

## After the Peace



*No man can build on air and the great achievements of the later leaders would have been impossible had there not been a certain amount of quiet repairing of the shattered foundations of the Church [prior to 1810].*

—WILLIAM W. MANROSS

Many thoughtful persons in England doubted that the prolonged war with the thirteen colonies was worthwhile, and as early as February 1782 the House of Commons seemed to think further efforts would be futile. "Impracticable" is the word used by Benjamin Franklin in a letter to George Washington. Some English leaders gave credence to the notion that the colonies would again submit to the Crown after a period of "Rage and Distraction" brought on by immature independence.<sup>1</sup> Merchants on both sides of the Atlantic surveyed their faltering business enterprises and pleaded for peace. Conditions in occupied New York City were horrid. The city was overcrowded with Loyalist families seeking their protection from the "cowboy" marauders who preyed on them. The valleys of the Hackensack in New Jersey and the Hudson in New York were scenes of bitter fighting by neighboring patriot and Tory families, supported by whichever army was near and had the upper hand; the losers often retreated to New York, where despite its half-destroyed condition room was somehow made for them. Because of the overcrowding, goods were scarce and expensive. There was plenty of Crown money in the city (which encouraged inflation), and graft was common. "English tax money tended to end up in private pockets," writes one historian;<sup>2</sup> many of the Loyalists who had sought the protection of a British-held city "were living in utter poverty in roofless, burned-out rooms."<sup>3</sup> "Canvas-town" it was called, because of temporary roof covers. The surrender at Yorktown on September 19, 1781, was the beginning of a long waiting period, an armistice dependent upon deliberations in Paris. On February 23, 1783, Rivington (the

publisher who trimmed shamelessly according to the political wind but was saved for postwar profits because, after all, he had by far the best stock of books in the city) reported that a "very important Intelligence was last night announced." But events moved slowly, and the King's proclamation recognizing American independence was not read until April 8. Ten days later Washington praised his troops for having won a war which assured "an asylum for the poor and oppressed of all nations and religions."<sup>4</sup>

New York received the peace news with a groan. The Loyalists there said they were betrayed by their own people. Having seen the dishonesty and philandering of military and civilian officialdom throughout the war years, they had no reason to hope for protection from His Majesty's forces now. And in any case, the English soldiers would soon be departing. Certainly the Tories in New York couldn't look for help from the returning patriots. In such cases, old scores are settled harshly. Most of the defiant Loyalists in New York elected to leave the country.

The English had the tremendous problem of vacating New York City in an orderly manner that provided maximum protection for themselves and the many families leaving with them. Ships had to be found for the 29,244 soldiers and civilians who eventually sailed down the Narrows. Houses were to be returned to their former owners. Looting and vandalism were forbidden. The peace treaty declared that no Negroes "or other property of the American inhabitants" was to be taken from the city, but (as we are delighted to discover) three thousand slaves did manage to flee with the Loyalists over the protests of their owners (some of whom were later compensated).

November 25 was set as "Evacuation Day." For many years afterward, it was an anniversary marked with particular patriotic fervor in New York State. "Close on the eve of an approaching winter, with an heterogeneous set of inhabitants, composed of almost ruined exiles, disbanded soldiers, mixed foreigners, disaffected Tories, and the refuse of the British army, we took possession of a ruined city," recalled Elkanah Watson.<sup>5</sup> By careful arrangement, on November 25, the Americans were to arrive in the city and the last ships carrying the English were to sail away. It seems to have gone smoothly. George Washington, Governor Clinton, and other dignitaries rode horseback down to the "barrier" on the Bowery at Grand Street. Rivington crowed, "May the Remembrance of the Day be a lesson to Princes." Thirteen shots were fired over the ruins of Trinity Church, probably as an intentional reminder of the colonies' triumph over the Crown and its Church. During these ceremonies a favoring breeze took the last British ship out of sight.

Inglis of Trinity had already departed.<sup>6</sup> Before leaving New York, however, he somewhat ingenuously expressed the idea that perhaps an Englishman might be found to be a bishop in the new nation. He specified an Englishman "who had never been in America, and was clear of having taken part in our unhappy Division."<sup>7</sup>

Inglis would also recall a meeting in New York on March 23, 1783, in which eighteen priests huddled together in shabby Tory sanctuary had planned for a bishop in Nova Scotia; Inglis himself had signed that memorial, together with Seabury and other Episcopal clergymen: Jonathan Odell, George Panton, John Beardsley, Benjamin Moore, John Bowden, George Bissett, Charles Mangan, and Joshua Bloomer. On March 28, 1783, Inglis again expressed his concern about the Episcopal Church in New York, and wondered (quite rightly) whether he could safely remain in the city.<sup>8</sup> The answer became obvious as Evacuation Day drew near, and he resigned on November 1. It is of interest that Inglis eventually returned to the Western Hemisphere as the first Bishop of Nova Scotia.

New York Province had not been conspicuously patriotic during the war. A historian in Boston later claimed the province supplied 17,781 soldiers for the American armies while Massachusetts sent 67,907.<sup>9</sup> If this is so, there must have been many tender consciences in New York at the peace. There were, on the one hand, the celebrated patriot heroes whose progeny would burnish their memory to a high luster. There were, on the other hand, those whose Loyalism had led them to make that departure of pathos on November 25, 1783. And there remained the very many others who accommodated themselves to the British occupation, and cheered the success of his majesty's forces during the war. Now these latter-day vicars of Bray found themselves unwilling to depart, and yet frightened at possible retaliation. They gambled that time could quickly heal, and for the most part they gambled well. But institutions, especially rich institutions, are more vulnerable to revolutionary wrath than people who can temporize, and nothing in New York was more associated with the discarded sovereign than Trinity Church.

There had been no services in Trinity since the fire of 1777 destroyed the church, of course, and it is presumed that Inglis and Benjamin Moore (sometimes aided by the other Episcopal clergymen who found the city more congenial than their parishes in patriot-controlled territory) officiated in St. Paul's and St. George's, both chapels of Trinity (there was also the chapel of King's College). The fact that these two churches were open during the war did not promote Episcopal fortunes later, though in fairness it was recalled that the Methodist and the Moravian churches were also open without question. The other

churches were closed; the Presbyterians would be specially anathematized by the English. Closed churches were often used for inappropriate purposes—storage, sheltering horses—and few were spared casual vandalism.

On the same day the vestry received the resignation of Charles Inglis, it elected his assistant, Benjamin Moore, to succeed him. Though a Tory, Moore was an American by birth and had recently married the heiress of valuable Manhattan property. For this reason, and perhaps because of assurances received from the vestry, Moore had opted to remain in New York. Suspecting trouble ahead, the vestry planned to present their chosen man to Governor Clinton immediately "for his approbation." Their suspicions were justified. In nothing else was there a more signal lesson to be taught than in filling the position of rector of the English church, and the "Whig members of the Episcopal Church" moved swiftly. Meeting at Simmons Tavern "near the City Hall," they challenged the election of Benjamin Moore as "improper and unwarrantable." The vestry temporized and attempted pacifying proposals, but the issue was too important to be settled by amiable gestures. Moreover, personal animosities were strong. Robert R. Livingston put it plainly in a letter:

a very great and important dispute has arisen in the church of England which is in this City a great political machine, disposing property to the amount of £200,000—the tories a few days before we came in elected as rector a man who has preached and prayed against us during the war. The Whigs insist of a new appointment and the dispute is carried on with so much warmth that it may probably draw after it serious political consequences.<sup>10</sup>

Chancellor Livingston's scant interest in religion was matched by his vast interest in cash and politics and, at this time, his concern that the Livingston family consolidate its position for future prosperity. Very gladly, he joined with four others who asked to meet with the Trinity vestry in Capes Tavern on December 9, 1783. The others were James Duane (soon to be mayor of New York), Marinus Willett (sheriff 1784–92), Robert Troup, and John Lawrence (both of whom had served long in the Continental Army). When the vestry refused to meet with "the gentlemen styling themselves the Whig members of the Episcopal Church,"<sup>11</sup> those gentlemen threatened suit and, on New Year's Day 1784, presented a petition which had been drawn up on December 10 and subsequently signed by nearly one hundred persons. Considering the precarious position of the English Church and its vast fortunes, which, surely, were envied by others, the vestry dreaded petitions and court interference. The response to the threatened suit was a sugges-

tion that there be, in effect, two ministers in charge. This was immediately rejected by James Duane, who was secure in believing the Council of the city would act in favor of the Whig petition. He was right. On January 12, 1784, the control of the Corporation was put in the hands of Duane, Francis Lewis, Lewis Morris, Isaac Sears, William Duer, Daniel Dunscomb, Anthony Lispinard, John Rutherford, and William Bedloe—all now firmly Whig. Duane had in mind a candidate for the rectorate: Samuel Provoost, an undoubted patriot, kinsman of the Livingstons, a son of the city. Impatient to see the thing through, Duane wrote to his wife:

In the mean time we are deprived of the Opportunity of doing Justice to the merit of our friend Mr. Provoost tho he has esteem and confidence of all the Whig interests.<sup>12</sup>

Duane was never during the war as notable a patriot as Provoost, but then as now the shades of political opinion were often ignored in the light of overwhelming tastes and personal loyalty. James Duane and Samuel Provoost had been friends for years: Duane had been a visitor in East Camp. He shared Provoost's delight in horticulture.<sup>13</sup> Provoost himself had a capacity for friendship, and those who knew him believed his qualities and his politics should be rewarded. Undoubtedly he had suffered financial privation during the war. Perhaps most of all, the Livingstons saw him as a significant factor in affirming their power in those important postwar years.

Samuel Provoost arrived in New York City on February 2, 1784, but it is probable he had been there earlier in the winter in order to inspect what remained of his property. Now he conferred again with the Whig trustees of Trinity and accepted what he had been told to expect: the rectorate of Trinity. On February 5, Benjamin Moore was informed that Samuel Provoost had been handed the keys of the church—keys to what building, we wonder—and that thereafter Provoost would "have the direction" of the parish. Moore replied gracefully and insinuated that he would await judication. But, having thus asserted his own integrity and reaffirmed the loyalty of the vestry, he stepped aside. Samuel Provoost was the new rector of Trinity Church.

Inasmuch as Trinity was a continuing reminder of the English ascendancy and occupation in New York City, it is safe to say that had Benjamin Moore persisted in claiming the rectorship, Whig fury might have retaliated by alienating the landed endowments of the church. And, if there were any selfish interests in New York that stood ready to grasp what a discredited Trinity had failed to hold, these, too, were disappointed in the election of Samuel Provoost. As things stood, the Corporation of Trinity, stained with Toryism, now had at its head New

York's distinguished patriot parson, Samuel Provoost. A century later, another rector of Trinity wrote:

It was a fortunate thing for the Parish, at that moment, that its head should be a man, not only of high repute for learning, culture, and knowledge of affairs, but also identified from the beginning with the cause of the American Revolution, and enjoying the full confidence of the State government and the patriotic citizens of New York.<sup>14</sup>

To this appraisal by a high Victorian, made at the nadir of Provoost's reputation, it might be added that Provoost above all others is responsible for retrieving the fortunes of the Episcopal Church in New York. What other available clergyman in New York could have done this? Benjamin Moore had indeed preached and prayed for the King during the war. This native son, now returned to the city with his wife and four children, was in almost all respects the ideal person. For, while Samuel Provoost held advanced democratic views—"a good Jeffersonian," says one historian<sup>15</sup>—his upbringing and manners led him to a certain Whig moderation entirely congenial to the interests of the extended Livingston family.

The Livingstons, for their part, may have regretted the departure of some of their Loyalist friends. But these were times to mend your own fortunes, and what more genteel way to do so than buy cheaply what once belonged to the King's men? Might not Trinity's properties be invaded had not the patriot parson been found and elected as rector?<sup>16</sup> New York City was an open field for an able man with connections to advance himself. Not all the Loyalists left the city, but those of that stripe who remained were wise not to speak overmuch about politics. Tory sympathies came in many shapes and sizes. Some families, like the DeLanceys and the Philipses, were now gone, their many lands confiscated (and often sold to their former friends). Other Tories—the dePeysters and the Kembles come to mind—remained discreetly outside the city during the war. Still others—such as Provoost's friend Robert C. Livingston—lived in England during much of the war, and when here went freely to and from occupied New York City. (The New York historian learns very soon not to inquire too closely into the movements and interests of the great patriotic families during the Revolutionary War!)

On the other side, there were those who believed Tories should be punished. Fortunately for the city and the Church, these sentiments were soon overcome by a general feeling that profit and virtue lay more surely in forgetting the past and extracting whatever advantages might now present themselves in a city waiting to be rebuilt. Ambitious businessmen saw a vast future in the realty and port of New York. It was in

the immediate postwar years that a piano salesman named Astor quickly sold his London-made instruments and used New York as the center of a far-flung fur business.<sup>17</sup>

Samuel Provoost was the least vindictive of men (if we except his relations with Seabury!) He settled comfortably into his new responsibilities. Since Episcopal clergy were a rare commodity now in patriotic New York, he asked Benjamin Moore to remain with him as Trinity's assistant minister. It was a salutary arrangement. New York in those scrambling years needed all the refined native sons it could find to counteract both the coarse effects of the occupation and the materialism that followed. A European visitor describes the city as one of ugly small houses, most of them built of wood painted white, some of brick, green doors predominating. "You might in half an hour's walk hear French, German, Low Dutch, Scotch, Irish or English pronunciations," he said, though the "well bred" spoke English. Women were "generally handsome, very fair. In the vicinity of New York every respectable family had slaves—negroes and negresses, who did the drudgery."<sup>18</sup> Well-to-do men did the family marketing, carrying baskets under their arms to and from the stores, a custom prevailing in New York City almost till living memory.

#### ASSESSING THE DAMAGE

The Episcopal Church in the colonies had suffered much during and immediately after the war, and in the opinion of most patriots it deserved to suffer. Its clergy had a point of view that reflected their education and ordination in England. Defeated and discredited, most of them left the country. The laity were dispirited and scattered; some of them, surely, were disgusted with the Church's performance during the war and forsook it altogether. Church buildings were closed and, often, much damaged. Glebes and other endowments were frequently alienated. It is a dismal picture, but, as we have seen, immediate steps were taken to protect Trinity Church under the popular Samuel Provoost. In other places in the state the Church gradually came together under local lay leadership using whatever clergy or lay readers could be found.

After the peace, John Sayre of Newburgh realistically predicted that "country congregations will be unable to support ministries without assistance from the Society"—and then supposed (most unrealistically!) that henceforth Society appropriations must be more generous.<sup>19</sup> Had Sayre forgotten that there had been a war? Did he suppose the American churches were still eligible for Society grants when Sea-

bury, arch-Loyalist, was denied consideration in London?

The condition of the Episcopal Church varied, according to location. Consider Yonkers, for instance. Its rector, Luke Babcock, had died in 1777 following a brief imprisonment by the patriots in Hartford. With Samuel Seabury, he had signed the Protest at White Plains in July 1775 against "unlawful Congress and Committees." His widow and children continued to occupy the glebe farm on the Saw Mill River. After the war they were allowed to remain there and the farm was preserved to the "Corporation of the Episcopal Church in the Town of Yonkers" by a special act on April 3, 1792.<sup>20</sup> The Rev. George Panton held services during the war, but quit in 1782. For some time ministers of other denominations used the church, but in 1784—that year of great good fortune for the Episcopal Church—a layman, Andrew Fowler, "collected the congregation and was the first one who read prayers and sermons in the church after the Revolutionary War." Fowler was later ordained.

"Collected the congregation"—that describes the task wherever there was an Episcopal church. An extreme example is Fishkill, where, though it was a relatively new building,

the church was already in 1776 in a delapidated and neglected condition, unfit for use. It was hardly habitable when first occupied for the Provincial Convention in September 1777, without seats or benches or other conveniences and so fouled by doves that it could not be comfortably used . . .<sup>21</sup>

The rector of Fishkill was John Beardsley. He also served Christ Church in the town of Poughkeepsie, where he lived on the glebe shared by both parishes. Beardsley was firmly Tory, whereas the Fishkill-Poughkeepsie region was notably patriotic. Beardsley did little to ease tensions between his politics and those of his people; no wonder the Fishkill church was "delapidated and neglected"! "He did not conceal his sentiments," says a polite Victorian writer.<sup>22</sup> The Minutes of the Council of Safety, December 5, 1777, are more direct, and authorize the Commissioner of Conspiracies

to cause the Reverend Mr. Beardsley and Henry Vandenberg, with their families (male servants and slaves excepted) to be removed to the city of New York, and to permit them to take with them their wearing apparel, and necessary bedding, and provisions for their passage, and no other goods or affects whatsoever.<sup>23</sup>

Beardsley went to New Brunswick in Canada at the peace and became rector of Maugerville, New Brunswick.

The Poughkeepsie vestrymen were, on the whole, quiet Tories.



They met regularly during the war and held prescribed Easter elections, but their new stone church was closed. The glebe was rented. Samuel Provoost came downriver in August 1779 to officiate at some baptisms, probably in a private house. After Yorktown, the vestry airily forgot the war and sought a rector. They found him in the person of Henry VanDyke, a lay reader of Stratford, Connecticut. It was understood that Mr. VanDyke would not move to Poughkeepsie until he was ordained, which took place in August 1785, soon after Seabury's return from Britain. Even then, VanDyke didn't come to Poughkeepsie. The impatient vestry—without a rector for eight years—finally drew the reason from Mr. VanDyke: he would be arrested and imprisoned for debt if he came into New York State. The matter was eventually settled by the intervention of Egbert Benson, and Mr. VanDyke began his ministry in Fishkill and Poughkeepsie in May 1787. Very soon thereafter, he began occasional services as requested by "a number of gentlemen of the Manor of Livingston" in what is now Tivoli. It was the faint beginning of expansion.

What happened to other New York clergy? Inglis had reported to London that the Rev. Ephraim Avery of Rye, Bedford, and Newcastle had been dragged into the street by Whig Soldiers, beaten, shot, and his throat cut. Such a message probably reduced the Society's officers to despair, but they may have had a measure of solace in Seabury's subsequent report that the poor man was found only murdered in his woodshed. Further investigation suggested suicide. Avery's intended successor, Isaac Hunt of Philadelphia, probably never arrived in Rye. He had been assaulted by a mob in his native city, and fled to England where he became chaplain in a titled house and the father of James Henry Leigh Hunt, the essayist. George Panton, as we have noted, served Yonkers during the war, but when things began to look glum for the Loyalists he, too, retreated to the city and was one of the fifty-five who petitioned Sir Guy Carleton for land grants in Nova Scotia commensurate with those His Majesty's government contemplated settling upon officers who had served in the colonies. Epenetus Townsend of the Salems, despite his Long Island origins, fled early in the war and was lost at sea en route to Nova Scotia. John Stuart, whose long and heroic labors among the Mohwaks were matched by those of his wife, set out with her for Canada and "scarce cast a look back to the world they had forsaken."<sup>24</sup> Richard Mosely had gone to Johnstown in 1772, and, some safe time after the peace, turned up in Connecticut. Another priest who emerged after the war was Isaac Wilkins. He was born in the West Indies, educated in New York City, and settled in Westchester anticipating eventual ordination. He served briefly in the Assembly, but his Loyalist sympathies took him to Nova Scotia after the war. He made

his own peace with the new nation, however (so many did!), and in 1799 became rector of Eastchester and St. Peter's, Westchester. He remained there till his death at the age of eighty-nine in 1830; whether or not it was a happy ministry may be gathered from the epitaph he wrote for his burial place: "He remained satisfied with the pittance allowed him, rejoicing that even in that he was no burden to his parishioners; nor ever wished nor ever went forth to seek a better living."<sup>25</sup> His brothers-in-law, Lewis and Gouverneur Morris, outstanding patriots, probably helped ameliorate his situation. Timothy Wetmore had remained in his father's parish at Rye as its schoolmaster, after the elder Wetmore's death of smallpox in 1760. He had declared in 1774, "It is my opinion that the Parliament have no right to tax Americans, though they have a right to regulate the trade of the Empire": a common-sense principle shared by many. But Wetmore's loyalty to the King he had heard prayed for all his life bade him depart for Nova Scotia after the war. A son, Robert, was ordained by Bishop Provoost in 1798 and died in Savannah in 1803.<sup>26</sup>

Joshua Bloomer, like Benjamin Moore, was to be found in his parish before, during, and after the Revolution. Educated at King's College, ordained in 1765, he remained grudgingly in his Long Island posts: "I administered the sacrament at Newtown, when I had but four or five male communicants," he stated; "the rest being driven off or carried away prisoner. I was forbidden to read the prayers for the king and royal family," whereupon he simply shut up the church until the Loyalist troops occupied Long Island.<sup>27</sup> It was because Bloomer did remain in his parish, and was thus an ongoing beneficiary of its grants, that in 1784 the Society sent to Grace Church, Jamaica, £30. This was the last grant sent by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to the Episcopal Church in New York, and it was followed by a gracious expression of hope that "the true members of our Church, under whatever civil government they live, may not cease to be kindly affected towards us."<sup>28</sup> Joshua Bloomer died in 1790 at the age of fifty-five.

Bernard Page, Tory rector of Peekskill, fled to England, and his substantial glebe was confiscated. Later, it was restored to the parish through the exertions of Pierre VanCortlandt, one of the lower Hudson River Valley patricians who opted for the patriot side.<sup>29</sup>

It is to be expected that King's College, regarded from its origins as a hotbed of Tory reaction, would attract the ministrations of the patriot soldiers during the brief time Washington's forces were in control of the city. President Myles Cooper was a "furious Tory."<sup>30</sup> He enjoyed pseudonymous literary debates with a favorite pupil, Alexander Hamilton—which, if the story is true, throws an attractive light on both men. Many years later, it was recalled that:

At last the mob got very ferocious against Cooper and a large body moved at a late hour in the night [May 10, 1775] towards the college with the intention of murdering or at least tarring and feathering its unlucky *Praeses*. Hamilton got scent of it, and at the corner of what is now Park Place and Broadway he made them a furious Whig address, and in this way kept them off till Cooper got intelligence of the state of affairs. He got out of bed, and without his breeches managed to get out of the back gate on Chapel Street and to scramble down the steep bank between the College and the river, and then proceeded along shore as far as Greenwich, where he stole a boat and paddled himself off to one of the frigates in the bay. Meantime the mob attacked his house, smashed the furniture, ran swords through his bed, in hopes of finding him there, and at last cleared out in disappointment.<sup>31</sup>

The college library, said by some to have been the best in the country, was ransacked and "soldiers disposed of the books about the streets for grog."

#### RISING FROM THE ASHES

While Episcopalians in New York State were gathering the fragments that remained after the war, the Church in other states was engaged in similar undertakings. The first work to be done was to find the local congregation. There were two other main tasks: first, the Church must be organized on an interstate level of cooperation and mutual interest. This is not to say that a "national church" was envisioned in the earliest postwar years. The initial aim was toward a confederation of state churches.

The second task was to maintain the apostolic succession from the English line of bishops. Heretofore, political considerations had made this impossible. But now the focus of the difficulty was altered: existing English law would not permit such consecration and, in any case, there was no precedent in the English Church for bishops' exercising jurisdiction beyond the British Isles. There was, in effect, a great gulf fixed between the lordly episcopate in England and the needs of church-people in the United States of America. The difficulty is almost unimaginable in our own day, where it is a familiar sight to see bishops of various nations and traditions participating in ordinations and consecrations.

Wise William White of Philadelphia was so pessimistic about the possibility of any American candidates' consecration in the near future that he proposed the Church function without bishops for the time being. White, like Provoost, had impeccable patriotic credentials; he

was rector of Christ Church, Philadelphia, brother-in-law of Robert Morris, and longtime chaplain of the Continental Congress. While his proposal was being made known to Episcopalians, other events were taking place. Ten clergy of Connecticut had met at Woodbury in 1783 and appointed Jeremiah Leaming or Samuel Seabury of New York to go to England, promising recognition as Bishop of Connecticut to whichever of them returned having been consecrated there. Leaming's advanced age led him to decline the honor thus accorded him, so the New Yorker set sail. Seabury took with him testimonials signed by Leaming, Inglis, and Moore, and word of William White's astounding idea that the Episcopal Church be nonepiscopal.<sup>32</sup> Seabury had, further, been advised that, should he fail to find consecration by the necessary number of English bishops, he might seek it at the hands of bishops in Scotland.

Independent of this, there was a meeting in New Brunswick, New Jersey, which led accidentally but directly to the formation of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. The ostensible reason for the meeting was money! For some years there had existed a Corporation for the Relief of Widows and Orphans of Clergymen in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey (descendant organizations still survive). The corporation had necessarily been neglected during the Revolutionary War, but it was potentially too important to forget now that the Church was looking toward renewal. Nudged by Abraham Beach of Christ Church, New Brunswick (but soon to be another of Provoost's assistants at Trinity), William White convened a meeting in New Brunswick on May 11, 1784. Clergy and laity attended. The discussions readily turned away from the corporation to matters of rebuilding the Church in the states, or, as they said with remarkable foresight, "forming a continental representation of the Episcopal Church." Sensing the importance of what they were about to do, they adjourned with plans to meet in New York City the following October. Invitations were issued to the other states, and it was directed that in "every State, where there shall be a Bishop duly consecrated and settled, he shall be considered as a member of the convention, *ex officio*."<sup>33</sup>

The autumn meeting was held in New York City, with William Smith of Philadelphia, "one of the most brilliant of the provincial clergy,"<sup>34</sup> presiding. That there was enthusiasm may be judged by the fact that the churches in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts were represented. It was understood that each state should have a bishop, that each bishop would sit in convention, and that the first General Convention would meet in Philadelphia on the September 27, 1785, the following year.

Before that, however, New York would have its own "diocesan" (a word not yet used) convention. It met, probably at St. Paul's Chapel, on June 22, 1785. Samuel Provoost, Benjamin Moore, and Abraham Beach were the city clergy present; the lay delegates were James Duane, Marinus Willett, and John Alsop. From Long Island there was one priest, Joshua Bloomer, and four laymen: Charles Crommelin, Daniel Kissam, Joseph Burrows, and John Johnson. Staten Island produced "the Rev. Mr. Rowland" and one layman, Paul Micheau. New Rochelle sent Andrew Fowler, and Ulster, Orange, and Dutchess counties sent laymen—Joseph Jarvis and John Davis. Samuel Provoost was elected president, and Benjamin Moore was secretary. The New York City clergy were chosen to go to the convention in Philadelphia accompanied by James Duane and Daniel Kissam (from Long Island) and John Davis (from Poughkeepsie). It was further ordered that Provoost was "to call another convention at such time and place as he shall deem most conducive to the work of the Church."<sup>35</sup>

It was that same month, June 1785, that Samuel Seabury returned to the United States. Failing consecration in England, he had found the nonjurors in Aberdeen willing to comply with his requests, especially since Seabury agreed to use his influence to their advantage in compiling the new American Prayer Book. In doing this, Seabury doubtless enriched the 1789 Book of Common Prayer, and historians have given due credit to the concordat thus honored. But at the same time, the nonjurors themselves have never had the scrutiny they deserved.

For in truth, they were unknown to most Episcopalians, though a dim memory of nonjuror may have lingered in American minds. The politics and the Church views of the nonjurors might be embarrassing to those attempting to revive the Church in the new Republic. The nonjurors were given that name when they refused to accept the result of the "Glorious Revolution" that placed William and Mary on the throne of her father in 1689. A number of prominent Church of England clergy, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, held to the principle that, having sworn allegiance to the King, any other sovereign was a usurper as long as James II lived. In an orderly and deliberate manner, these men set up a Church in Scotland, a country where episcopacy had just then been replaced by a presbyterian form of state church.

Now that Seabury had found consecration at nonjuror hands, it was remembered that in 1724 there may have been two other such bishops in America. According to rumor, both had been consecrated by one English nonjuring bishop in 1722. Welton is said to have declared openly his enhanced status, thus making himself a pariah among those city officials who looked to the London establishment for advancement, for the nonjurors prayed for the early restoration of the Stuarts. Talbot

(whose consecration is doubted by some historians) never attempted to exercise episcopal authority. He probably realized that to do so would involve him in a tangle of difficulties. Nevertheless, the possibility that there were two nonjuring bishops in America disturbed church-people who insisted on the established Church's normal orderliness. William White believed Talbot and Welton performed clandestine ordinations.

The importance to us is that the nonjurors were a discounted currency in America; two "bishops" roaming the environs of Philadelphia in the 1720s bent on drumming up interest in the Stuart cause was not an attractive scene to American minds after the Revolutionary War. It is a long cruise to England, and on their voyage to consecration there can be no doubt that William White told Samuel Provoost what he had heard about Talbot and Welton and their nonjuring politics—another nail in Seabury's coffin, as far as Provoost was concerned.

Holding to their conservative political and theological views, and thoroughly Stuart in their loyalties, the nonjurors maintained the apostolic succession but never exercised a wide ministry in Scotland. Dissensions further weakened their influence, so that by the time Seabury met their bishops, Arthur Petrie, John Skinner, and the Primate Robert Kilgour the nonjuring Church (which probably never had any church buildings) resembled a dying sect. The last nonjuror bishop died in 1805. Taken all together, the nonjurors were not what Episcopalians had in mind when they thought of their clergy receiving consecration in the apostolic line.

Certainly, Samuel Provoost didn't regard Seabury as having appropriate credentials. But then, it seems that these two men never could be congenial. The patrician Provoost resented the pretensions of Seabury, whom he had known from their days at King's College. Provoost was a Latitudinarian; Seabury's theology was nearer the Laudian standard and, once consecrated, he was not overly careful to confine his ministrations to Connecticut. Provoost had probably heard that when Seabury ordained a man he extracted the promise that there would be a personal obligation to him until the ordinand's state had its own bishop. Preposterous in a free country, one can hear Provoost exclaim. This is why Provoost later transgressed in the same manner on Seabury's territory.

Seabury's tracts during the war, his services as a chaplain, the possibility of his receiving a pension from the Crown: these rankled. Had not Provoost lost his own house and income during the war? Had not his wife's health suffered irreversibly in the wintertime harshness of East Camp? Had not Provoost been deprived of his beloved library and his scientific apparatus, while Seabury came and went in Loyalist New York? Now that the English themselves had denied him the highest

honor of his career, the wily Seabury managed to extract the laurels from an obscure group of reactionary clergy in Scotland who stood for the very things Provoost hated most. When seeking the word to describe Provoost's reaction to the news of Seabury's consecration in Scotland, we can do no better than fall back upon that familiar one, apoplectic!

Furthermore, Seabury wasn't done making mischief. Upon returning from England, he and his Connecticut colleagues refused to join in the Philadelphia convention because its presiding officer wasn't a bishop (that is, wasn't Seabury himself; there were no other bishops in America). Perhaps worse, Bishop Seabury was opposed to lay representation in the councils of the Church. When the New York convention approved a bicameral national structure, he wrote to Bishop Skinner in Scotland, "I cannot but consider this a very lame if not a mischievous business. It will bring the Clergy into abject bondage to the Laity."<sup>36</sup>

Provoost could not agree. He owed his present position in the Church to the laity, while Seabury's election was by clergy only, and his consecration had in part been advanced by testimonials written by Tories, Inglis and Moore. Seabury was ambitious, able, vocation-minded, and contentious. Provoost was easygoing, broad in his interests, diffident about the fortunes of the Church (in the accepted eighteenth-century manner). But, if he was not contentious, he was at least able to nurse a grudge.

The first General Convention of the Episcopal Church met in Philadelphia on September 27, 1785. Sixteen clergy and twenty-four laymen were present, representing Virginia, Maryland, South Carolina, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. Connecticut declined to attend because the Church there was still unsure about lay participation. Massachusetts found a much more Yankee-like reason not to attend: the journey would cost too much to be worthwhile. William White presided and guided the deliberations through the main business which came under the headings episcopate, liturgy, and constitution. It was determined that the states were to be ready with elected bishops when the Church of England would consent to consecrate them. A Proposed Book of Common Prayer was produced by a committee (and was never approved). The constitution of the Church on which White had spent much time began its way toward final ratification four years later.

Of even more interest to us, however, were the two New York conventions held the next year, 1786. There were four city clergy now, Provoost, Moore, and Beach having been joined by the Rev. Uzal Ogden, a difficult presbyter from New Jersey. The lay delegates were an impressive lot: Mayor Duane, Judge John Jay, Chancellor Livingston,

Richard Morris, John Alsop, William Duer, and Pascal Smith; it is perhaps worth noting that Duane, Jay, Livingston, Duer—and Provoost—were all related to one other. The united parishes of Jamaica, Newtown, and Flushing were represented, as were Hempstead and Rye; but there were many Episcopal churches unable as yet to respond to the call of a convention. Nevertheless, it was a real convention: seven clergy and fifteen laymen heard Duane's report of the Philadelphia meeting and discussed the Prayer Book for two days. The gentlemen then dispersed for a month, probably because the news they had been waiting for had not yet arrived. Gathering again on June 13, 1786, "Letters from the English Bishops and from Mr. Adams were read," earning the "thanks of this Convention . . . to the Hon. Mr. Adams and Mr. Lee for interesting themselves in so affectionate a manner for the benefit of the Church in the business of procuring for it an episcopate."<sup>37</sup>