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THE PRESBYTERIAN CLERGY IN SOUTH CAROLINA AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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During the decade immediately preceding the American Revolution, at least forty-five Presbyterian ministers visited or settled in South Carolina, although, according to Ernest Trice Thompson, only three of them located in the colony permanently.[1] The number of residents increased gradually and more than doubled by 1776. There were fifty churches, congregations, or preaching stations in the province. The Reverend Archibald Stobo and his colleagues, comprising an independent group which had come to Charleston directly from Scotland, are not included in this number.[2] Virtually all of these, with the exception of Stobo's associates, were a part of the Presbyterian missionary movement which began in Pennsylvania and gradually expanded down through Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. The ministers were of Scotch-Irish descent and sent either by the Presbytery of Hanover, which originally included South Carolina, or the parent Synod of New York and Philadelphia. After 1770, some of the clerics were directed to go to South Carolina by the newly created Presbytery of Orange, which had been formed from the southern section of the Hanover body. Most of the clergymen had volunteered for missionary work, and they journeyed south from a sense of duty rather than because there was no useful place for them in the program of their denomination in the Northern provinces. They were divines who had qualified for ordination in the same manner as had all other American Presbyterian clergymen.[3] They brought with them the same ideas, policies, goals, and practices to which they had been accustomed in their former stations, and each of them was filled with crusading Calvinistic zeal to serve the best interests of his fellow man, according to his lights.

The mission of the Presbyterians was to minister to the increasing number of settlers of their faith in the province, and neither to pros-

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[1] Ernest Trice Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South, 1607-1865* (Richmond, Va., 1963), I, 65.

[2] Alexander Hewat, *An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Colonies of South Carolina and Georgia* (2 vols.: London, 1779), II, 52.

[3] "Minutes of Hanover Presbytery," Union Theological Seminary Library, Richmond, Va. They contain many detailed accounts of the trials required of candidates before being licensed as Presbyterian ministers. Only a well educated man could satisfy the examiners.

I find that he & I agree exactly as to Thompson's[9] capacities. Poor fellow, he is the local editor of "The Mercury," the "res augustae domie" [res angusta domi] having compelled him to take the position.

Sumpter's flag has just been shot away for the sixth time, & the guns on the sea-face are badly used up, but the red-cross banner is floating now as proudly as ever from its shattered battlements. As Mr. Thomas Sayers[10] would remark: "slightly disfigured, but still in the ring." Gen'l Ripley commands all the defences of Charleston, occupying the position of Major-General. He looks very much like "Count Fosco", except his face, which is as honest & hearty as an old Tom Brown's. I like to hear his bluff, jovial voice, as he gives his orders with the rapidity & accuracy of an old soldier. Beauregard looks very much worn, & the light in his eyes rather dim. I hope the fire is only sleeping, biding its time . . . I think that, when we fall back to our second line, there will be a great battle fought on James' Island. We *must* hold that, we *must* whip them there, or Charleston must be lost. I am, however, very hopeful, as to the final result. I send you Gen'l Beauregard's order, in regard to the observance of to-day.

Direct, "Care of Gen'l. Ripley, Com'd'g 1st Mil. Dist."

God bless you, my dear friend, & keep you well & happy.

Sincerely & affectionately your friend,

W. Gordon McCabe

[9] Probably refers to John Reuben Thompson, editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*. Thompson was a close friend of both McCabe and Timrod. See Jay B. Hubbell, ed., *The Last Years of Henry Timrod* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1941), pp. 8, 36.

[10] Thomas Sayers was the champion prize fighter of England during the 1850s.

elyte nor disturb the activities of the Church of England. Like the Scotch-Irish colonists, their clergy came from inland North Carolina down into upper South Carolina and settled there. They had little contact with the Anglicans, who were concentrated along the coastal section. Earlier, Stobo and his colleagues had encountered considerable antagonism from the Establishment, but this had abated somewhat after the death of the irascible Scot in 1741.[4] However, it had not entirely disappeared, as the vituperous Charles Woodmason, an Anglican missionary who toured the Carolina interior in 1766, stated in his *Journal.* With a high degree of candor, he wrote: "the Synods of Pennsylvania and New England send out a Sett of Rambling fellows Yearly—who do no Good to the People, no service to Religion—but turning of their Brains and picking of their Pockets of ev'ry Pistreen the Poor Wretches have. . . ."[5]

The irate traveler blamed the Presbyterian clergy for abetting their followers in persecuting him, and condoning them in, "their present, low, lazy, sluttish, heathenish, hellish Life."[6] He blamed the Calvinists, "that stir up the Minds of the People,"[7] for locking the door of the meeting house where he was to hold a service and hiding the key. On another occasion, a pack of dogs was brought to the church to interrupt the service with their barking and howling. The missionary also described a threat of physical violence, when he related: "I had appointed a Congregation to meet me at the Head of Hanging Rock Creek—Where I arriv'd on Tuesday Evening—Found the Houses filled with debauch'd licentious fellows, and Scot Presbyterians who have hir'd these lawless Ruffians to insult me, which they did with Impunity—Telling me, they wanted no D—d Black Gown Sons of Bitches amnog them—and threatening to lay me behind the Fire . . . In the morning the lawless Rabble moved off . . . But the Service was greatly interrupted by a Gang of Presbyterians who kept hallooing and whooping without Door like Indians."[8]

[4] Jack C. Ramsay, "Archibald Stobo, Presbyterian Pioneer," *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society,* XXXVII (1959), 129-142.

[5] Charles Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution,* Richard J. Hooker, ed. (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1953), 42.

[6] *Ibid.,* p. 52.

[7] *Ibid.,* p. 42.

[8] *Ibid.,* 16-17. The initiative of the clergyman on this occasion commands respect. He captured one of the dogs and announced to his persecutors that he was glad to have had 57 Presbyterians attend his meeting that day and that he was especially pleased to have converted one of them. He stated that he actually counted 57 dogs in the pack. *Ibid.,* 46.

Mr. Woodmason had many frustrations in his ministerial labors in the backcountry, but he brought no charges against any particular Presbyterian clergyman, several of whom he must have met in person. Other than the unpleasant incidents recorded by the itinerant Anglican, there seemed to be little friction between the Calvinists and the Establishment. For the most part, since the Presbyterians remained in the interior of the colony, while the Anglicans rarely left their coastal parishes to travel inland, contacts between the two groups were not frequent. It is true that the Presbyterians, like other dissenting denominations, were opposed to a state church, but this was not a heated issue in South Carolina in 1766. It is a fact that the people of the South Carolina backcountry were usually poor, ignorant ,and wretched. Nevertheless, Presbyterian ministers who were sent to labor with them were required by their Church to be men of high caliber, regardless of the prejudices of the Anglican critic.

In South Carolina, just as they had done elsewhere, the Presbyterian divines pursued their policy of promoting classical education while they cared for the spiritual needs of their flocks. John Harris, Moses Allen, William Tennent, Joseph Alexander, and Thomas Reese were graduates of Princeton (at that time known as the College of New Jersey),[9] while Archibald Stobo and William Richardson held degrees from the University of Glasgow. Several of the missionaries had studied with Samuel Davies, before he left Virginia to become president of Princeton. Others had attended the famous "Log College" of David Caldwell, in Guilford County, North Carolina. The teachers combined their efforts to found a college, but it was not until after the Revolution that Mount Zion College was established at Winnsboro, with Thomas Harris McCaule as "its principal professor."[10] Dedicated to the promotion of learning as a Calvinist principle, the clerics had all the pupils they could accommodate.

Woodmason often referred to Presbyterian "teachers" that he met in the backcountry, and presumably he used the term "teacher" to indicate a missionary. On at least two occasions he used the term "Schoolmaster" when he obviously was not referring to a minister. He caustically described one as, "An old Presbyterian fellow, or between that and a Quaker," and wrote of another, "The Schoolmaster of this Villa (altho a Presbyterian) having been drunk for days past—I gently

[9] *General Biographical Catalogue of Princeton University,* Princeton University Archives, Princeton, N. J.

[10] William Henry Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical* (New York, 1946), 434.

chid Him for such Misdemeanor—for which he gave me such horrid abuse, that but for the Bystanders, I should have caned Him."[11] Woodmason's experience may have been literally true, although he did not indicate that these unworthies he encountered were in any way connected with the Presbyterian clergy.

Primitive conditions in the Carolina backcountry increased the determination of the Presbyterian divines to prevent untrained, uneducated, and unworthy persons from representing their Church in any capacity. Alexander Hewat, one of their contemporaries, appraised the situation with the statement: "In different parts of the province, persons of this stamp had appeared, who cried down all establishments, both civil and religious, and seduced weak minds from the duties of allegiance, and all that the Presbytery could do was to prevent them from teaching under the sanction of their authority. But this association of Presbyterians having little countenance from government, and no name or authority in law, their success depended wholly on the superior knowledge, popular talents and exemplary lives of their ministers."[12] In spite of the difficulties with which they were confronted, the efforts of the Presbyterian clergy to educate their people was rewarded by slow, but steady, progress. Evarts Boutell Greene commented: "By 1775, Presbyterianism was an important force throughout the South, not only in religion but also in education and politics."[13] Most of the Presbyterian ministers throughout British America held similar concepts of the right of mankind to political liberty, and those in South Carolina were no exception to the rule. It would be expecting too much of human nature to suppose that the Calvinist dominies each taught school without communicating their ideas to their students, and their opinions proved to be on the side of American independence.

By 1775, Charleston had grown to be a rich and cultured colonial metropolis, just as John Oldmixon had predicted that it would,[14] and residents of the urban area knew little and bothered less about conditions further inland. The traders and clergymen who penetrated the backcountry did know the situation, and the ministers tried to improve it. The teaching of the crude and half-wild Carolinians in the rural

[11] Woodmason, *Carolina Backcountry,* 44, 54.

[12] Hewat, *An Historical Account,* II, 53-54.

[13] Evarts Boutell Greene, *The Revolutionary Generation, 1763-1790* (New York, 1943), 106.

[14] John Oldmixon, *The History of the British Empire in America* (London, 1708), reprinted in *Narratives of Early Carolina, 1650-1708,* A. S. Salley, Jr., ed. (New York, 1911), 362-364.

section of the province by the Presbyterians, coupled with the efforts of conscientious colleagues of other denominations, eventually spurred into action the protest movement known as the Regulation in South Carolina.

As both civilization and prosperity began to increase slowly in the backcountry, the settlers began to request, and then to clamor for, protection against outlawry and banditry. When their demands were ignored by the colonial government, the people organized the Regulation to protect themselves. On the whole, the clergy frowned upon the tactics of the leaders of the movement, and especially the divines of the Church of England. Ironically, the harshest critic at first was the Anglican Woodmason, who later became the champion of the Regulation. In pursuance of his duties among his rural congregations, the itinerant minister announced Lieutenant Governor William Bull's proclamation to maintain order. The result was appraised by Richard Maxwell Brown as being so irritating to the Anglican members of the Regulation that they took their children to Camden to be baptized in a Presbyterian church.[15] The influence of the Presbyterian divines was evidently greater with the irate colonials than was the representative of the Establishment. The political opinions of the Presbyterians were beginning to have an effect on the people, although the clergy of that church took no leading part in the Regulation in South Carolina.

During the pre-Revolutionary period, the outstanding Presbyterian minister in the colony was William Tennent. One of the few representatives of his faith who did not live in the backcountry, he was called to the pastorate of the Independent Church, of Charleston, in 1772, and soon became widely known for his scholarly but forceful sermons. Alexander Garden, son of the naturalist of the same name, said: "He boldly stepped forward the champion of Liberty and Independence—with zeal and eloquence preached resistance, nor failed to support it with all his energies."[16] This grandson of the founder of the "Log College," at Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, declaimed revolutionary doctrine throughout the colony. In 1775, at Little River Church, he expounded his sermon, "to a large and concerned audience, and afterwards spoke for two and a half hours on the subject which then agitated the people."[17] The Reverend Archibald Simpson wrote that he heard Ten-

[15] Richard Maxwell Brown, *The South Carolina Regulators* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), 59.

[16] Alexander Garden, *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War in America* (Charleston, S. C., 1822), 203.

[17] George Howe, *History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina* (2 vols.: Columbia, S. C., 1870), I, 429.

nent on the text, "Phil. iv, 5, last clause, 'The Lord is at hand.' Was delighted to hear such evangelical preaching, and so great an attachment to our Lord and Saviour."[18] Thus Tennent did not neglect the Christian gospel for politics, but he argued that religious liberty could not be fully enjoyed without civil liberty, and the oppression of the rights of the people in either resulted in oppression in both. He was convinced that the American colonists had a right to both privileges. As David Ramsay concluded, "he could not consent to receive toleration as a legal boon from those whose natural rights were not superior to his own,"[19] and on this foundation Tennent based his revolutionary creed and preached it to his congregation.

Other Presbyterian men of the cloth delivered sermons that were successful in stirring their hearers to look with favor on revolt. George Howe related the following incident about the Reverend Joseph Alexander: "He was an ardent and fearless patriot. Filled with a sense of his country's wrongs, he did not scruple to advocate its cause in public and private. He was obnoxious therefore to those who favored the royal authorities, but at all times possessed the warm affections of his own people. The few men that were at home . . . habitually repaired to church on Sabbath mornings with their rifles in hand, and . . . guarded the minister and the worshipping congregation while he preached."[20] Under similar cirsumstances, Alexander continued his ministry of patriotism throughout the period even after the strife that arose between Britain and America made it dangerous for him to do so. In one composition, he said: "A mutual communication subsists between the supreme power and the subjects, in every harmonious, well-regulated empire." Another thinly-veiled reference to political matters was contained in the statement: "This subject teaches us, that it is the duty and interest of every person impartially and frequently, to examine under whose government they live. You have seen that there are only two Kings, and that one of these reigns in the heart of every descendant from an apostate Adam. Is the determination of this enquiry among those things that are impossible?"[21] The colonial government could

[18] "Journal of the Rev. Archibald Simpson" (original manuscript in the Charleston Library Society, Charleston, S. C.), quoted in Howe, *Presbyterian Church*, I, 372.

[19] David Ramsay, *History of South Carolina, from its First Settlement in 1670 to the Year 1808* (2 vols.: Charleston, S. C., 1858), II, 274.

[20] Howe, *Presbyterian Church*, I, 431.

[21] Joseph Alexander, *Eight Sermons on Important Subjects: By the Reverend Joseph Alexander, D.D. In the District of York, South Carolina* (Charleston, S. C., 1807), 164, 175.

not have pointed an accusing finger at any statement in Alexander's sermons, but the double meaning seems clear long after they were composed.

The Independent Church had been founded in Charleston by Presbyterians from Scotland, Congregationalists "from Old and New England, and French Protestants who had been lately exiled from France by the revocation of the edict of Nantz." [22] Presbyterian and Congregationalist ministers were alternately called to the leadership of this church. One of George Whitefield's followers, the Reverend William Hutson, was the pastor of this congregation from 1740 until his death in 1761. His pulpit oratory can only be judged from the comment made by David Ramsay, who knew many of Hutson's flock. Ramsay related that, in 1814, Robert Hayne, great grandson of the minister, stood almost on the spot where his forebear had preached, and: ". . . inheriting the genius and eloquence of his venerable ancestor, delivered an oration on the anniversary of the independence of the United States, which, for correct patriotic American sentiments, for thoughts that breathe and words that burn, and for forcible elocution, has seldom been equalled, and rarely, if ever, surpassed by anything on the same occasion." [23] From this tribute, a surmise is justified that the Reverend William Hutson preached sermons during his pastorate that encouraged revolutionary sentiments among his hearers.

John Thomas, whose ministry began in 1767 and continued until his death in 1771, was another revolutionary. His parishioners remembered him as, "a man of fire and pungency, nor was he a stranger to the art of addressing the passions . . . he was much *on the side of liberty,*" [24] and his sermons evidently reflected his views.

Another Presbyterian clergyman, Moses Allen, enroute to his new post in South Carolina, stopped in Virginia for a visit with his friend, James Madison. A zealous patriot, and encouraged by his conversations with Madison, the cleric arrived at his church at Wappetaw full to the brim with enthusiasm for a struggle for independence. "His animated exertions in the pulpit," and his participation later in the actual War, brought the heavy hand of British vengeance down upon him, and his life was forfeited as a result.[25]

[22] David Ramsay, *History of the Independent or Congregational Church in Charleston, South Carolina, From Its Origin Till The Year 1814* (Philadelphia, Penn., 1815), 3.

[23] *Ibid.*, 18.

[24] *Ibid.*, 19.

[25] Howe, *Presbyterian Church,* 365.

Thomas Reese, one of the most scholarly of the Calvinists in South Carolina during the period, was both eloquent and subtle in his sermons that conveyed his approval of the growing discontent of the colonists. In a discourse entitled *The Character of Haman,* the preacher told his congregation at Salem, Black River: "Ambition sticks at nothing to compass its designs. It wades to empire through seas of blood. No principles of religion, virtue or humanity can restrain the wretch, whose ruling passion is the lust for power. He will sacrifice all these to his beloved object. Hold up a crown, or a kingdom, or even an inferior object to such a man, and he will stop at no act of cruelty, however horrid, which he thinks may forward his designs. Treachery, Poison, daggers, and all the instruments of death, are employed without remorse. He cares not how much blood he spills, nor how much misery he causes, if he can only gain his point." [26] Naturally Reese referred to the Biblical Haman, but the double meaning of his homily seems crystal clear and doubtless was understood by his hearers.

Salem became a revolutionary hotbed when the war began, and Tory reprisals were especially severe on Black River. Because of the sermons he had preached, Reese was recognized as the leader of the patriots, and, "it was in his congregation that the murders perpetrated by Harrison, of Tory memory, and his followers, commenced." [27] Forced to leave the state to protect his family, the minister returned to his father's home in North Carolina, where he "used his pen for his country." [28] He wrote explanatory news reports during his exile, which encouraged the patriots in their endeavors. Returning to his church in 1782, he was welcomed by the survivors of his flock. With his ideas unchanged by the hardships of war, Reese immediately began work on an essay entitled, *The Influence of Religion on Civil Society,* which was published in 1788, in which he expounded in detail upon his concept of the relation between religion and politics. In his thesis, which was one of the foremost literary compositions produced in South Carolina in the eighteenth century, the writer summarized his convictions: "Christianity is the best religion in the world . . . We ought not, therefore, to spare a little cost and pains to support and encourage a

[26] *The American Preacher,* David Austin, ed. (4 vols.: Elizabethtown, N. J., 1791-1793), II, 331.

[27] Alexander Gregg, *History of the Old Cheraws* (Baltimore, Md., 1967), pp. 307-308. Also, *Banastre Tarleton, A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781 in the Southern Provinces of North America. By Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton, Commander of the Late British Legion* (London, 1787), 117.

[28] Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina,* 415.

religion so friendly to equal government and laws; and which so directly tends to promote the great designs of the American revolution."[29] The publication of the essay earned for the author the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Princeton University, the first time such a scholastic tribute had been conferred upon a Carolinian.[30]

In 1775, because of the growing political tension in America, the Synod of New York and Philadelphia deemed it expedient to draft, print, and distribute five hundred copies of a Pastoral Letter to the ministers under its jurisdiction. The South Carolina clergy duly received their copies, which clearly revealed the opinions of the church leaders. The Synod believed the time had come, "when (unless God in his sovereign Providence speedily prevent it) all the horrors of a civil war throughout this great Continent are to be apprehended," and the duty of Christian Americans should be to prepare for whatever events may come to pass by "unfeigned repentance." The writers predicted that the American people would resist further oppression by the "British ministry," even if an armed conflict was the result, although loyalty was urged "to our sovereign King George, and to the revolutionary principles by which his august family was seated on the British throne."[31]

The synodical epistle concluded that George III had most likely been misled by his ministers, and because of this loyalty to the Sovereign was requested. Presbyterians were further admonished: "Be careful to maintain the union which at present subsists through all the colonies; nothing can be more manifest than that the success of every measure depends on its being inviolably preserved, and therefore, we hope that you will leave nothing undone which can promote that end."[32] Prayers were requested for the Continental Congress and a declaration made that civil liberty was a right of all free people. In no line of the letter was revolution advocated, although resistance to British violence was plainly sanctioned. The ministers thus felt free to rely on their own opinions, and they declared for independence.

As hostilities began, the Presbyterian clergy led their fellow patriots into revolutionary activity with enthusiasm. A few of their number,

[29] Thomas Reese, *Influence of Religion on Civil Society* (Charleston, S. C., 1788), reprinted in *The American Museum or Universal Magazine* in serial form in VII (January-June 1790), VIII (July-December 1790), IX (January-June 1791).

[30] Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, II, 268.

[31] "Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia," *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia, Penn., 1841), 466-469.

[32] *Ibid.*, 468.

including Archibald Simpson, had already returned to England, and remained loyal to the Crown, but most of the divines were native-born Americans and went into action with determination. Notable among the patriot clergy was William Tennent, who "was possessed of too much vigour of mind to be indifferent to this great event," according to Ramsay.[33] And he proved to be anything but indifferent, as he served in the Provincial Congress, where numerous duties were assigned to him.[34] Tennent gave his talents wholeheartedly to the cause of the patriots. He wrote newspaper articles praising independence, and when it was necessary for the Assembly to convene on Sundays, he was "occasionally heard both in his church and in the State-house, addressing different audiences with equal animation on their spiritual and temporal interests." [35]

According to Edward McCrady, the idea of the Revolution had germinated and flowered in the area around Charleston, "while in the Up-Country the Scotch-Irish and the newly come Virginians in the middle country were too busy with their new settlements to be concerning themselves with questions which they regarded as but Low-Country politics." [36] To remedy this situation, the Provincial Congress of South Carolina dispatched William Tennent, William Henry Drayton, and Oliver Hart, who was the minister of the Baptist church in Charleston, to make a tour of the backcountry to inform the people there of the events that were transpiring and to attempt to enlist their support in the fight for independence. All three of the men accepted the commission and set forth resolutely on their journey, although they were not unaware of the implications involved, for Tennent wrote, "I consider myself as running great risks, but, think it is my duty." [37]

On August 2, 1775, the emissaries of the Congress began their tour, and, in spite of all kinds of opposition, "harangued the meeting in turns," and convinced most of their hearers of the soundness of the fight for independence. Never forgetting his duty as a clergyman, Tennent preached to the crowd first and then discoursed on politics. At

[33] Ramsay, *Independent Church*, p. 21.

[34] *Extracts from the Journals of the Provincial Congresses of South Carolina, 1775-1776*, William Edwin Hemphill, ed. (Columbia, S. C., 1960), 3, 34, 36, 75, 127, 184, 239.

[35] Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, II, 274-275.

[36] Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1780-1783* (New York, 1902), 708.

[37] William Tennent to Henry Laurens, quoted in John Drayton *Memoirs of the American Revolution* (2 vols.: Charleston, S. C., 1821), I, 383.

Beersheba Meeting House, he "Preached from Romans 5-5, afterwards spoke largely upon the public affairs." The next day, at a church at Thickety Creek, he "mounted the pulpit and spoke near two hours." The tour attracted crowds of people, and the eloquent preacher made excellent use of his opportunities, for he wrote in his *Journal*, "finding that I had catched the attention of the sober and judicious, I spared no pains to convince them."[38]

The Reverend James Creswell was host to the emissaries at Ninety-Six, and other Presbyterian clergymen cooperated in an effort to assist them. Even so, the journey was rigorous and, at times, discouraging. At Rocky Creek, where the travelers arrived soaked to their skins, Tennent recorded, "If we can stand this we need fear nothing, but the inclemency of the skies was not to be compared to the fury of the inhabitants of the Bed." The clergyman retained his sense of humor in spite of the hardships, and once when he stopped his carriage for a nap on the King's Highway, hoped "his Majesty will not be persuaded to get an Act of Parliament passed to constitute this treason." Then he summarized his feelings in the statement, "I find it better to laugh than to be always snarling at the weakness of mankind,"[39] and the mission was carried on to a successful conclusion, which made a distinguished contribution to the struggle for independence in South Carolina.[40]

Upon his return to Charleston, Tennent gave unsparingly of his time to Congressional deliberations. When the Constitution for the new State was being considered in 1777, he made an impassioned address on behalf of religious toleration, in which he stated: "Let us bury what is past forever . . . Let it be a foundation article in your constitution, 'That there shall be no establishment of one religious denomination of Christians in preference to another. That none shall be obliged to pay to the support of worship in which they do not freely join.' Yield to the mighty current of American freedom and glory, and let our state be inferior to none on this wide continent in the liberality of its laws and in the happiness of its people."[41] Tennent was successful in his

[38] *Fragment of a Journal Kept by the Rev. William Tennent Describing His Journey, in 1775, to Upper South Carolina at the request of the Council of Safety, To induce the Tories to sign an Association to support the cause of the Colonists* printed in *Year-Book-1894, City of Charleston, So. Ca.* (Charleston, S. C., 1894), 295-312.

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 299, 310.

[40] *Extracts from the Journals*, Hemphill, ed., 167.

[41] Howe, *Presbyterian Church*, I, 371. The complete address is included in Ramsay, *Independent Church*, 53-71.

endeavor, and after the adoption of the Constitution of 1790 there was no longer any established church in South Carolina.

Other Presbyterian divines became enthusiastic participants in the affairs of the state. John Harris was elected a delegate to the Second Provincial Congress from Ninty-Six District,[42] and Francis Cummings was sent to the South Carolina Convention in 1788, when the new Federal Constitution was considered.

Azel Roe, who had visited South Carolina as a missionary, returned to his New Jersey church and continued to incite "all within his influence to enlist in his country's cause." Undoubtedly he had advocated the same course to the people in Carolina. Because of his activity, he was imprisoned by the Tories. When he obtained his freedom, he joined the Continental Army as a chaplain.[43] George Duffield and Moses Allen also became chaplains, although the latter had moved to Georgia by the time hostilities began.[44] Allen was captured in that state and imprisoned, but escaped from jail and drowned in an attempt to swim to safety.[45] William Tennent served as a chaplain for a short while, and Charles Commins (Cummings) also became a minister to the troops.[46] The seventy-seven year old Josiah Smith, who had preached in a revolutionary vein from the Independent Church before his retirement, refused to accept favors from the British when Charleston was occupied. He moved his family away from the city and died in exile.[47] James Latta was not an official in the Revolution, but, "firmly and zealously espoused that cause by word and deed."[48] William Richardson was ably represented in the conflict by his adopted heir, William Richardson Davie, who served with distinction in the army.[49] Relatives of other clerics were members of either the Continental Line or the State Militia. The Presbyterian clergymen were neither afraid nor reluctant to accept military duty when it was feasible. Those who

[42] *Extracts from the Journals,* Hemphill, ed., pp. 76, 150.

[43] William Buell Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit* (8 vols.: New York, 1858), III, 232-235.

[44] J. T. Headley, *The Chaplains and Clergy of the Revolution* (Springfield, Mass., 1861), 331, 350.

[45] Howe, *Presbyterian Church,* I, 376-377.

[46] Headley, *Chaplains,* p. 273. Also see, Howard L. Applegate, "Presbyterian Chaplains Assigned to the American Army During the American Revolution," *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society,* XXXIX (1961), 62-63.

[47] Garden, *Anecdotes,* 202.

[48] Sprague, *Annals,* III, 203.

[49] William Henry Foote, *Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical, Second Series* (Philadelphia, Penn., 1855), p. 73.

moved away, after promoting the Revolution, did so to protect their families, and not themselves.

The British military forces were bitter in their attitude toward the Presbyterian preachers and took full advantage of their opportunity for revenge. David Duncan Wallace related: "Major James Wemyss burnt Presbyterian churches as 'sedition shops.' Presbyterian ministers were insulted, their houses and libraries burned, and Bibles with the Scotch version of the Psalms consigned to the flames as indicating a rebellious sect." [50] This type of persecution, even with the excuse that a war was in progress, reflected little credit on the policies of the British commanders, J. T. Headley wrote, "A chaplain, when taken prisoner, is usually treated with great courtesy and consideration, but there was a class of clergymen and chaplains in the Revolution, whom the British, when once laid hands on them, treated with the most barbaric civility." [51] This animosity was directed particularly towards the Presbyterian ministers, but it failed to intimidate them. A few left when the fighting began, but most of them remained with their people and used their influence and abilities in shaping the destinies of the new state.

In their policies, thinking, teaching, preaching, and personal activities, the Presbyterian divines tended to be on the side of the patriots. They championed the civil and religious rights of man, and they never ceased to work to establish them.

[50] David Duncan Wallace, *The History of South Carolina* (3 vols.: New York, 1934), II, 209.

[51] Headley, *Chaplains,* 58.