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BEYOND EXPECTATION: HOW CHARLES TOWN'S "PIOUS AND WELL-DISPOSED CHRISTIANS" CHANGED THEIR MINDS ABOUT SLAVE EDUCATION DURING THE GREAT AWAKENING

FRED WITZIG*

AT A TIME WHEN FEW PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF CHURCH WALLS cared a whit for the souls of slaves, at a place next door to the most active slave port in colonial America, in the only colony where the enslaved outnumbered their free neighbors, in the months following the largest attempted slave rebellion in North America, and just after a slave exposed an even larger slave conspiracy, some of America's most powerful slave merchants and masters organized a school for the education and evangelization of slaves. Reversing course after decades of fierce resistance to pressure from the Church of England to attend to the religious needs of slaves, and on the heels of South Carolina's colonial legislature outlawing the teaching of writing to slaves, prominent Anglicans in Charles Town in the early 1740s funded and oversaw one of the first slave schools in the British North American colonies. The school endured until 1764, educating several dozen slaves each year in reading and religion and becoming a model for slave education elsewhere in the British American Empire. In retrospect we might look with skepticism upon an institution deeply embedded in the southern slave system, wondering at the utility of such an education to the slaves themselves, but the fact remains that this school represents a most remarkable about-face on the part of those who established it.

Why they changed their minds regarding slave education can be found in the stuff of religious and cultural history. The primary founder and administrator of the slave school was the Reverend Alexander Garden, the Bishop of London's commissary in the Carolinas and a man of great wealth, respected among the colonial elite. At the time of the founding of the school, Garden had already labored hard for two decades to secure his place as a spiritual authority to the slave-trading and -holding merchants and planters of the colony, who struggled to maintain control over South Carolina's sizable—and volatile—slave majority. Garden fretted along with everyone else, doing what he could to preserve order and authority in the colony. Unsurprisingly, his interest in the slave school stemmed from this concern. More directly, though, the school emerged out of a conflict of reputation and war of social control between Garden and the most famous evangelist of the time, George Whitefield of England, during the Great Awakening,

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a wave of revivals that swept across the Atlantic from the British Isles to the North American British colonies and depended on Whitefield's indefatigable and immensely popular ministry. In his efforts to win converts to evangelicalism, Whitefield claimed an authentically Christian morality superior to that of Garden and his slaveholding friends, and to prove it, he established an orphanage in Georgia even as he castigated upper-class southerners, including Alexander Garden, for their ill treatment of slaves, going so far as to assert that God's righteousness would side with rebellious slaves. To counter Whitefield's claim, Garden rallied his wealthy friends around the cause of slave education and then used the school as evidence of his own piety to protect his cultural leadership. Thus, the slave school owed its existence to opposition to the Great Awakening. For scholars of the Great Awakening and the cultural changes that eventuated in the American Revolution, turning to non-evangelical, anti-revivalist sources invites new analytical opportunities for understanding the long-term consequences of the mid-eighteenth-century revivals. In this case, it also sheds light on the unexpected origins of one of British North America's first organized forays into slave education.¹

The slave school should have been started many years earlier. The Bishop of London and other prominent churchmen organized the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) in London in 1701 in order to extend the missionizing reach of the Church of England throughout the British Empire. Since its founding, the SPG had urged Carolinians to Christianize their slaves. The SPG sponsored hundreds of missionaries around the Atlantic world and incorporated in its original objectives the preaching of the Gospel to the Indians and slaves of the colonies. Its "Instructions for the Clergy Employed" included "Directions to the Catechists for Instruct-

¹ The historiography of the Great Awakening is voluminous, but the best overview is now Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007). Considerations of George Whitefield's transatlantic ministry include Frank Lambert, *"Pedlar in Divinity": George Whitefield and the Transatlantic Revivals* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); Jerome Dean Mahaffey, *Preaching Politics: The Religious Rhetoric of George Whitefield and the Founding of the New Nation* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2007); Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991). For anti-revivalist opposition to the Great Awakening, see Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening"* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999); Fred Witzig, "The Great Anti-Awakening: Anti-Revivalism in Philadelphia and Charles Town, South Carolina, 1739-1745" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2008). Other works relevant to evangelicalism, revivalism, and anti-revivalism in South Carolina include Allan Galloway, *The Formation of a Planter Elite: Jonathan Bryan and the Southern Colonial Frontier* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007); Harvey H. Jackson, "Hugh Bryan and the Evangelical Movement in

ing Indians, Negroes, &c."² The SPG's first missionary in South Carolina, the schoolteacher Samuel Thomas, seems to have met with some success working with slaves before he left the colony in 1705. Thomas's replacement, Francis Le Jau, carried on the work until his death in 1717. When a wealthy planter bequeathed a plantation in Barbados and approximately two hundred slaves to the society in 1710, plans were laid to build a college for slaves that would serve as a model of the civilizing potency of the Gospel by turning out educated but docile slaves. Slave owners elsewhere were supposed to take notice. The brutal realities of running a plantation as a profit-making enterprise where slaves could survive disease and hard labor long enough to attend school delayed its opening until the mid 1740s, but it was not for lack of effort.³

The leaders of the SPG in London may have exercised considerable zeal for Christianizing slaves, but conditions in the colonies inhibited evangelization. Masters prohibited missionary access to slaves, and enthusiasm among missionaries for reaching non-white southerners waxed and waned considerably. Slave masters feared that Christianization would foster rebelliousness or somehow slaves might leverage baptism to sue for emancipation on the grounds that the Bible forbade Israelites from enslaving other Israelites. The Reverend Richard Ludlam, the Anglican minister at Saint James Goose Creek Parish, got to the heart of the matter when he perceived that masters were not "so unwilling as afraid to bring their slaves over to Christianity."⁴

Colonial South Carolina," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 43 (October 1986): 594–614; Thomas J. Little, "The Origins of Southern Evangelicalism: Revivalism in South Carolina, 1700–1740," *Church History* 75 (December 2006): 768–808; Leigh Eric Schmidt, "The Grand Prophet," Hugh Bryan: Early Evangelicalism's Challenge to the Establishment and Slavery in the Colonial South," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 87 (October 1986): 238–250; Samuel C. Smith, *A Cautious Enthusiasm: Mystical Piety and Evangelicalism in Colonial South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2013).

² Frederick Dalcho, *An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (1820; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1972), 43, 47.

³ Shawn Comminey, "The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts and Black Education in South Carolina, 1702–1764," *Journal of Negro History* 84 (Autumn 1999): 360–369; Shevaun E. Watson, "'Good Will Come of This Evil': Enslaved Teachers and the Transatlantic Politics of Early Black Literacy," *Journal of College Composition and Communication* 66 (September 2009): W66–W89; Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 141–170.

⁴ Mr. Ludlam to the Secretary of the SPG, March 22, 1725, PR 0086, Selected Pages relating to South Carolina from Library of Congress Transcripts of the Papers of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Series A, Contemporary Copies of Letters Received, 1724–1735, microfilm, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia (hereinafter cited as PR 0086, SCDAH), vol. 19, 62–63.

South Carolina's white inhabitants had much to fear from the harsh culture of forced labor that they had created. Slaves refused to comply peacefully with the demands of slavery. Since the late seventeenth century, Carolinian settlers had complained of the steady stream of slaves who, as Governor James Colleton put it to his Spanish counterpart in Florida, "run daily into your towns." In the 1730s, hundreds of slaves responded, sometimes with the assistance of the other population in the South resistant to British control, Native Americans, to Spanish offers of freedom for British slaves who reached Florida.⁵ Often, they took with them expensive dishes, fine clothing, weapons, and other emblems of white power. Resistance turned violent when slaves fought back with axes and other tools of their exploitation reconceived as means of retribution. Whites accused slaves of arson, not a small concern for inhabitants of highly combustible colonial towns, and feared Africans' reputation for adeptness with poison.⁶

Occasionally, slaves organized their resistance into larger rebellions. Colonial North America's largest slave revolt took place in South Carolina in 1739. The Stono Rebellion involved up to a hundred slaves and took the lives of over twenty whites (many of the slaves also died). Reverberations from the rebellion were felt for several years as colonists relocated to more secure locations, stepped up slave surveillance, and passed through the legislature "An Act for the Better Ordering and Governing Negroes and Other Slaves in This Province." This version of the slave code, which had predecessors reaching all the way back to the turn of the century, included a provision rendering colonists immune from prosecution for any illegal act committed during the suppression of the recent rebellion, extending even to the killing of slaves, "as fully and amply as if such rebellious negroes had undergone a formal trial and condemnation."⁷ No wonder whites feared impending doom and worked assiduously to prevent it, particularly dur-

⁵ Colleton quoted in Jane Landers, "Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose: A Free Black Town in Spanish Colonial Florida," *American Historical Review* 95 (February 1990): 13. Joel S. Berson also describes the African exodus from South Carolina to Florida and links it to the Stono Rebellion in "How the Stono Rebels Learned of Britain's War with Spain," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 110 (January–April 2009): 53–68.

⁶ See Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), 285–307. Robert Olwell deals with slave resistance throughout *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country, 1740–1790* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998).

⁷ "An Act for the Better Ordering and Governing Negroes and Other Slaves in This Province" (1740), in David J. McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina* (Columbia, S.C.: Printed by A. S. Johnston, 1840), 7: 416, http://archive.org/stream/statutesatlarge07edit/statutesatlarge07edit_djvu.txt (accessed June 21, 2013).

ing what historian Peter H. Wood calls the "time of conspicuous unrest," the late 1730s.⁸

Because of white colonists' resistance to slave evangelization, the SPG had begun from its earliest days developing appropriate theological responses to many of the excuses used by slave owners who denied missionaries access to their slaves. The experience of Elias Neau in New York provides the most thorough example of how SPG leaders in London worked with willing missionaries to counter the protests of slave masters. The SPG recruited Neau, a French Huguenot who had gained fame by championing Protestantism in Catholic France, to be an Anglican schoolteacher in New York City. With fervent determination, he set about in 1703 to reach slaves with a Christian education. Encountering opposition from slave masters, Neau asked the SPG to promote the passage of a law obligating masters to educate their slaves in New York, which in turn prompted an effort to obtain such a law for the entire British Empire.⁹

To accomplish this feat, the SPG needed to clarify two primary theological questions posed by slave owners. First, Neau and the SPG emphasized the biblical command for servants to be obedient to their masters. Slave owners could be reassured that educating and Christianizing slaves would only make their human property more complaisant, not rebellious. Neau noted that the catechism he used for slaves stressed "the two great Articles, Faith and Obedience."¹⁰ Second, Neau and the SPG emphatically denied that Christian baptism released converts from the bonds of slavery. The 1706 SPG annual sermon declared there was nothing in the Christian religion that necessitated the freeing of slaves upon conversion, because Christian masters in the Bible were not enjoined to emancipate their Christian slaves. Nevertheless, the SPG failed to secure the desired imperial regulation, though members of the society were involved in procuring the Yorke-Talbot opinion issued by the imperial attorney general in 1729, which declared that baptism did not alter the slaves' temporal state. In New York, Neau managed to obtain a proclamation from Governor Robert Hunter encouraging masters to send their slaves to Neau's school

⁸ Wood, *Black Majority*, 301. Wood, *Black Majority*, 308–326, remains the best account of the rebellion, though important aspects of the event are described in Mark M. Smith, "Remembering Mary, Shaping Revolt: Reconsidering the Stono Rebellion," *Journal of Southern History* 67 (August 2001): 513–534; John K. Thornton, "African Dimensions of the Stono Rebellion," *American Historical Review* 96 (October 1991): 1101–1113. For the aftermath of the rebellion, see also Darold D. Wax, "'The Great Risque We Run': The Aftermath of Slave Rebellion at Stono, South Carolina, 1739–1745," *Journal of Negro History* 67 (Summer 1982): 136–147.

⁹ On Neau and the SPG's response to slave masters' resistance to slave education, see Glasson, *Mastering Christianity*, 76–86.

¹⁰ Neau quoted in *ibid.*, 84.

and a colonial law that supported baptism of slaves without the necessity of emancipation. Meanwhile, the slave school survived until Neau's death in 1722, at one point attracting a student population of over one hundred.¹¹

Therefore, by 1719, when Alexander Garden arrived in South Carolina, the SPG had already gotten past key theological obstacles to evangelizing slaves.¹² Proponents of evangelization and education had for nearly two decades publicized arguments against slave owners' two primary objections. Legal precedents for and practical examples of slave education existed in several parts of the British Empire, including South Carolina. Garden could have pointed to the work of Neau, Thomas, and Le Jau as models of effective mission work among slaves. He might have used SPG, imperial, and New York colonial declarations against complaints that education and baptism would, at worst, necessitate emancipation or, at best, render slaves unmanageable. For over twenty years, though, he did nothing of the sort.

In 1726 the Bishop of London appointed Garden as commissary for the Carolinas. The position obligated Garden to convey to his missionary cohort the bishop's periodic scolding of planters for their failure to evangelize the slaves. Now and then, the commissary reminded his missionary colleagues of their formal duties towards non-whites, such as when he relayed the bishop's 1727 "Pastoral Letter, To the Masters and Mistresses of Families in the English Plantations Abroad; Exhorting Them to Encourage and Promote the Instruction of Their Negroes in the Christian Faith."¹³ Otherwise, there is no evidence that Garden actively promoted the instruction of slaves in the Christian faith.

Instead, Garden and his friends carefully fashioned every facet of their lives to impress upon slaves the futility of rebellion and upon poor whites the worthiness of their leadership. In the assembly, they passed laws restricting slave mobility, marriage, and education; in the churches, they preached obedience to authority; in the fields, they beat slaves to work harder; and in the courts, they reimbursed slave owners forced by the law to kill rebellious slaves. On the streets, they paraded in their finest clothes between dances, plays, and banquets, making private entertainments—which only they could afford—visible to slave and poor white alike. In such ways, South Carolina's wealthy colonists lived out their days mindful of the need to maintain order and fearful of the possibility that they would fail. This was South Carolina's gentry—its "polite society," as it was known then—the

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 81–86. See also Travis Glasson's article " 'Baptism Doth Not Bestow Freedom': Missionary Anglicanism, Slavery, and the Yorke-Talbot Opinion, 1701–30," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 68 (April 2010): 279–318.

¹² James Barney Hawkins IV, "Alexander Garden: The Commissary in Church and State" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1981), iii.

¹³ Dalcho, *Historical Account*, 104–112.

colonial social, political, and religious leadership.¹⁴ This was Alexander Garden's world.

To understand why Garden preferred the methods of social control used by polite South Carolina society to those of the SPG's evangelists, we need to appreciate his social standing as a member of the class whose minds he was supposed to change. Financially and socially, Garden moved easily among the colony's elite. After marrying into their ranks, he integrated himself into the financial web of credit and speculation that bound them together. He purchased slaves and looked the other way as slave traders and masters abused their chattel. He used the authority of his office to reinforce the dictates and judgments of his lay brethren by making sure that other ministers played the same game. This minister-planter-merchant aristocracy formed a united front to protect the status quo in their favor.

In 1725 Garden wed Martha Guerard, daughter of affluent merchant, planter, and Huguenot assemblyman John Guerard and sister to John Guerard Jr., the eminent merchant, slave trader, planter, and member of the Royal Council.¹⁵ Garden also became financially enmeshed in the Carolinian economy as a property owner, a creditor, and a debtor, key indicators of the attainment of wealth and social trust. Shortly before he married Martha, he purchased a lot in Dorchester that they owned until his death.¹⁶ In 1731 the

¹⁴ For more on behaviors and material culture of colonial gentry, see Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992); Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740–1790* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Gallay, *Formation of a Planter Elite*; Richard Waterhouse, *A New World Gentry: The Making of a Merchant and Planter Class in South Carolina, 1670–1770* (New York: Garland Publishing House, Inc., 1989). For interpretations of politeness, see Lawrence E. Klein, "Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century," *Historical Journal* 45 (December 2002): 869–898; Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Klein, "Sociability, Politeness, and Aristocratic Self-Formation in the Life and Career of the Second Earl of Shelburne," *Historical Journal* 55 (September 2012): 653–677; Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727–1783* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); David S. Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

¹⁵ Walter B. Edgar and N. Louise Bailey, eds., *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives*, vol. 2, *The Commons House of Assembly, 1692–1775* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1977), 297–298. Guerard's career is traced in R. C. Nash, "Trade and Business in Eighteenth-Century South Carolina: The Career of John Guerard, Merchant and Planter," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 96 (January 1995): 6–29.

¹⁶ "Way, Aaron and William Way to Alexander Garden, Sale for a Town Lot in Dorchester," 1737–1739, Series S372001, vol. 0050, no. 00240, Index to Multiple

Gardens sold 842 acres in Colleton County.¹⁷ And in the early 1740s, when the majority of landowners in the colony held fewer than a thousand acres, they purchased a "barony" of twelve thousand acres in Granville County.¹⁸

Garden gained the confidence of his wealthy peers in business matters too. When William Treadwell Bull resigned the office of commissary and returned to England, he granted power of attorney to Garden and Edward Brailsford "to Give such orders and Directions to my Overseer or Overseers upon my Plantation or Plantations," including the right to hire and fire overseers, who bore the bulk of the responsibility for a plantation's success or failure. When Thomas Osborne, a "bookseller in London," needed to collect money from two merchants in South Carolina, he granted power of attorney to Garden. Thomas Rose and Nicholas Burnham borrowed £2,155 from Garden. In 1746 Daniel Laroche borrowed six hundred pounds from the Gardens, and the next year, Daniel Laroche, Andrew Delavillette, and David Montaigut, "merchants of Georgetown," borrowed fifteen hundred. There were at least four instances when power of attorney was granted to Garden, eight instances of loans involving Garden (most of them money owed to him), and transactions concerning Garden's purchase or sale of eight different pieces of urban or rural real property.¹⁹

Record Series, ca. 1675–1929, South Carolina Department of Archives and History (hereinafter cited as Index, SCDAH).

¹⁷ "Garden, Martha, Wife of Rev. Alexander Garden to Alexander Hext, Renunciation," February 9, 1733, Series S136009, vol. 1726, no. 00325, *ibid.*

¹⁸ "Dwight, Christiana, Wife of Daniel Dwight to Alexander Garden, Renunciation," April 23, 1741, Series S136009, vol. 1739, no. 00090, *ibid.* Curiously, this barony does not appear in Henry A. M. Smith, *The Baronies of South Carolina* (Charleston: South Carolina Historical Society, 1931). Although by no means an exhaustive study, this is the most complete treatment of baronies in South Carolina. Smith points out that while the title of "barony" was intended to refer specifically to a grant of land of twelve thousand acres as part of the Lords Proprietors' seigniorial system, it eventually came to include any tract of twelve thousand acres. In Saint James Goose Creek Parish, extant evidence suggests that only 41 percent of landowners owned more than a thousand acres and only 14 percent, more than three thousand acres. These percentages of the population exclude, by definition, slaves and white laborers. Philip P. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 43.

¹⁹ Promissory note, Thomas Rose and Nicholas Burnham to Alexander Garden, April 7, 1743, in Garden, Alexander (1686–1756) 2 MSS folder, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia; "LaRoche, Daniel, of Craven County, to the Reverend Alexander Garden, Rector of Saint Philip's, Charles Town, Bond for Payment of the Sum of Six Hundred Pounds," April 29, 1746, Series S213003, vol. 002I, no. 00230, Index, SCDAH; "LaRoche, Daniel, Andrew DeLavillette, and David Montaigut, Merchants of Georgetown, to the Rev. Alexander

Garden's estate as described in his will testifies to his material success. When he died, he left his daughter and two sons personal possessions appraised at over twenty-five hundred pounds (including "Negroes, four namely Tom, Lucy and her two children"); three hundred pounds cash; "bonds and Notes for Value 3,035" pounds; "House and Part of Lott in Town Fronting on Friends Street"; "a Lott of Land in Dorchester Town N[umber] 56"; and his "Barony of Tract of Land Cont[aining] 12,000 Acres Situate near Purisburgh on Savannah River." Excluding his real property, Garden's estate ranked in the wealthiest one-third in South Carolina in the period from 1756 to 1765, a phenomenal achievement for a man who

Garden of St. Phillips [*sic*] Parish, Bond for Payment of the Sum of One Thousand Five Hundred Pounds," August 1, 1747, Series S213003, no. 002I, no. 00235, *ibid.* The four instances of power of attorney were: "Osborn, Thomas, Bookseller of London, to Reverend Alexander Garden and George Seaman, Power of Attorney to Receive Money Owed by William Logan and Lionel Chambers, Merchants of South Carolina," July 26, 1751, Series S213003, vol. 002I, no. 00353, Index, SCDH; "Bull, William Tredwell to Alexander Garden, Power of Attorney to Sell his Estate in South Carolina," 1722-1730, Series S372001, vol. 00D0, no. 00205, *ibid.*; "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts to Rev. Alexander Garden, of St. James Goose Creek, and William Guy, of St. James Goose Creek, Clerk, Power of Attorney to Recover from William Dry, of St. James Goose Creek, Every Part of the Estate of Rev. Richard Ludlum, of St. James Goose Creek, to Dispose of the Estate for the Largest Monetary Gain Possible for the Society, and to Revoke the Letters of Administration of William Dry," October 8, 1734, Series S213003, vol. 002G, no. 00412, *ibid.*; "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts to Reverend Alexander Garden, of Charles Town, Rector of St. Philips Parish, Power of Attorney to Sell a Negro Slave Named Andrew," October 16, 1746, Series S213003, vol. 002H, no. 00250, *ibid.* Garden also was a party in at least two lawsuits, one that stemmed from work done on Saint Philip's Church, "Meek, John vs. Alexander Garden, Judgment Roll," 1741, Series S136002, box 025A, item 0046A, and one apparently to recover a small debt for himself, "Garden, Alexander vs. John Brand, Judgment Roll," 1722, Series S136002, box 017B, item 0011A, both in Index, SCDH. The eight land transactions were, in addition to the three mentioned above: "Mitchell, John and Wife to Alexander Garden, Lease and Release for Part of Town Lot No. 115 in Charlestown," 1755-1756, Series S372001, vol. 02Q0, no. 00115, Index, SCDH; "Trott, Nicholas and Wife, Sarah to Alexander Garden and Joseph Wragg, Lease and Release for Land in Berkly [*sic*] County and Charlestown," 1753-1754, Series S372001, vol. 02O0, no. 00279, *ibid.*; "Rawlins, Lydia, Wife of Robert Rawlins to Alexander Garden, Renunciation," October 12, 1753, Series S136009, vol. 1739, no. 00649, *ibid.*; "Rose, Beulah, Wife of Thomas Rose to Alexander Garden, Renunciation," April 21, 1746, Series S136009, vol. 1743, no. 00134, *ibid.*; "Wood, Alexander to Alexander Garden, Mortgage of Lease and Release for 200 Acres of Land in St. James Goose Creek," 1739-1753, Series S372001, vol. 02M0, no. 00233, *ibid.* Garden was involved in at least two other land transactions on behalf of the SPG: "Marion, James to Alexander Garden and Henry Izard, Attys. for Society for Propagation of the Gospel, Mortgage of Lease and Release for 425 Acres in Goose Creek," 1747-1748, Series S372001, vol. 02D0, no. 00015, Index, SCDH; "Bryan, Hugh to Society for the Propagation of the Gospel by Rev. Alexander Garden and William Guy, Attys.,

ostensibly spent his time pastoring his own large congregation and overseeing up to fifteen others.²⁰

The Anglican fellowship overseen by Garden embraced many of the slaveholding and slave-trading merchants and planters. The immense capitalization required to enter the slave trade and the fantastic wealth possible from trading slaves makes participation in the business a useful way to gauge personal wealth. Historian W. Robert Higgins compiled a list of Charles Town slave traders that includes the particular years in which they engaged in the trade, the number of cargoes they imported, and the duties they paid.²¹ By searching colonial church records, I have identified the probable religious preference of over half of the traders who were active during the years from 1735 to 1750.²² Nine of the fourteen colonists who

Mortgage for 300 Acres of Land in Granville County," 1737-1739, Series S372001, vol. 00S0, no. 00063, *ibid.* The eight debt agreements were, in addition to the ones listed above: "McKenzie, John, and Matthew Roche, Merchants of Charles Town, to Alexander Garden, Clerk, Rector of St. Phillips [*sic*] Parish Charles Town, Bond for Payment of the Sum of Three Hundred Nineteen Pounds," February 22, 1749, Series S213003, vol. 002I, no. 00229, Index, SCDAH; "Christie, Henry to Alexander Garden, Mortgage of Lease and Release for part of Town Lot No. 268 Charlestown," 1749-1751, Series S372001, vol. 02H0, no. 00026, *ibid.*; "Croft, Childermas to Alexander Garden, Mortgage of Lease and Release of 81 Acres of Land on Charlestown Neck and a Town Lot in Charlestown," 1753, Series S372001, vol. 02N0, no. 00486, *ibid.*; "Sheed, George Jr. to Alexander Garden, Mortgage of Lease and Release for Part of Town Lot No. 199 in Charlestown," 1753, Series S372001, vol. 02N0, no. 00365, *ibid.*; "Pinckney, Charles and Wife to John Williams and Alexander Garden, Mortgage of Lease and Release for 2 Town Lots in Charlestown," 1749-1751, Series S372001, vol. 02H0, no. 00018, Index, SCDAH; "Watson, Ann to Alexander Garden, Mortgage for Part of Town Lot No. 28 in Charlestown," 1749-1750, Series S372001, vol. 02F0, no. 00266, *ibid.*

²⁰ Richard Waterhouse has analyzed all 4,443 of the surviving estate inventories for the period from 1736 to 1775, a sample that includes primarily the wealthy, since the poor left few probate records. He provides a chart of estate values in *New World Gentry*, 64. The wills from which Waterhouse derived the values and rankings documented only non-real property. Congregations can be counted using Dalcho, *Historical Account*.

²¹ W. Robert Higgins, "Charles Town Merchants and Factors Dealing in the External Negro Trade, 1735-1775," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 65 (October 1964): 205-217.

²² Some traders, particularly those for whom we have first and last names, who occupied vestry or trustee positions, or who baptized their children in an Anglican church can be identified with much greater certainty than others. Partnerships usually only titled themselves by the last names of the partners, in which case I counted them as a probable identification based on the commonality of the name among a particular denomination's records, even where the uniqueness and prominence of the last name would strongly suggest an identifiable colonist. For instance, the Pringle of the Pringle and Inglis partnership is most certainly Robert Pringle, since Robert is virtually the only prominent Pringle to appear in colonial

who paid the top ten duties (four were paid by partnerships) during this period can be identified as certainly or probably Anglican. One of the remaining is unidentifiable, and four were probably Congregationalists. Out of the top twenty duties paid, 53 percent (sixteen of thirty) were most likely Anglican, 27 percent (eight) are unidentifiable, and 20 percent (six) were Congregationalists. Out of the entire number of colonists who paid duties between 1735 and 1750, 43 percent (forty-one of ninety-five) were likely Anglican, 48 percent (forty-six) are unidentifiable, and only 9 percent (nine) were Congregationalists. Because three of the Congregationalists appear in the records as both individuals and members of a partnership, a total of six different colonists, rather than nine, made up the Congregational presence in the slave-importing business, and those mostly were towards the top of the list. In other words, aside from several very wealthy traders, Congregationalists did not participate heavily in the slave trade. No doubt some of the unidentifiable ones were Presbyterians for whom most church records no longer exist, but others likely were from Anglican families who either did not go to church, did not register a baptism in the surviving Anglican records, or did not join a vestry and, hence, do not appear in vestry records.²³ But since most of the unidentifiable traders appear below the top

records during this time, and the chances of there being another Pringle active in slave trading is small. Anglican records oftentimes included marriages and births of non-Anglican colonists within the parish and, therefore, are not reliable markers of religious preference. But since baptisms could be performed by any minister, they would not likely appear in Anglican records unless the parents preferred an Anglican baptism. Occasionally, I included as a probable identification someone whose family name frequently appeared in places of importance within a certain denomination and only within the records of that denomination. Edgar and Bailey observe in the *Biographical Directory* that "it was not unusual for dissenters to be elected either a vestryman or churchwarden" (2: 5). I have not noticed this, particularly in the Charles Town churches. I suspect that it probably occurred in the outlying parishes where dissenters lacked sufficient buildings and ministers to support their own denomination. SPG missionaries outside of Charles Town often spoke of dissenters who attended the established church, occasionally breaking off when they either had the resources or became too upset with the Anglican services.

²³ I was able to glean names of important Presbyterians in Charles Town from George Howe, *History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, vol. 1 (Columbia, S.C.: Duffie and Chapman, 1870), and E. T. H. Shaffer, comp., *Bethel Presbyterian Church: From the Founding in 1728 Down to the Present Time—1928* (Walterboro, S.C.: Presses of the Press and Standard, [1928?]), the latter of which includes some elders' minutes. Since church leaders and slave traders came from the same upper ranks of wealth in society, it is likely that any Presbyterian traders would have shown up in these histories. Put another way, even a short but incomplete list of prominent Presbyterians compiled from these histories should capture the names of Presbyterian traders. Hence, it is highly doubtful that the unidentifiable traders were exclusively or even predominantly Presbyterian.

twenty duties paid, the fact that some may have been Dissenters does little to weaken the argument that Anglicans dominated the southern colonial slave trade. If the ability to deal in slaves was any measure of a colonist's wealth, then Anglicans acquired the largest fortunes.

Identifying slave ownership trends is even more difficult, but we do have some clues recorded in a letter from the Reverend Francis Vernod of Saint George's Dorchester Parish to his superiors in London in 1725. Again, Anglicans figure prominently. Vernod listed how many slaves were owned by each Dissenting and Anglican family within his parish. As in the slave trade itself, Anglicans held an advantage in slave wealth. The fifty-two Dissenter families owned 363 slaves, an average slaveholding of almost seven slaves per family. The fifty-seven Anglican families owned 944 slaves, for an average of over sixteen slaves per family. Eight of the ten largest slaveholders were Anglican, and the three largest Anglican slaveholders (with ninety-four, ninety-one, and seventy-seven slaves) owned more slaves than the two largest Dissenting slaveholders (who, with sixty-one slaves each, held 30 percent fewer slaves than the top Anglican).²⁴

Many of those slave merchants and owners counted Garden's Saint Philip's Church in Charles Town as their spiritual home, or at least often visited the church when in town. Year after year, the church elected rich merchants to the offices of vestryman, church warden, treasurer, and others, men with last names that would become trademarks of the South Carolina elite—Austin, Brewton, Laurens, Manigault, and Pringle, for example. When Garden retired in 1754 after three decades of service in South Carolina, the church awarded him with a plate and a letter of appreciation. The list of signatures attached reads like a who's who in South Carolina colonial society. Many of these men held positions of key economic and political power in the colony, including Gabriel Manigault, William and John Wragg, Miles Brewton, Jacob Motte, Benjamin Smith, and Charles Pinckney Jr.²⁵ Robert Pringle, a well-heeled merchant who married into the William Bull family, the "oligarchs" of South Carolina, and whose grandson would marry Garden's granddaughter, recorded in his journal a gift of wine and sugar to Garden.²⁶ Henry Laurens, a rising merchant who would go on to

²⁴ "Names and Number of the Inhabitants of St. Georges Parish So Carolina Inclosed [sic] in Mr. Varnod's Letter Dated 21 January 1725," PR 0086, SCDAH.

²⁵ "Minutes of the Vestry, St. Philip's Parish, 1732-1755," April 9, 1754, Works Progress Administration transcript, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

²⁶ Mabel L. Webber, ed., "Journal of Robert Pringle, 1746-1747," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 26 (January 1925): 22. On the Bull family, see Kinloch Bull Jr., *The Oligarchs in Colonial and Revolutionary Charleston: Lieutenant Governor William Bull II and His Family* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991).

prominence as one of the colony's most active slave traders and leading politicians during the revolutionary era, described Garden in a letter to his sister as "a good friend."²⁷

Thus, as a slave owner himself and married to a member of one of the South's prominent slaveholding and slave-trading families, Garden exhibited little enthusiasm for spreading the Gospel among slaves. As pastor of the most influential Anglican congregation in South Carolina, Saint Philip's Church, home to the colony's principal slave merchants, Garden did not relish his responsibility to correct his parishioners' mistreatment of slaves. In fact, he allied with parish vestries in the expulsion of ministers who protested the severity with which polite Carolinians governed plantations. After a trial period, a church would hold an "election" to grant tenure to a new minister. Vestries, dominated by elite slaveholders, called ministerial elections according to their own counsel. Garden willingly granted his clerical imprimatur to their decisions.

Vestries repeatedly withheld approval from all but the most satisfactory of clergy. Complaints from ministers who could not compel the vestry to hold an election are frequently found in their letters home. Sometimes, the unelected carried out threats to abandon the parish for good. Often, they could not get a clear explanation from the vestry as to why they would not hold an election. This was the case for John Fordyce of Prince Frederick's Parish, who wrote in frustration that although his church was "in a flourishing condition," with even Dissenters attending, his appeals to the vestry for an election had been "refused, notwithstanding they have no Objections to the contrary."²⁸

Vestries withheld elections in order to maintain a level of control over their ministers. In the midst of an election controversy in Saint Paul's Parish, Alexander Garden admitted to the secretary of the SPG that vestries "thought Electing a Minister, was putting it more in his Power to impose Hardships upon, and Lord it over them; that it was more reasonable a whole Parish shou'd govern one man, then one man shou'd govern and put Hardships on a whole Parish."²⁹ Some discontented parishioners in Saint Paul's elaborated on this idea, insisting that many people, both rich and

²⁷ Henry Laurens to Mary Gittens, September 18, 1747, in Joseph W. Barnell, ed., "Correspondence of Henry Laurens," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 28 (July 1927): 149.

²⁸ John Fordyce to the Secretary of the SPG, January 1, 1739/40, PR 0088, Selected Pages relating to South Carolina from Library of Congress Transcripts of the Papers of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Series B, 1721-1760, microfilm, South Carolina Department of Archives and History (hereinafter cited as PR 0088, SCDAH), vol. B7, 247-248.

²⁹ Alexander Garden to the Secretary of the SPG, April 18, 1734, PR 0086, SCDAH, vol. A24, 90.

poor, were persuaded "the business of all ministers when elected is to bear a tyrannical Sway over their Parishioners and thence wisely concluded that it was better for the Parish to govern one man than for one man to govern the whole parish."³⁰ The Reverend William Orr experienced the same problem in Saint Paul's in 1745 when he claimed to have been:

plainly and openly told over and over again by the most leading Men in the Parish, and I may say, by all sorts, that they will never elect me Rector of the Parish, tho they say they can find no fault with me nor any Missionaries the Society should send after me, tho they were men of the greatest Merit. And if the Soc[iety] will not send them Missionaries, but upon that condition . . . they will rather choose to go without them. So much and so unreasonably are they prejudiced against the just Rights and Privileges of clergymen.

Exasperated by the vestry's efforts to keep the minister "so much under them, and make him so subservient to them, as they desire," Orr surmised that "in this parish a clergyman (contrary to the Apostilical Precept and Practice) must not seek to please God, but men."³¹ However, this was true for all other parishes as well. Orr had discovered a principle that governed Carolina clergy: Anglican missionaries found themselves subjected to those members of their parish who wielded the local social and economic power. Ministers had little choice but to adapt to the demands of their vestries.

When particularly scrupulous clergy refused to acquiesce, they suffered ejection from their pulpits, many times with dire consequences. During the 1720s, 1730s, and 1740s, vestries in parishes under Garden's oversight expelled numerous stubborn ministers. The Christ Church vestry fired John Winteley in 1728. In 1730 the Reverend John Fulton described Winteley as being "in great strait and necessities," and in 1734 he reported that Winteley was "now in eternity."³² Fulton, Winteley's successor at Christ Church, along with Brian Hunt of Saint John's Berkeley, Benjamin Pownall and Lawrence O'Neill of Christ Church, Thomas Thompson of Saint Bartholomew's, and Thompson's successor, Charles Boschi, appear to have been removed under similar circumstances. John Fordyce of Prince Frederick's and Andrew Leslie of Saint Paul's won election only after protracted, acrimonious battles with their vestries.³³

³⁰ "Some Inhabitants of St. Pauls Parish South Carolina to the Rev. Mr. Garden," March 16, 1734, *ibid.*, 122.

³¹ William Orr to the Secretary of the SPG, April 17, 1745, PR 0088, SCDAAH, vol. B12, 95.

³² "Petition of Bryan Hunt and His Wife," April 14, 1730, PR 0086, SCDAAH, vol. [?, but after A23], 394.

³³ John Fordyce to the Secretary of the SPG, January 1, 1739/40, PR 0088, SCDAAH, vol. B7, 247-248.

During contests between ministers and vestries, reports to the Bishop of London from Garden and his vestries always included a long list of complaints about unchristian behavior. For example, Saint John's Berkeley Parish wardens and vestry complained of Hunt's "transient levities and folys" as well as "gross and repeated vices of immoralities of drunkenness, quarrelling, defamations, lying insolence, abusive and scurrilous language, sowing discord among the neighbours and such like besides," though these charges were never either repeated or corroborated during the long, bitter controversy.³⁴ John Wintley's vestry alleged that "no sooner" did the missionary arrive in Christ Church Parish "than he begun to break out in Several Sorts of Wild and immoral behavior," including "Drunkenness and Lewdness towards Women."³⁵ Rarely could vestries substantiate their allegations with evidence.

The rejected ministers had made a practice of scolding their parishioners for their impiety and poor treatment of slaves. Fulton referred to such preaching in his appeal to the bishop: "I was wearied out with taking notice of their horrible cursing and swearing drinking and gaming for the Barbarous usage of their Negroes, some for whipping them to Death Some for Branding in Sundry places with hot irons for cutting off their ears and scarifying their faces."³⁶ Wintley attributed his problems to his preaching against "Bandyng into Parties and factions and Seditious Associations against the Government."³⁷ None of these ministers had any significant wealth or connections to the gentry.

Since vestries controlled the purse strings, Garden himself needed to accommodate their demands. No doubt this was one of the incentives that seduced him into joining their ranks. According to the rejected ministers, Garden aggressively inserted himself into the battles between vestries and clergy, abandoning any pretense of impartiality in the process. Wintley tried to convince the bishop that Garden "was at the bottom" of the conspiracy against his election, for the commissary had "Spirited the Party in all their violent proceedings." Wintley protested Garden's "rash, peevish and arbitrary Measures of condemning without Hearing, and hanging without Trial, and because I am not merely his Creature." Going further, Wintley claimed that Garden "has resolv[e]d to ruin me, at least, to drive me out of the Country." Once, when Garden visited the parish, he treated Wintley rudely, preferring to dine with the vestry and repudiating the

³⁴ "Church Wardens and Vestry of St. John's So Carolina" to the Secretary of the SPG, July 3, 1727, PR 0086, SCDAH, vol. A20, 90-91.

³⁵ Church Wardens and Vestry of Christ Church Parish to the Secretary of the SPG, October 21, 1728, *ibid.*, vol. A21, 131-132.

³⁶ "The Apeal [*sic*] of John Fulton of Christ Church, Missionary . . . to the Society and His Lordship the Bishop of London," May 25, 1734, *ibid.*, 125-126

³⁷ John Wintley to the Secretary of the SPG, October 22, 1728, *ibid.*, 134.

minister's attempts to justify himself.³⁸ John Fulton, Wintelely's successor, asserted that the vestry "strove after the most malicious manner to irritate and provoke Mr. Commissary against" him, and Garden willingly complied.³⁹ Brian Hunt had similar problems with Garden and concluded that the commissary "domineer[ed] over the Missionaries."⁴⁰

On the other hand, ministers who survived in the severe social climate of South Carolina owed their success to their willingness to accept—even join in—the earthly pursuits of their slave-owning parishioners. It did not hurt to befriend Alexander Garden either. William Guy of Saint Helena's Parish, Francis Vernod of Saint George's Dorchester Parish, Thomas Hasell of Saint Thomas and Saint Denis Parish, Daniel Dwight (successor to the unfortunate Brian Hunt) in Saint John's Berkeley Parish, and Levi Durand in Christ Church Parish (where John Wintelely and John Fulton had failed) all became friends of Garden, married into wealthy families, and accrued significant landholdings and other investments, including slaves. In addition, all of them learned early on to keep their qualms to themselves. Garden was not only the most affluent minister in the Carolinas, but also the one who most adeptly used politeness to secure a long, flourishing tenure. In his Charles Town church sat the most powerful men in the colony. No wonder Garden was reticent to challenge the obstinacy of slave masters who refused to educate and Christianize people they considered mere chattel.⁴¹

Garden's reluctance to push for the education of slaves changed with the onset of the Great Awakening because of the attacks George Whitefield lodged against him and his friends. The story of Garden's theological conflict with Whitefield, with the former favoring a rationalist Latitudinarianism over the latter's experiential, revivalist evangelicalism, is rather well known.⁴² Garden likewise tussled with the itinerant over Charles Town's

³⁸ [John Wintelely to the Secretary of the SPG], June 14, 1729, PR 0087, Selected Pages relating to South Carolina from Library of Congress Transcripts of the Papers of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Series B, 1721–1760, microfilm, South Carolina Department of Archives and History (hereinafter cited as PR 0087, SCDAH), vol. [?, but after B4II], 229.

³⁹ "Apeal of John Fulton of Christ Church," May 25, 1734, PR 0086, SCDAH, vol. A21, 125–126.

⁴⁰ "Mr. Hunt from the Common Prison in Charles Town" to the Secretary of the SPG, February, 1727/28, *ibid.*, vol. A20, 119–136.

⁴¹ For an extended consideration of the relationship between clergy and vestries, see Witzig, "Great Anti-Awakening," 75–113. For alternative interpretations, see Quentin Begley Keen, "The Problems of a Commissary: The Reverend Alexander Garden of South Carolina," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 20 (June 1951): 136–155; Annette Laing, "'A Very Immoral and Offensive Man': Religious Culture, Gentility and the Strange Case of Brian Hunt, 1727," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 103 (January 2002): 6–29.

⁴² See, for instance, William Howland Kenney III, "Alexander Garden and George Whitefield: The Significance of Revivalism in South Carolina, 1738–1741,

fondness for entertainment and luxury. Garden defended the horse racing, card playing, dancing, banqueting, and conspicuous wearing of the latest London apparel—habits that defined polite society in the midst of South Carolina's growing classes of poor whites and degraded slaves—against Whitefield's ascetic renunciations of the same. "I see no other way" to halt such entertainments, Whitefield wrote in his journal, "but by going boldly, and calling people from such lying vanities in the Name of Jesus Christ."⁴³ This aspect of the story has been underappreciated by historians, but what has not been understood at all is how two important southern social and economic institutions, Whitefield's orphanage and Garden's slave school, became instruments of religious contest in the debate over the legitimacy of the Great Awakening. This debate catalyzed the extraordinary shift in polite perceptions of slave education. The outcome proved the end of the Great Awakening in the South and the beginning of the first institutional attempt to educate African slaves in the Carolinas.

George Whitefield first met Alexander Garden in 1738, and they enjoyed an amiable visit.⁴⁴ However, when the itinerant minister returned to Charles Town in January 1740, Garden confronted him angrily, and a mutual hostility grew over the next several years.⁴⁵ Between the two visits, Whitefield had begun his famous campaign against "unconverted" clergy, denouncing those who had not experienced a "New Birth." He directed much of his argument against his Anglican brethren. Whitefield firmly believed that ministers could "preach the Gospel of Christ no further than we have experienced the power of it in our own hearts."⁴⁶ Although Whitefield remained in the Church of England all of his life, he judged near the beginning of his ministry that "the generality" of Anglican ministers "do not preach or live up to the truth as it is in Jesus."⁴⁷ In a letter to evangelical students at Harvard and Yale, he wrote, "A dead ministry will always make a dead people."⁴⁸ Whitefield felt that an unconverted ministry was the root cause of dissent from the Church of England. "I have now conversed with several of the best of all denominations," he wrote in his published journals, and

South Carolina Historical Magazine 71 (January 1970): 1–16; David T. Morgan Jr., "The Great Awakening in South Carolina, 1740–1775," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (Autumn 1971): 595–606; David T. Morgan Jr., "The Consequences of George Whitefield's Ministry in the Carolinas and Georgia, 1739–1740," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 55 (Spring 1971): 62–82.

⁴³ George Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1960), 241.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 165

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 400–401.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 348.

⁴⁷ Whitefield, *Journals*, 346.

⁴⁸ George Whitefield, *Letters of George Whitefield for the Period 1734–1742* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), 134, 296.

"many of them solemnly protest that they went from the Church, because they could not find food for their souls. They stayed among us until they were starved out."⁴⁹ He might just as well have identified the Anglican commissary by name, seeing as Garden had never preached the New Birth or claimed it for himself.

Less than three weeks after he arrived in Charles Town, Whitefield published "A Letter to the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, North and South-Carolina." In the letter, which was dated January 23, 1740, he blasted southern slave owners for their "abuse of and cruelty to the poor negroes." He wondered why slaves had never successfully rebelled and posited that "yet should such a Thing be permitted by Providence, all good Men must acknowledge the Judgment would be just."⁵⁰ In a colony where blacks outnumbered whites, and immediately after the Stono Rebellion, to suggest that slaves could rebel with God's blessing demonstrated either Whitefield's fearlessness in proclaiming evangelical social doctrines or his unfamiliarity with southern culture.

But Whitefield was not finished. He was particularly discouraged by the unwillingness of masters to teach their slaves the ways of Christianity. "Enslaving or misusing their bodies, comparatively speaking, would be an inconsiderable evil," Whitefield wrote, "was proper care taken of their souls; but I have great reason to believe that most of you on purpose keep your Negroes ignorant of Christianity; or otherwise, why are they permitted through your provinces openly to profane the Lord's day by their dancing, piping, and such like?" Whitefield most certainly did not understand the African, and often religious, roots of slave dance, but this is irrelevant to the point he was making regarding the moral laxity of masters that resulted in the continued "heathenism" of their slaves.⁵¹

Whitefield rightly connected this reluctance to evangelize slaves with the widespread concern that exposing slaves to the Gospel would inspire them to press for earthly freedom and equality. "I know the general Pretence for this Neglect of their Souls is, That teaching them Christianity would make them proud, and consequently unwilling to submit to Slavery," he remarked. But to Whitefield this reflected badly upon the ethical "Precepts of Christianity." Echoing judgments reached earlier by the SPG, he challenged masters to "find any one Command in the Gospel, that has the least Tendency to make People forget their relative Duties. Do you not read that Servants, and as many as are under the Yoke of Bondage, are required to be subject, in all lawful Things, to their Masters; and that not only to the

⁴⁹ Whitefield, *Journals*, 250.

⁵⁰ George Whitefield, *Three Letters from the Reverend Mr. G. Whitefield* (Philadelphia: Printed and sold by B. Franklin, 1740), 13, 14.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 14.

good and gentle, but also to the forward?" Besides, Whitefield continued, "if teaching Slaves Christianity has such a bad Influence upon their Lives, why are you generally desirous of having your Children taught? Think you they are any way better by Nature than the poor Negroes?" Whitefield did not think so, arguing that "if born and bred up here, I am persuaded, [Negroes] are naturally capable of the same Improvement" and adult slaves could "be brought effectually home to God."⁵²

By denouncing his fellow Anglican clergy for their lack of New Birth spiritual vitality, condemning the polite entertainments in which many members of the Saint Philip's congregation indulged, and chastising southerners and their clergy for not Christianizing slaves, Whitefield struck at the very foundations of Garden's leadership. Whitefield insisted that Garden's pastoral care was illegitimate. How could Garden provide spiritual guidance to Christians when he himself failed the test of true Christianity—that is, inner conversion accompanied by outward manifestations of a Spirit-filled life? And how could Anglicans follow a leader who had neglected to mobilize missionaries for reaching the very people to whom they had been commissioned to preach in the first place? Putting George Whitefield's sermons opposing unconverted clergy alongside his letter censuring southern slaveholders illuminates the implicit but pointed personal attack on Garden that the commissary could not have missed. In Whitefield's eyes, Garden was a slave-owning, luxury-loving fraud who manifested no concern for the welfare of the weak.

It must have annoyed Garden that Whitefield repeatedly called attention to the tangible evidence of his own piety, Bethesda Orphanage, located near Savannah, Georgia. Whitefield began planning for his orphan house during his first visit to the Americas in 1738. By January 1740, the orphanage was open and caring for approximately twenty children, a promising start to what would become one of the most important social and economic institutions in colonial Georgia.⁵³ While preaching throughout the colonies, Whitefield took to ending his homiletic exhortations to forgo worldly attractions for the sake of God's kingdom with an appeal for donations to the orphanage. The link between "the benevolent heart of Mr. Whitefield" and "the idea of building an Orphan House" was not lost on his hearers, including deist Benjamin Franklin. In his autobiography, Franklin's wit provides us with an entertaining account of how effective Whitefield's fundraising could be: in one compelling sermon, Whitefield overcame Franklin's fa-

⁵² *Ibid.*, 14–15.

⁵³ Edward J. Cashin, *Beloved Bethesda: A History of George Whitefield's Home for Boys, 1740–2000* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2001), 21. For an earlier account of Bethesda, see Thomas Gamble Jr., *Bethesda, An Historical Sketch of Whitefield's House of Mercy in Georgia, and of the Union Society, His Associate and Successor in Philanthropy* (1902; repr., Spartanburg, S.C.: Reprint Company, 1972).

mous anti-clericalism to such a degree that the skeptic emptied the gold, silver, and copper coins from his pockets into the collection for Bethesda.⁵⁴ In the South, Whitefield's friends pointed to Bethesda as evidence of his "Compassion to the Souls and Bodies of Men," thus linking the minister's spiritual message of mercy to its earthly manifestation and the legitimacy of his spiritual leadership to evidence of his own piety.⁵⁵

Some of Whitefield's southern disciples followed his lead into advocacy for and ministry to the disadvantaged. In late 1740, recent convert and wealthy South Carolinian planter Hugh Bryan published his own excoriation of ministers who, while "nourishing and indulging themselves in the same Passions, Tempers and Delights with other Worldly minded Men," nurtured "no Bowels of Love, no Pity for poor perishing Souls," especially among the slaves.⁵⁶ In 1741, probably with Whitefield's encouragement, Bryan and his brother Jonathan, among others, began educating and evangelizing slaves on their Saint Helena's Parish plantations even as they continued to issue colorfully dire warnings to their neighbors of God's imminent judgment upon their licentiousness and cruelty. By 1742, the colonial assembly was sufficiently worried about their "frequent and great Assemblies of Negroes" to authorize an official investigation, which ultimately led to an indictment of Hugh Bryan for endangering public safety. Following what appears to have been a mental breakdown, Bryan published an apology for his rash behavior and the case was dismissed. Nonetheless, evangelicals' efforts to Christianize slaves continued for years, occasionally with great success.⁵⁷

In response to this flurry of evangelical polemics and activism, Garden and his colleagues launched their own attack against Whitefield both from the pulpit and in print. As Latitudinarian Anglicans, they rejected the young itinerant preacher's Calvinist theology, and as members of Carolinian polite society, they sought to clip the egalitarian threads that ran through his social critique. When Whitefield asked why Garden gave him such a chilly reception upon his return to South Carolina, noting his earlier friendliness, Garden sharply pointed out, "you did not speak against the clergy then."⁵⁸ Rejecting the Calvinist doctrine of predestination and upholding the spiritual efficacy of his elite friends' public obligations, Garden preached that "we may carefully attend the outward Ordinances, of publick Worship, Preaching, and Sacraments, nor ever neglect our Closest and Family Devotions; —we may fast, and pray, and give Alms, both in publick and private; and

⁵⁴ Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Philip Smith (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1996), 83.

⁵⁵ *South-Carolina Gazette* (Charlestown), June 25, 1741 (the *South-Carolina Gazette* is hereinafter cited as *SCG*).

⁵⁶ Postscript, *SCG*, January 1–8, 1741.

⁵⁷ The best description of Bryan's activity is Jackson, "Hugh Bryan."

⁵⁸ Whitefield, *Journals*, 400–401.

touching the moral Duties of Justice and Honesty, temperance and Chastity, or any other, behave ourselves blameless; and yet alas all to no Purpose."⁵⁹ As to evangelicals' censure of polite entertainments and ability to attract crowds of heterogeneous ethnic and class composition, Garden exclaimed:

had there appeared to me but half the Danger to Religion, or the Peace and Happiness of Society, from such Balls and Assemblies, which has but too plainly appeared from [Whitefield's] Mobb-Preachings, and the Assemblies of his Institution, of Men and Women, boys and Girls, building up one another in Conceit of their being righteous and not only despising but damning all others round about them, I should have preach'd against them with all my Might.⁶⁰

Meanwhile, on the pages of the *South-Carolina Gazette*, Garden's friends rose to his defense. "Arminius" mocked Whitefield, "who assumes the Character of an Apostle," for preaching "the old and exploded Doctrines of Calvinism."⁶¹ "C—" got more to the point, connecting Calvinist piety and soteriology to evangelical abstemiousness. In satirical verse, he called Whitefield a "Pig" with "a pretty num'rous Litter / Who squeak at cards, and Scream and tremble / To see our Beaux and Belles assemble. / And if a Sob or sad Grimace / You can't admit as Proof of Grace; / . . . You're a Polite, a Devil, a Scoffer."⁶²

Garden responded to Whitefield's open letter about southern slavery with one of his own. Published at the end of July 1740, just after a slave had revealed that some one hundred and fifty to two hundred bondsmen were conspiring to break into the armory in Charles Town and equip themselves for rebellion, Garden highlighted the terrible social dangers of Whitefield's critique.⁶³ Garden agreed with Whitefield that "the little or no proper Care taken by Owners of the Souls of their Slaves" was "too sad a Truth" and "a sore Evil indeed!"⁶⁴ But "the Generality of Owners use their Slaves with all due Humanity," Garden contended, and Whitefield's attack simply displayed his utter ignorance. In some places, warned Garden, Whitefield

⁵⁹ Alexander Garden, *Regeneration, and the Testimony of the Spirit* (Charlestown, S.C.: Printed by Peter Timothy, 1740), 49–50.

⁶⁰ Alexander Garden, *Take Heed How Ye Hear* (New York: Printed by J. Peter Zenger, 1742), 19.

⁶¹ SCG, January 26, 1740. I do not think that Garden was among the anti-revivalist writers in the SCG. Since his name appears in the SCG in various contexts and he quickly published his anti-Whitefield sermons and advertised them in the newspaper, I do not see any reason why the commissary would have been reticent to claim authorship of these pieces.

⁶² *Ibid.*, May 24, 1740.

⁶³ Wood, *Black Majority*, 321–322.

⁶⁴ Alexander Garden, *Six Letters to the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield* (Charlestown, S.C.: Printed by Peter Timothy, 1740), 53.

could be sued for "slander" and "indicted for Meddling . . . which may endanger the Peace and Safety of the Community."⁶⁵ Garden's recognition of the danger in Whitefield's justification for slave rebellion is demonstrated by his partial quotation of the relevant passage from the evangelist's letter: "'And indeed, considering what Usage they commonly meet with,' &c.—I suppress the remainder of this, and the next following Paragraph of your Epistle, as judging it both sinful, and dangerous to the publick Safety to reprint them."⁶⁶

More significant, though, was Whitefield's persistence in pointing out the potent example of his personal piety, Bethesda, which forced Garden to change his mind about slave education. The commissary and his followers decided to fight fire with fire. After more than two decades of doing nothing to alter the spiritual, emotional, or material situation of slaves in South Carolina, Garden mustered his friends to the difficult work of founding a slave school in Charles Town. Coming as it did after a period of particular unrest among slaves that culminated in the Stono Rebellion, and as whispers circulated of an even larger conspiracy afoot, Garden's conversion to chief promoter of slave education is astounding. His founding of a stable, productive slave school with the money and public approval of Charles Town's merchants and planters—those most entrenched in the institution of slavery—shows how deeply he had embedded himself in their ranks. Previous attempts at educating slaves in South Carolina had never achieved such planter support, the SPG's work in Barbados had failed, and Neau's efforts in New York had taken place in a city and colony not nearly as dominated by slavery. The fact that Garden awoke from his decades-long slumber at precisely the moment when Whitefield went on the offensive against slaveholding also underscores the seriousness with which the commissary took the attack, the sensitivity among the southern elite to their status as New World slavers, and the potency of the evangelical message in the current religious climate of the South.

Unlike Whitefield, Garden was acutely aware of the need to control the slave population and maintain white power, especially after the disastrous Stono Rebellion. He correctly perceived that he could exploit the egalitarian strain in Whitefield's evangelical ministry as a threat to white society in South Carolina. Garden devised and implemented a masterful strategy drawing on the issue of slavery to demonstrate the social dangers inherent in evangelical irrational enthusiasm as well as the legitimacy of his own leadership. Not only did Garden's ministry emerge from the Great Awakening stronger than ever, but he also forced Whitefield to moderate his social commentary and concentrate his evangelical ministry elsewhere.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 52.

Garden's strategy to use the slave school and Whitefield's orphanage to defend rhetorically the legitimacy of polite Anglican leadership, including his own, centered on showing the socially responsible nature of his school as opposed to Bethesda. First, Garden would compare the "happiness" of southern slaves to the supposed mistreatment of orphans at Bethesda. Second, he would organize the school around principles conducive to discipline and social order that were familiar to his parishioners but allegedly foreign to the itinerating English minister. Third, unlike at the orphanage in Georgia, men who had already earned public approval as responsible leaders would oversee the Charles Town school. Fourth, since Garden and his friends continually castigated Bethesda as a financial scam, his school would operate as a true philanthropic enterprise. The commissary's benevolent work would be reported in the *South-Carolina Gazette*, affording transparency and leaving no doubts as to his superior spiritual leadership.

Garden set up his counterattack of Whitefield by arguing that slaves actually were "far . . . from being miserable." In a defense that presaged the arguments of nineteenth-century slavery apologists, he favorably compared the "happy and comfortable" lives of southern slaves to those of "three fourths of the hired farming Servants, and Day Labourers, either in Scotland, Ireland, or even many Parts of England, who not only labour harder, and fare worse, but have moreover the Care and Concern on their Minds how to provide for their Families," a burden born in the Carolinas by masters, not slaves.⁶⁷

Garden then compared—to his advantage—the treatment of slaves to that of Whitefield's orphans, noting the need for adequate discipline in both regards. Just as Whitefield based his accusations of southern mistreatment of slaves on hearsay, Garden claimed, so too could he repeat rumors of Whitefield's "abuse and cruelty to the poor orphans . . . not only in pinching their bellies, but giving themselves up also to task-Masters and Mistresses." Would it be fair, demanded Garden slyly, for him to repeat those accusations in a published letter to Whitefield and suggest that God would approve if the orphans "put an End to their own Lives, or Yours, rather than bear such Usage?" Garden reminded Whitefield that "there must be due Discipline, or Rod of Correction exercis'd among Children" that might "and often is misrepresented for Cruelty and bad Usage." In the same way, "Discipline and Correction must be observed among every Parcel of Slaves . . . which in like Manner, may be, and often is misrepresented in the same Light."⁶⁸

Discipline in the cause of moral order was fundamental to Garden's concern regarding proper treatment of slaves. This becomes even more apparent in the approach he advocated for Christianizing them. The com-

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Garden, *Six Letters*, 53.

missary rejected Whitefield's recommendation as "a poor Remedy" for slave insolence, though he agreed that Christianization would not make the African labor force more rebellious, as long as it was done properly. "I believe the Reason of their being so kept [in ignorance], is the want of one certain uniform Method of teaching them, and which I hope will soon be established with success."⁶⁹ As he explained in the introduction to his reply to Whitefield, Garden recommended adoption of the method set forth by the Bishop of London in his 1727 "Pastoral Letter."

The bishop's letter had lamented the limited progress made "towards the delivering [of] those poor Creatures from Pagan Darkness and Superstition," but ultimately, it affirmed the prerogative of masters in dealing with slaves. The bishop understood that the resistance of masters stemmed from "mistaken Suggestions of the Change which Baptism would make in the Condition of the Negroes, to the Loss and Disadvantage of their Masters." He reassured them both that God would make up the difference in labor lost to religious instruction and that "the embracing of the Gospel, does not make the least Alteration in Civil Property, or in any of the Duties which belong to Civil Relations." But what of the argument that Christianization bred discontent and rebellion? To be sure, the bishop continued, "Humanity forbids all cruel and barbarous Treatment of our Fellow-Creatures." At the same time, however, "Christianity takes not out of the Hands of Superiors any Degrees of Strictness and Severity, that fairly appear to be necessary for the preserving Subjection and Government." No doubt one should always try to be reasonable and compassionate, but in some cases, incorrigibility demanded a severe response. "Of this Necessity, you yourselves [the slave masters] remain the Judges, as much after they receive Baptism, as before; so that You can be in no Danger of suffering by the Change; and as to Them, the greatest Hardships that the most severe Master can inflict upon them, is not to be compared to the Cruelty of keeping them in the State of Heathenism, and depriving them of the Means of Salvation."⁷⁰

To the bishop, and to Garden, the needs and wishes of the masters must take precedence. Theirs was a spiritual concern that was not to interfere in any way with the prerogative of the master to secure the subjugation of his slave however he saw fit. Thus, the proper program for Christianization must accommodate itself to the needs of the white colonists. It also must adhere to a uniform method and stand up to the passing barbs of itinerant preachers. Foremost in this method was the maintenance of discipline and social order.

To ensure proper discipline and order, Garden placed his school under what would have been widely recognized as appropriate oversight by suit-

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Dalcho, *Historical Account*, 110.

able colonial authorities. This started with the commissary himself. He took personal command of the endeavor and maintained strict supervision.⁷¹ In May 1741, Garden reported that he and his longtime friends the Reverends William Guy and Thomas Hasell had agreed to purchase two slaves for the SPG. Garden informed the society that he personally would provide for the "Maintenance and Education" of the slaves. When the two slaves finished their instruction, one would, under the careful direction of Garden and two other trustworthy persons, assume the teaching responsibilities of slaves sent by their masters to Charles Town. The other would settle in a country school.⁷² In other words, the work of the school would be carried out at all times under the close watch of Garden or agreeable slaveowning friends. The vestry of Garden's Saint Philip's Church appears to have looked after the management of the school. They vouched for the veracity of a list of donors published in the newspaper, and they later removed one of the students to the "madhouse."⁷³ The list of the school's benefactors that was printed in the *Gazette* named such colonial elites as Charles Pinckney, John Wragg, Robert Pringle, Jacob Motte, and Benjamin Smith, all men of considerable political, economic, and social influence.⁷⁴ Readers had already vested significant trust in these men by electing them to high political and ecclesiastical offices. When Garden solicited donations to the school in the newspaper, he noted that the students would learn "under the Direction of proper Trustees," who would locate the school "on a corner Piece of Glebe Land near the Parsonage."⁷⁵

Meanwhile, a reprint of a pamphlet from New England appeared in the newspaper that alleged Whitefield chose Georgia for his orphanage because it was a distant, failing province and, therefore, attracted little attention from responsible men who could keep an eye on the institution. The author identified Bethesda's location as "a remote Place, where none of us can controul his [Whitefield's] Accompts, a frontier Colony, in the most dangerous Situation; under such an unfortunate Constitution, or such wretched Management, that 'tis already half desolate." No wonder Whitefield could only rally to his defense "Persons quite unknown to us, and, with all their sounding Titles, of no greater Distinction, than Clerk and School-Master of one of our Hospitals."⁷⁶

⁷¹ Alexander Garden to the Secretary of the SPG, May 6, 1740, PR 0088, SCDAH, vol. 7, 235-238.

⁷² Alexander Garden to the Secretary of the SPG, May 20, 1741, *ibid.*, vol. B9, 124.

⁷³ SCG, April 2, 1744; George C. Rogers Jr., *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 91.

⁷⁴ SCG, April 2, 1744.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, March 14, 1743.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, August 1, 1743.

The pamphlet also challenged Whitefield's financial stewardship of Bethesda in a way that questioned his entire ministry. The writer wondered how some ministers could encourage "this, vain empty conceited Stroller, in sponging, by a Mask of Religion, upon so many well meaning People, both for himself and his phantastic Project, no better than one of the Bubbles in the South-Sea Times," a reference to an infamous failed investment scheme in the 1720s.⁷⁷ Another author claimed that while Whitefield had collected money specifically and explicitly for the orphanage, he pressured several major donors to allow him to appropriate it "for his own Use." Furthermore, Whitefield's criticisms of luxurious living rang hollow, for "did not their own Saint [Whitefield] appear as much like a Prigg of a Parson as any ever did," wearing "the best Purnelle and finest Hollands with Wiggs of Five Guineas a Piece?"⁷⁸ The author thought so, and he used Whitefield's appearance to paint the evangelical censure of polite fashion as hypocrisy, perhaps merely a tool to provoke class resentment and gain a following by employing what amounted to eighteenth-century populist rhetoric.

Whitefield's critics could produce little evidence of malfeasance, and historians have uncovered no damning evidence. Still, the accusation against the itinerant's financial integrity proved to be an effective rhetorical tool. Early in the contest, the writer who called himself "C—" in the *Gazette* dismissed Bethesda as an extension—and a victim—of Whitefield's diabolical Calvinist teaching. C— put it this way: "Having damn'd us without grudging," Whitefield was "reduc'd he found / T'accept beneath a thousand Pound / Tow'rds founding Georgia's Orphan . . . / For coining Dupes, and catching Fools."⁷⁹ By 1743 anti-revivalists claimed to have proof of Whitefield's financial misdeeds. "Publicola" published a letter to the managers of the orphan house calling for full financial disclosure and offering in the meantime an audit of unclear origin, declaring that Whitefield's financial statements were "imperfect, unvouched, nor any wise attested Ones." The letter makes a half-hearted attempt at objective responsibility out of concern for the public purse, asserting that Whitefield's continued "begging" demanded his highest integrity. Publicola reiterated previous attacks: the orphanage was a "Nest or Receptacle of idle vagabond Fellows" under the cover of a few orphans; it was a "Protestant Popish convent, of Men and Women, Boys and Girls"; the evangelicals used it to make themselves rich; Whitefield had not supported it with any of the money given to him for that purpose; and after he left the colonies, the orphanage had been forced to

⁷⁷ Ibid. For an excellent discussion of the bubble and its immediate transformation into a series of Atlantic cultural myths, see Julian Hoppit, "The Myths of the South Sea Bubble," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 12 (2002): 141–165.

⁷⁸ SCG, October 3, 1741.

⁷⁹ Ibid., May 24, 1740.

fend for itself, with the "poor, dear Lambs . . . reduced again to a Starving Condition." The "account" then listed several orphans whose age or wealth called into question their status as dependent minors. Others, it alleged, were not being employed or trained in any worthwhile occupation. This was followed by a financial statement showing no money received from Whitefield and no revenue generated from the labor of the orphans. All the while, Whitefield "indulged his own frail Tabernacle, eat and drank, and wore of the best."⁸⁰

A year later, Publicola published another open letter to the overseers of Bethesda, stating that he still "waited for with Impatience" a satisfactory response. He accused Whitefield of duplicity for the purpose of financial gain, playing himself off as "A stanch Churchman in Old England! A thorough Independent in New England! An Anabaptist 'mong Anabaptists! . . . becoming all Things to all Men, not that he might gain some, but make some Gain of All!"⁸¹ Whitefield's onsite orphanage manager, James Habersham, curtly responded to Publicola in the next issue of the *Gazette*, stating that he did not wish to "render Railing for Railing" and would wait until Whitefield returned from England to give an account of all financial transactions. This prompted another critic, "Your Friend," to publish a poem recalling when the "Whitefieldian Farce was at its Height in Charles-Town." He wrote that after Whitefield went about sowing discord "through each quiet State . . . / To rob weak Men, and their poor Wives beguile," charitable people gave him money, but the Calvinist preacher turned around to proclaim "Our best of Actions, with all solemn Pray'rs / Are ev'n sinful, in th' Almighty's sight."⁸² Here, we have a mixture of theology and material concerns, with the Calvinist rejection of good works as efficacious in the attainment of God's favor characterized as counterproductive to the Christian teaching of charity and social responsibility.

While this was going on, Garden published notices of his school's fundraising in the *Gazette*. "The Society for propagating the Gospel in foreign Parts, having had long and much at Heart the Propagation of the Same among the Negro and Indian Slaves," Garden announced with no

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, July 4, 1743.

⁸¹ Postscript, SCG, August 27, 1744. Publicola here plays on the language of 1 Corinthians 9: 19–22 in the Bible.

⁸² For Habersham's letter, see SCG, October 15, 1744. For the poem, see *ibid.*, November 12, 1744. Publicola was not satisfied with Habersham's answer either. He wrote that he had been pleased to see Habersham respond, but his "Joy was turned into Grief and Confusion" upon reading the letter. He became even more frustrated the next day when he entered into a conversation with others who also were dissatisfied with Habersham's letter. These people bemoaned the persecution Publicola had met with in response to his "good and honest Endeavors for the Good of the House!" *Ibid.*, November 19, 1744.

apparent shame, "have lately resolved on the following Method of pursuing this good End." After a short description of his plans for the school, he invited the "pious and well-disposed Christians" among his readers to "voluntarily contribute" money "into the Hands of either of the Church Wardens" or himself. "The same shall be accounted for in the most publick and authentick Manner by [signed] Alexander Garden," the notice read.⁸³

Even more importantly, less than eight months after Publicola called for a full financial review of Whitefield's orphanage, Alexander Garden published an accounting of his school expenses, including the exact wages paid to named recipients for specific work done on the school and the precise amount of money donated by named persons. Of course, the clerk, William Smith, attested that the account had been "audited and examined by the proper Vouchers, and approved by the Vestry of the Parish of St. Philip, Charles-Town." Next to this, a justice of the peace, James Wright, testified that "the above Accompt was sworn to, by the Reverend Mr. Garden, before me this 12th Day of December, 1743."⁸⁴ Four months later, Publicola renewed his demands for a full disclosure from the orphanage, this time employing Garden's language in reminding Whitefield of "The Publick's reasonable Expectation and Demand of your Accompts, your full, faithful, sufficiently vouched, sworn to, authentickly audited, and attested Accompts of the said House."⁸⁵ With his eye on Bethesda, Garden clearly positioned his school as the ethically superior model of Christian charity and responsibility.

In sum, while confirming the leadership credentials of his own polite cohort, Garden sought to expose Bethesda as a philanthropic scam perpetrated by a religious heretic bent on social mutiny. In the words of the anti-revivalist pamphleteer from New England referenced previously:

Let one but cant boldly about Religion, make the most impudent, barefaced boasting of his own Attainments, and Spirituality, and Orthodoxy, and give them proper Objects to vent their Wrath upon, and gratify a latent Vanity and Pride, and by bespattering all who differ from himself, and them, as cursed, damned Hereticks [*sic*]; and by insinuating great and general Contempt of their regular Ministry, as Men of no true spiritual Experience, or Ability, or Soundness; and the Populace will believe him in any Thing; even tho' he asserted, that the best Place for a British Orphan-House was the Peak of Teneriffe [*sic*].⁸⁶

By the end of 1740, the Great Awakening in the Carolinas and Georgia had all but run its course. In January 1741, Whitefield wrote gratefully in his

⁸³ SCG, March 14, 1743.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Postscript, SCG, August 27, 1744.

⁸⁶ SCG, August 1, 1743.

journal about the response and donations he had received in South Carolina, yet he also noted that "some have fallen away." Indeed, the most excited part of this journal entry was a reprint of letters from correspondents in Boston relating God's great work in New England, not the South.⁸⁷ There is little evidence to suggest that the initial fervor surrounding Whitefield in Charles Town endured after 1740. Undoubtedly, many causes contributed to the quick flowering and passing away of the revivals in the South, and Garden's pitting of his slave school against Whitefield's orphanage was only one of them. But judging by the fact that the subject of slave schooling lingered for several years in the newspaper, it was an important one.⁸⁸

Given the historical reluctance among masters to teach their slaves, building a slave school was a major undertaking. This only points out Garden's shrewdness in fighting the revivals in a way that made sense in the cultural context of the colonial South. By choosing to educate slaves with the consent and financial backing of slave masters and merchants, the commissary denied Whitefield the moral high ground with regard to the institution of slavery. By publicly placing the school under the watchful eye of Carolina's merchant and planter elite, he drew attention to the negligence of Bethesda's absentee administrator, and who in the world of masters and slaves would not have recognized the necessity of diligent oversight? Bethesda's financial management became an area of particular concern that reinforced the need for integrity and public responsibility.

From a personal standpoint, Garden fared rather well in this public contest. After figuring largely in the defeat of the revivals in the Carolinas, his church continued to grow, ultimately splitting in two and sharing the Anglican religious life of Charles Town with Saint Michael's Parish, established in 1751. Garden prospered financially and enjoyed the high life with friends in the slaveholding and slave-trading elite. When he retired in 1754, Saint Philip's Church honored him with a gift and a letter of appreciation signed by seventy-five of the most prominent men in Charles Town.⁸⁹ His polite parishioners and their descendants continued as leaders of South Carolina into the revolutionary era and beyond.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Whitefield, *Journals*, 504.

⁸⁸ Whitefield also appears to have abandoned his public crusade against the evils of slavery. Stephen Stein demonstrates convincingly that in 1743 Whitefield published in London a didactic letter that reads like an apology for slavery. See Stein, "George Whitefield on Slavery: Some New Evidence," *Church History* 42 (June 1973): 243–256. Whitefield would go on to exert political pressure on the Trustees of Georgia to legalize slavery, largely so that he could move his own slaves in South Carolina closer to Bethesda. See Gallay, *Formation of a Planter Elite*, 49–51.

⁸⁹ "Minutes of the Vestry, St. Philip's Parish," April 9, 1754.

⁹⁰ For example, Charles Pinckney served as president of the First Provincial Congress of South Carolina, and Henry Laurens served as president of the Second Continental Congress.

Garden's school remained a source of pride for years. He submitted to the SPG glowing reports well into the 1750s. In 1744 he wrote that "The Societys negro School, under my Care, succeeds even beyond my first Hopes or expectation."⁹¹ In October 1752, Garden reported that although a hurricane blew down the schoolhouse, he "had another ready prepar'd for that Service; and the said School goes on with the Usual Success."⁹² Garden passed away in 1756, but the school survived until 1764, when it closed for reasons that are not entirely clear. It appears nobody ever bothered to give the school a name. Perhaps due to the disruption of the Revolution, formal slave education in Charles Town would not begin again until sometime around the turn of the nineteenth century.⁹³

Garden had succeeded in establishing the first official school for Africans in the slave society of the American South. After years of ignoring the bishop and excusing his friends' neglect of the spiritual and intellectual lives of slaves, the man in charge of southern religion changed his mind and the minds of a polite class who had vehemently refused to entertain the thought of slave education. Stung by the criticism of an immensely popular traveling preacher who vigorously challenged their leadership at a time when slaves threatened their very survival, the commissary rallied white southerners to defend their place in society by forging ahead with an educational program that for decades they had considered dangerous and forbidden. It was a seismic shift in the long and otherwise evolutionary history of Anglo-American perceptions of slave education.

⁹¹ Alexander Garden to the Secretary of the SPG, October 18, 1744, PR 0088, SCDAH, vol. B12, 119.

⁹² Alexander Garden to the Secretary of the SPG, October 29, 1752, *ibid.*, vol. B20, 134.

⁹³ C. W. Birnie, "Education of the Negro in Charleston, South Carolina, Prior to the Civil War," *Journal of Negro History* 12 (January 1927): 13-21.

CATHOLICS, CONSTITUTIONS, AND CONVENTIONS: BISHOP JOHN ENGLAND AND THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF AMERICAN CATHOLICISM

WILLIAM S. COSSEN*

WHEN JOHN ENGLAND FIRST CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF THE SOUTH Carolina coast in 1820, he had just completed "a very tedious and unpleasant voyage."¹ England was recently named the first bishop of the newly formed Diocese of Charleston, and he left his native Ireland to take possession of a church with a schism in Charleston, a defunct parish in Savannah, and a nearly non-existent presence in North Carolina. The diocese was enormous, encompassing all of South Carolina, Georgia, and North Carolina, and during the early days of his episcopacy, England was responsible for administering most of it with the help of only a few priests who worked tirelessly to maintain the faith among the thirty-six hundred Catholics in the region.² England noted in 1839 that when he came to Charleston, he "found in it upon . . . [his] arrival, five priests, of whom only three had jurisdiction, and but two were in charge of congregations, one in this city, and one in the city of Augusta." He commented further that there were now eighteen active priests and nine permanent parishes with resident pastors, which represented a marked improvement from the bleak period nearly two decades earlier. The bishop made these remarks as part of his address to the first convention of the Diocese of Charleston, which was the

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¹ John England, *Diurnal of the Right Rev. John England, D.D., First Bishop of Charleston, S.C.: From 1820 to 1823* (Philadelphia: American Catholic Historical Society, 1895), 4–5.

² R. Frank Saunders Jr. and George A. Rogers, "Bishop John England of Charleston: Catholic Spokesman and Southern Intellectual, 1820–1842," *Journal of the Early Republic* 13 (Autumn 1993): 306–307. Quoting the *Annales de L'Association de la Propagation de la Foi* from 1831, Jay P. Dolan writes, "Close to two million people lived in the Carolinas and Georgia, a region where only ten thousand Catholics were accounted for. The bishop of the area claimed that 'there are almost close to 100,000 who being dispersed here and there are deprived of all religious assistance.'" Dolan, *Catholic Revivalism: The American Experience, 1830–1900* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), 8.