

## ANTIQUARY

T. & J. Swords.

### Part Three: The 'High Churchism' Controversy

As detailed in part one, with the publication of the *New York Magazine*, the printing firm of T. & J. Swords quickly became prominent publishers in the city. Their friend and fellow Episcopalian John Pintard wrote in his diary for August 1800, that the Swords

have risen to some degree of wealth by their industry, have two printing presses & 6 or 8 hands, with more work to execute than they can perform; they are the neatest & most correct printers on the continent.<sup>1</sup>

The brothers Swords were part of the intellectual improvement movement of the period which went hand in glove with much of the material they were publishing. James was for some time a member of the Calliopean Society and Thomas was a member of the New York Society Library. They rubbed elbows with the prominent men and literary figures of their day. Their store served as a gathering place for lawyers, doctors, budding authors, and ministers. The members of the most notable literary society from this time, the Friendly Society, gravitated to the Swords for many of their literary endeavours. T. & J. Swords was a New York institution. They were also high church Episcopalians and their printing shop was the informal publishing arm for the Protestant Episcopal Church in New York.

Sadly, the atmosphere became considerably less friendly after 1804, when a controversy exploded into the press pitting high church Episcopalians against the non-conformist churches, most notably the Presbyterian and Reformed ministers of the city.

#### THE FEARS OF AN AMERICAN EPISCOPACY

To understand the outbreak of the controversy, it is necessary to get a sense of the ecclesiastical tensions prior to the American Revolutionary War.

For generations, beginning in the days of Elizabeth I, Episcopalians and Presbyterians had struggled

over control of the Church of England, and from the seventeenth century had struggled over control of the Church of Scotland. First one group gained ascendancy and then the other, until finally the ecclesiastical armistice of the Glorious Revolution acknowledged Presbyterian control north of the river Tweed and Episcopal control south of it. The group memories of this struggle were dutifully and partisanly kept alive among Anglicans in such works as Peter Heylyn's *Aerius Redivivus* and Edward Hyde's *History of the Rebellion*, and among Presbyterians in the various works of Edmund Calamy and in Daniel Neal's *History of the Puritans*.

Neither the Scots, the Scotch-Irish, nor the descendants of the Puritans felt any great love for the established Church of England, and the history of the relationship between Presbyterians and Episcopalians during the colonial period did little to correct the situation. The two groups had come to rhetorical blows over the episcopate question in the decade before the American Revolution. Many Presbyterians perceived the elevated theological claims of the Episcopalians to be a stalking horse for their real aim of political domination. Particularly in New York, where the colonial Anglican church had been quasi-established in the lower counties, the association between Episcopal theological claims and the threat of political domination was not easily forgotten.<sup>2</sup>

Diana Hochstedt Butler notes three problems the American Episcopalians faced after the Revolution and their severance from the Church of England. The first problem was one of loyalty to the new country. In New England most Anglicans took the side of the English, while in the South they tended to be Patriots. However, "the fact that the Church of England was the national church of the enemy created problems of conscience for many American Anglicans and created the popular perception that Anglican churches were Tory churches."<sup>3</sup> Then there was the problem of episcopacy itself. "The idea of 'no bishop, no king' had a long history in

1. MS Diary, August 1800 entry, cited in *History of the New York Society Library*, compiled and written by Austin Baxter Keep, A.M. (Printed for the Trustees by The De Vinne Press, [1908]) 289–241. The John Pintard papers, 1779–1880, are held by the New York Historical Society.

2. Robert Bruce Mullin, *Episcopal Vision/American Reality: High Church Theology and Social Thought in Evangelical America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) 34–35.

3. Diana Hochstedt Butler, *Standing against the Whirlwind: Evangelical Episcopalians in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 8.

the American colonies from the seventeenth century onward. New England Puritans viewed their history as an escape from the tyranny of bishops and associated prelacy with religious repression" (8). The first two problems summed up the third practical difficulty facing the Anglicans, that of rebuilding their churches after the Revolution. "The prejudice against the Anglican episcopacy and the suspicion that Anglicanism was unpatriotic were still great" (9).

The controversies over and fear of the settlement of resident bishops in the American colonies are traced thoroughly in Carl Bridenbaugh's *Mitre and Sceptre*, and in the earlier work by Arthur Lyon Cross, *The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies*.<sup>4</sup> The latter noted that

almost from the time when the authority of the Bishop of London was extended to include the plantations, efforts were made to introduce a native episcopate to take over his American jurisdiction. This plan was pushed with more or less constancy from its inception in the days of Laud to the outbreak of the War of Independence. At first it was a matter of purely spiritual concern, but with the beginning of the second half of the eighteenth century it became almost inextricably involved in the political history of the period. There are innumerable evidences of the public interest which the question excited during the years just preceding the Revolution. One may point, for example, to the newspaper controversy of 1768–1769; to the active part which such prominent men as William Livingston, John Dickinson, and Roger Sherman took in the agitation; and, finally, to the fact that John Adams, while not concerned in the affair at the time, expressed, later in life, a firm conviction of the importance of the episcopal question in the final epoch of our colonial history (Lyons, 268).

In the colonies as a whole the "Great Fear of Episcopacy reached its highest intensity during the years 1767–70 when Anglican missionaries, encouraged and assisted by prelates in England, persisted in their attempts to procure bishops for America at the same time that Charles Townshend and the ministry ventured for the second time to reorder the British Empire. Presbyterian and Congregational ministers and a few prominent laymen easily discerned their covert intentions ..."

4. Carl Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics, 1689–1775* (1962; London: Oxford U.P., 1967); Arthur Lyon Cross, *The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1902).

5. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was founded in 1701 by the Reverend Thomas Bray "to send 'orthodox clergymen' as missionaries to the plantations" (Bridenbaugh, 57).

(288). "The agitation over an American episcopate reached its peak by 1770, and the public had grown almost frenzied in the course of it" (313). This frenzy settled to a simmer subsequently, but as Bridenbaugh notes, "the latter-day assumption that the attempts to establish an episcopate ceased and that the colonials became apathetic about the issue are demonstrably incorrect. The public did not want, nor was it ever permitted, to forget the dangers episcopacy posed to religious freedom in America. Though the proportion of space given to political affairs increased after 1772, that accorded to ecclesiastical news was sizable and of a nature to remind the dissenting readers that religious as well as civil liberties were being threatened, and that, if one was lost, the other would go, too" (314).

In 1773 an anonymous pamphlet entitled *The Case of the Scotch-Presbyterians of the City of New-York* appeared at Manhattan. It was evident even then that it was the work of Dr. John Rodgers, who had been preparing data on the history of the oppression of the Presbyterians for some time and, just lately, for the Convention of Delegates. Sparing no words, the author stated that "the malice and insolence of the stratagem to defeat the petition of the Presbyterian Church of New-York, may stand in the place of a thousand arguments, for the immediate appointment of such an agent." The Dutch Reformed Church of Albany experienced similar frustrations. In 1774 a petition for their incorporation was turned down again.... Fifteen days after the fight at Lexington, however, Lord Dartmouth instructed Governor Tryon that, even though the applications of the Dutch Reformed and Presbyterians for incorporation involved 'constitutional questions of great difficulty,' the King had authorized him to grant charters, if the legal officers and Council of the province agree that they 'are free from any difficulty of such a nature.' This reluctant display of royal grace and favor came some eighty years too late. Fighting had begun in what, as far as New York was concerned, Ambrose Serle properly termed a religious war (330–331).

Bridenbaugh places much of the tension over imposition of bishops on "the political ineptitude of a politically minded clergy. However reasonable the pleas for bishops without political authority might be ... they did not convince the Non-conformists that the framers had no ulterior motives, and, as we know, good reason for such doubts existed. Furthermore the Venerable Society<sup>5</sup> seemed to excel in making ill-timed moves. A large majority of the episodes with which we have concerned ourselves in this volume and which engendered so much bitterness on both sides originated in the conclaves of the Anglican clergy in America. We cannot, of course, place

the entire blame for the ecclesiastical strife of eighteenth-century America solely on the missionaries; they were, after all, merely understrappers.”

It was the hierarchy of the Church of England, managing an ecclesiastical empire without the knowledge of the most vital facts, for they displayed an ignorance of religious conditions and systems in the colonies, that made such blunders possible. No High-Church official ever crossed to investigate the situation in America; only one person, an unknown and inconsequential layman, was ever authorized to do so. The Church of England must, therefore, share with the English political system, Parliament, and the Crown the responsibility for the loss of the colonies (337–338).

#### THE NEW YORK 'HIGH CHURCHISM' CONTROVERSY

Prior to the war for American Independents, in New York the Anglicans had been overwhelmingly Tory, and as noted already there had been earlier clashes with the Reformed and Presbyterian ministers in the city. Indeed, “[n]o local issue gave rise to more sectarian bitterness than the decision of the Governor’s Council, acting under the relentless prodding of the Episcopal clergy, to deny incorporation to the Presbyterian Church” (Bridenbaugh, 260). The Dutch Reformed and Presbyterians did not need to have long memories to fear any resurgence of the kind of high church views that fuelled the quest to impose bishops in the colonies. The war was scarcely thirty years a matter of history, and John Rodgers, noted above as the author of *The Case of the Scotch-Presbyterians of the City of New-York*, was still active as a minister in the collegiate Presbyterian churches in the city along with Dr. Samuel Miller.

Dr. Miller had noted with some alarm the rearing of the spirit of the old enemy in correspondence dated to the beginning of the controversy. Writing in February 1805 to a Mr. Griffin, who was entertaining a call to a Dutch church, Miller noted:<sup>6</sup>

... the Episcopalians of this city have lately begun to employ a language and act a part, which indicate a wish to get the mastery over every other denomination in the state, and particularly in the city; and their immense wealth will enable them to do much towards the accomplishment of their object. It appears to me, and to others, that, among the means to be employed for repelling these claims, and for maintaining the respectability of the non-Episcopal part of our state, it is of the utmost importance that the minister to be

placed in the Dutch Church of Albany, should be a man both able and zealously disposed to cooperate in all just and liberal measures for this purpose.

... I inclose the prospectus of a new magazine. The members of our clerical association are to be the editors. As you have pledged yourself to patronize the Assembly’s Magazine, we cannot expect you to do much for this. But perhaps you can get some clerical subscribers in your part of New Jersey. I mention clerical subscribers more particularly, because the work will probably contain much discussion on the Episcopal [sic] controversy and other subjects specially interesting to clergymen.

Along the same lines, Miller’s biography contains some correspondence with Dr. Ashbel Green:

In a letter to Dr. Green, of the 12th of March, 1805, Dr. Miller speaks of the Episcopalians of New York City and State as having grown rapidly within two years, not so much in numbers, as in their arrogant claims and high-church principles:—

“Within the last year,” he says, “they have made many publications in the form of sermons, tracts, and much larger works, in which the high-toned doctrines of Laud and his successors in opinion are exhibited, and most strenuously contended for. We, at first, thought that the state of public opinion was so utterly repugnant to these principles, that our true policy was to treat all their exertions with silent contempt. But things have lately occurred of so flagrant and offensive a nature, that we have determined, at length, to defend our Presbyterian opinions, and to put our people on their guard. \* \* It has been judged best, after mature deliberation, to establish a magazine, as a vehicle for conveying to the public what we may choose to write on this subject. As the Episcopalians have already a magazine, which they employ as an engine to promote their views; and as controversial pieces will, perhaps, be least likely to give offence, or excite alarm, in this form, (being mixed up with much practical matter,) it is probably the most eligible plan on which to engage our adversaries.”

Dr. Miller went on in this letter to Dr. Green to advocate

6. Samuel Miller, *The Life of Samuel Miller, D.D., LL. D., Second Professor in the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, at Princeton, New Jersey* (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen and Haffelfinger, 1869) 190–194.

the founding of a Presbyterian seminary. Green and Miller were the initial movers of this plan which coalesced and came to fruition after several years. Thus the seed of Princeton Seminary came amidst concerns flowing from this High Churchism controversy.

In a letter again to Mr. Griffin on May 13, 1805, Dr. Miller himself linked the two subjects together as chief concerns:

I wish you to have a full and free conversation with Dr. Green, our mutual and highly esteemed friend, on two important subjects:—

I. The ambitious designs and artful proceedings of our Episcopal brethren. Since I saw you, I have received increasing conviction, that they are taking unwearyed pains, upon a large scale, to disseminate their high church doctrines much beyond the bounds of this city and state. Every minister of the Presbyterian Church ought to be apprized of their designs, and to be particularly armed on the subject of Church Government, and the history of Presbyterian and Episcopal ordination.

II. The great scarcity of ministers, and the indispensable necessity of adopting speedy and vigorous measures for increasing their number. I consider our prospect on this score melancholy and alarming. If we go on, according to our present system of measures, I do not believe that the funds of the Assembly will be prepared for any effective plan in less than ten or fifteen years; and to wait so long without doing anything, it appears to me would be madness.

While these letters give some hints to the origin of the controversy, the younger Samuel Miller provided a full accounting of it in his biography of his father.

DR. MILLER had hitherto been a voluntary, toilsome worker for the press, at the prompting, too much, of scholarly taste, and of surrounding social influences. Nevertheless, his labors had evidently, in God's providence, been overruled to prepare him, as to habits of study, style of writing, the courtesies of literature, reputation and influence, for subsequent more strictly professional and more important undertakings. He had scarcely thrown off the retrospect,<sup>7</sup> and relapsed, perhaps, into the fever of historical research, when

7. Samuel Miller, *A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century Part First, in Two Volumes, Containing a Sketch of the Revolutions and Improvements in Science, Arts, and Literature During That Period* (New York: T. and J. Swords, 1803).

he was restored, by Providential circumstances, to a proper theological diathesis. We have already found his letters recurring, frequently, to the subject of Episcopal aggressions. It is time to show that his representations and apprehensions upon this point were not groundless; and the leaves just now opening before us exhibit an important crisis in his history; a coloring which more or less marked the whole of his subsequent life.

The prevailing spirit of the Episcopal Church, in this country, has always been a spirit of arrogant pretension and exclusiveness. During our colonial existence, the establishment of religion in England was extended to some of the colonies with more or less rigor; and, in all of them where it existed, Episcopacy claimed peculiar preeminence as the state religion of the mother country. Its influence, during our Revolutionary struggle, was cast, predominantly, in favor of England; its connexion with the English Church being generally thought too important an advantage to be lightly severed. When, however, the colonies became independent, Episcopacy had in reserve still other grounds, on which to demand that its communion should be recognized as the Church, and all other bodies of Christians stigmatized as dissenters and schismatics. It now gave new prominence to the claim, long before advanced, of an exclusive apostolical succession; and while acquiescing in the results of the Revolution; nay, joining in the general acclamation of victory, yielded nothing of its own lordly assumptions. Still, the effect of our independence was, for a time, naturally enough, to depress the Episcopal Church. By her substantial adherence to the mother country, in our great struggle, she had lost prestige; and about a whole generation passed, before she recovered in either character or influence.

The chief opponents of Episcopacy in the colonies had been the Presbyterians; whose opposition, moreover, had been so persistent, and, in many respects, so successful, as to widen, lastingly, the distance in feeling between the two denominations. Until after the Revolution, all the efforts of the Episcopal Church in this country, to secure an American Episcopate, had been defeated, mainly through Presbyterian influence; an influence wisely and skilfully exercised, to prevent the aggrandizement of an ecclesiastical power, which had been, in repeated instances, unhesitatingly exerted, to annoy and oppress so-called dissenters. Nevertheless, from the return of peace to about the beginning

of the present century, the two denominations in New York City lived together in unwonted harmony. The war having left both the Presbyterian churches in an almost ruinous condition; until one of them could be repaired—a period of more than six months—Trinity church, as we have seen, with unsolicited and distinguished kindness, gave to the united congregations under Dr. Rodgers the use of St. George's and St. Paul's churches, alternately, for their worship (*Life of Samuel Miller*, 206–207).

Dr. Miller's own account of the controversy is as follows:<sup>8</sup>

For more than twenty years after the establishment of American independence, the Presbyterians of New York dwelt in peace and harmony with their Episcopal neighbors. They well recollected, indeed, the long course of oppressions and provocations which they had suffered, by means of Episcopal influence, prior to the Revolution. They recollected that, for more than half a century, besides supporting their own churches, they had been forced to contribute to the support of the Episcopal Church, already enriched and strengthened by governmental aid. They recollected in how many instances the fairest and most laudable exertions to promote the interest of their denomination, were opposed, thwarted and frustrated by the direct interference of the same favored sect. But when our national independence and equal rights became established; when all denominations of Christians were placed on the same footing, with respect to the state, and left to enjoy their privileges together, the Presbyterians were disposed to forget every injury; to cover every former subject of uneasiness with the mantle of charity; to dwell in equal concord and love with their brethren of every name. It was not supposed, indeed, during this period of tranquillity, that Presbyterians and Episcopalians were agreed in their views either of evangelical truth, or of ecclesiastical order; or that they considered all the points in which they differed as of small importance. But while both thought for themselves, and pursued their own views of doctrine and worship, they avoided an unnecessary, and, especially, an irritating and offensive obtrusion of their points of difference; and, above all, never seem to have thought, on either side, of that system of proscription and attack, which our Episcopal brethren have since chosen to commence.

The formal and open commencement of this system may be dated in the year 1804. Previous to that period,

indeed, several sermons and other fugitive pamphlets had evinced a disposition on the part of some individuals, to revive and urge certain claims, as unfounded in Scripture as they are offensive to liberal minds. But in that year there appeared in the City of New York, the first of a series of larger publications, which evidently had for their object a system of more bold and decisive proscription than had been ventured upon for a considerable time before. These publications, among other doctrines, were professedly intended to maintain and disseminate the following; viz., "That the power of ordination to the Christian ministry is, by divine appointment, vested exclusively in Diocesan Bishops; that where these Bishops are wanting, there is no authorized ministry, no true Church, no valid ordination; that, of course, the Presbyterian and all other non-Episcopal churches and ministers are, not only unauthorized and perfectly destitute of validity, but are to be viewed as institutions founded in rebellion and schism; and that all who are in communion with such non-Episcopal churches are "aliens from Christ," "out of the appointed road to heaven," have no interest in the promises of God, and no hope but in his "uncovenanted mercy," which may be extended to them, in common with the serious and conscientious heathen." Books, containing doctrines of this kind, had been published and sent abroad with much assiduity, for more than a year before any Presbyterian came forward to refute them, or to vindicate primitive simplicity and order; and, since that time, similar books have been printed, re-printed, new-modelled, and circulated, especially in the city and State of New York, with a degree of zeal and perseverance altogether new and extraordinary.

Nor is this all. These books have been put into the hands of non-Episcopalians. Presbyterians have been personally addressed on the subject, and attempts made to seduce them from their church, on the express allegation, that they were totally destitute of an authorized ministry and of valid ordinances. And, that nothing might be wanting to fix the character and purpose of these treasures, they were accompanied with declarations, that a state of warfare with the

8. This recounting given in the biography comes from Samuel Miller, *A Continuation of Letters Concerning the Constitution and Order of the Christian Ministry: Addressed to the Members of the Presbyterian Churches in the City of New-York: Being an Examination of the Strictures of the Rev. Drs. Bowden and Kemp, and the Rev. Mr. How, on the Former Series* (New-York: Published by Williams and Whiting, 1809).

Presbyterian church, on the subject of Episcopacy, was earnestly wished for, and considered as one of the most probably means of promoting the Episcopal cause.<sup>9</sup>

It was not possible for one denomination of Christians to act in a more inoffensive manner towards another, than we had uniformly done towards our Episcopal brethren. We had never attempted to unchurch them. We had never, directly or indirectly, called in question the validity of their ministrations or ordinances. We had never, on any occasion, obtruded our particular views of church order, as essential either to the *being* or *prosperity* of the body of Christ. On the contrary, whenever we had occasion, from the pulpit or the press, to instruct our people on those points in which we differ from Episcopalians, it was always done in a manner respectful, conciliatory, and perfectly consistent with acknowledging them as a sister church; a sister by no means, indeed, in our estimation, free from error; but yet sufficiently near the primitive model to be regarded as a church of Christ. All this, however, did not secure us from the treatment of which you have heard.

Under these circumstances; when we were virtually denounced and excommunicated; when the name of a Christian church was denied us; when our people were warned to abandon the ministry of their pastors, under the penalty of being regarded as *rebels* and *schismatics* both by God and man; when more than insinuations of this kind were presented and reiterated, from the pulpit and the press, on every practicable occasion, and in almost every possible variety of form; when, by the frequency and the confidence with which they were brought forward, some in our communion were perplexed, others, more discerning and better informed, rendered indignant, and all appeared to feel the propriety of vindicating the abused

ordinances of Christ; it became at least *excusable* to say something in our own defence. It was no bitterness against our Episcopal brethren; no love of controversy; no restless ambition; no desire to intrude into another denomination for the purpose of making proselytes; that dictated an attempt to justify our principles. The attempt was purely defensive, and was demanded by every consideration of duty to the souls of men, and of fidelity to our Master in heaven (*Life of Samuel Miller*, 207–210).

The main individual who brought about this state of affairs was John Henry Hobart. Miller's biographer son provided the background:

In the year 1800, the Rev. John Henry Hobart was called to be an assistant minister of Trinity Church, in the City of New York. With his coming, there seems to have been a marked revival of High-churchism in that city. The "series of larger publications," mentioned by Dr. Miller, commenced with him. "The strong attachment of Mr. Hobart," says his biographer, "to the distinctive principles of the Episcopal Church, and his bold, active and persevering defence of them, at all times, through good and through evil report, were striking peculiarities in his character and life. He was constantly endeavoring to rouse others to a sense of their importance; and by his indefatigable labors, his noble enthusiasm, even in the cause of soberness and truth, and the influence of his talents, character and station, he revived the languid zeal of Episcopalians, gave a new tone to their sentiments in this diocese, and stamped the impress of his own mind and feelings on thousands throughout the Church at large."

In the month of May, 1804, Mr. Hobart published his work entitled, "A Companion for the Altar." In the fall of the same year, he gave to the public another volume — "A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts" (*Life of Samuel Miller*, 211).

The former was "printed for Peter A. Mesier," but the latter was published by T. & J. Swords.<sup>10</sup> Prior to these publications which sparked the controversy, Hobart had previously anonymously edited for publication William Stevens' *A Treatise on the Nature and Constitution of the Christian Church* (New York: Printed by T. & J. Swords, 1803), and was "instrumental in the publication of an American edition" of Charles Daubeny's *A Guide to the Church in Several Discourses...* (New-York: Printed by T. and J. Swords, for Isaac Beers and Co, 1803), both as noted printed by the Swords.

9. "Hobart and his circle did not enter the ... controversy naively concerned with simply an abstract defense of truth but fully hoping that such a controversy might give wider circulation to their ideas and positions" (Mullen, 37).

10. John Henry Hobart, *A Companion for the Altar Consisting of a Short Explanation of the Lord's Supper, and Meditations and Prayers, Proper to Be Used Before, and During, the Receiving of the Holy Communion: According to the Form Prescribed by the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America* (New York: Printed for Peter A. Mesier, 1804); John Henry Hobart, and Robert Nelson, *A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America Principally Selected and Altered from Nelson's Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England* (New-York: Printed and sold by T. & J. Swords, 1804).

Hobart had moved in December 1800 to New York to accept the position of assistant pastor at Trinity Church. In a letter informing a friend of this move, he commented, "Except when under the uncontrollable influence of constitutional melancholy, I can generally find tranquil happiness in the endearments and duties of domestic life—in the enlivening hopes of friendships—in plans of literary improvement and professional duty ...."<sup>11</sup> It would seem as far as literary pursuits, Hobart fit well into the spirit of the time and it is not surprising given the relationship of the Swords to Trinity Church and their many publications for the Protestant Episcopal Church, that Hobart found a ready publisher in the firm. It is probably shortly after this move that he formed a long friendship with Thomas Swords.<sup>12</sup> From this point it seems the Swords became the main printers involved in the controversy from the high Episcopal side.

Mullen describes Hobart's views: "Two principles underlie his work: 'That we are saved from guilt and from dominion of sin, by the divine merits and grace of a crucified Redeemer' and that this merit and grace are only with certainty applied to the soul 'in the devout and humble participation of the ordinances of the Church, administered by a priesthood, who derive their authority by regular transmission from Christ' [i.e., apostolic succession] (Mullen, 30). "Hobart's emphasis upon the work of divine grace through the ordinances and sacraments rather than through a conversion led him ineluctably to place a far greater emphasis upon the question of *which* church and *which* sacraments" (Mullen, 31); "... he presented the church as a well-formed and regular society with an officially designated ministry that traced its pedigree back to its institution by Christ, a society to which all people were required to belong. In emphasizing the visibility, historicity, and authority of such a church, Hobart elevated questions of order to the level of issues of gospel truth. God's promise of grace was not a universal blessing but was limited to that church established by him. The continuing existence of the church throughout history took on a religious meaning; it was viewed as one of the greatest miracles and an important part of the believer's confidence" (Mullen 31–32). This "myth of a pure church" was Hobart's interpretive grid.<sup>13</sup>

Samuel Miller the younger, after giving some supporting extracts from Hobart's writings to buttress Presbyterian concerns, provided the following section on High Churchism (*Life of Samuel Miller*, 213–218):

In these works, Mr. Hobart ignored, entirely, the common Protestant distinction between the Visible and the Invisible Church; and it was but a logical consequence of this, to represent non-Episcopal pastors as mere laymen, the ordinances which they administered as wholly invalid and worse, and the people

attending upon their ministry as having no covenanted right to the salvation of the gospel. But this, under another name, was the very core of Romish error. True, those who, in the Church of England, and in the Protestant Episcopal Church of this country, have maintained and propagated high-church opinions, have stoutly denied them to be Romish; or, to use a word more common in this controversy, Popish. But the latter word affords the only real pretext for a denial. If Popery implies adherence to the Pope, as the self-styled Chief Bishop, Visible Head of the Church, and Vicar of Christ on Earth, then all High Churchism cannot justly be charged with it; although thousands, it is well-known, have been led thereby, and that most naturally, direct to Romanism, and the fullest acknowledgment of the Pope's claims.

But if High Churchism itself be the very foundation error, the real *πρωτον ψευδος*, of the Papacy, as undoubtedly it is, then is it in vain for high churchmen to deny their affinity to the Papiſts. The recognition of the Pope is only a specific difference: generically, Romanism and High Churchism are the same. Their common heresy embraces three essential points of doctrine: First, there is no earthly, or in part earthly, invisible Church of Christ: the only Church on earth is a visible, external communion: Secondly, all Christ's promises to his people, his Church, including the promise, or covenant, of salvation, belong, therefore,

11. William Berrian, *The Posthumous Works of the Late Right Reverend John Henry Hobart ... With a Memoir of His Life* (New York: Swords, Stanford, 1832) 78.

12. "Thomas Swords was an intimate friend of Bishop Hobart. He was a vestryman of Trinity Church from 1817 to his death, July 7, 1843." Episcopal Church, and J. H. Hobart, *Archives of the General Convention*, 4 (New York: Privately printed, 1912) 333.

13. "Rather than a theological confession, these men offered a method of analysis derived from the great age of Anglican high church patristic scholarship as represented in John Pearson and George Bull. Scripture as interpreted by the early church and as refocused, if necessary, by the English Reformers became the standard high church theological approach. The linchpin of the entire argument was the myth of the pure church. Virtually every high church writer shared the belief that a period of centuries existed during which the church accurately reflected the true teachings of the scriptures and hence could be used as a sure interpreter of scripture.... The witness of this pure church was the hermeneutic by which both nonepiscopal Protestants and Roman Catholics could be answered, since it attested to the apostolic nature of episcopacy while excluding papal supremacy. So important was the concept of the pure church that high church writers were always quick to defend it. Unfortunately, the growing trend toward what is now known as modern church history implicitly threatened the assumptions of the pure church argument" (Mullen, 67–68).

to a visible communion, and that alone: Thirdly, this visible communion, within the pale of which, alone, covenanted salvation is to be found, depends essentially for its existence, upon an outward succession of prelatical bishops:—the Romaniſt ſays, the ſucceſſion from Peter of the Biſhops of Rome — the Popes: — the Proteſtant high churchman ſays, an unbroken, tactual ſucceſſion, of prelates ſimply, from ſome one or more of the Apoſtles. The former contends, that there is no covenanted ſalvation out of the Church of Rome; the latter, that there is no covenanted ſalvation out of a communion which has prelates with unbroken, tactual apoſtolic ſucceſſion. The conſequences of this dogma are tremendous. As to this country, the Romaniſt tells you, that there is no covenanted ſalvation out of his own little communion. The Episcopalian high churchman tells you, that there is no covenanted ſalvation out of his, and, perhaps, the Moravian, and the Romiſh communions; and upon the laſt he often throws doubt on the ground of ſome Tridentine corruption. Of courſe, high churchmen are found, ſo called, of every grade; but high churchiſm, properly ſpeaking, is what has juſt been deſcribed. It derives its name from this heretical exaltation of the Viſible Church, or a part thereof, which it puts, in fact, nearer than Chriſt to both ſaint and ſinner. Chriſt ſays, “Come unto me.” High Churchiſm ſays, “Come to our Viſible Church, or you can never properly, or certainly, reach Chriſt.”

The Reformation of the ſixteenth century is often ſaid to have turned upon the doctrine of Juſtification by Faith—“the article of a ſtanding or falling church.” In appearance, it may have been ſo, but not in reality. The Reformers, digging through the overlaying maſs of Romiſh corruptions, down to the great doctrines of the goſpel, which they brought once more to light, did not reach firſt, as indeed they could not, the very foundations of truth. They recovered, both theoretically and experimentally, the doctrine of Juſtification,

14. “For Linn the iſſue at hand was very ſimply one of Episcopalian aggression. ‘It is their proclaiming themſelves to be the only true Church,’ he explained, ‘and condemning all others, in imperious and insolent language, which has given offence. It is their reviving exploded doctrine about *divine right and uninterrupted ſucceſſion*, and claiming an *exclusive right* to the adminiſtration of the word and ordinances, which has excited both oppoſition and contempt” (Mullen, 37). “For Linn, *Companion for the Altar and Feſtivals and Faſts* were poſſibly the firſt trumpet blaſt of the return of the bigotry, ſuperſtition, and old prejudice that characterized the days of William Laud. An appeal for authority in the realm of the church could all too eaſily become a juſtification for ſtate authority” (Mullen, 40–41).

and were rejoicing in it, “as one that findeth great ſpoil;” when Rome launched her excommunications and anathemas upon their heads. Out of the Church they were loſt! The very thought was terrible, and it carried ſome faint hearts back in a hurry to the Pope’s fold by the door of ſubmiſſion. Not ſo, however, with thoſe who knew beſt the Scriptural foundation, and the Scriptural power of juſtifying faith. They were only ſet to delving deeper into the doctrine of Chriſt. They had, perhaps, the witness in themſelves that they belonged to him—were the ſheep of his fold: what did it matter whether they belonged to the Pope or not? Happy thought! Now came to light the great goſpel truth of an Inviſible Church, the whole company of true believers, paſt, preſent, and future, united to Chriſt, and through him to one another, by faith, and heirs of every promiſe, every covenanted bleſſing. The Church of Chriſt, it was, henceforth, againſt the Church of Rome: that was the grand corner doctrine of the Reformation; which, alas! has been “a ſtone of ſtumbling,” and a “a rock of offence,” to ſo many calling themſelves Proteſtants. Every great ſtruggle for the faith has brought to clearer view, and more definite expreſſion, ſome momentous truth. The doctrine of the Inviſibility of the True Church was the main doctrine battled for and ſucceſſfully maintained by the Reformers: the denial of it really lay at the foundation of every Romiſh heresy.

#### THE “DEBATES”

Mullen writes that the “Episcopalian–Presbyterian debates can be divided into two phases. The firſt began with the debate found in the pages of the *Albany Centinel* over the iſſues raised in Hobart’s *Companion for the Altar and Feſtivals and Faſts* and culminated in the debate over Hobart’s moſt famous work, *An Apology for Apoſtolic Order and its Advocates*. The ſecond phase concerned the publication by Samuel Miller of the firſt of his two volumes of *Letters Concerning the Conſtitution and Order of the Chriſtian Miniſtry* and includes the reſponſes to Miller’s tomes by John Bowden and Thomas Y. How” (Mullen, 36).

The younger Miller ſummed up the founding literature of the controversy in this manner:

In the ſummer of 1805, the Rev. Dr. William Linn published, in “The Albany Centinel,” under the title “Miscellanies, No. IX,” a few ſtrictures upon the extravagant claims ſet forth in Mr. Hobart’s volumes.<sup>14</sup> He was met at once, in the ſame newspaper, by “A

Layman of the Episcopal Church," or Thomas Y. How, Esquire, afterwards the Rev. Mr. (finally Dr.) How; and the controversy was continued in this manner, by the gentlemen already named, Dr. Linn adopting, for different articles, the different signatures "Clemens," "Umpire," and "Inquirer;" and by "Cyprian," or the Rev. Frederick Beasley, rector of St. Peter's Church, Albany; "Cornelius," or Bishop Provost; "An Episcopalian," or Bishop White; and "Detector" and "Vindex," signatures both employed by Mr. Hobart—five against one; either the temptation of such extemporaneous newspaper debate, or distrust of each other, multiplying thus the champions of Episcopacy. At length, as usual, the publishers interposed, saying the public had become weary; and, not satisfied with the result, Dr. Hobart republished, in 1806, the whole controversy in a volume, "with additional notes and remarks." "My republishing the 'Essays on Episcopacy,'" he says, "was a defensive measure. \* \* \* Many of the assertions of the author of 'Miscellanies' remained unanswered, which it was necessary, therefore, to notice in a separate publication" [Hobart's *Apology* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), 49].

It would seem to have been in fulfilment of the plan of issuing a magazine, of which, in the spring of 1805, Dr. Miller's letters speak, that, about the beginning of the year, 1807, "The Christian's Magazine" was commenced, in New York City, under the editorship of the Rev. Dr. John M. Mason, with the assistance of other clergymen.<sup>15</sup> Among religious articles of various kinds, it embraced a review, by the editor, of the recent Episcopal controversy. This speedily called forth Dr. Hobart again: he replied to the review, as far as it had gone, in a work issuing from the press in June, 1807, entitled, "An Apology for Apostolic Order and its Advocates." About a month later, in July, Dr. Miller published the first volume of his "Letters concerning the Constitution and Order of the Christian Ministry." It was written without any reference to Dr. Hobart's "Apology," as the dates just given sufficiently prove (*Life of Samuel Miller*, 216–218).

For some time it was evidently known from the public prospectus that the Presbyterians would be issuing a new journal and the high church party suspected it would address the controversy. "I hope you will remember to send several copies of y<sup>e</sup> controversy. If this should be printed before y<sup>e</sup> the Presbyterian Mag<sup>n</sup> I think it will check its progress."<sup>16</sup> Hobart did proceed as noted above to reissue the original controversy with notes, which was published by T. & J. Swords between February, 1806 and August 21, 1806.<sup>17</sup> The first issue of *The*

*Christian's Magazine* apparently appeared early in 1807 as Mason's prefatory letter is dated December 6, 1806 (*Archives of the General Convention*, 5.231, note), and a correspondent of Hobart's notes in a letter of the same date, "The Xian's Mag<sup>n</sup> we understand is on y<sup>e</sup> way" (Rudd to Hobart, December 6, 1806, *Archives of the General Convention*, 5.230). The first response from Hobart is apparently a piece others have attributed to John Bowden, *Two Letters to the Editor of the Christian's Magazine by a Churchman* (New-York: Printed by T. and J. Swords, 1807). The first letter is an answer to Mason's review of Hobart's *Companion for the Altar*, and the second letter to his review of the *Collection of the Essays*. Later apparently, in June 1807, Hobart issued his *An Apology for Apostolic Order and its Advocates*, also published by the Swords,<sup>18</sup> which was followed shortly thereafter by the first volume of Miller's *Letters*. A second volume of *Letters* appeared in 1809, which received a reply from Bowden, and How made a delayed reply to Miller in 1816.<sup>19</sup> How soon left the field of debate due to a scandal. His late reply is ironic given the following related by Dr. Miller:<sup>20</sup>

Mr. How, for reasons which he himself best understands,

15. See Mason's detailing of the controversy, *The Confessional Presbyterian* 2 (2006) 88. John Mitchell Mason, Alexander M'Leod and Dr. Samuel Miller, the New York Presbyterian trio featured in the first three issues of this journal, were all part of this clerical society, as noted in the first part of this series (see *The Confessional Presbyterian* 2 [2006] 224).

16. John C. Rudd to John Henry Hobart, February 21, 1806. *Archives of the General Convention*, 5.110.

17. William Linn, Frederick Beasley, Thomas Y. How, and John Henry Hobart, *A Collection of the Essays on the Subject of Episcopacy, Which Originally Appeared in the Albany Centinal And Which Are Ascribed Principally to the Rev. Dr. Linn, the Rev. Mr. Beasley, and Thomas Y. How: with Additional Notes and Remarks* (New-York: Printed by T. & J. Swords, 1806). The dating comes from the February 1806 date of the preface, and from a reference in a letter to Hobart noting the publication, dated August 21, 1806. Davenport Phelps to John Henry Hobart, August 21, 1806, *Archives of the General Convention*, 5.166.

18. John Henry Hobart, *An Apology for Apostolic Order and Its Advocates Occasioned by the Strictures and Denunciations of the Christian's Magazine in a Series of Letters, Addressed to the Rev. John M. Mason, D.D....* (New York: Printed by J. and J. Swords, 1807).

19. Thomas Y. How, *A Vindication of the Protestant Episcopal Church In a Series of Letters Addressed to the Rev. Samuel Miller, in Reply to His Late Writings on the Christian Ministry, and to the Charges Contained in His Life of the Rev. Dr. Rodgers: with Preliminary Remarks* (New York: Eastburn, Kirk, & Co, 1816). How had also replied to the first set of Miller's Letters in *Letters Addressed to the Rev. Samuel Miller, D.D., in Reply to his Letters Concerning the Constitution and Order of the Christian Ministry* (Utica, N.Y.: Printed by Seward and Williams, 1808).

20. How, along with Hobart and Frederick Beasley, met at Princeton and all shared an intense interest in defending episcopacy. According to Mullen, while How possessed the same intensity for high churchism views as Hobart, "his sharper mind was quick to

has thought proper to assert, that my *Letters* [of 1807] “are well known to be the result of several years of laborious attention to the subject which they discuss.” Another writer, in the *Churchman’s Magazine*, has made a similar assertion; and boasts that the advocates of the Episcopal church will not require as much time to answer, as was employed in writing them. I cheerfully yield to these gentlemen the palm of celerity and copiousness in writing; and even if the statement respecting the time employed in preparing my publication were true, it is not easy to see how it bears on the argument. What would it avail a culprit to show that the collection of the testimony which seals his conviction was the work of a month instead of a day? But the statement is not true. My attention to the Episcopal controversy had been very small, perhaps culpably so, until within a few months previous to the publication of my *Letters*. When the printing was begun, not more than one third of the volume was written; and the greater part of it was actually composed during the three months which were consumed in passing the sheets through the press. But though the work was chiefly written with that haste which every one who has run a race with the press well understands; and amidst the feebleness of an habitual valetudinarian, as well as the distraction and fatigue of multiplied professional labors; it affords me some satisfaction to reflect, that, after the maturest deliberation, I see no cause to retract a single argument, or materially to alter a single statement. On the contrary, further

push subtle distinctions further, often ignoring propriety and tact. His sharpness was offset neither by Hobart’s warmth of piety nor by Beasley’s academic donnishness, and it continually left him open to the charge of Pharisaism” (Mullen, 12). How was elected assistant rector of Trinity Church in 1816 (*A History of the Parish of Trinity Church in the City of New York Part Three* [New York: Putnam, 1898] 25). John Pintard described Dr. How and his fall from prominence: “Doctor T. Y. How who stood preeminent as a polemical writer but void of every principle of religion or decorum, was detected last week in attempting the seduction of a servant girl.... Mr. How has resigned his clerical functions & has been suspended by his bosom friend Bishop Hobart who is bowed down by this overwhelming calamity. Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall must be every clergymans motto....” (*Letters from John Pintard to His Daughter* volume 1 [New York: Printed for the New-York Historical Society, 1940] 113–114).

21. Philip Milledoler, *A discourse, delivered in the Presbyterian Church in Wall-Street, March 23, 1806: for a society of ladies instituted for the relief of poor widows with small children, and published at their request* (New York: T. & J. Swords, 1806).

22. Samuel Miller, *A Sermon, Delivered January 19, 1812, At the Request of a Number of Young Gentlemen of the City of New-York, Who Had Assembled to Express Their Condolence with the Inhabitants of Richmond, on the Late Mournful Dispensation of Providence in That City* (New York: Published by Whiting and Watson; New-York: Printed by T. and J. Swords, 1812).

reading and reflection have convinced me, that every argument and every statement, notwithstanding all the contemptuous sneers and confident assertions of my opponents, are capable of being irrefragably fortified (*Life of Samuel Miller*, 218).

As subsequent history has shown, the extravagant claims of the Hobart school did not withstand scrutiny, built as it was upon a myth unsupported by history. Miller’s two volumes of *Letters* were reissued in 1830 edited into one volume. The 1807 volume of *Letters* received the following commendation from another alumnus of the Friendly Club (*Life of Miller*, 1.221):

The writer of the following was at the time Chief Justice, though since better known as Chancellor, of the State of New York.

“Dear Sir, Albany, September 1st, 1807.

I return you my thanks for your book on the Constitution of the Christian Ministry. I have read it with attention, with pleasure, and with great instruction. The subject was certainly not familiar to me, and you have awakened my astonishment at the *weak* and *contemptible* foundations of the Episcopal claim to the divine origin of diocesan Bishops. I may express myself too strongly; but the truth is, I have, carefully and *without the least prejudice*, followed your argument, and I think the performance a finished one, and perfectly conclusive on the question. I was as much pleased with the style and temper of the book, as I had reason to admire its logic and learning. It will be eminently useful, not only against the arrogant pretensions which gave birth to it, but against innovations upon the Presbyterian model from Independent sects. That your health may grow firm and enable you to prosecute your studies and your duties, is the sincere wish of

Your friend and obedient servant,  
James Kent.”

After the commencement of the published replies in the Summer of 1805, only one Presbyterian piece appeared from the Swords, Philip Milerdoler’s *Discourse, delivered in the Presbyterian Church in Wall-Street, March 23, 1806*.<sup>21</sup> As the controversy intensified over the succeeding years, either from prudence on both sides, or suspicion p, or simply because the they were so linked to the controversy, the Swords almost completely ceased publishing titles by Presbyterians. The one exception was a second printing of Miller’s sermon on the tragedy of the fire in Richmond in 1812.<sup>22</sup>

## HIGH CHURCH VERSUS EVANGELICAL EPISCOPALIAN

While from all accounts, and certainly by the time Hobartianism collapsed from the burden of maintaining the myth of the pure church, the Presbyterians swept the field despite pretensions to the contrary. However, Hobart was much more successful in sweeping the evangelical opposition of his own church out of the New York diocese.

In February of 1811 Bishop Moore of New York suffered an acute attack of paralysis which necessitated the election of an assistant bishop. In the special convention of the diocese Hobart was elected over the opposition of a small but vigorous minority.... The election of Hobart cast the high church party in a new situation: after this point they were not simply apologists for a vision of the Episcopal Church and its relation to the other denominations and the state, but could now begin to implement this vision. Yet they did not operate without opposition, in large part stemming from Hobart's attempt to place his mark upon his diocese. He was single-minded in his attempt to control the church, and it is indeed hard at times to be certain where his vision of the distinct role of the Episcopal Church in antebellum society ended and where a personal monomania and inability to tolerate opposition began. From early in Hobart's episcopate only those clergy who agreed with the general tenets of Hobart's high church program were appointed as missionaries, and diocesan patronage in general fell into high church hands (Mullen, 50).

In particular, Hobart immediately was at odds with more evangelical Episcopalians in his opposition to supporting independent endeavors such as the Bible Society movement which had as its defenders such leading citizens of the new republic as John Pintard and William Jay. Pintard often castigated the bishop in his letters.

Thro' the influence of Bp. Hobart, Episcopalians generally in N. York are intolerant bigots, regarding Episcopacy as an essential of salvation, little removed from the intolerance of the Church of Rome. But enough of a disgusting subject (Pintard, 3.184).

As Mullen notes, "Hobart's fundamental error for Jay was his confusing of the function of the Bible and that of the Prayer Book. Although admiring the Episcopal liturgy, Jay adamantly maintained that any formal coupling of the Bible and the liturgy was an [sic] slap at the authority of Scripture." Hobart

insisted the Episcopal Church should only support handing out the Scriptures with the Prayer book.

Pintard wrote of a missionary to Greece which Hobart refused to support:

My Bishop is violently opposed to the operations of our Gen<sup>l</sup> Miss<sup>y</sup> S<sup>o</sup> in favour of foreign Missions, & of all others told M<sup>r</sup> R. that he considers the Greek most visionary & absolutely forbids him to act as Miss<sup>y</sup> in his diocese. M<sup>r</sup> R. must therefore operate thro' the agency of friends. The poor Greeks w<sup>d</sup> be sadly off, if Bishop Hobart's diocese, like the Devil's, extended all over Christendom. This prelate is at least half a century behind the Age in w<sup>h</sup> he lives. He discourages every Episcopal exertion not connected with his diocese, & in concordance with his High notions. God forgive him he knows not what spirit he is off [sic]. My intercourse with his Holiness is very rare, for I cannot bow to the golden image that he has set up, & do not aspire to martyrdom, to be cast into the fiery furnace of his wrath. Thank God that I live in a free country, where liberty of conscience is not fettered by ecclesiastical Tyrants (Pintard, 3.151–152).

Hobartianism gave way mid century to a tentative truce with evangelicals in the church, but the advance of the Oxford movement and growing ritualism and Romanizing track it brought, eventually caused evangelicals to depart the Protestant Episcopacy Church in 1873 to form the Reformed Episcopal Church.

## MEMENTO MORI

All our cast of notables from this Early Federal period have long since passed from the stage; but all of them left legacies of one kind or another.

*Samuel Miller (1769–1850)*

The many labours and a brief biographical notice of Dr. Samuel Miller were presented in the inaugural issue of this journal.<sup>23</sup> To the church's good, Miller went on to better things than the literary, intellectual and political discourses and pursuits that took up the time of the Friendly Club:

The position which Mr. Miller occupied in New York gave him, at once, the freedom of that society to which he was naturally attracted by his cultivated literary and

23. See Wayne Sparkman, "Samuel Miller D. D. (1769–1850) An Annotated Bibliography," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 1 (2005) 11–42.

social tastes. His brother Edward, sharing these tastes, added many of his own professional friends to the number of their mutual associates; each brother, in fact, had the circle of his intercourse thus considerably enlarged. No doubt both, in this way, received a new impulse to their earnestness in general study, and to improvement as to various elegant accomplishments. But neither can it be doubted, that such society was not altogether favorable to a gospel minister's spiritual advancement, to his growth in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, or to his highest usefulness in the Church. In later years Mr. Miller seemed to look back at his life in New York, as having been, in more than one respect, a life of sore temptation; and no one can recur to its remaining records, imperfect as they are, without concluding that he could not have escaped entirely unharmed, from influences far too worldly, by which he was surrounded. The choice of a history of New York as the first great task for his pen, though a task never completed; and his subsequent actual preparation of two volumes of a general "Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century," clearly prove, that he had not yet learned to give himself wholly and rigorously—an absolute condition of great spiritual success—to his bare gospel work. A curious illustration of the temptations to which he was exposed, and to which, doubtless, he too far yielded, is found in his joining, perhaps to organize, as we have seen, a literary club, which embraced some very doubtful characters, as the intimates of a clergyman (*Life of Samuel Miller*, 1.128).

After a long and productive ministry Samuel Miller had a quiet passing into the next life. The last exchange a few hours before his death, between Dr. Miller and Dr. Archibald Alexander, his long time friend and fellow labourer at Princeton, is as follows:

Towards evening, however, Dr. Alexander was requested to visit him once more, and try whether his strong, familiar voice would not yet awaken his dying colleague. He came about five o'clock, and approaching the bed-side, asked, in his piercing tones, "Do you know me?" "Oh, yes!" replied Dr. Miller, who had been aroused as far as possible for this last interview. His voice was almost inarticulate, yet the reply not to be mistaken. In the same way, he answered all the questions put to him—as to the foundation of his hope, his desire to depart, his view of the fundamental

truths, which, after he had taught them for more than threescore years, after he had commended them to many others, as the most precious consolation of a dying hour, were now passing the test of their purity and excellence in the crucible of his own departing spirit, agitated with the pangs of dissolving nature. To every inquiry he most intelligently replied, "Oh, yes!" "Oh, no!"—with emphatic earnestness throwing all the residue of his strength into the half smothered words. Said Dr. Alexander at length, having offered a short prayer, and being about to take leave, "You are now in the dark valley!" "Oh yes!" was the only reply. "I shall soon be after you!" Thus parted for a little time [A.A. Alexander died October 22, 1851], at the brink of the river, these veteran soldiers of the cross (*Life of Samuel Miller*, 2.539–540).

Dr. Alexander's son, Dr. J. W. Alexander, noted Miller's death in his diary as well:

When I heard last night, Dr. Miller was almost gone, like a sleeping child, but knew [recognized] my father. One of the boys came in as I had penned this, to say that Dr. Miller died last night about 11, a few hours after my father saw him; without any struggle, oppression, or seeming pain. The funeral is to be from the church, (January 10.) at 2 o'clock. It has been a great comfort to the Doctor to have his medical son with him so many weeks. The Doctor was in his 81st year. Of all the deaths I ever knew, this is the most surrounded by all the things one could desire (*Life of Samuel Miller*, 540).

#### *Elihu Hubbard Smith (1771–1798).*

The notice of Dr. Smith's death in the *Medical Repository* was given in part two of this series.<sup>23</sup> He was the moving force behind the Friendly Club, and that little society did not long survive his early death. Smith was a Quaker turned Deist and sceptic. His death was nothing but a sad affair. The yellow fever was raging and a good portion of the Friendly Club having medical or ministerial duties, remained in the city.

Mr. Miller's fidelity as a pastor was put to the severest test. New York, then a city of fifty thousand people, was visited by the yellow fever. Half of the population left the city. In three months one-tenth of those who remained were dead. In the two collegiate Churches of which Dr. Miller was pastor, nearly two hundred fell victims to the pestilence. Throughout the visitation Dr. Miller remained in the city. His elder brother

23. "T. & J. Swords. Part Two. Two Large Presbyterian Works," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 3 (2007) 287.

Edward was practicing medicine in New York and had become eminent in his profession. Charles Brockden Brown, the novelist, writes of Dr. Edward Miller and with special reference to this epidemic: "His skill exceeds that of any other physician." The two brothers were indefatigable in their labors for the sick; and though, as Samuel says, "they were both mercifully borne through the raging epidemic without any serious attack," they were exhausted when the fever had spent its force. The increased visits and the almost daily funerals might well have excused the young pastor had he omitted some of his public services. But "though only a few attended public worship," he preached every Lord's Day; and in his journal he moralizes, in the spirit of Thucydides when writing on the plague in Athens, over the diminished sensibility of the population and of himself, wrought by familiarity with "scenes of mourning and of horror."<sup>25</sup>

In this outbreak of the yellow fever, Smith, who at the time had boarding with him William Johnson (another Friendly Club member) and Charles Brockden Brown, was attending to an Italian friend who had contracted the disease. The man had been denied a room at the boarding house and Smith took him into his own apartments. The Italian friend died and both Smith and Brown came down with the fever. Brown recovered but Smith did not. Dunlop records Brown's account given to his brother in a letter:

Sunday evening. Our Italian friend is dead, and Elihu is preparing to be transported to \_\_\_\_'s, whose house is spacious, healthfully situated, and plentifully accommodated. Our own house is a theatre of death and grief, where his longer continuance would infallibly destroy him and us. "Before his last attack, E. H. S. became sensible of the disproportionate hazard which he incurred, and had determined as soon as his friend Scandellahad recovered or perished, and his present patients had been got rid of, to withdraw from town."<sup>26</sup>

Dunlap completes the story and records Smith's death despite the attention of the Doctors (fellow club members) Edward Miller and Samuel Latham Mitchill.

Brown had been himself attacked by the first symptoms of the fatal disease, and was removed to the house of the same friend who now received the unfortunate Smith. Brown's symptoms yielded to medicine, not so his friend's; he lingered a few days in a state allied to stupor; the efforts of his medical friends Miller and Mitchill were utterly unavailing; he saw the

last symptom of disease, black vomit, pronounced the word "decomposition," and died.

Thus perished, on Wednesday the twenty-first of September, 1798, in the twenty-seventh year of his age, Elihu Hubbard Smith; a man whose whole ambition was to increase his intellectual powers with a view of devoting them to his fellow men.

Samuel Miller records the final mournful conclusion to the life of Elihu Hubbard Smith.

Among the victims of this wasting disease, in the season of which we are speaking, Doctor [Edward] Miller was called to lament the loss of his affectionate friend, and able colleague, Doctor Elihu H. Smith, who, in the morning of life and usefulness, and in the midst of professional exertions, as honorable to himself as they were beneficial to others, was sent to a premature grave.... Never can the writer of these lines forget the funeral of Doctor Smith. It was when the ravages of pestilence had become so tremendous, as to drive almost every individual from the city who was able to fly; when scarcely any passengers were to be seen in the streets, but the bearers of the dead to the tomb; and when it appeared as if the reign of death must become universal;—it was in circumstances such as these, that Doctors Mitchill and Miller, accompanied by two or three other friends, bedewed with their tears, and followed to the grave, the remains of a Young Man, in some respects one of the most enlightened and promising that ever adorned the annals of American science (*Life of Miller*, 1.116).

#### *Dr. Edward Miller (1760–1812)*

The brothers Edward and Samuel Miller were very close and the death of the former came shortly after the death of Samuel's son Edward Millington Miller, February 5, 1812, age seven.

In a little more than a month after his son's death, Dr. Miller met with one of the sorest bereavements of his life, in the decease of his last remaining brother, particularly endeared to him by constant and most intimate association, for more than fifteen years, in New York (*Life of Samuel Miller*, 1.323).

25. John De Witt, "The Intellectual Life of Samuel," *The Princeton Theological Review*, IV (April 1906) 177.

26. William Dunlap, *Memoirs of Charles Brockden Brown: The American Novelist, Author of Wieland, Ormond, Arthur Mervyn &c. with Selections from His Original Letters and Miscellaneous Writings* (London: Colburn, 1822) 83–84.

Dr. Miller, in his diary, thus noticed his brother's death:

"March 17, 1812. To-day, departed this life, my beloved and affectionate brother, EDWARD MILLER, M. D., Professor of the Practice of Physic in the University of the State of New York. He had been sick, for a fortnight, with a catarrhal fever; but was supposed to be decisively convalescent, when the fever suddenly assumed a typhoid shape, and closed his life in a few hours. The first impression I had of his danger was when I perceived a delirium coming on. But then it was too late to say a word to him concerning his eternal hope and prospects. I could only pray by his side; which I did a number of times.

I am now the only surviving son of seven born to my parents. One sister and myself are all that remain of nine children. Solemn situation! When shall I be called to give an account of my stewardship? Lord God, thou knowest. Oh, prepare me for all thy will."

Appended to this at a later date, is found an additional expression of grateful remembrance:—

"The brother whose death is noticed on the preceding page was one of the most affectionate and devoted brothers that ever man had. \* \* He devoted himself to my comfort with peculiar zeal and affection. And, after his decease, though he gave me no intimation of it before, I found that he had bequeathed to me his whole property, amounting to more than \$10,000, and made me his sole executor;"

Doctor Edward Miller had never made a profession of religion, yet there seemed to be good ground for believing that he had "hope in his death."

William Dunlap, Esquire, one of Dr. Edward Miller's earliest acquaintances and friends in New York, noticed his death most sympathetically in a

periodical publication of which he was the conductor. The following is one paragraph of that notice:—

"Every class of men joined in sympathetic regret, and in mournful testimonials to his superior worth. The assemblage of citizens, who attended to pay the last tribute of love and respect to his mortal remains, was numerous beyond example, except in the instance of the funeral of General Hamilton, whose death not only excited an extraordinary sensation, from the loss of a great and distinguished military and political leader, but from the manner and cause of his dissolution. In the instance I am recording, the uncommon concourse, not only of spectators, but of mourners, was unexpected; for the tribute of sorrow was paid to a man whose actions were not like Hamilton's, exposed to the gaze of millions, but were confined to the abodes of sickness, or the retreats of meditation. The expression of grief was strong and universal" (*Life of Samuel Miller*, 326; 329)

James Kent (1763–1847)

James Kent and Samuel Miller both arrived in New York about the same time in 1793, and both became members of the Friendly Club. Kent also attended the Collegiate Presbyterian churches where Miller was a pastor.<sup>27</sup> The religious views of club members were mixed. "On religious matters, as Smith wrote in his letter to Aikin, they differed widely; several, notably William Woolsey, were strong church members; others were indifferent; Smith was a proselytizing deist," whom Kent himself late in life characterized as a fine scholar but a "terrible freethinker."<sup>28</sup> May notes that Kent himself dabbled briefly with deism,<sup>29</sup> remarking on the mixed views of the club as well, that except "for Miller and also Latham [Mitchell], who was a moderate Presbyterian, the members inclined toward deism. Of the deists, Kent was a typical representative of the old sceptical and pessimistic variety, an admirer of Voltaire and Hume. Most of the others, though their reading was eclectic, were captivated by the most general and abstract writers of the Revolutionary Enlightenment, especially Godwin. Smith in particular discusses at length in his diary his movement away from Christianity on moral and rational grounds, and urges his friends to share his admiration of Godwin's *Political Justice* with its prophecies of republican Utopia" (May, 234).

Happily, though Kent dabbled with deism while a member of the Friendly Club, by 1804 he was praising "the ultra-evangelistic and Calvinist Panoplist . . ." (May, 326), and this exchange of letters late in life just prior to his death is poignant.

The following letters passed between Chancellor Kent, of New York, in his eighty-fifth year, and Dr. Miller.

27. "About the same time that Mr. Miller settled in New York, James Kent, Esquire, . . . removed thither from Poughkeepsie, and was appointed professor of law in Columbia College. More than six years Mr. Miller's senior, he had already gained some reputation as a lawyer, and as an active politician of the Hamilton school. He became an attendant upon the ministry of the Collegiate Presbyterian pastors; and on a subsequent page he will appear, in advanced life, recognizing his former relations to Mr. Miller. *Life of Samuel Miller*, D.D., 1.89.

28. James E. Cronin, "Elihu Hubbard Smith and the New York Friendly Club, 1795–1798," *PMLA*, Vol. 64, No. 3, (Jun., 1949) 474.

29. Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976) 326.

My dear Sir,                      New York, September 6th, 1847.

I have had a strong inclination, for some time past, to avail myself of a fit opportunity to unite myself to some church of the Protestant character, by making a public manifestation of my belief and hopes in the Christian dispensation of grace. I was educated in the Congregational Church, while I lived at Norwalk, in Connecticut, with my grandparents, and at Danbury for several years, and while I was in the course of my education at Yale College. Afterwards, at Poughkeepsie and Albany, I attended church as a member of the Presbyterian congregation; and I have always continued in that worship, until circumstances and my removal in town rendered it most inconvenient to attend either Dr. Phillips' or Dr. E. Mason's church;<sup>30</sup> and as my children had all become Episcopalians, and one of them the wife of Dr. Stone, that fact, the position of my residence, and my very great defect of hearing, rendered it suitable, as I thought, that I should attend them to the Episcopal Church; and I have finally joined that church, so far as to be admitted to the communion under the patronage of Dr. Stone. I have not in the least altered my prepossessions in favor of the Presbyterian and Congregational modes of worship and doctrine; but it did not strike me as very material to which of our churches I was attached, as they are all Protestant and sound; though my predilections are still in favor of the New England churches, and I have a strong aversion, in fact, to the forms and ceremonies of the Cathedral worship.

I have thought it, my dear Sir, due to you and to myself to make this frank explanation; our former connection and my very strong respect and friendship for you have induced me to venture to do it; and I hope you will receive it in the kindness and indulgence with which it is made, and not deem me too intrusive.

I have been greatly afflicted, for some months past, with a most inveterate disease, and that is Dyspepsia, and nervous irritability; though, through the blessing of God upon the endeavours of my physicians, and my own efforts, the disease is vastly mitigated.

I am, my dear Sir, with the highest esteem and regard, your friend and obedient servant,

James Kent.

My dear and venerated Friend,

Your kind letter of the 6th instant reached me five days after its date. It found me confined to the house by sickness, wholly unable to attend to the duties of my office in the Seminary, and too feeble to take my pen in hand. I am now, by God's blessing, considerably better, and with pleasure address myself to the privilege of answering your welcome communication.

Your letter was indeed welcome. To be addressed by an old and highly valued friend, with whom my acquaintance commenced more than forty years ago, and to be assured that I was not forgotten by him, was truly gratifying; but to be informed that that friend had thought it his duty, and had found his way clear, at the "eleventh hour," to make a public profession of his faith and hope in the glorious Gospel of the grace of God, was doubly gratifying. True, indeed, my satisfaction, on this occasion, would have been more complete, if he had informed me that he had, finally, in his old age, joined himself to that church which I believe to be more scriptural than any other; with which he had been connected, as a stated hearer, for nearly half a century; and in which it was once my privilege and pleasure to bear to him the relation of pastor. Still, I cannot but rejoice in the step you have taken.

Though I have no personal acquaintance with Dr. Stone, I have always understood that he was a decidedly evangelical man. From all that I have ever learned, I feel persuaded, that he preaches the Gospel substantially and faithfully. Of course, assured that he is engaged in leading souls to Christ, and, through his atoning sacrifice and life-giving Spirit, to heaven, I can cordially resign you, if you will allow me to say so, to his evangelical care. In my opinion, you judge correctly, in thinking that you cannot go essentially wrong, in joining yourself to any Protestant denomination, by the ministry of which inquiring souls are directed, as the ground of hope, not to rites and ceremonies, but to the atoning blood and perfect righteousness of the Saviour of sinners.

My prayer, my dear Sir, is, that your christian profession, though so long delayed, may be attended with the richest consolation and peace to yourself, and with edification to all around you. Allow an old friend,

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30. Ebenezer Mason was the son of John M. Mason.

once your pastor, to indulge the freedom of saying, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." You cannot conceal from yourself, that God has been pleased to assign you a conspicuous and honorable place among men. I need not say, that while this fact is to be acknowledged as a great mercy, it is also to be regarded by you as inferring the most solemn responsibility to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour, by a corresponding brightness of example.

I take for granted that, in whatever degree your attention may have been heretofore directed to theological reading, that degree will be, hereafter, rather increased than diminished. Under this impression, permit me to say, that there are few writings that I have found more pleasant and edifying to myself, than the works of the late John Newton, of London, and of Thomas Scott, the commentator. I can also cordially recommend the two works by John Flavel, the old Puritan divine, of England, viz., his "Fountain of Life Opened," and his "Method of Grace;" both of which have been lately published, in an improved form, by the American Tract Society. Dr. Stone knows them all well, and will, I have no doubt, add his testimony to their value. True, you will not find in these volumes any thing new. They aim at exhibiting and recommending those great elementary truths of the Gospel with which you have been familiar from your earliest years; which your venerated parents and grandparents loved and rejoiced in; and which the truly pious of all Protestant denominations scarcely know how enough to value and circulate. But I shall never forget, that the great and good Dr. Watts said, in his last illness, "I find that those plain, simple truths of the Gospel, which I have been accustomed to inculcate on the humblest and most ignorant of my fellow men, are now the comfort and support of my own soul." May you and I, my dear Friend, in our closing scenes, which cannot be far distant, when all creature comforts must and will fail, find it thus! May we then find, to our unspeakable joy, that He who expired on the cross can and will, through the consolation of the Eternal Spirit, support our pardoned and sanctified spirits!

For myself, I have now nearly completed my seventy-eighth year. I feel that my race is almost run, and that I shall soon "put off this tabernacle." But "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." May this consolation abound in you, beloved

and honored Sir, more and more, and in me also, unworthy as I am! And may we be so happy as to spend a blessed eternity together in the presence and enjoyment of him who "loved us and gave himself for us."

So wishes and prays your  
Sincere friend,  
Sam'l Miller.

"After Chancellor Kent's death, his son, William Kent, Esquire, since also deceased, requested to see his father's letter of the 6th of September, 1847, which he subsequently returned, with the following communication:—"

My dear Sir,  
I am exceedingly obliged to you for my father's letter. I have copied it, and now return it to you with a copy made by one of my clerks.

This letter of my father is exceedingly affecting to me. You perceive in it, that he supposed he was getting better. We all knew that his death was near. He wrote the letter in one of the delusive intervals of his cruel pains, when he was almost too weak to hold the pen; and you may observe, that there is not in this letter the usual accuracy of his writing. But his mind was clear. It remained serene and undisturbed almost to the moment of death. It is one of the sweetest recollections which his children retain of him, that his beautiful intellect was never clouded nor weakened during his long life. Neither was his heart changed. It was full of sensibility and tenderness till he departed.

The discussions, to which I alluded in my last letter, were caused by some ill-judged attempts to claim my father as having become a convert to the Episcopal Church. I am myself a regular attendant on the services of that Church; but it would have given me vastly more pain than pleasure, had my father become alien in sentiment to the religious education of his youth, and the opinions and feelings of his middle life. This, I knew, he never had become. One of the most interesting conversations, I ever had with him, was on the subject of religion, on the eve of my departure for Europe in May, 1845. His opinions then expressed were the same as those set forth in his letter to you.

Let me not be unjust to the Episcopal Church. My father admired its liturgy, and, during the last ten years of his life, his deafness having become so great as to render it impossible to hear a word from the

preacher's lips, he derived great comfort and joy from the prayers of our Church.

But he was a thorough Protestant in feeling, and always continued attached to the Church in which he was educated.

Allow me to add, that you stood very high in his regard. I have heard him so often speak of you, that I seem no stranger to you. There could be no more unequivocal testimony of his affection and esteem, than the letter of September, written with a hand trembling and nerves thrilling at the approach of death. The respect which my father felt has descended to me as an inheritance. With thanks for your ready answer, and with my fervent hope that you may long remain a shining and living light in the glorious Church of which you are a minister, I remain,

Your friend and servant,  
William Kent.

*Samuel Latham Mitchill (1764–1831)*

Samuel Latham Mitchill—scientist, doctor, politician—was one of the most famous figures of his day. As noted in this series, he, Dr. Smith and Dr. Edward Miller were responsible for the first medical journal in this country. While he was one of the more moderate of the Friendly club members, and did not cross from Quakerism to Deism and scepticism as Dr. Smith had, he seems to have been somewhat ambiguous regarding the exact nature of his faith. There was no end-of-life avowal of evangelical Christianity, such as made by fellow Friendly, James Kent.

The Doctor did not practice the religion of his father, a Quaker, but did attend the church of his wife, who was a Presbyterian. In the expression of religious views he was moderate, would smile at ridicule, never descending to reply to abuse of his religious opinions; he had a sincere regard for all creeds and was himself a sincere Christian. Some remarks in his sketch of Thomas Jefferson give us a view of his religious ideas.

On the seventh day of September, 1831, Dr. Mitchill died of a severe attack of bronchitis, after about two years of failing health. Dr. Francis has this to say

31. Courtney Robert Hall, *A Scientist in the Early Republic: Samuel Latham Mitchill 1764–1831* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934) 17–18.

32. Charles E. Butler, "T. and J. Swords, Publishers," *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 58 (1954) 93.

concerning the service at Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn: "His funeral was a great demonstration for a private citizen. I was one of the multitude that attended and lingered at the grave until all, save the sexton, had withdrawn. Not being recognized by that official, I inquired whom he had just buried. 'A great character,' he answered 'one who knew all things on earth and in the waters of the deep.'" <sup>31</sup>

*William Dunlap (1766–1839)*

A good portion of the small group making up the Friendly Club were involved in "firsts." Samuel Miller wrote the first American intellectual history; Smith, Edward Miller and Mitchill founded the first American medical journal; Charles Brockden Brown was the first American professional novelist; and Kent was the first American jurist to have any international reputation. William Dunlap was one of the first American dramatists, a theatrical manager, painter, critic, novelist, and historian, writing the first history of the American stage. He had a long life, often plagued with poverty and disappointments, and more sadly, he rejected the Christian religion.

*T. & J. Swords, Thomas Swords (1764–1843),  
James Swords (1765–1846)*

Regarding the firm of T. & J. Swords, Charles E. Butler concludes: "There can be no doubt that they held a high place in the society of their time. It is said that the funeral procession that followed the body of Thomas Swords to its last resting place 'was one of the longest ever seen in New York,' and one of the leading men of the day, Dr. John W. Francis, said of them in 1852, before their memory had been lost in the increasing complexities of the world: 'They commenced when New-York was little more than a village in population, and when literary projects were almost unknown. They deserve ample notice as most efficient pioneers, in their day, as printers and booksellers, and through a long career they held a high rank.... Their integrity was never doubted; their word was as good as their bond. They printed good works in more acceptations of the phrase than one....'" <sup>32</sup>

Thomas Swords was close friends with Bishop Hobart. He was a vestryman of Trinity Church from 1817 to his death, July 7, 1843. He was a member of many boards and corporations, both financial and benevolent. He married in 1792 Mary White of Philadelphia, and had a large family of children, five of whom were sons: Edward Jenner, John Evers, George, Henry, Robert Dumont. The firm's name was changed, after the death of the senior partner, from Thomas and James Swords to

Swords and Stanford, by the admission of Thomas N. Stanford, who had long been connected with the firm, to full partnership. Mrs. Swords survived her husband twenty-six years, and died in 1869” (*Archives*, 4.333).

James Swords was a man who entered into many business transactions in addition to his interest in the publishing house. He died in 1846. He was then, as he had been for many years, president of the Washington Life Insurance Company. He ends his will with this paragraph: “And now having thus far adjusted my temporal affairs, revoking all former wills by me made, I beg to express my thankfulness to Almighty God for the many and undeserved benefits which through a long life He has bestowed upon me, and for His great mercy and goodness in giving me health of body and strength of mind thus to dispose of my worldly concerns, and I humbly commend my soul to Him in the hope of a blissful immortality through the mediation and atoning merits of His blessed Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.” *Archives*, 4.333.

*John Henry Hobart (1775–1830)*

John Pintard recorded his thoughts upon hearing of the death of Bishop Hobart.

Bp. Hobart while on his visitations was taken with bilious fever at Auburn 2d inſt. His symptoms tho’ violent, mitigated, but on Sat<sup>y</sup> laſt 11<sup>th</sup> inſt. became so alarming that the Sacrament was adminiſtered to him. He died on Sunday morn<sup>g</sup> 12<sup>th</sup>. His remains are to be transferred to this city & he will no doubt have a pompous funeral at the expense of T[rinity] Ch. which permitted Bp. Provoſt to be buried at the expense of his family. He was an active, ambitious High Church prelate, & will be canonized by his party as ſuch. I c<sup>d</sup> not nor did not go all lengths with him, eſp<sup>y</sup> in his oppoſition to the Am. Bible So[ciety] & indifference to our Gen. Theol[ogica]l Semy w<sup>h</sup> he did all in power to degenerate into a Diocesan School. He has however gone to his account & let him reſt. I hope he is better off as I truſt our Diocese will be ... (Pintard, 3.175–176).

Bp. Hobart was eminent, altho’ I c<sup>d</sup> not accord with his high Ch[urch] notions nor policy of Ch. Government (Pintard, 4.175–176).

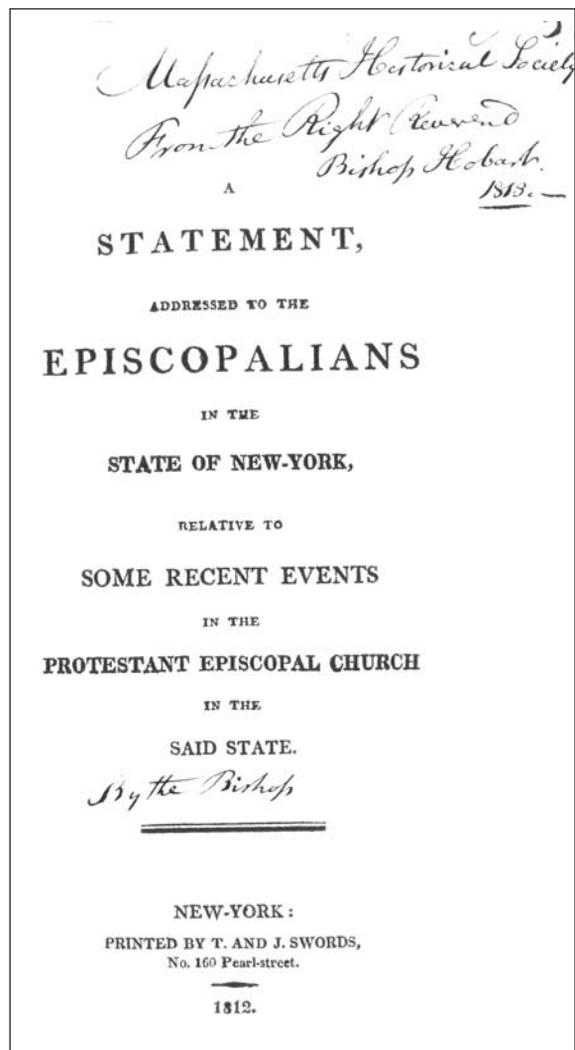
Upon purchasing Berrian’s biography of Hobart, Pintard advised: “I am engaged with the Life of Bp. Hobart juſt published, written very well by Doct<sup>r</sup> Berrian Re[ctor] of Trinity,

his protégé & a connection by Mrs Hobarts niece daughter of Mrs Dayton. I cannot give any other opinion until further read, except that is predominant, that it is too eulogistic.”

To believe Dr B[errian]. there never was ſuch a man as Bp. H[obart], “nor ſhall we look upon his like again.” (Pintard, 4.174–175).

To which the evangelical Pintard immediately added: “Never, please God.”

CHRIS COLDWELL ■



Hobart’s *A Statement, Addressed to the Episcopalians in the State of New York*, published by the Swords, twice signed: “Massachusetts Historical Society From the Right Reverend Bishop Hobart, 1813” and “By the Bishop.” Reproduction from the author’s copy.