

## **Moments in Our History** **(Excerpts from the Dissenting Church of Christ at St. John's 1775 - 1975)**

### **Opposition (Part 2)**

The departure of Jones with his company in August 1778 was a great blow to the congregation. Not so to the Reverend Edward Langman who reported (with some relief we imagine) to the S.P.G. that "some of the most ignorant of his people had been drawn away by the enthusiastic pretensions of a common soldier to more than ordinary gifts of the spirit, assuming thereupon the office of a preacher. But, as he has been lately removed, there have been no interruptions of that kind, such pretenders being more frequent at Harbour Grace and Carbonear."

After fasting and prayer, the little Society at St. John's sent after John Jones a "unanimous letter" (in duplicate and triplicate, Jones carefully records) requesting him to quit the Army and return to them "as their Pastor under God." Jones accepted their call and conditions "not withstanding some struggles arising from great offers made him in the Army." Jones' company was stationed at Plymouth and he was instructed by the Reverend Christopher Mends, minister of the Independent Church there. Greatheed speaks of "some difficulty" obtaining his discharge.

However, in due course, Jones was ordained by a presbytery of Dissenting ministers, namely, Mr. Mends of Plymouth; Herbert Mends of Sherborne; John Crisp of Ringwood; Edward Ashburner of Poole; William Gray of Stalbridge; Joseph Wilkings of Weymouth; Simon Reader of Wareham; James Rooker, Bridgeport; and John Berry, Shaftesbury. These reverend gentlemen all signed the now Reverend John Jones' certificate as a minister of the Gospel. John Jones was correspond with many of these men, who were to prove helpful to him and his congregation. The communion cup, still in the possession of our congregation, is inscribed "the Gift of the Dissenting Church, Plymouth, to the Dissenting Church in St. John's, Newfoundland, 1784" - a reminder to Jones of the church where he was ordained. Armed with his certificate and "under the favourable providences of a good God" Jones set sail for the last time from England.

*(Note S.P.G. Society for the Propagation of the Gospel - a missionary society to provide clergy from the Church of England to minister to the settlers and to convert nonbelievers in the colonies.)*