THE PROTESTANT INTEREST

New England after Puritanism

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Introduction

With news flooding the Boston presses of George Whitefield's awakenings, Thomas Prince preached one of the masterpieces of eighteenth-century evangelicalism, *The Endless Increase of Christ's Government* (May 25, 1740). In this sermon, Prince argued that the kingdom of God was advancing inexorably toward the conversion of millions across the nations, bringing people from all over the world into the fold of Christ before his final return. His vision was internationalist and utterly optimistic about God's ultimate triumph in the end of history. Perhaps Prince hoped that the victory of God was beginning at that moment:

> For as this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations, before the end of this present state shall come. . . . I cannot expect, that not only all the southern, western, and north-western parts of this new world, and Calefornia, will, in their times, be full of pure and pious churches, rejoicing in the great Redeemer; but even all that further western continent, extending from America to Asia, and that the gospel will go round and conquer every nation in Japan and China, Tartary, India, Persia, Africa, and Egypt, until it return to Zion, where it rose. . . . And when this whole globe shall be thus successively enlightened, then comes on the end of the present earthly scene: but it is then suprizingly to change,

> and, it is highly likely, by the conflagration, open into a glorious state of universal and abundant light and grace, and peace and blessedness.[1]

Prince's vision of Protestantism expanding across the globe was one of the most articulate expressions of a distinct departure in identity for many leading New Englanders during the fifty years between the Glorious Revolution and the Great Awakening. During these years, many began to think of themselves as part of what they called the "Protestant interest."

Despite the realization that the religious character of Puritan New England changed dramatically after 1689, historians have done very little to explain what kind of identity began to supersede Puritanism and how the change occurred. This book seeks to fill that gap by explaining how many in New England came to see themselves as belonging to the international Protestant interest. The political and military necessities after 1689, the sense of participating in an ongoing war for the fate of Christianity with Catholic foes, and the ways that print allowed elite New Englanders to imagine themselves part of an international Protestant community all led to an identification with the Protestant interest, a beleaguered but faithful world community of Christians reformed from the corruptions of Catholicism.

On March 29, 1692, Increase Mather and the new provincial governor of Massachusetts, Sir William Phips, set out from Plymouth, England, for the long trip across the ocean to Boston. Because it was a time of international war, many of Mather's friends in England worried that French privateers would intercept the ship. But God's hand was on "the Convoy of the None-Such Frigat," and the one encounter with French ships resulted in a "notable Deliverance" from four French men-of-war returning to French port from Martinique. Six weeks after departing England, Phips, Mather, and their entourage sailed into Boston Harbor. It was a Saturday night, and the

Sabbath had already begun so the celebrations upon their return were rather muted. Nevertheless the Town House was shining with welcoming candlelights, and eight companies of Boston militia escorted the men to their homes. Increase Mather hoped that he had done his best in securing Massachusetts' new provincial charter, and that the old Puritan way would be preserved in large part if not in the whole.[2] But as English metropolitan power centralized and French Catholicism threatened, identities in New England shifted, just as during the same period the meaning of Britain shifted through the expansion of commerce and the print trade, the Williamite settlement following the Glorious Revolution, the wars with France and Spain, and the political union with Scotland in 1707.[3]

Although the initial reception of the settlement acquired by Increase Mather and brought back in 1692 was mixed, there can be no doubt that the Glorious Revolution and the subsequent revision of the charter marked an important turning point not only in Massachusetts politics but also in provincial New English cultural identity.[4] In general, the mood of elite New Englanders toward involvement in metropolitan affairs changed from a seventeenth-century model of deceit, hostility, and avoidance to an early eighteenth-century model of pragmatic and sometimes remarkably enthusiastic taste for imperial cooperation and things British. The strongest impulse toward allegiance to the new monarchs became preserving the Protestant succession against the Catholic and Jacobite (supporters of a return to the Catholic Stuart line in the British monarchy) threats, and a belief that toleration of religious dissent in the new charter provided the foundation upon which a post-Puritan New English dissenting establishment could be protected.

Previously, the Puritans of the seventeenth century had based their godly commonwealth on the maintenance of the special charter originally granted in 1629. Once Charles II returned to the English throne in 1660 and the cause of Puritanism had largely failed,

the reformed Protestants of Massachusetts watched with increasing trepidation as the imperial policy of the crown began to emphasize "dependence, uniformity, centralization, and profit." None of this could bode well for Massachusetts' previously lucrative trading arrangements, nor could it allow its unique religious establishment to continue unfettered. In 1685, events brought all the negative potential of the imperial policies to fruition, as the Catholic James II assumed the throne, and processes began to put Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Plymouth, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey all under the single imperial control of the Dominion of New England. In 1686 the final blow came as James effectively dissolved Massachusetts' old charter and put a new imperial government in its place, the high point of the increasingly centralizing tendencies of Stuart colonial policy in the English Atlantic.[5]

Sir Edmund Andros assumed power of the new imperial government in December 1686 and quickly introduced a number of measures and practices that alienated many if not most leading Massachusetts figures, especially by commandeering Samuel Willard's Third Church meetinghouse for Anglican services. By 1688 many leading pastors and officials believed that Massachusetts needed to send an independent agent to London in order to plead for toleration of the Congregational system. Increase Mather seemed to many a good choice, and so, without the blessing of the suspicious Andros government, Mather and his son Samuel stole out of Boston in April 1688. Mather hoped to gain audience with James and high-ranking British officials and convince them that James's pro-Catholic Declaration of Indulgence, which had suspended the Test Act and penal laws against dissenting religious groups, should in Massachusetts mean a preservation of the rights of the Congregational system.[6]

In April 1689 news arrived in New England's ports of William's invasion, and many residents of Massachusetts began to agitate against the Andros regime, with troops mutinying against the gov-

ernment and assembling in a tumultuous Boston.[7] The cry of the crowd was against popery[8] and arbitrary government, and on April 18, Andros was deposed and he and many of his chief officials were imprisoned by a local committee meeting to manage this dangerous and important moment.

The agents of revolution quickly began constructing the act as driven by providence and as a key moment in redemptive history. Created in large part by Gilbert Burnet, the standard Whig interpretation of 1688 became that the conflict between James II and William of Orange reflected the larger conflict in history between the two mystical churches, one of Rome and Antichrist, and the other the true reformed church of Christ. Burnet, serving as the chaplain for William's invading forces, developed a narrative of William's successful assumption of the English throne as uniquely favored by God. The Boston presses produced propaganda asserting this narrative, too, including key sermons by Burnet himself.[9]

Massachusetts observers quickly embraced the Williamite narrative of the revolution as a providential deliverance from popery, and a great victory for Protestantism, taking a significant place in redemptive history. From the beginning New England rebels justified their revolt against Andros as a revolt against Roman Catholicism.[10] The *Declaration of the Gentlemen, Merchants, and Inhabitants of Boston* of April 18 made clear the connection between the revolution and the war against popery. The *Declaration* began by placing Massachusetts' rebellion in the context of the "Popish Plot," Titus Oates's 1679 "discovery" of a murderous plot by English Catholics against Protestantism: "We have seen more than a decade . . . since the English World had the Discovery of an horrid Popish Plot; wherein the bloody Devotees of Rome had in their Design and Prospect no less than the extinction of the Protestant Religion: which mighty Work they called the utter subduing of a Pestilent Heresy." The committee stated plainly that papists, "such as were intoxicated with

a Bigotry inspired into them by the great Scarlet Whore," plotted against them too. The scheme began as the charter was revoked and the protection against French and Indian massacres taken away. The popish government of Andros systematically deprived the colonists of their rights as Englishmen, and perhaps most suspiciously, New Englanders had become engaged in a war against the Indians (the Second Indian War), but the imperial government seemed more concerned with raising a large standing army under "Popish Commanders" than actually killing Indians. Again, to the rebelling Bostonians this looked like "a branch of the Plot to bring us low." Perhaps the imperial governors were setting up New England, the preserve of true Protestantism, to be "attaqu'd by the French, who have lately . . . treated many of the English with worse then Turkish Cruelties." But God heard their cry for help, and now they learned that "Almighty God hath been pleased to prosper the noble undertaking of the Prince of Orange, to preserve the three Kingdoms from the horrible brinks of Popery and Slavery." It was a key moment in the course of the transcendent war between Christ and popery, and most in Boston believed they could do no other than stand with William and the Protestant monarchy.[11]

The revolt against James II and the Dominion of New England was not without its domestic opponents, however. The most articulate was Connecticut physician-politician Gershom Bulkeley. In Connecticut, Andros's opponents called for new elections in May to erase the Stuart taint from the government. Bulkeley considered this mobocracy, "Lawlesse Usurpation & Tyrannie." He called for continuing respect for the Dominion's laws and procedures, unless and until the king had directed otherwise. Bulkeley justified his call for submission to the king's authority by means of New England's Protestant identity. "Consider your Profession," he wrote, "we are all Protestants." He thought the clear counsel of Scripture was to obey those in authority, and Protestants were nothing if not respecters of

the Word. Moreover, Bulkeley was as aware as James's opponents of the "strong engagement to root out the Protestant Religion" by European Catholics, but he believed, in stark contrast to most leading New Englanders after 1689, that continued support for the Stuart monarchy was England's and Protestantism's best hope to stand against the Catholic threat. Factionalism and rebellion could lead to their ruin, and Bulkeley even wondered if a Catholic plot had inspired the revolt against Andros. "I wish there be not some Jesuit that has foisted in this Project amongst them in the Bay and us here," but he believed that "that Diabolical sort" meant to use any means possible to divide Protestants against themselves. James's not-so-secret Catholicism seemed not to bother Bulkeley, for to him Britain was Protestant, even with a Catholic king. Despite his objections, the colony voted in May 1689 for a return to Connecticut's charter before the Dominion, and Bulkeley's brand of Toryism would become exceedingly rare in New England for the next generation.[12] However, one can see in his arguments against the Glorious Revolution that the question of what it meant to be a faithful Protestant could be hotly contested in British culture, and New England's dissenters would have constantly to face questions from London about their loyalty as British Protestants in the coming decades.

The imperial governors of Massachusetts after Andros might have disagreed with dissenting Bostonians on a whole host of points, but on the question of the Protestant succession and the war against popery there was no conflict, especially in public proclamations. For years after 1689, fast and thanksgiving proclamations from various governors and lieutenant governors asked for prayer to establish the Protestant succession against its popish and Jacobite enemies. For instance, the General Court declared a fast on February 12, 1690, recommending "to the earnest Supplications of all that fear God, the common Interest of the Protestant Religion in the World, which hath so many potent Adversaries [and] that King William and

Queen Mary may have their Throne Established, and be made great Blessings."[13] Such language would color Massachusetts' civil discourse for another fifty years and beyond. Elite New Englanders had suddenly become quite committed to the power of the British monarchy.

As the *Declaration* indicated, many in Boston feared that James II had planned on handing over control of New England to the French, and so the revolt against James and support for the Protestant succession became attacks directly against French Catholicism. Beginning with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the same year as James's accession, many English Protestants read of dragoons harassing the "poor persecuted" French Protestants (Huguenots) and heard of French atrocities as refugees poured into England and even a few into New England. In the combination of French Catholicism, English Catholicism, and Jacobitism, English Protestants (particularly low-church Anglicans and "dissenters," meaning those who would not attend or support the established Anglican church) perceived their greatest enemies and the greatest enemies of Christ. The dissenters of New England feared the French more than anyone in the Atlantic world, for few natural boundaries would prevent the French and their Indian allies from swooping out of Canada to destroy the Protestant bastions of New England.[14]

Increase Mather believed that the Andros regime was purposefully placing New Englanders in harm's way, setting them up for an invasion of French Canadian and Indian forces. Falling in line with Burnet's propaganda, Mather published *A Narrative of the Miseries of New England* in London in January 1689. In it, he lamented the forms of "arbitrary government" represented by Andros and his minions, and he particularly worried that Andros had plotted to give New England over to the French, who would undoubtedly treat New Englanders with the same barbarity as they had the Huguenots. Once the charters of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts

had been "declared to be void and insignificant, it was an easie matter to erect a French Government." Mather believed that the process had begun "to deliver that Country into the hands of the French King," because the "French Indians are . . . beginning their cruel Butcheries amongst the English in those parts." In the final appeal of the *Narrative,* Mather asked for "speedy Relief" for New England, which he believed should be forthcoming from William, "whom a Divine Hand has raised up to deliver the Oppressed."[15]

If Mather hoped that God would preserve New England from war with the French, he would be sorely disappointed, for 1689 saw not only a great political shift in the British Atlantic world, but also the start of the Anglo-French contest for empire. Though the population of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut outnumbered French Canadians about eight to one, the French Catholic threat remained ever-ominous, especially because the French seemed adept at cooperating with the Wabanakis, who formed a buffer of sorts between the two imperial powers. The Wabanakis and others who survived the epidemics and wars of the earlier seventeenth century, ironically, were now in a stronger position militarily and economically than before, experienced in European diplomacy and warfare and also better armed. Once King William's War (1689–97) opened the door for renewed French and English hostilities, the Wabanakis seized their opportunity for defense against land encroachments and also the sometimes lucrative practice of taking and exchanging prisoners.[16]

Massachusetts' leaders watched as in 1690 Sir William Phips led an expedition against Port Royal in Nova Scotia. With seven hundred Massachusetts troops backing him, Phips quickly secured the surrender of the pitiful French fort manned by sixty troops. Phips allowed the desecration of the Catholic church there, and brought back two priests among his military prisoners. Buoyed by this meager success, Phips raised an armada of thirty-four ships and two

thousand men for a grand expedition against the heart of French Catholicism in North America, the city of Quebec. Apparently the hand of God was not with the New Englanders this time, for a string of bad luck and disease among the troops brought to Quebec in October 1690 an armada that was cold, sick, and late. The invasion was beaten back easily by the French forces, and Phips and his remaining troops limped back to New England in the cold of winter storms, ultimately having lost a thousand of the men and forty thousand pounds sterling in materiel. In the future, New Englanders would think more carefully about large-scale invasions of Canada, and the Boston presses fell largely silent about the loss, unsure of what had gone wrong and why God had not destroyed the despised papists in the wake of the great Protestant triumphs of 1688–89. Andros's replacement, Simon Bradstreet, wondered, on behalf of many, why God had "Spit in our Face."[17]

With his reputation significantly tarnished, Phips left Massachusetts to join his pastor Increase Mather in London, and through Mather's negotiations, Phips returned in 1692 as Massachusetts' new imperial governor. The negotiations over the new charter in London and its controversial reception in Boston have been well documented.[18] The new political settlement in Massachusetts represented a middle way between the old charter, which granted near-total independence, and the Dominion of New England, which severely undercut local autonomy and even seemed to the colonists possibly designed to put high-church Anglicanism or even Catholicism in place as Massachusetts' official religion. The governor now would have a great deal more authority and would be appointed by the monarch, but the Massachusetts House of Representatives would also now become one of the most powerful of the provincial legislatures.

This settlement and the growing necessity to identify globally with a beleaguered world Protestant interest changed leading New

Englanders' religious interests even more dramatically. Now required to tolerate all Christians save Catholics, the Massachusetts establishment found itself forced legally into a more irenic and ecumenical stance both by the toleration required in the charter and by the knowledge that Anglicanism was in Massachusetts to stay, often in the form of Anglican imperial officials who seemed willing to threaten revocation of the charter should Massachusetts fail to appreciate the benevolence of the Protestant monarchs. In order to help win allies in England and to secure New England's churches' identity as loyal nonconformists, Increase Mather had also worked in 1691 with his London friend John Howe on the *Heads of Agreement* unifying in principle English Presbyterians and Congregationalists into one dissenting cohort.[19] The once-Puritan church establishment was now committed to formal toleration, it had accepted and even embraced a politico-religious alliance with low-church/Whig Anglicanism, it faced a common enemy with world Protestants in French and Spanish Catholicism, and had formally agreed to a dissenting alliance with Presbyterian brethren in England. Though the Mather family would fight to preserve vestiges of it for some years more, the old form of insulated and precisionist Massachusetts Puritanism, struggling for life since the 1660 Restoration, now seemed to be taking its last breaths. Much of the old Puritan identity now vanished before the concern for presenting themselves loyal nonconformists. As a 1699 address by Boston's ministers to the newly arrived governor, the Earl of Bellomont, put it, "What Hearty Friends, the vast Body of Non Conformists are to the English Liberties; and what Loyal Subjects to the High and Mighty Prince, unto whom (under God) We are all Indebted, for the Recovery of those Liberties; and how much an Union between all Good Men, whether Conformists or Non Conformists, will contribute unto the Strength of the Protestant Interest."[20] Whether conformists or nonconformists, all British

Protestants now owed their liberty and protection from Catholicism to the Protestant monarch of Britain.

In the years following the Glorious Revolution, then, New England's international Protestant movement began to emphasize distinctives that distinguished it from Puritanism. On many points the differences were subtle and entailed a change of emphasis, not a radical departure. Both movements certainly were biblicist, but their activism was directed toward different goals. Puritanism sought moral and ecclesiastical reform within the Church of England, and pursued political hegemony as best demonstrated in the Puritan/parliamentarian synthesis of the mid-seventeenth century in England. Puritanism proper was therefore reformist, magisterial, and specifically English. New England Puritanism, even more than its seventeenth-century English counterpart, was in its "orthodox" form usually isolationist and suspicious of transatlantic or cosmopolitan ventures, whether military, commercial, or missionary. While many Puritans emphasized personal conversions of nonbelievers, the New England Puritan movement in general focused much less on engaging the unregenerate than on establishing pure churches in a godly state. Even Puritan eschatology often seemed to encourage withdrawal over missions, suggesting that the judgment would be preceded by the saints' departure for the New Jerusalem instead of a great harvest of souls. The new, increasingly revivalist, decreasingly doctrinaire Protestant interest sought massive conversions across national and ethnic lines, and grew less interested in political or ecclesiastical reformation.[21] Its leading advocates became revivalist, more broadly internationalist, and British.

New England's leading cosmopolitans, finding themselves forced into war with Catholic powers and regularly hearing of the persecution of European Protestants, also began to emphasize gospel essentialism. This meant that churches that had embraced the essentials

of reformed Christianity, whether Congregational, Presbyterian, Lutheran, or Calvinist, counted as part of the Protestant interest. This essentialism had limits, of course, set largely by reformed theological orthodoxy, and the Calvinists of New England remained staunchly opposed to suspected proponents of Arminianism or other innovators. But the more that the leaders of the Protestant interest understood the true church to be persecuted and threatened with extinction, the more willing they became to share common cause with Protestant groups across their known world. Their sense of the beleaguered state of true religion internationally turned their thoughts away from reform and toward the need for miraculous and massive revival. This theme became a common emphasis in New England by the 1720s, and by the 1730s the language of eschatological revival was to be heard from pulpits across not only New England but also Britain and Protestant Europe.[22]

Although this book will argue that New England's leading pastors, merchants, and officials were increasingly internationalist and ecumenically Protestant in the early eighteenth century, a few caveats should temper that claim. First, I do not mean to say that everyone in New England participated in these trends equally. One must not assume that the laity and clergy shared identical religious views.[23] The trend toward Protestant internationalism seems to have developed primarily among elites in the seaports and their immediate surroundings, and in the Connecticut River Valley. Lay and backcountry opinion are not well represented here. Certainly the transition toward international pan-Protestantism was led primarily by men who had substantial transatlantic connections in commerce, religion, and/or politics.

Second, to associate this cultural identity generally with international reformed Protestantism does not dismiss the more complicated view needed to understand the competing political and religious identifications among eighteenth-century New Englanders.

If religion in a cultural sense is a web of symbols, beliefs, and meanings that makes sense of the ultimate meaning of existence, then that web is also constantly changing shape.[24] Cultural identifications shift with changing circumstances, and particularly in the early modern period religious identity fluctuated in tandem with political and national identifications. Among leading New Englanders these combinations of allegiances took a bewildering variety of forms. To say that the Protestant interest emerged during this period is perhaps more convenient than precise when one realizes the lived complexity of elite New Englanders' cultural identity. The particular heritage of New England, or Massachusetts and Connecticut, still heavily shaped self-identity in certain cases. The idea of a chosen New England was becoming more rare and often was supplanted by a British chosenness, or a belief that God was working uniquely in British history. As leading New Englanders focused more on knowledge about their Protestant brethren in Europe, however, they could also imagine themselves allied with the international Protestant interest, further demonstrating the power of print to help create imagined communities.[25] So these New Englanders might identify with their province, their nation, or the international community of Protestantism depending on the rhetorical or political need of the moment.

They could also claim diverse religious identities. For instance, though the leaders of the Protestant interest no longer called themselves Puritans, they certainly borrowed heavily from the traditions of the Puritan way, even in revivalism. They now often called themselves either "nonconformists" or especially "dissenters." They also identified with "evangelical" churches, or spoke of an "evangelical" gospel, such as when Benjamin Colman of Boston described George Whitefield's preaching as based on the "right Evangelical Articles of Faith upon which the Church reform'd from Popery."[26] "Evangelical" could also refer more specifically to German *evangelisch*

churches that the New Englanders counted among their most loved brethren. Many leaders of the Protestant interest in New England came to embrace the cause of evangelical revivalism, beginning in the 1720s with a new emphasis on the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, and culminating in the Atlantic ministry of George Whitefield. Significant inheritances passed from Puritanism to the Protestant interest, and from the Protestant interest to evangelicalism.

W. R. Ward, David Bebbington, Mark Noll, Richard Lovelace, and others have shown how the evangelical movement of the eighteenth century was fundamentally internationalist in mentality, and that its leaders mastered communication technologies to promote the growth of the movement. The Protestant interest was not coterminous with the later evangelical movement, as the friends of the Protestant interest could become Old Lights or New Lights in the 1740s. Some prominent friends of the Protestant interest, such as New London's Eliphalet Adams, remained friendly to the moderate evangelicals in the 1740s, but became extremely hostile to radical itinerants. One can see in this study, however, that the internationalist mindset and public and personal correspondence networks, so characteristic of the evangelical revivals, began developing at least as early as the 1690s. Thus, the Protestant interest served as a bridge to connect Puritanism to evangelicalism. Much of the work on the "Great Awakening," led by Susan [Durden] O'Brien, Frank Lambert, and Michael Crawford, has suggested that Whitefield's media revolution was a significant break from the past, helping to "invent" the Awakening itself. This book significantly revises that notion, showing that Whitefield, Edwards, and others in the transatlantic network refined previously existing communication practices to serve the particular interests of the revivals.[27]

Despite the pan-Protestant sensibilities of the Protestant interest, some of its proponents could also become theologically particular when the occasion called for it. They regularly claimed to defend

"reformed" theology: reformed from the corruptions of Catholicism and distinguished from the heresy of free-will Arminianism. Sometimes they might align with specific denominations within Protestantism, especially Congregationalism, Presbyterianism, or low-church Anglicanism. Though this mix of identifications is less conveniently packaged by the historian than a simpler static and homogenous view of cultural identity, one is also freed by this complexity to acknowledge the "multicultural realities" in which people usually live and their "everyday necessity of crosscutting identifications."[28]

While recognizing this wide variety of competing identifications, this study advances three primary elements as crucial to the development of the new cultural identity of the Protestant interest. First is the sense of a shared identity with *international Protestantism*. The English Reformers and Puritans featured transatlantic and international traits from their origins, from the Marian exile on the Continent to the great migration across the Atlantic, and from the continuing "congregational communion" of the English Puritan diaspora to the sprawling interconnectedness of Samuel Hartlib's circle. Many seventeenth-century New England Puritans shared internationalist sensibilities with their English and continental counterparts. But appeals to pan-Protestant unity among the Puritans usually failed to escape the pitfalls of precise ecclesiastical and doctrinal differences, and New England's orthodox elites rarely gave much latitude for transatlantic pursuits and interests before the Williamite Revolution. After the Glorious Revolution, however, two factors gave leading New Englanders a renewed identification with the international reformed community. First, the burgeoning print trade and more reliable transatlantic shipping made information about international Protestantism more generally and quickly accessible in Boston and its environs. Second, the mostly Catholic versus Protestant wars that raged or threatened across Europe and the

world after the Glorious Revolution, culminating in the Seven Years' War, helped create a thoroughgoing internationalist sentiment in which these New Englanders identified with reformed Protestants across confessional, national, and ethnic lines. The newspapers carried accounts of "orthodox dissenters" with religious and political agendas strikingly similar to the New Englanders' own. The European brethren, moreover, often found themselves threatened by real or suspected agents of the Roman Catholic church. With the French (and later Spanish) Catholic threat periodically breaking out into hot war in New England, it is hardly surprising that leading dissenters in New England would imagine these groups as comrades in the fight against world Catholicism.[29]

The second positive identification that this study asserts as a primary building block of reformed pan-Protestantism is *British nationalism*.[30] This identification surged in importance with the coming of the Protestant succession in the British monarchy, and the toleration of the New England dissenting establishment that the succession seemed to guarantee. The public devotion of leading New Englanders to Britain became at once a political and religious duty, as such observers as Boston's Benjamin Colman equated "fidelity to Christ" with fidelity to the Protestant succession and the British throne. The Protestant interest endowed the monarchs, especially William, and later the Hanoverians, with the "divine right by Providence" that saw Britain, and particularly the monarchy, as the vanguard of international Protestantism, divinely chosen to lead the fight against Catholicism.

Anti-Catholicism provides the third and final building block in this study.[31] Again, Puritans certainly had seen Catholicism as a primary if not the ultimate enemy, but the wars of empire and the perceived and actual declining fortunes of the European Protestant community made the rising pan-Protestant cohort much less

interested in combating other Protestants, especially if those Protestants defended the Protestant succession.[32] This became increasingly true as New France and its Jesuit missionaries made the Catholic threat very near and personal to the early eighteenth-century New Englanders. If leading New Englanders imagined themselves as British nationals helping lead the international Protestant community, it was largely with the end of defeating the evil "other" of international Catholicism, and especially their French Catholic neighbors. These New Englanders' hostility to Catholicism was apocalyptic, as most believed that before the return of Christ, the Catholic church and the papacy would be destroyed. They longed for a role in the eschatological destruction of Catholicism, and prayed and sometimes fought to see its fulfillment. There is no question that far above Native Americans or any other group, Catholics provided the most stark contrast against whom the Protestant interest defined itself.

This study examines the transatlantic public sphere and print domains in order to show how international Protestantism, British nationalism, and anti-Catholicism shaped a post-Puritan identity in New England society. From rhymes in almanacs to newspaper reports of persecuted Protestants, and from sermons on the apocalypse to balance sheets of the contest between world Catholicism and Protestantism, print facilitated leading New Englanders' move from Puritanism to the Protestant interest. Print allowed this growing religious identity to move out from the ministerial networks that had largely sustained Puritanism, and gave the Protestant interest a voice in the developing public sphere of print and the transatlantic trades. Public print and correspondence networks helped many New Englanders imagine not only a British nation, but also an international Protestant community and a mirror opposite international Catholic community.[33] The events that faced leading New Englanders after 1689 increasingly encouraged many pastors, officials, and

merchants to identify with the cause of British and international Protestantism.

Following Increase Mather's return with the new charter, many in Massachusetts kept up a critical and sometimes hostile relationship with the imperial governor or the high-church Tory interest in England, but this did not prevent a cordial public relationship with the crown or a growing identification with the British nation as the bastion of Protestantism. Despite the distance in geography and in interests between New Englanders and the metropolis, many increasingly imagined themselves as having an interest in creating a powerful British nation, their best hope for the preservation of international reformed Protestantism. Jeremiah Shepard of Lynn spoke for leading New Englanders in the 1715 election sermon when he celebrated "the Mercy of God to our Nation! Wherein the Glorious Arm of Divine Conduct is remarkable in two famous Revolutions," the 1689 Glorious Revolution, and the 1714 accession of George I, which made all Britons "secure from a Despotick or Arbitrary Government, or having our Liberties Invaded by Papal Usurpations and Tyrannies." As Gauri Viswanathan has described it, the dissenting interest in New England "adopted a strategy of inflating cultural continuities" between them and the metropolis so that these mutual concerns overshadowed the obvious differences between the dissenting establishment of New England and the Anglican metropolitan establishment. Many high-church Anglicans continued to view all dissenters with disdain, and especially during Queen Anne's reign dissenters faced all manner of political and popular threats to their tolerated status and safety. Especially offensive to the high churchmen was the occasional conformity practiced by some English dissenters, taking the Anglican sacrament in order to qualify for the legal benefits under the Test and Corporation Acts. Many

Anglicans, moreover, questioned the validity of dissenting pastors' ordination. How, then, could the dissenting establishments in New England lay claim to legal legitimacy as British Protestants? New Englanders found themselves tenuously drawing protection and resources "from the parent state [in order] to set up a private domain of their own" that would in some measure still resist imperial or Anglican hegemony over their religious establishment.[34]

It is a matter of some debate whether expressions of loyalty to the English and then British nation like those in the Boston presses amounted to a thoroughgoing British nationalism or pragmatic propaganda. One imagines elite New Englanders' sentiments to have been a mixture of both. But it seems likely that the factors of a shared British Protestantism and a common enemy in France and Roman Catholicism, combined with a belief that the Protestant kingship was the key to the preservation of New England's liberties, generated an immature but powerful form of British nationalism among leading New Englanders. This only increased after the 1707 union with Scotland (to which some date the creation of "Britain" proper), the accession of George I in 1714, and the Jacobite revolt in 1715. The English dissenters were among the leaders in the creation of a biblical discourse of British nationalism in 1707, and New England dissenting ministers shared in the creation of that discourse on their side of the Atlantic.[35]

Even when those in Massachusetts attacked the imperial governor and his policies, their concern often involved fears either about preserving the rights of English dissenters, or about illicit trade and cooperation with French Canada. For instance, in an appeal to Lord Nottingham, Increase Mather, likely angry about aggressive Church of England missionaries, pleaded for a replacement for Governor Joseph Dudley in 1703, recommending the low-church Anglican Charles Hobby, "in Religion a Protestant of the Church of England as by Law established, but of great moderation, having a respect for

dissenters who are good men & loyal subjects, as I know your Lordship also has."[36] Massachusetts' leaders became agitated when imperial officials seemed not to support the defense of all loyal Protestants against the Catholic menace, but they never wavered in their conviction that the true purpose of the British nation was defending the Protestant faith.

Massachusetts' leaders also became invested in promoting the Protestant succession, which by force of the Act of Settlement (1701) raised the prospect again of switching hereditary lines after William's successor, Anne, who had no living children, died. Despite Jacobite pleas for a return to the Stuart line, England looked to Hanover for the next queen, Princess Sophia. To prepare Britons for the coming of a German monarch to the throne, propagandists began promoting the house of Hanover as godly and noble. In Massachusetts, effigies of both Queen Anne and Princess Sophia were placed in the Council Chamber as early as 1705 in order to align Bostonians with the cause of the Protestant succession.[37] There would be no sympathy whatsoever among the dissenting interest for a return to the Stuart line, a fact referred to again and again in coming years by those in Massachusetts defending their peculiar rights as established dissenters.

The death of Anne, the accession of George I, and the suppression of the 1715 Jacobite uprising by the Stuart Pretender brought the high point of British nationalism during this period, as New England's coastal towns from Portsmouth to New London welcomed the Protestant succession of the recently dead Princess Sophia's son George to the British throne with celebrations "beyond what ever was known in the English America."[38] New England's clerical and political leaders met the news with the now-familiar sense of providential design and placed the succession and the revolt within the ongoing world contest between the godly Protestant interest and the forces of evil.

Edward Holyoke's 1715 almanac memorialized September 22, 1714, the day in which "King GEORGE was Proclaimed at Boston." Holyoke did not think it coincidental that the same night of the celebrations for the new king, rain broke a long drought. "Night's Showers Crown the Pomp of Night & Day: King GEORGE, as Rain on Mown Grass, Come Away!"[39] After years of wondering whether Anne would have a Protestant successor, the British Protestant and New England dissenting interest received George's succession as a refreshing blessing from God.

Massachusetts' leading pastors also stepped forward to construct a narrative of George's succession as ordained by God, and part of the unfolding of God's agency in British history. By July 29, 1715, the dissenting churches of Massachusetts and New Hampshire had presented their formal address in tribute to George by way of New England's agent Jeremiah Dummer. The *Boston News-Letter* printed the document on its front page once news arrived that the new king had received the address. The address embraced George while it also nervously advanced the ministers' hope that their status as established nonconformists would not become a problem under Hanoverian reign. There was no doubt to the ministers that it was "the most High GOD our Saviour, who has placed your Majesty on the Throne over us; the refreshing Rays of your Government like those of the Sun, reach your most distant Dominions." They petitioned the king, however, to continue treating New England's dissenters with the same respect and toleration as the United Brethren in England. The ministers reminded George that they were his most loyal followers anywhere in the empire, that Anglicans received fair treatment despite their nonestablished circumstances in New England, and that they hoped that all parties involved could unite around "Conformity to the Doctrines and Maxims of the Religion which our Gracious Redeemer hath revealed to us."[40]

On September 23, 1714, Cotton Mather preached a sermon on Isaiah 6:1, soon recommended to Bostonians by the *News-Letter* as a model interpretation of the Hanoverian succession. Mather noted the fear and trepidation with which Bostonians and others through the "European and American World" waited for news of the succession, hoping that the plans of the papists and Jacobites would not foil the Hanoverians' safe arrival and assumption of power. Not that Mather and his cohort had not appreciated Anne; on the contrary, Mather commended her heartily, for "there could be nothing more Endearing to us, than the Expressions and Assurances, which Her MAJESTY often Uttered from the Throne, of Her Zeal, for a Protestant Succession." New Englanders had remained largely quiet, at least publicly, as they watched hostility to dissenters percolate during Anne's reign. At least she supported the Protestant succession, as Mather noted. But now, God had quickly and surprisingly brought the Hanoverian to the throne, extinguishing all hopes of the "Popish Pretender." Mather sang the praises of this new king given by the hand of God. "We see ascending to the British Throne, A KING whose Way to it is Prepared in the Hearts of His Joyful Subjects . . . A KING, in whose Dominions Lutherans and Calvinists Live Easily with One Another . . . A KING, of whom we have all Possible Reason to hope, that He will Discern and Pursue the True Interest of the Nations; and give the Best Friends of His House and of the Nations, cause to Rejoyce. . . . Among, whom it is incredible, that the DISSENTERS, who have been so Universally true to That, and His Interest, should not be regarded as a Body of People, too true Britons, and Christians, to be Excluded from a Share in the Common Joy of their Fellow Subjects."[41] Mather believed that God had brought George safely to the throne in part to defend the rights of members of the dissenting interest as loyal Britons.

The idea of Massachusetts' Protestants as faithful dissenters

never was so important as during and immediately after the 1715 Jacobite uprising. In the tumult and uncertainty surrounding George's accession, Scottish and English Jacobites took the opportunity to proclaim James II's son King James III of Britain. While the rebellion and invasion were not without precedent, especially in Scotland, and despite the fact that the rising in northern England "went off like a damp squib," as one historian of Jacobitism has put it, the insurrection was nevertheless one of the most significant threats against the Protestant succession during the eighteenth century.[42] It took on highly symbolic importance across Europe and in the Atlantic world, not least in Massachusetts, as we shall see in chapter five.

Although 1715/16 was undoubtedly the high mark of British nationalism during this period in Massachusetts, sentiment for Britain as the defender of an ecumenical, international Protestant interest against Catholicism had become a staple of New Englanders' cultural identity. In some rhetorical moments Massachusetts pastors still held out a special place for New England in providential history, referencing the special circumstances of the founding as they approached the hundredth anniversary of the great migration out of England, or celebrating New England's unique and universal support for the Protestant succession. But certainly by the end of the Jacobite rising, the most vocal spokesmen of the new Protestant interest saw themselves as Britons and dissenters who united around the essentials of the reformed faith with churches throughout much of the known world.

As we shall see, in the early 1720s, the affinity for the Protestant monarchy was helped along by Father Rale's War (1722–1725), a direct threat against New England by the eastern Wabanakis and ultimately by French Catholic power. Leaders in eastern New England recognized that they needed continual support from the crown against the French threat, despite the formal peace between

the two states. Joseph Sewall, for one, hoped that despite God's judgment against New England through the "Sword of the Wilderness, and other wasting Calamities," they could find hope under the protection of God and king.[43]

New Englanders' admiring sentiments toward George I soon transferred to George II upon his father's death in 1727, and Massachusetts' and Connecticut's leaders quickly rose to welcome the succession and the continued protection of the Protestant interest. Fears over Jacobite plots remained current in Britain and in New England, as only in May the *Boston News-Letter*'s front page reported an address to the king by London clergy denouncing the Jacobites and warning of the "unavoidable Misery and Ruin that a Protestant Church and Nation must always expect from a Popish Prince." But upon George II's accession there would be no similar great revolt as happened in 1715. Nevertheless, New England's public voices rose together as one to proclaim that George II was the king in their provinces. Most notably, on August 16, Massachusetts' leaders assembled at the courthouse in Boston to sign a pledge of fidelity to the succession.[44] By late year the presses in Boston were producing reassurances that George II, like his father, and also Queen Caroline were noted not only for their "Firmness to the Protestant Interest," but also for their sympathy to dissenters. Though as recently as 1725 Tories in Parliament had proposed a bill revoking Massachusetts' charter, upon the succession the New Englanders reassured themselves that they need not worry about their establishment of dissent being threatened as long as the Hanoverians were on their side.[45]

The leading dissenting pastors celebrated the providential design in George II's succession. Thomas Prince spoke before the General Assembly in late August with a sermon comparing the succession to the passage of Israel's throne from David to Solomon, and he hoped that George II would have "a Largeness of Heart, as the Sand on the

Shores of his extended Empire." He prayed that the Lord would give him such "Royal Majesty" as had not been seen before in the "British Israel." And of course he hoped that George II would continue his father's protection of Massachusetts, considering "Sacred our Precious CHARTER; which with the PROTESTANT SUCCESSION, the Two inestimable Legacies of King WILLIAM and Queen MARY, will render their Names most Blessed." Finally, Prince hoped that Massachusetts would remain faithful to the Hanoverian line, "That we who dwell in the Wilderness may be happy in Bowing before Him," and that his enemies the papists and Jacobites "may lick the Dust." Many pastors, including Joseph Sewall, Thomas Foxcroft, and the elderly Cotton Mather weighed in with similar sentiments.[46] Israel Loring of Sudbury, Massachusetts, was moved to meditate on George's death in his diary, mourning the loss of "a king Whose accession to the British throne was esteemed by the Wise discerner of the times, as life from the dead, to his Dominions and the protestant interest."[47] Even to clerics like Loring, living in Boston's hinterlands, the matter of the Protestant succession was critical.

By 1727 the friends of the Protestant interest in New England had become thoroughly committed to a broad British Protestant identity, finding common cause with the Hanoverian monarchy and Whig Anglicanism. Their enthusiasm for Britain was in some ways pragmatic, born out of the circumstances of war and the memory of the Dominion of New England. But more importantly, in a massive shift from the 1680s and previously, many New Englanders now placed their best hope in the house of Hanover. The public face of religious and civil society in Massachusetts could no longer afford pettiness or precisionism. Under the old charter there might have been occasion to dream of God's special covenant with New England. After 1689, however, New England's national chosenness became British, centered in the Protestant monarchy and the monarchs' support and protection even of dissenters. God chose Britain

not for itself alone, but also for the highest purpose of defending the worldwide Protestant interest.

To tell the story of New England's Protestant interest, chapter one begins with a study of Benjamin Colman, who during this period became the most recognized pastor in Boston. Though his leadership was bitterly contested at the founding of his Brattle Street Church in 1699, by 1707 Colman had become Massachusetts' key spokesman in matters related to the British nation and the Protestant succession. Moreover, Colman worked feverishly to establish missions to the Native Americans that would compete with Jesuit missions. Not surprisingly, Colman became one of the key links in the evangelical movement of the 1730s and '40s. Chapters two and three examine the print domains of New England and their relationship to the Protestant interest. Chapter two considers how Boston newspapers' coverage of Catholic versus Protestant hostilities across the known world helped New Englanders imagine themselves part of a global Protestant interest. Chapter three details how New England almanacs served the interests of British nationalism through preserving the memory of key dates in the British monarchy, and singing the monarchs' praises in poetry.

Chapter four considers Father Rale's War (1722–25) in northern New England. The Jesuits were much more successful than the British colonists at proselytizing among the Wabanakis, and in the 1720s Father Sebastien Rale successfully encouraged them to rise up against British colonists' land incursions. New Englanders, however, narrated the war as the next stage of the global conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism. Chapter five considers the imagined threat of Jacobitism in New England, and analyzes the reasons for the common accusation of Jacobitism, despite there being almost no Jacobites in New England. The language of Jacobitism helped New Englanders construct a low-church Anglican/dissenter synthesis

that stood against the perceived threat of British high-church Anglicanism and the Catholicism they thought the high churchmen masked. Finally, chapter six discusses the role of eschatology in building the Protestant interest. Many New Englanders assumed that before the return of Christ, the Catholic church would be destroyed, the Jews would return to the true Messiah, and massive global conversions would begin. These expectations created a ready theological framework for understanding the meaning of the revivals that began in the 1730s and culminated in Whitefield's tours. The sense of the Protestant interest's global crisis, then, fed directly into an expectation of eschatological revival that might finally bring the triumph of world Protestantism over Catholicism. Eschatological disappointment, of course, did not prevent the establishment of a global evangelical movement that continues to grow today, which is the subject of the epilogue.