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The Writings of Michael Wigglesworth:  
The Rhetoric of Debate, Propaganda, and Typology  

by  
Edward John Osowski

A THESIS SUBMITTED  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  

Doctor of Philosophy  

Thesis Director's Signature:  

Houston, Texas  
February, 1975
To my parents,

for their support and understanding
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Chapter I

Introduction
There is a path, no vultures eye hath seen,
Where Lion fierce, nor lions whelps have been,
Which leads unto that living Crystal Fount,
Who drinks thereof, the world doth nought account.

Anne Bradstreet, "The Vanity of All Worldly Things"
In this work I intend to examine the manner in which the verse and prose of Michael Wigglesworth and several of his contemporaries serve as vehicles for a mode of propaganda described by Aldous Huxley as "rational propaganda", writing "in favor of action that is consonant with the enlightened self-interest of those who make it and those to whom it is addressed. . . ."

While Huxley might object to the application of his definition to a literature which serves, primarily, a religious purpose, his terms apply to the writings of the American Puritans. For the orthodox Puritan, there could be no question that the content of Wigglesworth's message was "true" (Huxley, p.36).

But most importantly, the technique of propaganda as practiced by the Puritans stressed the responsibility of the individual. While urging spiritual passivity before God, the Puritan writer nevertheless urged his reader to accept full responsibility for his actions. The appeal of Wigglesworth and others is not to the crowd but to the single reader, "The writer speaks only to individuals, sitting by themselves in a state of normal sobriety" (Huxley, p.43). No attempt to vitiate the obligations of the individual is made, "The crowd-intoxicated individual escapes from responsibility, intelligence and morality into a kind of frantic, animal mindlessness" (Huxley, p.42). Wigglesworth starts out with an audience which shares, to some extent, the beliefs he expresses, which shares a prejudice in favor of the values he holds (Huxley, p.49). His intention is
not to "manipulate . . . instincts and emotions" (Huxley, p.41),
but to express through rational means the validity of the ortho-
dox approach to salvation. Rational propaganda is based on a
desire not to manipulate or blind, but to produce "a clear
understanding, on the part of all concerned, of the nature of
symbols and of their relations to the things and events sym-
bolized" (Huxley, p.50).

Yet, while Wigglesworth's audience is not composed of "un-
suspecting minds" (Huxley, p.80), he does realize the role emo-
tional involvement can play in rational propaganda. By bringing
the audience to a state of "intensified suggestibility" (Huxley,
p.63), it is easier to begin the conversion process by which old
beliefs are strengthened and new ones are indoctrinated. Huxley
spells out the double audience with more precision:

But to strengthen existing faith is not enough; the
propagandist, if he is worth his salt, must create
new faith, must know how to bring the indifferent
and the undecided over to his side, must be able to
mollify and perhaps even convert the hostile. . . .
The propagandist arbitrarily associates his chosen
product, candidate or cause with some idea, some
image of a person or thing which most people, in a
given culture, unquestioningly regard as good (Huxley, p.81).

For the Puritan writer, the product, although not arbitrarily
chosen, was salvation; its path lay through the Covenants of
Grace and Works, made manifest in the Congregational Church.
In all his writings, Wigglesworth tried to demonstrate the value
in submission and the reward for overcoming one's desires and
the temptations of earthly existence.

In "The Fraye of Eloquence," the prose oration he delivered
during his senior year at Harvard as part of his training in
rhetoric, Wigglesworth demonstrates his awareness of the
necessity of appealing to both the emotions and reason. The eloquent speaker proceeds according to a plan, with evidence that can be perceived by the understanding, "... you shall hear him so lay open and unfoulde, so evidence and demonstrate from point to point what he hath in hand, that he will make a very block understand his discourse."\textsuperscript{2} To the Puritan, reason was the supreme faculty, the trait which distinguished man from other beasts. Yet the trained rhetoritician knew that man was a combination of reason and will, that without a reformation of man's heart no amount of rational persuasion could succeed. Perry Miller quotes Cotton Mather on this point, "If you have the whole man, and not the heart, you have but a dead man, get the heart and you have all."\textsuperscript{3}

Wigglesworth concurs in the role eloquence plays in modifying and transforming the emotions, "But furthermore 'tis a fit bait to catch the will and affections. For thereby they are not only layd in wait for, but surprized: nor onely surprized, but subdued; nor onely subdued, but triumphed over" ("Eloquence,"p.675). He then introduces a paradox which becomes familiar in his later writings--man discovers in servitude and passivity before God a freedom and strength beyond human comprehension, "Yet Eloquence beguil's with such sweetness: that here to be surprized is nothing dangerous, here to be subject is the best freedom, this kind of servitude is more desireable than liberty" ("Eloquence,"p.675).

The fears which Huxley expresses about the use of propaganda by demagogues and tyrants as a weapon to indoctrinate and manipulate the instincts and emotions of the masses (Huxley,p.41)
never crosses Wigglesworth's mind. To the Puritan, the purpose of training in rhetoric was not to present new truths, but simply to present the truths of orthodoxy in a new way. "So that Eloquence gives new luster and beuty, new strength new vigour, new life unto trueth; presenting it with such variety as refresheth, actuating it with such hidden powerful energy, that a few languid sparks are blown up to a shining flame" ("Eloquence,"p.674). Truth, in fact, possesses a static quality, and eloquence can correctly be used in only one way, to convey that truth ("Eloquence,"p.675).

Wigglesworth's oration, thus, provides the outline for the typical Puritan view of man and literature. Man is a creature of both head and heart and his regeneration must involve both faculties (New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century,p.287). Fundamental to his literary production is an awareness of the importance of the word in preparing for conversion and of the value of logical argumentation in convincing and strengthening reason. "The first must take the guise of rational persuasion, invincible proof, logical demonstration, and the silencing of objections; thus dialectic and abstract arguments were so tremendously important in Puritan writings because grace had to begin with logical conviction" (New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century,p.292).

The Puritan response to the world suffered from an underlying strain of separation and its literature strove to demonstrate that the world was, at best, "simply hostile to man, "a hideous and desolate wilderness full of wild beasts and men" as William Bradford described it.⁴ Heaven alone could bring man freedom
and release from his period of enforced exile on earth. For Anne Bradstreet, man is a "weary pilgrim" valiantly struggling against the temptations of the carnal world, waiting for its dissolution:

A pilgrim I, on earth perplexed

With sins, with cares and sorrows vexed,

By age and pains brought to decay,

And my clay house mold'ring away.\(^5\)

And yet while the Puritan's orientation remained other-worldly, directed toward the cessation of earthly sorrows in the joys of heaven, "Lord make me ready for that day,/Then come, dear Bridegroom, come away" (Bradstreet, "As Weary Pilgrim,"ll.43-44), he recognized that he was forced to act in the world. In God's final cataclysmic communication with the world on Judgment Day--when His all-consuming power would appear most magnificent and man's insignificance greatest--the earth would certainly pass away. Until then, however, the Puritan had to focus his actions into a coherent pattern that would align him with God's grand design for man. Above all, he had to "walke Humbly" to avoid the "shipwracke" of his soul.\(^6\)

Those who refused to "walke Humbly," Anne Hutchinson, Roger Williams, the Quakers hanged on Boston Common, served as examples to impress upon the people's minds the reasonableness of conforming to the orthodox straight and narrow. Nicholas Noyes bore this in mind when he prepared his introduction to Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana*. Here Noyes describes those who threaten the success of the new colony as "beasts":

A vexing thought, that makes me scarce forbear
To stamp, and wring my Hands, and pluck my Hair,
To think, what Blessed Ignorance hath done,
What fine threads Learnings Enemies have spun,
How well Books, Schools, and Colledge may be spar'd.
So Men with Beasts may fitly be compar'd!
Yea, how Tradition leaves us in the lurch,
And who, nor stay at home, nor go to church:
The Light-within-Enthusiasts, who let fly
Against our Pen and Ink Divinity.7

What emerges from an examination of colonial American literature is a realization of the extent to which certain techniques, among them propaganda and persuasion, the debate, and typology, converge to produce a literature which, while rational in its origin and basic impulse, makes use of appeals to the emotions. Woyes himself spells out the necessity of combating the "Ignorance" of his audience through those forces which support intellectual growth, "books, Schools, and Colledge."

The form which best provides the opportunity for the exchange of ideas and the logical demonstration of the superiority of one statement over another is the debate or dialogue. Wigglesworth makes use of this form repeatedly, at times challenging the reader to accept a position which will insure damnation. The debate poses two conflicting arguments and works not toward their reconciliation, but toward a rational and logical triumph of one idea over the other. In "The Flesh and the Spirit" Anne Bradstreet depicts the victory of the child of the new Adam whose vision is set on non-temporal rewards, over the person caught in the clutches of earthly fascination:
Sisters we are, ye twins we be,  
Yet deadly feud 'twixt thee and me;  
For from one father are we not,  
Thou by old Adam wast begot,  
But my arise is from above,  
Whence my dear father I do love.  

Flesh begins the debate challenging Spirit to answer the charge that it dwells on phantoms, "... what liv'est thou on/Nothing but Meditation?" (ll.9-10). It then tempts Spirit to find comfort in honor, riches and carnal pleasures (ll.21-36). But Spirit responds that her vision is superior to the mundane cares of Flesh, "Mine Eye doth pierce the heavens, and see/What is invisible to thee" (ll.77-78). Switching suddenly to future tense verbs, Spirit holds out a reward which is eternal, lasting beyond the transient pleasures Flesh enjoys, "Nor such like trash which Earth doth hold,/But Royal Robes I shall have on" (ll.80-81).

The thrust of "The Flesh and the Spirit" is to entice the reader through a sensual depiction of the joys of heaven (ll.79-108) into adopting the other-world orientation, rejecting the claims of this world and waiting in anticipation for the fulfillment—at some future time—of man's desires.

It is through the use of typology that the Puritan writer leads his reader through the intricacies of rational propaganda, inviting him to imitate the actions of notable types who preceded him and holding out the possibility of antitypical fulfillment if they imitate these actions. The impulses behind the use of typology are several. Perry Miller points out the manner in which typology was used to uncover the unity in the universe,
demonstrating the rationality of God's creation. "By an unavoidable compulsion, typology was forced to seek for a unity greater than that of the Bible, a unity of history, nature and theology." He continues, "The typologist, even in his worst vagaries, was seeking a pattern of repetition, the recurrence of eternal verities . . ." (Images, p.39).

While Miller discusses the Puritan method of typology only as a means of understanding Edwards' epistemology, for earlier Puritan writers--like Bradford, Wigglesworth or Taylor--typological analysis served several other functions. Since orthodox Calvinism denied the efficacy of human actions in procuring salvation, the Puritan writer had to guard against deviating from this position. Inviting man to pattern his actions upon those of David, Paul or Christ, as Wigglesworth does, grants a certain importance to the action while, at the same time, reducing its individual dimensions by fitting it into a scheme which cuts across the barriers of time. Typological identification thus becomes a method of answering the Puritan dilemma--man indeed does act, but his actions transcend the barriers of time and place. In repetition is found both comfort and relief from the unknown. Bradford thus believes that the persecutions the Separatists endured in England were the work of Satan, "... what wars and oppositions ever since, Satan hath raised, maintained and continued against the Saints . . ." (Of Plymouth Plantation, p.3) and were antitypes of the punishments the primitive church suffered at the hands of the pagan emperors (Of Plymouth Plantation, p.4).

The following summary of orthodox Calvinist theology presents
sketchily the beliefs which Wigglesworth held; it is derived from Perry Miller's *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*. Miller sees the Covenant of Grace as a compromise, engineered by the Puritans to ward off the attacks of the Arminians and the Antinomians. The Puritans had to answer the Arminians who found Calvinism—with its emphasis on man's depravity and his predestined spiritual state—devoid of moral obligation. Yet the Puritans also had to counter the anti-intellectual impulses of the Antinomians who proposed that man could enter into a direct and immediate relationship with God, without the intermediary of the church and Gospel.

The Covenant of Grace became, then, both a personal and communal commitment. It denied that there was a cause and effect relationship between good deeds and salvation, something the Arminians held (p.372). Yet it held out the security of salvation—through Christ and the Congregational Church—for those who had been selected for the reward. The Puritans walked a theological middle road between the piety of the Antinomians and the rationality of the Arminians. They thus developed a theology with an explicable God, one who worked by conditions which could be understood (pp.373-374).

In such a framework good deeds are not the sign of conversion but are the condition one accepts when he enters into the Covenant (p.384). "Thus good works are ... a condition of the Covenant not causally but 'declaratively,' just as fire is the condition of heat merely because God has enacted that it should ordinarily be concomitant. Deeds do not merit the salvation, but they must accompany it ..." (p.392). The
literary production of the colony must be seen in this light. In "God's Controversy with New England," for example, Wigglesworth is not saying that good deeds and prayers will necessarily placate God. What he preaches is that success will return to the colony when it returns to the conditions of the Covenant, marked by the performance of good deeds and prayers.

Wigglesworth's life itself is the sort that invites generalization and hyperbolic summation. In the funeral sermon he preached for his friend, Cotton Mather praises Wigglesworth as an example of virtues, a pillar who never swerved in his practice of faithfulness, love, patience and charity. Indeed, Wigglesworth is less an individual than the antithetical completion of certain Old Testament figures, "How Faithful was he in the Education of his Family! A very Abraham for his Commands unto them, to keep the Way of the Lord! A very David for his charge unto them to know the God of their Father and Serve Him (Day of Doom, p. 117).

Wigglesworth himself seems to have cultivated this hagiographic description of himself. On his deathbed he cast himself in the role of the suffering pilgrim whose goal is finally within sight, "For more than Fifty Years together I have been laboring to uphold a Life of Communion with God; and I thank the Lord I now find the Comfort of it!" (Day of Doom, p. 11b). In his "Autobiography" he dwells less on specific events than on those which either define him in general terms—a quality typical of the formal account of the saint's life—or can be used to demonstrate the role of God in his life.

The "Autobiography" begins with a statement noticeable for
its absence of specific features, recalling the language of the Old Testament, "I was born of Godly Parents, that feared the Lord greatly, even from their youth, but in an ungodly place, where the generality of the people rather derided than imitated their piety; in a place where, to my knowledge their children had learnt wickedness betimes; in a place that was consumed with fire in a great part of it, after God had brought them out of it" (*Day of Doom*, p.10).

The family endured storms and hazardous seas as they made their way to the "howling wilderness" of religious freedom in the colonies (*Day of Doom*, p.10). Wigglesworth becomes one of many Horatio Alger-like figures as he proceeds to recount the trials he endured to obtain an education, "I went to school under no small disadvantage and discouragement" (*Day of Doom*, p.11). Continuing the theme of generations with which he opens the piece, the poet then recounts his replacement of his father as guide with God as his source of spiritual sustenance (*Day of Doom*, pp.11-12).

Despite the tone of generalization with which he invests the account of his life, Wigglesworth spent many years offering important service to the colony.\(^{12}\) Born in 1631 in England, he migrated during the summer of 1638. In 1648 he entered Harvard College, obtaining his A.B. three years later and choosing to stay on as a tutor. During the next three years as he trained other students and worked on his Master of Arts degree, he kept his *Diary*, the spiritual account book of his soul's progress. After much scrupulous deliberation, he accepted the position as head of the church at Malden in October, 1655 and was ordained in May, 1657.
It was about this time that a debilitating illness struck Wigglesworth, forcing him to suspend many of his pastoral duties. The untimely death of his wife in 1659 added to his problems. Three years later, in 1662, he produced his first long poem, The Day of Doom and followed it with Meat out of the Eater and Riddles Unriddled in 1669. In addition to serving as minister and physician to the town, Wigglesworth had grafted the career of poet to that of preacher. Perry Miller comments on this union, "Poetry existed primarily for its utility, it was foredoomed to didacticism... Poetry in Puritan eyes, therefore, was a species of rhetoric, a dress for great truths, a sugar for the pill" (New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century, pp.360-361). Richard Crowder suggests that Wigglesworth understood the uses to which poetry could be put and turned to it as an extension of his ministerial role, "There were other ways of reaching the children of the Lord besides pastoral care and Sabbath preaching. With the thoroughness required of every conscientious Puritan, Michael had analyzed his potentialities and was exploiting them with exemplary scrupulosity" (Crowder,p.210).

After many solitary years spent in illness, he decided to marry, in 1679, a woman thirty years his junior. His congregation was outraged and Wigglesworth considered resigning from his post to avoid scandal. He chose to marry, however, and almost miraculously his fragile health improved. Similarly, his prestige in the town improved as well. In 1680 he was named a freeman, one of the 76 electors of the governor. In 1684 an invitation to head Harvard College was declined because he feared that accepting the position would feed his vanity, a vice he laments
in his Diary, and detract from the honor which was right-
fully God's. In 1685 he preached the election sermon.

His second wife died in 1690, but Wigglesworth chose to
remain celibate only briefly, marrying again in 1691. In 1697
he was elected a Fellow of Harvard and lived his remaining years
an example of virtue and grace. He died on June 10, 1705 in
Malden, the community he had served for more than fifty years.

Edmund Morgan explains that Wigglesworth's approach to life
might best be called a heightened sense of Puritanism. His
personal struggles to triumph over his sins while maintaining
a sense of his guilt and depravity and his public attempts at
defining and inculcating the tenets of orthodox Puritanism were
not the products of a diseased mind. Quite simply, Wigglesworth
followed the demands of good Puritanism.¹³ Morgan points out:

Wigglesworth knew that man never achieves righteousness in this world. He knew that within him lay all
the guilt of Adam, and he took pleasure in abusing himself for his sinful heart, for his pride, his over-
valuing of creature comforts, his neglect of God.
The automatic result of the daily examination of his
soul was the conclusion that he was a vile worm, in-
deed the "chief of sinners" (Diary, p.viii).

Wigglesworth's life and writings, then, stand as a record of
his attempts to reconcile man's fascination with the carnal
world with the spiritual orientation which he knew alone
could seal salvation.
Notes to Introduction


Chapter II

The Renewal of the Heart:
Autobiographical Writings
We deem man, if considered in his own nature, to be blinded with darkness of mind, stuffed with perversity and corruption of heart, so that of himself he is utterly incapable of knowing God (something fitting for him to attain), or of pursuing an upright and holy life; rather to him God has left only the capacity to dash headlong from one ignorance into another and to rush into every iniquity.

John Calvin, *The Geneva Catechism of 1558*
Before he turned his artistic and theological concerns to the world around him, to a description of the spiritual and physical blight suffered by the colony and a solution for these problems, Wigglesworth had trained himself in the art of close examination of his own life. His Diary and other prose pieces provided him with the opportunity to carry on a debate with himself, a dialogue in which his carnal orientation, what he calls the "cudd frame,"\(^1\) is explored like a specimen with a magnifying glass and set in contrast to the relief which a spiritual orientation provides. In the Diary, written while a tutor at Harvard College, Wigglesworth rehearses the themes which dominate his later writings. Repeatedly the problem of personal depravity and the necessity of submitting individual desires to the will of God war against pride and the desire for self-aggrandizement. Especially in the Diary he succeeds in bringing his own emotions to a heightened pitch, thereby making himself more aware of his guilt and more susceptible to the Diary's propagandistic intent. The burden of his own offenses weighs heavily on him. Wigglesworth is indeed conscious, and strives to retain the awareness, that "my vain thoughts, my detestable pride, my unnatural filthy lust" rupture the relation between God and himself (p.3).

Wigglesworth's personal writings, like those of other Puritans, are exercises in applying the message and art of rational propaganda to the self. They present the recognition that carnal man does not operate in harmony with God and strive to convince one of the benefit to be achieved from acting in consonance with God's will. As Wigglesworth admits, "Thus I had my Ends
and God had his Ends far differing from mine."² But with the
direct aid of God a reformation of the heart is worked, "God
in his Love and Pitty to my soul wrought a great change in me,
both in heart and life, and from that time forward I learnt to
study with God and for God" ("Autobiography," p.12). The per-
sonal writings of the Puritans were "wisdom literature," that
is, writing which is "expressive of advice and the knowledge
of good that has been reaped from experience."³

The struggle depicted in the Diary poses man's carnal in-
stincts in a hostile dialectic against God's spiritual desires
for man and dramatizes the struggle through the use of the form
of the debate in which the value of assuming each perspective
is studied. Larzer Ziff sees this concern in terms of a much
larger Puritan context in which the individual life is viewed
in dramatic terms. "Drama, indeed, as Wigglesworth . . . among
many others demonstrate[s] was of the essence of life. The
center of the drama was man's soul, wherein God and Satan waged
their battle, and this was externalized to a battle between the
chosen people and Satan's minions."⁴

The close introspection such religious narratives demand
requires one to comprehend their informing principles. They
are, in a sense, "success stories" so far as they chart the
progress of the soul from darkness to light, from carnal preoc-
cupation to the regeneration of the heart. Success, in the
terms of the narratives, is based on the realization, finally,
that man is a pilgrim on earth, that his true resting place and
home are only with God. Kenneth B. Murdock unites the propa-
gandizing impulse with the symbolic motif of the voyage through
the world of the flesh to the realm of the spirit, "If every
good man was a pilgrim toward blessedness, the best guidebooks
might be accounts of how others had fared on the road toward
heaven." In terms of the Puritan sense of rational propa-
da, no sane man would reject the invitation to become "good."

The personal writings of the Puritans thus become spiritual
account books which trace the movement of the soul in a rhythm
as it is led by grace to God and then draws back to sin under
its own power. Daily life was of little ultimate importance
because what mattered most was the progress of the soul. An
adherence to a strict compliance with chronology is disregar-
ded in favor of a structure based on spiritual development.
Daniel Shea sees the collapsing of chronology as an attempt to
clarify the significance of the narrative, "Generally, however,
chronology recedes as a pattern of organization in favor of a
pattern that would make the speaker's experience rationally
available to his audience" (Spiritual Autobiography, p.97).
Such a technique tends to abstract the literature, making it
descriptive of a general religious development. By reducing
those elements which would tend to individualize the writing,
the spiritual narrator enlarges the audience which can share
in the piece. The confessional aspect of these spiritual narra-
tives suggests that the form of the dialogue or exchange lies
behind them—the exchange of ideas either between the community
of men, or, more importantly, between the soul and God.

II

Before one turns to Wigglesworth it is instructive to exam-
ine the personal writings of Edward Taylor and Jonathan Edwards.
In his "Spiritual Relation" Taylor demonstrates the process he went through as he sought assurance of his election and the importance of maintaining an awareness of sin as an aid in bringing about one's conversion from a profane to a sacred creature. Taylor sees the "Relation" as a dialogue between himself and the members of the community who will benefit from his message, "that they might be given as much to edification, as might be . . . ." Because of the ritual qualities involved in the conversion narrative, the "Spiritual Relation" enters into an exchange or dialogue with other descriptions of the conversion experience, each work mutually reflecting and expanding the meanings of other similar works.

The verbal patterns of Taylor's work imitate the non-carnal perspective he wishes to propose to his audience. Man is not able to save himself but depends on God to move him. So, Taylor remarks on "my undoing without Christ, and my necessity of him" (p.471). To overcome man's resistance to altering his heart requires the emotional pressure of gazing at one's sins and realizing one's worthlessness and the subsequent submission to God as the active force. Taylor indicates the extreme pressure God must apply to disengage man from carnality through references to iron-working imagery, "Contrition is the first work of Aversion whereby the heart is broken of [f] from Sin; this is done by the Spirit of God hammering the hard heart in Conscience's [Forge] forcing its checks for Sin so hard against the will and Affections till they recede from Sin, are unrivited from Sin, and rebound against it . . . ." (p.471). With child-like faith and simplicity, the sinner must be drawn by God, "The Lord assist
me that I be not deceived. And oh that he would take me by
the hand and lead within the limits of that promise . . ." (p.473).

Taylor finds in his own experience empirical validation
for the belief in his inability to rescue himself from sin. As
a child he was always ready to leap into sin, "I was readily
laying after the vanities of youth," but the watchfulness of
his parents, their concern for his spiritual condition, protec-
ted him, "But being under the vig[iant] and watchfull Eye of
my parents who would crop the budding forth of Originall Sin,
into any visible Sin with whole[some] reproofs, or the Rod, I
was thereby preserved from a Sinful life" (p.470). The pattern
of the verbs demonstrates Taylor's awareness that man's power
rests only in his ability to sin; help must be actively imposed
upon him.

What Taylor calls for, then, is a renewal of the heart, the
assumption of a new orientation, derived from a recognition of
man's worthlessness. "Oh how have I matter of Humiliation,
enough to make me abhor myself, and morn ly[ing in] dust and
ashes" (p.473). He recounts that his sister's narration of the
expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden made him realize first that
all men are evil. "And so man was made a Sinner, and God was
angrey with all men for Sin" (p.469). But such feelings quickly
become internalized as he realizes that he, personally, reenacts
the sin of Adam in his soul, "... but ever since I have had
the notion of Sin, and its naughtiness remain, and the wrath of
God on account of the Same" (p.469). The realization that such
wrath, left unabated, would lead to his eternal damnation con-
vinces him to desire a reformation of his heart (p.471).
Jonathan Edwards' *Personal Narrative* is written from the perspective of the sinner reformed, the individual who has experienced the workings of grace on his soul and then seeks to articulate this new vision, what he himself calls "... those new dispositions, and that new sense of things." Although not directed at a particular reader, there is a sense in the work of a movement toward an audience in an attempt to explain the new vision and imitate it through patterns of language.

"The impossible aim Edwards set out for himself in the *Personal Narrative* was to articulate his totally new delight in 'things of religion' for readers who could have 'no more notion or idea' of it than he had as a boy ..." (*Spiritual Autobiography*, p. 200). The overall structure of the work matches the design of the typical jeremiad, that is, it moves through pain and humiliation to assurance and joy. Edmund Morgan describes the pattern as one which includes false awakenings to God's commands and backslidings, a gradual conviction of the worthlessness of the self, a recognition that Christ is the only hope, and an infusion of saving grace.¹⁰

During his days as a tutor at Yale College, Edwards turned to the themes outlined above. He resolved to keep before himself an awareness of the transitory nature of the world, a wilderness landscape in which man finds no solace but only temptations, "I have now abundant reason to be convinced of the troublesomeness of an perpetual vexation of the world" (*Works*, p. 26). The realization that the external world can provide no comfort becomes internalized into a conviction that man is worthless. Edwards reinforces this attitude by using the active-passive
verbal dialectic described earlier:

I find by experience that let me make resolutions, and do what I will, with never so many inventions, it is all nothing, and to no purpose at all, without the motions of the Spirit of God: for if the Spirit of God should be as much withdrawn from me always as for the week past, notwithstanding all I do, I should not grow; but should languish, and miserably fade away.---There is no dependence upon myself. It is to no purpose to resolve, except we depend on the grace of God; for if it were not for his mere grace, one might be a very good man one day, and a very wicked one the next (Works, p.17).

He finds that resolutions to reform are easily made, but his corruption and "deceitful" heart "weaken" his efforts (Works, p.17). He must reject the self and rely upon Christ as the source of renewal (Works, p.19). Daniel Shea defines the propagandistic impulse basic to Edwards' personal writings, "By narrative example he will teach what is false and what is true in religious experience, . . . and he hopes to affect the readers by both the content and the presentation of his exemplary experience" (Spiritual Autobiography, p.191).

Edwards' accommodation to the dogma of God's sovereignty brings about the inflowing of God's free grace and the balancing realization that he is powerless by himself. He tries to impress himself with the enormity of his sins in an attempt to humble himself, "I know not how to express better what my sins appear to me to be, than by heaping infinite upon infinite, and multiplying infinite by infinite" (Works, p.40).

Edwards demonstrates that the truly religious man realizes that he must abase himself, discounting any strength he might attribute to himself and present himself--passively--to the action of God's grace. He longs to "lie low before God" so
that "I might be nothing and that God might be ALL, that I might become as a little child" (Works, p.34). In these terms, Edwards depicts the pre-conversion life as one in which man remains active, but only to sin. After grace, man's blessed state is marked by passivity. "In the paragraphs describing his religious life prior to his conversion . . . verbs are active. . . . But very different notes are sounded once Edwards comes to understand that man must be oriented toward God and, as it were, infused by Him . . . . passive verbs accentuate the condition of dependence, and the flowering of the personality that emerges in the love of God is dramatically accomplished in ecstatic metaphor and the language of epiphany."11

The language Edwards uses is thus noted for its paradoxical elements. To the unregenerate man it is impossible to see the sovereignty of God as a delightful doctrine. But once Edwards has lost himself he finds himself; his world becomes revivified (Works, p.31).

III

In his Diary Wigglesworth carries on a debate with himself, casting the work in terms of a struggle between body and soul, man and God, sinner and saint. Throughout the work the split between himself and God and a return to harmony with God act as structuring rhythms. The purpose of the Diary, like the personal writings of Taylor and Edwards, is to impress upon himself an awareness of his own depravity and the necessity of returning to a harmonious unity with God's plan for man. Repeatedly Wigglesworth expresses his awareness that his sins separate him from God. It is "my vain thoughts, my detestable pride,
my unnatural filthy lust" which rupture the relation between God and man (p.3).

The Diary includes several excursions into communal depravity but is essentially a rehearsal, on himself, of the themes and styles he later uses to convince others that God's ways are not the ways of the world. In its simplest terms, the message of the Diary as propaganda lies in its emphasis on the immanence of God. The Diary describes man as a pilgrim in a wilderness, travelling "from adversity to success, from sin toward blessedness" (Literature and Theology, p.99). Wigglesworth refers to the soul in sin as existing in a "howling wilderness" from which it needs God's grace to be rescued (p.63).

To convey a sense of the soul's pilgrimage Wigglesworth relies on the verbal pattern I pointed out in connection with Edwards' writings. Progress toward grace is made when man is most passive; his active powers lead him only to sin. This verbal pattern is repeated in a motif of falling and rising elements in the Diary—joy is balanced with despair, relief with turmoil, comfort with sorrow. Through catalogues of his sins—which continue the active-passive dialectic—Wigglesworth seeks to keep before himself a sense of his human depravity.

Kenneth Murdock defines the purpose of the Puritan diary in terms which fit Wigglesworth into a historical context and help explain the thematic function of the catalogue of sins. "Events as such were not his [the diarist's] chief interest; what was closest to his heart was the service a diary might be in showing him his own faults and virtues, in keeping fresh in his memory what he learned each day about himself and about his
relation to God's law, and in helping him to devote all his energies to divinely approved ends" (Literature and Theology, p.101). So, Wigglesworth questions his evil heart and analyzes its faults:

But ah wretched backsliding heart! what evil hast thou found in god that thy love and affection to him are so quickly could? that thou secretly depart- est from him not savouring the things of god, going awhoaring in thy desires after vanity's, seeking thy self, like an empty vine bringing forth fruit to thy self? I abhor my self before the Lord for my shame- less pride, especially now when god is abasing me. I am ashamed of my apostatizing heart of unbelief in departing from the living god, to whom in my distress I am ever crying arise and save me: I am afraid of my want of natural affection and pitty to my afflic- ted parents (p.13).

The catalogue of sins receives a prominent position in the Diary for the role it plays in debasing the speaker. He accuses himself of remaining a flesh-bound creature, aware that his spiritual dimensions are inadequately developed, "But the same carnal, secure, vain sensual, slouthful, proud, un- beleving, unthankful, unfruitful frame remain in me still" (p.76). His very failure to turn his vision elsewhere reveals the ex- tent to which he is both preoccupied with his sins as well as with the desire to overcome these offenses. He lists his of- fenses as:

A loose and common heart that loveth vanity and frothy- ness . . . ; An unbelieving heart. which questions Gods love, which cannot wait his time which cannot trust his providence without distracting cares and overwhelming disquiements . . . ; An hard heart that cannot be so deeply affected with my sins and spiri- tual wants, as with my outward troubles that maketh me afraid . . . ; A sensual. heart that sometimes can se[e] no glory in heavenly things, no nor in heaven itself . . . ; A heart full of spiritual whoadom revolting from the Lord to some vanity [or] other every day (pp.76-77).

The cumulative effect of a passage like this is to deepen his
awareness of the gap between man's strivings and God's dispensations. Appropriately, the verbs point only to his ability to sin, to revolt against God.

Wigglesworth directs his address to himself with the words "Behold I am vile" (p.5) in an attempt to impress upon himself a sense of personal worthlessness. What he mourns, however, is the deadness of heart which keeps him captive to his sins. "I would mourn, but cannot, I would forsake them and overcome them but cannot. Lord save me, I am thine. a ded proud, froward, filthy heart make me an abhorrence to my god and a burden to my self. Lord for thy Covenant sake eas me of this body of death" (pp.5-6). This passage demonstrates his technique of working the address in two directions. First, he confronts himself with his sins and their effects. And secondly, he calls to God in supplication for relief from his misery. He admits the "deadness of Heart" he suffers (p.3), but also recognizes that he is powerless to relieve it. Receiving the power to maintain a non-carnal perspective will essentially free him from the "body of death."

His method of debate balances confronting himself with his sins and then recognizing, through this exchange, the necessity for reform with direct addresses to God and responses from Him. By probing his sins in this rhetorical manner, he uncovers precisely what he lacks in his religious affections. The Diary's purpose is obviously to keep this awareness before him so that reformation might be accomplished in time. In addition, he enjoys the psychological benefits derived from confessing. "What is common ... to unadulterated confession is
your intention of bringing guilt out into the open in order to disburden yourself of it and the unpleasant feelings it inspires. . . ." ¹²

The tendency to debate both himself and God simultaneously underlies the disjunction which exists within himself between the "Blind mind . . . Carnal heart" (p.53) and what he knows to be man's proper orientation. One typical list of questions begins with an examination of his own problems, "But why am I stared in the face with the dreadful apparitions of that sin that sin [sic] I say, a heart that cannot so much as earnestly desire such communion with thee and sense of thy love, as sometimes I have found" (pp.17-18). But it shortly becomes a list of inquiries addressed directly to God, "Why art thou angry with thy poor prisoner so long and shuttest out my prayers . . . ?" (p.18). The result of this approach is to convince him that his sins--his active self--effectively block off God. Only the acceptance of total passivity before God can cure his "carnal heart," "My soul cleav's to the dust, Lord undertake for me!" (p.18).

Through these interrogations Wigglesworth comes to understand the paradoxical nature of the spiritual state. Repeatedly he reminds himself that God's actions are explicable only to the man with a non-carnal perspective. Meditating upon the question, "What if god deny me the spiritual grace I want?" (p.102), he realizes that God dispenses His grace freely, certainly not in response to man's pressure. Wigglesworth's ability, however, to uncover the blessings which his troubles contain demonstrates that he has learned the message of the Diary's self-debasing
techniques. "He will by degrees increas spiritual strength in what manner, measure and season he seeth fit" (p.102).

The *Diary* provides him with the opportunity to verbalize his own inadequacy and his total dependence on God, "I loath my self and could even take vengeance on my self for these abominations . . . yet I feel, a stone in my heart that knows not how to melt. . . . my whole hopes are in thee for pardon . . ." (p.3). The constant referral to his own offenses, to his backslidings, "my dayly sensuall glutting my heart with creature comforts . . ." (p.10) raises his own sensibilities to a heightened pitch in which it is easy to recognize the distance between himself and God. This produces an effect in which Wigglesworth becomes totally passive, a sign of his own degeneration. The active force thus becomes God:

> Lord I ly at thy feet unworthy to be helped by thee, worthy rather to be trampled on in thy fury (forasmuch as I have trampled on and disprised christ in his glory) but remember thine owne name, thinck off thy Covenant, there is all my hope. Lord I ly downe in my shame worthy to be rejected. If thou wilt have no pleasure in me nor any of my services, loe here I am (p.20).

A pattern continues throughout the work, with Wigglesworth professing his passivity and inability to save himself and with God appearing as the source of power and hope (p.26; see also pp.31, 33). So deeply interwoven is the active-passive dialectic that he personally can do little by himself to change his position. He waits for God's help to "subdue my unconquerable corruptions pride, and whoarish affections; . . . I despair in and off myself to subdue them" (p.25). What remains is a process of constant waiting, apprehension for the
moment when God will indeed save him, "Ah Lord when will thy salvation appear? how long shall I be as those that are dead long ago? how long shall I cry and thou wilt not hear?" (p.38). The form of the address here directs the questions first to God, but it is the speaker himself who answers with a conclusion which seals his sense of worthlessness, "Lord thou owest me nothing" (p.38).

The design of the Diary accommodates more than just confessions and discussions of personal guilt. A pattern of movement outward, movement to the community at large, balances the personal aspect. The sense of personal depravity leads to an awareness that his sins urge God to punish the entire colony.

For the sins of one, many suffer:

Thou art good, I am evil, thou art faithful I am unfaithful in the covenant. oh I am ashamed that I dishonour my fathers hous so by feeding upon husks. that I wrong and grief my head and husband so by not loving and delighting in his presence; by my liking other loves more than him ah Lord! I pull down evils upon others as well as my self. Sicknesses, death of godly ones, wants, divisions have not my sins a hand in these miseries? oh Lord I am afraid of thy judgements upon my self and others. But spare thy people. I do beseech thee whatever becomes of me (p.82).

Wigglesworth realizes that his sins produce sufferings and that these sufferings provide the chance to reform his ways. Yet his position remains tenuous. Only infrequently has God's chosen path intersected with his own selfish interests. The sense of this split pains him considerably.

He viewed the great fire in Boston in March, 1653 as a sure sign that there is a direct relation between man's actions and God's reactions. "Thus god seals his word with his dreadful works" (p.8). However, from this mention of communal
suffering he retreats into introspection, expressing the necessity of throwing off his ability to sin and accepting passivity before God, "Ah Lord! my king, my god, thee thee I provoke, and wert thou not a god indeed, infinite in thy grace fire and brimstone, or a flood of wrath had seized on me long ere now" (p.9). Similarly, he internalizes droughts inflicted upon the colony so that they become images of his spiritual weaknesses, "These are the plagues that my soul lies under, and a hard heart and much unbelief added unto all" (pp.36-37). "He punishes my barrenness with publick drought" (p.29). On October 24, 1653 he had the vision which might be termed his one central theme and which suggests in outline The Day of Doom. He wrote, "On the 2d day at night in my sleep I dream'd of the approach of the great and dreadful day of judgment; and was thereby exceedingly awakened in spirit (as I thought) to follow god with teares and crys until he gave me some hopes of his gracious good wil toward me (p.51).

Wiggesworth relies on typloogical references to sinners consumed by pride to stress the harm his sins produce. By extending his point of reference back to the Old Testament he magnifies the importance of his sins, making them part of the pattern of eschatological history in which God, so angered by man's offenses, displays his immanence by raining down terror. Wiggesworth sees himself as another "Proud Pharaoh," Miriam, or Herod whose sins caused harm to come to their people (p.104). But he also exists apart from the figures with whom he identifies in his ability to recognize his faults and--hopefully--correct them (p.105).
From the impressment on his mind of the effects of his own sins on the fate of the colony, he moves to a study of the sins of others and their subsequent effects. A lack of concern for things spiritual has entered the colony. It is only a period of time before destruction follows, "... I see that this is the spirit and I fear if the Lord prevent not will be the ruin of the whole country. A spirit unbridled licentiousness. Lord in mercy heal, or I know not what will become of New England" (p.67). What moves Wigglesworth to this lament is the discovery that his divinity students refuse to study Hebrew. He responds with expected shock. So deeply has this spirit infected the colony that Wigglesworth finds himself unable to reform the students entrusted to him. "I find the spirits off all or most from studys; this spirit I find creeping up much ..." (p.22). Later he notes that the students he most respects, those who seem to be spiritual leaders, share in the general sense of spiritual weakness which cripples the colony, "Those that were hopeful heretofore, and whom my soul longed to have seen made exemplary in their places to successors are now become sensual as others if not corrupters of others"(p.28).

The ability to perceive his role in bringing sufferings to the colony offers a coherent approach to the problems of the world and it is with the knowledge that man's place in the universe can be understood that Wigglesworth finds hope. The task which remains for the Diary is to convince Wigglesworth both of the necessity for and intelligence of placing his trust in God. He uses two approaches to accomplish this aim. First, he demonstrates repeatedly that God does answer the prayers of
the beleagured saints. Secondly, he demonstrates through a
rhythmic pattern of sorrow and joy the relief which is found
when one trusts God totally.

Proof exists to convince him (and the colonists) that God
is indeed merciful. The purpose remains to demonstrate the
active role played by God in man's affairs. Help in locating
lost money convinces him of God's power, "Yet I pray'd to him
again; he heard me, and restored it the next day but one" (p.36).
The restoration of his money gives him the courage to pray for
the reformation through grace of his soul, "Give then I beseech
the \[e\] such grace for the future ..." (p.36). References to
God's covenant with man indicate that Wigglesworth held this to
be the primary way of insuring God's aid. "Oh remember thy
covenant, and bowels of mercy, and son christ Jesus lose not
thy glory in pardoning the cheif of sinners for my unworthyness"
(p.63). He actually implores God to remember his promise to
man, "... yet to thee Lord belong multitudes of mercy, be thou
faithful in thy covenant, for thyne own name sake. rescue me
from the power of all my iniquitys, and accept me in christ Jesus"
(p.66; see also p.73).

Several incidents which are of typological significance
convince him of God's immanence. "There Is a God who hath
heard me. If there were no God, how should my prayers have
been heard" (p.94). He views two voyages to New Haven as
spiritual accounts of the manner in which God rescues the sinner.
Trust in God leads him to seek His protection during a storm
and he is not disappointed, "Therefore I besought the lord
earnestly and set my self to plead with god and take hold of
him by faith for suitable winds to carry us toward our desired port; and god graciously heard my prayer..." (p.19). On another trip he remarks, "Here again mark the Finger of God clearing our way by causing the sunn to shine forth in its strength when we were in a strait... I pray'd and it pleased God to scatter the fogg and give us a clear afternoon to get in" (pp.73-74). Wigglesworth does not permit the metaphoric values of these passages to pass unnoticed. God's protection during physical trials demonstrates that He can rescue the soul from spiritual ailments (p.19).

Throughout the Diary, Wigglesworth demonstrates his repugnance of spiritual self-reliance through a pattern of depression and relief, repeated in regular intervals, usually on the Sabbath, in which he expresses his spiritual failings and finds relief through God. "God is still teaching me how to come to him to doe all for me and to speed. as if he preach't to none but me from Sabbath to Sabbath" (p.36; see also pp.15, 32). Of most importance in the rhythmic pattern is its role in reducing vanity and pride. "... The Lord awakened me and helped me to loath myself..." (p.71).

What Wigglesworth mourns, however, is the fact that he cannot retain a sense of his own worthlessness but repeatedly resumes his former ways, "But it is a sad thing to feel a carnal heart never more prevalent than immediately after I have come groaning to the Lord Jesus in such a solemn ordinance for redemption from it" (p.73). Even his vision of the day of doom fails to reform him, "The next day I found my self unable to make any work of it at my study. pride prevailing" (p.51).
Increasing his sorrow is the fact that he experiences the greatest sense of God's power, followed by the deepest wallowing in his carnal nature, on the Sabbath (pp.40-41).

But the Diary makes note of a subtle shift in this rhythm. During his last year at Harvard, a tone of optimism dominates. Until this point, the movement has always brought him back to his carnal self. While retaining knowledge of the "emptiness in the creature" (p.81), a real change in tone can be noted. He continues to catalogue his offenses (p.95), still retaining a sense of his evil nature (pp.78-79). He views an attack of the "rheum" in tentative terms, however, aware that it is a punishment for his "many evils," yet unsure of its exact cause, "yet cannot conclude what it is" (p.89). A plague of bugs, which he compares to the curses inflicted on the Egyptians "like Pharaohs frogs," is treated empirically. Rather than defining them as a curse from God, Wigglesworth proposes several solutions, among them "building a house in another place" (p.99). And, most importantly, on two Sabbaths, he does not slip into depression after experiencing a sense of Christ—his joy remains real and unwavering (pp.78,80).

In his brief "Autobiography" Wigglesworth generalizes his experiences, depicting them in terms of a voyage through adversity to salvation. This approach tends to make the work abstract, a depiction of the gradual movement from dark to light. Wigglesworth rejoices that his father saw his son's spiritual triumph, "... He lived to see and hear what God had done for my soul in turning me from Darkness to Light and from the power of Sathan unto God ..." ("Autobiography," p.11).
His parents' decision to leave England exposes them to "the hazzards of the seas, and the Distressing difficulties of a howling wilderness" ("Autobiography," p.10), but after their trial, God carries them safely to port ("Autobiography," pp.10-11).

The God depicted in the "Autobiography" is one who spares Wigglesworth when sick ("Autobiography," p.11) and protects him when he moves from his family in New Haven to the alien and threatening environment at Harvard. "... God in his mercy and pitty kept me from scandalous sins before I came thither and after I came there" ("Autobiography," p.12). But Wigglesworth admits that he failed to recognize the message of God's presence. Only God Himself has the power to work a "great change" in his heart and save him ("Autobiography," p.12).

The style of the brief piece matches Pere H. Delehaye's description of the typical saint's life. Wigglesworth becomes an abstract figure as individual and distinguishing features are eliminated from his life-story. But the purpose of warning and education remains central, and the "Autobiography" thus becomes "the object of edifying the faithful by an account of the sufferings of these heroes" (Legends of the Saints, p.1).

The style of the Diary and the other personal writings thus serves one central purpose—to heighten Wigglesworth's own sense of his depravity. By keeping this knowledge continuously before his eyes, and through repeated emphasis upon the primacy of God, he establishes the thesis that he explores in his poetry. In his verse, as in the Diary, man is held accountable for his wrongs. But good can only be accomplished through working closely in God's plan for man.
Notes to Chapter II


5 Cyclone Covey, The American Pilgrimage: The Roots of American History, Religion and Culture (New York: Collier Books, 1961), p.7, "The forging of the basic American tradition occurred largely at the hands of people whose orienting worldview and fierce motivation was that of a symbolic pilgrimage through the wilderness of this world to an ultimate hometown in the next."


Chapter III

The Jeremiad as Arcadian Echo
These golden times (too fortunate to hold)
Were quickly sin'd away for love of gold.

Benjamin Tompson, New-Englands Crisis
For the Puritan in America, man existed in two time frameworks. He was positioned in empirical time. But his actions were directed, as well, toward an eternal framework that broke the boundaries of normal space and time. Sacvan Bercovitch has described these two concepts of time maintained by the Puritan as "horological" and "chronometrical."\footnote{1} In the chronometrical framework certain events in the history of man stand as key moments and are distinguished from the events of every-day, "horological" existence. Adam's fall, the Exodus, the Incarnation, the Apocalypse—each had a special meaning which worked two ways. In terms of the salvation of each man, these events were recreated within each soul. In addition, the colony itself was on a course which led to the apocalyptic moment. These two meanings break normal concepts of time and space since the events of redemption are re-enacted time and again within the individual soul, with no regard to his actual physical location. Furthermore, the sainted colonists were indeed the Hebrews once more, on the same voyage through the desert to the Promised Land.

The jeremiad became the form which linked the two time schemes. In it the theme of national apocalypse becomes an analogue for the private, spiritual process of grace within the soul ("Rhetoric of Jeremiad," pp.16-17). History becomes a record of events interpreted in the light of providential intercession. In this chapter I will examine works by Edward Taylor, Increase and Cotton Mather, Benjamin Tompson, Anne Bradstreet and Michael Wigglesworth for the manner in which they employ the form of the jeremiad.
In its simplest form, the jeremiad isolates and develops one tenet of the Calvinist creed, namely, that because of his sins man suffers punishment from an immanent and vengeful God. The jeremiad provides a rational way for structuring man's experiences. As long as the world can be understood in terms of a cause and effect relationship, it makes sense. The jeremiad is, then, a response to a world caught in sin.

The brief poem by Edward Taylor, "Upon the Sweeping Flood August 13, 14, 1665," contains a simple recounting of a universe which responds to known causes:

Oh! that I'd had a tear to 've quencht that flame
Which did dissolve the Heavens above
Into those liquid drops that Came
To drown our Carnall love.

Our cheeks were dry and eyes refused to weep.
Tears bursting out ran down the skies dark Cheek.

Were th' Heavens sick? must wee their Doctors bee
And physick them with pills, our sin?
To make them purg and Vomit, see,
And Excrements out fling?

We've griev'd them by such Physick that they shed
Their Excrements upon our lofty heads.²

Taylor's poem reveals two elements of the jeremiad—it is based on an observation and description of natural phenomena and it seeks to impose a reading or interpretation of those events. A simple cause and effect relationship exists between the degenerate activities of the colonists and the punishments they
are made to endure. Here the reader receives only the briefest indication of the nature of the offense in the general indictment of their "Carnall love." Rather, Taylor chooses to elaborate upon the actual punishment and metaphorically expands the meaning of the rain. The world becomes another person, balancing the moral impenetrability of the colonists with the world's susceptibility to pain. While the colonists "refusde to weep" (reform), the world burst into tears. One might add that the world burst into tears precisely because the world refused to reform.

Retaining the image of the world as a person, the poet slightly alters his perspective in the second stanza. Here the colonists become physicians who seek to effect a cure through purgations. Yet their position as physicians is certainly ironic. One sees the pathos of their situation when he realizes that as physicians the colonists fail and add to their sufferings—excrement is flung upon them. The language of the poem stresses a sense of physical realism so that the reader's ability to experience the depth of suffering is strengthened or heightened through an identification of the flood with "Vomit" and "Excrements" cast upon their "lofty heads." The position of this phrase at the poem's conclusion balances the earlier use of "Carnall love." Despite the attack from above, the colonists stand unmoved. The reader can understand how the phrase "lofty heads" is ironically appropriate.

Yet the poem retains a subtle hint of hope; it becomes an experience in optimism. Terrible pain has been visited upon the colony to "drown our Carnall love." The colonists have so
"grieved" the Heavens that only such an excess of physical abuse can result. Such a statement of cause and effect contains within it the invitation to turn from carnal preoccupations and moral degeneracy to grace and sanctity. The path to reformation remains unstated but is implied. The form of the rhetorical question, used several times in the second stanza, is a device to involve the reader further in the immediacy of the experience. He is invited, in a sense, to respond to these questions. Emotionally, such involvement works to convince the reader of a rational truth through an emotional confrontation with it.

Taylor's poem demonstrates how even the briefest jeremiad contains two elements Bercovitch finds essential to the jeremiad. It both "laments an apostasy" and "heralds a restoration" ("Rhetoric of Jeremiad," p.7). The poem demonstrates the manner in which the jeremiad creates an imaginative response to the world and to man's spiritual condition. The poem is deliberately vague in the actual "sins" it decries, but from a theological perspective the phrase "Carnal love" should be a sufficient indication of the deciension within the soul. From the perspective of the "larger ordering of human history" in the jeremiad which Bercovitch describes ("Rhetoric of Jeremiad," p.17), the poem works typologically in two paths, directing the reader's perspective to the final destruction of the world by fire promised in John's Apocalypse and then back to the near total destruction of the world during the Flood. What occurs in the poem metaphorically is a collapsing of times—with the flood set in juxtaposition with the flames of apocalypse. Both
represent the vengeance of God and are equal reminders of the intensity of His power and anger. But their presence together within the space of four lines suggests more importantly the eschatological time sequence Taylor is seeking to develop.

II

The historical "veracity" of the jeremiad rests not in its depiction of objective facts, but in its analysis of historical events from a providential-eschatological perspective. In their responses to the Indian Wars—the subject of Tompson's work—Increase and Cotton Mather isolate the providential aspect of history and this framework must be kept in mind when one reads the jeremiad. Increase writes, "History is indeed a profitable study . . . . And there is holy Scripture to encourage a work of this nature; For what was the Book of the Wars of the Lord? Numbers 21.14. And that Book of Jasher, which we read of in Joshua and in Samuel? . . . What were these books but the faithful Records of the Providential Dispensations of God in the Days of old?"3

Mather challenges our concept of historical verity in two ways. First, the Indian Wars are placed in dramatic juxtaposition with wars from the Old Testament. Typologically, these struggles become related. Their location within different moments in a horological time sequence loses importance. What matters is that they are all manifestations of the struggles of "saints" against the powers of darkness. Secondly, the wars demonstrate the immanence and vengeance of God. Decrying the "Degenerate Estate of the present Generation in New-England," Mather reminds the colonists that their own offenses have brought
the punishment of God down upon them (Brief History, p.92). A "Testimony" passed in Boston on September 17, 1675 lists the offenses for which the colony is responsible and then links them to their sufferings. "It having pleased the Holy God... for our sins whereby he hath been provoked... to stir up many Adversaries against us" (Brief History, pp.93-94). In the "Introduction" to his An Historical Discourse Concerning the Prevelancy of Prayer Increase Mather provides an explicit list of offenses, including among them "Pride, shameful Drunkenness, ... woeful Apostacy," concluding, "the blessed Design of our Fathers in coming into this Wilderness not being minded and attended as ought to be: and as things are circumstanced, there is no Hope that these and other Evils should be reformed, until God arise and shake terribly the Earth."  

Yet what remains throughout increase's writing is a sense of abiding hope and trust. Although he relies on the typical notion of declension of the second generation, he retains a belief that the colony can still be rescued (Brief History, p. 47). The colonists are not so degenerate that God chooses to shun them. Restoration is available, but only after a period of trial and suffering. "But God saw we were not yet fit for Deliverance, nor could Health be restored unto us except a great deal more Blood be first taken from us..." (Brief History, p.62). Mather is concerned with a promise of future deliverance, a period when mercy will inevitably follow the present period of justice. By describing the future of grace, Increase undercuts the actual declension the reader should attribute to the colony. Increase's sentiments become typical or figurative,
suggesting a pattern of decline more general and common than the declension of the second generation of colonists.

The Seventh Book of Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* specifically relates to the apocalyptic framework for viewing the Indian Wars. It also recounts, in the rhythms Bercovitch has spelled out, the movement from lament to consolation and joy. The full title, "The Seventh Book of the New-English History: Relating the Afflictive Disturbances which the Churches Have Suffered and Their Various Adversaries: and the Wonderful Methods and Mercies whereby the Churches Have Been Delivered out of Their Difficulties," reveals the movement from pain to consolation. The title page optimistically points out, "Vain will be your endeavour to sink the Christian bark: it may be tossed upon the waves, but can never founder" (*Magnalia*, p.487). What Cotton Mather calls for in the work is the non-carnal perspective which sees sufferings as signs of God's concern, which defines man's proper perspective as one which keeps him oriented to the future, which explains sufferings as part of the concerns of carnal existence to be transcended upon salvation.

Optimism is the most striking quality Cotton's description of the Indian Wars possesses. Unlike his father's emphasis on the falling off from the "design" of the founders of the colony, Cotton sees the Indian Wars more in terms of a grand plot by the devil and his followers to hinder the development of God's church on earth and the dissemination of the truths of the Gospel:
These parts were then covered with nations of barbarous Indians and infidels, in whom the "prince of the power of the air" did "work in a spirit;" nor could it be expected that nations of wretches, whose whole religion was the most explicit sort of devil-worship, should not be acted by the devil to engage in some early and bloody action, for the extinction of a plantation so contrary to his interests, as that of New England was (Magnalia, p.552).

Cotton Mather's intention remains clear throughout—to indicate that the colonists are clearly justified in retaliating against the Indian attacks since they have done nothing to the Indians (other than being Christians). He validates this belief in several ways. First, through an analogy with Genesis 36:24, the Indians are depicted as antitypes of the "giants" vanquished by Anah (Magnalia, p.553). At the conclusion to the chapter, Cotton raises the activities of the colonists to an heroic level by finding their struggles the antitypes of Joshua's struggles against Og as well as antitypes of the heroic struggles of the "gentiles" in both Homer and Vergil (Magnalia, pp.578-579). Mather writes that the colonists' struggles are as heroic as "the Sixth Book of Milton" and more courageous than those of the Spanish explorers in Florida (Magnalia, p.566).

Perhaps what most sets the son's account off from the father's, however, is an emphasis on deliverance. For Increase prayers without reformation are met with increased hostility and death and demonstrate that the colonists have not turned from their carnal preoccupations (Brief History, p.72; see also p.55). But Cotton's vision provides more optimism. His narrative recounts that the town of Bridgewater, even though "seated in the very midst of the dangers of the war" suffered
no executions at Indian hands because it was a "most praying, and most pious town" (Magnalia, p.572). Unlike the days of humiliation which do not lead to success in Increase's account, Cotton Mather finds that victory rapidly follows humiliation and the acceptance of Christ as Saviour. "This was the success of a people that had just before solemnly renewed the consent of their souls to the 'covenant of grace,' and applied it unto the holy purpose of reformation among them" (Magnalia, p.575).

Cotton marvels at the speed with which the War was brought to a conclusion, commenting on the significance of a day of humiliation on June 29, 1675 which was matched exactly by a day of thanksgiving on June 29, 1676 (Magnalia, p.573). While Increase's account suggests the arduous process involved in submission to God's plan for man, Cotton finds almost instant relief once submission has been achieved. "The churches in Plymouth-colony agreed upon a day solemnly to renew their COVENANT with God and one another; on the very next day, Major Brad ford, with his Plymouth forces, was not only by a strange providence delivered from the strategems of the ambushing adversary, but also took and slew many of them, without the loss of one Englishman . . ." (Magnalia, p.574).

Cotton Mather's account remains, therefore, an explicit example of the jeremiad. There are no unanswered problems in his view of the colony's sufferings. Indeed, heaven has determined the length of time during which the Indians will be permitted to triumph (Magnalia, p.571). After that period, the prayers for relief will be inevitably answered. Yet the colonists do not escape Cotton's moral scrutiny. They have been their own
worst enemies. "But it must, after all, be confessed, that we have had one enemy more pernicious to us than all the rest, and that is 'our own backsliding heart,' which has plunged the whole country into so wonderful a degeneracy . . ." (Magnalia, p.579). The verbs casually slide into the present tense and Cotton now describes the present condition of the colonists, a situation in which prayers are no longer answered as quickly as they had previously been (Magnalia, p.580). But optimism remains. The narrative looks back, first to the success in the Indian Wars, then to a statement by Commenius that links church purity with suffering God's wrath most, and finally, to the conclusion that God Himself holds man's fate, "God knows what will be the End" (Magnalia, p.580). Clearly, Mather implies, success will mark this "End."

III

Howard Judson Hall has called Benjamin Tompson "the first poet writing within our borders whose culture and subjects are of the country itself." To Moses Coit Tyler he is the first American satirist. Both assessments seem overstated. His most famous poem, New-Englands Crisis, seems to be a straight-forward description of the King Philip's Indian Wars. While a section like "On a Fortification at Boston begun by Women" reveals his ability to employ the mock-heroic for satiric effects, the poem's metaphoric structure and apocalyptic elements make it more than a mere narration of historical deeds. Its sense of history must be viewed within the framework provided by the Mathers. The overall scope of Crisis matches the plan of the jeremiad, stressing the suffering which the colonists have brought upon themselves,
trusting that a steady diet of such material will convince the reader of the necessity for reform. The rhythmic pattern of Crisis alternates threats of violence and death with relief from terror.

The pattern of threat and relief parallels the movement of the soul both to and away from grace. The identification which the colonists make between the Indians they encounter in the new world and Satan himself permits one to view Tompson's work as more than versified history of the King Philip's Wars. The war functions as the immediate cause of the poem; that is, the "facts" the poet chooses to narrate and interpret are the sufferings inflicted on the colonists by the Indians. But the language and metaphorical qualities of the poem move it into the realm of spiritual narrative. The poem becomes a discussion of both the destruction of Eden-Arcadia and of the apocalyptic destruction envisioned in Revelation.

To understand its connections with the apocalyptic moment, it is necessary to recall several descriptions of the destruction of the world at the end of time. The seventh chapter of Revelation describes the destruction by fire, what a Negro spiritual describes as "God gave Noah the rainbow sign./No more water, the fire next time!" The Biblical description begins this way, "And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." What follows is a grand and general cataclysmic explosion with volcanoes tumbling to the sea, stars falling to earth, the dimming of the celestial lights, and the opening of the "bottomless
pit" (Revelation 8:8-13; 9:1-2). Later the torment of the fires is depicted as eternal, those who are damned suffering "... torment [which] ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name" (Revelation 14:11).

The "Prologue" to Crisis establishes a contrast between the "golden times" of the past and the present state of declension. The recollection of these times of innocence brings into sharp focus the decay suffered by the colonists. The past is the time of the "wiser Fathers," a period before the refinements of genteel society and soft civilization combined to bring a decline (1:24). Tompson cannot be accused of offering a world of easeful rest and bliss to his reader. Rather, he depicts the world of the "Fathers" as one which can best be described as a world of "hard primitivism," a world without fineries. In this lost world, the simplest food provided satisfaction:

The times wherein old Pompion was a Saint,
When men far'd hardly yet without complaint
On vilest Cates [food]; the dainty Indian Maize
was eat with Clamp-shells out of wooden Trayes
Under thatcht Hutts without the cry of Rent,
And the best Sawce to every dish, Content.
When Flesh was food, and hairy skins made coats,
And men as wel as birds had chirping Notes.
when Cimmels [biscuits] were accounted noble bloud
Among the tribes of common herbage food (ll.1-10).
In the arcadian past there is an harmonious identification between man and nature. But the introduction of the softening effects of civilization has led to a breakdown in values. The pastoral revery vanishes and is replaced by a modern world where brother no longer knows brother and rapacity overtakes charity:

If one in place did an inferiour meet,
Good morrow Brother, is there ought you want?
Take freely of me, what I have you ha'nt.

When honest Sisters met to pray not prate

About their own and not their neighbours state (ll.16-18,29-30)

Intemperance wins out as the simple foods of the past are rejected for "fruits and delicacies," alcohol, chocolate, wines:

Twas ere the Island sent their Presents in,
Which but to use was counted next to sin.
Twas ere a Barge had made so rich a freight
As Chocolat, dust-gold and bits of eight.
Ere wines from France and Moscovadoe too
Without the which the drink will scarcely doe,
From western Isles, ere fruits and delicacies,

Did rot maids teeth and spoil their hansome faces (ll.43-50).

To line fifty imagery of eating, suggesting the temperance of the past and the excesses of the present, abounds. In this connection several comments made by Morton Bloomfield seem helpful. He describes the un-social qualities of intemperance, a vice capable of destroying the normal ties of society. "The ideal society, the just society, must be reared on the virtue of
temperance."¹² This seems to be the point Tompson wishes to establish by defining the arcadian past as a time of pristine virtue and brotherly love.

One must also note the connections between food as literal sustenance and as spiritual replenishment (Piers Plowman as Apocalypse, p.107). In the "Prologue" to Crisis the colonists have prepared themselves a feast which is the antithesis of the spiritual banquet of Communion. Their love for food has actually become a substitute for religion:

Twas in those dayes an honest Grace would hold
Till an hot puddin grew at heart a cold.
And men had better stomachs to religion
Than I to capon, turkey-cock or pigeon (ll.25-28).

The first fifty lines have provided, in a sense, a catalogue of the offenses committed by the colony in which decay is seen as the clear result of such sins.

The remaining forty-two lines of the "Prologue" switch from the temperance-intemperance parallels of the first part to an analysis of the loss of religious spirit among the colonists. In the past there was no hesitation before foes:

No sooner pagan malice peeped forth
But Valour snib'd it; then were men of worth
Who by their prayers slew thousands Angel like,
Their weapons are unseen with which they strike (ll.55-58).

"Contentious souls" had not yet destroyed the harmony within the Bible-state (ll.60-61). Indeed, conditions were so peaceful that the universe, the macrocosm from which men were trained to read and interpret signs, offered no warnings of doom,
"No Bugbear Comets in the chrystal air/To drive our christian Planters to despair" (l.53-54).

Tompson announces, however, that the time of crisis is at hand, "New Englands hour of passion is at hand" (l.73). The arcadian world is now subject to disruption and dissolution:

This Theame is out of date, the peaceful hours
When Castles needed not but pleasant bowers
Not ink, but bloud and tears now serve the turn
To draw the figure of New-Englands Urne (l.69-72).

And yet there is a simple solution to the problem, "No power except Divine can it withstand" (l.74). By recalling the formula which insured peace in the past he invites the reader to reform and accept this past vision as the way to govern his future life:

Dear love, sound truth they were our grand protection.
These were the twins which in our Counsellors sate,
These gave prognosticks of our future fate,
If these be longer liv'd our hopes increase,
These warrs will usher in a longer peace:
But if New-Englands love die in its youth
The grave will open next for blessed Truth (l.62-68).

The promised period of "longer peace" seems to suggest both a new future of harmony and the eternal future of bliss after the apocalypse has occurred.

But it is not with a vision of bliss that the "Prologue" concludes. Rather, Tompson continues to warn that the "fruits of sinning" will proliferate unless the downward spiral is halted (l.78). He stresses the griefs and fears the colonists must
endure as what was once their Arcadian refuge crumbles:
Scarce hath her glass of fifty years run out,
But her old prosperous Steeds turn heads about,
Tracking themselves back to their poor beginnings,
To fear and fare upon their fruits of sinnings:
So that the mirror of the Christian world
Lyes burnt to heaps in part, her Streamers furl'd
Grief reigns, joyes flee and dismal fears surprize,
Not dastard spirits only but the wise.
Thus have the fairest hopes deceiv'd the eye
Of the big swoln Expectant standing by (ll.75-84).
The "Prologue" concludes, then, with an unstated question. The colonists have been reminded of their past glory and present distress; their offenses have been catalogued for them; and a resolution has been proposed. All that remains for them is to choose correctly, to heed the rational propaganda which offers a solution to their problem. "This is the Prologue to thy future woe,/The Epilogue no mortal yet can know" (ll.91-92). Since the future is unknown, it can include a reversal of their sufferings. With this understated optimism the prologue concludes.

It is best to look at Tompson's work from the perspective he provides, an orientation which sees the poem and its message as rational propaganda. "And every soul which hath common sence/Thinks it the time to make a just defence." Those who lack the insight of "common sence" will be unable to understand (and heed) the poem's message; but for all others, its meaning will be clear.
Tompson's first task involves the establishment of a dialectical motif in the poem, with the Indians as the obvious enemies, the agents set to work havoc upon the colonists' venture. A list of reasons for the Indians' wrath appears—their spirits have been excited by the movement of the sun into Leo; they are heeding the directions of Catholic supporters; they believe the lands are theirs:

In seventy five the Critick of our years
Commence'd our war with Phillip and his peers.
Wither the sun in Leo had inspir'd
A feav'rish heat, and Pagan spirits fir'd?
Wither some Romish Agent hatcht the plot?
Or wither they themselves? appeareth not.
Wither our infant thrivings did invite?
Or wither to our lands pretended right?
Is hard to say; but Indian spirits need
No grounds but lust to make a Christian bleed (ll.1-10).

All reasons become subsumed under a reason that echoes Cotton Mather—the religion of the colonists alienates and angers the Indians. The "lust" for Christian blood is sufficient to provoke them. There is obviously no attempt made to view the Indians as disenfranchised and as the rightful owners of the land. Already a movement from pessimism to optimism can be noted. Without invalidating the colonists' responsibility for their sufferings, this list of tentative reasons shifts responsibility to the "feav'rish" Indians.

Several other devices intensify the depiction of the Indians as enemies in a debate whose terms are life and death. First,
the Indians are attracted to the very elements of corrupt
society which Tompson has depicted as signs of the colony's
demise. They long for "wine to drink," the "richest merchants
houses," and "silken wives" to replace their Squaws (ll.19-42).
Secondly, they are depicted as savages, dwelling out of civili-
ization, both unredeemed by human compassion and unredeemable.
Increase Mather links the Indians with the powers of darkness
by describing their habitations in this manner, "Their cruel
Habitations are the dark corners of the Earth, tucked in the
Swamps . . ." (Brief History, p.84). Sympathy for men who
dwell like this is impossible the poet suggests:

A dern and dismal swamp some Scout had found
whose bosome was a spot of rising ground
Hedg'd up with mighty oakes, maples and ashes,
Nurst up with springs, quick boggs and miery plashes,
a place which nature coyn'd on very nonce
For tygers not for men to be a sconce.
Twas here these Monsters shapt and fac'd like men
Took up their Rendezvous and brumal [winter] den,
Deeming the depth of snow, hail, frost and ice
Would make our Infantry more tame and wise
Then by forsaking beds and loving wives,
Meerly for indian skins to hazzard lives (ll.225-232).
Indeed, their humanity practically vanishes as they assume what
properly is the dwelling place for animals and brutes. Yet as
the eventual victory of the colonists shows, the Indians are
mistaken in thinking that the colonists have slipped totally
into luxury, that they will not forsake their "beds and loving
wives" to retaliate. The Indians are "Myrmidons," the followers of Achilles who carried out orders implacably and without thinking. Similarly, they are inhuman "Elves":

Their Myrmidons inclos'd with clefts of trees
Are busie like the ants or nimble bees:
And first they limber poles fix in the ground,
In figure of the heavens convex: all round
They draw their arras-matts and skins of beasts,
And under these the Elves do make their nests (ll.209-214).

But the brutality of their actions makes it impossible to feel compassion for them. Their deeds are worse than those inflicted upon the primitive church:

Death would a mercy prove to such as those
Who feel the rigour of such hellish foes.
Posts daily on their Pegasean Steeds
Bring sad reports of worse than Nero's deeds,
Such brutish Murthers as would paper stain
Not to be heard in a Domitians Reign
The field which nature hid is common laid,
And Mothers bodies ript for lack of aid (ll.149-156).

Such lines also collapse the time scheme within the poem, so that the colonists become, typologically, fulfillments of the early martyrs. Later Tompson compares the colonists to Abraham, suffering under the curse of Nimrod:

They ransack, Newmans Relicts to molest.
Here all the town is made a publick stage
Whereon these Aimrods act their monstrous rage.
All crueltys which paper stain'd before
Are acted to the life here ore and ore"
("Seaconck or Rehoboths Fate," ll.1-12).
Nimrod, according to Talmudic legends, was a fire-worshipper who cast Abraham from a catapult into a furnace. Abraham walked through the flames uninjured, however, and the territory surrounding the furnace miraculously became a meadow. Such a typological connection bolsters the faith and courage of the reader. It acts as one of the optimistic interludes in the poem, the second half of the rhythm of damnation and salvation. The last two lines of the above quote are another example of the poet's attempt to collapse time--here the sufferings recorded in the Old Testament become more than just stains on paper.
It is as if the colonist are re-living what the Hebrews experienced before them. The knowledge that their predecessors triumphed remains behind the optimism of the typological identification.

Yet the movement of declension forces the poet to admit that the colonists do deserve their punishments. Causes and effects become evident as the town of Providence suffers destruction because it chose not to heed the orthodoxy of the Massachusetts Bay Colony:

Ther's none this Providence of the Most High
Who can survive and write its Elegie:
A place of darkness yet receiving light
From pagan hands, a miscellaneous nest
Of errors Hectors, where they sought a rest
Out of the reach of Lawes but not of God,
Since they have felt the smart of common rod.
Twas much I thought they did escape so long,

Here Tompson makes explicit the connections between the burning
of the settlement and the fires of apocalypse, "But know the
dismal day draws neer wherein/The fire shall earth it self
dissolve and sin" ("Providence," ll.29-30).

The fires which burn throughout the poem unite the theme
of the Indians as devils with the idea that New-Englands Crisis
describes the apocalyptic moment. The Indians practice "fiery
worship" in what echoes the Nimrod reference and they demon-
strate their power by sowing "the fire-brands of their wrath"
("Marlburyes Fate," ll.32, 34). The Indians, these fire-people,
are in the clutches of Vulcan ("Crisis," l.254). So great have
their destructive powers become that they seem to destroy the
entire landscape:

Lancaster, Medfield, Mendon wildred Groton,
With many Villages by me not thought one
Dy in their youth by fire that usefull foe,
Which this grand cheat the world will overflow

Increase Mather comments on the widespread destruction wrought
by the Indians, "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth.
This fire which in June was but a little spark, in three months
time is become a great flame, that from East to West the whole
Country is involved in great trouble; and the Lord Himself
seemeth to be against us, to cast us off, and to put us to
shame . . ." (Brief History, p.92).

The punishment inflicted upon the colonists matches the
condition to be suffered by the damned souls confined to hell:

Draw there the Pastor for his bible crying,
The souldier for his sword, the Glutton frying
With streams of glory-fat, the thin-jaw'd Miser
Oh had I given this I had been wiser.

Let the unstable weakling in belief
Be mounting Ashurs horses for relief.
Let the half convert seem suspended twixt
The dens of darkness, and the planets fixt,
Ready to quit his hold, and yet hold fast
By the great Atlas of the Heavens vast

("Marlburyes Fate," ll.61-64, 67-72).

The catalogue of sufferers permits the reader to evaluate his own performance as a believer. The poem provides a vivid depiction of the results of unregeneracy.

Yet despite his apocalyptic projections, Tompson remains confident in his belief that the general picture of destruction will act as sufficient motivation to reform the hearts and souls of the colonists. In fact, the section called "Marlburyes Fate" is written as a command to a painter. Such a device sets these lines off as frozen moments of suffering.

Most importantly, Tompson stresses that the sufferings the colony endures function in two ways. They indeed can lead to depression, to a realization that grievous sin has so offended God that He may actually choose to annihilate the colony. But another alternative remains—the path to relief involves a realization that reform is possible. What is necessary is pride
in the mission the colonists have been sent to accomplish, the
same pride that urges Tompson to decry the silence of "Harvar-
dine quills" in failing to produce memorials to the Wars ("Supple-
ment," l.1). For Tompson, pride in success, a desire to reform,
and a reliance on God can save the colony. What is necessary
is that the reader heed the message of the poem:

But off the Table hand, let this suffice
As the abridgement of our miseries.
If Mildew, Famine, Sword, and fired Townes,
If Slaughter, Captivating, Deaths and wounds,
If daily whippings once reform our wayses,
These all will issue in our Fathers Praise;
If otherwise, the sword must never rest
Till all New-Englands Glory is divest ("Crisis," ll.295-302).

The ashes of defeat can provide the habitation for the
phoenix, Tompson optimistically reminds his reader. This image
neatly encapsulates the apocalyptic overtones of the poem and
summarizes the notion of reform through suffering:

Let this dear Lord the sad Conclusion be
Of poor New-Englands dismal tragedy.
Let not the glory of thy former work
Blasphemed be by pagan Jew or Turk:
But in its funeral ashes write thy Name
So fair all Nations may expound the same:
Out of her ashes let a Phoenix rise
That may outshine the first and be more wise

("Chelmsfords Fate," ll.15-22).
IV

So far this chapter has been concerned with the jeremiad and its relation to what one might call the public apocalypse, that is, the end of the world as experienced by the entire community. Anne Bradstreet might be seen, then, as a balance, demonstrating the power of apocalyptic thinking to shape less public themes. Her poem, "Upon the Burning of Our House, July 10, 1666," explores, through an examination of a specific occurrence, the manner in which personal events can function in the jeremiad mode. Roy Harvey Pierce points out certain connections Bradstreet possesses with her contemporaries, including a concentration on the specific event and a belief in the instructive or didactic function of literature. "Still, she is like her fellows in being essentially the poet of the event . . . . The argument of [her 'personal poems] is essentially the same as that in the work of Tompson and Wigglesworth, the justice of God's ways with his Puritan flock." 

Like Taylor's "Upon the Sweeping Flood," Bradstreet's "Upon the Burning" describes a natural phenomenon and subjects it to a non-carnal interpretation. The sudden-ness of the appearance of the fire in the first stanza suggests, through the absence of concrete particulars, the fires of destruction at the apocalyptic moment. The stanza prepares one for Wigglesworth's use of the same heightening effect in The Day of Doom, a device which increases emotional involvement:

In silent night when rest I took,
For sorrow neer I did not look,
I waken'd was with thundring nois
And piteous shreiks of dreadfull voice.
That fearfull sound of fire and fire,
Let no man know is my desire. 17

In a sense, the sudden intrusion of the catastrophic event is intended to shock the reader out of his carnal perspective. The poem works to convince one that the easeful position of the speaker in the first stanza must be rejected if one is to escape the grief of personal loss and if, finally, one hopes to achieve eternal salvation. The poem does not try to demonstrate that such a carnal perspective has angered God so that in His anger He chose to punish the poet. Rather, the poem offers the reader the opportunity to enter into a debate, of sorts, regarding the proper position of earthly belongings in the life of the future-oriented believer. The belief that the unregenerate soul will suffer, in eternity, the same flames of destruction which consumed Bradstreet's possessions becomes clear by the poem's conclusion,

It is not until the second stanza that the reader actually knows what specific event the poem commemorates, "Then coming out beheld a space,/The flame consume my dwelling place" (ll. 11-12). Rather than entering into a lament upon the loss of her possessions, however, the poet immediately presents a statement of the orientation such grief demands if it is to be transcended:

And, when I could no longer look,
I blest his Name that gave and took,
That layd my goods now in the dust:
Yea so it was, and so twas just.
It was his own: it was not mine;
Far be it that I should repine (ll.13-18).
This thought frames a catalogue of the possessions lost in
the fire. Any desire to linger over these items, emotionally
suffering their loss, is cut short by the reminder, "All's
vanity" (l.36).

The poem concludes with a debate between the carnal and non-
carnal perspectives. The answers to the questions:

Then streight I gin my heart to chide,
And did thy wealth on earth abide?
Didst fix thy hope on moulding dust,
The arm of flesh didst make thy trust? (ll.37-40)
should be immediately evident to the reader who has grasped the
meaning of the poem's rational propaganda. The poet has tried
to convince the reader that the destruction of the possessions
has been part of "the providential order" and that the maintain-
ance of any other position will lead only to "sloth and despair." 18
In other words, one can remain subject to blind fortune or can
recognize that a rational force governs the universe. Only by
remaining dedicated to the attractions of the flesh, the "dung-
hill mists" (l.42), will one fail to see that God has prepared
an eternal home for the believer:

Thou hast an house on high erect
Fram'd by that mighty Architect,
With glory richly furnished,
Stands permanent tho' this bee fled (ll.43-46).

Throughout the poem the reader is offered the choice of
identifying with the objects of this world—and thus risking
eternal damnation and destruction in the fires of the apocaya-
lypse—or a world-view which transcends the earthly in its
message of comfort, which releases man from bondage to the
carnal, "The world no longer let me love, / My hope and Treasure
lyes Above" (ll.53-54). For the reader who has followed the
poem and accepts its message no choice actually exists.

Bradstreet's approach to the jeremiad in "A Dialogue be-
tween Old England and New; concerning their present Troubles,
Anno, 1642" demonstrates her ability to use the rhetoric of
debate and the notion of rational propaganda in a fairly ortho-
doxx manner. The two countries are personified in the poem and
participate in a debate, the purpose of which is to teach through
example. As New England sees the problem, a change in the
orientation of "heads and hearts" will bring "relief."19 What
sets this poem apart from others is that here the old country
is seen in declension; the pattern of falling off from father
to son observed in Increase Mather does not operate in this poem.

Throughout the poem, Old England remains aware of her fail-
ings. In fact, she sees that a cause and effect relation exists
between her sins and her present estate of "Famine and Plague"
(ll.83):

    Before I tell th' Effect, l'le shew the Cause
Which are my sins the breach of sacred Laws,
Idolatry supplanter of a Nation,
With foolish Superstitious Adoration,
Are lik'd and countenanc'd by men of might,
The Gospel troden down and hath no right (ll.89-94).

Old England recalls that she has been given warnings in the past,
other jeremiads, which she has failed to heed:

The Sermons yet upon Record do stand
That cri'd destruction to my wicked land:
I then believ'd not, now I feel and see,
The plague of stubborn incredulity (ll.125-128).

Indeed, sins have led to the destruction of an Eden-like environment, "I saw her people famish'd, Nobles slain,/Her fruitful land, a barren Heath remain" (ll.137-138).

But hope remains and it is New England that supplies this message. It is necessary to cleanse Old England of all remnants of Popery, "To sack proud Rome, and all her Vassals rout" (l.261). Then the English will once again become "Abraham's seed" and harmony will return to the land (l.276). The poem thus spells out the path to success and provides a model for the reader in New England to imitate:

If this make way thereto, then sigh no more,
But if at all, thou didst not see't before;
Farewell dear Mother, rightest cause prevail,
And in a while, you'le tell another tale (ll.287-290).

V

The immediate cause of Michael Wigglesworth's first major poem, "God's Controversy with New England," was what he called "the time of the great drought Anno 1662." He pins the troubles of the colony to its failure to live by the terms of the Covenant and tries to explain the manner in which the colony has brought these troubles upon itself. The Covenant had originally insured harmony for the colonists with their condition in the "wilderness":

The Lord has made (such was his grace)

For us a Covenant

Both with the men, and with the beasts,

That in this desert haunt:

So that through places wild and waste

A single man, disarm'd,

Might journey many hundred miles,

And not at all be harm'd (ll. 93-100).

Wigglesworth's poem laments that this harmony now belongs to the past. Repeated use of the past tense verb dramatizes the rupture which has occurred:

Our temp'rall blessings did abound:

but spiritual good things

Much more abounded, to the praise

Of that great King of Kings.

God's throne was here set up; here was

His tabernacle light:

This was the place, and these the fold

In whom he took delight (ll. 117-124).

As Wigglesworth depicts the situation, comfort in the Covenant has bred smugness and security, a belief that these conditions would never cease, that "... light would last,/And be perpetuall" (ll. 131-132).

God must directly confront the reader with signs of His impending judgment. His speech, presented as a series of rhetorical questions, is cast in the present tense. This device further heightens the distance between the former state of harmony and the present condition of discord. The repetition
of the form of the question is designed to stimulate reflection and thereby chasten even the most haughty spirit:

Are these the men whose gates with peace I crown'd,
To whom for bulwarks I salvation gave,
Whilst all things else with rattlings tumults sound,
And mortall frayes send thousands to the grave?

Are these the folk to whom I milked out
And sweetness stream'd from consolations brest;
Whose soules I fed and strengthened throughout
With finest spirituall food most finely drest?
On whom I rained living bread from Heaven,
Withouten Errour's bane, or Superstition's leaven?

(ll.173-176, 191-196).

Knowing that His poeple have failed Him, God wonders if another race of men has mysteriously replaced those with whom He originally made the Covenant, "Are these the same? or are some others come in place?" (1.208). Such a thought is designed to strike at the notion of special election, challenging the reader to reexamine his own position within the scheme of salvation. What follows is a list of offenses which suggests beyond doubt the extent of the colonists' failings. They are guilty of hypocrisy, covetousness, deceit, sloth—all signs of assumption of a world-view founded on the transient pleasures of the world (ll.209-238). God spells out how the colonists have reversed the order He expected them to follow. His words detail the carnal perspective which must be rejected if grace is to be restored:
If these be they, how is it that I find
In stead of holiness Carnality,
In stead of heavenly frames an earthly mind,
For burning zeal luke-warm Indifferancy,
For flaming love, key-cold Dead-heartedness,
For temperance (in meat, and drinke, and cloaths) excess?
(11.209-214).

A clear link is established between these offenses and the sufferings which the colony is undergoing. Good actions in the past do not forestall punishments when sins in the present replace these former worthy actions:

For thinke not, O Backsliders, in your heart,
That I shall still your evill manners beare:
Your sinns me press as sheaves do load a cart,
And therefore I will plague you for this geare
Except you seriously, and soon, repent,
Ile not delay your pain and heavy punishment (11.251-256).

This patient God will not wait in anticipation forever. He demands recognition and submission from those he has "mark't" as His own (1.262).

Wigglesworth justifies his own position as the poet-preacher with God's reminder that such jeremiads come from Him:

Oft have I charg'd you by my Ministers
To gird your selves with sack cloth, and repent.
Oft have I warnd you by my Messengers;
That so you might my wrathfull ire prevent (11.311-314).

Failure to heed the poem's message would lead to the extinction of the colony and the total damnation of the city on the hill.
The sins of the colony threaten the light it is commissioned
to spread to the rest of the world. God calls to mind a
period of enslavement to heathens as typologically similar to
their present situation:

I'le surely beare their candle-stick away,
And lamps put out. Their glorious noon-day light
I'le quickly turn into a dark Egyptian night (11.308-310).

The image of the "dark Egyptian night" is especially appropri-
ate on several levels. First, it refers to the condition of
the graceless soul, cut off from the light of God and the hope
of salvation. The image places the colonists in a typological
relation with both the Egyptians and the Hebrews. By threaten-
ing to extinguish the light in the colony, God suggests that
the colonists have become heathens themselves. But at present
the threat remains merely verbal; the possibility exists for
the colonists to reform and, like the Hebrews, to escape the
darkness.

The remainder of the poem rephrases God's accusations to
intensify the sense of guilt and degradation the poet is trying
to instill in the reader. Since God has already made the same
observations, the concluding section increases in validity. No
longer is it merely the poet who is speaking, but rather a
scribe presenting a gloss on the Lord's own words. The failure
of New England to follow in the path of the Covenant has brought
about sickness and disease:

Our healthfull dayes are at an end,
And sicknesses come on
From yeer to yeer, becaus our hearts
Away from God are gone.
New-England, where for many yeers
You scarcely heard a cough,
And where Physicians had no work,
Now finds them work enough (ll.351-358).

Repeating God's pattern, the poet lists the offenses of which the colony is guilty—riot, excess, wantonness, and worldliness. The effect of such offenses is clear; they "Provoke the Lord to take away/Such blessings as they have" (ll.399-406). Yet the worst has not been delivered, "We have been also threatened/With worser things than these" (ll.407-408).

Essentially, however, the poem's tone is hopeful. Total destruction has not arrived and may indeed still be avoided. With the knowledge that present pains are sufficient, if interpreted correctly, to work a transformation, God merely threatens increased sorrows. As God reminds the reader, saints never suffer needlessly at His hand, "To praying Saints I always have respect,/And tender love, and pittifull regard" (ll.245-246).

To stress the importance of the final message of hope, the poet employs a different stanzaic pattern to set it off. For success to visit the colony God's word must be heeded. The colony must recognize its depravity, reject its sinful ways, and turn to the righteous path again:

Ah dear New-England! dearest land to me;
Which unto God hath hitherto been dear,
And mayst be still more dear than formerlie,
If to his voice thou wilt incline thine ear (ll.423-426).

New England still retains "many praying saints" who "strive to
please him both in deed and word" (ll. 431-434). Despite "satan's might" and the colonists' offenses, Wigglesworth informs the reader that he also will stay on to help the colony with its sufferings, "And whereso'ere this body be a Thrall,/Still in New-England shall be my delight" (ll. 436-438).

The general structure of the poem impresses the reader with a consuming sense of the depravity of his condition and his own responsibility for it. In this framework, with the prospect of the elimination of these pains held out as the reward for following the terms of the Covenant, only the deadened sinner will not reconsider his conduct and submit to the program for grace offered by the poem. Within this outline the poem becomes an example of "rational propaganda." Wigglesworth does not propose that the colonists placate God, as one would a pagan deity, with sacrifices. Rather, he preaches that success will return when the colonists heed the conditions of the Covenant, marked by the performance of good deeds and prayers.

Viewing the poem solely as a historical document—the description of declension which resulted in drought—fails to note the levels of meaning the poem offers. F.O. Matthiessen sees the poem as a description of the problems plaguing the colony. He goes so far as to suggest that the threat which underlies all others is fear of the newly restored House of Stuart in England. Such a reading makes the poem more topically relevant than seems necessary. In addition, it fails to note the levels of typology in the poem which undercut the poem's topicality.

The poem is prefaced by a quote from Isaiah, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?
wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wilde grapes?" (Isaiah 5:4) which refers both to the loss of physical Eden—the world becoming wilderness—and the equally important concept of the soul as unregenerate, unable to grow in grace. The poet establishes the connection between these two points somewhat later in the poem:

Our fruitful seasons have been turned

Of late to barrenness,

Sometimes through great and parching drought,

Sometimes through rain's excess.

Yea now the pastures and corn fields

For want of rain do languish:

The cattell mourn, and hearts of men

Are fill'd with fear and anguish (ll.375-382).

Wiggesworth repeatedly challenges his reader to perceive the actions of the poem within a non-empirical framework, with the actions engaged in by the Israelites and the colonists as existing in a dynamic relation which deepens the meaning of each through cross-references. He writes:

What God omnipotent tells with a ruler's voice,
What the prophets proclaim unto you with one mouth,
And what I with many tears testify to in wrath,
You may not consider lightly, Dear Reader

(ll.17-20, Latin trans. by editor).

It is then quite convincing for him to appropriate Biblical language when he relates the early history of the colony. The colony's first successes in defeating the Indians were the same as the victory enjoyed by the Israelites when they triumphed
over the "curst Amalekites" (ll.45-52). An immediate link with Noah is forged when the poet views the colonists as the "cursed Cananites" and also the "fleshy Generation" destroyed in the flood (ll.287-292). Such references make it clear that the declension of the sons from the righteous paths of their fathers functions metaphorically and not literally. In other words, this falling-off is part of the general movement of all sinful men away from God, of the unregenerate soul from its Creator, and finds an appropriate image in language which recalls the New Testament parable of the prodigal son. "Such is the Generation that succeeds/The men, whose eyes have seen my great and awful deeds" (ll.327-328).

But the language also looks forward to the consuming fires of the apocalypse. The poet writes:

Soon after I beheld and saw
A mortall dart come flying;
I lookt again, and quickly saw
Some fainting, others dying (ll.339-342).

Like Tompson's New-Englands Crisis, "God's Controversy with New-England" uses metaphors of fire and drought to underscore its relation to an apocalyptic vision:

We pray and fast, and make fair shewes,
As if we meant to turn:
But whilst we turn not, God goes on
Our fields and fruits to burn (ll.387-390).

A passage quoted earlier, "God's throne was here set up; here was/His tabernacle pight," connects the fertility patterns in the poem with the Hebrew Feast of Booths or Succoth. In
the exodus through the desert, Succoth was the first stop on
the journey to the promised land. In this perspective, echoes
of the Feast of Booths act as ironic parallels to the colony,
foundering in its own desert, but not receiving the fertilizing
waters it needs. Part of the ritual of Succoth involves the
pouring of a libation of water on the south-west corner of the
altar, representing the section of the sky from which rain
comes to Jerusalem. Zechariah stresses the messianic overtones
of the feast and suggests that the water-drawing represents the
streams of living water that flow from the new Jerusalem after
the apocalyptic destruction of the earth, "And it shall be in
that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half
of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hin-
der sea: in summer and in winter shall it be" (Zechariah 14:8).

By extension, the absence of waters refers to the absence of
Christ, the living waters of grace, from the individual soul.
Jeremiah reminds the sinner that evil parches man's soul, much
like the colony in Wigglesworth's poem has been dessicated, and
that man becomes empty when cut off from God, "For my people
have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain
of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns,
that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13). Another passage from
Jeremiah actually echoes Wigglesworth's mention of the Feast
of Booths. "A glorious high throne from the beginning is the
place of our sanctuary. O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that
forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me
shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the
Lord, the fountain of living waters" (Jeremiah 17:12-13).
By suggesting these connections with the Feast of Succoth, Wigglesworth insures that the typological identification of the waters with the grace of God will be seen. The drought described in the poem thus operates on a personal level as a sign of spiritual dryness in the individual and on a larger level as a way of relating the colonists' plight to the situation of the Israelites in the desert. Typologically, "God's Controversy with New-England" relies upon the use of fertility symbols to collapse normal, horological time. By so doing, it offers a spiritual resolution to the problem being suffered by the colony.
Notes to Chapter III


3 Increase Mather, A Brief History of the War with the Indians (1676; rpt. Boston: Samuel G. Drake, 1862 as The History of King Philip's War), p.36.


9 Revelation 6:5 in The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments (London: Cambridge University Press, 1939). All subsequent quotes will be from this text.


13 Benjamin Tompson, New-Englands Crisis in Seventeenth Century American Poetry, ed. Harrison T. Meserole (Garden City,
(Meserole numbers each section of the poem separately.)

14 Perry Miller's essay "The End of the World" in Errand into the Wilderness (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp.217-239 seems inappropriate for consideration of a poem like Tompson's. Miller's concern with discovering the particular moment in time after which one could no longer maintain a belief in a divine termination of the world limits the "literary" qualities inherent in Tompson's work. The poem should be viewed not as versified history or as a scientific account of the world's final destruction, but as a work whose base in realism is subservient to several ends--first, to supplying a gloss on Revelation; second, to the propagandistic purpose of rousing the emotions and working a transformation in the hearts/ souls of the readers; and third, as a description of the internal landscape of the soul when it is in the clutches of the devil.

For Tompson the new world once possessed qualities of bliss and harmony like those traditionally associated with Eden. The concern in the poem is not with any actual or concrete falling-off from the pattern initiated by the fathers. Once Eden was lost, degeneration became a curse common to all men. Man was forced to operate in a world of tribulation. Tompson seems to be aware of this fact. Man's natural state is now one of degeneracy, only escaped through the intercession of grace. So, the pattern of falling-off from father to son becomes typical and metaphoric.

15 Others saw apocalyptic significance in the date 1666. It is the year, for example, of Dryden's Annus Mirabilis: The Year of Wonders.


Chapter IV

After the Apocalypse:
Wigglesworth and Taylor on the Judgment
Oh! what pangs, & girds of torments come in that way.
Oh! those Screeches, those Cryes, those yellings,
those roaring, those gusted-out Screeches, that Gnash-
ing of Teeth of the damned there, Oh! that horrible
noise & dole full Groans of Damned Divels, & burning
Spirit [s].

Edward Taylor on the Day of Judgment
In Orthodox Christian terms, man is not destroyed with the world in the fires of the apocalypse. While the props of his earthly existence vanish, he remains, first to face Christ the Judge in a trial, and then to experience, through all eternity, either eternal reward or never-ending damnation. Wigglesworth defines the difference in rewards as one of either "endless weal or woe:"¹

Thus every one before the Throne of Christ the Judge is brought,
Both righteous and impious
that good or ill had wrought.
A separation, and diff'ring station
by Christ appointed is
(To sinners sad 'twixt good and bad,
'twixt Heirs of woe and bliss) (stanza 21).

No man can escape the necessity of facing the final judgment. In Wigglesworth's *The Day of Doom* and Taylor's *God's Determinations* the poets strive to indicate, through an appeal to both the intellect and the emotions, the spiritual orientation one must develop to achieve salvation. Both poems are thus exercises in presenting a message of propaganda—an appeal to the mind—and in demonstrating the results of failing to heed this message—an appeal to the emotions. In this chapter I will treat works by Wigglesworth and Taylor which prepare the reader for the day of judgment.

Wigglesworth viewed his poetry as an extension of his own role as preacher and guide for the community. He felt deeply
his duty and responsibility to shape the actions and thinking of his community. And yet repeated illness often prevented him from preaching and he was thus forced to turn to the printed word to disseminate his ideas. In "To the Christian Reader," a poem which precedes the text of The Day of Doom, he discusses the necessity of preaching through poetry:

Thou wonderest, perhaps,
That I in print appear,
Who to the pulpit dwell so nigh,
Yet come so seldom there.
The God of Heaven knows
What grief to me it is,
To be withheld from serving Christ;
No sorrow like to this.  

In fact, his turning to poetry is looked upon as the result of God's direct power, forcing him to abandon preaching and to write verse, "Almighty God's afflict ing hand/Doth me by force restrain" ("Reader," p.14).

In "To the Christian Reader" he seeks to establish a critical framework within which to view The Day of Doom. Wigglesworth urges that the poem be viewed without hostility, but rather as an aid to one's salvation:

Accept it then in love,
And read it for thy good;
There's nothing in't can do thee hurt,
If rightly understood ("Reader," p.16).

Its message, indeed, stresses God's strength and support in times of need, something to which Wigglesworth, in his physical
afflictions, stands witness:

Let God be magnified,
whose everlasting strength
Upholds me under sufferings
Of more than ten years' length ("Reader," p.15).

Relying on the evidence of the aid he received during times of physical stress, Wigglesworth is confident in using himself as an example as he turns in address to the reader:

Oh get a part in Christ,
And make the Judge thy Friend;
So shalt thou be assured of
A happy, glorious end ("Reader," p.17).

The movement toward the reader directs attention away from Wigglesworth's own sufferings to the message these sufferings teach. The focus then becomes public, accessible to all who respond with the proper orientation.

In "A Prayer unto Christ the Judge of the World," the poem which immediately precedes The Day of Doom, Wigglesworth offers another example of what the correct orientation entails. It is not from classical muses, created by man, that he seeks inspiration. Rather, God alone is man's proper source of enlightenment:

Do thou my head and heart inspire,
To sing aright, as I desire.
Thee, thee alone I'll invoke,
For I do much abominate
To call the Muses to mine aid:
Which is th' Unchristian use and trade. ³

The appeal is made in direct address, a form Wigglesworth employs
repeatedly. Importantly, he calls attention to his "desire" to express doctrine correctly, yet indicates his inability to do so without God's aid. The request depicts Wigglesworth in a pose which recalls the traditional view of the Evangelists as mere instruments for the detailing of God's truths:

Oh! guide me by thy Sacred Sprite,
So to indite, and so to write,
That I thine holy Name may praise,
And teach the Sons of Men thy ways ("Prayer," p.20).

What must be remembered is that the successful preaching of God's message involves a harmony of head and heart in the poet and, by extension, a similar combination of rational and emotional faculties must be maintained by the reader for the poetry to achieve its effect.

II

The Day of Doom was written to return the back-sliding colony to the paths of righteousness. From this perspective, it is a response to the problems which Wigglesworth saw in the colony. His biographer points out, "The first splendid enthusiasm for the new Zion had passed with the passing of most of its founders, back-sliding was common, mutterings of discontent were frequent. Frankly, the Bible state was in difficulty." Designed to convince through an appeal to both the head and the heart, the poem's success lies not simply in the vividness with which it presents its teaching. To be successful propaganda, The Day of Doom must demonstrate that the "other-world" orientation, one which focuses man's attention on eternity and convinces him of the frailty of earthly existence, is the only acceptable solution to man's
predicament.

In the first part of the poem, stanzas one to twenty-one, Wigglesworth sets the scene for the approach of Christ the Judge. The poem opens with a vivid depiction of the degeneracy into which the colony has slipped. Smugness and complacency, the attractions of sensual pleasures, have bred disregard for spiritual pursuits. What leads man to this improper orientation is the influence of "carnal reason:"

Still was the night, Serene and Bright,
when all Men sleeping lay;
Calm was the season, and carnal reason
thought so 't would last for aye.
Soul, take thine ease, let sorrow cease,
much good thou hast in store:
This was their Song, their Cups among,
the Evening before (stanza 1).

These night-time festivities define a world that has slipped into degeneracy, "Wallowing in all kind of sin, vile wretches lay secure" (stanza 2). Compared to the "Virgins unwise" in Matthew's parable, the colonists have likewise "clos'd their eyes" and are found in "sloth" and "frailty" (stanza 2). The poem's purpose is to waken them from their slumber, to return them to the light of reason. The sudden intrusion of light upon the scene breaks the normal pattern of events and heralds the restoration of God in triumph, "Straightway appears (they see't with tears)/the Son of God most dread" (stanza 6). To this serene, easeful scene, the day of judgment comes with suddenness and no warning, "For at midnight brake forth a light,/which
turn'd the night to day" (stanza 5). The poet has followed Huxley's directions for successful propaganda. Depicted in languor, the colonists are thrust into a state of abnormally high susceptibility which will permit the Covenant to be seen as something both to desire and to strive for. By modifying their feelings, the poet can create among the colonists a desire for what they had previously scorned.⁵

The degeneracy of the colonists recalls typologically the generation of men who dwelled during the time of Noah:

Like as of old, when Men grew bold
Gods threatenings to contemn,
Who stopt their Ear, and would not hear,
when Mercy warned them (stanza 3).

While Noah's contemporaries suffered "Destruction" (stanza 3) and "vengeance unawares" (stanza 4), the reader is offered a warning. The poet reminds his audience that the day of doom arrives suddenly. The men who perished during the time of Noah stand as types, exemplifying the men who will suffer through the wrath of God's judgment. But history exists to provide a warning of activities to be shunned if man seeks to avoid damnation. No break occurs between the reference to the Flood and to the scene upon the day of doom--past tense verbs easily convert into present tense forms as a never-ending pattern to God's vengeance is uncovered. This verbal play eliminates distancing and thrusts the reader directly into the period of turmoil, a time which has arrived within the poem.

The poet's position as narrator permits him alone to stand apart from the chaos the day of doom visits upon the earth.
His technique is to describe the scene so that the reader will imagine himself enacting the frenzied movements listed:

Some hide themselves in Caves and Delves,
in places underground:
Some rashly leap into the Deep,
to scape by being drown'd (stanza 12).

And yet there is no place in which to hide. The world of nature dissolves in the apocalyptic moment, leaving man isolated on a vacant stage:

The Mountains smoak, the Hills are shook,
the Earth is rent and torn,
As if should be clean dissolv'd (stanza 15).

However, the attempt to seek a refuge in the props of the natural world fails because God's vision is non-carnal; He can detect man—and his inmost thoughts as well—everywhere:

No hiding place can from his Face,
sinners at all conceal,
Whose flaming Eyes his things doth spy,
and darkest things reveal (stanza 13).

The first part of the poem introduces a pattern which becomes the principle structuring device in The Day of Doom. The debate or inquisition is used to challenge smugness in the face of impending doom:

Ye sons of men that durst contemn
the Threatenings of Gods Word,

Dost thou perceive, dost now believe,
that Christ thy Judge shall be? (stanza 8).
The poet continues to challenge and taunt, "Are you as bold now you behold/your Judge draw near apace?" (stanza 9). The answer he elicits spells out the necessity of rejecting any belief in man's own powers to rescue himself:

They cry, no, no: Alas! and wo!

our Courage all is gone:

Our hardiness (fool hardiness)

hath us undone, undone (stanza 9).

By bringing the reader to the brink of disaster and threatening him with terror and destruction, the poet hopes to draw the same words from the mind and heart of the reader.

After setting this startling scene in Part I, the poet proceeds in Part II (stanzas 22-37) to catalogue the saints and sinners, bringing them in procession before the Lord of Judgment as preparations for the trial (stanzas 38-201) begin. In five stanzas (22-26), the saints are quickly rewarded. The afflicted, the martyrs, even those of weakest faith receive their eternal reward:

O glorious sight! Behold how bright
dust heaps are made to shine,

Conformed so their Lord unto,

whose Glory is Divine (stanza 26).

The use of the imperative verb "Behold" expresses the poet's own amazement at the beauty of the scene and invites the reader to consider the reward which could be his also. The vision is particularly comforting--among the saints are included some whose grace did not appear over-whelming, "All sound Believers (Gospel receivers)/whose Grace was small, but grew (stanza 25).
Wigglesworth relies on the paradoxical nature of the religious experience to express and exemplify the spiritual perspective one must maintain to achieve salvation. To man's unaided vision the ways of salvation make no sense, "Whom for his own, by ways unknown/to men, he sanctify'd" (stanza 25). But the poet provides clues to the method of achieving the non-carnal perspective. It requires "deep self-denial" and a willingness to bear sufferings in silence, "Yet ready were the Cross to bear,/when Christ them call'd thereto" (stanza 24). The ability to achieve and maintain a proper attitude toward physical sufferings distinguishes the saint from the sinner. This theme comes to dominate Wigglesworth's last two poems, *Meat out of the Eater* and *Riddles Unriddled*. But he introduces it here to demonstrate the extent to which the saint must carry his other-world orientation. The complaints one might ordinarily expect disappear as sufferings are seen as blessings in disguise or, paradoxically, the signs of God's affection:

Next unto whom there find a room

all Christ's afflicted ones,

Who being chastised, neither despised

nor sank amidst their groans (stanza 23).

The sinners, on the other hand, demonstrate their failure to achieve the perspective which the saints enjoy. The five stanzas dedicated to the saints stand as responses to the sinners who bemoan their fate, confessing ignorance of God's laws or simply lack of time to reform:

There also stand a num'rous band,

that no Profession made
Of Godliness, nor to redress
their wayes at all essay'd:
Who better knew, but (sinful Crew)
Gospel and Law despised;
Who all Christ's knocks withstood like blocks
and would not be advised (stanza 29).

Responsibility for their fates is thrust at them because they "better knew" the path to salvation and yet chose to disregard it. The extension in meaning to the reader is unmistakable. The damned are the "hypocrites" who perform all actions for what the poet calls "self-ends" (stanza 27). Recalling sections of his Diary, Wigglesworth emphasizes man's freedom to sin and damn himself, "Because 'gainst light they sinn'd with spight,
are also placed there" (stanza 28). A catalogue of the sinners provides the reader with the opportunity to compare himself to the "vile wretches all" (stanza 30), thus enabling him to determine the areas in which he needs reformation:

Blasphemers lewd, and Swearers shrewd,
Scoffers at Purity,
That hated God, contemn'd his Rod,
and lov'd Security;
Sabbath-polluters, Saints persecutors,
Presumptuous men and proud (stanza 31; see also 34, 35).

The elect recognize the precarious existence they must lead, avoiding any false sense of hope or "security" in carnal objects, remembering that all men, because of Original Sin, are subject to damnation, "There stands all Nations and Generations/of Adam's Progeny" (stanza 34). Section II concludes, then, with a
general picture of the damned awaiting their judgments. The reader is invited to consider his fate and to align himself with the spiritual orientation which will prevent damnation:

These void of tears, but fill'd with fears,
and dreadful expectation

Of endless pains, and scalding flames,
stand waiting for Damnation (stanza 37).

Their inability to mourn summarizes the extent of their degeneracy.

The third section of The Day of Doom forms the core of the poem. Here the poet prepares the reader to reject his sinful past. With the frightening warning, "Behold the formidable estate of all the ungodly, as they stand hopeless and helpless before the impartial judge . . ." (stanza 182), he conditions the reader to see how close man brings himself to damnation. The key to the dogma contained in this section of the poem resides in the emphasis placed on man's wilfulness in working his own destruction. The damnation of the goats is viewed as something they freely chose. To those who are saved, Christ explains the salvation process. The meaning of the words increases in importance since Christ Himself is the speaker. The saints embraced God, admitted their inability to save themselves, and believed that God alone could save them despite their degeneracy. The list of their "fruits" recalls the signs of the reformed soul seen in the Diary and conversion narratives:

Their penitence, their Patience,
their Love and Self-denial

In suffering losses, and bearing Crosses,
when put upon the tryal (stanza 45).
The path to heaven is certainly not an easy one, Christ reminds the saved:

You bore the Cross, you suffered loss
of all for my Names sake:
Receive the Crown that's now your own;
come, and a Kingdom take (stanza 49).

The purpose throughout the third section is to repeat—in a manner the reader can easily apprehend—the basic elements of the process of election. God chose the sheep to share in His glory before they were born, "These men be those my Father chose/before the worlds foundation" (stanza 40). And yet salvation is not some easy prize, arbitrarily granted in a haphazard manner. Through his sins, man demonstrates that he does not deserve to participate in eternal glory:

My grace to one is wrong to none:
none can election claim,
Amongst all those their souls that lose,
none can Rejection blame (stanza 43).

Christ reminds those who complain that their damnation is based on sins they never personally committed, that simply to be human is to be depraved and deserving of condemnation:

Hence you were born in state forlorn,
with natures so depraved:
Death was your due, because that you
had thus your selves behaved (stanza 101).

So common was the belief in man's total depravity that it was a sentiment taught children as they learned the alphabet. The
couplet which "explained" the letter "A" in the New England Primer is, "In Adam's Fall/We sinned all." For God to act in any other way, heeding man's calls for clemency, would mean that He is not free, "I have no libertee" (stanza 177). By calling attention to the edifying principles which underly the poem, the poet stresses the role propaganda plays in The Day of Doom:

The man whose ear refus'd to hear
   the voice of Wisdoms cry,
Earn'd this reward, that none regard
   him in his misery (stanza 140).

Responsibility is directed at the reader for heeding the message of the poem.

The procedure in the trial is one of uncovering the reasons for man's rejection of the promptings of God's grace. The basic form of this section of the poem—the debate—is established early:

At this sad season, Christ asks a Reason
   (with just Austerity)
Of Grace refused, of light abus'd
   so oft, so wilfully (stanza 60).

Stanzas 61–64 catalogue questions which point at the sinners' roles in effecting their eternal loss. They "chose Damnation before Salvation, when it was offered" (stanza 63). Christ marvels at their obstinacy in refusing His help:

Why Corss of love did nothing move
   to shame or to remorse?
Why warnings grave, and counsels, have
nought chang'd their sinful course? (stanza 61).
In a section which recalls the list of questions which conclude
"God's Controversy with New-England," the reader is reminded of
the role afflictions play in orienting man in a heavenly-looking
direction:

Why chastenings, and evil things,
why judgments so severe
Prevailed not with them a jot,
nor wrought an awful fear? (stanza 62).

The answer is summarized in their devotion to creature com-
forts and the pleasures of the flesh:

Why sinful pleasures, and earthly treasures,
like fools, they prized more
Than heav'nly wealth, Eternal health,
and all Christ's Royal store? (stanza 63).

Before the sinners speak, the reader is alerted to the fact
that God sees and will bring "unto light, and open sight" (stanza
57) the offenses which damn men and which they try to keep
hidden:

All filthy facts, and secret acts,
however closely done,
And long conceal'd, are there reveal'd
before the mid-day Sun (stanza 58).

Framing their defense is a reiteration of the doctrine of man's
essential depravity:

All have transgress, even the best,
and merited God's wrath
Unto their own perdition,
and everlasting wrath (stanza 66).
Correctly understood, the statement of depravity makes the responses of the sinners particularly futile.

The use of the debate emphasizes the distance between the unregenerate and condemned soul and Christ the Judge. To those who complain that they were led astray by the examples of the saved, Christ responds that such charges actually reflect back upon the arrogance of the sinners:

To whom the Judge: What you allledge,
doeth nothing help the case;
But makes appear how vile you were,
and rend'reth you more base (stanza 118).
The poet then directs his work back upon the poem itself, emphasizing its use as a tool for edification, providing examples to be heeded:

You understood that what was good,
was to be followed,
And that you ought that which was nought
to have relinquished (stanza 119).

Indeed, Wigglesworth retains a desire to present the doctrine of salvation in as accessible a form as possible. Nevertheless, responsibility does rest upon man to read the poem, to be familiar with its content, and to heed its message:

But what was hard you never car'd
to know nor studied,
And things that were most plain and clear
you never practised (stanza 122).

One group of the damned confronts Christ with the charge that
they deserve salvation because they partook of Communion:

Did we not eat thy Flesh for meat,
and feed on heavenly Cheer?
Whereon who feed shall never need,
as thou thy self dost say,
Nor shall they dy eternally,
but live with Christ for ay (stanza 74).

But His response questions the preparations they made in approaching the Communion Table. These charges recall Wigglesworth's Diary entries on the Sabbath and Taylor's "Preparatory Meditations" and call attention to the necessity of reformation of the heart. Repeating a theme familiar in Wigglesworth's writings, Christ charges the damned with failing to work on the reformation of their hearts and with an unabiding love of the pleasures of the flesh:

Your fancies fed on heav'nly Bread,
your hearts fed on some Lust:
You lov'd the Creature more than th' Creator,
your Souls clave to the dust (stanza 79).

Christ suggests that hypocrisy and deceit of the heart are the principal sins which seal damnation. The unregenerate soul relies on its own strengths and chooses its own paths, refusing to heed God's directions, "No warning could prevail, you would/your own Deceits retain" (stanza 87). So important is this message that the poet interrupts Christ's own words in an attempt to define the nature of hypocrisy and self-love, vices which seem to double back on the person who commits them:

Thus from your selves unto your selves,
your duties all to tend:
And as self-love the wheels doth move,
so in self-love they end (stanza 91).

The poet continues to gloss the words of Christ the Judge, pointing out that the man trapped in a carnal perspective fails to note that his actions have an internal meaning which often varies from their external appearances. But on the day of doom such hidden meanings become clear, the reader is warned:

God looks upon th' affection
and temper of the heart;
Not only on the action,
and the external part (stanza 99).

It is because all men sinned that they deserve damnation:
All men have gone astray, and done
that which Gods Laws condemn:
But my Purchase and offered Grace
all men did not contemn (stanza 103).

The sinners' fascination with carnal preoccupations seals individually the fate they deserve because they are children of Adam, "And without all actions prove/but barren empty things" (stanza 100). To those who mourn the absence of time in which to repent, stressing that with time they would have reformed their ways (stanza 107), Christ answers that only carnal man rests secure in this world. Belatedly, these souls are forced to recognize that the day of doom strikes without warning and that man cannot postpone reformation. God alone keeps man suspended above the fires of hell:

It was Free grace that any space
was given you at all
To turn from evil, defie the Devil,
and upon God to call (stanza 109).

Another group of sinners questions God's mercy, accusing Him of deceiving them with false promises while trying to coax Him into granting them salvation:

Others Argue, and not a few,
is not God gracious?
His Equity and Clemency
are they not marvellous?
Thus we believ'd; are we deceiv'd? (stanza 130; see also 131-133).

But by tempting God they appear similar to Satan who tempted Christ in the desert:

Oh, thou that dost thy Glory most
in pard'ning sin display!
Lord, might it please thee to release,
and pardon us this day? (stanza 132).

Christ's tone in responding to their challenges is one of wrath and impatience. He accuses them of having resisted the workings of grace on their souls (stanza 137) and subjects them now to Justice, not Mercy:

Wrath long contain'd, and oft restrain'd,
at last must have a vent:
Justice severe cannot forbear
to plague sin any longer (stanza 139).

Eventually the poet confronts the doctrine of predestination. Wigglesworth's use of the technique of charge and counter-charge
works effectively here. The damned complain that predestination controlled their fates:

    how could we Hell avoid,

Whom Gods Decree shut out from thee,

and sign'd to be destroy'd (stanza 144; see also 145-146).

The poet invites the reader to sympathize with the plight of the damned souls. But to do so requires a rejection of orthodox views on predestination and the eventual damnation of the reader as well. Christ replies to the charge of the damned with sympathy, admitting that men are indeed predestined, but that the evil actions of the sinners demonstrate that they are deserving of damnation:

    He that fore-sees, and fore-decrees,

    in wisdom order'd has,

That man's free-will electing ill,

shall bring his will to pass (stanza 148).

Man's role in effecting his own damnation is stressed, "But such as swerv'd, and have deserv'd/destruction as their own" (stanza 150).

The remaining sinners likewise make an appeal to the reader's sympathy. The savages who are condemned, the "blind Heathen, and brutish men" (stanza 156) base their defense on never having received the Gospel message:

    Thy written Word (say they) good Lord,

    we never did enjoy:

We nor refus'd, nor it abus'd;

    Oh, do not us destroy! (stanza 157).
They charge that the light of nature was too dim to lead them correctly (stanzas 159, 161). To their charges Christ replies that their own actions led to the dimming of nature's light and that these actions bring the wrath of God upon them, "Your selves into a pit of woe, your own transgression led" (stanza 163). But to comfort them Christ promises that they shall "less be punished" than those men who had access to the Gospel message and, by extension, to the poem itself (stanza 158).

The greatest appeal to the sympathy and emotional attachment of the reader is made by a group of infants who bemoan their fate (stanza 166). Willing to admit that adults should bear responsibility for their actions, the infants decry their condemnation for sins they never personally committed:

If for our own transgression,
    or disobedience,
we here did stand at thy left-hand
    just were the recompence:
but Adam's guilt our souls hath split,
    his fault is charg'd on us;
And that alone hath overthrown,
    and utterly undone us (stanza 167; see also 168-170).

Their refusal to accept their inheritance from Adam, however, alerts the reader to the unorthodoxy of their views. Christ interrupts to remind them that depravity is a condition shared by all men:

But what you call old Adam's Fall,
    and only his Trespass,
You call amiss to call it his,
both his and yours it was (stanza 171; see also 172-176). So basic is their attack on the general theme of man's notoriety that Christ shows little sympathy to them, repeating an idea seen before, that to be human is to be subject to condemnation:

Hence you were born in state forlorn,
with natures so depraved:
Death was your due, because that you
had thus your selves behaved (stanza 175).

Indeed, Christ charges that they would have acted like Adam if they had stood in his place, "And so into the self-same wo,/ your selves and yours have brought" (stanza 176).

To appease the condemned infants, however, Christ assigns them to a fate less painful than that shared by all others, "But unto you I shall allow/the easiest room in Hell" (stanza 181). Gerhard T. Alexis has tried to explain the meaning of these lines within the terms of orthodox Calvinism. He concludes that Wigglesworth did not intend to establish a limbo, common in Roman Catholic teaching, for these infants. Rather, Wigglesworth followed a tradition, present in figures as diverse as Dante and Jonathan Edwards, that there are levels of punishment in hell. Linking them, however, is the inescapable sense of loss. Alexis views the appeasement of the theory of the "easiest room" as directed more at the reader than at the condemned children, however:

In short, having a room does not mean being sealed off and separated, and the infants are truly to be found with the damned. For Calvin the overriding fact of eternal separation from God made of little moment gradations in the pain of sense, and lessening of that
pain should have meant no more to Wigglesworth or
his Puritan readers. But since the poem was inten-
ded to vivify the dreadful Judgment and dramatize
the lot of both saved and lost, the scene and its
terrors become physically felt, as the poet inten-
ded. In the circumstances, the thought of equal
suffering for little children, however doctrinally
sound, might upset, rather than strengthen, one's
convictions and commitments.

The trial summarily ends and the poet concludes section III
with a reminder that the time for mercy has passed (stanza 187).
The clemency offered to the heathens and infants seems to
disappear as Wigglesworth catalogues the punishments the con-
demned souls must endure in hell (stanza 190). The bonds of
blood and marriage which tie one on earth are forgotten without
remorse:

The godly wife conceives no grief,
nor can she shed a tear
For the sad state of her dear Mate,
when she his doom doth hear (stanza 197; see also
198-199).

The section ends with Christ's sentence of condemnation, ut-
tered for all eternity, "Suffer the smart, which your desert/
as it's due wayes claimeth" (stanza 201). The reader who has
followed the poem's structure knows that this address is di-
rected—in anticipation and warning—at him as well.

The final section of the poem (stanzas 202-224) summarizes
the themes of terror and joy which are balanced in the poem.
Wigglesworth describes the unrelenting pains of hell (stanzas
202-216), warning the reader to heed the poem's message in a
special way, by an address by the damned to the reader:

Experience and woful sense
must be our painful teachers

Who n'ould believe, nor credit give,  

unto our faithful Preachers (stanza 217).

The concluding picture of the poem, however, interrupts
this time of suffering and dismay to convey a sense of the
pleasures and rejoicing of the saints in heaven:

O blessed state of the Renate!

O wondrous Happiness,

To which they're brought, beyond what thought
can reach, or words express! (stanza 222).

Heaven seems to bear a resemblance to the earth of ease and
 languor which the damned had populated. Yet it is not encum-
bered by any distinctions which confuse earthly existence—
the soul's concentration is focused solely on spiritual thoughts.
Heaven is indeed worth the wait and suffering it demands. The
optimism of "God's Controversy with New-England" once again is
present. One remembers that the vision of The Day of Doom
is couched in the future, however imminent. Time remains, there-
fore, for the reader to repent and work with God for his sal-
vation. As propaganda, the poem holds out a vision which is both
appealing and obtainable. Submission is the requirement.

III

The three poems that complete The Day of Doom continue the
themes previously discussed at length. "A Short Discourse on
Eternity" has three foci—a discussion of the impermanence of
earthly life; an extended depiction of the glories of the joys
of heaven; and a vivid depiction of the eternal torments of
hell. Heaven is the only valid goal since this world is "but
a stride, compared therewithal" ("Discourse," p.57). The earth itself fails as a departing point to which heaven might be compared:

Naught join'd to naught can ne'er make aught,
nor Cyphers make a Sum;
Nor things finite, to infinite
by multiplying come ("Discourse," p.89).

Similar to the eternity observed at the conclusion of The Day of Doom, this heaven puts an end to sufferings with the eternal vision of the Godhead ("Discourse," p.89).

For the damned "Flaming Seas" and eternal pain are the deserved punishments ("Discourse," p.90). Most painful is the realization that this suffering will never cease, "Yet what they feel, nor heart of steel, nor flesh of brass can bide" ("Discourse," p.92). Strangely, there is no exhortation at the poem's conclusion. So convincing is the offer of heaven that a conscientious person can be moved in only one direction—to reject the life that leads to "Hell's fiery flake" ("Discourse," p.92). The only real choice open within the terms of the poem for a "rational" man is the heaven of "bliss and happiness" ("Discourse," p.89).

In "A Postscript unto the Reader" Wigglesworth dwells on man's tenuous position as a creature in time, subject to the call to judgment at any moment. The image the poet uses suggests a sermon by Jonathan Edwards:

Thou hangest over the Infernal Pit,
By one small thread, and car'st not thou a whit?
There's but a step between thy Soul and Death;
Nothing remains but stopping of thy breath,
(Which may be done to-morrow, or before)
And then thou art undone forevermore ("Postscript," p.97).

In another trial sequence God questions the sinners. Typically, the rhetorical questions are loaded against them. There is no answer which will justify a "kick against the bowels of his Lord" ("Postscript," p.95). The Lord's language works against any defense the sinners might offer, "Because the Lord was good hast thou been evil,/And taken part against him with the Devil" ("Postscript," p.95). No reply can be given. Again, man is depicted as "wilful" in the damnation process ("Postscript," p.97).

So great is man's sinfulness that nature itself acts as an objective correlative, both the observer of the extent of man's guilt and a gauge to the alienation man has effected:

Stand still, ye Heav'ns, and be astonished,
That God by man should thus be injured!
Give ear, O Earth, and tremble at the sin
Of those that thine Inhabitants have been ("Postscript," p.95).

And yet the interrogation process is not over. With even more debilitating language, the poet again glosses God's words, this time adding eleven questions in a stanza of only twenty-four lines ("Postscript," p.96). But the over-riding premise of the poem is that time to reform still remains. Despite man's propensity to sin ("Postscript," p.101) and his desire to follow the "crooked ways of evil" ("Postscript," p.94), a recognition of his degeneracy and an admission of his total dependence on God's mercy will save him ("Postscript," pp.102-103). Man must
seize the chance for salvation while time remains, "Now whilst the day and means of Grace do last" ("Postscript," p.94).

The poem, then, is a warning and proof that love for the "creature comforts" of this life will lead to destruction ("Postscript," pp.99-100). The other-world orientation becomes strongest at the conclusion, "Nor shalt thou grieve for loss of sinful pleasures,/Exchang'd for Heav'nly joys and lasting treasures" ("Postscript," p.104). In a song which the regenerate sing, heaven wipes away the bonds and sorrows of earth with a mighty "deliv'rance" ("Postscript," p.105). The message of the poem becomes clear and acceptable to those who truly see. Hope for the quick dissolution of the earth becomes a response to a hostile world, "So come, Lord Jesus, quickly come, we pray;/Yea, come and hasten our Redemption-day" ("Postscript," p.105).

With a similar viewpoint "Vanity of Vanities: A Song of Emptiness" strives to convince that in a world of impermanence and flux, only an other-world orientation makes sense. Both man and his world are nothing, "A shadow of something but truly naught indeed" ("Vanity," p.107). Because man is a creature of God, however, he can never be fully satisfied by the comforts of this world ("Vanity," p.108). The simple life is saner and safer. It is not troubled by frivolities ("Vanity," p.109). The conclusion of the poem is posed as a challenge. After presenting historical proof of men who had been trapped by their earthly possessions (Samson, Croesus, Julius Caesar, Scipio, Pompey, Hannibal, and Alexander), the poet offers the reader the chance to imitate them. Wigglesworth's sense of typological significance extends beyond the typical Biblical precedents by using
examples from "pagan" history as well. Again the choice is carefully constructed. Any sensible man would immediately see the choice in the same terms the poet uses:

Go boast thyself of what thy heart enjoys,
Vain Man! triumph in all thy worldly Bliss:
Thy best Enjoyments are but Trach and Toys;
Delight thyself in that which worthless is ("Vanity," p. 110).

Wiggesworth's use of propaganda throughout all these poems has been to indicate the necessity for reforming the heart and the punishments which come if man avoids doing this. However, he leaves the choice up to man—always pointing out, however, that the joys of the earth can never last forever and that the remembrance of the refusal to reform will haunt the condemned soul through eternity.

IV

Edward Taylor approaches the subject of the day of judgment from a perspective which unites the vengeance one sees in The Day of Doom with an emphasis on God's mercy and love. Taylor's approach in his prose writings is to relay the message of propaganda by appealing to the delights salvation offers while also frightening the reader into submission by depicting the torments of the damned in hell. Taylor directs his description of the sufferings in hell to the reader's ability to experience and understand them through the senses:

Oh! what pangs, & girds of torment come in this way. Oh! those screeches, those Cries, those yellings, those gusted-out Screeches, that Gnashing of teeth of the damned there, Oh! that horrible noise & dole full Groans of Damned Divels, & burning Spirit[s]. What eare can hear them? how will these rend & teare the very eare in their entrance! & Strike the very heart
like so many bodkins; & therefore think of this. Oh
how doth the eare prove an inlett now to hellish
torments.

The saints, however, enjoy perpetual spiritual delights:

Oh the pourings forth of heavens Glory here, will
make all heaven within, how it will make all life
and liveliness heare. Love will be elevated with
the Beams of Glory to inflame the Soule in the high-
est degree of Content, & always acting in the high-
est Imbraces. Joy will be mounted upon the Wings of
Glory to give the Soule the highest transport of
Delight that may be, & always it is enjoving fresh
incomes so that its Joyes never cease (p.540).

Sections of Taylor's account discuss the trial the con-
demned must endure. The reader is confronted directly with
the image of the damned souls, suffering eternal pains, and
he is asked to accept or reject membership with them, "Oh look
on * * * misshapen, ugly Conditioned roague, on earth, and is
he not a frightening spectacle . . . Oh what wouldest thou do?"
(p.543). Taylor offers his reader the choice of heaven or
hell, reminding him that Christ's free grace saves man (p.537),
but that man's evil actions effectively seal his damnation, all
of which will be revealed at the judgment, "Not one Deed, or
one circumstance omitted but all things as inward Corruption &
sinful thoughts" (p.542).

Central to Taylor's God's Determinations is the concept of
salvation seen in Wigglesworth's The Day of Doom—those who re-
fuse to enter into the Covenant of Grace surely damn themselves.
In format and approach Taylor's poem differs somewhat from
Wigglesworth's work, however. It is more subtle in its theology,
emphasizing the role of mercy in saving man, and relies upon
a greater variety of poetic devices. But its conclusions
are similar. For Taylor, as for Wigglesworth, incorporation
among the saints is a joyous occasion:

The Clouds of Grace Divine Contents

Such things of wealthy blessings on them fall
As make them sweetly thrive. 12

The work is composed of thirty-five short poems in which the form of the dialogue dominates. The reader finds debates between mercy and justice, the soul and Satan, and the soul and a saint, among others. Despite a movement away from the harshness of doctrine one sees in The Day of Doom, the preface sets a tone which stresses God's strength and man's degeneracy. Taylor defines the world as one created by God and totally dependent on Him. Providing a sort of catechism for the reader, Taylor insists that the reader recognize God's superiority:

Who in this Bowling Alley bowld the Sun?
Who made it always when it rises set
To go at once both down, and up to get?
..............................................
Who? who did this? or who is he? why know
Its Onely Might Almighty this did doe ("Preface," ll. 14-16, 1y-20).

But man has failed to recognize God's primacy and, through sin, has darkened the world, "But Nothing man did throw down all by Sin:/And darkened that lightsom Gem in him" ("Preface," ll. 41-42). The comforting fact about this God is that He can be understood. Even His terror can be explained, "Whose single Frown will make the Heavens shake/Like an aspen leafe the winde makes quake" ("Preface," ll. 31-32).

Taylor's poem is in the tradition of the jeremiad. In God's
Determinations Taylor confronts the problem of degeneracy and attempts to readjust the vision of his reader, to return him to spiritual questions, to offer him salvation and the orthodox way of obtaining it. In "The Effects of Man" Apostacy," the second poem, Taylor depicts the world as one of sin and degeneracy. Ironically, man's intelligence is so deadened that he fails to realize the effects of his sins until he has committed them. The poem seeks to correct this flaw ("Effects," ll.21-24). So great is his degeneration that he has lost his rational faculties—the poem exists to restore them:

bereav'd of Reason, he proceeds now so,
setakes himself unto his Heels in hast,
Runs like a Madman till his Spirits wast ("Effects," ll.42-44).

The poet reminds the reader that man's excuses for sins are futile, "His say seems nothing, and for naught will go" ("Effects," 1.62). Equally chilling is the realization that man can neither hide himself nor his deeds from God's vision, "But while he Sculking on his face close lies/Epying naught, the Eye Divine him spies" ("Effects," ll.63-64).

Man lies prostrate while Justice and Mercy enter into a debate, the conclusion of which parallels Christ's discussion of the Covenant of Grace in Wigglesworth's The Day of Doom. Throughout most of the debate Justice and Mercy are found at odds. Justice calls for vengeance:

I cannot hold off the Rebelld pate
The vengeance he halls down with Violence.
If Justice wronged be she must revenge:
Unless a way be found to make all friends ("Dialogue, ll.21-24").

Mercy responds with a call for less than harsh treatment ("Dialogue," ll.27-30). And yet when it comes to the crucial point, Justice and Mercy are in agreement. The "way has been found to make all friends" ("Dialogue," l.24) as Justice calls for. Justice reminds Mercy that man damns himself, but needs God's grace to be saved, "... none be damned but such as sin imbrace;/Yet none are sav'd without Inherent Grace" ("Dialogue," ll.65-66). Mercy concurs, yet adjusts the lines, "... none are Sav'd that wickedness imbrace./Yet none are Damn'd that have Inherent Grace" ("Dialogue," ll.71-72). Both agree that man is free to damn himself through his own sins.

Mercy warns that it is presumptuous for man to disregard the gravity of his sins, "Who scants his sin will scarce get grace to save./For little Sins, but little pardons have" ("Dialogue," ll.197-198). Mercy reminds the reader that to achieve salvation a total transformation of the carnal heart is needed, "Alas! poore Heart! how art thou damnifide,/By proud Humility, and Humble Pride" ("Dialogue," ll.125-126). Man is saved not through any actions of his own. In fact, he must admit his total degeneracy and turn to Mercy for aid:

When any such are startled from ill,

And cry help, help, with tears, I will advance


Unlike the message of optimism which Mercy offers the soul, Satan tries to trap man in despair by repeating Justice's discussion on the magnitude of man's sins:
Your sins like motes in th' sun do swim: nay see
Your Mites are Molehills, Molehills Mountains bee.
Your Mountain Sins do magnitude transcend:
whose number's numberless, and do want end

("Accusation," ll.3-6).

Satan's method is to entangle man in sin, and then to entangle
him further in confusion and despair ("Doubts," ll.44-50).

In poem sixteen, entitled "Christ's Reply," Covenant theology
is explained and Satan's guiles are answered. Christ reminds
the weary sinner that there is assurance of election in the
attack of temptations on the soul:

If in the severall thou art
This Yelper fierce will at thee bark:
That thou art mine this shows (ll.7-9).

There is an admission, recognized earlier in the debate between
Justice and Mercy, that man is prone to sin. Yet Christ points
out that repentance and grace overcome sin and lead to salvation:

If thou by true Repentance Rise,
And Faith makes me thy Sacrifice,
I'll pardon all, though more (ll.52-54).

Christ's reply contains a realistic vision of man, a recogni-
tion that he is not divine, that his life is one into which sin
will enter. But there is also optimism that repentance can
save. Indeed, a soul which has been a stall for Satan's "nick-
nacks" can become a "Tabernacle" of God's grace (ll. 74, 76).
Christ invites the sinner to accept grace from a God who "Frowns
with a Smiling Face" (l. 84), "If thou my aid, and Grace implore/
I'll shew a pleasant face" (ll.107-108).
But temptations will still occur. As Christ indicates, man is a dwelling of dirt, a "Mudwald Cote" (l.111). He should expect temptations and see them as opportunities to improve himself through resistance:

These White Frostes and the Showers that fall
Are but to whiten thee withall.

Not rot the Web they smote (ll.112-114).

No real attempt is made to define man as anything other than what human experience reveals him to be. The first view of man presented in the poem depicts him as degenerate ("Gods Selecting love," ll.2-4). The soul must learn that the spiritual life is a battle; it must unfurl the colors of God and face Satan on the battlefield. Christ promises to lead the fight, "I'll be thy Front, I'll be thy reare./Fail not: my Battells fight" ("Christ's Reply," ll.122-123). Apparent throughout God's Determinations is the Puritan notion of the Covenant of Grace, presided over by a free Creator who responds to man's requests.

"The Frowardness of the Elect in the Work of Corversion" presents a picture to which a sinner can respond. Much like those lulled by sin at the beginning of The Day of Doom, these sinners are "Lulld in the lap of sinfull nature snugg,/Like Pearls in Puddles cover'd ore with mudd" (ll.3-4). The colony suffers from a dearth of saints (ll.15-19).

Ironically, it is Satan who acts as an instrument for man's salvation. Poems twelve, thirteen, and fourteen continue Satan's attempts to lure man into despair. Satan depicts man as so totally depraved that he can do no good, "The Will is hereupon perverted so,/It laquyes after ill, doth good foregoe"
("Accusation," ll.13-14). Satan argues that the soul and he both desire the same pleasures; if this is what grace accomplishes, then Satan must likewise be a recipient of grace (ll. 47-48). Satan further accuses man of being a "Peacock," flaunting in sin like a whore, "Thy leering Looks, thy Wanton Eyes, each part/Are painted Sign-Post of a Wanton heart" ("Outward Man Accuses," ll.20, 3-4). Further, Satan charges, the hope which the soul holds is a hoax, "Thy joy is groundless, Faith is false, thy Hope/Presumption, and Desire is almost broke" ("Soul Accused," ll.29-30).

Yet the purpose of Satan's tirade is not achieved. The soul dismisses Satan and, convinced of its degeneracy and dependence, turns to God for relief, "Begone therefore; to him I'l le send a groane/Against thee drawn, who makes my heart his Throne" (ll. 49-50). The soul receives salvation and offers "An Extasy of Joy Let in by This Reply Returnd in Admiration." It rejoices at God's infinite mercy:

Oh! let our Praise his Grace assaile.
To free us from Sins Gulph each way,
He's both our Bridge, and Raile (ll.66-68).

Undaunted, Satan accuses two more groups of men, attacking their faith, hope, and the efficacy of their prayers ("The Second Hanke Accused"). To the third group Satan suggests that it is sin, not grace, that liberates the soul ("The Third Hanke Accused"). To Christ's earlier admission that temptations are a sign of election, Satan replies that only the damned are plagued by them, "Christ saveth none but whom he sanctifies/Thou art not sanctifide in any part" (ll.62-63).
These attacks lead the accused sinners to produce a "Threnodial Dialogue" in which they lament and admit their degeneracy, "No Grace we have though something Gracelike show" (1.28). From this gloom issues a call to Christ for mercy, "We've none to trust: but on thy Grace we ly./If dy we must, in mercy's arms wee'l dy" ("Their Call," ll.49-50). The soul admits its own unworthiness, and wracked by an overburdened conscience, confesses it cannot flee ("Resolution to Seek Advice of Gods People"). Then begins the actual conversion experience. To the soul's degeneracy, the saint replies that the first step to salvation is admission of sin. To answer the soul's fear that it may not be among the elect, the saint adds that those without grace never fear such things, "But such as never knew this dainty fare/ Do never wish them 'cause they dainties are" ("Doubts," ll.7-8). The saint reveals the treachery of Satan's methods throughout this lengthy poem, so that finally the soul is carried up in a vision of the power of God:

Prest down my Soul; but now it's off, she's Caught
In holy Raptures up to him.
Oh! let us then sing Praise: methinks I soar
Above the stars, and stand at Heavens Doore

("Effect of This Discourse," ll.21-24).

Characteristically, it is God who "catches" the soul. For the orthodox Puritan, salvation remains the free gift of God, not conditioned by man's attempts to reach for it. And even more characteristically, it is within the formal Congregational church structure that salvation is accomplished. In "The Soule Seeking Church-Fellowship" the saints enter a garden prepared
by God:

But yet this Curious Garden richly set,
The Soul accounts Christ's paradise
Set with Choice slips, and flowers: and longs to get
Itselfe set here: and by advice
To grow herein and so rejoice (ll.46-50).

Later, the souls enter the formal Covenant of the church:

They now enCovenant with God: and His
They thus indent.
The Charters Seals belonging unto this
The Sacrament

So God is their avoucht, they his in Christ ("The Soul
Admiring the Grace of the Church Enters into Church Fellowship," ll.25-29).

The poem concludes with a joyous celebration of the spiritual delights of heaven, "Oh! joyous hearts! Enfirie with holy Flame!" ("The Joy of Church Fellowship Hightly Attended," l.7).

The reader has been given the path to this vision and invited to join the ranks of the saints. The poem succeeds as propaganda both in presenting such a desirable goal and, more importantly, by demonstrating that the path to salvation can be understood rationally.
Notes to Chapter IV


Chapter V

The Sufferings of Faith and
the Logic of Paradox
Let others take their Choice,
    And run what way they please;
Let them enjoy their Lusts, and take
    Their fill of Carnal Ease:
Chuse thou the narrow path,
    My soul, and walk therein;
Thou know'st this is the only Way
    Eternal Life to win.

    Michael Wigglesworth, Meat out of the Eater

I believe in order to understand.

    St. Bernard of Clairvaux
In the long poems which conclude his poetic career Michael Wigglesworth concentrates on the revivifying power of suffering. Throughout *Meat out of the Eater* and *Riddles Unriddled* emphasis is placed on the role of submission to the will of God as the only means of insuring salvation. Even at times when the reasons for these sufferings seem least evident, the poet reminds the reader, the faithful Christian remembers that the logic of faith is paradoxical and that a greater will than his own has inflicted them. Wigglesworth's own physical ailments may have led him to view this theme with special care. Richard Crowder suggests, "Michael's own weaknesses and the loss of his beloved wife, Mary, had made him an expert in these matters, for he remained the true Puritan to the end, believing that the finger of the Lord directed every disaster and searching his conscience and conduct for the cause of every trial."¹

The title *Meat out of the Eater* refers to a riddle Samson posed to his wedding guests, "And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle."² It is precisely this paradoxical way of viewing reality—seeing sufferings as blessings—which Wigglesworth seeks to inculcate. The poem is composed of ten meditations, of varying length, each prefaced by an epigram which sets the theme of that section and "A Concluding Hortatory" which summarizes the poem's message. *Meat* lacks the emotional levels one finds in *The Day of Doom* and seeks to convince, rather, through a calm and steady application of ideas which are to be grasped rationally. In
its emphasis on a rational approach to a theological issue, the poem demonstrates the "plain style" of preaching favored by the Puritans. "The Puritan piety was no less intense, and the ecstasy of redemption was as deeply felt, but in Puritan sermons intensity of piety was balanced by the precision and restraint of a highly methodical form, a rigid dialectical structure, and the ecstasy was severely confined within the framework of doctrine, reasons, and uses."³

Like Wigglesworth's Diary and "God's Controversy with New-England," Meat attempts to solve the problem of suffering in man's life and to pose a rational response to pain, finding that suffering may very well be a sign of election. However, as in "God's Controversy," for the suffering to achieve its effect, the reader must understand it correctly. He must realize that pain links all men in a community of sufferers, under the protection of God:

These are the Common Lot
Of all God's Children dear,
Through many sorrows they must pass
The Lord that truly fear.⁴

The first meditation stresses the folly in assuming that man's home is in this world. Rather, the poet reminds the reader that heaven is achieved only after traveling the "Strait" path "which leadeth unto life" (Med.I,7). To think that salvation can be achieved through relaxation and ease is both "unwise" and spiritually immature. The poet concludes Meditation I with a challenge to his soul—and, by extension, to the reader—to choose between the narrow and difficult path which
leads through sufferings to eternal joy and the ease-ful, carnal path which seals one's damnation:

But broad are all the Wayes
That to destruction lead
And many many are the feet
That daily therein tread (Med.I,7).

In the Second Meditation Wigginsworth teaches that sufferings are a sign of election, "God doth in mercy scourge His own" (Med.II, epigram). The reader is urged to find comfort in the knowledge that he does not suffer alone, but shares a fate common to all the saints (Med.II,1-2). The pains which are man's common fate, however, serve a purpose which can be understood. They both test man's fidelity to God's teachings and act as a scourge, correcting him when he does wrong. Such a view, in the simplicity of its unswerving faith, is indeed comforting to the reader who chooses to accept it:

Yet all must bear the Cross
Before they wear the Crown;
All must partake of Chastening,
Whom God vouchsafes to own (Med.II,3).

Finally, the reader is urged to imitate Christ Himself who accepted pain to save mankind. The theme of the Imitatio Christi runs through the work and collapses the time of the poem by making it a study of the condition of all souls at all times in the fallen world:

All that Christ's members are
Must be made like their Head:
He is a bastard not a Child
That's never chastened (Med.II,5).

Wiglesworth concludes the Meditation with the greatest challenge to unenlightened reason he has posed to this point. The soul is urged to rejoice in its suffering and to realize that the untroubled soul is the one rejected by God:

My soul be thankful then
That God thee thus corrects.

Who might have let thee head-long run
With those whom He rejects (Med.II,7).

The Third Meditation continues the view that sufferings are a sign of God's concern, inflicted to correct man's ways, to "teach us to do well" (Med.III,1). Wiglesworth offers the reader the chance to identify typologically with David, a "saint" who learned from his sufferings that they are the result of swerving from God's precepts (Med.III,3). In addition, sufferings purge man of his carnal preoccupations and prepare him for participation in the non-carnal joys of eternity. Because sufferings work on man's carnal perspective and eventually eliminate it, they are a reason for rejoicing. To demonstrate this point, Wiglesworth temporarily abandons the "plain style" and metaphorically elaborates the purgative qualities of suffering:

These are God's Fining Pot,
Wherein He melts His Gold,
Consumes the Dross and maketh it
More lovely to behold.
These are His Fullers Sope
To wash out spots away.
That being thus refin'd and Wash'd
Him glorifie we may (Med.III,4).
The effect of sufferings is to prepare the soul, in the manner of a farmer preparing the soil, to be receptive to God's call. Wigglesworth's choice of metaphors relies on the traditional image of the unregenerate soul as an untamed garden, awaiting the reforming powers of the divine gardener:

Our hearts are over-run
Much like a Falloe-field,
Which must be broke and ploughed up
Before it Fruit can yield (Med.III,10).
The fruits of such preparations are a harvest of Virtue and Grace, "The Cross to Virtue trains;/It Tries; it makes to grow" (Med.III,11).

Meditation Four advances Wigglesworth's belief that God's workings with man can be understood rationally. This Meditation demonstrates repeatedly his debt to the formal aspects of the debate or inquisition:

The Fourth by various Arguments
Strives to beat down all Discontents,
And overcome Discouragements (Med.IV, epigram).

A series of questions at the Meditation's conclusion tests the reader's knowledge of the poem's message:

what if thy strength thee fail
If Sicknesses increase?
If Creature-comforts thee forsake?
If dearest Friends decrease? (Med.IV,13).

Failure to respond with an awareness of God's "faithfulness and Love" (Med.IV,1) toward man and a realization that "Creature-comforts"
are necessarily transient would certainly indicate the reader's inadequate spiritual awareness. The poet reminds the reader that the pains man endures are never more than can be borne and never more than are needed to work a restoration of virtue in the soul, "He lays on thee no more/Than what may reach the End" (Med.IV,2).

Man has never been taught that earthly life would be easy, the poet adds. In fact, in Christ man is offered the prime example—and model to imitate—of the person who suffered, submitted his will to that of another, and thus won some higher and more valuable good (Med.IV,5). And although man is urged to follow Christ's example, "Their Head to Imitate" (Med.IV,8), sufferings can be easily endured once man escapes his carnal perspective and remembers that God applies "Measure and Moderation" in His afflictions (Med.IV,10).

In the Fifth Meditation Wigglesworth holds out a picture of the joys of heaven as the reward for bearing sufferings in patience. The epigram summarizes the content of this section, calling attention to the poem's propagandistic base through the verb "persuades":

The fifth persuades to patience
From that Rich future Recompence;
Minding us of our Heavenly Rest,
Which should revive us when distrest (Med.V, epigram).

By contrasting qualities which he attributes to earthly and heavenly existence, the poet demands that the reader choose between pain and relief, turmoil and rest:

Thou art a Pilgrim here;
This world is not thy home:
Then be content with Pilgrims fare,
Till thou to Heaven come (Med.V,5).
Only a rejection of man's carnality, the "World, Flesh, and Devil, them all three" (Med.V,6) can bring the reader to Heaven, "our country dear" (Med.V,9). The reader must realize that he is an unwilling prisoner in this world, "Earth is to me a Prison" (Med.V,9), yet remember that he cannot escape this prison under his own power. Wigglesworth attacks the view of spiritual self-reliance, maintaining that while man can learn to desire a non-carnal perspective and be aware of the limitations of the flesh, God alone has the power to work the actual transformation in the reader's soul:

O Christ make haste, from bonds
Of Sin and Death me free,
And to those Heavenly Mansions,
Be pleas'd to carry me (Med.V,10).

The Sixth Meditation continues the theme of the *Imitatio Christi*, offering the reader—through Christ—an example of a figure who was troubled by imprisonment, poverty, and temptations (Med.VI,3-5), yet bore His sufferings with courage. The reader is urged to consider that man, in his sinfulness, deserves to suffer, while Christ freely chose to adopt the pains of mortal existence:

If he hath suffered,
In whom no guilt was found,
Well may we suffer for our faults,
Whose sins so much abound (Med.VI,6).
Man's proper response, when he considers the example provided by Christ, is to follow His steps, trusting that God's grace will provide the strength man needs to triumph, "Take up thy Cross, and willingly/Follow thy Generall" (Med.VI,8).

Wigglesworth centers the Seventh Meditation on the paradoxical sentiment that earthly success is actually a source of misery, "The worldly man's Prosperity/Is only gilded Misery" (Med.VII,epigram) and that it results in eternal damnation. The poet's religious belief stands removed from the secularization of Calvinist doctrine, which came to hold that good fortune on earth was a sign of divine election and salvation in the next world. Reminding the reader that man must eventually face the day of doom, Wigglesworth indicates the reward which nonsufferers receive from God:

The Lord to Judgment call:
Where opening all his fiery Treasures,
He'll pay them once for all (Med.VII,19).

These sinners who "fill'd their Measures" (Med.VII,19) are marked by the same self-reliance we have seen earlier in Wigglesworth's depiction of sinners. The message of Meat is to convince man of his insufficiency to save himself and the folly of either trusting in earthly possessions or fearing the pains of earthly woes.

The attempt to explain rationally God's plan for man is not as simple as the poem's straightforward message might at first indicate. Wigglesworth points out that "God's dealings are/Exceeding various" (Med.VII,1), so that one cannot say with certainty how God will treat each soul, "That none can certainly/
Discern God's love or hate" (Med.VII,1). To maintain any other position would subject Wigglesworth to the charge of spiritual arrogance and suggest an attempt to control God. Yet Wigglesworth proposes that the safest orientation to maintain is one that sees the flesh as a prison and sufferings as signs of grace (Med.VII,2). The poet does not deny that the world is part of God's creation, "God gives them outward things" (Med.VII,10). What he repudiates, however, is the refusal to move from love of God's creation to love for the Creator Himself, "For having made the world/the God whom they adore" (Med.VII,11). Their emotional and rational faculties are locked into a fascination with carnal pleasures, "The world doth fill their Head/And occupy their Heart" (Med.VII,11).

Recalling the opening stanzas of The Day of Doom, the unregenerate are depicted as drunken revellers, wallowing in sin:

    Their over-flowing Cups,
    Entice to Drunkenness:

    And then expose to filthy Lusts,
    Their pampered Carcasses (Med.VII,15).

To achieve sanctity, then, the carnal preoccupation must be repudiated and man must work on the reformation of his heart. The poet calls attention to the didactic aspect of the work, "God warns them by his word,/They're deaf and do not hear" (Med.VII,16), reminding the reader that he stands at a crossroad, faced with the necessity of following the path to destruction or the path to salvation. In rational terms, there is no choice—to reject the poem's message, to harden one's heart, lead to eternal damnation.
The choice to align himself with evil-doers is offered the reader at the beginning of the Eighth Meditation. The choice is seen in terms of wisdom versus folly and calls attention to the exemplary aspect of the poem:

We have the wicked view'd,
And seen his best estate
And who would chuse with him to share
Except a Reprobate? (Med.VIII,1).

The Meditation then proceeds through an examination of the trials which beset the saint, "Now let us take a Saint" (Med. VIII,3) and offers relief in God as its message. Sickness, pain, and imprisonment cannot move the believer to grief, "You cannot rob him of his God,/Nor him unhappy make" (Med.VIII,5). Threats of drowning or "burning Fire" cannot deter him from his belief in God's power to save man, "God so supports/They cannot sink his Soul" (Med.VIII,6). Finally, the reader is urged to identify with Biblical types who, like the particular saint the poet examines, stand witness to the poem's message. This typological device removes the sense of suffering as something unique to each man and places it in a scheme which links all men in a community of sufferers, pilgrims in the wilderness. The suffering saint finds comfort in the examples of Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Daniel, and Paul who were truly "Happy Men" (Med.VIII,7).

The religious perspective Wigglesworth hopes to induce rejects the adult state as a period of egocentric behavior, marked by carnal preoccupation and failure to recognize the overwhelming presence and power of God. But for the regenerate soul, the "Child of God" (Med.IX, epigram), God's power is present
at all times, "He knows right well that God himself/ Was the Efficient [Instrument]" (Med.IX,1).

The Ninth Meditation continues to offer a pattern of behavior and thought for the reader to imitate. When he suffers pain, the regenerate soul searches for the cause within his own awareness of his sins:

And having once found out
What sin hath God offended;
He seriously bewails it, and
Endeavours to amend it (Med.IX,4).

He remembers that man is completely unable to save himself and relies upon God's mercy and love to save himself, "Yet through the Merits of his Son/He begs and hopes for Graces" (Med.IX,6). He continues to repudiate self-interests (Med.IX,9), anticipating the moment when his period of earthly bondage is ended, "He waiteth patiently/ Until deliverance come" (Med.IX,14). Again, comfort is extended through identification with other sufferers—Noah, David, Peter, and Jacob (Med.IX,15,17,20). In fact, the promise is held out that to fight temptations and sufferings successfully like Jacob will indeed lead to the soul's apotheosis:

Thus every suffering Saint
By wrestling shall prevail,
And having overcome at last
Be styled Israel (Med.IX,21).

The Tenth Meditation sets the soul in opposition to the body. The poet reminds the reader that one's physical condition is of little concern to the elected saint, "Although Affliction tanne the Skin, / Such Saints are Beautiful within" (Med.X, epigram).
Indeed, sufferings test man's ability to "love and bless, and
honour God" by placing him "In middest of the fire" (Med.X,1).
The person who strives for sainthood recognizes his own will and
then controls it, directing his desires to a will greater than
his own, "Yet at the foot of Jesus Christ/They meekly lay them
down" (Med.X,2).

To demonstrate his point that man's outward appearance is
of no concern, the poet paraphrases sections of Psalm 45 and
The Song of Solomon:

   The Daughter of the King,

   All glorious is within,

   How black soever and Sun-Burnt,

   May seem her outward Skin (Med.X,4).

Although he identifies the Biblical source of these lines, Richard Crowder mistakenly views them as gestures toward racial
understanding. He writes, "Meditation X would appear to be an
early plea for racial tolerance and an understanding that all
human beings are God's children." A more accurate description
of the lines sees them as an allegorical analysis of the necessity
of seeing through the "letter" of the flesh to the "spirit," the
truth contained in the soul. Crowder's mistake can be seen by
examining the poet's later address to the Creator. The poet
calls for his body to be blackened, to endure more pains, so
that he may enjoy spiritual pleasures, "Thus beautifie my soul/
Dear Saviour; thus adorn it" (Med.X,5).

In the poem's conclusion, "A Conclusion Hortatory," the
poet insures that the reader remains aware of the choice he
must make, "Oh that they might thine heart persuade/The Cross
of Christ to chuse!" ("Conclusion,"1). Wigglesworth summarizes the purpose of the poem which has been to show the "comeliness" of God's ways ("Conclusion,"2). The reader is reminded that God's ways are truly explicable:

Incrigidleness
God's Anger will increase:

True penitence, and Faith in Christ:

This anger will appease ("Conclusion,"14). 

Briefly, the poem becomes a jeremiad, turning outward to the colony, pointing to the necessity of reforming its ways before destruction arrives, "O'h! therefore let's repent in time,/Before we be undone" ("Conclusion,"13).

Throughout Meat out of the Eater there is a sense of optimism. God's ways are not inscrutable. Couched in the present, and only casually making references to the consumption which will occur on the day of doom (Med.VII,19), the poem is designed less to impress the reader with a sense of terror than with an awareness of the prize he can reject if he does not submit to the message of the work. A saint, as Wigglesworth defines him, tends the state of his soul, rejecting this world in favor of the promise of a better one (Med.X,6). Only the foolish man will not heed the message of rational propaganda the poem holds out. With the path to heaven defined as one which demands submission (Med.X,2), only the sinner will forge another route. Through sheer repetition the poem stresses its message.

II

The second part of Meat out of the Eater, Riddles Unriddled, continues the themes and techniques observed previously in
wigglesworth's other works. The interest of Riddles rests on the distractions of the world and the threat they pose to future security. The purpose throughout the poem is to reveal to—and thus convince—the reader that God's ways are not the ways of the world. In fact, a true spiritual orientation finds itself at ease with the paradoxical and baroque statements the poem analyzes:

Light in Darkness,
Sick mens Health,
Strength in Weakness,
Poor mens Wealth,
In Confinement,
liberty,
In Solitude,
Good Company,
Joy in Sorrow,
Life in Death,
Heavenly Crowns for
Thorny Wreaths. 7

Each paradox is divided into a number of "songs" or "meditations" in which the poet tries to "prove and plainly shew" his arguments ("Confinement," epigram). Frequently, the poet either engages the reader through direct address or employs the technique of the debate to convey his message. Crowder comments on the technique of debate one finds in the poem:

Wigglesworth was never very far from contact with another being, whether man or God. Sometimes he would use a plural vocative ("readers" or "New-England"), but he had a profound sense of the dialogistic situation, for he often would refute objections and answer arguments
as if in conversation; also he made use of dialogue as a form: God speaks to man; Flesh and Spirit address each other. Wigglesworth's pervading feeling of responsibility for men and his unceasing observance of the two Great Commandments constituted his dialogue.

The poet remains aware of the didactic qualities of the work, qualities whose appeal are often more rational than sensual:

Oh might I speak a word
That might allay your grief,
Instruct you now to bear your Cross,
Or lend you some relief ("Solitude,"II,1).

The poem, viewed as medicine for the suffering soul, provides relief, is a "salve" of comfort ("Joy,"I,1). It is the reader's responsibility, however, to study the work and thus uncover the solution to man's problems, "Thou must these Cordials know,/ And how to take and use them" ("Joy,"I,3).

The first section develops the theme that the Christian discovers "Light in Darkness" and that he recognizes that earthly sufferings are merely a veil which must be pierced to uncover the joys of salvation. The poem instills this perspective:

There is a Child of Darkness
That walketh in the light,
That thinks his ill state very good
And therein takes delight ("Light,"I,3).

A dialogue or debate between Spirit and Flesh contains a discussion of the principal theme of Riddle--the role and place of sufferings--and concludes that they are designed to correct man, not to lead him to despair. Throughout all sufferings the Christian is asked to remember that God's love remains constant,
"Where Christ once sets his love/He loveth to the end" ("Light," II,3). As the debate continues, Spirit urges the reader to seek comfort in the precedent of Biblical sufferers and to complete typologically the pattern they initiate. Jacob, Moses, Joseph, and Job, among others, are held up as examples of individuals who suffered but triumphed ("Light,"III,4-15). The reader is left to choose between an eternity of bliss and an earthly life of pain:

For what are twenty years,
Unto Eternity?
Eternal Rest will make amends
For all this misery ("Light,"III,17).

Phrasing the choice in this manner guarantees that the informed and rational reader will follow the poem's propagandistic message, rejecting earthly encumbrances and focussing his attention on a spiritual deliverance.

The debate continues, directing itself at presenting a rational and concise outline of the correct way of viewing sufferings. To the saint, sufferings are merely transient and the source of eventual joy, "Yet brings forth fruits of Righteousness,/And sweet Peace afterward" ("Light,"IV,7). The poem, then, is seen as "Counsel" ("Light,"VIII,1) which holds out a rational plan for salvation involving prayer ("Light,"VII,2) and reliance upon God, "Relie upon him steadfastly" ("Light,"VIII,4).

Recalling sections of the Diary, the poet urges the reader to admit the gravity of his sins. From this understanding comes a sense of man's inability to save himself and of the necessity of constantly relying upon God:
Well let it humble thee
To feel a treacherous part
A sinful Self, a wicked Flesh

Remaining in thy heart ("Light,"VII,10).

Recognizing its inadequacies, the enlightened soul cries to
Christ for salvation ("Light,"I,2). The first section of
Riddles, then, continues the discussion on the role of sufferings
in man's life. By stating repeatedly—in the plain style—the
necessity of rejecting the claims of this earth and of turning
to God for help the poet verbalizes rationally his message of
spiritual propaganda. "Light in Darkness" challenges the reader
to view the world from the poet's perspective. Otherwise, the
reader remains in "darkness," bound to suffering and sin.

The paradox of "Sick mens Health" offers the reader the
reassurance that chastening and punishment originate in God's
love:

God chasteneth his in love
Ev'n when he seems severe,

Exempting not from smarting stripes

Those whom he counts most dear ("Sick,"I,2).

The poem is indeed offered as "instruction" for the reader to
assimilate ("Sick,"II,1). It holds out submission to God's
will as the key to obtaining the non-carnal perspective, "O let
my will submit/To his that is most just" ("Sick,"II,5).

Wigglesworth offers the reader no chance to retreat, but
forces him to confront the human vices which sufferings seek to
correct ("Sick,"III,6). Only a recognition of the reader's own
vileness will permit the poet to move on:
By these he rend'reth us
More vile in our own eyes,
And helpeth us more heartily
His favour for to prize ("Sick," III, 9).

But the reader is reassured that God gives strength to endure
the pain He inflicts ("Sick," IV, 2) and that God's love itself
is constant, more lasting than the universe ("Sick," IV, 10). All
that is required of the reader is to repudiate any sense of
self-sufficiency and turn to the Creator and admit man's inade-
quacy and vileness.

"Strength in Weakness" develops the paradox that man is
"Strongest when most Weak" ("Strength," epigram) and demonstrates
the frailty of human strength. Even Adam himself, the most
nearly "perfect" man, failed when he relied on his own powers,
the reader is reminded ("Strength," I, 1). The purpose of the
opening "song" is to convince man that his unassisted actions
result only in evil. "[No] Power to do what's good;/But only
what is ill" ("Strength," I, 2). The error the soul risks is
the unchecked growth of self-security which results in Christ's
rejection ("Strength," I, 6). Men must never "Neglect their watch,
trust in themselves" ("Strength," I, 6). The poet offers the
examples of David and Peter, both of whom fell because they
relied on their own resources to save themselves ("Strength," I, 7-8).
Paul holds out the key to the paradox of this section:

Thus Paul that great Apostle,
When I am weak, saith he,
Then am I strong; because the strength
Of Christ then rests on me ("Strength," I, 13).
The reader is urged to accept "Passive obedience" ("Strength," III,2) to initiate the awareness of his own negligibility, "God hath no need of us,/Nor any work of ours" ("Strength,"III,4). Only from this knowledge will man discover spiritual sustenance and eventually triumph.

The purpose of "Poor mens Wealth" is to train the reader in admitting that God's ways are not the ways of the world. A saint recognizes this doctrine and chooses the other-world orientation, "But God doth more esteem/Mens virtues than estates" ("Wealth,"II,2). Using the example of Lazarus and Dives, Wigglesworth presents the theme of this section of the poem—riches can indeed be a stumbling block to salvation by limiting one's ability to maintain a spiritual orientation ("Wealth,"I, 4-5). Nevertheless, he holds back from establishing a clear link between physical poverty and spiritual abundance. God's ways remain too mysterious for Wigglesworth to limit them ("Wealth,"I,7).

The reader is urged to accumulate spiritual treasures—virtues—which are never subject to the decay wealth and possessions suffer:

For Riches profit not
When as the day of Wrath
Is come ("Wealth,"II,4).

Possession of the Lord and participation in the Covenant ("Wealth," III,5) free the saint from enslavement to perishable earthly possessions ("Wealth,"III,4-6). Finally, the reader is reminded that his only real needs are spiritual and that God Himself provides all man needs, "He knows what things will most/Unto thy
The section titled "In Confinement Liberty" sets out to prove and plainly shew ("Confinement","epigram") that sin and corruption—the signs of personal liberty—lead to the destruction of the soul ("Confinement","I,3-4"). Ironically, however, man's refusal to heed the doctrines of the church and his choice to demonstrate his personal liberty by sinning will only make him a slave to Satan in eternity, "His sins, like Gords, shall hold him fast,/And Satan's Prisoner make" ("Confinement","I,10"). This section develops the paradox that in subduing the will the soul experiences simultaneously confinement and liberty ("Confinement","II,3"). The poet then invites the reader to identify typologically with a catalogue of saints who found spiritual comfort despite physical banishment. Jacob, Moses, Daniel, John, Paul and Silas ("Confinement","III,2-5") all testify to the fact that the possession of God alone frees man and acts to "weep us from the world" ("Confinement","II,5","But many have enjoy'd him most/in their Captivity" ("Confinement","III,6").

Section Six relies on the paradox that love of the world brings true loneliness because it blinds man to his spiritual home, "For when their Creature-comforts fail,/They're left alone indeed" (Solitude,"I,8"). The poet reminds the reader of the work's didactic purpose ("Solitude","II,1") and then concludes that God's ways cannot be debated. Merely to question the roles of suffering and loneliness in the reformation of the heart is an indication of one's degeneracy, "Justice can do no wrong,/Nor Mercy cruel be" ("Solitude","III,9").

To the suffering reader, Christ emerges as the best example
of a figure who suffered and triumphed ("Joy,"I,4). The poet asks the reader to find joy in his sorrows because they act like the purging of blood, releasing man from the control of vices ("Joy,"I,9-10). Their effect is to break the carnal heart, reducing man to spiritual passivity and thus insuring his spiritual triumph ("Joy,"I,11). To admit that human life is laden with pain ("Joy,"III,1) sets one's eyes on a future fulfillment in which joys are eternal ("Joy,"III,6-7). Comfort emerges from the knowledge that Christ Himself remembers the pains of human existence and will provide man with the grace he needs to achieve a spiritual perspective, "Yet of the Sorrows of his Saints,/A feeling he retains" ("Joy,"IV,11). The poem itself, then, provides a rational guide to the sorrows which plague man and offers relief to the reader wounded by pain and searching for an answer ("Joy,"I,2-3).

Perhaps the greatest irony which the poem develops is that of the eighth section. And yet "Life in Deaths" is a traditional Christian thought and is hardly startling in light of what has preceded it. For the saint, death is a termination of the woes of this world, a world the poet depicts in wasteland imagery:

This World's a Wilderness
To God's afflicted saint;
A place of Dangers, Fears and Foes,
A place of Woes and Wants ("Life,"I,1).

Disposing of this world is readily welcomed by one who has adopted the poet's other-world viewpoint, "It is a bridge whereby/We pass to heavenly rest" ("Life,"epigram).
For the saint, then, death is to be welcomed and entered into with joy. The vices and sins which plague man, hardening his heart to God's love, will vanish:

Our hearts no more shall swell,
Nor these our unsubdued Wills
Against his will rebell ("Life,"II,2).

Wigglesworth compares death to the passage through the Red Sea and the entrance to the promised land, "Pharaoh (the Devil) with his Host/Can us no more pursue" ("Life,"II,6). For the saint who has accommodated suffering and its lesson of repentance and meek submission into his life, the reward eventually arrives ("Crows,"I,3). However, Wigglesworth draws back from asserting that man can win salvation for himself. Weekly suffering is merely the seal of sainthood, not the cause, he asserts. God alone retains the power to make men saints, "'Tis not the Suff'ring but the Cause [God]/That doth a Martyr make" ("Crows,"I,8).

The reader is brought into typological identification with Christ who transcends His role as victim, "When Christ was crown'd with Thorns,/And smitten with a Reed" ("Crows,"I,1) and becomes Christus Triumphants, "His Crown of Glory wear;/Who for our sakes did wear those Thorns" ("Crows,"I,2). Similarly, the saint will reap his eternal reward:

So shall th' afflicted Saints,
That suffer for his sake
E're long be crowned like their Head
And of his joyes partake ("Crows,"I,2).

Wigglesworth then dares the reader to choose the pains of hell,
"Well, chuse to burn, if that be best; / Chuse Hell, and Heaven refuse" ("Crowns,"III,9) reminding him however that one demonstrates his wisdom by aligning himself with Christ and the glories of salvation:

This were a fearful choice.
What then? Will you be wise?
Oh be so; get a part in Christ:

Him love, him seek, him prize ("Crowns,"III,9).

The poet then contrasts the glories of eternity with the miseries of earthly existence in a propagandizing appeal to the emotions. The reader is invited to contemplate a description of the calm and rest which flood heaven:

Oh happy, happy Souls
That in God's Bosome rest!
That of the Fountain of all Bliss
Already are possest!
Your Labour's at an end

Your seed in tears was sown ("Crowns,"IV,10).

The technique is particularly effective. For the saint who agrees with the poet's description of the sorrow and pain of the world, it is but a simple task to accept the premise that heaven will be completely different. For those who desire fleeting joys on earth, the poet can offer only scorn. However, through submission and faith—and the knowledge of the path to salvation which the poem provides—an eternal reward comes ("Crowns,"V,11-12).
Notes to Chapter V


5 Crowder, *Featherbed*, p. 135.


Conclusion
And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, . . . for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers, If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

Deuteronomy 30:9-10
In the two works he wrote to prepare for his death, works which retain the public and didactic purposes of his previous writings despite their personal aspect, Wigglesworth dwells on the now familiar theme of rejection of this world. In "Death Expected and Welcomed" the long life amidst the "Sins and Griefs" of this world gives way to "sweet Rest" in heaven.\footnote{This is the title of the poem.} However, Wigglesworth continues to stress the doctrine of man's depravity. It is finally God alone who possesses the power to save man's soul, "Oh! do not now my sinful soul forsake,/ But to thyself thy Servant gath'ring take" ("Death," p.111). And yet the poem's tone is "Trusting" and calm ("Death, p.111), expressing in Crowder's words total faith, "the sweetness of acceptance that would come only with complete faith."\footnote{This is a quote from a different source.}

The other poem, "A Farewell to the World," offers a final dismissal to a hostile world, one which Wigglesworth realized exiled man from his true home:

Now Farewell, world, in which is not my Treasure;  
I have in thee enjoy'd but little Pleasure.  
And now I leave thee for a Better place,  
Where lasting Pleasures are, before Christ's face.\footnote{This is a quote from the poem.} "Farewell" returns to the admonitory tones one finds in works like "God's Controversy with New-England." Aimed at a particular group or object, each stanza employs the technique of direct address either to condemn or to offer comfort. New England is admonished for failing to heed the message of the Gospels and risks the punishment of "a dark Egyptian night"
("Farewell," p.112). Saints and servants of the Lord, on the other hand, are reminded that their spiritual states are precarious and that they must not slip into sloth and spiritual self-confidence ("Farewell," p.112). Wigglesworth propels them toward self-effacement, "Eschew Will-worship and Idolatry" ("Farewell," p.113). He comforts "Friends and dear Relations" with the belief that the proper end of the good life is a death which "frees me from all my Pain" ("Farewell," p.113). Although it is part of God's creation, the body itself is finally dismissed as a "clog" which stands in the way of perfection ("Farewell," p.114).

Suffusing these last two works is a gentle and quiet optimism, a feeling of serenity, and the realization of a battle well-fought, with success imminent. The lesson of his own life and the message contained in these last poems vindicate his entire literary output. Wigglesworth phrased his works in the familiar terms of the Puritan dilemma—forced to do battle, often with excruciating pain as the Diary reveals, in this world, yet also required to deny any final importance to this world.

In all his works, the effect is to convince one of the reasonableness of assuming the other-world orientation. This world becomes merely the landscape in which one prepares for eternity. Wigglesworth's writings succeed as propaganda, not because they tamed a hostile world, but because they repeatedly directed man's attentions to a goal around which he could center all his activity. They provided for the mastery of the world by the rejection of it. In the words of Allen Tate, the writings
of figures like Michael Wigglesworth present a view of life filled with dramatic and religious intensity. These writings "gave final, definite meaning to life, the life of pious and impious, of learned and vulgar alike. . . . [They] gave an heroic proportion and a tragic mode to the experience of the individual. . . . [They] dramatized the human soul." 4
Notes to Conclusion


Bibliography


