

Scott's narrow purpose for this study gives it its importance. He offers a month-by-month study of who is doing what where during the crucial years 1735–1738. He correlates the primary sources and does not privilege one over the other. He notes when there are gaps in the diaries and when the traditional story relies on memories written years later. He does not try to make the book exciting. He writes a masterwork of careful chronological scholarship.

On the other hand, the first chapter does an excellent job of putting the whole of the rest of the book in the context of Imperial Idealism. Reaching back to Elizabethan times and emphasizing the renewed Protestantism after 1688, Scott writes broadly about the philanthropic vigor of the Hanoverian British Empire. He tells of the wide influence of Thomas Bray and “Bray's Associates,” the support work of Henry Newman in the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), and the joint work of the Society for the Promotion of the Gospel (SPG) and the Georgia Trustees in the creation of an Anglican Mission.

The Wesleys and the Anglican Mission to Georgia is an excellent work of diligent scholarship. It gathers, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, what will be needed for the next century's analysis of colonial Georgia's importance in history.

Rick Kennedy

Point Loma Nazarene University

doi:10.1017/S0009640722000439

***Oliver Hart & the Rise of Baptist America.* By Eric C. Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. xi + 337 pp. \$99.00 cloth.**

Baptists were an acquired taste in colonial North America. In 1700, Baptist congregations counted 800 members (out of roughly 260,000 settlers). By 1740, Baptists accounted for 3,000 members (out of as many as 1.4 million). But after American Independence (1790), Baptists had grown to 67,000 members (out of 3 million Americans). Compared to today when the Southern Baptist Convention has 14 million members, American Baptists (Northern), 1.1 million, and the largest African American Baptist communion, the National Baptist Convention, has 8.1 million, the presence of Baptists in colonial America looks puny. As Eric C. Smith observes at the start of his book on Oliver Hart, “colonial Baptists were a small, disorganized, marginal sect in a sea of more powerful religious groups” (3). Persecuted in Massachusetts and Virginia and in competition with numerous other Protestant groups in settings like Pennsylvania, eighteenth-century Baptists “were too few and too weak to make much of a difference” (3).

This is the context in which Smith situates Oliver Hart (1723–1795), a devout carpenter in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, who began to preach with the approval of local pastors in 1748 and, the next year, took a call to a congregation in Charleston, South Carolina. In the South, Hart emerged as a major figure in organizing Particular Baptists (Calvinistic) and negotiating with Separate Baptists, Regular Baptists, and Free Will Baptists. Some of these labels are anachronistic, applied by later church leaders and historians to earlier Baptists who operated outside institutional mechanisms (thanks to small numbers and a congregational autonomy). Only after 1750 did

Baptist pastors adopt measures for collaboration. Hart's abilities set him up to be a persuasive figure in South Carolina. His model came from his home in Pennsylvania where, in 1707, five Particular Baptist congregations in the region formed a network for mutual counsel and encouragement. After almost two decades in Charleston, Hart brought eight congregations into a coordinated network for promoting the Baptist "interest." For Smith, Hart's role in the Charleston Association was his "salient contribution to American history."

One of the strengths of this biography is the details it provides of life as a minister in colonial America. Here it helps that Smith had access to Hart's diary. Even so, the author provides a good sense for the demands that pastors faced in a society that was far from settled. When, for instance, Hart determined to form an association of ministers in the Charleston vicinity, he needed to contact every competent pastor with an adequate education to rally approval. Some of this involved recruiting Baptists from the North to relocate to South Carolina, such as John Stephens, a Whitefield convert who was leading a Horseneck, Connecticut, congregation. Sometimes Hart needed to go into the back country to persuade prominent gifted laymen to become pastors, such as Francis Pelot, a planter in Euhaw who had migrated from Switzerland. The first association meeting consisted of two days of worship (Saturday and Sunday), followed by a day of business. This was one small step among Baptist attempts to keep up with migration further inland after the French and Indian War.

Smith also includes details on Hart's politics, especially his support for American independence. Although local circumstances inclined New England and Virginia Baptists to support the Crown, the same dynamics did not apply in South Carolina, where Baptists experienced few restrictions from local or British governments. Hart himself was well connected to patriots. His cousin, John Hart, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. His brother, Joseph, was an officer in Pennsylvania's Continental Army. Hart's own son, John, a college student at Rhode Island College, enlisted in South Carolina's militia. Hart himself preached to troops and locals in hopes of producing a revival. In some cases, Loyalist support was so strong that Hart met settlers armed in opposition. One incident forced Hart to beat a hurried and difficult retreat to Charleston where tranquility prevailed.

Despite the sometimes-primitive conditions of church life and the meager set of institutions available to Baptists, Hart represents, for Smith, the ideal of respectability. If the biography emphasizes one theme, perhaps to excess, it is the moderate, orderly, and learned character of colonial Baptists. One sentence summarizes well Smith's effort to play down eccentric aspects of Baptist church life: "Hart influenced his young friends toward his own ideal of moderate revivalism, paternalistic slaveholding, and denominational respectability" (167). That interpretive decision allows Smith not to ignore but to discount those features of colonial Baptist life—enthusiasm, slavery, and separatism—that inform stereotypes about Baptists.

That said, Smith has written a highly readable, elegantly presented, and well researched biography of a colonial pastor who likely deserves more attention than he has hitherto received. Even more commendable is Smith's ability to weave Hart's life into the context of colonial American society.

D. G. Hart
Hillsdale College

doi:10.1017/S0009640722000440