Transcribed and translated into modern English by Kevin Martin

The Players

Thomas Oliver: Church elder, merchant and surgeon. Served as ruling elder of the First Church from 1632-57, and as a selectman.

Thomas Buttolph: Glover. Joined church 1637; constable 1647.

Richard Fairbanks: Postmaster, a man of "distinction". Arrived 1633; joined church 1634; disarmed 1637; became receiver of all letters arriving from abroad 1639.

Samuel Cole: Innkeeper, confectioner. Joined church 1630; disarmed as an Antinomian 1637; selectman 1653-57.

Nathaniel Williams: Laborer, glover, clerk of the market. Joined church 1639; disarmed 1637; selectman; sergeant in artillery company.

John Biggs: Arrived 1630; joined church 1634. One of the wealthier inhabitants of the city; disarmed 1637; joined artillery company 1641.

Anne Hutchinson: (1591-1643) Her religious ideas provoked intense religious and political crisis in Boston 1636-38; Daughter of clergyman Francis Marbury; denied conformity with religious laws was sign of godliness, that true godliness came from inner experience of Holy Spirit; her ideas were branded the heresy of Antinomianism; excommunicated 1638 and expelled from colony; established Portsmouth, RI 1639; murdered by Indians, Pelham Bay, NY 1643.

Anthony Stanyon: Glover and tavern keeper. Arrived 1635 at the age of 24. Assistant clerk of writs; left for Exeter, NH, and then returned to England where he was a town clerk.

John Parmenter: Yeoman and one of the first settlers of Sudbury. Deacon selectman, and commissioner in Roxbury 1660.

Rev. John Cotton: 1584-1652 Attended Cambridge University; ordained priest in the Church of England; rector of the church in Boston, Lincolnshire for 20 years; his rigorous Calvanism brought him into conflict with church authorities; emigrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony on the Griffin in 1633; grandfather of Cotton Mather.

Francis Lisle: Barber, surgeon. Arrived 1637; joined church 1639; returned to England 1645.

John Milam: Cooper. Joined church 1636; joined artillery company.

Thomas Leverett. Arrived with John Cotton 1633. An alderman in Boston, Lincolnshire; selectman and ruling elder of the First Church from 1633 to his death in 1650. His son became governor of Massachusetts Bay.

Arthur Perry: Tailor. Arrived 1638; town drummer 1638; joined church 1640; member of artillery company; died 1652.

Nathaniel Heaton: Mercer. Arrived 1634; joined church 1636.

Edward Hutchinson: Son of William and Anne Hutchinson. Disarmed 1637; admonished for refusing to consent to the censure of his mother. One of the first settlers of Newport, RI. Returned to Boston 1638; captain of the artillery company 1657; deputy to the general court 1658.

William Tyng: Merchant, brewer. Arrived 1638; joined church 1639; deputy to the court ten times; treasurer of colony 1642-44.

Joseph Febar: Cooper. Arrived 1635 at the age of 26; returned to England 1639.

Thomas Savage: Tailor, merchant. Arrived 1635 at the age of 27. Married a daughter of Ann Hutchinson; disarmed 1637; opposed Hutchinson's church censure; elected representative to the General Court twelve times, Speaker five times; captain in artillery company 1651; chief commander in King Philip's War 1675.

Edward Bendall: Businessman, inventor. Arrived 1630; joined church 1634; disarmed 1637; joined artillery company 1638; returned to England 1653.

John Oliver: Surveyor. Joined church 1633; joined artillery company 1638. Son of ruling elder Thomas Oliver. Studied for the ministry, graduated Harvard 1645. Died 1646.

John Button: Miller. Joined church 1634; disarmed 1637; constable 1640; artillery company 1643.

James Johnson: Glover. Arrived 1635; joined church 1636; deacon 1650; captain in the artillery 1656.

James Penn: Arrived 1630; representative to the General Court 1648-49; beadle and marshall; elected ruling elder, First Church 1650.

James Everill: Leather dresser and shoemaker. Joined church in 1634; selectman.

William Courser: Shoemaker, innkeeper. Arrived 1635 at the age of 26; joined church 1636; one of the few church members not to have supported Anne Hutchinson.

Thomas Marshall: Tavern keeper, shoemaker, ferryman. Joined church 1634; disarmed 1637; selectman from 1647-58; deacon 1650.

Lester Gunter. Servant and non-church member. Arrived 1635 age 13.

Richard Turner: Planter. Joined church 1633; excommunicated for drunkenness 1638; moved to Providence, RI.

Mark Hains: Smith. Joined church 1639. His maid's name is not known.

William Hibbins: Merchant. Arrived 1634; joined church 1639; deputy to General Court 1640-41, assistant 1643-54. Died 1654. Husband of Anne Hibbins who was tried and condemned for witchcraft in 1655.

Edward Gibbens: Joined church 1630; deputy to the General Court 1635; joined artillery company 1637; major general 1647; assistant to the General Court 1650.

Introduction

The trial and confession of Richard Wait at Boston's First Church is the only known record of such an event. The trial was recorded by Robert Keayne, a Boston merchant.

Richard Wait joined the Boston church on August 28, 1634. He was disarmed as an adherent of Anne Marbury Hutchinson in 1637, and was excommunicated from the church for stealing leather (enough to make three pairs of men's gloves) on January 13, 1638/39. He approached the church for reinstatement in the spring of 1640, and was readmitted on May 4, 1640. Shortly thereafter, on July 20, 1640, he was excommunicated a second time for having drunk wine instead of attending church, at times with the servant of one of his fellow church members. Wait was readmitted to the church in 1641 after acknowledging that he had previously lied about his drinking. Nearly 30 years later he was excommunicated a third time for "habitual" drunkenness. Once again he was reinstated following a confession. It is possible that Richard Wait arrived in Boston on the Griffin on September 4, 1633. Richard's brother, Gamaliel, was a servant to Edward Hutchinson, and his wife Sarah, and they were thought to have been on this ship (as was John Cotton). Edward Hutchinson became a member of the First Church in October of 1633. Gamaliel Wait and Sarah Hutchinson became church members on December 15, 1633. Anne Marbury Hutchinson, the sister-in-law of Edward, arrived with her husband William, also on the Griffin, in 1634. Thomas Wait, younger brother of Richard and Gamaliel, followed Anne Hutchinson to Portsmouth, RI, in 1639.

The court proceedings are a further "translation" as presented in The Confession and Trial of Richard Wayte, Boston, 1640; James F. Cooper; William and Mary Quarterly, vol., 44, 1987.

The purpose of this further translation is to make the words spoken by the players more understandable to modern ears, but in no way is meant to be taken as a work of scholarship. Many of the words used had specific meanings within the early Congregational Church, of which, the translator (Kevin Martin) has but a very limited understanding.

April 20, 1640

Thomas Oliver (church elder) Calls out Richard Wait who has long been excommunicated to see if he could give satisfaction to the church for his restoration, which is his stated desire. He is now ready to make confession of such things as are past, and if you will be willing to hear him, I hope he will declare how God has gone along with him this time.

Pastor John Wilson Lift up your voice that the sound of your repentance may ring as far as the sound of your sins.

Richard Wait For that thing which was first laid to my charge I shall willingly confess. The leather that was brought to me, I wickedly kept back some part of it for my own ends, which God afterwards brought to light in his own way. I kept some buckskin leather, which was brought to me to make a working man a pair of pants. I kept enough to make a pair of gloves. I told those that asked that I had bought the leather from someone who had gone back to England, which was a wicked lie.

Later Thomas Buttolph figured out what I had done. He mentioned it to Samuel Cole. Mr. Cole asked me about this privately, but I denied taking the leather. I went to Goodman Buttolph and asked him if he could state absolutely that I stole the leather. I did this only to confuse him, so that he would not dare affirm it. But he stated that he would take an oath that I took the leather. I obstinately denied this with much wickedness, and would not change my story, though he gave me good counsel, to give God the glory and to confess it. Yet I was ready to call God to witness that it was not so. This was because the glory of God was not in my eye.

But they took a great deal of pains with me.

Then Richard Fairbanks, who, being aware of God's glory and the good of my soul, told me he was sorry that there was any suspicion, but even more so that I be guilty.

I rejected his counsel.

Then he called me aside and asked me if my conscience didn't bother me. I wickedly said no, and denied it, even though the leathers matched and I knew it. Yet I took the name of God into my mouth to witness the contrary.

Then Nathaniel Williams and Goodman Buttolph left us, and Goodman Fairbanks and Mr. Cole remained, continuing to question me, until I could no longer deny it. I told them that they burdened my spirit. They told me that they desired that I confess that I kept back some leather. They asked me where it was. I told them that I had sold it, being willing to hide one sin with another.

They asked me, "to whom?"

I told them I could not remember, but at last I confessed that the leather was in my home. They prevailed upon me to fetch it. I brought the leather to the church, and since the righteous proceedings of the church against me, God has helped me to see many evils in myself. But since I had more respect for myself than God's glory, I denied many things that I was accused of. As some wrong John Biggs suffered in a waistcoat. He had a problem but I didn't know it.

I had many workmen with me, and I didn't dare lay out their charge, but that doesn't excuse me. I should have been more watchful.

I did wrong to Goodman Fairbanks who trusted me, yet I made him pay more than he ought, and when he dealt with me after my casting out, I denied it, which exceedingly aggravated my sin, and I took pleasure in this evil.

Then I had other temptations upon this sin and that was I had a desire to commit wickedness with the wife of Anthony Stanyon, who had more grace than I. God made her deny my request. May God have the glory and I the just shame. I continued in a state of impenitence and in constant lying, and though this affected me somewhat, I was not yet with a sincere heart but it caused me to think about confessing. But when friends were not so ready to accept this, as I had expected, I had the urge to get out of this place, and continued for six months without any desire to regain God's glory, which I should most have looked for.

At that time God stirred up the hearts of Goodman Fairbanks and Goodman Parmenter to take some pains with me. I didn't appreciate their company because I knew that they had come to deal with me. They recited the last two lines of Psalm 51 to me, and gave me good advice that I didn't pay any attention to.

Yet when they were gone, I couldn't sleep. At last falling into slumber, I awakened with this scripture on my mind, "Oh consider this you that forget God". Then another place was darted into me, it is time to awake and that was from the security of sleep, which put me into such trouble and perplexity that I thought God would never show me any mercy. I thought my sin was a sin against the Holy Ghost, but I dare not tell anyone, but at last our Teacher (John Cotton), speaking of that sin, showed that every sin against conscience was not a sin against the Holy Ghost, which was of some support to me for a time, but it didn't last long.

But many temptations followed, mainly to kill myself. I thought a lot about how to do it. Some times I thought to drown myself, and at last to stab myself. I effected this at one time and drew out my knife, and I was going to strike the blow when the scripture of Lot to the Sodomites came into my mind, "Oh do not so wickedly". And that stopped me. But I was still tempted, and thought I may as well have done it, because I should have no mercy, my sins being so great against the law of the Gospel, against light and knowledge. At last God helped me to look up to Christ Jesus and to know that there was power in Christ.

Then I had some desire to see my sin and to loathe my former abominable sins. It still astonished me to consider that God should change my mind from these things and to admire God's patience with so vile a sinner. Then, so full as I know my own wicked heart, God brought me to a willingness to submit myself to what he should please to bring upon me. Then my heart was desirous to be affected at the dishonor put upon his name, and the offense given to his people. And now I desire to submit myself to Him and to lie down at His footstool and at the feet of all His people, to submit to their disposition.

Rev. John Cotton I would only put in a word to help you because your countenance shows that you grieve. I desire you to speak a little of repentance. There is three parts: confession; contrition; and satisfaction. Confession you have largely made. Contrition you have shown on your countenance, and it is seen by the fears and terrors in your conscience so far as that you thought there was no mercy for you and it drove you to thoughts of killing yourself. Now this is a legal contrition but the contrition of the Gospel is to look up to Christ and to see an utter inability in ourselves, to turn to God of yourself, or to return. Now you should do well to speak a word or two to the third part of repentance, which is

satisfaction or restitution which God requires for all things that you have wronged any in, as about the gloves and cloth and the like.

Richard Wait I have made restitution, and shall be willing to restore to any that do not yet have full satisfaction.

Pastor John Wilson I pray, give glory to God, and confess whether you had not a habit of purloining before in England against the light of your conscience, for it is strange to all that you should so suddenly be overtaken with these gloves and pieces of cloth, if you had not been accustomed to it.

Richard Wait I must needs confess: I was addicted to it in England.

Pastor John Wilson But you denied it before to the church.

Richard Wait I must confess to my shame that I was backward to acknowledge it this way.

Rev. John Cotton I pray, consider this, and give satisfaction to your brethren. All true repentance springs from some faith in Christ and of light and mercy from Him, as Peter repented and went out and wept bitterly. There will not only be a change of mind but looking up to Christ who we have pursued.

Richard Wait I must confess, I have had some seeds of faith to look up to Christ Jesus, yet in this condition that I am in, cannot expect any favor from God for he that is bound on earth is bound in Heaven.

Rev. John Cotton God may sometimes begin to his church, but if it be not so, you cannot think your repentance sufficient till God pardons as well as does his church.

Pastor John Wilson The prodigal did return to his father and you to Him, before he had manifested His grace, yet he went out to meet him.

Thomas Oliver I had thought in his temptation to remove he had said the honor of God and his offense to his people was one motive that made him stay. Therefore, I hoped God had begun to work grace in him and I have observed his humble carriage ever since his casting out.

Pastor John Wilson The time is late. Therefore, if you conceive that his repentance and confession is satisfactory, and such is sound, and if you think he has any sight or sense of God's love, and that you have not more to say, then we will pronounce him to be a leper no longer, but that the church may pardon him and receive him as a returning prodigal and as a lost sheep, and a stray returning home again and we will take off his sad sentence that has lain so long upon him.

Francis Lisle There is some other offenses of his keeping company with lewd and wicked persons since he was cast out which he has not spoken a word of. Therefore I think if God had touched his heart with true repentance, he would have confessed to God's glory, as his keeping company with Judith.

John Milam I confess that is worse to me than all the rest of his keeping company with loose persons.

Richard Wait I had a full purpose to have spoken to it but it was quite out of my mind. I must confess before the censure of the church had been brought upon me, I was not so careful of the choice of my company as I should have been. As for Judith, I must confess my carriage with her has been wanton and too familiar. I would have committed wickedness with her, and yet I was more ready to blame her than myself. I was not so sensible of my condition as I should have been, and that in keeping lewd company, but I desire to judge myself for it, as being too vain this way.

Arthur Perry There are some other things that I had thought your man Wait should have spoken to which he hasn't done.

Richard Wait I thought I had given you satisfaction in private and you know it was referred to.

Elder Leverett (Thomas Leverett). And since I heard nothing from you, and the thing is about some knives I bought and sold again, which they say cost me 7d, but I do remember no other but that I said the cutler should have them for 7d. Now I dare not say so though, because they assert I shall suspect myself, yet I dare not accuse myself, for then it would be only to give the satisfaction. For the silk I spoke of, I confess I did wickedly and devisedly lie. I was backward to give them satisfaction because of my intent of removing.

Pastor John Wilson The question is whether he now stands clear in your conscience, and that his repentance is sincere, and that you may believe in what he's saying at this time.

Nathaniel Heaton I desire to judge the best of him.

Edward Hutchinson What bothers me about the silk is his impudent denying that he ever opened the silk, and charging our brother Henton that he had scandalized him and charged him as he would answer it before God at the great day of judgment. He hasn't spoken about this.

Thomas Buttolph I am afraid this is his usual custom, for when I confronted him about the gloves he denied it with great protestations and charges against me, and offered to take his oath before the magistrates. He did discourage me in proceeding.

Richard Wait I confess that it much aggravates my sin and increases it.

William Tyng Although I shall not deny that there may be true repentance without tears, and tears without repentance, I still want to know why there wasn't a greater show of tears than there was, and whether he may not have constrained himself to weep that I might be free in my spirit about receiving him.

Pastor John Wilson He has manifested few tears, indeed, at this time. If the church isn't satisfied, we shall take it up at our next meeting.

April 26, 1640

Thomas Oliver Richard Wait, come forward. Brethren of the congregation, you may remember that last

Sunday our brother made partial acknowledgement of in the way of satisfaction, but not such that it gave us all satisfaction. Therefore, you are now to begin where you left and speak to the glory of God and to the shame of yourself, including those things you forgot.

Sergeant Wait Last Sunday God did not let me see the sinfulness of my former protestations. He has since helped me to see that I was not so easily convinced of my wickedness, they took pains with me to convince me of my sin. I tried to outwit them and scare them with strong words. In truth, I was in the wrong. Another thing I quite forgot was about Captain Underhill (John Underhill). When he came to make his confession in the church, I did conceal something about his revelation that he told me. When I went with him to the Pequots, he told me of a revelation that he had had about the cooper's wife (Joseph Febar). It was revealed to him that her husband would die, and that he should marry her. This, I confess, was a great sin in my concealing it. So I was a partner is his wickedness, which had I revealed it, might have tended much to God's glory and to the discovery of his wickedness in such revelations.

Thomas Leverett There are many things that some of our brethren expect satisfaction from you, as our brother Hutchinson, brother Perry, and others. Therefore, you shall do well to speak to their further satisfaction, if it may be.

Richard Wait I desire God to keep all his children from such desperate falls as I have run into, and this I can speak by sad and woeful experience, that one sin brings on another, and giving way to secret sins draws on to presumptions and open evils. I wish and desire that all which know of my wicked course, and all that hear me this day may take warning by me of all such evil courses that I have lived in to God's great dishonor, and the offense of all goodly people.

Thomas Savage Seeing that God has helped you to see the wickedness of revelations, I desire to know what you think of that revelation which yourself professed to have when you were cast out of the church, that if you should die, you did think you should die in a good estate, and this was revealed to you.

Richard Wait I do not remember any such expression of mine. It is true, when I was in a sad condition and much dejected, I did have some support from a promise, which did keep me from sinking. But that I was assured of my good estate, I do not remember it.

Thomas Savage I think my brother Hutchinson and brother Fairbanks do well remember the same for we came to deal with you about it.

Richard Fairbanks After this he did fall back again, to many gross and foul evils.

Pastor John Wilson Then brother, you need to be affected with this that you should abuse the word of God to bolster up your wickedness and to harden your heart against the censure of the church, and to see the original from whence all these corruptions sin, and what a root of bitterness there is in you, and how you have broke out to God's dishonor, and use many protestations, taking the name of God into your mouth to be a patron for your sin and wickedness that you may the more cloak your sins and to

fasten your lies as it were upon the eternal God, and to be sensible how often you have abused the name of God in this way.

Edward Bendall I desire to speak a word or two to Richard Wait. You know, there are two women in this country to whom you have offered much wrong in attempting their chastity. I desire to know what course you have taken, to make satisfaction to them, by confessing your sin to them.

John Oliver From Goody Stanyon I have had a letter from her and her husband in which they profess their full satisfaction and forgiving of him. Yet they desire more and more to see his repentance.

Edward Bendall But for Judith at the Island, she professes herself altogether unsatisfied and discontented with his carriage.

Richard Wait I acknowledged my sin here before. I tried to lay the greatest blame on her when the wicked attempt was from myself. I later submitted myself to her and confessed my sin. She said that she forgave me.

John Oliver Well, the time grows late and other duties remain to be performed in private. Therefore, I pray let us draw towards a conclusion. Brethren, if you think the profession he has made and the repentance he has held forth be such as it convinces your hearts, or carries power and weight in your spirits to receive him again in the bosom of the church and as a brother, then we may proceed to take off his censure, and whether it be sufficient to give satisfaction and to remove the offense.

Thomas Leverett We don't need to wonder that our brethren sticks to his admission, because things have been drawn and pulled from him. His confession was not free.

John Button We desire his healing and the helping of his spirit. If he stays a little longer, we might see the fruits of his repentance. It will be no inconvenience to him.

James Johnson I am loath to prescribe a way or rule to the church, but I think his sin and iniquity has gone on a long time, and his repentance has been too short. If we take the censure off now, we might be taking the plaster off before the sore is healed. Therefore, if he did stay while his repentance and reformation did appear in his life and conversation so we may receive him the more freely.

John Oliver That which has moved us to bring him to the congregation has been the information we have had of his dejection of spirit and diverse temptations. That he has lied so much that he has been ready to be overwhelmed, and to sink under his condition and to be swallowed up with grief insomuch that he has been tempted to commit suicide, and we have the rule of the apostle concerning the incestuous man to take of his censure and to restore him again, and not let him sink in despair.

Governor Winthrop For my part I know not what rule any man has to judge of men's hearts or their estates. For my own part I have heard so much of his repentance since his casting out, and so much by his expression that he has now presented, that I cannot but acknowledge myself satisfied, and my heart is ready to embrace him, and receive him in again. The church can do what it will.

James Penn For my part, I have been privy to his repentance, and I have observed him to walk dejectedly. The repentance he now offers is that which gives me satisfaction, and I think the church may do well to receive him again.

James Everill Here are many brethren whose spirits are not free yet to receive him, but do desire that it may stay awhile, that they may speak with him in private, so that they may also have satisfaction, as he has given satisfaction to others, so that they may receive him with more freedom of spirit.

William Courser By what rule may we submit to these brethren that say they are not satisfied?

Rev. John Cotton The brethren that are not satisfied give some reason why they are not satisfied and desire to speak to him in private. Now we would not grieve any brother and therefore we do things with one consent and with one heart. Therefore, if a little stay may help to a more full satisfaction it will be the more comfortable both to him and us. I confess this is a place of sad temptations and trials wherein Satan takes more scope to assault the servants of God and to draw them to many evils. And brother, let me say this to you: if God has shut up any of the brethren's hearts from you, then you know that God has also shut up his heart from you, that he would have you search into your own heart, whether your repentance be sincere, according to the great wickedness that you have lived in.

Thomas Marshall I perceive that some doubts remain in the brethren and that the church is divided. Some are inclined to receive him in, and some desire that they may see in his actions that which he professes with his mouth. Yet, for my own part, I am willing to receive him in, hoping in the judgement of charity that his repentance is sound. But I would have him know that if the church is not inclined to receive him in, that he should know that it is not due to hatred because he has been censured by the church. The church may take its censure and he may be damned eternally. I refer to some things he told me last night.

John Oliver Where the church rightly binds, and upon good grounds any man under the wrath of God binds that person under wrath. If the church unbinds, God himself also unbinds. However, if the church should keep bound those whom God has unloosed, the devil will take the advantage to work upon a dejected soul to drive him into desperate conclusions. If I see my repentance is not sound, the church will not accept it, which means God has not accepted it either. If God had pardoned, He would make the church pardon too. If God had opened his heart to me and his arms of mercy. He would have opened the hearts and arms of brethren to receive me. Therefore, all that I have done is in hypocrisy, which should make the church so much the more careful how they do defer and put the embracing and receiving of such a penitent over long, lest we give Satan advantage against them. And if expressions and outward behavior hold forth, true repentance and dejection of spirit we ought to take that for satisfaction, for if we must err, as we are subject to errors, we had better fail in receiving the hypocrite, than by our great severity to keep out a true penitent. However, I could have desired that every of so notorious a sinner had been expressed with tears and every tear had been a drop of blood which would well have suited his condition. Yet I would not therefore conclude that his repentance is not sound because he has not manifested tears. It may be he has been more free in private, as some have testified,

than now in public. Many questions have been put to him and there have been many answers. This may make a spirit distracted and may restrain them.

Thomas Oliver It isn't good that the brethren should raise objections now. It's well known to the church that this brother had been called out to give satisfaction over a month ago. They have had the liberty to confer with him privately ever since. To now hinder the church's proceedings and to increase the trouble of the church by their negligence, I think isn't well.

May 4, 1640

Thomas Leverett Richard Wait has now been called forth three times to give satisfaction to the church and to show evidence of his repentance. The last time he was referred to brethren to give satisfaction in private. One of them was with me this morning and declared himself to be fully satisfied, and three more, without our Elder Oliver. If any brethren yet be unsatisfied why he should be received in, they have the liberty to express themselves. If not, by your silence you show your consent to receive him again, and we shall proceed along with him.

Pastor John Wilson Goodman Wait, you see by the silence of the church that at last they show their willingness to receive you in again. Notwithstanding, there have been many fears and jealousies of you. It will therefore be your care and duty to look up to God and to be so the more watchful over your ways in the future, lest the church have cause to repent of what it has done. Now we will proceed to take off your censure. Therefore, I do here, in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the power which he hath committed to His church and His church to us, here unloose and deliver you from that great sentence of excommunication, which for your sins you have lain so long under, and I do here in the name of Christ pronounce you clean, and we do again receive you into the bosom and fellowship of the church, and give you again the right hand of fellowship and receive you as a true penitent, desiring that the Lord shall ratify in Heaven what his church has done on earth, for which let us now call upon God and that he would turn all this to your good.

July 20, 1640

Then there was a motion of the church to proceed at this time with our brother Wait for his offense.

Pastor John Wilson Brother Wait, you know how far the church has proceeded with you about some wicked confederacy with Lester Gunter, which when some of the brethren dealt with you, you did utterly deny that you never had any familiarity with him, nor did never drink with him except over at brother Richard Turner's. Yet, since then, it is plainly proven, and yourself have confessed, that you have had frequent meetings and drinkings with him both at your house and at his master's house, even at sermon time. This has been very scandalous and offensive to many. Yet when you were asked to speak the truth before your giving satisfaction, and received into the congregation after your excommunication to give glory to God and to acknowledge if there were any other sin that lay upon your conscience, or any sinful confederacy with that youth to the endangerment of his soul, that you would acknowledge it. And yet you steadfastly denied it and added one lie to another. Therefore, let me

exhort you now in the name and fear of God, not to withstand the grace of God and not obstinately to stand it out in a willful denial, but give glory to God and acknowledge your fault, that you may yet find mercy of the Lord and of the church; but if still you deaden your heart, some fearful judgement of God will find you out. Let not shame nor any other worldly disgrace hinder you from speaking the truth, lest the Lord confound you. Therefore have pity upon your own soul and do not cast it away, nor provoke the wrath of God against you. If the Spirit has been dealing with you since the last day, do not withstand the motions of the Spirit. You do not know what providence of God was in it to put of your censure to this day. It may be in mercy to your soul, and do not think you can hurt yourself by an ingenious confession of your sin in the face of the congregation.

Richard Wait I must say though I have not light to acknowledge what my brethren lay to my charge, yet I have cause to suspect myself in memory, but I did not understand that the question was general to me, whether ever I had at any time been drinking with him, but that they had asked me whether I was drinking with him in my shop at that time, when Mark Hains' maid said that she saw him under my shop board drinking and not otherwise.

Governor Winthrop Pray, put him in mind of that which was laid to his charge by Lester last night, which he denied. It may be he has since thought of himself better, though then it was not pressed upon him because there was but one witness.

Richard Wait I must still state that I never promised him to keep his counsel and not reveal things, though he had often been with me and desired not to reveal any confederacy together.

William Hibbins Lester is here and whether it may not be convenient for the church to hear what he has to say, it may be that there may be some further evidence to convince our brother.

Pastor John Wilson Though we would not altogether depend upon his testimony to condemn our brother, since Lester has been very wicked, faulty and dishonest, and in many ways very vicious. Yet because of the testimony that our brother Oliver has given of him who conceives the spirit of God is still working upon his heart, either to terror and conviction or to further mercy with him, I think it would be wise to hear his testimony.

Brother Marshall There may be one encouragement to the church to hear what Lester can say, for though we would not attribute much to the testimony of a heathen, should he speak against himself, his testimony may be worth hearing.

Pastor John Wilson Lester, you know how vicious and wicked you have been in your life. Therefore, do not add this sin to all the rest of your evils, that now out of malice or envy, you should unjustly accuse our brother.

Lester Gunter I desire to confess to the glory of God and the shame and confusion of my own face that I have been very evil in my life and unfaithful to my master, and that we have had many wicked drinkings together and in company, and a little before the court when I had occasion to come to be witness in some business of my master, then hearing that there was made mention of my name in the

congregation. I went to Goodman Wait's shop to inquire whether he had revealed anything of me and he said no. I asked him that he would not and he promised to me often that he would not and gave me his hand on it. This agreement was expressed between us in words once or twice. Therefore I do much wonder and it makes me tremble to think that he should deny that which I am persuaded he perfectly remember, and for any envy against him, the Lord knows I have none, for had God, by his providence discovered and brought it out, I never would have spoken of it.

Richard Wait I must state that I never made him promise that he wouldn't reveal anything, but I told him I could say nothing of what he did except what he had told to me. Since there was no witness, it's his word against mine. He asked me to conceal what I know of him, but I didn't promise that I would.

Pastor John Wilson It's late, and we need to bring this business to an issue. The matter will be whether the joint testimony of two of our brethren, and sometimes three, does punctually and fully agree together in which he still denies, or at least says he doesn't remember, though it is obvious that he lies and speaks against his conscience. Does the church proceed against him or not?

Governor Winthrop Last night I thought the admonition might serve a turn, but now since matters are farther opened and made clear where the grossness of his sin is apparent. When he was admitted into the church, he had the occasion to speak of the society he had with Lester, and he was moved by many to deal faithfully with his own soul and with the church in his repentance, and be privy to so many wicked practices with another man's servant, to the deserving and purloining of his master's goods, and encourage him on his decay-filled practice, and did confess some things that none had accused him of, and how his repentance could be sound when he let lie upon his conscience unconfused? I do think admonition is not sufficient, but that we should cast him out and leave him in that condition that we found him in.

Edward Gibbens I desire to ask this brother this question, whether he did not keep some close sin or some other which lay upon his conscience, whereby he robbed God of his glory, such that God has now caused him to fall into this just punishment of that.

Richard Wait Here has lain my temptation and my sin, that I concealed it and did not acquaint his master of it.

Pastor John Wilson After these things have been so far considered and bolted out, it appears there was impenitence of heart in his late repentance. And since he has fallen back to lying, is his impenitence in which he persists sufficient for the church to proceed against him, and leave him as we found him, seeing how he has dealt deceitfully with God, the church, and his own soul.

Governor Winship It was a great sin in this brother that when he knew Lester to be so unfaithful to his master, and such a liar, that he would still keep company with him and conceal it from his master, nor give this servant any admonition or counsel to repent and not make restitution, and not to continue such unfaithfulness.

Richard Wait I confess that it was my great sin.

Sergeant Savage Seeing he came into the church telling a lie it is just that he should be deprived of that privilege he gained by lying.

Richard Wait I pray, brother, convince me of that lie. I don't know that I came in by telling a lie.

Sergeant Oliver (son of Thomas Oliver): Seeing that he stands like a deaf adder, closing his ear to the voice of the church and the affirmation of his brethren, it is my desire that our brethren state it again to him and the church, that whether before his readmission, he was not asked to confess and acknowledge that he knew the evil about Lester.

Brother Perry Did affirm that he often press him to utter a confederacy that he knew or that he had with Lester, and it was expected of him, and yet he said nothing of all this that he did know and since has confessed.

Brother Penn For my own part I think his sin in some sort like this is like Annanias in keeping back somewhat from the church which he should have imparted to them, for he professes in the face of the congregation a show of repentance which was taken for sound, and he did seem to confess all his gross and sinful carriage, and yet he has played the hypocrite to his acknowledgement, and kept some gross sin upon his soul unconfessed. Therefore, I think he deserves to be returned to his first condition by excommunication, pronounced or left in the condition where the church found him.

Sister Wait His wife speaks to the church on behalf of her husband, and says that he is not convinced of the evil he is accused of. Even our Teacher has publicly stated that he hasn't been convinced. The church cannot proceed against anyone unless it is a sin against light.

Pastor John Wilson If our brother's sins seem to the church to be such that we cannot discharge our faithfulness to his soul without further proceeding against him for his lies and hypocrisy by excommunicate him. If the whole church agrees with one consent, we shall take silence as approbation. If any of you are of a different opinion, feel free to express himself with his grounds and reasons why he dissents from the judgment of the church.

Mr. Tyng In math it seems eighteen hold out for admonition, and that there should be a pause before we proceed to excommunication.

Pastor John Wilson He has had many admonitions from the presbytery and from private brethren in the church yesterday. Yet he still persists in his sin with a hard heart. Admonition should be for lesser and private sins, but sin in him is gross, as he knows that telling a lie in the face of the congregation. All our labor yesterday and today has been to admonish him of his lie and hypocrisy. Besides, we know that Peter did cast out Annanias without any admonition, and for the incestuous person Paul appoints them to cast him out, but he doesn't provide an admonition first.

Rev. John Cotton It is according to the rule that when brethren deal with an offended bother in matters of small consequence, and he is not plainly convinced that the church may leave an admonition, but when matters are of a high and notorious quality and proceeds to obstinacy, then that in Corinthians 5:1-5 is to be followed to cast him out without admonition, and I cannot say anything to hinder the

church in their intention, for I look at it as a most heinous and notorious sin, in that he should be acquainted with so much wickedness in Lester and neither acquaint his master of it, whom he had so wronged, nor yet acknowledge it to the congregation at his receiving into the church but lets it alone while one, out of the pangs of his conscience, and the rack of his soul reveals it, which I know not how it can stand with true

repentance which he has professed. Therefore our brethren may be satisfied with an admonition.

Pastor John Wilson If there are none to hinder the proceedings of the church in this intended censure of excommunication, we will proceed to it first seeking to God for his direction and blessing and by prayer in his great business. I would have you attend to the censure which in the name of God and power committed to His church for your sin; do cut you off from the fellowship of the church, and so I would have you take it and to be cut off from the ordinances of the church, like a heathen, which you have received so little profit by. Therefore, for your hypocrisy and dissension with God and the church, and with your own soul and hardening of your heart against the counsels of your brethren, and the admonition of the church, and having not confessed those sins and wicked confederacies with Lester, neither to his master or to the church, therefore as a heathen and publican, we cast you out and deprive you of the enjoyment of any liberties of the church, which you have not profited by. Therefore, we deliver you now up to Satan for the destruction of the flesh until he be pleased to bring you to repentance of this, your sin, and to restore you again if God see it good. And so withdraw yourself from the congregation of God's faithful servants.

After this disaster, the English colonists were in complete disarray. Some even concluded that the war was a result of God's punishment of the Puritans for not abiding by strict religious codes. The Puritans then lashed out at their easiest scapegoats, persecuting Quakers and imprisoning or hanging many neutral and Christian Indians.

In October, Philip's forces struck again with raids on the towns of Hatfield, Northampton and Springfield where 30 houses were burned. Attacking warriors now included members of the Agawam tribe. This tribe had been peaceful, but became hostile when settlers took some of their children for hostages as a precautionary move against an attack. Their strategy backfired and only served to enrage the Agawams into joining Philip and burning Springfield.

As winter set in, the attacks diminished as the natives moved into a position from where they could tighten the noose around their ultimate prize, Boston. But it would be a difficult winter for the Indians, too. With much of their traditional crops left unattended during the summer, hunger now took its toll. The English meanwhile, were becoming desperate. With the central part of Massachusetts now firmly in the hands of the natives, they began to think things couldn't get any worse. They were wrong.

One of the biggest fears for the English had been that the powerful Narragansett tribe (which had lived peacefully in Rhode Island with the followers of Roger Williams for many years) might soon enter the war. In a colossal blunder, the colonists decided to make a preemptive strike against the neutral Narragansetts. In December of 1675, a force of one thousand soldiers from Massachusetts Bay Colony, Plymouth Colony, and Connecticut Colony marched into Narragansett territory in southern Rhode Island

and to a battle that would become known as the Great Swamp Massacre. (By the way, this colonial army camped for several nights on the Post Road in North Kingstown, Rhode Island, just a few hundred yards from where I lived for several years).

An Indian traitor betrayed his own people and told the English the exact location of the large Narragansett fortress-camp surrounded by a palisade, deep within a swamp. The colonist army descended on the camp during a blizzard, felling a single large tree across the protective moat to provided entry into the fort. When the English finally breached the fortress-camp walls, vicious fighting ensued in which more than 500 Narragansetts were slaughtered (mostly women and children), and the entire camp was set ablaze. The surviving Narragansett Indians fled the battlefield, to enter the war on the side of Philip, and their rage knew no bounds.

In the next few months, Narragansett warriors raided and burned the towns of Medfield, Groton, Sudbury, Plymouth, Rehoboth, Providence, Marlboro and others. In February of 1676, Indian war parties descended on the town of Lancaster and succeeded in storming the garrison where all of its settlers had taken refuge. Colonial morale was at an all time low and it seemed as if all the New England colonies were on the verge of falling to the savage forces of King Philip.

However, the power of the Indians was now in decline. They were short on food, weapons, powder and shot, but worse, reinforcements were arriving almost weekly from England through Boston and other ports, leaving Philip's forces facing superior numbers of colonial soldiers. They were also about to suffer another massacre, this time at their main camp on the Connecticut River.

In May of 1676, Captain Turner and Captain Holyoke launched an attack on the Indian camp at the northern end of the Connecticut River. Surprising the Indians at dawn, they slaughtered scores of natives in close quarters combat as they fled their wigwams. Many others tried to swim across the river to escape the soldier's muskets, bayonets and swords, only to be drowned as the swift current swept them over the falls. Warriors from surrounding areas then launched a counterattack, killing Captain Turner as he and his men fled back to Hadley, but the damage had been done. This major war camp of the Wampanoags and Nipmucks had been effectively wiped out. As a result, the Indian alliance soon collapsed and the few warriors that escaped the camp either fled north or went on fighting in a lost cause.

Philip, with only few warriors left, made his way back to his tribal headquarters near what is now Mount Hope, Rhode Island where he continued to use hit and run tactics on isolated farms throughout the area. However, by the end of the summer of 1676 he was finally tracked down and ironically, it was a friendly Indian scout's musket that sent a musket ball through Philip's heart. The death of King Philip effectively ended the Native American resistance in New England, but true to his word, Philip had gone down fighting "determined not to live until I have no country". During his reign of terror, Philip had created such hate and fear among the English that after his death, his body was drawn and quartered, and his head was cut off and paraded it through the streets of Plymouth. In one final ignominious act, the colonists sold Philip's son into slavery where he died in Bermuda.

No one may ever know how close the English colonists came be being defeated in this war. But it is generally believed that if King Philip had managed to hold his alliance of tribes together; if he could have established a secure supply system; and if he had persuaded other neutral tribes to join his struggle against the whites, the colonization of Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island would have been set back many years, probably delaying, or defeating efforts for the creation of a United States.

FURTHER STUDY

The History of the Indian Wars in New England: From the First Settlement to the Termination of the War with King Philip in 1677; 2 volumes in one; William Hubbard

Changes in the Land, by William Cronon, Hill and Wang, NY.

Flintlock and Tomahawk, by Douglas Leach, Parnassus Imprints, E. Orleans, LA.

The Connecticut River, by Edwin Bacon, Putnams's Sons, NY and London.

King Philip's War: The History and Legacy of America's Forgotten Conflict; Schultz & Togias

A Puritan Outpost, by Herbert Parsons, MacMillan Co., NY.

Soldiers in King Philip's War: Official Lists of the Soldiers of Massachusetts Colony Serving in Philip's War, and Sketches of the Principal Officers; George Madison Bodge

History of the Town of Northfield, Massachusetts, 150 years, by J.H. Temple and G. Sheldon, Joel Munsell, Albany, NY.

Narratives of the Indian Wars, by Charles Lincoln, Barnes & Noble, Inc. NY.

Famous Indian Chiefs, by D. Johnston, Books for Libraries Press, Freeport, NY.

King Philip's War, by G. Ellis and J. Morris 1906, Grafton Press Publishers, NY.