ANGLICAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN COLONIAL AMERICA

By Arthur Pierce Middleton*

IN VIEW of the fact that the thirteen colonies that eventually became the United States of America were planted under the aegis of the English Crown and remained under its allegiance for generations, it is only to be expected that the influence of the established church of the mother country would be paramount in English America. Yet this was not the case. For half a century after the settlement of Jamestown, the English church was in the throes of a life-and-death struggle with the increasingly disgruntled Puritan wing who opposed the apostolic authority of its episcopate and resisted episcopal attempts to enforce doctrinal and liturgical conformity to its official formularies. And even after the rigorous settlement that accompanied the Restoration of Charles II, at the cost of driving the bulk of the Puritans into dissenting bodies, the church entered upon a long period of declining spiritual vitality. This was accentuated by the secession of the non-jurors in 1689 and by the temper of eighteenth-century rationalism. William III and the first two Georges, moreover, were unsympathetic to Anglican principles and generally appointed latitudinarian or erastian1 bishops, largely lacking zeal for pressing the distinctive claims of the church either at home or in the colonies.

A third, and perhaps more important reason was that the American plantations, particularly in New England and the Middle Colonies, were either settled in the first instance by non-conformists or else rapidly filled up with Scotch-Irish Presbyterians and German Lutheran and Reformed immigrants during the

*Dr. Middleton was formerly Director of Research at Colonial Williamsburg and lecturer in history at the College of William and Mary. He is at present rector of St. Paul's Parish, Brookfield Centre, Conn. This paper was read at the Sesquicentennial Symposium at Moravian College in Bethlehem on March 8, 1958.

1 Erastian—pertaining to the belief in, or submission to, the ascendancy of the state over the church in ecclesiastical matters; so named from the Swiss theologian, Thomas Erastus (1524-83). It is a peculiarly English term for what is more generally known as Byzantinism or Caesaro-Papism.
eighteenth century. Hence, on the eve of the Revolution probably no more than a third of the American colonists were adherents of the Church of England, and there was nowhere an Anglican majority, except possibly in Virginia and Maryland.

To this a fourth reason must be added. For at least half a century before 1763 the British government was primarily concerned with trade and commerce rather than with religion, and exhibited a marked disinclination to meddle with American international affairs. Hence the English church in the colonies lacked positive and forceful support from the London imperial authorities. A good example of this is the government's neglect to accede to the numerous requests for an American episcopate. There was, to be sure, the problem of finding a means of financial support for colonial bishops. But political expediency played the greater part in the government's refusal to act. The Whig Party which virtually controlled Parliament from 1714 until 1763 leaned for support upon the mercantile interests of London and the outports where the English dissenters were concentrated. In America the dissenting majority opposed bishops in principle, feared their coercive power, and suspected—especially after 1763—that they were another device for fastening imperial authority upon the colonists.

For all these reasons the English church was hampered in its growth in America and deprived of the advantage that the churches of France and Spain enjoyed in French and Spanish America. Even so, Anglican influence proved to be stronger in certain areas of colonial life than the obstacles which the church faced would lead one to suppose. This was particularly true in the realm of learning and higher education.

Whatever may be said of the political and economic relations between America and Britain, there can be no doubt that the colonies were in a state of intellectual dependence upon the mother country. Hence it was in this area that Anglican influence upon the colonies was strongest. The only English universities at that time were, of course, Anglican institutions. Not only did they provide many colonists with their education, but they also served as the chief models for most American colleges. Royal governors and other crown appointees in the colonies were commonly Oxford or Cambridge men. And many of the leading officials and merchants in New England and the middle colonies and the great planters in the South had gone there to study. Indeed, Anglican
influence was proportionally high among the class of men in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia who were likely to be most active in establishing colonial colleges and sending their sons to them. The Continental Congress which voted for independence included a good sample of the leading men of America, and no fewer than two thirds of the signers of the Declaration of 1776 were members of the Church of England.

When one recalls that the Anglican Church came to English America, at Jamestown in 1607, years before any of its competing denominations, it seems odd that the Massachusetts Puritans erected the first college in the English colonies. But there is a good reason why this was so. The early Virginia settlers were almost all Anglicans, and as such were eligible to attend or send their sons to the English universities. Hence there was no impelling necessity for them to erect a college in the new world. But, by the time the Puritans settled Massachusetts Bay, the star of Archbishop Laud was in the ascendant, and his policy involved a rigid conformity, not only in parish churches, but also in the universities. In effect, the Puritans were in danger of losing the opportunity for a university education in England. As they did not relish the idea of sending their sons to Scotland or the Netherlands for an education, they felt a genuine urgency to create a Puritan college in the New World to replace Cambridge University where Puritan influence had been strong, but which now closed its doors to all who would not conform to the Catholic liturgy and ceremonial of the Laudian Church.

Only six years after the settlement of Massachusetts Bay Colony Harvard College was begun in a town nostalgically renamed Cambridge, with the express purpose of providing higher education for Puritans of both Old and New England. A few of the intrepid "saints" who could not conscientiously enter Cambridge, England, crossed the Atlantic from the mother country to imbibe learning forbidden to them at home.

Even in Anglican Virginia, where the urgency was much less than to the northward, there appeared a desire for a college almost from the start. The first proposal was primarily for the Indians of Virginia, and it was the first of many examples of the impractical way in which the English set about converting the savages to Christianity. In Professor Morison's apt phraseology, "A persistent delusion of English colonists, from the early days of
Virginia to the founding of Dartmouth College, was the notion that the proper way to civilize an Indian was to catch him and send him to college."

In pursuance of this delusion, the English formulated plans in 1617 for an Indian college in Virginia. King James himself was behind the scheme, and ordered the archbishops of Canterbury and York to require sermons to be preached, prayers offered, and money solicited in every parish church in England "for propagation of the Gospel amongst Infidells . . . [and for] the erecting of some Churches and Schooles for the education of children of those Barbarians." By 1619 the sum of £1,500 was in hand, and a plan to establish a university along the lines of Oxford and Cambridge, with separate residential colleges, was worked out. The location selected was Henrico, up the James River from Jamestown, near the present site of Richmond. Ten thousand acres of land were given to the university, a board of trustees was appointed, and one hundred tenants were sent from England to till the soil as share-croppers and erect the necessary buildings. A former chaplain of the East India Company, Patrick Copeland, received the appointment as rector, and just as he was about to sail for America news arrived that the great Indian massacre of 1622 had resulted in the destruction of the buildings and the dispersing of the tenants. A few attempts were made to revive the grandiose scheme, but they came to nothing and the University of Henrico never opened its doors.

Another proposal, made soon afterwards, also failed to materialize, but is interesting because it was so far ahead of its times. A learned English antiquary, Edward Palmer of Leamington, Gloucestershire, purchased an island (which still bears his name) at the mouth of the Susquehanna near the head of Chesapeake Bay with the idea of founding a university. His will, dated 1625, lays down a provision for teaching art: "And further my will is that the schollers of said universitie for avoyding of Idelness at their houres of recreation shall have two paynters, the one oyle cullors and other for water cullers, which shall be admitted fellowes in the same college to the end and intent that the said schollers shall

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or may learne the art of paintinge - - - beseeching God to add a blessing to all these intents." This document, although nothing came of it, stands as a reminder of the ingrained love of learning that characterized the seventeenth-century English church.

Despite initial failures, the idea of a Virginia college did not entirely die out, and shortly after the Restoration of Charles II, the governor, Sir William Berkeley, returned to England to ask royal favors for the Old Dominion, including permission to raise money throughout the English church for a colonial college. Virginia's population had increased by then, and during Cromwell's time many English royalists had migrated there. But conditions in England were not propitious for securing financial backing for a college. The Restoration brought confusion to church and state and engrossed the attention of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities. The great plague took thousands of lives in 1665, and the fire of London in 1666 caused considerable financial loss. Moreover, the desultory war with the Dutch drained off men and money that might have been better employed elsewhere. And in Virginia the poverty caused by a long depression in the tobacco trade, and the discontent under Berkeley's corrupt administration, militated against the founding of a college in the 1660's and 1670's.

After Bacon's Rebellion and the Glorious Revolution of 1688, both Virginia and England enjoyed a brief period of peace and prosperity, and this was taken advantage of by the vigorous Bishop's Commissary for Virginia, James Blair, who was destined to translate the dream of a college into reality. In 1691 he persuaded the Assembly to revive the proposal for a college. Then followed an unexpectedly successful fund drive throughout the colony. Blair lost no time in sailing to England to solicit royal support for his scheme. King William and Queen Mary responded handsomely to his appeal by issuing a royal charter in 1693 and liberally endowing the College of William and Mary with lands and a share of the crown income from the colony. Blair also obtained a substantial portion of the income from the estate of Robert Boyle, the famous scientist, who had bequeathed it to a trust for converting the American Indians. Part of the money

Paul Wilstach, Tidewater Maryland (Indianapolis, 1931), 180-181.
went to Harvard College, but the bulk of it was given to William and Mary College. Blair also obtained a set of plans for a college building from Sir Christopher Wren, and the present edifice in Williamsburg, begun in 1695, represents a local simplification and adaptation of the great architect's work. Even after several fires, alterations, and a major restoration, it still exhibits the lineaments
of Wren's style, and is the oldest extant academic building in the
country. The King and Queen gave £2,000 in ready cash from the royal
quit-rents in Virginia to pay for the building, and also made sev-
eral provisions for the college's endowment, including 20,000 acres
of land and the proceeds of various royal duties on tobacco. The
Virginia Assembly also granted the college the returns from a
colonial duty on furs and skins exported. Individual colonists
subscribed some £2,500 toward the project. Despite the fact that
some of the latter failed to pay, and that a disastrous fire gutted
the college building in 1705 and retarded its development, their
Majesties' Royal College of William and Mary in Virginia was
probably the richest of all colonial American institutions of higher
learning. Jefferson, in his Notes on Virginia, estimated its annual
income from endowments at upwards of £3,000 on the eve of
the Revolution.

William and Mary from the first was a thorough-going Anglican
institution. Its founder, James Blair, was a priest of the church,
and served as its president for fifty years. All the early members
of the faculty were Anglicans, most of them in holy orders. The
honorary post of chancellor went alternately for seven year terms
to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London.
Young men interested in the priesthood were given free board
and tuition, if they could not pay their own way, and all students
were obliged to frequent daily morning and evening prayer in
the college chapel.

The Indian school, which was supported by the Boyle fund,
was the keystone of Anglican strategy in evangelizing the savages.
These hopes proved illusory, because of a faulty understanding of
Indian psychology. But the idea was that the young Indians
educated here would return as missionaries to their own people.
Many Indians went through the grammar school—there were
usually a dozen or more in residence—but not a single one man-
aged to get through college or receive holy orders.

The college was much more successful in preparing white Vir-
ginians for the sacred ministry and for posts of responsibility in
state and society. In 1718 the Assembly granted £1,000 "for the

*The section on the College of William and Mary is based on Brydon,
Virginia's Mother Church, Vol. I (Richmond, 1947) and Vol. II (Phila-
delphia, 1952), passim.
education of ingenious scholars, native of this colony." This, to-
gether with sons of the planter class, provided the college with
a steady stream of students, and in the half century before the
Revolution, William and Mary turned out a surprising number of
men who became leaders in church and state in the golden age of
Virginia aristocracy.

Although the college was an Anglican institution with a faculty
composed entirely of churchmen, William and Mary imposed no
test of orthodoxy upon its students and took a remarkably liberal
attitude toward free enquiry. All public discussion of doctrinal and
Biblical matters was reserved to the divinity school where it might
come under the steadying influence of trained theologians. Other
matters, however, were left to the other departments of the college
without restriction. As early at 1727 the college statutes provided
that the logic and physics of Aristotle, “which reigned so long
alone in the Schools, and shut out all other,” were not to be
accounted obligatory, but the president and faculty were to teach
“what systems of Logick, Physicks, Ethicks and Mathematicks
they think fit.”

This intellectual declaration of independence was really quite in
keeping with the college’s Anglican inheritance. It has been said
that the “uniquely distinctive feature of the Reformation expe-
rience of the English Church was the achievement of a synthesis
between the Christian elements in the Renaissance awakening and
the truth that was preserved and transmitted through the medieval
order.” Certainly reason played a large part in the thinking of
the great Anglican divines of the seventeenth century, who re-
garded it as God-given and, therefore, one of the legitimate sources
of religious authority. Richard Hooker in 1594 maintained that
the law of reason was God’s law, and to “refuse the conduct of
the light of nature” was both folly and impiety. Hence Anglican
theologians were inclined to be sympathetic to the new discoveries
of science that the age of reason brought, and the clergy open to
ideas from other than the traditional medieval sources.

As Harvard looked to Cambridge for its inspiration in its early
days, the College of William and Mary looked to Oxford. Several
of its chancellors and several royal governors of Virginia who took
an interest in the college were Oxford men. So also was William
Dawson who became professor of moral philosophy in 1729 and
succeeded Blair as president in 1743. For many years after 1729
the professorial replacements at William and Mary were young masters of arts of Queen's College, Oxford. Bishop Gibson of London, who was the college's chancellor, and Dawson were both Queen's men, and in 1746 three of the Virginia college's six professors were also. Between 1729 and 1757 eight of the thirteen important faculty members were Oxford men, and six of them were associated with Queen's College.

As time went on, the College received additional bequests from private individuals. The "King Carter Fund" was for the support of one scholar. Another endowed scholarship resulted from a bequest of £500 in 1743 by Blair. Five years later Philip Lightfoot bequeathed £500 "for a foundation for two poor scholars forever, to be brought up to the ministry of the Church of England, or such other public employment as shall be most suitable to their capacities." About 1770 the college authorized the payment of £50 to any William and Mary student who resolved to go to England for holy orders. Among the first to benefit from this grant was James Madison (cousin of the statesman), who subsequently became president of the college, a notable scientist, and the first Bishop of Virginia.

Although William and Mary was the foremost institution of higher learning founded under Anglican auspices in colonial America, it was not the only one. In 1746 lotteries were held in New York for the purpose of raising money for a college, and by 1751 some $1,700 had been secured. A board of trustees was appointed and an appeal made to the colonial assembly for financial aid. Because of the religious diversity of the inhabitants of New York, Anglicans were a small minority. But the church numbered among its members many prominent persons. Moreover, the church enjoyed the slight advantage of a partial Anglican establishment in the four lower counties and the prestige of belonging to the state church of the mother country. In the legislature opposition developed to the granting of public funds to an Anglican college, and many persons of dissenting or deistic persuasion urged that if a college were created with the financial backing of the colony, it should be a non-denominational institution. In 1754, while the debate raged, the rector and vestry of Trinity Parish, New York, came forward with a generous offer of land worth £7,000 or £8,000 and also a promise to augment the college president's salary of £250 by an additional £150 per annum on
two conditions: that the president always be a communicant of the Anglican Church, and that the services of the college conform to the liturgy of the church as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.

This proposal was denounced by some of the leading Presbyterian laymen, and by others who were ill-disposed toward Anglican control, as an attempt to capture the college for the church. But, as no alternate means of financing the college seemed practical, Trinity Parish's offer was accepted. A royal charter was obtained for King's College from George II, and the institution opened its doors in 1754.

The first president was an Anglican priest from Stratford, Connecticut, Samuel Johnson, who was a staunch churchman and a great scholar. He quickly placed the new college upon a sound educational foundation, and at the same time stressed what we would call religious studies. Christianity, he held, was necessary for the public good and happiness. Therefore, he told parents, it was essential "to give your children a truly Christian education."

In the advertisement for the college's opening in 1754 Johnson set forth his objectives: "The chief thing that is aimed at in this college is to teach and engage the children to know God in Jesus Christ, and to love and serve Him . . . with a perfect heart, and a willing mind." A great variety of subjects were to be taught, "the knowledge of all nature in the heavens above, and in the air, water and earth . . . minerals, plants, and animals," but all these were designed to lead the students from a study of nature "to the knowledge of themselves, and of the God of nature, and their duty to Him, themselves, and one another."

At a time when Yale forbade its Anglican students (and they then numbered a tenth of the student body) to worship in church on Sundays, Johnson gave his students leave to worship in the churches of their own denomination on Sundays. He did require them all to attend daily morning and evening prayer on weekdays under penalty of a fine of two pence for absences and one penny for tardiness, or "not coming in due season." Students were also expected to read the Bible and pray "in their closets" every day, and on Sundays to pursue a course of reading "the best books

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6 The section on King's College is based on Herbert and Carol Schneider, ed., *Samuel Johnson: His Career and Writings* (New York, 1929), especially Vol. IV.
for leading them into a right understanding of the Holy Scriptures.” He also took the teaching of the youngest class himself, so that he might “carry them through the New Testament in its Greek original, and not only make them understand the words but the things, explaining all difficult passages, and giving them a clear understanding of the whole scheme of Christianity.” All this, he said, was so “that they might be truly good men as well as knowing and learned.”

Johnson’s presidency gave great prestige to King’s College, and made it possible for support to be obtained for it in England. In 1759 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts gave the college £500, and in 1762 Johnson persuaded the King to authorize the Church of England to conduct a house-to-house solicitation for funds to be divided between King’s College and the new College of Philadelphia. Parish priests were ordered by their bishops to exhort their parishioners to give, and churchwardens were required to go from house to house to collect gifts and pledges. And so, under Johnson’s leadership King’s College was firmly established and it continued to flourish until the war for independence temporarily closed its doors. Then, when the flames of war and revolution died down, it was reopened in 1784 under a new name and charter as Columbia College.

William and Mary and King’s College are the only two colonial American institutions of higher learning that can properly be called Anglican. But there is one other, the College of Philadelphia, which was under strong Anglican influence, even though it was, technically, non-denominational. In Philadelphia as in New York, Anglicans were prominent, although very much in the minority. But here as in New York they were in the forefront of those who were instrumental in furthering the cause of higher education. In 1749 Benjamin Franklin drew up a plan for a college which was to be unconnected with any church and which was to concentrate its teaching upon what he regarded as practical subjects. Hence, English was to be on a par with Latin, modern languages taught, and emphasis given to history, economics, and politics.7

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Thanks to successful lotteries and private subscriptions, plus appropriations from the city, funds were raised and in 1751 an academy opened. Four years later this institution was chartered as the College of Philadelphia. It was not a church institution—indeed, it was the only non-denominational college in colonial America—but from the start Anglican influence was strong. Three quarters of its trustees were members of the Church of England, and its first provost, William Smith, was one of the outstanding intellectual leaders among the Anglican clergy. Indeed, Smith was an extraordinarily brilliant, though erratic, man who was bound to influence any institution with which he was associated.

Coming to New York as a tutor to two young gentlemen in 1751, Smith published a pamphlet called *A General Idea of the College of Mirania* in which he set forth the principles he thought should be used in the proposed college in New York. A copy of this pamphlet found its way into the hands of Franklin, then president of the trustees of the Philadelphia Academy. Impressed by its contents, Franklin determined to secure the services of the author. Smith, meanwhile, returned to England to take holy orders and, upon his return to America in 1754, became provost of the Philadelphia Academy, soon to be rechartered as the college of that city. This post Smith held from then until 1779, and his personality proved to be dominant in the institution during those years.

Smith agreed with Franklin in making no religious test for either faculty or students, but in other ways they parted company, Franklin eventually withdrawing and leaving the direction of the college entirely to Smith. In 1762 Smith went to England to solicit financial support for the college, and Franklin, now quite alienated from him endeavored to defeat his purposes, apparently for reasons of political expediency, by spreading a rumor that Smith planned to narrow the character of the college by transforming it into a church institution. Although wholly false, the rumor proved effective, discouraging prospective contributions by wealthy dissenters. In Philadelphia as in New York the more numerous dissenters feared the influence of the Anglicans who included the Lord Proprietary’s family, various high officials, and many of the more prosperous merchants. This tension was accentuated by a small but vociferous group of churchmen, known as the “hot church party,” who were determined to procure
ANGLICAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION

An Anglican establishment in the colony. Moreover, since a majority of the college trustees were churchmen, the dissenters took alarm at Franklin’s false rumor even though the trustees had given their word that the college would remain non-denominational.

Despite these trials, the college survived and flourished as an institution with no ecclesiastical affiliation. Dr. Smith not only provided able direction for the college, but also contributed greatly to the intellectual life of Philadelphia. In 1757 he established The American Magazine and served as its editor for many years. Between 1759 and 1763 his extraordinary talents were acknowledged by awards of doctor of divinity degrees from Oxford, Aberdeen, and Dublin. In later years he founded Washington College, Chestertown, Maryland, and served as its first president. He was president of the Convention of the Episcopal Church in Maryland after the Revolution, and chairman of the committee of the General Convention that drew up the American Prayer Book of 1785. In 1789 he again took over the college, now the University of Pennsylvania, as president, but was removed in 1791. He had been elected first Bishop of Maryland in 1783, but because of his defects of character, the election was not confirmed by the General Convention and he was not consecrated. Always haughty and supercilious, he became increasingly profane and irritable as he grew older. Never a likable person, he was avaricious, addicted to speculation, always in debt, and a heavy drinker. Yet no one can deny that even in the golden age of Franklin’s Philadelphia, Dr. William Smith stood out as an intellectual luminary of the first magnitude, and as such he must be reckoned an important Anglican contributor to higher education in that city.

Before leaving the colonial colleges, a further word must be said about Anglican benefactions to colleges of non-Anglican foundation. Although often forgotten, it is nonetheless a fact that some of the principal patrons of Harvard and Yale in their early years were members of the Church of England. Men like Sir John Maynard, Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Richard Blackmore, Sir Richard Steele, and bishops and priests such as Burnet, Bentley, Kennett, and Berkeley, deeply interested in learning and anxious to help the struggling colonial colleges, gave money and books to them, even when they were of dissenting origin. The most celebrated of these gifts came from George Berkeley, the Dean of Derry (and
later Bishop of Cloyne) who, after the failure of his scheme to establish a college in Bermuda, gave a library of a thousand volumes and also a considerable landed estate in Rhode Island to Yale College.8

Anglican influence was also exerted in another way, for both Harvard and Yale were deliberately modelled upon colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, rather than upon the Dutch universities which were well known to the Puritans of the first generation in Massachusetts. Harvard was from the first intended as a college of the English type, in Professor Morison’s words, “a society of scholars, where teachers and students lived in the same building under common discipline, associating not only in lecture rooms, but at meals, in chambers, at prayers, and in recreation.” This was a deliberate rejection of the Dutch type which allowed students to live in town and took no care of their social and spiritual concerns.9

Harvard, moreover, perpetuated the English scheme of four classes—freshman, sophomore, junior sophister, and senior sophister—which still remains the norm for American universities, and the Massachusetts college also took over the English, as opposed to the continental system of academic degrees, granting B.A. and M.A. degrees. So similar was Harvard to its English prototypes, that as early as 1654 Oxford and Cambridge accepted Harvard degrees as equivalent to their own.10

This similarity was maintained to some extent by the constant stream of American colonials who went to England for their education and also by the employment in colonial colleges of scholars who had been educated at Oxford and Cambridge. Statistics are hard to compile for the whole colonial period, but it is safe to say that an important minority of the better educated men in colonial America were the product of the Anglican Church’s two universities on the Isis and Cam.

If the term “higher education” may be construed so liberally as to include all higher learning, whether taught in college or pursued by independent reading, then there is another area of colonial life in which Anglican influence was paramount, and this

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9 Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard, 12, 18.
10 Ibid., 18, 25-26.
is the dissemination of books and libraries. The foremost person in this field of endeavor was the remarkable Thomas Bray, a native of Shropshire, educated at All Soul’s, Oxford, and a priest of the Church of England. In 1696 he received appointment as the Bishop of London’s Commissary in Maryland. Although he spent little time in America, this post led him to appreciate the difficulties of life in the new world. When he realized that the only priests he could recruit for America were generally too poor to afford adequate libraries, he conceived the idea of gathering and sending to the colonies a series of complete libraries.

After publishing a pamphlet setting forth his scheme, Bray set about to raise money to finance it. From the start he was phenomenally successful. Princess Anne encouraged him by donating forty guineas, which led him to resolve to send the finest library in the colonies to Annapolis. By adding other gifts to the royal one, he succeeded in sending 1,095 volumes valued at £350, all bound and stamped in gold with the name “Annapolitan Library,” partly in compliment to his gracious patron, soon to ascend the throne as Queen Anne. Other prominent persons came forward with substantial donations. The Lord Chancellor gave £10, Lord Weymouth £200. A group of gentlemen subscribed £140. Some fifty divines headed by the archbishops of Canterbury and York gave sums varying from £2 to £50 apiece. A group of thirteen lawyers and physicians and twenty-eight merchants and tradesmen made generous contributions, and so did several corporations, religious societies, and towns.

By 1698 Bray had raised nearly £2,500 which he spent on books sent not only to each parish in Maryland, but also to Charleston, S. C., William and Mary College, Boston, New York, Bermuda, Barbados, Cape Coast Castle, and Bengal. Soon it became apparent that the project was too great for one man, and in 1699 the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge was begun with its chief object to continue the work that Bray had begun. And the S.P.C.K., as it is familiarly known, even after more than 250 years is still the most important and effective agency of the Anglican Church in the realm of publishing and distributing books.

The stream of books sent to the colonies by Thomas Bray and the S.P.C.K. (Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge) exerted a profound influence on learning in America. According to Professor Klingberg, "The genius of Thomas Bray and his successors lies in their complete understanding of the frontier problem of intellectual poverty. . . . With superb intelligence they took steps to remedy this colonial poverty of mind and soul." The libraries which they sent were by no means confined to religious tracts and works of divinity. Even for the clergy Bray sent libraries that went far beyond theology and scripture study. A typical parochial library of 166 volumes included "eleven works on history and travel, two geographies, five dictionaries, three works each on mathematics, natural history, heraldry, biography, and law, four ancient classics, the same number of works on grammar and language, three books of essays, two books on sport, and one each on medicine, mythology, and poetry." (This last was always Butler's *Hudibras*, the popular satire on the hypocrisy of the Puritans.) With each parochial library Bray also sent a layman's library numbering 870 volumes and pamphlets.

There is little doubt that these books, scattered widely throughout the colonies, made reading facilities available to countless persons who otherwise would have had no access to books beyond the ubiquitous Bible, almanac, and a work or two of divinity. It is impossible to assess the intellectual contribution these libraries made to colonial America.

But there was yet another way in which Dr. Bray benefited the colonists. Being persuaded that inadequate support prevented many Anglican priests from going to America, he established in 1701 another society that was destined to leave its mark upon the thirteen colonies and wherever else in the world Englishmen went to trade or to settle. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, familiarly known as the "Venerable Society" or the S.P.G., took hold almost immediately and by the time of the Revolution found the wherewithal to send to America and support some 353 Anglican missionary priests. The late Victor Hugo Paltsits declared, after a study of the S.P.G.'s voluminous records, that it was the greatest single influence in "promoting a humanitarian culture in the English-American colonies."12

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12 Victor Hugo Paltsits, quoted in Frank J. Klingberg, "Contributions of the S.P.G. to the American Way of Life," in *Historical Magazine of the
By 1741 the Venerable Society had built nearly 100 churches and sent abroad over 10,000 Bibles and Prayer Books, and over 100,000 pious tracts. It did not confine its activities to churches and pious tracts; it also gave generously to all worthy projects of intellectual value and especially took an interest in colonial colleges, regardless of their ecclesiastical affiliation. In 1714 it sent some theological works to Yale. In 1733 it had a hand in Dean Berkeley's gift of 1,000 volumes to the same institution—which a Yale librarian of recent years said was worth $10,000 in modern terms and was "the best collection of books which had ever been brought at one time to America," Harvard, too, was the recipient of several gifts from the S.P.G., in 1748 and in 1764, following the destruction of Harvard Hall together with the college library by fire. The latter gift resulted from the suggestion of East Apthorp, the former S.P.G. missionary at Cambridge, Mass., who urged the Society "that it was a fit occasion to show Christian spirit by contributing to the repair of this loss in a colony wholly unprovided with public libraries." The Society responded with a gift of books worth £100. Other American colleges also received help from the S.P.G., notably King's College, which in 1758 got the munificent gift of 1,500 volumes.

Thus, despite the fact that the Church of England never enjoyed in America the favored position it had in the mother country, it nonetheless exerted a considerable influence on higher education in the colonies far beyond the two colleges that were specifically Anglican in origin. The Anglican universities of Oxford and Cambridge provided the chief models for the American colleges, gifts of books and money from Anglican societies and individuals enhanced the well-being of the colonial institutions, and sons of church families formed a disproportionately large percentage of the student bodies even of Puritan Harvard and Yale. Above all, the well-established scholarship of churchmen in the mother country, both clergy and laity, provided colonial America with its chief academic and intellectual standards.

Protestant Episcopal Church, XII (September, 1943), 222; see also the same author's Anglican Humanitarianism in Colonial New York (Church Historical Society Publication, No. 11, Philadelphia 1940).

Sermon of Bishop Secker, in 1741, in Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, XX (1951), 29.

Klingberg, "Contributions of the S.P.G.,” 220.

Ibid., 220.
If T. S. Eliot in his essay on Lancelot Andrewes is correct in saying that “a church is to be judged by its intellectual fruits,” then it is not too much to say that the Church of England, despite its minority status in the colonies, made a notable contribution to American higher education, one that is second to that of no other ecclesiastical body.