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Charles Chauncy

Earl Clement Davis

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Char. Chauncy.

During the first hundred years of New England Church History, the minds of the ministers were so much engrossed with problems of Church Government, and the relation of the Church to the political problems, and the state, that we may make a general statement to the effect that the Theology remained that which is expressed by the Westminster Confession, adopted in 1648 at the same time that the Cambridge Platform was adopted. True indeed it is that there had been some agitation concerning Baptism, and Communion but this was upon the side of folly, and not of theology.

The Charter of 1692 had severed the relations of the state and the church, and taken from the clergy much of the influence that they once exercised, and left them to interest themselves in problems that

were more theological in their nature. So
 be sure we had seen evidence of a new
 habit of thought at work, which had divid-
 ed the country into two general parties, the
 conservative, and liberal. But so busy were
 these men with questions of policy, that they
 had no opportunity to apply their habits of
 mind to theological problems. Even John
 Wise, hardly thought of dealing with his
 Colonization in precisely the same manner
 that he did with his "Dixian Profosols."

But a change was coming, as a natural result
 of new conditions.

Perhaps it would be well for us to recall the
 "Five Points of Colonization," for our interests are
 now turning from questions of government
 to questions of theology. (1) God elects individuals
 to be saved. (2) He designs complete redemption
 for them only. (3) Fallen man is of himself
 incapable of true faith and repentance. (4) God's
 grace is efficacious for the salvation of the

Elect. (5) A soul once regenerated and connected
is never ultimately lost.

But the hard lines of this system were being
weathered away. (1) The Greater freedom of the
New World made traditions less binding. (2)
Democratic ideas were developing very rapidly.

(3) There was a tinge of Fatalism in early days.
E. g. Cotton Mather.

By about 1725 there began to appear wrong
ideas that were not strictly Calvinistic. Colvini-
istic, whatever these ideas were, they were
all branded with one name "Arminianism".
In 1726 Cotton Mather said no minister could
be found in N. E. who held Arminian views.
But in 1736 Johnathan Edwards says that it
was appearing in New England. In 1750 Edwards
says that there is danger ^{that} ~~that~~ the young generation
would come entirely under the influence of
Arminianism.

~~In comparison with~~ In comparison with
Calvinism above defined, we may notice the
changed attitude by recalling to mind what

are commonly called "The five points of Arminianism":
i. e. (1) Conditional Election. (2) Universal redemption,
i. e. Christ died for all alike, but only those who
accept his atonement by faith will be actively saved.
(3) Salvation by means of Grace, or that man can
exercise true faith only by the regenerating
grace of the Holy Spirit, with which grace
however, he can cooperate. (4) Grace not ir-
resistible. (5) falling from a state of grace possible.

The general tendency of this new movement
is seen in two of its ideas. (1) It places
greater emphasis upon work. (2) It emphasizes
means of grace, i. e. education and character
as means of salvation.

These two tendencies represent the develop-
ment of a liberal and an orthodox party
within the Christian Church of New England.
The conservative branch is represented
by Johnathan Edwards and his followers.
The liberal branch, or moderate branch
is represented by Char. Chauncy, and

terminated in the Unitarian ^{by} ~~by~~

For the present we shall follow the movement taking as the leader Chas. Chauncy, Pastor of the 1st Church of Boston.

Chauncy was born in 1705, the year that Cotton Mather issued the sixteen proposals. Died in 1787. His father was a merchant, his grandfather was 2nd President of Harvard. He graduated from Harvard in 1721. Was ordained pastor of 1st Church 1727.

His life in so far as it concerns the thought movement with which we are concerned, centers about three controversies. (1) Revival controversy. (2) Episcopal controversy.

(3) Theological controversy.

~~A brief~~ A little insight into the King of a man Chauncy was is seen in the following written by a friend. He was, like Zaccheus, little of stature. God gave him a slender, feeble body, a very powerful, vigorous mind, and strong passions; and he managed them all

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exceedingly well. His manners were plain
and downright, - chiquefied, bold, and im-
posing. In conversation with his friends
he was pleasant, social, and very instruct-
ive." Walker's Ten N. E. Leaders. P. 273.

The New England of the time of Chauncy
was not the New of 50 or 75 years before,
and Boston perhaps more than any other town
reflected this change. The town authorities for
instance reported to the general court ^{in 1735} that
Boston had become "the resort of all sorts of
foul people, which instead of adding to the
wealth of the town, serve only as a burden
and a continual charge." Walker 10 N. E. Leaders 275

Religiously estimated, Boston was not what
it had been in the days of the founders. The
old Puritan enthusiasm had departed,
wealth, commercial interests, and the presence
of a foreign office holding sway had
largely defined religion of its original

primacy in popular interest. Whitefield, the
evangelist, wrote in his journal of 1740, "The
Kenerably seem to be too much conformed
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by the female sex, and even the common
people. I observed, directed of in the Pride of
life.

Unto these conditions come Whitefield, and
alwort like a thunder storm he swept
of over this country in 1740, conducting
revivols in all important places. He was
a preacher of great power, and with a tre=
mendous influence. Under his preaching
the storm of religious enthusiasm which
had been gathering force for 5 years
or more, burst upon the country with
all the force of a cyclone. Many more

converted, and some joined the church. It is 8
alleged that there were 25 or 30 thousand
converts. Perhaps their nature is seen in that
on repeated occasions men cried out, and
women fainted; many in the weeping
congregations declared themselves converted.

This "Great Awakening" of 1740 gave rise to
a very keen controversy, which brought out
the latent ideas of the clergy and made them
show their colors. Chauncy was among
those who condemned the revival. In
1748 he published a book under the title "Rea-
sonable thoughts on Religion" which heaped
of the revival.

His objections rested chiefly upon ~~two~~ ^{two} ~~grounds~~
grounds. (1) He objected to itinerant preaching
because it was un-congregational. Absorbites
~~and~~ and then some of the lesser lights, who
followed Whitefield were guilty of many
objectionable actions.

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(2) He objected to the criticism that the Evangelists
fouled up the clergy. In the Old South Church
in Boston, Whitfield said. "The Reverend
of Preachers talk of an unknown Christ, unfelt
Christ. And the reason why congregations
have been dead, is because dead men
preach to them." At New Haven he preached
on "The dreadful ill-consequences of an
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This revival resulted in, -

- (1) The loss of influence of the ministers
- (2) The rise of Separated Churches, whose
grounds of separation were precisely

the same as the gowels upon which ¹⁰ Brown and others had stood for, but here in New England 150. years later the New England Churches, the direct descendants of the early Separatists, offered these new Separatists.

(3) The third result of this revival was the emphasis it placed upon revival, the emotional element of religion, and hence the old idea of the direct influence of God upon the soul of the Regenerate. It is on this point that Edwards is so strong. Chauncy held that these "new lights" as they were called do not stand the test, which the Bible or the fruit of the spirit makes upon them.

4-Physical Manifestations - Dimmed
your eyes, neglect of clothes etc.
Chauncy had no sympathy with it.

The three important results were. 11

- (1) Sharp contrast drawn between the Calvinistic idea, or super votal agency, and the Arminian idea, means of grace or education. Chauvey stood for latter.
- (2) Second, drawing the lines between extreme and moderate Calvinists,
- (3) Among the moderates there was a renewed emphasis upon the Bible, in opposition to immediate grace. This study of the Bible, this reawakening is of no little importance, and in fact prepared the way for the later movement of 19th century.

Charles Chauncy

Earl Clement Davis

Harvard University or Pittsfield, MA¹

No Date

During the first hundred years of New England Church History, the minds of the ministers were so much engrossed with problems of Church Government, and the relation of the Church to the political problems, and the state, that we may make a general statement to the effect that the theology remained that which is expressed in the Westminster Confession, adopted in 1648 at the same time that the Cambridge Platform was adopted. True indeed it is that there had been some agitation concerning Baptism and Communion, but this was upon the side of polity, and not of theology.

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Perhaps it would be well for us to recall the "Five Points of Calvinism," for our interests are now turning from questions of Government to questions of Theology. (1) God elects individuals to be saved. (2) He designs complete

¹ The manuscripts in this series covering early New England Congregational preachers have no date. They are hand-written, dating them before Earl Davis started typing his manuscripts in 1907. So, they date either from his time at Harvard University, or the first year or two of his ministry in Pittsfield.

redemption for these only. (3) Fallen man is of himself incapable of true faith and repentance. (4) God's grace is efficacious for the salvation of the elect. (5) A soul once regenerated and converted is never ultimately lost.

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In comparison with Calvinism above defined, we may notice the changed attitude by calling to mind what one commonly called "the five points of Arminianism." (1) Conditional election. (2) Universal redemption, i.e., Christ died for all alike, but only those who accept his atonement by faith will be actually saved. (3) Salvation by Grace, or that man can exercise true faith only by the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit with which grace however, he can cooperate. (4) Grace [is] not irresistible. (5) Falling from a state of grace is possible. The general tendency of this new movement is seen in two of its ideas. (1) It places greater emphasis upon man. (2) It emphasized means of grace, i.e., education and character as [a] means of salvation.

These two tendencies represent the development of a liberal, and an orthodox party within the Christian Church of New England. The conservative branch is represented by Johnathan Edwards and his followers. The liberal branch, or moderate branch, is represented by Chas. Chauncy, and terminated in the Unitarian body. For the present we shall follow the movements taking as the leader Chas. Chauncy, Pastor of the 1st Church of Boston.

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had been gathering force for 5 years or more burst upon the country with all the force of a cyclone. Many were converted, and some joined the church. It is alleged that there were 25 or 30 thousand converts. Perhaps their nature is seen in that on repeated occasions men cried out, and women fainted: many in the {??} congregations declared themselves converted.

This "Great Awakening" of 1740 gave rise to a very keen controversy which brought out the latent ideas of the clergy and made them show their colors. Chauncy was among those who condemned the revival. In 1743 he published a book under the title, "Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion" which treated of the revival.

His objections rested chiefly upon two grounds. (1) He objected to itinerant preaching because it was uncongregational, and then some of the lesser lights who followed Whitefield were guilty of many objectionable actions.

(2) He objected to the criticisms that the evangelists passed upon the clergy. In the Old South Church in Boston, Whitefield said, "The {??} of Preachers talk of an unknown unfelt Christ. And the reason why congregations have been dead, is because dead men preach to them." At New Haven he preached on the dreadful "ill-consequences of an unconverted ministry." These words which became more bitter and vituperative as the controversy increased did not agree with men like Chauncy. In fact Davenport, the last of the lot of evangelists became insane, and it seems that this cloud of insanity hangs over the whole movement.

This revival resulted in: (1) The loss of influence of the ministers. (2) The rise of Separated Churches, whose grounds of separation were precisely the same as the grounds upon which {??} Brown and others had stood for. But here in New England 150 years later the New England Churches, the direct descendants of the early separatists oppose these new separatists.

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of the Regenerate. It is on this point that Edwards is so strong. Chauncy held that these "new lights" as they were called do not stand the test, which the Bible as the fruit of the spirit makes upon them.

(4) Physical manifestations. Divided families. Neglect of duties etc. Chauncy had no sympathy with it.

The three important results were:

- (1) Sharp contrast drawn between the Calvinistic idea, or supernatural agency, and the Arminian idea, means of grace or education. Chauncy stood for [the] latter.
- (2) Second, drawing the lines between extreme and moderate Calvinists.
- (3) Among the moderates there was a renewed emphasis upon the Bible in opposition to immediate grace. This study of the Bible, this result is of no little importance, and in part prepared the way for the later movement of the 19th Century.