a letter to his brother how tiring he found these excursions. In shorthand that Frank Baker later deciphered Charles wrote to John, "I am wearied with this hospitable people, . . . They do not suffer me to be alone. The clergy, who come from the country on a visit, drag me along with them when they return." According to the letter, Charles felt obliged to ride along and complement the scenery.⁶⁹

In his journal Wesley records preaching twice on Oct. 10 although the sermon manuscript simply lists "at Christ-Church in Boston N E October 10, 1736 Morning". It can be assumed that he preached the same sermon the second time he preached that day, but only assuming he followed the pattern previously set the week before. Newport writes of this sermon on Psalm 126:7 that "there are clear signs and precursors here of Charles's later evangelical experience and proclamation of the standard evangelical themes of the all-sufficiency of the blood of Christ and the assurance of salvation that comes with belief."⁷⁰

As already noted Wesley was in bad health for a large portion his time in Boston and the sermon reflects a mature acceptance of suffering and pain that are a part of a fallen creation. The sermon could actually be called existentialist, it is neither depressing or melancholy but accepts a place for life's struggles within the Christian life. For Wesley, who was sick throughout his life, this sermon may be a testimonial of his own struggles.

The Christian is called to struggle and in fact "must suffer with his master more or less; being, like him, to be [made] perfect through sufferings."⁷¹ Christian virtues rise from affliction like a seed and "in due time grow up in a plentiful harvest of rest and joy and life eternal."⁷² The emphasis on delayed eschatological joy is prevalent in the sermon, and Wesley applies the same emphasis to entire sanctification, a move that would later cause debate with his brother who thought that entire sanctification was possible in this life. Suffering and affliction are seen as different from torment, which following an Augustinian model, Wesley ascribes to pride.⁷³

In poetic language that reflects Wesley's lyrical talents he describes his understanding of salvation. He integrates his understanding of the place of suffering in the Christian life with his understanding of the process, or way, of salvation and a picture of Christ as the suffering servant. In this lengthy but striking passage he describes this interplay:

No sooner does humility enter a soul, which before was all storm and tempest, but it says to that sea 'Peace, be still,' and there is a great calm. There is indeed in every branch of humility a sweetness which cannot be uttered. There is pain, 'tis true, in the entrance into it, but that very pain is full of pleasure. There is mourning joined with it; but even that mourning is blessedness; it is health to the soul, and marrow to the bones. It heals even while it wounds; it delights at the same time and in the same degree wherein it softens the

⁶⁸Bridge would be ordained and subsequently die in his first appointment in Jamaica between 1737 and 1742. His religious biography highlights the often common exchange that took place between the two leading religious denominations in the Boston area.

In a letter from Cutler, Sr. to John Wesley dated Oct. 22, 1737, Cutler requests that Wesley pray for his son, Timothy Jr., who he indicates in the letter had by that time been appointed "Dean of Boking in Essex". See John Wesley, Letter from Dr. Timothy Cutler, *Letters I*, ed. Frank Baker, vol 25 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976-), 523.

⁶⁹Baker, *Charles Wesley as Revealed in His Letters*, 27.

⁷⁰Newport, *The Sermons of Charles Wesley*, 124.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 125.

⁷²*Ibid.*

⁷³*Ibid.*, 127.

heart. Humility not only removes all that pain and anguish with which pride drinks up the blood and spirits; it not only plants peace wherever it comes, and brings rest to the weary soul; but joy too much and such joy as together with it increases more and more until the perfect day.⁷⁴

Unlike his previous sermon, Christ, as humility, plays a more active role in the process of salvation, much as Wesley will preach later in the Revival and Third Rise of Methodism. Charles's understanding of the process and growth of salvation in his early career would match his later mature understanding after having gone through diversions, like his brother, during his more "Protestant" phase after 1738 extending through the 1740s.

Wesley's health did not improve and on Oct. 9 he records being "dragged out" to see a "Dr Graves", who was actually Dr Thomas Greaves (1683-1747). Dr. Greaves prescribed vomiting for what Charles describes as "increasing flux" and Wesley records feeling better. On Saturday, Oct. 16 Wesley again records that his illness was "increasing" despite the assistance of a doctor, with whom he was temporarily staying. According to manuscripts from his sermons, although not mentioned in the journal for Sunday, Oct. 17, Wesley preached twice despite his increasing illness.

The journal account of Sunday, Oct. 17 records that Wesley spent time with John Checkley and his wife discussing William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* published in 1729. Checkley, according to Wesley, owned one of two copies of *A Serious Call* in New England; and he borrowed it, spending the remainder of the evening reading it to a "Mr Williams" and "his daughter" who he records "seemed satisfied and affected." As previously noted the "Mr Williams" in Wesley's journal is very likely Dr. Nathaniel Williams.

Williams was a Puritan minister, a schoolmaster, and a physician in Boston. He graduated from Harvard in 1693 and married Anne. From 1713-1733 he was the headmaster of the Boston Latin School, the academy adjacent to King's Chapel. Of his eight children, two lived to adulthood. These included: Ann (Williams) Noyes, whose husband, Belcher Noyes, was the Governor's nephew, and Mary (Williams) Smibert. The daughter referred to in the text is most likely Mary for by 1736 Anne was already married and living away from the Williams home.⁷⁵

Williams is most likely the reference for a number of reasons including: the intermingling of dissenters and Anglicans within the educational system of Boston and Cambridge,⁷⁶ the fact that Williams was a doctor and Charles was ill during most of his stay including at "Mr William's" house, Williams' training in theology and thus a probable interest in listening to Law being read, and a reference in Thomas Prince's dairy that makes a connection between "Rev. Mr. Checkley" and Dr. Williams in 1737.⁷⁷ Williams was a well-known man in Boston and a respected member of Third Church, which was near both Mr. Checkley's shop and King's Chapel. Peterson writes that Williams played a "quasi-clerical" role . . . for nearly forty years as a lay member of the Third Church", thus highlighting his various leadership roles in the city.⁷⁸ If

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Dumas Malone, ed., *The Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. XX, Werder to Zunser* (New York: Scribner's, 1936), 283-284.

⁷⁶For instance, many Anglicans received degrees from Harvard. Among them were Dr. Cutler, both of Cutler's sons, John Checkley and his son, Samuel Myles, Addington Davenport, among other notable Boston Anglicans.

⁷⁷See Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates, Vol. IV*, 185.

⁷⁸Peterson, *The Price of Redemption*, 89.

Williams is the man in the journal, he would be one of the only Puritans that Charles mentions, apart from a courtesy visit he paid to the governor upon his arrival, and the only one he records spending any substantial amount of time with.

The sermon that Wesley preached that day known as “Halting Between Two Opinions” is based upon I Kings 18.21, “And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word” (KJV). There are two manuscripts of this sermon in Charles’s hand and it is believed that the sermon was originally written by Charles. Newport notes that “according to information on the MS itself, Charles preached [the] shorter form of the sermon at least four times during [1736] (20 June; 12 September; 17 October twice).”⁷⁹ He adds that, “None of these references can be certified from the journal.” Charles notes in the manuscript that he preached this sermon at Savannah, Georgia, “on board the London-Galley, Sept. 12, 1736”, at “Dr Cutler’s Church in Boston N.E. Oct. 17, 1736”, and at “Mr Price’s in Boston N.E. Oct. 17, 1736.”⁸⁰

The sermon does not contain many of the evangelical emphases that will become dominant later, but it does address the state and repercussions of divided loyalties. Wesley claims that “God may perhaps have the chief place in some of our hearts, but I doubt he can’t be said to have them wholly at his disposal, or to reign solely in them.”⁸¹ This divided heart is most often caused by concern for the world and the amassing of wealth.

Wesley’s view of salvation, or more specifically glorification, in this sermon emphasizes the importance of individual effort. He writes that “The promise of heaven is only made to those who take the utmost pain to attain it.”⁸² Considering humanity’s fallen nature the requirements of salvation are no less rigorous for the Christian although repentance takes the place of perfect obedience and “absolute obedience to the utmost of our power ‘is’ required of us now.”⁸³ The sermon is as demanding as later revival sermons but lacks a measure of grace and divine initiative that will undergird later sermons.

Wesley’s Departure from Boston

Wesley attempted to leave Boston numerous times during his stay, but his ship was kept in port by a lack of wind. His health did not improve although he continued to be treated by Dr. Greaves and his own remedies. These treatments included laudanum, an alcoholic extract of opium commonly used for medicinal purposes in the eighteenth century, which depleted Charles of his strength on Oct. 22.

For over a week Wesley’s colleagues, and some of his doctors, tried to convince him to remain in Boston until his health improved, but each time he refused. In a letter written to John on Oct. 21, Charles not only complains about what he considers the incessant requests for him to stay in Boston for his health, but seems almost comforted by the idea of death. He was

⁷⁹Newport, *The Sermons of Charles Wesley*, 108.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 110-111. See footnote 10.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 112.

⁸²*Ibid.*, 115.

⁸³*Ibid.*, 116.

determined to return to England despite his health.⁸⁴ The Bostonians not only wanted Charles to stay for his health, but even offered him a parish if he would stay.⁸⁵

Wesley had official papers from Oglethorpe for the Georgia Trustees in England and insisted that he personally take these documents to them. Jackson, writing in a style common among the earliest biographies of both Wesley brothers, wrote of Charles and his insistence to personally handle the documents that “For nothing was he more remarkable than a noble hardihood and daring in all matters that concerned his conscience and duty.”⁸⁶ It may be just as likely that Wesley, because of his truncated tenure in the Georgia colony and the controversy surrounding it, wanted to personally deliver these papers as a sign of his competence.

Neither the journal nor the available manuscripts state that Wesley preached on Oct. 24th, nor that he attended a church service. On Monday, Oct. 25 Checkley brought Wesley to the *Hannah* to board. Jackson writes that Wesley had “wisely refused to re-embark if the ship were to be still under the command of Indivine”, and that because of this insistence that a Captain Corney was given charge of the ship.⁸⁷ Since Wesley returned on a different ship it is hard to know whether Wesley’s complaints warranted this change or not. Within two days aboard he felt well enough to begin public prayers.

Conclusion

Charles Wesley’s month-long visit to Boston in the fall of 1736 offers the researcher a glimpse not only of the final portion of his sojourn in the American colonies, a period in his life not known for its success except in Boston, but of a period in Wesley’s life often overlooked because of its brevity and its location between his experience in Georgia and later increasing struggles with assurance of salvation that would lead to his 1738 “Pentecost” experience. Wesley’s month in Boston provides a glimpse of an interstitial period in Wesley’s life, a period when the future evangelist can be seen as a passive figure yet to find his ultimately revivalist calling, although it does present a picture of these later developments in nascent form. His visit to Boston represents the only time in his life when he was in a religious minority and where the Anglican Church was not only outnumbered but was often politically outmaneuvered by a dissenting body. The Anglican constituency which Wesley stepped into upon landing in Boston Harbor was, although a small group, a group endowed with economic and oftentimes governmental privilege, and was a group that had within it many of the divisions and parties that marked the life of Anglicanism in England but on a smaller and more intimate level.

Wesley’s High-Church loyalties led him to befriend and associate with Dr. Cutler and John Checkley, but his contact extended beyond this ideological circle to include more moderate churchmen such as Price and Davenport, and even Puritans such as Dr. Williams. Although he would not attract the large crowds that later Methodists would attract in Boston, Wesley preached in the two leading Anglican parishes and was heard by most of the Anglican constituency in Boston. His sermons were not controversial in the New England context, yet contain glimpses of the evangelical message that he would later preach during the Evangelical Revival, as well as glimpses of the early theological development that Wesley would continue to experience for many years to come.

⁸⁴See Baker, *Charles Wesley as Revealed in His Letters*, 28.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 27.

⁸⁶Jackson, *The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley*, 78.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 79.