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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Printing, Publics, and Pudding: Charles Chauncy's Universal Salvation and the Material Transformation of New England Orthodoxy

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Abstract

For over thirty years, eighteenth-century Boston minister Charles Chauncy published his views about universal salvation outside of the printing press. While scholars have argued that he was reluctant to publish because of his heterodox views against a predominantly Calvinist public, the long history of a broadly circulating manuscript complicates any clear intentions toward privacy or secrecy. Instead, Chauncy strategized around the printing press and the pulpit. Using more discreet modes of publication, like manuscript circulation and scribal publication, he gathered a supportive public for universal salvation before his views even reached the printing press. The audience for his work grew even further through intimate conversations and private correspondence between readers of the manuscript and those they wanted to convert. By the time Chauncy decided to print his views, Congregationalist ministers' hopes for a largely orthodox public sphere had already been compromised through various means of sharing, exchanging, and distributing ideas outside of the printing press. In many ways, it was not strictly the allure of Enlightenment ideas that facilitated the liberalization of New England theology. It was also the ways writers like Chauncy attended to different modes of publications to situate different readers as a captive and receptive audience.

Keywords: Universalism; Calvinism; Religion; Chauncy; New England; Print Culture

In 1782, a controversy stirred among Boston's clerical elite. Printers Thomas and John Fleet published a pamphlet titled *Salvation for All Men, illustrated and vindicated AS A Scripture Doctrine*, written by an anonymous author calling himself "One who wishes well to *all Mankind*." Against the backdrop of Boston's mostly Calvinist heritage, it was no surprise that a universalist text would draw so much attention. News about the controversy over *Salvation for All Men* spread to Europe where diplomat John Adams was alerted to "a religious dispute arising on Matters [that] do not tend to render Men wiser or better or more happy."[1]

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[1]Edmund Jennings to John Adams, July 22, 1783, Adams Papers Digital Edition (online collection), Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston [hereafter cited as "Adams Papers"].

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However, what ultimately concerned the ministers was not that universal salvation threatened New England orthodoxy. Universalists like itinerant preacher John Murray (1741–1815) had been converting congregations in rural towns across the countryside since the mid-1770s.[2] What was new about the 1782 publication was that universal salvation made its way to Boston's print networks and it was written by someone within the clergy's own ranks.

Salvation for All Men's author preached at First Church of Boston: Charles Chauncy (1705–1787). Among his peers, he was one of the most well-respected and widely published defenders of the New England clerical order. During the Great Awakening revivals of the 1730s and the 1740s, Chauncy published against supporters of revivalists across the region, and his *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England* (1743) successfully rallied antirevivalist ministers against the likes of George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards. In the 1760s, Chauncy printed defenses in support of New England clerical autonomy against Anglicans like Thomas Bradbury Chandler who supported the idea of an Anglican bishop presiding over colonial religious affairs. Baptist minister Isaac Backus praised his antirevivalists opponent as having "published more, for thirty years, to uphold the Congregational establishment in New England than any other man."[3] For most of his life, Chauncy had relied on print to assert the merits of New England Congregationalism. However, despite his orthodox publication record, he had been discreetly spreading his views on universal salvation through correspondences and a circulating manuscript he called "pudding." In other words, the famous defender of New England orthodoxy has also been facilitating theological transformation outside of the printing press.

Histories about the theological liberalization of New England Calvinism into its unitarian and universalist strains have often focused on the influence of Enlightenment ideas on key intellectual figures.[4] At the same time, terms like republican, democratic, and popular helped name the relationship between those very ideas and the social movements they may have engendered.[5] While such ideas were certainly influential, their circulation and reception were nevertheless dependent on the material forms of

[2]On Murray's itinerancy, see Kathryn Gin Lum, *Damned Nation: Hell in America from the Revolution to Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1–42. On the Great Awakening revivals, see David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2003); Thomas Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); and Doug Winiarski, *Darkness Falls on the Land of Light: Experiencing Religious Awakenings in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

[3]Isaac Backus, *A Church History of New England from 1620 to 1804* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Baptist Tract Depository, 1839), 186.

[4]See Henry May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976). For readings since then, see John M. Dixon, "Henry F. May and the Revival of the American Enlightenment: Problems and Possibilities for Intellectual and Social History," *William and Mary Quarterly* 71, no. 2 (Apr. 2014): 255–280.

[5]For some key works that illustrate this move, see Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972); Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991); Mark Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); and E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003).

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their publication. How they were published determined how those ideas reached and affected their readers, whether through correspondence networks or distribution channels composed of printers and booksellers. Indeed, eighteenth-century Anglo-Protestants had an array of options for publication including manuscript circulation, scribal publication, oral preaching, word-of-mouth, and print distribution.[6] Authors often strategized between these modes of publication, as each one varied in terms of availability and intimacy. They recognized that mediums situated readers into different discursive communities and shaped how they were expected to engage and respond to the texts' ideas. In other words, how ideas circulated and were received within reading communities was co-constitutive with the ways that modes of communication mediated the social relations between authors and readers.

Paying attention to the materialities of textual production and circulation takes seriously the ways authors and readers described texts as *performances*. When Chauncy used the term to describe his published views on universal salvation, he drew attention to the complex dynamics between authors, readers, and texts that go beyond readers merely assessing the validity of a text's theological claims: "I am not insensible, that, in a performance of this nature, where the *proof* is of the *moral kind*, and depends upon a variety of *circumstances* duly adjusted and situated with respect to each other, there will be always room left for *difference* of sentiment in different persons."[7] Indeed, many of the praises over Chauncy's publication went beyond its truth claims, often commenting on its aesthetic quality, ability to conform to genre conventions, and the affective responses it elicited from readers. However, performance also demonstrates Chauncy's awareness of how the printed form itself affected his readers. Much in the same way that readers were "adjusted" and "situated . . . according to the difference there may be in their temper of mind, manner of education, condition in life, freedom in the exercise of their faculties," so too did mediums participate in this process of conditioning how readers engage with their contents.[8] In the case of printed texts, paratextual elements that indicate authorship, publishing information, and subscriptions signaled to readers the many different intermediaries and investments that made their production possible. These print technologies lent the medium the authority of a discursive or imagined community behind its creation: a kind of public that situated readers among its ranks.[9] By paying attention to the author–reader dynamics that these

[6]My use of the term "publication" draws on David Hall, *Ways of Writing: The Practice and Politics of Text-Making in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); and Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993). Both loosened the criteria for what it means for something to be published by tethering it to the social function of a text rather than its form—namely the way it reaches audiences rather than a text being a product of the printing press.

[7]Charles Chauncy, *The Mystery Hid from Ages and Generations, Made Manifest by the Gospel-Revelation* (London: Printed for C. Dilly, 1784), vii.

[8]Chauncy, *The Mystery Hid*, vii.

[9]My thinking on the performativity of texts was shaped by the essays in *Cultural Narratives: Textuality and Performance in American Culture before 1900*, ed. Sandra M. Gustafson and Caroline F. Sloat (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010). Matthew Brown's essay proposes the idea of "performative literacy" to gesture toward the ways texts shaped readers' practices and how such interactions become conventions. Later essays also deploy various other theater metaphors to draw attention to the ways texts stage readers for a particular uptake. My own investigation into "performance" fixates on the ways such interactions were mediated by both the material medium and the publishers that made such invocations authoritative for the reader.

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texts staged, we can better capture the complexity and nuance with which authors inscribed ideas into material objects, strategized around their authority and circulation, and transformed their community's theologies.

In this article, I will explore these dynamics through the publication of Chauncy's *The Mystery Hid from Ages and Generations* (1783). Contrary to what the title might suggest, the text and its ideas were not entirely hidden. For thirty years before its print publication, the manuscript spread universal salvation to New England clergymen through correspondence networks. Their close connections to Chauncy's growing circle of followers likely influenced readers of the manuscript to write and speak more charitably about universal salvation than if they were responding to a heterodox print published text. The Boston minister deployed these more intimate means of circulating his ideas over and against preaching them from the pulpit or publishing through the printing press. When Chauncy finally decided to print his views, it was not merely for convenience or for wider distribution, but rather an assertion about the relationship between theology, printing, and the public. *Mystery Hid* announced to readers that a transformation had already been taking place in the hearts and minds of Congregationalist ministers over a long period of thirty years.

Manuscript Circulation and Scribal Publication

Mid- to late-eighteenth-century British colonial America saw a growth in adherents to universal salvation, the Protestant belief that God had predestined all of humanity to eternal happiness in heaven. Historians of this burgeoning movement mark Murray's 1770s arrival in the British colonies as inaugurating the earliest moments of the denomination, whose earliest adherents covered a geography that spanned from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, all the way to Gloucester, Massachusetts.[10] However, decades before Murray arrived in the colonies and a few years before his mentor James Relly published *Union; or a Treatise of the Consanguinity between Christ and Church* (1759), the foundational text for Murray's universal salvation, Chauncy had arrived at the conclusion that all of humanity was destined for eternal salvation. He was not the first in North America to reach this conclusion. However, Chauncy's turn was nevertheless pivotal in the history of undermining the longstanding hold of Calvinism over New England, which for decades has stressed that God had only destined a select handful of his elect to salvation.[11] His eventual publication, titled *The Mystery Hid*, established the legitimacy of universal salvation for the Puritan-descended clergy in Boston and across New England.

Chauncy adopted universal salvation just a few years after he rallied New England ministers against Whitefield and Edwards during the Great Awakening revivals in the

[10]Murray was a student of Relly in London and would become the minister for a group of Universalists in Gloucester, Massachusetts, who had separately encountered Relly's text. On this history as the starting point for Universalism, see George Hunston Williams, "American Universalism: A Bicentennial Essay," *Journal of the Universalist Historical Society* 9 (1971): 23; and Russel Miller, *The Larger Hope: The First Century of the Universalist Church in America* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1979).

[11]One of the earliest universalists in the British colonies was George de Benneville, a preacher and physician, who arrived in Philadelphia sometime in the 1740s. See Ann Lee Bressler, *The Universalist Movement in America, 1770–1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Histories of universalism in the United States begin with John Murray and often render Benneville's arrival and Chauncy's turn to universal salvation peripheral to the story even though they predated Murray's itinerancy in New England.

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1740s. After his newfound celebrity, he embarked on a journey to make "the Scriptures [his] whole study" and scoured "the libraries [in Boston] or at Cambridge" to discover what he believed had "escaped the notice of so many who have written on the Apostle's Epistles."[12] It would become the central thesis for *The Mystery Hid*, which he would print thirty years later: "The whole human race are considered in the following work, as made for happiness; and it finally fixes them in the everlasting enjoyment of it, notwithstanding the lapse of one man Adam, and all the sin and misery that ever has been, or ever will be, consequent thereupon."[13] According to Chauncy, universal salvation was divinely hidden for centuries because scriptural study had not yet been done in a "free, impartial, and diligent manner."[14] Within this claim, Chauncy was critiquing New England theology as valuing *sola scriptura* but perhaps never actually exercising it to the point of discerning the truth of universal salvation. Compared to his earlier publications which relied heavily on the authority and weight of scholarship by early modern Puritan divines, *The Mystery Hid* cited strictly from the Hebrew and Greek Testaments. Unencumbered by the centuries of commentaries, Chauncy concluded that Romans 5:15–21 and Romans 8:19–25 established the perfect equivalency of Adam and Jesus when it came to both damnation and salvation: "The human race came into the world under the disadvantage of being subjected to death . . . occasioned solely by the offense of the one man Adam; and they come into the existence likewise under the advantage of an absolute assurance . . . that they shall delivered from death, occasioned solely by the obedience of the one man Jesus Christ."[15] By 1754, Chauncy had prepared a manuscript containing his findings but he refused to send it to print.

Although most scholars framed Chauncy's decision to delay printing as secrecy, owed likely to its heterodox contents, he was nevertheless widely circulating a manuscript and reaching an audience for it outside the printing press.[16] For thirty years, readers spoke

[12]William Chauncey Fowler, "President Charles Chauncy and His Ancestors and Descendants," *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register, Volumes 10–11* (Boston, 1856–1857), 335.

[13]Chauncy, *The Mystery Hid*, v.

[14]Ibid., xi–xii. Chauncy credits dissenting English minister John Taylor of Norwich's *Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin* (1740) and his *Paraphrase and Notes upon the Epistle to the Romans* (1745) for inspiring him to approach scripture without extensive reliance on the conclusions and interpretations of scripture by early modern divines like Puritan minister Richard Baxter and his contemporaries. That is not to say Chauncy conducted his study without having consulted any commentaries in his research, but rather that he was much less likely to cite the findings of fellow ministers in his analysis of scripture than he had previously done.

[15]Chauncy, *The Mystery Hid*, 84. Works studying Chauncy's theology have underscored the importance of Chauncy needing to resolve issues around original sin and its implications for the afterlife before coming to universal salvation, suggesting that his move toward universal salvation was gradual. However, the sequence with which Chauncy finished the manuscripts suggests otherwise: universal salvation came first, and then questions around original sin and the benevolence of God would come after, in later publications titled *Five Dissertations* (1785) and *Benevolence of the Deity* (1784). By 1768, Chauncy had finished the manuscript for *The Mystery Hid* while the other two works are still mostly uncompleted, suggesting that universal salvation was the starting point, not the conclusion, for the rest of his much later publications. See Charles Chauncy, "A Sketch of Eminent Men in New England, in a Letter from the Rev. Dr. Chauncy to Dr. Stiles," *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society First Series*, *Vol. 10* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1809), 163 [hereafter cited as "A Sketch of Eminent Men"].

[16]The two main scholarly works on Chauncy are Edward M. Griffin, *Old Brick: Charles Chauncy of Boston, 1705–1787* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980); and Charles Lippy, *Seasonable Revolutionary: The Mind of Charles Chauncy* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1981). More recent works have explored the intersection of his liberal theology and political orientations by pairing him

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and wrote about it, comprising a kind of a growing discursive community. Initially, Chauncy invited only family members like his cousin Nathaniel to see the manuscript in-person: "I wish I could have an opportunity to converse with you, or to let you see what I have written upon Paul's Epistles."[17] By 1768, however, more of Chauncy's friends had read the manuscript to the point that they openly debated whether he should destroy it or "send it home [to London] for publication, and to have it printed without a name."[18] In a letter to Newport minister Ezra Stiles, Chauncy relayed the material details of the manuscript: it was grouped together with "a large parcel of materials fitted to answer several designs," and the text itself was "a quarto volume which [he] had completed for some years." The contents of the manuscript even reached London Unitarian minister Richard Price, who had written to Chauncy that "ultimate restoration of all mankind . . . is by no means reconcilable to the language of scripture," to which Chauncy responded: "Will you dear Sir, permit me to ask, Is it indisputably evident from Scripture that there shall not be this ultimate restoration?" Price was not privy to the manuscript itself just yet, but Chauncy hinted at the possibility of sending it to him: "I could have greatly enlarged upon the office of ultimate restoration; but I would not be too tedious. I fear I have been too troublesome already."[19] Over the course of thirty years, Chauncy grew his universalist network in ways that illustrate he was open to gathering a broader audience for his views.

For many writers in the eighteenth century, manuscript circulation and scribal publication were the primary modes of publication in a constrained print market. In *Ways of Writing* (2009), historian David Hall challenged scholars' affiliation of publication with print production and distribution by printers and booksellers. He proposed that scholars also include in their understanding of "publication" the roles and activities of the "scribal community" of creators and readers who "shared in the production and distribution of manuscript copies."[20] With this move, Hall reimagined the term "publication" from describing the material form of a text and the institutionalized channels that distributed it to describing the social life, function, and use of texts that escaped authorial control. This framework opened room for handwritten manuscripts to also be published based on their circulation. As Hall later suggested, distributing texts via manuscript circulation was not as constrained as it might initially seem since handwritten copies could still "reach a significant audience." In one instance, Hall relayed how clergyman John Cotton (1585–1652) was astounded that one "private letter . . .

with fellow Boston minister Jonathan Mayhew. See John Corrigan, *The Hidden Balance: Religion and Social Theories of Charles Chauncy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and John Oakes, *Conservative Revolutionaries: Transformation and Tradition in Religious and Political Thought of Charles Chauncy and Jonathan Mayhew* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016).

[17]Charles Chauncy to Nathaniel Chauncy, Apr. 14, 1754, *Manuscript Collection*, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

[18]Chauncy, "Sketch of Eminent Men," 163.

[19]Charles Chauncy to Richard Price, Mar. 22, 1770, "The Price Papers," *Electronic Enlightenment*, online collection, University of Oxford, Cambridge, UK [hereafter cited as Price Papers].

[20]Hall in *Ways of Writing* proposed the following definition: "Any text that existed in one or more handwritten copies can be considered published. This definition encompasses a text in an author's handwriting that he shared with others as well as what Harold Love has named 'user' publication, the making of copies (perhaps no more than one) by someone else" (35). While Hall makes this argument about seventeenth-century New England literary culture, similar practices continued well into the eighteenth century when aspiring authors relied on their own scribal communities to circulate and distribute copies of texts over and against relying on printers and booksellers.

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written to a very [dear] friend" was copied, "divulged abroad," and "in process of time, one copy multiplied to another."[21] At times, manuscript distribution along correspondence networks was a less constrained means of publishing a work to a broader audience, especially since it was not subjected to the curation of printers and booksellers.[22] In many ways, the social life of Chauncy's manuscript exemplified Hall's broader definition of publication and demonstrates how the practice extended into the eighteenth century.

How Chauncy's manuscript traveled, who it reached, and what readers did with it demonstrated an important point in Hall's criteria for publication: circulation which escaped authorial control. The manuscript likely traveled as far west as Durham, Connecticut, to his cousin; as far south as Newport, Rhode Island; and even crossed the Atlantic to reach his correspondents.[23] In addition to the geographies it covered, a haphazardly traveling object also found ways to escape the author's intentions for its circulation. In one notable instance, New Hampshire minister Jeremy Belknap took so long to peruse the 300-page manuscript that he delayed sending it back to Chauncy. As another Boston minister John Eliot (not to be confused with the missionary and author of the Wôpanâak Bible) wrote to Belknap, "Dr. Chauncy has repeatedly spoken to me, sometimes in an angry tone, about you [Belknap] that you have several MSS of his which he wishes you to return" and urged Belknap to "send them to [Chauncy] by the first opportunity."[24] Belknap would later ask for another opportunity to read the manuscript and was instructed to retrieve it from a "Mr. Thayer." This likely referred to John Thayer, a Boston clergyman who would later convert from Calvinism to Catholicism.[25] Thayer left for France that same year. Had Belknap not retrieved the manuscript, Thayer might have even brought it to Europe with him. These moments of authorial frustration illustrated the ways in which a traveling manuscript operated independently of its author's intentions.

In addition to the ways manuscripts haphazardly traveled along correspondence networks, scribal communities regularly copied texts for circulation alongside the growing

[21]Hall, *Ways of Writing*, 35.

[22]For more on colonial New England printing, see *A History of the Book in America, Vol 1: The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, ed. Hugh Amory and David D. Hall (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[23]William Hazlitt to Richard Price, Oct. 19, 1784, Price Papers.

[24]John Eliot to Jeremy Belknap, Dec. 10, 1780, "The Belknap Papers," *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society Sixth Series, Vol. 4* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1840), 201 [hereafter cited as Belknap Papers].

[25]The connection between Chauncy and Thayer appears in a short biography written by Percival Merritt who claims that Thayer "is supposed to have pursued his theological studies in Boston under the Rev. Charles Chauncy and to have received a license to preach." See Percival Merritt, "Bibliographical Notes on An Account of the Conversion of the Rev. John Thayer," *Colonial Society of Massachusetts Publications* 25 (1923): 129. Unfortunately, there are no footnotes to that claim. Bochem makes a strong, albeit indirect, case for Thayer's connection to Chauncy's views through his use of both reason and scripture. See Christine Bochem, *The Journey to Rome: Conversion Literature by Nineteenth-Century American Catholics* (New York: Garland Publishers, 1988). The strongest evidence for Thayer's connection to Chauncy is membership records from First Church of Boston indicating he was admitted on July 26, 1778, and the prominence of Thayer in the Belknap Papers. On membership records, see "Volume One: Admissions to Church Membership, 1630–1778 Votes of Church and Congregation, 1656–1785 Baptisms, 1630–1847," in *Records of the First Church in Boston, 1630–1868, Colonial Society of Massachusetts Publications* 39 (1961). For Chauncy's instructions for Belknap to obtain the manuscript from a Mr. Thayer in a letter from John Eliot, see John Eliot to Jeremy Belknap, July 31, 1781, Belknap Papers, 211.

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domestic print trade.[26] Within Chauncy's own community, both Eliot and Belknap regularly exchanged verbatim extracts of texts they could not readily send to each other.[27] After reading Chauncy's manuscript, Eliot offered to copy down any "passages [Belknap] desired and anything else [he] may hereafter peruse."[28] While it was not clear how many passages Eliot would eventually copy down and distribute, he provided Chauncy's paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 15:24–27 in the letter.[29] Other universalist networks also used these means not so much to avoid a suspecting public but simply because it was much more convenient. In one example, portions of a posthumously printed work titled *Calvinism Improved: Or, the Gospel Illustrated as a System of Real Grace, Issuing in the Salvation of All Men* (1796) was distributed through scribal publication. The original text was written by Connecticut universalist minister Joseph Huntington, who was wary of publishing his work for fear that his closest friends and connections "will probably be more wounded by this publication, or at least more aggrieved, than any other persons on [his] account."[30] Philadelphia physician and universalist John Redman received a printed copy and found it more "infinitely comprehensive, than anything [he] had before met with on this important subject." Rather than approach Connecticut printer Samuel Green for a copy, he instead copied pages of excerpts verbatim from a printed *Calvinism Improved* and distributed them to interested correspondents, such as fellow physician Benjamin Rush.[31] These scribal copies published Huntington's ideas well beyond the limited Connecticut market serviced by Green and in a manner more convenient for universalists like Redman.

Through manuscript networks, New England clergy like Eliot would be converted to universal salvation. He was initially skeptical about Chauncy's universalist views. After witnessing firsthand the revivalist tenor of the itinerant Murray, Eliot concluded that universal salvation could only stem from "brilliancy of imagination than strength of genius."[32] The young minister originally professed to annihilationism, where he believed that souls were destined for eternal destruction—a scheme he adopted strictly because it was "congenial to the disposition of [his] soul."[33] After five years of conversations with Chauncy, Belknap, and other readers of the manuscript, Eliot was moved as close to universal salvation as possible. He confessed in his writings, "Either reason

[26]See Hugh Amory, "The New England Book Trade, 1713–1790," in *A History of the Book in America Vol 1: The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, ed. Hugh Amory and David D. Hall (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 314–346.

[27]They regularly exchanged excerpts, with Eliot sending paragraph-long extracts of Bourn's work on annihilationism, which argued for the destruction of souls rather than their eternal suffering. Eliot wrote to Belknap that he would provide the extracts in a January 26, 1780, letter and sent his excerpt from Bourn two months after in a March 29, 1780, letter. Eliot also requested extracts of a "Dr. Whitby's" work from Belknap the following month. See Belknap Papers, 174–184. Eliot would also offer to print to newspapers excerpts from a letter that Belknap had seen earlier (193), which would eventually be printed in the *Independent Ledger* on June 5, 1780.

[28]Eliot to Belknap, Jan. 26, 1780, Belknap Papers, 174.

[29]Eliot to Belknap, May 23, 1780, Belknap Papers, 187.

[30]Joseph Huntington, *Calvinism Improved; or, The Gospel Illustrated as a System of Real Grace, Issuing in the Salvation of All Men* (New-London, CT: Samuel Green, 1796), v.

[31]John Redman to Benjamin Rush, Nov. 14, 1796, Rush Collection, Vol. 22, MS 22, Library Company of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA [hereafter cited as Rush Collection]. More than ten pages of verbatim extracts are found in Rush's papers from Redman.

[32]Eliot to Belknap, Feb. 18, 1775, Belknap Papers, 82.

[33]See Eliot to Belknap, Jan. 26, 1780, Belknap Papers, 174–176. Explanations of Eliot's annihilationist scheme are scattered across most of the conversations between Eliot and Belknap.

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or something else within me inclines towards the more liberal, because more extensive, plan of the restitution of all things." By 1780, all that remained was for him to read the manuscript. When Chauncy offered Eliot the chance at "the perusal of the MSS. upon Restitution," he readily accepted. This process illustrated the ways the intimacy of the manuscript, his many correspondences, and conversations with those within Chauncy's circle staged his encounter with the text. By the time he read the text, Eliot was already "fully convinced of the sentiments advanced by the Doctor." The manuscript was only the final step because Eliot wanted to see for himself how Chauncy exegeted universal salvation from Paul's Epistles so that he could believe "a man of common sense, good discernment, solid understanding, with an unprejudiced mind should read the Greek testament, especially the Evangelists, and upon giving his opinion should declare that [universal salvation] was the doctrine there delivered."[34] The manuscript did not disappoint. After a month with the text, he was convinced: "I have read Dr. Chauncy upon *you know what*. I think it unanswerable. Were I *not* of a sceptical turn of mind in things admitting much speculation, I should fall into it. Perhaps I may be said to believe it."[35] Without the networks of correspondence and many conversations that staged his uptake of the manuscript, Eliot may not have come to adopt Chauncy's views on universal salvation.

Through scribal publication and manuscript circulation, Chauncy gathered a public for his views about universal salvation. His reluctance may have had less to do with the heterodoxy of his views and more about the medium of print itself. Manuscript circulation and scribal publication leveraged the intimacy of interactions that would stage how readers might receive otherwise heterodox views. These modes of publishing were also simply a more materially convenient way for Chauncy to gather a community of readers and sympathizers. They did not demand engaging with unsympathetic or wary intermediaries like printers and booksellers for their work to reach an audience. Chauncy's circle knew that Calvinist rhetoric still dominated New England's religious printing by the mid- to late-eighteenth century. However, just because their views about universal salvation traveled through scribal practices and correspondences instead of challenging longstanding tradition in print does not mean they were necessarily secret or private either. Perhaps these are the reasons that allowed manuscript publication to thrive at a time when print was most celebrated for its ever-increasing, though still limited, accessibility.[36]

Intimacy and Pulpit Rhetoric

As the manuscript circulated among New England clergymen, Chauncy sought to constrain the explosion of conversations, rumors, and other audible publications that came with a haphazardly traveling manuscript. This was when he coined the term *pudding*.

[34]Eliot to Belknap, Jan. 26, 1780, Belknap Papers, 174–176.

[35]Eliot to Belknap, Apr. 14, 1780, Belknap Papers, 183.

[36]This argument rebuts the technological determinism associated with the printed medium, as reiterated by scholars such as Hatch in *The Democratization of American Christianity*; and Christopher Grasso, *A Speaking Aristocracy: Transforming Public Discourse in Eighteenth-Century Connecticut* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999). For more complex treatments of print that complicate the medium merely by signifying the popularization and wide circulation of ideas, see Caroline Eastman, *A Nation of Speechifiers* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009); and Trish Loughran, *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770–1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

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Eliot explained that "the pudding is a word which he uses when persons are nigh not acquainted with [their] sentiments, thus styling the MSS." When Chauncy wanted to know if someone might be amenable to reading his manuscript, he would often ask readers, "Doth he relish the pudding?"[37] There was little clarification from Chauncy or his readers as to why he used the term pudding, though the abundance of food metaphors he used to describe the experience of reading the manuscript suggests its effect on the material senses. After savoring the pudding, Eliot wondered if Chauncy really should consider "the propriety of feeding the palate of the populate with this rich & dainty food."[38] In contrast, Eliot called Relly's *Union* "as compleat a dish of hodge podge as most other essays upon mystical subjects."[39] Such metaphors might at times be in jest, but they perform an important work. Pudding signified both the idea of universal salvation and the manuscript containing Chauncy's views on the matter. Universal salvation was a topic that both readers and nonreaders of the manuscript could discuss together as a collective discursive community. However, the term obscured for nonreaders the contents of the manuscript that generated the discussion. In this sense, pudding preserved important reader/nonreader dichotomies and refocused the manuscript as the foundation for Chauncy's community's conversations and rumors about universal salvation.

Although Chauncy could exercise little control over who could circulate his manuscript's contents along correspondence networks, he worried over who could preach to a congregation about them. In December 1780, Belknap delivered a sermon to a group of ministers and was reported to have "thr[own] out so many heretical hints [that he] was obliged to appear as a candidate for moderate reproof." The content of his heresy likely contained some elements of universal salvation since Chauncy had to remind Belknap, "Be ye wise as serpents [as] it will not do to vent these sentiments at present."[40] Chauncy was also reluctant to share his manuscript with one of his closest friends, minister of Old West Church in Boston, Jonathan Mayhew (1720–1766). Despite the two sharing many theological and political positions, from their joint publications against the establishment of Anglican bishops in the colonies to their unrivaled support for the patriot cause during the American Revolution, Chauncy worried that Mayhew "cannot keep a secret." A circulating manuscript betrayed any sense of secrecy, but his concern may have had to do more with the Mayhew's reputation. The Old West minister was notorious for fiery sermons that attacked even the most orthodox positions held by fellow clergy. It was unlikely that he would have been silent from the pulpit about universal salvation. Chauncy expressed in more detail his concern to fellow minister Ebenezer Gay, who had already tasted the pudding: "I am not yet ready or determined to publish it; but if [Mayhew] sees it, such as his frankness, that all the world will soon know it."[41] Belknap's carelessness and Mayhew's fiery preaching, both from the pulpit, illustrated Chauncy's reluctance to publish universal salvation through preaching or any form of public oration.

His reservations about audible publication were likely owed to the ways Murray spread universal salvation through itinerant preaching. Eliot illustrated this difference

[37]Eliot to Belknap, Feb. 1781, Belknap Papers, 207.

[38]Eliot to Belknap, Jan. 26, 1780, Belknap Papers, 175.

[39]Eliot to Belknap, July 31, 1781, Belknap Papers, 211.

[40]Eliot to Belknap, Dec. 1780, Belknap Papers, 201.

[41]Quoted from Alden Bradford, *Memoir of the Life and Writings of Rev. Jonathan Mayhew, D.D., Pastor of West Church and Society in Boston, from June 1747 to July 1766*. (Boston: C.C. Little, 1838), 479.

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by comparing the effects of itinerant preaching and manuscript circulation on the clergy: Murray's preaching only served to "irritate the passions" of the clergy, while Chauncy's unprinted publications strove to "mollify their minds with ointment to receive the doctrine."[42] Central to this distinction was a difference in form. Theological exchange through correspondences, manuscripts, rumors, and conversations among ministers conveyed trust and charitability between peers. This approach respected and preserved each ministers' jurisdiction and relations with their own congregation, which they built over a long period of time. Within New England religious life, the pivotal events for enacting this authoritative dynamic were regular oral sermons. They functioned as a "regular voice of authority" that drew on ministers' familiarity with the day-to-day lives of their congregants and in their delivery also depended on the physical and spatial proximity between speaker and audience.[43] In contrast, Murray's itinerant preaching threatened the regular rhythms of New England religion by unmooring ministerial speech from congregants' immediate context and asserting authority through rhetoric and message that claimed a kind of universality. In other words, itinerant preaching imagined theological rhetoric that transcended local relations that ultimately made up Congregationalist polity and threatened to undo the system altogether.[44] Chauncy made a similar observation regarding the relationship between itinerant preaching and its effects on the authority of ministers and the uncharitable reception by congregants to established ministers' sermons during the Great Awakening revivals:

> Censoriousness, to a high Degree, is indeed the constant Appendage of this religious commotion. Wherever it takes Place the Subjects of it, too generally, are uncharitable to Neighbours, to brethren of the same Community, to Relatives, to Ministers in an especial Manner; yea, to all the World that are not in their way of thinking and speaking: And what may be worth a Note, the Places where this Appearance has been most remarkable, have commonly been most filled with Uncharitableness, in all expressions of it.[45]

[42]Eliot to Belknap, Dec. 10, 1780, Belknap Papers, 201.

[43]See Harry Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 4. Stout makes an important argument about rhetoric, that the experience of the sermon was primarily oral and not printed. On this front, many of the dynamics Chauncy assumed about preaching relied on an understanding of the sermon as an oral performance rather than strictly a printed one. On the sermon as an important site for information dissemination beyond theological content, also see Richard Brown, *Power Is Knowledge: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700–1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). On the speaker–audience proximity when it comes to sermon culture, see Meredith Neuman, *Jeremiah's Scribes: Creating Sermon Literature in Puritan New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013). Neuman proffers the "aural" experience of the sermon, which was contingent on the minister–audience relationship; the contestations and negotiations of which could be captured in sermon notes.

[44]Michael Warner makes a similar observation about evangelical publics; sermons anticipate an audience that was both converted and unconverted despite preaching to congregations composed mostly of those already converted or elect. See Michael Warner, "The Evangelical Public Sphere," A.S.W. Rosenbach Lectures in Bibliography (Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania, Mar. 23–26, 2009). Also see Harry Stout, "Religion, Communications, and the Ideological Origins of the American Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (Oct. 1977): 519–541.

[45]Charles Chauncy, *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New-England, a Treatise in Five Parts* (Boston: Printed by Rogers and Fowle, for Samuel Eliot in *Cornhill*, 1743), 170.

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Itinerants like Murray preached universal salvation with the confidence and authority that claimed to transcend the local ministerial–congregant relations that had been the cornerstone of New England life. In many ways, Murray's itinerancy complicated matters for non-itinerating universalists. By undoing the minister–congregation dynamics by preaching universal salvation, New England clergymen would readily associate the message with its form—namely that universal salvation itself was the cause for itinerancy's ills. Any manifestation of universal salvation that came even close to being delivered in the same manner that Murray published his views would be deemed suspect and deserving with as much charity as itinerants gave to established ministers.

Preaching universal salvation from the pulpit also created other complications. In some instances, oral sermons were simply too abrupt a means of publishing heterodox ideas to an unsuspecting congregation. Eliot compared Murray's mode of delivering the news of universal salvation to the idea of looking at the sun: "Eyes which have been for a long while blind must only gradually be admitted to the rays of the sun."[46] However, what concerned Eliot the most was also the ways in which universal salvation threatened the expected orthodoxy of the pulpit itself. As he wrote about preaching, "Every doctrine wh[ich] is necessary to salvation I think ought to be delivered from the pulpit.. . . But the future restitution of all things explained in ye MS. Is not thus necessary to be known."[47] Chauncy himself was attentive to these rhetorical dynamics. A heated public debate with ministers over the orthodoxy of a recently ordained minister at New South Church, Oliver Everett, caused such a stir that "Dr. Chauncy grew mad," had begun insulting every minister present, and was ready to subject everyone present to "eat ye pudding, bag & all."[48] What held Chauncy back, however, was the occasion. In the midst of a public spectacle, he likely recalled chastising Belknap and abstaining from sharing his views with Mayhew. He knew that declaring anything about universal salvation from the pulpit would win neither ministers nor congregants to his side. For both audiences, an audible declaration of universal salvation would simply sound and appear too much like Murray's preaching, which readily disregarded congregants' expectation about the orthodoxy of pulpit.

Chauncy witnessed firsthand what it would look like to publish universal salvation from the pulpit. His successor after retiring from his post at First Church of Boston, John Clarke, preached a sermon on universal salvation. Clarke "opened the subject in the pulpit, & in conversation with his people, and it hath given universal disgust" and widespread condemnation. Critics were furious, not so much that Clarke preached heterodoxy but that his timing with the American Revolution simply made it "improper to start such a controversy."[49] A pamphlet exchange followed between minister Samuel Mather, son of esteemed Boston clergyman Cotton Mather, and Chauncy's successor. Eliot remarked that had Clarke "entered into the argument and treated the subject delicately, he would have obliged his friends, served his cause, and gained a reputation."[50] Instead, having both published his views from the pulpit and debated in the presses, those "who were doubting the truth of [universal salvation] are put two steps back, rather than one forward, for they had looked for compleat satisfaction, instead of a

[46]Eliot to Belknap, Sept. 11, 1780, Belknap Papers, 198.

[47]Eliot to Belknap, Feb. 1781, Belknap Papers, 202.

[48]Eliot to Belknap, Feb. 1, 1782, Belknap Papers, 226.

[49]Eliot to Belknap, Sept. 30, 1782, Belknap Papers, 237.

[50]Eliot to Belknap, Dec. 7, 1782, Belknap Papers, 239.

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parade of satyre."[51] The incident with Clarke illustrated the very problems Chauncy avoided by circulating his manuscript for thirty years. It only justified his predecessor's strategy to publish outside of the printing press and the pulpit.

As a contrast to Clarke's public exchange with Mather, Belknap's correspondence with Maine minister Moses Hemmenway exemplified the wisdom behind Chauncy's approach. Hoping to recruit the minister, Belknap wrote to him in 1779 to inquire about his thoughts on universal salvation. Hemmenway responded that he had been "informed, indeed, that *such a universal redemption of mankind as shall issue in universal salvation* has been contended for by some." Although he had "read nothing that has been written in favour of it; have had no conversion upon the subject with any that were of this persuasion, or that appeared to understand the matter well," the combination of his correspondence with Belknap, earlier conversations with Eliot, and rumors around how universal salvation "has been received with so general a consent" similarly staged how Hemmenway would talk about universal salvation with his fellow minister. At first, Hemmenway believed that that there is little evidence to the contrary that God would not "continue sinful creatures in existence forever, as examples of punitive justice and monuments of his hatred of sin" and that such an approach was "not inconsistent with the end & design of [God's] moral government."[52] However, after listing numerous objections and counterexamples, Hemmenway entertained the possibility that universal salvation was an acceptable position. He wrote, "Upon the whole, dear Sire, I could gladly embrace the scheme of universal salvation, if *I could find a good foundation* for it in the Scriptures. I could hope that all will finally be happy and holy, *if I could reconcile it with the Scriptures.*" While his charitability did not lead to his support of universal salvation, he nevertheless found the position relatable: "There is something in the supposition that will strike a benevolent heart very agreeably. And I doubt not but that good men may be very favourably disposed towards it."[53] Hemmenway's remark encouraged those in Chauncy's circle. Eliot hoped that at the end, "Mr. H---y will be convinced of the beauty of the salva[tion of] Mankind as exhibited by [his] correspondence."[54] Through correspondences that established a sense of trust and charitability between interlocutors and correspondents, universal salvation grew to be a respectable and favorable position among the New England clergymen, even among those most unwilling to believe it.

Although universal salvation spread through circulating letters and discussions, Chauncy's manuscript was still the primary method for assuaging concerns about its connection to scripture. Inductees to universal salvation began with a similar question: could universal salvation be supported by verses from their Bibles? Hemmenway grappled with his inability to "reconcile [universal salvation] with the Scriptures," a concern that echoed Price's stance that universal salvation "is by no means reconcilable to the language of scripture" and Eliot's own requirement to see universal salvation "set in a Scriptural view."[55] The manuscript attended to this shared concern. It was replete with Chauncy's Greek Testament retranslations, paraphrases, commentary, proofs, and citations that would satisfy a minister's criteria for a scripturalizable universal

[51]Ibid.

[52]Moses Hemmenway to Jeremy Belknap, Dec. 20, 1779, Belknap Papers, 160–164.

[53]Hemmenway to Belknap, Dec. 20, 1779, Belknap Papers, 173.

[54]Eliot to Belknap, Jan. 26, 1780, Belknap Papers, 175.

[55]Chauncy to Price, Mar. 22, 1770, Price Papers; Hemmenway to Belknap, Dec. 20, 1779, Belknap Papers, 173; Eliot to Belknap, Jan. 26, 1780, Belknap Papers, 174.

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salvation.[56] However, until members of this discursive community became readers of the manuscript, they would be hard-pressed to agree that universal salvation was supported by scripture. Sustaining this distinction was one of the primary functions of the "pudding." On the surface, it would seem that the term merely concealed the "sentiments" or views of those who had read the manuscript.[57] However, pudding also refocused the community's attention to the manuscript and set apart those who could attest to its being supported by scripture.

Pudding became an important referent for the manuscript when news about universal salvation reached Boston's print networks. After Chauncy published a preliminary summary of the manuscript in a pamphlet titled *Salvation for All Men*, Murray himself read "a great many good things" in the pamphlet despite feeling that it maintained a veneer of Puritan "fire and brimstone."[58] Through rumors, Murray heard that there was a follow-up to *Salvation for All Men* on the topic of divine benevolence and surmised that this might be the pudding. However, the text on divine benevolence was not the pudding, but rather a separate text that Chauncy had been shopping around in Boston's print markets and would eventually be published as *Benevolence of the Deity*, which was printed a few months after *The Mystery Hid*. The details around the publication of the pudding escaped Murray and those not privy to the contents of the real manuscript. Entertained by Murray's false assumptions, Eliot wrote to Belknap, "I found the Murrayites at Portsmouth mistook [Divine Benevolence] for the Pudding. . . . Let them hug their mistake: perhaps it will encrease the number of people to encourage the work." Rather successfully, pudding obscured the correct text and its contents from those who were not privy to the manuscript. Such successes were useful at a time when Chauncy's views on universal salvation were already being published across different channels. Pudding reminded readers of the circulating manuscript and the growing discursive community around it.

Publishing through Printers and Booksellers

In 1780, Murray and universalist Elhanan Winchester arrived in New England, preaching and converting their listeners to universal salvation. Perhaps as a result, printers and booksellers began introducing universalist texts to the burgeoning domestic market, from reprints of London texts like Relly's *Union* to domestic publications like Judith Sargent Murray's catechism on universal salvation.[59] Much as with the Great Awakening revivals in the 1740s, ministers like Isaac Backus turned to print, publishing works such as *The Doctrine of Universal Salvation Examined and Refuted, Containing, a Concise and Distinct Answer to the Writings of Mr. Rely and Mr. Winchester, Upon That Subject* (1781) to combat the itinerants' growing popularity. For the clergy, print was tied to the "public," an imagined extension of the congregation whose beliefs they

[56]On scripturalization as an anthropological category, see the introduction in Vincent Wimbush, *White Men's Magic: Scripturalization as Slavery* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), and scripturalization as enabling the Bible to function as a mediating object for social relations and authority formation in early America, see Seth Perry, *Bible Culture and Authority in the Early United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).

[57]Eliot to Belknap, Feb. 1781, Belknap Papers, 207.

[58]John Murray, *Letters and Sketches in Sermons, 3 Vols.*, Vol. 2 (Boston: Joshua Belcher, 1812–1813), 94.

[59]A reprint of James Relly's *Union* was produced by Providence printer John Carter. Similarly, Connecticut printer John Trumbull printed Judith Sargent Murray's catechism, even advertising it alongside Backus's *The Doctrine of Universal Salvation* in the summer issues of *The Norwich Packet* in 1782.

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represented and a projection of the audience their speech would hail. Their responsibility toward this public was to both represent their orthodoxy in print and perform for this public the ministers' "possession of all truth, and [argue] that those who differ are so far in the wrong."[60] In many ways, these were the functions of letters of support and subscription lists—some of the common documents to accompany print proposals from authors who have not yet established themselves in the print public sphere. To assure printers that there was demand for their works, ministers promised a "public" that needed this production and one that this text would gather after its production.[61] Through these technologies reflecting the ideologies of print itself, ministers strategized around the requirements of print production so as to shape the reception of those who would come to read these texts. While ministers defending the standing orthodoxy of their Puritan forefathers relied on print to assert some veneer of orthodox consensus against largely nonprint-published itinerants, Chauncy's decision to print commemorated his success in having already converted readers through his manuscript.

Scholars have often interpreted print delays, posthumous publications, and deployment of pseudonyms as indicators of authorial secrecy or privacy. However, few have attended to print publication as a heavily constrained and inconvenient way of publishing texts.[62] Indeed, many have equated Chauncy's reluctance to fear of reprimand from other ministers. This was certainly possible since his mentor, Thomas Foxcroft, was a stringent Calvinist, and any hint of heresy risked Chauncy losing his position at First Church of Boston.[63] His biographers have also argued that the delay was owed to Chauncy's shifting interests, whereby the American Revolution so occupied the thoughts and concerns of the people that the Boston minister simply did not think it was a suitable time to print his discovery. Eliot confirmed this to have been the case at some point before the text's publication: "Dr. Chauncy says that the present is the worst time which could ever happen, for men's minds are too much absorbed in politics

[60]The quote appears in Franklin's autobiography, where he recounts an encounter with Michael Wohlfahrt, a follower of Johann Conrad Beissel, the leader who founded the Ephrata Cloister: "When we were first drawn together as a society, it had pleased God to enlighten our minds so far as to see that some doctrines, which we once esteemed truths, were errors; and that others, which we have esteemed errors, were real truths. From time to time, He has been pleased to afford us farther light and our principles have been improving, and our errors diminishing. Now we are not sure that we have arrived at the end of this progression, and at the perfection of spiritual or theological knowledge; and we fear that if we should once print our confession of faith, we should feel ourselves as if bound and confined by it, and perhaps be unwilling to receive further improvement; and our successors still more so, as conceiving what we their elders and founders had done to be something sacred, never to be departed from." Benjamin Franklin, *Franklin's Autobiography*, ed. Frank Woodworth Pine (New York: Henry Hold and Company, 1916), 126–127.

[61]Central to this notion of the public is the way it does not necessarily signify a broader readership, but rather an imagined category by authors and printers through technologies like subscription lists, letters of support, and the market for that authors' previous publications. On the notion of this public, see Michael Warner, *Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990). Warner draws heavily on Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso Books, 1983). Both track how the literary novel participates in this imagining process and how it acts on readers to situate them as members of this larger public. I argue that a similar dynamic appears when it comes to the affective "orthodoxy" of eighteenth-century New England.

[62]The closest to thinking about print publication difficulties for New England heterodoxy was Conrad Wright, *The Beginnings of Unitarianism* (Boston: Starr King Press, 1955), 188.

[63]Oakes, 91–94.

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to attend unto anything else."[64] However, both approaches assume that the press was a readily accessible mode of publication despite the fact that most ministers never actually published their works through print.[65] Printing in Boston during the late 1770s and 1780s had become more inconvenient, even for someone as established as Chauncy. The Revolutionary War led to the departure of most printers from the city, leaving only the famous Fleet family of printers by the 1780s. For comparison, before the war there were seven booksellers, four printers, ten printer-booksellers, and seven firms who sustained Boston's book trade in 1770.[66] Furthermore, Chauncy's 300 pages on universal salvation relied immensely on the availability of Hebrew and Greek text-types, which had not been accessible to colonial printers in significant numbers since 1764.[67] Sending a manuscript to London was an equally inconvenient option. Ships would take anywhere from six weeks to as long as three months that year to make the trip. By all accounts, printing was a harrowing option for British colonial authors in this period.

Given the many material constraints on printing in Boston, Chauncy sought a compromise. Backus's *The Doctrine of Universal Salvation Examined and Refuted* was already in the press, and Chauncy, who was not an ally to the Baptist minister, found enough flaws in his opponent's publication to address several problems in one publication: critique Murray universalists, attack the Baptist minister's stance on universal salvation as a whole, and provide a more nuanced account of universal salvation that might be amenable to the New England clergy.[68] In a pamphlet titled *Salvation for All Men*, he echoed some of *Mystery Hid*'s conclusions, but rather than citing his scriptural study, he instead summarized his views through the authority of early modern English

[64]See Griffin, 127; and Lippy, 108. Griffin argues that the war and the threat of Anglicanism led Chauncy to "set the pudding aside" as early as 1760. On Eliot, see Eliot to Belknap, Feb. 1781, Belknap Papers, 207.

[65]George Selement, "Publication and the Puritan Ministers," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (Apr. 1980): 219–241, here 223. On the role of print as a means of commemoration, see Warner, "Rosenbach Lectures."

[66]See Amory, 332–333. The printing business in Boston suffered because of the American Revolution. The arrival of British troops in 1774 ousted printers sympathetic to the Patriot cause, and when the Continental Army retook the city in 1776, printers sympathetic to the British cause also fled.

[67]The first set of Hebrew and Greek text-types were donated to and for use by Harvard College in 1726. They would then import more text-types to complete the set to aid with the printing of Jew-turned-Protestant Judah Monis's textbook, *Dickbook Lashon Aukodesh.* According to Hebrew scholar Shalom Goldman, the types were likely destroyed in a fire in January 1764. See Yosef Goldman, *Hebrew Printing in America, 1735–1926: A History and Annotated Bibliography, Vol. I*, ed. Ari Kinsberg (Brooklyn, NY: YG Books, 2006), 160. The closest record for the next importation of Hebrew text-types would be closer to the 1790s when the Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia was considering the importance of Hebrew for their publications, and by 1812 Hebrew types would be used by Philadelphia printers like William Fry. See James P. Wilson, *An Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of the Hebrew Language Without the Points* (Philadelphia: Farrand, Hopkins, Zantzinger, and Co., 1812).

[68]The connection between Backus's publication and Chauncy's decision to print his ideas at this time is evidenced by the title. In a manner befitting of Chauncy, he titled his work as a play on Backus's. Whereas Backus's publication was titled "The Doctrine of Universal Salvation Examined and Refuted," Chauncy titled his pamphlet "Salvation for All Men, Illustrated and Vindicated as a Scripture Doctrine," and in response to the rest of Backus's title being "a concise and distinct answer to the writings of Mr. Relly and Mr. Winchester upon that subject," Chauncy followed his title with "in numerous extracts from a variety of pious and learned men." Indeed, Chauncy relied on the authority of early modern universalists to rebut Backus's attempts to associate it with just Winchester and Murray. This style of titling was a signature of Chauncy, who famously did the same during the Great Awakening revivals and during the Episcopacy Controversy.

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dissenting ministers like Jeremiah White, who was the Puritan chaplain to Oliver Cromwell, and physician-minister Joseph Nicol Scott. It was panned by both critics and supporters of the manuscript. Belknap was so taken aback by the poor quality of *Salvation of All Men* that he charitably thought of it as "a scouting party, to make discoveries and try the temper of the public."[69] Eliot was much less generous. He described it as a "meer castrated edition of the whole work" and was so embarrassed by its publication that Eliot threatened to leave the city altogether to avoid responses to it: "If I could run away from Boston, I would be content not to see the place for 7 years, & heartily repent of my setting down here in the ministry. We must not be continually exposed to the fury of storms & hurricanes."[70] The abbreviated version of the manuscript was, by all accounts, a failure and ultimately a product of the material limitations of the New England print market and Chauncy's opportunism.

New England ministers realized that *Salvation of All Men* was published by someone within their own clerical ranks. A proper rebuttal required that they rush refutations to the presses to defend the orthodoxy of the public sphere. While Mather and Clarke were exchanging remarks on universal salvation through their respective publications *All Men Will Not Be Saved Forever* (1783) and *A Letter to Doctor Mather Occasioned by His Disingenuous Reflexions Upon a Certain Pamphlet, Entitled Salvation for All Men* (1783), ministers like Timothy Allen and William Gordon joined the fray, publishing *Salvation for All Men Put Out of All Dispute* (1783) and *The Doctrine of Final Universal Salvation Examined and Shewn to Be Unscriptural* (1783), respectively. Laymen were also emboldened to respond in the presses. One of Murray's followers, Shippie Townsend, published a response to Mather: *Some Remarks on a Pamphlet Institutes, All Men Will Not Be Saved Forever* (1783). Despite ministers' best efforts to assert a public orthodoxy through a flurry of publications, the print market reflected an already fractured New England religion along the lines of what clergymen thought about universal salvation.

The stakes for their publications were clear: which theological position should the public sphere represent? One of the main ways texts could signify a public was through letters of support and subscription lists. Ministers who proceeded to print usually needed to gather support from congregants, ministers, colleges, or other organizations. For these stakeholders, print was a means of commemorating a person, a speech, or an event where the sermon was delivered.[71] While subscriptions and letters of support did not always guarantee purchase of the work, it nevertheless contributed to the sense that the text represented the interests of some public audience and promised to readers that there would be a wider readership. Hence, these documents became loose signifiers of approval and consensus over the printing of ministerial speech. The combination of published sermons, congregational approval, and print-institutional production coalesced around printed texts' authority to claim orthodoxy in the public sphere. These groups legitimize printed objects as speaking for and to a public in a manner distinct from manuscript circulation and scribal publication.[72] However, the significance of

[69]Jeremy Belknap to Ebenezer Hazard, Dec. 19, 1782, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society Fifth Series, Vol. 2* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1882), Belknap Papers, 172.

[70]Belknap to Hazard, Dec. 19, 1782, Belknap Papers, 172.

[71]On the role of print as a means of commemoration, see Warner, "The Evangelical Public Sphere," A.S.W. Rosenbach Lectures in Bibliography.

[72]See footnote 62. Warner credited republicanism for the way print would be read as authoritative because of the way it could signify an impersonal public and situate its readers as part of that collective

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this imagining of the public had less to do with the way a printed text was distributed and circulated, and more to do with how the text situated its reader. The audience the text eventually reached was in many ways independent of the "public" printers and booksellers imagined for it, but how the audience received the text was nevertheless shaped by the public imagined by its author and publishers.

The relationship between an imagined public and their implicit orthodoxy created some difficulties for heterodox authors who were often required to speak on behalf of and to that public through print. Even without outright censorship in the colonies, cultural barriers to entry nevertheless hindered heterodox texts in an increasingly democratizing print market, and this contributed to authors' perception that there was still an operative orthodoxy in the colonial public sphere. This appeared in the contrasting experiences between Chauncy and Winchester. Encouraging Chauncy to publish in Boston, Eliot observed that "more ministers are of [Chauncy's] opinion than has hitherto been imagined" because Calvinists benefit from it in that it "exalts the character of the Mediator" and Armenians [sic] "cannot but relish it, as it favors their plan of liberality."[73] However, shared opinions among ministers rarely translated to non-ministerial financial support. In a bid to publish a universalist text, Eliot observed that "*Subscribing business* is very dull [in Boston]," and he feared that Chauncy's works might "not obtain sufficient subscribers to make it worth to pursue the work, - for the printers."[74] On the other hand, London printers were much less stringent with publication requirements, and Eliot himself came to the conclusion that "the pudding will be boiled in England."[75] Winchester, who had the support of New England and Philadelphian universalists, which helped him publish *The Seed of the Woman Bruising the Serpent's Head* (1781), nevertheless still felt that it was difficult to print heterodox texts in the colonies because of subscription concerns. Comparing the London and British colonial printers, he surmised: "It is likely that I have published more in the time that I have resided [in London] than I should have done in my whole lifetime if I had remained in America."[76] Winchester marveled at the ease with which he was able to get subscriptions for his universalist works and the large number of printers willing to produce heterodox works even without them.[77] These dimensions of print

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group of strangers. The way Chauncy treated the medium seemed to align with Warner's thesis about the ideology of the public. Like Franklin, the Boston minister published *Mystery Hid* anonymously (at least the first edition) and performed in print under the same terms. While Chauncy attached print's authority to these dynamics, its function and utility still seemed to the minister an extension of Congregationalist dynamics rooted in close relationships between ministers and the intimacies between clergy and the laity. On this front, he operated somewhere between evangelical and liberal readings of print technology: it was neither a medium for converting others nor for strangers for expressing their collective selves—it simply extended pre-existing congregationalist dynamics between ministers and their audiences. See Corrigan and Oakes. On evangelical uses of print, see Warner, "The Evangelical Public Sphere."

[73]Eliot to Belknap, July 31, 1779, Belknap Papers, 146.

[74]Eliot to Belknap, Sept. 18, 1783, Belknap Papers, 263.

[75]Eliot to Belknap, Oct. 22, 1783, Belknap Papers, 265

[76]Winchester to Rush, July 27, 1792, Rush Collection, Vol. 22, MS 96.

[77]Immediately after his comparison, he continues, "I am now taking in subscriptions for publishing a poem which was begun in America called 'The Process and Empire of Christ.' I have already about 210 copies subscribed for at five shillings a piece; so that if I live a few months longer, I expect to see the work published." Winchester's remark suggests that subscriptions for heterodox works was much easier to come by in London than in the colonies. In the same letter, he complained to Rush that Dilly, the same printer-bookseller who published his sermons and Chauncy's *The Mystery Hid*, was unwilling to

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informed how heterodox writers decided to either publish with the colonial printing press or through other means like scribal publication and manuscript circulation.

The dynamics between this orthodox public and whether print was the medium to represent it appeared most readily in the responses to Chauncy's *The Mystery Hid*. Ministers interpreted heterodox publications as making particular claims to an imagined public's theological position. One of the ways to correct this was to both rally and address this same public in print. When *The Mystery Hid* arrived from London, minister Stephen Johnson provided one of the earliest critiques in his work *The Everlasting Punishment of the Ungodly, Illustrated and Evinced to Be a Scripture Doctrine* (1786). Observing that, of the many public responses to Chauncy's views, "none hath yet appeared" in print, Johnson felt that it "required an answer." In the preface, he explained the stakes for printing his response: "I viewed it as an opening wedge of controversy; and thought it duty to turn my tho'ts upon the best method of defending the doctrine of future punishment, as commonly received in the Christian world." This "Christian world," he explained, consisted of anyone who was literate and could participate as reader or author in the Anglo-Protestant public sphere: "papal and protestant, common annotators and Christian writers."[78] Jonathan Edwards Jr., son of the Great Awakening revivalist Jonathan Edwards, made a similar argument for his entry into print with *The Salvation of All Men Strictly Examined: & the Endless Punishment of Those Who Die Impeninent* (1790). Edwards Jr. published his views "To point out the inconsistence and absurdity of an erroneous system, and even to set them in the most glaring light."[79] Despite depicting his text as merely a "confutation that is now offered to the public," the long subscription list of more than 300 names of readers from New England to Georgia betrayed any modesty in its goals.[80] These same subscribers, however, not only represented those who supported and rallied behind Edwards Jr., but, as recipients of the texts, were also the very same readers the author addressed in his text, the readers for whom "it will certainly be most prudent and safe . . . if [the reader] believed endless punishment."[81] In both situations, the decision to print was shaped by their own desire to assert the orthodoxy of the public that they represented and wanted to convert by their arguments.

While Chauncy's critics spent many pages critiquing *Mystery Hid's* theological arguments, most of the praises for the work focused on its merits as a kind of public performance that included but was not reducible to the ideas of its author. Johnson could not help but laud the author's efforts: "It is wrote with ingenuity and much labour, with a display of learning and critical genius, with an appearance of much candour and benevolence."[82] Edwards Jr. was also wary of saying anything negative about the author: "If in any instances I have deviated from this mode, and instead of adhering closely to the argument, have descended to personalities, and have endeavoured to bear hard on Dr. Chauncy . . . I ask pardon of the reader."[83] The laity similarly praised it for

publish one on the slave trade because "the publick were tied of the subject, and would read nothing more on either side."

[78]Stephen Johnson, *The Everlasting Punishment of the Ungodly, Illustrated and Evinced to be a Scripture Doctrine* (New London, CT: Printed by Timothy Green, 1786), i–iii.

[79]Jonathan Edwards Jr., *The Salvation of All Men Strictly Examined; & the Endless Punishment of Those Who Die Impeninent* (New Haven, CT: Printed by A. Morse, 1790), iv.

[80]Edwards Jr., iv.

[81]Edwards Jr., 205–206.

[82]Johnson, ii.

[83]Edwards Jr., iv.

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the experience it gave them to read it. John Quincy Adams found the text so riveting that he enjoyed it "more than cards, or dress or scandal."[84] Abigail Adams heard about *Mystery Hid* from a correspondent who wrote to her describing the text: "I wish You and Yours to See it, for I think You will be charm'd with the Spirit, and manner, and believe you will think the Subject, and reasoning theron, worthy of Serious attention. Doctr. Chauncy is the Author."[85] Among the political elite of Boston, *The Mystery Hid* "been much talk'd of [in New England]" but instead of making much "noise as it was thought it would," it instead "silenc'd every body." The work was so admirably done that no one could even attempt to answer it.[86] Contrary to John Adams's initial impression of the Universalist controversy as not tending "to render Men wiser or better or more happy," he wrote to Chauncy, "I hope to have a Pleasure of reading your new Work which has a great Reputation and is upon a most interesting Subject."[87] In anticipating that the printed text would gather "*difference* of sentiment in different persons," Chauncy was likely aware that one of the potential responses was commemoration. Among his circle, Clarke observed that it had been "universally esteemed a monument of the author's ingenuity" in Boston.[88] Publisher Ebenezer Hazard, who had been close with Eliot and Belknap as the pudding circulated, praised the work for its quality: "I cannot help thinking [Chauncy's] system not only rational, but Scriptural, and that it reflects more honor on the divine character than [he has] ever met with."[89] These responses reflected an experience with the text that focused on a broader collective affect toward what it signified to a broader public.

Print also promised the permanence of the author's views in the public imaginary. As the Ephrata Cloister explained to Franklin as to why they did not print their doctrines: "If we should once print our confession of faith, we should feel ourselves as if bound and confined by it, and perhaps be unwilling to receive further improvement; and our successors still more so, as conceiving what we their elders and founders had done to be something sacred, never to be departed from."[90] In many ways, Chauncy was aware that the printed medium can transform texts to more likely survive their authors and assert themselves as natural to the public sphere.[91] At the same time that readers were praising *The Mystery Hid*, the act of writing had become "intolerable" for Chauncy. He relied heavily on Clarke for most of his correspondence. "By my pen," Clarke writes, "[Chauncy] will answer any letters which you may send him in future and

[84]John Quincy Adams, Jan. 20, 1786, diary entry, Adams Papers.

[85]Joseph Palmer to Abigail Adams, Sept. 29, 1784, Adams Papers.

[86]Mary Cranch to Abigail Adams, Apr. 12, 1785, Adams Papers.

[87]John Adams to Charles Chauncy, Apr. 27, 1785, Adams Papers.

[88]John Clarke to Richard Price, Apr. 11, 1785, Price Papers.

[89]Hazard to Belknap, Nov. 13, 1874, Belknap Papers, 406–407.

[90]See Franklin, *Franklin's Autobiography*.

[91]In a short biography of his great grandfather, Harvard President Charles Chauncy, Chauncy recounted that as the eldest of his father's sons, he expected to have inherited his great grandfather's papers. However, they were bequeathed to another family who, due to unfavorable financial circumstances, placed them in the hands of a North-Hampton Deacon who made a living making and selling pies. The papers were then "put to the bottom of the pies," and in this Chauncy was both "greatly moved" but also "riveted in [his] mind a determination" to burn his papers just so that they might not suffer the same horrific fate. Print likely promised salvation from this fate. See Charles Chauncy, "Life of Rev. President Chauncy, Written at the Request of Dr. Stiles.," *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, *First Series Vol. 10* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1809), 179.

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I shall think it an honour to have it so employed."[92] By 1787, Clarke provided further updates on Chauncy's health: "Dr. Chauncy enjoys his health, but his mind is much impaired. He is but the shadow of his former self."[93] It was perhaps within this context that Chauncy's materialization and print publication of his ideas served him best. When he died later that year, one correspondent wrote to Adams that Chauncy was "very near his end [and that] he has render'd himself immortal by his writings."[94] The author's printed performances survived him and ensured that his views about universal salvation would continue to be published for future readers.

As Chauncy demonstrated through the numerous ways his views reached an audience from the 1750s to the 1780s, publication went beyond ensuring a text would reach a wide distribution. It entailed a text that could circulate independent of its author and gather a discursive community around its contents. At times, these methods proved more accessible, and at times, correspondence networks promised a wider geographical distribution than the sometimes-localized operations of printers and booksellers. For Chauncy's "pudding," these alternative modes of publication facilitated the conversion of New England ministers. When it was eventually printed, *The Mystery Hid* did much less converting than commemorating the entry of universal salvation into New England's theological public sphere. Its publication signaled to Boston's print networks that universal salvation had already entered the ranks of the esteemed New England clergy. Any subsequent controversy in the presses only displayed ministers' anxieties about the fracturing of New England orthodoxy in what they had originally imagined to be an orthodox consensus in print.

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[92]Clarke to Price, Apr. 11, 1785, Price Papers.

[93]Clarke to Price, July 18, 1786, Price Papers.

[94]Cranch to Adams, Feb. 9, 1787, Adams Papers.

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