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Political Anglicanism in the Chesapeake, 1760-1800

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Statement of original authorship

Hereby I declare that this thesis has been composed by myself, the work is my own and it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification, except as specified on the title page

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December 2011

Abstract

While the Church of England in the mother country had developed the organizational structure that permitted it to respond successfully to its critics, the Anglican Church in Virginia and Maryland struggled with structural failures and problems pertinent to the American geography and ethnic composition. The absence of a resident bishop, the diverse ethnic origins of the colonials, as well as the existence of large numbers of slaves and Indians, together with the great extent of the parishes, rendered the task of colonial ministers extremely difficult. Despite the diligence of some clergymen, the Anglican Church in the Chesapeake failed to bring large numbers of converts into its fold and to gain, therefore, a firm footing on the American soil. As a result, it took the form of an institution which was more appealing to the elite than to those of a low social background. Among the former, there were numerous examples of piety and devotion which exhibit a true attachment to the ideals of Anglican civil theology. The great power that local elites acquired within the colonial church establishment of Virginia and Maryland prevented Anglican clergymen from developing an independent stance which would have allowed them to influence public opinion in the colonies in a staunchly conservative way. As a result, Anglican clergymen failed to stem the revolutionary tide that swept the region in mid-eighteenth century. There are elements, however, of Anglican political thought in the arguments voiced by the statesmen of the new nation in Virginia and in Maryland. Such ideas as the perception of society as an organic whole, the propriety of elite rule, the authority of governmental institutions to promote public virtue, the right to depose a monarch - when he acted in an unconstitutional way - and the importance of moderate and peaceful demeanour were cherished by Anglicans at both sides of the Atlantic.

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Introduction

One of the most frequent criticisms that the Church of England has received from historians of the twentieth century is that it was slavishly attached to the interests of a semi-pagan aristocracy. This criticism is particularly evident in the work of R.H. Tawney,¹ but it was also used by historians in the nineteenth century, as well as modern studies.² These views are based on some evils within the Church which historians thought could be used as an accurate representation of the Church of England in the eighteenth century. At the level of high church politics, the Church has been accused of following the directions of the government to the point of giving up the church's true interests in order to comply with governmental policies. Moreover, the means of advancement within the church hierarchy, through political influence, turned the church into an institution, which, especially at elections, pursued party or faction politics in an opportunistic, non-ideological way. At the local level, the church was criticised for overly succumbing to the interests of the local propertied elite. This was supported by the fact that, after 1750, members of the aristocracy were increasing seeking employment in the clerical profession for their sons and clients and that the church was a great landowning institution with the effect of acquiring aristocratic ways of functioning. It followed that the church not only gradually distanced itself from the local, popular culture, but also pastoral care was neglected because of pluralism,³ and its concomitant, absenteeism. Moreover, the payment of tithes added to the confrontation between clergy and non-conformists. The latter had to pay them, despite not being church members, while the revenues of the clergy had been considerably increased through agricultural improvements. Cathedrals were targeted as being the hub of inertia and infamy,

¹ R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study* (London: J.Murray, 1926), ch. 3.

² Abbey, C. J. and Overton, J.H. *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, 2 vols. (London, 1878); S.L. Ollard, 'Confirmation in the Anglican Communion' in *Confirmation or the Laying on of hands*, vol. I: *Historical and Doctrinal* (SPCK, 1926), pp. 60-203; Basil Williams, *The Whig Supremacy 1714-1760*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962); J.H. Plumb, *England in the Eighteenth Century* (Hamondsworth: Penguin_1950), pp. 43-4; R. Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), p. 191; Peter Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence. Ecclesiastical Structure and Problems of Church Reform 1700-1840* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1989)

³ Virgin, *Church in an Age of Negligence*, pp. 73, 137, 259.

while the church became a synonym for slackness and dereliction of duty. It was Tawney who had initially used the epithet 'semi-pagan' to describe the lay elite. His line of argument went as follows: the eighteenth century was an age when the rationalistic way of thinking prevailed not only in social and intellectual circles, but also in circles within the church. This, supposedly, resulted to the decline of faith and spirituality and the prevalence of classical rather than Christian ideals. Consequently, it was deemed that the role of the church was peripheral to the developments of the eighteenth century, which has been regarded an age of enlightenment and secularisation; hence the relatively little attention that the Church of England has received from general histories of the eighteenth century.⁴

This critique was not only voiced in the twentieth century; it was also advanced by nonconformists, Methodists and intellectuals in the eighteenth century. The clergymen of the established church were, then, charged with erastianism, corruption, lack of devotion and vigour, and attachment to worldly activities. Moreover, they were accused of failing to attain the standards set by sixteenth and seventeenth-century ecclesiastics in law-making and theological debate.⁵ Only in the late nineteenth century did a greater appreciation of the established church started to appear, a tendency, which is clearly apparent in the work of Norman Sykes. Sykes argued that the church as an institution was more successful than previously indicated and that its clergymen were not as negligent in their tasks as previously thought. He also suggested that the poor description of the church in the eighteenth century was in many cases influenced by arguments of its opponents and by the improved standards set by late nineteenth-century practices.⁶ Following Sykes' thesis, revisionist historians in the last twenty years have come to be more appreciative of the work of the church in the eighteenth-century.⁷ Their method of

⁴ Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, ch. 3; Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England' in H. T. Dickinson, ed. *Companion to Eighteenth-Century England*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 225-26; John Walsh and Stephen Taylor, 'The Church and Anglicanism in the 'long' eighteenth century' in John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor, eds., *The Church of England c. 1689-c. 1833. From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 1-64, here pp. 1-2.

⁵ G.M.Ditchfield, 'The Changing Nature of English Anticlericalism, c. 1750-c.1800' in Nigel Aston and Matthew Cragoe, eds. *Anticlericalism in Britain, c. 1500-1914* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2001), pp. 93-114.

⁶ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', p. 225; Norman Sykes, *Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge,1934), ch. III.

⁷ Jeremy Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation and Reform, 1660-1828. Archbishops of Canterbury and their Diocese* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000); Jeremy Gregory and Jeffrey S. Chamberlain, eds. *The*

approach to the subject consisted of detailed research at the local level. They highlighted the positive aspects of the church, its power, efficiency and energy as an institution, rather than its flaws and failures. In this way, they have managed to qualify some of the views previously formulated or even to overthrow them. It has been found that many areas of the church were, in the eighteenth century, more vigorous than at any time since the Reformation, that it had started to reform itself from the inside, especially as far as pluralism and absenteeism are concerned, long before the administrative changes of the nineteenth century and that it was much more present in the daily, popular life of the parish than previously claimed. There is currently a debate between the 'optimist' revisionist tendencies⁸ and the more cautious, 'pessimist' post-revisionist current of thought, which stresses the inherent organizational problems faced by the church.⁹ The former group of historians has managed to bring into focus evidence of church life, which has been previously neglected in such a way that a new, wholesale understanding of the issue has been achieved. J.C.D. Clark's work has been one of the most influential and conspicuous examples of this viewpoint, because it managed to bring forcefully into one volume these various views. It presented not only the strength of the church itself as an institution, but also its great impact on the political, cultural and social aspects of English life in the eighteenth century.¹⁰ J.C.D. Clark has shown that the Church was one of the three pillars, together with monarchy and aristocracy, which dominated much of eighteenth-century social life. Other historians stressed the domination of the church in intellectual, cultural and political developments through print, arguing that the majority of the titles published at the time belonged in the category of theological works, - most of them written by Church of England clergy, - and that the sermon both spoken and written was a powerful means which could not only guide

National Church in Local Perspective (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003); W.M Jacob, *Lay People and Religion in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Peter Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence. Ecclesiastical Structure and Problems of Church Reform 1700-1840* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1989); Donald A. Spaeth, *The Church in an Age of Danger. Parshons and Parishioners, 1660-1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); see also J. H. Plumb, *England in the Eighteenth Century* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1950), pp. 43-4; R. Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), p. 191.

¹⁰ *English Society 1688-1832: Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice during the Ancient Regime* (1985; rev. ed., Cambridge, 2000)

public opinion on theology but also on political and social matters.¹¹ Rather than focusing on the conventional idea of an age of secularization and enlightenment or suggesting that there was a conflict between religious and worldly values, it has been acknowledged that the development of enlightened and religious thought in the eighteenth century went together, with the church instigating advances in sectors often related to classical, rational teachings, such as education.¹²

A similar development has happened regarding the historiography of the Church of England in the Chesapeake.¹³ Eighteenth-century Anglicans in the Chesapeake have been described by contemporary and nineteenth-century Evangelicals, as well as by modern historians until the 1980s¹⁴ as ‘unabashedly materialistic’, being solely focused on making profit through growing and selling tobacco. According to this argument, their Anglican faith was reduced to ‘a sort of gentry-dominated rationalistic moralism that failed to make any substantial mark on the social history of the region, setting the stage for an evangelical revolution that would sweep across the South’.¹⁵ It followed that Chesapeake Anglicans embraced

¹¹ Robert Hole, *Pulpits, politics and public order in England. 1760-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); William Gibson, *The Church of England, 1688-1832. Unity and Accord* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001); F.C. Mather, *High Church Prophet. Bishop Samuel Horsley (1733-1806) and the Caroline Tradition in the Later Georgian Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992)

¹² Jeremy Gregory, ‘The Church of England’, pp. 225-27; Jeremy Gregory, ‘The eighteenth-century Reformation: the pastoral task of Anglican clergy after 1689’ in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor, *The Church of England*, p. 71

¹³ Frederick V Mills, *Bishops by Ballot: An Eighteenth-Century Ecclesiastical Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982); John Frederick Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism in North America* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984); Joan Gundersen, *The Anglican Ministry in Virginia, 1723-1766: A Study of Social Class* (New York; London: Garland, 1989); J.K. Nelson, *A Blessed Company: Parishes, Parsons and Parishioners in Anglican Virginia, 1690-1776* (Chapel Hill; London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Anne Y. Zimmer, *Jonathan Boucher: Loyalist in Exile* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978); Lauren F. Winner, *A Cheerful and Comfortable Faith. Anglican Religious Practice in the Elite Households of Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010); Edward L. Bond, ed. *Spreading the Gospel in Colonial Virginia: Preaching Religion and Community. With Selected Sermons and Other Primary Documents* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005); Nancy L. Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism: The Colonial Church of England Clergy during the American Revolution* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999).

¹⁴ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*; Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*; Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism*; Dell Upton, *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* (New York, N.Y.: Architectural History Foundation; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986).

¹⁵ Edward L. Bond, ed. *Spreading the Gospel in Colonial Virginia: Preaching Religion and Community. With Selected Sermons and Other Primary Documents* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), reviewed by Nicholas M. Beasley in *Journal of Southern Religion*, VIII (2005) <http://jsr.fsu.edu>

the main 'low' church ideas of not regarding sacraments, religious rites, and ecclesiastical hierarchy as important aspects of Christianity. In addition, numerous instances of clerical delinquency seriously lowered the standing of the established Church. This meant that the Church of England in the Chesapeake did not manage to fulfil its pastoral functions as successfully and efficiently as it did in England and that it was more vulnerable to the threat posed by dissenters.

Between the 1950s and the 1980s, the depiction of the Anglican Church in the Chesapeake as a 'low' church institution, slavishly obedient to the claims of the local gentry particularly dominated the accounts of such historians, as William Warren Sweet, Sydney E. Ahlstrom and Rhys Isaac. They argued that the Church in Virginia was only reinvigorated with the advent of the evangelicals at mid-eighteenth century. However, a new generation of historians, including Joan Gundersen, John K. Nelson, Edward L. Bond and Nancy L. Rhoden has become more appreciative of the strengths of the Church of England in the Chesapeake. Instead of focusing on its weaknesses, they highlighted the tremendous efforts required by its ministers to perform their tasks in a geographically and religiously 'hostile' environment and they endeavoured to qualify their conclusions when describing the Church's failures.

In this respect, without denying the weaknesses of the Anglican Church in the Chesapeake, my study aims to reach a better understanding of its character and nature and to explore the links between theological and political thought in the second half of the eighteenth century. Whereas many studies have focused on either England or America, my approach is inevitably transatlantic: political developments in the colonies and the early American states were considerably influenced by events in the mother country and the rest of Europe. At the same time, I endeavoured to understand the elements peculiar to the American environment that determined the profile of colonial institutions. Moreover, following the lead of J.C.D. Clark, this thesis aims to explain developments in political thought through a religious spectrum. Religion cannot be easily excluded from the study of most topics related to the eighteenth century and the interaction of the Anglican religion and politics on a transatlantic level is a subject which has not been sufficiently explored. This seems surprising since the Church of England was the established church in the mother country and it was promoted in the colonies by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities

at home. My study follows, therefore, the fortunes of Anglican laymen and clergymen in Virginia and in Maryland, where the colonial Church of England had its most numerous adherents, through the eventful decades at the second half of the eighteenth century: the Episcopal controversy, the American Revolution, the drafting of the first state and federal constitutions, the French Revolution and the election of 1800.

The first chapter gauges the authority and power of the eighteenth-century Church of England in the mother country. It describes how the interests of church and state were intertwined to the effect that the Church used its alliance with the state to secure its position and status. The remarkable strength of the 'High' Church party in the first decade of the eighteenth century and from the 1760s onwards helped the Church provide adequate answers to its numerous critics: Latitudinarians, deists, dissenters. With the help of the state, the established church in England managed to survive almost intact until well into the nineteenth century.

The second chapter investigates the power of the Church of England in the Chesapeake. It shows that due to the absence of a resident bishop, the links with the parent church were particularly weak. Despite the fact that the social and educational background of the clergy was elevated in the years immediately preceding the American Revolution and that they were not particularly inattentive to the dispensing of their duties, geographical factors in the Chesapeake, combined with great religious and ethnic diversity and the immense power of the vestries conferred a particular American character to the Anglican Church. In the Chesapeake, the Church did not manage to have a great appeal to the slaves or to people of low social standing, while it had to compete with an increasingly Presbyterian population. Moreover, the weak association of interests between the lay elite, who dominated the vestries, and the ecclesiastical and civil authorities in England meant that the conservative Whig or Tory parties were less strong in the Chesapeake than in the mother country.

The third chapter examines the impact of the aforementioned different ecclesiastical structures on the political sphere. It shows how Anglican clergymen in the Chesapeake became increasingly dependent on the lay local elite. The need to defend their interests did not prevent the latter from opposing the Episcopal plan or the new taxation measures for the colonies, voted by Parliament. At these instances,

the majority of Anglican clergymen hesitated to voice an independent opinion, which would have influenced the colonial elite towards embracing the policies of England. Nevertheless, elements of a conservative perception of society, as depicted in Anglican doctrines, became apparent in the thought of future patriots, who were bred in the Church of England.

The fourth chapter follows the destinies of the clergymen and laymen in Virginia and Maryland during the revolutionary war and the early national period. It shows how the majority of clergymen in the Chesapeake sided with their patriot lay patrons and it examines the nature of the first ecclesiastical and state constitutions. It argues that lay power was reaffirmed through the ecclesiastical administrative structures that were devised after the disestablishment of the Church in Virginia and Maryland. It also supports that, despite the weaknesses of the Church of England in Virginia, elements of Anglican civil theology had an impact on the political thinking and rhetoric of men who drafted the first state constitutions. The fifth chapter investigates the nature of Federalism and Anti-federalism developed in the Chesapeake. It argues that the impact of Anglican doctrines can be found in the thought of Federalists and elite Anti-federalists. The Anglican depiction of society as an organic whole and the establishmentarian character of the Church of England were reflected on the insistence of Virginia Anti-federalists about local elite rule and in the Federalists' belief in the power of governmental institutions to promote public virtue.

Finally, the sixth chapter examines responses in the Chesapeake towards the French Revolution, the spread of deism and the election of 1800. It argues that whereas in the mother country, the Church formed adequate responses to the demands of dissenters and political radicals, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Chesapeake did not share the same anxiety over these developments that Federalists felt in New England. The relative loss of influence of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia and Maryland meant that Anglican clergy in the region condemned less forcefully the excesses of the French Revolution than their Congregationalist counterparts in the northern colonies. This contributed to the successes of the Republican Party in Virginia from the second half of the 1790s

onwards, whose members did not hesitate to downplay and, even condone, the violent acts of the French Revolutionaries.

Chapter One

The Church of England, 1760-1800: ideology and strength

This chapter will describe the ideology and structural vigour of the Church of England in the parent country so that an informed comparative analysis with the colonial institution will be made possible in the following chapters. It will be shown that by the eighteenth century, the English state had acquired a strong Anglican character which, in turn, gave the Church great power as an institution. The description, thus, of the way the Church of England was operating in the parent country in the late eighteenth century, will provide insight into its weaknesses in the colonies. It will also help elucidate the reasons why Anglican clergymen did not manage to play a dominant role in colonial church affairs or to influence the political thought developed at the other side of the Atlantic.

Before attempting to gauge the strength of the established church and the impact of Anglican beliefs in the late eighteenth century it is important to succinctly place developments in this period in the appropriate religio-political context. Events and ideas expressed as early as the mid-seventeenth century will be taken into account. This can be considered appropriate, since the civil wars and the restoration of monarchy in the seventeenth century were events of seminal importance that conditioned the evolution of the church in the following centuries. It should be noted that the power and privileges of the Church of England during the Restoration period, as reflected in the Corporation and Test Acts, passed in 1661 and 1673, respectively, in the new Prayer Book of 1662, as well as the association of the Church with divine right, passive obedience and non-resistance, were seriously undermined in the decades after 1688.¹ Such events, as the Toleration Act, increase in dissent and deism, the Occasional Conformity Act (introduced in 1711 and repealed in 1719), the suspension of Convocation in 1717, the rise of Latitudinarian clergy and of Whig bishops, attempts to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts in the 1730s, portray the threats that the Church of England faced in the first half of the

¹ For the meaning of the Revolution of 1689, see: Stephen Taylor, 'Plus Ça Change...? New Perspectives on the Revolution of 1688' *The Historical Journal* 37 (1994), 461-2.

eighteenth century.² Following these developments, the clergy of the Church of England - and especially Tory 'high' churchmen, but even many moderate clergy - became alarmed. Edmund Gibson (bishop of London, 1720-1748), the so-called 'Walpole's Pope', and William Wake (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1716-1737) endeavoured to defend the Church of England against its perceived enemies. They reinstated a theory for an alliance between Church and State. In this relationship, the Church should not be perceived as an appendage of the state, but as a component part of the English legal system and society in a way that the church's spiritual and political functions were interrelated and inseparable the one from the other. In this sense, those who did not adopt the established religious creed feared the power and influence of the Church. The latter not only dominated in every aspect of life, but was also in a position in which the state served its interests. As a result, clergymen felt it their duty to support the government both in local and parliamentary politics, especially at times of national crisis. This can be clearly perceived in the stance the clergy took during the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 and during the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth-century. In these cases, the Anglican clergy firmly supported the state, believing that every movement, event, or action against it, especially when coming from a Catholic quarter, could also jeopardize their position.³

² For a discussion of the Quakers Tithe Bill of 1736 and of the attempt to repeal the Test Act in the same year, see: Stephen Taylor, 'Sir Robert Walpole, The Church of England, and the Quakers Tithe Bill of 1736,' *Historical Journal*, 28, no. 1 (1985), 51-77, esp. 57-60; Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England' in H. T. Dickinson, ed. *Companion to Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), p. 228; David L. Wykes, 'Introduction: Parliament and Dissent from the Restoration to the Twentieth Century' in *Parliament and Dissent*, ed. Stephen Taylor and David L. Wykes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the Parliamentary History Yearbook Trust, 2005), pp. 2, 4.

³ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', p. 230; William Gibson, *The Achievement of the Anglican Church, 1689-1800: The Confessional State in Eighteenth Century England* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), pp. 192-5; Paul Langford, 'The English Clergy and the American Revolution' in Eckhart Hellmuth (ed.), *The Transformation of Political Culture: England and Germany in the late eighteenth century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the German Historical Institute, 1990), pp. 303-4; Charles Daubeny, *A guide to the Church, in several discourses; to which are added ...* (London: T. Cadell, Jun. and W. Davies, 1798), pp. 137-8; Stephen Taylor, 'William Warburton and the Alliance of Church and State' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 43, no. 2 (1992), 271-286; Edmund Gibson, *Codex juris ecclesiastici Anglicani: or, the statutes, constitutions, canons, rubrics and articles, of the Church of England, methodically...* 2 vols. (London: J. Baskett, 1713), vol. 1, pp. xvii-xviii, xxx; Francis Atterbury, *A LETTER to a Convocation-Man, concerning the RIGHTS, POWERS, and PRIVILEGES of that Body* (London: E. Whitlock, 1697), pp. 22-3; William Warburton, *The Alliance between Church and State: or, The Necessity and Equity of an Established Religion and a Test Law Demonstrated* (3rd ed., London: printed for J. and P. Knapton, 1748), pp. 87, 90-117; for a discussion of the role of bishops in Parliament, see: Stephen Taylor, 'The Bishops at Westminster in the Mid-Eighteenth Century' in *A Pillar of the Constitution. The House of Lords in*

The army, the civil service, most schools and the two universities were bastions of the Church of England in a way that gave the established church a central place in the political and social life of the nation. This can also be observed in the localities, where clergymen of the established church frequently held such offices as that of the Justice of Peace, land-tax commissioner, and turnpike trustee, so that they had a key role in the administration of local affairs. Moreover, clergymen served the local elite, for example in instances of direct or indirect canvassing, during parliamentary elections. At the national level, as well, the state seemed to be in need of the church's support: clergy would function as political or election agents who would instruct the laity and pass on information to them, they would distribute pamphlets of political content and, in turn, they would seek civil office.⁴ One feature of the alliance between church and state is the great responsibility that the established Church felt for the religious and spiritual life of the nation. This sense of duty in spiritual matters is reflected in such domains as education, charity, social control and the pastoral work of the ministers.⁵ Through this cooperation with the state, the Church of England retained many of its privileges and, in the 1770s, defeated attempts to abolish the *Thirty Nine Articles* against the claims of Rational Dissenters.

It becomes evident, then, that the Church of England played, thus, a major role in the life of people and that it functioned much more efficiently than its Victorian critics claimed. The Victorians have largely painted the eighteenth-century Church of England as an institution characterised by decadence, corruption, complacency and negligence. Revisionist historians in the last twenty years, however, have come to be more appreciative of the work of the church in this period and to revise this picture.⁶ Admittedly, one century's establishments cannot be judged by the standards of another. Nineteenth-century accounts of the Church of

British Politics, 1640-1784, ed. Clyve Jones (London and Roncerverte: The Hambledon Press, 1989), pp. 137-163.

⁴ Gibson, *Achievement of the Anglican Church, 1689-1800*, pp. 33-44; Langford, 'English Clergy and the American Revolution', pp. 304-5.

⁵ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', p. 239; Gibson, *Achievement of the Anglican church, 1689-1800*, p. 195-6; John Walsh and Stephen Taylor, 'The Church and Anglicanism in the 'long' eighteenth century' in John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor, eds., *The Church of England c. 1689-c. 1833. From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 49-51; Jeremy Gregory, 'The eighteenth-century Reformation: the pastoral task of Anglican clergy after 1689' in *ibid.*, pp. 67-85, esp. pp.75-77.

⁶ W. M. Jacob, *Lay People and Religion in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 40.

England would not have been able to explain such events as the great interest that Thomas Pelham-Holles, the Duke of Newcastle (Secretary of State, 1724-1754; Prime Minister, 1754-6 and 1757-62) took in the church, the immense energy that bishops exerted in performing their parochial duties, the zeal with which clergymen sought advancement in the church hierarchy or the vigour with which the clergy defended the Hanoverian regime.⁷ Recent research has shown that the church was less dependent on lay powers and more conscientious, pious and active in spiritual matters than previously assumed. It has been argued convincingly that the term 'Latitudinarian' does not accurately describe the character of the eighteenth-century Church of England, while Catholic beliefs and prejudices waned gradually as the century progressed.⁸ Despite the population growth and the existence of dissenters, it can be held that the church was as dominant in the life of the nation at the end of the eighteenth century as it was in the seventeenth.

In late 1780s and in the 1790s - faced with the loss of American colonies and Revolution in France, radicalism at home, and growth of urbanisation and industrialisation – there is a revival of efforts to strengthen the Church of England.⁹ This included more active reforms and reform societies, such as the Religious Tract Society (1799), and the defence of high church positions by such prelates as bishops Samuel Hallifax (bishop of Gloucester and St. Asaph, 1781-1790), Samuel Horsley (bishop of St. David's, Rochester and St. Asaph, 1788-1806), George Horne (bishop of Norwich, 1790-1792), Charles Moss (bishop of Bath and Wells, 1772-1802) and the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Moore (1783-1805).¹⁰ As it will be shown, even such moderate theologians, as William Paley (1743-1805) and Richard Watson (bishop of Llandaff, 1782-1816), defended the privileges of the Church of England. Besides, the rise of Evangelicalism – even Methodism – was not initially outside the Church. The debates over the extent of comprehension granted to Dissenters fast evolved around matters of faith, whereby the Anglican doctrines were reaffirmed,

⁷ Gibson, *Achievement of the Church*, pp. 196-7.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 183; cf. G.M. Ditchfield, 'Ecclesiastical policy under Lord North' in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor, *The Church of England c. 1689-c. 1833*, pp. 230-240.

⁹ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', p. 239.

¹⁰ F.C. Mather, *High Church Prophet. Bishop Samuel Horsley (1733-1806) and the Caroline Tradition in the Later Georgian Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 6-7; Elizabeth Elbourne, 'The Foundation of the Church Missionary Society: the Anglican missionary impulse' in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor, *The Church of England c. 1689-c. 1833*, pp. 247-264

because of the extreme, Socinian positions of the Church's adversaries.¹¹ Horsley's *Apology for the Liturgy and Clergy of the Church of England* (1790) was an effective reply to dissenting demands for the revision of the Prayer Book.¹² A distinctive Prayer Book Anglicanism emerged which supported subscription to the Articles and followed a *via media* between dry Latitudinarianism and Methodist enthusiasm. Despite being moderate and restrained, eighteenth century Anglicanism bore a conservative character to the effect that themes of hierarchy and obedience were greatly emphasized in discourses on civil theology. The persistence of a conservative consensus in society found its expression with the Priestley riots in Birmingham (July 1791).¹³

This chapter aims to describe the dominant political doctrine and power of the established church in the eighteenth century. Firstly, an attempt to gauge the impact of the Church of England on the life of the average parishioner will be made. An investigation of the role of the church in the local communities will reveal that the Church of England was a permanent feature in the everyday routine of the common people. The religious and political context within which the political ideology of the Church was expressed will be examined next. This will be followed by a description of the content of the Anglican political discourse, articulated in the last four decades of the eighteenth century. The thought of such diverse Anglican thinkers, as George Horne, Samuel Horsley, William Stevens, William Jones of Nayland, Richard Watson and William Paley will be analysed through an examination of their writings. It will be shown that the seventeenth-century idea of the divine origin of government was losing supporters towards the end of the eighteenth century: the political philosophy of Hutchinsonians had more impact on the thought of 'high' church Anglicans than Robert Filmer. Moreover, the rationality of Enlightenment was rejected by prominent Anglican theologians. Faced with domestic unrest and the American and French revolutions, Anglican theologians gradually focused - from the end of the American war, onwards - on such issues as

¹¹ Nigel Aston, 'Horne and Heterodoxy: The Defence of Anglican Beliefs in the Late Enlightenment,' *English Historical Review*, 108, no. 429 (1993), 915-9.

¹² Mather, *High Church Prophet*, pp. 64-87.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87; John Walsh and Stephen Taylor, 'The Church and Anglicanism in the 'long' eighteenth century' in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor, *The Church of England c. 1689-c. 1833*, pp. 55-60.

social control and the maintenance of social hierarchy, instead of being tolerant of ideas expounded by the French *philosophes*.

The Role of the Church in the Local Community

The Church had inherited the geographical divisions of the sixteenth century, namely twenty-six dioceses and nearly 11,000 parishes in England and Wales, with the consequence that these did not correspond to the population growth that was so apparent in the late eighteenth century, especially in such parishes as Manchester and Sheffield. There were ways, however, by which the clergy managed to meet the needs of the day and these efforts should not be underestimated.¹⁴ Diligent bishops, pious and interested laymen in church affairs, made worship, and also catechising, permanent features of eighteenth century English routine. The institution of poor relief and philanthropic programmes, the administration of local schools and missionary work were additional channels through which the Church dominated the life of the parishioners.

Despite the advanced age of some bishops, and the general perceived lack of commitment to pastoral duties, the eighteenth century had known such diligent members as the Archbishops of Canterbury, Thomas Secker (1758-68) and John Moore (1783-1805). Recent research in diocesan archives has discovered bulks of correspondence between bishops and the parish clergy, which has shown that high ecclesiastical officials were more attentive in providing advice and pastoral supervision than previously thought.¹⁵ As far as pastoral care was concerned, this was mostly determined by the personality of the clergyman in charge. Bishops held a tight control over work in the parishes and it is unlikely poor efficiency would have been tolerated. Jeremy Gregory has shown that in the eighteenth century the standards of admission to the ministry were as high as during the Evangelical

¹⁴ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', pp. 234-5; criticism for defective pastoral care were voiced in the eighteenth century even by orthodox clergymen, John Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (7th ed., Belfast: Henry and Robert Joy, 1757), pp. 31-32

¹⁵ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', pp. 235-36; Gibson, *Achievement of the Church*, p. 183-5; W.M. Jacob, 'Church and society in Norfolk, 1700-1800' in Jeremy Gregory and Jeffrey S. Chamberlain eds., *The National Church in Local Perspective. The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), pp. 178-182; Walsh and Taylor, 'Church and Anglicanism in the 'long' eighteenth century', p. 5.

Revival and the Oxford movement, that ministers had to go through a stiff examination before being ordained, and that numerous bishops became concerned about the degree of suitability of their ministers.¹⁶ There were, of course, cases of clergymen being remiss, but more detailed study of parish archives can reveal that the standards of pastoral work were more impressive than previously assumed. Besides, parishioners seem to have been content with the fulfilment of the duties of their rectors.¹⁷

Although eighteenth-century clergy did not possess uniform characteristics, a sketch of the typical clerical socio-economic profile can be attempted: university educated, member of the gentry or son of a clergyman, and well-remunerated. With reference to the education of the clergy, holding a university degree was a prerequisite for appointment in most English and Welsh parishes.¹⁸ Regarding the social origins of the clergy, as the century progressed, an increasing number of them came from the broader class of the gentry. At the end of the eighteenth century, however, a quarter of the clergy came from modest backgrounds and a significant number of them had fathers who had been clergy so that their lives had deep roots in the local community.¹⁹ This was especially true for the dioceses of Chichester, Canterbury, Leicestershire, Worcester and Wiltshire, while in the diocese of London the gentry were more favoured than in the aforementioned districts, especially after 1780.²⁰ Studies of clerical incomes in the eighteenth century indicate that clergymen

¹⁶ Jeremy Gregory, 'Standards for Admission to the Ministry of the Church of England in the Eighteenth Century', *Dutch Review of Church History / Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 83 (2003), 283-295; see also Jeremy Gregory and Jeffrey S. Chamberlain, 'National and local perspectives on the Church of England in the long eighteenth century' in idem, eds., *The National Church in Local Perspective. The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), pp. 1-27, here pp. 17-8; Jacob, 'Church and society in Norfolk', p. 179.

¹⁷ Jacob, *Lay People and Religion*, pp. 21, 40, 42-3; Gregory and Chamberlain, 'National and local perspectives', p. 20; for clerical competency in Sussex, see Jeffrey S. Chamberlain, 'A regular and well-affected' Diocese: Chichester in the eighteenth century' in Gregory and Chamberlain, *National Church in Local Perspective*, pp. 73-97, here pp. 85-7.

¹⁸ Jacob, *Lay People and Religion*, pp. 32-33; Gregory and Chamberlain, 'National and local perspectives', p. 19; Jacob, 'Church and society in Norfolk', p. 186.

¹⁹ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', p. 236; Jacob, *Lay People and Religion*, pp. 31, 35; Gregory and Chamberlain, 'National and local perspectives', p. 19; Walsh and Taylor, 'Church and Anglicanism in the 'long' eighteenth century', p. 7.

²⁰ Jeremy Gregory, ed., *The Speculum of Archbishop Thomas Secker* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), p. xv; J.H. Pruett, 'Career patterns among the clergy of Lincoln cathedral, 1660-1750', *Church History*, vol. xlv (1975), pp. 204-16; M. Ransome, ed., *The State of the Bishopric of Worcester, 1782-1808* ([Birmingham]: Worcester Historical Society, 1968), introduction; M. Ransome, *Wiltshire returns to the Bishop's visitation queries 1783* (Devizes: [Wiltshire Record Society], 1972), pp. 1-14;

enjoyed greater social mobility in the years up to 1720 and during the reign of George III.²¹

With reference to the frequency of worship, as far as generalizations can be attempted, services were delivered on Sundays, twice in the north and west and once in the south and east, and a sermon followed, on which the gentry were particularly keen.²² Overall, the British eighteenth century experienced the growing popularity of the celebrations of Communion.²³ Moreover, the visitation records show that communion services were delivered and attended once a week in towns, but infrequently in big urban centres, where they happened monthly in most cases. Less frequent celebrations of the Communion, namely four times a year, were mostly the norm in rural areas where the clergy found it hard to disengage the parishioners from their rural activities. In this sense, a generalisation could be attempted: the north of England, Wales and urban parishes had more frequent church services than the southern and rural part of the country. This can be perceived as counteracting the argument that pluralism and non-residence weakened the Church, since the northern and urban parishes were more prone to the aforementioned practices.²⁴ Urbanization and industrialization are often deemed twin demons, which posed problems for the sound functioning of the church. This argument, however, disregards the fact that in urban centres, such as Bath, Warwick, York and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, new churches were built or refurbished and the clergy enjoyed working in a newly created urban environment.²⁵

The increasingly elevated position of the pulpit, standing on three levels, and, thereby, the added importance attributed to the sermon, is something not to be contested. This is particularly evident in parishes which were newly built or

Viviane Barrie, 'The Church of England in the eighteenth century', *Historical Research*, 75, no. 187 (2002), 47-72, here 52-57, 61-2; Chamberlain, 'A regular and well-affected' Diocese', p. 84.

²¹ Barrie, 'The Church of England in the eighteenth century', pp. 57-60.

²² Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', p. 236; Jacob, *Lay People and Religion*, p. 40; Walsh and Taylor, 'Church and Anglicanism in the 'long' eighteenth century', p. 11.

²³ Gibson, *Achievement of the Church*, pp. 181-2; Walsh and Taylor, 'Church and Anglicanism in the 'long' eighteenth century', pp. 22-3.

²⁴ Gibson, *Achievement of the Church*, p. 180-1; weekly communion services were also offered in the churches of the city of London, see Barrie, 'The Church of England in the eighteenth century', pp. 67, 70-71; Gregory and Chamberlain, 'National and local perspectives', pp. 6-7; cf. Jacob, 'Church and society in Norfolk', p. 194; Walsh and Taylor, 'The Church and Anglicanism in the 'long' eighteenth century', pp. 11-12.

²⁵ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', pp.235; Walsh and Taylor, 'Church and Anglicanism in the 'long' eighteenth century', pp. 9-10.

renovated in the eighteenth century. The ministers were charged with focusing on the sermon rather than on the sacraments, but this trend is indicative of the spirit of the period: importance was to be given to the word, as a means of persuasion for the blessings of the Reformation in contrast to superstition and fear fostered in Roman Catholic circles.²⁶

The immediate results of the pastoral work of the clergy can be perceived in the impressive sense of piety that lay members of the Church posed. Diaries and letters suggest the great attention that people paid to the prayers and the psalms, since they were able to memorize many of their verses. Literature, painting and music were permeated with scenes from the Testaments and exhortations to a moral life; bookstores were dominated by devotional works and biblical criticisms and newspapers were filled with news from the religious life of the nation, especially during times of controversy. Moreover, sculptural monuments dedicated to the memory of the dead were ample with allusions to Christian faith. Members of the gentry would spend considerable amounts of money to build chapels attached to their houses, while in many cases they would even employ chaplains. Daily family prayers among the lower and middling sort were encouraged through chapbooks and family life was presumed to be a paragon of church discipline and morality.²⁷

The church had a preponderant role in the broader life of the community becoming in charge of poor relief programmes, through such societies as the Society for the Bettering and Increasing of the Comforts of the Poor (1796) and the Society for Diffusing Religious Knowledge amongst the Poor (1750). This was also evident in the church's participation in raising other charitable funds, in the administration of local schools and in missionary work.²⁸

The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), founded in 1698, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG),

²⁶ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', pp. 236-37; Jacob, p. 112; the sermon was given particular importance in the diocese of London, see Barrie, 'The Church of England in the eighteenth century', pp. 64-5, 67, 69.

²⁷ Jacob, *Lay People and Religion*, pp. 93-109; cf. Chamberlain, 'A regular and well-affected' Diocese', p. 86; Walsh and Taylor, 'Church and Anglicanism in the 'long' eighteenth century', p. 25; regarding exhortations to morality, John Brown (1715-1766) created great stir with his *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (7th ed., Belfast: Henry and Robert Joy, 1757).

²⁸ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', p. 237; Gibson, *Achievement of the Church*, pp. 189-190; Gregory and Chamberlain, 'National and local perspectives', pp. 21-22; Jacob, 'Church and society in Norfolk', pp. 186-7, 189; Walsh and Taylor, 'Church and Anglicanism in the 'long' eighteenth century', pp. 19-20.

founded in 1701, were two important educational voluntary institutions, involved in missionary work in the colonies. Their significance mainly lies in the fact that they were long-lived institutions, which achieved engaging a large number of missionaries for their cause. They were founded by Thomas Bray, a high-churchman. He believed that church life required reform and that Anglican expansionist activities were needed in order to eliminate catholic influence. The SPCK tried to conduct its educational work, through the establishment of bodies, which would gather information on parish church activities and life, through the foundation of libraries, the circulation of religious pamphlets and tracts and the organization of charity schools, at least during the first thirty years of its existence, as for instance in the diocese of York in the early 1700s. The SPG established a vast missionary network in the colonies, providing, in this way, not only for the education of English people, but also for people overseas. Bishops were active in supporting the work of SPCK and SPG with sermons, tracts, donations and advice to their clergy.²⁹ The activities of smaller societies, such as societies for the reformation of manners and the Religious Tract Society (1799) were also encouraged by the bishops in an effort to develop spirituality among the laity through learning and knowledge sharing.³⁰ Moreover, the church established communication with Protestants in continental Europe, who were suffering from Catholic persecution. These activities point towards the conclusion that, in terms of missionary work and spiritual guidance of Protestants, the eighteenth-century church was not idle.³¹

Attention should be drawn to the fact that the eighteenth-century Anglican Church had managed to attract large numbers of the laity to support its cause: the SPG and the Corporation for the Sons of the Clergy (for financial assistance to widows and children of deceased clergy) were funded in the large part by money from the laity, through annual fundraising functions. In this sense, the Church, rather than succumbing to the demands of the aristocracy, used its support to advance

²⁹ Jacob, *Lay People and Religion*, pp. 109-10; Craig Rose, 'The origins of the SPCK 1699-1716' in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor, *The Church of England*, pp. 172-190.

³⁰ Gibson, *Achievement of the Church*, pp. 186-190.

³¹ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', p. 237.

church-related activities.³² There were a substantial number of laymen who were willing to support the aforementioned church-related projects, and who were pious enough to understand their importance. These included Lady Betty Hastings (1682-1739), the duke of Newcastle (1693-1768) and William Legge, the second earl of Dartmouth (1731-1801). Some, like Samuel Johnson, went as far as to write sermons. The support of the laity included, except for the philanthropic projects mentioned above, the financial contribution to the payment of tithes and major contributions to repair works in old, medieval churches, which were inherited from the church structures of the past. All these, depict a laity who was earnest in its religious beliefs and for whom religion really mattered. The riots against Methodists in the 1750s, the Gordon riots against Catholics in 1780 and the Church and King Riots of the 1790s, which resulted to the destruction of the Dissenter Joseph Priestley's house and laboratory in Birmingham reveal the fervour that popular orthodox religious sentiment could reach.³³

The religio-political context

The American Revolution provided the main context for the expression of views on political theory and obligation during this era. The Middlesex election of 1768 and the campaign for the abolition of slavery had provoked some responses on issues of political philosophy, but Anglican arguments were rarely grounded on religious tenets.

In the midst of the Wilkes affair, George Horne argued against the Lockean concept of a state of nature, contractarian philosophies and government founded on popular consent. Calls were made for stability, order and restraint, but the Wilkes case did not produce any ground-breaking arguments in terms of religio-political discourse. Most Anglican writers rarely relied on religious ideas to oppose the reform

³² For the support of the laity to philanthropic projects, see: Elizabeth Elbourne, 'The Foundation of the Church Missionary Society: the Anglican missionary impulse' in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor, *Church of England c. 1689-c. 1833*, pp. 247-264.

³³ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', pp. 237-38; Wykes, 'Introduction: Parliament and Dissent', p. 18; Jeremy Gregory and Jeffrey S. Chamberlain, 'National and local perspectives on the Church of England in the long eighteenth century' in idem, eds., *National Church in Local Perspective.*, pp. 1-27, here pp. 22-23; for the interest of the local gentry in church affairs in the diocese of Chichester, see Chamberlain, 'A regular and well-affected' Diocese', pp. 74-75; cf. Jacob, 'Church and society in Norfolk', pp. 183-7.

of parliament. Instead, when opposing reform, they had recourse to secular theories for doing so.³⁴ Regarding the issue of slavery, many Anglicans, including Bishop Porteus, William Paley and Granville Sharp, argued in favour of its abolition, but they expressed their ideas in paternalist, humanitarian grounds, rather than religious-political theory.³⁵

As it will be analysed below, the American Revolution provided the opportunity for Anglican theologians and politicians to explore and elucidate their political creed. On a practical level, the vast majority of them supported the government in seeking to suppress the revolution in the colonies. It is evident that clerical contribution to the petitions pleading for conciliation was proportionately little.³⁶ On the level of church administration, only three bishops expressed their opposition to the policy of coercion. These were John Hinchcliffe, Bishop of Peterborough, Jonathan Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph and Frederick Keppel, Bishop of Exeter. The first two were friends with such members of the opposition, as the Duke of Grafton and Lord Shelburne, and this connection can partly explain their attitude on the matter.³⁷ The support that Anglican senior clergy and bishops gave at that time to governmental policies can be attributed to professional interest to a large extent, since only through courting the Whig administration, could they aspire to promotion. Without denying the intellectual and theological heritage, explained below, that made Anglican churchmen natural supporters of the administrative status quo, it needs to be noted that, in the second half of the eighteenth century, Lord North's patronage system had generated stability from the clerical quarters to the

³⁴ G. Horne, 'The Origin of Civil Government', 2 March 1769, *The Works of the Right Reverend George Horne DD Late Lord Bishop of Norwich*, 4 vols. (London, 1818), vol. 2, pp. 434-49.

³⁵ Lambeth Palace Library, MS. 2098, F. 37 (Porteous Notebook, 1777-1808); W. Paley, 'Moral and Political Philosophy', *The Works of William Paley*, 7 vols. (London, 1825), vol. 4, pp. 148-51; G. Sharp, *The Just Limitation of Slavery in the Laws of God ...* (London, 1776), pp. 17-19, 37, 39, 47-9, 55, 62; same, *An Essay on Slavery, Proving from Scripture its Inconsistency with Humanity and Religion* (Burlington, West Jersey, 1773; London, 1776), pp. 19-21, 27, 32; same, *The Law of Liberty...* (London, 1776), pp. 8, 10-11, 18, 39; same, *The Law of Passive Obedience ...* (London, 1776), p. 18.

³⁶ J.E. Bradley, *Popular Politics and the American Revolution in England: Petitions, the Crown, and Public Opinion* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1986), p. 180.

³⁷ P.O. Hutchinson, *The Diary and Letters of His Excellency Thomas Hutchinson* 2 vols. (London, 1883), vol. 1, p. 416; A.F. Stuart (ed.), *The Last Journals of Horace Walpole during the Reign of George III from 1771-1783*, 2 vols. (London, 1910), vol.1, pp. 534-4; vol. 2, p. 86; Jonathan Shipley, 'A sermon preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts' in *The Works of the Right Reverend Jonathan Shipley* 2vols. (London, 1792), vol. 2, pp. 191-2; Langford, 'English Clergy and the American Revolution', pp. 275-6.

benefit of the Crown. Richard Watson acknowledged the fact: 'Surely the clergy have a professional bias to support the powers that are, be what they may'. To the extent that the established church can be viewed as part of the 'propertied hierarchy' - and not as a separate caste or Estate - it becomes understandable why it was in its interest to cooperate and complement the lay powers of the realm.³⁸

Clerical support of the government seemed to be especially valuable after the surrender at Saratoga (Sept.-Oct. 1777), since they helped divert the interest of public opinion from the losses at the American war. The tone that they adopted in the years between the defeat at Saratoga and the conclusion of the peace in Versailles was one of self-punishment: British failings in the American war were attributed to political licentiousness and factionalism, to excessive criticism of the government, to the spread of luxury and to a general crisis in public morality. Clerical leaders called, then, for a reformation of manners and, increasingly, for due submission to government. It is evident that, in 1780 and in 1781, William Cooke, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, was not alone in denouncing the supporters of the Lockean contract theory and in defining liberty with due submission to governmental ordinances, comparing, at the same time, those seeking political reform with the rebels of 1640.³⁹

It can be argued, therefore, that from the end of the American war of independence onwards the emphasis of these ideas was placed more heavily than before on the divine origin of government and the duty of submission to it. This is not surprising, given the crisis that Britain was experiencing at that time at home and abroad. Apart from the loss of the American colonies, the crisis had various aspects,

³⁸ Richard Watson, *Anecdotes of the Life of Richard Watson, bishop of Landaff.* (London, 1817), p. 57; Langford, 'English Clergy and the American Revolution', pp. 306-307.

³⁹ Langford, 'English Clergy and the American Revolution', pp. 289, 292-299; Thomas Bedford, *A sermon, preached in the parish-church of St. Paul, in the Town of Bedford, upon the fast-day, February 27, 1778* (London, 1778), p. 5; George Horne, *A sermon preached before the Honourable House of Commons, at the church of St. Margaret's, Westminster, on Friday, Feb. 4. 1780* (London; Oxford, 1780); Thomas Thurlow, *A sermon preached before the House of Lords, in the abbey-church, Westminster, on Monday, January 31, 1780, Being the Day appointed to be observed as the Day of the Martyrdom of King Charles I* (London, 1780), p. 5; John Warren, *Sermon... 4 Feb. 1780* (London, 1780), pp. 10-11; William Cooke, *Civil liberty: a sermon preached before the University of Cambridge, on April the 9th, 1780, at Great St. Mary's Church* (Cambridge; London, 1780); same, *A sermon preached before the University of Cambridge, on January the 30th, 1781* (Cambridge; London, 1781), p.11; James Scott, *A sermon preached at York on the 21st of February, 1781, being the day appointed for a general fast* (York, 1781), pp. 7-8, 17; Thomas Ball, *A sermon preached at Mildenhall, at the visitation of the Arch-Deacon of Sudbury: on Monday, April 28, 1783* (London, 1783), p. 13; Beilby Porteus, *Sermons on several subjects*, 3rd ed. (London, 1783), pp. 247-267.

including the rise of the public debt and taxation, the war with Holland (1780-84), Spain (1779-83, 1796-1808) and France (from 1793 onwards), invasion scares, the unrest in Ireland (1798) and wars in India (Anglo-Mysore and Anglo-Maratha wars), coupled with the growth of factionalism at home, the Yorkshire association movement for economic and parliamentary reform (1779-1784) and the fall of Lord North's administration (March 1782). In 1780 the Society of Constitutional Information was instituted with the aim of achieving parliamentary reform. These problems were compounded with rapid population growth and unprecedented urbanization, which in turn led to pauperism in the cities, to food crises and social instability, to the resurgence of English radicalism, compounded with the importation of Enlightenment ideas from France and the conspiracy theory regarding the export of the French Revolution to Britain. The Gordon riots of 1780 demonstrated the potential for unrest that urban mobs possessed and raised the fear of anarchy.⁴⁰ These conditions fostered instability, which Anglican political theorists hoped to counter with the adoption of a more authoritarian tone in their sermons and public pronouncements. This becomes particularly evident in the long tradition of Martyrdom Day sermons, preached on 30 of January every year to commemorate the execution of Charles I. From the early 1780s onwards these sermons stressed less the possibility of altering the form of government, as in the example of the 1688 revolution, and more the duty of obeying governmental laws and ordinances. In 1787, John Butler, bishop of Oxford, even went as far as stating that the king was sacred, that Charles I had done nothing reproachable, and that, therefore, the revolution against him was not justified. Contrary to the reaction that similar sentiments had provoked in parliament in 1772, in 1787, no objection was raised against them.⁴¹

Denominational issues constituted an additional element of the context within which the political message of the established church was pronounced. Dissent and Methodism have been depicted as real threats menacing the dominance of the eighteenth-century Church. It should be noted, however, that by the 1730s there was

⁴⁰ Hole, *Pulpits, politics*, p. 85.

⁴¹ Hole, *Pulpits, politics*, pp. 50-53; George Croft, *A sermon, preached before The University of Oxford, October 25, 1783* (Oxford, 1784); John Butler, *A Sermon Preached Before The House Of Lords, At The Abby Church, Westminster, On Tuesday, January 30, 1787* (London: T. Cadell, 1787), pp. 11-13.

a decline in Old Dissent (Congregationalism, Presbyterianism and Baptism).⁴² The disputes over doctrine within the dissenting camp, the legal limitations that the state set for those nonconformists who wanted to advance in the political, social and educational sphere and, in particular, the legal restrictions placed by the Toleration Act (1689) accounted for this development. The Church, therefore, gained in numbers from the weakening of Old Dissent.⁴³

Methodists should be perceived as a group, which operated within the established church, rather than a dissenting association active outside the Anglican Church at least until the death of John Wesley in 1791. The internal reformation of the Church of England, rather than external destructive criticism was the main aim of John Wesley, who had strong links with the established religious institution: his father was the rector of Epworth and he himself never disavowed his ordination oaths to the Church. In fact, he had adopted the mainstream ecclesiology and political theology of the Church: John Wesley's education included the study of non-jurors and high-churchmen of the 1720s, while he made strong statements of loyalty to the crown, especially during the Wilkesite disorder and the American rebellion. Wesley advised his followers to attend both the Methodist meeting and the services of the Church of England. In doing so he had an active role in organizing Methodist meetings which would not clash the scheduled services of the Church. In this way, Methodism was a movement, which had Anglican origins and a partial Anglican character, at least until Wesley's death. In this way, it could be argued the movement contributed to the spiritual revival of the established church. It was only in the 1790s when Methodist preachers became influential in the countryside through a nationwide organizational network that they vociferously attacked the established church and its preachers.⁴⁴

⁴² Wykes, 'Introduction: Parliament and Dissent', pp. 14-5; for the development of 'New Dissent' in Norfolk, see Jacob, 'Church and society in Norfolk, 1700-1800,' pp. 177-8; Françoise Deconinck-Brossard has found, however, that 'old dissent' remained strong in the north east of Britain throughout the eighteenth-century, see hers '“We live so far North”: the Church in the North-East of England' in Gregory and Chamberlain, *National Church in Local Perspective*, pp. 223-242, esp. pp. 224-230, 232, 234.

⁴³ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', p. 238

⁴⁴ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', pp. 238-39; J.C.D. Clark, *English Society, 1660-1832. Religion, ideology and politics during the ancien régime* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 284-300, 486-7; John Walsh, 'Methodism at the End of the Eighteenth Century' in Rupert Davies and Gordon Rupp, eds. *A History of the Methodist Church in Great*

In the 1760s and 1770s a small, but articulate minority within the Church protested against the obligatory subscription to the *Thirty-Nine Articles* by the clergy and University graduates. They were liberal theologians connected with the University of Cambridge and led by Francis Blackburne (1705-1787), archdeacon of Cleveland. This group also included Richard Watson (1737-1816), bishop of Llandaff, and the theologians, John Hey (1734-1815) and William Paley (1743-1805). In 1765 Blackburne's *The Confessional* attacked the disciplinarian character of the church establishment.⁴⁵ In 1771, Blackburne, Theophilus Lindsey (1723-1808), John Jebb (1736-1786), John Disney (1746-1816), Christopher Wyvill (1738-1822) and William Chambers (1724-1777) signed the so-called 'Feathers Tavern' petition, which addressed the issue of subscription to the *Thirty-Nine Articles*. Parliament refused to satisfy the demand for its abolition, as well as a similar one voiced in 1772 by Rational Dissenters for the relief of their ministers and schoolmasters.⁴⁶ Theophilus Lindsey, John Jebb, John Disney and others gave up their posts in the established church for their Unitarian beliefs. Unitarian Rational Dissenters obtained a limited measure of relief in 1779, but they continued to challenge the Church's fundamental doctrines and position in the 1780s.⁴⁷

During the period between 1786 and 1787 these debates sparked off another campaign by dissenters for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. The 1786-7 campaign was controlled by the dissenting urban mercantile and professional elite whose positions in a large number of corporations were precarious. Moreover, they commanded the support of the ex-prime minister, William Pitt, second earl of Shelburne (1737-1805) and of no less than 135 members of the House of Commons,

Britain, 4 vols (London: Epworth Press, 1966-1988), vol. I, pp. 277-315. cf. Deconinck-Brossard 'We live so far North', pp. 238-41.

⁴⁵ William Paley, *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, 4th ed. corrected, 2 vols. (London: J. Davis, 1787), vol. 2, pp. 339-344; these Cambridge divines (except for Blackburne) supported, however, the establishment and the hierarchical nature of the church, see: William Paley, *A Distinction of Orders in the Church defended upon Principles of Public Utility* (London: Robert Faulder, 1782); cf. Martin Fitzpatrick, 'Latitudinarianism at the parting of the ways: a suggestion' in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor, *The Church of England c. 1689-c. 1833*, pp. 216-27.

⁴⁶ G. M. Ditchfield, 'How Narrow will the Limits of this Toleration Appear?' Dissenting Petitions to Parliament, 1772-1773' in *Parliament and Dissent*, ed. Stephen Taylor and David L. Wykes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the Parliamentary History Yearbook Trust, 2005), pp. 103-05.

⁴⁷ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', p. 233; C.F. Mather, *High Church Prophet*, pp. 21-2; G. M. Ditchfield, 'Feathers tavern petitioners (act. 1771-1774)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Jan 2006)

who were sitting for constituencies where Dissent was strong. The motion of 1787 was defeated, but it was renewed in May 1789 and in March 1790, by which time local associations and county meetings were organized nationwide, especially in the North and West of the country. The events in France, however, led 'high' churchmen and conservative Whigs, like Edmund Burke (1729-1797), to voice fears for the security of the established position of the Church. This reaction guaranteed the settlement of the issue for the next thirty-eight years.⁴⁸

Despite the fact that the struggle to enlarge the limits of toleration as prescribed in the Act of 1689 met with little success in the late 1780s and 1790s, it resulted in the deepening of the extremist character of its supporters. The Unitarians Theophilus Lindsey, and William Frend (1757-1841), fellow and tutor of Jesus College, Cambridge, not only demanded improvement of their social position, but also attacked the beliefs of the established church: they attempted a new translation of King James's Bible and pushed for a revision of the Book of Common Prayer, which would have modified the Trinitarian Athanasian Creed. Moreover, these disputes were connected with the development of political radicalism in Britain at the close of the century. This can be illustrated by the 1792 motion in parliament by the Whig leader Charles James Fox. He demanded the repeal or amendment of the Blasphemy Act (1698) and of those statues penalizing religious dissent from the anti-Catholic measures of the reign of Edward VI (1537-1553) to the Marriage Act of George II (1753). The latter stipulated that marriages must be performed in a church. In this instance, Fox, encouraged by the Standing Committee of Protestant Dissenters, advocated religious liberty not only for Unitarians, but also for Roman Catholics, Quakers and Jews.⁴⁹

In response to these challenges, Anglican clergymen re-emphasized the duty of submission to the established authorities and re-introduced into their discourse the seventeenth-century idea of the divine origin of government.

⁴⁸ C.F. Mather, *High-Church Prophet*, pp. 64-71; Wykes, 'Introduction: Parliament and Dissent', pp. 18-20; for the dispute between High-Churchmen and the heterodox (Arians, Socinians, Unitarians) on the subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles, see Walsh and Taylor, 'Church and Anglicanism in the 'long' eighteenth century,' pp. 46-9; Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France, and on the proceedings in certain societies in London relative to that event...* (London: J. Dodsley, 1790)

⁴⁹ C.F. Mather, *High-Church Prophet*, pp. 80-83, 85-86.

The political ideology of the Church, 1760-1789

Throughout the eighteenth century, Anglican clergymen and theologians drew their ideas of political obligation to the authorities from two main scriptural passages: St. Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* 13.1-7 and the *First Epistle General* of St. Peter 2.1-13. St. Paul had argued that due submission to civil and religious authority is required from Christians, since all power emanates from God. Otherwise, damnation will be the end result. In the aforementioned passage, St. Peter laid less emphasis on the divine origin of government. He argued that while Christians should obey the civil powers, regardless of the form that these might have acquired, they should simultaneously 'fear God'. While Anglican theologians claimed that submission to the civil authorities was imperative, very few of them supported the seventeenth-century doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance. They did not support the divine origin of monarchy with much fervour either, because then the Revolution of 1688 would not have been legitimate. But, was, then, any rebellion justifiable?⁵⁰

Anglican thinkers found the balance between the right of rebellion and unconditional submission by reconciling the two scriptural passages mentioned above. While authority and government in general had divine origins, they were dependent upon the will of man to determine what exact form these should take. This general doctrine allowed many interpretations and, thus, the accommodation of a wide range of ideas, from high church to latitudinarian, within the Anglican umbrella. In March 1769, the 'high' church, patriarchalist, George Horne, then, president of Magdalen College, Oxford and, later, bishop of Norwich, preached the Assize sermon at the University of Oxford. Horne stressed the divine origin of monarchy, but, a few days later in his Assize sermon at the University of Cambridge, Richard Watson, then professor of chemistry at Cambridge and, later, professor of Divinity and bishop, stressed the importance of popular sovereignty.⁵¹ His view was that the monarch was in a position of trust, accountable to the people for his conduct

⁵⁰ Robert Hole, *Pulpits, politics and public order in England, 1760-1832* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 12-15.

⁵¹ Horne, 'Origin of Civil Government', *Works*, vol. 2, pp. 434-49; R. Watson, 'Christianity Consistent with Every Social Duty', 9 March 1769, *Sermons on Public Occasions and Tracts on Religious Subjects* (Cambridge, 1788), pp. 5, 26.

and policies.⁵² Horne and Watson occupied the two extremes within the Anglican spectrum of political theology; the views of the majority of Anglican clergymen and theologians fell between the two.

The right of rebellion was a troubling philosophical question for Anglican theologians. The doctrine that God ordained government in general, but that the specific form of it was to be determined by man, allowed for resistance in certain circumstances. The bishops, as members of the House of Lords supported mixed government and the balanced constitution and had, thus, adopted a Court Whig position. They, therefore, maintained that rebellion was legitimate when the political system was bound to degenerate to either tyranny or slavery, when the magistrate undermined the laws of the land and threatened the liberties of the people. But, the question on how to judge when such a situation existed remained.⁵³

George Horne condemned the compact on which aristocracies and democracies were founded, arguing against the perceived rebelliousness of the people involved.⁵⁴ American resistance to British measures of taxation represented a favourable occasion for the expression of Anglican views on the right of revolting against governmental decrees. The high-church patriarchalist position was expressed by the Hutchinsonian William Jones of Nayland (1726–1800), who envisioned government as divinely ordained, to be obeyed dutifully by the people, but his views were not representative of the ideas of the Anglican clergy as a class. In the aftermath of the Boston Tea Party, Bishop Markham argued that the right of rebellion was not a theological issue, but one to be decided by secular criteria. In his view, resistance was an imperative duty of subjects, when the constitution was being seriously infringed. Watson even regarded as a sacred duty disobedience to a monarch who acted against the interests of his people. In preaching the Restoration Day and Accession Day sermons at the University of Cambridge in 1776, he based his analysis on *Romans* 13, and praised the balanced, mixed British constitution. Despite the fact that his arguments were perceived at the time as explicitly endorsing

⁵² 'Sermon' (1785, 1793), *Miscellaneous Tracts on Religious, Political and Agricultural Subjects*, 2 vols. (London, 1815), vol. 1, p. 478; 'Answer to Jenyns', *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 338-44; Restoration Day sermon (1776), *Sermons on Public Occasions and Tracts on Religious Subjects* (Cambridge, 1788), pp. 65, 74; Hole, *Pulpits, politics*, pp. 12-19.

⁵³ Brownlow North, *A Sermon...* (London, 1775), p. 5; John Green, *A Sermon...* (London, 1763), pp. 6-7.

⁵⁴ George Horne, Restoration Day Sermon (1760), *Works*, vol. 3, p. 133.

the claims of the colonists, in closer examination, it can be argued that Watson only reinstated the Lockean concept of a an original compact and stopped short of expressing outright support of the colonists.⁵⁵

The views of the majority of the clergy on the right of American resistance fell between the extremes set by William Jones and Richard Watson. Most of them defended the Act of Settlement and parliamentary sovereignty, reaffirming, thus, the Whig principles of the supremacy of law and legislature. In this sense, they criticized the colonists not for opposing George III's kingly power, but for disobeying the laws voted by parliament. Attesting to his Whig pedigree, Bishop Markham in his 1774 sermon, referred to above, stated: 'The Gospel, therefore, must be strangely perverted to give Support to such Doctrines, as indefeasible Right and unlimited Obedience. And it is as wonderful how such silly Opinions could venture to obtrude themselves on rational Society.' Similarly, James Yorke, Bishop of St. Davids, praised the 'temperate', mixed constitution and referring to the civil wars of the seventeenth century, argued: 'why should we hesitate to confess in general, that by an ill-conducted education, and the then prevailing opinions of hereditary right to rule, the royal breast had harboured sentiments incompatible with the liberal principles on which our constitution is founded.'⁵⁶

Regarding the right of disobeying the civil authorities, preaching after the beheading of the French king, Louis XVI, Bishop Horsley argued that rebellion against the civil powers should be organized in a constitutional way. For Horsley, who firmly believed in the divine origin of government, resistance was only

⁵⁵ W. Markham, *A Sermon...* (London, 1774), pp. 8-13; *Anecdotes of the Life of Richard Watson... Written by Himself* (London, 1817), p. 203; [R. Watson] *A Letter to the Members of the Honourable House of Commons*, second edition (London, 1772), pp. 10-11; Assize Sermon (1769) *Sermons on Public Occasions and Tracts on Religious Subjects* (Cambridge, 1788), p. 23; Accession Day Sermon (1776) and Restoration Sermon in *ibid.*, pp. 74, 78-9, 83-104; William Stevens, *The Revolution Vindicated and Constitutional Liberty Asserted* (Cambridge, 1777), pp. 15-16; W. Jones, *Fear of God, and the benefits of civil obedience* (London, 1778), p. 29; Langford, 'English Clergy and the American Revolution', p. 284; Robert Hole, "Watson, Richard (1737–1816)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, October 2007, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28857> (accessed June 10, 2010).

⁵⁶ Markham, *A Sermon...*, pp. 11-12; James Yorke, *A sermon preached before the Lords spiritual and temporal in the abbey church of Westminster ...* (London, 1776), pp. 8-9; see also: A. Francis Steuart (ed.), *The Last Journals of Horace Walpole during the Reign of George III from 1771- 1803* (2 vols.; London: John Lane, 1910), vol. 1, pp. 103, 594; Beilby Porteus, *Sermons on several subjects*, 3rd ed. (London, 1983), pp. 247-267; John Butler, *A sermon preached before the House of Lords, at the Abby church, Westminster, on Friday, February 27, 1778* (London, 1778).

legitimate in these cases where the laws of the land were being infringed. It was his view that the decision to take up arms should be based on charitable judgment and was only possible in extreme circumstances. He thought that such an act of resistance should be conformable to divine providence, while he was not willing to sanction a violent attack against established government, based on human initiative. He thought that human judgment was not to be trusted, while he perceived such rebellions as reflecting the power of faction. In this sense, Horsley viewed the duty of obligation to government as a religious duty, not one dictated by such legal documents, as the Coronation oath or the Act of Settlement. For Horsley, it was not human laws, but only revealed religion that properly regulated human conduct. On this issue, the layman, William Stevens (1732-1807), George Horne's first cousin and treasurer of Queen Anne's Bounty, openly supported the doctrine of passive obedience. He maintained that governmental strictures would never be so harmful as not to be preferable to anarchy, that submission to government was a Christian duty, and that this was God's will which had to be obeyed.⁵⁷ In this way, the extent of resistance to the civil authorities was a debatable issue among Anglican theologians, but it seems that during the first decades of George III's reign the question had acquired the form of a rather theoretical debate among Anglican clergy.

At the opposite pole to the high-church patriarchalists stood those who pursued a latitudinarian way of thinking within the established church. In the last four decades of the eighteenth century, a major figure among them was William Paley (1743–1805). He studied at Christ's College, Cambridge, where he also became a fellow and taught metaphysics and morals. His major appointment later in life was to the archdeaconry of Carlisle. Paley's most influential work among his contemporaries was the *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, first published in 1785 and undergoing fifteen editions by his death in 1805. Paley is best remembered for his utilitarianism and occupies a central role in the secularization of English Christian political thought. The basis of his philosophy lies in the tenet that the obligation to political authority is humanly perceived, instead of divinely

⁵⁷ S. Horsley, 'Thoughts upon Civil Government, and its relation to Religion, but especially to Christian Religion', Lambeth Palace Library, MS 1767, ff. 198-203 in Hole, *Pulpits, Politics*, pp. 161-3; S. Horsley, *A Sermon Preached before the Lords ... January 30, 1793*, second edition (London, 1793).

ordained. First, he argued that morality was not an innate quality of man, but socially learned. Then, he supported the view that the revealed will of God was that man pursues these activities that bring the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people and that these things were moral and virtuous. Only in this case, and not in performing immoral and vicious activities, man could ensure his place in heaven. In this way, self-interest was a powerful motive that led man to seek the happiness of his fellow citizens.⁵⁸ Paley shared with the rest of his fellow Anglican clergymen the belief in original sin and human imperfection. Man's passions needed to be restrained and Paley used the concepts of death, judgment, Heaven and Hell, to provide for that. God, therefore, still featured in his thought as an agent who enforced morality, not one who just revealed it.

Paley belonged to the latitudinarian movement in the Church of England, prevalent at the University of Cambridge. It emphasized the natural aspects of religion, the idea that truth can be revealed through man's reason, not by means of God's direct revelation. Considering that the greatly spiritual Hackney Phalanx and the Clapham Sect, as well as 'high' church theorists, such as Samuel Horsley and the bishop of Winchester, George Pretyman-Tomline (1750–1827), were at the ascendancy in the 1780s, William Paley stands alone in stressing the secular origin of political authority and obligation. The Evangelicals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and the Oxford movement in the 1830s and 1840s were strong critics of Paley's utilitarianism.⁵⁹

At this point, the emergence of evangelicalism at the end of the eighteenth century should be placed in its appropriate historical context. From the 1740s onwards, this Evangelical movement, which operated within the Anglican fold, distinct from Methodism, attracted a substantial number of clergymen, including William Grimshaw (1708–1763), Samuel Walker of Truro (1713-1761), Thomas Jones (1752–1845), Henry Venn of Huddersfield (1725–1797) and William Romaine (1714–1795). These clergymen fostered the 'religion of the heart' in the sense that they combated the unwarranted use of reason in theological issues. By the 1760s this Evangelical group had acquired concrete form. They attempted to activate the clergy, by fighting what they perceived to be clerical indifference in pastoral matters. They

⁵⁸ William Paley, *The Works of William Paley*, 7 vols. (London, 1825), vol. 4, pp. 1-6, 39-40, 339-40.

⁵⁹ Hole, *Pulpits, politics*, pp. 77-82.

stressed the need for moral uprightness, while they believed in salvation by faith. At the end of the eighteenth century, the most notable grouping in this bigger body of Evangelicals was the Clapham sect. While they were convinced of the importance of good works for personal salvation, they tried to promote genuine public uprightness, and they campaigned for several humanitarian causes, such as the abolition of the slave trade and the Sunday school movement. The focus of the group on public problems can be explained by its eminent lay membership, which included William Wilberforce and Hannah More.⁶⁰

From the end of the American war of independence onwards, Anglican sermons became increasingly concerned with the maintenance of social order and cohesion. In this way, they reflected the political problems that Britain encountered at home and abroad, along with the increasing popularity of the doctrines of the Enlightenment.⁶¹ Robert Hole has convincingly argued that, gradually from 1782, and especially from 1789 onwards, religious arguments were used less to discuss issues of a constitutional-philosophical nature and more matters of social theory. Despite the fact that these ideas always formed part of the Anglican tradition, in the years after 1790, ideas regarding restraint and sanctions, social hierarchy and the need of the poor to be content with their lot figured prominently at discussions in religious and political circles.

After the defeat in the American War, both George Horne and William Jones preached at Easter 1783 on the concept of divinely ordained social hierarchy. Horne argued that the social inequality of mankind was divinely designed and he presented the interdependence of rich and poor, as normative; besides, the existence of the poor made possible Christian charity, while – he thought – it was more honourable to give than to receive. William Jones thought that the will of God prescribed compassion and condescension from the rich, and industry and compliance from the poor.⁶² Even those who had favoured popular sovereignty, such as Richard Watson, did not

⁶⁰ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', pp.233-34; Walsh and Taylor, 'The Church and Anglicanism', pp. 43-5; Elizabeth Elbourne, 'The Foundation of the Church Missionary Society: the Anglican missionary impulse' in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor, *The Church of England c. 1689-c. 1833*, pp. 250-256.

⁶¹ Hole, *Pulpits, politics*, p. 53.

⁶² Horne, 'Duty of Considering the Poor', *Works*, vol. 3, pp. 75-80; William Jones, 'Duty of Reviewing the Poor,' *The Theological, Philosophical and Miscellaneous Works of the Rev. William Jones MA, ERS*, 12 vols. (London, 1801), vol.6, pp. 188-95.

display any democratic or levelling principles when discussing social hierarchy, and they sought arguments to persuade the poor to accept their lot. Josiah Tucker, Dean of Gloucester, envisaged different beginnings in life for the children of the poor and those of the rich, while William Paley thought that the foundation of the existence of social hierarchy was expediency.⁶³ At the height of alarm caused by the French Revolution and the resurgence of political radicalism at home, the threat posed by those who favoured political equality gained added importance in 1792-3. In a sermon that Samuel Hayes preached in St. Margaret's, Westminster, he argued that if God had intended men to be equal, He would have created them with the same mental and physical abilities as well. Others adopted a more utilitarian approach and argued that equality is a spiritual condition, only to be reached in Heaven. The governmental systems in the imperfect world that they lived required inequality, and, therefore, God approved of it.⁶⁴

In this context, religion was perceived as a useful ally of government, because it was perceived as a major tool in the maintenance of social order. This was especially true in the attitudes of the authorities towards the poor, who were considered as a separate entity in society, in need of pity, reform and control. Religious restraints were deemed essential in this task.⁶⁵ Conversely, Richard Watson thought that reason and natural religion were not adequate to civilize man, as could be observed in the natives of Tahiti and New Zealand and among the American Indians. In this sense, religion was deemed necessary in order to restrain man's passions. This could be achieved by means of moral education, but also through the invocation of Hell and Heaven. This was a sanction which was stressed by all parties of the Church of England, including high church patriarchalists, latitudinarians and bishops in the Old Whig tradition. In 1773, George Horne listed the passions of the age: 'anger, insolence, clamour, despondency, presumption, impetuosity'. These

⁶³ Richard Watson, Dispensary Sermon, *Miscellaneous Tracts on Religious, Political and Agricultural Subjects*, 2 vols. (London, 1815), vol. 1, pp. 448-72; Josiah Tucker, *A Sermon...* (London, 1766), p. 19; Paley, 'Principles', *Works*, vol. 4, pp. 283-4.

⁶⁴ S. Hayes, *A Sermon...* (London, 1793), pp. 9-13; W. Buller, *A Sermon ... March 9, 1796* (London, 1796), p. 8-10; R. Prosser, *A Sermon ... 24th July, 1797* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1797), p. 11; T. Armitstead, *A Sermon ... at the Spring Assize, 1798* (Chester, 1798), pp. 5-7.

⁶⁵ Horne, 'Essays and Thoughts', *Works*, vol. 3, pp. 469-70; Watson, 'Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury' (1783), *Sermons on Public Occasions*, pp. 413, 421; C. Wilson, *A Sermon...* (London, 1785), pp. 20-1; R. Lowth, *Sermon* (1767), p. 7; J. Cornwallis, *Sermon* (1782), p. 16; Hole, *Pulpits, Politics*, pp. 131-135; G. Pretyman-Tomline, *A Sermon ...* (London, 1789), p. 16.

concerns reflected the contemporary phenomena of social dislocation, urbanization and the growing threat of social unrest.⁶⁶ William Jones went even further. Referring to charity schools, he argued that they should teach children their place in society and their submission to providence.⁶⁷ In fact, Sunday schools were strongly recommended by bishops in the 1790s. The religious ideals they taught were deemed an adequate means to instil moderation, subjection and self-control among the poor.⁶⁸

Regarding the attitudes of Anglican thinkers towards the French Revolution, these were marked by intense reservation. Despite the fact that there was some support in Britain for the French Revolution, Anglican theorists, such as Bishops Porteus (1731-1809) and Horsley, along with William Jones of Nayland, Bishop Warren of Bangor and Richard Watson were cautious or outright hostile towards the events taking place in France in the last decade of the eighteenth century.⁶⁹ The denunciation of events in France became particularly strong in the Episcopal sermons of March and April 1793, namely in the period after the September massacres, the abolition of the French monarchy, and the trial and execution of Louis XVI. Bishops Robert Lowth and Richard Beadon thought France was immoral, unprincipled and wicked. Others, such G.I. Huntingford, warden of St. Mary's College, Winchester, George Pretyman-Tomline and W. Langford, the under-master of Eton College, stressed the importance of religion in providing moral restraints and the Christian duty of submission to legitimately constituted authorities.⁷⁰ After the outbreak of the war between Britain and France and the rise of Napoleon to power, the attacks

⁶⁶ John Egerton, *A Sermon ...* (London, 1761), p. 12; Horne, *Assize Sermon* (1773), *Works*, vol. 3, pp. 466, 470; Pretyman-Tomline, *Sermon ...* (1789), p. 16; Jones, 'Duty of Living Peacefully', *Works*, vol. 5, p. 133; R. Watson, *An apology for Christianity: in a series of letters, addressed to Edward Gibbon, esq* (Cambridge: J. Archdeacon, 1776), pp. 208-16.

⁶⁷ Jones, 'Blessedness of Poor', *Works*, vol. 6, pp. 215-19; Hole, *Pulpits, Politics*, pp. 90-93.

⁶⁸ G. I. Huntingford, *A Sermon ... 1796* (London, 1796), pp. 3-5, 7-8, 26; J. Law, *A Sermon ... 1797* (London, 1797), pp. 10-12, 15-17; J. Buckner, *A Sermon ...* (London, 1800), pp. 2-3, 12-14; J. Butler, 'Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Hereford', 1789, *Select Sermons* (Hereford, 1801), p. 348; George Pretyman-Tomline, *A charge delivered to the Clergy of the diocese of Lincoln, at the triennial visitation of that diocese in May and June 1794* (London, 1794), p. 18.

⁶⁹ Lambeth Palace Library, MS 2103, f. 27 (Porteus Notebook, 1786-1800); same, MS 1767, ff. 202-3 (Horsley, Letters and Papers); same, MS. 2103, f. 25; Jones, 'Sermon', 20 September 1789, *Works*, vol. 5, p. 284; R. Watson, *Charge ... to the Clergy of the Diocese of Llandaff June 1791* (London, 1792), p. 4.

⁷⁰ R. Lowth, *A Sermon Preached in Oxford Chapel on Sunday March 19, 1793* (London, 1793), pp. 6-7, 10; R. Beadon, *A Sermon Preached before the Lords ... April 19, 1793* (London, 1793), p. 12; G. I. Huntingford, *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons...* (London, 1793), pp. 9, 16-19; W. Langford, *Obedience to the Established Laws and Respect to the Person of the Administrator* (Eton, 1793); Pretyman-Tomline, *Charge* (1794), pp. 9-20.

against the French became even stronger, as can be illustrated by Richard Watson's sermon to the clergy of Llandaff in June 1798.⁷¹

Moderation, humility, as well as the avoidance of war, were values cherished by all Christians, but especially by Anglicans.⁷² Nevertheless, in 1797-98, these ideals did not prevent Anglican clergymen from encouraging patriotism and involvement in the war against the French. Participation in the war effort was perceived as a Christian duty and the war was considered a religious one, against atheism and infidelity.⁷³ In this sense, atheism and irreligion were thought to lead to anarchy, while religion was deemed essential to good government and a stable social order.⁷⁴ These fears seemed all the more relevant since the rumour of a conspiracy against religion and government was spread across England. It originated in two works by the Jesuit priest, Abbe Barruel (1741-1820) and the Scottish scientist, John Robison (1739-1805), who alleged that atheism was a real danger, not only in France, but also in England. It was a theme that was given credence by Richard Watson in 1798, and also by the Baptist minister Robert Hall (1764–1831), and Henry Majendie, Bishop of Chester and Bangor.⁷⁵

The French Revolution also prompted a discussion on the nature of man. The foundation of Anglican political theory was the belief that the nature of man was evil and that his passions needed to be restraint by government and religion. In this sense, they attacked the *philosophes'* theory on the limitless perfectibility of the human

⁷¹ R. Watson, *An Apology for the Bible...* (London, 1796).

⁷² Horne, 'Submission to Government', *Works*, vol. 3, p. 390.

⁷³ W. Barrow, *Sermon ... March 7, 1798* (London, 1798), pp. 6-10; S. Parr, 'Sermon' Fast Day 19 October 1803, *Works with memoirs of his life and writings*, 8 vols. (London, 1828), vol. 2, pp. 635-7; Richard de Courcy, *Self-Defence not inconsistent with the precepts of religion* (Shrewsbury, [1798]), pp. 24-30; C. Manners-Sutton, *A Sermon* (London, 1794), pp. 7-11, 14-16; C. Moss, *A Sermon Preached before ... the House of Commons* (London, 1798), pp. 20-2; T. Willis, *A Sermon Preached in the Foundling Hospital ... 2 June 1798* (London, 1798), p. 15.

⁷⁴ Huntingford, *Sermon... 1793*, p. 9; Langford, *Obedience to the Established Laws*, pp. 6-7; Pretyman-Tomline, *Charge ... 1794*, pp. 14-18; R. Prosser, *A Sermon Preached before the ... House of Commons ... February 13, 1801* (London, 1801), p. 13; Law, *Sermon ... 1797*, p. 17; S. Crowther, *Sermon Preached before the Barking Association ... 17 June 1798* (London, 1798), pp. 9-10; J.W. Wickes, *Sermon ... March 7, 1798* (London, 1798), pp. 7-8, 12; John Randolph, *A Sermon Preached before the Lords March 12 1800* (Oxford, 1800), pp. 15-16; R. Watson, *Substance of a Speech Intended to Have Been Spoken in the House of Lords*, 22 November 1803 (London, 1803), p. 3.

⁷⁵ Watson, 1798 Charge, *Miscellaneous Tracts*, vol. 1, p. 144; 'Address', *Miscellaneous Tracts*, vol. 2, pp. 186-8; R. Hall, 'Modern Infidelity Considered' (1799), *The Works of Robert Hall*, 6 vols. (London, 1832), vol. 1, pp.4-5; H.W. Majendie, *A Sermon Preached before the Lords ... June 1, 1802* (London, 1802), pp. 12-14.; John Robison, *Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe* (Edinburgh, 1797); Abbe Barruel, *Memoirs, illustrating the history of Jacobinism*, 4 vols. (London: [1797]-98).

species through reason. They believed that the celebration of passions, advocated by the *philosophes*, would lead to the pursuit of one's self-interest, instead of support for benevolence and the achievement of the common good. In 1790, George Horne stated that self-will had taken the place of divine will.⁷⁶

This argument about the emphasis laid on issues of social theory in the 1790s should not obscure the discussions on the question of political obligation, though these appeared less frequently after 1795. In sermons delivered to large public audiences at the time, bishops of the Church of England stressed the duty of subordination to the civil authorities and discussed less the limits of this obligation and the legitimacy of a revolution. The rights of the individual were expressed in the laws of the land and centered around the leading of a Christian, dutiful and virtuous life.⁷⁷

Regarding the issue of relief from the penal laws for English dissenters, the attitude of Anglicans was to defend fervently the constitutional position of their church. While regarding themselves as an integral part of the constitution, they argued that their church represented the 'cement' of the political system, and that the privileges they enjoyed did not serve their self-interest, but brought stability to the regime. The Reverend Robert Wells implied that the Church of England was well suited to monarchy, and he equated their enemy, namely republicanism, with Hell. Thomas Balguy (1716-1795), Archdeacon of Winchester, perceived the 'Feathers Tavern' petition as an attack to the establishment and argued that it might lead to its end, while the Reverend Thomas Nowell (1730-1801), in his Martyrdom Day sermon of 1772, associated the dissenters of his day to the seventeenth-century regicides. Influenced by such ideas, Edmund Burke argued in 1792 that the relationship

⁷⁶ Hall, 'Modern Infidelity', *Works*, vol. 1, pp. 53-7; Horne, 1790 Charge, *Works*, vol. 4, pp. 532-3; G.I. Huntingford, *A Sermon Preached before the Lords ... May 25th, 1804* (London, 1804), p. 14; J. Randolph, *A sermon preached before the Lords ... in the abbey church of Westminster, on Wednesday, March 12, 1800, being the day appointed for a general fast* (Oxford, 1800), pp. 7-8.

⁷⁷ Horne, 'Submission to Government... a Sermon', 25 October 1789, *Works*, vol. 3, pp. 384-97; Jones, 'Popular Commotions to Precede the End of the World... a Sermon', 25 October 1789, *Works*, vol. 5, pp. 274-95; Pretyman -Tomline, *Sermon*, 30 January 1789 (London, 1789), pp. 9, 17; W. Cleaver, *Sermon, Preached before the Lords ... January 31, 1791* (Oxford, 1791), pp.2-4, 11-12; Spencer Madan, *Sermon, 30 January 1795* (London, 1795), pp. 4-10; Shute Barrington, *A Charge ... to the Clergy of... Durham* (Bath, 1792), pp. 13, 16; S. Cooper, *The First Principles of Civil and Ecclesiastical Government Delineated* (Yarmouth, 1791), pp. 111-23, 149-53; Horne, 'Intended Charge', 1791, *Works*, vol. 4, p. 530; Robert Nares, *Principles of government deduced from reason, supported by English experience, and opposed to French errors* (London, 1792), pp. 20-1.

between the established church and state was not merely one of alliance, but that they represented parts of the same entity.⁷⁸

Given the growing political unrest in Britain in the 1790s, from 1793-4 onwards the theme that dominated Anglican sermons was that of social hierarchy. The theoretical foundation that provided the basis for Anglican thought on this matter was the medieval notion of society as a corporate entity, wherein everyone contributed to the welfare of the whole community, according to his/her station and abilities. Anglican theologians tended to endorse the existent social hierarchy with its inherent inequalities by deeming it necessary and divinely ordained. They praised the social and economic interdependence of rich and poor, considered the inequalities in Britain as ordered, established and subtle, and argued that the whole system was one of harmony and perfection.⁷⁹ The Evangelical Rev. John Owen went so far as to argue in 1794 that the inequalities in rank, power and property were essential for the protection and security of mankind.⁸⁰

The philosophical context

In the second half of the eighteenth century Tory ideas among the clergy enjoyed a newfound currency. William Stevens, together with William Jones of Nayland, George Horne, Nathaniel Wetherell (1726-1808), master of University College, Oxford and Dr. Samuel Glasse (1534-1812), rector of Wanstead, formed the main core of the group of high-church patriarchalists during this period. They emphasized the importance of the Trinitarian doctrine in theology and they opposed the undue use of reason in religious thought. William Stevens, apart from the Trinitarian doctrine, stressed the divine origin of the Church, the creed of the apostolic

⁷⁸ T. Balguy, *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Winchester...* (London, 1772); Thomas Nowell, *A Sermon...* (London, 1772); C.E.de Coetlogon, *The Test of Truth, Piety and Allegiance* (London, 1790), pp. 19-20; R. Wells, *A Correspondence Between the Rev. Robert Wells ... and a Gentleman under the signature of Publicola* (Bristol, 1791), p.17; Edmund Burke, 'Speech on Unitarian Position', *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, 6 vols. (London, 1877-83), vol. 6, p. 115; R. Watson, *Substance of a Speech*, 1803, p. 31.

⁷⁹ E. V. Vernon, *A Sermon ... January 30, 1794* (London, 1794), p. 15; R. Watson, *Miscellaneous Tracts*, vol. 1, pp. 452-3, 487; W. Mavor, *Christian politics: a sermon, preached to a country congregation, on Friday, April 19, 1793; being the day appointed for a general fast* (Oxford, 1793), pp. 6-8.

⁸⁰ J. Owen, *Subordination Considered on the Grounds of Reason and Religion* (Cambridge, 1794), pp. 3-12.

succession and the importance of the mysteries.⁸¹ They probably identified themselves more with the philosophies of Hutchinson, than those of Robert Filmer. The latter was very closely linked with the theories of divine right, passive obedience and non-resistance for men openly to refer to him. The works of John Hutchinson (1674-1737), who had written extensively on natural theology and philosophy, became the point of departure for their thoughts. The Hutchinsonians believed that the doctrine of the Trinity could be proved both through the observation of nature and biblical texts.⁸² The group against which the Hutchinsonians wrote were the Rational Dissenters, especially the Unitarians Joseph Priestley and Richard Price.⁸³ The influence of Hutchinsonians should primarily be ascribed to the network of connections that they had established through intermarriage and the favour of the court. Appreciation for the church rituals and the Sacraments was not, however, only maintained by the Hutchinsonians, but was shared by the clergymen of the Collegiate church in Manchester until the 1790s, long after the death of the local Non-juring bishop in 1752. Moreover, the Collegiate church in Bath, especially in the Abbey Church and St John's Hospital, as well as the clergy meetings in Sion College, London supported the 'high' church character in liturgy and in doctrine.⁸⁴

The political theology propounded by the aforementioned Hutchinsonians bore some similarities, however, to the doctrines of Filmer. Horne in his 1769 Assize sermon 'On the Origin of Civil Government', mentioned above, copied Filmer on several points: as in Filmer, his main theory was that humanity emanated from a single common parent – first Adam, and then, Noah – and that their power had been absolute. He then argued that throughout history power passed from father to son, but that it never reached the people.⁸⁵ William Stevens expressed a very similar, though more extreme, view. He held that Adam had possessed divinely ordained, unlimited

⁸¹ William Stevens, *A Treatise on the Nature and Constitution of the Christian Church, wherein are set forth the Form of its Government, the Extent of its Powers, and the Limits of our Obedience* (London: F. and C. Rivington, 1799), 48p; the same ideas were expressed by William Jones in his *Essay on the Church* (Glocester: R. Raikes, 1787), pp. 1-16, 29-42.

⁸² Aston, 'Horne and Heterodoxy', pp. 899-901

⁸³ Jeremy Gregory, 'The Church of England', p.234; Ditchfield, 'How Narrow will the Limits of this Toleration Appear?', pp. 100-102; For the differences in philosophical views between the Hutchinsonians on the one side and Hume and Priestley on the other, see Aston, 'Horne and Heterodoxy', pp. 896, 902-13.

⁸⁴ Mather, *High-Church Prophet*, pp. 10-17.

⁸⁵ Horne, 'Origin of Civil Government' (1769), *Works*, vol. 2, pp. 439-42.

authority over Eve and that this was the origin of all civil governments thereafter. He argued

the foundation of civil authority in the sentence passed on Eve, *Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee*. From that time, at least, the natural equality and independence of individuals was at an end, and Adam became (Oh dreadful sound to republican ears) universal monarch by divine right.⁸⁶

Nevertheless, political theology explicitly drawn from Filmer was rare at least after the 1760s. At the other extreme of the range of Anglican ideas expressed during this period was Richard Watson who readily acknowledged John Locke as his source of influence. Watson even considered Locke 'our best philosopher' and he had to defend him from his critics on numerous occasions. Although he did not refer to the term 'social compact' and he did not consider the state of nature as an historical period, he accepted the concept of liberty, as described by Locke in the state of nature. He thought that this was the kind of liberty man enjoyed in a social setting and that it was only circumscribed by law, enforced by popular will.⁸⁷ Despite the fact that other Anglican clergymen shared the same ideas as Watson, these were far from being the norm. Most Anglican theorists did not wholeheartedly embrace either Filmer or Locke, and in this sense they ascribed neither a pure divine nor a pure popular origin to civil government.⁸⁸

During the first half of the eighteenth century, debates about the nature of Holy Communion, propounded by Latitudinarians, led to the reassertion by high-churchmen of the Catholic doctrines concerning the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Benjamin Hoadly's *Plain Account of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* (1735), was answered by Dr. Gloster Ridley in 1736 and by Daniel Waterland in 1737. In arguing that Holy Communion was a memorial sacrifice, but of no less significance than the Jewish ones, Ridley can be regarded as promulgating seventeenth-century moderate 'high' church doctrines. His ideas were broadly shared by high-churchmen, including

⁸⁶ William Stevens, *Strictures on a sermon, entitled, The principles of the revolution vindicated* (Cambridge; Oxford; London, 1776), pp. 9-10; Hole, *Pulpits, Politics*, pp. 60-61.

⁸⁷ Watson, 'Christianity Consistent...', *Sermons on Public Occasions*, p. 6; 'Sermon to the Stewards of the Westminster Dispensary', *Miscellaneous Tracts*, vol. 1, p. 478.

⁸⁸ Hole, *Pulpits, Politics*, p. 62.

leading Hutchinsonians.⁸⁹ In the last decades of the eighteenth century, another two beliefs regarding the meaning of Holy Communion were put forward. High-churchman Archdeacon Charles Daubeny (1745-1827) argued that the Eucharist was a proper and propitiatory sacrifice, in which the bread and wine are in turn offered to God as tokens of Christ's sacrifice. Daubeny's views received, however, only marginal support by his fellow high-churchmen. In 1761, William Warburton (1698–1779), bishop of Gloucester, maintained that the Eucharist was not a mere memorial service - as Hoadly had argued - but a feast upon a sacrifice, a banquet through which the communicant entered into a covenant with God by a symbolic re-enactment of the Jewish sacrifice. Warburton's idea was further developed by the strict high-churchman, William Cleaver (1742–1815), bishop of St Asaph, who argued that the Eucharist made present the sacrifice of the death of Christ.⁹⁰

Most Anglican theologians of the period opposed Enlightenment thinking, because of its denunciation of religion. The major advocates of enlightened thought attacked religion as a prop of the state and as an obstacle to knowledge and rationality. Beilby Porteous, bishop of Chester and London, was sympathetic to the tenets of the Enlightenment, especially liberal views on slavery. Despite having a more elevated view of the poor than Voltaire, Bishop Porteus strongly supported established order and the maintenance of social peace. Other bishops followed him in this, such as Lewis Bagot (1740-1802), Bishop of Bristol, Norwich and St. Asaph, who considered Enlightenment thought as having an insidious effect on human personality, society in general and civil government.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Gloster Ridley, *The Christian passover. Four sermons in which the doctrine of the Lord's supper is laid down ...* (London: John Clarke, 1736); Daniel Waterland, *A review of the doctrine of the eucharist, as laid down in scripture and antiquity* (Cambridge: Corn. Crownfield, 1737); William Jones, *Essay on the Church* (Glocester: R. Raikes, 1787), pp. 21-2; F.C. Mather, *High-Church Prophet*, pp. 6, 19.

⁹⁰ F.C. Mather, *High Church Prophet*, pp. 18-20; Charles Daubeny, *Discourses on Various Subjects and Occasions ... Addressed to the Congregation Assembled in Christ's Church, Bath* (London, 1805), 5th discourse; Warburton, William. *A rational account of the nature and end of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper*. (London: A. Millar; J. and R. Tonson, 1761); William Cleaver, *Two sermons by William Lord Bishop of Chester, addressed to the clergy of the diocese* (Oxford: J. Fletcher, 1789); William Cleaver, *Pardon and sanctification proved to be privileges annexed to the due use of the Lord's supper, as a feast on a sacrifice...* (Oxford: J. Fletcher, 1791)

⁹¹ Lambeth Palace Library, MS 2098, ff. 19-20, 37, 44-, 51-2 in Hole, *Pulpits, Politics*, p. 68; Lewis Bagot, *A sermon preached before the Lords spiritual and temporal, in the abbey church, Westminster, on Thursday, January 30, 1783* (London, 1783), pp. 14-5.

Conclusion

In the last four decades of the eighteenth-century, 'high' churchmen formed adequate defences against the dangers faced by the established church. This 'high' church backlash was reflected in the thought of Hutchinsonians and Evangelicals. They managed to effectively defend the doctrines of their church and its alliance with the state against the attacks by dissenters and by those who adopted Enlightenment rationality, as exhibited in the American and French Revolutions. Orthodox theologians counteracted their enemies by stressing the duty of the king to defend Anglicanism and by emphasizing the rationality and moderation of the Church's doctrines. At the same time, bishops were inclined to support the state, especially at times of national crisis, as long as their interests were not being threatened. Towards the end of the century - faced with the emergence of radicalism at home, with unrest in India and in Ireland, and, while fighting Catholic enemies - Anglican theologians particularly stressed the duty of obeying in the laws of the land. They supported the existing social hierarchy and they emphasized the beneficent impact of religion on restraining human passions and reforming the soul. They stressed the duty of the individual to lead a pious life and discussed less, than at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the limits of the obligation to obey to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. While Anglican thinkers largely refrained from ascribing divine origin to government, they portrayed the duty of the subjects to obey to the much-lauded 'balanced' British constitution, as a duty, ordained by God.

The added currency that 'high' church ideas received in late eighteenth-century England, was also reflected in the continued engagement of Anglican clergyman with the affairs of their local communities: they led charity programs with significant lay participation and administered local schools. Moreover, despite the challenges posed by urbanisation and pluralism, the Church of England managed to remain equally dominant in the lives of the common English people as it had been in the seventeenth century. This became possible through the work of diligent bishops and a body of university-educated, relatively well-remunerated clergy, who effectively manned the network of parishes.

These features and modes of operation of the Anglican Church at home were seriously put to test when its institutions were transplanted in the American colonies. Structural problems in the administration of Anglican affairs, which were present from the inception of the Church of England in the colonies, prevented it from exhibiting a strong support to the civil authorities in the strong, decisive manner that this became possible in the mother country. The death of the queen Mary, who had favoured the 'high' church Tory party, and the ascendance to the throne of non-Anglican kings - until the reign of George III – meant that the political authorities in England, under the influence of dissenters, denied the colonial church the valuable services of a bishop. As a result, the colonial Church of England not only suffered from lack of clerical supervision and discipline, but it also was inferior in number to dissenters, especially in the middle colonies and in New England, throughout the whole of the eighteenth century. In this sense, the colonies were deprived of the religious uniformity that existed in the mother country, due to the fact that there wasn't an organic, intercolonial union among colonial Episcopalians. In addition, the disputes that emerged between England and the colonies in the 1760s precluded any possibility for the institution of a bishop in the colonies even more so than in the previous decades. These circumstances only allowed the Episcopal Church in America to have limited political influence to the effect that, in times of political radicalism, such as during the French revolution, the Anglican clergy in Virginia was reluctant to condemn its excesses, in the same way that their English counterparts did.

The Reverend Jonathan Boucher, who had officiated in the colonies, held strong ideas on the divine right of government, as expressed in the parent country, but his theories had limited influence. It can be argued, however, that other Anglican beliefs, namely the propriety of elite rule, the depiction of society as an organic whole and the idea that governmental institutions had the power to promote public virtue survived in the thought of Anglican federalists and anti-federalists.

Chapter Two

The Church of England in the Chesapeake: Structure, Strength and Ideology, ca. 1760

In England, the Church was more vigorous than in the colonies, deriving its strength and prerogatives from its alliance with the state. More precisely, the parent institution was closer to the centre of power, namely the King, the aristocracy and the gentry sitting in Parliament, so that these powerful men controlled, but also favoured the church in order to achieve their own political aims. In the Chesapeake, the relation between the church and the state, though existent, was different to that in England. The absence of direct royal authority led to the development of the power of the local lay elite, to such an extent that the institutions of church and state grew independent of the royal and ecclesiastical administration of the parent country. Admittedly, the lay elite played a great role in the management of church affairs, both in England and in the Chesapeake. Nevertheless, the interests of the colonial gentry were not as closely identified with those of the royal administration as the aims of the English aristocracy were. This conferred upon the former an autonomous character, which was, in turn, reflected in the religious life of the region, shaping the distinct features of the established Church there.

This distinct character of the church was the result of an early modern English liturgical tradition being developed within a different institutional framework, society and geographical environment than those existing in England of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Following recent studies by Joan Gundersen, John K. Nelson and Edward L. Bond,¹ this chapter argues that the lay and clerical leaders of the Church of England in the Chesapeake, while not merely aiming at inculcating social deference, were actively concerned about the religiosity of their fellow parishioners, in a way that made their efforts comparable to those of

¹ Joan Gundersen, *The Anglican Ministry in Virginia, 1723-1766: A Study of Social Class* (New York; London: Garland, 1989); Nelson, John K. Nelson, *A Blessed Company: Parishes, Parsons and Parishioners in Anglican Virginia, 1690-1776* (Chapel Hill; London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Edward L. Bond, *Damned Souls in a Tobacco Colony: Religion in Seventeenth-Century Virginia* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000).

their English counterparts. The investigation of matters of ecclesiastical structure and strength will help examine the religious elements that formed part of the upbringing of eminent loyalists and revolutionaries from the Chesapeake Bay. More specifically, this chapter will focus on these areas that portray the distinctiveness of the Church of England in Virginia and Maryland, such as the power of the vestries and the educational background of ministers. The aim is, of course, to trace the similarities and differences between the parent and colonial establishment and to explain how these could have led to the development not only of loyalist, but of revolutionary thought as well.

The Power of the Church as an Institution and its Relation to the State

With reference to church and state relations, the colonial Church of England in the Chesapeake bore external similarities to its parent institution: it was legally established, the civil authorities and an English prelate - namely the governor and the bishop of London - were formally responsible for many church affairs, while the King was the head of both the colonial and the mother church.² These ties with the civil authorities were not, however, so tenacious as to guarantee its strength. As a result, it suffered from perennial problems, which negatively affected its vigour. These were related to the absence of resident bishops, adequate state protection and educational institutions, which would have provided the Church with a regular inflow of ministers.

The mere existence of the Church of England in America was not taken for granted in the same way it was in the mother country: in New England, the Church of England never reached the status of being legally established due to dissenting strength,³ while in New York, in the Chesapeake and in the southern colonies it only did so around the turn of the seventeenth century. By 1624, Virginia was the sole

² Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 189.

³ John Frederick Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism in North America* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), p. 97; Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, pp. 191-2; Nancy L. Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism: the colonial church of England clergy during the American Revolution* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 15-16.

state in which the Anglican Church was legally established; Maryland came next in 1702 and the rest of the southern colonies followed.⁴

After a very unstable start in the course of the seventeenth century, from the turn of the century onwards, the Church of England in the Chesapeake Bay acquired a firm foundation. Strengthening popular allegiance to the established church was perceived as the main means to eliminate Catholic expansion and to tighten imperial control over the colonies. The 'High' Church party, whose influence increased under Queen Anne's reign (1702-1714), particularly supported this strategy. The rekindling of educational and missionary zeal through the foundation of the *Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge* (SPCK) in March 1699 and of the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel* (SPG), chartered in 1701, unequivocally reflects the aspirations of 'High' churchmen. The aim of the SPCK was to found libraries in England and abroad and of the SPG to support financially existing ministers, as well as to strengthen Anglicanism in those colonies where dissent predominated. Its task was also to bring into the Anglican fold the native Indians and black slaves.⁵

By mid-century, the result of the efforts of the SPG and the SPCK were apparent in Virginia, in Maryland and in the northern colonies.⁶ Following its growth in the seventeenth century, by the 1760s the Virginian church was the most developed colonial Anglican Church, while, by 1771, the Anglican establishments in Maryland and Virginia had matched or surpassed in total strength the rest of the establishments in continental America. Indicative of this is the fact that, in the late 1760s, of the 350,000 to 400,000 Anglican adherents in colonial America, 225,000 were resident in Maryland and Virginia.⁷ Also pointing to the strength of the Anglican Church in the eighteenth-century Chesapeake is the fact that members of eminent families were adherents of the Church of England. The Dulany family in

⁴ For the establishment of the Church in Virginia, see: Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, pp. 188-193; for Maryland, see: William Warren Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America* (New York: Harper, c. 1950), p. 41; Robert Smith to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 22 May 1695 in William Stevens Perry (ed.), *Papers Relating to the History of the Church in Maryland, 1694-1775* (privately printed, 1878), pp. 2-3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 87; Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, p. 220; W.M Jacob, *Lay People and Religion in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 109-10.

⁶ Carol Lee van Voorst, *The Anglican Clergy in Maryland, 1692-1776*. PhD thesis. (Princeton University, 1978), pp. 112, 116.

⁷ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 25, 86.

Maryland and the Lee, Washington and Byrd families in Virginia were all actively involved in church affairs.⁸

Despite the vigorous efforts to strengthen the presence of the Church of England in the colonies, the English authorities denied it the leadership and guidance of a visiting or resident bishop.⁹ As detailed in the previous chapter, this reflects the policies pursued after the reign of Queen Anne by non-Anglican Kings George I and George II, as well as the increase in dissent and deism and the rise of Latitudinarian clergy and of Whig bishops. As a result, the practice established since the time of William Laud (d. 1645) continued well into the eighteenth century with the Bishop of London being in charge of the colonial Anglican Church.¹⁰ Commissaries were sent for the first time when Henry Compton, an energetic prelate in pastoral matters, served as Bishop of London (1675-1713).¹¹ They were to function as a substitute for the bishop in his distant and indirect administration of the Church in America. They would take over some of the responsibilities of the governor over the church; support the interests of the Bishop in the colony, which sometimes conflicted with those of the governor, and place the imperial control over the Church of England in America on a firmer basis.¹² Their office was, nevertheless, largely discontinued after 1748 under Bishop Sherlock (1748-1761).¹³

Several problems arose from the absence of bishops in the colonies, including those regarding confirmation, ordination and ministerial discipline. Commissaries, being mere representatives of the Bishop of London in the colonies, were not an adequate replacement of bishops because they could not confirm the laity, nor ordain the clergy. The long, expensive and dangerous journey to England and back - especially until the 1730s-, which was needed for ministerial ordination, was a

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 86.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25; Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, p. 13; Henry Hartwell, James Blair and Edward Chilton, *The Present State of Virginia and the College. To which is added the Charter for Erecting the said College,...* (London: J. Wyat, 1727), p. 67.

¹¹ For the life and career of Bishop Compton see: Andrew M. Coleby, "Compton, Henry (1631/2–1713)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6032> (accessed December 13, 2011).

¹² Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism*, p. 84.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 82; Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, p. 27; Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, p. 26

perennial problem for colonial Anglican ministers.¹⁴ In addition, official clerical convocations could not be held because of the absence of the English bishop, whose authorization was needed for their convention. Nevertheless, colonial clergymen organised informal meetings on frequent occasions, especially from the mid-1760s onwards.¹⁵ Moreover, there were no judicial authorities in the colonies that could effectively discipline the Church or its clergy. Such jurisdiction pertained exclusively to the Bishop of London, but addressing him could hardly have been effective for the problems facing the colonists. The disciplinary power of the commissary over the clergy was relatively weak, since any parish minister had the right to appeal a commissary's decision to the Archbishop of Canterbury.¹⁶

In those colonies where the Church of England was established, it was not only dependent on the Bishop of London, but also on the civil colonial government. Colonial legislatures and governors had not only civil, but also substantial religious authority and, for this reason, had undertaken many of the temporal duties of English bishops. These included the creation of new parishes, the setting of ministers' salaries, the assignment of benefices to ministers and their efficient management, the issuing of marriage licenses, and the probation of wills. Moreover, the colonial legislatures voted laws, protecting the established church, the most important of which was the discrimination against dissenters, since all officeholders had to be Anglican¹⁷

Despite the fact that the functions of the civil authorities regarding church affairs were largely common to all colonies where the Church of England was established, it should be stressed that church and state relations differed considerably in Maryland and Virginia. A major feature of this relation was the great role that lay powers held in the colonial establishments. This is best illustrated in the preponderant role that the vestries played in church affairs. The vestry was mainly a gathering of all ratepayers to manage parish affairs. In eighteenth-century England,

¹⁴ Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, p. 28; Van Voorst, *Anglican Clergy in Maryland*, p. 108; The Rev. Alexander Adams to the Bishop of London, 29 Sept. 1752 in Perry, *Papers Relating to the Church in Maryland*, pp. 327-29.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 27; Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 25-26; Commissary Jacob Henderson to the Bishop of London, 13 March 1731 and 7 August 1731 in Perry, *Papers Relating to the Church in Maryland*, pp. 302, 308.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

the dominant role of the lay elite in religious matters is best illustrated by its participation in the system of patronage through which the ministers achieved their advancement in the ladder of preferment. The patrons held the so-called 'advowson', the legal right to appoint a churchman to a parish. In this case, the vestry did not have major responsibilities because the fulfilment of the parish's social functions and spiritual duties, as well as the management of its property, was under the control of the patron.¹⁸ The factor that made the elite-dominated colonial Anglican church distinct from its English counterpart was that the colonial elite was geographically distant from the royal and ecclesiastical authorities in England, and thus, much more autonomous. It can also be suggested that given the geographical distance itself between the colonies and the mother Church, lay participation, through the vestries, was one of only a few ways, if not the only way, to uphold the functions of the colonial ecclesiastical establishments. It is, therefore, not surprising that the British authorities did not seek to suppress the increasing self-determination of the American Church since it was this element that sustained the Church in the colonies.¹⁹

In Maryland, it was not so much the vestry, but the proprietor, who had the ultimate authority in church affairs. In 1632 the Roman Catholic Irish Calvert family of Baron Baltimore, was granted a charter that made Maryland its proprietary colony. Since the proprietors were not favourable to the Anglican faith, it was not until after the Glorious Revolution of 1688-9 and when under royal control between 1691 and 1715 that the Church of England became legally established in Maryland. When the charter was restored to Charles, 5th Lord Baltimore, a professed Protestant, he claimed the ultimate authority in religious matters in the region. In this way, he reviewed all ecclesiastical laws passed by the assembly and he had the right to disallow them. Moreover, before acquiring a license from the Bishop of London to officiate in America, all ministers had to gain a permit from the proprietor granting the minister permission to ask the governor for an ecclesiastical post in Maryland. This meant that, in terms of ecclesiastical preferment, the proprietor in Maryland had the first say, thereby circumventing the authority of the bishop of London or of the vestries. Although most clergymen who were given this permission, were unknown

¹⁸ Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 34, 88.

¹⁹ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 140-1.

to Lord Baltimore, on occasion, his family friends, university fellow students or other clients would be favoured.²⁰ In the 1760s and 1770s, this system caused indignation in the vestries and the open opposition of the so-called ‘country’ party that dominated the lower house of the assembly, to the proprietary or ‘court’ faction.²¹ The temporary rebellion in 1769 by the parishioners of Coventry parish in Somerset County, after the rejection of their chosen minister Thomas Bradbury Chandler and the lay hostility to the Reverend Bennet Allen’s ambitions for pluralistic appointments in wealthy parishes both demonstrate that the vestries in Maryland, though of limited powers, were far from being impotent.²²

In contrast to the mutilated rights of the vestries in Maryland, eighteenth-century Virginian vestries enjoyed enormous powers. They had acquired a self-perpetuating status through co-option, especially in the long-standing tidewater parishes, which ensured the stability of these bodies. The maintenance of control by the Virginian elite of the vestries was upheld by the frequent intermarriage of the colony’s prominent family members. For example, Robinsons, Wormeleys, Grymes, Thackers, Churchills and Smiths, eminent planter and planter-merchant families, were continuously present on the vestry of Christ Church Parish. Moreover, for fifty five per cent of the vestrymen of Christ Church Parish their tenure lasted for more than ten years.²³ In addition, the wealthiest county inhabitants were also members of the House of Burgesses, whereas the rest of the vestrymen and the churchwardens held simultaneously other executive, judicial, military, and legal positions. This underscored the vestrymen’s dominance in the civil affairs of the colony. In these ways, the socially prominent members of Virginian society dominated church and state with the result that their authority often undermined the power of the royal governor.²⁴

Richard Bland was an influential vestryman whose writings on the issue of the balance of power between Virginia’s ecclesiastical establishment and the Church

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 87; Van Voorst, *Anglican Clergy in Maryland*, pp. 106-07; Gerald E. Hartdagen, ‘Vestry and Clergy in the Anglican Church of Colonial Maryland’ *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 37, no. 4 (1968), pp. 371-396.

²¹ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 86-87.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 98-100; Gilmer Papers, *Maryland Historical Society*, vol. 1, pp. 53, 58, 61.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-37.

²⁴ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 92-94; Sweet, *Story of Religion*, p. 35; Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, p. 192; see also above, p. 5.

of England in the parent country reveal the degree of autonomy that the Virginian church claimed. In 1763, his *The Colonel Dismounted, or the Rector Vindicated*, he argued that lay Virginians were free, either as Englishmen or as unconquered natives, and therefore had the right to direct their own internal affairs. Bland declined the clergy's claim for different treatment from what ordinary citizens received. He stated: 'I profess my self (*sic*) a sincere son of the established church; without approving her hierarchy, which I know to be a relic of the papal encroachment upon the common law.'²⁵

As a result, in the task of administrating the church, there was not always a harmonious understanding between these bodies and the governor or the commissary. The duty of inducting the minister into his office belonged to the governor, but, by early in the eighteenth century, some vestries had adopted the practice of employing ministers on a yearly basis without induction, thereby bypassing the authority of the governor.²⁶ Moreover, the vestries assumed the right of buying, selling or leasing glebe lands, a right nominally belonging to the ministers. These prerogatives, especially the right to select the minister of their parish and collect tobacco tax for his support, were not enjoyed by their counterparts in the colonies or in England.²⁷ Under these circumstances, in the eighteenth century the only power exercised by the Church of England over the ecclesiastical establishment in Virginia was the bishop licensing the clergymen who were about to take up office.²⁸ It becomes evident that clergymen were competing socially with plantation owners, who were also vestry members, for financial security, higher salaries and greater respect for their social standing. Victory would secure the former larger participation in the lay-dominated Church causing it to become more uniform and shed the American character it had developed so far in favour of one closer to the English establishment.²⁹

²⁵ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 104-106.

²⁶ Hartwell, Blair and Chilton, *The Present State of Virginia*, p. 65; Gilmer Papers, *Maryland Historical Society*, vol. 1, pp. 51.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-19; Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, p. 13; Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 33-34; Joan Rezner Gundersen, 'The Myth of the Independent Virginia Vestry', *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 44 (1975), 133-141

²⁸ Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 38-40.

²⁹ Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism*, pp. 201-206.

Not only the vestries, but also the governor interfered greatly in church affairs in Virginia. In 1761 a dispute arose between the governor, Francis Fauquier, and the commissary, William Robinson. As a result, the governor successfully blocked Robinson's appointment as president of William and Mary College and as a member of the colonial council. Fauquier's interference with church affairs went so far as to attempt to infringe upon the commissary's prerogative to recommend candidates to the Bishop of London for ordination. These rivalries undermined the status of the office of the commissary to the extent that subsequent commissaries, James Horrocks (1769-1771) and William Willie had little real authority in the church affairs of Virginia.³⁰ In the late 1770s, James Ogilvie's case brought about similar issues: his candidature to the ministry was supported by influential Virginian parishioners, but the commissary James Horrocks opposed his ordination. The latter claimed the right to be the only person who could suggest candidates to the English bishop for ordination. At that time the English authorities reluctantly condoned the request of the Virginians.³¹ Admittedly, disputes between the ecclesiastical and civil administrations subsisted within the Church of England in the parent country throughout its long history, but in the colonies such occurrences seemed more pronounced and damaging for the church because the latter did not stand on such a strong footing in America.

It can be argued that the colonial Church of England in Virginia and Maryland greatly resembled the Presbyterian Church. The deacons and elders in Scotland were elected - and not presbyterially or synodally appointed - in the same way that the ministers were selected by the Virginian vestries. The Church of Scotland was void of episcopal visitations, confirmation and immediate supervision similarly to what was the practice in America. Not only were there no bishops in Virginia, but also the analogies of the vestry, precinct, and yearly meeting of the vestries with the commissary in Williamsburg can be found in Scotland's kirk-session, presbytery and synod. Moreover, Calvinist ideas of order and discipline were reflected in the compulsory character of church attendance in Virginia. The fact that forty-six, namely a third, of Virginia's ministers in the eighteenth century were educated in Scotland illustrates the Scottish influence in Virginian religious affairs. It

³⁰ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 88-89.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 95-98.

can be argued that the outcome was a Church that was distinctly Virginian, and ‘low’ Church as far as its administrative structure was concerned.³² The same idea of a ‘low’ Church administrative structure can be applied to Maryland. Frederick Calvert, the sixth Lord Baltimore (1731-1771), disallowed clerical conventions and, because he disliked lay petitions, his response to this form of complaint was consistently negative. In this way, any kind of organised action from the part of the clergy was silenced.³³ The laity, however, was frequently able to muster the support of the lower house of the assembly when their interests were being seriously disregarded.

The unstable foundations of the church in Virginia become clear when gauging the confessional character of education there. There were some attempts to establish schools, which would be under the control of the Church in the same way that Anglican orthodoxy was imposed on many schools in England. For example, in the late colonial period, in Virginia, sixteen ministers were employed as schoolteachers or taught in the houses of planters. At the same time, seven of ninety Virginia parishes supported financially and controlled the function and curriculum of schools. In addition, a bill was passed in the House of Burgesses in 1755 that gave permission to six parishes to construct workhouses or poorhouses. The education of youth and the relief of the poor were not, however, part of a general Church policy to institute and control schools or poorhouses, so that any endeavours of this kind were of an unplanned and fortuitous character.³⁴ More obvious and better organized was the involvement of the Church of England with colonial colleges.

The first colonial institution of higher education under Anglican influence was the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg which was chartered in 1693. Its establishment was the a result of the efforts of the commissary, James Blair (1689-1743), supported by Henry Compton, Bishop of London, and John Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury. Its purpose was to propagate orthodox Anglicanism in the colonies and to form a seminary that would provide sufficient training for future ministers of the Church of England. Its charter stated:

³² Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism*, p. 149.

³³ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, p. 98

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22; Lyon G. Tyler, ‘Education in Colonial Virginia: Poor Children and Orphans’, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 1st ser., 5, no. 4 (1897), 219-223; Lyon G. Tyler, ‘Education in Colonial Virginia: Private Schools and Tutors’, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 1st ser., 6, no. 1 (1897), 1-6.

Forasmuch as our well-beloved and trusty Subjects, constituting the General Assembly of our Colony of *Virginia*, have had it in their Minds, and have proposed to themselves, to the end that the Church of Virginia may be furnish'd with a Seminary of Ministers of the Gospel, and that the Youth may be piously educated in good Letters and Manners, and that the Christian Faith may be propagated amongst the Western *Indians*, to the Glory of Almighty God, to make, found and establish a certain Place of universal Study, or perpetual College of Divinity, Philosophy, Languages, and other good Arts and Sciences, consisting of one President, six Masters or Professors, and an hundred Scholars, according to the Ability of the said College, and the Statutes of the same³⁵

As a result, during the colonial years, all the presidents of William and Mary College, as well as most of the faculty, were ordained ministers of the Church of England.³⁶ The curriculum and the teaching methods in the college were copied from the University of Oxford and especially from Queen's College. Eight Oxford men (six of whom were graduates of Queens) were among the thirteen masters and presidents who were employed by the College between 1729 and 1757 to teach physics, mathematics, moral philosophy and classics.³⁷ Until the late 1760s, however, William and Mary functioned more as a grammar school, with the consequence that degree courses were rarely undertaken. Thus, its influence as a centre of higher education in the colonies was limited.³⁸ It was plagued by incessant strife over the division of powers between the Visitors or Governors and the Society of Professors, while the moral uprightness of the latter was also questioned.³⁹ In addition, its divinity school educated only thirty-two Anglican churchmen in the forty-seven years of its operation (1732-1779), who only served the Virginian Church.⁴⁰ As a result, colonial Anglicanism did not succeed in placing a firm grip on education in the Chesapeake, while the Church was denied a regular inflow of locally trained clergymen that would have constituted an important source of its strength.

³⁵ Hartwell, Blair and Chilton, *The Present State of Virginia*, p. 72.

³⁶ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, p. 20.

³⁷ Courtlandt Canby, 'A Note on the Influence of Oxford University upon William and Mary College in the Eighteenth Century', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd ser., 21, no. 3 (1941), 243-247.

³⁸ Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), pp. 213-217.

³⁹ Polk Thomson, 'The Reform of the College of William and Mary, 1763-1780', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 115, no. 3 (1971), 189-201.

⁴⁰ Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, p. 189; Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, pp. 29-30.

It can be concluded that the structures of the Church of England in the Chesapeake were not as coherent as those in the mother country: the existence of large numbers of black slaves and Indians, who did not belong to the Anglican communion, the absence of a resident bishop, the weak power of the commissary, and the great authority of the vestries together with William and Mary College's lack of intellectual vigour all undermined the authority and status of the Church. It was only in the 1760s that the ecclesiastical structure in the Chesapeake acquired a more concrete form.

The Clergy

During the course of the eighteenth century, the total number of Anglican clergymen ordained for service in the colonies, as well as the number of American-bred clergy increased. Moreover, the solutions proposed to problems of clerical discipline and supervision reveal the republican- or Presbyterian-type methods that were used to resolve Anglican affairs in that region. These facts further underscore the particular American or 'Chesapeakean' stamp that the Churches in Virginia and Maryland bore.

Between 1745 and 1775, 409 Anglican ministers were certified for colonial service: 156 in 1745-1760 and 253 in the next fifteen years. This points to the fact that the Anglican Church was strengthening its roots in the American colonies.⁴¹ In Maryland, during the period when the church was not established, the number of Anglican clergymen was small. There were only five ministers in the region in 1692.⁴² The number of ministers in Maryland, however, considerably increased from the 1720s onwards, after the Establishment Act of 1702. This was due to the advantages in remuneration that the clergy enjoyed in Maryland, when compared to that offered in other colonies. In Maryland, the salaries of the clergymen depended on the number of parish taxables and the price of tobacco, whereas in Virginia and in other colonies the salaries of the clergy tended to be fixed and uniform. This meant that, in populous Marylander parishes, clerical salaries were much more rewarding

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7; Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, p. 19.

⁴² Van Voorst, *Anglican Clergy in Maryland*, p. 98.

than in some Virginian ones, even as early as the 1690s.⁴³ In Maryland, the absence of year-to-year contracts that were frequently used for the employment of clergymen in Virginia rendering their tenure insecure, the non-existence of disputes between the clergymen and a commissary as powerful as James Blair, and the average annual salary of £250 - £300 that ministers in Maryland were earning until the early 1770s, unmatched by both SPG annual stipends (£50) and Virginian salaries, these were all factors that enticed clergymen from elsewhere in the colonies, as well as from the British Isles to seek employment in Maryland.⁴⁴

In the seventeenth century, only English, Welsh, Irish or Scots were ordained as colonial ministers, but at the turn of the century this began to change. In Virginia, there was, initially, a great demand for English ministers who had graduated from Oxford and Cambridge universities. These ministers would emigrate to the colonies mainly because they had not been able to find a lucrative post in the English ecclesiastical hierarchy through the system of patronage. Besides, in England, demand for the office of minister seemed to exceed vacancies. Scottish and Irish ministers were able to find employment more comfortably in Virginia, because in England they were suspected of Jacobitism and of Presbyterian sympathies: between 1690 and 1776, twenty-two Scottish-born Anglican parsons served in Virginia parishes for more than fifteen years.⁴⁵ Similarly, seventeenth-century Maryland was dominated by English clergymen: fifteen out of the twenty clergymen who emigrated to the colony in 1692-1699 were English.⁴⁶ In the first decade of the eighteenth century, however, Scottish clerics started rivalling the English and Welsh in acquiring new Maryland livings. This together with the arrival of three clergymen from Ireland in the 1710s led to the end of the monopoly of English clerics coming to Maryland and particularly of those from Oxford, Cambridge and the immediate vicinity of London. In 1699, eighty-seven per cent of the clergy in Maryland was comprised of Englishmen, but, by 1715 this percentage was already reduced to fifty.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp.98-100, 111, 121.

⁴⁴ Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism*, pp. 146-153; Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, p. 9; Van Voorst, *Anglican Clergy in Maryland*, pp. 108, 119-121; Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, p. 35; the average decadal number of clergymen arriving in Maryland between 1692 and 1759 is seventeen to twenty-two, see: Van Voorst, *Anglican Clergy in Maryland*, p. 120.

⁴⁵ Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 87-88, 90-100.

⁴⁶ Van Voorst, *Anglican Clergy in Maryland*, p. 123

As indicated above, this can be explained by the enticing conditions for clergymen that Maryland had to offer during that period.⁴⁷

In the eighteenth century, the previous unavailability of American-born clergymen and the resulting recourse to dubiously qualified clergymen of foreign origins began to change. Virginians abandoned their preference for English ministers. As a result, while there were no indigenous ministers at the beginning of the eighteenth century, by 1750 eighteen per cent of the clergy were Virginians. Their number increased to thirty per cent by 1770 and grew even further by 1775, reaching thirty-seven per cent. This resulted in Virginian-born ministers serving one out of three parishes in the colony. If this number is added to those who were born in Britain but prepared for the ministry in Virginia after their emigration to America (twenty-six per cent) and to those who were born elsewhere in British North America (seven per cent), it turns out that by 1775, the number of American-bred clergy was raised to two out of three. This increase in Virginian and America-born clergymen can be attributed to the transatlantic trip having become less hazardous by the 1730s, as well as to the perception of the ministry as a means of upward social mobility for the lower and middling sort.⁴⁸ In Maryland, the influx of American-born ministers began in 1724 with the ordination of a Virginian and it culminated in the 1760s and in the 1770s with fifteen and ten America-born ministers, respectively, taking up livings in the region. From the 1750s onward, the decadal influx of American ministers into Maryland would match and even surpass the number of British newcomers with the result that by 1775 forty-six per cent of the colony's ministers was represented by clergymen born in America. Twenty of the thirty-seven American ministers who officiated in Maryland in the eighteenth century were born in that colony, while the rest originated from Pennsylvania (eight ministers), Virginia (six ministers), Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Jersey (one from each colony). In the mid-eighteenth century, the promotion of Maryland ministers in the established church can be explained by the fact that they were preferred by the governor, since they were considered supporters of the proprietary interest.⁴⁹ The fact that clergymen in Anglican orders born elsewhere in colonial America had different

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 122-3, 125.

⁴⁸ Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 103-06.

⁴⁹ Van Voorst, *Anglican Clergy in Maryland*, p. 129.

religious backgrounds, illustrates the ability of colonial Anglicanism to expand and attract people from a variety of traditions, forming an American identity of its own.⁵⁰

Despite salaries being determined by law, salary disputes were not non-existent in Virginia and Maryland. These disputes ultimately tarnished the image of the clergy, while they fuelled the underlying anticlericalism in the region and, in this way, undermined the appeal of the Church of England. In Virginia, anticlericalism was already on the rise by 1755 and, then, in 1758, it received new impetus from the issue of the Two Penny Act. Some clerics, led by John Camm, appealed to the English authorities in order to veto salary adjustments voted by the House of Burgesses. They managed to have their cause, the so-called Parson's Cause, met. These disputes, however, presented the clergymen in public perspective as enemies of the colony.⁵¹ In the same way, in 1763 and 1770, disputes occurred in Maryland, instigated by clergymen who were complaining about reductions in their salaries. Given the relatively extravagant way that some clerics used to live and the fact that northern ministers with much more unstable earnings would not appeal for justice, some of the arguments against the attitude of the clergy in the Chesapeake seem to have been justified. In the public eye, these salary litigations identified the clergymen with imperial British authority and strengthened the igniting opposition to English ecclesiastical and civil authorities.⁵²

The accusations of moral offences perpetrated by the clergy further weakened the status of the colonial Church. In Virginia, from 1723 to 1743, accusations were filed against twenty ministers, eleven of whose cases could have been valid; between 1743 and 1776, there was a rise in the latter number, reaching fourteen. Of the thirty-five cases against clergymen in Maryland, one-third were lodged in the 1760s. The suits against the clergy always received more publicity and left more lasting hostile feelings than any attacks against lay people. The absence of an ecclesiastical court - which would definitely have solved these problems - the encouragement that attacks on the clergy of the established church enjoyed with the Great Awakening, and the

⁵⁰ Nelson, *Blessed Company*, p. 106.

⁵¹ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 95-98; Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, pp. 32-33; Gilmor Papers, *Maryland Historical Society*, vol. 1, p. 51

⁵² Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, pp. 34-35.

prejudices of the Northern clergy against the Southern, all amplified the consequences of these incidents.⁵³

With reference to ecclesiastical supervision, there were attempts in the colonies to establish their own ecclesiastical courts, but they never materialised. In Maryland, in 1724-5, an attempt was made by the colonial legislature to establish a lay court to supervise the clergy, but the concerted action by the proprietor and the governor blocked this motion. During Horatio Sharpe's administration (1753-1768), a 'probationary year' for all new appointees before induction was put into effect, but Lord Baltimore's favourites seem to have been exempt from this measure. In 1768, the House of Delegates put forward the Ecclesiastical Courts Bill stipulating that the governor should nominate three laymen and three clergymen to form a court that would judge complaints against clergymen, when made by the majority of the vestry and the churchwardens of a parish. This bill, however, was never enacted, due to Lord Baltimore's unexpected death. In Virginia, a bill in 1772 proposed the establishment of an ecclesiastical committee to supervise the church's ministers. It stipulated that a commission should be constituted, which would have a president, four clergymen and a Court of Delegates comprising an equal number of laymen and ministers. This bill did not pass because the burgesses adjourned before a final decision on it was taken. The fact that these bills did not entrust ecclesiastical supervision solely to the clergy or to the Bishop of London, but also included members of the laity, points to the fact that the colonial establishments in the Chesapeake had developed their own methods of seeking solutions to church-related problems. In this instance, Presbyterian- or republican-type methods, instead of Episcopal or hierarchical ones, were preferred.⁵⁴

Finally, it should be stressed that, despite occasional complaints about the professionalism and the moral integrity of colonial clergymen, there is no substantial evidence to support the assertion that they were particularly negligent in the performance of their duties. Admittedly, the large size of the parishes made their task far from easy. In Maryland in the 1770s, around fifty men had to serve a population

⁵³ Sweet, *Story of Religion*, pp. 37-8; Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, pp. 189-190; The commissary's speech to the clergy at a visitation of the Eastern Shore in Christ Church, 24 June 1730 and the Reverend Hugh Neill to the Bishop of London, 20 Sept. 1768 in Perry, *Papers Relating to the Church in Maryland*, pp. 294, 338-39.

⁵⁴ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 106-109.

of more than two hundred thousand.⁵⁵ Moreover, prejudices against the ethnic origins of the colonial clergy caused a deterioration in the relations between the latter and their parishioners. As indicated above, from 1714 until the American Revolution, around one-third of the Maryland clergy were Scottish. In Maryland, they were perceived as young, ambitious men, tainted with Presbyterian principles because of their education - if not because of their initial religious profession – and because they barely had a good command of English. On 10 July 1764, in a letter to Cecilius Calvert, Horatio Sharpe reflected these prejudices against the Scottish clergy:

I shall according to your Desire provide for the Revd Mr Love who seems. I think to be a decent well behaved Man. I wish he may preach as well as he looks & pronounce English a little better than the Generality of our Scotch Clergymen who hold at present so many of the Benefices in the Province that near half the Inhabitants have some Room for saying they are obliged to pay their Minister for preaching to them in an unknown Tongue. It would be well therefore if you could now send us in a few from the English Universities since the Inhabitants do not seem fond of educating their Children for the Church.⁵⁶

There seems to be, however, no concrete evidence which would confirm that Scottish clergy in Maryland were converts from Presbyterianism or that they were particularly unworthy with regard to dispensing their duties.⁵⁷

It is evident, therefore, that in the course of the eighteenth century the colonial church in Virginia and Maryland gradually acquired an American identity of its own. This is indicated by the great influx of Scottish, Irish and Welsh, as well as America-bred clergymen into the colonial church in the Chesapeake Bay while further evidence is afforded by the fact that ministers officiating in that region did not share the intellectual eminence of their counterparts in England. Other factors also weakened the Church of England in the Chesapeake: salary disputes, such as the Parson's cause in Virginia, and accusations of moral offences against the ministers fostered anticlericalism. At the same time, the absence of ecclesiastical courts, which

⁵⁵ Van Voorst, *Anglican Clergy in Maryland*, p. 122; The Rev. Arthur Holt to the Bishop of London, 20 May 1734 and Hugh Jones to the Secretary, 30 July 1739 in Perry, *Papers Relating to the Church in Maryland*, pp. 315, 321.

⁵⁶ Horatio Sharpe to Cecilius Calvert, 10 July 1764 in *Archives of Maryland*, ed. William Hand Browne, Clayton Colman Hall and Bernard Christian Steiner (Baltimore, Md.: Maryland Historical Society, 1895), vol. XIV, pp. 166-7.

⁵⁷ Van Voorst, *Anglican Clergy in Maryland*, p. 127.

would have effectively resolved these disputes, as well as the large size of parishes, made the task of ministers difficult, since they lacked the support that fully-fledged hierarchical authorities in their region could have offered them.

Threats to the Church

Despite the considerable increase in the number of Anglican churches and clergymen, the growth of non-conformist churches was brisker than that of Anglican ones. Between 1700 and 1780, the number of Congregational churches multiplied by five times their original number, of Roman Catholics by two and a half times, while more considerable expansion took place among the Baptists, Lutherans, and Presbyterians. More precisely, between the years 1700 and 1780, the number of Baptist and Presbyterian churches increased by almost fourteen and seventeen and a half times respectively, with the result that, by 1780, both denominations enjoyed a greater number of churches than the Anglicans. As far as the number of the Church of England churches is concerned, there were 111 churches in the colonies by 1700, 246 by 1740, and 406 by 1780. This resulted in a growth rate for the Anglican church of only three and a half times for the period 1700-1780. In other words, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Anglicans were in second place regarding the number of churches, only surpassed by the Congregationalists. By 1780, they had dropped to fourth place behind Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Baptists. By then, Congregationalists had 658 religious institutions, most of which were in New England; Presbyterians 543, mainly in the middle colonies; the Baptists had 498 and the Anglicans 480. In other words, in none of the colonies where the Anglican Church was the established church (namely all the colonies south of Pennsylvania and New York) did it enlist the majority of the population in its fold. In fact, with the possible exception of Virginia, the membership of the Anglican Church did not even number fifty per cent of the population.⁵⁸

With reference to Anglican service to the population, the decline in the number of Anglican churches translated into the following: in 1700, Anglican churches catered for only one fourth of the colonial population, in 1750 for one sixth,

⁵⁸ Sweet, *Story of Religion*, p. 173.

and in 1775 for one ninth.⁵⁹ The ratio of ministers to the population was similarly poor. In the Chesapeake, the total white population per minister (of all denominations) increased from 1200 in 1700 to over 2000 by the eve of the Revolution. The respective numbers for Anglicans were considerably higher, however: in 1770, the total population (white and slave) per Anglican minister amounted to 5,698 people in all or 3,493 white people. This was comparable to developments in the lower South (North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia), where the population per minister ratio had been under 1000 since 1635. This was reversed by 1770, when there were over 1500 whites per minister (of all denominations), while the number of whites per Anglican minister exceeded 6000.⁶⁰

A measure of a church's strength can be its ability to bring new parishioners into its fold. The Bray Associates instituted schools in Williamsburg, Fredericksburg, Philadelphia and Newport. They were a small group of churchmen who worked with the support of the SPG in the 1760s.⁶¹ These endeavours together with the fact that blacks would generally follow the religion supported by their masters and by the royal authorities resulted in the majority of black Christians being Anglicans in the colonial period. Nevertheless, this should not conceal the fact that only two or three thousand blacks out of the half million or so living in the American colonies in the years preceding the Revolution were Anglicans. The fact that slaveholders apprehended that the baptism of slaves might lead to their freedom can help to explain this.⁶²

The Anglican faith had more appeal to European settlers, Huguenots, Swedes, Dutch or German-Lutherans than to African-Americans. Some German immigrants to the Virginia backcountry converted to the Anglican Church, because parish taxes obliged them to support the parish minister and election to the vestries assured social elevation in their communities.⁶³ Colonial Huguenot immigrants to colonial America preferred the Anglican Church to Congregationalism or Presbyterianism and many Dutch were converted to Anglicanism because of the factions within their own

⁵⁹ Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, pp. 24-25.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

⁶¹ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 22-23.

⁶² Sweet, *Story of Religion*, p. 167; The commissary's speech to the clergy at a visitation of the Eastern Shore in Christ Church, 24 June 1730 in Perry, *Papers Relating to the Church in Maryland*, p. 292.

⁶³ Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 100-101.

church and the confusion generated by the Great Awakening in the Calvinist camp.⁶⁴ Even so, when compared to Anglicans, dissenters seemed more energetic in the conversion of parishioners to the effect that the Church of England increasingly appeared weak especially in Virginia but also in the backcountry from Pennsylvania to South Carolina. Given that Calvinist Scots, Ulstermen and German Lutherans were, in their majority, converted by dissenters, a map of the geographical distribution of religious churches or sects would show Anglicans being restricted to coastal towns and long-settled tidewater regions.⁶⁵ With reference to Virginia, in the 1730s Anglicans were converted to Presbyterianism in Hanover and Louisa Counties, while the need for the settlement of the Virginia backcountry encouraged the immigration to that region of Scots-Irish Presbyterians and of German Lutherans, Reformed, Menonites and Dunkers from the Middle colonies. Besides, Virginia's mercantile relations with Scotland increased from the 1740s onwards, culminating in the 1760s, due to favourable trade terms that Scottish merchants were willing to accept. This led to Scottish immigration into Virginia, especially to Alexandria, Fredericksburg, Richmond, Petersburg, Norfolk and further induced the expansion of Presbyterianism in the region.⁶⁶

In Virginia, foreign immigrants were not the only social group that the Church of England lost adherents from. Given the great aristocratic support to the Church in that region, it also gradually became less appealing to the poor, many of whom defected from it between 1740 and 1760. Under the impetus of the Great Awakening, and led by Samuel Morris, they constituted religious communities characterised by biblical self-discipline. Samuel Morris wrote a narrative of the events, which is a telling example of the religious experiences of the revivalists and of their accommodation in a colony where the Church of England was the established church:

In the Year -43, a young Gentleman arrived from Scotland with a Book of his Sermons preached in *Glasgow*, & taken from his Mouth in short Hand, which with Difficulty I procured. After I had read it with great Liking & Benefit, I invited my Neighbours to come & hear it; and the Plainness, Popularity, & Fervency of the Discourses, being peculiarly

⁶⁴ Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, p. 22.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 26.

⁶⁶ Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 92-93, 100.

fitted to affect our unimproved Minds, and the Lord rendering the Word efficacious, many were convinced of their undone Condition, and constrained to seek Deliverance with the greatest Solitude. A considerable Number convened every Sabbath to hear these Sermons, instead of going to Church, and frequently on Week Days. The Concern of some was so passionate and violent, that they could not avoid crying out, weeping bitterly, & c. and that when such Indications of religious Concern were so strange and ridiculous, that they could not be occasioned by Example or Sympathy, and the Affectation of them would have been so unprofitable an Instance of Hypocrisy, that none could be tempted to it... having never been accustomed to social *extempore* Prayer, none of us durst attempt it in Company. By this single Mean sundry were solemnly awakened, and the Conduct ever since is a living Attention of the Continuance and happy Issue of their Impressions. When the Report of these Sermons and the Effects occasioned by reading them was spread Abroad, I was invited to several Places to read them, at a considerable Distance; and by this Means the Concern was propagated.⁶⁷

The weaknesses described in the previous section, including the absence of bishops, the large size of parishes, and anticlericalism, inevitably translated into low numbers of Church of England adherents in America, in general, and the Chesapeake Bay colonies, in particular. This becomes evident when comparing it to the appeal that other churches, such as the Congregationalist, the Baptist and the Presbyterian, had in colonial America. The Church of England in Virginia and Maryland did not seem appealing to the poor or to black people. At the same time its confinement to the seaboard towns along the east American coast meant that such vast regions as the Virginia backcountry were predominantly Presbyterian.

The Political Message of the Church

James Blair and Thomas Bray (1656-1730) had laid the foundations of the political ideology and theology of the Church in the Chesapeake. Following the parent institution, the Virginian Church was Arminian in its beliefs.⁶⁸ Blair and Bray

⁶⁷Samuel Davies, *The state of religion among the Protestant dissenters in Virginia; in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Joseph Bellamy, of Bethlem, in New-England...* (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1751), pp. 10-11.

⁶⁸Sweet, *Story of Religion*, p. 36.

promulgated the traditional Anglican idea of one's freedom of will to choose God's command and of the attainment of moral happiness through works, faith, and God's grace. These views were contained in such works as Bray's *Catechetical Lectures*, a copy of which could be found in nearly every Episcopalian library in America. The same ideas were also adopted by High Church Episcopalians in the northern colonies, such as George Keith, John Checkley and others. These northern Episcopalians further emphasized the notion of responsibility for human actions in order to refute the Congregationalists who insisted on God directing human history after the fall of Adam. They had inherited the seventeenth-century Anglican belief in human free will within a stratified national church. In this sense, the main stabilising factor in society was the obedience that was due to God, king, lords, and bishops. On the other hand, the Puritan idea of God's irresistible grace and of the perseverance of the saints could lead to actions in the name of God that would still potentially be to the detriment of temporal powers and social harmony.⁶⁹ Consequently, the distinctiveness of Anglicanism lay in the moderation of its beliefs - the so-called *via media* -, as opposed to the extremities of Catholic liturgical worship, Evangelical enthusiasm and the dryness of atheism or deism.

The Anglican belief in the moralising and socially stabilising effect of government and of traditional authorities emanated from the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance. They were the main props of the civil theology of the High Church Tory party in the late seventeenth century and they remained prevalent until well into the eighteenth.⁷⁰ The sermons of James Blair and Jonathan Boucher, who between 1762 and 1775 officiated in Hanover, King George's county, Virginia, and in St. Anne's in Annapolis respectively, propagated these ideas. Non-resistance involved the compliance to governmental orders, as well as the belief in the merits of the political structure established at the time. Passive obedience did not signify the obedience to any governmental order that would infringe God's laws, such as the declaration of an unjust war but rather that the passive endurance of any kind of civil

⁶⁹ Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism*, pp. 182-186.

⁷⁰ For the emergence of the High Church Party within the Church of England, see: Sweet, *Story of Religion*, pp. 10-15.

punishment for not following such orders was preferable to complying with the wishes of the monarch or to taking up arms in opposition.⁷¹

Anglicanism was perceived as especially suitable for promoting social deference and harmony. Richard Allestree's *The Whole Duty of Man* (1663) was the standard Anglican educational tract in this period.⁷² The theory of the 'great chain of being' led to the idea that compliance to governmental rules was a civil duty, that sustained social welfare and supported the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance. Passages in the scriptures were understood as embracing such thinking. In this order of dependencies, the king, the head of civil and ecclesiastical authorities, was perceived as the superintendent or vicegerent of God on earth, controlling the temporal laws. In the Church's rites of passage this was symbolised by the fact that Anglican ministers swore allegiance to the king both before becoming deacons and before being ordained priests.⁷³

In the Chesapeake, the Revolution of 1688-9 did not produce the great divisions that it produced in the parent country between the Non-jurors and those who accepted the change of monarch. The providential right of kings, rather than the divine or the indefeasible right, was an idea that gained consensus after 1689. In Maryland, an 'Association in arms for the defence of the Protestant Religion, and for the Asserting the Right of King William and Queen Mary to the Province of Maryland and all the English Dominions' was organised in April 1689, under the leadership of the former Anglican minister, John Coode (1648-1708). It contended against the claims of the Quakers and the Catholics for power in political and civil affairs, especially at a time when rumours of an alliance between the Catholics and the Indians were rampant. Coode and his followers, however, did not receive much support from those Anglicans who held posts under the Calverts because the former directly attacked the Governor and the proprietary interest.⁷⁴

The great religious divisions between Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Quakers in Maryland are emphasised by the fact that, until 1700, the

⁷¹ Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, pp. 64-65.

⁷² James Blair, 'Our Saviour's Divine Sermon on the Mount' in Edward L. Bond, ed. *Spreading the Gospel in Colonial Virginia* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005), pp. 99-102; Anne Y. Zimmer, *Jonathan Boucher: Loyalist in Exile* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978)

⁷³ Rhoden, pp. 11, 67-71.

⁷⁴ Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism*, p. 138.

Episcopalians would not allow the Toleration Act towards non-conformists and the Bill of Rights to be enacted into law. The prudent and conciliatory endeavours of Thomas Bray led to the rejection of the obligatory use of the Book of Common Prayer in all church services in order to satisfy non-conformists. It was only under these circumstances that the establishment of the Church in Maryland was made possible in 1702.⁷⁵

In Virginia, the leading clergymen were more tolerant towards non-conformists than in Maryland. James Blair believed that Anglicans shared the same religious heritage with the other American Protestants and, in this way, that there were points of agreement between them. In this sense, he welcomed the evangelist George Whitefield, who visited the colonies in the 1740s. Samuel Morris, a 'Bricklayer', member of Samuel Davies's congregation, the Presbyterian minister in Hanover County, Virginia, gave an account of this incident:

The Reverend Mr. *Whitefield* had been in *Virginia*, I think, in the Year 1740, and at the Invitation of the Rev. Mr. *Blair*, our late Commissary, had preached in *Williamsburg*, our Metropolis, about 60 Miles from *Hanover*. His Fame was much spread abroad, as a very warm and alarming Preacher; which made such of us in *Hanover*, as had been awakened, very eager to see & hear him; but as he left the Colony before we heard of him, we had no Opportunity.⁷⁶

Whitefield's views were influenced by those Calvinist ideas that were rejected by seventeenth-century High Churchmen. The most important of his principles were free forgiveness, salvation by grace through faith alone, and the persistence of the saints. He denounced new birth and regeneration through Baptism, ideas which Congregationalist clergymen such as Timothy Cutler in Yale had adopted.⁷⁷ Whitefield equally opposed, however, the High Church moral law as expressed in the *Whole Duty of Man*.⁷⁸ The fact that, until the 1790s, Whitefield and Methodism had never denied the importance of the Anglican liturgy, the Thirty-Nine Articles, the importance of ecclesiastical hierarchy, and, generally, the notion of a National Church points to the idea that they should be understood as reviving

⁷⁵ Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism*, pp. 139-40.

⁷⁶ Davies, *The state of religion*, p. 10.

⁷⁷ Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism*, pp. 190-191.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 198-200.

Anglican piety and as correcting the abuses of the Anglican Church, rather than antagonising it. It was the propagation of a strong personal faith and the trust in the free forgiveness of a benevolent God to sinners that explain most adequately Whitefield's success.⁷⁹ In Virginia, some eminent evangelists within the church adopted elements from Whitefield's thought. Those included Devereux Jarratt, Mary Randolph Meade and Frances Tasker Carter, wife of Robert Carter. Whitefield had a great impact on the religious thought in such lower southern colonies as South Carolina and also had many supporters within the Anglican laity, especially in the middle and southern colonies: in Georgia, in South Carolina, in Newcastle and Lewis, Delaware, in Oxford, Pennsylvania, and in New Jersey in particular.⁸⁰

In the same light should also be perceived the adoption of the ideological tools of natural theology, which marked intellectual advancements in the College of William and Mary during the immediate pre-revolutionary years.⁸¹ Its professors, Thomas Gwatkin and Samuel Henley, found loyal supporters in such students as William Leigh, James Madison (cousin of the later United States President), and Samuel Shields. James Madison's sermon on Founders' Day, in August 1772, endorsed Henley's method of examining Revelation through reason. Madison asserted that 'the theoretical Knowledge of Mankind is susceptible of daily Improvement, of Refinements which not only sublimate Religion, but every Science that glows in the Poet, or shines in the Philosopher.'⁸² This development should be viewed as an effort to remain in tune with contemporary trends of thought, especially those cultivated in the University of Cambridge, rather than as an attempt to propagate deism or atheism.

The fact that the ideas of the Glorious Revolution with its implications for the succession of dynasty and toleration towards non-conformists gradually gained ground in the Chesapeake suggests that, by the 1760s, the colonial clergy of the Church of England in the Chesapeake subscribed to conservative Whig policies, rather to Tory ones. The thought of Charles Inglis, rector and curate of Trinity Church, New York (1766-1783), is a telling example: while trying to avoid the

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 198-200.

⁸⁰ Mills, p. 7; Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism*, pp. 192-198.

⁸¹ Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, p. 223.

⁸² James Madison, *Oration in Commemoration of the Founders of William and Mary College, Delivered on the Anniversary of its Foundation* (Williamsburg, Virginia: Rind, 1772), p. 10.

political polarisation within the colonists and his own Church, Inglis thought that the Americans should be cautious not to undermine, through their fight for independence, the liberties gained by the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89. He believed that a stratified society involving the prerogatives of a hereditary aristocracy and monarchy, which patriots such as John Adams and Thomas Jefferson attacked, guaranteed political order and social tranquillity. Conservative Whig episcopalians believed that such stability was especially encouraged by the Church, since it instructed its members to lead a moral life within a hierarchically-structured society, superintended by God. This group of conservative Whig episcopalians was arguably stronger in New England and in the middle colonies, where it had to contend with the dissenting majority of the population. In the Chesapeake, its main representative was Jonathan Boucher, but it also found supporters in Henry Addison, Bennet Allen, Thomas Bacon and Thomas Gwatkin.⁸³

It becomes evident, then, that Anglican theologians in the colonies had adopted the main seventeenth-century tenets of the Church of England: freedom of will, responsibility for human actions, and passive obedience and non-resistance. Anglicanism, through its moral doctrine of the ‘Great Chain of Being’ was deemed particularly suited to promote social deference and harmony. In correspondence with political theology in the mother country, colonial Anglican theorists of the 1760s subscribed to conservative Whig ideas, as opposed to Tory ones. They believed in the providential right of kings as established with the Glorious Revolution and in the authority of a hereditary aristocracy and monarchy within a stratified society. Moreover, the success that George Whitefield enjoyed in the colonies and Samuel Henley’s adoption of natural theology reflected corresponding developments in England, such as the rise of Methodism and of Cambridge latitudinarianism as exhibited in the thought of William Paley.

Divine Services, Lay Piety and Patterns of Church Construction

Frequent descriptions of the colonial Church of England - mostly by its evangelical enemies - which have been reproduced by modern scholars, emphasise the laxity

⁸³ Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism*, pp. 228-231.

with which Church of England services and rites were observed. The Anglican clergyman, Hugh Jones, in his account of *The Present State of Virginia* (1719) accused Blair of introducing such practices as parsons not always wearing white surplices over their gowns on communion Sundays⁸⁴ and people receiving communion in their seats. Jones' words are eloquent on this: 'Every minister is kind of independent in his own parish, in respect of some little particular circumstances and customs.'⁸⁵ These accounts were mainly reproduced in 1982 by the influential historian Rhys Isaac in his study of Virginian religiosity⁸⁶ and in 1986 by Dell Upton, in his study of Virginian churches.⁸⁷ According to these critical descriptions of the worship in Virginian churches, the celebration of Holy Communion took place only from once a month to three times a year, the latter case being the most frequent one. Moreover, the musical parts of Holy Communion would be spoken, instead of sung, the rest of the liturgy and the sermon would be delivered in a monotonous way, and leading gentlemen would enter the church only in the time for the sermon.⁸⁸

Modern research, however, has made an attempt to redress this flawed image of the Virginian Church, pointing to the fact that the existing evidence does not fully corroborate these assertions. Elements of formality and informality might have been present in the way church services were conducted and attended in colonial Chesapeake, but these should not obscure the elements of orthodoxy in worship, nor suggest that the colonial laity was less pious than these in England. More specifically, vestry accounts from the half-century preceding the American Revolution show that vestries regularly catered for the surplices of their parsons and that, while it is possible that in some tidewater parishes, leading gentlemen would come into the church late, this was only shortly after the beginning of the service and certainly much earlier than the delivery of the sermon.⁸⁹ Moreover, the frequency of the church services largely reflected what was the norm in eighteenth-century

⁸⁴ Hugh Jones, *The Present State of Virginia. From whence is inferred a short View of Maryland and North Carolina*, ed. Richard L. Morton (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956), pp. 67-114

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁸⁶ Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, pp. 60-61; Isaac based his analysis on Hunter Dickinson Farish, ed., *Journal & Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion* (Williamsburg, Virginia: Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., 1957), p. 167.

⁸⁷ Dell Upton, *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* (New York, N.Y.: Architectural History Foundation; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986), pp. 3-4.

⁸⁸ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 4-5, 25; Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, p. 13

⁸⁹ Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 188-189.

England. Finally, colonial church buildings, though not being elaborately decorated, contained features that fully stressed the hierarchical, Episcopal elements of the Church of England.

In the Chesapeake, the sheer size of the parishes dictated one Sunday morning service - instead of a morning and an evening one, as prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer - normally starting at eleven o'clock. It should be noted that a single Sunday service was also the practice in England, especially in the south and east of the country.⁹⁰ Anglican faith was based on the Bible and its liturgy, which interpreted it, evolved around the 1662 revision of the Book of Common Prayer, a book, which has been praised for its ultimate rational piety. This provided for a liturgy with a coherent, regular and solemn character that efficiently catered for the spiritual needs of the parishioners at the time. Variations from the prescribed liturgy certainly existed, but their extent is not identifiable from the existing evidence.⁹¹

A usual morning service comprised the Morning Prayer, the Litany and Ante-Communion or 'Altar Prayer', and the sermon or homily. The Morning Prayer started with a solemn phrase from the scripture. In the colonies, Holy Communion would take place three or four times a year.⁹² This was a deviation from what was the practice in England, where Holy Communion was celebrated at least once a month in towns and urban centres.⁹³ The 'New Version' of metrical psalms by Tate and Brandy was the main source from which psalms for the services of the Church of England were derived. The psalms were sung by the congregation in unison or in octaves, while seated, after a first signal given by the minister. The first edition of the Book of Common Prayer, which contained the 'New Version' by Tate and Brandy, was to be used when performing this task.⁹⁴

Numerous are the examples of the exhibition of lay piety. Frequent were the injunctions in the sermons of ministers in the Chesapeake for personal prayer and devotion, while the diaries of William Byrd II and of John Blair of Williamsburg

⁹⁰ Gregory, Jeremy 'The Church of England' in H. T. Dickinson, ed. *The Blackwell Companion to Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), p. 236; Jacob, *Lay People and Religion*, p. 40.

⁹¹ Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 189-191.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 191.

⁹³ William Gibson, *The Achievement of the Anglican Church, 1689-1800. The Confessional State in Eighteenth Century England* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), pp. 180-1.

⁹⁴ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 4-5.

illustrate that these commands made a lasting impression on the minds of eighteenth-century wealthy Virginians.⁹⁵ The fervour with which the parishioners of Coventry parish in Maryland protested against the rejection of their petition to appoint Thomas B. Chandler as minister in their parish, the vigorous opposition of church adherents in St. Anne's, St. James's and All Saints' parishes (Maryland) to pluralism and to the performance of services by curates, as well as the rejection in 1772 of Samuel Henley, suspected of heterodoxy, as rector for the Bruton parish Church,⁹⁶ all demonstrate that lay piety was not lacking in the Chesapeake, at least as far as the socially privileged were concerned.

Anglican Church architecture in the Chesapeake was based on English prototypes. There were two main types: the rectangular and the cruciform. Because of the shortage of funds, the majority of the churches were relatively small: about 30 feet by 50 feet. They were not elaborately ornamented places of worship.⁹⁷ They had white walls with simple, clear glass windows, rather than stained ones, which was the norm in England. Churches with screens and the imposing towers and steeples of the English gothic churches were relatively rare, but not entirely non-existent, as Bruton Parish church, Williamsburg, Elizabeth City Parish church, Hampton, and Christ Church, Alexandria in Virginia and St. Andrew's Church, Leonardtown, Maryland, all suggest.⁹⁸ Efforts were made, nevertheless, to decorate appropriately what was destined to be the 'house of God': arches, vaultings, pediments, buttresses, sculpted fonts and altar tables placed on a pedestal are indicative of the desire of the colonists to imitate church buildings and furnishings in England.⁹⁹

In addition, arrangements for the inside of church buildings properly emphasised the Episcopal character of the worship. The wooden altar was situated in

⁹⁵ Lyon G. Tyler ed. 'Diary of John Blair', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 7, no. 3 (1899), 133-153; Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling, ed. *The great American gentleman: William Byrd of Westover in Virginia. His secret Diary for the years 1709-1712* (New York: Capricorn, 1963)

⁹⁶ Samuel Henley, *A Discourse Delivered in the Chapel of William and Mary College, Virginia; On the Anniversary of the College Foundation* (London: T. Cadell, 1776), esp. pp. 5-6; Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, p. 233; Gilmor Papers, *Maryland Historical Society*, vol. 1, p. 61; Sermon preached at St. Ann's Church in Annapolis... Occasioned by the death of Thomas Bordley in Bordley Family Papers, MS 64, *Maryland Historical Society*, p. 19.

⁹⁷ Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, p. 58

⁹⁸ Upton, *Holy Things and Profane*, pp. 47-98; Stephen P. Dorsey, *Early English Churches in America, 1607-1807* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 54-55, 60-61, 82-83; Cf. Nigel Yates, *Buildings, Faith, and Worship. The Liturgical Arrangement of Anglican Churches. 1600-1900* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 47-66.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-162.

the east of the nave, surrounded by a railed chancel, namely a chancel with a set of railings, sometimes ornate and frequently of marble or wood. Inside the chancel was the communion table, on which a copy of the Scriptures and the Prayer Book were placed. On communion Sunday, the chalice, paten, flagon, and alms basin stood on a table, covered with a comely linen cloth. The Decalogue, Apostles' Creed, and Lord's Prayer were often written on tablets hanging on the wall on each side of the chancel, a structure which often took imposing, elaborate forms. The font would be situated close to the west end of the church. In the centre of the nave, there was a three-level pulpit, as was the trend in eighteenth-century England, rather than one built on a single level. It was a wooden structure that also comprised a reading desk and a clerk's stall. The minister would conduct the liturgical part of the service from the reading desk and he would deliver the sermon from the pulpit desk. The pews of a high square shape were assigned to families according to their social standing. The richest and most powerful ones were seating at the front or in a place with a good view of the pulpit. In this way, the seating in a church on Sundays would clearly reveal the social stratification in the Chesapeake tidewater parishes.¹⁰⁰

It can be concluded, then, that, far from being lax, the Church of England in the colonies of the Chesapeake Bay strove to emulate English prototypes. This becomes evident in the care with which the vestries tended parish affairs, in the frequency of services bearing many similarities with the English patterns and in the numerous examples of lay piety. Moreover, both church architecture and decoration resembled the styles adopted in English churches.

A Lay-dominated, Somnolent Church?

In the years immediately preceding the American Revolution, Samuel Henley was one of the disaffected in William and Mary College. He was a former non-conformist minister from outside Cambridge who had been ordained an Anglican minister. His preaching of dissenting notions was not accepted in Virginia.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Nelson, *Blessed Company*, p. 188.

¹⁰¹ Samuel Henley, *The Distinct Claims of Government and Religion Considered in a Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Burgesses, at Williamsburg, in Virginia, March 1, 1772* (Cambridge, Mass., 1772), pp. iii-iv, vi, viii.

In the early 1770s, Henley was attacked as a heretic and a Socinian because his sermons included ideas denouncing the doctrine of the Trinity and depriving Jesus of his divinity.¹⁰² He also believed in annihilation, namely the idea that in life after death the sinful people would be totally destroyed, repudiating, thus, the conventional doctrine of redemption.¹⁰³ For this reason, on 12 June 1772, Henley was rejected as a rector for the Bruton parish church by the rigorously orthodox majority in the vestry. Henley, influenced by the spirit of the Enlightenment, encouraged men to use their own reason, even when judging religious doctrines. He exalted ‘these modern ages of free enquiry’ and the opportunity of advancement in all sciences that his time offered.¹⁰⁴ According to him, Revelation was to be tested by rational criteria, while truth was only what was not contradictory to reason.¹⁰⁵ The fact that, in Virginia, Henley was denied the rectory of Bruton parish, that the parishioners of Coventry parish, Maryland, vigorously claimed the right to be officiated over by a minister who had morally and doctrinally upright views, as detailed above, and that there was strong opposition to pluralism among the church adherents in the St. Anne’s, St. James’s and All Saints’ parishes, Maryland, all indicate that the Church of England in the Chesapeake was far from being somnolent.

The vigour of the Church of England, whether in the Chesapeake, or in the colonies as a whole, could not match or surpass that of the parent institution. The colonial Church failed to have an impact on new immigrants, as potential adherents, and in the regions where the birth rate was high, the Church of England was weak. The strengthening of long-established parishes concealed, in this way, weaknesses in the institutional structure that the seventeenth century had bestowed on the eighteenth-century colonial Church of England.¹⁰⁶ There were elements in the religious life in the Chesapeake, however, which unmistakably reflected the strength of the Anglican Church in England. This was expressed in the work of missionary societies, such as the SPG, in the active involvement of the colonial elite

¹⁰² Nicholas to Henley, *Va. Gaz.* (P&D), Feb. 24, 1774 in Isaac, p. 233.

¹⁰³ Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, p. 235.

¹⁰⁴ Henley, *Distinct Claims of Government*, p. iii; The importance that Henley ascribed to knowledge is also portrayed in his: *A Discourse Delivered in the Chapel of William and Mary College, Virginia; On the Anniversary of the College Foundation* (London: T. Cadell, 1776), esp. pp. 5-6.

¹⁰⁵ Henley, *Distinct Claims*, pp. 2, 11, 12.

¹⁰⁶ Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, p. 26.

in church affairs and in those intellectual developments that occurred in the colonies in tune with the age of reason. These conditions moulded the particular character of the Church of England in colonial Virginia and Maryland, which can be best described as distinctly 'Chesapeakean': it retained the main features of the Anglican church as experienced in the mother country, such as the importance of the liturgy in worship, lay piety, and the influence of patrons or the elite in church affairs. Nevertheless, factors intrinsically 'Chesapeakean' or American, such as the diverse religious and ethnic roots of the ministers, the distance from an ecclesiastical and temporal hierarchy with vested interests in civil administration and the increased role of the vestries in church administration, were also present. These were the elements that ensured the preservation of the colonial Church of England in the 'New World', where great religious and ethnic diversity was predominant from its inception.

Finally, the term 'Chesapeakean' should not be used in a sweeping fashion to describe the religious characteristics and conditions of the Church of England in Virginia and Maryland as a single, homogenous entirety. A proper distinction between the two regions, regarding the integral elements of the church should be made. In Maryland, greater religious diversity than in Virginia rendered the religious establishment more intolerant towards dissenters. Moreover, Anglican clergymen in the region, being less dependent on the vestries, could easier develop their own independent opinions regarding political and ecclesiastical affairs. Jonathan Boucher, the staunchest loyalist supporter in the Chesapeake at the time of the American Revolution, mainly officiated in Maryland. The Virginian establishment undeniably bore a longer tradition than the one in Maryland and it grouped together more numerous adherents. Nevertheless, the united efforts of James Blair and the vestries, exercised such great control over the clergymen in the region that the latter were hesitant to express independent ideas about religious and political issues. In this way, clergymen in Virginia increasingly gave the impression that they were addressing but the upper social classes, failing, therefore, to have an impact on the whole population or to influence their religious practices and political ideas.

Chapter Three

Anglicanism in the Pre-Revolutionary Chesapeake, ca. 1760-1774.

This chapter aims to investigate the influence of Anglican political theology and doctrine on the thought of statesmen and clergymen of that persuasion living in the Chesapeake in the years prior to the outbreak of the hostilities between Britain and her North American colonies. This will be done through an examination of the responses of prominent Anglicans towards events that attracted public attention during these years. These included the Episcopal controversy, the Parson's cause in Virginia, and the Proclamation controversy in Maryland. The extent to which the seventeenth-century orthodox high-church theory of the divine origin of society and its laws permeated the thought of Chesapeakean Anglicans is the main concern of this thesis. Jonathan Boucher, an English clergyman who officiated both in Virginia and in Maryland during those years, wrote his *View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution* (1797). In the United States, this is the text most influenced by the celebrated notions of passive obedience and non-resistance towards the civil authorities, a doctrine, which formed an integral part of the traditional Anglican theory about the divine nature of society. In this chapter Boucher's essay is used as a means of examining how Anglican ideas in the colonies, as expressed by the colonial clergy and laity of the established church, converged with or diverged from those in England.

The Episcopal Plan

In the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century, there were frequent expressions of the need for a resident bishop in the American colonies. For example, in 1638, the plans of Archbishop Laud for a bishop in New England were frustrated by the Bishops' Wars in Scotland. In December 1713, the ministers, churchwardens and vestry of King's Chapel, Boston, sent a petition addressed to the queen, supported by Governor Nicholson, while petitions from New York, New England

and Rhode Island also reached the parent country. Furthermore, in 1725 and in 1727, clergymen from Connecticut sent addresses to the king and the 'Society for the Propagation of the Gospel', but these petitions failed to receive the desired response, possibly due to the influence of Walpole and the Whigs, who were opposed to any action that might cause religious and political strife within the empire. On 20 February 1741, Thomas Secker, bishop of Oxford, ostensibly embraced the cause of the colonists by delivering the annual sermon of the SPG on this matter. Secker was one of the most energetic supporters of the plan in England at that period and the years to come, when he was joined in his efforts by Thomas Sherlock, who became bishop of London in 1748.¹ The attempts of both prelates proved abortive, however, mainly because of the opposition from dissenters and the low-church party in the parent country.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the plan for the establishment of a bishop in America was largely due to the initiative of the Elizabeth Town clerical Convention of 1766. This was explained in detail in Thomas Bradbury Chandler's *An Appeal to the Public in Behalf of the Church of England* (1767). Chandler advocated the institution of primitive bishops, in the sense that they would only have had the power of ordination, confirmation, consecration and visitation, without titles, the receiving of tithes, or the organization of ecclesiastical courts.² Dissenters were quick to express their opposition in the press. Their main fear was that the Massachusetts and Connecticut Congregational establishments would be overturned in favour of the Anglican Church. For New England dissenters, the bishop's campaign aroused memories of the seventeenth century, when Archbishop William Laud had intended a bishop for New England and, also, schemed to institute bishops and standardize the use of Prayer Book in Scotland. Dissenters, then, were not far from arguing that the institution of a bishop in America would threaten religious liberty there, since they

¹ A.L. Cross, *The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902), pp. 89-112.

² Thomas Bradbury Chandler, *An Appeal to the Public, in behalf of the Church of England in America* (New York: J. Parker, 1767), pp. 19-35, 54; see also: Jonathan Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution in thirteen discourses, preached in North America between the years 1763 and 1775: with an historical preface* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1797), p. 139; Chandler, *Appeal to the Public*, pp. 96, 97-105; see also: Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, pp. 165-172, 216.

thought that there were no guarantees for the security of the civil and religious rights of the people.³

These fears of dissenters in New England were exacerbated by disputes between Congregationalists and Anglicans, which occurred in the years immediately preceding the Episcopal plan: in 1763, Congregationalists in Massachusetts voted an Indian Missions Act that the Privy Council rejected mainly because Archbishop Secker resisted it. In retaliation, an initiative coming from the Anglican camp to found a college, named Queens, in the Berkshires, Massachusetts, was blocked by the assembly. Moreover, Anglicans in Massachusetts and Connecticut protested that they were refused church taxes, which they had the right to collect even on occasions when their ministers were absent.⁴ After bishop of Landaff John Ewer's annual SPG sermon, advocating a bishopric in America, and the publication of Chandler's *Appeal* in 1767, the bishop's controversy was transformed to a newspaper and pamphlet confrontation with Congregational minister Jonathan Mayhew of Boston being the main protagonist.⁵ Mayhew was one of the first to associate the Stamp Act and the other 'tyrannical' British measures with the Episcopal plan in an effort to substantiate the fears of the spectre of despotism being unleashed against the colonies.⁶

It becomes, then, evident that the bishop's campaign further exacerbated the tensions between Anglicans and dissenters in New England and in the middle colonies. The support of Virginia and Maryland for the Episcopal plan proved crucial for its success. The established status of the Church of England in the Chesapeake region could have contributed to the success of the scheme and could have

³ Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences*, pp. 137, 141, 143-144.

⁴ Frederick V Mills, *Bishops by Ballot: An Eighteenth-Century Ecclesiastical Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 144-5.

⁵ Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, p. 191.

⁶ Robert Lawson-Peebles, "Smith, William (1727-1803)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004). Online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, n.d. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/65048> (accessed 12 July, 2006); Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, p. 247; Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 146-7; Jonathan Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist, 1738-1789. Being the autobiography of the Revd Jonathan Boucher, Rector of Annapolis in Maryland and afterwards Vicar of Epsom, Surrey, England. Edited by his grandson Jonathan Bouchier.* (Port Washington, N.Y: Kennikat Press, 1967), p. 100; for the so-called 'Mayhew controversy', see: Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, pp. 145-160 and Carl Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre. Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics, 1689-1775* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 224-229; for the newspaper controversy, see: Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, pp. 195-214.

complemented the limited support from the New England laity and from the Pennsylvania clergy. However, the less than harmonious relations between the laity and the clergy in the Chesapeake posed further difficulties to the realisation of such a scheme.

Church and Politics in the Chesapeake

In Virginia, as indicated in chapter two above, it was the vestries - not the proprietor – who mainly determined parish affairs. Since the beginning of the eighteenth century, the vast majority of these bodies had acquired a self-perpetuating status and even contested the right of the governor to induct candidates, through the use of yearly contracts and the practice of probationary periods of service, especially after the act of October 1748, which calculated clerical salaries on an annual basis and fixed them at 16,000 pounds of tobacco. It is telling that in his letter of 14 June 1759 to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, the bishop of London stated:

In the same Act of 1758, there is the strongest Confirmation of the Clergy's Right to their full Proportion of Titheables, without any Diminution whatsoever, which Provision was meant to silence the Complaints of the Clergy against the other Part of the Act; and Reason they had to Complain, when, instead of the Royal Authority, they were put under the Power of the Vestry and made subject to the Humours of the People.⁷

At that instance, the bishop of London's understanding of the situation was that the Lieutenant-Governor sided with the vestry in order to augment its powers. He held:

But one would think, upon Consideration of some late Transactions there, that the Deputy-Governours (*sic*) thought themselves obliged, upon their first Entrance, to make a Present to the Vestries of the Maintenance of the Clergy, the Jurisdiction of the Prerogative and the Supremacy and Rights of the Crown.⁸

⁷ This refers to the 'Two Penny Act' of that year, passed into law on 12 October 1758; Richard Bland, *A Letter to the clergy of Virginia, in which the conduct of the General-Assembly is vindicated, against the reflexions contained in a letter to the lords of trade and plantations, from the Lord-Bishop of London* (Williamsburg, [Va]: William Hunter, 1760), p. iv; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

⁸ Bland, *Letter to the clergy of Virginia*, p.vi.

Under these conditions, it seemed that the only power exercised by the bishop of London over the Virginia church was the procurement of licenses to clergymen who were to take up office. This becomes evident when considering that, after the tenure of Bishop Edmund Gibson (1723-48) in the See of London, no Bishop of London ever issued a commission delegating his jurisdiction to a commissary in Virginia. A letter of authorization was the most common document that the professed commissaries in Virginia would bear after mid-eighteenth century.⁹ The opposition of the Virginia laity to any external interference in religious affairs can be portrayed in several occurrences, most notable of which is the Parson's Cause, a dispute over clerical salaries that arose between the clergymen and the vestrymen in early 1760s.

In 1758, the assembly allowed the payment of debts in money instead of tobacco, due to the shortage of tobacco, and fixed the rate at 16s:8d per 100 pounds. This adjustment was not unusual, since many officials were sometimes paid in money instead in tobacco. Nevertheless, the clergy objected to the measure and requested the interference of the Bishop of London to ban the law.¹⁰ The latter's words also reveal the smouldering conflict between the assembly and the crown:

Here the Case is fully stated: It is admitted, that the Maintenance of the Clergy had the King's Confirmation; and that the Governor, by his Instructions, is restrained from altering it; but it seems the Act confirmed by his Majesty, appointed 16,000 Pounds of Tobacco to each Clergyman. The Act upon which this Advice was asked took no Notice of the Quantity of Tobacco allowed to the Clergy; but made it subject to a Compensation in Money, which was to be rated by the very Persons who were liable to the Payment of the whole: Upon this Circumstance the Council gave their Judgment, and declared it was the Opinion of the Board, that this Bill was not contradictory to that Law, insomuch as it by no Means lessened the Quantity of Tobacco allowed to the Clergy, but made it subject to a Compensation in Money, which was to be rated by the very Persons who were liable to the Payment of the whole: Upon this Circumstance the Council gave their Judgment, and declared it was the Opinion of the Board, that this Bill was not contradictory to that Law, insomuch as it by no Means lessened the Quantity of Tobacco allowed the Clergy, but only ascertained the Price thereof to be paid in Money for all Dues, as well to Officers as to the Clergy.

⁹ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 88-89.

¹⁰ Bland, *Letter to the clergy of Virginia*, pp. 13-14.

This Declaration is a formal Judgment in the Case, stated between the Authority of the Crown and the Power of the Assembly, and subjected the Laws established by the Royal Assent to be altered, corrected or suspended, by a Vote of the Assembly.¹¹

On the passing of the 1757 act, the clergy in convention resolved to send the Rev John Camm, rector of Newport and York-Hampton parishes and professor of divinity at William and Mary College, to England in order to seek its rejection by the king.¹² As a result, not only was the ‘Two Penny Act’ of 1758 overturned, but also that of 1755.¹³ In the minds of the clerical authorities in England the ‘Two Penny Act’ represented a curtailment of the influence both of the Crown and of the Church of England in the plantations, while the colonial elite drew a parallel between the contentious behaviour of the clergy in the 1750s with that of the Puritans in the seventeenth century.¹⁴

The control that was achieved in the 1750s over the House of Burgesses’ legislative power encouraged other clergymen to seek redress of their grievances regarding financial issues. In 1763, James Maury, rector of Fredericksville parish, took legal action in Hanover County Court and succeeded in gaining compensation for salary losses. On this occasion, Patrick Henry’s speech in favour of the vestry convinced the judge to grant only one penny as indemnity to the clergyman. John Camm decided, then, to publicize his convictions and a pamphlet disputation began with his *A Single and Distinct View of the Act Vulgarly Called the Two Penny Act* (1763), in turn answered by Landon Carter’s *The Rector Detected* (1764) and by Richard Bland’s *The Colonel Dismounted, or the Rector Vindicated* (1764). Through their writings, Carter and Bland represented the vestry. They criticized the clergy for seeking to acquire a privileged status above that of common subjects, because of the requests the clerics put forward. Moreover, Bland commented on the matter of Britain’s relations with the colonies. He held that the colonists had the right to manage their own internal affairs and that this was derived either from their English

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. v.

¹² John Camm later became commissary of the Bishop of London and was also president of the College of William and Mary, between 1771-1777.

¹³ Landon Carter, *A letter to the Right Reverend father in God, the Lord B----p of L-----n* (London, 1760), pp. 58-60.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12, 33.

origins or from their unconquered status as Americans. This reasoning was portrayed in the Virginia Council's resolve that the veto exercised by the royal authorities over colonial laws readjusting the payment of salaries and debts should not represent an annulment of those acts.¹⁵

Bland's writings betray his views on the Anglican clergy. He was inclined to grant the clergy an instructional role – instead of a sacerdotal one - but he denied them preferential treatment above what other citizens received. He claimed: 'They [The Ministers] stand upon the same Level with other Men, and are not superior to them, as I know of, either in Station or Learning'.¹⁶ He, then, made his point clearer: 'the Clergy, it must be confessed, is of great Consideration in the State; as Instructors of the People in that Religion upon which the Salvation of Souls depends, they ought to be held in high Estimation; but yet the Preservation of the Community is to be preferred even to them'.¹⁷ Moreover, he believed in the Anglican ideal of proceeding in an orderly manner. He condemned what he described as the 'riotous' behaviour of the clergy when the latter protested against the 'Two Penny Act'.¹⁸ Similarly, Landon Carter declared that: 'extremities, be they ever so legal or justifiable, could never have procured the End proposed'.¹⁹

Another cause for dispute between the clergy and laymen in Virginia of the late 1770s was the commissary's claim to be the only person to suggest candidates to the bishops in England for ordination, regardless of the will of the vestry. For example, James Ogilvie was supported by Thomas Jefferson and the vestrymen of Orange parish but was not favoured by commissary James Horrocks. Horrocks refused to support Ogilvie and wrote to Bishop Terrick advising him to refuse Ogilvie his ordination. Not only Jefferson, however, but also Peyton Randolph, attorney-general for Virginia, and Thomas Adams, Virginia's agent in London, sided with Ogilvie. Jefferson expressed his personal disgust over Horrocks' behaviour.

¹⁵ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 96-97.

¹⁶ Bland, *Letter to the clergy of Virginia*, p. 4; see also: Carter, *Letter to the Right Reverend Father in God*, p. 44.

¹⁷ Bland, *Letter to the clergy of Virginia*, p.19.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁹ Carter, *Letter to the Right Reverend Father in God*, p. 9.

Ogilvie was eventually ordained, but decided to remain in England, instead of serving in Virginia.²⁰

In Maryland, the House of Delegates had formed the country faction, which from 1739 onwards had opposed the proprietary prerogative in several ways: they attacked numerous taxes benefiting the proprietor and the governor, including the tonnage duty, the hogshead tax, and the proclamation fees, which counterfeited the stipulations of the charter. During these disputes, the country faction developed tactics that assured its victory over the proprietary or court faction and over Britain in the 1770s. When Robert Eden replaced Governor Horatio Sharpe in 1769, a new effort was launched by the country party to lower the incomes enjoyed by the proprietor, his officials, and the colonial secretary. The relinquishment of license fees by the proprietor can be deemed as a victory for the country party.

In 1773, in his response to the so-called ‘Proclamation Controversy’, when the determination of officers’ fees by the proprietor alone was contested by the country faction, Daniel Dulany presented a typically loyalist line of argument coloured by Anglican principles: the reaction to unconstitutional measures should be in correspondence with the severity of the abuses perpetrated by the temporal authorities. He thought that the country faction had no right reason for complaint, since in Britain the king himself determined the fees of officers in his government and that right was conferred on the proprietor in Maryland by the king. This was the case, in the same manner, in New York, as well, where the governor and his council solely, without the concurrence of the lower house of assembly, established the fees. Dulany emphatically declared: ‘if oppressed, they [the people] must feel the oppression – if they are not [oppressed] let them not be persuaded by this political quack to think they are’.²¹ In this sense, Dulany regarded the resolves of the lower house in Maryland as evidence of ‘intemperate vehemence’.²² Anglican loyalists had a strong sense of their Protestant identity. In 1765, Daniel Dulany had professed to be an ‘Englishman’ and in his dispute with Charles Carroll of Carrollton during the proclamation controversy, he professed to be a Protestant, as opposed to his

²⁰ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp.97-8.

²¹ Peter S. Onuf, (ed.), *Maryland and the Empire, 1773. The Antillon-First Citizen Letters* (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 116, 118.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 116.

adversary who as a Catholic, was -Dulany claimed - not allowed to criticize the political system, which actually provided toleration of his views.²³

During these disputes in early 1770s in Maryland, the church establishment came under attack. In 1771-1772, the lawyers Samuel Chase and William Paca questioned the validity of Maryland's church establishment. They offered to defend gratis anyone who, convinced by their arguments, declined to pay taxes towards the established church. In 1773, in Charles County, such a case was taken to court and redress was achieved. In the same year, the assembly passed a measure declaring the Act of Establishment of 1702 unconstitutional, but the upper house rejected this bill. A new church tax reduced the poll tariff from forty to thirty pounds of tobacco and set a rate of four shillings per poll for the payment of the tax with the consequence that clerical salaries were decreased by between one-fifth and one-half. Any attempts to legally overturn the act proved unsuccessful.²⁴

What best explains Virginia's opposition to the Episcopal plan is the close identification of religious with political authorities in this region. In this sense, it was very frequent for a vestryman to be member of the House of Burgesses or hold one of the following less prestigious offices: county clerk, county surveyor, coroner, tobacco inspector, collector of customs, or militia officer. Indicative of this is the fact that, in 1765, at least half members of the House of Burgesses were also vestrymen, a proportion which seems to have diminished only slightly by 1775. In addition, between 1757 and 1775, almost three out of four of those who became Burgesses and vestrymen had also worked as county justices. In this way, the Virginia laity had developed independent ways to administer the religious and political affairs of the colony to the extent that they successfully resisted the authority of the governor and the bishop of London. Consequently, any potential interference from a resident bishop - even one with limited, spiritual powers - was inevitably perceived as an affront to the aforesaid prerogatives of the colonial laity.²⁵

²³ Daniel Dulany, 'Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes in the British Colonies (Annapolis, 1765)' in Bernard Bailyn, ed.; Jane N. Garrett, assist. ed., *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, 1750-1776*, vol. I. 1750-1765 (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 645; Onuf, *Maryland and the Empire, 1773*, pp. 122, 188.

²⁴ For Jonathan Boucher's account of these events, see: Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist*, pp. 70, 103-05.

²⁵ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 94-5.

In Maryland, the disputes between the court faction, which favoured the proprietor, and the country faction, which was largely constituted by the colony's gentry, checked the progress of the Episcopal campaign. During those disputes, which erupted between 1739 and 1773, the country faction assumed the role of the parliament and the court faction that of proprietary representatives. As a result of the turmoil, the established church emerged weakened. By the late 1760s the court faction had already lost some of its prestige, due to the attacks it had received from the country faction during the controversies caused by the Stamp Act and the Townshend Duties. A bishop was, then, perceived as an attack on proprietary prerogatives.

The Episcopal Campaign in the Chesapeake

Dr Myles Cooper, president of King's College, New York, and Robert McKean, SPG missionary in New Jersey, had aimed to convince Maryland's governor, Horatio Sharpe (1753-69), and the colony's clergymen of the usefulness of an American bishopric within the Church of England in colonial America.²⁶ In Maryland, the proprietor had the chief role in ministerial selection and clerical law-making, to the extent that the will of the vestry counted for little. On the contrary, in Virginia, the vestry had become powerful, especially from 1725 onwards. These circumstances weakened the standing of the clergy in both colonies and placed it in a permanent defensive position. Moreover, the need for appeal to the royal and religious authorities in England for the success of the Episcopal plan – in the midst of the mounting conflict between Britain and the colonies – minimized the chances of success of the scheme. The staunch supporters of the bishop campaign were those clergymen who were involved in disputes over remuneration with the colonial elite. It seems that they were the only ones dedicated to Britain and, at the same time, bold enough to resist the lay authorities in the colonies.²⁷

In Maryland, any stance in clear favour of a bishopric, would have aroused the opposition of the governor, the proprietor, and the assembly and would, thus, have further weakened the position of the church. As a result, among the Maryland

²⁶ Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist*, p. 100; Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, p. 231.

²⁷ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, p. 101.

clergy, only Henry Addison, Bennet Allen and Jonathan Boucher favoured the Episcopal campaign.²⁸ Virginia - almost inevitably – saw a swelling wave of anticlericalism, since the clerical plea to the English authorities during the Parson's cause was not favoured by the leading statesmen in the colony. This, coupled with the growing tension between Britain and her colonies over taxation, fostered hostile conditions for an Episcopal plan to flourish in the region during the later years of the 1760s. Telling is the fact that, in Virginia, only James Horrocks and John Camm showed committed support to the bishop campaign.²⁹

In the 1760s, the initial resistance to the Episcopal campaign in Maryland was spearheaded by Governor Horatio Sharpe. When a petition of eight clergymen was presented to him, Sharpe refused to accept it as a product of the deliberations of the whole body of the clergy. He promised, however, to bring the petition before the assembly. The latter refused to send the petition to England for further consideration, but, in spite of this decision, it was sent. Upon receiving knowledge of this fact, Lord Baltimore instructed Governor Sharpe not to allow the clergy to assemble again for any purpose whatsoever.³⁰ Despite the acknowledgement of the need for the services of a bishop, it was then feared that secular powers would have been gradually acquired by a resident colonial bishop, even though his authority would be limited to ecclesiastical affairs.³¹

Nevertheless, the clergy managed to meet in Maryland in August 1768, at which time Sharpe was in the process of being replaced as governor by Robert Eden. With the aim of organizing a Society for the Relief of Ministerial Widows and Orphans, Addison, Allen and Boucher called a convention of the clergy, wherein petitions for the establishment of a bishopric were prepared. Under the leadership of Jonathan Boucher, former tutor in Virginia, and then, rector at St. Anne's parish, in Annapolis, Maryland, nine clergymen signed the aforementioned petition and stated that they intended to circulate the text to the king, the bishop of London and the proprietor. Governor Eden then suggested that this text be submitted to the Assembly

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 89-92; Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist*, p. 100; Copybook of Henry Addison, Henry Addison to Captain D.D. Addison, 14 August 1784, Addison Papers, box 1, *Maryland Historical Society*.

²⁹ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 100-1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

³¹ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 101-102.

for consideration, but three clergymen replied in writing that it was intended only for his examination. It seems, thus, that the clerical support for the Johnson-Chandler Episcopal plan was not steadfast and that it aroused the opposition of the Maryland gentry, as the antagonism between Boucher and the Dulanys of St. Anne's parish exhibits.

Boucher's relocation to Prince George County should not be perceived as irrelevant to these events. His sermon 'On the American Episcopate' shortly after occasioned the attack of the aforementioned vestrymen, Samuel Chase and William Paca, who publicly reproached him for an overbearing attitude towards the vestry. They also argued that common law was against the institution of bishops. These incidents famously induced him to preach with a pair of loaded pistols placed on the cushion of his pulpit. Regarding the Episcopal cause, Boucher believed that he was obliged to perform his duty to do what he thought was rightful on that occasion and not merely to comply with the wishes of the Maryland elite. His description of the event is telling: 'in matters of duty, whatever deference I owed to their opinions, or however much I was bound to them in gratitude for past favours, or by interest in the prospect of future ones, I could allow no man to dictate me.'³² The rest of Boucher's career serves as evidence of the seething tension between him and the vestry, which was mainly composed by the social elite of the parish: in 1773, he delegated the tasks in his parish to a curate and he himself became a curate to Henry Addison, at St. John's Parish in Prince George's County. In 1775, with hostilities mounting between revolutionaries and loyalists, he decided to return permanently to England.³³

The main indication of the prevailing mood of the Maryland clergy towards the ecclesiastical and political affairs is their stance towards episcopacy. The question on this issue bears clearer examination. In their published attack on Boucher, Chase and Paca stated that the majority of the clergy were against the institution of a bishop in America. This claim might not have been groundless, since John Gordon, rector of St. Michael's, Talbot County, and David Love, rector of All Hallows, Ann Arundel County, both wrote to Walter Dulany that they were adamantly opposed to the bishop's campaign and that they intended to muster the support of more clergymen in order to present a counter-petition to the governor. It

³² Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist*, p. 66.

³³ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 102-103; Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist*, pp. 112-3.

has not been confirmed whether this action was eventually taken or what Dulany's views were on this matter, but Gordon and Love were evidently persuaded that many of their colleagues shared the same sentiments. It can, therefore, be concluded with fair certainty that the Episcopal scheme was not heartily received in Maryland.³⁴

In 1771, Thomas Bradbury Chandler entreated Virginian Anglicans to support his plan through his pamphlet, *An Address from the Clergy of New York and New Jersey*. Chandler's pamphlet was answered by Thomas Gwatkin's *A Letter to the Clergy of New York and New Jersey* (1772), wherein he firmly opposed the creation of a bishopric in America. In 1771, Horrocks attempted to organize a meeting in order to institute a Fund for the Relief of Widows and Orphans, but some clergy suspected the disguised purpose of this convention and insisted that his real intentions should be revealed. This initiated the Episcopal controversy in Virginia, which was marked by an exchange of twenty-three letters in Purdie's *Virginia Gazette*, between 30 May 1771 and 5 March 1772. Given that the Episcopal plan was largely identified with the English political measures against the colonies³⁵ and that newspaper owners were particularly afflicted by the Stamp Act, these letters expressed a particularly negative stance against the campaign for a bishop. This phenomenon was common in the thirteen colonies, since, prior to 1774, not one of the forty-two American newspapers was wholeheartedly supporting the British.

In Virginia, the anti-episcopal campaign internalized arguments that targeted the established church as a whole and that focused on the following issues: the menace presented to political liberties by the existence of the establish church, the failing moral discipline of the clergy, and the invalidity of the doctrine of apostolic succession. Under the instigation of John Camm and William Willie, the Virginian convention met on 4 June 1771, but less than one in six clergymen attended and, of these, one third firmly opposed episcopacy.³⁶ The latter percentage was composed of four clergymen:³⁷ namely Thomas Gwatkin and Samuel Henley, professors in William and Mary College, Richard Hewitt, rector of Hungar's parish, Northampton County, and William Bland, rector of James City parish. Gwatkin and Henley,

³⁴ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 103-104.

³⁵ Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, pp.255-9.

³⁶ Twelve out of more than 90 clergymen in Virginia attended the meeting at that time and four of those who attended opposed the Episcopal campaign, see: Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, p. 231.

³⁷ Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences*, p. 94.

English-born ordained ministers, initiated the public controversy in the newspapers, under the pseudonym 'A Country Gentleman.' Other opponents of the Episcopal campaign contributed to their arguments, while Camm and Horrocks, assuming the name 'A Country Clergyman', attempted to stand up for their decision to promote the Johnson-Chandler plan.³⁸

Gwatkin's and Henley's arguments evolved around the following points: they argued that the convention was not a representative one because only a minority of clergymen in the colony attended; that the supporters of the scheme should have had the consent of the assembly and the council; that they were not entitled to decide on a matter that would have affected other colonies; and that this plan would have further exacerbated the already weakened relations with the Church in England, because it would have led to the institution of independent religious structures in America. Gwatkin and Henley thought that the explicit implication of the petition, namely that the supervision of the bishop of London was to a great degree inadequate, exhibited unjustified insolence towards the ecclesiastical authorities in England.³⁹ In the midst of these debates, James Horrocks left for England, causing William Nelson, president of the council, to suspect that the real reason behind the trip was not health reasons, as Horrock had stated, but becoming a consecrated bishop. It was clear by then that the heated disputes in Virginia over episcopacy came close to provoking a schism within the Anglican camp.⁴⁰

Given the unresponsive attitude to the Episcopal plan from the majority of the clergy in Virginia, it becomes understandable that, in July 1771, Charles Inglis described Virginian Anglicans as 'false brethren'.⁴¹ Inglis, undoubtedly agreed with Chandler's view on the reciprocity of benefits in the alliance between Episcopacy and monarchy. In his *Appeal to the Public in (1767)*, Chandler affirmed: 'but notwithstanding, Episcopacy and Monarchy are, in their Frame and constitution, best suited to each other. Episcopacy can never thrive in a Republican Government, nor Republican Principles in an Episcopal Church'.⁴² This statement indicates that Anglican clergymen, especially in New England and the middle colonies, were

³⁸ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 104-5, 109; p. 148.

³⁹ Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, pp. 233-4.

⁴⁰ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, p. 105

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 109.

⁴² Chandler, *Appeal to the Public*, p. 115.

considerably more committed to the monarchical cause than the Anglican laity in the Chesapeake or the dissenters. The view of the alliance between the Anglican Church and the monarchy was eloquently expressed by the bishop of London in 1759: 'If the Crown does not or cannot support itself in so plain a Case, as is before us, it would be in vain for the Clergy to plead the Act confirmed by the King; for their Rights must stand or fall, with the Authority of the Crown.'⁴³

The similarity in thinking between the Anglicans in Virginia and Maryland, on one hand, and dissenters, on the other, is illustrated in Richard Bland's exhortation to Thomas Adams, colonial agent in London, to publish in the capital's press the efforts of Horrocks and Camm in favour of the Episcopal campaign in an attempt to instigate English dissenters to act against it.⁴⁴ This reaction suggests that, given the perceived offences by the English authorities against the rights of the colonists, any measure supported by the government in the mother country was, almost inevitably, perceived as a threat.⁴⁵

In August 1771, Richard Bland expressed an opinion that probably voiced the concerns of many fellow vestrymen. He argued that the actions of clergymen, who called the meeting to promote the Episcopal plan, failed to take into consideration the existing church-state relations in Virginia and especially the pertinent acts of the assembly. Given that a bishop would have contested the jurisdiction of the general court, which extended to all ecclesiastical and political cases, an amendment in Virginia's laws would have been needed to accommodate the new patriarch. This was a development that Virginia's elite was reluctant to excuse, since it would have disrupted the undisputed dominance of the laity in church affairs in the colony. This reasoning is another indication that Virginia's Anglicans shared similar thinking about religious matters with Congregationalist and Presbyterian parishioners. In July 1772, the House of Burgesses officially thanked those clergymen who opposed the Episcopal plan in Virginia, a resolution which became known in Annapolis, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and London. An anonymous author, under the pseudonym 'Martin Luther', remarked that this struggle did not help to develop good

⁴³ Bland, *Letter to the clergy of Virginia*, p. vi.

⁴⁴ Richard Bland to Thomas Adams, 1 Aug. 1771, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, VI (1898-99), p. 134.

⁴⁵ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, p. 144.

morals and religion in Virginia. Because of the intense anticlericalism that this debate had promoted, this statement seemed a description of the religio-political conditions in Virginia at this time. It was a reality, however, that the Anglican leaders in the Old Dominion failed to recognize in time.⁴⁶ The 1772 bill for an ecclesiastical commission to oversee the task of the ministers of the established church, which was drafted by the legislature (see chapter two above), can be perceived not only as a consequence of the controversy over the bishops in Virginia, but also as corroborating the above remarks about the Presbyterian or republican-type polity developing in the colony.⁴⁷

In Maryland, from 1765 onwards, the gentry resisted the exercise of any hierarchical-type authority. In this way, the proprietary patronage, the governor as a proprietary representative in ecclesiastical affairs, and the establishment itself were under attack, especially after 1773. In these conditions, a resident bishop would have benefited neither the proprietor, nor the country party, formed by Maryland's gentry. As a result, the Maryland clergy, being dependent for their appointment and incomes on the proprietor and the Maryland elite, who formed the members of the vestries, refrained from publicly voicing any possible favourable opinions on the subject of a bishop. It can be concluded that the Episcopal campaign, launched in the midst of the political conflict with Britain, suggested - in the minds of the colonists - that the imposition of any power of an hierarchical nature on the colonies would be identified as encroachments upon colonial rights by the royal authorities.⁴⁸ Moreover, the colonial elite had long developed its own methods for managing the affairs of the established church so that the institution of a bishop seemed not only unnecessary, but also threatening to the privileges of those who dominated the vestries and the lower houses of the assemblies.

Conclusion

It has already been noted that in the colonies, where the Anglican Church was the established one, it was the assemblies and the Anglican laity, through the vestries,

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 105-6; Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, p. 235.

⁴⁷ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, p. 108.

⁴⁸ Some London newspapers suggested that fear for the expansion of the Church of England in America through the establishment of a bishop contributed to the mounting opposition against the Stamp Act, see: Chandler, *Appeal to the Public*, p. 89.

that mainly managed church affairs. In this process, the authority of the bishop of London or of any other English officer was largely discounted. Moreover, the discussions and resolutions of the vestries were more reflective of popular sentiments than of any other body within the church, since – with some exceptions in the Virginia parishes -vestry members were largely elected by the freeholders of the parish. In addition, the Anglican laity, through the assemblies, determined ministerial salaries and the vestries fully determined the selection of their ministers, especially in Virginia. This pervasive local control over ecclesiastical affairs resulted in the clergymen being immensely influenced by popular, local sentiments and far more bound to them than their counterparts in England. As a result, they frequently sided with leading members of the colonial elite during the colonial contest with Britain in an effort to maintain and enhance their standing in colonial society. This also explains the fact that, during the fight between the mother country and the colonies in the 1760s and 1770s, many Anglicans who were active in church affairs were found among the opponents of the British policy. For example, Daniel Dulany's pamphlet, *Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes in the British Colonies for the Purpose of Raising a Revenue, by Act of Parliament*, published as a response to the Stamp Act, contained such powerful ideas on 'no taxation without representation' that it made William Pitt and others reconsider the effectiveness of the said act. In the aftermath of the Stamp Act, Virginia's House of Burgesses, many of whose members were also members of the vestries, passed a set of resolutions against this legislation, which inspired similar reaction from members of the lower house of the assembly in eight of the other twelve colonies. Of great impact were also two pamphlets written by Virginians, members of the House of Burgesses: Richard Bland's, *Enquiry into the Rights of the British Colonies* and Landon Carter's critique of the Stamp Act in the *Maryland Gazette* of 8 May 1766.⁴⁹

This influence was such that there was largely weak support for British policies from Anglican ministers in the Chesapeake. Only John Camm, clergyman in Virginia, and Jonathan Boucher, in Maryland, along with their brethren in the northern colonies (Thomas Bradbury Chandler, Myles Cooper, Charles Inglis, and Samuel Seabury), became firm supporters of the English measures against the

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 134-6.

colonies to the point of losing their posts in the colonial parishes. Jonathan Boucher wrote in his *Reminiscences*: ‘I endeavored (*sic*) in my sermons and in various pieces published in the Gazettes of the country, to check the immense mischief that was impending, but I endeavoured in vain.’ The stance of the aforementioned clergymen to the transatlantic political disputes justified the suspicions of the opponents to episcopacy that, if the conflict with the British authorities reached a climax, the pro-episcopal leaders would assume a loyalist stance. As will be shown in the following chapter, a general colonial convention of clergymen, which could have organized and solidified loyalist political attitudes was, however, never held in the years before 1783. This further weakened the existing limited clerical support for the loyalist cause.⁵⁰

Traditional Anglican notions of political theology, however, had left their mark on the thought of both Anglican loyalists and patriots among both the laity and the clergy. In Virginia and Maryland there was always a kernel of statesmen who were characterized by a particularly conservative perception of society. Future patriots, such as Landon Carter, Daniel Dulany, and Richard Bland, expressed such traditional ideas as the divine origin of society, the belief in the medieval structure of society, the reverence for the law, an appreciation for social peace and moderation, while they ascribed a paternal, moralizing influence to the ruling authorities. Innovative ideas, such as the Lockean theory of natural rights and the belief in the constitutional power of the people had crept into the thought of these highly educated and informed men, but their distrust of the exaggerations of a lawless mob and their faith in the merits of moderate, peaceable behaviour, as cultivated by such traditional institutions as the church, indicates that their upbringing within the Anglican camp had left a lasting mark on their perception of the world.

⁵⁰ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 150-1.

Chapter Four

Anglican Responses to the Revolutionary War, the first constitutions and disestablishment

In 1778, Samuel Chase commented:

Our people are the same with those of all other Countries. They have neither more or less Virtue. The conduct of the populace and of popular Assemblies is much oftener dictated by passion and prejudice than by Wisdom. Whim, humour or Caprice frequently influence their determinations. To this may be added that Republicks are seldom grateful. With these Sentiments why do you think I love Noise and Politicks?¹

While Chase recognized the need for the assertion of popular will and authority, he did not have any illusions about the qualities of the people in a republic. Despite being a colony where pro-revolutionary sentiments prevailed, the Chesapeake Bay had its share of men, who - though not active loyalists - had adopted a conservative way of political thinking. This elite group did not advocate radical political or social change. Although they had adopted the common law theory and the ideals of English constitutionalism, rather than the natural rights doctrine, they still denounced political corruption and the evils of patronage. They went, however, only as far as advocating aristocratic leadership, within the bounds of responsibility to the people, while they supported the common man's rights as long as these did not pose the danger of anarchy and of overturning the existing social order. In Virginia, this group was represented by Robert Carter Nicholas, Edmund Pendleton, John Page, Richard Bland, Thomas Ludwell Lee, Paul Carrington, Dudley Digges, William Cabell, Carter Braxton, James Mercer, John Tabb, among others. There were also prominent Virginians, who did not hesitate to adopt whole-heartedly a loyalist stance: John Randolph, attorney general, Richard Corbin, receiver general for quitrents, Philip Ludwell Lee, and William Byrd III. Moreover, in Norfolk, there existed a substantial Tory population, mainly Scottish merchants, who either returned to Britain or their

¹ Samuel Chase to Samuel West, 16 October 1778. Bamberger Autograph Collection, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, quoted in James Haw et al., *Stormy Patriot. The Life of Samuel Chase* (Baltimore, Md: Maryland Historical Society, 1980), pp. 100-1.

houses were burned early in the war. To these should be added a small loyalist group of Church of England ministers, who enjoyed spiritual, cultural and professional ties with England.²

Similarly, in Maryland in the second half of the eighteenth century, a group with conservative tendencies formed the country or patriot party. This was the group, which resisted proprietary authority in Maryland, and successfully contributed to the inter-colonial struggle to overturn British rule. Samuel Chase was one of the leaders of the patriot party. Charles Carroll of Carrollton, William Paca, Thomas Johnson, Charles Carroll, the Barrister, Matthew Tilghman and Robert Goldsborough were also eminent members of it.³ The conservative character of the patriot party is better illustrated when contrasted with the activities of a radical faction, the Ridgely-Hammond or, else, Hall-Hammond group, which placed more faith in the abilities of the people at large and advocated extensive social change for those with humble origins.

This chapter will examine clerical and lay attitudes towards the major events at this period taking place in the Chesapeake and in the colonies in general as a theatre of war. Anglican clergymen, as ministers of the gospel enjoined to promote peace and brotherly love, were particularly perturbed at the outbreak of the War of Independence, not only because of the violence it involved, but also because it required them to break their oath of allegiance to the British monarch. In Virginia, given the revolutionary inclinations of the lay vestries, on which their financial security and appointment depended, ministers were willing to side with the overwhelming patriot majority in the colony, in order to retain the support of their 'patrons'. In Maryland, less dependence on the vestries meant greater development of loyalism than in Virginia, to the point that loyalist ministers almost outnumbered those who had adopted a patriot stance. A large number of Anglican ministers preferred political neutrality and withdrew from the public scene in order to avoid the dilemmas that the revolution posed for their professional careers and personal consciences. Not all ministers were forced to abstain from the public domain. Those with patriot inclinations, especially in Virginia, argued that it was their duty to

² Helen Hill Miller, *George Mason. Gentleman Revolutionary* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), pp.120-2.

³ Haw *et al.*, *Life of Samuel Chase*, pp. 1, 24, 36, 40.

oppose a monarch, who had acted unconstitutionally, and they filled their sermons with injunctions for moral behaviour in order to ensure the support of God in the patriot struggle.

Peaceable and moderate behaviour was a quality valued not only by Anglican clergymen in the Chesapeake, but by many politicians as well. They exhibited an appreciation of lawful and orderly conduct, as their defence of their constitutional and natural rights against British authorities illustrate. Moreover, politicians in the Chesapeake, and especially the conservative nucleus among them, were reluctant to proceed to independence until they tried lawful means to achieve reconciliation with Britain. This chapter will show most Anglican ministers in the region sought reconciliation, since the war raised the spectre of social anarchy and the possibility of separation from Britain, their cultural home.

When Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence, it was necessary for the legislatures to draft constitutions for the newly formed states. At this point, the latent conservative powers in the Chesapeake came forward: in Virginia, they suggested restrictions to the suffrage, proposed representation in the House of Delegates that was not proportionate to the population, and refrained from disestablishing the Church of England. In Maryland, the conservatives recommended high property qualifications for office-holding, long terms in office and many appointive offices. These suggestions aimed at re-affirming the social standing of the elite, as had been established by the English system in colonial times. The Anglican political theology, which advocated obedience to government by an elite of high learning and virtue, provided the ideological foundation for such policies. The reasoning, on which Anglican political suggestions were based, described the economy and society in medieval terms. In this sense, every one contributed to the welfare of the whole community according to their social standing. As a result, obedience was due to those traditional authorities, appointed by God, such as the government and the church, which were deemed guardians of stability, culture and wisdom. The conservatives' concern with the maintenance of the established social order was reflected in their reluctance to abandon slavery, despite the limited abolitionist of Thomas Jefferson and some other radicals. Fears were expressed about the possibility of social upheaval and the loss of elite privileges.

The disestablishment of the Anglican churches, similarly aroused debates among statesmen in the Chesapeake. In Virginia the conservatives prolonged the debate to such an extent that disestablishment happened gradually and, in Maryland, state support for religion in general was ensured. The disestablishment of the church in Virginia was complete, though it took a decade to realise. This can be attributed to the existence of a forceful dissenting population in the region, that had long dwelled under the obligation to pay taxes for the upkeep of a church it did not support, and to the adoption by its leaders, James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, of the Lockean theory regarding individual natural rights.

Disestablishment of the Church of England in America and the suspension of ministerial salaries meant that some ministers would have to take up more secular activities in order to supplement their incomes. Due to personal attachment to his parishioners, the decision of a minister to leave his post was sometimes difficult. Such a choice was also based on broader issues of national identity. For loyalists, Britain still held a strong cultural influence, but patriot ministers were keener to accept America as their adopted home. In patriot minds, their country, the United States, or its leader, Washington, acquired a religious importance, while America became the land where God's prophecies for the prevalence of liberty in the world were not clearly manifested. In this way, patriot ministers were more appreciative than loyalists of the positive attributes of disestablishment and praised the true religiosity that it promoted among parishioners.

In terms of church re-organization, time-honoured practices in the Chesapeake of extensive lay participation in church affairs were reaffirmed during the Revolution and clerical authority diminished. At the national level, the powers of the laity were granted, but, under the influence of high churchmen from the northern states, a relatively conservative Prayer Book was adopted, the Reverend Samuel Seabury's consecration in Scotland was accepted and application was made to the English ecclesiastical authorities for the consecration of more American bishops. Given the disestablishment of the Anglican churches and the painful process of reorganization that followed, the fears and anxieties of the majority of clergymen at the beginning of the war regarding their personal fate and that of their churches were not unwarranted.

The Political Attitude of Ministers during the Revolutionary Years

When the hostilities between Britain and her North American colonies broke out, many clergymen continued to perform certain services, such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals. With the escalation of the dispute, however, a considerable number of clergymen adopted a stance of political neutrality and sought to avoid the conflict. This attitude was either forced by patriots who sometimes attempted to silence those who expressed different views or it was the result of a personal choice on the part of the clergymen. It became a means of avoiding the dilemma of having to choose between the king, who was the head of their church, and the revolutionary authorities, which were seizing political power in the land where these clergymen officiated. Neutrality corresponded to depoliticization, whereby, either voluntarily or involuntarily, clergymen refrained from publicly expressing their political opinions or acting in ways that might betray these. By assuming a neutral stance which was recommended by the traditional Anglican emphasis on moderate and temperate behaviour, clergymen attempted to withdraw from the politically charged parts of the public sphere. As a consequence many gradually refrained from performing services of public worship and some even decided to close their churches. Moreover, peaceableness was achieved either through the expression of hopes for reconciliation or through remaining silent on political matters. In the Chesapeake neutrality was adopted by almost forty per cent of the ministers. Decisions, however, had to be made and regional variations appeared with respect to the proportion of loyalist and patriot clergymen among the colonists. In the middle and northern colonies loyalist clergymen predominated, whereas the patriot element dominated their ranks in the southern regions. Approximately one-third of the clergy in Maryland were loyalists, but there were notable individual exceptions. As a result, in real terms, the loyalists outnumbered the patriots, by six clergymen, while there were thirty who were neutrals. In Virginia, patriot clergymen clearly outnumbered the loyalists by thirty, but the number of neutrals was substantial reaching forty-four ministers.⁴ Patriot ministers stressed the duty of the subjects to oppose their king, if he infringed the

⁴ Nancy L. Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism: the colonial church of England clergy during the American Revolution* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 88-90.

constitution or God's laws, and they promoted social virtue and morality in order to ensure God's favour and assistance in the patriot efforts.

In the early years of the Revolution, clergymen retained the prominence as community leaders that they had previously achieved in the colonial period. The standing of ministers, during the colonial period, was augmented by their function as educators or authors, and through their friendship with or marriage to members of the colonial gentry. In the revolutionary years, some Anglican clergymen performed a highly political role as chaplains to provincial governments, especially in the colonies where a specific denomination was part of the establishment. This was the case in Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas. In Maryland, the rector of St. Anne's was also employed as chaplain of the House of Delegates. Reverend Jonathan Boucher occupied this position. In Virginia of 1775, Thomas Gwatkin was chaplain to John Murray, Lord Dunmore, Governor of Virginia, and for consecutive years William Hubbard served as justice of the peace in his county. Moreover, before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, many ministers of the established Church of England participated in the activities of their local committees of safety or endorsed non-importation agreements. In Virginia, twenty-three ministers became members of such committees and on 27 May 1774 thirteen ministers, along with the members of the House of Burgesses, formed an Association in protest against the closing of the port of Boston. Hopes for reconciliation between Britain and her colonies influenced the decision of these ministers in favour of political involvement. They thought that these petitions and protests were the only warranted way for the redress of colonial grievances.⁵

Recommendations for peaceableness were another way in which political neutrality was exhibited and expressed. During the years 1774 to 1776, Anglican ministers denounced the American rebellion as a tragic civil war. David Griffith admitted: 'It will ill become this sacred place, and the character of a minister of the gospel of Christ to inspire rebellion and foment disorder and confusion'.⁶ Later, in 1777, John Hurt, feeling somewhat uncomfortable about his support to war efforts,

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 90-3.

⁶ David Griffith, *Passive Obedience Considered in a Sermon Preached at Williamsburg, December 31st, 1775* (Williamsburg, Va: Alexander Purdie, 1775), p. 24.

argued: 'it was not through licentious opposition, or for conquest, we drew the sword, but for justice; not to introduce, but to prevent slavery;'⁷

After 1774-1775, however, ministers of all political affiliations ceased to perform an active, prominent role in the public arena. The escalation of the dispute and the dwindling of hopes for reconciliation and peace accounted for this. Continued ministerial service during and after these years should be interpreted as an indication of patriotism and as an expression of allegiance to the revolutionary cause. In Virginia, Thomas Price was employed as chaplain to the House of Burgesses from 1766 until 1776, when he resigned because of the Declaration of Independence. On the other hand, the continued services performed by the Reverend James Madison were illustrative of his firm adherence to the patriot cause. At this point, ministers who were not wholehearted supporters of the revolutionary cause, chose to remain quiet on political matters so that their stance amounted to political inactivity under the pretence of peaceable behaviour. This can also be termed political neutrality, because it was a stance that aimed at bearing no offence to either side. From the point of view of the ministers, this was achieved by the omission of information about or comments on political events.

Conditions rendered ministerial neutrality on the part of the ministers difficult to maintain. The decrees of the Continental Congress, which designated days of fasting and humiliation, required the alteration of the usual prayers to the King and demanded oaths of allegiance to Congress aimed at promoting the unity and determination of the patriot forces, and, thus, alienating the loyalists. For example Congress declared 1 of June 1774 and 20 July 1775 intercolonial Fast Days,⁸ but many Anglican ministers in the northern colonies, who wanted to avoid the issue of political involvement, chose not to observe them. This resulted in their identification as loyalists and could have had serious repercussions for them, such as fines, house arrest, prohibitions on travelling outside their town or county, or even imprisonment. Although the participation in congressionally approved Fast Days did not carry any tremendous implications for the oaths the ministers had already taken, changing the liturgy or swearing an oath of loyalty to the Congress meant that they violated their

⁷ John Hurt, *The Love of Our Country. A Sermon, preached before the Virginia Troops in New-Jersey* (Philadelphia: Styner and Cist, 1777), pp. 14-5.

⁸ Miller, *George Mason*, p. 101.

previous oaths, which acknowledged the King's ultimate political authority and the sacredness of the liturgy of the Church of England. These obligations were represented by the Oath acknowledging the King's supremacy, which ministers had to swear twice, at their ordination as deacons and as priests, and by their taking the Oath of Uniformity, which preserved the strict observance of the rituals of the Church of England. Moreover, the Prayer Book of 1662, the standard text upon which the services of the Church of England were planned, ordered the reading of prayers for the king and the royal family in the Morning and Evening Prayers as well as in the Eucharist. Ministers of the established church regarded these oaths as containing the fundamentals of their faith, and thus, took them very seriously. Besides, according to the Church's canons, any alteration to the liturgy or any omission of its parts could be grounds for excommunication. This dilemma is illustrated in David Griffith's words:

It has, long, perplexed the minds of many pious and well disposed persons, who have been fluctuating between duty to God and to themselves; and so long as they have acted from conscientious motives, and have endeavoured to make the laws of God the rule of their action, their conduct is highly commendable.⁹

Consequently, conformity with the rebels' demands for alteration of the liturgy or taking the congressional oaths indicated a firm commitment to the patriot cause, which, of course, not all ministers were ready to exhibit. In 1776 the Virginia Convention replaced prayers for the king and the royal family with those for the Congress. The disinterest with which the Virginia Anglican laity responded to these alterations emphasizes the high level of patriotism in the region, which also set the tone for ministerial patriotism in the church, through the laity's preponderant role in the management of church affairs.¹⁰ In the northern colonies, where religious and political divisions were much more pronounced than in the Chesapeake, the repercussions that the revolutionary war had for the Church were much more strongly felt by its ministers.

These tensions are reflected in the different ways ministerial depoliticization was experienced in the northern and southern colonies after 1775-6. In New England

⁹ Griffith, *Passive Obedience Considered*, p. 24.

¹⁰ Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, pp. 104-9.

and in the middle colonies, ministers, who, in large numbers, were not staunch supporters of patriot activities went into exile or retirement, or closed their churches when confronted by the conflicting demands of allegiance by the king and revolutionary authorities. In the southern colonies, ministers did not remove themselves completely from the public sphere due to their largely patriot affiliations and the fact that the established status of the church in colonial times had allowed a broad acceptance of their public role from groups situated at the both ends of the political spectrum. Indicative of the different way the political tensions of the era were experienced in the two regions is the fact that only thirteen per cent of the ministers in Virginia left their posts between 1775 and 1783, while the respective percentage for ministers officiating in Massachusetts and in New Hampshire was fifty. The usual places of relocation were England or regions in America occupied by the British, such as Nova Scotia.¹¹

Regional variations are also apparent in the fact that, contrary to what was the norm in New England, many churches in the Chesapeake and, more generally, south of Pennsylvania, remained open during the years of revolutionary turmoil. Continued service increasingly illustrated the patriotism of the ministers in the Chesapeake region, since the new political authorities had established litmus tests for the identification of loyalism, which could hardly be avoided.¹² In Virginia, every free adult male had to swear an oath of allegiance to the revolutionary authorities before 10 October 1777, in order to be eligible for public office, including the posts of Anglican rector or curate. In Maryland, fewer than half of its ministers swore allegiance to the new political powers.¹³

Moreover, regionality had an impact on the way Anglican ministers interpreted the revolutionary war. Anglican ministers in the northern colonies were more eager to ascribe to it religious causes than their counterparts in the south. Following previous controversies over the Episcopal campaign and the privileges of different denominations, loyalist Anglican ministers argued that dissenters, who in the northern colonies largely led the Revolution, were instigated by 'enthusiastic delusion' and started the war with the express purpose of destroying the Church of

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-3.

¹² James Haw *Life of Samuel Chase*, pp. 47-8, 51.

¹³ Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, pp. 110-11.

England. On the contrary, given the low-key tone of religious disputes in the southern colonies and the large number of patriot ministers, in that region, the Revolution was not perceived as an affront on the Church of England. It was more frequently interpreted as a response to the infringements by Parliament of the constitutional - rather than the religious - rights of the colonies.¹⁴

In his *Passive Obedience Considered in a Sermon Preached at Williamsburg, December 31st, 1775*, David Griffith articulated the arguments of patriot Anglican clergy. He first admitted the divine supervision of government, so that the good order of society, so conducive to human happiness, would be established.¹⁵ This implied that civil magistrates were obliged to govern equitably, or else God would withdraw his favour. In this way, Griffith argued that any abuse of power justified disobedience to their commands, since they would have infringed God's laws. Indeed, Griffith perceived that to be a religious duty. He emphatically argued:

I cannot be induced to believe, that God will be angry with his creatures for disregarding the injunctions of those who have departed from that rule of rectitude laid down by him, who would force them into measures, which, they are convinced, are neither for the advancement of his glory nor their own happiness. in countries, so circumstanced, resistance, or a disregard to laws, in certain cases, is not only justifiable, but a necessary duty.¹⁶

Posing as an adversary of despotism, Griffith presented St. Paul's conduct as justified resistance to temporal authorities. He also argued that civil governors were not infallible to the extent that subordination to them was not always required.¹⁷

With reference to the British political system, Griffith reasoned that this doctrine was all the more applicable, since limited monarchy meant that the people would also be granted legislative power through their representatives. He then blended the patriot argument of 'no taxation without representation' in order to argue that the measures adopted by the British parliament were unlawful and to claim that such political rule should not have been ordained by God. Resistance to it was, therefore, warranted. Irrespective of their political credos, loyalist and patriot

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

¹⁵ Griffith, *Passive Obedience Considered*, p.6.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 19.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-19.

Anglican ministers generally shared the same doctrines regarding the origin, nature and function of polities. The only point of difference was that loyalist Anglicans did not think that the measures taken by the British parliament were so injurious to the colonies that they justified resistance. Reluctant to see his world collapsing, Griffith argued that patriot resistance was not reproachable, since they were not aiming to abolish monarchy or withdraw their allegiance from the king. Besides, their assemblies had declared their loyalty to the crown at numerous instances.¹⁸ In the same way that loyalist ministers claimed that divine providence had assured that monarchy would always be the prevailing mode of government, Griffith finally argued that ‘divine protection’ would assure the success of the patriot arms. He stated:

The most consolatory reflection we now have is that the cause of truth and justice is the cause of God, and that his almighty arm is irresistible. From the example of past times we may, likewise, draw consolation; the history of which proves, that zeal and unanimity, in a righteous cause, have often been an overmatch for numbers and power. Next to divine protection, let us place our hopes in, and exert all our faculties to effect this most desirable object.¹⁹

In 1777, the patriot John Hurt started from a conservative principle, the medieval notion of economy, whereby everyone contributed to the welfare of the whole community according to the station ascribed to him by God, in order to argue that every American revolutionary had to conform to the Puritan ideal of virtue in order to ensure God’s support for the revolutionary cause. He reasoned:

God has assigned each of us our station [...]. If our profusion in extravagant expences render us less able, or less willing, to assist the public, we violate the most sacred of all social duties, and become flagrant transgressors of the will of our Creator [...]. Let us then not build too much upon human prospects, or shut God out of our councils and designs; but let us flee humbly to him for succour.²⁰

¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 20-2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

²⁰ Hurt, *Love of Our Country*, pp. 9,19, 20.

Following the same theme, namely the link between virtuous conduct and rewards from God in the temporal world,²¹ the Reverend James Madison was able to celebrate, a few years later, the success of American arms in a millennial note, as the fulfilment of a prophecy:

America has become the theatre, whereon the providence of God is now manifested. – America! thy story, shall long instruct the astonished world, that perseverance in the cause of justice, in the defence of those rights which God had given, will ever find a protecting guardian in the ruler of the universe. Suppose before this western world had received its first *european*; some angelic being, withdrawing the curtain of time, had pointed out to him the place we now inhabit, - and had thus addressed him. ‘Seest thou yon distant shore, frequented only by the savage roamers of the forest, or it’s still more savage inhabitants, the untutored natives; - I tell thee, that region, rude as it now appeareth to thy view, e’re many generations are past, covered with thy numerous descendants, with flocks and with herds, shall arise great in arms, shall spurn the yoke of sceptered tyranny, shall teach the distant corners of the earth the first and noblest rights of human nature, and shall there open an everlasting asylum to persecuted liberty.’²²

During the revolutionary years, a popular stance of many ministers was that of political neutrality. This helped them deal with the conflicting requirements of loyalty to the king or to the revolutionary authorities. It meant that ministers chose the path of least resistance to the demands of the new political powers by evaluating the traditional Anglican qualities of peaceableness, quietness and moderation and adopting a corresponding political attitude.²³ The patriotism of Anglican ministers in the Chesapeake reflects their close identification with the interests of the local lay elite, who dominated not only the state, but also church affairs. Moreover, these ministers’ elevated public role in colonial times allowed them to keep their churches open during the war years and to retain their posts in the post-revolutionary era. In presenting the grievances of the colonists, patriot ministers adopted the rhetoric of the lay elite on their rights as Englishmen. They downplayed religious explanations for the conflict and they endorsed the duty of subjects to oppose the monarch when

²¹ James Madison, *A Sermon Preached in the County of Botetourt, ...* (Richmond: Nicolson & Prentis, 1781), pp. 7-9.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 11-2.

²³ Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, pp. 114-5.

he acted unconstitutionally. In this, a mutual trade of ideas seems to have been effected between Anglican clergymen and laymen. While ministers embraced the constitutional arguments of the elite in opposing the British authorities, lay revolutionaries had adopted the Anglican appreciation for moderate and orderly behaviour.

Cultural Influences

The insistence of the conservative lay Anglicans on orderly and lawful behaviour in their resistance to the British, can be attributed to the fact that they strove to emulate the English system in its original purity and function. As their newly-framed constitution and their resolutions for state support of religion will illustrate later in this chapter. they did not desire extensive social change. The hierarchical nature of the Church of England, which most members of the elite attended, as expressed in its forms of worship, leadership and architecture, inevitably influenced their political thinking.

Many Maryland politicians were educated in England or by Anglicans. George Plater studied in William and Mary College, while Matthew Tilghman and Samuel Chase received their early education from Anglican ministers. Robert Goldsborough had studied at the Middle Temple, Westminster, and spent at least five years in England, but William Paca and Alexander Contee Hanson were graduates of the College of Philadelphia. Paca was, nevertheless, a former pupil and friend of the Reverend William Smith of Chestertown, the former provost of the College of Philadelphia, and he later served in the vestry of St. Anne's parish.²⁴

In Virginia, a similar English, particularly Anglican, cultural influence can be seen on a sizeable group of conservative politicians. The points of contact with English culture can be identified as their stay in England to study and their graduation from William and Mary College, a school of Anglican outlook, in Williamsburg. In fact, eight of the revolutionary Virginian politicians referred to in

²⁴ 'Matthew Tilghman', *Dictionary of American Biography: under the auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies*, 22 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1928-1958), vol. 18, pp. 543-4 [hereafter cited as: *DAB*]; 'George Plater', *DAB*, vol. 14, pp. 647-8; 'Alexander Contee Hanson', *DAB*, vol. 8, pp. 230-1; 'Robert Goldsborough', *DAB*, vol. 7, pp. 366-7; James Haw, *Life of Samuel Chase*, pp. 2-7.

this chapter, namely Robert Carter Nicholas, John Page, Richard Bland, William Cabell, Carter Braxton, James Mercer, Edmund Randolph, and Richard Henry Lee, were either graduates of William and Mary College or received their education in England. Another, John Randolph, also a graduate of the aforementioned College, became a Loyalist.²⁵ Moreover, John Page, Patrick Henry and George Mason received their early education from clergymen of the established church.²⁶

Service in the vestry of one's parish was a traditional first step for anyone who aspired to occupy more eminent offices in his colony and several Virginia statesmen had offered their services as vestrymen. Because of the relation of this post to the development of one's professional career, a relative importance should be ascribed to it as an indication of one's piety or influence by the Anglican faith. Some Virginians, however, exhibited noticeable zeal in their involvement in the church affairs of their local parish, such as John Page, who was even recommended by his friends as a first bishop of Virginia, and George Mason, who was directly involved in the building of Pohick church, Truro parish, completed in 1774. This church was lavishly decorated with its pieces of liturgical use diligently crafted and placed in a prominent position. The altar cloth, which was made of crimson velvet with a gold fringe, gives an idea of the care that had been taken in ornamenting and equipping this church. George Washington, who was also a vestryman in the same parish and member of the building committee, had to make arrangements for the purchase of the fabric to make the altar cloth. Both Mason and George Washington, then, bought centrally located pews.²⁷ Other statesmen who were involved in vestry business were Carter Braxton, in St. John parish, who served several times as president of the state convention of the later Protestant Episcopal Church, Edmund Pendleton, who was clerk to the vestry of St. Mary's Parish.²⁸

²⁵ 'Robert Carter Nicholas', *DAB*, vol. 13, pp. 485-6.; 'John Page', *DAB*, vol. 14, pp. 137-8; 'Richard Bland', *DAB*, vol. 2, pp. 354-5; 'William Cabell', *DAB*, vol. 3, pp. 389-90; 'Carter Braxton', *DAB*, vol. 2, pp. 609-10; 'James Mercer', *DAB*, vol. 12; 'Edmund Randolph', *DAB*, vol. 15, pp. 353-5; 'Richard Henry Lee', *DAB*, vol. 11, pp. 117-20; 'John Randolph', *DAB*, vol. 15, pp. 362-3.

²⁶ 'John Page', *DAB*, vol. 14, pp. 137-8; Patrick Henry, *DAB*, vol. 8, pp. 554-9; Miller, *George Mason*, pp. 30.

²⁷ Miller, *George Mason*, pp. 79-84; 'John Page', *DAB*, vol. 14, pp. 137-8.

²⁸ 'Edmund Pendleton', *DAB*, vol. 14, pp. 417-9; Frederick V. Mills, *Bishops by Ballot. An Eighteenth-Century Ecclesiastical Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 200.

The profound cultural influence that England exerted on colonials, especially loyalists, made them express themselves often in anti-catholic terms. James Chalmers argued:

With predilection we view our parent state, and wishfully contemplate on our late felicity, almost realizing that state of old, so beautifully feigned by the poets. We venerate the constitution, which with all its imperfections (too often exaggerated) we apprehend almost approaches as near to perfection as human kind can bear. We shudder at the idea of arming with more virulence, more unremitting ardour, against the parent state than against France; by whom our rights, civil as well as religious, certainly were more imminently endangered.²⁹

Following on that, and exhibiting a great appreciation of religion, Chalmers valued three great things in British culture: ‘religion, liberty, and commerce’. In fact, he indicated that British people ‘know better than any people on earth’ how to appreciate these advantages.³⁰ He rhetorically asked: ‘Do ye possess the wisdom to continue your happiness by a well regulated connection with Britain?’³¹ Indeed, Chalmers felt a strong connection with Great Britain, based on the ‘familiarity of manners, laws, and customs’ between the British and the colonial American people.³² Living in Connecticut at the time, Chalmers seems to have been influenced by the ideas of loyalist Anglican clergy there. He had a strong belief in other-worldliness and thought that God was the superintendent of human societies. Chalmers declared ‘it is the province of Gods to make laws for men’ and, then, ‘the christian’s inheritance is not of this world. provided he hath nothing to reproach himself, it is of little consequence to him whether matters will go well or ill here below.’³³

Similarly, in Virginia, Landon Carter expressed his and his fellow countrymen’s loyalty to the Crown and their undisputable affiliation to the Church of England. He wrote: ‘They were all Members of the Church of England, and no Dissenters among them;’ they were so indeed, my Lord, and are so still, excepting a

²⁹ [James Chalmers], *Plain Truth: Addressed to the Inhabitants of America. Containing Remarks on a late Pamphlet, Intituled Common Sense* (Philadelphia printed; London, reprinted: J. Almon, 1776), pp. 18-9; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25; cf. Henry Addison to Rev. Mr. Barnaby, 28 Sept. 1785 and Henry Addison to John Ansley, 3 March 1787, Addison Papers, box 1, *Maryland Historical Society*.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 4.

very few with respect to the whole Community'. He then went on to ensure that vestries were dissolved because there was a suspicion that some included dissenters among them and that a related act was passed to prevent this tendency.³⁴ Regarding his religious beliefs, Daniel Dulany declared: 'I worship not the GOLDEN CALF; but cleave to the religious rights and ceremonies established by my forefathers; and in this, I think, I am both conscientious and politick'.³⁵ According to Landon Carter, the alliance of church and state was indispensable for the well- functioning of the society. He believed that 'the Imperfectness of the civil Power ... cannot be remedied, but by a Religion that deters from Evil, and encourages good Actions (out of the Reach of the known Rules of Discovery) by the Doctrine of Futurity'.³⁶ For Carter, however, this alliance involved the control by the lay authorities of the religious ones. In this instance, he professed to be an admirer of James Blair, who had placed the ecclesiastical courts in Virginia under the control of laymen.³⁷

It becomes evident, then, that many prominent statesmen in Virginia and in Maryland were educated either in England or by Anglican clergymen. This helped them develop a strong appreciation for the Church of England, the English culture and political system, as exhibited in their involvement in parish affairs and in their writings. Their influence by Anglican ideology becomes even more clear when examining the ways through which these politicians perceived the revolutionary struggle.

Patriot Attitudes towards the Revolution

Given their upbringing in the Church of England, Anglican Patriots emphasized the right of human resistance to civil authorities, while their thought contained elements of providentialism and of natural rights philosophy, expressed with religious terms. Anglican patriots had more respect for traditional institutions, such as the monarchy, the church and the family, than dissenters. Given their 'parental', long-established

³⁴ Landon Carter, *A letter to the Right Reverend father in God, the Lord B----p of L-----n* (London, 1760), pp. 13-14.

³⁵ Peter S. Onuf, (ed.), *Maryland and the Empire, 1773. The Antilon-First Citizen Letters* (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974). p. 44.

³⁶ Carter, *Letter to the Right Reverend Father in God*, p. 53.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

ties with England, patriots were reluctant to attack their king and they prayed for moderation and justice until 1775, the last point when this was still feasible. Jonathan Boucher, when he met with George Washington at some point before 1775, expressed his fears for an imminent civil war and the independence of America. But Washington assured him earnestly of the contrary. Boucher relates:

I foresaw and appraised him of much that has since happened; in particular that there would certainly then be a civil war, and that the Americans would soon declare for independency. With more earnestness than was usual with his great reserve he shouted my apprehensions, adding (and I believe with perfect sincerity) that if ever I heard of his joining in any such measures I had his leave to set him down for everything wicked.³⁸

Patriots, however, did not ascribe a divine, sacerdotal role to ministers of religion, but, rather, an instructional one. In this sense, they adopted the idea of the moralizing, paternal role of the church and its servants, with the effect that they considered the clergy as the custodians of erudition and refined culture within a hierarchical social structure. Landon Carter expected the clergy to exhibit ‘*virtuous Mildness and decent Deportment*’ and that the laity should find an example of morality, piety and decency in the behaviour of the clergy.³⁹

Samuel Henley, a clergymen of the established church and a loyalist – though a liberal one – was keen on making the distinction between divine laws, those that regulate moral conduct, and civil ones, those that are dictated by the civil authorities for the preservation of society. Henley then concluded that the origins of society were not divine or religious. He stated:

From the preceding view of Society and Government, it is evident, Religion had no part in the formation of either. That it looks with a benign aspect upon civil polity cannot be doubted, since the conduct it enjoins tends greatly to advance men’s secular welfare. This, however, is not its *primary* design. Obedience to human and divine laws arises from distinct motives.⁴⁰

³⁸ Jonathan Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist, 1738-1789. Being the autobiography of the Revd Jonathan Boucher, Rector of Annapolis in Maryland and afterwards Vicar of Epsom, Surrey, England. Edited by his grandson Jonathan Bouchier.* (Port Washington, N.Y: Kennikat Press, 1967), p. 109.

³⁹ Carter, *Letter to the Right Reverend Father in God*, p. 14, 16.

⁴⁰ Samuel Henley, *The Distinct Claims of Government and Religion, Considered in a Sermon preached before the Honourable House of Burgesses, at Williamsburg, in Virginia* (Cambridge: printed for J. Woodyer, Davies and Elmsly, 1772), pp. 7-8.

Henley had adopted the Lockean doctrine regarding the formation of societies, which argued that man was born in a state of nature and entered society upon relinquishing some of his natural rights in return for the protection of his life, liberty and property.⁴¹ In the distinction that Henley made between civil and religious law, he was one of the first advocates of the right of freedom of conscience and religion. He rightly placed emphasis on the sincerity of one's belief in religious doctrines and not on one's abidance to religious laws, simply because the civil authorities dictated so.⁴²

This does not mean, however, that the political rhetoric of patriots was not based on ideas inspired by religion. Protestantism, and by extension, anti-catholicism, figured greatly in patriot arguments. This was particularly evident in the early 1770s, when the British parliament recognised the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec. At that instance, the king and his council were denounced as 'Papist Knaves'. 'Free born men' were not to be 'rul'd by Popish law, because they freedom claim'. The mission of preserving the purity of the Protestant religion was used, therefore, as a rhetorical weapon in the contest against the British.⁴³ The notion of the unity of all Protestants figured greatly in the discourse of both Anglican patriots and loyalists, but through different approaches. While Anglican loyalists laid emphasis on their Britishness through their common devotion to Protestantism, as developed by several wars against such national Catholic enemies, as France and Spain, patriots, influenced, by their anti-catholic feelings, assailed their king for his pro-catholic measures.⁴⁴ The emphasis on Britishness, cultivated during the wars with France, was adopted by patriots even before the beginning of the colonial conflict with Britain. In 1760, Richard Bland demonstrated his attachment to the king, by stating:

[Virginia] a Colony, that has given a Thousand recent Proofs of her Affection to her Sovereign, and her Regard to the established *Church*: and at a Time too, when she is exerting herself, even beyond her

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 13-7.

⁴³ Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia. 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), pp. 246-247.

⁴⁴ For loyalist Anglican approaches to Catholicism, see: Thomas Bradbury Chandler, *An Appeal to the Public, in behalf of the Church of England in America* (New York: J. Parker, 1767), 58; For dissenting patriot approaches, see: Alden Bradford, *Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Reverend Jonathan Mayhew* (Boston: C.C. Little & co., 1838), p. 271, cited in Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, p. 149.

Abilities, to maintain a War against the professed Enemies of the Religion and Liberties of *Britain*, who have invaded his Majesty's Dominions and frequently supported a *Popish* Pretender to his Throne.⁴⁵

Then, he stated his Privilege as an *Englishman*, that the Trial of his case during the Parson's cause should be 'fair, open and publick'.⁴⁶ Similarly, Landon Carter believed that the Seven Years War fully exhibited the attachment of the colonies to the crown.⁴⁷ In 1766, however, while the imperial dispute escalated, Bland referred to the English and the colonists as 'distinct People' and he held that this view was supported by parliamentary resolutions regarding the colonial rights of representation and taxation.⁴⁸

Anglican loyalists had resolved that British measures were not so injurious to the colonies, as to warrant armed resistance, while patriots emphasized the gravity of British oppression. According to patriot arguments, British measures were not only harsh, but also the British political system was impregnated with corruption, including the king himself. In this way, the Revolution did not represent an attack on the church, as Anglicans in New England partly viewed it, but rather it was the result of political failings seem to be menacing British constitutional principles. The Glorious Revolution of 1688-89, which re-instituted constitutional monarchy, provided an example of resistance to arbitrary monarchs who acted in an unlawful way. In patriot thinking, government, instead of representing the indefeasible right of monarchs, was composed by fallible individuals.⁴⁹

Patriots reasoned that, since God desired the wellbeing of mankind, he would never let men be put in ordeal by an oppressive king. They pointed to the contractual character of God's covenant with his people. If the king broke God's law in a persistent way, one that would undermine his subject's interests, the latter had a

⁴⁵ Richard Bland, *A Letter to the clergy of Virginia, in which the conduct of the General-Assembly is vindicated, against the reflexions contained in a letter to the lords of trade and plantations, from the Lord-Bishop of London* (Williamsburg, [Va]: William Hunter, 1760), p. 5.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 20.

⁴⁷ Carter, *Letter to the Right Reverend Father in God*, p. 54-55.

⁴⁸ Richard Bland, *An inquiry into the rights of the British colonies, intended as an answer to The regulations lately made concerning the colonies...* (Williamsburg [Va.]: Printed by Alexander Purdie & co. 1766), p. 13.

⁴⁹ Daniel Dulany, 'Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes in the British Colonies (Annapolis, 1765)' in Bernard Bailyn, ed.; Jane N. Garrett, assist. ed., *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, 1750-1776*, vol. I. 1750-1765 (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 609.

religious obligation to resist his efforts. Daniel Dulany stated: ‘By these charters, founded upon the unalienable rights of the subject and upon the most sacred compact, the colonies claim a right from taxes *not imposed with their consent*’.⁵⁰ Carter Braxton seems to have internalized the principle of the events in 1688: ‘the happy edifice was at length completed under the auspices of the renowned King William in the year 1688. They wisely united the hereditary succession of the crown with the good behaviour of the Prince.’⁵¹

Due regard for the law, as introduced by the Glorious Revolution, and, consequently, demand for redress of grievances in case the monarch acted unconstitutionally, was an idea, which was adopted by Anglican political theology, and featured greatly in patriot thought. The fact that Anglicans recommended lawful, constitutional actions as the proper course of action can also be attributed to the Anglican ideal of moderate, peaceful behaviour and to Anglican advocacy for the least resistance to governmental measures, however damaging these might be. In 1777, the patriot minister, John Hurt, adeptly described the kind of resistance to civil authorities, which was sanctioned by Anglican political theology. This was characterized by temperance and regulated opposition to unconstitutional governmental measures. He argued: ‘The liberty we contend for is not the license of a few to tyrannise over multitudes; but an equal freedom to all, so far as is consistent with the present circumstances of our country, good order, the constitution, and peace of government.’⁵² Anglicans’ moderation in action and due reverence for the law is illustrated in their diligent exhibition of the unconstitutionality of the crown’s measures and in their resolution not to take any bold action for independence until they would exhaust every lawful means for the redress of their grievances.

In response to the Tea Act (1773) and to the so-called Intolerable Acts (1774), on 4 July 1774, George Washington wrote to Bryan Fairfax: ‘As to your political sentiments, I would heartily join you in them, so far as relates to a humble

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 634.

⁵¹ Carter Braxton, *An Address to the Convention of the Colony and Ancient Dominion of Virginia; On the Subject of Government in general, and recommending a particular Form to their Consideration* (Philadelphia: John Dunlap, 1776), p. 9.

⁵² Hurt, *Love of Our Country*, p.15.

and dutiful petition to the throne.⁵³ The Fairfax resolves, drafted by George Mason and adopted later in July 1774, further demonstrate that, apart from conservatives, patriots had also adopted the belief that moderate action was the right way of proceeding in politics. Referring to the authority of Parliament to regulate trade and commerce, Virginia statesmen declared: ‘Such a Power directed with Wisdom and Moderation, seems necessary for the general Good of that great Body-politic of which we are a Part;’⁵⁴ It should be noted that the belief in the idea that moderation and temperance should prevail in society and in politics was reiterated by George Mason two years later, in his draft of the Virginia Declaration of Rights (May 1776).⁵⁵ Lastly, Fairfax freeholders reaffirmed their affection for the king:

declaring, in the strongest Terms, ou[r] duty and Affection to his Majesty’s Person, Family, [an]d Government, and our Desire to continue our Dependance upon Great Bri[tai]n; and most humbly conjuring and besecching his Majesty, not to reduce his faithful Subjects of America to a State of desperation.⁵⁶

As late as June and July 1775 Thomson Mason, in his letters to the *Virginia Gazette* thought that it was still possible for the empire to be saved from - what he considered – the madness of Parliament. Similarly, during the autumn, the general assemblies of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and North Carolina all resolved against declaring independence.⁵⁷ In Maryland, there was a greater reluctance than in Virginia among the patriot party to declare independence. Indeed, Chase’s Maryland colleagues were hesitant on the matter until late spring 1776, except for Charles Carroll of Carrollton, who concurred with Chase’s view by March 1776. The ties with England were deemed a stabilizing factor on the Maryland political scene at the time, since common people under the leadership of the Hammond-Ridgely faction, were prone to radical actions. These raised the fear of anarchy and social upheaval in the minds of the elite. On 15 May 1776, the Maryland

⁵³ Miller, *George Mason*, p. 105; see: John C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington, 1745-1799*, 39 vols. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931-44), vol. 3, pp. 227-8.

⁵⁴ Robert A. Rutland (ed.), *The Papers of George Mason, 1725-1792*, 3 vols. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), vol. 1, p. 202

⁵⁵ Mason stated in his draft of the Virginia Declaration of Rights: ‘no free Government, or the Blessings of Liberty can be preserved to any People, but by a firm adherence to Justice, Moderation, Temperance, Frugality, and Virtue’, see: *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 278.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 209.

⁵⁷ Miller, *George Mason*, p. 130; Regarding the inclination towards independence in Maryland, see: Haw, *Life of Samuel Chase*, p. 50.

convention unanimously resolved to instruct its delegates in Congress to strive for reconciliation and firmly oppose independence. It was only as late as 28 June 1776 that Maryland statesmen, under popular pressure, decided to countenance independence.⁵⁸

The patriots pleaded God to safeguard liberty. They referred to the perceived endangered freedoms of the British constitution as God-given. Moreover, they adopted the Lockean discourse that liberty in the state of nature was regarded sacred and that people had entered society in order to be protected by its laws, while consenting to give up part of their liberty. Even Samuel Henley, a future loyalist, argued that societies were ‘formed for the mutual protection of the persons and properties of those who composed them’, on the basis of ‘laws, founded on general consent’.⁵⁹ Richard Bland was undeniably influenced by this Lockean doctrine, when he declared:

Men in a State of Nature are absolutely free and independent of one another as to sovereign Jurisdiction, but when they enter into a Society, and by their own Consent become Members of it, they must submit to the Laws of the Society according to which they agree to be governed; [...] but though they must submit to the Laws, so long as they remain Members of the Society, yet they retain so much of their natural Freedom as to have a Right to retire from the Society, to renounce the Benefits of it, to enter into another Society, and to settle in another Country; for their Engagements to the Society, and their Submission to the publick Authority of the State, do not oblige them to continue in it longer than they find it will conduce to their Happiness, which they have a natural Right to promote. This natural Right remains with every Man, and he cannot justly be deprived of it by any civil Authority.⁶⁰

Similarly, Daniel Dulany in his *Considerations* argued for ‘no taxation without representation’ on the basis that ‘all men have natural, and freemen legal, rights, which they may justly maintain, and no legislative authority can deprive them of.’⁶¹

Dulany’s studies in Cambridge, which was the hub for the study of nature and where Newton had developed his theories on natural laws in the previous century, inevitably contributed to the formation of this line of thinking.⁶² In his ‘Virginia

⁵⁸ Haw, *Life of Samuel Chase*, pp. 66, 68.

⁵⁹ Henley, *The Distinct Claims of Government and Religion*, p. 5.

⁶⁰ Bland, *Inquiry into the Rights of the British Colonies*, p. 11.

⁶¹ Dulany, ‘Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes’, p. 609-10; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 644, 646; cf. Rutland, *Papers of George Mason*, i, pp. 229-30.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 603.

Declaration of Rights' of May 1776 George Mason restated his belief in the idea that government officials, as representatives and, thus, 'servants' of the people, were instituted to protect the people's rights, as well as their common benefit, security and happiness.⁶³ This was the traditional liberal representation of government and society, according to which government was a necessary evil instituted for the protection of man's interests. The conservative interpretation depicted man as having evil dispositions and being born not in the state of nature, but within civil society. The purpose of government was, then, to exert a moralizing influence on man and to restrict his evil passions.

Another feature that Anglican patriots borrowed from their Evangelical fellow-countrymen is that they stressed the need for moral uprightness and self-restraint so that the political revolution of the colonial elite became the religious revolution that evangelicals wished to achieve. Daniel Dulany encouraged the use of homespun, which would indicate virtue and dignity as opposed to the corruption witnessed by the luxury and dissipation of English people. He argued:

Let the manufacture of America be the symbol of dignity, the badge of virtue, and it will soon break the fetters of distress. A garment of linsey woolsey, when made the distinction of real patriotism, is more honorable and attractive of respect and veneration than all the pageantry and the robes and the plumes and the diadem of an emperor without it. Let the emulation be not in the richness and variety of foreign productions, but in the improvement and perfection of our own. Let it be demonstrated that the subjects of the British empire in Europe and America are the same, that the hardships of the latter will ever recoil upon the former.⁶⁴

Arguments inspired by both religion and pragmatic considerations featured in the patriot discourse. The religious arguments involved those referring to anti-catholicism, providentialism, God's covenant and the moral discipline, required of his people, whereas the pragmatic considerations of the patriots were related to the belief that ministers had an instructional, educational role (rather than a sacerdotal one), to their opposition to the severity of British oppression, and to their conviction of the flaws of the British constitution and the sacred nature of liberty.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, i, pp. 276-8.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 649.

Loyalist Attitudes towards the Revolution

The motives for eighteenth-century loyalism to the British crown can be divided into two types: those inspired by religious conviction and those influenced by pragmatic considerations. Loyalism, when shaped by religious conviction, was usually expressed by Anglican clergymen, by those who were educated in England or by those otherwise influenced by such clergymen. Such loyalists adopted the main belief of Anglican political theology, namely that obedience to rulers was an earnest religious obligation, because God himself had created government and especially favoured monarchical rule. Jonathan Boucher argued:

Obedience to Government is every man's duty, because it is every man's interest: but it is particularly incumbent on Christians, because (in addition to its moral fitness) it is enjoined by the positive commands of God: and therefore, when Christians are disobedient to human ordinances, they are also disobedient to God.⁶⁵

Boucher supported this argument with the following idea: since government had the authority and power of law and order, and thus, the power of taking one's life, which is a prerogative belonging only to God, then, it inevitably followed that government had divine origins. In this sense, God had conferred government with the power of life and death.⁶⁶ Boucher explained: '*there is no power, but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God.*'⁶⁷

In this belief system, the king, as the head of church and state, was God's servant. Boucher argued: 'the supreme magistrate, whether consisting of one or of many, and whether denominated an emperor, a king, an archon, a dictator, a consul, or a senate, is to be regarded and venerated as the vicegerent of God'.⁶⁸ In this sense, due to the fact that society was ordained and commanded by a divine power, man had to conduct his life by following the rules of religious faith. It also followed that

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 507-08.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 521.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 525.

⁶⁸ Jonathan Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences of the American revolution; in thirteen discourses, preached in North America between the years 1763 and 1775: with an historical preface* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1797), p. 534.

the purpose of government was the advancement of God's honour, through good, stable administration, as shown in the traditions and ceremonies of the Church of England. Boucher argued: 'a levelling republican spirit in the Church naturally leads to republicanism in the State'.⁶⁹

These beliefs were grounded on a medieval notion of economy and on the seventeenth-century puritan ideal of Christian brotherly love. The main aim of the individual, living in society, should have been the welfare of the whole community. In order to further this aim, each person should have played a part in it with a spirit of Christian kindness and goodwill, dependent on his standing in society. Samuel Henley, asserted: 'In the compacted strength of its members, Society found, both, a guard against external assault, and a remedy for intestine disorder. Each according to his ability or property, contributing towards the support of the whole'.⁷⁰ In this system, ministers were ascribed a sacerdotal role and were deemed 'Physicians to the Soul'.⁷¹ Implied in this was the belief in the inequality of people's abilities and in the distrust towards popular power, and inferred in this belief was the necessity of the existence of a learned, governing elite who would take the lead in the management of political and social affairs. Jonathan Boucher's semi-rhetorical questions to the people in Maryland who rose up in arms against Britain, clearly exhibit this distrust towards the abilities of the people at large. He asked:

1. Do not the popular meetings now so common among us bear a very near resemblance to the tribunitial assemblies of the people in the earlier periods of the Roman history?
2. Do not the resolves entered into at such popular meetings, and framed and supported so as to have nearly the force of laws, resemble also the Plebiscita, or Ordinances, which in after times were as valid and obligatory as the Senatus-consulta, or laws constitutionally enacted by the whole legislature?
3. Should these two quæres be answered in the affirmative, does it not deserve some consideration, whether be encouraging these, we do not in fact encourage that Dominatio Plebis, so much desecrated by the best writers on Government?⁷²

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 534, 104.

⁷⁰ Henley, *Distinct Claims of Government and Religion, Considered*, p. 5.

⁷¹ Carter, *Letter to the Right Reverend Father in God*, pp. 23-24

⁷² Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist*, p. 129.

Elsewhere Boucher expressed even more explicitly the opinion that men did not have equal abilities: ‘Man differs from man in everything that can be supposed to lead to supremacy and subjection, *as one star differs from another star in glory*’. This inevitably led to the conclusion that government by compact was not possible. Besides - he reasoned - it was difficult to determine what the common good was because of so many diverse opinions.⁷³

Moreover, the right of resistance, if exercised without due reverence for the law, would never have allowed the rule of the majority and this would have brought instability, confusion and decay of government.⁷⁴ In this sense, Boucher denounced the first Continental Congress, because he thought that the representatives to it ‘have not been summoned, or convened by any formal constitutional authority, or invested with any legislative powers: but have been chosen as freely as the circumstances of the time would admit’.⁷⁵ Similarly, Boucher described the non-importation and non-exportation agreements as

a combination to ruin, or to obstruct the trade of a fellow citizen, who happens to differ from us, in his religious or political opinions, adopted in passion, prosecuted by the intrigues of a cabal, by innuendoes, insinuations, threatenings, and publicly signed, by large numbers of leading men, would I presume, be a manifest violation, or the laws of God and Man.⁷⁶

Boucher argued that the belief in non-resistance to government was to be found in Scripture: ‘*to be quiet, and to sit still*’ is what they ordained.⁷⁷ The belief that government was not established by compact between equal men who had rights derived from nature was based on the idea that God had intended man to be, from his creation, a social being. Jonathan Boucher was categorical on this: ‘It was the purpose of the Creator, that man should be social’.⁷⁸

According to this doctrine, the salvation of man depended on his positive contribution to humanity. The Glorious Revolution promoted a kind of due respect for the law, which was based on the importance of civil order. While protesting at the

⁷³ Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences*, pp. 514-5. Cf. Jonathan Boucher, *A letter from a Virginian, to the members of the Congress to be held at Philadelphia, on the first of September, 1774* ([Philadelphia: H. Miller], 1774), p. 13.

⁷⁴ Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences*, pp. 518-520.

⁷⁵ Boucher, *Letter from a Virginian*, p. 4.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-9.

⁷⁷ Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences*, p. 535.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 515.

unconstitutionality of the Stamp Act, the loyalist Maryland lawyer Daniel Dulany reasoned that the dependence of the colonies on the British crown should not be effected arbitrarily, without laws regulating the relationship of the colonies to the mother country.⁷⁹ More precisely, Dulany believed that the reverence for the law introduced by the Revolution was – in practical terms – depended on the doctrine that laws can not be passed without the concurrence of parliament.⁸⁰ This led him to the conclusion that the right of resistance to those illegitimate actions, which contravened God’s law and civil rules, was warranted. Boucher, a high-churchman, argued that resistance was only warranted against those laws which deterred people from being good Christians, and which induced them to commit immoral, impious or inhumane actions.⁸¹

According to loyalist clergymen, whenever man decided to resist governmental laws, he should also passively accept any governmental penalties for his disobedience. The crucifixion of Christ (in that he accepted the punishment imposed by Pontius Pilate) represented the foremost example that due submission to the government was always required, even if only in the sense that one should patiently accept the penalties imposed for one’s disobedience. The reason for that was that social peace and order should not be disturbed.⁸² It followed that opposition should always be conducted through legal means and in an orderly manner. Despite opposing the Stamp Act, Dulany declared: ‘The resentment I should recommend would be a legal, orderly and prudent resentment’.⁸³ In his exchange of letters with the patriot Charles Carroll of Carrollton, Dulany persistently supported the values of the British constitution, its main feature of decision-making through the sovereign legislature of King-in-Parliament and repeatedly argued for an orderly manner of proceeding, as opposed to any reaction which would imply or illustrate rage and delusion or bring about anarchy. The same reasoning is shown in Dulany’s portrayal of the Revolution of 1688. He argued that James II abdicated because he betrayed the trust placed in him by the people by trying to subvert the constitution and undermine the established church. At the same time, Dulany straightforwardly denied that it was

⁷⁹ Daniel Dulany, ‘Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes’, pp. 619-20.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 635.

⁸¹ Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences*, pp. 538-39.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 542-6.

⁸³ Daniel Dulany, ‘Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes’, p. 651.

the Revolution which brought about the dethronement of the Stuart king, because then the Revolution would have been rather ‘an act of *violence*, than of *justice*’.⁸⁴ In expressing this opinion, Dulany had been influenced by high-church theologians of the Church, who preferred to perceive the removal of James II, as his act of abdication, rather than the consequence of any revolutionary action. Boucher held a similar view, when he wrote: ‘Nothing but its success, could have rescued the revolution from its foul imputation, had it not been for the abdication’.⁸⁵ It can be argued that Dulany’s belief in the legitimate redress of grievances through one part of the British constitution, that is the legislative of King-in-Parliament, and not the people at large, was evidence that he believed that the ultimate, sovereign authority in the empire, was this legislative. This betrayed the conservative slant in his thought and differentiated his political thinking from that of Charles Carroll.⁸⁶

Based on the belief that resistance should only match the severity of the injuries committed by government, loyalist clergymen and lay Anglicans in the colonies reasoned that the laws adopted by the British parliament were not so damaging to the colonies that they justified resistance and hence only some revision of the administration of the colonies was necessary. Boucher called the duty on tea ‘insignificant’, because he did not think that it affected a great part of the population of America at the time.⁸⁷ This stance led him to call for a lawful redress of grievances rather than for extensive revolutionary actions. According to Boucher, petitions addressed to the representatives in parliament, whose could repeal unjust laws if they wished, was the proper way to act. He thought that if redress was requested in a decent manner, it could be achieved.⁸⁸

The pursuance of this idea conformed rightly with the main Anglican credo that violence and war against the temporal authorities should be precluded by all possible channels, with the effect that it was more desirable to tolerate in silence the legal punishments for non-compliance with civil measures than embark on

⁸⁴ Onuf, *Maryland and the Empire*, p. 103; cf. *ibid.*, p. 187.

⁸⁵ Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences*, p. 552.

⁸⁶ Peter S. Onuf (ed.), *Maryland and the Empire, 1773*, pp. 9-13, 37-39; for example, during the proclamation controversy in Maryland, contrary to what Daniel Dulany believed, Charles Carroll of Carrollton thought that the House of Commons alone should establish the fees paid to the officers of courts, see: *ibid.*, p. 108.

⁸⁷ Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences*, pp. 554-5.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 555-9. cf. Boucher, *Letter from a Virginian*, p. 13.

revolutionary upheaval. Jonathan Boucher argued that it was precisely from this reverence for the law that true liberty stemmed.⁸⁹ James Chalmers shared the clerical repugnance of war, deploring the ‘horrors and calamities’ that war brought.⁹⁰ The belief in peaceable and moderate behaviour laid the foundations of Anglican political thinking and it was frequently praised by Anglican theologians in the colonies as one of the main qualities of human behaviour. Landon Carter believed that ‘Mildness, invites to Peace, Love and Duty; but Horror plunges into Confusion and Despair.’⁹¹ In the same way, Daniel Dulany prayed for moderation when seeking to regulate the authority of the parent country over the colonies.⁹² Jonathan Boucher insisted that this is what God ordained: ‘it is our duty not to disturb and destroy the peace of the community, by becoming refractory and rebellious subjects, and *resisting the ordinances of God*’.⁹³

The English civil war provided an example of the social and political upheaval that could be produced when moderate behaviour was not exhibited. In the minds of Anglican political theorists, the conduct of Cromwell and his followers, who overturned the authority of the established church and of monarchy, was the paramount example of the kind of political behaviour that should be avoided. John Camm, referring to Richard Bland, who allegedly desired the overthrow of the established order in Virginia, exclaimed: ‘How would our Hearts (say both!) with Rapture burn, Would *Cromwell*, righteous *Cromwell*, NOW return!’⁹⁴ James Chalmers also perceived the American Revolution as a religious war. He compared the American War of Independence to the English civil war, and his contemporary patriots to those who allied with the Independents at the time of Cromwell. He thought that the former were duped by the latter, since they did not realize that their rebellion would end in rejecting the constitution and beheading the king.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences*, p. 509; see also: Boucher, *Letter from a Virginian*, p. 24.

⁹⁰ *Plain Truth*, p. 24.

⁹¹ Carter, *Letter to the Right Reverend Father in God*, p. 37; see also: John Camm, *Critical remarks on a letter ascribed to Common Sense containing an attempt to prove that the said letter is an imposition on common sense...* (Williamsburg [Va.]: Joseph Royle, 1765), p. 28.

⁹² Daniel Dulany, ‘Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes’, pp. 624, 627.

⁹³ Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences*, p. 508.

⁹⁴ Camm, *Critical remarks*, p. 38.

⁹⁵ *Plain Truth*, p. 29.

What's more, these thoughts were justified by Providence, which ensured the prevalence of monarchy in the eighteenth and in previous centuries. The most indicative example was the Puritan revolution of the seventeenth century, which so failed of success that monarchy was restored in 1660, only eleven years after Charles I's decapitation. It followed that the American and, later, the French Revolution were against the events ordered by Providence, since in well-ordered states monarchy would always be the predominant system of government. Given these assumptions, the loyalism of Anglican clergymen was inspired by a concept of society, which was distinct from the powerful secular approach of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. It was based on the consideration that government referred to something otherworldly, different from a secular community, which was instituted for purely practical purposes.

Nevertheless, pragmatic considerations regarding the role of the Church as a social institution did play a part in the development of the loyalist inclinations of some Anglican clergymen, since their appointment required a solemn oath of allegiance to the king.⁹⁶ In other words, they had to serve the political establishment to which they had sworn loyalty. Moreover, cultural and educational references from the reality of clerical life also encouraged the growth of loyalist thinking among eighteenth-century clergymen, serving in the parent country and in the colonies. These practical considerations were founded on a belief in the moralizing, social function of the church, which promulgated moderate and peaceable behaviour and, thus, sought to ensure social cohesion. Conformity to the wishes of a social elite was necessary, because, according to loyalist thinking, only through the rule of a social hierarchy could the well-being of the community be maintained. Underlying this idea was the desire to shield the community from what was perceived as the growing individualism of the middle decades of the eighteenth century.

According to the same loyalist ideas, patriots did not fight for the common good, but for their own, personal advancement, seeking material prosperity and political dominance. Anglican loyalists then held that this led to radical, immoderate behaviour, which in turn resulted in group divisions in political life, to social upheaval, and to lawlessness. The Anglican critique branded this kind of socio-

⁹⁶ Chandler, *Appeal to the Public*, p. 41.

political behaviour as democratic tyranny, which was based on the kind of manipulation of the populace which, in the past, had produced such social turmoil, as the Salem witchcraft trials and the English civil war. Daniel Dulany feared that the ‘free people of Maryland will become a lawless mob at their [the Confederates’] instigation, and be the dupes of their infernal rage’.⁹⁷ At this point, the definition of a Whig by Jonathan Boucher becomes interesting. He wrote: ‘a whig consists in being haughty and overbearing in domestic life; in being insolent to inferiors, and tyrannical to slaves ... to support revolution principles is, in everything, to oppose and thwart the executive power’.⁹⁸ He then went to lament the consequences of growing political radicalism in the colonies. He stated: ‘... so total and important a change in the public mind cannot fail to have a mighty influence on the whole of our colonial system, is evident. it’s [the country’s] present form of government may be thus altered, by multitudes and by mobs, without infinite detriment to our civil as well as to our religious interests’.⁹⁹ Following this reasoning, Boucher feared the expansion of lawlessness, which he saw as the consequence of excessive liberty.¹⁰⁰ He was also one of those who publicly denounced the actions of the first Continental Congress, as an example of those who act more according to ‘their temper than their judgment’, and as the product of the activities of a ‘deluded multitude’, of ‘turbulent demagogues’ and of ‘mad enthusiasts’, who have abused the will of God to serve the purposes of a Charles or a Cromwell’.¹⁰¹

Anglicans adopted the eighteenth-century belief in the paternal character of every ruling authority, as previously analysed in the writings of Richard Hooker, Robert Filmer and Montesquieu. The works of high-churchmen in the colonies, such as Jonathan Boucher, illustrate the direct influence of the patriarchal doctrines of Robert Filmer.¹⁰² Boucher explained the paternal nature of government in the following way: Government on earth imitated the government of angels in heaven, in the sense that ‘as soon as there were some to be governed, there were also some to govern’. Consequently, ‘the families of the earth were subjected to rulers, at first set

⁹⁷ Onuf, (ed.), *Maryland and the Empire, 1773*, p. 75.

⁹⁸ Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences*, p. 99; Boucher similarly feared the expansion of lawlessness, which he perceived as a result of excessive liberty.

⁹⁹ Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences*, pp. 99, 101.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 511.

¹⁰¹ Boucher, *A letter from a Virginian*, pp. 6-9.

¹⁰² Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences*, p. 522.

over them by God', with the effect that 'the first father was the first king'.¹⁰³ In this way, the government of a family set the precedent for the government of communities and nations. The first example of this was the family of Adam and Eve, exercising power over their offspring, as ordained by God.¹⁰⁴ There were some statesmen, however, who disavowed Filmer's principles, despite being loyalists. In Virginia, John Camm declared: 'This Sir *Robert Filmer*, if I mistake not, is one who stood up for arbitrary Government and *dispensing Powers*.'¹⁰⁵ The paternal character of governing authorities seems to have largely imbued the thought of eighteenth-century Anglicans, whether patriots or loyalists, without them making a conscious examination of its origins. Richard Bland, a revolutionary, referring to King George III, held: 'The Father of his People, is at too great a Distance to extend his beneficent Hand for their Relief in Time'¹⁰⁶ while Landon Carter gave a great illustration of this belief in the paternal and sacred nature of the authority of the Crown in the following words:

As we are persuaded that our Sovereign cannot wish to have a stronger Testimony of Love and Obedience in his People than what he must have experienced from the constant Behaviour of Virginia, ... it is humbly hoped that he will not suffer himself to be induced to withdraw his wonted paternal Mildness from us.¹⁰⁷

It was believed that the value of social establishments was to protect man from his own power, irrationality and fervour through the agency of positive laws. Daniel Dulany expressed the following opinion:

I well know there are men of the profession [lawyers], who need not the restriction of positive Law to keep them within the bounds of moderation; but ... it may happen that profligate, and illiberal men, may sometimes insinuate themselves into the most honourable professions, to check their rapacity, and insolence is not unworthy of the legislative attention.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 524-5.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 526, 532.

¹⁰⁵ Camm, *Critical remarks*, p. 21.

¹⁰⁶ Bland, *Letter to the clergy of Virginia*, p. 16; cf. Bland, *Inquiry into the Rights of the British Colonies*, pp. 29, 14.

¹⁰⁷ Carter, *Letter to the Right Reverend Father in God*, p. 48. see also: *ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁰⁸ Onuf, (ed.), *Maryland and the Empire, 1773*, p. 74.

Similarly, Jonathan Boucher took for granted the intrinsic evil disposition in man's character, due to the Fall, and argued that the purpose of laws and government was to regulate man's conduct. He stated: 'If men were as good as it is their interest to be, laws and governors would be unnecessary'.¹⁰⁹ Alluding to the royal prerogative, Richard Bland stated: 'but great and powerful as it is, it can only be exerted while in the Hands of the best and most benign Sovereign, for the Good of his People, and not for their Destruction'.¹¹⁰ In his *Plain Truth* James, Chalmers, a Maryland landowner, Chalmers exhibited the usual loyalist distrust towards concerted popular action or sovereignty in claiming that without the authority of the crown 'our constitution would immediately degenerate into democracy'.¹¹¹ In a conservative vein, Chalmers stood as a firm supporter of good order, which would only be provided by aristocratic government, while he denounced factionalism, confusion, wars, sedition and anarchy, that, he thought, prevail in a democracy.¹¹²

The exertion of the authority of the king was thought to contribute to the maintenance of society. This theory contradicted John Locke's theory of the social contract as the origin of society and, instead, it promulgated the idea that the right of the colonists to wield legislative power was not a right, which was granted by nature, but was granted by the indulgence of the parent country. Besides, for those Anglican clergymen who were born or educated in Britain, the continuous attachment with Britain and the British King was a natural course of action, since the latter were the elements to which they were customarily related. In the mindset of those Anglicans, the American colonists were inevitably an integral part of British society.

Moreover, the structure of the Church of England, with its archbishops, bishops, priests and deacons, was based on an hierarchical concept of society, which was particularly appealing to the wealthy, being a product of the prospering trading towns along the American seaboard. Daniel Dulany hinted at these developments when he observed:

I fancy you will hear many of my brother-mechanicks raising their voices against you, who scarce know the meaning of your Court-influence, and Corruption, who will stand on the side of

¹⁰⁹ Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences*, pp. 113-4; see also: *ibid.*, p. 523.

¹¹⁰ Bland, *Letter to the clergy of Virginia*, p. 18.

¹¹¹ [James Chalmers], *Plain Truth*, p. 2.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 7.

him, whom they think from an unprejudiced observation of his manners, the likeliest to shield them from oppression: or may it be, the encrease of whose business, as it is closely connected with the prosperity of the city, bids the fairest to enlarge the sphere of action, and importance, not only of every tradesman, but of every inhabitant who lives by his labour, and the sweat of his elbow.¹¹³

Anglican clergymen often befriended the colonial elite of the seaboard towns to the effect that they expressed concerns about the future of their trade, in the case of the outbreak of war with Britain.¹¹⁴ The Anglican faith, their social position and self-interest determined the political affiliations of the wealthy Anglican ‘moderate men’, and strengthened their belief in the moralizing, paternal role of the Church and the British Crown. These groups depended - to a great extent – on British sponsorship for their social and political survival. In this respect, Daniel Dulany asked Charles Carroll of Carrollton:

Have they [his adversaries] not as deep a stake in the safety of the Constitution as you, or your friends? What can possibly tempt them to join in the demolition of that bulwark, which alone shelters them in the enjoyment of their fortunes, and of every comfort that can plead to the reason, and the interest the heart of man?¹¹⁵

Constitution Making

After compiling a ‘Declaration of Rights’, the Virginian delegates set out to draft a new constitution for their state. After long discussions, the constitution, which emerged, represented a mixture of liberal and conservative views. The authority of the governor and of the Privy Council was successfully controlled by the assembly and the separation of powers enshrined. More radical measures, which Jefferson had suggested, such as universal manhood suffrage, the proportioning of representation in the House of Delegates to the population, the disestablishment of the Church of England and the ratification of the constitution by the people at large, failed, however, to win the approval of the majority. Maryland statesmen had to deliberate on similar issues in a convention where the demarcation between conservative and

¹¹³ Onuf (ed.), *Maryland and the Empire, 1773*, p. 48.

¹¹⁴ Chandler, *Appeal to the Public*, p. 62; Boucher, *Letter from a Virginian*, p. 28.

¹¹⁵ Onuf, (ed.), *Maryland and the Empire, 1773*, p. 47.

radical powers was more pronounced than in Virginia. Before the resulting constitution could bear the mark of the views of both factions, the strong tendencies of the elite to reaffirm its power had to be severely restrained.

Carter Braxton's *Address to the Convention and Ancient Dominion of Virginia; on the Subject of Government in general and recommending a particular form to their consideration* (1776) contained one of the first plans of government to be suggested and gives a flavour of the conservative thinking that was expressed at the time. Wishing to strike a balance between tradition and innovation, Braxton recommended a constitution with many aristocratic features,¹¹⁶ on the grounds that:

it cannot be wise to draw them [men] further from their former institutions, than obvious reasons and necessity will justify. Should a form of government directly opposite to the ancient one, under which they have been happy, be introduced and established; will they not on the least disgust repine at the change, and be disposed even to acts of violence in order to regain their former condition.¹¹⁷

Braxton identified the main flaw of the British constitution as being the influence of the monied interest, which destroyed the independence of Lords and Commons, and he went on to state that 'however necessary it may be to shake off the authority of arbitrary British dictators, we ought nevertheless to adopt and perfect that system, which England has suffered to be so grossly abused, and the experience of ages has taught us to venerate'.¹¹⁸ For Braxton, effective remedies would have been the removal of placemen, triennial elections and the suppression of the 'rotten boroughs'.¹¹⁹ Richard Henry Lee and Patrick Henry opposed such ideas, but on 12 May 1776 Edmund Pendleton wrote to Braxton, denouncing democracy as a political system:

A democracy, considered as *referring determinations*, either legislative or executive, TO THE PEOPLE AT LARGE, is the worst form (of government) imaginable. Of all others, I own, I prefer the true English constitution, which consists of a proper combination of the principles of honor, virtue, and

¹¹⁶ Braxton's constitution included the Governor, continuing in office on 'good behaviour', the triennial election of Representatives, and Councillors of State, equivalent to the British Lords, holding office for life, see: Carter Braxton, *Address to the Colony and Ancient Dominion of Virginia*, pp. 20-22.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

fear. I confess *there are some* objections EVEN TO THIS, which only proves that perfection is not in our power to attain.¹²⁰

Braxton should have agreed to this representation, since he was not a republican himself. In the aforementioned pamphlet, he wrote: ‘The systems recommended to the Colonies, seem to accord with the temper of the times, and are fraught with all the tumult and riot incident to simple democracy’. Braxton thought that democracy required public virtue, which in turn implied disinterested motives when acting for the good of the whole community. In Braxton’s view, such virtue was unattainable.¹²¹

There was, therefore, in Virginia a group of conservative statesmen, who, despite the fact that they had sided with the patriots, entertained – even in post-revolutionary times – a liking for English political ideas, because England, as a cultural centre, still influenced their thinking. This was acknowledged by Arthur Lee, who, in 1775, had stressed the cultural attachment between Britain and America in these words:

We have every influence of interest and affection to attach us to each other, and make us wish to preserve the union indissoluble. The same laws, the same religion, the same constitution, the same feelings, sentiments and habits, are a common blessing and a common cause.¹²²

Conservative politicians wished the continuation of tradition and distrusted the change that the conferring of power on the people would have brought. They had a desire, therefore, for good social order, as cultivated by the maintenance of the hierarchical structure of society and politics that English constitutionalism promoted. Carter Braxton declared:

let it be remembered that under them [English laws], she [Virginia] flourished and was happy. The same principles which led the English to greatness, animate us. To that principle our laws, our customs, and our manners are adapted, and it would be perverting all order, to oblige us,

¹²⁰ David John Mays, *Letters and Papers of Edmund Pendleton, 1734-1803*, 2 vols. (Charlottesville, Va: University of Virginia Press, 1967), i, p. 177.

¹²¹ Braxton, *Address to the Colony and Ancient Dominion of Virginia*, pp. 14-9.

¹²² Arthur Lee, *Appeal to the Justice and Interests of the People of Great Britain: in the Present Dispute with America* (New York: Rivington, 1775), p. 3

by a novel government, to give up our laws, our customs,
and our manners.¹²³

Braxton's Anglican upbringing and his education at the College of William and Mary, as well as his stay for two years in England (1758-60) can partly explain his preference for a highly stratified society, at the apex of which an educated elite would be placed and to whom alone should government should be trusted.¹²⁴

The majority of statesmen in Virginia at the time, however, thought that the people at large should play a greater role in the administration of the polity and that political power should not be granted only to the elite. The constitution, voted at the Virginia convention of May and June 1776, shows the urge of Virginian revolutionaries to check the power of the executive, namely that of the governor, through the exertion of the power of the people by way of their representatives in a bi-cameral assembly. One of the first checks on the authority of the executive was the annual election and rotation in office stipulated for the governor and his council: the governor was to be elected annually by the joint ballot of both Houses of the assembly, was not to serve more than three consecutive one-year terms and was to be ineligible for election for three years thereafter. The eight-member Privy Council was to be elected by the joint ballot of both Houses and be renewed by removal and replacement of two members every three years, with retiring members ineligible for election for three years thereafter. Moreover, the separation of powers, executive, judiciary and legislative, ensured the independence of their judgment and represented a strong deviation from the king-in-parliament principle of the British constitution, whereby the representatives of the people did not have any autonomous authority.¹²⁵

Some elements of pre-revolutionary usage crept into the Virginia constitution, however. The broadening of suffrage, which George Mason had suggested, and the almost universal suffrage, based on property of only fifty acres and through grants of the same to those who did not possess it, which Thomas Jefferson had recommended, did not come to fruition. The right to vote would 'remain as exercised at present', mainly resting with freeholders possessing landed estates of at least £1,000 value. Moreover, contrary to the stipulation in the

¹²³ Braxton, *Address to the Colony and Ancient Dominion of Virginia*, p. 13.

¹²⁴ 'Carter Braxton', *DAB*, ii, pp. 609-10.

¹²⁵ Miller, *George Mason*, pp. 158-61.

constitution that the lower house of the assembly would consist of two representatives from each county, Jefferson had suggested that the representative should be proportionate to the population. Representation in the lower house of the assembly, as adopted, ensured the prevalence of the Tidewater elite with its large plantations to the detriment of the interests of the large number of small landowners in the Piedmont and the West. In addition, despite the urgings of George Mason and Thomas Jefferson to immediately proceed with the disestablishment of the Church of England, the members of the Virginia Convention preferred not to discuss - at that time - this controversial subject. Consequently, the church was disestablished only gradually during the following decade.¹²⁶

In Maryland, a convention, met on 14 August 1776, for the purpose of framing a declaration of rights and a new constitution. As in Virginia, there existed in Maryland a group of conservative Anglican political leaders, the most prominent of whom were Samuel Chase, Brice Worthington and Charles Carroll, the Barrister. As with Carter Braxton in Virginia, Chase believed that the new constitution of his state should restore British liberties (mainly, the trial by jury, freedom of the press and the right to petition) to their original function, unburdened from the corruption of the British system. The declaration of rights that was produced at the convention denounced plurality in office, and advocated the principles of the separation of powers and rotation in office. In the society which he envisioned, government and good order would be entrusted to an educated elite of wealth, who would be accountable to their propertied constituents only. In this sense, the former status quo as instituted under the proprietary government would be maintained. In Maryland, this group had to contend with those politicians who strove for radical reforms. They were led by Matthias and Rezin Hammond, John Hall and Charles Ridgely. Their main aim was to establish a political system which would break away from British practices and norms of the past so that the popular will would be taken into account to a much greater extent. Radical political ideas of this sort were particularly appealing in the northern and western counties of Maryland.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 158-61.

¹²⁷ Haw, *Life of Samuel Chase*, pp. 69-74; 1-2 Nov., 1776. *Proceedings of the Conventions of the Province of Maryland, held at the City of Annapolis, in 1774, 1775 & 1776* (Baltimore: James Lucas & E. K. Deaver and Annapolis: Jonas Green, 1836), pp. 305, 307.

The differences between the political agenda of the patriots and that of the Hammond-Ridgely faction came to the fore during the discussion on the state's new constitution. The Hammond-Ridgely group formed a plan of government, which rendered all governmental bodies accountable to an annually elected bicameral legislature with annual popular elections for the county officials and militia officers and universal manhood suffrage for the revolutionary native-born and the loyalist foreign-born freemen who fulfilled reasonable residence and property requirements. This programme was included in the instructions that were given to Anne Arundel county's convention delegates, led by Rezin Hammond.¹²⁸ This plan was objectionable to the patriot faction, who would not endorse the suggestion for the popular election of sheriffs and justices of the peace. Moreover, the patriots held that those without property should not have the right to vote, because they had no stake in society and that the expression of their political will could, therefore, be subversive of good social order.¹²⁹

Thomas Johnson, Robert T. Hooe, Matthew Tilghman, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, George Plater and Robert Goldsborough were actively involved in the committee, which was assigned the task of drafting the new constitution. It seems that Samuel Chase, though initially a member of the convention, later collaborated with the constitutional committee at a distance. The document, which they prepared, included such stipulations as a three-year term for members in the House of Delegates, a seven-year term for members of the Senate, elected through an electoral college, which was elected by the voters, landed property qualifications for the members of the government, and property qualifications for the voters according to colonial standards. Moreover, administrative officers, such as county sheriffs, assessors and clerks, would not be popularly elected, as the radicals wished, but appointed by the governor and council.¹³⁰ Finally, a compromise was reached: senators would serve a five-year term, and delegates a one-year one, but William Paca and Samuel Chase argued that, in this way, they would be too much dependent on the will of the people and, thus, public liberty might be placed in danger. In

¹²⁸ *Maryland Gazette*, 22 August 1776.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 11 December 1777.

¹³⁰ *The Constitution and Form of Government proposed for the Consideration of the Delegates of Maryland* [Annapolis: Frederick Green, 1776].

addition, property requirements for voters and office-holders were reduced in a way that not only landed estate, but also real or personal property were admissible as qualifications for the franchise used to elect senators and delegates. For voters, the colonial standard of fifty-acre freehold was retained, but a property of £30 current money was also acceptable, far reduced from the £40 sterling that was required in colonial times. The governor and council would only have executive, not legislative powers, but they could appoint a wide range of officers, except for county sheriffs who would be elected.¹³¹

It is evident that if Samuel Chase and his fellow-patriots had managed to prevail in the convention a very conservative constitution would have been voted with high property qualifications for office-holding, longer terms of office, more appointed officers, and restrictions on the exercise of political rights for those who had not actively supported the Revolution.¹³² Such a constitution would have expressed the political philosophy of the conservatives who supported the maintenance of social order through the government of an elite of merit, who would be accountable to the propertied classes.¹³³ The hierarchical nature of the Church of England, which most of the members of the Maryland elite attended, as well as the English system of government, to which members of the elite owed their social standing since colonial times, inevitably influenced the political thinking of conservative statesmen.

A heated discussion on the nature of the Republican government and its legislative bodies erupted in Maryland during the paper money dispute in 1785-6, when Samuel Chase became a leader. He supported the gradual issue on loan of up to £350,000 of currency to citizens who would offer as collateral lands of twice the value of the loan. On this, he had on his side the majority of the public. Conversely, prominent members of the Maryland elite, such as Alexander Contee Hanson, Edward Lloyd and Charles Carroll of Carrollton thought that such a measure would be destructive for the economy of the young state. Related to this subject was the newspaper controversy, which erupted in the first half of 1787. In this, the principal

¹³¹ Haw, *Life of Samuel Chase*, pp. 75-6; 4 November 1776. *Proceedings of the Conventions of the Province of Maryland*, pp. 329-31.

¹³² *Constitution and Form of Government ... of Maryland* [Annapolis: Frederick Green, 1776]; 8 Nov. 1776. *Proceedings of the Conventions of the Province of Maryland*, pp. 348-9.

¹³³ Haw, *Life of Samuel Chase*, p. 77.

protagonists were William Paca on behalf of the Delegates and Alexander Contee Hanson on behalf of the Senate. Hanson argued that the popular instructions to the Senate were useful as information or advice, but not binding. The Senate, a body consisted of a natural aristocracy of merit, and destined to check the more passionate and irrational decisions of the House of Delegates, a democratic body, should be left to exercise its proper role and not to be swayed in its resolves from direct popular action between elections. Samuel Chase did not contest the rightfulness of the fact that a major political role was granted to this aristocratic group, but he lamented its unresponsiveness to the popular will.¹³⁴ This episode illustrates that belief in the merits of the political leadership of a socio-economic elite was deeply embedded in the thought of Maryland statesmen during the revolutionary period. Different perceptions of its precise function within the bounds of republicanism were, however, projected.

The elite in the Chesapeake were reluctant to abandon their social standing and privileges, as is illustrated in their drafting of new constitutions. Inevitably influenced by the English political system, religion and culture, conservative politicians in Virginia, such as Carter Braxton and Edmund Pendleton did not advocate democracy. They merely wished to safeguard English liberties and good social order as enshrined in English constitutionalism, when purged from corruption. The constitution, which was eventually produced, secured the right of the people at large to play a meaningful role in administration, but only the landed elite had the right to vote and, in the lower house of the assembly, representation was not proportionate to the population. Similarly, in Maryland, the influence of the propertied elite, who contended with the radical Hammond-Ridgely political group, was immense. As a result, its constitution secured long terms of office for senators and property qualifications for voters and office-holders and reaffirmed the appointive powers of the governor and council.

Disestablishment

¹³⁴ Haw, *Life of Samuel Chase*, pp. 137-43.

Disestablishment aroused fierce debates in the Chesapeake related to the degree of support that the state should lend to religion. In Maryland disestablishment of the Church of England was achieved in a straightforward way, by a single legislative action, but it was not complete in the sense that state support of religion in general was maintained. It can be argued that in Maryland, it was the smouldering opposition of the elite towards the proprietary government and the church that the latter controlled that led to disestablishment, but the influence of British constitutional and cultural values on the thought of Maryland statesmen precluded the possibility of complete disestablishment in their state. In Virginia, the process of disestablishment, was achieved gradually involving discussions on toleration, on the appropriateness of the measure of general assessment for religion and on individual natural rights. A conservative nucleus of Virginian politicians were reluctant to do away with the foundations of the religious system to which they were accustomed and, in several instances, served. As was shown in a previous section, the more pronouncedly Anglican upbringing of Virginian politicians, as compared to those of Maryland, together with the fact that in colonial times these Virginians were the principal administrators of church affairs can be deemed the main reasons why they adopted a moderate approach of the established church. As a result, the disestablishment of the Church of England was achieved in a piecemeal way in Virginia, when compared to the more decisive resolutions of the Marylanders. The forcefulness of Virginia dissenters, however, who had long endured the injustice of paying for the support of a church which they did not attend, and the adoption of the natural rights doctrine from their leaders, led, ultimately, to the complete disestablishment of the church in that state.

In Maryland, the Declaration of Rights of November 1776 banned taxation for the support of any religious denomination. Gustavus Scott, delegate from Somerset County, moved to secure state support for religion. He proposed that there would be a general tax for religion on the payment of which each person could specify which denomination he desired to support.¹³⁵ His suggestion, nevertheless, did not come into effect, since taxes were so burdensome for Marylanders during the war there was overwhelming opposition at the time to more taxes for the support of

¹³⁵ Haw, *Life of Samuel Chase*, p. 74; 1-2 Nov. 1776. *Proceedings of the Conventions of the Province of Maryland*, pp. 305, 307.

religion. Samuel Chase was, however, consistent in his claim that the Maryland convention should take appropriate care of this issue, as his effort in 1777 for the practical application of the relevant stipulation in the constitution illustrates. Similarly, the leaders of the Anglican Church in Maryland would not let the matter rest. The participants in the November 1784 session of the assembly, wherein other projects for civil improvement were launched, seemed to Chase particularly receptive to the plan for the state support of religion. As a result, he brought in a bill, whereby each taxpayer would have to designate the church towards the support of which he wished to contribute and according to which non-Christians were entirely exempted from this kind of taxation. There was strong opposition in the assembly against Chase's bill. Only a resolution which approved state support for religion in general was passed by the House of Delegates with a vote of twenty-seven to twenty-one. A more specific regulation which ensured state support for all ministers of the Christian religion passed by only twenty-six to twenty-four votes. Public disagreement to the plan, however, was prevalent: a sliding economy in the immediate post-revolutionary years made the passing of any new tax bill difficult to achieve and the Delegates unanimously voted against the bill in November 1785. As a result, Maryland never did implement its initial constitutional authorization for the support of religion in general.¹³⁶

Samuel Chase was perhaps the most pious Maryland politician at this time. His father was the Reverend Thomas Chase, who had officiated in Somerset Parish, Somerset County, and in St. Paul's Parish, Baltimore County. He was a staunch anti-Catholic, as he demonstrated during Britain's wars with France and the Jacobite rebellion of 1745-6. Samuel Chase, taught at home by his father, had acquired a gentleman's education with interests in Latin and Greek, history and literature. He inherited from his father his love of classical scholarship and his religious piety, as his support for his church throughout his life and his opposition to complete disestablishment illustrate.¹³⁷ In 1784, Chase advised his sons, Sammy and Tommy, to pursue the study of classics, as well as history, geography, philosophy, rhetoric and mathematics, but 'the first object' they were 'to learn and never forsake' was

¹³⁶ Haw, *Life of Samuel Chase*, pp. 93, 132-3; Henry Addison to Rev. Mr. Barnaby, 28 Sept. 1785, Addison Papers, box 1, *Maryland Historical Society*.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-7.

their ‘duty to God and man without which anything else is useless’, since ‘the duties of religion and morality are never to be dispensed with’. ‘Follies’ he might ‘excuse, but certain vices’ he would ‘never pardon, such as impiety, gaming and drinking’.¹³⁸ Chase was a friend of Bennet Allen and he had opposed the 1768 bill, which had intended to impose supervision over the clergy through a board, presided over by the governor. During the controversy over the clergy’s salaries, Chase had defended the Talbot County minister, John Barclay in April 1772, and, despite his and Paca’s dispute with Jonathan Boucher in the newspapers, Chase never went so far as to deny the legality of the church establishment of 1702 or directly attack the Anglican Church in an anticlerical vein, as Paca did. Chase, however, could not adopt Boucher’s views regarding the propriety of a resident bishop in America. Following the way of reasoning of many of his fellow countrymen, Chase linked episcopacy with burdensome taxes, oppressive ecclesiastical courts and British tyrannical measures. Having spent all his life in Maryland, he could not appreciate the pomp and pageantry of the Anglican Church, as instituted in England. He was a loyal disciple of the Church of England, but only so far as it functioned in Maryland.¹³⁹

In Virginia, for years dissenters had demanded the disestablishment of the Anglican Church. The Declaration of Rights of 1776 formed a favourable climate for the submission of their petitions regarding this matter.¹⁴⁰ George Mason, who had drafted a large part of the final text of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, had couched his belief in the freedom of conscience on terms of full religious toleration by the state. Mason stated:

as Religion, or the Duty which we owe to our divine and omnipotent Creator, and the Manner of discharging it, can be governed only by Reason and Conviction, not by Force or Violence; and therefore all Men shou’d enjoy the fullest Toleration in the Exercise of Religion, according to the Dictates of Conscience, unpunished and unrestrained by the Magistrate, unless under Colour of Religion, any Man

¹³⁸ Chase to N. Sammy, and T. Chase, 8 July 1784, copy. Samuel Chase Letters, Ms 1234, Maryland Historical Society, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 126.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 32-6.

¹⁴⁰ See, for example: ‘Petition of Dissenters in Albemarle and Amherst Counties’ in Julian P. Boyd (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 31 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950-2006), i, pp. 586-9.

disturb the Peace, the Happiness, or Safety of Society, or of Individuals.¹⁴¹

In his advocacy of toleration, Mason was influenced by Locke's *Essay concerning Toleration* (1667), but he would go so far as to endorse complete disestablishment.

Conversely, for James Madison, freedom of conscience was an absolute right unrelated to any decision in favour of toleration either by the state or by another religious body. At Montpelier, Madison was brought up in an Anglican household. His tutor was the Reverend Thomas Martin, rector of the local Brick Church. The Reverend Martin was a graduate of the Presbyterian College of New Jersey (later Princeton), presided over by the militant Presbyterian John Witherspoon from Edinburgh. In 1769, Madison visited the College, in the company of Reverend Martin, and remained there to study for a year and a half. Influenced by Presbyterian doctrines, at his return to Virginia, Madison was found on the side of the religious minority. Inevitably, he was struck by the strengths of religious persecution in the colony, supported by the established status of the Anglican Church there. On 24 January 1774, he wrote to his former fellow-student, William Bradford of Philadelphia:

I want again to breathe your free Air. That diabolical Hell-conceived principle of persecution rages among some and to their eternal Infamy the Clergy can furnish their Quota of Imps for such business. This vexes me the worst of anything whatever. There are at this [time] in the adjacent County not less than 5 or 6 well-meaning men in close Goal for publishing their religious Sentiments which in the main are very orthodox.¹⁴²

Consequently, at the 1776 Convention Madison, with Patrick Henry's backing, advocated disestablishment. He presented the following statement, to be added in the 'Declaration of Rights':

That Religion or the duty we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, being under the direction of reason and conviction only, not of violence or compulsion, all men are equally entitled to the full and free exercise of it according to the dictates of Conscience, and therefore that no man or class of men ought, on account of religion to be

¹⁴¹ Rutland, *Papers of George Mason*, i, pp. 276-8.

¹⁴² William T. Hutchinson, William M.E. Rachal *et al.* (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, 17 vols., (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1962-), i, p. 106.

invested with peculiar emoluments or privileges nor
subjected to any penalties or disabilities unless under &c.¹⁴³

Such staunch churchmen as Robert Carter Nicholas and Edmund Pendleton were not, however, prepared to accept a clause attacking the establishment. As a result, the final version of the 'Virginia Declaration of Rights' contained only the phrase: 'all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience',¹⁴⁴ without any reference to the policy that should be followed by the civil and religious authorities.

Popular opinion in Virginia was, nevertheless, favourable to disestablishment. The legislative committee on religion received, at that time, sixteen petitions requesting the severance of the ties between church and state, whereas only three of the ninety-five parishes were favourable to the maintenance of the established church. Under the thrust of such pressure, the assembly decided, in that year, to dispense with the law requiring dissenters to pay taxes for the support of the established church. Besides, after 1776, the Anglican clergy did not receive any salaries, while the official termination of their payments was enacted in 1779. George Mason drafted the relevant act, but his suggestion that the property of the Church of England in Virginia remain to its members was excised from the bill by the committee on religion. Opposition to Mason's recommendation can be attributed to the fact that, while most of the delegates were Anglicans, their constituents were often dissenters, who had largely contributed to the acquisition of this property by the Church. Committee members, however, did not move to complete disestablishment at this stage.¹⁴⁵

This points to the existence of conflicting strains in Virginia society and polity at the time. Despite the growth of a dissenting population which pressed for even more radical changes in administration, the governing Anglican elite still adhered firmly to the cultural values and practices of the pre-revolutionary past. These opposing political forces came forward in a fervent debate on the value of the establishment of a particular religious denomination, which erupted between the

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, i, p. 174.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, i, pp. 174-5.

¹⁴⁵ Miller, *George Mason*, pp. 201-2; Rutland, *Papers of George Mason*, ii, p. 553.

years 1779 and 1785. Thomas Jefferson's act for establishing religious freedom was introduced, in 1779, but failed to pass. Jefferson argued:

Well aware ... that Almighty God hath created the mind free, and ... that all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments, or burthens, or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness ... that to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinion which he disbelieves *and abhors*, is sinful and tyrannical ... that our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions ... and finally, that truth is great and will prevail if left to herself ...

We the General Assembly of Virginia do enact that ... all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities.¹⁴⁶

The alternative suggestion, namely a general assessment for the support of religion, proposed by Patrick Henry, and endorsed by Richard Henry Lee and Edmund Pendleton, seemed to gain ground. Indeed, five years later, in response to petitions from various counties, the October Assembly of 1784, by a vote of 47 to 32, ordered Patrick Henry to frame a bill, introducing general assessment. This bill attempted to ensure state support for religion in an equitable way, since parishioners would prefer to fund the minister that conformed to the religious affiliation of the majority amongst them. Patrick Henry's main argument was that this system promoted virtue and peace in society. This bill passed its second reading and was scheduled for final consideration, when Madison argued that such a serious issue could not be decided in a single Assembly session. By a vote of 45 to 38, it was then resolved to postpone discussion of this measure until the following autumn. In the meantime, however, Patrick Henry was promoted to the post of governor (November 1785) and Madison had the opportunity to inform the counties about this bill.¹⁴⁷

Apart from Jefferson, Madison's allies included Baptists and Presbyterians, as well as such liberals as George Mason and George Nicholas. They argued that government support of religion led to the corruption of the latter and that it violated people's civil and natural rights. In their minds, the new measure did not seek to establish anything different from the institutions of the old regime. These arguments

¹⁴⁶ Boyd, *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ii, pp. 545-6.

¹⁴⁷ Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, p. 117; Miller, *George Mason*, pp. 216-7.

were expressed in James Madison's *Memorial and Remonstrance To the Honorable the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia* (1785), which was intended for wide circulation and signature: 'We maintain therefore that in matters of Religion, no man's right is abridged by the institution of Civil Society, and that Religion is wholly exempt from its cognisance'.¹⁴⁸ This document was circulated actively in the Northern Neck, but it did not receive from everyone the support that it sought. In a letter to George Mason on 3 October 1785, George Washington held that he did not oppose government support of religion and that he lamented the upheaval that the debate over issues concerning religion had produced. He claimed:

Altho' no man's sentiments are more opposed to *any kind* of restraint upon religious principles than mine are; yet I must confess, that I am not amongst the number of those who are so much alarmed at the thoughts of making People pay towards the support of that which they profess ... As the matter now stands, I wish an assessment had never been agitated, and as it has gone so far, that the Bill could die an easy death; because I think it will be productive of more quiet to the State, than by enacting it into a Law; which in my opinion, would be impolitic, admitting there is a decided majority for it, to the disquiet of respectable minority.¹⁴⁹

Washington also did not sign the Fairfax County petition against the bill when it came under discussion the following month at a session of the Assembly. Similarly, as was expected, Richard Henry Lee refused to endorse Madison's suggestions. He noted: 'he must be a very inattentive observer of our Country, who does not see that avarice is accomplishing the destruction of religion, for want of a legal obligation to contribute something to its support'.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, Presbyterians in several counties, especially in Hanover, revoked their previous statements, which supported complete disestablishment.¹⁵¹

In the autumn of 1785 Madison mustered sufficient legislative support to affect a decisive blow on the attempt to levy religious taxes. The Methodists, who earlier had considered themselves part of the Church of England, and were, therefore,

¹⁴⁸ James Madison, *A Memorial and Remonstrance, Presented to the General Assembly, of the State of Virginia, At their Session in 1785, In consequence of a Bill brought into that Assembly for the Establishment of Religion by Law*. (Worcester, MA: Isaiah Thomas, 1786), p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, ii, p. 832.

¹⁵⁰ James Curtis Ballagh (ed.), *The Letters of Richard Henry Lee*, 2 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1911-14), ii, p. 304.

¹⁵¹ Miller, *George Mason*, pp. 217-8.

in favour of the general assessment bill, rescinded their previous support. The general sentiment against Patrick Henry's bill came to be so evident that this law was never put to a second vote. The time was then ripe for Madison and his allies to bring Jefferson's *Act for Establishing Religious Freedom* forward for consideration. It passed the House in December 1785 and shortly thereafter the Senate approved it. On 19 January 1786, the governor countersigned the bill, which put a permanent halt on governmental involvement in religion.¹⁵² The main arguments in this bill, which were influenced by Madison's *Memorial and Remonstrance*, were that civil punishments in matters of religious faith could not guarantee the sincerity of one's beliefs. Moreover, it was deemed tyrannical to impose taxes for the support of any religion that one did not profess. This was based on the idea that government, because of its fallibility, was not the appropriate authority in regulating matters of conscience and hence such a law was an infringement of the natural rights and liberties of the individual.¹⁵³

In Virginia, dissenters' resentment against the Church of England (the King's Church, which was associated with British tyranny) and Enlightenment ideas about the natural rights of freedom of religion, of conscience and of expression played a major role in the prevalence of views in favour of complete disestablishment.¹⁵⁴ As described above, the disestablishment of the church in Maryland was swifter than that in Virginia. This can be attributed to the fact that, in Maryland, the proprietor, rather than the laity, as was the case in Virginia, had the major say in the management of church affairs. In this way, in Maryland, smouldering opposition against the proprietor and his arbitrary rule led to the rejection of every institution that was directly associated with him and with the British administration. In Virginia, the ruling elite already had a preponderant role in church management, with the result that in the post-revolutionary period, they did not feel state support of the Anglican Church, this relic of the old regime, as oppressive as their Maryland counterparts did. Disestablishment, however, concerned the clerical members of the church at least as much as – or even more than – its lay members. The examination

¹⁵² Miller, *George Mason*, p. 218.

¹⁵³ *An Act for establishing Religious Freedom, passed in the Assembly of Virginia in the beginning of the year 1786* (Richmond: John Dunlap; James Hayes, 1786), pp. 3, 5, 7.

¹⁵⁴ Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, p. 118.

of the reaction of Chesapeake Anglican ministers towards issues that disestablishment entailed, namely the changes in the means of their financial support, and the substitution of the king as the head of the Church, will lead to the investigation of deeper issues, involving their professional, cultural and national identity.

Clerical Attitudes towards Disestablishment

The disestablishment of the Anglican Church in the Chesapeake and in the colonies further south and the resulting discontinuation of their salaries was an important factor, in discouraging ministers from continuing in their posts. The fact that ministers could become dependent only on the voluntary subscriptions of their parishioners for their remuneration rendered their income very precarious. As a result of disestablishment, nearly half of the Virginian ministers left their offices, in most cases voluntarily, while in Maryland this group represented around forty per cent of the clergy.¹⁵⁵ In those cases of a strong personal attachment of a minister to his parishioners, the decision to leave a parish was difficult, and these relationships could even be so strong as to contribute to a parish retaining a minister with loyalist sympathies. These choices in a minister's professional career involve broader issues of national identity. Britain undeniably exerted a strong cultural influence on all colonial Anglican ministers, but patriots were keener than loyalists to embrace America as their adopted home and they came to appreciate the positive aspects of disestablishment.

As stressed above, in the disestablishment era, one major issue, which clergymen had to deal with was their remuneration. Secular activities, performed to earn a living, were considered inappropriate for the clerical profession and status. When, ministerial salaries were suspended, a group of Virginian clergymen sent a memorial to the assembly, reminding it that they had 'entered into Holy Orders expecting to receive the several Emoluments which such religious establishment offered; that from the nature of their education they are precluded from gaining a

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

tolerable subsistence in any other way of life'.¹⁵⁶ Given the new circumstances, however, clergymen with considerable financial obligations had to consider taking up occupations of a secular nature. These included teaching, farming, practising medicine, or acting as chaplains. Samuel Chase's father, the Reverend Thomas Chase, had to become a schoolmaster in order to supplement his income, hence he was reluctant to accept independence. His son was a prominent revolutionary, and he himself a former Son of Liberty, but for conscience's sake he was lukewarm towards the revolutionary cause. In February 1778 he was obliged to take the oath of allegiance to the new state, if he did not want to dislocate his family, and thus, jeopardize their position.¹⁵⁷

Mutual affection between parishioners and their clergyman rendered the decision to leave a clerical post especially difficult, but, conversely, absence of such attachment greatly encouraged his departure. In Virginia, Christopher MacRae was so close to his parishioners that they understood his reasons of conscience, when he refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Congress, and they even petitioned the assembly for permission for him to keep his glebe and his post. In contrast, Alexander Cruden's Virginia parishioners did not seem as sympathetic towards him, when he refused to abandon his loyalty to the king. The vestry advertised his position in the *Gazette*, interpreting his attitude as abdicating his position. There were ministers who had hostile relations with their vestries from the beginning of their time in office and the Revolution only aggravated such a situation. Bennet Allen, in Maryland, had previously incurred the opposition of his parishioners when he sought pluralistic appointments, in the 1760s when he opposed the assembly's decisions regarding clerical remuneration and in the 1770s when he did not support revolutionary activities. After such strained relations with the colonists, he not surprisingly left for England in 1775. Sometimes, the termination of a minister's employment resulted only from his loyalist affiliation. William Douglas, who officiated in Louisa County, Virginia had served his parishioners very faithfully, taking long trips to marry couples, visit sick people and baptize children. These

¹⁵⁶ Charles Fenton James, 'Documentary History of the Struggle for Religious Liberty in Virginia' (Lynchburg, Va., 1900; New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), p.76 quoted in Miller, *George Mason*, p. 122.

¹⁵⁷ Haw, *Life of Samuel Chase*, p. 102.

endeavours seem not to have mattered much, however, because the vestry decided to replace him in the tempest of the Revolution.¹⁵⁸

These issues of personal attachment and responsibility to family and parishioners interplayed with broader influences related to the professional or national identity of the ministers. Anglican clergy were members of the Church of England who officiated in America either as colonial ministers, being part of the established church, or as missionaries, accountable to the SPG. Attachment to England, as a cultural 'home', varied according to whether ministers were born in England or in the colonies, but the parent country undeniably exerted a cultural and psychological influence over all the Anglican clergy. Many of them had been educated in British universities and everyone had visited England at least once in their lives in order to become ordained. Their descriptions convey the great impression that the majesty of cathedrals and the pageantry of English ecclesiastical courts left on their minds. The Reverend James Ogilvie of Virginia described with great awe his attendance at a gathering of the London elite and his encounter with the Archbishop of York, and the Bishops of Durham and Lincoln. These experiences inevitably created a divided allegiance.

This is particularly evident in the thought of loyalists, who had to reconcile their affection for Britain with their sentiments for America, 'their adopted home'. This ambivalence as regards matters of cultural and national affiliation is illustrated by the fact that some Anglican ministers expressed at the beginning of the conflict the wish that no harm come to either country, while they declared that they prayed for the welfare of both Britain and America. In 1775, the Reverend William Smith stated that 'God knows my love is strong & my zeal ardent for the prosperity of both Countries'.¹⁵⁹ Jonathan Boucher thought that revolutionaries considered him a loyalist, because of his English birth, although he had lived many years of his life in America, married there and owned property.¹⁶⁰ Boucher depicted the relationship between Britain and America as one between parent and child and thought that their

¹⁵⁸ Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, pp. 120-2.

¹⁵⁹ William Smith to SPG, Philadelphia, 28 August 1775, *Historical Collections relating to the American Colonial Church*, ed. by William Stevens Perry (5 vols., [Hartford, Conn.]: Printed for the subscribers by Church Press, 1870-1878), ii, p. 479, quoted in Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, p. 124.

¹⁶⁰ Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution*, p. 593.

interests were naturally interrelated so much that he wished for the prosperity of both. He stated: 'I cannot dissociate the idea of a perfect sameness of interest between the two countries, as much as between a parent and a child.'¹⁶¹ The portrayal of the bonds between Britain and America as parental was indeed common among loyalists, who thought that America had shown ingratitude towards the parent country by rebelling against it. Conversely, patriot Anglicans reconfigured their parental bonds, which they now placed not with Britain, but with America, which then became something more than a cultural home to them. They portrayed it as an elect nation, to which they also felt a religious duty, as it became one of the symbols of civil religion. In 1781, in the mind of the Reverend James Madison of Virginia, America was poised as the elect nation, the 'asylum for ... the wretched inhabitants of the old world, where little else is to be heard but the voice of despotism' and George Washington, in the context of civil religion, became 'the guide, the protector, the deliverer of America!' Then, Madison went on to wonder: 'in whom else could we have found those virtues, a fortitude which fears God alone, a prudence which baffles the designs of his enemies, a foresight which outruns time itself'.¹⁶² Both the Reverends David Griffith and John Hurt, patriot chaplains of Virginian regiments, referred to their duty towards their 'country', America, with a certain religious reverence. Hurt was explicit in regarding America as his 'mother', while he tried to unite colonial forces against the common enemy, Britain.¹⁶³ It is evident, thus, that for Hurt and other Anglican patriots Britain was no longer regarded as a cultural home with which they would be keen to associate. In these primary stages of nascent nationalism, their affections lay entirely with America.

Disestablishment placed the American church in a new relationship with the civil authorities. In 1786 the Reverend James Madison considered disestablishment as a true blessing for the church as an institution and as favourable to religiosity. Applying civil religion patterns of thought, Madison believed that Providence made America 'the asylum of mankind', since it revolutionized the way human affairs would be managed. More precisely, he thought that religion in America would then be placed on a new foundation, without the fetters that bound it to the civil

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 592.

¹⁶² Madison, *Sermon Preached in the County of Botetourt*, pp.12-3.

¹⁶³ Hurt, *Love of Our Country*, p. 7; Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, pp. 123-5

authorities. Madison considered these a disgrace to Christianity and believed that disestablishment would prove extremely beneficial to the way religion was practised and administered.¹⁶⁴

For other clergymen residing in America, the severance of ties with the temporal authorities proved much more perplexing or disturbing. Ministers, who had profited from the establishment, had difficulties reconciling dependence on the vestries for financial support with the absence of an established church. In 1770, Bennet Allen expressed his disapproval of denominationalism, and the consequent competition between sects that it encouraged. He argued that colonies without a religious establishment were

thereby deprived of the inestimable Benefit of religious Union, and for Want of a national Church, are by the Equality of all Sectaries, torn and convulsed by continual Struggles, between them for Superiority and Preeminence, whilst their Ministers feel all the Miseries of a precarious Dependence often on *involuntary* Contributions, and are exposed to Contempt, the never failing Attendant on Poverty.¹⁶⁵

In 1776, in a petition to the General Assembly of Virginia, several Anglican clergymen expressed their indignation at what they thought would result from their being deprived of their private property. They held that the perseverance of the religious establishment would ensure the maintenance of social peace and harmony, as opposed to the competition between sects that denominationalism promoted. Besides, they argued, the establishment of the Anglican Church in Virginia had exhibited mildness and toleration towards dissenters, while they accused the latter of being fervent enemies of the Church. Similarly, in 1784, the Reverend Samuel Shield of Virginia expressed his abhorrence towards change and innovation. He was one of the firm supporters of a national establishment and praised it because it promoted uniformity in worship and discipline.¹⁶⁶

In the late 1770s and 1780s, however, when disestablishment became a reality, fewer ministers were keen on expressing their disapproval of the conditions

¹⁶⁴ James Madison, *A Sermon Preached Before the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Virginia, on the Twenty Sixth of May, 1786* (Richmond, VA: Thomas Nicolson, 1786), pp. 3-6.

¹⁶⁵ Bennet Allen, *A Reply to the Church of England Planter's First Letter Respecting the Clergy* (Annapolis, MD: Anne Catherine Green, 1770), p. 7.

¹⁶⁶ Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, pp. 125-131

under which the church had to exist, since it was impolitic on their part to oppose these structures, on which they were now heavily dependent. Other ministers, who were ordained after the Revolution, were more appreciative of the positive aspects of denominationalism. William Duke of Maryland believed that disestablishment would help promote the religiosity of parishioners, since the security of livings under the establishment had not safeguarded it from clergymen who were prone to delinquent or immoral behaviour. Duke argued:

[t]hen it will appear that we are not destitute of religion, though we have no legal establishment ... For although the partial attention of the civil power, in the maintenance of one certain society, would seem to interest it more in religious affairs, I believe it will always be found, that the less its purposes towards religion are affected, by the peculiarities of any one party, the more essentially it will promote the common cause.¹⁶⁷

Then, he criticized the demeanour of some Maryland clergymen who ‘did not seem to interest themselves in matters of religion, any further than their livings were concerned’.¹⁶⁸ The acceptance by Anglican clergymen in America of the new institutional framework of the church became easier after the end of the war, when many loyalist clergymen, who were strong supporters of the establishment, were forced into exile.

The consequences of the severance of ties with the British monarchy and the reinstatement of the new church were among the primary issues Anglican ministers had to deal with in post-revolutionary America. Griffith then supported the idea that the new institution should imitate in structure the primitive church and, thus, become the church which most closely resembled its predecessor in that ancient era.¹⁶⁹ Some patriot ministers believed that the virtue of citizens, necessary for the survival of the republic, would ensure the good function of the church more efficiently than its attachment to the civil authorities. The Reverend James Madison seemed to think that these two notions, religion and virtue, were mutually supported and reinforced. He held that the prevalence of virtue in the new republic was entirely dependent on

¹⁶⁷ William Duke, *Observations on the Present State of Religion in Maryland* (Baltimore, MD: Samuel and John Adams, 1795), pp. 46-7.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁶⁹ Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, p. 133.

the promotion of religion.¹⁷⁰ In Madison's opinion, the cultivation of virtue and a sense of duty among the citizens of the new republic acquired added importance after the disestablishment of the Anglican Church, which, through its doctrines, had promoted obedience to civil laws.¹⁷¹

It becomes evident that in the new era of independence and disestablishment, ministers of the Church of England had to find ways to compromise their cultural attachment to England and its church with the new political conditions formed in post-revolutionary America. Disestablishment meant that around half the Anglican ministers in the colonies of the Chesapeake Bay had to vacate their posts either for financial or ideological reasons. As mentioned before, such decisions were particularly difficult for loyalists, most of whom felt attached to America and their congregations. At this instance, while loyalists wished for the prosperity and welfare of both countries, patriots stressed their parental bonds with America and their religious duty to serve that country. Moreover, the latter thought that disestablishment would promote the religiosity of the parishioners, while, for loyalists, disestablishment represented the loss of financial support, as well as the destruction of social peace and harmony. Eventually, in embracing denominationalism, Anglican ministers were inclined to adopt the revolutionary principles of liberty and egalitarianism so that the ideological foundations of the remodelled Anglican Church would converge with the values on which the new republic was based. The Reverend William Smith, exhibiting a strong disposition towards religious toleration, stated that there was no need for conflict between the different denominations since they were similar to each other in Christian charity.¹⁷² In the same way, the Reverend William Duke argued that the formation of several sects simply arose from different human understandings of religion, due to the fallibility of human nature, and that social harmony demanded the toleration of one

¹⁷⁰ James Madison, *A Discourse on the Death of General Washington, Late President of the United States, Delivered on the 22d of February, 1800, In the Church in Williamsburg* (2nd edn. New York, 1800), pp. 6, 40; Madison, *A Sermon Preached Before the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, p. 16.

¹⁷¹ James Madison, *An Address to the Members of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in Virginia* (Richmond, Va: Thomas Nicolson, 1799), pp. 4-5, 23.

¹⁷² William Smith, *A Sermon Preached in Christ-Church, Philadelphia, on Friday, October 7th, 1785, Before the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the States of New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and South-Carolina* (Philadelphia, PA: Robert Aiken, 1785), pp. 12-3.

another.¹⁷³ In the post-revolutionary era, the reconfiguration of the Anglican Church in America also meant the affirmation of the rights of the laity, through a carefully devised legal framework, and the institution of a bishop with clearly defined, limited powers.

Church Organization

In order to provide efficient administration for a nation-wide institution in such a vast country, Anglican clergymen and laymen in North America based the church's structure on conventions whose jurisdiction corresponded with the boundaries of states and on a national convention to which representatives from all states were sent. Another major issue, which concerned Anglican leaders, at the time, was whether the so-called Protestant Episcopal Church would retain the same liturgy and church government as the parent institution. A particularly contentious issue was the role of the laity in church government, and more generally, how far the new institution would adopt the political structures and philosophy of the new republic. The church organization that emerged bore elements of past practices and it reflected the concerns of the present. In Virginia and in Maryland, a bishop was allowed to officiate, but his powers were greatly restricted so that in Virginia he was not treated as someone much more important than a parish minister. Moreover, the authority of the laity was reaffirmed and allowed to continue in the post-revolutionary period. As a result, in Virginia the vestries even had the right to examine a candidate before induction, a prerogative which in Maryland belonged to the clergy. On the national level, the church convention had to take into account the views of conservative clergymen from the northern states. After long deliberations, the consecration of the first American bishops by the ecclesiastical authorities in Scotland was accepted and a relatively conservative Prayer Book was adopted, but the authority of bishops and priests had to be controlled by the laity.

The first attempts at the organization of the Anglican churches in America were made at the Maryland Convention of November 1780. This convention, which was mainly concerned with the churches within that state, adopted for the first time

¹⁷³ William Duke, *Thoughts on Repentance. By a Minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Maryland* (Baltimore, MD: William Goddard, 1789), p. 6.

the name 'Protestant Episcopal Church', in order to designate the former Church of England in the colonies. This term later became the formal name, used nationwide, for the Episcopal Church in the United States.¹⁷⁴ In the early 1780s two major plans of church government were suggested. The Reverend William White of Philadelphia suggested the organization of the churches on a federal basis. His publication, *The Case of the Episcopal Church in the United States Considered* (1782) showed him favouring the adoption of the political principles of the new nation in church government. In White's opinion, the new church should be distinct from the English patterns in that parishes (and not dioceses) should become the main basis of administration, the laity should play a large role in church government, and, at least at the beginning, laymen should participate in the election of a bishop, due to the great shortage of ministers. In addition, White rejected the necessity of a spiritual connection with England and argued that political independence, as well as the long American tradition of lay participation in church administration, vouched for the formation of an independent American church.¹⁷⁵

White's suggestions met strong opposition from conservatives in Connecticut, who disapproved of the role of the laity in the management of church affairs and placed greater importance on the proper consecration of an American bishop by the English prelates, before any other organizational arrangements could be achieved. Connecticut clergymen met at Woodbury, on 25 March 1783, when they reaffirmed their preference for the English model and the diocese as the basis of administration. They believed that this was the system that came closer to the Apostolic, primitive church and they abhorred the idea that popular sovereignty in politics should be imitated in church organization. During this meeting, Connecticut clergymen chose Jeremiah Leaming or Samuel Seabury as candidates to occupy the seat of bishop in America, after receiving consecration in England.¹⁷⁶

In the Chesapeake a concerted effort was made at the time for the reorganization of the Anglican churches in the region. In Maryland, the first significant meeting of the clergy was that of August 1783, in which fifteen of their

¹⁷⁴ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, p. 190.

¹⁷⁵ William White, *The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered* (Philadelphia, PA: David C. Claypoole, 1782), pp. 6-7, 17, 33.

¹⁷⁶ Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, pp. 138-40.

number participated. This meeting produced *A Declaration of Certain Fundamental Rights* in which the Anglican clergy stated that it was their right to make use of the church buildings formerly belonging to the Church of England, to appoint only ministers of the Anglican persuasion to officiate in their churches, according to the hierarchy of ministers – deacon, priest, and bishop – and to meet in a convention consisting of laymen and clergymen in order to revise the liturgy and prayers. In addition, Dr. William Smith, was elected bishop and reference letters were prepared to be sent to London for his consecration. This convention also formed two committees, each comprised of three ministers, one for the eastern and one for the western shore of the Chesapeake, to examine and recommend ministers for ordination in order to fill vacant posts.¹⁷⁷ The selection of Dr. William Smith as bishop should be attributed to his personal talent for persuasion, but the haste in which he was elected, as well as the formation of committees for the selection of ministers, point towards the intention of the clergy to control ministerial appointments as far as this was possible. The departure from his earlier scheme for commissaries in America – instead of bishops – indicates that Smith found the meeting of 1783 an appropriate occasion to achieve his personal ambitions.¹⁷⁸

The failure of the Maryland convention to consult the laity, especially on the appointment of a bishop, was a serious mistake, however, because it brought them into conflict with the governing elite of the newborn state. Indeed, none of the laity had expressed any wish for the establishment of a bishop in colonial times. When the convention sent the *Declaration of Certain Fundamental Rights* to Governor William Paca for approval, he expressed in his reply his unwillingness to accord the ministers of the Episcopal Church any preferential treatment, greater than the other denominations received.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, in September 1783, in a letter to the General Joseph Reed of Pennsylvania, Paca expressed his disapproval of the fact that the clergy had not consulted the laity in their proceedings and that his opinion was that a bishop was unnecessary in the state.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ William Smith, *An Address to the Members of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Maryland, containing an Account of the Proceedings* (Baltimore, MA: William Goddard, 1784), pp. 9-11, 14-15.

¹⁷⁸ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 191-2.

¹⁷⁹ Smith, *Address to the Protestant Episcopal Church of Maryland*, pp. 11-13.

¹⁸⁰ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 193-4.

On 22 June 1784, a day when the assembly also met, the delegates took some time to consider the terms of the *Declaration*. They suggested the addition of four new articles. The first stated that any clergyman ordained bishop, priest or deacon in a foreign country should not take the oath of allegiance to a foreign authority, civil or spiritual. The second article state that the bishop's authority only included his power to ordain, confirm and preside over ecclesiastical meetings and any change in this regulation required action by the convention. The third article stated that the clergy's powers were defined as training, examining and recommending the clergy for ordination and appointment, but their final induction into a parish was exclusively the right of the congregation who provided for his support. Finally, any future ecclesiastical conventions would have to include one lay and one clerical representative from each parish and any alteration in these stipulations required a vote of two-thirds of the convention. The clergy approved these additional articles.¹⁸¹ The article, which excluded taking an oath of allegiance to a foreign authority during the rite of consecration or ordination, squarely prevented Dr. William Smith from seeking episcopal powers in England. In addition, Maryland Anglicans took no immediate step to ensure the institution of a bishop in Maryland, nor did they recommend Dr. Smith as a bishop in any of their resolutions. With these decisions, they unequivocally expressed their disapproval of the way Dr. Smith had been elected and of the idea of establishing a resident bishop in Maryland at that time. They appear to have disapproved of the hierarchical or aristocratic way of church government, and they thought that the laity should have an equal role with the clergy in the administration of church affairs. Subsequently, Maryland Episcopalians followed William White's *Case* in their system of church government.¹⁸² With reference to the attitude of the clergy, their swiftness in calling a meeting towards the end of the war should be attributed to the long denial of such a right to them by the proprietor during the colonial period. Despite their quick and concerted efforts to control church affairs, they soon realized and accepted the fact that, in the post-revolutionary era, it was impossible for them to proceed without the laity's consent to and cognisance of their actions.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Smith, *Address to the Protestant Episcopal Church of Maryland*, pp. 15-18.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

¹⁸³ Mills, *Bishops by Ballot*, pp. 195-6.

Virginian Episcopalians met later than their counterparts in Maryland, in May 1785. Seventy-one laymen and thirty-six clergymen representing sixty-nine of the state's ninety-five parishes participated in this convention. The Reverend James Madison, president of William and Mary College, was elected president of the meeting, but due to the large number of laymen, Carter Braxton, of St. John parish, presided over the convention at least seven times. This meeting produced forty-three *Rules for the Order, Government, and Discipline of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*. The long tradition in presentation and appointment of a minister, enjoyed by the vestries, was once again granted to them. Moreover, they retained the privilege of examining a candidate before inducting him. The office of a bishop was clearly defined: his responsibilities would not be substantially different from that of a minister, since he also had to fill the position of a minister in a parish. Moreover, a bishop could only be elected by a convention, to which he would be accountable if charges were raised against him, for example by the vestries. Conversely, the bishop could reproach a clergyman for his conduct, but the convention had the ultimate authority to suspend or dismiss him. The strong inclination of this convention to preserve the status of the vestries and to restrict the duties of the bishop derived from the long colonial tradition of vestry dominance in the management of church affairs, and it reflected the time-honoured opposition of the laity towards offices of prerogative within the church. The office of a bishop, in particular, inevitably bore aristocratic elements in its nature, and in these early post-revolutionary years, it was still associated with former British rule. With the absence of the former supporters of the episcopal campaign, namely James Horrocks, William Willie and John Camm, no immediate action was taken in the 1785 convention for the institution of a bishop in Virginia. As in Maryland and elsewhere, ministerial vacancies were probably filled temporarily with lay readers.¹⁸⁴

In 1789 a General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States was summoned. The constitution adopted stipulated triennial General Conventions, in which both clergy and laity would participate as delegates selected in state conventions and representing their parishes. Bishops would be chosen at state-level with the participation of the laity and be responsible for their respective

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 200-2.

states, while clergymen were accountable to their state conventions.¹⁸⁵ The structure of the American Episcopal Church can be described as a ‘limited constitutional episcopate’, because it adopted certain republican features to the effect that the authority of bishops and priests was, then, checked to a considerable extent by laymen.¹⁸⁶ The Church of England’s 1662 Book of Common Prayer bore several changes, which were inevitable, because of the fact that the British king was no longer the head of the colonies and their churches. Other changes, approximately two hundred, mainly aimed at modernizing the language. These alterations, however, can be characterized as minor, since, under the influence of the northern clergy, the resulting Prayer Book, was distinguished for its conservatism, when compared to the Proposed Book of 1785. The Prayer Book of 1789 contained the Nicene and the Apostles’ Creeds, and the expression ‘descent into hell’.¹⁸⁷

The post-revolutionary organization of the Anglican Church in America, reaffirmed the authority of the laity in church affairs. Bishops would be elected with the concurrence of the laity, while, in the states of the Chesapeake Bay, the laity had the final say in the induction and discipline of a minister. In this way, the weak, subordinate position (to the laity) of the church, as experienced during colonial times, was re-emphasized to the effect that clergymen did not manage to represent an autonomous pillar of political thought in the years to come. As it will become evident in chapter 6, the relative loss of influence of the Episcopal Church in the Chesapeake Bay region, meant that clergymen in Virginia and Maryland formed inadequate responses to political radicalism, which developed among their lay patrons at the time of the French revolution.

Conclusion

The revolutionary war created perplexing circumstances for Anglican ministers. In order to avoid the dilemmas posed by the overturn of the British authorities in

¹⁸⁵ William Stevens Perry, *Journals of the General Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the United States of America...* 3 vols. (Claremont, N.H.: Claremont Manufacturing Company, 1874), i, pp. 99-102.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, i, pp. 71, 74, 95-7.

¹⁸⁷ Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, pp. 119-20; for discussion on these doctrines in the 1786 General Convention, see: Perry, *Journals of General Conventions*, i, pp. 59-60.

America, to which ministers had sworn allegiance, in the Chesapeake, about forty per cent of the clergy there adopted the stance of political neutrality. This meant that they exhibited peaceableness, as part of their behaviour, in an effort to offend neither side and they withdrew from the public domain or avoided the expression of political opinions. Depoliticization was a stance adopted by mostly loyalist ministers in the years 1774-1775, but in the Chesapeake it did not result to a complete withdrawal from the public sphere, due to the authority which the ministers enjoyed as community leaders in the pre-Revolutionary years and which was accepted by political groups situated at both ends of the political spectrum. Moreover, in Virginia, the majority of ministers sided with the patriots. The considerable dependence on the vestries in colonial times had led to an identification of political interest between the two groups which found expression in the war of independence. As a result, patriot ministers adopted the arguments of their lay patrons for the defence of their rights as Britons. These were further endorsed by the theories of Anglican civil theology, which advocated the subjects' right to oppose the monarch, when he acted in an unconstitutional manner. This was also a violation of God's law. According to patriot ministers, what was then required was virtuous and moral behaviour by the insurgents, so that the favour of God towards their struggle could be ensured.

The revolutionary disposition of the laity should not, however, be exaggerated. Following the Anglican ideal for orderly, moderate conduct, they exhausted every lawful means of protest and it was only when they realized the utter unresponsiveness of the British monarch to their grievances that they declared independence. In fact, the Maryland convention decided to endorse independence only as late as June 1776 for fear of social upheaval due to the authority that radical groups held in that colony. On tracing the route that revolutionaries followed towards independence one can detect a conservative disposition in their thinking, which partly emanated from the cultural impact that Britain exerted on their minds and ways of life. Particularly for those who had studied or stayed in England for any length of time, or had attended an Anglican college in the colonies, read English literature and enjoyed British luxuries, the parent country still represented their cultural home.

These conservative tendencies manifested themselves more clearly in the drafting of the first state constitutions. The documents, which were produced, ensured the maintenance of the power of the landed elite. In Virginia, the rejection of universal manhood suffrage and a system of representation that was not proportionate to the population for elections to the House of Delegates, and, in Maryland, the initial suggestions for longer terms of office and high-property qualifications for office-holding revealed the conservative disposition of Chesapeake law-makers. The majority of them did not aim at democracy: they did not trust completely the judgement of the people at large and they feared the social disorder that such a system might have produced. They only wished for the reinstatement of the principles of the British constitution and the restoration of its original purity. Because of this attitude, the power of the executive was controlled by the aristocratic and popular constitutional branches, which in turn checked each other's authority. The Anglican Church, which most of the Chesapeake politicians attended, inevitably influenced their political thinking with its emphasis on obedience to the rule of a learned and virtuous elite.

Moreover, the alliance of church and state constituted an integral part of British constitutionalism. As a result, in Virginia of the mid-1780s conservative ideas arguing in favour of state-supported religion were still tenaciously held by a large group of statesmen, as well as by the wider public. Religious institutions were still thought of as the main promoters of virtue, morality and peace of society. Chesapeake politicians were brought up in a society, where, from its inception, a highly ceremonial Anglican form of worship intertwined with a large part of public and private life undoubtedly determined their thinking and shaped the policies they adopted when the time came for them to remodel their society. In Virginia, the Church of England was disestablished only gradually, while in Maryland state support of religion in general was maintained, despite the disestablishment of the church.

During the war years, the precariousness of clerical livings obliged a large proportion of ministers to abandon their clerical posts and to take up secular activities. Their decision to leave their congregations was often influenced by the degree of their personal attachment to their parishioners, but loyalism sometimes left

that as the only option. Such instances led to the consideration of broader issues of national and cultural identity. While loyalist ministers depicted America as the child who had shown ingratitude to its parent, Britain, patriot ministers were more eager than loyalists to adopt America as their new home and to appreciate the positive aspects of disestablishment and life in a new republican society.

The war of independence and the disestablishment of the Anglican churches rendered their re-organization imperative in the first half of the 1780s. Through the liturgical and administrative forms that were instituted new post-colonial patterns of organization emerged. In the Chesapeake, the authority of the laity, that was imposed in the colonial period, was reaffirmed and the powers of the bishops clearly defined and restricted. On the national level, the influence of high churchmen from the northern colonies resulted in the adoption of a conservative Prayer Book and the application to a foreign power, England, for the consecration of the first American bishops.

It can be argued that in many aspects the war of independence changed the civil authorities in America, but colonial patterns of civil and ecclesiastical organization re-emerged in the early national period. In the Chesapeake, the reaffirmation of elite power through the state constitutions, and the hesitations which were expressed regarding the disestablishment of the Church of England reveal a conservative disposition among the leaders of the early republic. This can be partly ascribed to the cultural influence that the British hierarchical political system exerted on the thought of the elite in the Chesapeake; a system, which the Anglican Church endorsed with its civil theology and traditional forms of worship.

Chapter Five

Anglican Responses in the Chesapeake to the Constitution and the First Amendment, 1787-1791

Introduction

In an essay in Ronald Hoffman's and Peter J. Albert's *Religion in a Revolutionary Age* (1994), Stephen A. Marini linked Federalism with liberal theology and Anti-federalism with evangelicalism. Marini wrote:

by 1787 American Arminianism ... had itself become divided into evangelical and liberal wings, the former including the Methodists and the sects of the Revolutionary revival, the latter comprised of the more familiar New England Unitarians, Middle States Deists and Presbyterians, and southern Anglicans so prominent among the Founders.¹

Gordon S. Wood had earlier identified this supposedly 'basic division that separated "unenlightened" from "enlightened", Calvinist from Liberal, and ultimately Anti-federalist from Federalist'.² These classifications, however, do not explain why elite Anglicans in Virginia, such as Richard Henry Lee, George Mason and Patrick Henry, were Anti-federalists or how Methodists in Maryland's lower Eastern Shore were almost overwhelmingly Federalists.³ Wood himself has admitted the problem of describing the thought of Federalists and Anti-federalists as uniform and homogenous by stressing that George Mason and Richard Henry Lee did not really speak for the group, which they supposedly represented. Wood asserted:

Yet some of the prominent Anti-federalist leaders, such as Elbridge Gerry, George Mason and Richard Henry Lee, scarcely represented either socially or emotionally, the main thrust of Anti-federalism. Such aristocratic leaders were socially indistinguishable from the Federalist spokesmen

¹ Stephen A. Marini 'Religion, Politics, and Ratification' in Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Religion in a Revolutionary Age* (Charlottesville, Va: University Press of Virginia, published for the United States Capitol Historical Society, 1994), p. 213.

² Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill, N.C: The University of North Carolina Press, published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va, 1969), p. 428.

³ Norman K. Risjord, *Chesapeake Politics, 1781-1800* (New York, N.Y: Columbia University Press, 1978), p. 284.

and often were as fearful of the excesses of democracy in the state legislatures as the Federalists.⁴

While not denying the usefulness of religious divisions for understanding the roots of Federalist and Anti-federalist thought, this chapter aims to introduce into the equation the social division in order to trace the Anglican elements in both Federalist and Anti-federalist rationale. In analysing Anti-federalist thinking, a distinction between elite Anti-federalists, and those of the middling and lower sort will be made. It will be stressed that the latter groups were advocates of radical changes in eighteenth-century society so that its benefits would be enjoyed by all social strata.⁵ Much evidence seems to support his thesis concerning the validity of social divisions among the Anti-federalists. It is to be lamented that past and current historiography, with only a few exceptions, has been reluctant to accept and reflect on the implications of this categorization.⁶ As a result, Anti-federalists are more often than not studied as a monolithic, undiversified group.

Federalists and elite Anti-federalists in the tidewater counties of the Chesapeake states shared a common basis of religio-political ideas. Elite Anti-federalists were no lesser supporters than Federalists of the rule of a 'natural aristocracy', as the advocacy of the former for religious tests, deference at the local level and bicameralism suggest. Moreover, according to elite Anti-federalist ideas, the organization of the judicial system should allow only those with a permanent stake in society, namely the gentry and the substantial yeomanry, to participate in juries, while the judges and attorneys would perform a moderating, stabilizing role. Finally, elite Anti-federalist ideas about the nature of the public sphere wherein the

⁴ Gordon S. Wood, 'Interests and Disinterestedness in the Making of the Constitution' in Richard Beeman, Stephen Botein, and Edward C. Carter II, eds., *Beyond Confederation. Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity* (Chapel Hill, N.C.; London: University of North Carolina Press, published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va, 1987), p. 93; see also: Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, p. 485.

⁵ Saul Cornell, *The Other Founders. Anti-Federalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788-1828* (Chapel Hill, N.C; London: University of North Carolina Press, published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., 1999), chapters 2, 3.

⁶ On elite Antifederalism, see Robert H. Wiebe, *The Opening of American Society: From the Adoption of the Constitution to the Eve of Disunion* (New York, 1984) and on the most democratic aspects of Antifederalism see Jackson Turner Main, *Political Parties before the Constitution* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1973). Main interpreted Antifederalism as agrarian localism in Cornell, *Other Founders*, p. 51n and Whitman H. Ridgway, 'Popular Sentiment and the Bill of Rights Controversy' in Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., *The Bill of Rights. Government Proscribed* (Charlottesville, Va.; London: University Press of Virginia, published for the United States Capitol Historical Society, 1997), pp. 209-244.

well-born, through the exertion of their personal status, could control the interpretation and discussion of their ideas, and, thereby, manipulate public opinion based on the fundamental conservative assumption about the validity of elite rule. The same set of elite Anti-federalist ideas included the main suggestion that in small localities, members of the gentry could better sense and transmit to the governing authorities the popular will. In contrast, the more distanced those elite groups of talent and merit were from the people at large, the more impersonal politics became, and, hence, the road was open for the democratisation of political life. In their insistence on the ‘filtration of talent’, on elite rule, in their fears of mobocracy and demagoguery, and in the belief that the law and governmental institutions could exert a moralising influence on the uneducated, Federalists did not differ fundamentally from Anti-federalists in their political thinking.⁷ The main dividing line between the two groups seems to be the level – local or national - on which they claimed that the ‘natural aristocracy’ should rule. Moreover, while both Federalists and Anti-federalists admitted the usefulness of traditional institutions for their moralizing impact on common people, Federalists placed more reliance on the merits of governmental mechanisms for this function, whereas Anti-federalists placed greater trust in religion.

In the states of the Chesapeake Bay, the impact of Anglican civil theology can be detected on the ideas of both Federalists and elite Anti-federalists. Their political thought was based on the perception of society, as an organic whole, a medieval concept, also adopted by Anglicans. This theory included the idea that the members of each social group had to contribute to the welfare of the whole community through a spirit of benevolence, according to their respective abilities and social standing. This meant that they performed mutually complementary, and not conflicting, functions. In this system of ‘the great chain of being’, the gentry, due to their culture, education, and social connections, were deemed the most appropriate rulers of their communities. In this sense, the mechanism of ‘filtration of talent’, that Federalists devised, did not promote radical social change, but supported the possibility of one’s advancement within the limits of one’s social group. Federalists and elite Anti-federalists feared that too much social mobility would allow men, who

⁷ Cornell, *Other Founders*, pp. 59, 65-80.

did not possess the necessary culture and refinement, to occupy positions of leadership. Demagoguery and anarchy would ultimately follow. As a result, influenced by the establishmentarian nature of Anglicanism, Federalists and elite Anti-federalists held that deference was due to established traditional institutions, such as government authorities, the church and the gentry. These would exert a moralizing, paternal influence on the uneducated masses and, thus, prevent the disruption of social order, the development of mob rule and, ultimately, the rise of tyranny. In addition, the Anglican reverence for the rule of law as cultivated by the Glorious Revolution, had an impact on the Anti-federalist demand for a bill of rights, namely written guarantees which would restrict federal authority and secure personal liberties.

In the Chesapeake, a common Anglican ideological basis of the main Federalist and elite Anti-federalist tenets can be described. More generally, the elites of coastal and tidewater North American towns along the Atlantic shared similar conservative ideas.⁸ The fact that the theology of Anglicans, Congregationalists and Presbyterians of the old coastal communities had common features, especially the belief in the organic structure of society and the mediation of divine truth through a religious caste, can help explain the similarities in their political thinking. In this sense, elite Anglicans in Virginia and in Maryland, including Edmund Pendleton, George Mason and Luther Martin, shared the same perception of society and of politics as, for example, the Congregationalist Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts and the Presbyterian James Wilson of Pennsylvania, despite the fact that they differed in politics. Belief in the rule of a ‘natural aristocracy’ of talent and a distrust of popular action were central ideas in the thought of these men, while their thinking diverged over the means that should be used in order to promote such concepts. This understanding of society and politics differed radically from such perceptions as those of the *Federal Farmer*, possibly the pseudonym of Melancton Smith, a merchant in New York, and *Aristocrotis*, the pen name of William Petrikin, a tenant farmer from Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The former wanted the jury to be comprised not only of local people, but also of common folk, while *Aristocrotis* attacked directly and vociferously the idea of rule by a ‘natural aristocracy’. In this way, the

⁸ Marini, ‘Religion, Politics and Ratification’, p. 192.

evangelicals of the backcountry, namely Republican Methodists, Separate Baptists and New Side Presbyterians, were inclined to middling and plebeian Anti-Federalism. Their perception of politics and society differed substantially from that of elite Anti-Federalists.⁹ In this sense, the geographical and social divide helps explain the similarities in political thought among members of different religious groups, as well as those among members of different political groups.

Influenced by the above presumptions and endeavouring to grapple with the aforementioned issues and questions, this chapter will focus on elite Anti-federalists and Federalists in Virginia and in Maryland. These were the groups of the nascent republic that expressed the kind of deeply conservative thinking which can be traced to their Anglican upbringing. Where pertinent, comparisons will be made between elite and radical Anglican thinkers, while the responses of Anglicans in Virginia and in Maryland to the first Amendment will also be explored. In this sense, the emphasis placed above on social standing and regionality does not seek to downplay the importance of religious influence on Federalism and Anti-federalism, but to balance more effectively the different factors which could have an impact on one's political thinking. Moreover, the consideration of issues of regionality and social standing aims to indicate how to solve the particularly perplexing question - at least for the purposes of this thesis - of how groups having different religious backgrounds could concur in their political thinking. This question becomes all the more pressing and meaningful in this work as Americans started devising their own political systems and became actively involved in politics, not any more in a defensive way, reacting against the encroachments of the British Parliament, but in a way that was meant to be active and outmost engaging.

⁹ Federal Farmer [Melancton Smith?], 'Observations Leading to a Fair Examination of the System of Government Proposed by the Late Convention ... Letters From the Federal Farmer to the Republican' nos. 1-5, (New York, 1787), no. 4 in Herbert J. Storing, ed., *The Complete Anti-Federalist*, 7 vols. (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1981), vol. II, p. 249; Aristocrotis [William Petrikin], 'The Government of Nature Delineated ...' (Carlisle, Pa., 1788) in *ibid.*, vol. III, pp. 197-198, 204-05.

The Religious Geography of Virginia and Maryland in the 1790s

The investigation of the religious geography of Virginia and Maryland in the 1790s will help explain better the religious roots behind the political agenda and rhetoric of Federalists, and elite and popular Anti-federalists. Moreover, by way of comparison, it will bring forward those elements of political thinking which were and were not distinctly Anglican. In examining such issues as the security of personal liberty and relations between the individual and government, Marini's aforementioned geographical and religious divide between the 'liberal' sects of the coastal communities and the evangelical ones of the backcountry will be used alongside Saul Cornell's theory about the social dimensions of Anti-federalism. Congregationalists (by the 1790s turned Unitarian, according to Marini), Presbyterians, Deists and Anglicans of the urban, coastal centres shared common features in their political theology which account for the similarities in political opinions between Federalists and elite Anti-federalists. In Virginia, elite Anti-federalism, as represented by George Mason, Richard Henry Lee and Patrick Henry, developed mainly in the tidewater communities.¹⁰ They shared the same hierarchical perception of society not only with the Federalists of their own state, but also with the Unitarians, Presbyterians and Deists of the middle and New England states. They were much more willing than evangelical popular Anti-federalists of the Piedmont to accept a society composed of interest groups and held together by utilitarian laws, which could understand and chasten the human soul through the use of reason. On the other hand, popular Anti-federalism, in its middling and plebeian forms, was much more appealing to the evangelical sects of the backcountry, namely to Republican Methodists, Separate Baptists and New Side Presbyterians. The latter perceived even people of the lower sort as having an intrinsic virtue, which made them equal partakers of a contract with the governing authorities for the protection of their rights. Moreover, plebeian Anti-federalists were much more willing than the other Anti-federalist groups to engage in crowd action and challenge the conservative, conventional ethics and practices of their times.

¹⁰ For the political divisions in Virginia, see: William Grayson to William Short, New York, 10 November 1787 in John P. Kaminski, *et al.* (eds.), *Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution* (21 vols., Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976-), viii, 150.

In the Chesapeake colonies, the evangelical sects of the revolutionary revival developed in parallel with the decline of Anglicanism. The former colonial Church of England has been weakened by warfare and legal disestablishment. While in 1775 there were 95 Anglican parishes in Virginia, 164 church buildings and 91 ministers, by the end of the Revolution a major decline had occurred: of the 71 remaining parishes, 34 of them were vacant, leaving only 35 active ones and 28 priests to serve them.¹¹ The church's place in the Virginia backcountry has been taken by radical evangelical groups of Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians through successive revivals in the 1770s and 1780s.¹² As a result, during the immediate post-revolutionary years, Anglicans were predominant in the tidewater counties, while Republican Methodists occupied the southern, Separate Baptists the northern counties and New Side Presbyterians the counties east and west of the Blue Ridge Mountains.¹³

These evangelical sects were theologically and politically radical groups, which had been detached from the Methodists, Old Side Presbyterians, and Regular Baptists of the urban, cosmopolitan eastern coasts of Virginia, the Mid-Atlantic States, Massachusetts and Maine. They operated on democratic structures of ecclesiastical polity, which led them to require a government with minimal institutional intervention in people's lives.¹⁴ As a result, Republican Methodists, New Side Presbyterians and Separate Baptists dominated the Virginia backcountry and were particularly appealing to the poor, since they promoted an ecclesiastical and civil polity of an egalitarian nature, which was similar to the concepts of Anti-federalism.¹⁵ New Side Presbyterians, in particular, had adopted the strong belief of evangelical Calvinism in divine law, which perceived society as a compact between the rulers and the governed, according to which inalienable rights should not given up if it was not necessary to do so. These characteristics of Presbyterian theology can help explain their Anti-federalism and render compatible their support for religious

¹¹ Marini 'Religion, Politics, and Ratification', pp. 192, 194.

¹² The initial seven Methodist counties in central Virginia were: Dinwiddie, Amelia, Sussex, Brunswick, Prince George, Lunenburg and Mecklenburg. Wesley M. Gewehr, *The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1965), pp. 156-7, 159, 168-9, 172-3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 117-118, 135-6, 173-8, 186.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 211-7; [John Leland's Objections to the Constitution] in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 425-26.

¹⁵ Marini 'Religion, Politics, and Ratification', pp. 201-03; Gewehr, *Great Awakening in Virginia*, pp. 160-1.

tests for office-holding, as well as their strong advocacy of written guarantees for religious freedom.¹⁶

But it was not simply to any kind of Anti-federalist thought that the sects of the revolutionary revival in Virginia were attached. Their political thinking was rather an expression of popular Anti-federalism, in its middling and plebeian forms. Both middling and plebeian Anti-federalists shared the same abhorrence of ‘aristocratic’ leadership that elite Anti-Federalists and Federalists had espoused. They believed that the participation of the middling sort in state institutions, such as the legislature and the juries, would secure individual rights and help preserve republican virtue.¹⁷ This added importance that middling Anti-federalists placed on the rights of the middling sort is compatible with the centrality of the doctrine of ‘New Birth’ in evangelical faith: the saving grace of the Holy Spirit made everyone equal participants in the kingdom of God in the same way that the middling sort demanded to be equal beneficiaries of the rights and liberties conferred on the individual in a republic.¹⁸

On the other hand, plebeian Anti-federalists advocated a radical version of republicanism, wherein the expression of the rights of the majority, rather than those of the individual, mattered most. In this sense, plebeian Anti-federalism valued the merits of direct democracy, namely the assertion of the will of the people through immediate crowd action rather than through the use of such refined means as the press. In contrast to elite and middling Anti-federalists, plebeian Anti-federalists did not wish to exclude the lower sort from the legislature, the juries and elections.¹⁹ According to evangelical ecclesiastical polity, authority was given to individual congregations, rather than to a central organisation. In selecting a minister, changing the covenant, or disciplining a church member, the decisions of the evangelicals demanded unanimity, not merely a majority vote. In this way, the expression of the

¹⁶ For Separate Baptists’ opposition to the constitution and their demands for religious freedom, see: Joseph Spencer to James Madison, Orange County, 28 February 1788, in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 424; ‘James Madison, Sr., to James Madison, 30 January 1788’ in *ibid.*, ix, 599; for New Side Presbyterians’ radicalism, as illustrated in the demand for a unicameral legislature and in the fervent opposition to the powers of the Senate, see: ‘Republicus [William Ward?]’, *Kentucky Gazette*, 16 February 1788 in *ibid.*, viii, 379-80; same, *Kentucky Gazette*, 1 March 1788 in *ibid.*, viii, 447-9; Marini ‘Religion, Politics, and Ratification’, pp. 204-07, 209-10.

¹⁷ Cornell, *Other Founders*, p. 119.

¹⁸ Marini ‘Religion, Politics, and Ratification’, p. 216; for the egalitarian and contractual nature of Methodism, see: Gewehr, *Great Awakening in Virginia*, pp. 163-165.

¹⁹ Cornell, *Other Founders*, p. 120.

will of a group as whole mattered more than the views of individuals, in the same way as plebeian Anti-federalists valued crowd, rather than individual action.²⁰

Consecutive revivals in the 1780s had transformed the religious geography in the Chesapeake area. The presence of Republican Methodists, New Side Presbyterians and Separate Baptists in the Virginia Piedmont eroded the power of the Anglican church, while Methodists gained numbers in the eastern shore of Maryland. The strong presence of evangelical sects in the backcountry, which had embraced a radical political theology, encouraged the development of popular Anti-federalism in this area. The doctrine of 'New Birth' included the idea that the saving grace of the Holy Spirit can endow everyone with inherent virtue, while the contractual character of the evangelical congregations encouraged the belief that the people at large had the requisite moral attributes that enabled them to participate responsibly in a democratic society. In this way, popular Anti-federalists advocated the right of the common people to participate in such bodies as juries, the militia and the legislature for better securing their liberties. In this sense, both middling and plebeian Anti-federalists shared an abhorrence of elite leadership and rejected the idea that the natural aristocracy is best equipped to rule, because of its supposed talent and merit. In contrast, elite tidewater planters, such as the leading Anti-Federalists George Mason, Richard Henry Lee, Patrick Henry, Luther Martin and John Francis Mercer had adopted the ideas of Whig republicanism, but also shared the belief in the propriety of rule by the natural aristocracy of talent and merit. They were persuaded that only the social-economic elite possessed the necessary education and virtue to lead society to the attainment of the common good. As it will be shown below, the Anglican belief in an organic society - headed by the elite - wherein every part held a certain role, through which it contributed to the welfare of the whole community, was a conservative source of influence which informed the ideas of these elite Anti-federalists. In this system, obedience to law and the observation of one's duties towards the traditional authorities of family, church and civil government were of particular importance. The Anglican reverence for the law was another source of influence which had an impact on elite Anti-federalist demands for specific, written

²⁰ Marini 'Religion, Politics, and Ratification', p. 216; for the importance of localism and biblicism in Methodism and in Separate Baptism, see: Gewehr, *Great Awakening in Virginia*, pp. 108-9, 163, 165.

guarantees for the security of popular and states' rights and restrictions on federal authority.

Elite Anti-federalist Anglican Thought

In the states of the Chesapeake Bay, Anglicanism had a particular impact on the formation of Federalist and Anti-federalist thought. With reference to Anti-federalism, Anglican influences can be particularly detected when this political stance was adopted by the elite. It was not any kind of Anti-federalism that Anglicans embraced. The conservative nature of the Church of England rendered Anti-federalism, in its elitist expression, particularly appealing to Anglicans. Besides, in Virginia and in Maryland, Church of England adherents were mostly drawn from the elites of the tidewater region. Elite Anti-federalists' constitutional thought was based on the idea that the natural aristocracy of wisdom and talent could best discern and apply what would be beneficial for the common good, although matters of honour and personal prestige would prevent the elite from conniving against the interests of the people at large. In this way, elite Anti-federalists argued, the liberties of the people would be best defended and preserved, even though they were governed by an elite. In this sense, it was not the idea of 'aristocratic' rule to which Anglican Anti-federalists objected, but rather the danger of its excess, namely the degeneration of such a government into a narrow oligarchy. This conservative idea about the propriety and effectiveness of elite rule rested on the Anglican assumption that society functions as an organic whole, wherein its members, while possessing unequal abilities, still have mutually complementary roles.²¹ Within this hierarchical system, the elite, due to their superior refinement and culture, are deemed the most effective leaders of the rest of the community. It was not only on elite Anti-federalism that Anglican influences can be detected. Despite the fact that middling and plebeian Anti-federalism opposed the Anglican civil theology about the propriety of elite rule, Anglicanism still had some impact on these political currents, though to a more limited extent. This was particularly evident in Maryland, where middling and plebeian Anti-federalism were ripe. The impact of the Anglican

²¹ Marini 'Religion, Politics, and Ratification', p. 200.

appreciation of moderate conduct is evident in middling Anti-federalism's distrust of the lower sort and in its denunciation of the excesses of crowd action. Even Francis Mercer, who can be characterised as plebeian Anti-federalist, was influenced by his conservative, Anglican upbringing: he advocated changes in order to ameliorate the plight of the lower sort, as long as the deferential character of politics would not be threatened.

One of the main characteristics of elite Anti-federalist thought was the attachment to state and local authority. Anti-federalists claimed that state governments should be preserved and they raised the fear that they would be eliminated by a strong national government. George Mason emphatically stated: 'it [the Convention] has fairly annihilated the Constitution of each individual state. It has proposed to you a high prerogative government, which, like *Aron's* serpent, is to swallow up the rest.'²² Elite Anti-federalist arguments were based on the idea that local elites, who mainly manned state authorities, could better sense the popular will by being closer to the governed than the federal government. As a result, federalism and localism were employed in liberal and Whig republican terms. In this sense, members of the gentry claimed that local and state authority should be preserved, because only in this way would the rights of the people be best protected and the welfare of the whole community promoted. Luther Martin of Maryland argued:

the *only* method by which an extensive continent like America could be *connected* and *united* together consistent with the principles of freedom, must be by having a *number* of *strong* and *energetic State governments* for securing and protecting the rights of *individuals* forming those governments, and for regulating all their concerns.²³

²² 'Cato Uticensis', *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 17 October 1787 in Kaminski, (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 73; see also: George Mason to George Washington, Gunston Hall, 7 October 1787, enclosure in *ibid.*, viii, 45; George Lee Turberville to Arthur Lee, Richmond, 28 October 1787 in *ibid.*, viii, 128; *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 31 October 1787 in *ibid.*, viii, 139; William Russell to William Fleming, Aspsville, 25 January 1788 in *ibid.*, viii, 324; George Lee Turberville to James Madison, Richmond, 11 December 1787 in *ibid.*, viii, 233; 'The Virginia Convention, Monday, 16 June 1788', speech of William Grayson in *ibid.*, x, 1309; Luther Martin, 'The Genuine Information Delivered to the Legislature of the State of Maryland ... (Philadelphia, 1788)' in Storing, *Complete Anti-Federalist*, ii, 33.

²³ Luther Martin, 'The Genuine Information' in Storing, *Complete Anti-Federalist*, ii, 48; see also: 'James Monroe: Some Observations on the Constitution, c. 25 May 1788' in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, ix, 857-58.

According to Anti-federalist thinking, Article 2 of the Articles of Confederation, which restricted the rights of the federal authority to those specifically granted, should have been included in the new constitution.

In this sense, elite Anti-federalists influenced by Anglican religious attitudes did not reject the idea of government by a ‘natural aristocracy’. It was the danger of excesses that alarmed Anti-federalists, namely of ‘natural aristocracy’ degenerating to oligarchy, through corruption and the alliance of rulers with a particular faction.²⁴ ‘The Impartial Examiner’ argued:

if the nation happens to enjoy a series of prosperity, voluptuousness, excessive fondness for riches, and luxury gain admission and establish themselves – these produce venality and corruption of every kind, which open a fatal avenue to bribery. Hence it follows, that in the midst of this general contagion a few men – or one – more powerful than all others, industriously endeavor to obtain all authority; and by means of great wealth – or embezzling the public money, - perhaps totally subvert the government, and erect a system of aristocratical or monarchic tyranny in its room.²⁵

The fear of corruption and tyranny is the reason why elite Anti-federalists stressed so much the importance of government by virtuous leaders. Richard Henry Lee especially emphasised this need, but he had to acknowledge that it was inevitable that virtuous men would not always govern.²⁶ In Arthur Lee’s mind, particular danger lay with the Federal Senate. He thought that it could easily be transformed into an oligarchic body, since it was so removed from the control of the people not only by the way it was elected, but also through the longevity of its term.²⁷

²⁴ Cornell, *The Other Founders*, p. 69.

²⁵ ‘The Impartial Examiner’, no. 1, *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 5 March 1788 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 465; see also: Arthur Lee to John Adams, New York, 3 October 1787 in *ibid.*, viii, 34; Richard Henry Lee to Samuel Adams, New York, 5 October 1787 in *ibid.*, viii, 37; Richard Henry Lee to Edmund Randolph, New York, 16 October 1787 in *ibid.*, viii, 62; ‘A Plain Dealer [Spencer Roane?]’, *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 13 February 1788 in *ibid.*, viii, 364-5.

²⁶ Richard Henry Lee to William Shippen, Jr., New York, 2 October 1787 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 33, see also: Cornell, *The Other Founders*, pp. 79-80.

²⁷ Cincinnatus [Arthur Lee], no. 4, ‘To James Wilson, Esquire’, *New York Journal*, 22 November 1787 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, xiv, 187-88.

Elite Anti-federalists frequently referred to the problem created by removing governors from the control of their electors. They feared that the former would escape the regular check of the latter. On this, 'The Impartial Examiner' affirmed:

In the appointment and constitution of the other branch, the *senate*, we have but the shade of a deputation from the people. The state-legislatures, it seems, are to elect this *body*. The objections, which apply to the *house of representatives*, hold more strongly with regard to this, in as much as longer continuance in office will be productive of more danger; and the mode of appointment, by rendering them more independent of the people, will preclude *these* from having any decisive influence on their conduct.²⁸

By distancing the rulers from their localities of origin and election, the new Federal constitution prevented the cultivation of deference, which could be best promoted only at a local level. Elite Anti-federalists believed that deference could function as a means of control by establishing proper checks and balances, necessary in a democratic system. By preserving the links with their local communities, the elite would refrain from betraying the interests of their co-patriots, because they were influenced by prestige and honour.²⁹

Elite Anti-federalists thought that the dual purposes in government, namely of democratic checks and aristocratic rule, would be best assured through bicameralism and juries in the judicial system. The concept that society was consisted of two main social groups, the gentry and the plebeians, underlay the concept of bicameralism. The Framers believed that a bicameral legislature would better discern the common good, since it would exploit the qualities of both social groups.³⁰ In the same way, the balancing of the interests of the different social and economic forces could be achieved through the use of juries. Anti-federalists regarded judges as representatives

²⁸ 'The Impartial Examiner', no. 3, *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 4 June 1788 in *ibid.*, x, 1578; see also: 'James Monroe: Some Observations on the Constitution, c. 25 May 1788' in *ibid.*, ix, 862.

²⁹ Richard Henry Lee to Edmund Randolph, New York, 16 October 1787 in *ibid.*, viii, 62; Cornell, *The Other Founders*, p. 70.

³⁰ Arthur Lee to Edward Rutledge, New York, 29 October 1787 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 131; Cincinnatus [Arthur Lee], no. 4, 'To James Wilson, Esquire', *New York Journal*, 22 November 1787 in *ibid.*, xiv, 189; on the small number of Representatives, see also: 'The Virginia Convention, Wednesday, 4 June 1788', speech of George Mason in *ibid.*, ix, 939; 'The Virginia Convention, Wednesday, 11 June 1788', speech of William Grayson in *ibid.*, ix, 1170; Richard Henry Lee to Edmund Randolph, New York, 16 October 1787 in *ibid.*, viii, 62; on the strong powers of the Senate, see also: George Mason to George Washington, Gunston Hall, 7 October 1787, enclosure, in *ibid.*, viii, 43-4; Cornell, *The Other Founders*, p. 70.

of the natural aristocracy and juries as representing those of the democratic forces in society. Arthur Lee stated that trial by jury is the ‘best of all human modes for protecting, life, liberty, and property.’³¹ Elite Anti-federalists did not argue, however, that juries had to be composed of common people, but argued instead that they should be composed of those who had a permanent stake in society, namely the gentry and the substantial yeomanry. Because of their property, the main interests of such propertied men lay with the preservation of the existing social order, and so, their dispositions were considered moderate enough. The traditional elite’s distrust of the lower sort, because of their potentially unruly passions, underpinned this idea. Similarly, judges and attorneys had to be men of wisdom and rank in order to exert a moderating, stabilizing influence on the judgments of the jury.³²

In concert with their support of local and state authorities, elite Anti-federalists thought that the rights of the people would be best secured through state control of the juries and the militia.³³³⁴³⁵ In this way, state authority would be used to protect personal rights. Elite Anti-federalists, however, did not support a permanent right of revolution or the use of force by individual citizens, as radical Anti-federalists did, but advocated the use of state force for the defence of the liberties of their citizens.³⁶

³¹ ‘An Independent Freeholder [Alexander White]’, *Winchester Virginia Gazette*, 25 January 1788 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 327-8; Cincinnatus [Arthur Lee], no. 2, ‘To James Wilson, Esquire’, *New York Journal*, 8 November 1787 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, xiv, 14.

³² Cincinnatus [Arthur Lee], no. 2, ‘To James Wilson, Esquire’, *New York Journal*, 8 November 1787 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, xiv, 13; see also: Cornell, *The Other Founders*, pp. 67, 80

³³ George Mason to George Washington, Gunston Hall, 7 October 1787, enclosure, in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 44; see also: Arthur Lee to John Adams, New York, 3 October 1787 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 34; Richard Henry Lee to Edmund Randolph, New York, 16 October 1787 in *ibid.*, viii, 62; Joseph Jones to James Madison, Richmond, 29 October 1787 in *ibid.*, viii, 129; Luther Martin, ‘The Genuine Information’ in Storing, *Complete Anti-Federalist*, ii, 71.

³⁴ Luther Martin, ‘The Genuine Information’ in Storing, *Complete Anti-Federalist*, ii, 55; Cornell, *The Other Founders*, pp. 59-60.

³⁵ George Mason to George Washington, Gunston Hall, 7 October 1787, enclosure, in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 45; George Lee Turberville to Arthur Lee, Richmond, 28 October 1787 in *ibid.*, viii, 128; Tamony, ‘To the FREEHOLDERS of AMERICA’, *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 9 January 1788, in *ibid.*, viii, 287; ‘The Impartial Examiner’, no. 1, *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 5 March 1788 in *ibid.*, viii, 465; Luther Martin, ‘The Genuine Information’ in Storing, *Complete Anti-Federalist*, ii, 58-9.

³⁶ Cornell, *The Other Founders*, pp. 60-61.

The idea of deference at the local level was central to elite Anti-federalist ideology. This credo presupposed and required the existence of a small republic. Elite Anti-federalists believed that only in a small republic could people discern the virtuous and meritorious, through personal acquaintance with them, and hence elect them as their representatives.³⁷ Anti-federalists maintained that the centralisation of power, as suggested by the Federalists, and the loss of power by state authorities could result in the suppression of liberty and the emergence of upstart demagogues in political life. Luther Martin stated: ‘It was insisted that governments of a *republican nature*, are those *best* calculated to *preserve* the *freedom* and *happiness* of the citizen – That governments of *this kind*, are *only calculated* for a territory but *small* in its extent.’³⁸ Anti-federalists held that the effective control of politicians by the governed was only possible when small political communities retained their power. In this case, matters of honour and personal reputation would deter those elected from betraying the interests of their local community. Besides, it was more likely that the governors would have the same concerns with the governed in a small republic than in large one, where a diversity of interests prevailed.³⁹

The same notion of deference towards the elite in a small locality informed elite Anti-federalists’ perception of the public sphere. The belief that due respect could only be cultivated in a small republic, and that the removal of statesmen from the localities encouraged demagoguery in political life can be linked to the elite Anti-federalists’ abhorrence for the public world of print.⁴⁰ They believed that the anonymity of print did not allow the people at large to discern those who were truly meritorious and virtuous, and, as a result, liberty was placed in jeopardy. Elite Anti-federalists preferred discussing their ideas within a small circle of respected friends, instead, wherein they could directly exert their personal influence for the attainment of public good. In contrast, printed ideas can be widely circulated and received by the public opinion in such a way that their author cannot control. For example, George Mason and James Monroe preferred distributing their objections to the

³⁷ Luther Martin, ‘The Genuine Information’ in Storing, *Complete Anti-Federalist*, ii, 44.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

³⁹ Cornell, *The Other Founders*, pp. 72-74, 80; ‘Cato Uticensis [George Mason?]’, *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 17 October 1787 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 73; ‘James Monroe: Some Observations on the Constitution, c. 25 May 1788’ in *ibid.*, ix, 855-6.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of elite Anti-federalists’ perception of the public sphere of print, see: Cornell, *The Other Founders*, pp. 74-8, 80.

constitution within the circle of their prominent friends and tried to avoid their wide circulation as pamphlets.⁴¹

Anglican elite Anti-federalists' insistence on the preservation of state and local authority and on the efficacy of bicameralism, their ideas about the interaction of judge and jury in the judicial system and the functions of a small public sphere of print and politics were informed by their belief in elite rule. In this way, they did not advocate active participation of the common people in politics, and denounced strongly crowd action, which, in their minds, referred to licentiousness and tyranny. They insisted that the elite, in positions of power, could best protect the liberties of the people, especially when operating in small localities. In this sense, they did not believe, like evangelicals did, in the inherent virtue of the middling and lower sort which made them equal participants in politics. In addition, the Anglican reverence for the rule of law, as introduced with the Glorious Revolution of 1688, can be deemed as having influenced the elite Anti-federalist insistence on the inclusion of written guarantees in the constitution explicitly protecting the rights of the states and restricting the power of the Federal government.

The medieval perception of society as an organic whole, whose members possess unequal abilities, underlay the elite Anti-federalist support for state authority. Influenced by this medieval concept, Anglican theologians held that everyone should contribute to the well being of the whole community with a spirit of Christian brotherly love. In this way, the different social classes were regarded as fulfilling complimentary, and not opposing roles. According to elite Anti-federalist thought, local elites undertook a particular task: as the best qualified representatives of their communities, they were entrusted with the role of understanding the popular views, refining the opinion of the people and transmitting it to the governing authorities.⁴² The depiction of the body politic as an organic whole - and not as an entity whose

⁴¹ 'George Mason and Edmund Randolph in the Constitutional Convention, 12-15 September' in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 10; 'James Monroe: Some Observations on the Constitution, c. 25 May 1788', head note, in *ibid.*, ix, 845-6; 'Brutus [Tobias Lear]', *Virginia Journal*, 6 December 1787 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 212; Valerius, 'To the Honorable RICHARD HENRY LEE, member of Congress for the state of VIRGINIA,' *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 23 January 1788 in *ibid.*, viii, 318.

⁴² Cornell, *The Other Founders*, pp. 54, 56, 63, 65-7, 79.

parts have conflicting roles - signified that the decisions of the rulers should not be opposed.

It is evident that Anglican civil theology particularly promoted the maintenance of the authority of long-established gentry families, since it believed that the family, along with other traditional institutions such as civil government and the established church, were the best promoters of order, stability and peace in society. Only these traditional bodies had a permanent interest in the maintenance of the existing social order. In this way, the local elite were vested with a paternal role in relation to the rest of the community. Due to their wisdom and merit, they were considered as having a moralizing impact on the impulses and vices of common people. For this paternal protection that they offered to the people at large, traditional rulers, such as the king, the bishops and the lords, should be respected and obeyed. On the model of the first family, that of Adam and Eve, they functioned as ‘fathers’ of the common people, instructing them in virtue and restraining their passions.⁴³

Middling and Plebeian Anti-federalism

In Maryland, Anglican Anti-federalism was also strong in its middling form. Its main representatives were William Paca, Samuel Chase, Jeremiah Townley Chase and Benjamin Harrison. During the April 1788 elections to the Annapolis Ratifying Convention Anglican middling Anti-federalists defeated a strong Federalist ticket in Anne Arundel County. They were strong supporters of individual rights and thought that the government should not restrict either personal rights, or the economy. Their handbill demanded a Bill of Rights, which would secure such individual rights, as jury trials and religious freedom, and would protect against standing armies, excessive taxation and the misuse of state troops.⁴⁴ In this sense, they sought to restrict the authority of the executive and of the judiciary, while they defended the legislature’s right to pass laws in order to defend individual personal rights and liberties. In this, they differed from elite Anti-federalists who did not oppose

⁴³ Jonathan Boucher, *View of the Causes and Consequences of the American revolution; in thirteen discourses, preached in North America between the years 1763 and 1775: with an historical preface* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1797), pp. 522, 524-6, 532.

⁴⁴ Eric Robert Papenfuse, ‘Unleashing the ‘Wilderness’: The Mobilization of Grassroots Antifederalism in Maryland’, *Journal of the Early Republic*, 16 (1996), 76.

governmental intervention, as long as the latter was duly representative of the people, namely of those who were enfranchised. Moreover, in contrast to elite Anti-federalists who supported government by a natural aristocracy, middling Anti-federalists denounced government by the wealthy or the wellborn. In September 1786, in the midst of the paper money controversy, Chase and Paca's supporters published a broadside criticising the fact that the state Senate had been dominated by the wealthy. Samuel Chase argued in February 1787 that by not taking heed of the instructions of their constituents, who supported the emission of paper money, elite statesmen sought to establish 'aristocratic tyranny'.⁴⁵ In this sense, they chose not to espouse the Anglican perception of society as an organic whole, led by an educated and meritorious elite. They perceived society rather as an entity comprising groups with conflicting interests, all of which should be represented in its institutions. The representation of learned professionals, merchants, mechanics, artisans and large farmers is what they strove for.⁴⁶

Despite the fact that middling Maryland Anti-federalists rejected one of the main tenets of Anglican political theology, namely elite leadership, it can be argued that Anglicanism had a certain influence on their thinking. Indeed, the Anglican ideal of moderate, restraint behaviour can be considered a source of influence on middling Anti-federalists' disapproval of the excesses of popular democracy and of crowd action. After witnessing the violence of the mob in Maryland politics of the late 1780s, Samuel Chase became one of the strongest Anti-federalist critics of the anarchy and licentiousness of his time. Indeed, in his denouncement of mob rule, Chase did not differ fundamentally either with Federalists or elite Anti-federalists. This is best illustrated by the fact that in the late 1780s, he emerged as a leader of the Federalist Party in Maryland. Moreover, the Anglican belief in the deferential character of civil and ecclesiastical polity partly survived in middling Anti-federalists' distrust of the lower sort. Indeed, middling Anti-federalists tried to exclude the lower sort from juries, militia and elections, a right for which plebeian Anti-federalists fought. In the 1786 broadside, mentioned above, middling Anti-federalists advocated the rights of merchants and affluent mechanics, using a well-

⁴⁵ Papenfuse, 'Grassroots Antifederalism in Maryland', pp. 78-9, 82-3.

⁴⁶ Cornell, *The Other Founders*, p. 97, 119; Papenfuse, 'Grassroots Antifederalism in Maryland', p. 85; see also: *ibid*, p. 86.

attended style, instead of endeavouring to rouse the passions of the rank and file.⁴⁷ The middling Anti-federalists' distrust of the lower sort is also illustrated in their concurrence with elite Anti-federalists that the states, rather than the localities, adequately reflected the idea of small republic; this was an argument that plebeian Anti-federalists rejected. The state government was a sphere where the elites and the middling sort could prevail, whereas the increase of the authority of the localities, which plebeian Anti-federalists supported, would encourage the lower sort to exert their influence. In his September 1787 speech, Samuel Chase presented himself as a supporter of a Bill of Rights, as well as states' rights.⁴⁸

In Maryland in the late 1780s, plebeian Anti-federalism gained ground along with elite and middling opposition to the new Federal constitution. The main representative of the former was John Francis Mercer. He had adopted the main features of plebeian Anti-federalism, namely the support for the civil rights of the lower sort, the priority of crowd over individual action and of personal over states' liberties. While Mercer endorsed crowd action, he hesitated about advocating an armed rebellion by Anti-federalists should the Constitution be adopted.⁴⁹ This suggests that, despite his mainly plebeian Anti-federalist views, Mercer had an appreciation for moderate, peaceable conduct. In his 'Farmer' essays of 1788, he praised 'the body of the people, as the only safe depository of liberty and power'. He criticised, however, the unruly character of democracy in 'Florence, where a numerous populace confined and crowded within the walls of a city, formed the most turbulent republic, that ever disgraced the cause of freedom by cruelty and anarchy'. After denouncing the excesses of popular democracy, he argued that the enfranchised freeholders should have an indirect participation in the legislature, because they were:

the most independent of mankind, mild by nature, moderate by manners, and preserving in every honest pursuit: - Surely if ever men were worthy of being entrusted with their own rights, the freeholders of America are – *Make them then and their posterity legislators by birth* – I mean not the lowest populace – I mean that class of citizens to whom this

⁴⁷ Papenfuse, 'Grassroots Antifederalism in Maryland', pp. 79, 83, 106; L. Marx Renzulli, Jr., *Maryland. The Federalist Years* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1972), p. 102.

⁴⁸ Cornell, *The Other Founders*, pp. 119-20; Papenfuse, 'Grassroots Antifederalism in Maryland', pp. 84-5.

⁴⁹ Papenfuse, 'Grassroots Antifederalism in Maryland', pp. 95-6, 101-2.

country belongs: - ... they who hold the property of the soil,
are alone entitled to govern it.

In the same passage, Mercer advocated the right of election for those who, according to the state constitution, were unenfranchised, because they possessed less than fifty acres of land.⁵⁰ Indeed, Mercer was consistent on this point throughout his life: universal white manhood suffrage was instituted mainly due to his efforts as governor between 1801 and 1803.⁵¹

Despite his radical views regarding civil rights and popular action, Mercer did not embrace fully the tenets of plebeian Anti-federalism. This can be partly explained by his Anglican background. While other plebeian Anti-federalists supported crowd action, even in its violent expressions,⁵² Mercer denounced the excesses of popular democracy. As shown by the quotation above, he denied the legislative task to those who did not fulfil the existing property qualifications for voting, because he thought that they were not mild enough. This suggests that he did not wholly trust the temper and political judgment of the lower sort. The Anglican ideal of moderation and of deferential politics should have influenced Mercer in his praise of moderate characters, his attack on the violence caused by turbulent crowds and his partial distrust of the lower sort. Indeed, Mercer's concern for well-tempered action suggests that he advocated the rights of the lower sort only so long as the deferential nature of society and of government was not disturbed.⁵³ This is an essentially conservative notion, which characterized the thought of traditional protestant churches, such as the Anglican, to which Mercer belonged.

In the late 1780s and early 1790s, violent outbreaks were common in crowd actions by plebeian Marylanders. These included the riots on 5 September 1788 (Gay Street Riot) and on 5 October 1788 in Baltimore, during the October elections for the state legislature.⁵⁴ The participation in these episodes of Anglicans from both political parties presents certain interpretational problems. First, it is difficult to detect in these incidents the impact of the ideas of a specific political party, since

⁵⁰ 'A Farmer [John Francis Mercer],' (Baltimore) *Maryland Gazette*, 25 March 1788, in Storing, *Complete Anti-Federalist*, v, 49-50.

⁵¹ Papenfuse, 'Grassroots Antifederalism in Maryland', p. 105.

⁵² 'A Farmer and Planter,' *Maryland Journal*, 1 April 1788, in Storing, *Complete Anti-Federalist*, v, 76.

⁵³ Papenfuse, 'Grassroots Antifederalism in Maryland', p. 101.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 106; Renzulli, *Federalist Years*, pp. 107-111.

they evolved in a chain of events, with consecutive attacks and counter-attacks. Besides, the participation of Anglicans in these episodes is particularly perplexing, since their political theology strongly opposed violent crowd action. It seems that the democratisation of politics, which, as shown above, had been encouraged by a few middling and plebeian Anglican Anti-federalist leaders, ultimately got out of hand and led to violence.⁵⁵

Given the lack of any explanation based on religious or political ideas, the possibility of economic motives as partly underlying these events has to be admitted. Anti-federalism was particularly influential in Baltimore, Anne Arundel and Harford counties. In the October 1788 state election and in the 1789 congressional one, these counties supported Anti-federalist candidates who demanded the emission of state paper money for payments and the cancellation of British and domestic debts. This can be explained by the fact that Anti-federalist leaders and voters in the aforementioned tidewater counties were involved in British debt obligations and speculation in confiscated loyalist property. In contrast, federalist candidates supported the interests of the creditors and opposed debtor relief and paper currency, conformably to Article I, Section 10 of the Constitution.⁵⁶ Prominent Anglican plebeian Anti-federalist leaders, such as John Francis Mercer, were adequately restrained in their support of violent mobilization, but the same moderation was not shown by other supporters of popular interests.

It can be argued that Anglicanism had an impact on the thought of middling and plebeian Anti-federalists. Despite the fact that these forms of Anti-federalism advocated the rights of the middling and lower sort, they did not aim at destroying the deferential character of society and politics, an ideal, which was equally shared by Anglican civil theology. This is particularly evident when considering that both these types of Anti-federalism appreciated the effects of moderate conduct and disapproved of the excesses of crowd action, especially the resort to violence.

Religious Tests, Religious Freedom, and the First Amendment

⁵⁵ 'A Farmer and Planter,' *Maryland Journal*, 1 April 1788 in Storing, *Complete Anti-Federalist*, v, p. 76.

⁵⁶ Renzulli, *Federalist Years*, pp. 66-9, 111, 117-8.

‘Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof’. In framing the new Constitution, the Founding Fathers, claimed that they neither desired the establishment of a particular religious sect or the provision of support for religion in general nor required a religious test for holding any Federal office. Despite the seemingly unequivocal language of the first amendment, its meaning has generated much discussion among historians. Did the Founding Fathers really intend to erect a ‘wall of separation of church and state’? Was America a deeply secular society by the end of the eighteenth century? The examination of these matters inevitably revolves around two issues: Article 6, section 3 of the constitution which prohibited the institution of religious tests as a filter for those who were to take up a federal office; and the first amendment, which banned the establishment of a church at the national level. The investigation of Federalist and Anti-federalist views on these matters demonstrates that Americans of the 1780s shared a deep sense of religious piety to the point of being at times intolerant of those who were not Christians, but also of those who were not Protestants.⁵⁷

Regarding the issue of religious tests, Federalists viewed their abolition as a mechanism to accommodate the diversity of religious and political opinions in the new nation. In the Chesapeake Bay, the Federalist opposition to religious tests can be explained as an expression of the Anglican trust in governmental structures and institutions for the achievement of social harmony, in this case through the placement of all religious groups on an equal standing, while being confident at the same time the virtuous and talented would rise in eminence. In this sense, the ban on religious tests in the Federal constitution and in the Virginia Act for Religious Freedom represented an enlightened departure from customary practice, which several state constitutions later emulated. In the same way, Federalists were initially reluctant to provide specific assurances of religious liberty, because they thought that such constitutional provisions could prove too restrictive to accommodate the plurality of religious interests in the new nation. On the other hand, while elite Anti-federalists argued that specific religious assurances to secure administration by the virtuous were needed, they were strong supporters of the rights of conscience. In the thought of both Federalists and elite Anti-federalists, however, the Anglican ideal that

⁵⁷ This is particularly stressed in Morton Borden, ‘Federalists, Antifederalists, and Religious Freedom’, *Journal of Church and State*, 21 (1979), 469-82.

traditional institutions, such as the government and the church, should be used as moralizing, stabilizing factors in society survived intact. The apparent Anti-federalist equivocation on the issue of the freedom of conscience can be explained by their limited perception of its meaning: they advocated the propriety of religious tests so that only Protestants could hold federal office, and they also supported religious freedom so that the establishment of one particular Protestant sect - at the expense of the rest - would be prevented. No one was such adamant supporters of religious tests and of the rights of conscience, however, as the evangelical popular Anti-federalists of the Piedmont. Their strong biblicism, their appreciation of written contracts - on the basis of which their congregations were organized - and their belief in New Birth conferred their religious organizations with a distinctly egalitarian character that they sought to emulate in their civil polity.

In America of the 1780s, Anglicans, along with the other Protestant sects of the old coastal communities (Congregationalists and Presbyterians) shared a long establishmentarian tradition, which was based on the belief that governmental institutions should be used to promote religious homogeneity in society. Strongly Calvinistic in origin and with a deep sense of human depravity and divine rule, these sects appreciated the importance of moral discipline and believed that it should be imposed through governmental measures. These essentially conservative sects frequently used the language of jeremiad to condemn what they perceived as the growing licentiousness of their times.⁵⁸ In the previous chapter, the views of a conservative caucus in Virginia, including Patrick Henry and Edmund Pendleton, who wished the support of religion by the state, have been examined. The inhabitants of Caroline and Amelia counties who petitioned the Virginia General Assembly (on 5 December 1777 and 8 November 1784, respectively) in favour of a general assessment, and the members of the Maryland House of Delegates in their address of 8 January 1785 argued that religion encouraged good government, social order and peace, while it promoted the interests of civil society.⁵⁹ By 1787, eight of the thirteen

⁵⁸ Marini 'Religion, Politics, and Ratification', pp. 207, 214; Thomas J. Curry, *The First Freedoms. Church and State in America to the Passage of the First Amendment* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 219.

⁵⁹ James Hutson, *Forgotten Features of the Founding. The Recovery of Religious Themes in the Early American Republic* (Lanham; Boulder; New York; Oxford: Lexington Books, 2003), pp. 4-7; Early

state constitutions, namely those of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, North and South Carolina, Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey established public support of religion and held the profession of Christian religion as a requirement for state office. Even the Pennsylvania constitution of 1776, the most radical of all, specified that laws should be passed for the development of virtue and the restraint of vice and immorality in society. Moreover, two-thirds of the delegates in the ratifying conventions were members of the various religious denominations, a fact that suggests that religious affiliation was thought a qualification requisite for good political leadership.⁶⁰ Indeed, two states where establishmentarian views held a strong sway, namely Connecticut and Maryland, were divided on the vote on Article 6, section 3 (on religious tests) in the Philadelphia Constitutional convention. The rest of the states, with the exemption of North Carolina, were in the affirmative.⁶¹

Being accustomed to an establishmentarian tradition, whereby state institutions were used to promote the causes of religion, in the republican era adherents of the traditional Protestant sects were prepared to utilize governmental structures as moralizing mechanisms. The essentially optimistic nature of their religion, based on the Arminian doctrine that human will was free and Christ died for all, allowed them to agree with the doctrine of the Enlightenment that the human soul can be known through reason and chastened through the operation of rational laws. In this way, they were prepared to adopt Madison's idea that the practical solution for the observed disorder in the American society of the 1780s was to use governmental structures as a means to promote social cohesion. Through the operation of rational laws a compromise of interests would be achieved and the aspirations of a licentious minority suppressed.⁶²

Indeed, Madison's thought and religiosity bring forward the compromising character of such regulations on religion as the first amendment, of which Madison was one of the principal framers. Madison was a deeply religious man, and it was due to his strong sense of piety that he wished that everyone should be free in the exercise of his religion. His origin from a state where religious persecution

Virginia religious petitions: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/petitions/place.html>, date accessed: 11 December 2006.

⁶⁰ Marini 'Religion, Politics, and Ratification', p. 191.

⁶¹ Borden, 'Federalists, Antifederalists, and Religious Freedom', 471.

⁶² Marini, 'Religion, Politics and Ratification', pp. 213-5.

suppressed the religious beliefs and practice of a large part of the population, nurtured in him great respect for religious diversity and for the rights of freedom of conscience. It is this deep hatred of church establishment, because it could confer undeserved economic and political power, led him to support strongly the separation of church and state, and to wish to celebrate true religious diversity in the constitution.⁶³ The constitution's effort to harmonise different religious interests in part reflects Madison's support of religious freedom in a truly pluralistic society.

In this way, the first amendment clearly illustrates the aforementioned agreement between Madison and Federalists of the traditional sects on the use of governmental institutions to achieve social cohesion and to promote virtue. It passed during the proceedings of the first Congress in August 1789. The guarantee of religious liberty was not a subject, which generated much discussion among the delegates. It was first introduced by James Madison on 8 June 1789, but it was only debated two months later, on 15 August. Madison's suggestion read:

The civil rights of none shall be abridged on account of religious belief or worship, or shall any national religion be established, nor shall the full and equal rights of conscience by in any manner, or on any pretext, infringed ... No State shall violate the equal rights of conscience.

Madison's approach indicated that Congress would have the power to regulate matters of freedom of conscience even on a state level, but Samuel Livermore of New Hampshire proposed a formulation that prevented Congress from intervening with state policies on this issue. The expression that Livermore suggested simply stated: 'Congress shall make no laws touching religion, or infringing the rights of conscience.' It was very similar to the one eventually adopted by the delegates. By incapacitating Congress from disestablishing religious institutions nationwide, the power to legislate on this issue was clearly removed from the jurisdiction of the federal authorities and conferred on the state governments. Besides, with the states having passed explicit regulations on this issue in their constitutions, there was no real danger that Congress would establish a church at the Federal level, nor was there

⁶³ Donald L. Drakeman, 'James Madison and the First Amendment Establishment of Religion Clause' in Garrett Ward Sheldon and Daniel L. Dreisbach, eds., *Religion and Political Culture in Jefferson's Virginia* (Lanham; Boulder; New York; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), pp. 225-228; Curry, *The First Freedoms*, p. 219.

any movement that supported doing so. In this way, the first amendment reads more like a compromise between those who were fervent supporters of religious freedom, like Madison, and those who came from states where religious sects were firmly established, like Samuel Livermore of New Hampshire and Fisher Ames of Massachusetts, where Congregationalism was the state-supported church.⁶⁴

In a similar way, Anglican Federalists thought that government and its laws were the best promoters of order and virtue in society, since they would place all religious groups on an equal footing and prevent the dominance of a disordered minority. Rational laws would, then, ensure that only the virtuous and talented would rise to eminence. Besides, Federalists' understanding of the plurality of religious interests led them to support the view that any written guarantee of religious freedom would not cover the rights and demands of all different religious sects.⁶⁵

The agreement between Anglicans and Enlightenment liberals showed that they shared the optimism that the human soul can be chastened through the operation of positive laws as best exemplified in the disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Virginia. Conservative Virginia Anglicans gradually accepted Madison's advocacy of disestablishment of the Church of England so that the homogeneity of religious interests, and thus social cohesion, would be achieved. In this sense, the politics of the ratification of the constitution represented a certain departure from what was thus far a limited perception of religious liberty, instituted on the state level. Despite the fact that the Federal constitution was not binding on the states in matters of religion, between 1789 and 1792, Delaware, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Georgia changed their relevant regulations so that they accorded with those of the Federal constitution and of Virginia.⁶⁶ These legislative adjustments reveal the religious liberalism of Anglicans, along with Presbyterians, when compared with the Congregationalists in New England. The latter's strong belief in a divinely ordained society is illustrated by the fact that New Hampshire did not abandon religious tests for office holding until as late as 1876.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ *Annals of Congress*, 1st Cong., 1st sess., pp. 451, 759; Drakeman, 'James Madison and the First Amendment', pp. 219-225; Curry, *First Freedoms*, p. 217.

⁶⁵ Marini, 'Religion, Politics and Ratification', pp. 213-5.

⁶⁶ Borden, 'Federalists, Antifederalists, and Religious Freedom', 481.

⁶⁷ Borden, 'Federalists, Antifederalists, and Religious Freedom', 478.

In contrast to Anglican Federalists, Anti-federalists insisted on the propriety of religious tests. Arthur Lee, perhaps influenced by the radical politics in London, was one of the few elite Anti-federalists who rejected the need for religious tests for office-holding under the federal government.⁶⁸ The Anglican ideal that traditional institutions and means, such as the body of laws, civil government and the church, had a paternal role in society and were to be trusted in order to defend the interests of the people and promote virtue survived both in the Federalist and in the elite Anti-federalist camp. Luther Martin, a prominent Anti-federalist lawyer, was supportive of religious tests in the Federal constitution and he lamented that it failed to acknowledge ‘*A belief of the existence of a Deity, and of a state of future rewards and punishments.*’ He believed that such a stipulation would have offered ‘security for the good conduct of our rulers.’ The justification he provided was that in ‘a Christian country it would be at *least decent* to hold out some distinction between the professors of Christianity and downright infidelity or paganism.’⁶⁹ Martin, however, used less dramatic language than his evangelical counterparts to express his disapproval of the ban on religious tests. The Anglican appreciation of moderation and restraint in conduct would rarely induce an elite Anglican Anti-federalist to support forcefully either religious tests or religious liberty, issues which were highly controversial.

In this sense, a distinction should be made in the way that different Protestant sects perceived religious freedom and the propriety of religious tests for office holding. Evangelical sects of the backcountry, such as Republican Methodists, Separate Baptists and New Side Presbyterians, were firmer supporters than the Protestant denominations of the old coastal communities (Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Anglicans), of both religious liberty and religious tests. The evangelical belief in New Birth, whereby everyone was made an equal recipient of divine grace, promoted the concept that everyone could equally participate in the rights and duties of the polity. Evangelicals strongly demanded assurances for this, namely what came to be the first amendment in the Bill of Rights. On the other hand, the strong biblicism, according to which evangelicals lived, cultivated in them the belief that religious profession was one of the best securities for virtue. From this

⁶⁸ Cornell, *The Other Founders*, p. 79.

⁶⁹ Luther Martin, ‘The Genuine Information’ in Storing, *Complete Anti-Federalist*, ii, 75.

idea, stemmed the strong evangelical demand for religious tests in the constitution. It represents one of the main points of concurrence between evangelicalism and popular Anti-federalism.⁷⁰

But how could Anti-federalists reconcile their advocacy of both religious qualifications for office holding and religious freedom? Federalists and Anti-federalists of almost every denomination had a particularly limited perception of religious liberty. Religious freedom was defined within the bounds of Protestantism, rather than based on the acknowledgment of the multifaceted nature of a pluralistic society. Anti-federalists advocated the security of the right of religious freedom, in the sense that all Protestant sects should have the right to worship freely, but at the same time they required religious tests for office-holding so that no pagans, deists, Jews or Catholics could hold federal office.⁷¹ Martin's assertion that the belief in Protestant Christianity, at least in its generic version, should be used as a test of virtue, necessary for the survival of the republic, betrays his limited sense of the rights of religious conscience and his limited toleration for a fundamentally pluralistic society. Mr. Singletary, a delegate to the Massachusetts Convention, thought that the admission only of Christians to Federal offices would ensure the preservation of virtue in the republic. He believed that:

we [they] were giving up all our [their] privileges, as there was no provision that men in power should have any *religion*; and though he hoped to see Christians, yet, by the Constitution, a Papist, or an Infidel, was as eligible as they. It had been said that men had not degenerated; he did not think that men were better now than when men after God's own heart did wickedly. He thought, in this instance, we [they] were giving great power to we [they] know not whom.⁷²

Henry Abbot, a Federalist delegate to the North Carolina Ratifying Convention, observed that some of his constituents were jealous defenders of their religious

⁷⁰ [John Leland's Objections to the Constitution] in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 426; Edmund Randolph to James Madison, Richmond, 29 February 1788 in *ibid.*, viii, 436; Marini, 'Religion, Politics and Ratification', pp. 216-17.

⁷¹ Curry, *First Freedoms*, pp. 196-7.

⁷² Jonathan Elliot, ed., *The debates in the several state conventions on the adoption of the federal Constitution, as recommended by the general convention at Philadelphia, in 1787. Together with the journal of the Federal convention, Luther Martin's letter, Yate's minutes, Congressional opinions, Virginia and Kentucky resolutions of '98-'99, and other illustrations of the Constitution*, 5 vols., 2nd edn. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & co.; Washington: Taylor & Maury, 1836-59), ii, 44.

freedom, but that, at the same time, they feared that without a religious test, ‘pagans, deists, and Mahometans might obtain offices.’⁷³ Such views reveal that, for eighteenth-century Americans, only Protestant Christians deserved religious liberty.

Such views on religious freedom indicate the intention to prevent the establishment of a single Protestant religious sect - a system that could be proved tyrannical for the rest - rather than a policy of safeguarding the religious rights of all the citizens. At the Virginia Ratifying Convention, the most prominent speakers revealed a shared fear that one particular sect would be established, oppressing the rest. Patrick Henry, stressing the need for an amendment, asserted that ‘no particular sect or society ought to be favoured or established, by law, in preference to others.’⁷⁴

Madison asked:

Would the bill of rights, in this state, exempt the people from paying for the support of one particular sect, if such sect were exclusively established by law? ... Fortunately for this commonwealth, a majority of the people are decidedly against any exclusive establishment.⁷⁵

Edmund Randolph reassuringly suggested that the multiplicity of sects would prevent ‘the establishment of any one sect, in prejudice to the rest’.⁷⁶

It becomes evident, then, that although the framers of the Federal Constitution banned religious tests for federal office holding and provided explicit securities for religious liberty through the first amendment, they did not initially aim to create a truly secular society. The aforementioned stipulations in the constitution rather provided protection for the different religious practices in the various states. Indeed, eight of the thirteen states, which ratified the constitution between 1787 and 1790 had instituted public support for religion and required religious tests for office holding. The Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom (1786), article 6, section 3 of the Federal Constitution, and the first amendment all represented, however, a departure from the prevailing practice of demanding religious tests for office holding and restraining the rights of conscience. After ratification, four states sought to emulate their stipulations. The fact that the Protestant denominations of the

⁷³ Elliot, *Debates in the several state conventions*, iv, 192.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, iii, 659.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, iii, 330.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, iii, 204.

old coastal communities, namely Anglicans, Congregationalists and Presbyterians, were willing to readjust their establishmentarian ideas and accept, therefore, the use of governmental institutions as the means of achieving social cohesion, without the use of religion, can explain this. Anglicans and Presbyterians, however, were more liberal in their theology than Congregationalists, who continued for long the establishment in practice of congregationalism in the states where they predominated. Regarding the Chesapeake region, a differentiation needs to be made between the views of evangelical popular Anti-federalists of the Piedmont and the ideas of Anglican Federalists and elite Anti-federalists of the tidewater region. The former, because of their biblicism and strong appreciation of individual rights were strong supporters of both religious tests for office holding and written guarantees for the rights of conscience. This can be explained by the fact that they shared a particularly limited sense of religious liberty, which included only those who were Christians, by which they meant Protestants: they demanded religious tests for office holding, so that no Pagans, or Muslims could enter public office, but they also required the security of religious liberty, so that no one Protestant sect would dominate over the rest. Anglican elite Anti-federalists of the tidewater region shared the same limited perception of religious liberty, but they were more moderate than evangelicals in their assertions and demands for religious tests and religious rights. Having adopted the Anglican ideal of utilising traditional institutions as moralising and stabilising forces in society, they were, in a way, more prepared than evangelicals to agree with Anglican Federalists. As stressed above, the latter were convinced of the practical usefulness of using such traditional institutions as governmental structures and laws for the promotion of virtue and the restraint of licentiousness, without specifically employing religion or favouring one particular sect.

Anglican Influences on Federalism

Federalists agreed with elite Anti-federalists on preserving ‘aristocratic’ rule and they shared an organic perception of society. They devised elaborate institutional mechanisms through which the virtuous and learned would occupy positions of

power. Through this process of ‘filtration of talent,’ a ‘natural aristocracy’ of talent and merit would naturally emerge. Being weary of the disordered manners and unrestrained passions of the democratic elements in state legislatures, Federalists required the formation of governmental bodies, which would be elected in such a way as to elevate the wisest to positions of power. Such men would function as stabilizing elements in society and politics. For example, bicameralism ensured the control of the House of Representatives, namely the popular branch of legislature, by the Senate, a body of the virtuous and learned few. In this, lay the conservative strain in Federalist thought: they distrusted popular democracy and strongly opposed crowd action. Indeed, Federalists not only supported bicameralism, but also required a House of Representatives of limited membership, to which only the truly meritorious would be elected. These wise and few men, as members of the Federal legislature, were entrusted with the role of transcending narrow interests, discerning what is beneficial for the whole community, and applying this in practice. The perception of the body politic as an organic whole, based on the theory of the ‘great chain of being’, underlay Federalist thought. They believed that men possess unequal abilities, but that everyone should contribute to the best of their abilities to the welfare of the whole community in a spirit of benevolence. This theory conceptualised society as a body consisting of different parts, which perform complementary - not conflicting functions. In this way, Anglican theologians argued that the decisions taken by the civil authorities, as servants of God on earth, were beneficial to the rest of the society. For this reason, Anglican civil theology in most cases opposed resistance to governmental authorities. In these ways, in the tidewater counties of the Chesapeake Bay, the Anglican perception of society influenced not only elite Anti-federalists, but also Federalist theories. This pervasive impact of Anglicanism towards different political attitudes is best illustrated by the following statistic: Virginia Anglicans were divided in their reception of the Federal constitution, with a ratio of 41 to 21 Anglican delegates in the state ratifying convention voting for the constitution. This signifies that, in Virginia, Anglicanism could nurture both Federalism and Anti-federalism.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Marini ‘Religion, Politics, and Ratification’, p. 192.

Despite the fact that other traditional Protestant sects, such as Congregationalists and Presbyterians, had adopted the same perception of an hierarchical society and political system, no other sect exploited this doctrine fuller than Anglicans. The ecclesiastical polity of the latter, organized around deacons, priests and bishops confirms this. In addition, influenced by the alliance of church and state in the Chesapeake, Anglican Federalists had internalised the concept that state institutions could be used for the cultivation of virtue in society. In late eighteenth-century America, where different interests emerged, sometimes in a dangerously conflicting and licentious way, this idea translated to the use of governmental structures in order to balance the demands of various interest groups. The Anglican appreciation of moderate, peaceable behaviour and social order underlay this desire to eliminate factionalism. At the same time, through the system of the 'filtration of talent', mentioned above, the virtuous and talented would rise to positions of power and leadership.

Central to Federalist, as well as elite Anti-federalist, thought was the idea of government by a 'natural aristocracy' based on talent and merit. This signified that through constitutional mechanisms the wise, cultivated and virtuous - in most cases, those who were already the social and economic elite- would rise to positions of power and provide effective leadership for the rest of the community.⁷⁸ The mode of election of the President and the Senate was designed to ensure this. According to Article 1, section 3 of the Federal constitution the members of the Senate, who would have to be above the age of thirty, instead of twenty-five, as stipulated for the members of the House of Representatives, would be elected by the state legislatures, and not directly by the people, as was the case with the members of the House of Representatives. For the President a higher age limit than that for the Representatives and Senators was set, namely that of thirty-five years. Along with the Vice-President, he would be selected by an electoral college; men, equal to the number of the

⁷⁸ 'Extract of a letter from a well informed correspondent, to his friend in this City, on the subject of the proposed Foederal Constitution,' *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 28 November 1787 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 179; Valerius, 'To the Honorable RICHARD HENRY LEE, member of Congress for the state of VIRGINIA,' *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 23 January 1788 in *ibid.*, viii, 318; Publius [James Madison], no. X in Alexander Hamilton, *The Federalist: a collection of essays, written in favour of the new Constitution, as agreed upon by the Federal Convention, September 17, 1787*, 2 vols. (New York : J. and A. M'Lean, 1788), i, 58.

members of Congress that each state was allowed, elected in their respective states. By such means, both the President and the Senators would be of a mature age and elected not by general popular elections, but by men, sufficiently detached from the factions in their localities, and thus, disinterested enough to achieve a wise, dispassionate choice.⁷⁹ By not trusting to the people at large the election of the President, the Vice-President and the Senators, this system reflected the idea of government by the elite and it was based on a belief in deference towards its members.⁸⁰ In this sense, the basic difference between Federalist and elite Anti-federalist thought was one of a rather practical nature: while both political groups agreed in preferring elite government, Anti-federalists thought the liberties of the people would be better protected if the elites maintained the links with their local communities and functioned within them. On this, Federalists objected that the operation of elites in the localities would encourage their coalition with a certain faction and, thus, result in the promotion of the interests of only one group. To prevent such coalitions they suggested the removal of politics from the states and their function on a central 'stage', distant enough from the localities.

Despite their different ideas on how the new republican institutions would better protect the rights and liberties of the people, both Federalists and elite Anti-federalists shared an organic perception of society and the economy.⁸¹ It was based on the theory of the 'great chain of being', which constituted an integral part of Anglican civil theology. This signified that, due to their education, refinement and cosmopolitan vision of the world, the elite were best equipped to govern, whereas little trust was placed to the political judgments of the lower sort, who were considered impulsive, licentious, and factious. In contrast, the gentry were entrusted with the task of understanding the will of the rest of the community, refining public opinion, and implementing what would be beneficial for the whole of the body politic.⁸² The notion that within a highly stratified polity each part held mutually complementary, and not conflicting economic roles, underlay the aforementioned

⁷⁹ 'Civis Rusticus', *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 30 January 1788 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 335-6.

⁸⁰ Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, p. 479.

⁸¹ My analysis of the implications of this theory is influenced by Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, p. 499.

⁸² George Washington to Patrick Henry, Benjamin Harrison and Thomas Nelson, Jr., Mount Vernon, 24 September 1787 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 15.

perception. This system did not allow for great social mobility, since each economic group would function within the bounds of its social standing.

In Anglican political theology the tenet about hierarchical polities also presupposed that governmental authorities had a divine origin: they were modelled after Adam and Eve, the first fathers and the first governors, created by God. This idea is clearly illustrated in a passage published in the *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, in November 1787:

When I declare, that it is, in my humble opinion, the most perfect system, that ever was presented to mankind for their adoption, I barely do it justice; it is a system of government, the prototype of which is in Heaven. Had the ancient *legislator* received such a government, from his supposed *goddess*, he might, with some degree of propriety have imposed it on the world as partaking of divine descent.⁸³

Given this godly sanction, Anglican Federalists and elite Anti-federalists did not advocate social change, but their systems ultimately resulted to the preservation of the existing social divisions. This theocratic perception of stratified societies also formed the basis of the dogmas, adopted by Congregationalists and Presbyterians. Given the powers that these Protestant sects accorded to individual congregations, it can be concluded, however, that they were not prepared to accept fully the implications of an hierarchical depiction of society. It was only Anglicanism with its ecclesiastical polity organized around deacons, priests and bishops that fully embraced the view of a highly stratified society. In this sense, it can be argued that it was in Anglicanism, more than in other Protestant sects, that direct influences on the thought of Federalists can be found.

In these ways, the idea of deference to a learned and virtuous elite was fundamental to the Federalist doctrine. Apart from the Anglican organic perception of society, the eighteenth-century ideal of a cultured, virtuous and, in many ways, cosmopolitan, gentleman informed this idea. The Federalist system of ‘filtration of talent’, which would elevate a ‘natural aristocracy’ of virtue and merit, potentially allowed, however, the emergence of people of humble origins. Through great industry, a few might manage to acquire the necessary education and cultured

⁸³ ‘Extract of a letter from a well informed correspondent, to his friend in this City, on the subject of the proposed Foederal Constitution,’ *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 28 November 1787 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 177; cf. *ibid.*, p. 180.

manners to compete and become distinguished in the world of politics. Remaining true to their republican principles, it was not the elevation of men of poor means that the Federalists opposed. Their distrust and opposition, rather, lay in the elevation of men who did not possess the adequate genteel education, experience, refinement, virtue and social connections to match the dignity and responsibility that accompanied the political offices for which they competed.⁸⁴

In the minds of Federalists, and elite Anti-federalists, the increase of debt and of inflation, the diminished influence of religious, judicial and governmental authorities, corruption, profligacy and the degradation of manners were all signs of anarchy.⁸⁵ Indeed, such ‘upheaval’ resulted from the great social mobility that the Revolution had unleashed. The departure of loyalist Tories, the intensification of factionalism in politics, the augmentation of the representatives in the legislatures, the participation of the lower sort in the militia, the multiplication of political groups, the profiteering during the war and the dissolution of old mercantile unions offered chances for the lower sort to acquire new economic and political roles, as well as to gain wealth speedily. In these developments lay the greatest fears and anxieties of Federalists. George Washington argued:

From a variety of concurring accounts it appears to me that the political concerns of this Country are, in a manner, suspended by a thread. ... and that, if nothing had been agreed on by that body [the Constitutional Convention], - anarchy would soon have ensued – the seeds being reiply sown in every soil.⁸⁶

Federalists’ belief in ‘filtration of talent’ sought to control and regulate the alarming unleashing of new social forces. Under this constitutional mechanism, only the truly learned and meritorious - even of poor backgrounds originally - would become entitled to acquire high political office.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, pp. 495-8.

⁸⁵ The Reverend James Madison to Thomas Madison, Williamsburg, 1 October 1787 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, vol. VIII, p. 30; Publius [James Madison], no. X., in *The Federalist*, i, 53.

⁸⁶ George Washington to Patrick Henry, Benjamin Harrison and Thomas Nelson, Jr., Mount Vernon, 24 September 1787 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 15; the same concern was shared by Edmund Randolph, see: ‘The Virginia Convention, Tuesday, 17 June 1788’, speech of Edmund Randolph in *ibid.*, x, 1354.

⁸⁷ Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, pp. 476-80, 507-10.

In the previous section, it has been highlighted how the ban on religious tests for federal office holding and the safeguarding of religious freedom aimed to achieve a compromise of interests through governmental mechanisms. The establishmentarian tradition shared by Anglicans, but also by Congregationalists and Presbyterians, made them accept the use of governmental institutions and laws as moralising, stabilising tools that would help develop social cohesion. ‘Civis Rusticus’ advised his readers:

be disposed to reverence the authority of laws, yet active to detect and expose malversation and wrong measures: the proposed government will then, ... have internal efficiency and permanence, and will ensure to the present and future generations, security of property, and peace, happiness, and liberty, the great end of political and civil society.⁸⁸

By the mid-1780s, Anglicans were prepared to agree with Enlightenment figures that the problems of licentiousness and upheaval in American society would be best solved by balancing different interests. The Reverend James Madison, the future bishop of the Episcopal Church in Virginia, stated:

If any Circumstance can induce a ready Compliance amongst ye Bulk of ye People of America, with federal Measures, it will be, that they flow from a Form of Govt. to wch. they are so strongly attached, and in whc. they will consider themselves as justly represented.⁸⁹

In practice, therefore, social cohesion and order would be best achieved through the highest security of the rights of all, and the resulting suppression of the aspirations of a disordered minority, rather than by religious tests or the imposition of an established religious sect.⁹⁰ The strong anti-clericalism shared by evangelicals, especially in such states as Virginia, where religious minorities had been persecuted, barred religion as an effective moralizing means. The rational devising of secular institutional mechanisms would then provide the answers to the political problems America faced towards the end of the eighteenth century.

⁸⁸ ‘Civis Rusticus’, *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 30 January 1788 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 339; see also: the Reverend James Madison to James Madison, Williamsburg, c. 1 October 1787 in *ibid.*, viii, 31.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Marini, ‘Religion, Politics, and Ratification’, p. 215.

The use of governmental institutions to address the disorder in American society of the later 1780s is clearly illustrated in such concepts as bicameralism and the narrow representation in the House of Representatives. Both Federalists and elite Anti-federalists appreciated the value of bicameralism. The institution of a Senate, as representative of a natural aristocracy of the wise and learned, reveals the shared perception of American society as a highly stratified one. The elitist nature of the Senate becomes evident when considering the age limit of thirty years for candidates for the Senate and the indirect way of electing the latter, namely through the state legislatures, and not by way of a general, popular vote. Composed, thus, of learned men, sufficiently detached from their localities, whose abilities would be checked by the different stages of indirect election, the Senate was destined to function in Congress as a moralizing, stabilizing body. Its members would rise beyond narrow, local interests and would control the factious, democratic politics of the House of Representatives. The task of legislative review, with which the Senate was entrusted, and its power to make treaties, without the concurrence of the Representatives, were means through which Federalists hoped to check democratic disorder.⁹¹

Federalists further hoped to control the excesses of democracy by keeping the number of Representatives small, elected in large constituencies, so that the popular influence on Congress would be sufficiently limited. They saw the democratic branches of state legislatures adopting unwise, rash measures and they feared that the same tendency might prevail with the popular representatives in the House at the Federal level.⁹² Although Federalists tried to obscure the aristocratic character of the Senate, senators, were, in fact, representatives of the socially and economically established elite, and would act not only as natural leaders of the body politic, but also contribute to social order, provide examples of virtue, and check the destabilising tendencies of the Representatives.⁹³

Social order could also be achieved through social cohesion and the unification of interests. The alliance of church and state and the resulting imposition

⁹¹ Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, pp. 503-4, 551-4; 'Civis Rusticus', *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 30 January 1788 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 337; see also: 'The Virginia Convention, Thursday, 19 June 1788', speech of Francis Corbin in *ibid.*, x, 1391.

⁹² Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, pp. 501, 512, 515-6; Elliot, *Debates in the several state conventions*, iii, 107-8.

⁹³ Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, pp. 557, 560.

of religious uniformity were no longer regarded as the most efficient means of providing social unity. The establishmentarian character of traditional Protestant sects influenced Federalist ideas on how governmental institutions could be used to achieve unity. Federalists thought that the variety of interests in society would be best protected and balanced through the formation of a large republic, through compromises between small and large states in their representation in Congress, and by securing state and individual rights in the first ten amendments. The first two methods sought to counterbalance the variety of interests and prevent the adoption of rash, unwise measures supported by a factious majority or by a disordered minority.⁹⁴

The mechanism of the ‘filtration of talent’ was central to the system that the Federalists promoted. The election of the President by an electoral college and of the Senators by the state legislatures together with the high limits of age set for the candidates for these offices were the main ‘sieving’ mechanisms that would ensure the elevation of the truly cultured, refined and experienced. Although such a system ideally allowed everyone to occupy such posts, in practice it was only those who were already socially and economically established who could successfully compete in politics. It was only members of the elite who, due to their refined tastes and social connections, possessed the chief attribute of conducting themselves at ease in a world of genteel politicians. At the heart of the Federalist persuasion lay, therefore, a strong distrust of the judgment of the people at large. Bicameralism, the limited number of the Representatives and their election in broad constituencies ensured that the Senate would control popular passions and that the democratic element in Congress would be restricted. An organic, hierarchical conception of society, fully adopted by the Anglicans, underlay such measures. The theory of ‘the great chain of being’ specified that society consisted of different groups which functioned in complementary and not conflicting ways. Each part of the body politic had to perform its role within the bounds of its station without aspiring to something different to what it already possessed. In the same way, Federalists argued that

⁹⁴ ‘Brutus [Tobias Lear]’, *Virginia Journal*, 6 December 1787 in Kaminski (ed.), *Documentary History of the Ratification*, viii, 214; ‘An Independent Freeholder [Alexander White]’, *Winchester Virginia Gazette*, 18 January 1788 in *ibid.*, viii, 311; Publius [James Madison], no. X in *The Federalist*, I, 59-61; Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, pp. 504-5, 510-11, 517.

society's natural leaders would rise beyond narrow local interests and would apply what was beneficial for the rest of the community. Due to the removal of the 'natural aristocracy' from the localities, people of lower standing were dispossessed of the mechanisms to check effectively their leaders. In this way, Federalists were opposed to the right of the middling and lower sort to resist traditional authorities and they abhorred the direct assertion of the will of the crowd, which they regarded as a mobocracy. Finally, Federalists, influenced by the establishmentarian nature of the traditional Protestant sects, used to a great extent governmental institutions for the attainment of public virtue and social cohesion. This is portrayed not only in the system of 'filtration of talent' for selecting the meritorious and virtuous, but also in the system of counterbalancing the demands of different social and religious groups. For example, the interests of small and large states were compromised through their equal representation in the Senate and the proportionate one in the House of Representatives.

Conclusion

Despite their support for different political systems, both Federalists and elite Anti-federalists shared the same ideas about the propriety of elite rule. In elite Anti-federalist thought this is illustrated by the support of state and local authority, bicameralism, religious tests for office holding, the advocacy of a small republic and the exertion of the influence of the elite in the public sphere of print. The elitist character of Federalism is depicted in its system of 'filtration of talent', whereby a 'natural aristocracy' of talent and merit would be selected. Moreover, Federalists distrusted popular democracy and strongly denounced crowd action. It can be argued that in Virginia and in Maryland, Anglicanism had an impact on the thought of Federalists and elite Anti-federalists of the tidewater communities. Federalists' and elite Anti-federalists' support of elite rule was based on an organic perception of society and politics, as described in Anglican civil theology. The theory of the 'great chain of being,' adopted by Anglicans, embodied this organic depiction of society. The main idea, which underpinned this central Anglican doctrine, was that society was consisted of men of unequal abilities. They had to contribute to the common

good, according to their faculties and social standing, and with a spirit of Christian brotherly love. In this sense, Anglicans did not discern a conflict between the interests of the different social classes, but believed that their social and political roles were complimentary. In the same way, Federalists and elite Anti-federalists thought that the elite, because of its education, refinement and cosmopolitan vision, were the best suited to rule. Its interests were not perceived as conflicting with those of the rest of the society. Moreover, it can be argued that the establishmentarian nature of Anglicanism in the states of the Chesapeake Bay had an impact on Federalist ideas about the use of governmental institutions for the cultivation of virtue in society and the suppression of factions. Federalists hoped to eliminate social disorder through balancing the different political interests, so that a spirit of moderation in government would be cultivated. This was compatible with the Anglican appreciation of moderate conduct, both in a personal and a public level, and with the denunciation by Anglican theologians of revolutionary upheaval and violence. In addition, the Anglican reverence for the rule of law influenced Anti-federalists' demand for a Bill of Rights, wherein personal and states' rights would be specifically guaranteed. Anglicanism had a limited impact on Maryland's middling and plebeian Anti-federalism. These forms of Anti-federalism were mainly influenced by the evangelicalism of the backcountry. Republican Methodists, Separate Baptists and New Side Presbyterians shared a radical perception of ecclesiastical polity and society that was compatible with the Anti-federalist spirit of the lower sort. This highlights the reactionary character of Anglicanism and further illustrates its influence on Federalism and elite Anti-federalism in the states of the Chesapeake Bay.

Chapter Six

The Impact of the French Revolution on American Anglicanism, 1789-1800

The French Revolution and the French wars that followed marked fundamental developments in the socio-economic sphere, in the realm of ideas, and in the politics of Europe and of the British Atlantic world. Given the mutual trade of ideas between Britain and America, the investigation of the impact of the French Revolution on Anglican political thought in the Chesapeake of the 1790s should necessarily take into account British responses to the French Revolution, as well as the political attitudes in America.

With regard to America, dividing the period into two terms, 1789-1795 and 1796-1800, can be a useful approach. The election of 1796 and the formation of the first political parties can be considered as the point which marked a change in American attitudes towards the French Revolution. Whereas before 1796 clergymen of all denominations shared the general enthusiasm in America for French revolutionary ideals, after 1795, the alignment of political opinion, and, as a result, the response to the events in France, corresponded to the political divide created by the first party system. At this stage, internal developments conditioned American responses to the French Revolution and to the subsequent Napoleonic wars. After 1795 the Federalists' denunciation of the events in France can be viewed as a product of their belief that the Whiskey rebellion and the surge of deism in America were imports from France. They attributed to French influences what they perceived to be the growth of violence and irreligion in American politics and society. This was a strong feature of the Federalist rhetoric, which found firm supporters primarily among the Congregationalist clergy in New England. In the states of the Chesapeake Bay, neither the Anglican clergy nor the laity shared this rhetoric with any passion. The Anglican clergy in the Chesapeake denounced the French excesses less vigorously than their Congregationalist counterparts in New England. The responses of the Anglican laity in the Chesapeake states were varied. They either mildly criticized French aggression or tried to condone it. Thomas Jefferson, who was brought up in an Anglican household, was the most conspicuous example of the

latter case. Jefferson went so far as to believe that violence was necessary for traditional institutions to become disestablished. In no instance, however, did the reactions of Anglicans in the Chesapeake towards the French Revolution match the paranoia expressed by Federalists in New England.

The steady growth of support for the Republican Party in Virginia and in Maryland, which culminated in the 1800 election to the presidency of Jefferson, partly explains this. Another factor, which contributed to the downplaying of French violence by American observers in the Chesapeake during the second half of the 1790s, was the relative erosion of the strength of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the region. In Britain in the 1790s, the Church of England was a long-established and traditional institution, which articulated a conservative political discourse, in opposition to the French Revolution and its excesses. As described in the previous chapters, the Church of England in the states of the Chesapeake Bay had a 'low' church character, which it maintained after the revolutionary war. Despite the fact that it survived the losses of the war relatively well, it did not form a 'high' church, conservative outlook during the post-revolutionary years. It had to adapt to the liberal, republican spirit of the post-revolutionary times with the result that it developed further away from the deeply conservative character of the Anglican Church, as expressed in the parent country. As a result, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Chesapeake did not formulate a conservative discourse, which would have raised the same fears and criticism of the violence in France as those articulated by Federalists in New England.

The French Revolution and Anglican Political Thought in the Chesapeake

Until late 1794-early 1795, clergymen in the early republic shared the general enthusiasm in America for French liberal ideals. Coupled with that was the need of ministers serving the traditional denominations of the east coastal towns to maintain their dwindling congregations. Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Anglicans had to embrace the same liberal rhetoric as expressed by the social and political leaders of their communities. Moreover, since the Reformation, Protestants had been characterized by their anti-Catholicism. In this sense, it is not surprising that

clergymen of strongly Calvinist sects supported the French Revolution during that anti-religious phase, when the pillars of the Catholic Church in France were being demolished. During the second half of the decade, the development of political parties polarized opinions on the French Revolution. Federalists in New England allied with the Calvinist clergy in order to decry the excesses of the French Revolution and the Directory, while at the same time they perceived the reflection of French evils at home. In the Chesapeake, especially in Virginia, the gains of the Democratic-Republicans, as well as the loss of conservative impact of the Episcopal Church, made clergy and laity, alike, still aspire to France as an example. Despite some conservative voices in the region, they approved or mildly criticised French atrocities. Even on the issue of irreligion, they tried to prove that it was unfounded or they advanced arguments to refute it.

During the first five years of the French Revolution, the political rhetoric of clergymen in America had to match the general enthusiasm for liberal ideals, as they were expressed in France. Due to the problem of declining congregations in the churches of traditional denominations in the eastern coast, clergymen often adopted the political credos of their lay patrons.¹ Indeed, the year 1789 witnessed an outpouring of sympathy and admiration in America towards France. The fall of the Bastille was celebrated in civil festivities in America and the French King, the Marquis de Lafayette, French patriots and the French army were all held in high esteem in America.² Even later, during the years 1792-3, American public opinion was inclined to excuse the French revolutionaries for the misfortunes of the royal family and La Fayette. They were considered pardonable excesses in the midst of the revolutionary struggle.³ The Federalists, though conscious of Lafayette's errors, were willing to welcome him to America, while the Democratic-Republicans received his actions with unqualified approval. In a speech in 1792 on the occasion of an anniversary of the American Revolution, while a student in William and Mary College, John Mercer declared:

¹ Gary B. Nash, 'The American Clergy and the French Revolution', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 22 (1965), 397.

² Bernard Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America. A study of moral and intellectual relations between France and the United States at the end of the eighteenth century*, translated by Ramon Guthrie (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1966), p. 273.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 324-6.

Already does the liberal Frenchman, animated by the Sun of this Western hemisphere, keep holy the day, he left his native land to cross the atlantic, a soldier in the cause of freedom. Fayette! formed after natures favorite plan, may the object of thy early virtues be cherished by thy countrymen; may every gift, that Heaven can bestow upon a generous people, be enjoyed by Frenchmen.⁴

Democratic-Republicans ignored the fact that Lafayette joined the royal forces during the Revolution and many even argued that a general tax should be imposed in order to raise money that Lafayette could use on his return.⁵

The fact that American clergymen sympathised with the liberal ideals being expressed in France is not surprising. What is surprising in their reaction is the fact that these clergymen persisted in their support for France even during the most violent, anti-religious phases of the Revolution. This can be explained by the fact that Protestant Americans perceived the revolutionary excesses through a well-established anti-Catholic lens. Despite their regret for the excesses of the French Revolution, American clergymen were inclined to condone such violent events as the September Massacres in 1792, the execution of the king in 1793, the programme of dechristianisation waged against Catholicism and even the Reign of Terror. Having strong anti-Catholic opinions, American Calvinist clergymen, in particular, such as Jedidiah Morse, Ezra Stiles, and Joseph Lathrop in New England, linked the revolutionary spirit in France with that in America, believing that the cause of liberty was advancing and that it was only a matter of time before social and political stability would be established in France. They even went so far as to believe that religion would emerge rejuvenated after being ‘purged’ during the revolutionary turmoil in France. These clergymen perceived the fight against Popery and the old regime in the French Revolution, as similar to and influenced by the ideals of the American Revolution. American revolutionaries, in their opposition to monarchy and the traditional hierarchical institutions of the old world, were regarded as having removed the same shackles from which the Frenchmen were now fighting to free

⁴ John Mercer, *An Oration Delivered on the 4th of July, 1792* (Richmond, Va.: T. Nicolson, [1792]), p. 17.

⁵ *Gazette of the United States*, 20 March 1793; *Bache's General Advertiser*, 4 March 1793; *ibid.*, 31 July 1793; La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, *Travels through the United States of North America, the country of the Iroquois, and Upper Canada, in the years 1795, 1796, and 1797*, 4 vols., 2nd ed. (London: R. Phillips, 1800), vol. 2, p. 53; *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 250; *ibid.*, vol. 3, 397-8.

themselves in the 1790s.⁶ This attitude especially characterized clergymen in the Chesapeake and the southern colonies, who later became favourable to the republican cause and long persisted in their support for the French Revolution.

In contrast, after late 1795, when the anti-religious phase of the French Revolution was over, the prevailing feeling of American clergymen towards the French Revolution was that of repugnance. In particular, Federalist Congregationalist clergymen in New England associated the revolution in France with fraud, violence and immorality. These phenomena were thought to have destroyed religious principles and practice. The Reverend David Osgood's Thanksgiving sermon of 1794 was the first and one of the most illustrative examples of this kind of religio-political rhetoric. The origin of these Federalist and Calvinist fears can be located in their belief that only traditional, hierarchical systems, such as the established church and elite rule, preserve social order through the cultivation of deference. Conservatives believed that everyone was inherently depraved and that man's passions were only restrained by long-standing institutions that promoted respect towards one's peers.⁷ Democracy with its encouragement of popular action could only result in mobocracy, demagoguery and factionalism. Civil war, a particularly dreaded outcome, seemed imminent. The anarchy and disunion of the people that it produced were to be avoided at all costs. The short-lived ancient democracies and the contemporary instances of violence in America and France presented tangible proofs of the harrowing effects of popular mobilization and violence. The massacres, the battle against the established church in France and the emancipation of slaves disquieted the propertied classes and the clergy in America. The poor refugee Creoles, who migrated to America from the former French colony of St. Domingue, were a graphic example of the resulting horrors of civil war and the overthrow of the established order. Vivid blood-soaked imagery was used by Calvinist Federalists to portray the products of violence in revolutionary France that should be avoided in America.⁸

⁶ Nash, 'The American Clergy and the French Revolution', pp. 393-9; Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, pp. 362-4.

⁷ Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, pp. 418-20.

⁸ Nash, 'The American Clergy and the French Revolution', pp. 392-5; Rachel Hope Cleves, 'On Writing the History of Violence', *Journal of the Early Republic*, 24 (2004), 641-5, 655-661; Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, pp. 306-07.

The Fast and Thanksgiving Days' sermons of 1795 mark the turn of the tide. Conservative calls for the renewal of religion and piety among the people were expressed by clergymen, journalists and statesmen. Calvinists were so much appalled by what they perceived as the infidelity of the people that they thought that the millennium was fast approaching, when all humanity would be swallowed in a maelstrom of blood and violence. In 1797, the publication and wide circulation in America of Abbe Barruel's *Memoirs on Jacobinism* had an impact on the thought of New England divines. In this work, the French Revolution was described as the product of Antichrist, while its origins were ascribed to the activities of German Illuminati, the Masonic lodges and the anti-Christian Jacobins. The fervour of this book suited the zeal with which New England clerics castigated what they perceived to be the infidelity of the French Revolution.⁹ Anarchy, violence and deism in American social and religious life at the end of the eighteenth century, as instanced in Shays' and the Whiskey rebellions, were regarded as imports from France. The Genet affair and the XYZ affair of 1797, during which the American diplomats in Paris were repudiated by the French revolutionary authorities, encouraged this reaction.¹⁰

The threat of the dissolution of society, as presented in France, haunted the thoughts of clergymen of traditional religious beliefs in the northern and southern colonies, namely Presbyterians, Regular Baptists and Anglicans. In the Chesapeake, the traditional Anglican appreciation for social order and the aversion towards violence influenced these beliefs. Nevertheless, Anglican clergymen in Virginia and in Maryland did not adopt the same style as their Congregationalist counterparts or their Anglican brethren in England in denouncing the excesses of the French Revolution. Federalist clergymen in New England were strong in their opposition to French lawlessness and, as emphasized in chapter one, Anglican clergymen in England fiercely denounced French ideals - especially after the beheading of the king - and stressed the importance of submission to traditional authorities. In contrast, the

⁹ Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, pp. 364-5; Howard Mumford Jones, *America and French Culture, 1750-1848* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1927), pp. 397-400.

¹⁰ Nash, 'The American Clergy and the French Revolution', p. 392; Cleves, 'On Writing the History of Violence' pp. 645, 650-5; Fay, *Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, pp. 326-8, 367-8; Jones, *America and French Culture*, pp. 392-3.

discourse of Anglican clergymen in the Chesapeake, when referring to the events in France, was more moderate in tone. In a Thanksgiving sermon in 1795, Bishop James Madison of Virginia criticised the anarchy that pervaded American political life in the 1790s, but he referred approvingly to the Revolution in France. He maintained that in the same way that divine Providence guided the Americans towards the achievement of their independence, it protected the French in their revolution against tyranny. He stressed that Americans should be morally disciplined, if they wished to receive the continuous beneficial protection of Providence. This remark matched the increasing fear of social upheaval voiced in conservative circles in America at this time. Despite the fact that Madison appreciated the ‘blessings of peace, of order’ and of law-abiding behaviour, at the same time he referred to the sacred compact that magistrates had entered into with God, obliging them to protect the rights and liberties of the people.¹¹ If the civil authorities proved oppressive, the people had a right to resist. This patriotic discourse, similar to the one used by ministers supporting the American War of Independence, was influenced by the rhetoric of Democratic-Republicans in Madison’s home state of Virginia, who favoured the promotion of equality and justice.

In a similar tone to Madison’s was the Reverend John Bracken’s sermon on the same occasion. Although he approved of the suppression of the Whiskey rebellion and lamented the disorder that it caused, he was a supporter of the French Revolution. Bracken stressed the superintendence of human affairs by God and the divine origin of government. He emphatically stated that ‘the minutest movement in it [the universe] is continually subject to his direction, and all its parts incessantly *declare his glory, and fulfil his word.*’¹² Bracken expressed the traditional Anglican appreciation for lawful behaviour. He believed, thus, that the laws of the American constitution were God-given. According to Anglican civil theology, Bracken had an ordered and rational sense of liberty, which allowed him to support the French struggle against despotism, but, at the same time, to condemn the upheaval caused by

¹¹ James Madison, *Manifestations of the Beneficence of Divine Providence towards America. A Discourse* (Richmond, Va: T. Nicolson, 1795), pp. 8, 10,13, 15-16, 18, 21.

¹² John Bracken, *The Duty of giving Thanks for National Blessings. A Sermon, preached in the Parish Church of Bruton, Williamsburg; on Thursday February 19th, 1795* (Richmond, Va.: Thomas Nicolson, 1795), p. 7.

the Whiskey insurrection in western Pennsylvania and Virginia. For Bracken, the use of lawful means of protesting was the designated course of action, as long as the nature of government was of an adequate republican character that permitted it. Bracken had adopted the traditional Anglican ideal that opposed wars and the effusion of blood, but at the same time he supported the resistance to oppressive monarchs, who violated God's will. It seems that Bracken's residence in Virginia influenced him towards the utmost appreciation of liberty and republican ideals, but his Anglican background did not allow him to approve of licentious opposition to civil government, especially when the constitution of the land provided means for lawful protest. Besides, behaviour in a way that could not be characterised as sober and temperate was not a mode of conduct that Anglicanism appreciated.¹³

The responses of the Anglican laity to the French Revolution ran parallel to those of the clergy. In Virginia and in Maryland, the initial enthusiasm for the revolutionary activities in France was followed - after 1795 - by unconditional approval or mild criticism of the excesses. James Madison and Thomas Jefferson held an optimistic view of human nature. They believed in the ability of man to gain his rights with minimal governmental interference. For them, a rigid social hierarchy was not required for the preservation of social order. They justified violence in France as a small aberration, a reaction that could be explained by the years of oppression under which the French people had suffered. The Battle of Valmy (1792) and the subsequent events of the Reign of Terror were celebrated in America in civic feasts, while Democratic societies were founded, according to the Jacobin example, being critical of the American government and of the American elite.¹⁴

Anglican laymen in the Chesapeake generally welcomed the revolution in France. Even when Anglican laymen disapproved of the events in France, their stance was generally moderate in style. Similarly to the clergy, their tone never resembled the paranoia of the Federalists in New England. On the issue of the execution of the King, Jefferson considered that rendering monarchs subject to punishment, like other criminals, promoted the rights of man, since, in this way the inviolability of the King's person was destroyed. Jefferson's reaction can, therefore,

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-25.

¹⁴ Cleves, 'On Writing the History of Violence', pp. 645-7; Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, p. 421.

be judged rather cool or reserved, since he had earlier expressed faith in the good disposition of the King.¹⁵ The *Aurora* expressed the opinion that France had suffered a lot under monarchy, but the dethronement of the King should have been enough to relieve the country from its evils.¹⁶ The *National Gazette* initially denounced the dethronement of the King as a violent measure, but later defended and excused it on the account of his flight from Paris and of the massacre of patriots, such as the protestors against royalty killed in the Champs de Mars in July 1791. In the summer of 1793 this paper continued to approve the revolutionary actions perpetuated in France, arguing that such instances exhibited dignity and resolution.¹⁷ The decapitation of the King was met in America with popular approval as well: in Philadelphia his head was mangled and burnt in effigy twenty or thirty times a day in the winter of 1792-3 and part of the summer, while at an inn between Chester and Wilmington there was a sign illustrating the decapitated queen.¹⁸

James Monroe is the most illustrative example of favourable opinion towards France. Sent in 1794 as Minister to France, he had first-hand experience of the Revolution, which he interpreted through a strong Democratic-Republican lens. He judged that the executions of revolutionary leaders, including that of Robespierre, were a necessary means of check on the men in power so that tyranny and corruption would be immediately averted. In traditional Democratic-Republican style, Monroe perceived the revolution in France, and even its excesses, as the advancement of liberty and an expansion of the rights of man.¹⁹ Monroe, however, did not rejoice in violence. He hoped that factionalism would be checked and he appreciated what he perceived to be the return of tranquillity, temperance and moderation in government.²⁰ Monroe did not consider the massacres of 2 and 3 September 1792 or

¹⁵ Paul Leicester Ford (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, 12 vols. (New York, London: G.P. Putnam's sons, 1904-'05), vol. 3, p. 527.

¹⁶ *General Advertiser and Aurora*, 26 March, 1793; Charles Downer Hazen, *Contemporary American Opinion of the French Revolution* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press; London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1897), p. 255.

¹⁷ *National Gazette*, 10 October 1792, 20 February 1793, 20 March 1793, 15 June 1793; Hazen, *Contemporary American Opinion of the French Revolution*, pp. 256-7.

¹⁸ La Rochefoucauld, *Travels*, vol. 3, 488-9; Hazen, *Contemporary American Opinion of the French Revolution*, p. 257.

¹⁹ Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, pp. 350-1; Stanislaus Murray Hamilton (ed.), *The writings of James Monroe, including a collection of his public and private papers and correspondence*, 7 vols. (New York, London, G. P. Putnam's sons, 1898-1903), vol. 2, pp.11, 34-54.

²⁰ Hazen, *Contemporary American Opinion of the French Revolution*, pp. 124-7. James Monroe to Edmund Randolph, 10 August 1794, 15 September 1794, 16 October 1794 and 13 January 1795.

the invasion of the Convention on 31 of May 1793 as evidence of popular ferocity and licentiousness. He ascribed their causes to external factors, such as the transfer of people to the capital from outside Paris.²¹ Monroe believed that the revolutionary ideals were deep rooted in the hearts and minds of the people. His optimism prevented him from discerning the despots who were about to govern France under the Directory.²²

Some Virginian Anglicans, however, in the style of New England conservatives used harsh language to describe the events in France. William Short, a graduate of William and Mary College and friend of Jefferson, referred to the Jacobins as ‘monsters’ and he lamented the use of violence by the French to overthrow the lawful government. Jefferson’s reply to Short’s criticism is indicative of the enthusiasm with which Democratic-Republicans received the events in France. Jefferson approved the abolition of hereditary monarchy by the Jacobins, and, although he deplored violence and the sacrifice of innocent people, he justified French actions because he thought they were necessary to subvert French tyranny. He maintained that even the whole of the human race would be worth sacrificing to the name of freedom.²³ Patrick Henry joined William Short and the Federalists in denouncing the excesses of the French Revolution. He strongly expressed his disapproval at the execution of the King.²⁴ In this way, Henry reaffirmed his association with the conservative wing of the Democratic-Republican group.

The connection of France with irreligion required exceptional ingenuity on the part of Democratic-Republicans to counteract. Patrick Henry disagreed with the teachings of deism and thought that they were ‘but another name for vice and depravity’,²⁵ but others from his party were prepared to defend its creed. In December 1792, Pierre Samuel Dupont de Nemours gave a speech in the *National Assembly* attacking the established church and superstition, and declaring himself an

²¹ James Monroe to Edmund Randolph, 6 March 1795 and 17 May 1795; Hazen, *Contemporary American Opinion of the French Revolution*, pp. 129-30.

²² James Monroe to the Secretary of State, 5 November 1795; Official Dispatch, 6 December 1796 and 30 December 1796; Hazen, *Contemporary American Opinion of the French Revolution*, pp. 134-6.

²³ William Short to Thomas Jefferson, July 31, Aug. 16 (?), Aug. 24, Sept. 18, 1792; Thomas Jefferson to William Short, Jan. 3, 1793.

²⁴ Moncure D. Conway, *Omitted chapters of history disclosed in the life and papers of Edmund Randolph* (New York & London, G. P. Putnam’s sons, 1888), p. 153; Hazen, *Contemporary American Opinion of the French Revolution*, pp. 254-5.

²⁵ William Wirt, *Patrick Henry. Life, Correspondence and Speeches*, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner’s sons, 1891), vol. 2, p. 570.

atheist. In its comment of March 1793 on this, the Democratic-Republican *National Gazette* in anti-clerical tone argued that it would have been worse if Dupont declared himself an aristocrat: ‘an aristocrat is a more dangerous animal than either a deist or an atheist. The aristocrat oppresses the moral and physical faculties of men, the deist or atheist oppresses nobody.’ His opinions are his own, and ‘ask not the aid of cruel and rich priests’. The newspaper further accused the clergy of creating religious animosity and suggested that the ringing of church bells should be suppressed in America in the example of France.²⁶ Others tried to prove that the charges of irreligion were unfounded. The *Aurora* argued that the French constitution allowed for freedom of religion,²⁷ while the ‘Independent Chronicle’ held that Robespierre’s faith in the Supreme Being meant that his views were not far from being orthodox. Anti-clerical attacks were further heaped on England and its clergy. The *Independent Chronicle* called them ‘lawless banditti’, who tyrannise over the consciences of men.²⁸ Further, the sermons of the Reverend David Osgood, who had criticised the excesses of the French Revolution and its impact on America, namely the cultivation of a liberal spirit in politics and religion, were vehemently answered by the opposition. Over several weeks the ‘Friends to the Clergy and Enemies to Ecclesiastic Presumption’ tried to refute Osgood’s charges. His style was denounced as ‘inquisitorial’ and he was attacked as a supporter of monarchy.²⁹

The Anglican Church in the Chesapeake of the 1790s seemed, therefore, impotent to influence the political attitudes of the laity. As it is shown below, the spread of atheism and deism in the region, with the simultaneous growth of the Republican Party and its support for French political ideals, were reasons why the Protestant Episcopal Church developed a liberal, republican character at the end of the eighteenth century. Its increasing dependence on lay support for matters of ecclesiastical government and finance meant that it could not afford to oppose the religious and political views of prominent members of the elite.

²⁶ *National Gazette*, 27 and 30 March 1793.

²⁷ *Aurora*, 18 February 1794; for the same ideas see: *Independent Chronicle*, 6 March 1794.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 24 July and 4 August 1794

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 15 January 1795.

The Formation of Political Parties, the Whiskey Rebellion and the Alien and Sedition Acts

Given the initial clerical support in America for the de-christianisation phase of the French Revolution, the conservative reaction during the last five years of the eighteenth century should not be considered a response to the events in France, but rather a result of internal developments. The rise of deism in America, the increased anarchy, and the development and alignment of political parties polarized American views on the French Revolution.³⁰ Federalists frequently used their opposition to the French as a rhetorical tool to attack their political adversaries and to implement reactionary measures in America. They argued that French infringement of commercial agreements, riotous behaviour at home, as exhibited by the Whiskey Rebellion, and the fear of war sanctioned their decisions. On the other hand, Democratic-Republicans accused their enemies of monarchical tendencies, did not think that there was any cause for alarm due to irreligion or anarchy at home and rejoiced in the freedom provided by American political institutions.

The first political alignments were formed in 1793 when the French declared war on Britain. The cause of the French Revolution was extremely popular in America to the effect that the Federalists had to devise carefully a political rhetoric in order to oppose the Republicans, who wholeheartedly supported the French principles of liberty and individual rights. In this way, while Federalists praised the initial conception of the French Revolution, they attacked its excesses and claimed that the French were 'exporting' atheism to other nations. At this point, the Federalists exploited the fear of atheism and deism in the clerical camp and used the clergy, especially its Calvinist wing, as exponents of their cause. As a result, Federalist political discourse in the 1790s persistently portrayed the Republicans as atheists and deists and, ultimately, as responsible for the presumed growth of immorality and anarchy in American society.³¹ Several well-publicised scandals that disturbed American social life of the 1790s, in which the French played a role, helped to establish the connection between the French Revolution, its Democratic-Republican supporters in America, and the increase of licentiousness in that country.

³⁰ Nash, 'The American Clergy and the French Revolution', p. 404.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 405-06.

These scandals involved Talleyrand, Monsieur de Marsillac and Count Alexandre de Tilly. The first two cases, in particular, whereby Frenchmen renounced their religious identity in order to enjoy the pleasures of the secular world, vividly illustrated the dangers against which Congregationalist clerics preached from their pulpits.³²

The Whiskey Rebellion in the summer of 1794 confirmed the conservative fears of imminent lawlessness in American social and political life. Federalists drew a parallel between the insurgents in western Pennsylvania and the violence used by the Jacobin clubs in the French Revolution.³³ There was a prevailing anxiety that mobocracy, corruption and irreligion will replace order and virtue in American politics in the same way that these phenomena were perceived as dominating French politics of the 1790s. In Maryland, John Dennis the supposed author of a pamphlet called *Address to the People of Maryland, on the Origin, Progress and Present State of French Aggression* (1798) argued:

There is a kind of executive power, much to be dreaded, ... I mean the executive power of Mobocracy – And this sort of executive power which has been for years, and is now raging in Europe with a violence, whose hands nothing can stay, ... is the definition of despotism, and wherever it directs its destructive course, it rages *ad internecionem* and spares neither age nor sex, nor Christian nor Jew.³⁴

Such apprehensions encouraged Federalists to re-double their efforts in order to harness the clergy to their cause. In this way, irreligion in France was used by Federalists as a political weapon to attack their enemies at home. A pamphlet war erupted, wherein atheism and deism - terms used interchangeably - were perceived as the cause of anarchy, immorality and factionalism in France. Federalists held that these social and political vices were imported in America through the support lent by the American Republicans to the French cause. In apprehension of contamination by French principles, John Dennis stated sarcastically: ‘it is time the French were

³² Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, pp. 456-8.

³³ [John Dennis], *An Address to the People of Maryland, on the Origin, Progress and Present State of French Aggression, with a Sketch* (Philadelphia: John Fenno, 1798), p. 68.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-3.

invited here as they have been elsewhere, to overturn institutions of such systematic corruption as our government has recently been represented to be.’³⁵

By evoking the fears of irreligion and atheism, Federalists were able to gain the support of the Congregationalist clergy to such an extent that the majority in their camp took a conservative stance and embraced the Federalist cause. In 1794, even the Anglican Reverend John Jones Spooner of Virginia denounced the upheaval caused by the French Revolution and supported the Federalists in their defensive stance against the aggression of the French.³⁶ Liberty, order and religion were praised as the true ideals of the American Revolution. In commemorating its anniversary, Spooner compared the Americans to the Israelites and stated that ‘their public affairs were prospered, according as their observed the rites of their religion, for these had a tendency to preserve within due bounds, their tempers and passions to heighten their morality, to increase their moderation and temperance’.³⁷ These ideals, Federalists argued, were subsequently misappropriated by the French and the Republicans, who encouraged licentiousness, turmoil and sacrilege. By 1795 the fears for irreligion so far controlled the psyche of Federalist clergymen that few, even if they agreed with French ideas, refrained from referring to the excesses of the French Revolution in their efforts to promote piety and virtue at home.³⁸

In the second half of the decade, the rise of the Directory and of Napoleon Bonaparte, together with the fear of a war with France and of French invasion added fuel to the Federalist rhetoric. Dennis, influenced by his Anglican background – he had regularly attended services at Old Christ Church, Philadelphia - viewed politics through a conservative lens. He believed in the paternal nature of governmental institutions, in God’s superintendence on human affairs, in a ‘rational freedom’ and in moderation in government.³⁹ As a result, he deplored at ‘the horrid butcheries of Robespierre’ and thought that ‘wretchedness, anarchical tyranny, prostration of all the rights of property, the elevation of the wicked upon the ruin of the virtuous’

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

³⁶ John Jones Spooner, *A Discourse, delivered in the Court-House of Prince George County, Virginia; on the Anniversary of American Independence, July 4th 1794* (Petersbourg, Va.: William Prentis, 1795), pp. 14, 16.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11

³⁸ Nash, ‘The American Clergy and the French Revolution’, pp. 407-412; Spooner, *Discourse, delivered in the Court-House of Prince George County, Virginia*, pp. 4, 14- 17, 19-20.

³⁹ [Dennis], *Address to the People of Maryland*, pp. 49, 31, 61.

characterised the activities of the Directory. Moreover, he denounced Democratic-Republicans as atheists for opposing Adams' proclamation for fasting and prayer. Dennis agreed with Adams that the French violations of commercial agreements with America, their aggressive spirit and corrupt manners warranted defensive war preparations by United States. His religious principles, however, made him lament the civil war that might have erupted if Virginia rejected a war with France.⁴⁰

The passing of the Alien and Sedition Acts (1798) gave the Democratic-Republicans an opportunity to go on the offensive. John Page, a devout Anglican, expressed the belief that there was no cause for alarm, since in the early years of its existence the American Republic had functioned in an orderly manner. In conformity with his Anglican background, Page expressed due appreciation for 'regularity, subordination and decorum', as well as lawful behaviour. He believed that Americans had so far enjoyed liberty 'without running into licentiousness, confusion and anarchy.' Moreover, Page argued that these legislative acts, which limited the actions of foreigners in the United States and the freedom of speech, were only suitable in monarchical states, such as Great Britain, where hierarchical institutions were established. He claimed:

The *common law of England*, may and ought to guard its HEREDITARY Executive against libellous attacks, calumnies and criminations, and its *established church* against attacks on its doctrine, discipline and worship. It must be wise in *England* to forbid all complaint against an hereditary executive, ... And it must be prudent to endeavour to check freedom of enquiry to endeavour to check freedom of enquiry respecting religious opinions, where the religion of a powerful *hereditary monarch*, and of his *hereditary nobility*, is *established* by their laws.⁴¹

According to a cherished Republican ideal, Page exalted the liberal character of American institutions, including religious freedom. In contrast to old world states, he argued that the spirit of liberty in America did not warrant the employment of reactionary measures, such as those introduced by Federalist policies. Page further accused the Federalists of monarchical tendencies and fear that 'the doctrine of expediency, and of promoting the general welfare, and of preventive justice', might

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 41, 76, 54-56, 67.

⁴¹ John Page, *Address to the Freeholders of Gloucester County, at their Election of a Member of Congress, to Represent their District...* (Richmond, Va.: John Dixon, 1799), pp. 5, 17.

justify ‘*the appointment, not only of kings and of an hereditary nobility, but of a dictator, of an establishment of religion, and of an holy INQUISITION.*’⁴² It is significant that towards the end of the 1790s the association of an established religion with the oppressive character of monarchy still haunted Republican imagery.

The development of political parties in America in the 1790s had accordingly influenced the political rhetoric articulated by the clergy. At the end of the decade, while Federalist clergymen in New England allied with the Federalists in denouncing French irreligion and lawlessness, fearing that these developments were already apparent in American social life, Democratic-Republican clergymen in Virginia barely mentioned France in their sermons. In 1800, in his sermon on the death of George Washington, the Bishop James Madison of Virginia called for the renewal of virtue and religiosity, so that Americans would continue to receive the beneficence of Divine Providence in the same way as it had been bestowed on Washington. Despite the fact that Madison denounced deism, there was no allusion to the upheaval in France in his arguments, whereas disorder in that country featured so often in the rhetoric of Federalists. Democratic-Republicans preferred to ignore those developments in France that marred their ideal picture of it as a defender of liberty.⁴³

While Federalists were horrified by the atrocities committed by the Directory and Napoleon and thought that anarchy was imported into America by French sympathisers, Democratic-Republicans in Virginia did not find any due cause for alarm. They were bothered by the conservatism of their adversaries and accused them of monarchical tendencies. The moderation and temperance of Anglicanism, its survival in a region that was overwhelmingly Republican, and the loss of vigour of this faith can account for the minimal conservative influence that it exercised over the ideas and expressions of its adherents.

Religion in the 1790s

One factor which facilitated the expansion of religious and political liberalism in America in the 1790s was the decline of traditional religion. Deism presented

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁴³ James Madison, *A Discourse on the Death of General Washington, ...* (2nd edn., Richmond, Va.: W. Prichard, 1800), pp. 40-41.

particular attractions for those who admired French principles and believed that religious and political conservatism had remained rooted in America. Moreover, the fact that the traditional religious denominations of the east coast found difficulties in reorganising themselves after the revolutionary war meant that belief in hierarchical systems of government and social organisation waned. Unbelief and ignorance of God seem to have marked the backcountry. Religion was no longer considered a system of beliefs, which involved the revelation of God to his disciples, but merely a mechanism of social control. Religious faith was valued only for its instructional function and man and government were no longer thought to be of divine origins.⁴⁴

The growth of deistical thinking contributed to the cultivation of Federalist fears of anarchy and irreligion. In America, the beginnings of deism were marked with the publication in 1794 of Ethan Allen's *Reason, the Only Oracle of Man*. The deistical flare was shared by John Fitch, Elihu Palmer and Thomas Paine and it is reflected in America in the publications of the works of Baron Paul von Holbach, and Count Constantin de Volney. The development of deism in America in the 1790s was encouraged by the general spirit of the Enlightenment, the adoption of French rationalism during the late 1770s and early 1780s, and the adherence of eminent Americans to deistical thinking.⁴⁵ For example, in Virginia, Thomas Jefferson, George Mason and Edmund Randolph openly adopted 'natural' religion, whereas George Washington, James Madison and John Randolph had embraced deistical thinking without severing their ties with the traditional churches. Deism, being based on rationalism and materialism, encouraged the development of personal investigations of religious doctrines. It is not coincidental that treatises dealing with the mental processes of man became popular in America in the 1790s. John Locke's *Essay Concerning Inquiry on Human Understanding*, David Hartley's *Observations on Man*, Condorcet's *Progress of the Human Spirit* and La Mettrie's *Man a Machine* gained greater prominence than the works of William Paley, Isaac Watts, Joseph Butler and Francis Egerton (the Earl of Bridgewater). The free inquiry promoted by deism matched the French spirit of political liberalism. It was, thus, appealing to Americans who perceived the American and the French Revolutions as a continuous

⁴⁴ Jones, *America and French Culture, 1750-1848*, pp. 378-383; James Madison, *An Address to the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond, Va: T. Nicolson, 1791), p. 4.

⁴⁵ Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, pp. 221, 364-5.

struggle against the unbending authoritarian rule of bishops, the political elite, and hereditary monarchs.⁴⁶ As a result, in a strongly anti-clerical style, Jefferson decided to give the University of Virginia an agnostic character, excluding the teaching of religion from its curriculum.⁴⁷

The warm reception of French ideas in America was facilitated by the alliance between the two countries during the American revolutionary war. In the seventeenth and large part of the eighteenth century, France was associated with Catholicism and with anti-Christ. The American War of Independence rendered Protestant England – rather than France – as the main enemy. As a result, Americans became not only receptive towards deism, but even tolerated Catholicism. In Baltimore of the 1790s, Bishop John Carroll made an impact on the religious and intellectual life of the city, French was taught in the cities of the east coast and the Americans welcomed the edict of Louis XVI tolerating Protestants.⁴⁸ Of course this penchant for things French was another point of attack for the Federalists during the last years of the 1790s.⁴⁹

In the Chesapeake, the flirtation with deism and with French principles by prominent members of their congregations prevented Anglican clergymen from strongly condemning French violence and aggression. The Church of England in this region had never had the same conservative character as it did in the parent country. It had never enjoyed the same close alliance with and support from the state as the parent institution did and its rituals and doctrine were less hierarchical in tone. William Duke observed:

The countenance of government, and the distance from the See of London, from which it [the Church] was supposed to derive ecclesiastical order, reduced it into a security, during the political subjection of this country to Great Britain, that dreamed away all thoughts of discipline ...⁵⁰

In the 1770s and 1780s the Church of England in the colonies was disestablished in the Chesapeake. This together with the severance of the ties

⁴⁶ Nash, 'The American Clergy and the French Revolution', pp. 392, 399-404; Jones, *America and French Culture*, pp. 376-7.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 373-4, 387.

⁴⁹ Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, pp. 452-3.

⁵⁰ William Duke, *Observations on the Present State of Religion in Maryland. By a Clergyman.* (Baltimore, MD.: Samuel & John Adams, 1795), p. 23.

between the mother country and the colonies showed that it no longer enjoyed the protection of a monarchical state and that it was placed on the same footing as other denominations. The loss of support of the monarchy meant that the former Church of England in the colonies lost its potential for a conservative impact on the thought of the laity. It was renamed the Protestant Episcopal Church and its ministers had to argue in favour of their new status. In 1792, the Reverend John Mercer acknowledged the parental bonds with Britain, but justified American Independence on account of the uncompromising stance of the mother country. He believed that the American struggle against Britain had been justified in the name of God-given liberty.⁵¹ Some ministers even came to appreciate the benefits of religious freedom and disestablishment. In 1795, the Reverend John Bracken believed that disestablishment encouraged the practice of religion on the basis of purer motives than when the church enjoyed an alliance with the state. It was this kind of argument that permitted the adaptation of Episcopalians to the new post-revolutionary conditions with regards to the relationship between church and state.⁵² The same ideas were expressed by John Mercer. He lamented the innocent blood spilled during the religious controversies of the old world and expressed his appreciation for the religious freedom and toleration enjoyed in America.⁵³

Another factor which constrained the conservative character of the Protestant Episcopal Church was that the clergy had to acknowledge the laity as an equal partner in decision-making. This was in accord with the republican spirit of the times, which had affected the institutions of government as well as the church. In addition, laymen became the chief source of financial support for the Protestant Episcopal Church.⁵⁴ The fact that the Republican Party was particularly strong in Virginia and in some parts of Maryland made Anglican clergymen in this region adopt some of the main features in the Republican agenda. As shown in the first section, they were reluctant to condemn French Jacobinism. The Republican leader, Thomas Jefferson, was renowned for his admiration for French principles and French

⁵¹ John Mercer, *Oration Delivered on the 4th of July*, pp. 8-14.

⁵² John Bracken, *The Duty of giving Thanks for National Blessings. A Sermon, preached in the Parish Church of Bruton, Williamsburg; on Thursday February 19th, 1795* (Richmond, Va.: Thomas Nicolson, 1795), pp. 16-17.

⁵³ Mercer, *Oration Delivered on the 4th of July, 1792*, pp. 16-17.

⁵⁴ Duke, *Observations on the Present State of Religion in Maryland*, p. 22.

culture. A clash of ideas between lay Republicans and Anglican clergy in the Chesapeake would have eventually diminished the numerical and financial strength of the 'Protestant Episcopal Church'.

The different character that the former colonial Church of England had acquired in a republican environment after the War of Independence is best illustrated by a short comparison between its political rhetoric and that of the established Church in England in the 1790s. The latter mounted a strongly conservative rhetoric against Jacobinism and political radicalism, as soon as the intensely violent phase of the French revolution started. In contrast, in Virginia and in Maryland, the Protestant Episcopal Church went so far as to make allowances for the violence in France. In 1792 Mercer totally repudiated the belief in the divine origin of government. He endorsed the 'divine Rights of Man', while he disapproved of the divine rights of kings, which he considered a cause of evil in the past. A belief in progress that can be achieved through science and the repudiation of the old world superstition made Mercer consider any king as 'no more than man'. At the same time, he admired the French for embodying these ideals, and stepping in what he perceived to be the liberal path of freedom and truth.⁵⁵

In the 1790s, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Chesapeake had not only lost its conservative influence on the thought of the laity, but it was subject to debate about whether it had any great influence at all. This situation was frequently lamented in the sermons of its leaders. In a 1791 'Address to the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia', Bishop James Madison of Virginia deplored the 'want of that *fervent, Christian zeal*' and the 'indifference of the Laity'. The problems that mainly occupied him were the expansion of evangelicalism and the internal decay of the Episcopal Church. Although bishops at all ages generally reminded to ministers that they had to behave according to the moral standards of their profession, the deteriorated situation of the Church, to which Madison referred, seemed real and alarming. He stated that 'the communicants, in too many Parishes, are not as numerous as formerly'. He referred to 'the decadence of religion', 'the declension of the Church', and to the 'inefficacy of the ministerial labours'. He urged his clergy to be '*an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in*

⁵⁵ Mercer, *Oration Delivered on the 4th of July, 1792*, pp. 17-18.

spirit, in faith, in Purity' and to imitate the evangelical style of preaching. He admitted that 'we have lost too many members of the Church by the cold method of reading sermons, and by not preaching in a manner sufficiently *Evangelical*.'⁵⁶

One of the main features of churchgoing that Madison thought was neglected was psalmody. The proper attention to it would have rendered Episcopalian church services akin to the evangelical ones in form. Given the enormous success of evangelical preachers in the 1780s and 1790s, it is not surprising that Madison suggested this remedy in order to improve the quality of church services. Madison also addressed himself to the laity. He emphasised the fact that virtue sustains a republic and that religion is the best means to promote it, because its action is preventive, when compared to civil laws, which operation on people's morals is penal. But Madison did not refer only to the instructional role of religion. He stressed the divine origin of Christian faith and underlined the fact that Apostles and ministers, as their successors, were entitled with the task of transmitting God's will to the believers. In stating this, Madison had again the evangelicals in mind. The latter believed that the interposition of the clergy was not necessary to the understanding of God's will and that each person could reach God by means of his own mental powers and through personal faith. This belief had led to the multiplication of self-appointed evangelical preachers, who never sought Episcopal ordination. In ending his address to the Convention, Madison implored the laity to support financially the Church '*in the proportion, which the law formerly prescribed*'. That was indispensable for the continued existence of the Church at a time when it received no assistance from the state.⁵⁷

In 1795, the Reverend William Duke described a similar picture for the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland. He lamented the indifference and lack of discipline exhibited by its ministers and congregations. He thought that the constant pursuit of pecuniary emoluments by the clergy prevented them from developing the religious zeal suited to their professions. As a result, the Bible was considered merely a tool for moral instruction, whereas the divine authority of the Christian religion was never taught or expounded. As with Madison, Duke argued that Episcopalians

⁵⁶ Madison, *Address to the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, pp. 6, 17, 15, 8, 14.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-34.

should imitate in form of worship the evangelicals, so that they exhibit a proper understanding of the tenets of their faith. He then ascribed the growth of Methodism and Baptism in Maryland to the lethargy that characterised the Protestant Episcopal Church. Duke chose, nevertheless, to close his account of the state of religion in Maryland in an optimistic tone, albeit a reserved one. He noted that the sense of self-preservation led several congregations 'to perform the duties of public worship, as if they expected to derive some benefit from its glorious observance and consequently they become more compact and more able to repel an assault'. But, he also stated that 'experience does not encourage us to expect greater amendment in general'.⁵⁸

It seems that at the end of the decade the condition of the Episcopal Church had not improved much. Madison complained about the apathy and lethargy in the Church. He stressed the need for a good organisation of the vestries, including them being acquainted with the laws of the church and appointing worthy parsons to officiate in the parishes. In addition, Madison pointed to the problem of the ruined state church buildings and urged vestries to arrange for their repair. Moreover, he stressed the need to support the ministers financially on a regular basis, since there had been difficulties in the collection of subscriptions for them. Then, he referred to the problem of unsuitable or profligate ministers. He indicated that a well-educated clergyman would not use methods to excite fanaticism, as the evangelicals did, and that the vestries should find the means to remove unworthy clergymen. In closing his sermon, Madison emphasised the instructional role of religion and the importance of cultivating the piety of the people in order to arrest the spirit of irreligion, immorality and profaneness that was prevalent in his day. At the end of the 1790s, the problems that preoccupied Madison were related to the internal deterioration of the church, but also to the laity's general indifference towards religion and to the expansion of evangelical modes of worshipping. He concentrated his efforts on motivating the laity to take proper heed of ecclesiastical affairs and to provide effective management through the vestry system.⁵⁹ The increased participation of the laity in Episcopal Church administration, but also the spread of deism and evangelicalism were worrying traits of the times reflected in sermons by the leaders of the church.

⁵⁸ Duke, *Observations on the Present State of Religion in Maryland*, pp. 25, 53.

⁵⁹ See his *Address to the Members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*.

In America in the 1790s, Methodism, developing from within the Anglican fold, seemed to have replaced Episcopal Protestantism in the urban centres of the east coast. Along with the other evangelical denominations it competed in the quest for souls against the spread of deism.⁶⁰ Significantly, the spread of deism and Methodism in the Chesapeake affected the religious beliefs of prominent Anglicans, such as Thomas Jefferson and Thomas John Claggett, the first bishop of Maryland, respectively. William Duke was another clergyman in Maryland who was a former Methodist itinerant. He was ordained by Bishop Samuel Seabury. A major factor which induced him to convert to Anglicanism was the shortage of means on which itinerants were forced to subsist.⁶¹ In 1795, in describing the relationship between evangelicals and Episcopalians, his writings reveal a liking for the ways of the latter. He claimed:

This worldly and irreligious disposition [of Episcopal clergymen] does not avow any dislike of Christianity; rather it would seem to wish mightily well to it, and promote its interest in a 'rational way!' Hence a proposition directly tending to the spiritual advantage of the church startles and disturbs them; ... in the character of prudent and rational friends of Christianity, they counteract its vital efforts, and avail themselves of the confidence reported in them to execute a more effectual enmity.⁶²

In Virginia and in Maryland, the Church of England had never been a 'high' church, strongly conservative in nature. After the end of the American War of Independence it became even more liberal in outlook, since its circumstances of financial dependence on the laity compelled the adoption of republican political ideas, as expressed by the local elite. It lost the support of the state, and, challenged by the rise of deism, Methodism, and evangelicalism in the region, it sustained a further decline in its power and influence.⁶³ As was shown in the previous sections, it failed to articulate a conservative political rhetoric that could have influenced the Anglican laity, for example towards a possible opposition to the anarchy in France.

⁶⁰ Jones, *America and French Culture, 1750-1848*, pp. 390-1, 411-414.

⁶¹ Frederick V. Mills, *Bishops by Ballot* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 253; William Duke, *A Methodist's Remonstrance Addressed to a Certain Clergyman* (Carlisle, Pa.: Kline & Reynolt, [1790]), pp. 16, 18, 21.

⁶² Duke, *Observations on the Present State of Religion in Maryland*, p. 24.

⁶³ Joseph J. Bend to John Eager Howard, 4 June 1794, Howard Papers, MS 469, box 7, *Maryland Historical Society*.

Thomas Jefferson and the Presidential Election of 1800

Federalists presented atheism and irreligion as imminent dangers to American society and politics of the 1790s. As noted above, these were propaganda tools, and one easy target was Thomas Jefferson. He had embraced an unpopular cause, namely that of the French Revolution, and his personality bore some traits, which made him a unique individual: his religious beliefs were obscure, philosophy was one of his main interests, he believed in the merits of pure democratic societies and he had a refined, cultured taste according to eighteenth-century American standards.⁶⁴ The attacks against him vividly illustrate the anxieties that occupied Federalists throughout the 1790s, while the personal characteristics of Jefferson exhibit the gradual liberalisation of American society and thought during the revolutionary and post-revolutionary times. His deist inclinations and admiration for France, as well as the following that he commanded, demonstrate the declining influence of traditional institutions and patterns of thought in America at the end of the eighteenth-century.

Since 1793, when Jefferson's clash with Hamilton started, Federalists, with the help of New England theologians, had persistently portrayed him as an atheist and a violent rebel of the worst kind. Jefferson's unconventional religious beliefs and his boundless admiration for the French Revolution and its ideas provided the supporting evidence – though not the cause – for the propaganda mounted against him by his enemies. The slander against Jefferson was reiterated at crucial moments of national importance, such as the presidential election of 1796 and – to a much larger extent – that of 1800. Federalist leaders in New England and the middle colonies, themselves members of the local political and social elite, harnessed to their cause a host of newspapers in such a way that they systematically attacked the Republicans, as their political enemies, and Jefferson in particular, as their leader. The fear was raised that he would become a Napoleon Bonaparte, while his sexual life, his credibility in business enterprises, and his competence as a politician were all questioned.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Charles O. Lerche, Jr., 'Jefferson and the Election of 1800', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 5, no. 4 (1948), 469.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 470-1.

Given that New England had a long-standing tradition of religious controversy and intolerance, Federalist politicians and the clergy there employed Calvinist doctrines, anxieties and fears to vilify Jefferson. The sincere revulsion of common people against atheism and their distrust of any person, whose faith was questionable, were exploited to serve the Federalist cause. By twisting the meaning of Jefferson's writings and actions, he was unquestionably pronounced an atheist. His remarks in the *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787) were misrepresented to mean that he had challenged some of the foundations of Christian doctrine, such as the deluge as an historical fact, the Christian calculations of the age of the earth, the brotherhood of man, the idea of the 'chosen people', the use of teaching the Bible to school children, and the belief in one God. More specifically, such comments as that on the physical differences between white and black people and the famous statement, that 'it does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty gods, or no god. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg', were received as a refutation of the idea of the brotherhood of man and as a mark of irreligion. Not only Jefferson's writings, but also some of his actions were distorted, such as the occasion on which he attended a public reception in Fredericksburg on a Sunday. This was used as a proof for the claim that he had no appreciation of the Sabbath.⁶⁶

In 1800, Calvinist clergymen argued that the election of Jefferson, a French admirer, as President would place America on the same foot with France to the effect that the United States would be treated unfavourably by other nations. Moreover, Federalist propagandists claimed that such a choice for president would have a negative effect on the morals and religion of the people, since it would be conducive to social disorder, irreverence and depravity. They even accused Jefferson of desiring the destruction of Christianity. Jefferson's support for the anti-clerical phase of the French Revolution, his admiration for Thomas Paine's deist work, *The Age of Reason* and his initiation of the separation of church and state in Virginia were used as proof of his un-Christian attitudes. Believing in an hierarchical ecclesiastical and civil polity of divine origin, Calvinist clergymen even went so far as arguing that God would be displeased if an un-Christian president would be elected. Calvinist divines believed that the purpose of government was the exaltation of God's honour

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 473-4.

and reasoned that, in this case, there was no room for a deist or an atheist in any governmental or other public post. The same set of attacks against Jefferson included the presumption that, because of his interest in natural philosophy and abstract learning, he was unfit for office. In the mind of orthodox, Calvinist clergymen, involvement with abstract, theoretical thinking – and what is more, with French philosophers - unmistakably signified the adoption of French revolutionary ideals in their most violent form. In this sense, Calvinist theologians were appalled that someone whom they considered a supporter of French violence and immorality might become President.⁶⁷

Furthermore, the ‘Mazzei letter’, namely a letter written by Jefferson in 1796 to the Italian agent Philip Mazzei, became one of the main tools of the Federalist propaganda. On the basis of this letter, wherein Jefferson criticised Federalists for what he perceived to be their aristocratic, pro-English opinions, Jefferson was portrayed by his enemies as not only anti-English, but also dangerously pro-French in his sentiments. This was received as a vile attack on Washington and as further testimony to Jefferson’s double-dealing, since he had praised Washington in his speech to the Senate as soon as he took up the office of Vice-President in March 1797. From inferences such as these, it was concluded that disaster, civil war and ruin would befall America, were Thomas Jefferson ever to be elected President. Jefferson would remodel the country according to French systems and practices and, hence, civil war was inevitable since pious Christians and patriots would revolt in order to resist such a prospect. The inescapable result would be the summoning of foreign troops, namely Napoleon’s veterans, to assist the Jeffersonians in their bloody struggle, which would end in the slaughter of widows and orphans. And then, in the same way that Napoleon Bonaparte emerged as a military dictator from the factional warmongering during the French Revolution, Jefferson would not be far from doing the same. His hostility, and even his intention to subvert the government, was presumed by his opposition to the constitution, as well as to the suppression of the Whiskey Rebellion, Jay’s Treaty with Britain and the funding system of the public debt. The end product would be the formation of a country, on the French

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 474-477; Constance B. Schulz, ‘Of Bigotry in Politics and Religion’. Jefferson’s Religion, the Federalist Press, and the Syllabus’, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 91 (1982), 74; Jones, *America and French Culture, 1750-1848*, pp. 406-07.

model, wherein the social elite was decimated, and religion, industry and commerce were extinguished.⁶⁸

The attacks on Jefferson's religious views and his personal morality were continued after the election of 1800, while he was in office as President. Various incidents, such as the appointment of Samuel Bishop, who had a deist son, to a public office in Connecticut, his continued friendship with Thomas Paine and the latter's return to the United States, his admiration for the works of William Godwin, who had very liberal ideas on religion and marriage, and his supposed adulterous sexual relationships were used as evidence to support arguments pointing out Jefferson's baneful influence on public morals.⁶⁹

Jefferson's religious beliefs were informed by his optimistic view of human nature. He believed that Christian doctrines are the means by which humans to attain the perfection of their characters. He believed that the purpose of Jesus Christ was to teach humanity morality so that mankind can govern themselves without being subject to prejudices or authoritative establishments. In a similar vein, Jefferson thought that Christianity was the faith which best promoted science, liberty and free enquiry.⁷⁰

Apart from his ideas on the French Revolution and on religion, Jefferson's views on slavery represented another point of controversy during the campaign for the election of 1800. His remark in the *Notes on Virginia* that he hoped for the emancipation of slaves and his stated support for universal suffrage aroused fears that his plan was the enfranchisement of free blacks. He was charged with intending to destroy the kind of property which formed the foundations of the economy in the south and it was claimed that his policies would lead to a slave insurrection in the manner of that in Saint Domingue.⁷¹

At that point, Jefferson seems to have become an easy scapegoat amidst the general anxiety expressed by the landed elite of Virginia in the 1790s that the slave rebellion in the French colony of Saint Domingue would agitate the minds of black slaves in the southern American colonies and encourage them to break their own

⁶⁸ Lerche, 'Jefferson and the Election of 1800', pp. 477-484.

⁶⁹ Schulz, 'Of Bigotry in Politics and Religion', pp. 75-83.

⁷⁰ Jefferson to Bishop James Madison, 31 Jan. 1800; Schulz, 'Of Bigotry in Politics and Religion', pp. 84-5.

⁷¹ Lerche, 'Jefferson and the Election of 1800', 486-7.

shackles. The insurrection in Haiti started in 1791 and evolved by 1804 into the creation of the first free and independent black republic, the Haitian Republic. Of course, this fear was not unfounded since black slaves in Virginia could have learned from and been influenced by the French and the Haitian revolutions through several communication networks. For example, by 1793, white refugees from St. Domingue arrived in Virginia, accompanied by their slaves who, despite, their difference in culture with local black people, could have influenced the latter's perception of their own condition through the accounts of their experiences. With Gabriel's conspiracy in the spring and summer of 1800, white fears seemed to have materialized. Two 'Frenchmen', possibly used in a metaphorical sense, reportedly participated in the plan in a way that 'frenchness' and the idea of liberty associated with it had inspired not only white Democratic-Republicans, but also black slaves.⁷² It becomes understandable then that during the election of 1800, Federalists considered the French influence responsible not only for the actions of their adversaries, but also for those of the slave population and they began to perceive a possibly imminent alliance between the two groups.⁷³

The smear on Jefferson during the campaign for the presidential election of 1800 was calculated to be disturbing to every pious, religious person. Jefferson's admiration for French values, philosophy and culture led to him being branded as a 'revolutionary' and a 'Jacobin'. By association, he was portrayed as an atheist, an enemy to religion, someone who portended only evil for the souls of the American citizens.⁷⁴ The Federalist attack against him was the culmination of conservative Calvinist rhetoric which had been developing since the beginning of the 1790s. Jefferson personified all those evils the growth of which in American society Federalists wanted to check. Despite the widespread propagation of Federalist anxieties, the victory of Democratic-Republicans in the elections of 1800 and 1804 demonstrate the change that had occurred in American political thought. Traditional institutions and patterns of thought no longer seemed attractive, while established

⁷² James Sidbury, 'Saint Domingue in Virginia: Ideology, Local Meanings, and Resistance to Slavery, 1790-1800', *The Journal of Southern History*, 63 (1997), 531-552; Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, p. 306.

⁷³ Douglas R. Egerton, 'Gabriel's Conspiracy and the Election of 1800', *The Journal of Southern History*, 56 (1990), 200.

⁷⁴ Lerche, 'Jefferson and the Election of 1800', pp. 489-90.

ideas, as well as established religions, smacked of old world superstition and intolerance.

Conclusion

The Church of England in the mother country had developed the organizational structure that permitted it to respond successfully to its critics. It was distinguished for its vigour with bishops supporting the government at times of crisis, while the latter performed service to the church through favourable legislation. Moreover, the church at the mother country benefited by diligent clerical supervision of the clergy, who, in turn, were university educated and managed to be proved worthy pastors of their congregations. The Evangelical movement within the church provided another source of vigour, since they stressed the need for moral uprightness and were enemies of clerical indifference in pastoral matters. In addition, the Anglican Church was prominent in the life of the parishioners with the administration of poor relief programs, local schools and missionary work. These features of the alliance between church and state in the mother country became evident at the times of crisis during the American and French Revolutions. During the last decades of the eighteenth century, Britain was also threatened by wars with Holland, Spain and France, but also unrest in Ireland and the struggle of dissenters to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts. During this period, the Church of England clergy tried to emphasize their role as providing stability to the regime, by placing emphasis - in their public pronouncements - on the divine origin of government, the importance of due submission to social hierarchy and government and the supremacy of law and legislature. Moreover, they called for moral restraint and stressed the role that religion played in the reformation of manners. At this juncture, the latitudinarian William Paley was alone in examining the secular origins of political authority and obligation.

In contrast, the Anglican Church in Virginia and Maryland struggled with structural failures and problems pertinent to the American geography and ethnic composition. The absence of a resident bishop, the diverse ethnic origins of the colonials, as well as the existence of large numbers of slaves and Indians, together with the great extent of the parishes, rendered the task of colonial ministers extremely difficult. These features, coupled with the weak power of the commissary, the absence of ecclesiastical courts and the salary disputes that emerged between the

colonial laity and the clergy weakened the standing of the Church of England in the colonies of the Chesapeake Bay.

Despite the diligence of some clergymen, the Anglican Church in the Chesapeake failed to bring large numbers of converts into its fold and to gain, therefore, a firm footing on the American soil. As a result, it took the form of an institution which was more appealing to the elite of seaboard towns along the east American coast, than to those of a low social background or to those residing in the backcountry. Among the former, however, there were numerous examples of piety and devotion which exhibit a true attachment to the ideals of Anglican civil theology. Moreover, the religio-political theory of freedom of human will and responsibility for one's actions, as well as the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance, were espoused by Anglican theologians in the colonies. For them, Anglicanism represented the only set of beliefs that could foster social deference and harmony. Nevertheless, the great power that local elites acquired within the colonial church establishment of Virginia and Maryland, through their activities in the vestries, prevented Anglican clergymen from developing an independent stance which would have allowed them to influence public opinion in the colonies in a staunchly conservative way. The latter felt obliged to identify their interests with those of their lay patrons, since the vestries in Virginia and the proprietor in Maryland had the ultimate authority in the selection and induction of a minister.

The campaign for the establishment of a bishop in the colonies in the 1760s is an example of the weak political influence that the Church of England exerted in the new world. From the outset, met stiff opposition from dissenters. They identified ecclesiastical authority with the British political measures against the colonies to the effect that the political administration in England was reluctant to provide adequate support to the scheme. In the colonies, the lay-dominated church was not willing to accommodate any interference in its affairs, while the ministers, inevitably influenced by local, popular sentiments, could not muster support for a colonial bishop or for the loyalist cause.

In this way, due to the fact that the Church of England was - in many respects - weak in the colonies, Anglican clergymen failed to stem the revolutionary tide that swept the region in mid-eighteenth century. There are elements, however, of

Anglican political thought in the arguments voiced by the statesmen of the new nation in Virginia and in Maryland. Such ideas as the perception of society as an organic whole, the propriety of elite rule, the power of traditional authorities to promote public virtue, the right to depose a monarch - when he acted in an unconstitutional way – the reverence for the law and the importance of moderate and peaceful demeanour were cherished by Anglicans at both sides of the Atlantic.

During the war of independence itself, around forty per cent of the ministers chose to adopt a stance of political neutrality. In an effort to offend neither side, loyalist ministers, in particular, avoided the expression of their political opinions. In the colonies of the Chesapeake Bay, Anglican ministers did not withdraw completely from the public scene, because the majority of them sided with the patriots. As a result, they tried to appreciate the positive aspects of disestablishment and adopted the patriot arguments for taking up arms against Britain, such as the conviction that it was their duty to oppose the monarch when he acted unconstitutionally.

Regarding, lay attitudes towards the war of Independence and the political re-organisation of America after Independence, many patriots, influenced by British culture, had conservative inclinations. In this sense, they decided to declare independence, only after they became convinced that the political authorities in Britain would not respond to their complaints. Given that many patriots had studied or stayed for extended periods of time in Britain and that they considered it as their cultural home, it becomes understandable that they were reluctant to rise up against it. As they claimed, their aim was to reinstitute the principles of the British constitution in its original purity. In this sense, they did not advocate democratic principles in the first state constitutions with the result that property qualifications for office-holding, instead of universal manhood suffrage, were reinstated. Anglican ministers in the colonies of the Chesapeake Bay did not manage to stem the revolutionary tide in their region, due to the weaknesses of their church. Nevertheless, the cultural affinity of patriots with Britain - a part of which was their religion - made them adopt such conservative ideas, as the rule of the learned and virtuous elite, as supported by the doctrines of the Church of England and its highly ceremonial form of worship. Besides, the alliance of church and state in the British political system led a large group of statesmen in the American republic to advocate

state-supported religion. At the same time, long-established colonial practices, such as the heavy involvement of the laity in church affairs, were re-instated when the Anglican Church was re-organised in the aftermath of the American Revolution. In the 1780s, bishoprics were introduced in America, but the powers of the incumbent were clearly defined and restricted.

The influence of Anglican civil theology can also be observed at the debates on the Federal constitution. The Anglican appreciation of elite rule had an impact on Anti-federalist support of state and local authority, within which the elite could exert its power. Moreover, Anti-federalists advocated bicameralism, religious tests and the circulation of ideas within a small group of learned friends. Through these channels, they believed that the ignorance of the lower social strata could be reined. Moreover, the Anglican appreciation of the rule of law influenced the Anti-federalist support of a Bill of Rights. Regarding Federalist thinking, the Anglican support of elite rule had an impact on the Federalists' arguments in favour of a system of 'filtration of talent', through which only the learned and culturally refined would obtain high political offices. The Anglican theory of the 'great chain of being', according to which society consisted of men of unequal abilities, of whom only the elite was best suited to rule - because of its education and refinement - had left its stamp on the thought of leading Anglican Federalists. Besides, the establishmentarian nature of Anglicanism encouraged Federalists to advocate the use of governmental institutions for the cultivation of virtue in society and the suppression of factions. The containment of lawlessness itself was also an ideal cherished by Anglicans, since they were firm supporters of moderate conduct.

The attitudes of the Anglican clergy and laity towards the French Revolution further depict, however, the Americanization of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the states of the Chesapeake Bay and its inability to exert a conservative influence on the political thought of the laity. While Anglican theologians in England fiercely denounced the excesses of the French Revolution as early as 1793 and emphasized the need for social control and submission to the traditional authorities, their counterparts in Virginia and Maryland criticised French violence only after 1796 and in a less vigorous tone. In the same vein, the Anglican laity mildly criticized French aggression or tried to condone it. They appreciated the French struggle against

popery and the institutions of the old regime and, while they attacked anarchy in America in the 1790s, they thought that the French were guided by divine Providence. It becomes evident, then, Anglican public opinion in the Chesapeake bay was strongly influenced by the patriotic discourse advanced by the Democratic-Republican party. The severance of every tie between the Anglican Church in the region and the British monarch, as well as, in an era of disestablishment of the church, the inevitable identification of interests between the Anglican clergy and laity, who provided the financial support of the church, help explain the marked difference in the political rhetoric adopted by Anglicans in America and in England. As a result, even the devout Anglican, John Page, favoured disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Virginia and embraced Democratic-Republican ideas.

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