

CHARLES WESLEY IN BOSTON

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In the study of Charles Wesley's life little is known about his sojourn in Boston, except for his own journal record. There is nothing of Charles Wesley the poet and hymn writer per se that one associates with his brief respite in Boston, which was an unforeseen part of his 1736-stay in the American colonies. It is enigmatic, since up to now one has known little about how he fit into the Boston religious scene, which was extremely complex at the time, or how he interpreted it.

Charles Wesley remained a total of 32 days in Boston. Entries in his *Journal* are for only twenty-two of those days. On two of the days for which there are no records in the *Journal*, namely, October 6 and 15, there are extant letters of Charles Wesley to his brother John, which provide useful information. In addition, his *Journal* entries for October 17, 18, 19, 21, and 25 are amplified by his letters to John on those dates.

On September 24, the ship made port at Boston's Long Wharf and Wesley wrote the following in his *Journal*:

Friday, Sept. 24. Being within sight of the lighthouse, at nine in the morning, the pilot came on board us. At two I gladly obeyed his hasty summons, and went into his boat with the other passengers, bidding an hearty farewell to our wretched ship, and the more wretched captain, who for the last two days had, most happily for us, laid dead drunk on the floor, without sense or motion.

I was at leisure now to contemplate a prospect entirely new, and beautiful beyond all I had ever seen. We sailed smoothly on, in a vast basin, as it seemed, bounded on all sides with small innumerable islands. Some of these were entire rock in height and colour not unlike Dover Cliffs: others steep, and covered with woods. Here and there lay a round hill, entirely clothed with green and all at such equal distances that the passages seemed artificially made to admit the narrow streams between.

Having passed one of these passages, we were presented with a new set of hills and rocks and woods, in endless variety; till we came to the castle, three miles from Boston. From thence we had a full view of the town, stretched out a mile and a half upon the shore, in a semicircle. We landed at Long Wharf, which we walked straight up, having a row of houses on one side, and near 200 sail of ships on the other. Lodged in a public house. Went to bed at eleven.¹

¹ MSJ, 63-64

One immediately notices a difference in the style of writing in this prose passage from the rest of Charles's *Journal*. He was a reluctant diary or journal keeper, but at the behest of his brother John attempted to do so. In spite of his poetical gifts, he generally was not given to florid prose, rather his *Journal* entries tend to be terse and to the point. In the change of style in this passage from his *Journal*, however, one immediately senses the emotional and psychological release taking place within Charles upon his arrival in Boston, for he has five months of turmoil in Georgia behind him. It should be noted also that only one of the succeeding entries in his *Journal* (October 2) during the visit to Boston (there are a total of twenty-six between September 24 and October 26), when the repaired ship on which Wesley was returning to England finally moved out of Boston harbor, clear of all land, reflects this same descriptive eloquence of the September 24th entry.

The Boston Religious Context

What was the religious situation in Boston at the time of Wesley's visit? The Massachusetts Bay Colony had been settled in 1630 and dominated at first by Puritan influence. It was not until 1679 that persons living in Boston petitioned the king that they might be permitted to practice religion according to the Church of England. The situation was complicated by the fact that it was not until 1681, that a law prohibiting the keeping of Christmas was repealed. On June 15, 1686, the Church of England was established by law and officially organized in Boston. King's Chapel, the first Anglican Church in the city, was built the same year.

Fifty years later, Charles Wesley arrived in Boston. By 1736 two additional Anglican churches had been built—Christ Church (1723), which became known as Old North Church, and Trinity Church (1733). By the time of Wesley's arrival a number of Anglican missions had been established and several clergy of the Church of England assigned to them through the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. All of the work was under the authority of the Bishop of London, who had also established the office of Commissary in Boston with responsibility for oversight of the churches and missions there. The priest holding that position, The Rev. Mr. Roger Price, was also the rector of King's Chapel. The Rev. Dr. Timothy Cutler was the rector of Christ Church.

As Anglicanism had grown in Boston, so had tensions among religious communities. It was a hotbed of religious controversy. In addition to Puritans, Scots had also settled in New England and Presbyterianism was on the rise. Many Dissenters found their rightful place within a fast growing Congregationalism. Amid all this activity the Church of England was deeply concerned to establish missions in the New World and to win it for Christ and the church. But the missions provoked considerable opposition from

the Puritans and other non-adherents to the Church of England. As loyalties to the British crown waned, so did loyalties to the Church of England, for the two were considered mutually exclusive. Here is the voice of protest from the distinguished Congregationalist clergyman Cotton Mather:

*“Societies for the Propagation of Religion which, for Laborers in the Harvest of God, send forth Men that are alienated from this Life of God, and that, instead of Preaching the more weighty Matters of the Gospel, Preach up the lesser Matters and mere Accidentals of Christianity, and such things as it is not certain that God has ever Instituted,—these do for the most part serve the Empire of Satan under the Banner of our Saviour; and by these Cheats a vast disservice is done unto the Interest of the Gospel in the World.”*²

Furthermore, nothing could have been more offensive to New England Puritans than the idea of apostolic succession espoused by the Church of England, not only because of mere formalism, but because of adamant opposition to Roman Catholicism through which such descent in Anglicanism was claimed.

A viewpoint openly advocated by Dr. Cutler of Christ Church roused the ire of many. He maintained “that, *ordinarily*, there was no salvation out of the communion of the Episcopal Church; and that none but an episcopally ordained minister could perform any religious offices with validity and effect.”³ There were also a variety of the King’s laws in effect at the time, which evoked agitation and turmoil. For example, one law stated that those persons living within five miles of an Episcopal Church would be exempt from certain taxes. Yet, the “Sunday laws” could prevent them from attending church at such distances from their homes. In other instances persons were taken to court for absenting themselves from divine worship, and, if found guilty, were required to pay the court costs.

An excerpt from a letter of Mr. John Checkley, a gentleman whom Wesley met on at least four occasions during his Boston visit, to the Bishop of London in 1728, reveals the complexities of the situation:

There are but few churches (at great distance from each other) in this great country; and the Churchmen being dispersed throughout the whole territory, they are obliged (some of them) to ride 30 or 40 miles to partake of the Holy Sacrament. It is, moreover, usual for the Church people to walk or ride 6, 8, and 10 miles upon the Saturday evening, or very early on the Sunday morning, to the town where the Church of England is settled, and to return home again on the Sunday evening. But if a stop is not put to this first law, they will be obliged to spend the greatest part of the Saturday and Monday in going (for all are not able to keep horses) and riding to church and returning home. But this would be very hard upon the poor people, who are generally husbandmen, etc.⁴

² Quoted in H. W. Foote, *Annals of King’s Chapel from the Puritan Age of New England to the Present Day*, 2 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1882), 1:263.

³ Foote, 1:341.

⁴ Foote, 1:452.

Into these extremely complex religious circumstances came Charles Wesley, a learned, young priest and Oxford graduate (B.A. 1730, M.A. 1733), who did not want to enter the priesthood and who did not come from an aristocratic family. He had been assigned, after a hasty ordination (on one Sunday he was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Oxford and the following Sunday priest by the Bishop of London), to work in the Colony of Georgia, an assignment that differed from that of many other missionaries of the Church of England. He was appointed Secretary of Indian Affairs, as well as Colonel Oglethorpe's personal secretary. In addition, he also served the small congregation at Fort Frederica on St. Simon's Island.

By the time of Wesley's visit to Boston in 1736, British immigrants had been living and worshiping there for over a hundred years. King's Chapel, built in 1686, already had a fifty year history. Boston was by no means as physically wild and difficult as the Colony of Georgia had been for him. The latter had been first settled by Oglethorpe in 1733, largely with British folk of desperate fortunes, many of whom had been in debtors' prison, and Protestant exiles from Europe. Wesley arrived in Georgia in May and departed in August. The summer months were very hot and the sand flies annoyed him. The climate, living conditions, and the people of Boston, however, were much more civil and agreeable to Wesley. Furthermore, there were established churches and congregations of the Church of England in Boston, which he had not experienced in the southern colony, except for small bands of worshipers who gathered under extremely primitive conditions, under a tree in the outdoors or in a makeshift room in a storehouse.

After having been ordained less than a year and having spent four stormy months in his first assignment, he was returning home quite dejected, and now unexpectedly arrived in Boston. In discussing the subject of "Charles Wesley in Boston" it is important to remember two things in particular: (1) Wesley had not yet broken on the scene as a religious poet; that only took place after his conversion experience of May 21, 1738; he had no notoriety in this regard. (2) Charles Wesley's visit to Boston preceded the existence of The Episcopal Church and the organization of its Diocese of Massachusetts. At the time churches of the Anglican communion were under the authority of the Bishop of London.

The Boston Visit

A. Persons whom Charles Wesley met in Boston⁵

1. The Rev. Roger Price

Certainly Charles Wesley's arrival in Boston was not anticipated by any-

⁵ See *Classified Digest of the Records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts 1701-1892* (London: Published at the Society's Office, 1893).

one. There was no prior announcement of his coming, no letter of introduction. Indeed, there was some initial disbelief that he was even a priest of the Church of England. On his first morning in Boston, September 25, Wesley went straight to the most high-ranking official of the Church of England resident there, The Rev. Roger Price, the Commissary of the Bishop of London. Price was born December 6, 1696, the eldest son of The Rev. William and Elizabeth Price, and was educated at Oxford where he received the B.A. degree from Balliol College in 1717.

Here is Charles's complete *Journal* entry for September 25, regarding his first meeting with Price.

Called several times at Mr Price, the commissary's, before I found him at home. At first he looked as not believing me to be a clergyman (my ship-clothes not being the best credentials). But when I returned in my habit (Dr [Timothy] Cutler having met him meantime, and informed him of me), he received me very cordially, and pressed me to live with him while I stayed in Boston.⁶

What possibly could have been Wesley's expectations in calling on the Commissary? First and foremost, he probably felt it his duty, as he himself was under the authority of the Bishop of London, who had jurisdiction in North America and was hence Wesley's bishop. While being an ordained clergy person would unquestionably have given him some status of importance in the British colonies, nevertheless, unless there were some official communiques available to Church of England clergy, which informed them of the current missionary assignments for North America, and that is entirely possible, the Boston clergy probably had little or no information about Charles. Nevertheless to have been so cordially received by The Rev. Roger Price, the Commissary of the Bishop of London, and invited to stay in his home, indicates that the Commissary could have had some information about Charles, other than The Rev. Dr. Cutler's words of encouragement, whom Charles apparently met first upon arrival in Boston.

2. *The Rev. Dr. Timothy Cutler*

It is extremely interesting that just two days after his arrival in Boston this unknown, inexperienced young priest was invited by Dr. Timothy Cutler, rector of Christ Church, to preach in the morning at the church and in the afternoon by The Rev. Price to preach at his church, King's Chapel.

Who were these persons first to receive Charles Wesley in Boston? The Rev. Dr. Timothy Cutler was the first rector of Christ Church. He conducted the first service of worship in the church on December 29, 1723, just after the completion of the building. Cutler was born in 1683, in Charlestown and the son of Major John Cutler. In 1701 he graduated from Harvard College and on January 11, 1710, he was ordained and installed as the pastor of

⁶ MSJ, 64.

a Congregational church in Stratford, Connecticut. Cutler became known for his excellent preaching, for which he was invited to preach before the General Assembly of Connecticut in October of 1719. In March of the same year he had become rector of Yale College.

He became a convert to Anglicanism, however, and went to England for his ordination, which he received in March 1723 by Bishop Green of Norwich. He was then licensed as a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Dr. Cutler's move, however, from Congregationalism to Anglicanism won him no friends among emerging American patriots and the non-Anglican religious community. He was subsequently informed that his services would no longer be needed at Yale. In any case, welcomed by non-Puritans, he was assigned as the first rector of Christ Church where he served from 1723 to 1765, the year he died (December 29).

One can only wonder what it was that motivated this distinguished clergyman of such standing to invite the young Charles Wesley, after only a day and a half of acquaintance, to preach at Christ Church. Was it curiosity about a young priest who had been serving on the "frontier" in Georgia? Was there a winsomeness about the young Wesley? Was Wesley's visit, as a representative of the mother church an important signal to a community filled with Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Puritans, Dissenters? Was Cutler poorly prepared with his own sermon for Sunday, September 26th? One is left to the imagination. This much is clear, however, Wesley was on his way back to England with official reports from Governor Oglethorpe of Georgia to proper authorities in London, and he would be able to take messages in person to the Bishop of London. Furthermore, it seems highly unlikely that Dr. Cutler would have invited Charles to preach from his pulpit, if there had not been something about Wesley that convinced him that this was a young man with something to say and someone to whom he could entrust the people of his parish and the pulpit of his church.

There must have been a sense of trust and confidence in the young priest, Charles Wesley, on the part of Dr. Cutler, since his son, John, who was to enter the ministry, left with Wesley for passage on the same ship to England for his ordination.

3. *Mr. John Checkley*

On his first Sunday in Boston, September 26, Wesley notes in his *Journal* that, after preaching at Christ Church and at King's Chapel, he spent the evening with Mr. "Chicheley." The name is misspelled by Wesley. This gentleman was unquestionably John Checkley, who was born in the year 1680 in Boston. He owned a shop in the middle of Boston, where he sold books, medicines, and other small articles, and the shop was a popular gathering place. He was an ardent supporter of the Church of England and a

noted church Controversialist. This is demonstrated by the fact that he went to England three times for ordination but due to opposition by his enemies, especially Presbyterians, failed to receive it until he was sixty years old (1739). He then served South Providence from 1739 to 1754, the year he died (April 15). This means Checkley was still seeking ordination at the time Charles Wesley was in Boston. In Wesley's record of the first encounter with Checkley on September 26, he described him as "a right honest zealous advocate for the Church of England, who has on that account, been cruelly persecuted by the Presbyterians."⁷

In the colony Checkley had been more than a nominal Controversialist. He was such a staunch loyalist that he had published tracts opposing Presbyterians and others who were not within the fold of the Church of England. On one occasion he was even brought to trial for libelous activity in this regard.

Mr. Checkley . . . went to England, in 1728, to apply for holy orders, but he had succeeded in rousing against him the enmity of the whole New England Church; and a letter from two of its ministers to Bishop Gibson led that prelate to refuse him ordination, as being an enemy of the House of Hanover, an enemy to all other Christian denominations, and an uneducated man,—three charges which were all peculiarly offensive to that eminent scholar and catholic Whig bishop. Checkley returned to Boston to busy himself in the affairs of the church, as is indicated by our later records.⁸

The amount of time Wesley spent with Checkley during the month in Boston is quite significant, for there are four *Journal* entries that mention him. On October 12, Wesley recorded:

Supper with several of the clergy at Mr. Checkley's, who entertained us very agreeably with his adventures. He seems to have excellent natural parts, much solid learning, and true primitive piety; is acquainted with the power, and therefore holds fast the form of Godliness; obstinate as my father in good, and not to borne down by evil.⁹

Checkley has probably related to Charles some of the experiences he had endured in having his ordination in the Church of England opposed. It is interesting that two days later, October 14, Wesley made this entry in his *Journal*:

Was taken up with the clergy, in drawing up recommendation of him (Checkley) to the Bishop of London for orders. The bishop had been formerly frightened from ordaining him, by the outcries of the Presbyterians. They were wise to keep a man out of the ministry who had in a private capacity approved himself such a champion of the Church.¹⁰

⁷ MSJ, 64.

⁸ Foote, 1:304.

⁹ MSJ, 66.

¹⁰ MSJ, 66.

Again on October 17, Wesley spent time with Mr. Checkley. They discussed “spiritual religion” and the latter’s wife observed that much of Wesley’s thinking was like that of William Law. Wesley was delighted to hear Law mentioned and discovered that Checkley’s wife was well acquainted with Law’s *Serious Call*. He learned that she owned one of the two copies of the book in New England, which Wesley immediately borrowed. He spent an evening reading it to the Williams family with whom he was staying. According to Wesley’s account the reading seems to have had a strong influence on Mr. Williams and his daughter.

In the only known, extant letter written from Boston to his brother John, Charles remarked of Checkley:

I find he has been, throughout his life, persecuted, only not to death, by the spirit of Presbytery. It has reduced him and his family to the last extremity. . . . Made for abstinence and hardships. . . . He has studied America, as much as most men in it. I carry recommendations of him to the Bishop of London, who was formerly frightened by his pretended Jacobitism from admitting him to Holy Orders to which he has for about twenty years devoted himself.¹¹

Finally, there is a mention of Mr. Checkley on Monday, October 25. Checkley brings the message that Charles Wesley was to board the ship. When they arrived at the wharf, however, Wesley had to wait in the cold for half an hour.¹² His *Journal* entry says, “Mr. Checkley helped me into the boat and covered me up.” Wesley was quite sick at the time and concerned about exposure to the cold weather.

It seems that through Wesley’s encounters with Checkley he was convinced that the latter was a man of honor, capability, spiritual depth, and worthy of ordination. Perhaps the assistance Charles gave in writing a recommendation for him to the Bishop of London exercised some of the influence necessary for the bishop to reverse his previously negative decision and to ordain Checkley. The bishop did change his mind and Checkley was ordained in 1739.

4. Mr. Jonathan Belcher

On Monday, September 30, we learn that Wesley visited the governor, Jonathan Belcher, grandson of Andrew Belcher, a tavern-keeper in Cambridge during the early days of Harvard College. Jonathan Belcher’s father, Andrew, however, became a wealthy Boston merchant and counselor of the province and sent his son to Harvard where he graduated in 1699. Belcher’s selection as governor did not make many loyalists happy, for he was American-born. Yet, it was precisely this fact that he used as an

¹¹ At the conclusion see the three-part letter, which includes entries for October 17, 18, 21, and 25.

¹² MSJ, 68.

argument to convince the proper authorities that he was the right choice at the time. He was sympathetic with the Congregationalists and a Dissenter, though he acted as if the King's Chapel in Boston were really his domain. Why did Charles Wesley go to visit him? Perhaps his official relationship as the secretary of the governor of Georgia motivated him to seek out the governor of Massachusetts for conversation.

Here is Dr. Cutler's opinion of the new governor.

Very mortifying to the Church here is the Governor, whom we expect every day, Jonathan Belcher, Esq. Not long ago this gentleman married his daughter here to a person baptised and brought up in the Church; but not before he had strictly obliged him entirely to forsake the Church, which the booby has faithfully done.¹³

It must be said in Belcher's defense, however, that he succeeded in garnering the support of King George II for Christ Church. Over a three year period the King sent the following gifts to the church: a silver Holy Communion set, a Bible, prayer books, a damask, cushions, and vestments. The Communion silver is housed in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

5. *The Rev. Ebenezer Miller*

During the afternoon of September 30, Charles Wesley was visited by Mr. Millar (misspelled in the *Journal*, should be Miller), "a good-natured clergyman."¹⁴ This was Ebenezer Miller (died 1763), holder of the Doctor of Divinity from Harvard College, and M.A. and D.D. degrees from Oxford. Miller was the brother of John Checkley's wife. He was assigned to a mission in South Braintree (later Christ Church, Quincy), where he served from 1727 to 1761. Miller was a native-born New Englander and a part of a well known and respected Braintree family. On October 4, Wesley recorded, "I rode with Mr. and Mrs. Price, Dr. Cutler (his son, and Mr. Brig, two Cambridge scholars), to see Mr. Miller, at Braintree."¹⁵ Clearly it is The Rev. Ebenezer Miller who was serving at Braintree whom Charles Wesley mentioned. Miller was also not immune to criticism.

Dr. Miller was well versed in the history and doctrines of the Church, and not afraid to meet in public polemic discussion Parson Dunbar of the First Church, who accused him of having been sent by his superiors to "foment disturbances" and "cause divisions" among the churches of New England, and by "promoting Episcopacy," to increase the political influence of the Crown.¹⁶

The last entry in the *Journal* mentioning Mr. Miller is on October 18.

Accordingly Mr. Miller came very early to attend me to the ship. I took occasion

¹³ Foote, 1:398.

¹⁴ MSJ, 54.

¹⁵ MSJ, 65.

¹⁶ Foote, 1:259.

to mention the book I had borrowed of his sister, Mrs. Checkley, and read him the characters of Cognatus and Uranius. He liked them much and promised he would carefully read the whole.¹⁷

6. *The Rev. Addington Davenport*

On October 4, after an outing to Braintree with The Rev. and Mrs. Price and Dr. Cutler, as well as Cutler's son and a Mr. Brig, both students at Cambridge, Charles Wesley learned that a Mr. Davenport had come to visit him. Wesley described him as "a worthy clergyman, as deserving of the name as any I see in New England."¹⁸

Who was this man who had come to call on Wesley? He was The Rev. Addington Davenport, who was born on May 16, 1701, and graduated from Harvard College in 1719, and received the M.A. from Oxford on March 12, 1732. Charles received his B.A. degree from Oxford in 1730 and his M.A. degree in 1733. Therefore, he and Davenport had been students at the same time in Oxford. Whether they knew each other then is not known. In 1732 Davenport was appointed by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts and became the second missionary at St. Andrew's Church in Scituate, where he served from 1732 to 1737. Afterwards from 1737 to 1740, he was the assistant at King's Chapel (Boston), and in May of 1740, he became the first rector of the Trinity Church in Boston, which was built in 1733.

There is no indication that Charles Wesley had any association with the Trinity Church or its clergy during the time of his visit in Boston. The Rev. Davenport was still serving the St. Andrew's Church in Scituate at the time. He did not become rector at Trinity Church until the spring of 1737, as indicated, and by that time Wesley had departed Boston.

Why would Davenport have come to call on Charles Wesley? Had they known of each other at Oxford, or had Davenport heard of Wesley's association with Oxford University and, hence, wanted to meet this man with whom he shared a common background? Perhaps the word had spread rather quickly that Wesley had preached the previous two Sundays at King's Chapel and at Christ Church and on the latter of those Sundays, October 3, he also assisted with the administration of Holy Communion at Old North Church. Unfortunately we do not know the reason for Davenport's calling on Wesley.

7. *Mr. Peter Appee*

This is someone whom Charles Wesley probably wishes he had never met. He was a Dutchman, who had taken passage to the New World on the ship

¹⁷ MSJ, 67.

¹⁸ MSJ, 65.

Simmonds at the same time Charles made the voyage in 1735. At first he seemed to be quite serious about religion but then turned out to be somewhat of a conartist. Apparently he had intended to marry a certain Miss Bovey, whom he met in Georgia, after he had returned to Holland and had gotten some person and business matters in order. Miss Bovey, a beautiful young woman mentioned by Charles in the Georgia section of his *Journal*, however, died quite suddenly and her death is mentioned in John Wesley's records as well.

Appee had plagued Wesley about religion, as well as money. He even tried to procure loans from him with no intent to repay them. In a letter entry dated October 21, Wesley records: "Appee, like an errant gentleman as he is, has drawn me into monstrous expenses for ship stores, etc."¹⁹ Given his deceitful behavior on numerous occasions, one cannot be convinced that anything he said had one iota of truth. While in Boston, Appee continued to be an annoyance to Wesley. According to the *Journal*, on October 21, when Wesley was very sick,

Appee came, and laboured all he could to dissuade me from the voyage [i.e. his return to England], promising himself to deliver my letters and papers, and excuse me to Mr Oglethorpe, Mr Price, Williams, etc., joined him. But I put an end to their importunity by assuring them nothing less than death should hinder my embarking.

. . . .
Friday, October 22. It may be of use hereafter to remember Appee's behaviour at Boston. He gave out that his design in coming to Georgia had been to take charge of the people there. But finding Mr Oglethorpe just a genius as himself, he thought his own stay there was not so necessary, but he might safely quit the interest of the colony, which, had it not been to such an hand, he could never have prevailed on himself to do. That at present he was unresolved where to bestow himself; only that it should be on that part of mankind which needed him the most. That he was going to England about matters of the last importance. Two or three letters of no moment, he said, I carried; but all secret dispatches to the Duke of Newcastle, and other ministers of state, he was charged with. From the court of Great Britain he was to be sent envoy to Spain. His money, a few 100s of pounds, he had (in some companies) sent before him to England; in others had turned it into silver, and freighted Indivine's ship.²⁰

Typical of Appee's behavior is what transpired after Charles Wesley finally got on board the ship *Hannah* on October 25, to depart for England. Once on board, having been so ill, he lay down in a state room, noting that he was "less fatigued . . . than I expected."²¹ Nevertheless, Appee, who knew how sick Wesley had been, came on board and told Wesley that he wanted the state-room where Wesley was resting, since it was assigned to him.

¹⁹ See complete letter at the end of this article.

²⁰ MSJ, 67-68.

²¹ MSJ, 68.

8. *Dr. Graves* (misspelled, should be Greaves)

Thomas Greaves (pronounced “Graves”), who practiced medicine in Boston, was consulted by Charles Wesley during his visit. Greaves was an active member of Christ Church during its early years and a significant contributor toward the costs of building the church. He also served as First Senior Warden, and subsequently was a member of the vestry at various times. He was also an original pew owner. It seems that in 1736 he was serving as a judge for the Superior Court of the Province.

On October 9, Wesley recorded, “Was dragged out to consult Dr Graves about my increasing flux. He prescribed a vomit, from which I received much benefit.”²² Yet, on Monday, October 25, Wesley stated in his *Journal*, “This morning Dr Graves came over from Charlestown to see me, gave me physic, and advice.”²³ Is this the same Dr. Graves whom Charles consulted on October 9? It is assumed so.

9. *The Plasteds, Mr. and Mrs. Williams, Dr. Gibbons, Dr. Gardner*

To date I have been unable to locate any background information on the following persons of whom Charles Wesley also writes in the account of the *Journal*: The Plasteds, Mr. and Mrs. Williams, Dr. Gibbons and Dr. Gardener.

Wesley notes on October 5, that he dined at Mr. Plasted’s, “a London acquaintance of my brother’s who from thence took occasion to find me out, and showed me all the friendship and civility he could, while I stayed in Boston.”²⁴

Wesley apparently stayed for a number of days in the home of the Williams family while in Boston, however, this author has not discovered anything about them, except that Wesley mentions that he spent an evening reading William Law’s *Serious Call* to them and that the father and daughter were quite impressed.

Wesley’s sojourn in Boston is marked by happy times, especially his encounters and fellowship with the Anglican clergy of Boston and the surrounding area. He seems to circulate quite freely and with ease among them, such as Dr. Cutler and The Rev. Price, who held distinguished positions in the colony, and among those who were serving mission stations, such as The Rev. Miller. According to Charles Wesley’s *Journal*, some of them apparently sought him out as well, e.g. Davenport and Miller.

²² MSJ, 65-66.

²³ MSJ, 68.

²⁴ MSJ, 65.

B. Places and Experiences

(1) *Priestly functions:*

(a) Preaching—According to Wesley’s *Journal* he preached six times during his stay in Boston, twice on each of the succeeding Sundays: September 26, October 3, and October 10. On September 26 and October 3, he preached at Old North Church (Christ Church) in the morning and in the afternoon at King’s Chapel. He records that he preached twice on October 10, but provides no record of where or when. The sermon he preached on September 26 was entitled “The One Thing Needful.”²⁵ On October 3, he preached on the text “There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest [Job 3:17].” He preached the same sermon in the afternoon to the congregation of King’s Chapel. There is no indication of either sermon topics or biblical readings for October 10, and there is no record in the *Journal* that he preached on Sunday, October 17 or 24. There is no entry for Sunday, October 24.

(b) Sacrament of Holy Communion—According to Wesley’s record of Sunday, October 3, he received the Sacrament of Holy Communion for the first time in two months: “After two months’ want of it, I again enjoyed the benefit of the Sacrament, which I assisted Dr Cutler to administer.”²⁶ This would indicate that on his first Sunday in Boston, September 26, when he preached at Christ Church in the morning and King’s Chapel in the afternoon, he did not receive or administer the Sacrament. Perhaps the services on September 26 were the Daily Office.

There is one other entry in the *Journal* for the Boston visit which records participation in the sacrament of Holy Communion. It is on October 10: “Recovered a little strength in the Sacrament.”²⁷ There are no records for the Sundays October 17 or 24, that Wesley either received or administered the Sacrament and no indication that on the weekdays, as was often his practice, that he received or celebrated the sacrament.

(2) *Places visited by Charles Wesley*

Aside from his stay in Boston proper, Wesley visited a number of places in the surrounding area on three days—October 2, 4, and 5. (a) On October 2, he made an excursion into the countryside with The Rev. Price.

I rode out with Mr Price in his chaise, to see the country, which is wonderfully delightful. The only passage out of town is a neck of land about two hundred yards over; all the rest being encircled with the sea. The temperate air, the clear rivulets,

²⁵ Charles transcribed a number of his brother John’s sermons, of which this is one. See Richard P. Heitzenrater, “Early Sermons of John and Charles Wesley,” in *Mirror and Memory* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1989), 150–61. Cf. Newport, *Sermons*, 79, 360–68.

²⁶ MSJ, 65.

²⁷ MSJ, 66.

and the beautiful hills and dales, which we everywhere met with, seemed to present the very reverse of Georgia.²⁸

(b) The following day, October 4, he rode to Braintree with the Prices, Dr. Cutler, his son and another student from Cambridge to visit The Rev. Miller. Perhaps Miller had extended Wesley an invitation, when he called on Wesley in Boston. (c) And on October 5, after dining with the Plasteds, who, as noted, were London acquaintances of his brother John, he “drove Mr Cutler to Cambridge. I had only time to observe the civility of the fellows, the regularity of the buildings, and pleasantness of the situation.”²⁹

There are no *Journal* entries for October 6, 7, and 8, and one can only assume that Charles was becoming ill, since on October 9, he noted, “Was dragged out to consult Dr Graves about my increasing flux.”³⁰ There are no other *Journal* entries indicating that he made further excursions to other places. This was no doubt due to his weakened and ill state.

(3) *Illness*

Wesley indicated that he was already not feeling well after preaching on October 10: “my body was extremely weakened by preaching twice.”³¹ The day before he consulted a doctor about “my increasing flux” [diarrhea]. He prescribed a vomit, from which I received my benefit.”³² A week later, on Saturday, October 16, he wrote: “My illness increasing, notwithstanding all the doctors could do for me, I began seriously to consider my condition; and at my evening hour of retirement found benefit from Pascal’s prayer on sickness.”³³ The entry for October 19 and 20 states: “I grew worse and worse, and on Thursday, Oct. 21, was forced to keep my chamber through pain.”³⁴ That day he wrote to his brother John, “If my pains have any intermission, the walking up or down stairs or the speaking three sentences, brings them, back again.”³⁵

From October 22 to 24, he was still trying to overcome his illness. “Within that time,” Wesley says, “I vomited, purged, bled, sweated, and took laudanum, which entirely drained me of the little strength I had left.”³⁶ The lack of an entry for October 24, may have been due to illness. The following day, October 25, he felt “surprisingly better, though not yet able to walk.”³⁷ That same day Dr. Greaves came to visit him, examined him, and

²⁸ MSJ, 65.

²⁹ MSJ, 65.

³⁰ MSJ, 65-66.

³¹ MSJ, 66.

³² MSJ, 65-66.

³³ MSJ, 66.

³⁴ MSJ, 67.

³⁵ See complete letter at the end of this chapter.

³⁶ MSJ, 67.

³⁷ MSJ, 68.

wrote out some instructions for medical care. This was the same day Wesley finally boarded the ship to depart for England. However, it was a very difficult day for this very ill man. Rev. Price drove him to the wharf, but when they got there the ship was not ready for boarding. Therefore, Charles was forced to wait half an hour in the cold air. When he finally boarded a smaller boat to take him to the ship, it took another two hours just to reach the ship *Hannah* and board.

On October 26, the day the ship finally was clear of all land, Wesley stated in his *Journal*: “Entered upon the doctor’s regimen, and quickly found the benefit.”³⁸

C. Correspondence

One cannot conclude a discussion of “Charles Wesley in Boston” without giving careful consideration to the letters he wrote while in Boston. Only one *Journal* entry indicates that he corresponded while in Boston. On October 1, he recorded: “I wrote to my brother concerning my return to Georgia, which I found myself inclined to refer wholly to God.”³⁹ Frank Baker indicates, however, in his study, *Charles Wesley As Revealed by His Letters*, that Charles wrote a number of letters while in Boston.

On October 5 and 6, Charles wrote a lengthy letter to his brother John in an interestingly coded fashion. The brothers had already endured many difficulties with intercepted letters opened by others and Charles was determined to avoid that difficulty by writing this letter in Latin, Greek, and shorthand. Baker cites the one English longhand passage:

Oct. 6. If you are as desirous as I am of a correspondence, you must set upon Byrom’s shorthand immediately. I leave my journal and other papers with Mr. Price, which he will send you if I fall short of England.⁴⁰

The letter is filled with reflections on the conflicts and despair experienced in Georgia and indicates Charles’s uneasiness about the future. All of the slanderous insults he endured while in Georgia continued to plague him. Nevertheless, he knew his own heart and that he had a clear conscience. Here is a brief passage transcribed from shorthand by Frank Baker.

Dear Brother,

I take (advantage?) of the deepest seriousness and best temper I have known since the fatal hour I left Oxford, to lay open my very heart, as I call God to witness that what I now write comes from it. You know what has passed in Georgia. . . . The snare is broken, and I am delivered by the only expedient that could have saved me. . . . I sometimes think how to dispose of the remainder of a (mad?) life. I can either live at Oxford or with my brother, who before I left England had provided for me without my asking. He will labour all he can to settle me. But I trust God will not

³⁸ MSJ, 68.

³⁹ MSJ, 65.

⁴⁰ Baker, 26.

suffer me to set up my rest there.⁴¹

The letter indicates that Commissary Price had offered Wesley a church in Boston or the surrounding area, but Charles continued in shorthand:

But Georgia alone can give me the solitude I seek after. I cannot look for a long life there, but neither do I count that a blessing.⁴²

After all the turmoil Wesley had endured in Georgia and on board the ship with Captain Indivine, it is not surprising that he needed time alone for reflection. Boston, however, hardly afforded him that privilege. He wrote to John:

I am wearied with this hospitable people, they so vex and tease me with their civilities. 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. I am constrained to take a view of this New England, more pleasant even than the old. I cannot help exclaiming, "O happy country, that cherishes neither *flies*, nor *crocodiles*, nor *informers*."⁴³

Not only was Charles experiencing inner unrest over excess hospitality and civility, he was greatly disturbed physically and emotionally because of the illness that had begun in Georgia and which he thought he had shaken. No doubt the following passage was written to John before he consulted Dr. Greaves.

My disorder, once removed by this most salubrious air, has again returned. All my friends advise me to consult a physician, but I cannot afford so expensive a funeral.⁴⁴

Three additional excerpts cited by Baker from Charles's letters to John from Boston indicate the kind of mood swings the young priest was experiencing as he contemplated departing for England.

October 15:

I should be glad for your sake to give a satisfactory account of myself, but that you must never expect from me. It is fine talking while we have youth and health on our side; but sickness would spoil your boasting as well as mine. . . .

Thou I am apt to think that I shall at length arrive in England to deliver what I am entrusted with, yet do I not expect, or wish for, a long life. How strong must the principle of self-preservation be, which can make such a wretch as I am willing to live at all!—Or rather unwilling to die; for I know no greater pleasure in life, than in considering that it cannot last for ever. . . . I am just now much worse than ever; but nothing less than death shall hinder me from embarking.

The most revealing letter is one bearing entries on four specific dates: October 17, 18, 21, and 25. The entire text of the letter is included here.

⁴¹ Baker, 27.

⁴² Baker, 27.

⁴³ Baker, 27.

⁴⁴ Baker, 27. See Whitehead's *John Wesley*, 1:141-142.

Friday, Boston

Dear Brother,

If I ever see England, it will be by that time this reaches you. My poor friend here has not yet convinced me of your hypocrisy but I take for granted you have still a disinterested concern for my happiness. I should be glad for your sake, to give a satisfactory account of myself, but that you must never expect from me. They have dragged me at last to a physician, whose prescriptions I have followed hitherto without effect: but he cannot answer for their success unless I could stay a few days on shore, which is impracticable. 'Tis fine talking while we have youth and health on our side; but sickness would spoil your marooning, as well as mine. I am now glad of a warm bed, but must quickly betake myself to my board again. לטובה וגם זאת [Hebrew: moreover, this would be for good].

Though I am apt to believe I shall at length arrive in England and to deliver what I am entrusted with, yet do I not expect or wish for a long life. How strong must the principle of self-preservation be, which can make such a wretch as me willing to live at all!—Or rather unwilling to die; for I know no greater pleasure in life, than in considering [that] it cannot last for ever!

. . . The temptations past⁴⁵

No none shall vex me; every grief I feel
Shortens the destined number, every pulse
Beats a sharp moment of the pain away,
And the last stroke will come. By swift degrees
Time sweeps me off, and I shall soon arrive
At life's sweet period. O Celestial Point
That ends this mortal story!

Today completes my three weeks unnecessary stay in Boston. Tomorrow the ship falls down. I am just now much worse than ever, but nothing less than death shall hinder my embarking. Mr Oglethorpe I know will gladly excuse my writing. I should write to my two other Georgia friends, would pain permit. Don't forget poor Lasserre.

October 18. A blast attends all that belongs to me. The ship that carries me must move with endless delays. 'Tis well if it sails this week. I have lived so long in honours and indulgences that I have almost forgot whereunto I am called; being strongly urged to set up rest here. But I will lean no longer upon men. When I again put myself in the power of any of my own merciless species, either expecting their kindness or desiring their esteem. **z! <, 82XJ@ MD, *, D, \60!** [Let him go to Frederica! (i.e., go to hell!)]

I must mention an unhappy matter to you. Mr John Checkley, and *valeat quantum valere potest* [let him be strong in so far as he is able]. By the strictest enquiry of friends and enemies, I find he has throughout his life, persecuted, only not to death, by the spirit of Presbytery. It has reduced him and his family to the last extremity. He has excellent natural parts, much solid learning, and true primitive piety, is acquainted with the power and therefore holds fast the form of godliness; obstinate as was my father in good, and not to be borne down by evil. **5V8@! EJD'J4FJ0I** [a good soldier]; **};! @G<@! 1, @*D': @!** [God's untiring runner]; **};! 6: T< JIBJ': , @!** [an anvil when it is beaten]. Mr Oglethorpe himself does not

⁴⁵ Isaac Watts, *Horae Lyricae* (1709), Book II, "Sacred Vertue, Loyalty, and Friendship." Wesley reverses the first line "The temptations past" which reads "The past Temptations" in the original. In line 2, he changes "vex us" to "vex me" and in line 6 "we shall" to "I shall." He apparently omitted line 4: "Beats a sharp moment of the pain away." Gratitude is expressed to Professor Richard Watson for identification of this passage.

better understand nor is more beloved by the Indians than he: he is activity itself. Made for abstinence and hardships. But for his family he had taken a walk over now to see Mr Oglethorpe. He has studied America, as much as most men in it. I carry recommendations of him to the Bishop of London, who was formerly frightened by his pretended Jacobitism from admitting him into Holy Orders, to which he has for about these twenty years devoted himself.

He understands surveying and fortification: on which and 1,000 other accounts I thought he might be of great use in Georgia, but could not venture proposing it [to] him without first obtaining Mr. Oglethorpe's directions. Should I die in the passage, you are at liberty to give him anything that was mine. My solo heir and executor at Tiverton, I am sure, will consent to it.

Apee, like an errant gentleman as he is, has drawn me into monstrous expenses for ship stores, etc., so that what with my three-week's stay at Charlestown, my month's stay here, and my double passage, from Courtier I am turned philosopher. But this I absolutely forbid your mentioning to Mr. [Oglethorpe], except in the above case of my death. Then add to the account of my life "laid down in his service," and let him judge on whose side is the balance.

October 21. I am worried on all sides by my friends' solicitations to defer my winter's voyage till I have recovered a little strength. So far I agree with you and the physicians that to go in my condition is running upon certain death. If my pains have any intermission, the walking up or down stairs, or the speaking three sentences, brings them back again. Mr. [____], I am apt to think, would allow me to wait a fortnight for the next ship; but then, if I recover, my stay will be thought unnecessary. I must die to prove myself sick, and I can do no more at sea. I am therefore determined to be carried on board tomorrow morning and leave the event to God.

October 25. The ship fell down as was expected, but providence sent a contrary wind that hindered my following till now. Since the 21st, I have tried the virtue of vomits, purges, bleeding, and opiates. I am at present something better. On board the *Hannah*, Captain Corney [i.e., Cornish?]; in the state-room, which they have forced upon me. I have not strength for more.

Adieu!⁴⁶

Summary and Evaluation

What are we to make of this unexpected visit of Charles Wesley to Boston? Clearly, though a young priest, who had just served four months in the colony of Georgia and was on his way back to London, he seemed to attract considerable attention. His immediate invitations to preach at the most prestigious Anglican churches, Christ Church and King's Chapel, indicate that his presence was regarded as significant. The Boston community was wrought with religious strife and steadily American patriotism was surfacing with increasing tension between people of the Anglican persuasion on the one hand and Puritans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and diverse Dissenters on the other. Into this atmosphere of religious tension came a young priest of the Church of England, who must have been a symbol of hope and affirmation to the Boston Anglicans. He was dined, entertained, and placed before the community in the most conspicuous places, namely,

⁴⁶ A copy of this letter is found in the Frank Baker Collection of the Divinity School of Duke University. I am grateful to Dr. Richard P. Heitzenrater for making it available to me.

the most significant Church of England pulpits of Boston. Wesley seems to have enjoyed himself in Boston, aside from his illness and the overbearing hospitality. He seems to have been comfortable circulating among the Anglican clergy of the colony and there is no indication that he had contact with any clergy of the churches who were increasingly at odds with the Church of England. No doubt he used his position as Governor Oglethorpe's secretary and Secretary for Indian Affairs in Georgia as an entree to the governor of Massachusetts, Jonathan Belcher, whom he visited shortly after his arrival. There is no record of his conversation with the governor; only a record of the visit itself. Nevertheless, as a man with credentials from the Church of England and Oglethorpe's emissary to the proper authorities in London, Wesley arrived in Boston and was received with graciousness and respect.

One thing is very clear, however, from his letters to his brother John at this time. He was in no wise persuaded that he should remain in Boston either to receive an appointment to a church by Commissary Price or long enough to recover from his illness and regain strength before setting out on a voyage home. He was determined to leave at all costs.

What possible impact could the Boston visit have had on Wesley the hymn writer and poet? He was not yet known as a sacred poet and it was not until after his conversion on May 21, 1738, that he appeared on the sacred literary horizon, destined for enduring notoriety as Britain's greatest eighteenth-century religious poet. His lifelong commitment to ministry within the Anglican Communion is affirmed in his experience with the Anglican clergy and their parishes, which is almost the exclusive sphere of his experience while in Boston. While in his later life he, with his brother John, was an initiator and integral part of the Methodist movement, he never thought of it outside the Church of England. And the high ecclesiology he espoused in the hymns, which he seems to have begun writing with regularity after his conversion on May 21, 1738, was in no sense weakened on the American frontier. Certainly the Presbyterians, Puritans, and Congregationalists of Boston had no effect upon him.

By the time George Whitefield came to Boston in September of 1740, however, the attitude toward the Wesleys, Whitefield, and the evangelical movement they were leading within the Church of England had changed radically. On May 9th of that year The Rev. Roger Price of Boston wrote to the Bishop of London: "My Lord, Mr. Whitefield, who is occasion of much debate and enquiry, is expected here the next fall. I shall be glad to receive your Lordship's direction for my behaviour towards him."⁴⁷

Whitefield arrived in Boston on September 18, 1740. The following day he visited King's Chapel and went home with The Rev. Price and visited with Church of England clergy. He was not, however, invited to preach,

⁴⁷ Foote, 1:504.

as was Charles Wesley, at King's Chapel or at Christ Church. He was invited to preach at Old South Meeting House, a popular meeting place for Dissenters, and throngs of people came to hear him. He also preached at the Boston Commons in the open air to thousands of people.

On June 15, 1741, not quite a year after Whitefield's first visit to Boston, Mr. Brockwell, who would soon be an assistant at King's Chapel, wrote to the Secretary of the Bishop of London as follows:

The Wesleys and Whitefield are expected here in the fall. We universally dread the consequences of their coming, and I am sure as to myself I shall be glad of the Society's direction how to behave in such perilous times. The two former, if enemies, are powerful ones,—men of great capacities, and fortified by a large fund of learning, whereof Whitefield is destitute, and therefore the victory over him is neither difficult nor glorious, however he may boast in his libelous and scandalous Journals. If the venerable Society please to favour us with their instructions how we are to treat these itinerant Preachers, the sooner the better, that we may be armed against the approach of (I fear) these enemies to our church and constitution.⁴⁸

In 1743 Dr. Cutler summed up Whitefield's first visit to Boston in this way.

When Mr. Whitefield first arrived here, the whole town was alarmed. He made his first visit to our church on a Friday, and conversed with many of our clergy together and belied them—me especially—when he had done. Being not invited into our pulpits, the Dissenters were highly pleased and engrossed him; and immediately the wellspring, and all hands went to Lecture; and this show kept on all the while he was here. The town was ever alarmed; the streets filled with people, with coaches, with chaises,—all for the benefit of that holy man. The conventicles were crowded; but he chose rather our Common, where multitudes might see him in his awful postures; besides that in one crowded conventicle, before he came in, six were killed with fright. The fellow treated the most venerable with an air of superiority. But he forever lashed and anathematized the Church of England, and that was enough.⁴⁹

If one turns to the significant amount of secular poetry written by Charles Wesley, which was not published until 1988 and 1992, in volumes one and three of *The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*,⁵⁰ edited by myself and British colleague, the late Oliver A. Beckerlegge, one gains tremendous insight into the kinds of political views which must have been buttressed by Wesley's visit to Boston, though one cannot say unequivocally that they were shaped by the Boston sojourn.

Charles Wesley was a Tory and loyal supporter of the crown and he believed that the throne and magistrates were divinely appointed. He clearly believed in the right of kings to govern personally. The idea of a constitutional monarchy was completely foreign to him, as well as the idea of democracy. Charles also had difficulty dividing loyalty to the king and his nation from the essentials of religion. Indeed, they were intimately linked.

⁴⁸ Foote, 1:509.

⁴⁹ Foote 1:507.

⁵⁰ Nashville: Abingdon/Kingswood, 1988, 1992. Vol. 2 was published in 1990.

Here are his lines entitled “For the Magistrates.”

Thou, Lord of lords, and King of kings,
The eternal Potentate we own;
From Thee its Source dominion springs,
A stream that issues from Thy throne:
Thou hast ordained the powers that be,
Who govern by a grant from Thee.

To George in majesty supreme
We bow, as sitting on Thy seat,
To every ruler sent by him,
To every magistrate submit,
Whose delegated power is Thine,
Whose whole authority, Divine.⁵¹

Charles Wesley left unpublished at his death an over six hundred-line epic poem on the American Revolution and a very large manuscript entitled simply “MS Patriotism.” Both are filled with his lyrical admonitions of loyalty to the crown and opposition to the American Revolution and patriotism. He is convinced that the brothers Admiral Viscount Howe and General Howe, Commander-in-Chief of the British military during the American War of Independence, are responsible for Britain’s loss of the war and he has no friendly words for them. Here is Wesley’s opinion of the latter:

What now has our great Captain done?
...
Wasted our lives with wanton pleasure,
And twenty millions of our treasure:
His Sovereign basely disobeyed;
His trust perfidiously betrayed;
His Country sold; his duty slighted;
The Colonies with France united;
Made our amazing Efforts vain;
Embroided us both with France and Spain;
Gained his own Party the ascendant,
And made AMERICA independent!⁵²

Here is a brief excerpt from his poem on the American Revolution.

When liberty unbounded reigns
And binds rebellious Kings in chains,
Till every humbled Monarch know
From whence his regal honors flow,
And prostrate in the dust adore
That awful original power;

⁵¹ George Osborn, ed. *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, 13 vols. (London: the Methodist Conference, 1878), 6:77; henceforth cited as *Poet. Works* followed by volume and page number(s).

⁵² *The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*, 1:57; lines 596, 606-615.

Till subject to the Many's rule
 The Royal Shade, the Fashion's tool
 Resigns his sceptre and his globe
 And shouts For Ever live King Mob.⁵³

One cannot maintain that such ideas were shaped during Wesley's Boston visit. However, the persons with whom he associated, perhaps with the exception of Governor Belcher, would have in principle supported such views. It is important to point out, nevertheless, that there were some loyal Episcopalians who felt that they could remain loyal to the crown and establish an independently governed Episcopal Church in America. In spite of Wesley's strong views of loyalty to God, crown, and nation, clearly his love extended to all humankind, as indicated in the following hymn from *Hymns for the National Fast, Feb. 8, 1782*.

When plagues the land o'erflow,
 We share the common woe;
 But our patriotic love
 Is not selfish, nor confined,
 But our yearning bowels move
 Toward the whole afflicted kind.
 With every sufferer
 We drop the generous tear
 (Whom Thy tendering Spirit leads,)
 Pity no distinction knows,
 Love for all the wounded bleeds,
 Love embraces friends and foes.⁵⁴

Clearly Charles Wesley's time in the colonies was formative for him. He learned much about himself. He became an ardent opponent of slavery for the rest of his life and he became aware of the need for a spiritual awakening in the New World. The Boston visit was unexpected and placed him once again in the midst of a somewhat "established" Church of England, which he welcomed. He also found himself among a group of clergy serving in Boston, who had been students and held degrees from Oxford University, which he had attended. One of them, Davenport, overlapped with his tenure at Oxford.

Wesley could not possibly have become aware of all the dynamics of religious discord in the Massachusetts colony during his brief stay. He seems to have been well protected from that by the Anglican clergy. It is quite likely that his views of what was transpiring in the colony were shaped very strongly by the sympathizers to the King and to the Church of England with whom he associated. Unquestionably his opposition to war and discord were buttressed by his American sojourn and his vision of a people of the earth unified in Christ amid human discord of all types was accentuated

⁵³ From the poem "The Revolution," lines 83-92, *The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*, 1:161.

⁵⁴ *Poet. Works*, 8:323-324.

and enlivened by the Boston visit.

In spite of the fact that the Boston visit seems to have begun pleasantly and was a welcome contrast to Georgia, on October 17 Charles noted in the letter to his brother John cited above,

Today completes my three weeks unnecessary stay in Boston. . . . 'Tis well if it sails this week. I have lived so long in honours and indulgences that I have almost forgot whereunto I am called; being strongly urged to set up rest here. But I will lean no longer upon men. When I again put myself in the power of any of my own merciless species, either expecting their kindness or desiring their esteem. . . .

Tomorrow the ship falls down. I am just now much worse than ever, but nothing less than death shall hinder my embarking.

Charles Wesley was delighted finally to depart for England.