DIGITAL ACCESS TO SCHOLARSHIP AT HARVARD
DASH.HARVARD.EDU

HARVARD LIBRARY
Office for Scholarly Communication

The election of Henry Ware: Two contemporary accounts edited with commentary

Citation
Wright, Conrad. 1969. The election of Henry Ware: Two contemporary accounts edited with commentary. Harvard Library Bulletin XVII (3), July 1969: 245-278.

Permanent link
https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.INSTREPOS:37363815

Terms of Use
This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA

Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.
Please share how this access benefits you. Submit a story .

Accessibility

The Election of Henry Ware: Two Contemporary Accounts

Edited with Commentary

Conrad Wright

THE election of Henry Ware as Hollis Professor of Divinity in 1805 occasioned bitter controversy at the time, and has always been recognized as a crucial episode in the history of Harvard College. It was the first phase of what Professor Morison has called "a college revolution,"[1] which was completed a year later by the election to the presidency of Samuel Webber. Since both men were liberals in religion, replacing Calvinists, these related events, and the angry response they called forth, had lasting consequences for the College. But they had larger implications as well, since they precipitated the Unitarian controversy, which profoundly altered the ecclesiastical landscape of New England. Before a generation had gone by, the congregational churches of the Standing Order in Massachusetts were divided into two denominations, the orthodox or Trinitarian Congregationalists on the one hand, and the Unitarians on the other.

Yet there has always been some obscurity about the precise sequence of events leading up to Ware's election, and especially about the situation within the Corporation, which was initially responsible for the choice of a professor; and the familiar accounts would seem to be misleading in significant respects. It has generally been assumed that in the Corporation, then made up of six men, there was a rigid division along theological lines, repeated balloting over a period of time, and perhaps a series of tie votes, until finally the liberals exerted enough pressure to force a change of one vote and to carry the day.[2] No doubt

[1] Samuel Eliot Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard* (Cambridge, 1936), p. 187.

[2] See, for example, such various authorities as: William B. Sprague, *The Life of Jedidiah Morse, D.D.* (New York, c. 1874), p. 59; Earl Morse Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism in Transylvania, England, and America* (Cambridge, 1952), p. 405; James King Morse, *Jedidiah Morse: A Champion of New England Orthodoxy* (New York, 1939), p. 94.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

the basis for this interpretation is the statement by Dr. Jedidiah Morse — a member of the Board of Overseers and in a position to know something of what went on in the Corporation — that the members of the Corporation "were at one time equally divided between two candidates," and that "the choice was finally, after several weeks, determined by the change of an individual vote." [3] This comment is correct as far as it goes, but as much cannot be said for some of the conclusions extrapolated from it. That the two candidates were the Reverend Henry Ware of Hingham and the Reverend Jesse Appleton of Hampton, New Hampshire, was at best an ill-kept secret. But precisely what the line-up within the Corporation was, who supported which candidate, who it was who changed his vote, and what his reasons were, Morse's statement does not reveal.

It is possible to reconstruct the sequence of events within the Corporation with some confidence, however, because of the existence in manuscript of two accounts by direct participants, together with certain ballots in the handwriting of the Fellows of the Corporation themselves. The existence of these materials is not a new discovery — one of the inside accounts was known to President Quincy in 1840, when he wrote his *History of Harvard University* — but they have never been analyzed in such a way as to fit disparate fragments into a coherent account. What they reveal very clearly is that, while theological and ecclesiastical factors finally were expressed in the outcome, considerations of a very different sort played an equally crucial part in the deliberations; that there was actually a good deal of give-and-take, as well as some intransigence, in these discussions; and that a compromise proposal, though it lost by one vote, drew support from both factions.

The two inside accounts, printed below from the original manuscripts, are: (1) extracts from the diary of the Reverend John Eliot, as copied into the commonplace book of his brother, Ephraim Eliot; [4] and (2) a narrative account prepared by Professor Eliphalet Pearson in January 1805, which stops short of the crucial meeting on Feb-

[3] Jedidiah Morse, *The True Reasons on Which the Election of a Hollis Professor of Divinity in Harvard College, Was Opposed at the Board of Overseers, Feb. 14, 1805* (Charlestown, 1805), p. 27.

[4] The commonplace book of Ephraim Eliot, formerly belonging to Professor Samuel Eliot Morison, is now in the library of the Boston Athenaeum, the Director of which has consented to publication of the relevant passages. Another transcript of the same diary entries was made by the Reverend John Pierce in his manuscript

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

ruary first of that year, when the election finally took place.[5] These materials tell a story that could never be reconstructed from the official records of the Corporation, which do little more than indicate that the subject was under discussion, with no mention of trial ballots or defeated motions.

The story begins in August 1803 with the death of Dr. David Tappan, who had been Hollis Professor since 1792. Tappan, a Calvinist but not a dogmatizing one, was respected and liked by many whose religious views were more liberal than his. In the terminology of the day, he was a "moderate Calvinist," but he nevertheless retained the confidence of the "Arminians" or "rational Christians" who were moving in the direction of Unitarianism. One of the liberals characterized Tappan thus in his diary:

> From education, from his connexions, and from the general course of his studies, his sentiments were calvinistical. But never were "orthodoxy and charity" more closely allied, than in him. Indeed, his calvinism was of the moderate kind; and, though he was firmly fixed in his own opinions, far from being dogmatical or pertinacious, he was desirous of correcting his own errours, and was willing, that others should enjoy their sentiments.[6]

President Joseph Willard, like Tappan, was a moderate Calvinist; and apparently he hoped to replace Tappan with a man of similar views. Professor Pearson's assertion in his narrative account that Willard was opposed to the election of Henry Ware, and that "he would sooner cut off his hand, than lift it up for an Arminian Professor," is detailed and circumstantial enough to be credible, even though an assertion to the contrary was made in the public press at the time.[7] Willard's difficulty apparently was that he could think of no candidate among the Calvinist clergy who was anywhere nearly as plausible for the position as Henry Ware, who was understood to be a liberal. He therefore procrastinated; and more than a year went by with no dis-

"Memoirs," now in the Massachusetts Historical Society. Ephraim Eliot's version includes some explanatory notations by Professor Joseph McKean, however, and so has been chosen for the present publication.

[5] Pearson's narrative account was prepared for polemical purposes and with a view to publication, but events apparently moved too fast for him. Both a first draft and a fair copy are in the Harvard University Archives, together with the handwritten ballots and other memoranda saved by Pearson. These materials are reproduced with the consent of the Custodian of the University Archives.

[6] "Memoirs" of the Reverend John Pierce of Brookline, I, 125, 27 August 1803. MS., Massachusetts Historical Society.

[7] *Columbian Centinel*, 21 November 1804.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

cussion in meetings of the Corporation even of possible candidates, let alone any nomination. In September 1804 some criticism of the delay began to appear in the Boston papers. Presumably these comments were not wholly disinterested. They may well have come from those who felt that Ware was an obvious choice, and who wondered whether there might not be more than met the eye in the failure of the Corporation to act.

On 25 September 1804, before he could make up his mind, President Willard died. Since one of the Fellows, Dr. Simeon Howard, had died in August, there were now two vacancies. A meeting of the Board of Overseers was immediately called to authorize the filling of these vacancies. The Overseers advised an election to replace Howard, but they recommended that the professorship be filled before the presidency. Dr. John Eliot, minister of the New North Church in Boston, was promptly elected to the Corporation, and on 30 October 1804 the Overseers unanimously concurred. Since the presidency remained unfilled, Professor Pearson, as senior member of the Faculty, assumed the responsibilities of that office in the "immediate government" of the College, and he also presided in meetings of the Corporation, of which he had been a member since 1800.

There were now six members of the Corporation, whose opinions, prejudices, and quirks of character were to determine the direction and control of the University for the next century at least. Oldest both in years and in service to the College was Ebenezer Storer. A Boston merchant and man of affairs, he had been the Treasurer of the College since 1777, and had filled the post with notable success despite the uncertainties of war and a fluctuating currency. He had held a number of town offices at the time of the Revolution, and at a later date was a founder of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was a prominent member of the Brattle Street Church, of which he had at one time been a deacon, and the presumption is that he participated in the gradual drift of the church in the direction of liberalism. At the very time that the controversy in Cambridge was heating up, the Brattle Street Church was calling and ordaining Joseph Stevens Buckminster, who clearly belonged in the liberal camp. It is recorded that Storer's disposition was notably "tolerant and pacific," and that he had a "naturally mild and social temper."[8] He was much attached

[8] Clifford K. Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, XII, 211. A leaning towards liberalism in theology is suggested by the fact that Storer owned a copy of the

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

to President Willard, though at the same time he was emphatically in favor of the election of Ware; and he was one who pressed for action when the orthodox members of the Corporation were resorting to tactical delays.

Next in order of seniority was Dr. John Lathrop, minister of the Second Church, whose election as a Fellow dated from 1778. A native of Connecticut, he was a graduate of Princeton, and had been a Calvinist in his younger years. His theological development was typical of that of many of his contemporaries who gradually moved in an Arminian and Unitarian direction without there being any occasion for a sharp break with the old Calvinism. His church moved with him, and on his death in 1816 it called Henry Ware, Jr., to be his successor.[9]

Judge Oliver Wendell was named to the Corporation in 1788. Like Storer he grew up in the Brattle Street Church. His daughter Sarah, however, was the second wife of the Reverend Abiel Holmes of Cambridge, whose orthodoxy eventually led to controversy and schism in the Cambridge church; and Holmes was a Yale classmate of Dr. Jedidiah Morse of Charlestown, who led the opposition to Ware's election in the Board of Overseers. Furthermore, Wendell had been one of the trustees of Phillips Academy in Andover when Pearson was Preceptor there. He was therefore closely connected by personal and kinship ties with the orthodox group. In the controversy he sought to play a mediating role, but when his attempts at compromise failed, he finally voted for the Calvinist candidate.[10]

Professor Eliphalet Pearson had been elected to the Corporation in 1800; he continued nevertheless to serve as Hancock Professor. Earlier he had been the first Preceptor of Phillips Academy, where he was long remembered without affection for the strictness of his discipline. At Harvard he was widely unpopular with the students; and those who disliked him accused him of being partial, "having favorites, for whom nothing was too good, & butts, whom he delighted to torment." [11] A man of dominating physical presence, he was as over-

---

Philadelphia edition of Richard Price, *Sermons on the Christian Doctrine* (1787), now in the Andover-Harvard Library.

[9] William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York, 1856–1865), VIII, 68–72.

[10] Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, XIII, 367–374.

[11] Pierce, "Memoirs," VII (1837–38), 308. MS., Massachusetts Historical Society. For a more contemporary comment on Pearson's personality, see Samuel Cary to

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

bearing when presiding at meetings of the Corporation as he was in the classroom. Ambitious to become president, he was chiefly successful in antagonizing those on whose good opinion he was dependent. In the controversy, the inflexibility with which he adhered to the Calvinist cause came as a surprise; and Dr. Eliot, at least, reached the conclusion that ambition much more than genuine conviction was the explanation. Recollecting the events at a much later date, John Pierce went so far as to categorize Pearson as "ultra-liberal" in theology until the death of Willard. "He then suddenly claimed to be orthodox; & the change was so sudden & thorough, without the appearance of better motives, that a large proportion of his old friends considered him as merely acting a part." [12]

In 1806, when the Corporation was on the point of choosing Professor Samuel Webber to fill the post that Pearson felt was properly his, Pearson resigned both his professorship and his seat in the Corporation, complaining that developments in the University compelled him to take such a view of its "radical and constitutional maladies" as to exclude any hope of useful service. A committee of the Board of Overseers consulted with him and reported that its members did not share his gloomy fears about the future of the College, but finally recommended that the resignation be accepted.[13] Pearson returned to Andover, where he interested himself in the affairs of Andover Theological Seminary, only to discover that he was no happier there than he had been in Cambridge. By the time of his death in 1826 he had slipped into relative obscurity.[14]

Judge John Davis began a long stint of service to the University in 1803. He was successively Fellow (1803–1810), Treasurer (1810–1827), and Overseer (1827–1837). A native of Plymouth, he had moved to Boston in 1796, when appointed United States Attorney. In 1801 John Adams named him Judge of the United States District Court, where he served with distinction for forty years; his contem-

---

Mrs. Sarah Atkins, 19 March 1806, *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, III (1900), 177–179.

[12] Pierce, *loc. cit.*

[13] Josiah Quincy, *The History of Harvard University* (Cambridge, 1840), II, 286–288.

[14] Sprague, *Annals*, II, 126–131; Claude M. Fuess, *An Old New England School* (Boston, 1917), Ch. 5; Leonard Woods, *History of Andover Theological Seminary* (Boston, 1885), pp. 51–53, 145–147; John Pierce, "Memoirs," VII (1837–38), 308–309; N.S., III (1845), 222–223, MS., Massachusetts Historical Society.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

poraries regarded his work in the field of admiralty law as especially important. He was a member of the Federal Street Church, of which he was a deacon for many years. He was interested in matters scientific and literary, and was President of the Massachusetts Historical Society from 1818 to 1835. Memoirs of him after his death are uniformly eulogistic, and make a point of stressing his unruffled and judicial temper. In the controversy of 1805, so far as the evidence shows, he did not play an especially aggressive role.[15]

Finally, there was Dr. John Eliot, elected just in time to be thrust into the midst of conflict. A graduate of the College of the class of 1772, a year before Pearson, he had succeeded his father as minister of the New North Church in 1779. He was one of the founders of the Massachusetts Historical Society and very active in its affairs. Like many of the liberals of that generation, he was deeply averse to theological controversy, and the extent to which he had departed from the orthodoxy of the creeds is indicated not so much by what he said as by the studied way in which he restricted himself to the language of Scripture whenever he touched on disputed topics. His reaction to the controversy over the Hollis Professorship is quite apparent from the extract from his diary printed below. It is clear that Professor Pearson's personal jibes at him, as though he were another schoolboy in the classroom, helped to sour the atmosphere in which the discussions were carried on.[16]

The first meeting of the Corporation after Eliot joined it was on 3 December 1804. During the preceding month there had been renewed criticism in the Boston newspapers of the delay in filling the vacant professorship. It was even asserted that the income from the Hollis endowment had been misapplied to other uses because the lottery to raise funds for the erection of Stoughton Hall had yielded less than expected. A spokesman for the orthodox group — who may well have been Dr. Jedidiah Morse, though proof is lacking — had warned of the danger that the governing boards might choose "professed Unitarians" for the professorship and the presidency. Prodded by public opinion from without and by the insistence of the Treasurer from within, the Corporation began its discussion of the question at

[15] Convers Francis, "Memoir of Hon. John Davis, LL.D.," *Coll. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, 3rd Ser., X, 186–203; Ezra Stiles Gannett, *A Good Old Age* (Boston, 1847).

[16] Sprague, *Annals*, VIII, 92–99; Joseph McKean, "Memoir Towards a Character of Reverend John Eliot, S.T.D.," *Coll. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, 2nd Ser., I, 211–251; [James Freeman], *The Character of Rev. John Eliot, D.D.* (Boston, 1813).

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

that meeting. Professor Pearson was obviously dismayed by the demands for action, preferring to have no professor at all rather than run the risk of the election of a liberal.

At the next meeting on 7 December the Professor came prepared with a carefully wrought-out argument.[17] "He made a most solemn speech," Eliot recorded, "in which he told us how much he had prayed & thought upon this matter — that we were under a necessity of Electing a Calvinist — from the Records of the *College*, the public mind, the character of former professors &c." His performance at this meeting lost him the sympathy of Eliot, who thereafter referred to him in his diary as "Megalonyx." Not only did Pearson subject Eliot to personal abuse, but he gave the impression that his defense of orthodoxy was motivated by calculations of personal as well as party advantage. In the afternoon, according to Eliot, "a great secret was communicated," which he expected would soon become a matter for public discussion. It is a plausible surmise that Pearson had let slip the fact that he hoped to be elected president himself.

At a meeting on 15 December at the home of Judge Davis, the only tangible accomplishment was a definition of the duties of the professorship. It is probable that individual names were discussed on this occasion. Either at this meeting or at the next one, at Judge Wendell's on 26 December, each Fellow of the Corporation jotted down two names of candidates worthy of consideration. Since Pearson carefully saved the original slips of paper and the handwriting can be identified, there is solid evidence as to the preferences of each of the Fellows.[18] Contrary to what historians have generally supposed, the names offered for consideration did not follow a rigid pattern of ecclesiastical parties or factions. Pearson and Wendell both named two orthodox ministers, to be sure: Jesse Appleton of Hampton, New Hampshire, and Joshua Bates of Dedham. Judge Davis and Dr. Eliot both suggested Henry Ware of Hingham and John Pierce of Brookline, who were liberals.

[17] A memorandum in the "Pearson Papers" in the University Archives seems to be Pearson's outline for the remarks he made on this occasion.

[18] These slips of paper, now in the University Archives, are reproduced as Figures 2–14. They are not dated, and it is impossible to say for sure at which meeting they were used. But it is not probable that they date from the meeting of 1 February 1805, since the trial ballots of that date were on different paper, and variations in the handwriting suggest a different occasion and different pens. This procedure of nomination was also used on 11 December 1805, when the Corporation was attempting to elect a president, the chief difference being that instead of listing two names, each of the Fellows listed four.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

But Lathrop named Ware and Bates, while his willingness to consider Appleton is revealed by the fact that in November he had sought information on the latter's qualifications from his cousin, Dr. John Lathrop of West Springfield. Storer's choices likewise included both a liberal and an orthodox candidate: "Mr. Ware" and "Mr. Payson." Presumably Payson was the Reverend Seth Payson, a country parson in Rindge, New Hampshire, who not long since had written a book supporting Jedidiah Morse's charge that a secret organization, the Order of the Illuminati, was conspiring to overthrow the governments of Europe and America and introduce anti-Christian principles. Payson's older brother, recently deceased, had been well known in Boston, since he had been for many years the minister in that part of Chelsea now known as Revere. It is recorded of Payson that in early life he had had some leanings toward Arminianism, but that he "settled down into a decided Calvinist." [19]

In short, the Corporation was made up of two men clearly on the orthodox side and four liberals, two of whom were ready to consider either a liberal or a Calvinist for the professorship. As the discussion proceeded, however, a stalemate developed, with three men supporting Henry Ware while three backed an orthodox man — presumably Jesse Appleton, though the nomination slips by themselves do not rule out the possibility of three votes for Pearson's preferred candidate, Joshua Bates.

Henry Ware, the candidate favored by the liberals, was then forty years of age. A graduate of the College of the class of 1785, he had been minister in Hingham for seventeen years. His liberal sympathies were indicated by the wording of a catechism he had prepared in collaboration with his neighbor, the Reverend Daniel Shute of the Second Parish in Hingham, which was Arian rather than Athanasian. A man of spotless reputation and a certain sweetness or gentleness of character, he afforded no opening for attack on personal grounds.[20]

The Reverend Jesse Appleton was also an attractive candidate, well liked by both liberals and orthodox. Only thirty-three years old, he was a graduate of Dartmouth and had been minister in Hampton, New Hampshire, since 1797. Dr. Joseph Lathrop, who had directed his

[19] Sprague, *Annals*, II, 210. There is a sketch of Payson in the *Dictionary of American Biography*.

[20] Cf. George H. Williams, ed., *The Harvard Divinity School* (Boston, 1954), pp. 39–41, and the sources cited there.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

theological studies, gave him a warm recommendation in response to Dr. John Lathrop's inquiry, previously mentioned:

> He is an accomplished scholar, an able divine, an accurate reasoner, an elegant writer, an agreeable speaker; easy in his manners, pleasant in conversation; evangelical, but liberal in his sentiments; and he appears to possess a serious & pious mind. . . . Probably the choice of a Professor is already made. If it is, I hope it has fallen on as good a man, as Mr Appleton; I much doubt, whether it has fallen on a better.[21]

But the Faculty and tutors at Harvard were not favorably disposed, Pearson himself preferring Joshua Bates of Dedham to Appleton. It may well be that they were influenced, as was Dr. Eliot, by the fact that he had a "dissonant & unpleasant" voice — an obvious disqualification for a man who was expected to conduct public worship for the College. Though passed over for the Harvard post, Appleton's abilities were recognized in 1807, when he was named President of Bowdoin.[22]

In view of Ebenezer Storer's emphatic preference at a later date for Ware over all other candidates, it is plausible to assume that he joined Davis and Eliot in supporting him on 26 December. This would mean that Lathrop voted for an orthodox candidate, and was the one who shifted to Ware a month later. Meanwhile, because of the stalemate, the suggestion was made that the advice of the Overseers be sought. Pearson was immediately aroused, fearing that this move would play into the hands of his opponents. The Board of Overseers was then made up of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Governor's Council, Senate of the Commonwealth, and the ministers of the congregational churches of the "six towns" — that is to say, the original towns first settled by the Massachusetts Bay Puritans. This body was accustomed to assemble in full session only in February and June, when the General Court was meeting. Between times, necessary business was transacted by thinly-attended meetings made up predominantly of the clerical members, who were overwhelmingly liberal in sentiment. Pearson could readily anticipate what kind of advice such a rump session would give. Yielding to his protests, the Corporation did not formally vote to seek the advice of the Overseers, but it did request a meeting to deal

[21] Joseph Lathrop to John Lathrop, 12 Nov. 1804, as extracted by Eliphalet Pearson. MS., "Pearson Papers," Harvard University Archives.

[22] There is a sketch of Appleton in the *Dictionary of American Biography*; see also Sprague, *Annals*, II, 380–389.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

with other business, knowing full well that the matter of the professorship would surely be raised by some one of those present. After all, three members of the Corporation were also on the Board of Overseers, since Lathrop and Eliot were Boston ministers and Judge Wendell was a member of the Governor's Council.

Fifteen Overseers attended the meeting on 3 January 1805. It was one of the liberals, no doubt, who urged that the tie could be broken if the vacant presidency were filled. Those maneuvering for delay replied that this was so serious a matter that it should be referred to a full meeting of the Overseers, and they pointed to the requirement in the College Charter for "a general meeting of all the Overseers and Society, in great and difficult cases, and in cases of non-agreement." A motion to refer the matter to the whole board was voted down, however, and the Corporation was duly advised "to proceed to the choice of a president of the college . . . with all convenient speed, and present him to the overseers for their approbation." The orthodox were much exercised by these votes, since Lathrop and Eliot did not disqualify themselves as Overseers from giving advice to themselves in their other capacity as members of the Corporation. Had they done so, a tie would have resulted, and the motion that actually passed would not have prevailed.[23]

By the time the Corporation next met, on 1 February 1805, Judge Wendell was advocating a compromise.[24] Why not elect Ware as president, he suggested, and Appleton as professor. Appleton was surely the kind of moderate Calvinist whom many liberals could happily accept, and such a compromise was a plausible way out of the impasse. But Pearson saw his chance of becoming president suddenly evaporating, and he violently opposed Wendell's suggestion. Storer felt that Ware was better fitted to be professor than president, while Eliot still worried about Appleton's dissonant and unpleasant voice.

Although several of the Fellows thought it premature to elect a

[23] The meeting was attended by nine clerical and six lay members, but the Lieutenant Governor presided and did not vote. Lathrop, Eliot, and Wendell are all listed in the minutes as being in attendance. It should be noted that Pearson was very critical of the two members of the Corporation who voted with the majority, but says nothing of the third member, who apparently did not disqualify himself either.

[24] That Wendell was the author of the compromise is the testimony of Sidney Willard, the son of President Willard. See Sidney Willard, *Memories of Youth and Manhood* (Cambridge, 1855), II, 174.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

president, it was agreed to take a straw vote to see how Wendell's proposal would fare. Five of the six trial ballots have survived (Figures 15–20), and they reveal that the compromise failed by the narrowest of margins. Ware received four votes for president, those of Lathrop, Wendell, Davis, and Eliot; but Appleton lost Eliot's vote for the professorship. To his lasting regret, Eliot cast his ballot for John Pierce of Brookline. Storer's ballot is missing, but by a process of elimination it becomes clear that he insisted on voting for Ware for the professorship, and gave his vote for the presidency to John T. Kirkland. Pearson would accept neither half of the compromise. For professor he named Joshua Bates, the minister in Dedham, while for president he supported "Dr. Smith," who may very well have been Samuel Stanhope Smith, the President of Princeton, a Presbyterian minister and an acquaintance of Jedidiah Morse.[25] Since Appleton did not receive a majority on the trial ballot, the compromise failed, and a formal ballot was taken for the professorship only. Ware got four votes, now including that of Lathrop, while Appleton, too late, received Pearson's as well as Wendell's.

Regardless of how one assesses the blame for the failure of the compromise, it is clear that nontheological and nonecclesiastical factors played a large part in the outcome. The final vote on 1 February 1805 was actually the only time when the Corporation divided along strictly factional lines. While Pearson clearly felt that theological considerations outweighed all else, the other members of the Corporation were reluctant to see the vote rest on such grounds. Indeed, months later, when nominations for the presidency were called for, Pearson was the

[25] The identification of Pearson's choice as Dr. Samuel Stanhope Smith is at best an inference, but one which now seems to me more plausible than my earlier suggestion that it might have been Dr. John Smith of Dartmouth. (See Conrad Wright, *The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America*, Boston, 1955, p. 279 note.) Pearson and Morse were the closest of collaborators at this time, and Morse was eager to cultivate contacts with Presbyterians from the middle states. Furthermore, Pearson's list of nominees for the presidency at the meeting of 11 December 1805 strongly suggests an interest in Presbyterians from outside New England. He named, in order, "Dr. Smith," "Dr. Green," "Dr. Cutler," and "Mr. Mellen." If Smith was probably Samuel Stanhope Smith, Green was surely Dr. Ashbel Green, who became President of Princeton in 1812, when Smith resigned. Cutler was Dr. Manasseh Cutler, minister in Beverly and prominent in Federalist party politics. Mellen was doubtless the Reverend John Mellen, a former Tutor, a Dudleian Lecturer, and a member of both the Historical Society and the American Academy, who had recently resigned his pastoral charge at East Barnstable because of his wife's ill health and had moved to Cambridge.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

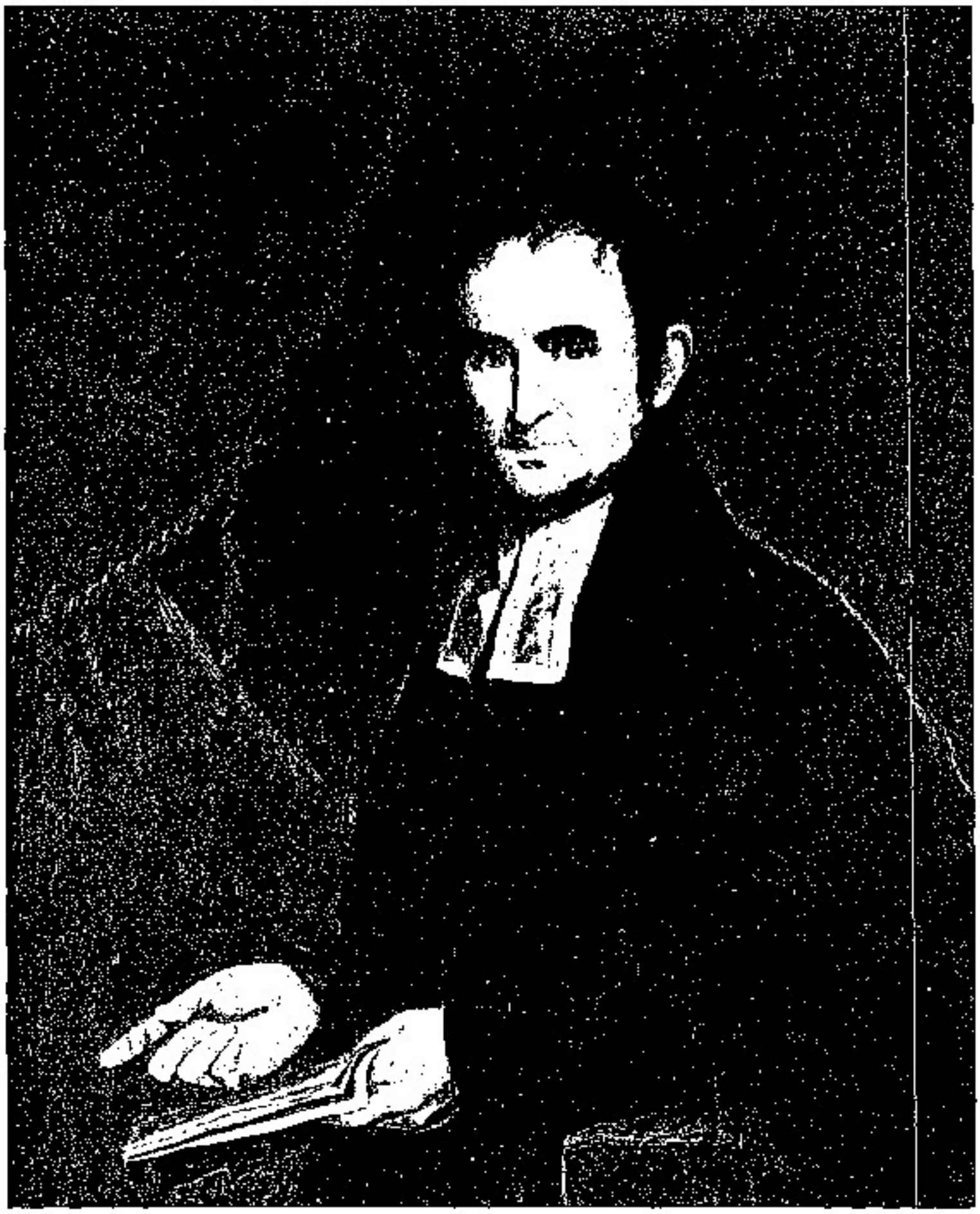

FIGURE 1

HENRY WARE

COPIED BY GEORGE FULLER FROM ORIGINAL PAINTING BY FROTHINGHAM (?)

(Reproduced by Permission of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Gift of Dr. Charles E. Ware)

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

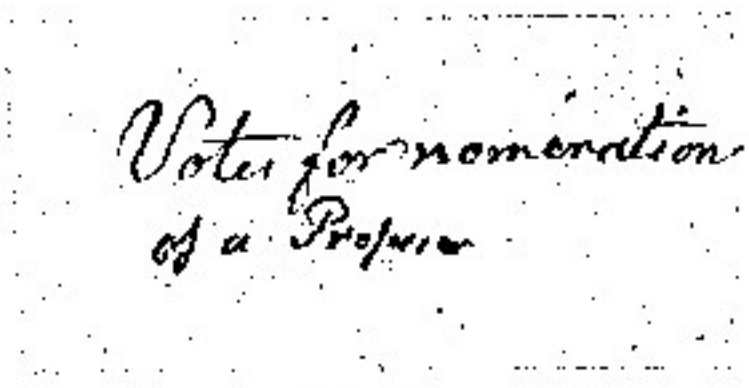

FIGURE 2

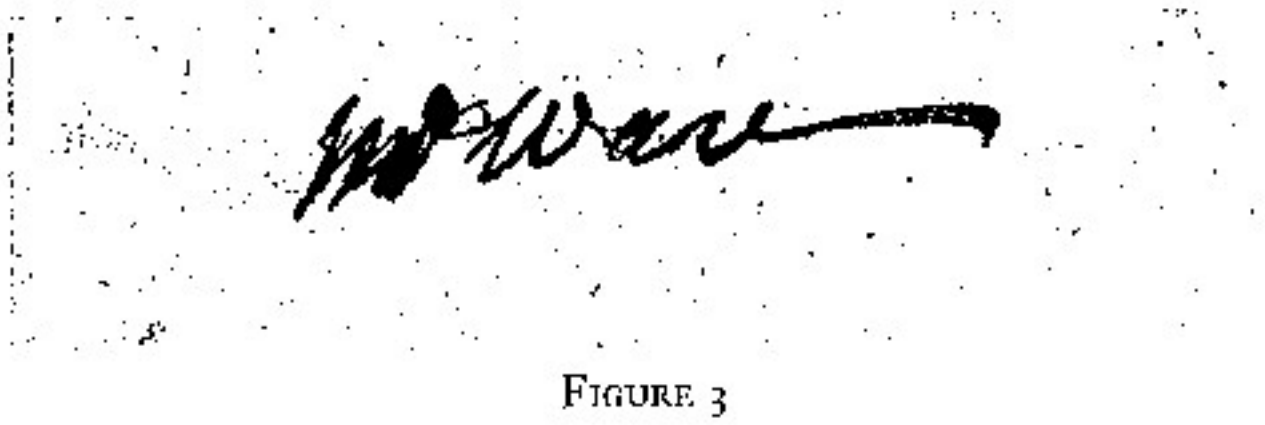

FIGURE 3

FIGURE 4

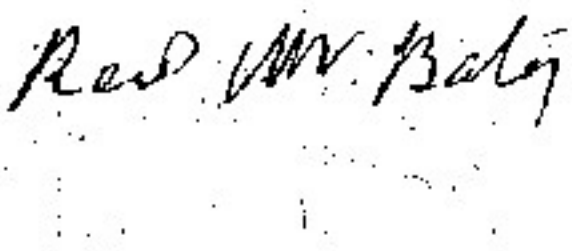

FIGURE 5

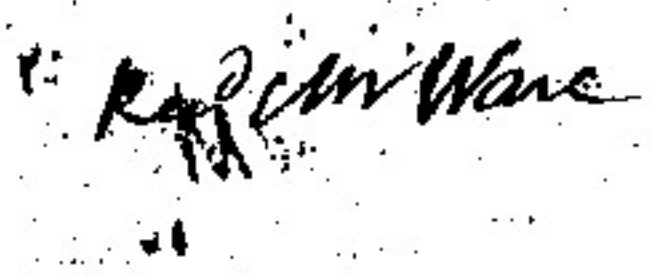

FIGURE 6

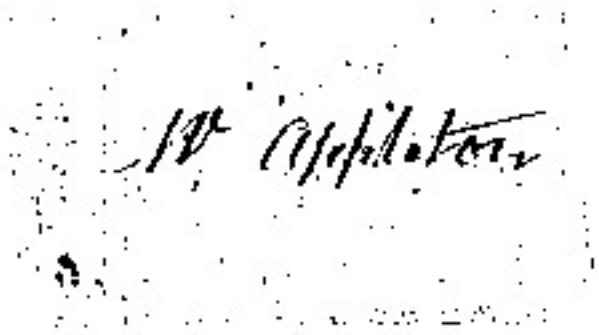

FIGURE 7

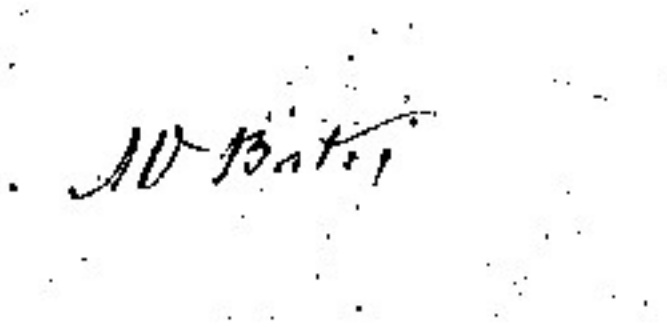

FIGURE 8

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

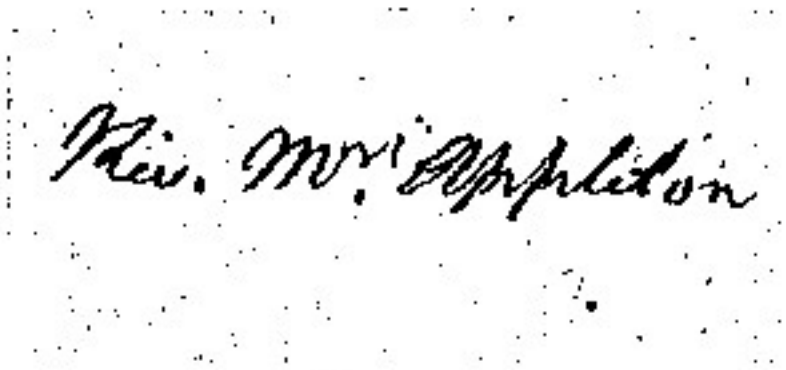

FIGURE 9

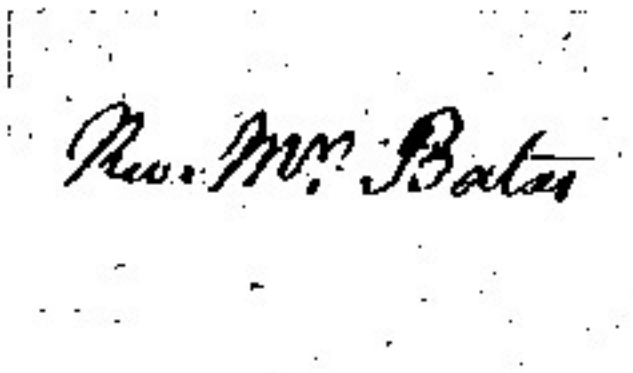

FIGURE 10

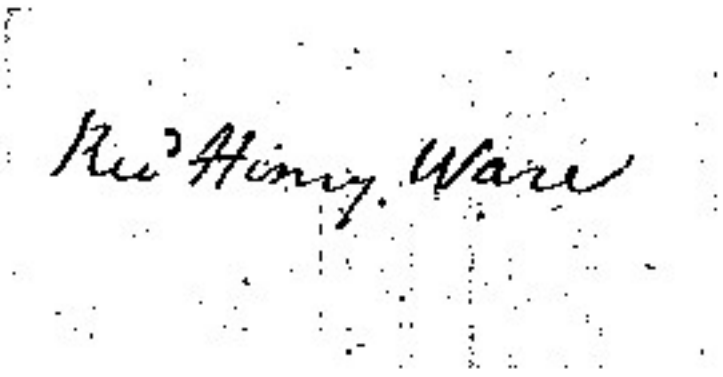

FIGURE 11

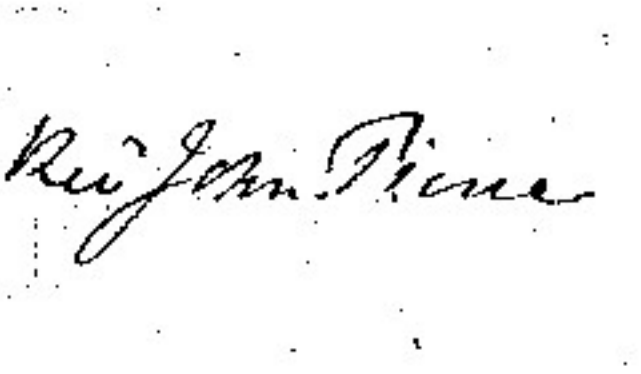

FIGURE 12

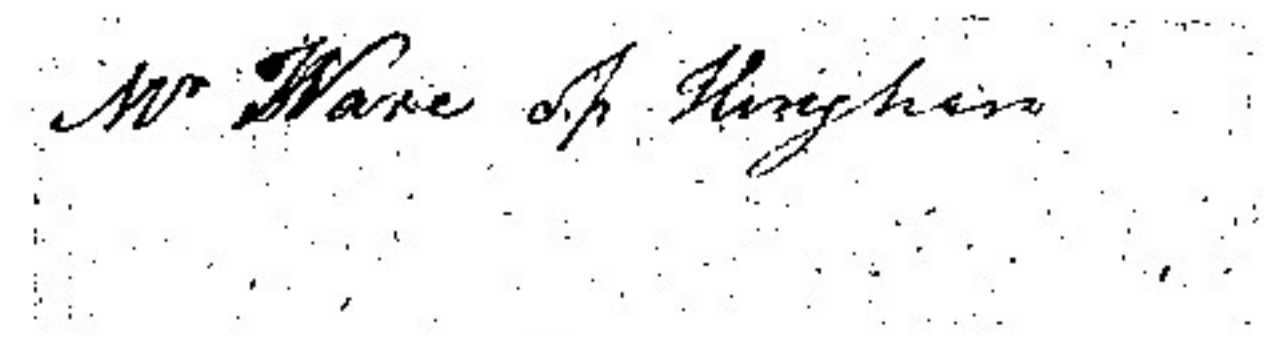

FIGURE 13

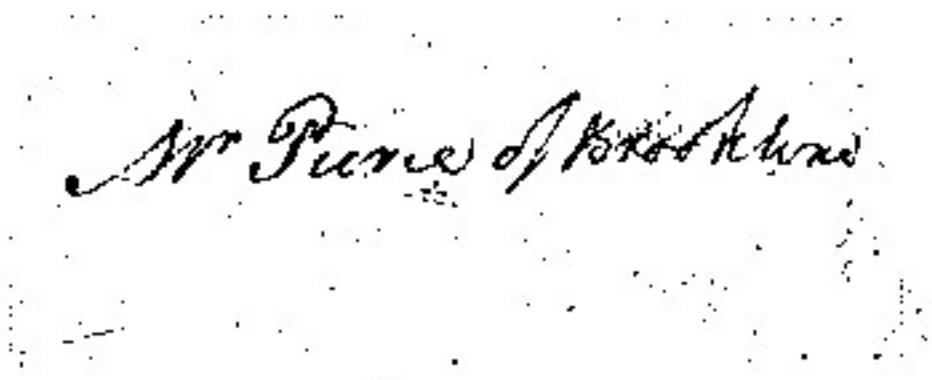

FIGURE 14

NOMINATION SLIPS, 15 or 26 December 1804
(Originals in the Harvard University Archives)

FIGURES 3 AND 4 — EBENEZER STORER
FIGURES 5 AND 6 — DR. JOHN LATHROP
FIGURES 7 AND 8 — JUDGE OLIVER WENDELL
FIGURES 9 AND 10 — PROFESSOR ELIPHALET PEARSON
FIGURES 11 AND 12 — JUDGE JOHN DAVIS
FIGURES 13 AND 14 — DR. JOHN ELIOT

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

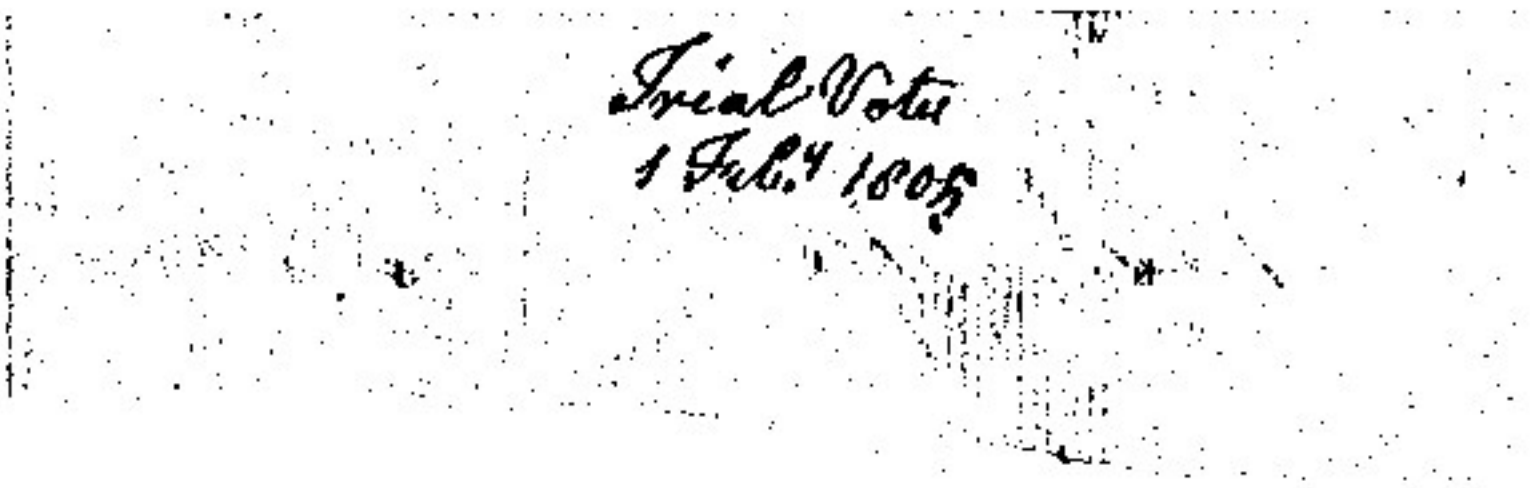

FIGURE 15

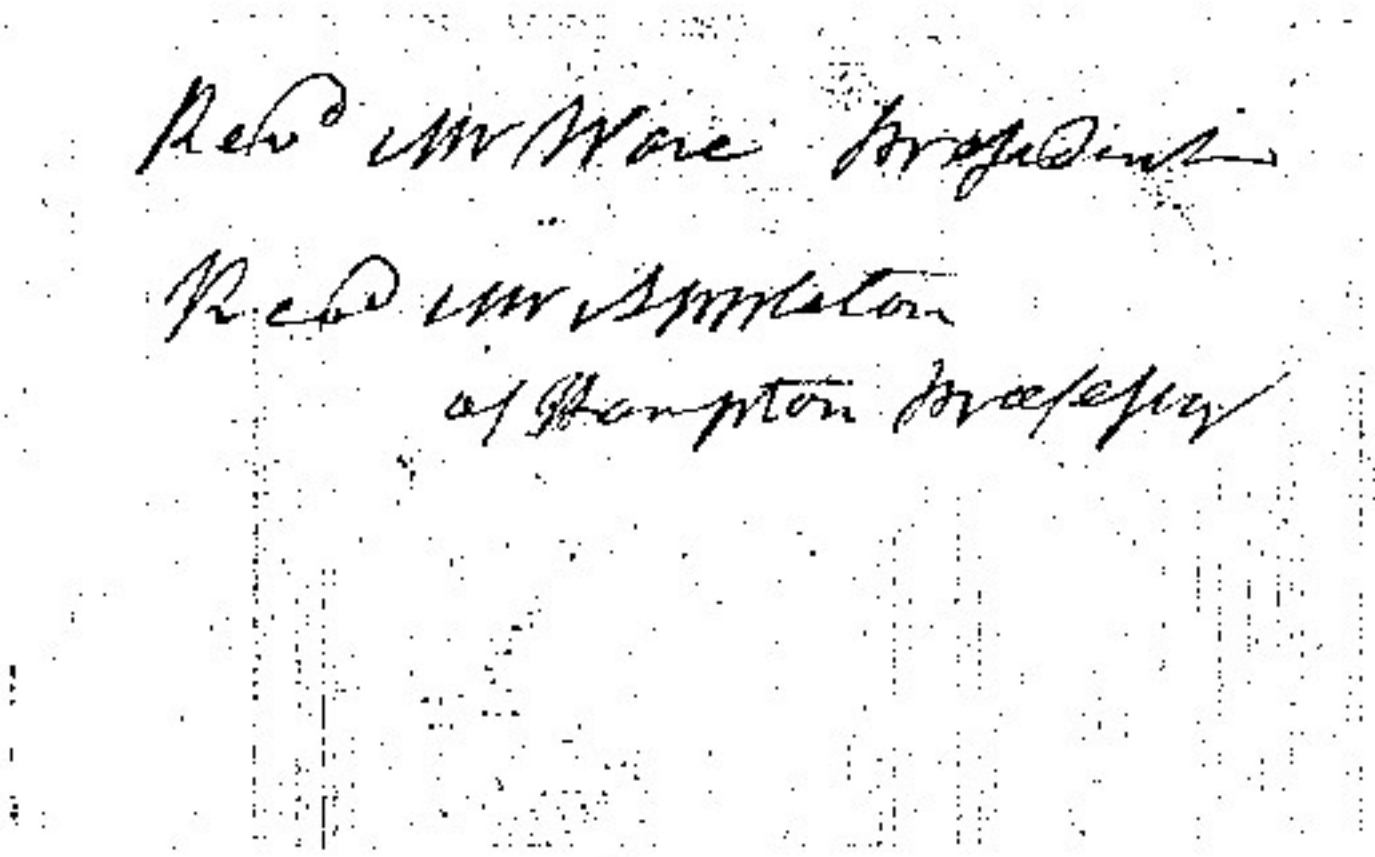

FIGURE 16
DR. JOHN LATHROP

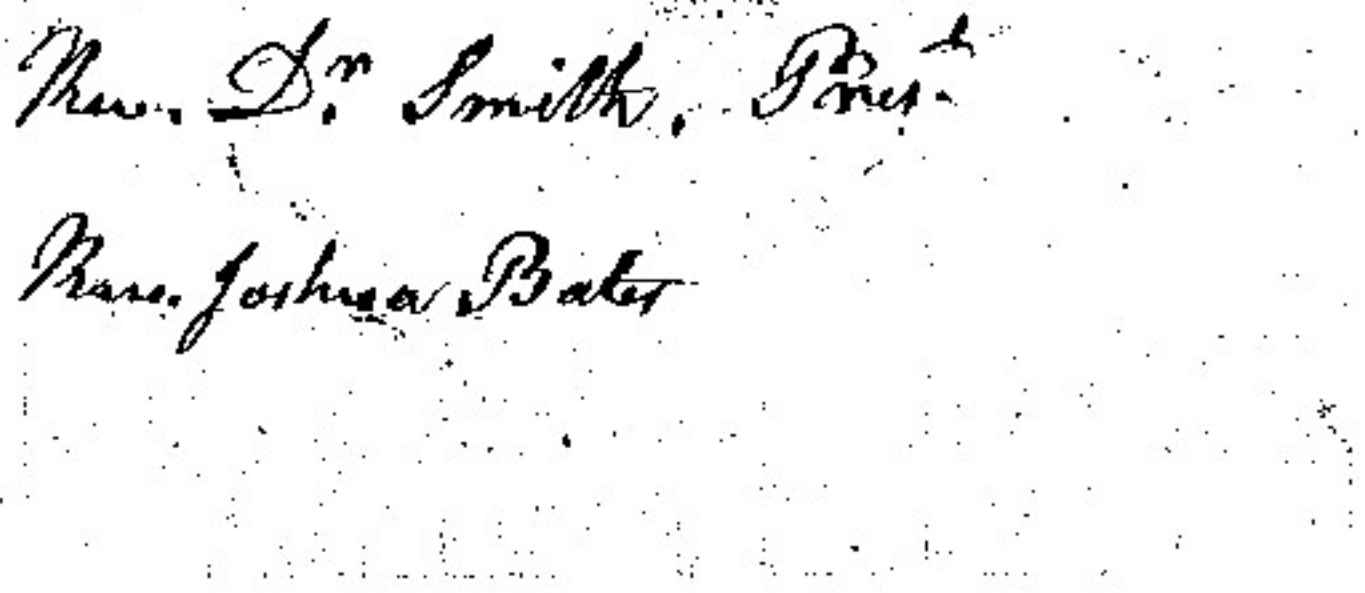

FIGURE 17
PROFESSOR ELIPHALET PEARSON

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

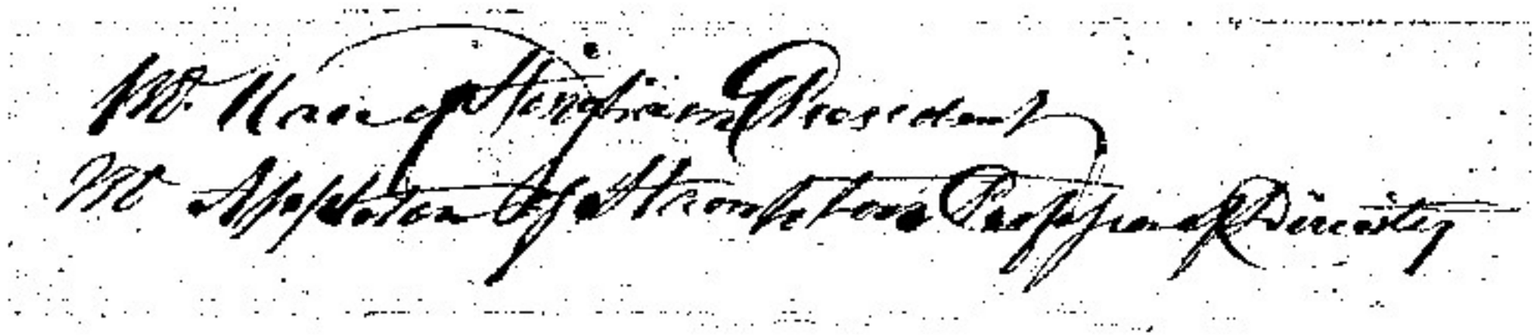

FIGURE 18 (VERSO of FIGURE 15)
JUDGE OLIVER WENDELL

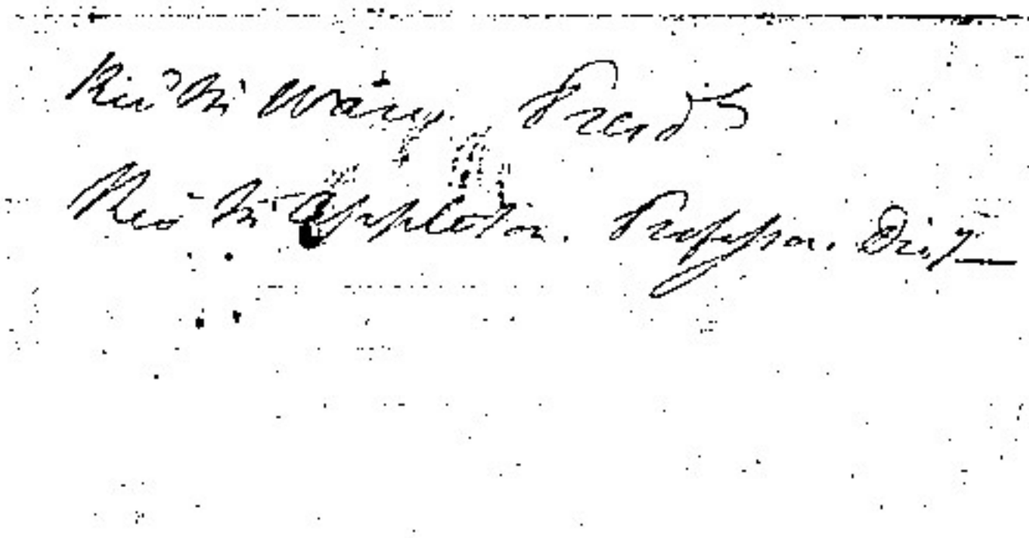

FIGURE 19
JUDGE JOHN DAVIS

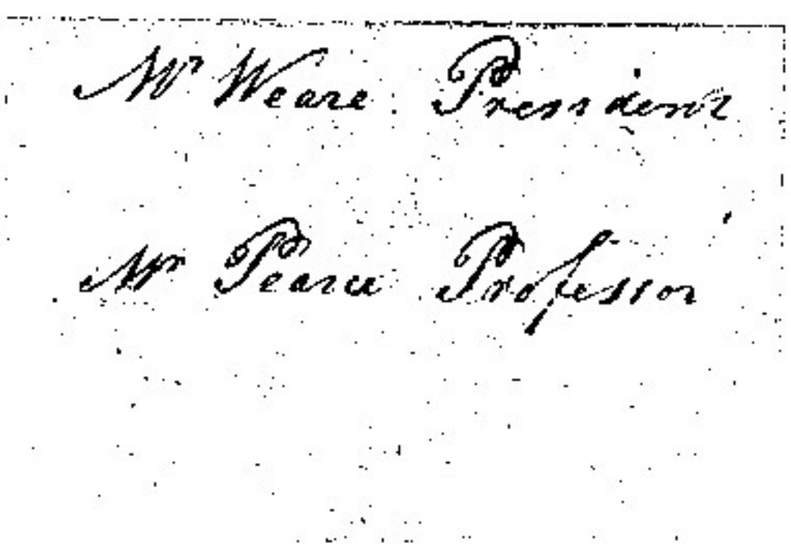

FIGURE 20
DR. JOHN ELIOT

(Originals in the Harvard University Archives)

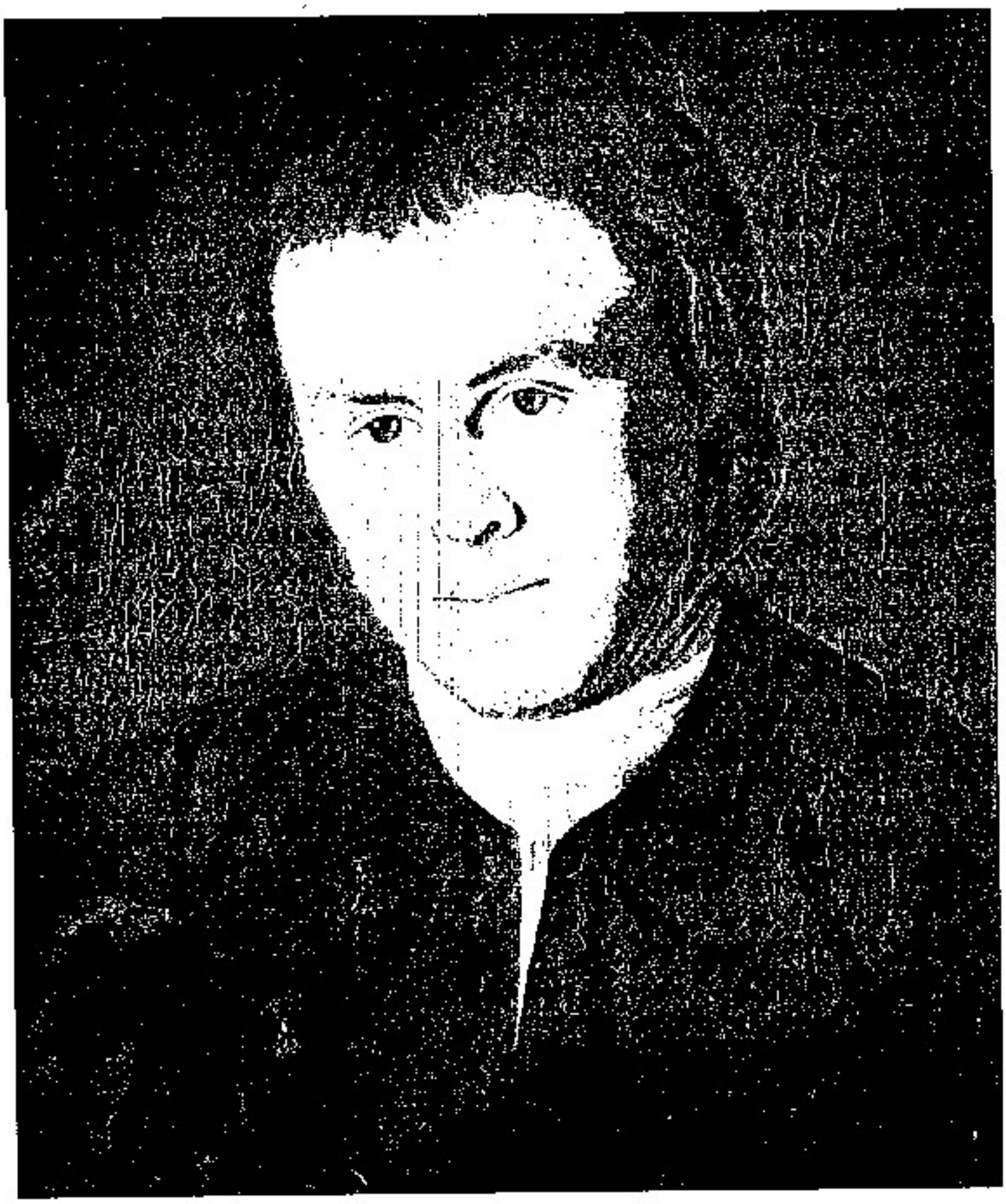

FIGURE 21
JOHN ELIOT (1754–1813)
BY SAMUEL KING
(Reproduced by Permission of the Massachusetts Historical Society)

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

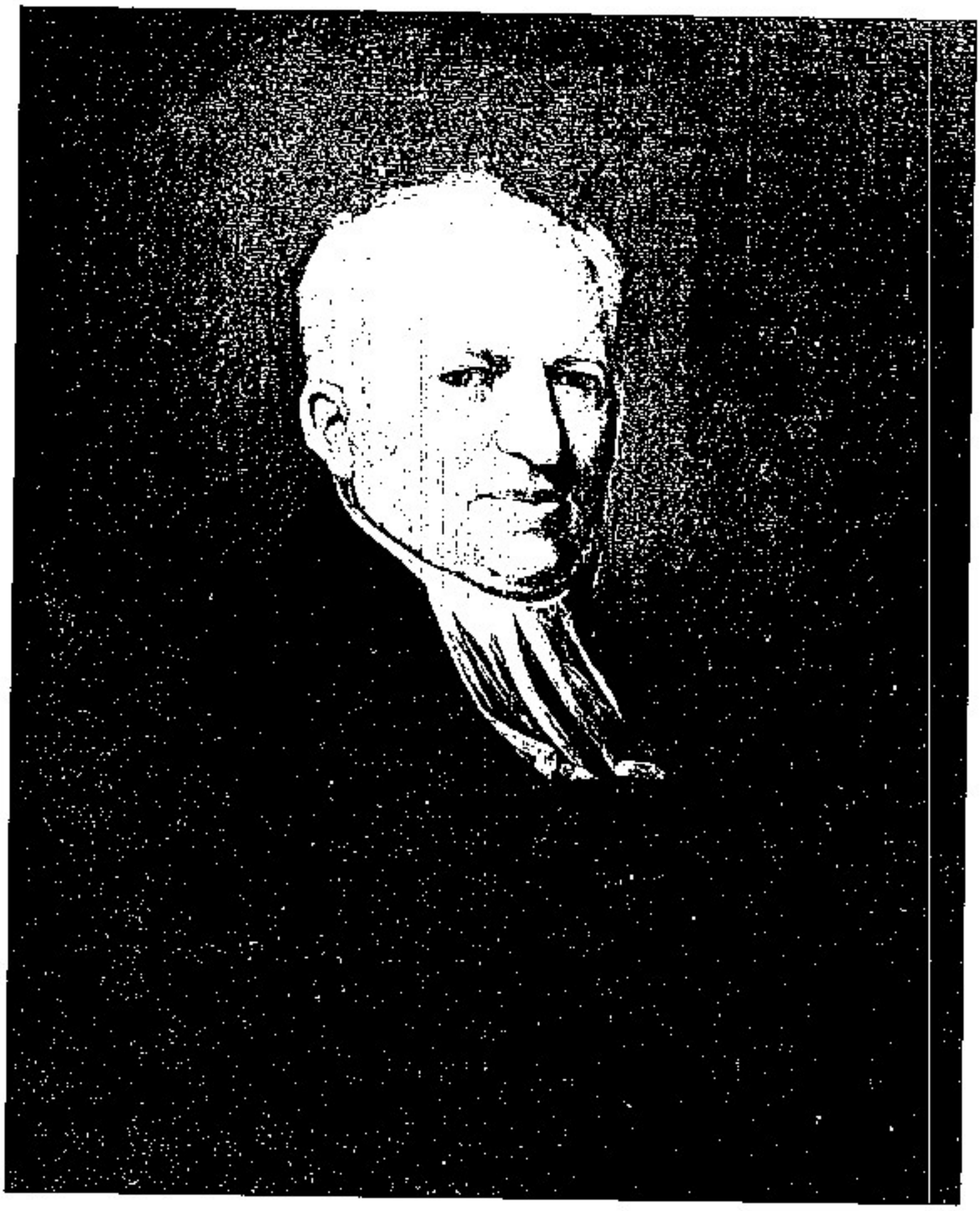

FIGURE 22
ELIPHALET PEARSON
BY SAMUEL F. B. MORSE
(Reproduced by Permission of Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts)

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

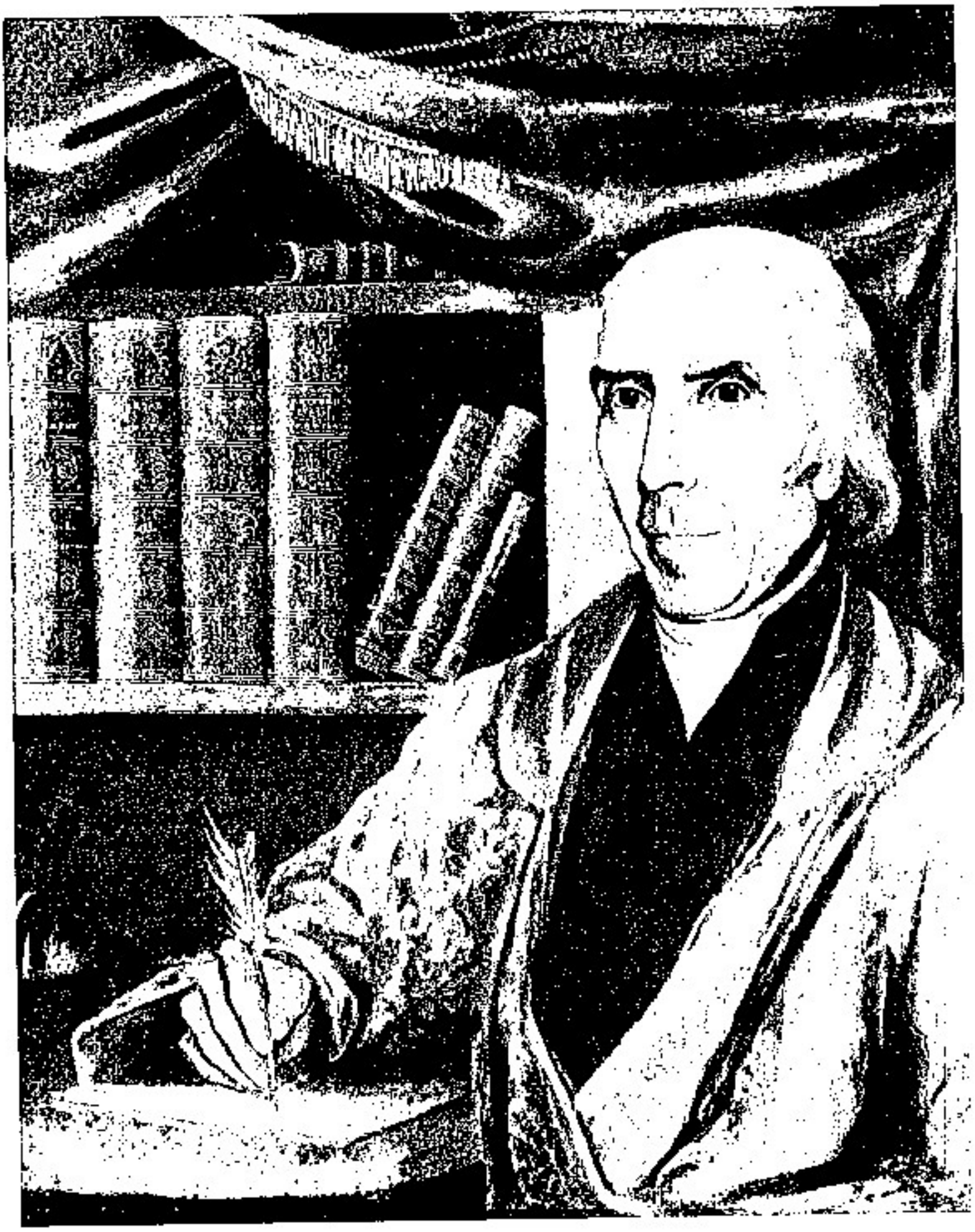

FIGURE 23
JEDIDIAH MORSE
BY SAMUEL F. B. MORSE
(Reproduced by Permission from the original in the Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of Miss Helen E. Carpenter)

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

only one who would suggest none but men of his own theological persuasion for the post. Judge Davis and Dr. Lathrop as well as Judge Wendell were even willing to consider Pearson himself, despite all that had happened.

The public at large could hardly have been aware of such non-theological factors affecting the Corporation's decision as the problem of Appleton's speaking voice, the clash of personalities between Pearson and Eliot, and Pearson's presidential ambitions. When the nomination went to the Overseers for concurrence, therefore, the only issue that was open to discussion was the interpretation of the terms of the Hollis gift and the propriety of electing a liberal to the chair. The situation was ready-made for those who, like Dr. Morse, disapproved of friendly cooperation between the liberals and the orthodox and were eager to widen the cleavage between them. Morse played a role in the Board of Overseers equivalent to the one Pearson had played in the Corporation; he seems to have been, even more than Pearson, the one who shaped the strategy of the orthodox party and sought to exploit the issue for partisan ends.[26] If he could not prevent the election of Ware, he could at least try to convict the liberals of a breach of trust, and thereby discredit them in the eyes of the general public.

Interest was sufficiently aroused so that the attendance at the meeting of the Overseers on 14 February 1805 was unusually full. Ordinarily fewer than thirty of the lay members would turn out for such a meeting. This time forty-five of forty-seven were present and were joined by twelve of the seventeen clerical members. Senator Enoch Titcomb of Newburyport, a member of the "Old South" or Presbyterian church there, who had been carefully briefed in advance by either Morse or Pearson, inquired into the terms of the professorship as laid down by the donor, and asked what procedure the Corporation had followed to satisfy itself that Ware's doctrinal views were in accordance with the terms of the Hollis gift.[27] The main burden of

[26] Morse's activities in trying to rally the orthodox in opposition to Ware are revealed in a letter to Dr. Joseph Lyman of Hatfield, dated 27 December 1804. This letter must have been occasioned by the meeting of the Corporation the day before, and it points to the close collaboration between Morse and Pearson, as well as the active part the former was playing even while the matter was still in the hands of the Corporation. The original letter is in the Houghton Library at Harvard; selections made from a copy in the Morse Papers at Yale may be found in Morse, *Jedidiah Morse*, p. 90.

[27] Morse, *True Reasons*, p. 19.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

attack, however, was assumed by Morse. The crux of the debate was the requirement that the electors should "prefer a man of solid learning in divinity, of sound and orthodox principles." [28] For Morse and the other Calvinists, the term "orthodox" could mean only one thing, the orthodoxy of the Westminster Confession. Thomas Hollis was not an Arminian or a Unitarian, they insisted, and would never have countenanced the election of a man who so far departed from sound doctrine. It was surely culpable negligence that the Corporation had not made formal inquiry into Ware's doctrinal views, as had been done on earlier occasions, most notably when the first Professor Wigglesworth had been named in 1722.

Of those who replied to Morse, only Samuel Dexter, Jr., can be positively identified. According to John Pierce, "by an appeal to Hollis's statutes, and a convincing address to the reason and understanding of the Board, he turned the counsels of this busy heresiarch into foolishness." [29] The position taken by the liberals was that Hollis, as a Baptist, had himself departed from Westminster standards, and was distinguished by nothing so much as his generous regard for, and willingness to work with, men with whom he was not in entire doctrinal agreement. His own minister had refused to make the Westminster Confession the test of orthodoxy and insisted on the Bible as the only standard. Hollis' concern that his endowment should be administered in accordance with his prescribed rules and orders derived from his fear that they would be given a narrower construction than he intended, and that groups like the Baptists might find themselves excluded. Most important of all, he had deliberately set aside creedal definitions of "sound and orthodox principles" when he prescribed that the only article of belief to be required of his professor would be "that the Bible is the only and most perfect rule of faith and practice," and that it is to be interpreted "according to the best

[28] Quincy, *History of Harvard University*, I, 248.

[29] See John Pierce, "Memoirs," N.S., III, 224. MS., Massachusetts Historical Society. There is a sketch of Dexter in the *Dictionary of American Biography*. He was the son of the Samuel Dexter who gave to the University the endowment for the Dexter Lectureship on Biblical Criticism. A lawyer and an exceptionally capable advocate, he had been a Congressman, United States Senator, Secretary of War, and Secretary of the Treasury. In 1805 he was a member of the Governor's Council. He was to cross Morse's path on later occasions, most notably as one of the referees in the dispute between Morse and Miss Hannah Adams, by which Morse's reputation was largely destroyed.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

light that God shall give him." [30] In short, the election of a man like Henry Ware was no breach of trust, since he qualified by the only standard of orthodoxy that Hollis himself had attached to his foundation.

It is a curious fact that we know more about what went on in the closed meetings of the Corporation than we do about the semi-public meeting of the Board of Overseers, attended by fifty-seven men. The arguments advanced by the orthodox may be found in Morse's pamphlet, published within a matter of weeks, entitled *The True Reasons on Which the Election of a Hollis Professor of Divinity in Harvard College Was Opposed at the Board of Overseers.* The liberal position was stated in a reply to Morse by William Wells in the *Monthly Anthology* for March 1805.[31] But there was no listing of the yeas and nays to tell us how each man voted, nor did anyone save the ballots; hence there seems to be no way to determine the extent to which the voting reflected theological loyalties, or what to make of Wells's assertion that "political considerations . . . were the cause of opposition with the majority." [32] What we have is the official minute, recorded in Dr. Lathrop's hand: "After a long and patient discussion, the question for concurrence was called and the votes being taken by ballot, it appeared, that the Election of the Revd Henry Ware, Hollis Professor of Divinity, by the Corporation, was concurred by the overseers." [33] And we have scattered bits of information in Morse's

[30] Quincy, *History of Harvard University*, I, 538.

[31] *Monthly Anthology*, II (1805), 152–157. The final completed form of the liberal case may be found in Quincy, *op. cit.*, I, 230–264. Quincy had been a member of the Senate in 1805 and therefore on the Board of Overseers; he had attended the small meeting on 3 January 1805 as well as the full meeting on 14 February. His analysis of the issues carries special authority because of his personal involvement. By thorough investigation of the College Papers he added one significant point to the earlier case presented by the liberals, *viz.*, that the so-called statutes of the Founder were not of Hollis' devising but had been prepared in New England; and that while Hollis had no difficulty in accepting them, when he did so, in what seems to be a deliberate attempt at clarification of the wording of others, he added the provision, in the form of a declaration to be made by the professor, that the Scriptures were to be accepted as the only rule of faith. Quincy also offered evidence to show that the initial inquisition of Dr. Wigglesworth was done to satisfy a conservative Board of Overseers, rather than to meet any requirement of Hollis.

[32] *Monthly Anthology*, II, 152.

[33] Minutes of the Board of Overseers, 14 Feb. 1805. Harvard University Archives.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

pamphlet, most important of which is a report of the number of votes, 33 for concurrence, 23 opposed.[34]

After consulting with his church and receiving a dismissal by vote of an ecclesiastical council, Ware accepted his election. He carefully complied with the requirements of the founder by formally declaring, in the presence of the two governing boards, his belief "that the Scriptures of the old and new Testament are the only perfect rule of faith and manners," and promised to explain them to his pupils "with integrity and faithfulness, according to the best light, that God shall give me." [35]

At an elaborate ceremony on 14 May, Dr. Pearson had the unhappy duty of presiding over Ware's induction into office. His unhappiness turned to bitterness when the fact was doubly underscored that the other members of the Corporation were not going to elect him president. In December 1805 they chose Fisher Ames, who declined on account of ill health; and in February 1806 the discussion clearly indicated that Professor Samuel Webber would be the next choice. Then it was that Pearson abruptly resigned both as Fellow of the Corporation and as Hancock Professor. By that time he would not even accept an invitation to dine with the other Fellows.[36]

As Jedidiah Morse saw it, a revolution had taken place in the affairs of the College. For the first time in its history, the presidency and the professorship of divinity were held by men who could not be counted among the ranks of the Calvinists. Harvard had been faithless to the tradition by which it had been guided for more than a century and a half. An intensely partisan man, Morse interpreted these events in terms of party rivalries. He thereby intensified the sectarian conflict that was already latent in the community.

For the liberals, however, it was another Harvard tradition that was at stake. For a century, ever since the days of President Leverett, the perspectives of the College had been widening as the community it served became more heterogeneous. In the community at large, Calvinism no longer held a monopoly, and in the College, even under

[34] Morse, *True Reasons*, p. 27. The Governor presided, and presumably did not vote.

[35] A fair copy of this Declaration is in the "Henry Ware Papers." Harvard University Archives.

[36] Invitation from the Corporation to Pearson, 28 March 1806, and the draft of his reply. "Pearson Papers," Harvard University Archives.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

Calvinists like Leverett and Holyoke, a "free and catholic" tradition had developed, which declared that Calvinist and Arminian, and even Trinitarian and Arian, could cooperate for the common good. The liberals felt that this tradition was now threatened by a narrower sectarianism than had prevailed for many decades. William Wells spoke their mind in the *Monthly Anthology*, in February 1805:

> Feeling, as I do, most seriously interested in the prosperity of our Alma Mater, I shall lament, as deeply injurious to her usefulness and reputation, that hour, when her present liberal principles shall be exchanged for subscriptions to Articles of Faith; or, what is the same thing, when the belief of a certain speculative system shall be esteemed necessary in him, who aspires to the honourable station of an instructor of her sons.

The supporters of Henry Ware were successful, and we have been accustomed to define their success in terms of the election of a liberal to the Hollis Professorship. But one might argue that more important than the election of Ware, and even more fateful for both the College and the community, was the rebuff to Eliphalet Pearson and the defeat of Jedidiah Morse.

Doct John Eliots Journal

Corporation Meeting Decem. 3d —

The first time since I had the honour of belonging to the University. The *Professor* in the *Chair*. He prayed. An Arian prayer: as tho' studied. Introduced the business in 20 articles or more. Every thing so slow & *formal* that in my opinion accounts for the lassitude of our College affairs, the subject of universal complaint. Very much displeased at their manner of doing business. The *Professor* very loth to proceed to the election of a Prof. of Divinity was forced into the conversation by Mr Storer — and then would only talk upon general principles, as tho' he meant to draw us into a confession of the propriety of choosing a *Calvinist* — and with our own *weapons* to beat off *Ware*, or *Pierce* &c.

It was treating us as children, to bring on the business in this manner — One thing I was pleased with — otherwise the meeting wd have disgusted me. — It gave me sincere pleasure that all the accounts of the Prest funeral were granted, and 500$ given to the family —

Decemr 7

Corporation met at Cambridge. Megalonyx in the Chair. The business introduced. It was urged to choose a Professor of Divinity immediately. He made

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

a most solemn speech — in which he told us how much he had prayed & thought upon this matter — that we were under a necessity of Electing a Calvinist — from the Records of the *College*, the public mind, the character of former professors &c

He pleaded argued, scolded — discovered himself so much of the Jesuit as to bring about a wonderful revolution in my own mind. — Not that a Calvinist should be chosen! — but that this sage professor had a part to act, & was destitute of that moral sentiment wh I had always supposed had an influence upon his mind. He was ill humoured he is ever ill mannered. Upon this occasion he threw the foam of Billingsgate upon me, thinking he had a right to abuse me as I was a new member. He had two or three hours talk to no purpose but to pour out his own opinion, which had not the weight of a straw on our minds — nor had they much more solidity than a bubble. Thus passed the forenoon. P M. a great secret was communicated wh I will not reveal till allowed, but imagine this will soon become the publick talk.

This will account for much of the strange conduct, & the inconsistency of *Megalonyx*.

Decem:r [12] at Cambridge
at Boston the 15 — Judge Davis
26. Judge Wendel's

the whole conversation upon the professorship of Divinity. — On one side. It was said that the will of the Founder was for a Calvinist — that 19 out of 20 were Calvinists who wished the prosperity of the College. That None but a Calvinist was good enough. That they were better men than Arminians &c

It was urged, on the contrary, that Mr Hollis, supposing him a Calvinist, was so liberal as not to insist upon a man's believing as he did to be a useful Minister or professor. That he attended the church where the Minister was very heterodox. That he & his family always associated with the London Clergy who were liberal and against human creeds & confessions. That the word Orthodox was brought in to signify the general sentiments of the country — without meaning to confine it to the influence of a *Sect*. — That the Reformers were once the smaller party and that for the same reason every foundation in the European Universities was forfeited &c. This struck Megalonyx with some force. And he said in answer. It wd so far apply but that the Govern^ts had donated that property &c

If so — then why not Govern^t say what is Orthodoxy. It is a changeable thing?

As to the learned men in this country being Calvinists. It is not true. The Socinians make a considerable number. The Arians more. The Arminians a large no. of the Clergy and the principal among the laity. As to the Hopkinsians. They certainly are not Calvinists. They are most of them Arminians in some points — many of them Arians. Had the Clergy of Mass. decided whether Mr Ware sd be Professor, or an Hopkinsian — it would have carried more easily than his *Election* by the Corporation.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

1805. Feb 1st The piece below in the handwriting of Rev John Eliot was found by his son John & myself in a copy of the Triennial Catalogue interleaved, & which I now have, throws important light on the history of the College at that period; & of Doct Eliots after views of things

Signed Joseph McKean [37]

The original of the first in the hand writing of Rev. John Eliot and the original of Mr McKean's observation on the same paper, are in the possession of John Fleet Eliot.

viz. The corporation met at Cambridge at the house of Professor pearson — six present viz Mr W. — Dr L. the Treasurer, the professor, Judge Davis & myself — several articles of common business till 12 o clock. Then a debate whether to elect a professor of divinity — It was proposed by one gentleman, that we should proceed to elect a president as well as professor — and he proposed to elect Mr Ware president and Mr Appleton professor — Megalonix violently opposed to either — The Treasurer was against Mr Ware as president, but very desirous to make him professor — Judge W — much in favor of Mr Ware as president, but for Mr A. as professor. The other members against choosing a president at this meeting; but willing to make trial votes, & if agreed nearly, to make a serious choice of professor only — Several candidates mention'd for each office. At 4 o Clock the trial vote for president was Ware 4

Dr Kirkland 1
Dr Smith — 1

6

For professor Mr A. — 3
Mr Ware — 1
Mr Pierce — 1
Mr Bates. 1

6 — my vote for Mr Pierce, prevented the choice of Mr Appleton — for which I am now sorry — It was then agreed to vote for the professor of divinity, and that the gentleman who had the most votes should be sent up to the Overseers — Mr Ware had four votes Mr A. two. Tho I voted, it was my opinion that Mr —— should be president, & Mr Pierce professor. But if Mr Appleton had been elected professor, how much easier would things have been managed — I loved Appleton — but my objections were on account of his voice, which is dissonant & unpleasant, especially in prayer. I remembered Wigglesworth.[38] Another objection was, the immediate government of the College were all against him, both professors & Tutors. Even pearson was

[37] The Reverend Joseph McKean, Minister in Milton from 1797 to 1804, and Boylston Professor from 1809 to 1818, was an especially close friend of Dr. Eliot. The three lines that follow may be ascribed to Ephraim Eliot.

[38] The younger Edward Wigglesworth was Hollis Professor from 1765 to 1791. In later years he was much broken in health, and following a paralytic stroke in 1790, he was encouraged to resign.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

against him, though he voted for him merely to keep out Ware. He was for Bates, who would have made a good professor.

Intended Publication Relative to Choice of Professor of Divinity

1805

D[r] *Tappan* died 27th Aug[t] 1803. From this event to the death of President *Willard* the choice of a Professor of Divinity was not brought forward by the President, as an article of business, nor was it made a subject of discussion, at any meeting of the Corporation. At a meeting however on the 9th of June 1804, the subject being introduced by [a] member, "President *Willard*, D[r] *Pearson*, & Judge *Davis*" were appointed a Committee, "to examine the Rules & Regulations of the Professorship of Divinity, and consider, whether any alterations or additions be necessary, and to make report."

The object, contemplated in this appointment, was the extension of the usefulness of this Professorship, and the business of this Committee was considered, as naturally prior to the choice of a Professor, if not preparatory for it. The Chairman accordingly appointed a meeting of the Committee at Cambridge some time in July or beginning of August; but this meeting was prevented by Judge *Davis's* inability to attend it; nor did the Chairman after this ever appoint another meeting of the Committee.[A] The Corporation however had two meetings between that of the 9th of June & Commencement, without touching on the subject of choosing a Professor of Divinity.

D[r] *Howard* died 13 Aug[t], and President *Willard* 25 Sep[r] 1804, nothing more, as before stated, having been [done] by the Corporation or Committee relative to the vacant Professorship.

In the Centinel of the 1st of September, after some account of the public exercises at Commencement, it is added, "we expected to have heard announced the appointment of a Professor of Divinity; but did not. It is more than a year, since death made a vacancy in that Professorship. We hope it is not abolished. If it be, we cannot think the money, left by *Hollis*, can be appropriated in any other way to so good purpose."

In the Centinel of the 22[d] of Sep[r] also is another piece, dated the 18th Sep[r], under the signature of a *Parent*. This professes to be grounded on the former;

[A] This was probably owing, not only to the usual increase of the President's duties in y[e] term preceding Commencement, but to his daily attentions to the building of a new College,[39] to the impression of the Collectanea Graeca Majora,[40] with other extra duties, & to sickness.

[39] Stoughton Hall.

[40] The Cambridge edition of Andrew Dalzel, *Collectanea Graeca Majora*, was published in 1808.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

for the writer says, "I found in the account of Commencement an insinuation, as if the Professorship of Divinity was in danger of being abolished" &c. "My Minister tells me that the gentleman, who kept the office between the Elder Dr W. & the amiable Dr *Tappan*, was almost always too indisposed to give a lecture. It appears from every information, that a fair opportunity offers to fill this important place with a man of talents, learning, spotless Christian life, conduct, & doctrine, and in the vigor of life; and yet is the thing neglected. This tardiness creates uneasiness in the country" &c. "Our Minister assured me, & quoted his authority, that the *Overseers* have been very uneasy on this head; and had expressed their minds more than half a year since to the Corporation, and requested their immediate attention to the choice of a Professor." [B]

Here it may be remarked, that this unprecedented attack upon the Corporation of H. College commenced in the autumnal vacation, when the two members,[41] most intimately connected with the University, were necessarily absent on journies for health & business, and therefore unacquainted with it. It was not however on this account less calculated to produce its intended effect in Boston.

President *Willard* was entombed on Saturday P.M. the 29th of Sept^{r}, and such was now the promptitude of the Corporation to supply vacancies, that even during the funeral a meeting of the surviving members was called, and holden in the President's Study, for the double purpose of calling a meeting of the Overseers the next Thursday, "to acquaint them with the two vacancies, occasioned by the deaths of Dr *Howard* & the *President*," and for appointing another meeting of the Corporation the ensuing Friday.

A meeting of the Overseers was accordingly holden on Thursday the 4th Oct^{r}; and the next day the Corporation met. Being informed, that the Overseers advised to the choice of a *Fellow*, and that it was thought best, that the vacant Professorship be filled previously to the choice of a President, the Corporation did at this meeting proceed to the choice of a Fellow, though nothing more was done or said about the choice of a Professor. After transacting considerable other business this meeting was adjourned to the 23^{d} of Oct^{r}, which meeting failed through the necessary absence of the *Treasurer* & Judge *Davis*.

In the mean time a writer, who subscribes himself *A.M.*, comes forward in the Centinel of the 10th of Oct^{r}, and informs the *public*, what are the requisite qualifications in a *President* of the University. Had this writer allowed a due flow to the tears of the Electors, they might perhaps have thanked him for his counsel in a more delicate & private way.

A long absence of one of the members,[42] on necessary business, & various other causes rendered a full meeting of the Corporation, though repeatedly attempted, impracticable till the 3^{d} of December. Previously to this sundry pieces, relating to the University, appeared in the newspapers. Thus in the

[B] These assurances are so many falsehoods.

[41] President Willard and Professor Pearson.
[42] Judge Wendell, identified by name in Pearson's first draft.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

Centinel of the 14th of Novr, under the signature of *E*, is exhibited a long impeachment of the Corporation, introduced by this singular caption, "Remarks on the conduct of the *Corporation* of Harvard College in neglecting to choose a *Professor of Divinity*."

Having assumed it as a principle, that the Corporation are "public servants, & agents for the State," and having arraigned them before the Court of *public opinion*, this concealed accuser proceeds to observe that, "whether righteous or unjust, this judge will sit in judgment on the actions of public servants; she will be heard. To arrest her proceedings is impossible." — "In forming their opinions [i.e. the Corporation]" [48] the wishes of a majority of that portion of the public, which depends on the College for the education of its sons, should be attentively regarded.[C] In the election of a Professor of Divinity, deliberation & dispatch are equally necessary. Unnecessary delay is more reprehensible in this case, than in any other" &c. — He then proclaims the reasons, which, as he says, "the provoked impatience & dissatisfaction in the public mind" have assigned for this delay, viz.,

1. "That economical views have tended to delay the choice."
2. "This delay has been attributed to disagreement, or contrariety of opinion in the Corporation, and a tenacity of sentiment, too unyielding to sacrifice its favorite to the public good." — "Gloomy indeed is our prospect, if they intend waiting for unanimity."
3. "A third class have mentioned favoritism."
4. "A fourth class, reasoning, as they say, from *analogy*, have been uncharitable enough to suppose it inattention or neglect."

He concludes thus, "parents have reason for demanding a Professor to instruct their sons, or at least some information respecting the occasion of delay. They have complained. They do complain."

In the Centinel of the 21st of Novr the writer *E* is closely followed by *C*, his piece being dated 16th Novr, and the author probably not far from Boston. *C* says of *E*'s performance, "it has already done service by clearing some estimable characters of the imputation of neglect; and I mention with great satisfaction a fact,[D] relative to one, who cannot now answer for himself; I mean President *Willard*, who expressed to some of his nearest friends in the strongest terms, as the writer of this has been well informed, his ardent wish, that the

[C] Perhaps it might have been as well, to have left the Corporation to collect the public opinion for *themselves*, as had always been done on all former occasions of like nature.

[D] The real fact is this, President *Willard* was very anxious to have the chair of Divinity filled by an *orthodox Calvinistic* Professor of the same theological sentiments with Dr *Tappan*; and that he repeatedly declared to the writer of this note that "he would sooner *cut off his hand*, than lift it up for an *Arminian* Professor"; — that "we ought not to choose a man, upon whom even suspicion

[48] Square brackets in the original.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

office of the Professor of Divinity should be soon filled; and by the very man,[E] to whom the public have looked with undivided attention. This anecdote would not have been given to the public, had not the publication in your last implied a negligence somewhere; and those, who are living, can answer for themselves. Any *individual* management in this delicate business will hardly escape the notice of a discerning public."

Thus far all the writers on this subject in the Centinel (to say nothing of other Boston papers) appear to have had one object in view, viz., to impress on the Corporation, if possible, a conviction, that the public are *impatient* for the choice of a Professor, and that they are *united* in one man.

Knowing facts to be otherwise, and alarmed at the idea of the election of *Arminians* & *Unitarians* into College offices, *Amicus* appeared in the Centinel of the 24th of Novr. This writer, in opposition to the former, says, "though it is desirable for the Corporation to elect a President & theological Professor as soon, as possible; yet delay, yea a long vacancy is certainly preferable to a speedy election of gentlemen, whose cardinal sentiments do not harmonize with the gospel theory." — "We ask with a view for seasonable deliberation; *is there not reason to apprehend that some of the Corporation & Overseers are rather inclined to elect Unitarians, or those styled rational Christians, who even deny the proper divinity of the Saviour?*" — "The Founders of the College, when they fixed the corner stones, ardently prayed for an uninterrupted succession of devout, orthodox Officers, to direct & support the Institution. It is believed by gentlemen of goodness & information, that the two clerical characters, most officiously and confidently mentioned abroad for President & Professor, are professed Unitarians, and discard the doctrine of Christ's proper Divinity." — "If this be fact, what devout Christian will not pray for their nonelection? For the moment good parents believe that the leading Officers of the University deny the Godhead of Christ, or that they are Arians or Socinians, they will call home their sons, and send them to other Colleges."

C having in the Centinel of the 21st Novr suggested the idea of "*individual* management," a *Parent* prepares his charge for the next paper, as appears from the printer's acknowledgment, though not inserted before the 28th of Novr, in

---

[of *arminianism*] [44] rested"; and that "he had rather the Professorship should be vacant seven years, than be filled by an *Arminian*."

[E] What then prevented the President from bringing forward this man, in whom he & the public were so happily united? It was his usage in other cases as soon, as his mind was satisfied with respect to the best candidate for a vacant office, to nominate him to the Corporation. This was not done in the present instance. The truth is, though the President was absolutely decided in his own mind, who ought *not* to be (viz., the very man, as is verily supposed, to whom *C* alludes) yet he was not perfectly satisfied, who *ought* to be Professor of Divinity in Harvard College.

[44] Square brackets in the original.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

which it is more than insinuated that an *individual*, viz., "the Professor of languages is an agent in settling estates; spends his time, as an agent, to attend on the General Court;[45] as a trustee to a country Academy;[46] that he is of half a dozen Committees on business, not connected with that, *for which he has a handsome salary*; that there has not been more than one public lecture delivered on languages for six months past; that he is absent from *Cambridge* frequently 3 & 4 days in succession, and the scholars thereby defrauded of even private lectures, *his pay going on all the time*; that he ought not to be a member of the Corporation,"[F] &c.

Two days after the appearance of *Amicus* the incensed, if not *wounded Mayhew* sends to the Centinel his strictures on *Amicus*, if such they may be called; in which nothing seems worth transcribing or noticing, except his candid insinuation, that *Amicus* is one of the Corporation, couched in the suggestion, that "these things did not come *from abroad*."

In the Centinel of the 1st of Dec! *Paratus* also appears in reply to *Amicus*. Of this writer it is but just to say that he is much more temperate & decent, than *Mayhew*. This indeed might be expected from a man of more art and address, who is necessitated to substitute *sophisms* in place of *arguments*. Accordingly from the beginning to the end of his long labored piece, saving its chronological & other mistakes, an intelligent & well informed reader can scarcely discern any thing, but a thin tissue of cobweb *sophisms*; the object of all which is to induce a belief, that neither M! *Hollis*, nor his *statutes*, require a *Calvinistic* Professor of Divinity.[G]

[F] This, it seems, is the *radical* evil. But let this *Parent*, and all others, equally unacquainted with the history of H. College, be informed, that till within a few years, not only one of the Professors, but one of the Tutors, was of the Corporation, and formerly & for many years all of them.

[G] Here it may be proper to state that Mr. *Hollis's* eleventh Statute, relating to his Professor of Divinity, expressly requires "that the person, chosen from time to time to be a Professor, be a man of solid learning in Divinity, of *sound* or *orthodox* principles" &c; and that the *Founder*, (whatever *Paratus* may imagine concerning his brothers, his grand nephew, or his adopted successors) was himself a strict *Calvinist* & *Trinitarian*. This is evident beyond all controversy from his numerous declarations in his large correspondence with President *Leverett* & D!. *Coleman* relative to his foundation. On which it may be observed, that, as the Statute requires a *sound* or *orthodox* Professor, terms, which in the mouth of the *Founder* as well, as in the *Confessions* of all the reformed churches in christendom, exclude *Arminians*, *Arians* &c.; and, as the Statute further requires that the person, chosen Professor from "*time to time*"; i.e. not only the first, but every succeeding Professor in all future time, be

[45] This particular charge seems unfair to Pearson, since he attended on the General Court to protect the interests of the College in connection with the laying out of the Concord Turnpike north of the Yard.

[46] Phillips Academy, Andover.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

In the Centinel of the 8th the editor [47] says, "*Calvinus* is received; and shall be inserted on Wednesday." Notwithstanding this engagement, *Calvinus* was not inserted on Wednesday; but instead thereof an apology for the omission.

Upon this the gentleman, through whom *Calvinus* had been conveyed to the Centinel, withdrew it, and sent it to the Palladium. On Friday the 14th Decr it was acknowledged in this paper, which was a pledge of its publication the next Tuesday. But this acknowledgment drew around the editors such & so many opposers (probably the same who had before interfered at the Centinel office) that one of them with much anxiety and at two different times applied to that gentleman to be excused from printing it. His request not being granted, he at length with much seeming reluctance published it on the 18th of Decr, but not without this *marked* introduction. "We insert the following at the particular request of some of our highly esteemed patrons. Still we are apprehensive that newspaper discussions on this subject will not only give offence to many, but *subserve no one valuable purpose.* Indeed we hope that the parties concerned will reconcile it to their views & feelings to omit any further appeals to the tribunal of the Public."

What reason the editors of the *Centinel* or *Palladium* had for wishing to be absolved from their engagements; or what reason, but the fear of truth & dread of conviction, *Paratus* & his co-adjutors might have for wishing & laboring to suppress the publication of *Calvinus*; those, who have read him with candor, are left to conjecture. One thing however is manifest, a strong aversion to having the cause decided by that very tribunal, to which the party had with so much confidence appealed.

In the Centinel of the 22d of Decr the editor was so candid, as to insert the following, "Mr *Russell*, your declining to publish *Calvinus*, and the serious attempt, afterward to prevent the publication of his piece in the *Palladium*, have alarmed, not myself only, but others. This conduct has certainly the *appearance* of an unwarrantable attempt to abridge the freedom of the press.

"A number of pieces in succession were admitted on *one* side, designed & calculated to influence public opinion in favor of the election of certain gentlemen to the vacant offices in the University, and several direct & very indecent attacks were made on one of the Professors, intended to impair his influence. The papers were open to receive these communications, without any indications of disapprobation or compunction, until *Amicus* tho't proper to give his opinion concerning the affairs of the University. Because it happened to differ from those, who had preceeded him, it excited instant & acrimonious opposition. In three days this unknown writer received as many answers from dif-

---

sound & *orthodox* in the *same* sense; it follows undeniably, that the Corporation never can be at liberty to choose a person to be a Professor of Divinity, who is an *Arminian*, *Arian* &c.

[47] Identified as "Mr. Russell" in Pearson's first draft. Benjamin Russell was an energetic and important journalist; a sketch of him may be found in the *Dictionary of American Biography*.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

ferent hands; and, tho' not all of them the most candid, they were inserted, for aught that appears, without objection or delay. After more than a week had elapsed, *Calvinus* espoused the cause of *Amicus*, and sent a candid & dispassionate answer to *Paratus*, one of his antagonists. His piece is acknowledged, deferred, and finally refused — it is sent to another press, acknowledged, delayed, & powerful efforts made there also to suppress it. These, Mr. *Russell*, are facts, and they too plainly indicate that there exist somewhere dispositions to prevent the public voice being heard, and to carry favorite points by means, not the most honorable. If any deem these suspicions groundless, let the facts stated, as the cause of them, be disproved, or explained so, as to appear consistent with justice, honor, and

FAIR PLAY.

In the same column also is a conciliatory piece, signed THOUSANDS, hoping that this public "discussion will be terminated as early, as it can be *fairly* done in consistency with that just maxim, *audi alteram partem*."

But notwithstanding the complaints of FAIR PLAY & the most hopes of THOUSANDS, that the *other party may be heard*; in the very next Centinel the editor addresses his correspondents in the following remarkable words, "*A.B.* is informed, that we do not *choose* to *permit* the controversy, he is engaged in, to proceed any farther."

Thus pressed by what in the newspapers is denominated *public opinion*, the Corporation at the close of the 3d of Dec! began, and at several succeeding meetings, as other necessary business permitted, continued their deliberations on the subject of a Professor of Divinity; till on the 26th of Dec! it appeared, that the members were equally divided with respect to candidates for that office. Upon this, instead of continuing their deliberations on the subject, or seeking or waiting longer for divine direction & influence in this difficult situation, it was moved, "that a meeting of the Overseers be called, to ask their counsel & advice to choose a President," and this by way of *compromise*. But, as the Corporation had already done every thing of this kind, required by Charter or usage, this motion was dismissed; and it was voted to call a meeting of the Overseers on some other business, at which meeting any member present might introduce the *real* object, for which it was called. When it was asked in the Corporation, whether the Overseers should be officially acquainted with the nonagreement of the Corporation, it was replied, "not *officially*." A meeting of the Overseers was accordingly called for the 3d of January. In the mean time it was currently reported in Boston, that the Corporation were equally divided in opinion as to a Professor, and had in consequence called a meeting of the Overseers for their advice.[48]

The Overseers met according to desire, and the idea of their advising at that

[48] At this point, the following additional sentence appeared in Pearson's first draft: "Several of ye Overseers also were made further to understand that this meeting of their body was called for ye special purpose of *choosing a President by way of compromise*."

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

meeting to the choice of a President was introduced by a member of the Corporation.[49] In course of discussion it was proposed to defer giving this advice till, according to the opinion at a former meeting, a Professor of Divinity should be chosen, or at least till there could be a full Board of Overseers, which might be in two or three weeks. To this proposed reference objections were made; and, when in reply the words of the College Charter, which expressly provide for "a *general* meeting of *all the Overseers* of the Society in *great* & *difficult* cases, and in case of non agreement," were quoted; the ground was immediately changed, and the case was stated to be one of the simplest & easiest imaginable. In this way the natural operation of the Charter was evaded; and, when the question of reference to a full Board was taken, eight of the fourteen Overseers then present voted against it.

But here it may be observed, not only that the Chairman [50] (who gave no vote) appeared from his remarks on the subject to be in favor of the reference; but that two of the gentlemen, who voted against the reference, were members of the *Corporation*, i.e. voted in favor of advising *themselves*, at that meeting, to proceed to choose a President. Now, if on this difficult & delicate subject of advising the Corporation these two members had declined giving their votes, the number of *nays* would have been reduced to six, which would not have been a majority of the whole or reduced number. At any rate the simple fact is this, at a *partial* & thin meeting of the Overseers, *really* called by the Corporation on a *great* & *difficult* case," & in consequence of "nonagreement," six Overseers (exclusively of the two members of the Corporation) out of sixty two, the whole number, did, in the face of the College Charter, advise the Corporation "with all convenient speed to choose a President." [51]

This was the state of this important business on the 3d of Jan^{y}, and so it remained till the day of the meeting of the General Court Jany the 16th; when, to gratify a CONSTANT READER, who perhaps wished to interest in his views the members of the Legislature in general, or the distant Overseers in particular, or perhaps to give the Corporation farther instructions in the choice of a President & Professor, the Editor of the Centinel so far receded from his "resolution to put a period to the controversy," as to publish his *communication* on the subject. One circumstance, worthy of remark here, is the effrontery, with which the public is imposed on, & Dr *Doddridge* compelled by the weight of his name to give currency & effect to the opinions of another man.[H] This how-

[H] See the whole of the last paragraph, ascribed to *Doddridge*, and compare it with the quotation from *Jer. Taylor* in Dodd. Lect. Part VII, near the end.

[49] Dr. John Lathrop, the Secretary of the Board of Overseers, according to the minutes of the meeting.

[50] Lieutenant Governor Edward H. Robbins, identified by name in Pearson's first draft.

[51] Pearson's first draft ends at this point (except for the Appendix) with the following sentence: "This is the *real* & present state of this very *important* & *difficult* business."

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

ever is no more, than a slight additional specimen of that *unfairness*, with which the publications on one side have been conducted. But in the circumstance, which it is most important to remark, is the *liberality*, with which the writer opens his ideas on the subject of *religion*. After quoting for his text two favorite lines, not from the Bible, but from the versatile *Pope*,[1] he proceeds by way of inference, "and therefore whether the candidates for the *Presidential* & *Theological* chairs be Calvinists, Arians, Socinians, or Latitudinarians, is not of so much importance, as whether they are learned, pious, moral men; capable of diffusing instruction; and anxious to discharge their duty with fidelity."

Waving all remarks on such logic, as this, one is constrained to ask, what their duty will be; especially that of the theological Professor? Will it not be to teach theology? If so, is it of less importance, that he inculcate the divine truth & discoveries of the gospel, than that he be a learned man & capable of diffusing those instructions, which cause to err from the words of knowledge? Or is it thought, that he will be the best Professor, who, possessing most genius & erudition, shall with the most insinuating address & ardent zeal be most indefatigable in his attempt to prove that JESUS CHRIST is not the *Son of God*, but a *mere man*, and the proper son of *Joseph* & *Mary*? From such liberality, from such sentiments, from such *Presidents* & *Professors*, all pious Christians, who believe the Divinity of Christ, will devoutly pray, "good Lord, deliver us." — "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver & an antichrist. Whosoever abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him, God speed. For he, that biddeth him, God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds."

APPENDIX [62]

Much is said by those, who have arraigned the Corporation in the Boston papers, about *delay* in the choice of a Professor of Divinity, and of the *impatience* of the public on this account. What is this delay? The attack commenced on the first day of Sep[r] just one year & five days after the death of D[r] *Tappan*. How long was the office vacant previously to his election? D[r] *Wigglesworth* resigned July 1, 1791, and D[r] *Tappan* was chosen June 19, 1792, i.e., 12 days short of a year, making a difference of 17 days in the two cases. Was any charge of *neglect* brought against the Corporation in 1792? Not a syllable. It ought also to be recalled, that from D[r] *Wigglesworth's* first paralytic stroke Feb[y] 2, 1790 to his resignation, a period of 17 months wanting

[1] Of whom it was said, that he was a Papist or Protestant, as was the last author, he read.

[62] In the first draft, instead of using the word "Appendix," Pearson introduced the second part of his paper with the following sentence: "The preceding statement naturally suggests several questions & remarks."

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

one day, he was unable even to go to College. So that the Students were deprived of theological lectures, public & private, almost two years & a half. Yet not a word was said to quicken the Electors. If in addition to this, what the writer under the signature of a PARENT advances on the authority of his Minister, be true, viz., that the late Dr *Wigglesworth*, during his official life, i.e., a period of nearly 26 years, "was almost always too indisposed to give a lecture"; the need of a Professor must have been as great then, as it is now, and the *patience* of the public somewhat greater, than it is stated to be in the present case. For through that long period a dead silence reigned in all newspapers, neither parent, nor minister, expressing any concern about this interesting subject. Thus also in supplying all vacant College offices in former days the Corporation were always permitted to exercise their own judgment, with respect both to *time* & *candidates*, without censure or stimulus from a *pretended public* or *assuming partizans*.

But, it may be said, reasons now exist, heretofore unknown. It may be so; but what are they? Is religion, or the religious education of our youth, an object of more public concern now, than formerly? Are ministers & parents in general more engaged at the present day in educating those, committed to their charge, in the principles of the gospel, than were their predecessors? Or is this unprecedented pious concern for the rising generation confined to the few *zealots*, who have volunteered in this cause? Pity it is, that they have concealed themselves under fictitious names. For it often happens, that one half the benefit, both of instruction & reproof, is lost in this way. Not knowing to whom we are indebted for advice, we regard it much less, than when it is given by characters, long distinguished for wisdom, prudence, & piety. So in the present case, had these anxious friends of religion given their *names* with their reproof; the Electors would have instantly felt all the influence, naturally flowing from their weight of religious character & holy lives. But perhaps this is too much to be expected from modest worth & piety. Might not these good gentlemen then, by private letter, have made themselves, their pious anxiety, and their kind advice, known to the Corporation, together with the hazard & evils of delay? This method, for the *prelude* at least, would have been as prudent & delicate, as that publicly adopted. Moreover, when actors or writers conceal themselves, some persons are so disingenuous, as to suspect that all is not right, and that there may be some shades of difference between the ostensible & real motives. This indeed has sometimes been the case in political contests; why not in others? Great changes, even revolutions in government, have been effected by writers, dealing out, as they pretended, *public* opinion under *fictitious* names. Is there, or is there not, reason to apprehend that something similar with reference to the University may be contemplated by a *few* in the present juncture? This is a serious question. Let it be examined with candor.

It is well known by the Corporation, and perhaps ought to be by the public, not only that the Statutes require, at all times, that the Professor be "of *sound* & *orthodox* principles in Divinity," but that in the life time of the *Founder*

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

the Corporation obligated themselves & their Successors in this Trust, by a Bond duly executed, to "an *inviolable observance* of his Statutes." Accordingly the gentleman, first placed on this foundation, was at the time of his election examined by the Corporation, particularly with respect to "the *soundness* & *orthodoxy* of his principles in Divinity"; on which points the Corporation being satisfied by his answers, he was elected Professor, and afterwards presented to Mr *Hollis* for his approbation. In like manner also the second Dr *Wigglesworth* was examined "concerning his principles in Divinity, whether they were *orthodox*; to which he gave full & satisfactory answers." These two examinations, being confined to the subject of *orthodoxy*, show what importance the Electors of 1722 & of 1765 attached to *sound* & *orthodox* principles in a Professor of Divinity, and are recorded, as standing monuments of their cautious & faithful observance of this most important Statute, and as useful precedents for the guidance of future Electors. At the election of Dr *Tappan* however, it does not appear from the records, that a similar examination was instituted. Nor indeed was it equally necessary. For, as Dr *Tappan* had been a public teacher of christianity more than 18 years, had published many sermons, and been engaged in a public religious controversy; his religious principles were generally known; and his *orthodoxy* established beyond all reasonable doubt.

These three Professors were all *Calvinists*, and so reputed. That this is true of the last, and that his religious instructions were singularly acceptable & satisfactory in the University & in our churches, almost every person living, who ever heard him preach, read his sermons, or heard him named, will readily testify. What reason then, it may be asked, can there now be for innovation; or for suspecting that any wish it? While Dr *Tappan* lived, it is true, not a whisper of dislike of his religious principles was heard; and now even by our newspaper writers & other advocates of gentlemen of different sentiments, he is mentioned, as an *amiable* man. But it is very observable, that not a syllable is uttered by them in approbation of his theological principles, nor a wish expressed, that his successor may hold the same religious tenets. Since his death indeed it has been said, that some persons thought Dr *Tappan* too orthodox. It is also said, that there are some clergymen as well, as others, in the vicinity of Cambridge, who were not perfectly pleased with his sentiments, while he was living. This may be so; and may in part account for the late unprecedented efforts to bring into College offices men, whose religious creed is allowed by all parties to be so opposite to that of the late Professor. Does not this indicate a wish to revolutionize the Professorship of Divinity, if not the University? This suspicion gathers strength from the *time*, *manner*, & *unfairness* of the attack, made on the Electors.

The *time* chosen was a few days after the death of a very worthy member * of that Board, and during the vacation, a period, when the two members, immediately connected with the University and most interested in it, were journeying at too great a distance to counteract any designs in the capital.

* Dr. Howard.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

As this attack commenced soon after the death of a Fellow of the Corporation; so also after the death of the President it was prosecuted with redoubled vigor. Events, which involved the College & its nearest friends in deepest grief, to the advocates of change seemed to indicate that the time to *strike* was come.

The *manner* also was not less extraordinary, than the time of the attack. In the very onset the public must be alarmed by the suggestion, that "the Professorship was abolished," and that the Corporation were "neglecting a *fair* opportunity of filling the office with a man of talents, learning, and spotless life, conduct, & doctrine." The Corporation are then told of the "provoked *impatience* & dissatisfaction of the public mind, and formally arraigned "before the court of *public opinion*"; and in a menacing style assured, that, whether *righteous* or *unjust*, this judge *will* be heard; "and that to arrest her proceedings is *impossible*; that delay is more reprehensible in this case, than in any other; and that parents have reason for *demanding* a Professor" &c. Language this rather singular, in which to address probably the oldest incorporated literary Society in the United States.[53] Were the Corporation a company of menial servants, who had been guilty of some gross enormity; an imperious master might perhaps have menaced them in this public manner. But to return. After this the public scourge seems to be brandished chiefly over the head of an *individual* rather, than over all the members of that body; and after many unjust lashes it is insinuated, that he ought to be turned out of the Corporation. What the object of attacking this *individual* was, is best known to the authors of it. *Fair Play* supposes it "intended to impair his influence"; and perhaps his supposition is correct.

The *unfairness* of this attack consists of two particulars, viz., the *falsehoods*, asserted & insinuated; and the *arbitrary* measures, adopted to support it.

Passing over the *sophisms*, used by *Paratus*, to prove that M[r] *Hollis* was a liberal man, i.e., an *Arminian*, if not an *Arian*, the following assertions & insinuations are selected, as specimens of sheer falsehood, viz., "that the Overseers had expressed their minds more than half a year since to the Corporation, and requested their immediate attention to the choice of a Professor"; — "that the public have looked with *undivided* attention to one man, by whom the office of a Professor of Divinity should be filled"; — and "that President *Willard* ardently wished it might soon be filled by *that very* man"; — that the Professor of language "has not delivered more than one public lecture for six months past"; not to mention other insinuations equally false.

The *arbitrary* conduct of the leaders in this unfair business is in part exposed by FAIR PLAY, to whom it may be well to recur. The fact is simply this; while no antagonist appeared, these newspaper writers advanced, by rapid strides of abuse & falsehood, till they fancied the battle won; and ventured to declare that the *public had with undivided attention fixed on their man*. But, when the *public opinion* began through *Amicus* to open upon them, they dis-

[53] The language of the first draft at this point suggests that Pearson originally wrote for oral delivery: "Why, gentlemen, this is pretty extraordinary language in which publicly to address . . ."

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

charged three vollies at him, and quitted the field; being gravely convinced, that public warfare, where there is danger of opposition, especially from *truth*, is not good; and firmly resolved, that there should be no more public controversy on this subject. Accordingly the batteries, which themselves had opened, and kept playing, while no one appeared on the field, were now silenced. Every press was instantly closed against the voice of even that very *public opinion*, to which they had with so much confidence appealed; because she had ventured to lisp, "that *delay*, yea a *long* vacancy is certainly preferable to a *speedy* election of gentlemen whose cardinal sentiments do not harmonize with the *gospel* theory." Alarmed by this whisper, & frightened by the name of *Calvinus*, whom they wellnigh stifled in his birth, they so carefully guarded the presses, as for several weeks to silence the public voice. For, though it has been credibly asserted, that sundry pieces on the side of orthodoxy were sent to the same presses, all have been suppressed; the several Printers seeming to unite with Mr *Russell* in his reply to A.B. and say, "we do not *choose* to *permit* the controversy to proceed any farther."

Whether this determination were prudent or imprudent, may perhaps be a question; but one thing is certain, the *public opinion* can never be collected by shutting the presses against it. Nor is this *partial* conduct consistent with the principles of honor, or the majesty and independence of *truth*. It may however, and probably has produced its intended effect; if not upon the Corporation, yet upon multitudes, by making an early false impression on their minds concerning facts & persons, which time, and even truth herself, were she permitted to speak, may never be able wholly to obliterate. This is precisely that base policy, so often charged on those writers & presses, which have subverted the federal government. Can Federalists then adopt a policy and make use of weapons in the cause of *religion*, which they so justly brand with infamy in the cause of politics? *O tempora! O mores!*

Violent disorders are said to call for violent remedies. But what must that cause be, which requires *such* means of support? Can any thing, short of an intended *revolution* in the religious sentiments of the University, account for so much *abuse*, *falsehood*, & *oppression*? Can that cause be *good*, which resorts to expedients so base, so dishonorable to man? Such in truth has been the art, zeal, impatience, & activity, with which their object has been pushed, that every serious Christian, every considerate man, who is not prepared for a revolution in the University & in our Churches, ought to make a solemn pause, and attentively observe the present aspect of College affairs. This duty is peculiarly enforced by the consideration, that the religious character of the University & its usefulness probably depend more upon the *sound* & *orthodox* principles of the Officers, necessary to supply the two vacancies, than upon those of all the other Officers of the Society. Since its foundation the College was never reduced to a state so critical with respect to religion. Its Christian friends of similar religious principles to those of its pious Founders & the munificent *Hollis* earnestly wish to maintain in it the religion of their wise & learned forefathers, which they conscientiously believe to be the religion of

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

JESUS CHRIST; and devoutly deprecate a revolution of sentiment in favor of what is called *rational* in opposition to *evangelical* religion. They wish no lax, nor rigid extreme; but only that the College may be preserved in that *middle* course, in that *good old way*, in which it has thus far continued & flourished. This is the *real state* of the controversy.

Had not a few individuals, warmly attached to what they call *rational* christianity, and flattering themselves that this part of the country was nearly ripe for a revolution in religion, attempted with intemperate zeal to impose on the Corporation their *own* opinions & favorites, as those of the *public*; it is verily believed, that no special difficulty would now subsist, and that the vacant Professorship would before this time have been filled to public satisfaction. But, through an illjudged & unprecedented interference, the office is still vacant; and, though the original object is not now pressed in the public papers, as at first, it is not abandoned. The efforts, now made, are more secret, though not less vigorous. To carry the point, much is said about *liberality* & *charity*. Charming words, syren sounds, like *liberty* & *equality* on other tongues. God in mercy grant that they may not prove equally *delusive* & *fatal*!

We are often told, that there is little or no difference between a *moderate Calvinist* & a *moderate Arminian*; and that certain religious points or speculations, about which great & learned men have differed, cannot be very important. This argument, if admitted, would prove too much. The fact is, that the greatest disputes of great & learned men in all ages, whether in philosophy, politics, or religion, have frequently been about first principles & points most important. But this is only one of numberless fallacies, dealt out on the present occasion. The appeal is made to fact. Does not every humble Christian, who has experienced the excellence & power of the gospel in his own soul, esteem & feel the *character* of the REDEEMER & his *atonement*, and, in a word, the *doctrines of grace* commonly so called, to be of the highest importance? Does he not perceive & feel an immense difference between, what is denominated *rational*, & what is called *evangelical* preaching?

This being the fact, is it not an object of the first importance, that our sons, especially those, intended for the gospel ministry, be trained up by men, who are *sound* in the faith & of orthodox principles in Divinity? By men of open, undisguised characters, who do not conceal their views of the leading doctrines of the gospel, but freely avow them, that parents may know, on what to depend in this day of declension & error? Is not every pious Christian, who is concerned for the rising generation & the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, loudly called upon, in his proper sphere & in all prudent ways, to *contend earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints*?

When it is considered, that the University stands in some such relation to the body politic & the church of Christ, as the heart does to the body natural; what can be more desirable, more important, than that the *fountain* of learning & religious instruction be *pure*? If the heart be corrupt, the vital fluid, which by numerous arteries & veins is circulated through every part of the system, will convey disease & death to the whole. By a thousand ligaments & interest-

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)

ing relations the University is as closely connected with the community, as the heart is with the body; and by ten thousand streams & in every direction this fountain is constantly *diffusing its influence* & *circulating its waters*, whether salutary or baneful, through all parts of our land. The fervent prayer of every thoughtful Christian will be, 'O that they may be such, as will make glad the cities & churches of our God'; while no one will be able to calculate or conceive, how far the happiness, temporal & eternal, of not only the present generation, but of millions yet unborn, even to the remotest period of time, may be affected by the College elections, *now pending*.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XVII, Number 3 (July 1969)