

Papal Plots and Muslim Mischief: Religious Fear and Democratic Sensibilities in Early America

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Abstract

The consensus among early American historians is that anti-Catholicism served as an important source of pan-Protestant British nationalism after the Glorious Revolution. Different Protestant denominations from around the British empire drew unity from their shared fear and loathing of Catholics. My dissertation presents surprising evidence that anti-Catholic rhetoric was not always about Catholicism itself. I argue that nascent democratic sensibilities were rooted in Reformed theological anxieties about the preservation of liberty of conscience. Liberty of conscience was a contested notion that promoted heartfelt, personal piety as the right way to worship God and that stressed the fact that a certain degree of autonomy was necessary to express this authentic devotion. Religious fears about threats to that autonomy pre-dated the Glorious Revolution. What is more, these fears divided protestant Anglo-Americans as much as they brought them together. Fear regarding the loss of religious autonomy drove contests between a variety of Protestant groups for political, economic, and social power. In the process, this fear guided a concept of ever more generous political and religious autonomy upheld by the language of anti-Catholicism. Scholars situate the connection between Protestantism and democracy in the Early Republic, and they maintain this link was the result of the American Revolution and the Great Awakening. My research proves this link existed long before either. My dissertation also suggests a foundational paradox in American life: religious xenophobia and popular anxieties about the loss of freedom of conscience proved to be effective tools in inculcating democratic sensibilities in America.

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Introduction

The Methodist minister Phillip Embury described obstacles facing Methodists in North America in 1757. He singled out Massachusetts and Pennsylvania as the most difficult places for Methodists to reside in. “New England, as is widely known, strangles dissent,” he explained, as Puritan religious and political leaders forced “numbers of Christians not of their persuasion to leave their colony under great burden ... or to convert themselves to the Associated [Congregationalist] Churches.”¹ Pennsylvania was just as inhospitable. Embury wrote that Pennsylvania’s ruling Quaker sect “controls most of the wealth” of the colony, and disadvantaged non-Quakers in economic dealings as “they occupy most positions of authority within the towns.”² And Quakers seemed intent on “forcing the withdrawal of all other [sects] from public life.” This left other Protestants with little recourse to “protect their interests and privileges” in worshiping God as their conscience dictated.³ The result, according to Embury, was not without irony. “Although it is said there are very few Papists in America ... the spirit of jealousy displayed by some ruling Christians towards their many suffering brethren may suggest, to the impartial observer, that they are behind every rock and tree, ... occupying positions of substance and considerable authority.”⁴ Embury considered Puritans and Quakers to be Papists,

¹ Samuel J. Fanning, “Phillip Embury: Founder of Methodism in New York,” in *Methodist History*, Vol. 3 (January, 1965), 16-19.

² Ibid., 24-25.

³ Ibid., 25.

⁴ Ibid., 25; Portions of Embury’s account are also found in William Warrant Sweet. *Men of Zeal: The Romance of American Methodist Beginnings*. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1935), 53-63; Willam A. Powell, Jr., *Methodist Circuit-Riders in America, 1766-1844*. (Masters Thesis, University of Richmond, 1977), 2-6.

as they threatened individual heartfelt piety, or liberty of conscience. And he was not alone in feeling this way.

There is a consensus among historians who have examined religion in the early modern British Atlantic world that Anglo-Americans united behind a pan-Protestant front. These religious historians insist that Britons on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean united in opposition to the Catholic Church. Protestant Britons shared a view of Catholicism defined as a force of aggressive intolerance and repression that was determined to undermine British freedoms and prosperity. This was rooted in the repression of Protestants by the Catholic church, but also the many controversies and conflicts within Britain that were blamed on Catholics. Protestants fought one another prior to the Glorious Revolution, but in its wake the British Empire was defined as a Protestant bastion holding back the spread of Catholicism. These religious historians further see within eighteenth century British America a fractured religious environment of ever-increasing denominational variety whose one shared sense of self relied more and more on an understanding of Protestantism defined by intense pluralism and diversity. Their British identity drew disparate theological and doctrinal strands into a single communal fabric defined by religious dissent and oriented outward as a countervailing force to Catholic universalism and a world inhabited by

many non-Christians of whom they were increasingly aware.⁵ In short, religious historians believe anti-Catholic rhetoric and sentiment brought different Protestant denominations together around the Atlantic World after the Glorious Revolution.

Religious historians have traditionally argued that anti-Catholicism served as an important source of this pan-Protestant unity that swept early America after the Glorious Revolution. The degree to which Britons around the Atlantic World united behind a Protestant, anti-Catholic banner has been overdrawn. Britain had a tumultuous past of internal conflict and political upheaval that pre-dated the Glorious Revolution, and that owed much to that same Catholic-Protestant dualism. Political conspiracy, civil war, the overthrow of monarchies, and repressive political and ecclesiastical policies were all commonly tied to internal threats deemed

⁵ Carla Gardina Pestana. *A Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Thomas S. Kidd. *The Protestant Interest: New England after Puritanism*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Patricia Bonomi. *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Brendan McConville. *The King's Three Faces: The Rise and Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Owen Stanwood. *The Empire Reformed: English America in the Age of the Glorious Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Melinda Zook. *Radical Whigs and Conspiratorial Politics in Late Stuart England*. (New York: University Park Publishing, 1999), 201; John Pollock. *The Popish Plot: A Study in the History of the Reign of Charles II*. (London: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 17-49; Robert Emmett Curran. *Papist Devils: Catholics in British America, 1574-1783*. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 2-11; For more on the history of anti-Catholic rhetoric, see Colin Haydon. *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England, 1714-1800: A Political and Social Study*. (London: University of Manchester Press, 1993); Haydon, Colin. "Eighteenth-Century English Anti-Catholicism: Contexts, Continuity and Diminution." in John Wolffe, ed., *Protestant-Catholic Conflict from the Reformation to the Twenty-first Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 46-70 and Sheils, William J. "Catholicism in England from the Reformation to the Relief Acts," in Sheridan Gilley and William Sheils, eds. *A History of Religion in Britain: Practice and Belief from Pre-Roman times to the Present*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 234-51. Scholarship on the roots of English anti-catholicism has dramatically altered over the last half century. Early works such as that Mary Augustina or David Mathew describe English anti-Catholicism as primarily theological, owing to English rejection of the primacy of Bishops over civil society (and the selling of indulgences). Subsequent scholarship has all but abandoned this argument, almost exclusively viewing English anti-Catholicism as fundamentally political in nature. The dominant viewpoints within this interpretation center on the ongoing geopolitical fights with Catholic countries as outlined in E.I. Watkin's *Roman Catholicism in England, from Reformation to 1950* and the numerous domestic Catholic intrigues against Protestant monarchs.

“popish” or overly Catholic. What is more, the Glorious Revolution did little or nothing to dismiss fears within British society that still simmered in the minds of aggrieved Protestants in exile in North America. Protestants fought a large number of interdenominational contests throughout the eighteenth century that were couched explicitly in anti-Catholic terms. Protestants continued to debate the meaning of freedom of conscience, and the best ways with which to achieve and safeguard it. On the one side were those who viewed religious freedom as upheld by forces of law and order and reinforced by centralization and guided state intervention in matters of religion. On the other side were those who viewed religious freedom as inherently dependent on non-intervention by external state and institutional forces, decentralized religious authority, and a personalized view of religious freedom that demanded a great deal of individual autonomy secured by weak or non-existent policy controls on religious organization and practice. Each side turned to anti-Catholic rhetoric to articulate threats to their conception of religious freedom and challenge the forces behind those threats. As these contests inevitably reflected competing views of individual and collective autonomy, the role of the state in belief and expression, and the protection of minority viewpoints, they became an early basis for American public discussions of political economy and the parameters of representative government. This recognition suggests that religious fears about internal and external threats to Reformed theological positions on liberty of conscience pre-dated the Glorious Revolution and the use of anti-Catholic rhetoric divided British Protestants as much as they brought them together.⁶

American notions of democracy were rooted in theological anxieties about the preservation of liberty of conscience. Scholars who have studied the history of liberty of

conscience present it as a contested notion that promoted heartfelt, personal piety as the right way to worship God and that stressed the fact that a certain degree of autonomy was necessary to express this authentic devotion.⁷ British America was dominated by Protestant dissenters who emerged from the English Reformation with a relatively radical interpretation of the personal and collective autonomy necessary to achieve what they referred to as “right worship,” a concept that over time would become subsumed within a broad, all-encompassing concept called freedom of conscience. The radical interpretation of freedom of conscience by groups such as the Puritans, Quakers, Baptists, Methodists, and others meant that British Americans predominantly understood the concept within the interpretational framework from which their Calvinist traditions emerged following the English Reformation. Each of these groups accepted religious exile in North America predominantly to acquire the autonomy they felt true religious freedom required. The combination of their historical experience of repression and alienation by the Catholic Church, and later the English Anglican establishment, informed their many contests for power within a religiously diverse North American environment. American Protestants jealously

⁷ Tisa Wenger. *Religious Freedom: The Contested History of an American Ideal*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); For more on the historical significance of liberty of conscience, see Zachary Brooke. *The English Church and the Papacy*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Aiden Nichols. *The Panther and the Hind: A Theological History of Anglicanism*. (London: T & T Clark, 1993); George Tarnard. *The Quest for Catholicity: The Development of High Church Anglicanism*. (New York: Palmgrave, 1964); Francis J. Bremer. *Lay Empowerment and the Development of Puritanism*. (New York: Palmgrave Macmillian, 2015); John Spurr. *English Puritanism: 1603-1689*. (New York: Macmillian, 1999); Michael Mendle. *The Putney Debates of 1647: The Army, The Levelers, and the English State*. (London: Cambridge, 2001). Historians such as Bremer and Mendle connect the English struggles over reformed religion to the tumultuous political environment of early modern Britain, especially the political parties that emerged and fell surrounding the English Civil War. However, religious identity for them is an adjunct of the larger political struggle for dominance between some (although certainly not all) Protestants and the traditional Catholic elite. Neither sees the debates surrounding freedom of conscience or the power of reformed theology in political society as essentially related to political autonomy. Instead, both to some degree interpret these contests as emerging religious groups groping to articulate their nascent doctrine and organization rather than advancing a view of society that questions the religious and political autonomy their groups inherited within English society.

guarded their own religious interests and lived with perpetual and intense fear regarding the intentions of their religious revivals and the future of their ability to continue worshipping freely and without interference by more powerful or numerous religious groups.

Investigating particular fears positions this dissertation within an ongoing dialogue by historians of emotions. Historians such as Barbara Rosenwein and Corey Robin have demonstrated the value of understanding the importance of symbolic expressions within communities defined by shared fears such as threats to freedom of conscience. According to Rosenwein, understanding the nature of shared fears to communicate a negatively constructed identity enhances the significance of theoretical platforms such as “emotional communities.” These were arenas of shared values, but also fears and hopes. These communities, based on a level of common experience and discourse, used emotive language to describe and respond to changing realities. Identifying and focusing on commonalities in the emotive language within widespread religious fears establishes the link between Protestants from a variety of social, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. Additionally, historians of early American religion have tended to treat the discussion of religious issues as either exclusively theological or as implicitly political events cloaked in religious language. Emotional statements or views, however, are meaningful on their own, rather than as surrogates for other political or religious perspectives. My dissertation embraces the applicability of viewing expressions of religious fear as insightful glimpses into a larger Atlantic emotional community instead of implicitly religious or political rhetoric within an isolated cultural audience.⁸

⁸ Barbara H. Rosenwein. *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006); Corey Robin, *Fear: The History of A Political Idea*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Others, too, argue the need to consider emotional expressions on their own merit rather than as surrogates for other political or religious meanings by embracing the possibilities of ulterior motivations or meanings within emotives. If emotions are real experiences expressed through comprehensible language, they are important markers for the social, religious, or political structures that allow them. Contextualizing the emphasis on emotional expression and public displays of religious “passion” in the Atlantic awakenings of the mid-eighteenth century, for instance, helps explain how new light evangelicals and old light rationalists might have coexisted within a shared religious dialogue of religious fear. The power of emotives to understand changes in expressed identity or in collective hopes or fears proves the theoretical promise of fear in defining the parameters of a religious identity that was largely peculiar to the British-American Protestant experience by the mid eighteenth century.⁹

Reformed theological fears that individual heartfelt piety and religious independence was constantly at risk from various real and imagined threats drove different Protestant denominations to demand “democratical and anti-papist” reforms. Baptists in Massachusetts wanted compulsory tithing laws repealed. Moravians, Lutherans, and Presbyterians in Pennsylvania wanted more of a voice in the Quaker dominated legislature. All of these groups opposed any further encroachment by the Church of England into the religious and political power structures they had constructed in North America. In each case, religious fears regarding a threat to religious liberty informed the articulation of nascent democratic sensibilities; sensibilities that led Protestants to demand increasing amounts of freedom of action for their

⁹ Peter N. Stearns. *American Fear: The Causes and Consequences of High Anxiety*. (New York: Rutledge Press, 2006).

adherents, progressively less intervention from the state in their affairs, and enhanced representation for minority sects in the political, economic, and religious policies of communities within which they lived. Americans referenced freedom of conscience and used anti-Catholic rhetoric to articulate a democratic view of society wherein religious and political autonomy was upheld and even enhanced in the face of perpetual dangers from within and without.

Previous scholarship has approached the link between democracy and religion in North America from a variety of analytical approaches. Historians have linked religious pluralism with Revolutionary-era ideals of equality and liberty. They emphasize the incredible egalitarianism of American political thought as a result of the anti-establishmentarian and decentralizing nature of the First and Second Great Awakenings.¹⁰ Conversely, I argue that these revivals did not invent the fundamental link between religious and political autonomy among American Protestants. American Protestants perceived a link, however contested and subject to interpretation, between religious and political liberty that can be traced far earlier to the peculiar nature of the English Reformation. This perception was based in fear and paranoia about potential threats to that autonomy, and indicated a multi-faceted, interwoven view of the relationship between religion and politics in society. This viewpoint concerned itself with past encroachments upon religious

¹⁰ Nathan Hatch. *The Democratization of American Christianity*. (Newport: Yale University Press, 1991); Alan Heimert. *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution*. (New York: Wipe and Stock Publishing, 2006); Nathan Hatch. *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Hugh Heclo. *Christianity and American Democracy*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009). Heclo's own argument essentially parallels Hatch's argument for the 20th century. Heclo, however, sees democracy and Christianity as mutually reinforcing in 19th and 20th century America. Hatch considers post-Awakening Christianity as linearly influential for later republican and democratic values, but sees little or no direct influence of American political sensibilities on American religious life during this period.

and political freedoms, and wearily anticipated new and more dangerous future efforts to once again extinguish free expression — religious and political — from the earth.

Other scholars have deemphasized the importance of the Awakenings on democratic thought, instead embracing the power of the Puritan tradition to articulate a millennialist view of America as ordained by God as a haven for religious and political pluralism. Historians such as Jon Butler and Ruth Bloch argue that Puritan ideals on communalism, volunteerism, and popular sovereignty informed the construction of American democratic ideals far before the effects of the Awakenings were felt around the British Atlantic world.¹¹ My dissertation supports the view that these democratizing notions preceded the Awakenings, but diverges from these interpretations on two important points. First, I argue that these ideas were based in an experience and tradition among Protestants felt far beyond the limits of Puritanism itself, instead representing the intellectual and theological tradition received and embraced by numerous Protestant dissenting sects in the wake of the English Reformation. Second, I argue that this tradition, shared among a variety of sects though it was, was a continually disputed idea. Instead, it was constantly restated and redefined by numerous contests over a variety of forms of power and authority, and increasingly tied to an American religious experience that looked beyond Protestantism itself in constructing the identity and values within which the intellectual and religious understanding of Protestantism was based. As religious scholars such as Tracy Fessenden have illustrated, the American Protestant identity was built from its beginnings by exclusionary tendencies among

¹¹ Jon Butler. *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); Ruth Bloch. *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756-1800*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

and between religious groups.¹² These tendencies were based not in aspirations of public secularism and an embrace of religious pluralism, but rather the jealous safeguarding of a self-interested degree of autonomy among America's religious sects seeking to advance their own interpretation of "right worship" and to retard the encroachments or advances of competing interpretations within the larger public dialogue regarding freedom of conscience.

My dissertation is divided into six chronological chapters. The first chapter roots the origins of Protestant anxieties about threats to liberty of conscience in the English Reformation. English Protestants viewed the Reformation as deliverance from the intolerance and tyranny of the Catholic church. Various dissenting Protestant groups within England emerged from the Reformation with unresolved theologically-driven fears regarding the abuse of power and corruption. Many of these fears were articulated in anti-Catholic language and followed these Protestant groups into their North American exile. Contested notions of the personal and collective autonomy necessary to secure liberty of conscience persisted in the British North American colonies well into the eighteenth century.

The most powerful religious establishments in English North America were the Congregationalist led government in Massachusetts and the Quaker dominated legislature in Pennsylvania. Chapter two explains how these two colonial governments invoked Reformed theological ideas about liberty of conscience in their response to the Glorious Revolution. Scholars such as Owen Stanwood and Carla Pestana have stressed the ways in which the Glorious Revolution was a key turning point that drew together England's various dissenting

¹² Tracy Fessenden. *Culture and Redemption: Religion, The Society, and American Literature*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

sects into new patriotic British identity around their shared Protestantism. Yet, much remained the same during and after the Glorious Revolution. Massachusetts's Congregationalists fell back on traditional anti-Catholic verbiage to oppose the reforms made under James II's Dominion of New England before the Revolution. Quakers also labeled the Dominion's forceful advocacy of the Anglican church and the repression of their prerogative within Pennsylvania as "popery." British Protestant dissenters habitually fell back into infighting and mutual recrimination. Much of these internecine struggles revolved around the best means of preserving liberty of conscience.

Christians were not the only threats to liberty of conscience. Chapter three examines the role of reformed fears regarding liberty of conscience in the portrayal of Muslims within English literature, popular culture, and art. Throughout the early eighteenth century, a variety of British American Protestants used the lens of anti-Catholicism to articulate perceived tyranny within the political, religious, and cultural traditions of Islam. This allowed Protestants to contrast real and imagined examples of abusive power in Muslim societies with their own sense of a democratic and religiously tolerant tradition. It also tied feared threats to freedom of conscience with an ever-widening array of behaviors. In applying anti-Catholic fears and prejudices to Muslims, everything from legal policy to cultural tradition to the behavior of individuals was put forth as satisfactory evidence. The one shared element was the abhorrence of behaviors considered tyrannical or corrupt. The rejection of authoritarian or corrupt practices within Islam, then, served as a vehicle through which to express the same fears of abusive or corrupt power that had dominated dissenting Protestants' worldview since the Reformation.

The portrayal of Islam with traditional anti-Catholic fears also speaks to the power of anti-Catholicism to reinforce identity among North America's Protestant communities. The

expression of anti-Catholic fears to ever-widening groups that Protestant Americans encountered in the Atlantic world served to reinforced their own peculiar, Protestant identity. It also provided a framework to express and define that identity in terms that were sure to evolve with the changing realities of North America. Over time, this would create an emotive vocabulary of Protestantism and democracy increasingly unique to North America. In the repeated articulation of the traits of their perceived opponents, they negatively constructed the traits they aspired to or claimed. In short, anti-Catholic fears allowed them to articulate their own identity as the antithesis of popery and tyranny — wherever the forces of either were to be found.

Religious fears brought American Protestants together to face external threats. Anxieties over liberty of conscience also tore American Protestants apart. Chapters four and five offer case studies that illustrate the key role ideas about liberty of conscience played in schisms among American Protestants. Chapter four examines the Baptist struggle for religious exemption from tithes in the towns of Rehoboth and Swansea, Massachusetts between 1700-1727. The Baptists of Swansea successfully fought for, and later defended, their exemption from compulsory religious taxation by the Congregational establishment. Rehoboth's Baptists ultimately failed. Yet, their dissonant experience reveals common strands. These communities articulated their resistance to mandatory tithes as a matter of consenting, contractual agreement between government and the governed as much as Reformation-based demands for the theological tolerance of dissenters. Their understanding of freedom of conscience saw political and religious autonomy as irrevocably bound together, and Baptists' dissent freely invoked political notions of local rule and volunteerism in defense of their religious rights. Baptists viewed encroachments on those principles as "papist."

Chapter five examines the struggle of non-Quaker immigrants and sectarians against the political and economic control of the ruling Quaker party in Pennsylvania. Royal governor Sir William Keith waged a two-decade struggle to curb the economic and political clout of the Society of Friends, who dominated Pennsylvania's towns at the expense of the largely dissenting countryside. By the eve of the Great Awakening, dissenting Protestants within the colony, both immigrant and native-born, frequently denounced their political and religious marginalization under Quaker rule. Within a decades-long contest for power in Pennsylvania, more and more challengers came to voice accusations of political exclusion and economic corruption by the Quakers as demonstrations of "papist" behavior. Yet, time and again, Quakers mounted a successful defense of their political position by enthusiastically reminding Pennsylvanians of the Friends' famed "Protestant tolerance," which American dissenters' anti-Catholic traditions had long equated with sound, legitimate governance. By 1750, this divisive but potent tactic was an increasingly valuable medium for the contesting of religious and political power in Protestant America.

Chapter six describes the confluence of religious and political ideas about liberty during the "episcopacy controversies" of the 1760s. A major goal of attempts at the imperial reorganization of British North America during this time was the assertion of Anglican primacy within the empire through the establishment of dioceses, or episcopacies, in British America. Traditionally fearful of Anglican dominance, Congregationalists, Quakers, and a variety of other dissenting sects found unity in opposition to Anglican efforts. To the bafflement of London, North American dissenters wailed against this "popish" encroachment on their group's interests, launching an unparalleled print campaign against the Anglican establishment. Some said it would

subject them to the repression their fellow believers suffered back in England. Others suggested it would be only the first step of many toward the complete removal of their freedom of conscience. As opposition leader Jonathan Mayhew argued in 1763, American Protestants knew through personal experience that “tyranny of religion is but the first step toward a more direct civil oppression.” A long list of events from the Protestant Reformation to the struggle over episcopacy had taught American Protestants that “popery and tyranny” were synonymous.

My dissertation sheds new light on the power and durability of Reformed theological ideas. Contested ideas about the nature of liberty of conscience and the best means of preserving this key religious freedom informed attitudes toward a variety of external and internal threats over the course of the early modern era. As Protestants continued to contest the boundaries of freedom of conscience, they gradually developed more and more liberal understandings of the relationship between political and religious freedom. They also gradually perceived new sources of threats to that interconnected freedom. Competing sources of religious and political power became public components of a larger social struggle to define and refine freedom of conscience without “leveling” society toward anarchy, poor governance, and a lack of good public order. In the search for that ideal mixture of freedom and order, American Protestants articulated a compelling view of a democratic society far before they understood how and why it would come to be constructed.

My dissertation also suggests a foundational paradox in American life: religious xenophobia and popular anxieties about the loss of freedom of conscience proved to be effective tools in inculcating democratic sensibilities in America. Much of the scholarship that examines the relationship between religious pluralism and political ideas in early America suggest the

inclusive and decentralizing effects of American Christianity on the subsequent nation's political structures, or vice versa. Yet, reformed fears regarding freedom of conscience took the form of virulent, hate-filled, anti-Catholicism. In the desire to protect the very institutions, traditions, and freedoms that American Protestants held so dear to themselves and their families, they espoused a xenophobic fear of other Christians and non-Christians as threats to their individual and collective ability to decide their own religious and political affairs. It was the fear and resentments of those groups as oppressive or corrupt that led Protestants to define themselves as the opposite. It was the articulation of a desire to oppose and exclude threats to their "right worship" that led them to embrace religious pluralism — not as a desire for universal religious equality, but rather as a means of protecting against infringements upon themselves. Ultimately, the identity American Protestants constructed as tolerant and democratic was formed by the perceived need to oppose forces which were not rather than as a mutual, unified desire to embody what they should be.

Chapter 1: Religious Anxieties and Xenophobia in Seventeenth-Century England

On the eve of the Glorious Revolution, the editor of the *Protestant (Domestick) Intelligence*, Benjamin Harris, was afraid of a Catholic menace. He wrote that “the King has kept a most corrupt host at Court.” This corruption owed in no small part to the “clique of Papists he maintains.” This Catholic “clique” plotted against the liberties of English Protestants by seeking to enforce their authoritarian “Romish governance.” By 1688, simply the presence of Catholics close to the levers of power suggested that “diverse plots are currently employed.” Harris, and English Protestants like him, believed they knew who was responsible for these conspiracies. In Harris’ words, “Papists are the authors of that mischief.”¹³

Fear of papal plots and the association of the Catholic Church with heavy-handed, hierarchical authority was common among Protestants in England during and after the Reformation.¹⁴ Recently, scholars have downplayed the role that theology played in producing “anti-popery” in early modern England. Scholars such as Colin Haydon favor an economic

¹³Benjamin Harris, *The Protestant (Domestick) Intelligence, or News both from the City and Country, Published to Prevent False Reports*. (London, 1685), pp. 1-3, 11-19.

¹⁴Melinda Zook. *Radical Whigs and Conspiratorial Politics in Late Stuart England*. (New York: University Park Publishing, 1999), 201; John Pollock. *The Popish Plot: A Study in the History of the Reign of Charles II*. (London: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 17-49; Robert Emmett Curran. *Papist Devils: Catholics in British America, 1574-1783*. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 2-11.

explanation for this anti-Catholic sentiment.¹⁵ According to this interpretation, the imposition of burdensome compulsory tithes and the selling of indulgences and relics offended most Protestants as idolatrous and corrupt. Other scholars such as John Miller highlight the political and nationalist implications of anti-Catholic fear.¹⁶ This field of scholarship emphasizes the popular effects of ongoing geopolitical struggles with European Catholic states, as well as the influence of Protestantism on English national identity. Theology and doctrine are not simply overlooked in these analyses, they are downplayed as a force in early English history.¹⁷ Yet, Reformed theology played a central role in English anti-Catholicism, especially when it came to defining religious tyranny and freedom of conscience, or religious liberty.

Early English Protestants spilled a lot of ink interpreting precisely what the Bible had to say about freedom of conscience. They generally agreed that religious liberty was a good thing

¹⁵ Colin Haydon. *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England, 1714-1800: A Political and Social Study*. (London: University of Manchester Press, 1993). For more on this reading of English anti-Catholicism see Haydon, Colin. "Eighteenth-Century English Anti-Catholicism: Contexts, Continuity and Diminution." in John Wolffe, ed., *Protestant-Catholic Conflict from the Reformation to the Twenty-first Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 46-70 and Sheils, William J. "Catholicism in England from the Reformation to the Relief Acts," in Sheridan Gilley and William Sheils, eds. *A History of Religion in Britain: Practice and Belief from Pre-Roman times to the Present*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 234-51.

¹⁶ John Miller. *Popery and Politics in England, 1660-1688*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 18-23. For more on this interpretation see *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, 1650-1850*, eds., Tony Claydon and Ian McBride (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*. ed., Arthur F. Marotti (London: MacMillan Press, 1999).

¹⁷S. Bindoff, *Tudor England*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), pp.93-95, 150, 165-67, 183-86; John Miller, *Popery and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp.78-80. Scholarship on the roots of English anti-catholicism has dramatically altered over the last half century. Early works such as that Mary Augustina or David Mathew describe English anti-catholicism as primarily theological, owing to English rejection of the primacy of Bishops over civil society (and the selling of indulgences). Subsequent scholarship has all but abandoned this argument, almost exclusively viewing English anti-Catholicism as fundamentally political in nature. The dominant viewpoints within this interpretation center on the ongoing geopolitical fights with Catholic countries as outlined in E.I. Watkin's *Roman Catholicism in England, from Reformation to 1950* and the numerous domestic Catholic intrigues against Protestant monarchs

and that the Bible was the source of true knowledge on the subject, but they differed sharply in their analysis of the Bible. High church Protestants such as members of the Anglican Church understood freedom of conscience in narrow legal terms as the ability to correctly worship God. Low church dissenters outside of the Anglican Church, such as the Puritans tended toward more expansive interpretations. Some argued freedom of conscience required some degree of broad social and legal toleration, but accepted some forms of active discrimination against dissenting groups.¹⁸ Other low church early English Protestants favored a Biblical interpretation that rejected compulsive worship of any kind, whether doctrinal, organizational, or legal. Freedom of conscience was a contested notion that centered around varied ideas of personal and collective autonomy. Freedom of conscience was a cherished English liberty. It simply meant different things to different people.

Similarly, English Protestants' fear and hatred of Catholicism was widespread but not uniform.¹⁹ Fear and resentment of the Catholic Church among the elite of the Church of England centered on the uneasy recognition of the Anglican Church's competing claim to universalism and the numerous attempts by Catholics to reverse the reforms that separated the Anglican

¹⁸ The Anglican view of freedom of conscience is best reviewed in Zachary Brooke's *The English Church and the Papacy*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Aiden Nichols's *The Panther and the Hind: A Theological History of Anglicanism*. (London: T & T Clark, 1993), and George Tarnard's *The Quest for Catholicity: The Development of High Church Anglicanism*. (New York: Palmgrave, 1964). The Puritan view can be found in Francis J. Bremer's *Lay Empowerment and the Development of Puritanism*. (New York: Palmgrave Macmillian, 2015) and John Spurr's *English Puritanism: 1603-1689*. (New York: Macmillian, 1999). A snapshot of the most prevalent Separatist views on freedom of conscience is offered in Andrew Lang's *John Knox and the Reformation*. (New York: Longman Academic Publishing, 1905). The more radical Separatist view is best explained in Michael Mendle's *The Putney Debates of 1647: The Army, The Levelers, and the English State*. (London: Cambridge, 2001).

¹⁹ David M. Loades. *The Reign of Mary Tudor: Politics, Government and Religion in England, 1553–58* (London: Oxford University Press, 1991), 29-35; McConnel, James (2011). "Remembering the 1605 Gunpowder Plot in Ireland, 1605-1920", in *Journal of British Studies*. (2011) vol. 50, num. 4, 863–891; John D. Brewer and Gareth I. Higgins. *Anti-catholicism in Northern Ireland, 1600-1998: the Mote and the Beam* (London: MacMillan Press, 1998), xi-4.

establishment from the Catholic Church. Low-church fears of Catholicism tended to be more organizational and doctrinal. Groups such as the Puritans and Presbyterians felt that Anglicanism too closely resembled Catholicism itself. Both groups unified around Protestantism and both perceived the Catholic church as a form of religious tyranny that threatened their freedom of conscience. Their commiseration, though, largely ended there.

Coming to terms with the theology behind freedom of conscience deepens our understanding of English anti-Catholic fear and resentment. The Bible was the definitive source of knowledge for many Christians around the Atlantic.²⁰ Biblical concepts of power and corruption, fragmented and contested though they were, defined English fears regarding Catholic power. Political and economic events of the seventeenth century only served to deepen these deep-seated and pre-existing religious convictions.²¹ It was these biblical concepts that were primarily responsible for encouraging the rise and perpetuation of the broad xenophobia categorized as “anti-popery” that was peculiar to the English Protestant experience in the run up to the Glorious Revolution.

The idea of a Catholic Reconquista designed to eliminate the heresy of Protestantism seemed a very real prospect. It struck fear in many pious English Protestants’ minds precisely

²⁰ Mark A. Noll. *In the Beginning Was the Word: The Bible in American Public Life, 1492-1783*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 5-8.

²¹ For sustained arguments that these political and economic events played generated early English fears, see James Mcdermott. *England and the Spanish Armada: The Necessary Quarrel*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 33-49; Alice Hogge. *God’s Secret Agents: Queen Elizabeth’s Forbidden Priests and the Hatching of the Gunpowder Plot*. (New York: Harper Collins, 2005), 9-21; John Pollock. *The Popish Plot: A Study in the History of the Reign of Charles II*. (London: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 13;

because of the perceived growing popular support of Reformed doctrine.²² Calvinist interpretations of Biblical precepts pertaining to freedom of conscience became very popular in England over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²³ The arguments first advanced by Henry VIII and Elizabeth I in advancing Protestantism relied heavily on the notion that English Christianity was defined by its relative liberality and tolerance. As Henry's chief minister Thomas Cromwell argued, the English people had long been accustomed to "the independency ... of thought and manner" in religious matters that their isolating geography and language provided.²⁴ By the end of Henry's reign, it was a relatively commonplace assumption that the Catholic Church's rule in England represented an aberration or perversion of that tradition.²⁵ As early as 1576, Protestants such as John Foxe warned that "Rome will allow none the freedome of their conscience ... to seek out Christ in the manner befitting the urging of their soules."²⁶ Since Catholic claims to universalism precluded the individual or collective right to dissent from church doctrine or policy, Protestants of all sects readily turned to the concept of

²² Patrick Collinson and John Craig. *The Reformation in English Towns, 1500-1640*. (London: Macmillan, 1998) 191-217; Derek Wilson. *A Brief History of the English Reformation: Religion, Politics, and Fear: How England was Transformed by the Tudors*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1998), 234; Christopher Haigh, "The Recent Historiography of the English Reformation," in *The Historical Journal* vol. 25, no. 4 (Dec. 1982), 995-1007.

²³ Two of the most important works on the growing popularity of Reformation theology in Early Modern England are David Armitage's *British Political Thought in History, Literature, and Theory, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) and Richard Lodge's *The History of England- From the Restoration to the Death of William III 1660-1702*. (London: Bellamy Publishing, 1910).

²⁴ Coby, J. Patrick. *Thomas Cromwell: Machiavellian Statecraft and the English Reformation*. (London: Lexington Books, 2009), 114-15.

²⁵ Derek Wilson. *A Brief History of the English Reformation: Religion, Politics, and Fear: How England was Transformed by the Tudors*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1998), 39-42, 45, 116.

²⁶ John Bale, *The Apology of John Bale against a rank Papist, answering both Him and His Doctors, that neither their Vows nor yet their Priesthood are of the Gospel, but of Antichrist*. (London, 1574, 35-42. ; John Foxe. *The Pope Confuted, or the Holy and Apostolique Church confuting the Pope*. London, 1580, 13, 29, 55-61

freedom of conscience to defend and justify the legitimacy of their respective beliefs. According to theologians such as John Calvin, Jesus's ministry itself set the example for Christian freedom of conscience as explained in the Epistle to Diognetus, asking "Did God send Christ, as some suppose, as a tyrant brandishing fear and terror? Not so, but in gentleness and meekness ..., for compulsion is no attribute of God."²⁷ Puritan and Plymouth colony founder William Bradford would later argue the centrality of freedom of conscience to all Protestants by citing Peter and John's response to their oppressors to "judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God, for we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."²⁸ Like the martyrs of the early Christian Church, Protestants were willing to pay any price to secure their right to worship in their own ways.

High Anglicans tended to view freedom of conscience as having been satisfied upon the construction of the English Church, though they typically sought to preserve much of the organization and clerical authority of Catholicism in Anglicanism.²⁹ Thomas Cramner, a leader of the English Reformation and eventual Archbishop of Canterbury, was a leading Anglican who supported limited reform of some Catholic doctrine, liturgy, and rituals within the Anglican church. He interpreted freedom of conscience, however, around "the strengthening and lifting up of the one true" Protestant church. As Cramner argued in advocating his *Book of Common Prayer* in 1548-49, the existence of and support for the Anglican Church alone offered the best

²⁷ Epistle to Diognetus, 7: 3-4.

²⁸ John Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. London, 1536 (1561), 3: 6-10, 17-19; William Bradford. *Of Plymouth Plantation*. London, 1651, 119.

²⁹ Zachary Brooke. *The English Church and the Papacy*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 77-79; Aiden Nichols *The Panther and the Hind: A Theological History of Anglicanism*. (London: T & T Clark, 1993), 27-41; George Tarnard. *The Quest for Catholicity: The Development of High Church Anglicanism*. (New York: Palmgrave, 1964), 19-25.

hope for freedom of conscience. Reform was unnecessary, and even when required had to be offered from above and required obedience below.³⁰ Cramner's interpretation is unsurprising given his primary aim of shoring up the fledgling Anglican establishment. Demonstrating the value of the Anglican Church as the defender of Protestant belief was crucial in that effort.³¹

Other High Anglican leaders offered a more nuanced view. Bishop and Dean Lancelot Andrews was as anxious as Cramner to reinforce the authority of the Anglican church, but recognized the need for significant reform of the church "to ensure the liberty ecclesiastical" that the Catholic Church had denied Protestants.³² Accordingly Andrews agreed with reluctant adherents to the Anglican Church that "diverse manners and rituals of the Church ... might be examined for use toward Godliness." Like Cramner, however, Andrews saw the Anglican Church as the sole legitimate defender of freedom of conscience.

Andrews was particularly keen to defend the episcopal structure of the Anglican Church. According to him, criticism of the episcopal organization of the church was merely an "excuse to disunity and tumult" among English Protestants.³³ Cramner and Andrews agreed that the Anglican Church alone preserved and defended the freedom of conscience for English Protestants, but neither advanced opinions on how to deal with those Protestants dissatisfied with the consensus views of Anglicanism. Within the High Anglican interpretation of freedom of

³⁰ John Angel. *The Agreement of the Holy Fathers, and Doctors of the Church, Upon the Chiefest Attributes of Christian Religion*. 1555, 11-19, 27-31.

³¹ Arthur F. Marotti. *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy: Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern England*. (University of Notre Dame Press: Southbend, 2005), xiii, 6-9, 11.

³² Richard Cosin, *An Apologie for Sundry Proceedings by Jurisdictions Ecclesiastical, of Late by some Challenged, and also Diversly by them Impugned*. 1593, 12-15.

³³ John Ellis. *A Defense of the 39 Articles of the Church of England, Written by J. Ellis in Latin and now Done Into English*. 1685(1700), 1-3, 9, 12, 15.

conscience, perhaps the most restrictive was that promoted by William Laud. The Archbishop of Canterbury during the personal rule of Charles I, Laud is best known for his alleged Arminianism. Laud's introduction of strict guidelines for Protestant worship, doctrine, liturgy, and organization under the direction the autocratic Charles was so infamous as to be colloquially referred to as "Laudianism" by his dissenting opponents.³⁴ Under Laud's code, Protestants who resisted his reforms were suppressed by powerful courts with severe punishments for those who disobeyed.³⁵ Most High Anglicans, however, took a more lenient view toward Protestants outside the Anglican church, provided some sort of penalty was assigned to discourage their behavior. What they agreed upon is that the Anglican Church, like the Catholic Church before it, stood alone as the sole symbol of the English Protestantism and it alone could defend the freedom to "right worship" for English Protestants. They agreed that the necessary personal and collective autonomy to achieve freedom of conscience was provided within the Anglican Church, regardless of the extent to which its organization resembled Catholicism itself.³⁶

The Puritan interpretation of freedom of conscience, however, was based on the assumption that too many Catholic doctrines remained in the Anglican church to fully achieve

³⁴ Jonathan D. Moore. *English Hypothetical Universalism: John Preston and the Softening of Reformed Theology*. (New York: Eerdmans Publishing, 2007), 146.

³⁵ Cust, *Charles I*, 133-147; J.P. Kenyon, *Stuart England*. (Penguin Publishing: London, 1978), 113-115. One of the most controversial of these punishments was the 1637 prosecution and punishment of William Prynne, Henry Burton, and John Bastwick for publishing anti-episcopal pamphlets arguing for greater freedom from the dictates "of the King's peculiar religion." The men were pilloried, whipped, and had their ears cropped. They were subsequently imprisoned indefinitely, and Burton eventually died from wounds he suffered as part of his punishment under Laud's verdict. This was later recounted at the King's trial and used as evidence against him.

³⁶Robin Clifton, "Fear of Popery" in *The Origin of the Civil War* Ed. Conrad Russell (London: Macmillan 1973), pp.158-160.

that autonomy.³⁷ While adherents to the Puritan interpretation of freedom of conscience recognized the Anglican church as the symbol of English Protestant rejection of Catholicism, they also strongly advocated the “purification” or removal of elements of the Catholic church such as the episcopal organizational model, standardized prayer books, and what they considered idolatrous rites and rituals. According to one Puritan theologian, “the freedom to praise God as one understands best for his salvation” required greater collective and individual autonomy than that granted by the Anglican establishment.³⁸

Puritan doctrine about freedom of conscience did not, however, generally promote separation from the Anglican Church. Puritan theologians acknowledged the primacy of Anglicanism as the “combined form of English Protestantism.” John Knox was one such example of this relatively nuanced position. Knox himself advocated the eventual replacement of the episcopal model within the Anglican Church, which he is credited by some with founding.³⁹ Significant segments of English Protestantism saw the hierarchy of the Catholic Church as one of its worst attributes. Seen as distant, authoritarian, and indifferent to local attitudes, the episcopal structure of the Anglican Church was one of the most galling holdovers from Catholicism for many English Protestants. Growing numbers of adherents advocated a presbyterian model instead. This would put more power in the hands of local congregations and significantly decentralize the church leadership directly under the King or Queen as the head of the Church.

³⁷Francis J. Bremer. *Lay Empowerment and the Development of Puritanism*. (New York: Palmgrave Macmillian, 2015), 58-61, 68, 73-79; John Spurr. *English Puritanism: 1603-1689*. (New York: Macmillian, 1999), xi-xii, 3-17.

³⁸ A.C. *A Glimpse of Eternity Very Useful to Waken Sinners and to Comfort Saints*. 1679, 3-5, 31-32.

³⁹ Ridley, Jasper. *John Knox*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 528-530.

Knox publicly supported the position put forward by Patrick Anderson in 1623 that “the episcopate face of [Anglicanism] is a sad duplication of the evils of Papistry.”⁴⁰ Knox’s preoccupation with the episcopal model within the Anglican Church resembles Lancelot Andrew’s interest in the subject. For him, the Episcopal model was the Catholic structure in all but name.⁴¹ Whereas Andrews was quick to defend the organization of the Anglican church as necessary to prevent “chaos in ecclesiastical matters,” Knox and others asserted that just as the strict hierarchy and administration of the Catholic Church had “kept many from the faithful exercise of the gospel of their hearts,” the episcopal model of the Anglican Church would prevent the necessary autonomy to achieve “right worship.”⁴²

From the Puritan interpretation, freedom of conscience required the collective autonomy to “form the rites, prayers, and exercises” which glorified God and the personal autonomy to decide which entity or institution, if any, did so correctly.⁴³ To many in the Puritan school of thought, the episcopal model precluded both. One of the earliest public remonstrances against the unchecked power of the Catholic clergy in England lamented that “although with a presbyter style in governance a Priest might answer” to those who worshiped under him, “a Romish Priest hath but one master.” Protestants like Knox warned that without more accountability between

⁴⁰ Patrick Anderson. *The Ground of the Catholic and Roman Religion in the Word of God with the Antiquity and Continuance Thereof*. 1623, 13; Lawrence Anderson, *The Nonentity of Protestantism*. 1633, 17-23.; William Allen. *A Conference about the next Succession to the Rule of England divided into Parts*. 1555, 13; John Knox, *An Inquiry into the Ministry of the Presbyterians*. 1568, 9.

⁴¹ Thomas Abernathie. *Abjuration of Popery, by T. Abernathie, Sometime Jesuit but now Penitent Sinner*. 1638, 11-14.

⁴² Anon. *The Scotch Presbyterian Weather Cock Perched Upon our English Steeples*. 1647, 5-7, 9.

⁴³ Anon. *The Sovereigns Prerogative, and the Subjects Privilege*. London, 1640. pp. 19-20

Priest and congregation, the opportunities for corruption and the abuse of power were endless.⁴⁴ Knox and others, while never abandoning their support for the Anglican Church as *the* form of English Protestantism, continually argued the need for organizational reform. Only then could the Anglican Church be cleansed of those attributes likely to threaten or prevent freedom of conscience.

Other Puritan theologians focused on those Protestants outside the Anglican Church. Arguments such as those put forth by John Foxe in his *Actes and Monuments* were republished in dozens of editions throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Foxe, like Knox, venerated the Anglican Church as the “chiefest model of our spiritual happiness” and generally recognized its position as the sole representative entity for English Protestants.⁴⁵ But Fox and many other pro-reform Anglicans looked at the suppression of religious dissent, and most especially the penal laws designed to discourage or prevent Protestant worship outside of the Anglican church, as dangerously similar to the intolerance of the Catholic Church.⁴⁶ Foxe argued that as a bulwark against the Catholic suppression of the freedom of conscience, the Anglican church would be betraying its own purpose if it were to “mimick in form” Catholic intolerance. The point was that freedom of conscience required the autonomy “to differ in opinion from the majority of Christians,” while avoiding excessive independence in spiritual matters “tended toward atheism and heresy, ... and eventually a fall into the superstition and seduction of

⁴⁴ William Marschall. *The Image of a Very Christian Bishop, and of a Counterfeit Bishop*. London, 1536, 7-9.

⁴⁵ Anon. *Another Cry of the Innocent and Oppressed for Justice*. 1664, 10-22.

⁴⁶ Arthur F. Marotti. *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy: Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern England*. (University of Notre Dame Press: Southbend, 2005), xiii, 6-9, 11.

Popery.”⁴⁷ Puritan theology about freedom of conscience is best understood in those moderate terms. Puritan views on freedom of conscience were not radical.

Separatist theologians, on the other hand, did develop a radical theology about freedom of conscience. For a variety of doctrinal and organizational reasons, religious dissenters who openly advocated separation from the Church of England saw “right worship” as impossible within the existing Anglican structure. Such Separatists saw freedom of conscience “as despised and cast aside” by the Church of England’s claim to speak for all English Protestants.⁴⁸ Although for different reasons, adherents of the Separatist interpretation generally sought the removal of all religious or legal constraints on their religious lives. For them, freedom of conscience required the universal tolerance of all Protestant groups, the removal of penal codes and taxes, and strict non-interference from either the state or the Anglican church in their affairs.⁴⁹

The founder of the Quakers, George Fox, was a leading figure within this interpretive stance. Fox and the Society of Friends he led recognized freedom of conscience as “the absence of coerced actions of any kind” in religious matters. The Quakers, considered radical by contemporary comparison, advocated pacifism, rejected loyalty and fealty oaths, and refused to pay the mandatory tithes to the Anglican Church. Fox and others cited 2 Corinthians 9:7 in

⁴⁷ Thomas Anderson. *A Sovereign Remedy Against Atheism and Heresy*. 1672, 6-12; Anon. *A Brief History of the Presbytery and Independency Shewing the Reasons put Forth to Separate from the Church of England*. 1691, 8-10, 21, 24-27.

⁴⁸ William Duesbury. *Several Letters Written to the Saints of the Most High*. 1654, 1-3.

⁴⁹ Andrew Lang. *John Knox and the Reformation*. (New York: Longman Academic Publishing, 1905). 25-31; Michael Mendle. *The Putney Debates of 1647: The Army, The Levelers, and the English State*. (London: Cambridge, 2001), 119-131, 133-35; Martin Fitzpatrick. “Heretical Religion and Radical Political Ideas in Late Eighteenth-Century England.” in *The Transformation of Political Culture: England and Germany in the Late Eighteenth Century*. Ed. Eckhart Hellmuth. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 5-11, 29-30.

criticism of compulsory tithe. “Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” The practice itself suggested rampant corruption, especially since the tithe was imposed per diocese by local clergy. The Church, it was said, “collectes great sums of [money] and does what we dare not contemplate” with the proceeds.⁵⁰ By 1654, Fox asked if “Protestancy can be maintained if it comes to too closely resemble the Romish faith?” “Protection,” he argued, “from the threat of Popery cannot be found in like tyranny of the heart.”⁵¹

Indeed, the “threat of Popery” from the Anglican Church itself motivated much of the Separatist interpretation of religious freedom. Gerard Winstantly, a Puritan writer and minister⁵², argued that all English Protestants were under threat of losing their freedom of conscience so long as “so many attributes of Rome ... remain” in the Anglican Church. The Catholic Church, he reasoned and most English Protestants agreed, “will not ever suffer Christian mercy, love, and compassion.” This meant that an Anglican Church would inevitably stand the risk of suppressing its own dissenters “in a manner displeasing to Jesus Christ who hath shewn his light” to all

⁵⁰ William Fulke. *Two Popish Heretics Confuted, and of their Particular Heresies detected*. London, 1580, 11-13.

⁵¹ George Fox. *A Declaration against all Profession and Professors That Have Not the Life of What They Profess; From the Righteous Seed of God; Whom the World, Priests, and People Scornfully Calls Quakers*. London, 1654., 3, 12.

⁵² Puritans are entirely separate from the term “Puritan School” as defined in this study. The term “Puritan school” refers to the general agreement to reform or “purify” the Anglican Church from within by an assortment of religious groups and leaders to ensure freedom of conscience. The Puritans as a religious sect, although rather generically known by their movement’s original desire to purify the Anglican Church of all Catholic traits, were actually largely dissenters *outside* the Anglican Church by the mid-seventeenth century and had given up on reforming English Protestantism from within the Anglican establishment itself.

equally.⁵³ Winstantly was primarily concerned with expanding freedom of conscience to include numerous interpretations of Protestant doctrine and organization. In order to achieve that goal, individual autonomy had to be expanded “to allow the voice of concern and disagreement.”⁵⁴

Other Protestants of the Separatist interpretation held far more liberal and sweeping views of the autonomy necessary for freedom of conscience. Thomas Rainsborough, the leader of the Leveller movement, rejected the power of *any* organization, whether a church or a nation-state, to exert power over religious matters. Criticizing “classes, orders, memberships, ... inheritances, and stations” of any kind, Levelers like Rainsborough made clear that freedom of conscience required the complete autonomy of doctrinal belief and exercise, which was itself only possible with the participation of “men emancipated of force and disdain” by any outside actor.⁵⁵ Barrowist founder and leader Henry Barrow proclaimed that “Protestancy cannot long survive” when formed as a religious establishment of any kind. Since the Catholic Church was “once pure ... but then corrupted” by its attachment to human creations like political or ecclesiastical institutions, attaching Protestantism in any way to political government “blinds us from our right worship, ... as though it were Papistry.”⁵⁶ In Essence, the Separatist school took seriously the “continental promise of Protestantism”, and sought to define freedom of conscience

⁵³ Gerard Winstantly. *Truth Lifting Up His Head Above Scandals, Wherein is Declared what God, Christ, Father, Son, Holy Ghost, Scriptures, Gospel, Prayer, and Ordinances of Good Are*. London., 1650., 1-7, 27-30.

⁵⁴ Anon. *To All That Profess Protestant Christianity*. London, 1655., 7-8; P.E., *A Serious Review of Some Principles of the Quakers, and Diverse other Dissatisfied Souls*. London, 1655., xxi-4.

⁵⁵ Thomas Rainsborough. *An Exact and Necessary Catalogue of Pentioners, Which May Serve for an Answer to the Preface of the History of the Standing Army*. London, 1648 (1656), 16-21.

⁵⁶ Henry Barrow. *The Examination of Henry Barrow, With Answers to the Questions Why He Would Not Take An Oath and Why They Refused to Hear or Have Communion with the Church of England*. London, 1662, 1-15, 22-29.

on the individual level. To some extent, all within this interpretive stance agreed on the need for broad tolerance of dissenting Protestant groups, though most differed on the extent to which, if at all, the state regulated those groups that dissented from the Anglican Church.⁵⁷

Key events over the course of the seventeenth century deepened English Protestant anxieties about the promotion and preservation of liberty of conscience. These events did not cause the anxieties. Instead, they served to turn pre-existing Reformed theological anxieties into a sort of paranoia. The first major event of the seventeenth century that heightened Protestant fears was the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. The failed plot, which seems to have been the work of only a handful of resentful Catholics, centered on an attempt to detonate explosives under Parliament on the day the King officially opened the Parliamentary session in 1605. The plot was discovered and thwarted before it could be executed. Predictably, however, the prevalent opinion was that it was a larger conspiracy reaching to Rome. Some speculated that only a handful of the conspirators had been found. “It is generally understood that those [apprehended] are a small portion of the plot’s designers.” Many suspected the official account which described the plot as limited. “Spain or France have bought the Papists” was the understandable opinion of many.⁵⁸ A small segment of the population suspected the conspiracy to be even larger. “The People make nothing of talking treason in the streets openly; as that they are bought and sold and governed by Papists and that we are betrayed by people around the King and shall be delivered up to the

⁵⁷ Pierre Du Moulin. *The Christian Combat, A Treatise of Afflictions, with a Prayer and Meditation of the Faithful Soul*. London, (1609?), pp. 1-4; Marotti, *Religious Ideology*, pp. 79-91.

⁵⁸ Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* editors, Robert Latham and William Matthews (Berkley: University of California Press 1974) June 14, 1667.(pp-441-449);

French and I know not what.”⁵⁹ Most, however, viewed the plot as the work of domestic Catholics intending to “open the road for Papal rule.”⁶⁰ The fact that the Gunpowder plot had targeted both the King and the Parliament made the overt connection between Catholic power and “and the destruction of our English [government] in the minds of many. Essentially it indicated that the rule of the Pope would reestablish religious tyranny while simultaneously destroying Parliamentary government in England. High Anglicans tended to view the plot as a means of attacking English Protestant’s freedom of conscience through “doing away with the King’s Church.”⁶¹ Protestant dissenters outside of the Anglican Church, though agreeing that the destruction the Anglican Church was a chief goal of “agressive Popish desygns,” felt that the success of the plot would ultimately have resulted in even greater persecution. “They [Anglicans] will be more readily pardoned by a Catholic magistrate ... as their forme of worship is little diverse from the Romish rites.” The real sufferers under a Catholic uprising would be those Protestants who have rejected “Popery in all its guises.”⁶² Aside from differing Protestant perceptions on what the aftermath of such a Catholic uprising or revolution would look like, all found agreement that the plot offered proof-positive that Catholics were intent on “introducing

⁵⁹ Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* editors, Robert Latham and William Matthews (Berkley: University of California Press 1974) June 14, 1667.(pp-441-449); Pepys, *Diary*, March 26, 1668.(pp. 603-607); John Miller, *Popery and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1973), 119-131. Baxter, *Jesuit Juggling*, 95.

⁶⁰ *A Full Account of all Secret Consults, Negotiations, Strategms, and Intrigues of the Romish Party*. London, 1690, 9.

⁶¹ Robert Clipshaw. *The Grand Expedient for Suppressing Popery Examined, or the Project of Exclusion Proved to be Helpful to Reason and Religion*. London, 1665. 13-15.

⁶² B.C. *The Wars of Protestancy, Being a Treatise, Wherein are Layed Open the Wonderful, and Almost Inevitable Distinctions of Protestants Among Themselves*. London, 1637, 33-49.

spiritual tyranny ... again... to these Isles, ...and extinguishing right worship among the elect.”⁶³

In referring to the aims of the plot, even where Protestants interpreted the specific aims differently, most could agree in the fear that the plot’s success would bring “Papist tyranny ... spiritual and temporal.”⁶⁴

The Gunpowder Plot, though executed by domestic Catholics, was largely understood to be funded and organized by foreign Catholic powers France and/or Spain, and thus constituted a threat to English Protestant “right worship” from abroad. The introduction of the Clarendon Code under Charles II reinforced the “Popish” threat to freedom of Conscience as a concurrent menace within England. After the Stuart Restoration that began in 1660, Charles II proceeded to shore up the newly restored Church of England.⁶⁵ He did so primarily through a series of initiatives within the Clarendon code, which were designed to reestablish the disbanded Anglican Church as the official state religion. Designed as a repudiation of the Puritan policies of the Commonwealth period, the code was essentially a reintroduction of the several of the most hated Catholic penal laws. The Corporation Act of 1661 effectively barred Protestant dissenters from public office. The following year, the Act of Uniformity made the *Book of Common Prayer*

⁶³ John Ainsworth. *The Trying Out of the Truth*. London, 1615, 2-5.

⁶⁴Richard Baxter, *Jesuits Juggling: Forty Popish Frauds Detected and Disclosed*. London, 1635, 195, 258.

⁶⁵ There is some debate regarding whether Charles or the newly appointed Parliament was the driving force behind some of the more restrictive rules placed on dissenters from the Church of England. Charles initially indicated sympathy for general religious tolerance, including Catholics. However, he chose not to oppose the Clarendon code as presented by his chief minister Edward Hyde, most of which penalized worship outside the Church of England for both Catholics and low church Protestants alike. The Act of Uniformity alone resulted in the revocation of over two thousand dissenting ministers’ licenses. For further reading see C. N. Trueman’s *The Clarendon Code*.

compulsory in all religious services.⁶⁶ Most low church Protestants⁶⁷ saw this as proof that too many elements of the Catholic instinct toward tyranny remained within the Church of England. Referring to the “King’s Church,” one dissenting minister lamented that it was “Popish in all but name” because of its repressive tendencies and “aversion to toleration.”⁶⁸ The Coventicle Act of 1664 forbade the assembly of more than five Protestant dissenters in any given place at one time and the Five Mile Act of 1665 forbade dissenting ministers from setting foot within five miles of any incorporated towns. Many prominent theologians laid the blame with the “Catholick tastes” of Charles rather than the Church of England itself. According to many, the role of the King as the head of the Church had always closely mirrored the “stature of a Pope.”⁶⁹ Nevertheless, for many dissenting Protestants, just as the Gunpowder plot reinforced the notion of a foreign Catholic effort to undermine English Protestantism, the Clarendon code’s repressive policies convinced many that those elements of Catholicism remaining within the Anglican establishment would inevitably “lure English Priests and Magistrates to the Popish sceptre.” “Protestancy”, and

⁶⁶ Ronald Hutton. *Charles II: King of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1989), pp. 169, 185, 220-229.

⁶⁷ Low Church Protestants were those Protestants who rejected the primacy of clergy and, more specifically, the episcopal organizational model within Protestantism. Low Church Protestants tended to side with the Separatist school of thought in placing emphasis on individual religious autonomy and in rejecting the Anglican Church as the universal symbol of English Protestantism.

⁶⁸ Samuel Pepys. *Diary of Samuel Pepys*. London, 1665. March 16, 1665.

⁶⁹ Samuel Colvil. *The Grand Imposter Discovered, or An Historical Dispute of the Papacy and Popish Religion*. London, 1644., pp. 1-2; Peter Walsh. *The Controversial Letters, or the Grand Controversy Concerning the Pretended Temporal Authority of Popes over the Whole Earth, and the True Sovereign of Kings within Their Own Respective Kingdoms*. London, 1662., pp. 31, 36, 39-41.

thus “right worship,” it was widely believed, “faces mortal enemies within” who posed as serious a threat to freedom of conscience as those enemies without.⁷⁰

Paradoxically, one of the most meaningful episodes that heightened Protestant fears of the Catholic threat to freedom of conscience derived from a plot which ultimately proved fictitious. The so-called Popish Plot controversy of 1678-81 terrified previously unmoved segments of English society.⁷¹ The supposed plot, which was alleged to include Catholic officials of high political and ecclesiastical office conspiring to assassinate Charles II, turned out to be the entirely baseless invention of the convicted fraud Titus Oates. The accusations within the plot, aimed at a variety of actors from the Jesuits to supposed “hidden Papists” within the Anglican establishment to Charles’ Catholic wife Catherine, were at first considered absurd. Over time, however, the suspicious death of Sir Edmund Godfrey, a rabidly anti-Catholic member of Parliament, and Oates’ testimony before the increasingly nervous assembly lent the plot a degree of credibility. It was only after Oates’ testimony grew to implicate members of the royal family and King Charles personally interviewed Oates that enough discrepancies and fabrications were found to discredit the plot. By 1685 and the accession of James II, Oates was imprisoned for fraud and perjury.⁷² Nevertheless, Oates’s testimony inflamed what had by the 1670s become

⁷⁰ William Crowe. *A Collection or Catalogue of our English Writers on the Old and New Testament, either in Whole or in Part, with a Discussion Therein on their Treatises*. London, 1663, 17-21; John Collet. *A Sermon on Conforming and Reforming*. London, 1661, 1-7; Anon. *Another Cry of the Innocent and Oppressed for Justice*. London, 1672, 3-6.

⁷¹ John Kenyon. *The Popish Plot*. (New York: Phoenix Press, 1985), 10, 61

⁷² John Pollock. *The Popish Plot: A Study in the History of the Reign of Charles II*. (London: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 13, 73-75. Oates was released on the ascension of William and Mary to the throne. Though recognized as a “liar and scoundrel,” Oates’ hysterical accusations were seen as borne of genuine concern for the “encroaching spectre of Popery” that the Glorious Revolution had halted. William accordingly pardoned and released Oates who, though permanently discredited among the public, received a state pension until his death in 1705.

prevalent and long-standing Protestant fears of encroaching Catholic menace. Perhaps more importantly, the widespread Protestant belief in a Catholic plot merged with accusations of rampant corruption to suggest both political and religious tyranny. By this point the English Protestant contest over freedom of conscience had been submerged by the presumably greater threat that Catholicism represented.

The perception of a growing Popish threat among wider and wider segments of English society was aided in no small part by the explosion of popular anti-Catholic literature that the Popish Plot episode accelerated. A 1679 issue of the conservative *Domestick Intelligence* observed a popular parade marching at Temple Bar in London singing “the English Man, must make universal Acclamation, Long Live King Charles, and let Popery perish, and Papists and their Plots and Counter-plots forever be confounded as they have hitherto been. To which every honest English Man will readily say Amen.” The procession was followed by six costumed “jesuits ... with bloody consecrated daggers.” The surrounding crowd grew so hostile at the sight of the supposed Papists that the procession, itself a public demonstration against Catholics, was brought to a halt as members of the crowd attacked the costumed performers. One was fatally stabbed as the crowd chanted “Perish Popery”. At the end of the procession was a figure dressed as the Pope, behind which stood a figure costumed as Satan, “His Hollinesses Privy Counselor, frequently Caressing, Huggling, and Whispering him all the way, and often-times instructing him

aloud to destroy His Majesty, to contrive a pretended Presbyterian Plot, and to fire the City again, to which purpose he held an Infernal Sword in his hand.”⁷³

The Popish plot episode did not, however, create the anti-papery rhetoric that had become common place by the middle of the seventeenth century. The most influential book in the development of the English anti-papery literature was John Foxe's *The Acts and Monuments of the Christian Reformation*, commonly known as The Book of Martyrs, which was published more than a century earlier in 1563. The book became a best-seller with sales second only to the Bible. According to Foxe's thesis, there was a continuous struggle between the forces of true Christianity, represented by Protestantism, and the forces of the anti-Christ, represented by the Papacy in Rome. Foxe's book was important because by linking anti-Catholic feelings with powerful feelings of nationalism, it ensured that anti-Catholicism was one of the predominant features of English nationalism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; a fact just as important to England's growing overseas possessions as it was to herself.⁷⁴

Politicians, too, increasingly linked Protestant fears regarding right worship and political events, with some such as Andrew Marvel arguing “There has now for divers years a design been carried on to change the lawful government of England into absolute tyranny and to convert the

⁷³John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn* Ed. William Bray (London: J.M. Dent and Sons 1920), March 1, 1671 (pp 201-212); Tim Harris, *London Crowds in the reign of Charles II.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1987), p. 99. Incidentally, the Intelligence printed this account under the title “A Protestant Tutor” in Boston in 1685 to accompany that city's first celebration of the virulently anti-Catholic “Pope's Day” parade on the anniversary of the failed Gunpowder plot. See (*Domestick*) *Intelligence, or News both from City and Country, Published to Prevent False Reports.* in Massachusetts Historical Society Photostats (Boston, 1918), 8, 9, 10, 14, 16.

⁷⁴Mark Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crises 1678-1681.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University 1994), p. 166; Michael G. Finalyson, *Historians, Puritanism and the English Revolution: the Religious Factor in English Politics before and after the Interregnum.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983) pp. 124-25.

established church into downright Popery.”⁷⁵ In his book, Marvell attacked the policies of the Earl of Danby, Charles' chief minister from 1674-78. He denounced Danby for his arbitrary tendencies in government, arguing, incorrectly, that his political policies were a continuation of the pro-Catholic policies of the early 1670's in a new disguise. Danby's Protestantism was also attacked as being nothing more than revived Laudism, which from Marvell's and many others' point of view was only marginally better than Catholicism. This widely held view was important because it allowed two very different lines of political policy to both be interpreted in terms of popery and arbitrary government, and reflected the linkage between Catholicism and corrupt, tyrannical power already widespread in English society.⁷⁶

Much of the anti-Catholic literature of the 1670's was in the form of manuscript libels that were too controversial to be formally published or attributed. However, these pamphlets reached a wide audience mainly through their circulation in handbills and through personal distribution among friends.⁷⁷ One such manuscript that circulated in 1674 directly attacked the Duke of York and his religion. It asked "whither it be high time to consider settling the succession of the crown so as may secure us from the bloody massacres and inhuman Smithfield butcheries, the certain consequences of a Popish government"; a foreshadowing of the opposition's position during the Glorious Revolution. The popular appeal of these pamphlets was

⁷⁵Andrew Marvell. *An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government*. London, 1678, 1-3.

⁷⁶*Letters addressed from London to Joseph Williamson* Ed. W.D. Christie (London Camden Society 1874) Volume II, November 10, 1673. Joseph Williamson was a secretary of State in the early 1670's. One of his responsibilities was collecting intelligence for the government.; John Miller, "Public Opinion in Charles II's England" in *History* Volume 80 no. 260 (October, 1995), pp.360-62.

⁷⁷ see Colin Haydon. *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth Century England, c 1714-80* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993) and E.R. Norman. *Anti-Catholicism and Literature in Victorian England*. (Cambridge, 1963).

not lost on Bohun, who claimed “You shall sometimes find a seditious libel to pass through so many hands that it is at last scarce legible for dust and sweat” and also by the comment that these pamphlets “swarm in every street and march from friend to friend.” All seemed aware of growing market for anti-Catholic literature, but also the influence that this type of literature had in stoking popular fears of corruption and tyranny as both the harbingers and the result of encroaching Catholicism. Even King Charles was said to have lamented that “a few words from the scribblers seems enough to bring the house down around us.”⁷⁸

The rise of these anti-papery publications, prevalent though they were throughout the seventeenth century, were doubly powerful in the wake of the Popish plot crisis precisely because they excited as much concern in Parliament as they did among the Protestant populace. Numerous scholars accept that the Popish Plot, and more precisely the reactions of Charles II and his Catholic brother and heir James during the episode, immediately precipitated the exclusion crisis; a political crisis created by Parliamentary opposition to the ascension of a Catholic King James to the throne after Charles.⁷⁹ Although the exclusion bill faded away, the enmity between the largely Protestant Parliament and the future King James did not, and this mutual suspicion

⁷⁸ *A Full Account of all Secret Consults*, 175-183; Miller, *Politics*, p.131; Tim Harris, *London Crowds in the reign of Charles II*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1987), p. 99; Miller, *Politics*, p. 133; Cressey, *Bonfires*, pp. 175-77.

⁷⁹ Kenyon, *The Popish Plot*, 2-3; Clement Boulton Kent. *The Early History of the Tories: From the Ascension of Charles the Second to the Death of William the Third*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1908), 231, 258-64.

would ultimately culminate in Parliament inviting the Protestant William and Mary of Orange to overthrow the Stuart regime in what became known as the Glorious Revolution.⁸⁰

The success of the Glorious Revolution in establishing an exclusively and specifically Protestant monarchy was predictably recognized as a singular triumph for English Protestants. Anxious to preserve as much political and religious unity as possible, William immediately repealed penal laws and substantively liberalized policies toward dissenters. Protestants of all sects welcomed the Revolution primarily as “the establishment of an English identity built upon and defined by Protestantism,” but also as a deliverance from “Popery and Slavery.”⁸¹ More specifically, it secured what High Anglican and Separatist Protestants alike viewed as the foremost prize, referred to by an anonymous pamphlet supporting the revolution as “the primitive right of free worship.”⁸²

Yet, the English Protestant conception of freedom of conscience or “right worship” was a highly contested concept. While Protestants from around the English empire enthusiastically expressed their joy at their deliverance from the Popish threat, the unresolved dispute among

⁸⁰ Steven Pincus. *England's Glorious Revolution, 1688-89: A Brief History with Documents*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005), xii-xv, 15-21. The Glorious Revolution actually represents a watershed moment with a dazzlingly complex array of causal factors. Some scholars have focused on enmity between Parliamentarians and the authoritarian tendencies of the Stuarts. Others have highlighted that this enmity broadly conformed to emerging party interests within English Politics. There is some contention as to whether English anti-Catholicism precipitated or only worsened the revolutionary crisis itself. No scholars dispute that it was an integral part of the lead up to the revolution, and very few question that popular anti-Catholic sentiments contributed to the largely bloodless and popular coup d'état. For more on the historiographical disputes therein see Clyve Jones's 1973 work *The Protestant Wind of 1688: Myth and Reality*.

⁸¹ Owen Stanwood. *The Empire Reformed: English America in the Age of the Glorious Revolution*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 8-11; Alexander Shields. *A Short Memorial on the Sufferings, Grievances, Past and Present, of the Presbyterians*. London, 1690, 3-7.

⁸² Anon. *The Primitive Role of Reformation According to the First Liturgy of King Edward Vi, Containing an Extract of the Same, So Far as Popery is Affected*. London, 1688(1689), 1-3.

themselves regarding the requisite personal and collective autonomy needed to establish “right worship” meant that interpretations varied widely on what that deliverance portended.⁸³

Unsurprisingly, the High Anglican interpretation was that the revolution had secured freedom of conscience through Anglican supremacy. English Protestants in North America, however, largely consisted of Protestant groups such as the Puritans and the Quakers who had embraced a much larger and more liberal interpretation of collective and personal religious autonomy. These groups enthusiastically appropriated the anti-Catholic rhetoric and ideology which came to define the British empire of the eighteenth century. Yet, the unresolved Protestant dispute over collective and individual autonomy and the peculiarities of the colonial Protestant experience meant that the Glorious Revolution marked a point of divergence between English and American understandings of what freedom of conscience and tyranny meant.

⁸³ George Hickes. *The Spirit of Popery Speaking out of the Mouths of Phanatical Protestants*. London, 1690, 2, 5-9.

Chapter 2: Xenophobia Beyond Albion's Shores

Residents of Boston awoke to odd noises on the morning of February 15, 1687. Samuel Sewall peered through a window in his prominent home on Main Street and observed a “strange procession” noisily making its way towards the Royal Governor’s residence. Sewall recognized an acquaintance of his, Joseph Maylem, leading the “great disturbance.” Maylem carried “a Cock at his back, with a Bell in his hand.” Members of the crowd followed Maylem and pretended to strike him “with great whips.” The mock-ritual that Maylem and his comrades were conducting was meant to mark the arrival of Shrovetide, a holiday associated with Lent and deeply immersed in Catholic culture. The colorful procession poked fun at the traditional elements of Shrovetide celebrations, which included “beating the cock” - a competition to kill a chicken with a stone from a set distance.⁸⁴ Boston’s Puritan founders had banned the celebration of Shrovetide in the 1630s because they viewed it as one of many unnecessary “Papish pageants.”⁸⁵ Sewall and others took the display as a sign that the colony was increasingly nervous of a “popish encroachment.”⁸⁶

These anxieties sprang from several developments. Edmond Andros, the royal governor of the newly established Dominion of New England, ordered Boston’s Puritans to allow the

⁸⁴ William Hone. *The Year Book, of Daily Recreation & Information: Concerning Remarkable Men, Manners, Times, Seasons, Solemnities, Merry-makings, Antiquities & Novelties, Forming a Complete History of the Year; & a Perpetual Key to the Almanac*. Boston, 1832, 76-77.

⁸⁵ Mary Augustina Ray. *American Opinion of Roman Catholicism in the Eighteenth Century*. (New York: Octagon Books, 1974), 26.

⁸⁶ Samuel Sewall. *The Diary of Samuel Sewall*, I, 1674-1700, MHS, *Collections*, 5th ser., V (Boston, 1878), 167-169, 171.

celebration of Shrovetide in 1687.⁸⁷ This mandate was part of James II's efforts to consolidate royal control over England's colonies in North America. These efforts included absorbing Massachusetts' joint stock colony into a new, larger royal colony, which eliminated Massachusetts' representative government. This weakened Puritans' ability to enforce the Puritan orthodoxy of their church, the Congregational Church, as the legislature had been composed exclusively of Congregationalists.⁸⁸

James II also sought to elevate the status of the Anglican establishment in North America. He wanted to bring wayward Americans back into the Church of England.⁸⁹ To kill multiple birds with one stone, Governor Andros encouraged the proliferation of Shrovetide. The Anglican Church still recognized the holiday and celebrated it annually, albeit with less pomp and enthusiasm than in Catholic observance. For Boston Puritans, or Congregationalists, tolerating the holiday's observation at all represented a threat to the very covenant the city's

⁸⁷ Brendan McConville. *The King's Three Faces: The Rise and Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 30-31.

⁸⁸ For more on Andros and the Dominion see Mary Lou Lustig, *The Imperial Executive in America: Sir Edmund Andros, 1637-1714*. (London: Associated University Press, 2002).

⁸⁹ For more on Anglicization efforts see Arthur Lyon Cross, *The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies*. (New York: Longman, Green and Co. Publishing, 1902) and "Anglicization" in Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

father's had formed with God in 1630 when they crossed the Atlantic to escape religious extravagance and establish a spartan city on a hill.⁹⁰

Colonists beyond the Puritan Commonwealth also felt threatened by this renewed Anglican drive toward ecclesiastical supremacy. Quakers in Pennsylvania feared the plans James II and Governor Andros had for New England might have a ripple effect on other colonies. Andros had introduced loyalty oaths in an attempt to promote and enforce Anglican orthodoxy in the new Dominion. Pennsylvania's Quaker leadership forbade oath swearing, as this violated the tenets of their faith, and they feared Andros' oaths would spread to the south.⁹¹ Oaths of allegiance to the Church of England would have effectively marginalized the same group whose interests the colony had been founded to protect and promote.

There is a consensus among early modern religious historians that the Glorious Revolution of 1688 united British Protestants on both sides of the Atlantic. The struggle generated new forms of anti-Catholic fervor, we are told, that contributed to the replacement of the Catholic Stuart monarch with the Protestants William and Mary and the establishment of

⁹⁰ Ibid., 29; Brendan McConville. *The King's Three Faces: The Rise and Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 29-30. According to Brendan McConville, it seemed that "tyranny wore a strange disguise" as depicted in Sewall's account. McConville interprets the same selection from Sewall's diary to indicate a disruption of the "delicate balance that had allowed the settler societies to develop their own unique characteristics and social orders," but denies that the attitude of American Nonconformists towards "popery", or Catholicism in general, influenced British American reactions to the Glorious Revolution and the new imperial order; The notion of a Puritan "city on a hill" owes to a sermon delivered by John Winthrop in which he calls for Puritans in Massachusetts Bay to construct a society that can be doctrinally separate from other sects and free to worship without influence from outside groups, but also serve as a visible example of virtue and righteousness for other Christians seeking the true gospel elsewhere in the world.

⁹¹ Joseph Casino, "Anti-Popery in Colonial Pennsylvania", in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 105, no. 3 (July 1981), 283-287.

what Carla Pestana deemed “a distinctly and purposefully Protestant Empire.”⁹² The new King, who was Protestant but not Anglican, promised an empire of broad tolerance that favored no one denomination. William I also fervently opposed the Catholic Church. American Protestants, Pestana and others have argued, eagerly appropriated new forms of anti-Catholic rhetoric of the Revolution’s immediate aftermath to explain the event’s larger meaning, and to articulate their patriotic devotion to the new King.⁹³

American reaction to Shrovetide and the Dominion of New England underscores the fact that Protestant dissenters in North America expressed their political and religious opposition to the Stuart government in anti-Catholic language *before* the outbreak of the Glorious Revolution.⁹⁴ The imposition of the Dominion, the promotion of Anglicanism, tolerance for Catholic traditions and holidays, and the proposed erosion of Boston and Philadelphia’s establishments threatened these groups’ political and religious liberty. This convinced dissenting Congregationalists and Quakers, members of the two most powerful religious establishments in

⁹² Carla Gardina Pestana. *Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 11.

⁹³ Ibid., 9; Owen Stanwood, “The Protestant Moment: Antipopery, the Revolution of 1688-89, and the Making of an Anglo-American Empire,” in *The Journal of British Studies*, vol. 46, no. 3 (July 2007), 489-490.

⁹⁴ Colonial resistance to Andros and the Dominion is well documented, although no existing works have considered the role of anti-Catholic language and thought within this resistance. Accordingly, none have looked at the power of that language and its meaning for political resistance. Existing scholarship has instead viewed anti-Catholic rhetoric as symbolic support of the Glorious Revolution itself and, thus, subsequent to the Revolution rather than a general intellectual thrust preceding the events of 1688.

English America, that they were being backed into theological and political corners.⁹⁵ Anti-Catholic rhetoric was a familiar means of both expressing and galvanizing opposition to these perceived encroachments. In this light, the widely held conviction among North American Protestants that Andros and James II were “bound in... conscience to endeavor to Damn the English Nation ... to Popery and Slavery” indicated a literal connection rather than rhetorical flourish.⁹⁶

Additionally, the power of the Glorious Revolution to forge a transatlantic pan-Protestant unity has been overstated. The ascension of the Anglican church under the Dominion of New England, reopened long-standing antagonisms between the English religious establishment and Protestant dissenting groups. The failure of the Glorious Revolution to reverse some aspects of the Anglican expansion in North America convinced New England’s dissenting groups for decades to come that “popery persists among us.”⁹⁷ The Glorious Revolution also opened up new divisions among dissenting Protestants in British America. In its immediate wake, Congregationalists faced the development of factions from within regarding how best to cement their place within the new regime and to reverse the encroachments upon their godly order. Quakers, too, struggled with internal dissent in developments surrounding the Keithian schism.

⁹⁵ For more on the power and influence of the Congregationalist establishment in New England, the best work remains Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939). There is some controversy regarding whether or not the Quaker presence in Pennsylvania constituted an “establishment” in the traditional sense due to Quaker tolerance for dissenting groups. Nevertheless, most scholars on the group during this period describe the Society of Friends as the dominant political and economic actor within Pennsylvania in the colonial period. For more see Sally Schwartz, *A Mixed Multitude: The Struggle for Toleration in Colonial Pennsylvania*. (New York: New York University Press, 1987) and Edwin B. Bronner, *William Penn’s Holy Experiment*. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1962).

⁹⁶ Addington. *An Answer to a Letter from a Gentleman of New Yorke*. (Boston, 1698), 1.

⁹⁷ William Lloyd. *Considerations Touching the True Way to Suppress Popery in this Kingdom*. (Boston, 1726), 24-26.

They were also forced to answer intense criticism from other Protestants as they desperately sought to counter Anglican assertions questioning their loyalty to the new Protestant state. Each of these inter-Protestant contests were direct results of the Glorious Revolution, and each was articulated in the supposedly “unifying” anti-Catholic vitriol that was further legitimized by the Glorious Revolution.

Massachusetts and Pennsylvania provide the best case studies with which to evaluate the meaning of anti-Catholic thought in North America during the era of the Glorious Revolution. With a combined population of over 40,000 in 1688, the cumulative populations of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania represented an estimated quarter of the English North American colonial population.⁹⁸ By 1700, the two colonies constituted nearly a third of the population of England’s North American possessions. In that same year, Boston and Philadelphia, the seat of government for each colony, were the largest and third largest cities on the continent with populations of 9,000 and 7,000 respectively.⁹⁹

Massachusetts and Pennsylvania were also home to the largest and most powerful dissenting religious groups in the English colonies. Boston had long been the seat of Congregationalist power in North America. Harvard college specialized in the training of Congregationalist ministers, and regularly supplied Massachusetts’s need for ministry to the every-growing number of nonconformists who resided in Boston.¹⁰⁰ The city’s reputation as a

⁹⁸ United States Army Office of Census Information. “Population in the Colonial and Continental Periods.” (Washington, D.C.: 1944), 7-13.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 19.

¹⁰⁰ Stout, *The New England Soul*, 4-9, 13-17.

haven for religious dissenters, although somewhat exaggerated given Congregationalist attitudes toward other dissenting groups, drew thousands of religious refugees from England.¹⁰¹

Pennsylvania, too, acquired a reputation for comparatively sweeping religious tolerance. Founder William Penn argued that the colony was designed to allow Quakers to achieve their freedom of conscience, but “not that I would lessen ye Civil Liberties of others, because of their perswasion.”¹⁰² Over the last twenty years of the seventeenth century, thousands of German, Dutch, and Scottish Protestants flooded into the colony seeking to take advantage of the colony’s liberal approach to religious practice. That said, Pennsylvania was dominated politically and economically by the Society of Friends. As with the Congregationalists in Massachusetts, the colony’s tolerance extended only as far as the interests of its dominant dissenting establishment allowed. As Penn admitted, the Society would not tolerate “dissenters, and worse than that in our own Country.”¹⁰³

Congregationalists and Quakers in North America during the seventeenth century universally decried the Catholic Church, but they did so in different ways and for different reasons. Congregationalists tended toward the more obvious anti-Catholic fears based on James’s Catholicism. Cotton and Increase Mather, two of the most prolific and influential of Massachusetts’s leading Congregationalist leaders, argued that any Catholic sovereign would inevitably be tempted to impose “the vanity of popery” on their subjects.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 50-51; Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment*, 37-41.

¹⁰² William Penn. *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience, Once More Briefly Debated and Defended, by the Authority of Reason, Scripture, and Antiquity*. 1670, *Works*, I. 443-467.

¹⁰³ William Penn. *The Papers of William Penn*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975) XIII, 637-638.

¹⁰⁴ Cotton Mather. *Buttress upon the Kingdom of the Devil*. (London: 1695), 198.

The Mathers offered two alternate reasons for the natural inclination of Catholic leaders toward despotism. First, Cotton Mather argued in 1690, Catholic monarchs preferred authoritarian rule and could not stomach domestic dissent in politics or religion.¹⁰⁵ Mather attempted to make the case that the absolutism of the French or Spanish monarchy was forever linked to the tyranny of the Catholic Church. “Where we may witness the one,” Mather argued, “we may anticipate the other, also.”¹⁰⁶ Other Massachusetts dissenters agreed with this conclusion. One writer echoed the sentiment in a suggestively misspelled remark that the King’s “Catholick *despostion*” was a result of his too-closely imitating the style of Europe’s Catholic absolutists.¹⁰⁷ The second explanation, offered by Cotton Mather’s son Increase, took the more direct line that Catholicism was in and of itself anti-democratic. He suggested in 1689 that “long experience hath shewn popery ... is as [poison] to liberty and toleration.”¹⁰⁸ In effect, this argument echoed the long-building sentiment among English Protestants that Catholicism and corrupt or authoritarian political power were synonymous.

Pennsylvania Quakers freely appropriated the link between Catholicism and tyranny, too, but tended toward a slightly more measured response than Congregationalists. A typical argument thanked William for preventing a situation where the Society of Friends would be “reduced to a real Slavery for if in all parts of Such a Government as this, none but Roman

¹⁰⁵ Cotton Mather. *An Advice to the Churches of the Faithful*. (Boston: 1702), 3-5.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁰⁷ Nathaniel Byfield. *An Account of the Late Revolution in New England*. (London: 1689/ Boston: 1692), 79-80.

¹⁰⁸ Increase Mather. *David Serving His Generation*. (Boston: 1689), 37.

Churchmen are to judge us.”¹⁰⁹ William Penn himself instructed the province’s dissenters to “prepare in solemn manner fitting our final great and wonderful deliverance from an arbitrary Prince” to demonstrate their appreciation for William’s efforts. He had, Penn argued, “discovered the pretense and [screens] to the most abominable wickedness.”¹¹⁰ Quakers reasoned that William had done what he had because he was a champion of “a broad and liberal toleration” that dissenters could never have enjoyed under the Stuarts.¹¹¹ Quaker critic and polemicist Francis Bugg attempted to summarize the Quaker stance as “to presume none other considerations for the causes and resulting of the late Revolution in England excepting their interests in the province.”¹¹² Quakers, however, repeatedly referenced William’s status as a “Protestant, but as well nonconformist.” This fact, many Friends anticipated, would persuade William to “more liberal policies as regards toleration” of dissenting groups such as the Quakers. The revolution represented the victory of a sovereign who “[resembles ourselves] in desire for liberty in the practice of [our] faith.”¹¹³ The King’s only repressive instinct, it was anticipated, would be “toward Catholicks,” which was something Quaker leaders were willing to tacitly accept. Although Quakers did not back away from insisting “toleration for all practice of Christianity, whatever the [sect],” Penn was quick to accept “some limitation” was needed to

¹⁰⁹ George Whitehead. *An Anecdote against the venom of the Snake in the Grass, or the Book so Stiled*. (London: 1697), 199.

¹¹⁰ William Penn. *Petition to the King from Pennsylvania*. (Philadelphia: 1696) in *Papers*, VII, 183.

¹¹¹ William Penn. *Petition of the Protestant Subjects living in Pennsylvania to King William*. (Philadelphia: 1696), in *Papers*, XIII, 637-638.

¹¹² Francis Bugg. *News From Pennsylvania*. (London: 1703), 38-39.

¹¹³ Schwartz, *A Mixed Multitude*, 56-57.

protect America's dissenters and the larger empire of which they were a constituent part from "a scourge known to all" in the form of international Catholicism.¹¹⁴

The late-seventeenth-century Dominion of New England resurrected older disputes regarding dissenting autonomy for groups such as the Congregationalists and Quakers. The gradual process began with Edward Randolph, who brought word of the Massachusetts' charter dissolution in May of 1686. Traveling with Randolph was the Reverend Robert Radcliffe, an Anglican minister to complement the new Anglican governor, an entirely Anglican army garrison that accompanied Randolph, and the four hundred or so Anglicans living in and around Boston. The first Anglican minister in Massachusetts, not to mention the first to perform services in the colony, he promptly began holding services at Boston's Town house. The returning specter of Anglicanism predictably caused concern to Massachusetts' dissenters. Even more alarming to their community was the replacement of the general court with a royal governor's council led by Joseph Dudley, a former Puritan who had converted to Anglicanism. The council would be universally manned by Anglicans, several of which were converts from more traditional New England Puritan orthodoxy. Dudley made some attempts to court Boston's dissenting elite, including Increase Mather whom he identified as a "spokesman of the real tribal heads of the native population." Moderates and orthodox Congregationalists believed this gesture at reconciliation might continue on the handover of leadership to Andros.¹¹⁵ Despite these hopes,

¹¹⁴ William Penn. *A Seasonable Caveat Against Popery*. (Philadelphia: 1670), 467-486.

¹¹⁵ David S. Lovejoy. *The Glorious Revolution in America*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 180.

however, the continued presence of several “heretics” from the Puritan way on the governing council ignited claims that “liberty in matters spiritual” was about to be curtailed.¹¹⁶

The prerogative of the new Anglican-led government was multifaceted and directed at some of the most precious privileges enjoyed by the Massachusetts dissenters, again setting off fierce debates regarding religious liberty. The first dispute centered on substantive legal reforms which included property rights. James ordered Andros to rescind all non-royal property rights in New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. Angry landholding dissenters argued that the new policy essentially meant “all their lands were the kings, that themselves did represent the King, and that therefore men that would have any legal title to the lands must take patents of them, on such terms as they should seek to impose.” What free people,” the writer wondered aloud, “could endure this popery?”¹¹⁷

When the fees associated with land title renewal proved insufficient, Andros also sought and received expansive powers to levy excise and importation tariffs to contribute to the Dominion’s administration. Unsurprisingly, the Separatist instinct among Boston’s dissenters compared this with “Romish tithes.”¹¹⁸ Worse still was the announcement that the officials selected by Andros to collect these taxes were his old Anglican friends from New York, including Edward Randolph as customs agent, James Graham as attorney general, John Palmer to the Dominion’s council, and John West as the magistrate of the court of assizes. All were Stuart

¹¹⁶ Byfield, *An Account*, 19.

¹¹⁷ Beverly Bond, Jr., *The Quit-Rent System in the American Colonies*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919), 14. The assault on private property led more than one writer to draw comparisons between the new policy of Andros and that of the Catholic Church before the dissolution of the monasteries in England during the sixteenth century.

¹¹⁸ W.N. Whitmore, ed. *The Andros Tracts*, vol. 1, (Boston: 1869), 120.

loyalists and Anglicans. Congregationalists sarcastically commented that “of all our Oppressors we were chiefly squeezed by a Crew of abject Persons fetched from New York” who essentially extorted nonconformists with fees and bribes “jesuitically imposed.”¹¹⁹ This was essentially a revisitation of one of the founding Puritan complaints regarding conformist power.

These fears were compounded by the growing exclusion of Congregationalists from Massachusetts governmental institutions. The royal governor’s council had summarily replaced all representative assemblies and even town councils as the supreme legislative body within the Dominion as of 1686. What few dissenters were allowed to remain on the council increasingly saw themselves isolated by Andros and his Anglican allies in council meetings. One member complained that the governor generally had “three or four of his creatures to say yes to everything he proposed after which no opposition was allowed.”¹²⁰ Within weeks, contentious Congregationalist members were “seldom admitted to council meetings and seldom consulted at the debates.”¹²¹ Another councilor warned that “unrighteous things” were being proposed by the Anglicans who “did what they would.”¹²² Within six months of his tenure in Boston, angry Boston Congregationalist leaders railed against the Dominion’s “preferments principally upon such Men as were strangers to and haters of the [Congregationalist] People.”¹²³ As the Dominion’s borders expanded to include New York, New Jersey, Connecticut as well as New England, it progressively swept away dissenters from the institutions of government within these

¹¹⁹ Lustig, *Imperial Executive*, 144.

¹²⁰ W.N. Whitmore, ed. *The Andros Tracts*, vol. 1, (Boston: 1869), 138.

¹²¹ Declaration (18 April 1689), *Andros Tracts*, 1: 13.

¹²² Sewall, *Diary*, (14 July 1688), 1.

¹²³ Declaration (18 April 1689), *Andros Tracts*, 1: 15.

colonies. For frightened religious dissenters, this inevitably caused renewed debate over whether the Dominion was recreating “popish absolutism.”¹²⁴ Ultimately it was the erosion of nonconformist political power and institutions that spawned concerns of religious repression. And in this context, fears based in contested notions of religious and political autonomy were not misplaced. Anglicans such as Edward Randolph freely admitted that the previous rights and liberties of the Dominion’s nonconformist subjects were irrelevant and that Anglican Andros’s power was essentially “as arbitrary as a great Turk.”¹²⁵ It seemed clear that the intent and authority of the Dominion was essentially repressive and arbitrary.

This erosion of Congregationalists’ religious and political power within the Dominion was all the more troubling because by 1687 it was becoming clear that the Anglican-led council intended to reverse what it saw as “the neglect of the true Protestant church and the King’s ecclesiastical privileges” by reasserting the primacy of the Anglican establishment within the Dominion.¹²⁶ Suddenly, whatever tentative rapprochement that had existed between nonconformists in New England and the state’s establishment church was dismantled. This, in some respects, was one of the principal fears of all Protestant nonconformists in English America. Anglican leaders, either unaware or indifferent to the fear this would excite among nonconformists, nevertheless proceeded with a multi-pronged approach toward that end. The council requested Congregationalist leaders make one of the city’s three Congregational churches available for Anglican services. The request was met by stunned silence from the

¹²⁴ McConville, *The King’s Three Faces*, 33.

¹²⁵ Randolph to Thomas Povey (21 June 1688), Randolph, *Papers*, vol. 4, pp. 227. “Great Turk” has significant anti-Catholic connotations which will be discussed in the following chapter.

¹²⁶ Andros to Thomas Blathwayt (28 Nov. 1687), *Andros Tracts*, 1: xxv.

gathered leaders. After meeting the following day, Congregationalist leaders including Increase Mather and Samuel Willard informed the council that they “could not with a good conscience consent that our Meeting House should be made use of for the Common-Prayer Worship...that which too greatly resembles the Romish practice.”¹²⁷ Boston’s Anglican leaders did not insist and, for the moment, Boston’s establishment seemed soothed by his conciliatory stance on the issue. This was to be short lived, as the council announced some weeks later that “publick monies” were to be spent on the construction of an Anglican meeting house, King’s Chapel, close to Boston’s city center.¹²⁸ Any policy forcing public financing toward conformist worship in a nonconformist meeting house convinced Congregationalists they were “suffering popery in our midst.”¹²⁹

Congregationalist leaders recognized levying public tax money for an Anglican church as a step toward the compulsory tithe of the Anglican Church which had so angered earlier nonconformists in England. Despite the obvious hypocrisy of theological opposition to tithes as a violation of freedom of conscience within a colony whose Congregationalist establishment had imposed the same policy on Quakers, Baptists, and Anglicans, Congregationalists nevertheless complained “long and loudly” about this encroachment on their “sacred rites and liberties in matters civil and ecclesiastical.”¹³⁰ Randolph himself lamented that the dissenters complained with some justification that they were “to be freely extorted in the maintenance of our

¹²⁷ Sewall, *Diary*, (21 December 1686), 47.

¹²⁸ Lustig, *Imperial Executive*, 141-142.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹³⁰ Edward Randolph to Thomas Blathwayt. (21 May 1687), Randolph, *Papers*, vol. 6, 224.

government ... and compelled to tithe against the maintenance of our own [churches].”¹³¹ By late 1687, rumors circulated that the council was to introduce a new policy recognizing only marriages conducted in the Church of England.¹³² Bitter recriminations among nonconformists regarding who was to blame for the sudden advance of Anglicanism followed. A widely-held view among some was that the heavy-handed nature of Puritan rule in New England had “forced the hand” of the King and Andros in reasserting Anglicanism in order to curb the excesses of North America’s “fanatical worshippers.”¹³³ At least one Quaker writer speculated that New England’s Congregationalist establishment was dragging other nonconformists into a fight with the state’s church that it not only could not win, but that was likely to result in a wider crackdown on all Protestant nonconformists’ privileges in North America. “What defense is left,” the writer wondered aloud, “when the excesses of some Christians, be they nonconformist or Episcopal, settled in this country or in another place, cast doubts upon the Friends?”¹³⁴

The introduction of loyalty oaths under the Dominion, however, did much to unite American dissenters against Anglican efforts. Although ostensibly part of official attempts to standardize imperial legal codes and structures, oaths and oath taking was a particularly problematic issue for dissenting New Englanders. In England itself, oaths sworn on the Bible were an accepted form of binding members of civil society. To dissenters such as Congregationalists, however, oaths represented a betrayal of “godly Calvinist order” and

¹³¹ Edward Randolph to John Povey. (24 January 1687), Randolph, *Letters*, vol. 4, 198.

¹³² Lustig, *The Imperial Executive in America*, 166-167.

¹³³ Edward Randolph to Thomas Blathwayt. (21 May 1687), Randolph, *Papers*, vol. 6, 224-29.

¹³⁴ Anon. *A Member of the Society of Friends, or the People Often Referred to as Quakers, with an Answer to many unhappy Souls who find no Fault with themselves but with others*. (Boston, 1688), 11, 18-19, 21.

freedom of conscience as the Separatist school of thought understood the concept.¹³⁵ As William Penn argued, “whatsoever is sworn by, is not a meer medium, but an object of worship.”¹³⁶ This amounted to idolatry and thus popery. The fact that “many good and very learned men, have doubted the lawfulness of Kissing or touching the Book in solemn Oath cannot be deny’d” to have reinforced the legitimacy of this concern for dissenters like Willard. Most Congregationalists, and especially more conservative believers within the sect, believed that accepting oaths and civil oath-taking betrayed the covenant between New England and God.¹³⁷ Although nominally in the interest of all religious groups, as dissenters who made the oath could freely worship, Congregationalists recognized it (accurately) for what it was: a blatant attempt by the Anglican establishment to disadvantage Congregationalists before the law in Dominion.¹³⁸

Quakers, too, fiercely resisted the introduction oaths. Here again, the dilemma was essentially a refusal to either offer or take oaths on religious principal. Quakers were firm adherents to the New Testament prohibition on oaths, believing that the practice originated in man’s original fall from grace. “We dare not swear because we dare not Lye.” For Quakers, it was presumptuous even to suggest God might stand witness to the daily affairs of men.”¹³⁹ Going back as far as William Penn’s original instructions on the formation of the colony, “all evidence or engagements be without Oaths, thus I.A.B. doe Promise in the sight of God and them

¹³⁵ David S. Lovejoy. *The Glorious Revolution in America*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 89.

¹³⁶ William Penn to Robert Harley. (ca. April 1701), Penn, *Papers*, vol. 9, 166-167.

¹³⁷ Schwartz, *A Mixed Multitude*, 44-45.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 49; McConnville, *Kings Three Faces*, 34-36.

¹³⁹ William Penn. *A Treatise on Oaths, Containing Several Weighty Reasons Why the People called Quakers Refuse to Swear...* (London: 1675), 18-20.

that hear me to speak the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the whole Truth A B.”¹⁴⁰

Quakers in Pennsylvania were largely able to avoid the implementation of loyalty and civil oaths long after their implementation in the Dominion and those southern colonies with nominal Anglican establishments. Now that these rules were codified, however, it was simply a matter of time before any legal recourse of resistance evaporated where the rules applied, and most understood the reach of the Dominion was “something approaching our own towns” in time.¹⁴¹ The doctrinal rejection of oaths, then, effectively disenfranchised those Quakers within the Dominion. Failure to adhere to the loyalty oaths would disqualify the candidate from any public office, and could theoretically even lead to the loss of a minister’s legal license. Quaker leaders in Pennsylvania reasonably suggested this would effectively mean open repression of all Quakers by the Anglican church which “holds itself in the Romish manner.”¹⁴² While Congregationalists feared the loss of their domination, Quakers feared the complete loss of freedom to worship openly.

Protestant dissenters used anti-Catholic vitriol to articulate their opposition to the repressive and authoritarian tendencies within the Dominion of New England prior to the Revolution. Under the Dominion, the long-feared Anglican church reasserted its primacy within the empire, and groups such as the Congregationalists and Quakers arguably stood to lose the most. Popular dissenting reactions to Andros and the Dominion reveal time and again that encroachments on the political and religious autonomy of the Congregationalists and Quakers

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 23-24.

¹⁴¹ William Penn. *A Defense Against A Paper Called Gospel Truths*. (London: 1688), 9.

¹⁴² Penn, *A Treatise on Oaths*, 22.

were conceptualized of and labeled as “popery” inasmuch as they were seen to be abusive to these groups.

The antagonisms between the Anglican establishment and American dissenters that the rise of the Dominion of New England precipitated were not resolved by the results of the Glorious Revolution. Far from the unifying effect some scholarship has emphasized, anti-Catholic rhetoric among American dissenters served as a vehicle for damning critiques of steps toward the suppression of religious dissent by the Anglican Church after the Revolution. It also served as a vehicle for criticisms and complaints brought to the fore between dissenting groups themselves by the Revolution.

Anglican power was not comprehensively reigned in after the Glorious Revolution, as American dissenters had hoped. While the fall of Andros and the Dominion had seen the restoration of town councils and a return of some degree of Congregationalist dominance on these councils, the Glorious Revolution did not roll back the toehold the Anglican Church had achieved in the heart of Congregationalist power. The fate of King’s Chapel in the years immediately following Andros’s overthrow is indicative of this struggle. As previously indicated, Andros had established the Anglican Chapel in the heart of Boston to accommodate the Anglican ministers and troops that accompanied him to his new post in Boston. Samuel Willard argued that the continued existence of the Anglican Church amounted to “suffering popery in our midst.”¹⁴³ Willard and others moved to cut the public funding Andros had demanded and forced through under the Dominion. William, however, responded by supplementing the withdrawn funding directly and admonishing Boston’s religious leaders for their failure to live up to the

¹⁴³ Nicholas Noyes. *New England’s Duty and Interest*. (Boston: 1698), 19, 21-27.

provisions of his Declaration of Tolerance. As it was paraphrased by a Congregationalist minister, the King's opinion was that "only Papists prevent freedom of conscience and worship to suppress dissenting views."¹⁴⁴

William and Mary's support for the King's Anglican Chapel, as well as the larger failure of the Revolution to resolve what many considered a question of "intrusion into spheres where this [sect] was largely absent" resulted in the emergence of two factions among Congregationalists in the 1690s.¹⁴⁵ Willard and other hardliners demanded the suppression of Anglicanism as had been the case before James II and Andros's intervention in the colony. Only then, they argued, could they guarantee that God would see their colony "untainted with popery, ... as we had made solemn covenant to maintain ourselves."¹⁴⁶ More moderate Congregationalists were represented by leaders such as the elder and younger Mathers, who assured their nervous congregations that "although we may look and see Papists who live amongst us, we may look and ne'er discover more opportunity to deliver them from their errors by witnessing the fullness of the gospel [in New England]."¹⁴⁷ For this more moderate faction, patience and loyalty to the policies of the new regime was the best way to "secure what liberties we have yet restored" without the risk of angering the King and again having their freedom of conscience limited.¹⁴⁸ Hardliners like Willard, however, went above moderates like the Mathers,

¹⁴⁴ Sewall, *Diary*, (21 December 1693), 291-294.

¹⁴⁵ Samuel Willard, *A Time to Hold Steadfast and Shirk Not Those Things the Lord Hath Called Upon*. (Boston, 1701), 12.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 19, 24, 31-33, 36.

¹⁴⁷ Mather, *Things To Be Looked For*, 4-7.

¹⁴⁸ Mather to William Merle. (1? August, 1699), 3.

and attempted through various means to weaken the Anglican Church in Massachusetts. Several town councils passed complex zoning restrictions designed to prevent the construction of new Anglican chapels.¹⁴⁹ Willard himself saw to it that repeated requests to improve the hastily build wooden structure of King's Chapel were rejected by Boston's town council.¹⁵⁰

Compounding this was the introduction of the Anglican Church's missionary arm, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) in 1701. Founded by Reverend Thomas Bray and a small group of lay and clerical associates, it sent Anglican clergymen and religious literature to Britain's colonies, supported schoolmasters and the establishment of new churches, and lobbied for a more expansive place for the Church of England in Britain's empire following the Glorious Revolution. Bray and his collaborators believed that the colonial Church of England was underdeveloped, that it had too few properly ordained ministers, and that dissenters, especially Quakers, exercised too much influence in the colonies. Many SPG supporters looked on global Roman Catholic missionary activity with a mixture of awe and hostility, and envisioned the organization as a counterweight to the Jesuits and other Catholic orders. For Congregationalists and Quakers, however, two of the main targets of the SPG's efforts in North America, the Society was simply a new variety of those Catholic orders and represented the same threat to their freedom of conscience as "papist leagues who ... convert by

¹⁴⁹ Lovejoy, *The Glorious Revolution in America*, 244-45.

¹⁵⁰ Congregationalists prevented any improvements being made to the structure until 1754, when direct royal intervention requisitioned stone and mortar to convert the structure and provided the necessary funding. Even still, Congregationalists put such strict limitations on the construction space available to the church that the stone structure had to be built around the wooden Chapel which was then disassembled and removed through the windows. This is discussed at greater length in a subsequent chapter.

fire.”¹⁵¹ Congregationalists, especially, would view the SPG and its efforts as primarily directed at themselves and their group’s dominance within New England. Seen as a continuum of Anglican efforts under James II, both groups would view the Society with contempt and suspicion throughout the century; a rivalry which would finally boil over again with the Episcopacy crisis of the 1760s.¹⁵²

The actions of Congregationalists such as Willard angered the Mathers and others who saw this kind of stubbornness as retarding efforts to convince King William to reinstate the original charter of the Bay colony which had been revoked under James II. As Increase Mather argued, “a restoration of the Charter would do much to diminish the fears” of the hardline trouble makers. The only way to accomplish that larger aim, however, was to “immediately stop those declarations and actions which others may look on and determine as much as Romish tyranny.”¹⁵³ The irony is that for the hardliners, “suffering popery” encouraged oppression and tainted the colony’s covenant, while the moderates insisted that resisting the King’s tolerance for the Anglicans resembled “Romish tyranny” and prevented the restoration of the Charter, which protected and perpetuated the colony’s covenant. Ultimately, Congregationalists were left deeply divided over how to respond to developments.

¹⁵¹ Patricia Bonomi. *Under the Cope of Heaven*. (New York: Yale University Press, 1986), 119; There are no full-length accounts of the overall history of the SPG other than those produced by authors affiliated with or commissioned by the society and they are intended to further the society’s program. Independent academic historians have long been aware of the society’s importance to the religious history of the colonial United States and the British Empire, and considerations of its role have been incorporated into surveys and syntheses in those fields. The current leading accounts of early American religious history are Patricia Bonomi’s work and Jon Butler’s *Awash in a Sea of Faith* (Harvard, 1992). Both give significant attention to the SPG and are valuable introductions to the organization’s impact in the colonies that became part of the United States. A larger discussion of the SPG and Protestant American reactions to the group is provided in chapter six.

¹⁵² This is covered in detail in chapter six.

¹⁵³ Mather to William Merle. (1? August 1699), 3-5.

The aftermath of the Glorious Revolution contributed to an even larger schism within the Quaker community known as the Keithian controversy that erupted in the mid-1690s.¹⁵⁴ George Keith was a Scottish Quaker who settled in Philadelphia in 1689 due to his frustration with the lack of protection shown to Quakers by the new regime. After proposing some changes to Quaker teachings and a set creed to curb the spontaneity of Quaker worship in Pennsylvania, he was disowned by the Society of Friends entirely. Briefly trying to establish a reformed “Christian Quakers” group, Keith eventually left Pennsylvania under pressure from Quaker leaders. In 1692 he would convert to Anglicanism and embark on a lifelong campaign of criticism against Quakerism.¹⁵⁵ Keith, however, had attracted many like-minded reformers within the Quaker community, especially regarding Quaker tolerance of the practice of slavery, which he and his followers hoped would end with the “Glorious Revolution against the state of slavery made possible by Papists.”¹⁵⁶ Keithian followers accused the Quakers of persecution in allowing slavery and a lack of tolerance toward religious dissent in excommunicating those within the Society of Friends who disagreed with the practice. According to Keith, this made the Friends little better than Catholics. “They may well have earned the discredit of some accusers who suspect Papistry in their actions.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Schwartz, *A Mixed Multitude*, 56-66.

¹⁵⁵ Jon Butler, “Into Pennsylvania’s Spiritual Abyss: The Rise and Fall of the Later Keithians, 1693-1703,” in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, no. 101 (1977), 157-162.

¹⁵⁶ Slavery, both literal and metaphorical, had significant links to Protestant notions of Catholicism. This is explored more fully in the next chapter.

¹⁵⁷ George Keith. *The Spirit of Railing Shimei and of Baal’s 400 Lying Prophets Addressed to Caleb Pusey and his Quaker Brethren in Pennsylvania*. (New York: 1703), 61-62.

Quakers feared that their Keithian opponents were nothing more than Anglican oppressors attempting to provoke English authorities into suppressing Quaker literature and practice. “It is clear,” wrote Quaker Hugh Roberts to William Penn, “the design of ye so-stiled reformers ... is to discredit the [Friends] before his Highness King William has yet had audience and occasion to affirm the truth of the matter.”¹⁵⁸ Some felt Keith was little more than an Anglican accomplice all along, using “Romish tactics” to discredit the Society. “Can it be believed that Mr. Keith was ever in his actions any but an agent of Comforists?”¹⁵⁹ Before his explosion from Pennsylvania, Quaker leaders had sought to simply silence Keith’s vociferous publication of critical essays by confiscating his printing press, arguing his “jesuitical fanaticism” represented a reasonable threat to “harmony” within the colony. Keith responded that these oppressive actions meant “the Society has become one of many among the Romish leagues.” Each side increasingly suspected the malevolence and pretensions to tyranny of its opposition, and their critique hinged upon traditional anti-Catholic critiques.¹⁶⁰

Keith’s departure for New York and his conversion to Anglicanism resulted in yet further schism within the Quaker community. The small but significant and vocal following of reformers he had attracted within the Society of Friends scattered after his departure. A minority resumed their positions within the Society, which was inclined to be lenient among those who dropped their dissent from standard doctrine as defined by the yearly meeting of Quaker leaders. A sizable

¹⁵⁸ Hugh Roberts to William Penn, in *Hugh Roberts of Merion: His Journal and a Letter to William Penn*, 18.

¹⁵⁹ Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to London Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends. (23 September 1696), Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Collection, *Yearly Minutes, 1681-1746*, pp. 58-59. Comformist was a derogatory term reserved for all religious tyrannies, but especially used by American Protestants against the Church of England.

¹⁶⁰ Schwartz, *A Mixed Multitude*, 58.

portion, however, abandoned the Quakers and formed Baptist congregations to continue their dissent. Baptists were already beginning to trickle into Pennsylvania around the turn of the eighteenth century, and were effectively treated as a disliked minority within the colony. The Society of Friends, they argued, had “veered too far toward oppression and intolerance.” It was, they suggested, “in no better sight than the Papists before the Lord’s eye.”¹⁶¹ Another significant grouping, especially among German Quakers, joined the German Moravians who had begun to spill into Pennsylvania’s frontier regions to live in isolation. They lamented, ironically, that had they known “the true face” of Quakerism in Pennsylvania, they would have remained in Germany to take their chances: “If not to live free of Catholic persecutors, than what reasons did we risk [settling in Pennsylvania].”¹⁶² A small number, especially after Keith’s conversion, joined the Anglican Church to be “sprinkled by a priest.” This group, led by Keith, eventually succeeded in soliciting the establishment of an Anglican Church in Philadelphia in 1695 over the objections of the colony’s leading Quaker council.¹⁶³

SPG agents in Philadelphia were eager to take advantage of Quaker weakness following the Keithian controversy. They reported to London that the tumult had been caused by “the many notorious wicked and damnable principles and doctrines discovered to be amongst the greatest part of them,” and that they were eager “after truth and the sound doctrines of the Church of England away from Romish ignorance.”¹⁶⁴ Keith and others petitioned King William himself and

¹⁶¹ Caleb Pusey, *Satans Harbinger Encountered*. (Philadelphia, 1700), 55-58.

¹⁶² Menos Maria Theyl Vartieller. *An Indication of True Reasons for Settling Among the People of this Place, called Pennsylvania*. (Philadelphia, 1702), 11-15.

¹⁶³ Schwartz, *A Mixed Multitude*, 57.

¹⁶⁴ Thomas Clayton to the Clergy of the Church of England. 29 November 1699. in *Aspects of English Church History, 1660-1778*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 68, 104.

he responded by tripling the number of Anglican ministers in the colony between 1701-1707. Stressing the need for freedom of conscience in the colony, Keith warned William through the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel that “if Priests come not timely; the whole country will be overrun with Presbyterians, Anabaptists, and Quakerism.”¹⁶⁵ He and other Anglicans argued English penal laws and acts of toleration should be enforced on the Quakers.¹⁶⁶ Quaker leaders feared they were being bullied into submission. Congregationalists, suspicious though they were of Anglican efforts, did nothing to defend the Quakers. Several Congregationalists agreed that Quakerism ought not be tolerated within Britain’s new Protestant empire as an acceptable form of Protestantism. Rather, they suggested the sect’s members “may be better comprehended for Catholicks” because their divisive effect on Protestants “begged restriction.”¹⁶⁷

While previous scholarship has emphasized the unifying aspects of anti-Catholicism in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution, episodes such as these underscore the fact that transatlantic ties between Protestants remained tenuous. The defeat of Anglicization efforts under the Catholic James II could not and did not distract Protestant dissenters in New England from the problems they perceived in the Anglican Church. Resistance among Congregationalists in Massachusetts was based on the premise that the Anglican Church was repressive. Pennsylvania Quakers faced complete disenfranchisement under the Dominion and, like the Congregationalist establishment, would not forget Anglican efforts to curb their power. Both groups of American

¹⁶⁵ George Keith to Thomas Bray, 24 February 1703. in *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts Letterbooks*, A1, no. 87.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ All but three of these can be found in the collected edition *An Enquiry How Far Papists ought to be Treated as Good Subjects, and How far They are Chargeable with the Tenets commonly imputed to Them*. (Boston, 1705); Anon. *A Vindication Against Rome*. (Boston, 1699), 1.

Protestants articulated their loyalty to the new regime in anti-Catholic language, but they also linked the Anglican Church's actions to tyranny in one after another public denunciation. In this heated environment of suspicion and mutual recrimination, long-ignored yet unresolved issues regarding the extent and degree of the state's intrusion into religious matters and the autonomy of religious dissenters resurfaced among Protestant groups. Much older disputes over freedom of conscience still heavily influenced dissenting views of government and society for British-American Protestants.

Protestants, however, also began to look outward in the decades following the Glorious Revolution. Their new Protestant empire stood first as a force against Catholic Europe. American Protestants also began to experience a rich variety of new peoples and religious traditions in the extensive networks of trade, migration, and transfers of peoples that drove the English Atlantic empire. Jews, Muslims, Native Americans, and African slaves increasingly came into contact with white American Protestant dissenters. As Protestants increasingly came into contact with these peoples, their critique of power, corruption, and oppression expanded to include these peoples. Their fears regarding freedom of conscience were continuing to broaden to include a variety of threats to that necessary autonomy, and they projected those fears onto these new groups — Christian or otherwise — in the same anti-Catholic terms that had defined their articulation of those threats to date.

Chapter 3: “As Arbitrary as the Grand Turk:” Freedom of Conscience and the Protestant Image of Islam

Boston tradesman Henry Tordes was visiting the West Coast of Africa in the spring of 1712. His private diary details the customs, commerce, architecture, and politics of the natives he encountered. In his words, their spiritual worldview was “Mahometan.” For Tordes, this meant that they were “lacking religion.”¹⁶⁸ In his Calvinist way of thinking, “religion” only meant a heartfelt Protestant system of faith. Although aware that the people he interacted with were not Catholic, Tordes pejoratively referred to Muslim Africans he encountered as “all of them Papists.”¹⁶⁹ In his mind, there was a link between Islam and Catholicism – neither was a true religion. Instead, the Boston Puritan saw Muslims and Catholics as slaves to a spiritual form of tyranny.¹⁷⁰

While a wealth of scholarship has considered the image of Islam in the West in the early modern period, far less work has been done on Protestant perceptions of the relationship between Islam and Catholicism. The scholarship that has been done on this relationship has focused on biblical comparisons between Islam and Catholicism and on the limited contact between Muslims and European Protestants in North America. During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Protestants interpreted Islam and Catholicism as “Gog and Magog,” the

¹⁶⁸ Henry Tordes, *Private Diary: January-December 1712, with notes on travel aboard a trading vessel*. Boston. 1714, 221.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 219.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 219

dual images of antichrist depicted in the Bible in the book of Revelations.¹⁷¹ In this formulation, Muslims and Catholics both worshiped false prophets and idols. Islam and Catholicism originated as separate counterweights to the true gospel, just as the forces of Satan and evil stood as binaries to Godliness and righteousness.

There were also outlandish depictions of Muslims in English popular culture throughout the eighteenth century. According to literary scholars and art historians, Western Christians commonly used Islam and Muslims as rhetorical devices in a wide variety of public disputes and debates.¹⁷² Christians used Muslim references without fully understanding their meaning. A lack of detailed knowledge about Muslim theology and culture allowed Christians to imagine any number of ills as being deeply ingrained in Islamic traditions.

What historians have overlooked is the fact that Reformed theology and doctrine undergirded the conceptual bridge American Protestants built between Islam and Catholicism during the eighteenth century. Tordes' diary underscores the fact that religion and politics were inseparable during the early modern era. Reformed theological fears related to the abuse of power and the restriction of religious liberty drove animosities toward anyone or anything

¹⁷¹ Thomas Kidd, *American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 17, 27-31; Fuad Sha'ban. *Islam and Arabs in Early American Thought: The Roots of Orientalism in America*. (Durham: Acorn Press, 1991), i-vi; Michael Gomez, "Muslims in Early America," *Journal of Southern History* 60 (Nov. 1994): 671-72; Bernard Lewis. *Culture in Conflict: Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the Age of Discovery*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 26-30.

¹⁷² This scholarship tends to focus on depictions of Islam in literature and performance drama. For more on Islam in English literature of the eighteenth century see Mathew Dimmock. *New Turks: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England*. (New York: Ashgate Press, 2005), Gerald MacLean. *Looking East: English Writing and the Ottoman Empire before 1800*. (New York: Palmgrave Publishing, 2007), and Benedict Robinson. *Islam and Early Modern English Literature: Politics of Romance from Spenser to Milton*. (New York: Palmgrave Publishing, 2007). For more on depictions of Islam in drama and the performing arts see Humberto Garcia. *Islam and the Enlightenment, 1670-1840*. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2012) and Bernadette Andrea. *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

American Protestants perceived as a threat to heartfelt personal piety. As American Protestants came into increasingly real and imagined contact with Muslims over the course of the eighteenth century, Reformation fears widened and deepened in American hearts and minds. Contact with and reflections on an “other” compelled American Protestants to reflect with greater vigor on the spiritual content in tyranny and liberty.

The Protestant concept of freedom of conscience centered on the existence of personal and collective freedom in order to freely worship. Personal autonomy was necessary to satisfy the needs of heartfelt, personal piety. Collective autonomy was necessary to secure the political, economic, and institutional freedoms required to publicly and safely express that personal piety. As the concept was a contested notion among varying Protestant groups, debates and doctrinal differences tended to revolve around the question of how much personal and collective freedom was required to achieve this “right worship.” Repeated emphasis on this question among and within Protestant groups, however, inevitably led to the parallel consideration of perceived threats to that required freedom. As the concept was addressed in increasingly complexity and depth over the eighteenth century, Protestants inevitably looks further and further afield in order to articulate that expanding concept and the ever-growing sense of mortal threats to it. As Protestants writers, ministers, and travelers increasingly came into contact with Muslim actors around the Atlantic world, Protestant discourses on the behaviors and affiliations that posed a threat to religious liberty came to include Islam itself.

Early modern Protestants believed Muslim and Catholic spiritual authority was tyrannical in part because they saw both as being arbitrary. In their Reformed theological understanding of the Bible, all true believers were priests. Muslim and Catholic hierarchies simply had no basis in Scripture. In 1688, for example, Governor Andros's deputy Edward Randolph described Andros's power in the Dominion of New England as "arbitrary as a grand Turke." This was an ambiguous reference to authoritarian Islamic monarchs.¹⁷³ This notion abounded in English culture, and it fit into a much larger symbolic tradition of the "Mahometan chieftain" or "Moslem Despot" that factored prominently in a variety of western depictions of Muslim society and governance.¹⁷⁴

A great deal of the xenophobic language directed at Islam in the early eighteenth century fixated on this Muslim leader and the theme of arbitrary power, or tyranny. Early modern Protestants went to great lengths to argue that the arbitrary and authoritarian leadership that could be found in Muslim societies was similar to Catholic parts of the world.

Tyranny had been a common feature of Protestant perceptions of Islam long before the eighteenth century. As far back as the Crusades, Christians had looked on Islam as a threat to true

¹⁷³ Randolph, *Papers*, 228. Colonial sources repeatedly conflate and interchange Arab, Turkish, and African Muslims. Part of this is based in the flawed and non-linear sources of information regarding Islam and Muslims through popular literature, entertainment, and English literature. Edward Said's 1978 *Orientalism* explains that the "othering" of Islam as inherently "Eastern" and as a divergent intellectual, philosophical, and theological tradition from Western Christianity. This mentality is clear throughout colonial references to Islam. For the purposes of this chapter, those sources are taken at face value in order to highlight the rhetoric used to portray and understand Islam, but the conflations and confusions between multiple ethnic and sectarian groups within Islam evidenced within this chapter should not be taken as an endorsement by the author of those views. Rather this chapter seeks to demonstrate that anti-Catholicism and the recurring themes therein were applied, erroneously and reductively, to Islam as a whole with little or no regard for the actual distinctions within those mentioned groups.

¹⁷⁴ Garcia, *Islam and the Enlightenment*, 112-129.

religion.¹⁷⁵ There were Christians who believed Muslims were infidels because they rejected Christ as the Messiah. There was also a pervasive, though not entirely accurate, belief among Christians that Middle Eastern leaders forced non-Muslims to convert to Islam in territories under their control.¹⁷⁶

English Protestants echoed these medieval European sentiments. One of the texts most indicative of these views is John Toland's 1718 *Nazarenus, or Jewish, Gentile, and Mahometan Christianity*. Toland's work detailed the "tendencies toward base despotism in governance" in Islamic societies.¹⁷⁷ Toland argued that outside of the true gospel Muslims were condemned to "rulers who must allow no dissent and ... subjects in the religion which does not beg freedom" of belief or action.¹⁷⁸ In effect, Toland was advocating an inevitable link between arbitrary forms of spiritual and temporal power. Toland's views on tyranny in Muslim culture was a commonly held one. One pamphlet written in response to Toland's *Nazarenus* agreed that "Mahometans do not seek liberty or grant it to those subject" to their power.¹⁷⁹ Another writer, citing Toland's work,

¹⁷⁵ Sha'ban, *Islam and Arabs*, 27-39.

¹⁷⁶ For more on the history of forced conversion and broader issues of tolerance between Christians and Muslims in the early modern period see Sydney Griffis's *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007) and David Thomas's *History of Muslim and Christian Relations*. (Leiden: Brill Publishing, 2013).

¹⁷⁷ John Toland. *Nazarenus, or, Jewish, gentile, and Mahometan Christianity : containing the history of the antient Gospel of Barnabas, and the modern Gospel of the Mahometans ... also the original plan of Christianity explain'd in the history of the Nazarens ... with the relation of an Irish manuscript of the four Gospels, as likewise a summary of the antient Irish Christianity*, (London, 1718), 59.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 62-65.

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Mangey, *Remarks Upon Nazarenus*. (London, 1718), 5.

argued that “many educated in the manners of the Mahometans speak to their cruel tyranny in governance.”¹⁸⁰

The English Protestant critiques of Islam that linked Muslim leadership with tyranny were not new to English Protestants in the eighteenth century. A monograph of 1701, described the entire history of Arab peoples after their conversion to Islam as “a history of despotic manners.”¹⁸¹ Thomas Cooper’s *The Imperious Style of Turks Exemplified* revisits several historical accounts of interaction between European Christians and Arabic Muslims from the seventeenth century. In Cooper’s retelling of events, Muslim leaders repeatedly reveal themselves as despotic or tyrannical leaders. Recounting a series of exchanges in 1562 between the Caliph Solyman the Magnificent and King Ferdinand of Spain that effected a temporary alliance between the two leaders’ states, Cooper recalls the Caliph commenting on the “mildness” of Ferdinand’s rule. This comment was meant to display how much more despotic Solyman was than Ferdinand, who English Protestants remembered in absolutist terms.¹⁸² Cooper suggested the Caliph “would rule over them as does any Turkish Potentate,” which he goes on to describe as “absolute and unyielding to dissent or clamor.”¹⁸³ Those conquered, he argued, were to be subjects to “Mahometan absolutist governance.”¹⁸⁴ This suggested to Protestants that Islam had perverted Arab conceptions of monarchy “to a state unrecognized by

¹⁸⁰ Humphrey Prideaux, *The True Nature of Imposture Fully Displayed in the Life of Mahomet*. (London, 1707), 18-19. (Prideaux’s citation is listed in the 1727 reprint of *True Nature*)

¹⁸¹ Abbe De Marigny. *A History of Arabians*. (London, 1701), 83.

¹⁸² Thomas Cooper. *The Imperious Style of the Turks Exemplified*. (London, 1739), 22-24.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 14, 17-19.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

Englishmen accustomed to their liberties.”¹⁸⁵ As one writer argued, “In Persia scarcely little is known to limit the prerogative of rulers,” and this ultimately resulted in “a people in the most oppressed state comprehensible.”¹⁸⁶

Oppression and tyranny were also well-worn tropes English Protestants used in reference to the Catholic Church. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Protestants from a variety of sects repeatedly referenced views of the Catholic Church and its adherents based on the presumption of corruption or arbitrary power within Catholicism. Drawing from complaints regarding religious intolerance and political oppression that were as old as Protestantism itself, Protestant dissenters of the eighteenth century came to articulate their unresolved fears regarding a variety of threats to their freedom of conscience by labeling those threats “popish.” By so doing, they referenced a common interpretation of Catholicism as corrupt or tyrannical. They also harnessed the power of that interpretation to label new threats, real and imagined, to their prerogative to worship freely.

Across the Atlantic Ocean, American Protestants examined the despotic or tyrannical Muslim through the lens of traditional Protestant fears of Catholic tyranny after the Glorious Revolution. Several writers juxtaposed Protestant liberalism with Muslim despotism. Puritan Patrick Thalmey wrote in 1711 that the reason for the success of Great Britain’s Protestant leadership was that it resisted the “popery of arrogance ... seen in some Turkish and Romish rulers.”¹⁸⁷ Moreover, Thalmey noted, “we are delivered of those intrigues and cliques which

¹⁸⁵ William Stasty. *A Description of Persian Monarchy*. (London, 1626), 99-101.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁸⁷ Patrick Thalmey. *A Narrative of the Success of our Protestant King*. (Boston, 1711), 41.

weigh heavily in the rule of Romish governance as it is under the Mahometan prince.”¹⁸⁸ An anonymous tract of 1716 also differentiated England’s Protestant King from Muslim leaders. Again defending the Protestant monarchy, and thus the Glorious Revolution, this tract explained that “the succession to the English throne of a Popish King would result in little better than a Great Turk to rule over the nation.” Since Muslim leaders were “terrible tyrants and oppressors,” they were to be feared and regarded as nothing more than “a lesser Pope of the Orient.”¹⁸⁹

Muslims, American Protestants argued, were “papists” in their arbitrary views on political power. The Pennsylvanian German Pietist John Muehleisen argued that Islam as a religion matured “in proximity to Rome” and understood power relations in “Catholick thoughts.”¹⁹⁰ A Boston reprint on Islam, purportedly an English translation from a Muslim scholar named Mahomet Rabadan, depicts Rabadan lamenting on the tyrannical impulse behind Muslim concepts of power. Rabadan suggests that “the faith of Mahomet is such ... that strict order must be maintained,” and that “this mode of governing is practiced by Christians of Rome.”¹⁹¹ The almost-certainly non-existent Rabadan goes on to explain that “Mahometans are as Papists” in that absolute power was the presumably best way of maintaining the religion.¹⁹² The alternative, Rabadan said, was that “by the wants and desires of infidels ... the order of the

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 47.

¹⁸⁹ Anon. *The Desolations of a Popish Succession*. (Boston, 1716), 28-30.

¹⁹⁰ John Muehleisen. *Ishmael, or a Natural History of Islamism, and its Relation to Chistianity*. (Philadelphia, 1731), 19-23.

¹⁹¹ Mahomet Rabadan. *Mahometism Fully Explained*. (Boston, 1703?), 193.

¹⁹² Ibid., 212.

state and [Islam] would be fatally weakened.¹⁹³ Minister Cotton Mather echoed this line of reasoning in 1698 while attempting to explain the success of groups such as the Muslims in the face of their clearly errant beliefs. According to Mather, the success and spread of religions like Islam was purely due to the fact that “as with papists, no opportunity is allowed for the better fulfillment of true gospel and worship.”¹⁹⁴ As Rabadan suggested, Mather agreed that without tyrannical control over their society “Mahometans, as with Catholicks” would be unable to prevent Protestantism from luring away their adherents.¹⁹⁵ “A Moslem monarch,” wrote one New York observer, “feels himself as to answer only to a false God ... as though he lay claim to infallibility that the Pope presupposes.”¹⁹⁶

Issues of infallibility and absolute rule also led Protestants to invoke comparisons between Muslim political leaders and European Catholic rulers. Numerous variations of a common polemic compared “the Pascha” in Islamic society to that of King Phillip of Spain; the arch enemy of English Protestantism in the sixteenth century. Phillip’s attempt to invade the island of England was like “great efforts of Asia upon the Greek isles, or of the Turks into Christian lands.”¹⁹⁷ Puritan Thomas Foxcroft’s 1727 public sermon celebrating the ascension of George II, and delivers before the colony’s political leadership, commended “George the second,

¹⁹³ Ibid., 212.

¹⁹⁴ Cotton Mather, *American Tears Upon the Ruins of the Greek Churches*. (Boston, 1701), 38.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 39.

¹⁹⁶ Joseph Pitts. *A Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mahometans, in which is a Particular Relation of their Pilgrimage to Mecca, the Place of Mahomet’s Birth*. (Boston, 1743), 19-23.

¹⁹⁷ Paul, Rycault. *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*. (Boston, 1714), 92-95.

who defends the western world against tyrannical Popery of the east.”¹⁹⁸ According to Foxcroft, “east” meant the papists, but also Stuart loyalists who unfairly besieged Protestant Britain “as the Turks lay’d siege to Vienna.”¹⁹⁹ Foxcroft also lashed out at the French King Louis who “stiles himself the Sun King ... as an idol of worship found in Romish or Mahometan superstitions.”²⁰⁰ George II would, according to Foxcroft, never “surrender to popery or Mahometan despotism.”²⁰¹

American Protestants even labeled “popish” any perceived intolerance within Muslim societies. This theme was certainly a common one among European Protestants, but a significant portion of eighteenth century American Protestant discussions of religious tyranny within Islam ran along the lines of similarities with aspects of Catholicism instead of the inverse. They believed that Muslims forced conquered or enslaved peoples to convert to Islam. A former traveler through Morocco later stationed in Philadelphia noted that “not all of those who inhabited the land are Moslems by conscience.”²⁰² The locals the traveler encountered were forced to convert to Islam because “their Lord had bade them thus.” It was a fate, the account went on, “resembling the worst Romish oppressions.”²⁰³ Likewise, a translation of *Arabian Nights*, published in London in 1729 and in Boston in 1733, included in its introduction

¹⁹⁸ Thomas Foxcroft. *A Sermon to Offer Some Thoughts, Commemorating the Ascension of his Majesty King George II of England*. (Boston, 1727), 17.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 24.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 29-33.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 33.

²⁰² Mariana Postans. *The Moslem Noble: His Land and His People, with some notices of the Parsses or ancient Perisans*. (Philadelphia, 1744), 5-7.

²⁰³ Ibid., 16.

“explanatory notes on the manners and customs of Moslem men.”²⁰⁴ Muslims were, it explained, “tyrants of religion.” Moreover, they were incapable of “suffering dissent in religion among them.”²⁰⁵ This inability meant that Muslims would inevitably demand of any non-Muslims that “they adopt Mahometan religion or be put to the sword, as in former Popish excesses upon Protestants.”²⁰⁶ The fictional Muslim scholar Rabadan explained “Moslems, and Muhammet, grew in strength by making Moslems of any they encountered.”²⁰⁷ This echoed previous Protestant complaints regarding Catholic forced conversion.

Protestants on both sides of the Atlantic labeled “papist” the supposed intolerance of Muslims toward other religions. The Quaker-turned-Pietist Muehleisen argued that, like Catholicism, “Mahometans are no respecters of any who do not worship Mahomet.” This, combined with their “Popish tendency to resolve sundry disputes” with force, lent an impression of “Romish universal ambitions.”²⁰⁸ As dissenting Protestants were the natural targets at religious universalism, they took this particular threat exceptionally seriously. Reprinted works by dissenters such as John Bale now included updated critiques, such as arguing that “Mahometan intolerance” made Muslims complicit in “the greatest Whore ... The Roman Antichrist.”²⁰⁹ Another reprint of an earlier work by Bale lamented that “the Pageant of Popes

²⁰⁴ Unknown. *A Plain and Literal Translation of the Arabian Nights Entertainments, now entitled The Book of the thousand nights and a night, with an introduction*. (Boston, 1733), xii-xvi.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., xvi-xvii.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 7-9.

²⁰⁷ Mahomet Rabadan. *Mahometism Fully Explained*. (Boston, 1703?), 202, 204.

²⁰⁸ Muehleisen, *Ishmael*, 41-42.

²⁰⁹ John Bale. *The Image of both Churches*. (London, 1548. Reprinted John Bellamy, Boston, 1719), 3.

also possesses many Grand Turkes.” Their inclusion, the anonymous author reasoned, was because “neither can the Turke tolerate dissent.”²¹⁰

American Protestants speculated that even where dissent was allowed, it came with arbitrary penalties and restrictions that resembled Catholic suppression of Protestants. One hated similarity was religious taxes on dissenters within Muslim lands. Cotton Mather referenced the taxes placed on pilgrims to the Muslim-held Holy Land during the Crusades, recounting that “great caravans of Christians were looted for anything of value ... for a privilege of passage.”²¹¹ He then directly compared such “corrupt tyranny” to “the tithes of antiChrist” and, more specifically, “the vestments demanded by Rome.”²¹² Others pilloried supposedly more lenient tithing reformers in the Catholic Church by elaborating on this theme. Satirist Samuel Butler wrote of Catholic reformers that “the Turk’s Patriarch Mahomet was the first Great Reformer, ... that mixed it with new light and cheat, with revelations, dreams, and visions, and apostolic superstitions, to be held forth and carry’d on by war, and his papist successor, a supposed presbyter.”²¹³ Mather himself did not entirely blame Muslims or Islam for this depravity. Instead he suggested that the religion “hath grown up with an eye fix’d to Rome ... and emulated the Romish model.”²¹⁴ Mather and others compared taxed passage through Muslims lands to the resented excise of tithes on nonconformists, as well as the sale of relics. “What the Turks have to

²¹⁰ John Bale, *The Pageant of Popes, with an expanded introduction and appendix*. (Boston, 1674), 6-9, 11.

²¹¹ Mather, *American Tears*, 17-29.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 30, 32.

²¹³ Samuel Butler. *An Hypocritical Nonconformist*. (Boston, 1744), 9-11, 14.

²¹⁴ Mather, *American Tears*, 41.

sell ... is the idol of a piece of the earth, when we seek a kingdom beyond.”²¹⁵ This represented tyrannical suppression of religious belief, which constituted a principal fear of dissenting groups such as the Congregationalists and Quakers.

The Islamic treatment of non-believers also spoke to concerns regarding corruption. Corruption was a central theme in early modern Protestant tracts on the Catholic Church, and it carried over into writings on Islam. Traders such as Henry Tordes were the group of American Protestants most like to come into firsthand contact with Muslims during their travels. Many of them paint a picture of a monolithic society and religion crippled by rampant corruption. Tordes’s own account details the variety of trade goods his expedition attempted to sell in Guinea. Each item “had to be shewn to officials” who then decided whether or not it could be sold or traded in Guinea. “The cost of solicitation, was generally a payment of monies or goods to the official of that settlement.”²¹⁶

What smacked even more of popery was the fact that “the Mahometan Priests were chiefly the beneficiaries of these taxes.”²¹⁷ Tordes and other Protestants would have viewed such payments with deeply entrenched loathing. Puritan sermons of the early eighteenth century frequently expressed their support of the Protestant monarch by recounting the excesses of popery. Foremost of among these excesses was the memory of the corrupt practices of the Catholic church. Tordes himself returned to this comparison twice, interpreting these “taxes on

²¹⁵ Ibid., 49.

²¹⁶ Tordes, *Private Diary*, 241-45.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 242.

trade” with the “Romish practice of bribery” with which the Church extorted its own members and dissenters alike.²¹⁸

Some argued that without a general free trade with Muslims in Africa, Muslims would have succumbed to popery. One Boston tradesman published a pamphlet in 1737 wherein he argued that “the support and preservation of the British colonies in America” depend on “free and impartial trade in Africa.”²¹⁹ The chief means of accomplishing this, according to the anonymous writer, was “to sway the Mahometans away from their Popery in Trade.”²²⁰ The corruption that American Traders were likely to encounter in Muslim Africa “will in tyme show itself the death of prosperity” and, eventually, “a slide into the ruine of Romish monopoly.”²²¹ Tordes, too, had been concerned with monopoly. Like the anonymous pamphlet advocating the Royal African Company’s interests, Tordes argued that “the livelihood of the American plantations” depended on being allowed to trade “outside the covetous eye of Rome.”²²²

A similar tract, first published in London, but reprinted in Boston and Philadelphia in 1741, described similar concerns of corruption among Muslim traders. Although the tract did not address Muslims directly, it speculated that “the Mahometan merchant will give preference” in business dealings to other Muslims.²²³ In this way, the tract continued, “they are as Jesuits who

²¹⁸ Ibid, 244-47.

²¹⁹ Anon. *The Importance of Effectually Supporting the Royal African Company of England Impartially Considered: Shewing that a Free and Open Trade to Africa depend on moving Mahometans Away from Popish Practice in Trade and Law*. (Boston, 1737), 1-4.

²²⁰ Ibid., 7.

²²¹ Ibid., 11-13.

²²² Tordes, *Private Diary*, 201.

²²³ William Sacheverell. *An Account of the Isle of Man*. (Boston, 1717), 33-5.

recognized only their [own] interest.”²²⁴ The often reprinted *Letter From Rome*, a fictional proclamation from the Pope to the world almost certainly written by a Puritan satirist,²²⁵ also took up this line of reasoning. One eleven-page segment stated that the Pope intended to “imitate the Turks” in his rule over Protestants. They would, the Pope promised, be “as a Turkish Sachem ... who suffers no dissent in matters of politicks and religion ... and exacts his tribute from all without consideration” for the needs and concerns of traders.²²⁶

Other Protestant writers referenced the conspiratorial theme in Reformation-era fears of Catholicism and suggested that corruption in dealings with Muslim leaders were part of larger designs originating in Rome. German Moravian Ondreh Habermeld argued that “corrupt dealing with the Mahometans” resembled the “guise of Papistry” so strongly that coordination between Muslims and Catholics was “indisputable,” presumably alluding to cooperation between the Catholic Stuarts and Muslim despots.²²⁷ Another tract published two years later by Henry Timberlake, a onetime minister turned Protestant polemicist, argued that Christians traveling through Muslim lands were extorted in the most egregious ways. In a tone reminiscent of the Crusade narrative put forth by Cotton Mather, Timberlake argued that “in passage through Gaza,

²²⁴ Ibid., 37.

²²⁵ It was published under the pseudonym “Marcus Aurelius” in Boston through a known Puritan Press (Palmer and Bellamny) and included a detailed critique of the ways in which Catholic persecution of Protestants, as well as imagined designs of the Church on world domination. The letter reads as a sort of warning to Protestants about what to expect under Catholic rule.

²²⁶ Marcus Aurelius. *A Letter From Rome*. (Boston, 1741), 19, 24, 29.

²²⁷ Ondreh Habermeld. *The Grand Designs of the Papists, in the reign of our late Sovereigns Charles and James, and now carried on against his present Majesty, his government, and the Protestant Religion*. (Philadelphia, 1723), 4-6, 19.

Jerusalem, and Alexandria, ... Christians are victims of Popish corruption.”²²⁸ Their safe passage and subsistence was “wholly at the pleasure of the local Priest” as had been the case during the worst excesses of the Catholic Church in Europe.²²⁹ The German Pietist Meuhleisen echoed this sentiment, arguing that “Mahometans are corrupt” in the same ways that Protestants “can recall from their sufferings under Rome.”²³⁰

Corruption, though, was not merely an economic concern. The idea of rampant corruption harkened back to longstanding Protestant resentments regarding Catholicism and toleration. Corrupt practices such as the selling of indulgences or the excise of what were seen to be repressive taxes and tithes went to the heart of what Protestants perceived to be different about their theological world view. As Cotton Mather advised, “the truth of these trials is not in material greed or envy, but in the preservation of freedom” of which the Muslims knew nothing and respected “as the Papist is no respecter of conscience and light.”²³¹ Even the British agreement on trade with Algiers of 1713 mentions “Papist restrictions on free discourse of traders.”²³² The origins of Protestant complaints on issues such as tyranny and corruption were well-known among America’s dissenters, and while many of their arguments were reductionist and ambiguous in detail, they nevertheless represented themes with which Protestant fear and

²²⁸ Henry Timberlake. *A True and Strange Discourse on the Travails of two English Pilgrims*. (London, 1719/ Boston 1725), 33.

²²⁹ Ibid., 41-49.

²³⁰ Meuhleisen, *Ishmael*, 49.

²³¹ Mather, *America’s Tears*, 45-49.

²³² Duke of Brente. *Extracts from Several Treaties between the Kingdom of Great Britain and Other States, and on Agreements with the Kingdom of Algiers*. (London, 1741), 77-79.

hatred of abusive power was channeled into grievances that arose in conversation about Muslims within Protestant dialogue.

Protestant images of the Muslim also addressed the complex fears regarding slavery, both literal and metaphorical. Notions of slavery went hand in hand with conceptions of Catholicism reaching back to the Protestant Reformation in England. Countless Protestant sermons, from Anglicans to Puritans to Quakers, equated the approach of Catholicism as synonymous with the prospect of spiritual and temporal servitude. How slavery was defined in those situations depended on the writer and the context of their work, but all agreed on a primal relationship between “popery and slavery.” These conceptions of slavery surpassed even the presumption of despotism and corruption within Islam because, just as with Catholicism, the slavery which followed could take a variety of economic, political, or religious forms.²³³ This made notions of slavery an especially rich genre of anti-Catholic literature, but also a convenient commonality within which to discuss authoritarian elements of Islamic practice. The *Voyage of De Gennes to the Straits of Magellan*, for example, drew upon the rich history of Protestant fear of “popish slavery” by highlighting the predilection of Muslims “to conquer and enslave” and to “suffer none to worship Christ, but instead convert captives to spiritual slavery in Mahometism.”²³⁴

Written in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution, accounts such as this labored to link English

²³³ For more here see Chapter One’s discussion of early Protestant polemics against governmental popery, especially the treatises and sermons published by the Barrowists and Puritan non-separatist writers.

²³⁴ Sieur Froger. *A Journals of the Late Voyage of Mr. De Gennes to the Straits of Magellan*. (London, 1693), 17-20.

economic prosperity and the “preservation of liberty” to the nation’s the Protestant monarch, who had prevented “a decline into popery and slavery.”²³⁵

Protestants perceived Catholicism to be a cause of social and moral decline, and slavery was merely a single symptom. The image of errant religion as a catalyst for decline and the long tradition of equating popery and slavery easily lent itself to accounts of Muslims that emphasized the connection of Islam to Catholicism. *Mahometism Fully Explained*, for instance, invoked the image of the Inquisition in describing “the tortures put to infidels who refuse conversion to Mahometism.”²³⁶ As Rabadan himself suggested, “This is the custom of the Roman Christians,”²³⁷ Joseph Pitts, too, drew on this comparison to argue that “slavery is so openly practiced among [Muslims] that they resemble the darkest Papists in their treatment of the gospel and those souls who would not abandon it.”²³⁸ Much of this connection clearly drew from preexisting Protestant assumptions that popery *meant* slavery, and thus where slavery flourished so, too, did popery in some form.²³⁹ The rise of Protestant American interest in Barbary enslavement narratives and the growing need to distinguish Muslim slavery from American

²³⁵ Ibid., 26-29. The earliest known Protestant connection between slavery and popery is found in the second volume of John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*, 211-245.

²³⁶ Rabadan, *Mahometism Fully Explained*, 37-41.

²³⁷ Ibid., 41.

²³⁸ Pitts, *A True and Faithful Account of the Mahametans*, 201-204

²³⁹ Thomas S. Kidd. *The Protestant Interest*. (New York: Yale University Press, 2004), xv.

slavery compounded the meaning and value of discourses that fixated on slavery within Protestant interpretations of Islam.²⁴⁰

For Protestants, especially those groups familiar with the institution of slavery, it represented the ultimate loss of freedom of conscience. The loss of physical freedom is the first and most obvious component. However, Protestants fixated on tales of Muslim slaves being forced to convert to Islam. For them, this represented the worst possible enslavement both in this world and denial of their inheritance in the next world.²⁴¹ Indeed, great effort was made to distinguish Christian enslavement from that of Muslims. Narratives of Protestant Christians in captivity under Barbary pirates or of being sold as infidel slaves became increasingly popular during the 1730s and 1740s, and spoke to growing popular fears and disgust at this “complete bondage of person and soul.”²⁴² The earliest surviving North American Barbary captivity narratives are those by Abraham Browne and Joshua Gee. Browne was taken prisoner by Moroccan corsairs in 1655 and was held approximately three months. Paraded in the public slave markets and narrowly averting sale to “the most Crewelest man in Sally,” Browne was fortunate to find a kind master who gave him relatively easy chores. Like other narratives Browne's is

²⁴⁰ For more on Barbary enslavement narratives of the eighteenth century see Daniel J. Vitkus, ed. *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001) and Paul Baepler, ed. *White Slaves, African Masters: An Anthology of American Barbary Captivity Narratives*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

²⁴¹ Fears regarding enslavement by Muslims who then forced conversion to Islam were so great among some Protestants that Cotton Mather speculated whether “Heavenly Father may yet forgive” Christians committing suicide to avoid forced conversion. Ultimately, he decided suicide may not be an appropriate response and might incur God’s judgement, although he maintained that the punishment for conversion would be worse than the divine retribution for suicide. see Cotton Mather, *Some Remarks on the History of Christian Captives, at the hands of the Moslems, and in Some Parts Entirely Enslaved, in Relation to the Actions of Pirates*. (Philadelphia, 1711).

²⁴² For more here see Elizabeth Maddock Dillon’s “Slaves in Algiers”: Race, Republican Genealogies, and the Global Stage”, in *American Literary History*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Autumn 2004), 407-436, and Paul Baepler’s “The Barbary Captivity Narrative in American Culture” in *Early American Literature*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (2004), 217-246.

interlaced with biblical verse, and he prides himself on not converting to the "Mohumetan Religion."²⁴³ Forced conversion, he alludes, would have made him "no better than the Huguenot who is threatened with flame, and chooses the Eucharist."²⁴⁴ Another account of Protestants being enslaved by Muslims from Cotton Mather furthers this point. Mather wrote:

"The poor Christian Captives, that are taken by any of those Hellish Pirates, belonging to the Emperor of Morocco, are brought up...being kept at Hard work, from Day-light in the Morning till Night: carrying Earth on their Heads in great Baskets, driven to and fro, with barbarous Negroes by the Emperor's Order; and when they are drove home by the Negroes at Night, to their Lodging, which is on the cold Ground, in a Vault or hollow place in the Earth, lade over with great Beams athwart, and iron Bars over them, they are hold in there, like Sheep, and out in the Morning; and if any be wanting, he quickly secures the Negroes, and sends out a parcel of his Guard, to look for them."²⁴⁵

Mather's point, however, was to draw comparison between Muslim slavery and Catholic oppressions. "We must remember the fate and salvation of these victims of Mahometan despotisms, ...as we easily recall the evils of Papistry elsewhere in the world."²⁴⁶

Other captivity narratives made the link between fears of Islamic and Catholic tyranny.

William Nichol recounted in his popular *The Morality of the East* that Muslim slavery as a system was "learned on experience" at a time when "the Roman Christians were also barbarous

²⁴³Gee, Joshua. *Narrative of Joshua Gee of Boston, Mass., While he was captive in Algeria of the Barbary pirates 1680-1687*. Ed. Albert Carlos Bates. Hartford: Wadsworth Atheneum, 1943, 111, 113-117.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 179.

²⁴⁵Mather, Cotton. *The Glory of Goodness: The Goodness of God, Celebrated; In Remarkable Instancees and Improvements thereof: And more particularly in the Redemption Remarkably obtained for the English Captives, Which have been Languishing under the Tragical and the Terrible and the most Barbarous Cruelties of Barbary*. (Boston, 1703), 29-31.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 49-50.

enslavers.”²⁴⁷ This meant, in effect, that “Moslem slavery is but another branche of Popery.”²⁴⁸ He went on to explain that Islamic slavery was popery for three reasons. First, Islamic slavery “is only practiced on dissenters of religion.”²⁴⁹ This was a clear reference to Protestant resentments of Catholic oppression. Second, Nichol continued, enslavement by Muslims “will inevitably coerce Christians to abandon” sound religious doctrine in favor of self-preservation; exactly the kind of “forced bargain” Protestants associated with the excesses of Catholicism in Europe.²⁵⁰ Finally, Muslim slavery was popery because “it is found preferable to capture Protestants.”²⁵¹ Nichol offers no proof of this claim, but as with many others the impact of these ideas on Protestants well-versed in the main points of Protestant opposition to Islam would have been unavoidable and explosive.

So concerning where the proliferation of reports of Protestant enslavement by Muslims that groups such as the Congregationalists and Quakers acted to set up relief funds and dispatched representatives to secure the release of Christian captives. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the calls for donations to these funds were replete with anti-Catholic imagery that underscored their paranoid fear. One Congregationalist tract, advocating for the creation of a fund to bribe Barbary enslavers into freeing captured Puritans, warned that “those enslaved face hellish slavery and

²⁴⁷ Nichol, *Morality of the East*, 117.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 118-119.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 122.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 125-131.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 135.

Popish submission.”²⁵² Without the help of charitable Bostonians, “they will be condemned to hell on this earth, as well as to that hell below.”²⁵³

Quakers, too, worked anxiously for the spiritual and physical freedom of Protestant Captives. In the annual Meeting of the Society of Friends of 1760, several *Epistles on Barbary Captives* were published. Quakers, the epistles claimed, “seek equality and fraternity with all man” and would “hold on grievance against those” who had enslaved fellow Quakers.²⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the “Friends ought not to suffer suffering friends to endure a state of slavery.”²⁵⁵ Quakers, better than most, “can recall the suffering the Friends hath endured under Romish tyranny.”²⁵⁶ They could not, the epistle continued, turn a blind eye to Muslim slavery which “resembled the same.”²⁵⁷ Slavery was repulsive to Quaker religious doctrine and, as we recall, the tolerance of slavery within Pennsylvania had proven a contentious and schismatic issue within the Society. Quaker leaders were quick to point this out to Muslim interlocutors and advise them that giving up slave ownership would prevent their religion from declining. They recounted the story of Quaker Thomas Lurting’s encounter with Turkish sailors as proof of Quaker empathy and respect for Muslims. Lurting, the first mate on a merchant ship that had been captured by Muslim pirates, was to be sold into slavery in an African port. Lurting and

²⁵² Thomas Pocock. *For the Relief of Captives, especially our own Churchmen*. (Boston, 1722), 8.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁵⁴ The Society of Friends Yearly Epistle. *Epistles on Barbary Captivity*. (Philadelphia, 1760), 88.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 92, 95.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 95.

other captives were then able to trick their captors and regain control of the vessel at sea. A debate among the newly freed Englishman ensued over what to do with the Muslim captives. “The merchants said they were worth two or three hundred pieces of eight a piece, whereat both the master and I told them, if they would give up many thousands they should not have one, for we hoped to send them home again as free men.” Enslaving them, was “the lowest Popery.”²⁵⁸ Ultimately, the Englishmen would not impose on their Muslim captives the same kind of spiritual and temporal bondage they themselves feared most.²⁵⁹

A wealth of scholarship has examined the Muslim image in Protestant minds through the lens of race. In fact, this notable element is missing from the many of the Reformed fears regarding religious liberty. Ultimately, fears of the Muslim threat to freedom of conscience easily superseded concerns regarding race.²⁶⁰ Of 143 tracts published between 1695 and 1733 in North America that reference “popery,” almost 80 directly reference Islam within admittedly anti-

²⁵⁸ The Society of Friends, *Epistles*, 119-124. This account is also seen in Foxe’s *Works* vol. 6, pp 90.

²⁵⁹ Neither Congregationalists nor Quakers held positive views on slavery. Nonetheless, both tolerated the practice to some degree during the early eighteenth century. Popular Protestant depictions of Islam served to help differentiate the American variety of slavery from that practiced by Muslims. *Morality of the East*, for example, differentiates the two based on the fact that enslaved Africans are exposed to Protestantism rather than Catholicism. Protestants, Nichol argued, were likely to be more kind as masters because “of long experience where they hath been shewn the yoke of tyranny and oppression.” One writer went as far to ask if “where popery is not found, can their be true slavery?”

²⁶⁰ A wealth of scholarship has pointed out race was an underlying differentiating factor. Scholarship such as that by Benilde Montgomery and Paul Kaepler demonstrate that one of the especially egregious aspect of Barbary Captivity was the notion of Black Muslims owning White Christians. Moreover, this scholarship suggested that the obvious earlier comparisons between Catholic abuses of power and those within Islam drew on the presumed racial other of the Muslim to disparage Catholic expansion into non-white lands, as well as to suggest inferiority within Catholic political and religious culture. To be sure, race factors into anti-Catholic appropriations of the Muslim image. Mather’s 1698 letter to English captives described African Muslims as “black beasts” and “Monstrous Negroes.” The Author of the *Morality of The East* labels African Muslims’ “blackness, a sign of their community of antichrist and papery.” This and other evidence proves the extent to which race was an important tool of othering Muslims within a largely white Protestant context.

Catholic polemics. Within those 80, however, race is only mentioned 6 times. Within four of those occurrences, race was not mentioned as an objective negative, but rather to emphasize black Africans' susceptibility to tyranny or corruption based in proximity to Rome alone.²⁶¹ It was not that race did not act as an agent of othering, or that dissenting Protestants possessed radically egalitarian racial views.²⁶² Protestant descriptions of a variety of "others" played to these Reformation-based fears. A militia muster of the 1760s labeled Native Americans allied to the French as "Jesuitical."²⁶³ In *Nazarenus*, Jews were accused of "bearing the original whore of Papistry into the world."²⁶⁴ One particularly popular fictional travel tale of 1733 detailed voyages into India and China by mimicking actual ancient accounts of the voyages. In the story, travelers encountered Asians whose "Jealous Priests bore scepters as if each a pope."²⁶⁵ India, too, the account ran on, was "Ruled by many individual Princes whose rule is Romish."²⁶⁶ Race was an often unnecessary tool of othering within dialogues examining corruption or tyranny within Islam, since traditional anti-Catholic fears offered a more potent, meaningful, and tangible line of

²⁶¹ These tracts, though certainly not exhaustive of all anti-Catholic tracts to come from North America, are carefully detailed in *A Catalogue of All Discourses for and Against Popery*. (Boston, 1735).

²⁶² Montgomery, "White Captives", 621.

²⁶³ *A Muster for Militia, to be assembled at once, and in response to the threat of Invasion*. (New York, 1761), 1.

²⁶⁴ John Toland, *Nazarenus, or Jewish, Gentile, and Mahometan Christianity*, 8.

²⁶⁵ An Experienced Gentleman. *Ancient Accounts of India and China*. (Boston, 1733), 27.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 99, 102-104.

demarcation between alien religious traditions such as Islam and Reformed Protestant Americans' view of themselves.²⁶⁷

Tyranny, corruption, and slavery within Islam were well-established tropes within English popular culture by the eighteenth century. After the Glorious Revolution, American Protestants increasingly articulated threats to their freedom of conscience, and they increasingly sought after sources of abusive power from ever widening sources. As they encountered groups such as Muslims within the larger Atlantic world, they drew upon long-standing exaggerated images of Islam from English popular culture and art. In this sense, American dissenters upheld their place within the larger English tradition. However, they increasingly articulated those tropes of Muslim tyranny and despotism, of corrupt Arab officials and Princes, and of the barbarity of Muslim captivity in dialogues condemning forms of tyranny and repression. These perceptions were based on exaggerations, ignorance, and an incredibly reductive view of Islam and Muslims. Nevertheless, the threat seemingly posed to Protestantism by Islam could only be meaningfully conveyed through the lens Protestants had traditionally applied to perceived enemies of their freedom of conscience. By applying these longstanding Reformation-era fears to Islam, American Protestants were singling out negative attributes among Muslims. In defining Muslims as papists, everything from legal policy to cultural tradition to the behavior of individuals was put forth as satisfactory evidence. The one shared element was the abhorrence of any behavior considered tyrannical or corrupt. The rejection of perceived authoritarian or corrupt practices

²⁶⁷ For more on the variety of images of the Other in early American Culture and the larger Atlantic world see Wayne E. Lee's *Barbarians and Brothers: Anglo-American Warfare, 1500-1865*, Jorge Canizares-Esguerra's *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1700*, and Jennifer Pulsipher Hale's *Subjects Unto the Same King: Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England*

within Islam, then, served as a vehicle through which to express the same fears of abusive or corrupt power that had dominated dissenting Protestants' worldview since the Reformation. As groups such as the Congregationalists and Quakers in North America fought to preserve their religious power amid the schisms and Awakening of midcentury, those same concerns dominated dissenters' resistance to those establishments. They also informed inter-Protestant debates, old and newly emerged, about the nature and limitations of power.

Chapter 4: “Democratical and Anti-Papist:” Freedom of Conscience and the Struggle over
Religious Taxes in Massachusetts

Baptists in Rehoboth, Massachusetts petitioned the colonial legislature in Boston for a special exemption from a mandated tithe in 1706. The tithe was an annual tax of 10% of one’s annual income. Everyone in Massachusetts was expected to pay this tax. Public funds went directly to support Congregational churches in the Puritan Commonwealth. Puritan leaders drew the concept of the tithe from the Old Testament.²⁶⁸ Everyone in Massachusetts was expected to pay this tax. They argued that the original charter for the colony of Massachusetts guaranteed “Liberty of Conscience as to matters of religious [concerns].” They stated their belief that forcing everyone in the colony to pay a tax meant to support a single denomination violated the religious freedoms of other denominations, and this perspective was long a central complaint regarding the Catholic tradition. The Baptists understood their objection to the tax to be “entirely democratical and anti-papist.”²⁶⁹

Scholarship on religious dissent in colonial New England has focused on the Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century. The major thrust of this scholarship has been to emphasize the democratic energies that the Great Awakening produced. Open air sermons

²⁶⁸ As mentioned in chapter one, dissenters such as Baptists drew this from 2 Corinthians 9:7, “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

²⁶⁹ A Petition of Reheboth Baptists for exemption from Religious Taxes. January 1, 1706/7. Reheboth Town Records, II, 172-175.

liberalized the Puritan Commonwealth. It split existing denominations. Ultimately, it even produced entirely new sects.²⁷⁰

Portraying the Awakening as the genesis of dissent and democratic sentiment in America obscures our view of issues of religious dissent within New England that drew upon far older concerns and beliefs than those associated with mid eighteenth-century outdoor revival meetings. Congregationalist control of Massachusetts' political and religious life was the central focus of a number of dissenting Protestant complaints reaching back into the seventeenth century. Much of the dissenting opposition to the conservative, Congregational establishment in the first three decades of the eighteenth century represented a continuation of those longer, wider disputes. This opposition was articulated in the anti-Catholic critique born out of the original English Reformation.²⁷¹

The logic used by dissenters such as Baptists to assert their religious freedom indicates that their political concerns rested upon similar Reformed theological anxieties about liberty of conscience that permeated English Protestant concerns during the seventeenth century. These Reformed theological anxieties united Protestants around the Atlantic World in opposition to a

²⁷⁰ Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996, 167-73; Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Eighteenth Century*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), 17-33. Heimert and Miller's narratives of the Awakening period dominate our perception of the religious climate of colonial America, and both place the Awakening as central to our understanding of the period, its most influential people, and the larger picture of North America's larger political and religious culture. Nathan Hatch's *The Democratization of American Christianity* does a better job of separating the dissent of minority religious groups from the effects of larger religious movements and in differentiating between the origins of their respective impulses, although admittedly far later than the colonial period. Scholars such as Jon Butler discount the influence of the Awakening altogether, arguing that it was neither a singular, conglomerative event nor a coherent, influential movement within American Christianity, but rather a series of relatively toothless reform movements that fizzled into a number of sectarian schisms.

²⁷¹ Jonathan Mayhew, a leading proponent of the Great Awakening in New England directly referred to the revivals as "a new Reformation, ... intent to correct the errors" of the original Reformation in his *Remarks upon the Thoughts and Beliefs of the Late Revered John Cotton*. (1743), 2-3.

variety of external threats from the Catholic Church and Muslims and more. Yet, the Baptists' struggle against the tithe in Massachusetts underscores the ways in which Reformation fears divided Protestants.

The Baptists' fight for religious freedom in Massachusetts lasted from the end of the Glorious Revolution to 1735, when they finally secured an exemption from the tithe in Massachusetts. The struggle took place in what was formerly New Plymouth, the notoriously liberal Puritan colony in what would become Maine that was joined with Massachusetts under the new royal charter in 1691 at the conclusion of the Glorious Revolution. Massachusetts was again the de facto domain of the Congregational establishment, and Puritan politicians in Boston quickly moved to bring this new territory into conformity with the Bay colony's reestablished ecclesiastical rules and organization.

This amalgamation proved to be a serious test for the Congregational system. Demographically, non-Puritan colonists accounted for thirty-five percent of the population in the newly incorporated area.²⁷² Theologically, systemic control was difficult since Congregationalism itself had originally been predicated on home rule for individual churches. Asserting the prerogative of the Congregational establishment had traditionally been based on arguments regarding the widespread popularity of the Congregationalists within Massachusetts and their clear numerical majority within the colony. Neither of these arguments applied to the new situation confronting Massachusetts with the incorporation of majority Baptist communities.

²⁷² Albert E. Dunning. *Congregationalists in America: A Popular History of their Origin, Belief, Polity, Growth, and Work*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1894), 184-88. Dunning has broken down Massachusetts geographically along lines of religious denomination for several communities, including Reheboth.

These difficulties would be compounded by legal concessions made to these groups in the urgent drive to reestablish as much as possible of Congregationalist control within the colony in the new Charter of 1691, which clearly stipulated broad religious tolerance by law.

Despite these challenges, Congregational leaders were eager to wrest back any of the authority that they had lost under Governor Andros' leadership during the formation of the Dominion of New England. This authority included requiring every town and its members to financially support an "able, learned, and orthodox minister."²⁷³

Shortly after Puritans regained power in Massachusetts in 1692, the first attempts were made to bring the dissenting towns of the Plymouth area into compliance with Massachusetts' religious laws. Representatives of dissenter-dominated towns were brought before the County Court for the General Sessions of the Peace at Bristol to explain the failure of their towns to comply. Swansea was the first to be cited.²⁷⁴ The town had been formed under the leadership of Reverend John Myles, a Baptist minister from Wales. Myles had been instrumental in the founding of the Baptist Church at Rehoboth as well in 1667. But Plymouth authorities investigated his activities and the Plymouth court of Assistants banished him from the town.²⁷⁵ He and other Baptists then moved closer to the border with Rhode Island and, with permission from Plymouth authorities, founded Swansea. Its incorporation was interesting in that the

²⁷³ Cotton Mather. *Ratio Disciplinae*. Boston, 1726), 21. Cotton Mather claimed that the Massachusetts ecclesiastical system allowed the majority of taxpayers in any parish to chose a learned, able, orthodox minister of any denomination, but in practice the courts interpretation of the laws made it almost impossible for any but a Congregationalist to received legal sanction. There is no record of any but Congregationalist ministers ever being accepted by the courts as a duly authorized minister entitled to all the rights thereof until after the American Revolution.

²⁷⁴ O.O. Wright. *A History of Swansea*. (Swansea, 1917), 45, 102.

²⁷⁵ Henry M. King. *The Life of the Reverend John Myles*. (Providence: Brown University Press, 1905), 11; Backus, *History of New England*, 433.

authorities put no restrictions or conditions on the town concerning religious establishment or organization, which was customary. They left ecclesiastical and town issues entirely to the discretion of Myles and his fellow churchmen.²⁷⁶

The rules they drew up for the new town were referred to as “foundational covenants.”²⁷⁷ Most notably they stipulated that their town did not allow those who held heretical beliefs, such as Quakers. The main point was to convince the Puritans of Plymouth and Massachusetts that they were just as hostile to groups such as the Quakers, and that the small issue around which Baptists differed from Congregationalists doctrinally represented only a minor point over which there should and could be mutual toleration.²⁷⁸ Like most Baptists, those of Swansea were Calvinists who favored open communion with Puritans, and they were not particularly opposed to established connections between Church and State. However, no explicit mention was made in the town’s covenant regarding the source of support for the town’s minister, or whether that support was to be voluntarily or compulsorily drawn from the community.²⁷⁹

In August 1693 the Court of General Sessions of the Peace in Bristol sent a warrant to Swansea ordering the town to procure a Congregational minister according to the law. The town had several meetings on this question and in October 1693 voted to choose Samuel Luther as

²⁷⁶ *Records of the Governor and Company of Massachusetts Bay*, ed. N.B. Shurtleff. (Boston: 1853/4), Vol. III, 173-75.

²⁷⁷ *Records of the First Baptist Church of Swansea*, no. 165 in *Massachusetts Ecclesiastical Archives*, Massachusetts Historical Society. The names of seven original members of the church are signed but no date is given in the manuscript. The covenant may have been copied into the book at a later date

²⁷⁸ Thomas W. Bicknell. *A History of Barrington* (Providence: 1898), 174, 192 in *Massachusetts Ecclesiastical Archives*, Massachusetts Historical Society.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 140. Bicknell’s interpretation of the Barrington records indicate he believed that the covenant implied, and most Baptist members inferred, that the tax was to be exclusively voluntaristic but avoided explicit mention to help resolve the standoff with the county court.

their minister. Though not a Congregationalist, the County court apparently approved of the choice as a temporary solution. Then in 1697, the grand jury of the county presented the town of Swansea with a citation “for not having or procuring a Minister and Schoolmaster as the Law enjoins.”²⁸⁰ At the next court session town representatives complained that they had a minister who met the requirements of the law. The court, however, ruled that “their allegations being not satisfactory,” that they must select a new Congregationalist minister and schoolmaster.²⁸¹

Swansea’s Baptists, though vocally angry about “suppression of [Baptist] worship” by Boston, made some effort to comply.²⁸² They selected a Congregationalist schoolmaster. When the court met again in April 1699, however, the town’s representatives brought with them their town’s foundational covenant; arguing that it codified their choice of minister as a matter of “liberty of conscience.” To lose their choice on the matter would mean “to live under popery.”²⁸³ Although the court reiterated that minister Luther was not “in all respects Qualified as the Law directs,” they accepted him as the town’s “honest efforts” to meet their legal requirement.²⁸⁴

For several years this was the unresolved status quo that was accepted by both Swansea’s Baptists and the Congregational establishment. Whether or not the law constituted a violation of religious toleration granted by King William after the Revolution was left open, although

²⁸⁰ Bristol County Records of the Court of General Sessions of the Peace, Vol. 1, 28. in *MEA*.

²⁸¹ Ibid. By the aforementioned act of 1692/3, the county court could fine each church elder up to four pounds for each offense, however it was usually the case that towns such as Swansea voted to levy the fines on the community as a whole on the assumption that the position of the elders had been debated and supported by the town’s majority will.

²⁸² John Butterworth. *An Account of the Troubles which have befallen the People Called Baptists in the Town of Swansee in this Country*. Boston, 1700, 10.

²⁸³ Ibid., 11.

²⁸⁴ Bristol County Records, I, 49-51.

numerous Baptists suggested the Congregationalists were clearly abusing their privilege within the colony. Baptist leader Samuel Luther's vocal complaints began to antagonize Congregationalist leaders. He refused to baptize Congregational children in the Baptist church. He eventually refused to admit individuals into full membership who were not baptized according to Baptist doctrinal standards.²⁸⁵ This effectively ended the open communion that Swansea's original Baptists settlers had promised the Congregationalists in order to achieve limited tolerance. Amid rising complaints, the grand jury sought to further investigate Luther's behavior, finding that "Swansea is liable to a presentment for being destitute of a Christian minister."²⁸⁶ Furthermore, they found that Luther had broken the law by not being learned (educated at a Congregational college) and for refusing to maintain an open communion with non-Baptists.²⁸⁷ Open hostility between Baptists and Congregationalists was now inevitable, and would center on accusations that each group was repressing religious dissent.

Hostility between Baptists and Congregationalists in New England was not new, and the evolution of the tithing controversy reveals the extent to which struggles over religious dissent and toleration drew from these older tensions. Examinations of schism and dissent within New England have largely defined these topics through the experience *within* religious groups during the Great Awakening that swept the region in the 1740s. Yet this emerging struggle over compulsory tithes in Massachusetts demonstrates the problematic nature of this characterization of events. This was a struggle over orthodoxy and dissent that took place more than thirty years

²⁸⁵ McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 137.

²⁸⁶ Bristol County Records, I, 66.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 121-133.

before the Awakening. It was also the beginning of a conflict defined by relatively unified sectarian resistance against an outside group rather than divisive internal struggles for control within groups. In effect, it was rooted in a form of dissent and competing notions of freedom of conscience inapplicable to the larger Awakening period. The Awakening challenged the cohesion of groups such as the Baptists and Congregationalists. The tithing controversy in Swansea pitted unified these sects against each other. Non-Puritan colonists living and working in Massachusetts resented the universal demand to financially support Congregational ministers for a complex set of reasons. Some dissenters objected to paying anything to support a minister of any kind. Some merely rejected the compulsory nature of the provision, and others simply insisted that the minister they supported be of their own church. They invoked notions of constitutional charter rights and a comparatively widened stance on freedom of conscience that embraced volunteerism and local power to resist in order to resist this type of compulsion in religious matters.²⁸⁸

The Congregational minority of Swansea struck first, petitioning Boston in April 1707 for “their assistance in the procuring of a proper minister as the law directs.”²⁸⁹ The court was unsurprisingly sympathetic to the complaint and ordered Luther and other Baptist elders of Swansea to appear in January 1708. Luther and the others argued that their original town covenant had granted them their “liberty of conscience and worship.”²⁹⁰ The struggle for liberty of conscience and the preservation of that freedom divided Protestants as much or more than it unified them. The struggle by Baptists would see them employ the nascent democratic

²⁸⁸ McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 114.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, II, 139-144.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 151; McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 138; James Cooper, Jr. *Tenacious of their Liberties: The Congregationalists in Colonial Massachusetts*. (New York: Oxford University press, 1999), 44-45.

vocabulary that split communities down to the level of neighbors. The Court ruled what it thought was a compromise. The town was to raise eighty pounds a year for their ministers. Forty would go to Luther and the rest to a Congregationalist minister approved by the court.²⁹¹

While the Congregationalists thought this was a fair judgement, especially after the behavior of minister Luther toward them, the Baptists immediately saw problems with the settlement. First, they constituted a clear majority of the community, and it seemed clear that at least some of their money would be supporting the Congregationalist minister. Second, they felt that the majority should have the right to rule in the town and the minority should bow to the majority's will on matters such as choosing a minister. Third, the foundational covenant implied, they argued, a voluntary contribution to the sole source for maintenance of the ministry,²⁹² and that volunteerism had privilege in the town's business "else popery begin to encroach."²⁹³ Perhaps most troublingly, the court's order stipulated that Baptists who refused on principle to pay a tax levied for either the Congregationalists, Baptists, or any other minister were subject to imprisonment for non-payment. This represented "the most vile, most corrupt tyranny and popery."²⁹⁴

The justices of the county court, recognizing the extralegal nature of the compromise did not try to impose it directly, but rather sent it to the general court at Boston for the approval of a

²⁹¹ McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 138-39.

²⁹² *A Petition of Swansea Baptists to the General Court*, July 1709, 1-2. in *Bristol County Records*, II, 129. By volunteerism, the petitioners elaborated the concept as "to allow consent in matters of taxation based upon free conscience and the execution thereof" as opposed to "popish manners of force." *A Petition of Swansea Baptists*, 2.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5-6; also cited in McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 129-130.

higher court. The general court, however, decided not to take any action whatsoever, and so the situation remained for the next eleven months.²⁹⁵ In December 1708, the town's Congregationalists arranged for the Reverend John Fiske to come preach at their town. Presumably he was going to live and preach in private homes until such time as the Congregationalists were able to build him a home and meeting house out of their own funds or better still to persuade the authorities of the town of Swansea to provide for him out of taxation. Aware that this might mean the beginning of a much larger struggle within the town, several town elders exercised the privilege granted them under the rules of 1667 and issued a warrant to the town constable to remove Fiske as a "contentious person."²⁹⁶ The constable, however, was a Congregationalist, and was unwilling to execute the order. Instead he took it to the county court in January of 1709 and argued that such an order was illegal because Rev. Fiske did not come under any of the categories described under the 1667 rules. The court promptly agreed with the constable. It argued that the elder's actions were "illegal and unprecedented."²⁹⁷

Far from being a "contentious person," the court pointed out that:

"Mr. Fiske comes upon an invitation from a considerable number of the freeholders, and other inhabitants as a probationary preacher and possibly may find that acceptance as to have a farther and more enlarged invitation by a majority of the town for his continuance and settlement or at least by so many as may be able and willing to support him. His qualifications and approbation being such as the law requires."²⁹⁸

²⁹⁵ Bristol County Records, II, 150-155.

²⁹⁶ McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 139.

²⁹⁷ Bristol County Records of the Court of General Sessions of the Peace, Vol. 1, 44. in *MEA*.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

The court released the constable from enforcing the warrant and ordered the Baptist elders to appear at the next session to explain their actions. The elders decided not to contest the court's decision and were dismissed with only a warning.²⁹⁹

The Congregationalist establishment's victory was short lived, however, and did nothing to quell the growing complaints from the local Congregationalist minority in the Baptist-dominated town. The Reverend Fiske doesn't appear to have stayed very long or to have made any inroads amongst Swansea's Baptists. Two years went by and the Congregationalists from Swansea, now lead by Samuel Low, sent another petition to Boston. This time they sent it directly to the Governor. Signed by twenty-nine influential members, the petition began by assuring the court of the petitioner's high regard for "the Gospel purely preached and the ordinances of Christ's kingdom duly administered under pious orthodox ministers."³⁰⁰ They said that the deplorable privation that they suffered in Swansea was due to their persecution by the Baptist majority in the community. They referenced "ill circumstances which our different opinion in matter of religion from our neighbors," had brought their estates into "something resembling a Priestly parish."³⁰¹ They also pointed out "our estates are under those whose power has all taxes."³⁰² They begged the court to impose "the pure Gospel and Gospel ordinances as are set by law."³⁰³

²⁹⁹ Bristol County Records, II, 155.

³⁰⁰ Massachusetts State Archives, Vol. 113, 599.

³⁰¹ McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 140.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 140-141.

³⁰³ Bristol County Records, II, 160.

In short, the Congregational minority could not overcome the Baptist majority, either in town meetings or through the county court, and so they turned the provincial legislature to exercise its authority to create a new town out of Swansea in which the Congregationalists would be a majority.³⁰⁴

The General Court read the petition in June of 1711. Elders of Swansea called a town meeting in July, which Samuel Low and his fellow petitioners chose not to attend. At this Baptist-dominated meeting the town voted “almost unanimously to have ye town remain as it is now bounded, one town as it is and hath been enjoyed.”³⁰⁵ Accusing the Congregational petitioners of being “mostly strangers several of them lately come to town, and some as good as papists,” the Baptist petition argued that the majority was essentially unbound by the foundational covenant to respect the religious rights of the minority Congregationalists.³⁰⁶ They went on:

“we see no advantage in breaking our town, our township being small and granted by the General Court for our township. We wish every conscientious person may enjoy their liberty and just rights so that the foundation and the covenant and agreement present there unto will forbid Romish rule of religious concerns.”³⁰⁷

The most notable aspect of this petition is the relative absence of a doctrinal or theological argument in defense of their position. The Baptists’ petition essentially established

³⁰⁴ McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 140.

³⁰⁵ Massachusetts State Archives, vol. 113, 613-615.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 615.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 617.

their autonomy based in the desire to be “democratical and anti-papist.”³⁰⁸ What the Baptist petitioners clearly took that to represent was a system based upon local rule. Popery, then, represented power that was not local. Since the Baptists’ authority was locally based, they clearly did not see their repression of the Congregationalists in the same light. Moreover, Baptist efforts were clearly based in the will of the people, as the authority from which the Baptists invoked this reasoning lay in the town’s foundational covenant. Since their authority was based on that granted in the document, they clearly did not make the link between popery and their own behavior as it was contractually, legally limited. What made them “anti-papist” was that their effort was dedicated to securing their full religious rights under the reign of the established Congregational church who denied them those rights.³⁰⁹

That is not to say the Baptists did not see even more at stake. In a petition submitted to the Court by three elders, the Church’s decisions were justified on the grounds of defending the religious and political rights of Englishmen guaranteed by the Crown. Referring to the Congregationalists sarcastically as “hypocritically bewailing their unhappy condition,” the Baptist elders argued instead that “this town was settled by a people of a different persuasion from other towns in the country for the most part their inhabitants were such as for [Baptists]. Therefore for prevention of all animosity... it was plainly appeared that the town of Swansea had a special favor granted them on this account.”³¹⁰ For Baptists, this agreement was synonymous with law as it contractually bound both sides to respect each other’s political and religious

³⁰⁸A Petition of Reheboth Baptists for exemption from Religious Taxes. January 1, 1706/7. Reheboth Town Records, II, 172.

³⁰⁹ Swansea Town Records, I, 59.

³¹⁰ Massachusetts State Archives, vol. 113, 617-18.

autonomy as it currently existed. Violation of those terms threatened religious freedom, but also political representation.

By this interpretation, the original settlement was to have been an agreement for each denomination to supposedly go its own way. The assumption that the Congregationalists purposefully chose not to hire their own minister, but had traditionally supported the Baptist minister, was taken for tacit acceptance of all by the status quo. The Baptists interpreted the Congregationalist demand for a system of religious taxes as merely a device to force the Baptists to pay a share of their expenses to support a Congregational minister. In this manner, the Baptists also referenced a larger issue at stake:

“the privileges granted us by the Crown of Great Britain we count not safe to let them go but all former grants of townships of any place or town is confirmed to them and their heirs forever, therefore not safe to let them go, we being invested in them by the Crown which may appear in our royal charter. Lastly we humbly conceive that this honored Court will not take away that privilege that Her Majesty hath granted to any persons or place because in so doing they take away the liberty and property of the subjects which our whole nation is so much concerned to maintain and is a forerunner to destroy our rights and privileges in popery and tyranny.”³¹¹

In essence, the argument was a mixture of rationalistic, local rights, the rights of all Englishmen, and pseudo-moral law, one which would foreshadow the fears that popery invoked.

Other Baptist petitions would invoke similar language. One from October 1711 said “our foundational covenant is to prevent present and future differences that might arise by reason of different persuasions imposing upon each other undue popish or otherwise obnoxious maintenances, but all persons to have the liberty of their consciences to support the ministry

³¹¹ Ibid., 616-17.

wherein they partook of the teaching.”³¹² Another anonymous petition of the same year argued “an unfair imposition of taxes on our township would break and make void all our right and privileges respecting our liberty of consciences according to the grant given us; which we esteem next to our lives and to be deprived or [eclipsed] of any particular in said covenant is a popish hardship.”³¹³

The General Court temporarily sided with the Baptists, but only because they believed the numbers of Congregationalists in Swansea insufficient to support a separate township. The town’s Congregationalists asked in 1712 to, again, “have the town divided or an hundred pounds granted for the support of the ministry.”³¹⁴ The Baptists of Swansea responded, by a full vote, that Swansea already granted liberty of conscience and that the town did not need splitting. The astonishing aspect of this town vote was the included threat that the town would “send our grievance before Her Majesty’s council if we cannot enjoy our rights and privileges granted to the General Court at Plymouth and confirmed to us by Royal Charter.”³¹⁵ Such threats were not exactly new for dissenters in New England, but Congregationalists in Massachusetts were alarmed because this threat ostensibly represented the unanimous vote of a whole town who could speak with unanimity to the King. Moreover, it sent the message to Congregationalist leaders in Boston that Baptists sought to exploit the new political relationship between Massachusetts and the Crown. There is no way of knowing how seriously the threat was taken by

³¹² Massachusetts Ecclesiastical Archives, XI, 383.

³¹³ Anon. *A Reply to Several Discourses on the limits of Toleration in Massachusetts Bay*. Boston, 1711, 37-38.

³¹⁴ Massachusetts State Archives, vol. 113, 599; Bicknell, *Barrington*, 95.

³¹⁵ Swansea Town Records, I, 60.

the General Court, but the Congregationalist petition was unanimously turned down immediately by the Court. Cotton Mather said of the controversy, that those so-called Baptists “see popery where [there] is none and imagine themselves oppressed when good reason shows themselves to be the oppressors.”³¹⁶ Likewise, Minister John Checkley argued that the Baptist complaint that Congregationalist ecclesiastic rules represented popery to be “a familiar line from those who seek only chaos.”³¹⁷ Baptist ministers, however, were quick to answer. An anonymous tract of 1713, probably written by William Ingram, argued “being obliged to pay tithe or compulsorily taxed for the maintenance of another worship is popery.”³¹⁸ The author went on to explain with two reasons. First, he argued that since the tax was neither voluntary nor constituted the will of all believers, it could not be legally defended. More tellingly, however, he argued that even if the ecclesiastical taxes represented the will of the clear majority, it is “the imposition of authority without the consent of those who are subject to it... as with the [worst] of papist rule.”³¹⁹

The Congregationalists of Swansea were eventually successful, however, in establishing their new community, called Barrington. In November of 1717, the General Court granted the town’s incorporation, and in April of 1718 selected the town’s minister. He was to be paid a salary of seventy pounds annually by a taxed levied upon all inhabitants as codified by

³¹⁶ Cotton Mather. *Baptists, or, A Conference about the Subject and Manner of Baptism: Moderately, but Successfully Managed...* Boston, 1724, 32.

³¹⁷ John Checkley. *A Defense of A Book lately reprinted at Boston, entitled A Modest Proof of the Order and Government Settled by Christ and his Apostles in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.* (Boston, 1724), 84-88.

³¹⁸ Anon. *A Defense of the Recent Complaints and Tumults among those people called Baptists in the County of Bristol.* Boston, 1713, 7. McCoughlin theorizes that Ingram wrote the tract due to a similarly written and worded petition attributed to him from the previous year.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 14-19.

Congregationalist law. In Barrington, the Baptist protest against this tax began immediately. The new township in Barrington included twenty-one Baptists. The town simply ignored them.³²⁰ The town's constables, town men who happened to have opposed the division of the town of Swansea, refused to carry out the tax collection. They were imprisoned by the County Court at the complaint of Barrington's Congregationalist elders.³²¹ In 1719, Barrington petitioned County Court, complaining that "some of the inhabitants being averse to a learned minister, refuse to pay their rate for his maintenance."³²² One of these, a Benon Price, was a Baptist and imprisoned for his failure to pay his ministerial rate. Prince brought suit against constable John Tory, probably since he helped to support the Baptist Church in Swansea and regularly attended services there. But at the trial, the superior Court of Common Pleas at Bristol, the jury ruled in favor of the constable. Price lamented, "I know not if there is a difference being set free or put back into jail if such papistry is permitted by free men."³²³

The Baptists' problem reemerged with the death of Minister Luther in 1717. The grand jury of Bristol County immediately criticized the town "for not having a minister according to the law."³²⁴ The Baptist Church chose Ephraim Wheaton to succeed Luther, but the Court believed that the special exception to the mandated Congregationalist education made for Luther

³²⁰ Bicknell, *Barrington*, 202-204.

³²¹ Ibid., 209; Barrington Town Records, p. 3 (April 21, 1718).

³²² Bicknell, *Barrington*, 248.

³²³ Ibid., 248; Bristol Superior Court Records, session of April 1719, pp 176; Barrington Town Records, 8, (February 4, 1719/20).

³²⁴ Barrington Town Records, p. 81, November 22, 1740. There was no Baptist Church in Barrington in 1740 or any other time during the colonial period, so the date here is almost certainly made in error but is clearly chronological to the larger court proceedings which are mentioned in the town records both before and after as 1718/19.

did not extend to a successor. The Baptists' position was also damaged because they could not vote unanimously for Wheaton. Several non-Baptist families still resided in Swansea and, though they had no objection to the voluntary system of the town, articulated the fear that the Baptists might use their majority to levy new taxes for Wheaton's support.³²⁵

The Baptists responded that any man whom they chose as minister would be required to sign a statement agreeing to a system of voluntary support. This apparently calmed Congregationalist fears of Baptist tyranny, and Wheaton was indeed appointed minister. Days later, the Baptist elders of Swansea appeared again at Bristol Court to "make evident to the Court that they had a lawful minister."³²⁶ Minister Wheaton thanked Swansea's Baptists for their support of his ministry, and also thanked the town for its "opposition to the tithes and treasury and corruption Protestants have forsaken."³²⁷

The struggle of the Swansea Baptists over the turn of the eighteenth century are telling for the means with which they resisted abuses by the Congregationalist establishment. Their resistance to compulsory tithes was a longstanding hallmark of dissenting Protestant thought and belief. Their fears of the abuse of religious freedom and the violation of what they felt to be their freedom of conscience were expressed in the anti-Catholic language that had traditionally invoked those fears. More than that, however, Swansea's resistance invoked principles of local government and decentralized political power within those traditional fears. Their "freedom of conscience" was explicitly thought of as "democratical and anti-papist." Popery still represented

³²⁵ Swansea Town Records, I, 84, January 10, 1720/21; *Ibid.*, I, 93, May 20, 1721.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 76, 77.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 79, 83.

abusive or corrupt power, but clearly also referenced more immediate political structures and policies.³²⁸

While the Baptists of Swansea had roughly managed to hold their own against the encroachments of the Massachusetts ecclesiastical system, their actions had primarily been defensive. Their efforts were essentially only to maintain their special, local privileges, and generally did not attack the system of the Congregational establishment itself. However, many of the members of the Swansea Church lived in the neighboring town of Rehoboth. Here they were a minority and were subject to the full power of the Massachusetts Congregationalist tax system. The petitions of Rehoboth Baptists for relief were somewhat more aggressive.³²⁹

The town of Rehoboth made occasional attempts to support the Congregational minister by voluntary tax, but more often than not the town's small size made it necessary to tax all inhabitants. In 1678, for example, when the town was negotiating with a minister to settle there, it was voted to grant him forty pounds salary a year.³³⁰ It also, however, specified that fifty-five pounds should be raised by people freely subscribing, "but if it appear that it will not amount unto it then the town shall levy persons therein concerned according to the best understanding to raise the said some."³³¹ We may presume that "persons therein concerned" would have been members of the Congregational Church, but after the minister accepted and the voluntary tax failed to raise enough money, the town decided in 1678 that the tax would be levied upon the

³²⁸ McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 147.

³²⁹ Bristol County Court Records, III, 61.

³³⁰ Rehoboth Town Records, II, 20, November 13, 1677/78.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, II, 23, June 20, 1678.

entire town. By 1707, the Baptists of Rehoboth sent a petition to Governor Dudley, complaining that the Congregationalists in Rehoboth “constantly compels us to a maintenance of their minister, assessing their religious taxes upon us and by distress pulling away our estates from whereby we are greatly wronged.”³³² This repression, they argued, “resembled popery.”³³³ The petition went on to state many of the arguments that the Baptists would use over the next three years of their resistance to the Congregational establishment. After stating that they knew of “no more suitable way for release from their oppression” in Rehoboth than to appeal to the Governor, they first appealed to the Royal Charter of 1691, granting liberty of conscience; “It allowing liberty of conscience as to matters of religious concerns... avoids such popery as compulsory tithes.”³³⁴

Second, they referenced a statement made by Queen Anne, and repeated by all monarchs that had ascended to the throne since the Glorious Revolution. Expressing toleration for all dissenters, “as also the favor which Her Majesty hath been pleased graciously to afford to her subjects in the realm of England as each one to enjoy their own persuasions as to matters of their religion without molestation, and for each sect to maintain their own ministers.”³³⁵ This argument, like the first, relied upon a definition of liberty of conscience which, although vague, clearly indicated the retention among Baptists of traditional resentments towards establishment tithes.³³⁶

³³² Massachusetts State Archives, vol. 11, 223.

³³³ Ibid., vol. 11, 229.

³³⁴ Ibid., vol. 11, 229-30.

³³⁵ McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 151.

³³⁶ This is discussed in detail in chapter one.

Finally, the petition cited the specific problems Baptists faced in Rehoboth:

“We are a small company of people dwelling within the township of Rehoboth who are of a Baptist Church and we cannot in conscience conform to the popish manners and forms which the Church in that town practices upon us; they not being agreeable to our persuasions, but we constantly assemble ourselves with those of our own society in Swansea and there hear our own minister who is maintained without any charge to the town of Rehoboth or any other town. We go not to hear the minister of the Church in Rehoboth yet not withstanding they constantly compel us to a maintenance of their minister as if a priest assessing the tax to be laid upon anyone who is so wronged as to inhabit that locality.”³³⁷

However, the Baptists were quick to differentiate their plea for exemption from opposition to civil government in general, adding “as concerning the taxes where assessed on us for the support of government we have always been as forward and as free to pay as themselves have been and so shall continue.”³³⁸ They also distinguished themselves from groups such as the Quakers, who believed there should be no salaried ministry. Interestingly, they ended the petition with an appeal not to scripture but “what the law of reason doth require of it.”³³⁹ Instead of asserting the righteousness of a theological position, they appealed rather to the “charity and compassion of the Governor” against their “rather popish oppressors.”³⁴⁰

Even more striking was the Baptists’ claim that the Queen meant to enforce greater toleration in the colonies after the passing of William III. “Her Majesty’s clemency hath so appeared as to the indulging of the tender consciences of those who were of different persuasions in her realm of England whereby we doubt not but that her intent was that her gracious favor and

³³⁷ Rehoboth Town Records, II, 92-106.

³³⁸ Ibid., 111.

³³⁹ Ibid., 111, 112.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 114.

protection from popery, atheism, and anti-Christianity should also extend to her subjects in her foreign plantations.”³⁴¹ Whether or not the Baptists were aware that this was inaccurate or of her desire to send an Anglican bishop to reassert the empire’s religious establishment in British America, or simply meant to play upon the Governor’s responsibilities, this approach made few friends among the Congregationalists. The Baptists clearly believed that the Congregationalist establishment was illegal under the laws of the realm. The willingness of Baptists to play on tensions between Massachusetts and the Crown did much to encourage Congregationalists’ view that the Baptists “decry Papery but espouse toryism.,” essentially tying the Baptists to the conservative British ideology that had eschewed Protestant dissenters in favor of Anglican supremacy.³⁴²

Governor Dudley himself did nothing to help the Baptists, but the petition did gain the attention of Increase Mather, who recognized serious logical flaws arising from the imposition of religious taxes on dissenters. He also recognized that many Congregationalists themselves found them burdensome. In 1706, the same year that the Rehoboth petition was written, Mather published a defense of compulsory taxes.³⁴³ With characteristic shrewdness, however, he formulated it primarily in terms of an attack upon the Anglican system of tithing. The tract, however, is very cleverly written, and important for the three audiences it targeted: first, dissenters like the Quakers, who opposed any form of salaried ministry; second, Anglicans, who

³⁴¹ Ibid, 111, 117-121. This is discussed in greater detail in William McCoughlin’s *Soul Liberty: The Struggle of the Baptists for Religious Freedom*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 77-81.

³⁴² McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 152.

³⁴³ Cotton Mather. *A Discourse Concerning the Maintenance Due to Those that Preach the Gospel*. (Boston, 1706).

defended the English tithing system; and third, dissenters and Congregationalists who objected to the New England system of religious taxation and who argued for volunteerism in the support of ministers through tax. The first group Mather answered with scriptural text, emphasizing 1 Corinthians 9:14, arguing “the lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel,” and castigating the Quakers for what he felt was an impractical doctrinal stance.³⁴⁴

To Anglicans, Mather quoted John Selven's century-old *History of the Civil Right of Tithes*, arguing that “tithes are not by any divine law due to the minister of the Gospel but are rather an institution of the romish Church which the Church of England hath mistakenly carried over.”³⁴⁵ His most scathing attack, however, was reserved for dissenters within New England. He denounced volunteerism as understood attack on Baptists, noting that “in too many places in New England a great part of those who are taught, would communicate nothing to him that teaches them were they not by the civil law compelled unto it. And in some plantations they have no Gospel among them nor ever are like to have if from their hearers the preachers be supported in no other way than that of voluntary contribution.”³⁴⁶ He went on to suggest that he thought “although many of the Baptists purport to see popery in the tithe,” he thought irreligion rather than principle was their main motivation.³⁴⁷

What, then, were the differences between the views of Mather and of the Baptists?

Mather argued that only an undutiful Christian would fail to see the justice and reasonableness of

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 17-22.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 26.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 29.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 31. Mather's discussion of religious dissent and the limitations of what dissenters could reasonably claim within the rights afforded on behalf of freedom of conscience within this sermon are discussed in greater detail in Cooper, *Tenacious of their Liberties*, 58-70.

religious taxes of any kind. Moreover, Mather suggested the necessity for legal enforcement of religious taxes by the law. This was not, in his estimation, “popish tyranny.”³⁴⁸ The Baptists, on the other hand, believed that there was clear scriptural justification for voluntary support, and that any system of compulsory taxation for the support of the Congregational Church was inconsistent with “our Charter privileges, our freedom on consciences, and our Protestant rights.”³⁴⁹ Here things stayed for four more years until a new dilemma forced upon the argument once again.

In 1710, a number of Congregationalists who lived in the southern part of Rehoboth, petitioned the General Court to form a separate parish from the rest of Rehoboth, due to the distance between their homes and the Rehoboth meeting house. Baptists immediately became alarmed. This petition, if granted, would effectively mean that the Baptists of the district would be taxed to build a second Congregational meeting house and be forced to pay for the settlement and maintenance of yet another Congregational minister. Not only did the Baptists reject this, but a majority of the Congregationalists in Rehoboth actually opposed this as well. It would mean an increase in the religious taxes for all inhabitants.³⁵⁰

The petition of the separatist Congregationalists was signed by around thirty people. They claimed to represent twice as many. They worried that their children were not only often absent from Sunday worship but also that because of the many Baptists in the area, they were “enticed to embrace opinions tending to undermine Gospel order and ordinances by frequenting

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 39.

³⁴⁹ Rehoboth Town Records, II, 129, July 17, 1710. This is recorded with a different date in Massachusetts Ecclesiastical Archives, XI, 389 as having occurred in 1712.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., II, 129, July 17, 1710.

other places for the sake of nearness.”³⁵¹ The places which they were referring to were two nearby Baptists churches in Swansea. The petition anticipated opposition from the town’s Baptists, but hoped that “the wisdom of the court may help us obtain a pious, learned, faithful minister settled among us.”³⁵² The Baptists almost immediately filed a counter petition to the Court. They maintained that there was not sufficient wealth or population in the town to support two ministers, especially in light of the heavy taxes imposed from Queen Anne’s War. They also argued that the separatist petitioners actually meant to “subject the Baptists of said town to the rigors and abuses afforded them under the established Church’s unfair and popish taxes.”³⁵³

The town’s separatist petitioners suggested that Congregationalists actually outnumbered the Baptists within the proposed new parish. However, in reality Congregationalists and Baptists split the district roughly in half. The petitioners’ efforts to inflate their real numbers convinced the Baptists that the Congregationalists were trying to discount families known to be Baptist and who would have joined the Baptist Church had the local Congregationalists allowed them.³⁵⁴

By 1712, Rehoboth’s Congregationalists sent yet another petition to the General Court, suggesting that the new parish would constitute seventy to eighty families who could easily support their own minister. Considering the Baptists, the petition was less optimistic:

“If our prayers be not answered until the Baptists are willing, it will be an adjournment without day, and we think their aversion to a learned orthodox minister coming amongst us

³⁵¹ McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 155.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 155.

³⁵³ Massachusetts State Archives, vol. 113, 596-597.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 113, 599; McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 156.

may be justly improved as an argument for granting our request in that behalf to prevent others being tainted with these opinions.”³⁵⁵

For the Congregationalists, simply tolerating the Baptists at all within Rehoboth was the extent of their generosity. In the meantime, the Baptists themselves had offered a new petition in 1710. Signed by Minister Wheaton and twenty-five elders, the petition simply repeated the arguments of the petition of 1706. It did, however, contain some significant changes. It noted that the harsh insistence upon discouraging Baptists in Rehoboth had begun to arouse the sympathy of even Congregationalist neighbors. “Some of our town have said and even they that are of [Congregational churches] that they would be glad if it [religious taxes] were taken off of us and only assessment made upon their hearers. They say soberly that this is a romish tithe.”³⁵⁶ They claimed that the Congregationalists of Rehoboth were not necessarily eager for their religious freedom, but rather to limit that of the Baptists; “Many were persuaded against their own understanding.” The Baptists argued that if the Congregationalists wanted to build and support their own church voluntarily, “we are no Papists and know of no reason why they should not have one.”³⁵⁷ If religious taxes were levied, however, on other dissenters, it would “be an unjust tyranny.”³⁵⁸

The General Court initially declined to create the new parish. Instead, it merely recommended that the town construct a new meeting house closer to the southern part of town

³⁵⁵ Massachusetts Ecclesiastical Archives, XI, 386.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 388.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 390; Rehoboth Town Record, II, 134, May 14, 1711.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., II, 134, May 14, 1711.

and come up with some way to support a ministry for both parts.³⁵⁹ This recommendation, however, was not legally binding and the Baptists of Rehoboth refused to act on it. Instead, they replied to the General Court in May of 1711 that the financial straits that two ministers would occasion would be too much for the town to handle. Rehoboth's Congregationalists, however, did not give up, instead launching a thinly veiled attack on the Baptists as "not sufferers of popery but... inflictors of abuse upon us."³⁶⁰ They went on, "we are half encompassed with neighbors who do all they can to disaffect people and do therefore apprehend tis a matter of no small consequence that they prevent the upholding of God's worship. This especially a most injurious charge at this juncture when other charges be so heavy upon us."³⁶¹ Whether this attack on the Baptists was merely a threat or a new line of argument to the Court, it was a striking illustration of how much trouble Baptist dissent from religious taxation was causing Boston's establishment. The Congregationalists found the Baptists among them a keen annoyance, yet they could not fully suppress the group without betraying principles of local rule and decentralized Church authority that they themselves employed so frequently against the Anglican Church.

The Congregationalists of Rehoboth persisted, however, petitioning for a new parish again in 1712 and in 1713. In both cases, the General Court repeated its recommendation that the town raise the appropriate money to support two churches and two ministers.³⁶² The Baptists,

³⁵⁹ Ibid., II, 146-156.

³⁶⁰ McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 158.

³⁶¹ Massachusetts Ecclesiastical Archives, XI, 399.

³⁶² McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 156.

however, persisted in their arguments that this represented a limitation of their freedom of conscience. They argued, “compliance with the Court’s recommendation will not be to the glory of God nor the town's comfort... it is more a remark upon late encroachments an papist inclinations against Protestant dissenters in these parts of the world.”³⁶³ The Baptists also adopted a new strategy. In an ironic twist, they turned to the Anglican Church’s Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to bring their case before the Crown. The petition, dated January 1714, addresses Samuel Miles, minister at King’s Chapel in Boston, who was gathering materials on behalf of the Anglican Church and its efforts to obtain a bishop for the colonies. The petition began by noting that Charles II and James II, who were never friends of the Baptists, had stopped “cruel and popish abuses to His loyal subjects... namely the Baptists and the Quakers... by the Presbyterian(Congregationalist) parties in New England.”³⁶⁴ They also argued that the Toleration Act and the Charter of 1691 had both granted indulgence to “tender consciences.”³⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the petition suggested “ever since Sir Edmund Andrews’ government has ended we have suffered by being raided to pay their Presbyterian ministers.”³⁶⁶ The petition also suggested that “they are making distress upon our estates, taking away our goods and selling them at an outcry to any that will buy them, and carry our bodies to prison” merely for pursuing their freedom of conscience in a manner entirely “democratical.”³⁶⁷

³⁶³ Rehoboth Town Records, II, 146-49.

³⁶⁴ Samuel Miles. *Inland Letters*, in Records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, vol. IX, 380-382.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 383.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 385.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., vol. X, 19.

There the matter remained until 1715, when Rehoboth's Congregational meeting house fell into such disrepair that it was necessary to build anew. An original agreement between the town's Congregationalists and Baptists had worked out a tense compromise. It soon became clear, however, that the Baptists would again carry more of the burden. Thus the Rehoboth's Congregationalists essentially won their fight, and thereafter the town had two meeting houses and two standing churches. The Baptists gained nothing from the ongoing struggle, aside from the fact that the issue of voluntary tithe-paying was essentially agreed to within the town. After 1720, the town followed Increase Mather's advice and simply incorporated the money necessary for ministerial maintenance into the town's regular taxes. The seemingly only concession to the Baptists was the town's decision to supplement the salaries of both ministers as a means of encouraging voluntary contributions and hopefully keeping the compulsory tax so low as to not invite Baptist anger.³⁶⁸

The Baptists did not move out of Rehoboth and the divisions created between Baptists and Congregationalists over compulsory religious taxes did not end either. In the summer of 1726 they petitioned the General Court again, arguing "that they might be exempted from any minister's maintenance than their own."³⁶⁹ The answer that the town received is telling. It listed several reasons why the Baptists, both in Rehoboth and Massachusetts in general, should not be granted tax exemption. It should also be noted that the response was written two years after the General Court voted to grant tax exemption to Baptists and Quakers within Massachusetts. The first reason was simply that the tax was contractual under law. The second reason pointed out

³⁶⁸ McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 159-160.

³⁶⁹ Rehoboth Town Records, II, 189-94.

that as many Baptists in Rehoboth had traditionally attended Congregational churches, they also benefited from the maintenance of Congregational ministers.³⁷⁰ Third, as Congregationalist Cotton Mather echoed in 1726, “though they say it be popery to levy a tax for the support of one professor at the expense of another,” this did not violate agreed-upon reformed interpretations of the tithe based on scripture and “popery ever only perverts” scripture.³⁷¹ The last and most important point, however, came to the issue of liberty of conscience, which the Baptists gave as their primary justification for exemption. “As to what the petitioners say concerning liberty of conscience implying liberty of estate to maintain the same we have no need to inform the honorable Court of that matter, they well knowing that though his most gracious Majesty King George has granted liberty of conscience to those that worship the true God and yet obligeth the dissenters in England with their estates to pay their acknowledgement to the Church there established.”³⁷²

This was the operative point of fact. For Congregationalists, the Baptists’ drive to resist compulsory taxation stretched the definition of liberty of conscience beyond what law or prevailing custom had allowed in England. The fact that most points of opposition focused on local circumstances was a clear indication that Congregationalists did not wish to oppose the Baptists on issues of dissenting freedom. Baptists of Rehoboth, however, refused to couch the disagreement in any other terms. Answering the counter petition, they reminded their Congregationalist neighbors that “if it be popery that the Church of England could impose fines,

³⁷⁰ McCoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 159.

³⁷¹ Cotton Mather. *Ratio Disciplinae Fratrum Nov-Anglum: A Faithful Account of the Discipline professed and practiced, in the Churches of New England*. Boston, 1726, 19.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 51-52.

taxes, remonstrances, and any other claim upon the believers of New England's [Congregationalist] churches, we see not where it is not the same imposition of popery and tyranny to extract this from dissenters in this country... if it be popery in England, and they [Congregationalists] maintain that it is, it must also be popery here."³⁷³

The Great Awakening has dominated research into dissent and freedom of conscience in New England during the eighteenth century, as contests for authority and for freedom of conscience among and between disparate Protestant groups during that time can easily seem to be offshoots of tumultuous effects Awakening. Ultimately, though, the examples of Swansea and Rehoboth offer a glimpse of an entirely different, though not necessarily contradictory, Protestant contest over authority and legitimacy.³⁷⁴ While the Baptists of Swansea successfully fought for, and later defended, their exemption from compulsory religious taxation by the Congregational establishment, Rehoboth's Baptists ultimately failed. There are, however, two noticeable similarities in their larger resistance. First, both invoked reformed ideas regarding religious and political autonomy to resist Congregationalist taxes. Second, and more importantly, their resistance reveals the extent to which older Reformation fears of abusive power and religious compulsion continued to dominate dissenting political views in the decades following the Glorious Revolution. Baptists' dissent freely invoked notions of local rule and volunteerism in defense of their religious rights. Baptists readily viewed encroachments on those principles as popery. In retrospect, few recognized these struggles over religious taxation as indicative of a

³⁷³ Isaac Backus, *History of New England*, vol. 1, 518-19.

³⁷⁴ These examples can be contrasted with those examined in Francis Bremer's *The Puritan Experiment* and Thomas Kidd's *The Protestant Interest: New England After Puritanism* which both place struggles for religious exemption and dissent as largely between New England's Congregational establishment and Anglicans, rather than those smaller dissenting groups within New England itself.

new way of life or a new attitude among North America's Protestant dissenters toward colonial government. The granting of religious exemption in 1727, however, represented a clear departure from the old Congregational policies of conformity and uniformity. That the exemptions were rooted in opposition to perceived sources of "popish" abuses and corruption spoke to the degree to which Reformation-era dissenting Protestant thought retained its potency in explaining religious and political developments. As the first three decades of the eighteenth century passed, fears of these same "popish encroachments" would lead Protestant dissenters in Pennsylvania to pursue greater political and religious freedom under the colony's Quaker establishment.

Chapter 5: “A Contest of Papists and Levellers”: Freedom of Conscience and the Struggle for
Political Supremacy in Pennsylvania

The prominent Lutheran minister Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg received a letter in Saxony in 1732 from Pennsylvania. German Lutherans in the colony wrote to “sincerely request some aid...from the [Lutheran] church and [its] ministers so that they might receive the gospel freely among themselves.”³⁷⁵ They described to Muhlenberg their frustrations at being ostracized from political and economic power by the Quaker elite within the colony who “made [not] recourse” for their right to worship according to Lutheran doctrine. Without political power, they could not defend their religious liberties. With little or no economic power, they had difficulty even paying the salary of a Lutheran minister to live among them “so that, we are left without hope to exercise” their religious principles. Without ministers to preach the gospel to them, colonial Lutherans worried “our children will be [seduced] to the many [sects] more strongly established” within the colony.³⁷⁶ Ultimately, they feared they would never be heirs of the freedom of conscience long-promised by the Society of Friends’ colony.

The tensions created by the influx of European immigrants into Pennsylvania in the first few decades of the eighteenth century have been the focus of recent histories of colonial Pennsylvania. The dominant Quaker elite within Pennsylvania became very reluctant to accept the growing power of non-Quaker immigrants in the colony. Quaker leaders resisted calls for

³⁷⁵ Ernst Tahlmer to Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg. (August 19, 1732) in *The Journals of Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg in Three Volumes*, eds., Theodore Tappert and John Doberstein. (Philadelphia: Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania, 1958), Vol. 2, 201, 203-205.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 206.

greater political and economic integration of immigrant groups, as they feared the potential for foreign voters to weaken their stranglehold on political power in the colony. This led the Society of Friends to redouble their efforts to maintain the status quo even as they came to be a minority of the population after 1720.³⁷⁷

There has been a tacit acceptance of the Quaker's famous reputation for religious tolerance within this body of scholarship that has obscured the extent to which competing ideas about freedom of conscience influenced the tone and direction of political contests in colonial Pennsylvania. Yet, colonists such as the Lutherans justified resistance to Quaker political power as a necessary precondition for the preservation of freedom of conscience. Royal Lieutenant Governor Sir William Keith allied himself with the growing number of non-Quaker groups in the colony to wage an almost two-decade struggle to curb the economic and political clout of the Society of Friends. Keith and his allies considered Quakers to be "papist[s]" because of the ways they fought to limit access to political power, which thereby reduced people's ability to safeguard their liberty of conscience. Keith and his allies perceived both the Catholic Church and Quakers in Pennsylvania as being unbiblical and antidemocratic. Quakers, in turn, accused their opponents of being "levelers." By this, Quakers meant that Keith and his allies were radical malcontents bent on destroying Quaker law and order that was necessary for freedom of

³⁷⁷ John Smolenski. *Friends and Strangers: The Making of a Creole Culture in Colonial Pennsylvania*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Sally Schwartz. *A Mixed Multitude: The Struggle for Toleration in Colonial Pennsylvania*. (New York: New York University Press, 1988). Smolenski makes a clear case for the problems caused by European, and especially German, immigration into the colony throughout the first half of the eighteenth century. The arrival of large waves of immigration led to a Quaker reassessment of what their power would look like within Pennsylvania after the loss of majority status. Schwartz examines the history of religious pluralism in the colony thoroughly, but is largely triumphalist in her assessment of Quaker tolerance and finds few instances of complaint regarding the power of the Friends over their neighbors.

conscience to flourish.³⁷⁸ At bottom, the political struggles for power in colonial Pennsylvania were rooted in longstanding Protestant theological debates over the best way to promote and preserve freedom of conscience. Very old religious ideas retained their power despite being far removed from the Reformation.

The bursting of the South Sea Bubble in 1720 brought old and latent religious disputes to the surface in Pennsylvania.³⁷⁹ Important overseas trade with the Caribbean went into steep decline as a result of this financial crisis. Philadelphia's economic hardships soon spread to the countryside, and by 1723 the entire colony was in a serious depression. A massive influx of European immigrants only deepened unemployment and poverty in the region.³⁸⁰ Non-Quaker Pennsylvanians urged their colonial government urged the colonial government, which was dominated by Quakers, to help alleviate any current and any potential temporal and spiritual suffering by printing paper currency. The depression resulted in much of the local currency being

³⁷⁸ Anon. *Gospel Times, or Oaths Forbidden under the Gospel*. (Philadelphia, 1722), 12. the term "leveller" was a derogatory reference to the radical English Protestant group of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century known as levelers due to their rejection of social and political hierarchy in any form, which in turn led them to take an early position alongside the Puritans and other radical dissenters extremely critical of the "incomplete" cleansing of Catholic ritual, rigid hierarchy, and authoritarian tendencies from the Church of England. By the eighteenth century, the leveler movement was essentially dead after having become associated with anarchistic and nationally disloyal, subversive ideals that were destructive to public order and the prevailing social acceptance of social stratification.

³⁷⁹ Helen Paul. *The South Sea Bubble: An Economic History of its Origins and Consequences*. (New York: Routledge Press, 2013), 119-131.

³⁸⁰ Schwartz, *A Mixed Multitude*, 160-69.

invested abroad, and the countryside was even harder hit than the cities by the shortage of cash.³⁸¹ Unlike other colonies, Pennsylvania had never printed paper currency.

Recent immigrants and non-Quaker colonists in Pennsylvania were disproportionately situated in the countryside, and many of these groups became dependent on Quaker-led town councils for financial support. The non-Quaker provincials worried that reduced economic circumstances jeopardized their ability to worship God. As Lutherans had warned Muhlenberg, without access to economic power within the colony, non-Quakers were unable to support their own ministers, construct their own churches, or even purchase the property necessary for the maintenance of either.

The provincial push for paper currency became one of the primary issues in the elections of 1721. Non-Quakers led calls for the currency and accused Quakers of hoarding the dwindling supply of paper currency. Quaker leader James Logan described the election as “very mobbish, and carried by a leveling spirit.”³⁸² He and other Quakers saw their efforts as dangerous to the Quaker-enforced religious tolerance. The Quaker-led assembly, though offering sympathy for the suffering of some settlers, demonstrated its dominance by defeating the paper money proposal in 1722.³⁸³

³⁸¹ Frederick B. Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House: The Quaker Merchants of Colonial Philadelphia, 1682-1763*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), 98-105; Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 65-98.

³⁸² Letter from John Logan to Henry Goldney (9 February 1723), in John B Linn and William Henry Engle, eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, Vol. 7, p. 70 (Harrisburg: Lane Hart Print), 1874-1900.

³⁸³ Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House*, 101; for more on the currency fights, which were extended, see Gary B. Nash, *Quakers and Politics: Pennsylvania 1681-1726*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 332-344.

The non-Quaker countryside universally decried the vote to suppress paper currency. One writer accused Quaker powerbrokers of purposefully ignoring the interests and liberties of non-Quakers: “they [Quakers] care not for the others... but only for their own sekt.”³⁸⁴ Another lamented, “they pretend towards generous sentiments but behave as rogues and papists.”³⁸⁵ Non-Quakers interpreted the move as denying them a political voice in the colony's affairs. Without that political voice they feared their inability to defend their religious liberties, which reformed Protestant ideas saw as inseparable.

This upheaval was seized upon by Lieutenant Governor Sir William Keith. Keith had arrived in 1717 and had generally sided with the dominant Quaker group. In numerous struggles over the colony's proprietary nature or issues of royal intervention in the colony's affairs, Keith, an Anglican, went to great effort to protect the colony's Quaker establishment and their interests. However, he now began to see the Quaker bloc's stubborn resistance to the paper currency initiative as as a threat to liberty of conscience. By 1721, Keith began to publicly criticize the Quaker establishment as purposefully oppressive.³⁸⁶ He formed political organizations such as the Leather Apron Club, where he openly courted political followers from a variety of non-Quaker groups, promising them his intentions to protect their diminished liberties. The

³⁸⁴ Darus Preceptus. *Some Thoughts on the Troubles We Recently Encountered, with Commentary on the Causes of these Predicaments*. Philadelphia, 1724. 8.

³⁸⁵ Mathius Apsden. *A Cry for Christian Help*. Philadelphia, 1724, 17-18.

³⁸⁶ Smolenski, *Friends and Strangers*, 255; Gary B. Nash. *The Urban Crucible: Norther Seaports and the Origins of the American Revolution*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 149.

Lieutenant Governor increasingly let it be known that he saw Quaker behavior toward other Protestants as “the worst corruption.”³⁸⁷

His efforts paid off, and in no small part because of his role as a champion of religious freedom. In the fall elections of 1722, almost all the Quaker assembly men who had voted against the paper money effort were defeated. At the same time, the Lieutenant Governor permitted two Anglican SPG missionaries into Philadelphia. Keith claimed that Quakers had restricted Anglican access to Pennsylvania in the past. He viewed this immigration policy as anathema to civil and religious freedoms.³⁸⁸

Quaker powerbrokers suspected the worst of Keith’s intentions. “All encouragement hath lately been given & all ways taken to insult Friends and render men of ability obnoxious, in popish discourses and wretched argument,” said Quaker Assemblyman Issac Norris.³⁸⁹ Norris resented the implication that Quakers were damaging religious and political liberty since, as he and most other Quakers felt, they had done the most of anyone to secure both. They had constructed a colonial society dedicated to religious freedom. Their ruling order guaranteed more generous religious rights than anywhere else within the British empire, and their rule had generally benefited the waves of exiles who came year after year to the colony in search of religious freedom.

³⁸⁷ Keith to Assembly, in Gertrude MacKinney and Charles F. Hoban, eds., *Pennsylvania Archives, Ser. 8: Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania, 1682-1776*, Vol. 8, 1459-1460.

³⁸⁸ Isaac Norris to James Logan (16 October, 1723). *Isaac Norris Letter Book, Vol. 2*, 1716-1730, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 364-65.

³⁸⁹ Issac Norris to Joseph Pike (7 May, 1723). *Issac Norris Letter Book, Vol. 2*, 329.

Keith did little to allay Quaker concerns as he moved forward. In his opening address to the legislature in January 1723, he blasted Quaker obstruction as tyranny directed at non-Quakers. “We all know it is neither the great, the rich, nor the learned that compose the body of any people, and that civil government ought carefully to protect the poor, laborious, and industrious part of mankind in the enjoyment of their just rights, equal liberties, and religious privileges with the rest of the fellow creatures.”³⁹⁰ The new assembly of his political allies, more than three-fourths of which were non-Quakers, authorized the printing of 15,000 pounds in paper currency. The next year, that same assembly would authorize another 30,000. Keith suggested that as the Quakers no longer held the majority in the colony, they should not represent the dominant view on colonial affairs. Such a statement referred directly to the loss of majority that many Quakers in the colony had long feared. In effect, Keith was suggesting that the colony existed for the protection of the majority of the colony, regardless of whether or not the Quaker establishment was in that majority.³⁹¹ The alternative was a system that trampled the religious and political liberties of Pennsylvanians. Quakers, however, desperately feared the loss of control of the only territory within which their own religious liberty was guaranteed — something Quakers had fought for in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut to no avail.

Keith was putting the Quaker leadership in a difficult position. In the past he had proven himself willing to stand up for the Society of Friends. He had played a leading role in negotiations with the board of trade over the affirmation controversy, and had repeatedly

³⁹⁰ Keith to Assembly, *Pennsylvania Archives*, Vol. 8, p. 1455.

³⁹¹ Smolenski, *Friends and Strangers*, 256.

defended the Society from religious attacks by other Anglicans.³⁹² Essentially, Keith was a known quantity that Quakers had come to trust with the defense of their liberty of conscience.³⁹³ Yet, given the history of problems that Quakers had endured under previous Anglican governors, his actions were troubling. Quaker leaders such as Isaac Norris and James Logan viewed the Quaker's monopoly on power as the foundation of Pennsylvania's colonial order, an order that had upheld the liberal, tolerant colony as a bastion of religious freedom.³⁹⁴ Keith openly courted non-Quakers at a point when the Society had finally become a minority of the overall population. The fact that he was challenging Quaker authority with the help of an ever-growing non-Quaker population was a major threat to their position in the colony, and thus the basis of their own free worship.

Quaker John Logan responded to Keith and his supporters in 1723 with his *Charge* to the Philadelphia grand jury. Although in many ways typical of these types of appeals, Logan nevertheless clearly referenced the governor's challenge by reminding all citizens that "harmony ensued" as long as rulers and ruled never lost sight of their appropriate roles. The success of the British governmental system, he suggested, was that it allowed different groups to participate in government relative to their "social ranks and privileges."³⁹⁵ Logan's concept of the public interest meant deferring to Quaker interests, since they pursued the interests of the colony's

³⁹² The Affirmation controversy centered on the Quaker refusal to sign any form of oath or binding contract in matters of personal or collective religious autonomy.

³⁹³ Ibid., 258-9.

³⁹⁴ James Logan to John Penn, Thomas Penn, and Richard Penn (29 May, 1729) in *The Papers of James Logan*. Vol. 10, p. 45, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

³⁹⁵ James Logan. *The Charge Delivered from the Bench to the Grand Jury, at the Court of Quarter Sessions, Held for the County of Philadelphia, the Second Day of September 1723: Published at the Desire of the Said Grand Jury: Together with their Address*. (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1723), 11.

political and religious freedoms without prejudice or bias.³⁹⁶ *Charge* also puts forward the Quaker argument to other Quakers, justifying their power in equal parts by the original settlement of the colony by a Quaker leader and their traditional control of the colony going back to 1675. “The lateness of this our Settlement indeed will scarce allow many, to account it their country because they can remember, that they were born and bred in another.”³⁹⁷ Patriotic unity within Pennsylvania meant adherence to the Quaker “culture and tradition,” because that tradition was the “long known in defense of all Protestants.”³⁹⁸ What was worse, the rise of print media in the colony after 1710 made the “evil communication” of men like Keith a kind of “vicious education ... that we are papists or worse” that restricted the religious liberty of others.³⁹⁹ The Friends were forced, according to Logan, to accept an changing Pennsylvania demographically, but not religiously. The point of utmost urgency was that the colony remain safe as a “Settlement for the Friends” and anyone else seeking the right to worship God in their own way.⁴⁰⁰

Logan’s efforts in his *Charge* nevertheless had very little result. Keith had successfully appealed to widespread feelings of political and religious repression among non-Quakers, and the Quaker defense regarding their religious tolerance was not sufficiently persuasive to many. Most voters ignored the colony’s proprietary secretary and voted the governor’s political friends

³⁹⁶ Roy N. Lokken, “The Social Thought of James Logan,” *WMQ* 27, 1 (1970): 69-89.

³⁹⁷ James Logan. *The Charge...*, 13-14.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3, 4.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 12; Frederick B. Tolles, *James Logan and the Culture of Provincial America*. (Boston: Brown Press, 1957), 125-28.

into the assembly again in 1723. The Legislature then voted for another currency printing bill, again contrary to the wishes of the Quaker city councils. Fearing that the governor and his new political allies were constructing a new political order hostile to Quaker rule, John Logan left for England. By January of 1724 he was telling Hannah Penn, William Penn's widow and the Proprietor of Pennsylvania, that Keith could not be trusted and was becoming a demagogue. Although suggesting that he was fighting for the religious and political freedoms of Pennsylvania's inhabitants, it was clear to Logan and others that he was merely taking advantage of non-Quaker fears to advance his own "High Anglican" agenda.⁴⁰¹ Before long, he suggested, Pennsylvania would not be able to guarantee Quakers' safety — instead becoming a tool of Anglicans and immigrants. Trusting the advice of her husband's old friend and fellow Quaker, she agreed to a compromise solution. She would send new instructions to the lieutenant governor restricting his actions against the Quakers, though leaving him in office. More importantly for Logan, the search for a potential replacement for Keith would also quietly begin.⁴⁰²

In the instructions she sent home with Logan in 1724, Penn made her displeasure at Keith clear and staunchly defended the Quakers as friends of religious freedom. She criticized Keith for ignoring the Quaker-led town councils and giving too much power to the Assembly. She instructed Keith to consult the Quaker councils before consenting to any laws coming out of the Assembly. Additionally, she requested that Keith appoint enough Quakers to the Provincial Council, a ruling group within the Assembly, to ensure a majority of its members were

⁴⁰¹ James Logan to Hannah Callowhill Penn (10 January, 1724), *Papers of John Logan*, Vol. 10, 117.

⁴⁰² James Logan to Hannah Callowhill Penn (10 January, 1724), *Papers of John Logan*, Vol. 10, 119; Hannah Callowhill Penn to James Logan (14 March, 1724), *Papers of John Logan*, Vol. 10, 125.

Friends.⁴⁰³ Directly answering Keith's chief criticism in the elections, she insisted that it was not "Romish ... as diverse men have made the case" that "Pennsylvania's principal settlers" should maintain a leadership role in the colony. Quakers were the best guarantors of political and religious liberty for *all* of Pennsylvania's inhabitants, and thus the legitimate rulers of the colony.⁴⁰⁴

Her instructions set off an extremely divisive debate between Governor Keith, his ally and Speaker of the Assembly David Lloyd, and James Logan. Again, the debate centered on how true freedom of conscience was maintained. Keith suggested in a series of publications that he had never meant to promote factionalism or disunity within Pennsylvania, but rather had only ever worked to secure the "liberties and rights" of English subjects within the colony. Furthermore, he suggested that the mistreatment of "dutiful tennants" of Penn's colony harmed the legacy of Quaker rule "as they, perhaps as much as any others, have suffered oppressions and seek to preserve some from such mischief." Quakers, he suggested without explicitly stating it, were acting much the same as "one might see in Catholick despotisms."⁴⁰⁵ Tellingly, however, Keith made his argument with Penn public, which belied his professed desire for unity and harmony within Pennsylvania. James Logan immediately delivered a new memorial to the Assembly that attacked Keith as a "leveller" and defended Penn's directions to Keith. Penn "had

⁴⁰³ Hannah Callowhill Penn. *London, 26th of the Third Month, 1724: Sir William Keith, in My Last of the 25th of February, by the Bearer, Inclosing an Agreement Made with the Lord Baltemore*. (Philadelphia: Samuel Keimer, 1724), 1-2.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁴⁰⁵ Sir William Keith, *The Speech of Sir William Keith, Bart. Governor of the Province of Pennsylvania ... To the Representatives of the Freemen of the Said Province of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly Met, January 5, 1724-5*. (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1725), 17, 19. The address was also reprinted in the *American Weekly Mercury Newspaper* 12 January 1725.

the authority to appoint and remove a lieutenant to govern the colony in her stead,” and she accordingly possessed the authority to “compel him to exercise his powers in ways consonant with her wishes.” Moreover, he repeated the chief Quaker argument that the Friends’ hold on power was justified as they were known to “recognize and protect ... the rights of all.”⁴⁰⁶

Shockingly, this provoked dissent even with the Quakers about the colony’s laws on religious freedom. The Quaker Speaker of the Assembly, David Lloyd, convinced a majority of the Assembly to claim that Penn’s instructions violated the 1701 charter. “The Representative Body of this Province,” not the Quaker-led councils or the colony’s Quaker proprietor, was “the guardian of the People’s rights and liberties.”⁴⁰⁷ Lloyd then personally elaborated on his position by publishing his 1725 *Vindication of the Legislative Power*.⁴⁰⁸ Lloyd’s essay was a masterpiece of reformed fears regarding religious and political tyranny. On one hand, Lloyd suggested that Logan’s embrace of Penn’s directions to Keith violated “English Rights” which were “the greatest rights, liberties, and privileges.”⁴⁰⁹ On the other hand, Lloyd argued that Logan’s desire to bring Pennsylvania in line with other colonies violated the religious freedoms of the Charter of 1701, specifically in that this would remove “the softer and milder tolerance in matters of religion, which have heretofore informed the appeal [of Pennsylvania] to diverse peoples settling

⁴⁰⁶ James Logan to John Wright (19 January 1725), *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2nd Ser., Vol. 7, p. 86; James Logan. *A Memorial from James Logan, in Behalf of the Proprietary Family, and of himself, Servant to Said Family*. in *Pennsylvania Archives, Votes and Proceedings*, p. 1639.

⁴⁰⁷ Assembly Minutes, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 1655; also reprinted in *American Weekly Mercury*, 9 February 1725. The formal assembly notes differ from the text printed in the *Mercury*, although it seems that the newspaper copy was only shortened for length. None of the included quotes differ.

⁴⁰⁸ David Lloyd. *A Vindication of the Legislative Power: Submitted to the Representatives of All the Free-Men of the Province of Pennsylvania, Now Sitting in Assembly*. (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1725), 3.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 2, 4.

here.”⁴¹⁰ Lloyd sarcastically noted the irony that Pennsylvania had gone the farthest in protecting dissenters from “the subjugations of popery” and yet now Quakers, the chief beneficiaries of that tolerance, were seeking to end it.⁴¹¹

Logan answered Lloyd the same year with *The Antidote*, which largely rehashed his argument to the Assembly defending Penn’s directions to Keith. He did, however, answer some of Lloyd’s accusations regarding Quaker repression of non-Quaker rights. He reminded “those newly settled” that Pennsylvania provided “mighty privileges” in religion that far surpassed those provided for other English subjects. Pennsylvania was the last place anyone could claim to be the victim of “popish aggressions.”⁴¹² Keith, Logan continued, was “the Grand Apollyon of this Country’s Peace” causing the sentiments of many of the colony’s otherwise politically disinterested settlers to be “tainted and soured” against the Friends as religious oppressors.⁴¹³ Logan insisted the Quaker rule was the only thing “ensuring tranquility” in a colony possessed of inhabitants who, though they complained of sectarian suppression by the Quakers, “would find true Jacobites” without the famously tolerant Quakers in power.⁴¹⁴ His opponents, he concluded,

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 5-6.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 7.

⁴¹² James Logan. *The Antidote: In Some Remarks on a Paper of David Lloyd’s, Called a Vindication of the Legislative Power; but apprehended by many as an Assault on the Character of the People called Quakers, Submitted to the Representatives of All the Freemen of Pennsylvania*. (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1725), 4-7.

⁴¹³ Ibid., 7.

⁴¹⁴ Jacobite is a derogatory reference to the supporters of the late Stuart Monarchy, who were largely funded and organized by Catholic France and English Catholics exiled with the overthrow of the Stuart Monarchy by the Protestant William and Mary.

had no right to speak of “freedom of conscience” when it was the “planting generation” that had done the most to secure this right.⁴¹⁵

Logan’s *Antidote* resonated with many of the colony’s Quaker leaders, and Penn herself was congratulatory on his “sound reasoning” in claiming the role of protectors of religious freedom for the Friends.⁴¹⁶ This did little to discourage the nascent alliance that had emerged between Lloyd and Lieutenant Governor Keith. They campaigned vociferously in the 1725 elections. Keith published printed appeals and public speeches, eventually organizing what Logan described, “Night meetings and entertainments that cajoled the people with very particular familiarities ... representing himself as their Champion and Deliverer from Papist bondage.”⁴¹⁷ Time and again, Keith made the case that his political efforts were designed to restore the religious prerogatives that had fallen into “neglect and insult” by the Quakers.⁴¹⁸ The efforts of the Lloyd-Keithian alliance payed off and their faction won by wide margins at the polls. Logan and other Quakers attributed their opponents’ victory as the result of Keith’s “popularity with vast crowds of Bold and indigent Strangers” who had only recently settled in the colony.⁴¹⁹ Whether this was true or not, his claim as a defender of religious liberty was clearly resonating with the colony’s non-Quaker majority.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 5, 8-9.

⁴¹⁶ Hannah Collowhill Penn to James Logan (28 October, 1725) in *James Logan Letter Book, Vol. 2, 1724-1726*, p. 59.

⁴¹⁷ James Logan to Joshua Gee (4 April, 1725), *James Logan Letter Book, Vol. 2, 1724-1726*, 278.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 280.

⁴¹⁹ James Logan to Simon Clement (17 March, 1725), *James Logan Letter Book, Vol. 2, 1724-26*, 270.

Successful though it had been, the Lloyd-Keith alliance was never meant to last beyond the challenge to the Quaker dominance of the Assembly and began to disintegrate in 1726. Penn officially began the process of removing Keith from office. She accused him of lying to her in his correspondence and ruining its former economic prosperity. More importantly, his efforts were “animating the common people against the Friends and merchants to a very great degree through malicious and leveling slanders” that they were enemies of religious freedom.⁴²⁰ In March of that year, the King’s Privy Council formerly approved Keith’s replacement by Major Patrick Gordon, nominally Anglican though Logan was relieved to hear he was “completely against the Romish chicanery” of previous Anglican governors.⁴²¹ Still, Keith did not leave without offering a final parting blow to the Quakers of Pennsylvania. In his final address to the assembly before the beginning of Gordon’s term, Keith contrasted English Quakers who were “plain, honest good people in all their dealings” with Pennsylvania’s Quakers whose “near absolutist nature” in stubbornly clinging to a monopoly on political and religious power had deprived them of “good sense and judgement” and rendered them enemies of “conscience and government.”⁴²²

⁴²⁰ Hannah Callowhill Penn. *The Case of the Heir at Law and Executrix of the Late Proprietor of Pennsylvania, and in Relation to the Removal of Sir William Keith, and the Appointing of Major Patrick Gordon To Succeed Him as Deputy-Governor There*. (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1726), 5, 7-11.

⁴²¹ Order of the King in Council. (11 March 1726), in *The Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies, 1574-1739*, Karen Kupperman, John C. Appelby, and Mandy Banton, eds. (New York: Rutledge, 2000), part 35, pp 33-34; James Logan to John Penn (17 October, 1726) in *Penn Papers Official Correspondence*, Vol. 1, p. 237.

⁴²² Sir William Keith. *The Observator’s Trip to America, in Dialogue between the Observator and his Country-man Roger*. (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1726), 7-9. Keith launches a similar complaint in *A Just and Plain Vindication of Sir William Keith, Bart. Late Governor of Pennsylvania, From the Untruths and Aspersions Contained in a Paper Printed at London, under the Title of the Case of the Heir at Law, and Executrix of the Late Proprietor of Pennsylvania*. (Philadelphia: Samuel Keimer, 1726), 2.

Keith then decided to run for the Assembly in the 1726 elections. The worst of Quaker fears were realized in the election when “numbers of vile people who may truly be called a Mob” turned out to vote for Keith and what remained of his faction. Summing up the surprising success of Keith’s move, Logan attributed it to his ongoing claims as a champion of religious liberty. Logan complained that “some people would have it said that the province is currently absorbed in a contest between papists and levelers ... though but one of these charges is just.”⁴²³ Displaying “bonfires, guns, and huzzas” and shouting “Keith forever, Popery never,” this “mob” soundly voted Keith into office. In an orgy of excess, Keith’s supporters then burned down the pillory, stock, and butcher stalls in downtown Philadelphia, most of which was Quaker-owned.⁴²⁴ Neither Logan nor Keith, however, could foresee that this was the beginning of the end Keith’s moral claim to defense of freedom of conscience among non-Quakers.

He ran for office again in 1727, and won, but again failed to claim the Speaker’s post. Humiliated, he left Pennsylvania for England in early 1728 to begin lobbying the Crown to turn Pennsylvania into a royal colony. This strategic blunder undermined his chief claim to popular support in Pennsylvania, as this would have ostensibly elevated the Anglican Church to formal establishment status within the colony and effectively ended Quaker rule. A pamphlet by Samson Davis of the same year made Keith’s efforts public.⁴²⁵ Sealing his fate within Pennsylvania, the

⁴²³ *Votes and Proceedings*, Vol. 10, 1755-56; also printed in *American Weekly Mercury*, 2 June 1726; James Logan to [H?} Taylor, *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2nd ser, Vol. 7, 91.

⁴²⁴ Isaac Norris to James Scarth (21 August, 1726), in *Isaac Norris Letter Book*, Vol. 2, p. 475; Gordon To John Penn (18 October, 1726), *Penn Papers Official Correspondence*, Vol. 1, 237, 243; Issac Norris to Joseph Pike (26 August, 1726), *Issac Norris Letter Book*, Vol.2, p. 516; Keith failed, however, to secure the Speaker’s chair and his attempt to do so isolated him from Lloyd, who retained the post

⁴²⁵ Samson Davis. *The Two Following Depositions Were Laid Before the House the Ninth Day of August 1728.* (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1728).

alliance with Lloyd and some elements of the Assembly was broken, almost all of which were Quakers or other Protestant dissenters from the Church of England.⁴²⁶ Lloyd and the Assembly issued a public accusation against Keith, claiming that he was attempting to instigate a “wild and daring spirit” that was driving “Jacobite oppressors” to attack the “privileges of this Province.”⁴²⁷ Samson Davis’s pamphlet, likely echoing the fears of many Quakers, suggested Keith’s ultimate aim as an Anglican was to “replace the liberty of conscience widely enjoyed in this Province.” Had Keith succeeded, the Anglican establishment would have “demanded the kiss of the ring of [Rome.]”⁴²⁸ More than anything else, this forced Lloyd, his fellow moderate Quakers, and the loose band of non-Quaker dissenters in the Assembly to close rank with the more conservative “proprietary” Quaker faction. All hated and feared the Anglicans more than each other, and the specter of Anglican ascension within the colony ended accusations of a Quaker breach of freedom of conscience. Only worse could be expected from the Anglicans.

Though lacking a leader, non-Quakers did not disappear as suddenly as Keith himself had. Several of his supporters protested the decision by Lloyd and Penn to leave Keith’s seat in the Assembly vacant rather than fill it with one of his allies, who almost certainly would have been a non-Quaker. The move was derided as a cynical attempt by the Quakers to “hold popish

⁴²⁶ Thomas Wendel, “The Keith-Lloyd Alliance: Factional and Coalition Politics in Colonial Pennsylvania.” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, XCII (July 1968), 303.

⁴²⁷ David Lloyd and John Swift. *A Defense of the Legislative Constitution of the Province of Pennsylvania, As It Now Stands Confirmed and Established, by Law and Charter*. (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1728), 11-13.

⁴²⁸ Davis, *Two Following Depositions*, 19; Craig W. Horle, ed. *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania: A Biographical Dictionary*, Vol. 2. 1710-1756. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 561.

sway” on power.⁴²⁹ Lloyd and another assemblyman promptly issued a printed response to these critics, arguing that since the Quakers were “known to be the most tolerant of Christians,” their hold on power could implicitly never be “repressive of religious liberty.” More directly, Quakers were the “true heirs” of political power in Pennsylvania because time and again they had proven to be “anti-papist” in that they were uniquely disposed to “preserve the rights of even these ... many detractors and levellers.”⁴³⁰

As historian John Smolenski argues, the Quaker political myth that proved central to their control of the colony after the loss of majority status in the 1720s was that the Friends were the best possible leaders of a religiously tolerant Pennsylvania. Essentially, the Quakers offering of complete religious freedom to other dissenters was conditioned on recognition of their “natural leadership role.”⁴³¹ Non-Quakers’ own role was that of a co-participant so long as they recognized and upheld this Quaker-led order. Once criticisms on the point of religious liberty had been answered, very little challenge was possible within the existing political language of Pennsylvania. It was only through persistent challenges on this point that this important element of their dominance could be questioned.⁴³² The events of 1728 had produced the public perception that continued Quaker rule was actually of greater benefit to religious dissenters than the prospect of a newly imposed Anglican orthodoxy through loss of proprietary status. Accordingly the new alliance of Quakers and other Protestants in 1728 prevailed in the fall

⁴²⁹ Anon. *To the Honorable Patrick Gordon esq; Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Pennsylvania*. (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1728), 10.

⁴³⁰ Lloyd and Swift, *A Defense of the Legislative Constitution*, 21.

⁴³¹ Smolenski, *Friends and Strangers*, 269-71.

⁴³² Ibid., 271; Schwartz, *A Mixed Multitude*, 160.

elections of that year. Indeed, Quakers would continue to dominate the colonial Assembly for the next 25 years-comprising between 50 and 90 percent of the legislature despite representing a smaller and smaller minority of the colony's population.⁴³³ In the end, Quakers successfully defeated the accusations of "popish" behavior that had defined Keith's challenge to the Quaker order, not through their own actions, but rather through the errors of Keith and others whose efforts came to be suspected as advantageous to Anglican interests. Even those groups such as the Baptists, Presbyterians, and German Protestant groups who harbored resentments of Quaker power agreed that Anglicans were a greater threat to their respective religious liberties. If Quaker rule stood in the way of Anglican ascension within Pennsylvania, it had to be embraced if only for the time being as a better guarantee of freedom of conscience.

Perhaps the most indicative tract of this perspective was the 1735 memorial *Advice to the Free-Holders and Electors of Pennsylvania* published under the presumed pseudonym of Constant Truman. The Tract argued the relatively contradictory line that equality and exclusionary Quaker power existed simultaneously in Pennsylvania. This environment was nevertheless one that represented the true spirit of "English Liberties" because Pennsylvanians, though not equally endowed with equal political rights, lived in a colony where "we are at Liberty to Declare our Thoughts and Conscience freely to one another, concerning Public Affairs."⁴³⁴ Regardless of their religious beliefs, colonists didn't suffer from what "arbitrary government... with his Mind enslaved, his Tongue tied, his Hands fettered and his Legs chained, just as the Humour or Wantonness of a Great Prince or Priest, without any Regard to Justice and

⁴³³ Smolenski, *Friends and Strangers*, 268; Wendel, "The Lloyd-Keith Alliance," 317.

⁴³⁴ Constant Truman. *Advice to the Free-Holders and Electors of Pennsylvania*. (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1735), 7.

the Laws” attempted to impose upon them.⁴³⁵ Without the benevolence and religious tolerance provided by a Quaker-led society, *Advice* went on to suggest to Pennsylvania’s dissenters, “you are no longer Freeman, but Slaves, ...Beasts of Burden” to those who had “not merely political rule, but also Popish pretensions to [complete] authority in all matters.”⁴³⁶

By the time *Advice* was published, Quakers were enjoying what some have called the zenith of their power within the colony.⁴³⁷ The challenge from Gov. Keith had seriously weakened Quaker dominance in the 1710s and 1720s by uniting religious opponents in opposition based on perceived threats to their freedom of conscience. With the defeat of Keith and many of his political allies, this challenge to Quaker power as the protectors of freedom of conscience largely faded. However, the issue of freedom of conscience within the colony were not easily cast aside and remained a focal point within coming struggles. Indeed, the rising numbers of non-Quakers within Pennsylvania played a crucial role in the next challenge to Quaker power in Pennsylvania, which began with a renewed debate surrounding Quaker pacifism and the limitations of freedom of conscience. This struggle, too, would be defined as a struggle against “popery.”⁴³⁸

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 19-20.

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 12-13, 15.

⁴³⁷ Allen Tully. *Forming American Politics: Ideals, Interests, and Institutions in Colonial New York and Pennsylvania*. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994), 211, 235-39.

⁴³⁸ Paul Dudley. *An Essay on the Merchandise of Slaves and Souls of Men, with an Application thereof to the Church of Rome*. (Philadelphia: 1741), 8-9. This tract was originally published in Boston in 1731, but was republished in Pennsylvania during the dispute over freedom of conscience. The implications of its appropriation by the Quakers spoke not only to the explicit mention of encroachment on religious beliefs as “popery,” but also to the specific topic Dudley discussed in the tract, which was how slavers enslaved Africans by “first, removing their sense of religion and denying their beliefs.” This, Dudley argued and the Quakers agreed, “was ever the first effort toward subjugation and servitude.”

The issue of pacifism had faded to the background in Pennsylvania after the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. The onset of the War of Jenkins' Ear in 1739 and then the Seven Years War resurrected the issue within the colony.⁴³⁹ Much as with the earlier dispute with Keith, the struggle began between Anglican proprietary officials attempting to further the interests of the Crown and the ruling Quaker party. Again, too, each side's interests hung on winning the support, or at least acquiescence, of Pennsylvania's growing community of non-Quakers. Quite apart from earlier disputes over militia service and pacifism, which were contests between Anglicans and Quakers, non-Quakers factored prominently into the larger debate. Defensive preparations and militia recruitment were debated in almost exclusively religious terms, as both the Quakers and the proprietary officials desperately courted the support of the colony's presumably many non-pacifistic Protestants.⁴⁴⁰

It was proprietor John Penn who actually suggested the formation of a colonial militia in directions to Governor William Thomas in 1739. The frontier of Pennsylvania lay exposed to French incursions from the Ohio River Valley, and frontier areas were especially weak targets due to their geographical isolation, sparse settlement, and delayed communications with Philadelphia. The issue of successfully defending this frontier region would have been a concern of any colonial government, but the situation was worsened by Quaker pacifism and the heightened environment of fears regarding religious liberty in the colony. From the beginning, Penn anticipated "great difficulties" for the Governor in such an endeavor because "a number of

⁴³⁹ Stephen Brobeck, "Changes in the Composition and Structure of the Philadelphia Elite Groups, 1756-1790." (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1973), 28-33, 250-51.

⁴⁴⁰ Schwartz, *Mixed Multitude*, 164.

the people are principled against fighting.”⁴⁴¹ Any efforts to provide for defense by law would almost certainly be met by the counterargument that any law that would “oblige them to carry arms, would be a persecution” and a denial of their religious freedoms. Penn instead suggested a way for Thomas to avoid the “howls of popery” from the Assembly: the Governor could instead issue commissions to trusted “gentlemen” who could then raise volunteer forces not coerced by militia draft.⁴⁴²

For their part, Quakers had sensed the issue coming for some time by the fall of 1739, when a brief organizational session of the Assembly was called following the October elections. Detailing the presumably inevitable war with Spain, Gov. Thomas “earnestly recommended” that efforts be made to resolve the “defenseless state” of Pennsylvania.⁴⁴³ Neighboring colonies, he argued, were already “vigorously pursuing these laudable ends.”⁴⁴⁴ After a brief council with the Quaker-dominated ruling council within the Assembly, the larger body sought to delay the issue. Although admitting that “it in its nature a matter of very great importance,” the Assembly argued that very little legislative business was traditionally discussed in the organizational session.⁴⁴⁵ Thomas hotly replied that given the threat to the colony, the Assemblymen should “wave a rule” as petty and irrelevant at such a crucial time.⁴⁴⁶ The Quaker-led Assembly simply refused and the

⁴⁴¹ John Penn to Governor Thomas (2 August, 1739) in *Thomas Penn Letter Book, Vol. 1*, 306-07.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 310.

⁴⁴³ Governor William Thomas to the Assembly (16 October, 1739, *Votes and Proceedings*, Vol. 3, 2512-2513.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 2517.

⁴⁴⁵ Resolution of the Assembly of the Province of Pennsylvania (17 October, 1739), *Votes and Proceedings*, Vol. 3, 2513.

⁴⁴⁶ Governor William Thomas to the Assembly (18 October, 1739), *Votes and Proceedings*, Vol. 3, 2514.

session ended. It was clear to them the Governor intended “a provision to coerce war-like motions...even against the rights” of pacifism that Quakers claimed and vigorously defended.⁴⁴⁷

This unsurprisingly enraged many of the non-Quaker proprietary officials, who suspected the Quaker complaints regarding their religious rights to pacifism were merely an excuse for inaction. One Anglican official bemoaned the fate of a colony in the hands of the Quakers who “will do nothing but Trust in the Lord.”⁴⁴⁸ “Many hot headed people,” the official continued, “see the popery with coercion on any principle that touches religion ... and [choose] none but people of that persuasion” for office.⁴⁴⁹ Gov. Thomas himself hoped that the Quaker’s overt obstruction would persuade many in the colony to oppose the Quakers in the elections of 1740. Several petitions began to circulate advocating greater defensive measures, and several proposals for the the organization of Penn’s suggested voluntary militia were published. Thomas, however, sensing the delicate nature of the issue, opted to wait until it was clear the Assembly would do nothing. If they rejected even laws that exempted Quakers, Thomas calculated, he would have a greater mandate to take unilateral action under the guise of being forced by Quaker inaction.⁴⁵⁰ Thomas argued privately that there was “very little sincerity” in the Quaker aversion to militia laws. “They who profess Conscience,” he continued, “will not allow others to act agreeable to

⁴⁴⁷ William Allen to John Penn (17 November, 1739), *Penn Papers Official Correspondence*, Vol. 3, 91.

⁴⁴⁸ Gilbert Tennent. *The Necessity of Holding Fast the Truth: Represented in Three Sermons on Revelations III: III*. (Boston, 1742), 19-24.

⁴⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 29.

⁴⁵⁰ Governor William Thomas to John Penn (5 November, 1739), *Penn Papers Official Correspondence*, Vol. 3, 89.

theirs.”⁴⁵¹ No matter one’s feelings on the larger issue, he argued this was simply “tyranny in pure form ... disguised as toleration of dissent.”⁴⁵²

When the Assembly reconvened in January 1740, Quaker members offered a prepared statement that made clear they viewed the issue as a matter of freedom of conscience.

Assemblymen recognized their duties as “loyal subjects and Lovers of our Protestant Religion and Liberties.” Nevertheless, the Assembly asked for the Governor’s “charity” in respecting their “different sentiments” on the issue of taking war-like measures.⁴⁵³ It was the prospect of freedom of conscience, they reminded Thomas, that had drawn both the Quakers and many of the colony’s immigrants to Pennsylvania. The Assembly acknowledged that numerous immigrants who had come to the colony felt it their “duty to fight” in defense of their adopted land, but maintained that “greater numbers” opposed any kind of warfare or fighting. Then they came to the point: the Assembly refused to pass any law pertaining to military matters.⁴⁵⁴ The Quaker explanation on this point was nuanced and delicate. Compelling people to bear arms would violate the principle of freedom of conscience, and thus serve to “commence persecution” that was at least as bad as “the supposed Catholick enemies are to do.”⁴⁵⁵ On the other hand, passing such a resolution which exempted Quakers and other religious pacifists would be “partial with

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 89, 90.

⁴⁵² Ibid., 91.

⁴⁵³ Assembly of the Province of Pennsylvania. (19 January, 1739/40). *A Resolution to William Thomas, Esq. of Pennsylvania, Governor of Said Province, Votes and Proceedings*, Vol. 3, 2540-2545.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 2545-46.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., 2548.

respect to others.”⁴⁵⁶ The Governor could exercise his military authority granted by the provincial charter, but nothing else. Furthermore, the Assembly would ignore any petitions in favor of military matters because the “Sentiments of the House” were now publicly known.⁴⁵⁷

Governor Thomas immediately replied in a written statement to the Assembly that was published the very next day to the public. His requests were not to the Quakers, he complained, but to the Assembly as a representative of all Protestants in the colony. The public knew, he claimed, that he had no interest in restricting freedom of conscience, but “no set of religious principles, will protect us from an Enemy.”⁴⁵⁸ Alluding to the implied accusation of his pacifist opponents, Thomas mused whether “it could be popery, to endeavor to defeat the Papist enemy rather than welcome him inside” the colony unopposed.⁴⁵⁹ Nine days later the Assembly replied in an even darker tone. Insisting that the colony was in no real danger of attack, the Assembly wondered why the Governor “insists with such haste” on an army that seemed increasingly “unwarranted.” Perhaps “other needs” were the true reasons for the Governor’s desire to take “the lead of a military force,” the implication clearly being that the force might be used to enforce his power and repress religious pacifists.⁴⁶⁰ The Assembly, including all Quakers, were proud and loyal subjects of the British Crown, but “if any thing inconsistent” with their religious

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., 2550; part of this reply was also printed in the American Weekly Mercury as *The Assembly’s Resolution to the Governor in late Session*. (27 January, 1740), 2.

⁴⁵⁷ *The Assembly’s Resolution to the Governor in Late Session*. (27 January, 1740), 3-4.

⁴⁵⁸ Governor Thomas to the Assembly (10 January, 1739/40) in *Votes and Proceedings*, Vol. 3, 2529-2531.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 2531.

⁴⁶⁰ Assembly of Pennsylvania to Governor Thomas (19 January, 1739/40), in *Votes and Proceedings*, Vol. 3, 2540-2545.

beliefs “be required of us, we hold it our Duty to obey God rather than man.”⁴⁶¹ Turning Thomas’s logic around on itself, a subsequent message to the Governor suggested that the best way to “defeat a marauding Popish force” was to resist “mimicking the Popish manner” by sacrificing liberty for security.⁴⁶² At a point of stalemate, the Assembly and the Governor agreed to recess for the time being.

By April of 1740, Thomas believed he’d found an opportunity to circumvent Quaker control of the Assembly by issuing a proclamation during the Assembly’s recess (usually done with Assembly approval) asking men to volunteer for an expedition against the Spanish West Indies. More than 700 volunteered with the promise of their share of plunder from the expedition.⁴⁶³ When the Assembly reconvened, Thomas felt he had presented the Quakers with an *fait accompli*. He asked the Assembly to provide transportation, food, and supplies for the volunteers as requested by royal orders presented to the colony.⁴⁶⁴ After a heated debate, and much to the surprise of Thomas, the Assembly pointedly refused to comply. It recognized its “duty to pay tribute to Caesar,” but warned the Governor that his proclamation was a dishonest maneuver that undermined his claims of respecting freedom of conscience.⁴⁶⁵ This resembled,

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 2544-45.

⁴⁶² Robert L. D. Davidson. *War Comes to Quaker Pennsylvania, 1682-1756*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), 27-28.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., 28, 31-33; Sir William Thomas. *A Proclamation to the Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania, on the Late Rumors of War and the Best Ends Required to Secure this Province’s Peace and Security*. (9 April 1740); also reprinted in the American Weekly Mercury (9 May, 1740).

⁴⁶⁴ Governor Thomas to Assembly (2 July, 1740), *Votes and Proceedings*, Vol. 3, 2588-2593.

⁴⁶⁵ Assembly to Governor Thomas (7 July, 1740), *Votes and Proceedings*, Vol. 3, 2593.

they claimed, “a Romish toleration” of religious principles that many in the assembly held dear.

The Assembly, the response continued:

“cannot preserve our good consciences, and come into the levying of money, and appropriating it to the uses recommended to us by the Governor’s speech, because it is repugnant to the religious principles professed by the greater number of the present Assembly, who are of the People called Quakers.”⁴⁶⁶

The Governor’s supporters erupted in rage at the colony’s lack of efforts toward defense.

One claimed that the “perverse Assembly” were to blame for a lack of volunteers and military support for Britain’s war. Supposedly “guarding against popish encroachment,” they had instead demonstrated to the Crown that “a Quaker Government is not only useless but in time of War may prove exceeding dangerous.”⁴⁶⁷ Another critic of the Assembly, Richard Peters, denounced the Quakers for “unaccountable behavior.” It seemed to him that they were “tired with Liberty, riches, and plenty and wanted to get rid of them as fast as they can.”⁴⁶⁸ Quakers, however, responded that Thomas “took delight” in stirring up the colony for his own gain.⁴⁶⁹ More to the point, Quaker John Reynell voiced the suspicions of many that Thomas, like Keith before him, was bent on pushing the government “[entirely] out of the hands of Friends through any means possible” which would inevitably end their “right worship in the country.”⁴⁷⁰ Keith had failed to oppose the Quakers on matters of freedom of conscience by “failing to afix popery” to the

⁴⁶⁶ Assembly to Governor Thomas (8-11, July, 1740), *Votes and Proceedings*, Vol. 3, 2594-2597.

⁴⁶⁷ Gerald Mosley to John Penn (17 July, 1740), *Penn Papers Official Correspondence*, Vol. 3, 125.

⁴⁶⁸ Richard Peters to John Penn (31 July, 1740), “Papers of Richard Peters”, in *Richard Peters Letter Book*, p. 16.

⁴⁶⁹ John Reynell to Daniel Flexney (30 August, 1740), in “Coates and Reynell Papers”, in *John Reynell Letter Book, 1738-41*, pp. 215.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 216

Friends. Now Thomas, Reynell felt, was attempting to “have the effect” by convincing the colony and the Crown that Quakers were “fools and cowards.”⁴⁷¹ Now it was the Quakers who “faced a threat to conscience” from the heavy-handed and deceitful Governor who himself displayed “the bearing of a Priest who serves not his people but his *true* master.”⁴⁷²

The Quaker position time and again presented the issue as one of freedom of conscience, and it was this interpretation that would shape the fall elections of 1740. The Governor took “great pains” to represent Quakers as “unfit” to be involved in government, but most of the Quaker incumbents returned to the Assembly in October. Indeed, only three of the Assemblymen were non-Quakers.⁴⁷³ Governor Thomas angrily complained that the election result had been achieved by the Friends “deceiving the Germans ... into a belief that a militia will bring them under as severe a bondage to Governors as they were formerly under their Papist Princes in Germany.”⁴⁷⁴ Due to Quaker election propaganda, he claimed, many Lutherans and Moravians believed they were in danger of being “dragged down from their farms and obliged to build forts as a tribute for their being admitted to settle in the province.”⁴⁷⁵ They also feared forced service in an “Anglican Army.”⁴⁷⁶ The leader of the proprietary faction in the Assembly, William Allen,

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 217.

⁴⁷² Ibid., 217-218.

⁴⁷³ James Logan to Thomas Story (8 November, 1740), Norman Penny, ed. “The Correspondence of James Logan and Thomas Story, 1724-41,” in *Bulletin for Friends’ Historical Association*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1926), 81-82.

⁴⁷⁴ Israel Pemberton to John Fothergill (4 November, 1740) in *The Israel Pemberton Papers*, XXXIV, p. 1-2. At the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁴⁷⁵ Governor William Thomas to the Board of Trade (20 October, 1740) James T. Mitchell and Henry Flanders, eds., *The Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania from 1682 to 1801*, 16 Vols. (Harrisburg, 1896-1911), Vol. IV, 470-71.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., 475-9.

agreed with this opinion. He claimed his party had been defeated due to the “dextrous knack of lying” by the Quakers, who had “brought down upon us about 400 Germans who hardly came to elections formerly, perhaps never 40 of them having voted at any other election.” The Quakers disguised their real political goal of maintaining power “under a cloak of religion.” By so doing, they were taking advantage of “ignorant country people” who apparently feared “some hidden despotism” would remove their religious liberties more than they feared the real prospect of invasion.⁴⁷⁷

Thomas echoed this accusation when he gave his account of the election to London. In a “violent letter” to the Board of Trade, he complained about Quaker “obstinacy.”⁴⁷⁸ He felt that the Quakers should have withdrawn from the Assembly in 1740, but instead they stubbornly stood for reelection. He suggested that “such is the effect of power, even on people who in most other governments are contented with bare toleration in religious affairs ... here any effort to maintain order or to enforce compliance with Law and Good Sense is [a] Popish evil of such magnitude as would defy belief.”⁴⁷⁹ Threatening to resign, he claimed that Quakers were clearly unsuitable for governing a colony as their paranoia about religious freedom obscured all other practical considerations. Moreover, he claimed that it was “impossible” to serve the Crown considering the “narrow, bigoted views of the governing sect here.”⁴⁸⁰ In response, the Quaker and Presbyterian-led Assembly spent most of the session publicly approving the published

⁴⁷⁷ William Allen to Proprietors of the Province of Pennsylvania (27 March, 1741), in *Penn Family Official Correspondence*, Vol. 3, p. 143.

⁴⁷⁸ Governor Thomas to the Board of Trade (20 October, 1740), *Statutes*, Vol. IV, 468-69.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 471-73.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 476.

statement of the recent Quaker Yearly Meeting. The assembled Quakers at the Yearly Meeting had discussed the “probability of a complaint being made to the King against the Principles of Friends in regards to Government,” and asked for “consideration of religious liberties enjoyed here.”⁴⁸¹

Neither side was prepared to concede defeat on the issue. Both sides heavily courted the support of German Lutherans and Moravians in the fall 1741 elections. One of the Governor’s faction attempted to recruit the help of Conrad Weiser, an Indian interpreter who held great influence in the German community. Weiser was advised that Quakers had misled the Germans by suggesting to them that the victory of the Governor and his allies would lead the Germans to be “obliged to labor at erecting forts, and then putting them in mind of the Popish Tyranny” of German princes to which they would again be subjected. “Monstrously absurd” views such as these, Weiser was told, meant that Quakers “presume altogether on the ignorance of the Germans.”⁴⁸² Weiser agreed and published *Serious and Seasonable Advice to our Countrymen Ye Germans in Pennsylvania*. Weiser warned German Protestants that reelecting Quakers would constitute continued opposition to the wishes of the British government and might “draw a displeasure on us.”⁴⁸³ He sought to dispel the notion that Germans would be subjected to “popery and slavery” if the Quakers were not kept in power. “Whomsoever you shall [choose] by much

⁴⁸¹ Governor Thomas to the Assembly (6 January 1741), *Votes and Proceedings*, Vol. 3, 2665-2667; Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Minutes, in *Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Collection, 1681-1746*, 420 (Quaker Collection, Haverford College).

⁴⁸² Thomas Cookson to Conrad Weiser (12 September, 1741), in *Weiser Papers, Correspondence*, Vol. 1, 6-7. Historical Society of Pennsylvania Quaker Collection.

⁴⁸³ Conrad Weiser. *A Serious and Seasonable Advice to our Countrymen Ye Germans in Pennsylvania*. (20 September, 1741) *Weekly American Mercury*, 6.

the greater part will be Englishmen, there is not nation in the world more jealous and careful of their Liberties than the English, and therefore you may fully trust them.”⁴⁸⁴

Only two days before the election, an anonymous reply in German was issued to Weiser’s letter, probably from the Lutheran Christopher Sauer. The reply accused Weiser of intending to “cheat and deceive” his German audience in order to please the “corrupt prince” Governor Thomas, who had recently appointed him as a justice of the peace. The freedom of conscience and expression that Germans enjoyed in Pennsylvania were chiefly the result of the incredible tolerance of the Quakers. “Liberty of Conscience” was especially owed to the Quakers, as they had rejected “oaths, draughts, tithes ... and other trappings of Popery.”⁴⁸⁵ The election, the letter continued, was a momentous one and “one single mistake ... is perhaps never to be set to rights.” Quakers had “carefully and diligently watched our Good.” Accordingly, the anonymous writer concluded, the Quakers had to be returned to power so that “free worship and trade” could continue to be enjoyed by Protestants of every sect.⁴⁸⁶ As had been the case with Governor Keith’s challenge to Quaker power, the proprietary faction had sought to pit immigrants and non-Quakers against the Friends. Again, however, the Quakers succeeded by defending their role as a arbiter of religious freedom, and so won the argument. “The old Assembly is Chose without Interruption,” ran the complaint of the opposition.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁸⁵ Anon. *An Anonymous Answer to Conrad Weiser’s Letter to the Germans*. (29 September, 1741), in *Penn Family Official Correspondence*, Vol. 3, 199.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 200-202.

⁴⁸⁷ Samuel Noble to J. Smith (3 October, 1741), in *John Jay Smith Papers*, Vol. 1, 200.

The issue of freedom of conscience manifested itself very differently in Governors Keith and Thomas's challenges to Quaker power in Pennsylvania. Keith sought to portray Quaker dominance as arbitrary and politically illegitimate, and thus harmful to religious freedom. Courting the numerous and growing community of Protestant dissenters, he and his allies painted Quaker power throughout the 1720s and 1730s as "papist" because it came at the expense of the political and economic power necessary to ensure their ability to worship freely. Quakers defended themselves from these attacks by successfully making the case that it was their law and order, however exclusionary, that guaranteed the very liberties with which their opponents claimed to be most concerned. Conversely, it was the Quakers themselves who rejected Thomas's efforts toward defense in the 1740s as "popery" that infringed upon their religious beliefs regarding pacifism. Nevertheless, these divergent stories do provide at least two parallel insights. The first of these is the remarkable extent to which feared threats to religious liberty continued to define larger struggles for political and economic power, and vice versa. Both Keith and Thomas's opposition movements against the Quaker establishment were essentially political struggles over legislative and economic power. Yet the spectre of "popery" trampling their religious and political freedoms dominated the tone and content of these struggles for both sides. The fact that each side increasingly included dissenting Germans, Swedes, and other European Protestants *outside* of the English dissenting tradition certainly spoke to the ability of these groups to participate in the larger religious and political dialogue of English Protestant in America.

Second, the contests for freedom of conscience in Pennsylvania indicate the extent to which older Reformation fears regarding freedom of conscience remained a contested notion.

Challenges to Quaker power were time and again framed primarily as issues of freedom of conscience that was being denied to non-Quakers. However, the prospect of Anglican ascension in Pennsylvania quieted accusations of “popery” in the behavior of the colony’s Quaker leadership. Non-Quaker dissenters in Pennsylvania eventually conceded the Friends' inheritance of political power because they suspected, and Quakers convincingly made the case, that Anglicans emboldened by royal intervention were more of a threat to freedom of conscience. Similarly, Quakers resisted Thomas’s challenge to their authority by convincing German dissenters, many of whom were not pacifists, that true freedom of conscience required more autonomy than the Governor and his allies were prepared to offer the pacifist Friends. Quakers succeeded because they were able to convince other dissenters that their leadership was preferable precisely because it recognized and respected the fundamental link between religious and political liberty, as well as the demands each freedom placed on the other. The alternative to this view, they argued, was popery.

Chapter 6: No Popery, No Tyranny: Bishops and American Democracy

Ann Hulton was very concerned in 1768. She lived in Boston and her brother was one of the newly established customs commissioners for North America. Ann and her brother were also Anglicans. She worried that her neighbors might harm her family in the midst of American protests against British authority. “They believe that the Commissioners of Customs have an unlimited power to tax,” she explained to family in London. What was more, her neighbors believed that commissioners would use this “unlimited power” to expand religious as well as political forms of imperial control. They were fearful, Ann wrote, that customs revenue would be used “for supporting a Number of [Anglican] Bishops that are coming over.”⁴⁸⁸ These fears inspired in her neighbors “an enthusiastic Rage for defending their religion and their liberties.” And this rage was not confined to the city of Boston or even to the colony of Massachusetts. This “inflammatory” sentiment had spread “over the continent.” Across North America, Ann wrote with alarm, people likened the rule of Anglican bishops to “the chains of Papist bondage.”⁴⁸⁹ For many Americans, temporal freedom was defined in religious terms.

Religious histories of the eighteenth-century imperial crisis that split the British Empire stress that in the years following the Great Awakening, religious dissenters in North America were left fractured and reeling. Numerous schisms and the formation of “new-light” denominations produced even more zealous competition for religious autonomy. The Anglican

⁴⁸⁸ Anne Hulton. *Letters of a Loyalist Lady, Being the Letters of Anne Hulton, Sister of Henry Hulton, Commissioner of Customs at Boston, 1767-1776*. ed., E. Rhys Jones. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), 13.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

Church, various British monarchs, and imperial administrators hoped to capitalize on the infighting the Great Awakening generated in North America. Throughout the eighteenth century, the Anglican Church set about increasing the organizational and institutional presence of their church in British North America. Scholars have argued that the threat to divide North America into bishoprics ruled by Anglican bishops, known as the Episcopacy Crisis, further contributed to tensions that brought about the American Revolution.⁴⁹⁰

The scholarly emphasis on the Great Awakening actually obscures more than it clarifies when it comes to understanding Americans' reaction to the episcopacy crisis of the 1760s. Most of the focus of recent scholarship has been on the fractured and disorganized nature of most Protestant sects in the aftermath of the Awakening period. This scholarship tends to treat the crisis as more of an internal debate within the Anglican establishment, augmented by public commentary from religious dissenters in the colonies. Yet, the efforts on the part of the Anglican Church to solidify ecclesiastical sovereignty over North America after the Great Awakening tapped into deep Protestant anxieties about the promotion and preservation of liberty of conscience that proliferated before the Great Awakening. Moreover, far from arising amidst a fractured and disorganized religious environment in North America, the American Protestant

⁴⁹⁰ For More on the schisms of the Great Awakening and their overall effect on relations between American Protestant dissenters see Alan Heimert, *The Great Awakening, with Documents*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966); Three full-length works have treated the episcopacy crisis in detail, albeit from very different perspectives. The oldest and perhaps most detailed is Arthur Lyon Cross's *The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1902), focusing on the print campaign of both sides of the debate in London. Nancy L. Rhoden's *Revolutionary Anglicanism: The Colonial Church of England Clergy during the American Revolution* (New York: New York University Press, 1999) primarily details the splintering of American Anglicans during the Revolution, but devotes considerable energy on the episcopacy crisis as a beginning point of that larger schism. Most comprehensive is Carl Bridenbaugh's *Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics, 1689-1775* (New York: Oxford University, 1962). Bridenbaugh traces the origins of the controversy to the beginning of the eighteenth century, identifying episcopacy as a transatlantic dispute beginning with the Glorious Revolution that ultimately evolved into a significant contributing cause of the political crises preceding the American Revolution.

response to the crisis was organized and focused by their shared fears of Anglican power. These fears culminated in articulation of democratic expressions during the 1760s. Between 1760 and 1770, American Protestants displayed an unprecedented degree of unity in their opposition to the extension of Anglican episcopacies, or dioceses, to North America. Their mutual suspicions about the ultimate aims of the Anglican Church in America led them to articulate a shared vision of the threats it posed to their freedom of conscience. It also led them to act together in opposition. They formed cooperative, interdenominational groups to counter the spread of the Anglican Church in North America and to share information between themselves. Their alliance against episcopacy coalesced around a single democratic rallying cry: “No Popery, No Tyranny.”⁴⁹¹

Protestants feared the ecclesiastical and civil power bishops traditionally wielded in society ever since the Reformation. Indeed, complaints about the abusive power of Catholic bishops were among the leading causes of the Reformation. After Henry VIII’s famous divorce, the Anglican Church retained the role and powers of bishops in their own organizational and institutional structures. Laypeople in England resented bishops for several reasons. They believed bishops arbitrarily imposed mandatory tithes on impoverished communities. They were notoriously corrupt, and ostentatiously displayed the wealth their position afforded them in fine garments and food, palatial buildings, and jewelry. They were also something approaching ecclesiastical police. They enforced compliance with approved church doctrine, punished a

⁴⁹¹ Jonathan Mayhew. *Observations on the Charter and Conduct of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: Designed to Shew Their Non-Conformity to Each Other; with Remarks on the Mistakes of East Apthorp, M.A., Missionary at Cambridge.* (Boston, 1763), 27.

variety of infractions among worshipers, and persecuted those who refused to conform to mandated ritual, liturgy, and Biblical interpretation. Their traditional means of enforcement were religious courts that over time came to exercise increasingly civil functions. By the eighteenth century, for instance, Anglican bishops possessed the power to unilaterally adjudicate issues regarding land ownership, taxation, inheritance, the authentication of legal documents, legal residence, marriage and divorce, and some commercial transactions. This made them a symbol not only of religious oppression, but also of the interconnectedness of abusive religious power and its eventual encroachment upon civil liberties. For many low-church, evangelical Protestants, bishops personified spiritual and temporal tyranny, one of the reasons many dissenters left England and came to North America in the seventeenth century.

While the 1760s represent the apex of Anglican efforts to establish bishoprics in North America, Anglican leaders began pushing for this change before the Great Awakening.⁴⁹² As we've seen, the first organized efforts began with the 1701 Royal Charter founding a missionary arm of the Anglican Church, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG). The SPG's charter described its duty as "an organization able to send priests and schoolteachers to America to help provide the Church's ministry to the colonists."⁴⁹³ Beginning in 1702, the SPG pushed for the establishment of a formal episcopal structure in the colonies to administer its work. These efforts, although resulting in several formal proposals for an American episcopacy between 1702 and 1740, largely came to nothing. Sympathetic to Anglican

⁴⁹² Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, 54-62; Brendan McConville. *The King's Three Faces: The Rise and Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776*. (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2006), 35-36.

⁴⁹³ *A Royal Charter for the Establishment of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, issued by Command of his Majesty King William III in Council, issued the Sixteenth of June, 1701 at London*. London, 1701, 3.

aims, Parliament remained for a long time reluctant to interfere so openly in colonial religious life.⁴⁹⁴

The prospect of bishops in North America remained little more than a topic of debate within English Anglican circles until 1741, after the Great Awakening, with the elevation of Dr. Thomas Secker to the Bishopric of Oxford. Secker vigorously resurrected the issue of an American episcopacy on several theological grounds. In a lengthy sermon of the same year to the SPG, Secker repeatedly referenced the theme of “sheep not having a shepherd” (Mark 6:34) in order to make the case that American Anglicans were suffering from want of bishops in their colonies. Secker argued that the lack of Anglican bishops in America hurt conversion efforts by the SPG who upheld the Christian duty to spread the gospel.⁴⁹⁵

Low-church, evangelical Protestants in North America, however, pointed to Secker’s mention of “promoting an orderly discipline in the sundry Churches” as indicative that the true intent of an American episcopacy was to destroy religious dissent. This spoke to the central tension seen in chapter five between competing views of religious liberty that pitted order against autonomy as the best way to help safeguard freedom of conscience. Additionally, dissenters in the colonies pointed out that America technically already had a bishop since the colonies fell under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London since 1721.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁴ Cross, *The Anglican Episcopate*, 79-91.

⁴⁹⁵ Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, 179; Dora M. Clark. *British Opinion and the American Revolution*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 183-87.

⁴⁹⁶ Society For the Propagation of the Gospel. *Abstracts of the Proceedings of the Society appended to the Sermon preached at the Annual Meetings, 1701-1783*. London, 1887., Vol.2, 219.

Secker countered this criticism over the next three years by arguing that without a bishop in America, Anglican ministers were forced to make the arduous journey to Britain in order to be ordained. Secker was vocal, but initially lacked political support for a move the Privy Council thought sure to enrage colonial religious dissenters.⁴⁹⁷

By 1749, Secker was again urging the Board of Trade to consider appointing bishops in the colonies. He now had support from the politically powerful Bishop of London, Thomas Sherlock. For two years, Sherlock and Secker adamantly insisted on the need for “an ecclesiastical ordering” of America to Whig leaders close to George II, but again failed to advance the issue.⁴⁹⁸ The government under Robert Walpole, the first British prime minister, issued a response in 1751 that pointed out the likelihood that pushing for an American episcopacy would be a political disaster. It was, Walpole argued, a hugely unpopular idea in the colonies that was likely to offend American dissenters and promote disloyalty to George II’s government. Reluctantly, although with the King’s noted sympathy, Secker and Sherlock admitted defeat and backed down.⁴⁹⁹

The push for American bishops stalled for another decade until events conspired to once again resurrect the issue. In 1758, Secker was promoted to the leadership of the Anglican Church as the Archbishop of Canterbury. This put Secker in charge of the church’s agenda going

⁴⁹⁷ Cross, *The Anglican Episcopate*, 100-101.

⁴⁹⁸ Thomas Sherlock. *A Circular Letter to the Commisaries*. (Sept. 19, 1750), in “Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts Journals”, XVI, 131, 189.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 314; XVII, 211-217. Sherlock admitted that “although the issue is resolved in part” because of the King’s rejection of the proposal, it “might be proposed again at a more favorable moment” as Sherlock felt George II was secretly in favor of the an episcopacy as a potential way of administering the colonies.

forward, and he made the appointment of American bishops a priority.⁵⁰⁰ This agenda was aided by the accession of George III to the throne in 1760. Secker was particularly close to the new king, having personally baptized him and served as a religious advisor since his youth.⁵⁰¹ George III was more religiously orthodox than his father, and promised Secker to “hoist the standard of religion” in the colonies.⁵⁰² Moreover, George III promised Secker that the end of the Seven Years War which raged on in the colonies would see the imperial reform of the colonies’ governance; a component of which would be the “ecclesiastical ordering of the King’s possessions in North America.”⁵⁰³ By 1760, the stage was set for confrontation between the Anglican establishment and American dissenters who feared that a renewed attempt to impose an Anglican Bishopric was under way.

As we’ve seen in chapter two, low-church, evangelical Protestants in North America shared certain fears about Anglican intentions that prompted repeated attempts to shape any changes to ecclesiastical policy. They universally questioned whether there was real need for SPG missionaries in the colonies. Congregationalist Ezra Stiles kept abreast of public debates regarding the SPG and Episcopacy, quickly becoming one of the leading voices in the public contest. He estimated the number of Anglicans in the colonies at no higher than 12,600. Although the SPG estimated Anglican numbers to far higher, they pointed out only 27 missionaries worked

⁵⁰⁰ Cross, *The Anglican Episcopate*, 229; Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, 109, 179.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 179.

⁵⁰² Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, 211, as quoted in Thomas B. Chandler. *The Life of Samuel Johnson, the First President of the King’s College in New York*. (New York: Smith and Mitchell, 1805), 79-83.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 119, 121-127; this was also alluded to in Chandler’s *An Appeal farther defended, in Answer to the Farther Misrepresentations of Dr. Chauncy*. New York, 1771, 7-8.

in North America.⁵⁰⁴ Stiles, however, was unconvinced. The Anglicans had 47 churches in the colonies, which Stiles argued was more than enough to minister to their small numbers. “The supposed need for further missionaries... can only represent a design to enforce adherence through a host of Priestly overseers.” This reminded him of the “Romish way.”⁵⁰⁵ His reaction also indicates that while episcopacy became viable after 1760, the fear and resentment it created among American Protestants was based in a far older theological and philosophical perspective. He and other American Protestants understood religious worship to be voluntaristic and individualistic, and organized efforts toward unsolicited religious conversion struck them as coercive. This was understood as a violation of freedom of conscience.

Many others agreed with Stiles’s reformed doctrinal interpretation. One Baptist writer, calling himself only “an Independent Mind in matters ecclesiastical and civil,” echoed Stiles’s assertions insisting “there was very little, or rather no occasion for Missionaries in New England.”⁵⁰⁶ Since the SPG sent them to North America all the same, the writer claimed that the missionaries inevitably fell into conduct “that ill becomes them.”⁵⁰⁷ Describing the type of conduct to which he was alluding, the Baptist writer claimed “they set upon dissenters as Jesuitical instigators” in order to pit “altar against altar.”⁵⁰⁸ Quakers, too, suggested a lack of

⁵⁰⁴ Ezra Stiles. *A Discourse on Christian Union: the Substance of Which was delivered before the Reverend Convention of the Congregational Clergy in the Colony of Rhode-Island; assembled at Bristol April 23, 1760*. New Port, 1760, 113.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., 117.

⁵⁰⁶ Anon. *An Independent Mind in Matters Ecclesiastical and Civil, with some Remarks on the Recent Statements of Mr. Stiles on a Discourse regarding Christian Union*. 19.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., 27-28, 39.

need for Anglican missionaries, especially in Pennsylvania. As James Pemberton argued, “Quakers and Dutch Presbyterians are a great majority of the whole number of inhabitants” in Pennsylvania. Moreover, he added, those Anglicans in Pennsylvania largely resided in the cities where “they have already ample [accommodation]” for their numbers.⁵⁰⁹ Dissenters universally felt that the SPG greatly inflated the number of unchurched Anglicans to justify their calls for missionaries. Congregationalist Charles Chauncy accused the SPG’s annual reports to London of being “unreliable and greatly exaggerated claims” of Anglican numbers.⁵¹⁰ The point, he argued, was to “better the numbers of the ArchBishop’s conniving legions” fighting for “popish prelacy” in North America.⁵¹¹ Nonconformists viewed the SPG as a force besieging, not relieving, the citadel of religious liberty.

In order to undermine episcopacy efforts, influential dissenting ministers energetically attempted to sway public sentiment against the SPG as a threat to “right worship.” Perhaps no one embodied this effort more clearly than Massachusetts Congregationalist Jonathan Mayhew, whose 1763 publication criticizing the SPG did much to spread the controversy over Anglican efforts among a wider audience. He described the SPG’s missionaries as “False Brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.”⁵¹² The influential Boston Congregationalist Chauncy agreed, arguing “the conduct of the Society has, for many years, given us reason to suspect” the

⁵⁰⁹ James Pemberton to Dr. Francis Alison (4 May, 1761) in *The Pemberton Papers*, XXVI, 201-211. At the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁵¹⁰ Charles Chauncy to Ezra Stiles (11 November, 1761) in *Chauncy Family Papers*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 43-48.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, 56, 58-61.

⁵¹² Mayhew, *Some Observations on the Conduct*, 7.

motives of the SPG missionaries who “report with readiness any perceived opportunity to encroach upon us.”⁵¹³ Presbyterians in New York and Pennsylvania suggested that SPG missionaries were “far more concerned to observe and limit our actions and manners of worship” than with ministering to needful Anglicans or converting Native Americans.⁵¹⁴ Presbyterian Francis Allison claimed the SPG clergy “assert their number is near a million; that the King must sometime answer the neglect of this part of the English” in order to “report any remarks made against” these claims back to London.⁵¹⁵ Allison remarked that it reminded him of the “many Popish falsehoods ... which are designs against free worship” of Protestants elsewhere.⁵¹⁶ Here again, the interpretation of events by American Protestants was defined by the reformed preoccupation with threats to their religious freedoms and privileges.

American Protestants attempted to convince their neighbors that the annual SPG conventions were pro-episcopacy propaganda.⁵¹⁷ With Secker’s rise to the head of the Church in 1758, the SPG began to sponsor yearly conventions of Anglican clergy from each colony

⁵¹³ Charles Chauncy. *A Complete View of Episcopacy, As exhibited from the Fathers of the Christian Church, until the Close of the Second Century*. Boston, 1771.

⁵¹⁴ Presbyterian Board of Publication. Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: embracing the Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, from A.D. 1758 to 1788., (Philadelphia, 1841), 41, 42-45.

⁵¹⁵ Dr. Francis Alison to Ezra Stiles (7 August 1766). *Ezra Stiles Papers*, XXIX, 29.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵¹⁷ The Anglican convention movement was particularly worrying for Congregationalists and Quakers as they understood it to be a step toward a formal institutional presence of the Church of England in North America meant to compete with their own de facto local establishments. They especially feared the influence of such conventions on the religious ordering of the empire, and particularly rights to free association of dissenting churches. Conventional organizations would have allowed Anglicans to effectively coordinate North American ecclesiastical policies with the rest of the empire. As Americans enjoyed a far more liberal religious settlement than British India, Australia, and Ireland, they inevitably felt disadvantaged by such a move and worried about its undermining effects among their still weakened denominations after the Great Awakening.

beginning that year with New Jersey. Pennsylvania and the middle colonies followed suit in 1760, Connecticut in 1765, and the rest of New England in 1766. They were designed to concentrate the power and voice of the Anglican church in America to something approaching a single voice reporting back to the Archbishop of Canterbury.⁵¹⁸ Nearly every convention from the New England colonies repeatedly memorialized London for the appointment of American bishops and the establishment of an episcopal order in North America, which had been Secker's main objectives since the 1740s.⁵¹⁹ Having American Anglicans request what he already desired strengthened his argument by making it appear he was only answering reasonable requests. Dissenters quickly saw through this deception. Presbyterian Noah Welles of Connecticut saw the conventions "behind every effort to undermine our liberty in matters of religion" by suggesting to the King "some kind of imposition against his Church."⁵²⁰ Fellow Presbyterian William Livingston agreed, claiming the conventions were "but an attempt by the Archbishop's Jesuitical forces" to advocate against dissenters, especially "those of Presbyterian and Congregational churches."⁵²¹ The conventions were not dissimilar from the yearly meetings of groups such as the

⁵¹⁸Although no positive proof of Secker's involvement in the convention movement exists, his correspondence with Thomas Chandler of New Jersey strongly suggests the convention movement could not have happened without his suggestion and encouragement.

⁵¹⁹ Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, 272-74; Society For the Propagation of the Gospel. *Abstracts of the Proceedings of the Society appended to the Sermon preached at the Annual Meetings, 1701-1783*. London, 1887., Vol.2. Eighteen of twenty proceedings between 1750-1770 include direct requests for episcopacy.

⁵²⁰ Noah Welles to William Livingston. (12 December, 1766) in *Johnson Family Papers*, No. 84, 11-14.

⁵²¹ William Livingston to Noah Welles. (28 December, 1766) in *Johnson Family Papers*, No. 84, 77.

Quakers and Baptists, but their connection to the SPG and episcopacy fatally tainted their image as nothing more than “provocations” in the minds of colonials.⁵²²

Suspicion of the SPG, although widespread, was not uniform in intensity because of the society’s disproportionate focus on New England.⁵²³ Accordingly, the campaign for public opinion quickly shifted to the prospect of bishops themselves. The most obvious tactic was to link Anglican and Catholic bishops.⁵²⁴ In 1763, only weeks after Mayhew’s provocative sermon, the *Boston Gazette* had almost an entire page dedicated to the close resemblance between Anglican and Catholic Bishops in comparison with dissenting ministers.⁵²⁵ Ominously, the writer claimed, the most important shared trait between the Anglican Bishop and the Catholic Bishop was “abhorrence of constitutions bequeathed by our ancestors...religious and civil.”⁵²⁶ This widespread sentiment equated the two organizationally within their respective institutions, but also philosophically. Both resented freedom from their ecclesiastical and political authority, and used their position in opposition to that freedom.

American Protestants feared that Anglican bishops, once installed, were likely to wield their power in much the same arbitrary way associated with Catholic clergy. Through their power over their local jurisdiction, many believed as did a Baptist writer of 1764 that Bishops would

⁵²² Presbyterian Board of Publication. *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: embracing the Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia , from A.D. 1758 to 1788.*, (Philadelphia, 1841), 99.

⁵²³ Secker discusses the fact that Anglican missionaries were concentrated in the North before the SPG in 1761, and again in 1762. Cross also discusses this in some detail in Chapter three of *Anglican Episcopate*.

⁵²⁴ Mary Jane Farrelly. *Anti-Catholicism in America, 1620-1860*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 33-39; See also Chapter One on Protestant dissenters’ views of Anglican organizational similarity to the Catholic hierarchy.

⁵²⁵ *Boston Gazette*. August 8, 1763. Boston, 2.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

“divide every area into a parish, and make the inhabitants pay taxes, toward the support of a minister of the Established Church.”⁵²⁷ Presbyterians, too, feared “A Papist Levy” in the inevitable taxes that the support of Anglican Bishops would require.⁵²⁸ Bishops would presumably also demand tracts of local land from which to establish their respective holy sees, and preliminary steps were made toward that end. The SPG had seen to it that separate grants of land were made available to the Anglican Church for each of the 128 towns issued charters in the land between New York and New Hampshire. This totaled over 2,000 acres of land. Trinity Church of New York was allotted 2,400 hundred acres for “its Spiritual leadership.”⁵²⁹ New Jersey, it was rumored, was to be forced to put aside “upwards of 2000 acres ... of the publick lands ... for the maintenance of a coming Bishop.”⁵³⁰ On this land, dissenters feared they would be compelled by mandatory tithes to support the construction of “palaces for the ostentatious housing of these imposed minor Popes.”⁵³¹ In 1761, The *Boston Newsletter* printed a rumor typical of this common suspicion claiming that the Dean of Bristol was to be given the title of Bishop of Albany and assigned a “palace to reside in ... with a 2000 pound salary per annum”⁵³² It was subsequently reprinted the same year in Philadelphia and Newport. Jonathan Mayhew complained in 1763 that in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where there lived only ten Anglican

⁵²⁷ Samuel Auchmuty to Samuel Johnson. (26 October, 1764) in *The Hawks Papers*, Vol. 2, 17-18.

⁵²⁸ John Stephenson to Dr. John Fothergill. (14 November, 1764). *Pemberton Papers*, XXXIV, 6-9.

⁵²⁹ Matt B. Jones. *Vermont in the Making*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), 138-39.

⁵³⁰ William Johnson. *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, IV, 812. (also in Vol. VI, 457).

⁵³¹ Ibid., Vol. VI, 459; Mayhew, *Observations on the Conduct*, 303, 307-309.

⁵³² Boston Newsletter. (19 June, 1761) *News of discussions between the Dean of Bristol and Members of the SPG...* Boston, 1761, 3.

families, the Anglican Church was demanding prime land in the middle of town for the construction of a hugely expensive new Christ Church:

“The affair of Bishops has lately been, and probably now is in agitation in England. And we see the Society spare neither endeavors, Application, nor expense, in order to effect their grand design of episcopizing all New England, as well as other colonies. And it is supposed by many, that a certain superb edifice in a neighboring town, was even from the foundation designed for the Palace of one of the supposed humble successors of the Apostles.⁵³³

Compared with the modest approach of dissenting groups’ assembly houses, Mayhew went on, these “palaces ... were an affront to Christian modesty, and a yoke to be placed upon those who would not voluntarily bear it.” In closing, he rhetorically asked if this kind of corruption and heavy-handedness “could be or should be supposed to be found outside of Rome?”⁵³⁴

For most Americans, Anglican bishops were the symbolic figureheads of the abusive systemic power that an American episcopate would grant the Anglican church over them. Many foresaw the implementation of Anglican religious courts. Presbyterian Francis Alison summed up the fears of many when he advised Congregationalist Ezra Stiles that:

“the Church of England are determined to introduce one, or more Bishops ... We would not be uneasy had they fifty Bishops in America, tho with that they would make the first Trial in Jamaica and Antigua where there would be no opposition. What we dread is their political power, and their courts, of which Americans can have no notion adequate to the mischiefs that they introduce since they are unaccustomed to Popery in any form.”⁵³⁵

⁵³³ Mayhew, *Observations*, 107.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, 155-56.

⁵³⁵ Francis Alison to Ezra Stiles. (7 August, 1766). *The Ezra Stiles Papers*, No. 29, 11.

Quakers, too, feared religious courts run by Anglican Bishops that would inevitably “rule harshly over some only because they are not of the Episcopal Church.”⁵³⁶

American Anglicans tried to counter nonconformist arguments by suggesting that an American episcopacy would not grant civil powers to Anglican courts. New York Anglican minister Thomas Chandler promised dissenters that “the Bishops shall not interfere with the Property or Privileges whether civil or religious of Churchmen or Dissenters.”⁵³⁷ Tellingly, however, Chandler left open the possibility “that there might be an Augmentation of their Powers as Circumstances will admit of it.”⁵³⁸ Many like Ezra Stiles felt that because Chandler “admitted the fact ... they cannot be trusted.”⁵³⁹ On this challenge, Chandler freely admitted that “there are some other facts and reasons, which could not be prudently mentioned in a work of this nature, as the least intimation of them would be of ill consequence in this ill age and country.”⁵⁴⁰ Stiles and other dissenters saw this as an admission of ulterior political motives, “raising a great flame” among denominations across the colonies.⁵⁴¹ “Many across the country, quite apart from the people of New England called phanaticks and levelers, became quite afraid of the Bishop’s courts and their powers ... for when has such popish power of the religious life of a people restrained itself from encroachment of civil affairs?”⁵⁴²

⁵³⁶ John Stephenson to Israel Pemberton. (9 November, 1766). *Pemberton Papers*, XXXIV, 141.

⁵³⁷ Thomas Bradbury Chandler. *An Appeal to the Public in Behalf of the Church of England in America*. New York, 1767), 1-2.

⁵³⁸ Chandler, *Appeal*, 82.

⁵³⁹ Ezra Stiles to Charles Chauncy. (3 Nov., 1768). *Stiles Papers*, No. 2, 50.

⁵⁴⁰ Chandler, *Appeal*, 105-09.

⁵⁴¹ Ezra Stiles to Thomas Bradbury Chandler. (not sent, dated 9 April, 1768). *Stiles Papers*, No. 2, 61.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, 64; partially quoted in Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, 164-65.

American Protestant fears of an Anglican episcopacy after 1760 underscores the durability and portability of Reformation ideas. Similar to their reactions to Anglican elevation within the Dominion, various dissenting groups were united in their fears regarding the threat the Anglican Church posed to their freedom of conscience. The threat of bishops, however, prompted dissenters of various denominations to take unprecedented steps at cooperative, organized political resistance to that new threat. Their fears regarding encroachments on their religious privileges generated voluntaristic political initiatives designed to resist changes to imperial policy in North America. They justified their efforts by articulating a democratic sensibility of religious and political governance that was fundamentally informed by fears that linked both in the Protestant imagination.

The first attempt at institutional opposition to the Church of England was the effort to form new dissenting Protestant missionary societies to counter the work of the SPG. Since one of the earliest arguments put forward in favor of an American episcopacy was based on the need to christianize the Natives, dissenters urgently attempted to founded or renew their own missionary groups throughout the 1760s hoping to undercut the Anglican justification for ecclesiastical reform. The first move came from the Congregationalists in Massachusetts in 1762 at the close of the French and Indian War. Referring to the many nominally Catholic tribes of Natives who now found themselves British subjects, the General Court chartered the “Society for the Propagating of Christian Knowledge among the Indians of North America.”⁵⁴³ The Court’s stated aim in forming the society was “to show gratitude to God, who has crowned the King’s arms with success, and to take advantage of the French Papists being driven out of Canada, to proceed

⁵⁴³ *Massachusetts: Acts and Resolves*, Vol. IV, 520-23. (Boston: Greenlee, Brown, Alston), 1889.

to spread the knowledge of His religion.”⁵⁴⁴ In fact, Ezra Stiles and other leading Congregationalist ministers had advocated for the formation of a missionary society to counter “the designs of the Episcopal Priests ... who have in constant view the formation of episcopacy here.”⁵⁴⁵

At the same time that the Society was chartered, Stiles and others began quietly soliciting support from among other nonconformists in New England. This initially included only Presbyterians and Baptists. The new body was not required to deliver annual public reports on its activities, thus concealing the amount of its annual income and expenditures — and with this the actual focus of its efforts. Moreover, it was to be funded by “an Evangelical Treasury of religious dissenters from all of North America, but applied at the pleasure of a junto of their representatives here” that included ministers from the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Baptists.⁵⁴⁶ Although formally directed against the Roman Catholic influences among the formerly french Native tribes, the society’s charter noted its hostility to the Anglican establishment in the thinly veiled reference to its mission of “shewing the Indians the blessings of deliverance from Church Hierarchy of any kind.”⁵⁴⁷ By Fall of 1762 Massachusetts and New Jersey Governor Sir Francis Bernard had approved the act and sent it on to London for review by the Privy Council.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 521.

⁵⁴⁵ William Perry Stevens. *Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church*. (Hartford: 1870), Vol. 3, 487.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., 487. Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, 210.

⁵⁴⁷ Stevens, *Historical Collections*, 489.

Some dissenters were skeptical as to whether the Anglican establishment would allow such an open threat to their agenda in North America, and complained about their lack of political leverage. Congregationalist Jonathan Mayhew wrote to his Baptist friend Thomas Hollis that “our *good* friends of the Church of England will endeavor to obstruct this scheme.”⁵⁴⁸ Dissenting leaders became so concerned that in October they wrote to Massachusetts’ influential London agent Jasper Mauduit to solicit the aid of the Dissenting Deputies in England to help promote the society and to ward off Anglican attacks on their plans.⁵⁴⁹ As Mayhew and others suspected, Anglican leaders lobbied vigorously to prevent the royal charter of the society. SPG missionary Rev. Henry Caner wrote to Archbishop Secker arguing that “the real design of it is to frustrate the pious designs” of the SPG in Christianizing the native population.⁵⁵⁰ Furthermore, he warned Secker, the society proposed “being allowed to hold property of up to 2000 pounds sterling in real estate” in order to prevent Anglican ownership and frustrate SPG missionary efforts further. Correctly guessing the actual motivation of America dissenters, he claimed “They are determined that we should be deprived of Bishops, and, in large part, any ecclesiastical governance at all.”⁵⁵¹ A number of Anglican leaders in London led by Provost William Smith registered a series of “remarks against the society.”⁵⁵² By March 1763, Mauduit reported back to

⁵⁴⁸ Jonathan Mayhew to Thomas Hollis. (3 April, 1763). *Mayhew Family Papers*, No. 67 in the Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections*, IX, 9-10.

⁵⁴⁹ Jonathan Mayhew to Jasper Mauduit. (1 May, 1763). *Mayhew Family Papers*, IX, 15-16.

⁵⁵⁰ Henry Caner to Archbishop Secker. (22 June, 1763), in *Letterbook of the Reverend Henry Caner, SPG Missionary in colonial Connecticut and Massachusetts Until the Revolution; a review of his Correspondence from 1728 through 1778.*, ed. Kenneth Walter Cameron. (Hartford: Transcendental Books, 1972), 164.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁵⁵² Cameron, *Letterbook of the Reverend Henry Caner.*, 205-09.

nonconformist leaders in New England that the society's application for a royal charter had failed. By May, the Privy Council took the relatively uncommon step of disallowing Massachusetts's act establishing the society altogether.⁵⁵³ Writing to Mayhew, Mauduit recounted that "from the beginning there was a strong prejudice against this New Society as the word had been given by numerous High Churchmen that it was set up in opposition to the Society here ..."⁵⁵⁴ Even moderate bishops, he continued, "had all been spoke to, and with a notion, that it might interfere with the Designs of the Church here and in North America."⁵⁵⁵ This did nothing to quiet dissenters' concerns about Anglican scheming, and Mayhew and other dissenting leaders agreed to "keep up the Society in a more private way" despite what their shared horror at what was clearly a "jacobite interruption" of their local civil affairs by religious opponents.⁵⁵⁶

The failure of the New England dissenting sects' missionary efforts did little to deter American dissenters' larger efforts against an American bishops or their newfound unity of purpose. This took the form of organized efforts to construct a unified dissenting Protestant representative body and organization called the Christian Union. The passage of the Stamp Act, which dissenters widely interpreted to be the inevitable "Civil motion of ... the larger design to restrain America...which has begun with episcopacy," reinvigorated efforts for unified resistance and cooperation among American dissenters.⁵⁵⁷ In early 1766, they made a concerted effort to

⁵⁵³ *Acts of the Privy Council, at the Court of Saint James.*, Vol. IV, 559-60.

⁵⁵⁴ Israel Mauduit to Jonathan Mayhew. (3 April, 1763). *Mayhew Papers*, No. 67, 14.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

⁵⁵⁶ Convention of Dissenting Delegates. *Proceedings and Minutes of Dissenting Delegates*. (New York, 1763), 11.

⁵⁵⁷ Anon. *A Time to Consider What Lay Ahead, or Considerations on the Desire on the Part of the Church of England to Bring Bishops to America*. (Boston, 1765), 14, 16, 19.

counter what they perceived to be the organizational and institutional advantages held by Anglicans with their own form of inter-denominational union. Composed of representatives from all nonconformists, the Christian Union would strengthen the resistance to episcopacy by unifying the dissenting voice and maximizing their political leverage against the Anglican establishment.⁵⁵⁸ This *Christian Union* was to serve as an ecclesiastical council composed of representatives from the Congregationalists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Quakers, and Moravians. Crucially, it would also serve as these groups' primary vehicle through which to lobby the Privy Council on matters of religious *and* political interest to Protestant dissenters.

American Protestants understood that they lacked a political voice in the debate surrounding ecclesiastical policy in North America, and immediately began searching for a way to gain that voice. The union of the two Presbyterian synods of Pennsylvania and New York in 1758 had convinced some dissenting leaders, especially in New England, that a broad union of American dissenters might be possible. Indeed, their rising fears of episcopacy led them to conclude that some kind of organized, representative political affiliation among American Protestants was the only way to defend American religious prerogatives. Writing to Francis Alison a year later, Congregationalist Ezra Stiles suggested that some effort should be made to "bring all dissenting Protestants together."⁵⁵⁹ This would perhaps be the only way to "unite our efforts against popery and its imitators."⁵⁶⁰ In April of 1760 he advanced the idea to the Convention of Congregational Clergy of Rhode Island, arguing that Congregationalists should

⁵⁵⁸ Ezra Stiles. *Ezra Stiles Papers*, No.32, 5-9.

⁵⁵⁹ Ezra Stiles to Francis Alison. (7 December, 1759), *Ezra Stiles Papers*, No. 32, 101.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 103.

set aside disputes with other dissenting Churches ... whose combined strength may yet hold back encroachments made upon us all, and ... deliver us to Liberty in place of Popery.”⁵⁶¹

Congregationalists, however, were hesitant to form formal ties with the other Churches. One of the audience maintained that “this may be seen as the very Priestly courts we ought to despise.”⁵⁶² Stiles continued to advocate the idea of a broader dissenting union, but for the next two years it never advanced beyond the point of public debate.

While Congregationalists remained skeptical, Presbyterians continued to act. Francis Alison initiated a failed attempt at a complete union of Pennsylvania Presbyterians in 1764. It gained wide support and looked close to formal association when Anglican leaders persuaded the governor to intervene and stop the association. Two years later, however, the matter shifted beyond Anglican control. In May of 1766, eighty ministers and elders met at the annual synod of New York and Pennsylvania Presbyterians in Manhattan. On the 30th, the Pennsylvania ministers entered onto the floor a letter from Francis Alison, asking the synod to begin correspondence with the Presbyterians and Congregationalists of Connecticut in order to sound out the possibilities of wider union between their groups.⁵⁶³ The synod almost unanimously approved the proposal and formed a committee, headed by Dr. Alison, to handle future negotiations with

⁵⁶¹Ezra Stiles. *A Sermon Delivered before the Convention of the Congregational Churches in the Colony of Rhode Island, with some remarks on Recent Events*. (New Port, 1760), 27.

⁵⁶² Stephens, *Historical Collections*, 612.

⁵⁶³ Presbyterian Board of Publication. *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: embracing the Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, from A.D. 1758 to 1788.*, (Philadelphia, 1841), 351-354.

the Connecticut ministers. The point was clear: “to affect some kind of union of dissenters against our many conformist adversaries” in defense of their religious and political freedom.⁵⁶⁴

In June the General Association of Churches of Connecticut agreed to open negotiations with the Presbyterians, thus marking the beginning of an interdenominational political campaign to shape any potential reforms.⁵⁶⁵ Simultaneously, Dr. Francis’s brother Patrick and Reverend John Ewing traveled to Rhode Island to confer with Ezra Stiles about any interest Congregationalists of that colony had in joining this hypothetical union. Stiles warned his messengers to move quickly since the Archbishop would certainly be aware of their efforts by August.⁵⁶⁶ Alison and Ewing replied that the Presbyterians had no intent of keeping their grand design secret.⁵⁶⁷ Encouraged by their confidence, Stiles extended his support to their plan and promised to press his fellow Rhode Islanders on the importance of “such a union at this time of threatened episcopacy.”⁵⁶⁸ He also suggested they immediately take their plans to Boston and court the support of the powerful Congregationalist establishment there. It appears they left for Boston the same day.⁵⁶⁹ Stiles then wrote to Dr. Alison detailing his ideas about how such a proposed union might be organized and led without creating too much distrust and resentment

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., 354.

⁵⁶⁵ *Records of the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut*, eds. Warren Wallace and William Avery. (Hartford, 1888), 57-59.

⁵⁶⁶ Ezra Stiles to Francis Alison. (7 August, 1766), *Stiles Papers*, No. 31, 125.

⁵⁶⁷ Francis Alison to Ezra Stiles. (26, August, 1766), *Stiles Papers*, No. 31, 132.

⁵⁶⁸ Ezra Stiles to Francis Alison. (8 October, 1766), *Stiles Papers*, No. 31, 149.

⁵⁶⁹ Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, 272-73; Stiles, *Stiles Papers*, No. 31, 150.

between the various dissenting groups. Stiles sought confirmation from Alison as to what the driving purpose would be behind such a union. Alison's reply in August of 1766 was telling:

"I am greatly for an Union among all the anti-Episcopal and anti-Papist Churches and I think it may be Effected without so much difficulty ... Let the bottom to build on be broad: No authority be claimed by the body, but what is suasive... The grand points to be kept in view, are the promoting of religion and the good of the Civil Societies, and a firm union against Episcopal and Papal Encroachments."⁵⁷⁰

In his letter to Stiles, Alison admitted that the Anglicans "are unwearied in their applications against America, and their power is great in England, and every lawful method should be used to keep free from that yoke of Bondage."⁵⁷¹ Stiles, however, had spent much of July in Boston eagerly sounding out support among the Massachusetts establishment for a union to include, at least, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Congregationalists. Boston's Ebenezer Pemberton told Stiles that the union was unrealistic, thinking the most that could be accomplished was some kind of "unified correspondence to keep each other abreast of developments and to coordinate their separate responses to religious and civil offenses."⁵⁷² Stiles advised Alison, however, that in private "all are agreed to a Union in some form or other but I found none ripe to pronounce a plan." Going further, Stiles felt Congregationalists were anxious that union "must take the nature of a social Confederacy between and among *three* distinct, separate, and independent Bodies."⁵⁷³ Further complicating Stiles's efforts, was the suspicion felt by Connecticut dissenters of any union between themselves and the Massachusetts dissenters.

⁵⁷⁰ Francis Alison to Ezra Stiles. (22 September, 1766), *Stiles Papers*, No. 31, 164,166-67.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁵⁷² Ebenezer Pemberton to Ezra Stiles. (9 September, 1766), *Stiles papers*, No. 31, 158.

⁵⁷³ Ezra Stiles to Francis Alision. (7 August, 1766), *Stiles Papers*, No. 31, 148.

Such an arrangement, they felt, was likely to be seen “with an evil eye at Court... as a Twin Brother of the Civil Union of the dissenting Colonies,” similar to the Albany Plan of 1754.⁵⁷⁴ Furthermore, they pointed out, these schemes were “both begotten by a Commonwealth man” and intended ultimate colonial Independence. They questioned “Might this not induce, rather than prevent” the very civil encroachments their religious resistance was designed to prevent.⁵⁷⁵

Far from disheartened, Stiles continued his efforts toward some kind of representative union. By October, he had gathered enough opinions from among the many dissenting ministers to conclude that they all agreed upon the urgent need for some type of union to resist Anglican attempts to impose Bishops.⁵⁷⁶ They differed widely, however, over how to achieve it. Stiles again intervened to suggest “Articles of Dissenting Union” with which he attempted to answer the principal disagreements between the groups. First, there would be an annual meeting of all the dissenting groups annually in September. Second, each association or presbytery would provide two delegates. Third, and most important to the Baptists and Presbyterians weary of the Boston establishment, the meeting would “circulate” each year from New York, Philadelphia, New Haven, Hartford, and Boston to avoid giving preeminence to any “one dominant group.”⁵⁷⁷ Fourth, the delegates would have no power to exercise authority over any other churches or ministers. In closing the articles, Stiles returned to the most salient point, providing something of a mission statement. “The General Design of the body shall be to gather and circulate

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., 149-152.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., 152-53.

⁵⁷⁶ Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, 159; Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, 274; John M. Mulder. “William Livingston: Propagandist Against Episcopacy.”, in *Journal of Presbyterian History* (1962-1985), Vol. 54, No. 1, Presbyterians and the American Revolution: An Interpretative Account (Spring 1976), 83-104.

⁵⁷⁷ Ezra Stiles to Charles Chancy. (24 October, 1766), *Stiles Papers*, No. 31, 174-77.

information about the Public State of the cause and interest, to emphasize its loyalty to the King and submission to law, and to publish a summary of its deliberations and resolves.”⁵⁷⁸ Stiles argued that this arrangement “preserved the liberties of the individual Churches” while also “safeguarding the liberties of the whole from forces beyond” North America who were attempting to undermine their freedom of conscience.⁵⁷⁹

In November, over thirty representatives from the Baptist and Presbyterian churches met at Elizabeth Town, New Jersey to debate Stiles’s proposed articles.⁵⁸⁰ Now Baptists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists-groups who had spent decades opposing one another-were working together to defend their collective rights. With very few amendments to the plan, Dr. Alison and the other delegates approved the articles, now renamed the “Plan of Union”⁵⁸¹ Copies of the Plan were sent out for approval by the other constituent groups in New England with the request that they also send delegates to the next meeting of delegates on September 10, 1767.⁵⁸² While the meeting was gathered, the representatives received a letter from Charles Chauncy of Boston “promising at their next [Boston] meeting in May to form a Plan of Union to comprehend all of the associated Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in North

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., 179-81.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., 181-82.

⁵⁸⁰ The meeting was symbolically held on the 5th of November, the traditional remembrance of “Pope’s Day”, or as it is more commonly remembered in Britain as Guy Fawkes Day. The Delegates delayed the meeting by three weeks in order to hold their convention on that day, “marking our purposes of obstructing Popery ... forever.” in *Minutes of the Convention of Delegates from the Synod of New York and Pennsylvania, and from the Associations of Connecticut and New Jersey; Held Annually from 1766 to 1775*. (Hartford, 1843), 8-17.

⁵⁸¹ Francis Alison to Ezra Stiles. (4 December, 1766), *Stiles Papers*, No. 32, 19, 21-24.

⁵⁸² *Minutes of the Convention of Delegates from the Synod of New You and Pennsylvania, and from the Associations of Connecticut and New Jersey*., 25-27.

America.”⁵⁸³ Writing to Ezra Stiles, Alison also advised that the “Congress” had agreed to publish “Some remarks on the plan ... in the five great Cities ...to shew that we are alarmed with just fears, lest the introduction of Bishops, or some other kind of Popery, affect our civil and Religious liberties.”⁵⁸⁴ Alison was reluctant to make such a bold public statement before the union was fully formed, and repeatedly wrote to Stiles over the coming months for advice and speculation of whether the union might be expanded “to the numerous dissenters of Pennsylvania ... including the Dutch dissenters and the Quakers.”⁵⁸⁵

Stiles and other dissenters, however, were busy trying to win over reluctant New England Congregationalists. Their political power in wealthy and influential Massachusetts made them an invaluable ally in political opposition to religious encroachments. Many Congregationalists maintained old animosities toward the Baptists, whose efforts against the Massachusetts establishment had embarrassed the group and weakened their dominance within their colonies. Conveying his main argument to fellow Congregationalist Noah Welles, he explained:

I have for several years been of the opinion that the public Litigation of the Episcopal Controversy will become necessary in America. The Situation and Exigencies of our Churches for this and the next succeeding Generations at least, I expect will require as vigilant and spirited a Defense as the the first hundred years of the Reformation against Popery and Tyranny: tho’ I am sensible I herein differ from some of my Brethren. The Episcopalians are determined to have Bishops if possible —and some time far more— are intriguing the appropriation of one twentieth of the Lands this side of the Mississippi or 3 Rights out of 60 to the Churches, as a foundation of a future

⁵⁸³ Charles Chauncy to Francis Alison. (3 November, 1766), in *Minutes of the Convention of Delegates*. 29; portions are also found in a letter from Chauncy to Stiles (9 November, 1766), *Stiles Papers*, No. 32, 94.

⁵⁸⁴ Francis Alison to Ezra Stiles. (2 January, 1768), *Stiles Papers*, No. 32, 107-109.

⁵⁸⁵ Isabel Calder. *Letters and Papers of Ezra Stiles*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933), 15-16.

Revenue for the Episcopal Hierarchy.⁵⁸⁶

Stiles “rode the circuit” throughout Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire throughout 1767 meeting and lobbying Congregationalists to join in the union. He had considerable success convincing Connecticut and New Hampshire holdouts to join with the union; promising to smooth over differences between New-Light and Old-Light dissenters.⁵⁸⁷

As Carl Bridenbaugh observes, it was the Boston Congregationalists that “turned out to be the stumbling blocks” to a comprehensive political union of American dissenters.⁵⁸⁸ The Crown was already becoming more impatient with Massachusetts’ increasingly public statements regarding infringements of their freedoms, and many Congregationalists feared the “convention of delegates will take the appearance of a body meant to rule on ecclesiastical *and* civil matters of interest” to the dissenting group. They felt it would be the “ecclesiastical equivalent of the Albany plan” of continental political union which “seemed to some opponents a step toward insurrection.⁵⁸⁹ They also felt that their resistance could be successfully waged “by more silent methods” through the networks of correspondence formed between dissenting groups across the colonies after 1760.⁵⁹⁰ Congregationalists, while expressing they sympathy with the union and their shared fear of episcopacy, insisted on continuing their resistance outside of the union. They

⁵⁸⁶ Ezra Stiles to Noah Welles. (22 November, 1766), *Stiles Papers*, No. 32, 181, 183-85.

⁵⁸⁷ Calder, *Letters and Papers*, 48-56.

⁵⁸⁸ Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Scepter*, 276.

⁵⁸⁹ *Minutes from a Convention of Dissenting Delegates, met at New Haven*. (Boston, 1767), 17-20.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

did, however, commit to maintaining their networks of communication with the union “should events force to reconsider” their decision.⁵⁹¹

At the Convention of dissenting delegates in 1767 at New Haven the ministers adopted the amended plan for dissenting union, and made clear the democratic impulse behind their affiliation. They also appointed committees to begin detailed “Correspondence ... with our Brethren who, tho’ outside of the Delegates’ Assembly, share our anxieties regarding the encroachments of Popery, and Church Hierarchy, on our Liberties.”⁵⁹² By 1768, this list now grew to include the “many Quakers of Philadelphia, who keep to some regular contact with Dr. Alison ... as to events,” New England’s Congregationalists, and several of the German pietist dissenters spread throughout the middle colonies.⁵⁹³ Francis Alison was skeptical of what could be expected from the union as formed arguing that the organization “might hold the Churches in union, but this I fear is the reason so many are afraid of it” when they had so long been focused on the same threat from episcopacy.⁵⁹⁴ Stiles was more optimistic, and told Alison that the “anti-papal embryo is formed” now that dissenters were successfully working together to “exercise and protect their rights and privileges.”⁵⁹⁵

Anglicans had watched these efforts with increased concern and understood the push by American Protestants to be essentially predicated on attaining some degree of political authority. By 1768, although strict secrecy among the dissenters had prevented detailed descriptions of

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., 29.

⁵⁹² Ibid., 41-42.

⁵⁹³ Ezra Stiles to Noah Welles. (15 January, 1768), *Stiles Papers*, No. 33, 14-18.

⁵⁹⁴ Francis Alison to Ezra Stiles. (12 December, 1767), *Stiles Papers*, No. 32, 175-79.

⁵⁹⁵ Ezra Stiles to Francis Alison. (1 February, 1768), *Stiles Papers*, No. 33, 5-7.

their meetings and their efforts, reports began to reach the Archbishop in London of “some grand design of coalescing or union” among the American dissenting groups.⁵⁹⁶ The Archbishop was able to obtain news of the dissenters of New York meeting secretly in Manhattan in early 1768. Aware that their assembly was known to the Anglicans, and concerned that Anglican criticism of the assembly might dominate public perception of their efforts, they decided to publicly proclaim the content and meaning behind their “society of dissenters.” Their meeting strove, they claimed “for the preservation of their common and respective civil and religious rights and privileges, against all Oppressions and Encroachments by those of any Denomination whatsoever.”⁵⁹⁷ The true target of their suspicions was made clear soon after with the added “whether they be Roman Bishops ... or their domestic imitators.” Their only motivation, they maintained, was the “terrifying prospect” of losing their religious liberty, “which may soon be followed by greater oppressions, it may be expected.”⁵⁹⁸

Anglicans, too, made the link between religious and political governance. Bishops in England responded in 1769 that “American dissenters are affecting secret societies, delegations, conventions, and other schemes ... for the undermining of the King’s Gospel and his fair governance of his rightful possessions and subjects in that country.”⁵⁹⁹ Unmoved by this criticism, an anonymous dissenter - probably Ezra Stiles - defended both the New York meeting and the larger union of dissenters. “The Society are not unfriendly to the religious liberties of any

⁵⁹⁶ R.P. Schneiders, ed., *The Johnson Family Papers*, Vol. 1, 395-96.

⁵⁹⁷ Herbert L. Osgood. “The Society of Dissenters, Founded at New York in 1769,” in *The American Historical Review*, VI (1900-1901), 498-501.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 505-507.

⁵⁹⁹ Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. *SPG Correspondence*, Series B., Vol. II, 137.

true Protestant Church whatever, tho' they openly profess themselves oppos'd to the Scheme of establishing Diocesan Episcopacy in America, or any other scheme for Popish rule o'er them, and are determin'd to endeavor, by all lawful Ways and Means in their power to prevent it."⁶⁰⁰

At this point, the political leadership of Massachusetts decided to intervene in the public debate over dissenting union to suggest greater political power for American Protestants. Tellingly, they combined the literal threat of ecclesiastical hierarchy with civil and political tyranny in much the same way that dissenting ministers had been doing throughout the controversy. In their instructions to its agent in London, Dennys De Berdt, the House of Representatives offered this warning to the Privy Council:

"The establishment of a Protestant Episcopate in America is also very zealously contended for: And it is very alarming to a people whose fathers...were obliged to fly their native country into a wilderness, in order to peaceably enjoy their privileges, civil and religious. There being threatened with the loss of both at once, must throw them into a very disagreeable situation...If the property of the subject is taken from him without his consent, it is immaterial, whether it is done by one man or five hundred; or whether it is applied for the support of ecclesiastik or military power, or both as means to oppress and rule by force, without consent. It may be well worth the consideration of the best politician in Great Britain or America, what the natural tendency is of vigorous pursuit of these [Popish] measures."⁶⁰¹

The House then forwarded the extract to be published around the colony and beyond, ultimately reprinted or summarized in over 30 newspapers and circulars.⁶⁰²

The movement for dissenting union was buoyed by this public support from Congregational Massachusetts's leadership, especially since they remained formally outside of

⁶⁰⁰ Anon. *A Defense of the Just Reasons for the Establishment of a Christian Union among the Dissenters of North America*. (Boston, 1769), 7-12, 14.

⁶⁰¹ *Journal of the Honorable House of Representatives of His Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts Bay, in New England*. (Boston, 1768), at Massachusetts Historical Society. *Collections*, IV 421-2.

⁶⁰² Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, 117.

the union itself, and Dissenting Delegates felt empowered to encourage greater activism among American Protestants. Presbyterians made continued effort to draw in more dissenters, by 1769 extending feelers to the Southern Presbyterians in South Carolina and Virginia and continuing the hope that “some Quakers maintain interest in our common Protestant defense.⁶⁰³” At the meeting of the dissenting delegates in 1769 at New Haven, the Convention attempted to reiterate the force and urgency of their efforts, again insisting on the link between religious “popery” and inevitable political oppression. American dissenters knew well that “no mutilated Bishop ... will rest content without civil powers.”⁶⁰⁴ Elaborating on this theme, the Convention began to connect the religious weakness of dissenters with their lack of political power within the empire. “We also know the force of a British Act of Parliament: and have reason to dread the establishment of Bishops Courts among us. Should they claim the right of holding these courts, and of exercising the powers belonging to their office... we could have no counter-balance to this enormous power in the colonies, when we have no Nobility or proper Courts to check the dangerous exertion of their authority ... so that our civil liberties appear to us to be in eminent danger from such an establishment.”⁶⁰⁵ Episcopacy efforts, in short, would inevitably lead to wider political resistance since “we have so long tasted the Sweets of civil and religious liberty, that we cannot be easily prevailed to submit to a Yoke of Popish Bondage, which neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear.”⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰³ Israel Pemberton to Francis Alison. (13 July, 1769), *Pemberton Papers*, XXXIII, 99-103.

⁶⁰⁴ *Minutes from the Annual Convention of Dissenting Delegates*. (New Haven, 1769), 22-23.

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 70-73.

After 1770, resistance to the episcopacy efforts by the Anglican church increasingly became joined with larger political resistance to imperial political and economic reforms in the colonies. As John Adams would insist years after the American Revolution, “the apprehension of Episcopacy contributed ... as much as any other cause, to arouse the attention not only of the inquiring mind, but of the common people, and urge them to close thinking on the constitutional authority of parliament over the colonies.”⁶⁰⁷ In essence, the resistance of religious dissenters to “popery” inevitably lent itself to political mobilization by American dissenters who viewed “popery and tyranny” as natural extensions of each other. As a wealth of scholarship has pointed out, religious leaders in New England and Pennsylvania would be early and vocal supporters of the American Revolution, and their networks of communication, cooperation were invaluable to American patriot efforts.⁶⁰⁸

Dissenting resistance to bishops between 1760 and 1770 indicates the remarkable extent to which traditional reformed fears regarding freedom of conscience blended literal, direct fears

⁶⁰⁷ John Adams to Jedediah Morse. (2 December, 1815), *The Papers of John Adams, Works and Letters*, Vol. 10, 185, at Massachusetts Historical Society.

⁶⁰⁸ One of the most well-trodden tasks of historians of early American religion has been to connect the peculiar American religious experience and environment to the causes, continuation, and outcome of the American Revolution. Although too numerous to cover in depth here, this scholarship can essentially be categorized into three analytical approaches. The first, and most popular, is that adopted by scholars such as Alan Heimert *Religion and the American Mind* and, earlier, Perry Miller’s monumental *New England Mind* series. These specifically linked New England’s millennialist tradition and the outbreak of the Revolution in that region. The second main approach has been to link widespread American religiosity, and especially the American piety of the Great Awakening, to popular calls for spiritual and temporal reform that would eventually culminate in the American calls for imperial reform and ultimate rebellion. For more on this interpretation, see Edmund S. Morgan. *Visible Saints: The Making of a Puritan Idea*. (New York: Norton Books, 2013) and Thomas Kidd. *God of Liberty: A Religious History of the American Revolution*. (New York: Basic Books, 2001). The least favored approach to positioning the influence of religion and religious leaders on the American Revolution is that put forward in Bernard Bailyn’s landmark work *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967). Bailyn argues that the political ideology of the American Revolution was the logical outgrowth of, among other things, the Puritan doctrinal stance on a number of issues now considered fundamental to the American secular, republican, partially-federalized state that emerged in 1783.

regarding religious hierarchy with more symbolic understandings of the link between religious and political oppression in American minds. After the episcopacy controversy, “in the eyes of dissenting ministers, no distinction between religious and civil liberties any longer existed; Liberty itself faced extinction.”⁶⁰⁹ That process had begun in American dissenting dialogue far earlier. Similar to the struggle by dissenters in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania against the ruling establishments there, the virulent Reformation-based fears of Protestant dissenters articulated both the interests of religious toleration but also the democratic norms they felt best supported and maintained that toleration. Unlike these cases, however, episcopacy effectively united fractured American dissenters against an encroachment from without and effectively muted the decades of tension and mutual suspicion that had previously characterized their interdenominational interactions. Faced with the threat of Anglican encroachment on their religious privileges in the colonies, and convinced that civil restrictions would follow to sustain that encroachment, American dissenters articulated a nearly modern view of political democracy and religious pluralism. They took concrete steps toward representative self-rule and interdenominational unity to resist their new common enemy. In the process, they constructed the informational and institutional entities that would eventually transform their religious opposition to “popery” into wider political resistance to “tyranny” in the tumultuous 1770s.

⁶⁰⁹ Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre*, 257.

Conclusion

Protestants emerged from the English Reformation with a highly contested notion of freedom of conscience. They generally agreed that religious liberty was a good thing and that the Bible was the source of true knowledge on the subject, but they differed sharply in their analysis of the Bible. High church Protestants such as members of the Anglican Church understood freedom of conscience in narrow legal terms as the ability to correctly worship God. Low church dissenters such as the Puritans tended toward more expansive interpretations. Some argued freedom of conscience required a degree of broad social and legal toleration, but accepted some forms of active discrimination against dissenting groups. Other English Protestants such as the Quakers favored a Biblical interpretation that rejected compulsive worship of any kind, whether doctrinal, organizational, or legal. Ultimately, freedom of conscience remained a contested idea that centered on varied understandings of personal and collective autonomy.

While the Protestant definition of freedom of conscience differed, so too did understandings of how best to achieve it. Groups such as the Puritans and Quakers, who presided over de facto religious establishments within Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, emphasized the need for systems of authority that preserved freedom of conscience. From this more conservative Protestant viewpoint, laws and institutions that essentially reinforced and justified their religious dominance were necessary since their power had presumably worked to maintain and defend religious freedom among Protestants of every denomination. In effect, it was the force of their law and order that preserved “right worship” against both the degrading forces of chaos from dissenters within British America and the array of abusive or tyrannical sources of religious

authority confronting them outside the British empire. Protestants outside these dominant sects, however, asserted a more radical view of freedom of conscience best won and maintained through the weakening or outright elimination of systems of authority that interfered in matters of conscience. Many Protestants recognized the laws and institutions that groups such as the Congregationalists, Quakers, and, later, Anglicans erected as damaging to freedom of conscience precisely because they preserved the dominance of one group over others in their respective communities. Additionally, more and more Protestants questioned the extent to which religious tolerance and freedom could be maintained through the intervention of any church or state into matters of faith. The result of this dichotomy was that the ongoing issue of defining and defending freedom of conscience became the battleground for contests over a variety of sources of political, economic, and social power.

The dispute over “right worship” that followed these groups into a North American exile predicated on the search for religious freedom was expressed in traditional English anti-Catholic rhetoric. Protestants saw Catholics throughout English history as the source of immeasurable tyranny, corruption, and hardship. They looked to the overthrow of the Stuart monarchy and connected the Catholicism of the Stuarts, who attempted autocratic rule, with the absolutist Catholic monarchs of Europe. They saw the intolerance and universalist intent of the Catholic church as a form of spiritual tyranny, and remembered well the corruption of Catholic Priests and Bishops and their repression of Protestants before the English Reformation. They suspected “Papists” behind innumerable political plots, conspiracies, and social crises that shook England throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the occasional confirmation of those suspicions kept Protestant fears at fever pitch. When ensuing contests for religious and civil

autonomy by Protestants again became struggles to define the ideal mix between order and freedom, they readily reached for the language of anti-Catholicism to label any and all forces that threatened the type of tyranny or repression they felt incompatible with their definition of right worship. Time and again, American Protestants perceived struggles both between themselves and with outsiders as fights between harmful, overreaching authorities defined as “papists” and anarchistic, order-destroying “levelers.” Ultimately, the fear of “popery” lost none of its potency in explaining larger events to these groups, nor its ability to continuously suggest a Protestant identity defined by some degree of religious and political freedom.

The first manifestation of this struggle arose in the midst of events surrounding the Glorious Revolution. While previous scholarship has emphasized the unifying aspects of anti-Catholicism in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution, the reaction of Congregationalists and Quakers underscores the fact that transatlantic ties between Protestants remained tenuous and subject to intense debate. The defeat of Anglicization efforts under the Catholic James II could not and did not distract Protestant dissenters in New England from the problems they perceived in the Anglican Church. Resistance among Congregationalists in Massachusetts was based on the premise that the Anglican Church was repressive. Pennsylvania Quakers faced complete disenfranchisement under the Dominion and, like the Congregationalist establishment, perceived a lethal challenge to freedom of conscience through Anglican efforts. Both groups of American Protestants articulated their loyalty to the new regime in anti-Catholic language, but they also used this symbolism to link the Anglican Church’s actions to tyranny in one after another public denunciation. In a heated environment of suspicion and mutual recrimination, long-ignored yet unresolved issues regarding the extent and degree of the state’s intrusion into religious matters

and the autonomy of religious dissenters resurfaced among Protestant groups. Far older disputes over the limits of freedom of conscience still heavily influenced dissenting views of government and society for British-American Protestants, and increasingly helped to espouse an idealized view of both.

These views were increasingly projected onto the world American Protestants saw around themselves. As they encountered groups such as Muslims within the larger Atlantic world, Protestants drew upon long-standing exaggerated images of Islam from English popular culture and art. They increasingly articulated tropes of Muslim tyranny and despotism, of corrupt Arab officials and Princes, and of the barbarity of Muslim captivity in dialogues condemning forms of tyranny and repression. These perceptions were based on exaggerations, ignorance, and an incredibly reductive view of Islam and Muslims. Nevertheless, the threat seemingly posed to “right worship” by Islam could only be meaningfully conveyed through the lens Protestants had traditionally applied to perceived enemies of their freedom of conscience. In defining Muslims as “papists,” everything from legal policy to cultural tradition to the behavior of individuals was put forth as satisfactory evidence. The one shared element was the abhorrence of any behavior considered tyrannical or corrupt. The rejection of perceived authoritarian or corrupt practices within Islam served as a vehicle through which to express the same fears of abusive or corrupt power that had dominated dissenting Protestants’ worldview since the Reformation. As groups such as the Congregationalists and Quakers in North America fought to preserve their religious power amid the ever-growing numbers of Protestant claimants to religious freedom, those same concerns dominated new dissenters’ resistance to those establishments. They also informed inter-Protestant debates, old and newly emerging, about the nature and limitations of power.

The struggle between Baptists and Congregationalists in Massachusetts over compulsory tithing was one such debate regarding the limits of freedom of conscience. Although the Great Awakening has dominated research into dissent and freedom of conscience in New England during the eighteenth century, Baptists in Swansea and Rehoboth, Massachusetts offer a glimpse of an entirely different, though not necessarily contradictory, Protestant contest over authority and legitimacy. While the Baptists of Swansea successfully fought for, and later defended, their exemption from compulsory religious taxation by the Congregational establishment, Rehoboth's Baptists ultimately failed. There are, however, two larger explanatory points emerge from their larger resistance. Both invoked reformed ideas regarding religious and political autonomy to resist Congregationalist taxes. More importantly, their resistance reveals the extent to which older Reformation fears of abusive power and religious compulsion continued to dominate dissenting political views in the decades following the Glorious Revolution. Baptists' dissent freely invoked evolving ideas regarding local rule and volunteerism in defense of their religious rights. Baptists readily viewed encroachments on those principles as "popery." Few may have recognized these struggles over religious taxation as indicative of a new way of life or a new attitude among North America's Protestant dissenters toward colonial government. The granting of religious exemption in 1727, however, represented a clear departure from the old Congregational policies of conformity and uniformity. These exemptions were rooted in opposition to perceived sources of "popish" abuses and corruption, again indicating the potency of the contest over freedom of conscience in explaining religious and political developments, as well as the contest's growing relevancy in deciding issues of political power and agency.

The struggle over Quaker power in Pennsylvania reinforces the importance of freedom of conscience in contests that were increasingly economic and political, rather than exclusively doctrinal. Lieutenant Governor Keith sought to portray Quaker dominance as arbitrary and politically illegitimate, and thus harmful to religious freedom. Courting the numerous and growing community of Protestant dissenters, he and his allies painted Quaker power throughout the 1720s and 1730s as “papist” because it came at the expense of the political and economic power necessary to ensure their ability to worship freely. Quakers defended themselves from these attacks by successfully making the case that it was their law and order, however exclusionary, that guaranteed the very liberties with which their opponents claimed to be most concerned. Alternatively, it was the Quakers themselves who rejected Thomas’s efforts toward defense in the 1740s as “popery” that infringed upon their religious beliefs regarding pacifism. Nevertheless, these divergent stories do provide parallel insights. The first of these is the remarkable extent to which feared threats to religious liberty continued to define larger struggles for political and economic power, and vice versa. Both Keith and Thomas’s opposition movements against the Quaker establishment were essentially political struggles over legislative and economic power. Yet the specter of “popery” trampling their religious and political freedoms dominated the tone and content of these struggles for both sides. The fact that each side increasingly included dissenting Germans, Swedes, and other European Protestants *outside* of the English dissenting tradition certainly spoke to the ability of these groups to participate in the larger religious and political dialogue of English Protestant in America.

On the other hand, the contests for freedom of conscience in Pennsylvania indicate the extent to which older Reformation fears regarding freedom of conscience remained a contested

idea. Challenges to Quaker power were time and again framed primarily as issues of freedom of conscience that was being denied to non-Quakers. However, the prospect of Anglican ascension in Pennsylvania quieted accusations of “popery” in the behavior of the colony’s Quaker leadership. Non-Quaker dissenters in Pennsylvania eventually conceded the Friends' inheritance of political power because they suspected, and Quakers convincingly made the case, that Anglicans emboldened by royal intervention were more of a threat to freedom of conscience. Similarly, Quakers resisted Thomas’s challenge to their authority by convincing German dissenters, many of whom were not pacifists, that true freedom of conscience required more autonomy than the Governor and his allies were prepared to offer the pacifist Friends. Quakers succeeded because they were able to convince other dissenters that their leadership was preferable precisely because it recognized and respected the fundamental link between religious and political liberty, as well as the demands each freedom placed on the other. The alternative to this view, they argued, was popery.

Disputed and dividing though it was, fears regarding freedom of conscience also had the power to unite American Protestants. The key precondition was a threat from without that seemed greater than those posed from within. Protestant resistance to the imposition of Anglican bishops between 1760 and 1770 demonstrates that traditional reformed fears regarding freedom of conscience had begun to blend literal, direct fears regarding religious hierarchy with more symbolic understandings of the link between religious and political oppression in American minds. After the episcopacy controversy, Protestants had to some degree completed the link between civil and religious oppression that disputes regarding freedom of conscience had opened and reopened within public discourse in North America. That process had begun in American

dissenting dialogue far earlier. However, similar to the struggle by dissenters in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania against the ruling establishments there, the virulent Reformation-based fears of Protestant dissenters articulated both the interests of religious toleration but also the democratic norms they felt best supported and maintained that toleration. Unlike these cases, however, episcopacy effectively united fractured American dissenters against an encroachment from without and effectively muted the decades of tension and mutual suspicion that had previously characterized their interdenominational interactions. Faced with the threat of Anglican encroachment on their religious privileges in the colonies, and convinced that civil restrictions would follow to sustain that encroachment, American dissenters articulated a nearly modern view of political democracy and religious pluralism. They took concrete steps toward representative self-rule and interdenominational unity to resist their new common enemy. In the process, they constructed the informational and institutional entities that would eventually transform their religious opposition to “popery” into wider political resistance to “tyranny” in the tumultuous 1770s.

Anti-Catholic rhetoric divided Protestants as much or more than it united them. There was genuine pan-Protestant, transatlantic animosity toward the Catholic Church. But, the root of this animosity lay in Reformed theological fears related to the preservation of liberty of conscience. These fears manifested themselves in antipathy toward various perceived sources of tyranny. Religious concerns also generated nascent democratic sensibilities and love for placing a high degree of political power in the hands of as many people as possible. American democracy was rooted in religious ideas and a spiritual worldview

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Vita

J. L. Tomlin received his BA in History and Philosophy in 2008, and his Masters in History. His Masters research investigated the peculiar ways in which religious sermons delivered to militia groups served to inculcate group identity markers in colonial Massachusetts. Delivered by choice to enfranchised men in front of political leaders, these sermons were an early form of democratic political speech that encouraged desired religious and political attributes within society. In 2011, J. came to the University of Tennessee. Directed by Dr. Christopher Magra, J.'s dissertation examines the application of anti-Catholic rhetoric by American Protestants within contests for power. His research has uncovered an eighteenth-century discourse predicated on religious fears related to the abuse of power with powerful political repercussions. His research demonstrates that the patriotic, anti-Catholic vitriol peculiar to British America morphed over the course of the eighteenth century into a broader, all encompassing Protestant xenophobia. Based in the fear of religious "others" as well as an egalitarian, democratizing sensibility, this intense fear ultimately informed the creation of American political identity. J's research has benefited from research awards from the Newberry Library, Jack P. Miller Center, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the Wheeler Research Endowment. His dissertation was awarded the Charles O. Jackson Dissertation Prize and the Kathryn and Thomas Shelton Dissertation Award. J. has also received generous travel and research support from Brown University's John Carter Brown Library and the American Historical Association, as well as the Departments of History, Religious Studies, and the College of Arts and Sciences.