

1671 the General Court approved the founding of Derby, provided that the people "mayntayne an orthodox ministry amongst them there."¹² ~~In this manner, the New England colonies strived to extend their ecclesiastical institutions along the frontier to strengthen the protective Hedge.~~

PETER CARROW, PURITANISM AND THE WILDERNESS (NY: COLUMBIA UP, 1969)

Despite the underlying uncertainty which the Puritans revealed by the jeremiads and by their concern for doctrinal purity upon the frontier, the eruption of King Philip's War in 1675 stunned the colonists and shocked them out of their complacency.¹³ Although this Indian war lasted less than two years, its impact upon Puritan society was more enduring. As the Indians rampaged through the countryside and destroyed numerous towns, the immense dangers of the war reminded second-generation New Englanders that the wilderness continued to be a hostile environment. And the contingencies of wartime underscored the importance of social collectivity.

As a battleground, the New England wilderness offered a decided advantage to the Indians. Accustomed to the secrets of the forest, the natives could assault the isolated English towns and then retreat into the woods before the Puritan troops could confront them. One inhabitant of Sudbury reported that "our woods are pestered with Indians." The hazards are great, asserted John Pynchon of Springfield, "if we do but stir out for wood, to be shot down by some skulking Indians." Daniel Gookin later recalled that the colonists "at first thought easily to chastise the insolent doings and murderous practices of the heathen." But, he remembered, Indian fighting proved to be

¹² *Recs. of Mass. Bay*, IV, Part I, 122, 139-40, 235, 264, 368, 417, 421, 423-24, 445, Part II, 15, 409, 557; *Pub. Recs. Conn.*, II, 24, 148.

¹³ For a complete discussion of the Indian war of 1675, see Douglas Edward Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War* (New York, 1958).

more difficult, because "our men could see no enemy to shoot at." Besides lying in "ambushments," the natives would "apparel themselves from the waist upwards with green boughs," so that the pursuing armies "could not readily discern them . . . from the natural bushes."¹⁴

The problem of tracking the Indians in the wilderness convinced many New Englanders that the war would be long and difficult. Shortly after the commencement of hostilities, one observer noted the significance of "the Leaves in the wilderness" in concealing the enemy and recommended that the Puritan troops wait until the underbrush was "dried and burnt and the swampes frozen hard." "When it will be over[,] wee cannot as yet see," remarked John Hull several months later, because the natives "are like wild Deare in the Wilderness . . . [so] that our souldiers can rarely find any of them." William Hubbard later described several episodes in which the dense wilderness enabled King Philip to evade the Puritan armies. Experience taught the English "how dangerous it is to fight in such dismal Woods," stated Hubbard, "when their Eyes were muffled with the Leaves, and their Arms pinioned with the thick Boughs of the Trees, [and] their Feet were continually shackled with the Roots." "It is," concluded Hubbard, "ill fighting with a wild Beast in his own Den." Increase Mather subsequently urged the settlers to be grateful for the abrupt conclusion of the war. "For we expected," Mather suggested, "that when the summer was come on, and the bushes and leaves come forth, the enemy would do ten times more mischief then

¹⁴ Edmund Browne to Gov. John Leverett, September 26 [1675], printed in *N.E.H.G.R.*, VII (1853), 268; John Pynchon to Gov. Leverett, October 8, 1675, quoted in Judd, *History of Hadley*, p. 145; Daniel Gookin, "An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England in the years 1675, 1676, 1677," printed in *Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society*, II (1836), 441.

in the winter season." Since the dense underbrush played such a prominent role in this war, the colonists undoubtedly resented the wilderness as much as their enemies. Major John Talcott, a leader of the Connecticut troops, for example, depicted stalking the Indians as "wilderness work." Such metaphors suggest that many New Englanders probably projected their antipathy for the natives onto the wilderness about them. For besides being an inhospitable environment, the wilderness now actively imperiled the settlers of New England.¹⁵

Above all, the Indian War of 1675 constituted a social crisis for the Puritan colonists. Not since the early years of settlement did the wilderness condition so threaten the existence of New England colonies. "Wee Are in A very sad Condition," reported the inhabitants of Stonington at the outbreak of hostilities. As the war progressed, fear spread throughout the English settlements. "Many people in these parts are like soules distracted," wrote Samuel Gorton from Rhode Island, "running hither and thither for shelter and no where at ease." The General Court of Connecticut ordered each plantation "to make . . . suitable places of defence" into refuges "for their women and children and others that are not able to help themselves." The Indian outburst terrified the settlers in Massachusetts Bay, and towns as remote from the frontier as Cambridge approved defensive preparations. "These are perillous times which we now live in," preached Increase Mather, "when men are getting their Bread with the peril of their lives, because of the Sword of the Wilderness." People

¹⁵ Thomas Stanton to Wait Winthrop, July 11, 1675, Winthrop Mss., XVIII, 138; John Hull to Philip French, September 2, 1675, John Hull's Letter Book, Transcription, I, 271, American Antiquarian Society; Hubbard, *A Narrative of the Troubles*, I, 85, 87; Increase Mather, *A Brief History of the Warr With the Indians in New-England* (Boston, 1676), p. 50; John Talcott to Deputy Governor Treat and the Council of Connecticut, June 8, 1676, quoted in Judd, *History of Hadley*, p. 170.

"can scarce look out of [their] doors," he maintained, "but they are in danger of being seized upon by ravening Wolves, who lye in wait to shed blood, . . . and fear is on every side."¹⁶

In response to these terrors, the New England colonies urged the settlers to collaborate to protect their plantations from external assault. "Wee are calling in all our out Livers and shall by Gods Assistance doe our best for our Defenc," declared one resident of New London shortly after the outbreak of war. Stressing the need for collective efforts against the common foe, the Connecticut Council ordered the inhabitants to cooperate in gathering the harvest and storing the crops in places of safety. The Connecticut General Court advised the inhabitants of the newly planted town of Derby either to remove to a larger settlement for defense or to "well fortify themselves and stand upon their garde"; the Court presented similar requests to the residents of Simsbury and Haddam. At this time, the Bay colony recommended that the towns along the Connecticut River consolidate for mutual protection. "To remain in such a scattered state," wrote Secretary Edward Rawson in behalf of the Massachusetts Council, "is to expose lives and estates to the merciless cruelty of the enemy, and is no less than tempting Divine Providence."¹⁷

Although fear engulfed all the settlements of New Eng-

¹⁶ Thomas Stanton and Thomas Minor to the Governor and Council of Connecticut, June 1, 1675, Samuel Gorton to John Winthrop, Jr., September 11, 1675, Winthrop Mss., XVIII, 137, III, 184; *Pub. Recs. Conn.*, II, 268-69; *Records of the Town of Cambridge*, p. 227; Increase Mather, *An Earnest Exhortation to the Inhabitants of New-England, To hearken to the voice of God in his late and present Dispensations* (Boston, 1676), p. 9.

¹⁷ Daniel Witherell to John Winthrop, Jr., June 30, 1675, Winthrop Mss., XIX, 120; *Pub. Recs. Conn.*, II, 373, 266-67, 412, 425; Edward Rawson to Major Thomas Savage, March 26, 1676, quoted in Trumbull, *History of Northampton*, I, 315-16. The Council of Connecticut disputed Rawson's advice to the town of Hadley; see, *Pub. Recs. Conn.*, II, 438.

land, the war particularly menaced the isolated plantations upon the frontier. "It is hardly imaginable," declared Daniel Dennison, a leader of the Puritan forces, "the panic fear that is upon the upland plantations and scattered places." The uncertainties which Dennison described were not unfounded rumors, for these remote settlers suffered immensely during the war as they endeavored to defend their homes. Woodbury requested assistance from the Connecticut government because "we have bin Nackid from any help of man" and feared an Indian attack. The inhabitants of Northampton rejected the advice of the Massachusetts Council to merge with Hadley and announced their intention to defend their town. "The Lord has wonderfully appeared of late for our preservation," they argued, "and we fear it would be displeasing unto him, if we should" surrender to "our enemies, that which the Lord so eminently delivered out of their hands." The desertion of so strong a town, they concluded, "may so animate the enemy, and discourage other plantations, as may prove no small prejudice unto the country."¹⁸ Despite such determination, however, the Indians destroyed several towns upon the frontier and threatened the existence of the New England settlements.

Although the colonial governments sympathized with the embattled frontiersmen, the authorities nevertheless recognized the importance of preserving the frontier towns as defensive outposts for the densely populated areas. In urging the settlers upon the Connecticut River to join forces, Edward Rawson confessed that "our present work" is to "secure the principal towns upon the sea coast." In October 1675, the Massachusetts General Court author-

¹⁸ Daniel Dennison to ———, October 28, 1675, printed in *N.E.H.G.R.*, XXIII (1869), 327; Samuel Sherman to the Council of Connecticut, February 9, 1675[/76], "Wyllys Papers," 231-32; Inhabitants of Northampton to the Council of Massachusetts Bay, March 28, 1676, quoted in Judd, *History of Hadley*, p. 159.

ized Thomas Hinchman "to garrison his house upon Merimacke River," because it "is a very apt place to secure that frontier." The Bay colony, to be sure, advised the women and children to withdraw from the more exposed plantations. But the authorities were determined to retard the abandonment of the inland settlements by able-bodied men. In the autumn of 1675, the General Court ordered that all persons who departed from their habitations without official permission would "forfeite their interest in that place." The following spring, the Court reiterated the need to preserve the inland plantations since the weakening of the frontier would undermine the entire commonwealth. The Court prohibited anyone with military responsibilities from removing from these towns, and enacted various defensive measures.¹⁹ The New England leaders thereby endeavored to solidify the frontier plantations as a means of safeguarding the colonies as a whole. By appealing to the need for collectivity and by stressing the importance of cohesion, the Puritan leaders hoped to preserve the shaken settlements from utter extinction.

The terrors of King Philip's War shattered the self-confidence of the New England colonies and confirmed the accuracy of the prophets of woe. "Why are our hedges broken down." William Hubbard asked rhetorically in the Massachusetts election sermon of 1676. To most New Englanders, the reply was self-evident. Three years earlier, Samuel Willard had advised the congregation of Groton that "Afflictions and Calamities are . . . Gods Judgements, ordered and fore-determined by him." And Increase Mather had concurred that "War is the greatest of all outward Judgements."²⁰

¹⁹ Edward Rawson to Major Thomas Savage, March 26, 1676, quoted in Trumbull, *History of Northampton*, I, 315-16; *Recs. of Mass. Bay*, V, 54, 48, 51, 65, 81, 79.

²⁰ William Hubbard, *The Happiness of a People* (Boston, 1676), p. 49; Samuel Willard, *Useful Instructions for a Professing People in times*

In assessing King Philip's War, the Puritan colonists viewed the holocaust as a divine punishment for unrepented sins. We have ignored earlier warnings and lesser judgments, declared the General Court of Massachusetts in November 1675, and hence "God hath heightened our calamity, and given commission to the barbarous heathen to rise up against us, and to become a smart rod and severe scourge to us." Increase Mather, citing the destruction of plantations and the deaths of prominent soldiers, agreed that God had brought the war as a just punishment for His backsliding people. John Eliot suggested that the sin of oversecuritv compelled the Lord to chastise New England to remind the people of His ultimate power. "We were too ready to think that we could easily suppress that flea," he wrote shortly after the beginning of the war, "but now we find that all the craft is in catching of them, and that in the meane while they give us many a soare nip." Eliot's son, Joseph, compared this war to the catastrophes which had humbled the sinful nations of Europe earlier in the century. "In this our calam[ous] times," he remarked, "we can the better sympathize with the European stories of the sad effects of these wars."²¹

For more than a decade, the Puritan clergy had warned their congregations of the dangers of worldliness and irreligion. But although the ministers forecasted divine chastisements for these sins, the jeremiads remained an abstract rhetorical device. The Indian war of 1675, however, added new meaning to these prophetic cries. As the natives swarmed through the wilderness and devastated remote

of *Great Security and Degeneracy* (Cambridge [Mass.], 1673), p. 28; Increase Mather, *The Day of Trouble*, p. 6.

²¹ *Recs. of Mass. Bay*, V, 59; Increase Mather, Sermon of February 24, 1675[/76], Mather Mss., American Antiquarian Society; John Eliot to John Winthrop, Jr., July 24, 1675, Photostat, Winthrop Mss.; Joseph Eliot to John Winthrop, Jr., August 16, 1675, Winthrop Mss., IV, 153.

frontier settlements, the colonists became aware of the fragility of their society. The wilderness crisis of 1675 thereby grounded the jeremiads in experience and dramatized the warnings of the Puritan ministry. King Philip's War generated immense fear in New England and forced the settlers to reassess their attitudes toward themselves and the wilderness about them. Drawn together by the collective terrors of the war, the colonists reexamined the relevance of their social theory and attempted to adjust their ideas to satisfy the needs of a wilderness community.

As an immediate effect, of course, the war revitalized the Puritans' distrust of the Indians. Unwilling to distinguish between friends and foes, many New Englanders wished to extirpate all the natives. According to Daniel Gookin, "the common people" opposed not only the Christianized Indians, "but also all such English as were judged to be charitable to them." The defection of the friendly (but non-praying) Indians near Springfield, Gookin confessed, "had a tendency to exasperate the English against all Indians, that they would admit no distinction between one Indian and another." At the height of the crisis, Increase Mather criticized the people of New England for their blind hatred of the Indians. In his subsequent narrative of the war, however, Mather suggested that the natives were untrustworthy. "No man that is an inhabitant of any considerable standing," maintained Mather, can doubt that the Indians "have at sundry times been plotting mischievous devices against" the colonies of New England.²²

These ideas aggravated the sense of insecurity in the aftermath of the war. In the autumn of 1677, numerous Indians attacked the settlers at Hatfield, "who were a little

²² Gookin, "An Historical Account," 452-53, 454; Increase Mather, "Diary of Increase Mather," *Proc. M.H.S.*, second ser., XIII (1899-1900), 359; Mather, *A Brief History*, pp. 1, 27.

too secure, and too ready to say the bitterness of death was past," and captured several inhabitants. At this time, Increase Mather noted that the residents of Cambridge and Watertown were needlessly alarmed at rumors of an Indian attack. The following spring, one inhabitant of Connecticut reported that the settlers there feared "new trouble from the Indians." "This year begins awfully," declared Increase Mather in 1681. "The latter end of last year was attended with a fearful blazing star whereby the whole earth hath been alarmed," he remarked, and "Tis reported that at Wallingford an Indian appeared in the star." There are "Rumors and great fears," he concluded, "lest N[ew] E[ngland] should be involved in another War with the Indians." And to avoid any misunderstandings, the Massachusetts General Court reenacted the prohibition of trading guns and ammunition to the natives. In subsequent years, similar fears of an Indian conspiracy coursed through the Puritan settlements.²³

This long series of alarms, as in the earlier years of colonization, betrays an underlying unease among the New England settlers. But significantly the colonists did not advocate the extermination of the Indians. In the years immediately after King Philip's War, the commissioners of the United Colonies recommended that the English erect schools for the natives "as being most probable to Reduce them to Civillity; and capassitate them to be Religiously Instructed." Increase Mather later praised the missionary activities among New Englanders and implied the absence of any genocidal interests. His son, Cotton Mather, tended

²³ Hubbard, "A General History," VI, 636-37; Mather, "Diary," 406, 409; Joseph Eliot to Increase Mather, May 3, 1678, John Russell to Increase Mather, March 28, 1681, Samuel Sewall to Increase Mather, October 8, 1688, Joshua Moody to Increase Mather, January 8, 1688[/89], "Mather Papers," 375, 82-83, 519, 370; *Recs. of Mass. Bay*, V, 136, 304-305, 500; Samuel Sewall, "Diary of Samuel Sewall: 1674-1729," *Colls. M.H.S.*, fifth ser., V-VII (1878-1882), V, 95.

to be vitriolic, but distinguished justly between Indian allies and Indian foes.²⁴ In Indian affairs, King Philip's War effectively reminded the colonists of the hostility of their environment in the New World. For the remainder of the century, New Englanders cautiously observed the movements of the Indians and repressed any feelings of oversecurity.

The war of 1675, by threatening the very existence of the New England settlements, stimulated a renewed concern for social cohesion. On the eve of conflict, the jeremiads had criticized the breaches within Puritan society and had urged the people to coalesce. "Division hath been one great cause of our defection, and will be a total obstruction unto Reformation, if it continue," preached Samuel Torrey. "It concerns us and becomes us, now that trouble is near, to be a United people," exhorted Increase Mather, for "These are not times for us to be contending one against another." King Philip's War vividly underscored the dangers of social disintegration, for the Indians wrought the greatest havoc upon the isolated settlements along the frontier. In the midst of the crisis, the Massachusetts General Court regretted that "our inhabitants in the severall townes [are] in so scattering and remote a condition."²⁵

Since the natives destroyed many of the inland plantations, New England commentators often blamed the war upon overexpansion and suggested that the frontiersmen had tempted the Lord by removing beyond the confines of the Hedge. The founders of Massachusetts "could not well tell what to doe with more Land than a small number

²⁴ *Acts of the Commissioners*, II, 368; [Increase Mather], *A Brief Relation of the State of New England From the Beginning of that Plantation . . .* (London, 1689), pp. 15-18; Mather, *Magnalia*, I, 215, II, 400, 434.

²⁵ Torrey, *An Exhortation unto Reformation*, p. 38; Mather, *The Day of Trouble*, pp. 29-30; *Recs. of Mass. Bay*, V, 66.

of acres," intoned William Hubbard, "yet now men more easily swallow down so many hundreds and are not satisfied." Hubbard especially criticized those people who departed from "a good neighbourhood, and the beautiful heritage of Church communion" simply because they hungered for land. "God is knocking the hands of New-England people off from the world, and from new Plantations," he asserted, "till they get them new hearts, resolved to reform this great evil."²⁶

Increase Mather echoed these statements and argued that the engrossment of thousands of acres of land simply revealed the increased worldliness of the settlers. In 1679 Mather drafted the report of the Boston synod which condemned unnecessary expansion. "There hath been in many professors an insatiable desire after Land, and worldly Accomodations," lamented the elders of the Bay colony, "yea, so as to forsake Churches and Ordinances, and to live like the Heathen, only that so they might have Elbow-room enough in the world." In describing the course of the Indian war, William Hubbard emphasized that "those Parts of a Country that lye next bordering upon the Coast of the common Enemy" suffered greater hardships than the older plantations. Furthermore, Hubbard noted, many of these settlements "were contented to live without, yea, desirous to shake off all Yoake of Government, both sacred and civil." New Englanders then drew the logical conclusion that these ungodly dispersals provoked the Lord to punish His people. The Almighty "hath let loose the heathen upon us," averred Increase Mather, to cure us of this disease. "And," he concluded ominously, "wo to this land" if it neglect His warnings.²⁷

²⁶ Hubbard, *The Happiness of a People*, pp. 58-59.

²⁷ Mather, *An Earnest Exhortation*, pp. 9-10, 23-24; [Boston Synod], *The Necessity of Reformation With the Expedients subservient thereunto asserted . . .* (Boston, 1679), p. 7; Hubbard, *A Narrative of the Troubles*, II, 267, 256-57.

The authorities of New England resolved to prevent a recurrence of this dispersal by regulating the resettlement of the colonies. In 1676 the Council of the Bay colony ordered the selectmen of the coastal towns "to take effectual care" that the refugees from the frontier "settle themselves . . . in some orderly and diligent way of Employment and Government." Despite the chaos of war, the Council determined to uphold the traditional social order. In 1677 the General Court of Connecticut declared that the "woefull experiance in the late warr" revealed that "liveing in a single and scattering way, remoate from townships and neighbourhood" weakened the commonwealth and tempted posterity "to degenerate to heathenish ignorance and barbarisme." To prevent such evils and to promote "common safety," the Court ordered that all future town-planters "shall settle themselves in such neerness together" so that "they may be a help, defence and succour each to [the] other against any surpriz, onset or attempt or any comon enemy." The Bay colony similarly provided safeguards for the western towns upon the Connecticut River. In 1677 the General Court ordered each of these settlements to "endeavor the new modelling . . . of their houses, so as to be more compact . . . for their better deffence against the Indians." And two years later, the inhabitants of Westfield consented to relocate their town for reasons of safety.²⁸

The colonial governments also endorsed the resettlement of the inland plantations which had been abandoned during the war. Usually the refugees from the frontier provided the impetus for rebuilding the gutted settlements. The former inhabitants of Deerfield regretted that "our Plantation has become a wilderness, a dwelling for owls

²⁸ *At A Council Held at Boston, April 4, 1676* [Boston, 1676] [broadside]; *Pub. Recs. Conn.*, II, 328; *Recs. of Mass. Bay*, V, 170, 171, 238-39.

and a pasture for flocks" and expressed sorrow "that a plantation soe circumstanced should lie desolate." The General Court of the Bay colony responded by passing several laws regarding land tenure for "promoting the planting, and speedy setling" of Deerfield. Massachusetts and Connecticut subsequently encouraged the reconstruction and resettlement of the other deserted plantations along the frontier.²⁹

The Deerfield petition, which advocated resurrecting that town out of the wilderness, underscored a renewed interest in the postwar years to physically transform the virgin forest. Although New Englanders had praised the metamorphosis of the wilderness prior to King Philip's War, the role of the forest as an ally to the Indians probably stimulated these tendencies by revealing the essential brutality of the American environment. Furthermore, the burdens of rebuilding the settlements compelled New Englanders to stress the transformation of the wilderness. "The English go . . . now to their Old Habitation[s]," observed one colonist in 1677, "and Mow down their Ground, and make Hay, and do other Occasions necessary for their resettling." In a petition to the Massachusetts General Court, the uprooted inhabitants of Groton stressed the importance of rebuilding "waste places" so that they might "see this desolation a quiet habitation." To encourage "the good people in this Colony in cleareing land," the Connecticut General Court ordered that "whosoever shall henceforth inclose land" will be exempted from taxation for this land for four years.³⁰ The efforts of the

²⁹ The Inhabitants of Deerfield to the General Court of Massachusetts Bay, April 30, 1678, quoted in George Sheldon, *A History of Deerfield, Massachusetts . . .*, 2 vols. (Deerfield, 1895-96), I, 189-90; *Recs. of Mass. Bay*, V, 209, 360-61, 145-46, 345; *Pub. Recs. Conn.*, II, 491, III, 10.

³⁰ R[ichard] H[utchinson], "The Warr in New-England Visibly

New England authorities to reclaim the wilderness land led logically to the affirmation of the subjugation of additional virgin territories.

In the years after King Philip's War, Puritan commentators continued to extol the transformation of the wilderness. In his history of New England, William Hubbard applauded the changes wrought by a half-century of colonization. Writing of the arrival of the Higginson group in 1629, Hubbard suggested that "New England . . . at that time [did] more resemble a wilderness, then a country whose fields were white unto the harvest." Hubbard praised the transition of New England from a refuge outpost to a settled land. "When God first made man," declared Hubbard, "he gave him a command . . . to increase and multiply, and replenish the earth; of which," Hubbard added, "it is no question but America was intended as a part." Although our "fore-runners were made to fly into the wilderness from the dragon," he maintained that New England was more than a spiritual sanctuary. It is, he concluded, "a country capable with good improvement to maintain a nation of people, after once it comes to be subdued." A decade later, Increase Mather echoed Hubbard's apotheosis of the transformation process. In a few years time, stated Mather, "that which was . . . a howling Wilderness . . . became a pleasant Land, wherein was abundance of all things meet for Soul and Body." Cotton Mather later devoted large portions of his *Magnalia Christi Americana* to lauding the subjugation of the New England wilderness. Mather expressed little love for "the dismal thickets of America" prior to colonization and reserved his strong-

Ended . . ." [1677], printed in Lincoln, *Narratives of the Indian Wars*, pp. 105-106; Petition of the Inhabitants of Groton to the General Court of Massachusetts Bay, May 20, 1679, quoted in Caleb Butler, *History of Groton* (Boston, 1848), p. 88; *Pub. Recs. Conn.*, II, 327-28. See also, Hubbard, "The Epistle Dedicatory," *The Happiness of a People*.

est accolades for the "immense toyl and charge [which] made a wilderness habitable."³¹

The desire among New Englanders to rebuild their colonies after the defeat of King Philip and the renewed interest in transforming the wilderness accelerated the process of frontier expansion in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. In regulating the resettlement of the inland communities, the Massachusetts General Court acknowledged its acceptance of frontier extension. Although the General Court intended to promote social cohesion, it ordered that "no deserted towne or *new plantation* shallbe inhabitted" without permission of the magistrates.³² Whether or not the authorities recognized the full implications of their decision, this order betrayed the difficulty of restraining the disruptive forces of the wilderness. Despite their disclaimers to the contrary, the leaders of New England conceded that they could not impede the dispersal of plantations. In subsequent years, both Massachusetts and Connecticut approved the establishment of numerous plantations, usually with the requirement that the settlers transplant "an able orthodox minister." Thus King Philip's War merely delayed the growth of New England, for the colonies continued to expand, though perhaps unevenly, in the ensuing years.³³

The acceptance of dispersal, however, merely highlighted the basic problem of Puritan society in the wilderness: the need to reconcile expansion and collectivity. During the last decade of the seventeenth century, New England commentators deplored the tendency to transplant beyond the Lord's Hedge without the holy ordi-

³¹ Hubbard, "A General History," V, 112, 26, 22; [I. Mather], *A Brief Relation*, pp. 4-5; Mather, *Magnalia*, I, 552, 85, 214, II, 526-27, 583.

³² *Recs. of Mass. Bay*, V, 213-14 (itals. added).

³³ *Recs. of Mass. Bay*, V, 360, 408-409, 410-11, 426, 467, 482, 486, 487; *Pub. Recs. Conn.*, III, 83; Mather, *Magnalia*, I, 88.

nances. In a lecture preached in 1690, Cotton Mather argued that "those places which the [Indian] Devastations of the last year fell upon, were the more pagan skirts of New-England, where no Minister of God was countenanced." In the Massachusetts election sermon of 1698, Nicholas Noyes urged the General Court to protect "the Frontiers and Out-Plantations" from the Indians. Cotton Mather responded to this concern for the inland settlements by admonishing the frontiersmen to provide for their own safety by seeking the Lord. Mather stressed the protective benefits of true religion and urged the "scattered plantations" to reform. In 1707, while lauding the settlers "in the Exposed Frontiers" of New England as "the best People in the Land," he implored them to establish godly institutions. During the recent wars, he reminded them, those plantations "that have had Churches regularly formed in them, have generally been under a more sensible Protection of Heaven" while "the Un-churched Villages" have been "utterly broken up."³⁴

The paradox which plagued Puritan society in the wilderness thereby persisted beyond the seventeenth century. The commitment among New Englanders to replenish the soil and transform the wilderness contradicted the desires of the Puritan establishment to maintain a modicum of social cohesion. Cotton Mather summarized this dilemma in the Massachusetts election sermon of 1690, *The Serviceable Man . . .*, in which he lamented the decline of religion and education in the remote inland plantations. "Doubtless, men of ingenuity, might instruct

³⁴ Mather, *The Present State of New-England . . .*, p. 32; Nicholas Noyes, *New Englands Duty and Interest to Be a Habitation of Justice and Mountain of Holiness . . .* (Boston, 1698), pp. 83-84; Mather, *Magnalia*, II, 572, 675, 678; Cotton Mather, *Frontiers Well-Defended: An Essay to Direct the Frontiers of a Countrey Exposed unto the Incursions of a Barbarous Enemy . . .* (Boston, 1707), pp. 3, 7, 28, 31. For additional discussion of this problem, see Clifford K. Shipton, "The New England Frontier," *New England Quarterly*, X (1937), 25-36.

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us how at once we may Advance our Husbandry," he preached, "and yet Forbear our Disperson; and moreover at the same time fill the Countrey with a Liberal Education."⁸⁵ There was, of course, no solution to this problem. Social security engendered confidence which, in turn, fostered a disregard for social stability. The terror of King Philip's War posed as a chilling reminder of the uncertainties of the wilderness condition. But the defeat of the Indians and, more important, the ongoing transformation of the forest convinced New Englanders that such menaces were both transitory and surmountable. With renewed confidence, the settlers turned their backs upon the warnings of their ministers and returned to their tasks of subjugating the wilderness.

⁸⁵ Cotton Mather, *The Serviceable Man* . . . (Boston, 1690), p. 51.