

A Nursing Father: A Whig Image of Kingship

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How great a Mercy ought a People to account it, when God gives such to rule over them who are concerned to promote their best Interests, and desirous to shew them all the Affection and Tenderness of kind Fathers. And such a Mercy our Nation and Land enjoy in his present Majesty, our *Rightful and most Gracious Sovereign King* George II, who, we trust, esteems it a greater Honour to be the Common Father of his Loyal Subjects, than to wear the Imperial Crown of *Great-Britain*.¹

Men are bound to honour in their Hearts, and with their Lips, those whom God hath vested with his Authority, and advanced, by his Providence to rule over them . . . *Fear God; Honour the King*: If we obey the first, we shall not despise the second of these divine Precepts. Magistrates are God's Representatives upon Earth, they bear his Character, and shine with some Rays of his Majesty; and ought therefore to be highly respected according to the dignity of their Station.²

The rhetoric of the Glorious Revolution in America, as in England, was shaped by those precepts that Englishmen understood to be the cornerstones of their constitution. American participants in the Revolution against James II and his colonial regimes equated Stuart government with tyranny, slavery and Popery, and saw in William and Mary and the post-Revolutionary settlements in England and America a return to the traditional English constitutional values and institutions that protected the liberty, property and religion of English subjects wherever they might reside. The Glorious Revolution was thus regarded not as a radical movement toward some new innovation in government but as a return to first principles, as Samuel Johnson would have it, “a course . . . which returns to the point at which it began to move.”³ Colonists explained that they had joined in the Revolution to restore representative government, to protect their property, and to defend their lives and Protestant consciences against the unacceptable innovations in government and religion fostered by James Stuart and the men to whom he gave precedence over his American possessions. The colonists had not been alone in their struggles. They credited William and Mary for assisting in their salvation and for the restoration of their constitutional rights and privileges. Thus the inhabitants of Kent in Maryland gave thanks to God for their Majesties’ “endeavours for the restitution of our ancient Laws, religion, and properties to their primitive lustre and splendor.”⁴ Cotton Mather noted that under William’s rule, the “Charters and Ancient Privileges should be restored to the English Nation” and intimated to his colleagues in Boston that the King would surely do no less for them.⁵ This new alliance of king and people became an integral part of the Revolutionary settlement and a political idea that would endure in the colonies until the summer of 1776. The power and prerogatives of the monarch and the liberty of the subject were viewed, not as competing interests, but as

1 Daniel Lewes, *Good Rulers the Fathers of their People, and the Marks of Honour Due Them* . . . [Massachusetts election sermon] (Boston: John Draper, 1748), 23.

2 Ebenezer Gay, *The Duty of the People*, 25.

3 *Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language*, Alexander Chalmers, ed., (Rep. London: Studio Editions, 1994), 617.

4 “Address of the Justices of the County of Kent to the King . . ., February 7, 1689[90],” “Proceedings of the Council of Maryland,” *Archives of Maryland*, William Hand Browne, ed, (Baltimore: Isaac Friedenwald for the Maryland Historical Society, 1890), 8:143.

5 Increase Mather, *A Brief Account of the Agents of New-England*, Andrews, *Narratives*, 292-293.

complimentary aspects of the English constitution.⁶ Increasingly, American colonists viewed the reigning English monarch as the defender of their laws, liberties, properties and religion.

Colonists who had overturned Stuart governments, or who, in the case of Maryland, toppled the government of a proprietor to whom they attributed Stuart principles, claimed to have done so in allegiance with William and Mary and in keeping with the Whig ideals of the English Revolution. Revolutionaries in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, and Maryland announced that they had rebelled against corrupt colonial administrators who abused the laws, deprived the people of their say in government, taxed unconstitutionally, and conspired with Papists, both domestic and foreign, toward the ruination of the English colonies and the residents thereof.⁷ As has been seen, Jacob Leisler and his government based their legitimacy on an alliance with William and Mary, and Leisler's adherents continued to claim that the Revolution in New York had been undertaken in support of the Revolution in England.⁸ Like Jacob Leisler, John Coode, the leader of the Maryland Revolution, justified his actions and those of his supporters by linking the Revolution in Maryland with that of England. He wrote, "wee know our duty which is obliged our lives and fortunes for the service of King William and Queen Mary."⁹ Coode claimed that the "most eminent Protestants" of Maryland supported the new monarchs and had resolved that "as God Almighty had given their Majesties a just call to the Crown . . . so accordingly . . . they would give their lives and fortunes to mainteyne their Majesties Right and Title to the Faith and Allegiance Obedience and Subjection of their subjects in the said Province."¹⁰

Even those who had resisted the colonial revolutions were quick to give their obedience to the new rulers once they were firmly ensconced on the throne and to congratulate them, albeit somewhat belatedly, on their accession. The "Jacobite" colonists tried to gain the high moral ground as quickly as possible. Connecticut "Loyalists," for instance, protested that the revolutionary government that ousted them had no legitimacy—"it is not derived from the Crown, for the Crown gives no liberty to erect a government . . . This Government [was] erected in opposition to and contempt of the Crown . . . the benefit of their Majesties laws are denied us."¹¹ A Dominion sympathizer in Boston wrote that the Boston Committee of Safety had "subverted their Majesties Government and . . . such was their design, to rend themselves from the Crown of England."¹² Nicholas Taney of Maryland characterized the conflict there as a "rebellion for persons here without order from their Majestys to take up armes against the lawful

6 See Richard L. Bushman, *King and People in Provincial Massachusetts* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 22; Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1969), 269-270. For the English equivalents of the idea, see J.R. Western, *Monarchy and Revolution: The English State in the 1680s* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowan & Littlefield, 1972), 30, and H.T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property*, 75-78.

7 For a compilation of Marylanders' complaints against the proprietary government of Lord Baltimore, see "Maryland's Grievances Why They Have Taken Up Arms," Beverly McAnear, ed., *The Journal of Southern History*, 8 (August, 1942), 392-409. For studies of proprietary government in Maryland, see James Hugh, "A Facet of Sovereignty: The Proprietary Governor and the Maryland Charter," *Maryland Colonial Historical Magazine*, 55 (June, 1960), 67-81; and Francis Edgar Sparks, "Causes of the Maryland Revolution of 1689," *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science*, Herbert Adams, ed. 14th Series, 11-12, (November-December, 1896), 7-108. Studies of the causes of the Maryland Revolution include Michael Kammen, "The Causes of the Maryland Revolution of 1689," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 55 (December, 1960), 293-333; Lovejoy, 70-97, 257-274; and Michael D. De Michele, "The Glorious Revolution in Maryland: A Study in the Provincial Revolution of 1689," PhD. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1967.

8 See *D.H.N.Y.*, 2:9, 14, 20, 30, 34-35; and *Loyalty Vindicated*, Andrews, *Narratives*, 386, 388, 392.

9 Mr. Coode to Mr. Bacon, February 8, 1689/90, *Maryland Archives*, 8:169.

10 "The Answer of John Coode and Kenelm Cheseldine Agents and Commissioners from the Late Convention of Their Majesties Province of Maryland . . .," *Maryland Archives*, 8:227.

11 "Some Objections Against the Pretended Government in Connecticut," *Cal. St. P.*, 13:705-706.

12 C.D., *New England's Faction Discovered*, Andrews, *Narratives*, 265, 257.

authority” of the Lord Proprietor and the King and Queen.¹³ Richard Hill echoed Taney’s sentiments in a letter to Lord Baltimore. He wrote that under the Proprietor’s protection he and his fellow colonists had “always enjoyed our free libertie in the exercise of our religion together with the benefit of the laws of our native Countrey England,” and that these privileges were lost to them since the Maryland Revolution.¹⁴ He described the revolutionary government’s “practices and proceedings” as “not only contrary but in defiance of all laws both humane and divine.”¹⁵ In an address to the new rulers, Anglican supporters of the Proprietary government of Maryland congratulated William and Mary upon “dispersing all malicious and threatening Clouds of Popery” and nourishing the Church of England. Then they asked for the new rulers’ aid against the “several persons who call themselves Protestants” who had “overturned the Lawfull and peaceable Government” for no other reason “then to gratifie their own ambitions and mallitious designes.”¹⁶ Although some colonists were opposed to the revolutionary governments that were the result of the Glorious Revolution in their home provinces, none appear to have been particularly enthusiastic about restoring Stuart rule. Support for James II seems to have evaporated with the accession of the Orange Prince, and James’ progeny in France, James the Old Pretender and Bonnie Prince Charlie, found very few adherents in America. There was no significant Jacobite movement in the colonies; according to John Adams, American Jacobites were as rare “as a comet or an earthquake.”¹⁷ Americans’ “king over the water” resided at the Court of St. James, not St. Germain. Even those colonists who had been the most vocal in their protests against the revolutionary regimes in New England, New York and Maryland gave their loyalty and allegiance to William and Mary and celebrated (though perhaps with less enthusiasm) the abdication of James II.

The generation of the Glorious Revolution and succeeding generations of American colonists viewed the provincial conflicts of 1689 as a continuation of the Glorious Revolution fought in America—in essence, campaigns of the same war fought on distant shores. Cotton Mather noted that the Revolution in Boston was “a great service . . . done for their Majesties: King William and Queen Mary, whom God grant long to Reign.”¹⁸ Edward Rawson and Samuel Sewell seconded Mather, when they wrote, “no man does really approve of the *Revolution in England*, but must justifie that in New England also; for the latter was affected in compliance with the former.”¹⁹ As time passed, the Glorious Revolution became a part of Americans’ political legacy, at once illustrating the patriotism, love of liberty, and Protestant fervor of the forefathers and linking successive good English Protestant kings with their American subjects. Charles Chauncy preached nearly fifty years after the Glorious Revolution that when “our fathers in New-England groaned under an oppressive burden of . . . *popish* and tyrannical power,” Bay Colonists threw off their oppressors in imitation of their English brethren and in allegiance with “the glorious King William, under God, the great Deliverer of the Nation from Popery and Slavery.”²⁰

Regardless of the form that the Revolution had taken in individual provinces, Americans everywhere considered the Glorious Revolution and the subsequent accession of William and Mary to be

13 Nicholas Taney to Madam Barbara Smith, September 14, 1689, *Maryland Archives*, 8:119.

14 Richard Hill to Lord Baltimore, September 20, 1689, *Maryland Archives*, 8:122.

15 *Ibid.*

16 “Address of the Protestants of Calvert County to His Majtie,” *Maryland Archives*, 8:130-131.

17 John Adams, “On the Canon and the Feudal Law,” *Works of John Adams*, Charles Francis Adams, ed. (Boston: Little & Brown, 1850), 3:456.

18 Cotton Mather, *The Present State of New England* . . . (Boston: Samuel Green, 1690), 33-34.

19 E.R. & S.S., *The Revolution in New England Justified*, 1.

20 Charles Chauncy, *A Counsel of Two Confederate Kings to Set the Son of Tabeal on the Throne of Israel* . . . *A Sermon Occasion’d by the Present Rebellion in Favour of the Pretender* . . ., (Boston: D. Gookin, 1746), 28. See also John Gordon, *A Sermon on the Suppression of the late Unnatural Rebellion* (Annapolis: Jonas Green, 1746), 18; John Swift, *Election Sermon* (Boston: B. Green, 1732), 13; and Charles Chauncy, *Civil Magistrates Must Be Just, Ruling in the Fear of God* . . . [Massachusetts election sermon] (Boston, 1748), 34.

crucial events in the political and constitutional history of the English world. It was celebrated in all of the American colonies for years to come. On St. George Day in 1732, residents of Charlestown, South Carolina, “under a Discharge of Cannon round the Battery . . . drank to the pious Memory of King *William the 3rd*.”²¹ In 1755, the trustees of the College of New Jersey named a new building on their campus Nassau Hall to “express the Honour we retain, in this remote part of the Globe, to the immortal Memory of the glorious King *William the Third* . . . who was the great Deliverer of the *British Nation* from those two monstrous Furies—*Popery* and *Slavery*.”²² In 1774, John Adams wrote that the Glorious Revolution in New England was affected when the people there “made an original express contract with King *William*.”²³ Three years later the New York Presbyterian Patriot minister, Abraham Keteltas, cited *William’s* Revolution and accession “by the votes of a free Parliament” among the precedents that lent justification to the then current revolution against the tyrannical rule of George III and his ministers.²⁴

When the Hanoverian Dynasty was ushered in with the accession of King George I in 1714, there was a broad consensus among American colonists in favor of the German ruler. Although the dynastic change and ensuing politics in England caused stress and social disorder there, Americans appear to have accepted their new rulers with equanimity. George I’s reputation preceded him in the colonies as well as in England. In 1714, Cotton Mather extolled the virtues of the new king in his funerary sermon for Queen Anne. “We see ascending the *British Throne*,” intoned Mather, “A King whose Way to it is Prepared in the Hearts of his Joyful Subjects, by the Accounts which they have long had of his Princely Endowments, and of His Excellent Conduct in His German Dominions.”²⁵ Mather praised the new King for his tolerance of Protestant dissent in his German realm, for his solicitous conduct toward his subjects and for his justice.²⁶ In 1716, Benjamin Colman praised George for his piety, wisdom and justice.²⁷ Coleman declared, “O what a GIFT of God, not only to us, but to Europe and to the Reformed Churches, [that] a Wise and Just King [sits] upon the Throne of Britain.”²⁸

In the age of the Hanovers, American political writers devoted a great deal of their attention in political sermons and tracts relating to the good governance of the colonies and the Empire to the king. He was viewed as the chief executive of Great Britain as well as each colony. He was the linchpin that connected each American province to the British Empire. He existed as the head of state, the protector of a Protestant religious polity, the dispenser of justice, the promoter of prosperity, the chief arbiter of morality and order, and the apex of the British social hierarchy.

Colonists viewed themselves as both subjects of the British Empire and citizens of their own

21 *South Carolina Gazette*, April 29, 1732.

22 *Maryland Gazette*, October 30, 1755. For similar sentiments, see also “Killigrew’s Political Maxims,” *South Carolina Gazette*, July 13, 1747; Thomas Prince, *The People of New-England Put in Mind of the Righteous Acts of the Lord* . . ., (Boston, 1730), Plumstead, 201; John Barnard, *The Throne Established by Righteousness* . . . (Boston, 1734), Plumstead, 276; [Peter Annet?], *A Discourse on Government and Religion. Signed by an Independent* (Boston: D. Fowler, 1750), 18, 42; and Samuel Cook, *An Election Sermon* (Boston, 1770), Plumstead, 340-341.

23 John Adams, “Novanglus,” *Works of John Adams*, 4:114.

24 Abraham Keteltas, *God Arising and Pleading the Peoples’ Cause* . . ., (Newburyport, Massachusetts, 1777), in Ellis Sandoz, *Political Sermons of the Founding Era, 1730-1805* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1990), 596. See also Moses Mather, *America’s Appeal to an Impartial World* (Hartford, 1775), Sandoz, 453, 476; Samuel Cooper, *A Sermon on the Day of the Commencement of the Constitution* . . . (Boston[?], 1780), Sandoz, 639; and Elhanan Winchester, *A Century Sermon on the Glorious Revolution* (London, 1788), Sandoz, 995-996.

25 Cotton Mather, *The Glorious Throne*, 33.

26 *Ibid.*, 35.

27 Benjamin Colman, *A Sermon Preach’d at Boston in New England, on Thursday the 23rd of August, 1716. Being the Day of Public Thanksgiving, for the Suppression of the Late Vile and Traitorous Rebellion in Great Britain* (Boston: Fleet & Crump, 1716), 6.

28 *Ibid.*, 17

colony. As the latter they were protected by additional contractual relationships (their charters), which gave them certain rights or liberties peculiar to themselves because of their colonial status. Since the colonial charters were presumed to be contractual agreements between each colony and the Crown, colonists viewed their relationship with the British Empire as a connection between the reigning monarch and themselves. Although the Crown might not have interpreted the charter relationships in the same light as colonists did, the means by which the Empire administered her colonies tended to support the colonists' views. The king either chose or gave his imprimatur to his royal governors; colonial laws were conditional upon their acceptance by the governors and the king in council (both, in effect, extensions of the British Crown).

The relationship between the king and his subjects in the American colonies was personal as well as political. Colonial newspapers, serials and sermons conveyed an interest in the monarch that was considerably more intimate than a merely constitutional relationship with a political entity. Newspapers frequently carried stories about the day-to-day lives of the ruler and the royal family, the parties and events that they attended, their dress, and their public demeanor. Royal family weddings were celebrated and royal deaths were mourned in print and from the pulpit even when these distant events had no effect on the succession or on colonial relations with the mother country.²⁹ In addition to the public lives of the royal family, colonial subjects were also interested in the political lives and personalities of their rulers. This interest was conveyed in newspaper articles and tracts, in addresses to royal officials and the king, and in sermons in which colonial ministers declaimed upon the ideal attributes of rulers and compared the behavior of the reigning monarch and his antecedents with the ideal.³⁰ Americans' preoccupation with the monarch and royal family even permeated the landscape itself as colonists named towns and counties, streets and even the physical features of the land after kings and princes, queens and royal consorts, from Lake George on the Vermont frontier to Fort King George in Georgia, from the James River to the Cumberland Gap.

A number of historians have explored the position and importance of the monarch in colonial society. The king sat at the top of a vertical social hierarchy.³¹ Differences of rank from majesty to noble, to husbandman, to yeoman, to tenant, to itinerant—from the one to the few to the many—"was part of a natural order of things, part of that great chain of existence that ordered the entire universe."³² Admittedly, this hierarchical chain was less distinct in the British colonies in North America than it was in the mother country. In the American colonies there were very few hereditary lords, and the relative availability of land, and the scarcity of labor made for a larger freeholder class than in England, a more affluent and respected mechanic class, and a much smaller itinerant class. Although by the middle of the eighteenth century, distinctions between the highest and lowest economic classes in the colonies had become starker, and the distribution of wealth more skewed than it had been in the past, class stratification "remained

29 For Weddings, see *Boston Weekly Rehearsal*, June 9, 1733, August 13, 1733; *Virginia Gazette*, October 1, 1736; *Pennsylvania Journal*, February 21, 1744. For Deaths, see *Virginia Gazette*, March 1, 1737, March 24, 1737, April 7, 1737; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 15, 1761, January 26, 1761; Cotton Mather, *The Glorious Throne*; Samuel Checkley, *The Duty of a People to Lay to Heart and Lament the Death of a Great King . . .* (Boston: Benjamin Gray, 1727); Thomas Prince, *A Sermon on the Sorrowful Occasion of the Death of His Late Majesty King George of Blessed Memory . . .* (Boston, 1727); Jonathan Mayhew, *A Sermon Preached at Boston in New England, May 26, 1751. Occasioned by the Much Lamented Death of his Royal Highness, Frederick, Prince of Wales . . .* (Boston: Richard Draper, 1751).

30 For example, see "From the Portland Gazette, October 21, 1745," *Maryland Gazette*, February 25, 1746; *New York Weekly Journal*, January 17, 1737/38; "Twelve Good Reasons for Rejecting the Pretender, Which Ought to Be Kept in the Study of Every Protestant," *New York Weekly Journal*, February 17, 1746; "Answer to the Pretender's Declaration," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 11, 1746.

31 Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1992), 12, *passim*. See also Jerrilyn Greene Marston, *King and Congress: The Transfer of Political Legitimacy, 1774-1776* (Princeton, University Press, 1987), 23, *passim*; and Bushman, 19-22, 46-48.

32 Wood, *Radicalism*, p.19. See also Bushman, 18-20.

remarkably shallow and stunted by contemporary English standards.”³³ Although scholars might disagree as to the significance of the economic and social structural developments within colonial society in the eighteenth century, they generally agree that the American colonial social ladder was shorter than that of Great Britain. Edwin Perkins notes that poverty increased, especially in the northern towns after the middle of the century, but still concludes that the standard of living for the “typical white family was almost certainly the highest in the world by the 1770s.”³⁴ Perhaps class differences and the potential for class conflict were the most apparent in the growing northern urban centers and in those areas of the colonies where, by the mid-eighteenth century, new land was becoming scarce. There, conflicts of interest between manufacturers, workers, consumers, farmers and speculators caused friction.³⁵ In spite of these differences, however, American colonists still viewed society in the same terms as their English cousins and agreed that the king held a paramount place in it as both the apex of British society and the political father of those below him on the chain.

Colonists frequently portrayed their king in patriarchal terms. Although redefined from the Filmerian construction by Whig ideas of constraint on the executive and the elective nature of kingship, the concept of the king as father held on with tenacity both in Britain and in the colonies and was revitalized during the first half of the eighteenth century. Robert Filmer had justified Stuart absolute kingship by equating it with the power a patriarch exercised over his family under the divine ordinance of the Commandment to “honor thy father.” For Filmer, a tyrannical father was a father nevertheless, answerable only to God, and not to his children, for his actions.³⁶ British Whig writers of the first half of the eighteenth century stressed that only good rulers deserved the title of father. Political fatherhood was

33 Wood, *Radicalism*, 112.

34 Edwin J. Perkins, *The Economy of Colonial America*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 212. See also Theodore Draper, *A Struggle for Power: The American Revolution* (New York: Times Books, A Division of Random House, 1996), 123-127; Alice Hanson Jones, *Wealth of a Nation to Be* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 67-68, 72. David Hackett Fischer remarks on the “truncated system of social orders in New England” and adds that Virginia’s more stratified social order was based less on economic determinants than on “worthy descent, virtue and valor, reputation and fame” (David Hackett Fischer, *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 383-384). See also Rhys Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1988), 118. Richard Hofstadter argued that the significant feature of American colonial society was that the preponderance of the population fell somewhere into a wide middle class. See Richard Hofstadter, *America at 1750: A Social Portrait* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 132-135. Robert Brown and other historians note the fairly broad based and essentially democratic features of the American colonial class structure. See Robert Brown, *Middle-Class Democracy and the Revolution in Massachusetts, 1691-1780* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, for the American Historical Association, 1955); Robert E. and Katherine T. Brown, *Virginia, 1705-1780: Democracy or Aristocracy?* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1964); Daniel Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953) and *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (New York: Random House, 1958).

35 These tensions have been the focus of works by Progressive and neo-Progressive historians. For a few examples, see Carl L. Becker, *The History of Political Parties in the Province of New York* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1909); J. Franklin Jameson, *The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1926); Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution, 1762-1776* (New York, 1918); Allan Kulikoff, “The Progress of Inequality in Revolutionary Boston,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 28 (July, 1971), 375-412; Marc Egnal and Joseph Ernst, “An Economic Interpretation of the American Revolution,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 29 (January, 1972), 3-33; Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: The Northern Seaports and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979); Kenneth Lockridge, *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985), 150-159, *passim.*; and the recently published 1962 dissertation of Jesse Lemisch, *Jack Tar vs. John Bull: The Role of New York’s Seamen in Precipitating the Revolution* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997).

36 See Robert Filmer, *Patriarchia*, in *Two Treatises of Government*, by John Locke. With a Supplement *Patriarchia* by Robert Filmer, Thomas I. Cook, ed. (New York: Hafner Press, 1947), 281. Filmer died in 1653, but *Patriarcha* was not published until 1680.

not the divine right of the ruler but an accolade from the people. Writers stressed the paternal love, benevolence and protection that a good father bestowed upon his family rather than the authoritative power that a patriarch wielded over his progeny.³⁷ “In order to answer the ends of civil Government,” Daniel Lewes stated, “Rulers should behave towards their People, with the tenderness and affection of Fathers . . . by protecting them to the utmost of their Power.”³⁸ Lewes continued:

The Parent who governs his Children with Lenity and Gentleness and appears to be deeply concerned for their welfare on all Accounts, takes the surest Course to entitle himself to their sincere Respect, and to be truly honoured by them. Where as he that is rigorous and always treats them in a churlish imperious Manner, is only slavishly feared, but not cordially loved.³⁹

Lewes attributed to George II, “all the Affection and Tenderness” of a loving father.⁴⁰ According to Ebenezer Pemberton, a Presbyterian minister in New York, George II “may truly be stiled the indulgent Father of his people, under whose administration we may worship God according to the dictates of our conscience, and have none to terrify and disturb us, — may dwell under our vines and Figtrees, and have none to make us afraid.”⁴¹

With increasing frequency during the period from the rise of the Hanovers through the 1760s, colonial ministers and other writers compared good kings (monarchs since the Revolution of 1688) with bad kings (usually the Stuarts), and employed biblical citations that stressed the paternal nature of monarchy to illustrate the qualities of good rulers. “Such Kings,” Samuel Checkley noted, “as they expect love, honour and loyalty from their Subjects, so they endeavour to be themselves *nursing fathers* unto them, which was

37 In *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, Gordon Wood focuses on the more negative aspects of Early Modern familial relations and the analogous patriarchal political relationship between king and people. He stresses the inequality and dependency of paternalism, the “stark forms of unfreedom,” and “other kinds of inferiority and dependence” of Early Modern family and monarchical society rather than the more protective and benign aspects of paternity within the family relationship (see Wood, *Radicalism*, 46-56). Wood notes that the American Revolution was, in part, a continuation of a “revolution against patriarchal society,” that transformed parents from arbitrary to “limited monarchs” (149-156). Although Wood’s assumptions about the liberalization and increasingly indulgent nature of parenthood through the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are valid, and well supported by writers like Lawrence Stone and Daniel Blake Smith, Wood largely ignores that even in the earlier works by Americans of the Hanoverian Age, writers stressed the protective, benign and indulgent nature of the British monarch as patriarch. This idea was carried over into the National period when George Washington and other American leaders were similarly described. See Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1977); Daniel Blake Smith “Study of the Family in Early America,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 39 (1982), 2-28; Karen Calvert, “Children in American Portraiture, 1670-1810,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 39 (1982), 87-113; and Barry Schwartz, *George Washington: The Making of a Symbol* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 32-33.

38 Daniel Lewes, *Good Rulers*, 14,15.

39 *Ibid.*, 21.

40 *Ibid.*, 23.

41 Ebenezer Pemberton, *A Sermon Delivered at the Presbyterian Church in New York . . .* (New York: James Parker, 1746), 20. For a few other examples, see Ebenezer Gay, *The Character and Work of a Good Ruler, and Duty of an Obligated People . . .* [Massachusetts election sermon] (Boston: D. Gookin, 1745), 11; Daniel Lewes, *Good Rulers*, 25, *passim*; Samuel Mather, *A Funeral Discourse Preached on the Occasion of the Death of the High, Puissant, and Most Illustrious Prince Frederick Lewis, Prince of Great Britain . . .* (Boston: J. Draper, 1751), 27; Jonathan Mayhew, *A Sermon Preached at Boston*, 23; “To the Author,” *New England Courant*, May 28, 1722; “Humble Address of the Maryland House of Delegates,” *Maryland Gazette*, January 26, 1755.

the great blessing God promised his People of old.”⁴² Ebenezer Gay stressed that “Rulers are political *Fathers* of their People.” When they encourage virtue and suppress vice, “such rulers are called . . . the *Breath of a Peoples’ Nostrils*.” Gay continued, “our *King* is a nursing Father, and our *Queen* a nursing Mother, who have expressed their tender care of, and Concern for us, their poor but dutiful Children in these distant parts of their Dominion.”⁴³ Nathaniel Eells preached at the Hartford election sermon in 1748 that “in order to answer the Ends of civil Government, . . . Rulers should behave towards their People, with the Tenderness and Affection of Fathers.”⁴⁴ Daniel Lewes took a more Classical turn when he compared George II to Augustus Caesar, “one of the best and wisest” Roman Emperors, “that when the People offered him the title of *Lord*, . . . thought the title of *Pater Patria* more honourable.”⁴⁵

Since good kings were “civil Fathers” to their subjects, colonial writers argued that good subjects ought to exercise a filial duty “to honour them as such.”⁴⁶ As good rulers protected and guaranteed their subjects’ liberties, property and religion, so subjects were obliged to pray for and obey their king and to do all that they could to protect and preserve the power and prerogatives of their ruler. To do so was not a matter of blind or slavish obedience, but of reciprocal self-interest and obligation, and was thus good practice. After all, if the king employed his powers to the benefit of his subjects, then self-interest dictated that the subject, in turn, should strive to preserve those royal powers that the king exercised to his people’s benefit. Good rulers worked “with Heart, and Head, and Hand, to promote the great Ends of Rule, and Government, the Good and Welfare of their People, and are willing to Spend and be Spent, for the common weal.”⁴⁷ Should not good subjects then support their rulers, for “what an inexcusable and shameful Ingratitude to God, as well as Blindness to their own Interests, is it for a People to bite the Hand that thus kindly feeds them?”⁴⁸ Indeed, the Scripture enjoined good Christian citizens that “whosoever therefore resisteth the power,” of rulers, “resisteth the ordinance of God.”⁴⁹ Divine writ, however, did not extend the requirement “to all who bear the title of rulers in common,” but only to those who “actually perform the duty of rulers by exercising a reasonable and just authority for the good of human society . . . , such as are in the exercise of their office and power, benefactors.”⁵⁰ Good rulers were ever vigilant and solicitous of the temporal and spiritual interests of their subjects. They encouraged virtue and punished

42 Samuel Checkley, *The Duty of a People*, 14. See also Nathaniel Appleton, *The Cry of Oppression Where Judgement is Looked for* . . . (Boston: J. Draper, 1748), 13-15, 25; and “To the Honourable Cadwallader Colden . . . The Humble Address of the Council of His Majesty’s Province of New York,” *Pennsylvania Journal*, March 18, 1762.

43 Ebenezer Gay, *The Duty of a People*, 16, 19, 33.

44 Nathaniel Eells, *The Wise Ruler; a Loyal Subject* . . . [Connecticut election sermon, 1748] (Boston, Timothy Green), 14.

45 Lewes, *Good Rulers*, 13. See also Samuel Mather, *A Funeral Discourse*, 27.

46 Lewes, *Good Rulers*, 24.

47 Nathaniel Hunn, *The Welfare of a Government Considered* . . . [Connecticut election sermon] (New London: Timothy Green, 1747), 9.

48 *Ibid.* See also Samuel Davies, *Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of a Good Soldier* . . . *Hanover County, Virginia, August 17, 1755* . . . (Philadelphia: James Chatten, 1755), 3-4.

49 Rom. xiii, 2. Cited in Jonathan Mayhew, *Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission* . . . (Boston: D. Fowle, 1750), in *Pamphlets of the American Revolution*, Bernard Bailyn, ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1965), 215.

50 Jonathan Mayhew, *Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission*, Bailyn, *Pamphlets*, 226.

vice.⁵¹ “Under their shadow” the people “possess[ed] the comforts and conveniences of Life, with security from Rapine, from solicitude, from continual fears of Wrong and Outrage.”⁵² The Anglican rector of Christ Church in Philadelphia, Archibald Cummings, stated that “where *Princes* Protect and Defend their Subjects, and injure them not in their *legal Rights* and *Liberties*, the Subjects are bound to Reverence and Obey their Princes.”⁵³ Such “*reciprocal Duties*” were “founded on the eternal respects of things; for natural Equity, plain Reason, and the unavoidable necessities of our state and condition, exact and require them.”⁵⁴ Because kings were the “Instruments in the Hand of Providence,” it was incumbent upon their subjects to pray for them.⁵⁵ In so doing, “we are at the same time in the most Effectual and Successful manner promoting our own Interest.”⁵⁶ In short, so long as the king evinced a paternal care for the needs of his subjects, they were obliged by God, by society and by their own self-interest, to offer him the allegiance, obedience and protection that good children afforded their parents.

Colonists saw the hand of Providence at work in the events that they associated with their kings. Just as a divine hand and a Protestant wind had brought William, Prince of Orange, to England to deliver the English world from Popery and slavery in 1688, Providence continued to bless Englishmen into the eighteenth century. Colonial writers viewed the Hanoverian succession as a providential stroke that guaranteed a new dynasty of good Protestant rulers to Englishmen wherever they might reside.⁵⁷ In 1746, “the God of Battles” intervened on the field at Culloden in Scotland, insuring victory to George II’s son William, the Duke of Cumberland, and his army over Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender, thus

51 See Benjamin Colman, *A Sermon Preach’d at Boston in New England, on Thursday the 23rd of August, 1716. Being the Day of Public Thanksgiving, for the Suppression of the Late Vile and Traitorous Rebellion in Great Britain* (Boston: Fleet & Crump, 1716), 2-4; Ebenezer Gay, *The Duty of a People*, 18-19; John Swift, *Election Sermon*, 13; Benjamin Colman, *God is a Great King*, (Boston: S. Kneeland & T. Green, 1733), 4; Nathaniel Hunn, *The Welfare of the Government Considered*, 6-7; Nathaniel Eells, *The Wise Ruler*, 17-18; William Balch, *A Public Spirit, as Express’d in Praying for the Peace and Seeking the Good of Jerusalem, Recommended to Rulers and People . . .* [Massachusetts election sermon] (Boston, 1749), 13-14.

52 Ebenezer Gay, *The Duty of a People*, 18-19. The word “solicitude” is here used in the sense of “anxiety.”

53 Archibald Cummings, *The Character of a Righteous Ruler. A Sermon Upon the Death of the Honourable Patrick Gordon . . . Christ’s Church, Philadelphia, August 8, 1736 . . .* (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1736), 10. See also Ebenezer Gay, *The Character and Work of Good Rulers*, 14; Nathaniel Hunn, *The Welfare of the Government Considered*, 7-8.

54 Jared Eliot, *Give Cesar His Due: or, the Obligation that Subjects Are Under to Their Civil Rulers . . . A Sermon Preached before the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut . . . , May 11th, 1736* (New London: Timothy Green, 1738), 18. See also Ebenezer Gay, *The Character and Work of Good Rulers*, 13; Charles Chauncy, *The Counsel of Two Confederate Kings*, 43; John Gordon, *A Sermon*, 30.

55 Eliot, *Give Cesar His Due*, 16.

56 *Ibid.*, 18.

57 See Benjamin Colman, *A Sermon Preach’d at Boston*, 7; Ebenezer Gay, *The Duty of the People*, 33; Archibald Cummings, *The Character of a Righteous Ruler*, 13; Thomas Prince, *The People of New England*, Plumstead, 209; John Gordon, *A Sermon*, 18; Charles Chauncy, *The Counsel of Two Confederate Kings*, 32; Mr. Thornton [sic], “To His Highness the Prince of Wales. An Ode,” *South Carolina Gazette*, December 15, 1737; “A Short Eulogium on His Present Majesty King George II,” *Maryland Gazette*, December 31, 1746; “The Humble Address of the Pastors of the Churches in His Majesty’s Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, Assembled in Boston, at their Annual Convention, May 25, 1743,” *New York Weekly Journal*, February 2, 1747; “Humble Address of the Synod of Philadelphia, Conven’d May 25, 1743,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 9, 1743.

preserving the continuation of Hanover rule.⁵⁸ Royal events were prodigious, sometimes even causing effects far away in the provinces at the fringe of the Empire. The editor of the *New England Weekly Journal* noted that, after the celebration of the accession of George II in Boston “a welcome rain, after a time of much heat and drought put an end to the Ceremony.”⁵⁹ He observed that “a like merciful rain” had auspiciously fallen, ending a prolonged drought “on the evening of the Day when George *the First* was proclaim’d here.”⁶⁰ This Bostonian concluded with the hope that “the royal smiles” and “happy influences of” the new monarch’s “wise and just Government” might fall on all of his dominions, Massachusetts in particular, “like the rain upon the mown grass & as showers that water the earth; that in his days the righteous may flourish.”⁶¹

As Whig notions of royal patriarchy developed, so also the idea grew that, although British kings were not specifically chosen by God, but governed by the consent of the British people through their representative legislatures, good kings were, nevertheless, “raised up by divine Appointment and Providence to Rule and Judge the People.”⁶² The phrase “his sacred majesty” was employed as a title for British kings long after the conception of divine right as it was understood and promoted by James I and Robert Filmer had passed out of English political acceptability. The notion of assigning divine approval and even status to rulers who were also assumed to hold their office and prerogatives by the election and consent of those over whom they ruled may seem paradoxical to the modern reader; however, ministers found a precedent for this new model of divine kingship in the Old Testament story of the establishment of a monarchy over the Children of Israel.⁶³ “When they had become a settled Nation,” John Barnard said, “in the Land which God had promised to their Fathers,” the Israelites chose “to come under a *Monarchical* Form of Government.”⁶⁴ In 1754, Jonathan Mayhew cited biblical precedent to illustrate the legitimacy of the Hanoverian succession when he noted that after the establishment of monarchy in Israel:

the crown, instead of descending uniformly to the elder branch of the male line, was often bestowed on a younger; sometimes transferred to another family; and sometimes even into another tribe—and this not without divine approbation.⁶⁵

Colonial ministers and writers adopted a curious mixture of scriptural authority and English Whig

58 Ebenezer Pemberton, *A Sermon*, 7. See also Charles Chauncy, *The Counsel of Two Confederate Kings*, 28; “Victory Celebration at Annapolis, July 22, 1746,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 31, 1746; “Address of the House of Representatives of the Colony of Nova Caesaria, or New Jersey, in America . . .,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 4, 1747. George Whitefield, though English, conveyed similar sentiments in a sermon he preached in Philadelphia shortly after hearing news of the victory at Culloden. See George Whitefield, *Britain’s Mercies, and Britain’s Duty; Represented in a Sermon Preach’d at the New-Building in Philadelphia . . .* (Boston: Kneeland & Green, 1746), in Sandoz, 125.

59 *The New England Weekly Journal*, August 21, 1727.

60 *Ibid.*

61 *Ibid.*

62 Nathaniel Eells, *The Wise Ruler*, 1. See also Benjamin Colman, *A Sermon Preach’d at Boston*, 6; John Hancock, *Rulers Should be Benefactors . . .* (Boston, 1722), 3; Edward Holyoke, *Integrity and Religion to be Principally Regarded by Such as Design Others to Stations of Public Trust* [Massachusetts election sermon, 1736] (Boston: J. Draper, 1736), 13; Daniel Lewes, *Good Rulers*, 8; and “The Humble Address of the Synod of *Philadelphia*, Conven’d May 25, 1743,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 9, 1743.

63 I Samuel 8.

64 John Barnard, *The Throne Established by Righteousness . . .* (Boston, 1734), Plumstead, 238. See also Charles Chauncy, *The Counsel of Two Confederate Kings*, 32. For comparisons of Hanover kings to David, see Benjamin Colman, *Fidelity to Christ . . .* (Boston: T. Fleet, 1727), 2-3; John Barnard, *The Throne Established*, Plumstead, 247; Ebenezer Gay, *The Character and Work of a Good Ruler*, 28; and “Observations,” *Virginia Gazette*, July 3, 1746.

65 Jonathan Mayhew, *An Election Sermon*. May 29th, 1754, Plumstead, 292.

political principles to forge a synthesis that, while hostile to the Stuart notion of divine right, nevertheless insisted that a good monarch, though chosen by the consent of those ruled and constrained by Parliament, was the anointed of God, holding both secular prerogatives and divine appointment and authority. In the Massachusetts Election Sermon of 1734, Boston Congregationalist minister, John Barnard, argued that, since the people placed the king at the head of government, the people might remove a bad king; however, a good king, howsoever chosen, was both anointed and ordained by God.⁶⁶ An “Independent” puts the point rather succinctly:

Men are made *kings* by the Grace of God, — but not *tyrants*, because they have not the grace of God in them. And that *grace of God* which makes kings comes by means of the *good will of the people*. Those that hold their power by this right, as the *present royal family do*, have the best, the justest, and the most natural right in the world. Properly speaking, men are made kings by *the grace of the people*, and they behave as worthy of such an office, by *the grace of God*.⁶⁷

In short, for Englishmen, only *good* kings could hold the position of divinely anointed rulers, and good kings were those rulers who were solicitous of the Protestant religion, liberties and property of those over whom they ruled.

Good rulers were assigned a status even greater than divine ordination. Good rulers were “God’s Vicegerents [sic], and therefore called Gods.”⁶⁸ For Samuel Mather, “with respect to the Power, Rule and Authority, which they have over others,” kings resembled “*the Almighty* who is the Original of all Dominion, Might and Majesty.”⁶⁹ While some writers described the divine, or divinely inspired, attributes of kings, others stressed the kingly attributes of God. Jonathan Edwards, admitting that “all things upon earth are insufficient to represent to us” the glory of God and of Heaven, employed the language of monarchy to describe them “because we are most apt to [be] affected by those things which we have seen with our own eyes, and heard with our own ears, and had experience of.”⁷⁰ Edwards noted that the capital cities of kingdoms “are commonly, above all others, stately and beautiful” and Heaven, being the seat of the King of Kings, was the most beautiful of capitals as it displayed the glory of God.⁷¹ Like a good English king, Edwards stated, Christ governs by laws that are “exceedingly tending in their own nature to the peace, comfort, joy and happiness of his people.”⁷² Christ’s government provides his subjects with the “greatest liberty,” and the Holy Ghost “rules over his subjects as a father amongst his dear children, . . . his commands are but fatherly counsels.”⁷³ Benjamin Colman also invoked the qualities of a good king in describing God. As the King of Kings, He holds his sovereignty by inalienable

66 John Barnard, *The Throne Established*, Plumstead, 243-244. See also “The Chronicle of the *Queen of Hungary* with the mighty Acts of George King of *England* at the Battle of Dettingen,” *Pennsylvania Journal*, December 15, 1743.

67 [Peter Annet?], *A Discourse on Government*, 16.

68 Jared Eliot, *Give Cesar his Due*, 16. See also John Hancock, *Rulers Should be Benefactors*, 3; Ebenezer Gay, *The Duty of a People*, 25; and Jonathan Mayhew, *A Discourse Occasioned by the Death of King George II. And the Happy Accession of His Majesty King George III* (Boston, 1761), 30-34; “To the Author,” *New England Courant*, May 28, 1722.

69 Samuel Mather, *The Fall of the Mighty Lamented. A Funeral Discourse Upon the Death of Her most Excellent Majesty Wilhelmina Dorothea Carolina* (Boston, 1738), 11.

70 Jonathan Edwards, *Nothing on Earth Can Represent the Glories of Heaven*, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Kenneth P. Minkema, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 14:139-140.

71 *Ibid.*, 14:141.

72 Jonathan Edwards, *The Threefold Work of the Holy Ghost*, *Edwards' Works*, 14: 427.

73 *Ibid.*, 14:432.

right.⁷⁴ He is a benevolent monarch, providing “Protection, Defense or Maintenance” to his subjects.⁷⁵ God is the law made manifest, who like earthly kings, distributes dignity and rewards to the righteous and punishes the wicked, “thus the Lord is our King, the Lord is our Judge.”⁷⁶ Significantly, both Edwards and Colman characterized God primarily as a benefactor, solicitous of the cares of His subjects—a far cry from the vengeful God who might visit “nothing but horrible disorders, agonies, and vexations” upon his strayed children.⁷⁷ He is an English Whig God, portrayed with the stern but benevolent and paternal attributes of a good English king, not the unrestrained and often arbitrary and wrathful ruler of the Old Testament and the Jeremiad. God’s benevolence was all the more remarkable because, unlike good English kings, His powers and prerogatives were unrestrained. He had no Parliament to protect His subjects from arbitrary rule. There could be no revolution, and no abdication in His Kingdom. God truly ruled by “inalienable right,” and, as the creator and preserver of all things in Heaven and on Earth, He exercised “Government and Rule over all.”⁷⁸ God’s Throne rested upon the pinnacle of the metaphysical pyramid that was the “Great Chain of Being,” and, given that there was no possible appeal to temper His wrath, His benevolence was all the more wonderful and worthy of emulation by his ministers, the kings of the Earth.

Colonial political writers rarely considered the likelihood that any future British ruler might become a tyrant so long as the Settlement of 1688 and the Hanoverian succession held; however, should a Stuart somehow return to the throne—a very real threat in the minds of American colonists throughout the period—there was general consensus that tyranny must surely follow. Indeed, fears of the restoration of a Roman Catholic ruler were a fundamental part of the political ideology of most Englishmen, and especially of His Majesty’s colonists in North America. Colonists, like the majority of their English cousins, equated tyrannical government with Catholic monarchs in general and with the Stuarts in particular. Colonial ministers and editorialists asked what could be more terrifying than a Catholic Stuart prince who was educated on absolutist principles by his father at the court of a French monarch? American divines used the reign of James II and the administration of his servants in the Dominion of New England to illustrate the cataclysmic consequences of a Stuart restoration. Charles Chauncy wrote, “Our Fathers groaned under the oppressive Burden of a *popish* and tyrannical Power . . . [when] the then Governor of Massachusetts, Sir Edmond Andros, unhappily copied after the Measures of his Royal Master.”⁷⁹ So might new governors reduce a new generation of Anglo-Americans to oppression and slavery under a Stuart Restoration. William Dawson of William and Mary College agreed that, “should it prevail (which Heaven avert) Life, Liberty, and Fortune would be Precarious.”⁸⁰ A New Yorker expanded on the theme, stating that under a restored Stuart king “our Lives, Laws, Liberties, Properties, Wives,

74 Benjamin Colman, *God is a Great King* . . . (Boston: S. Kneeland & T. Green, 1733), 2-3.

75 *Ibid.*, 3. See also Thomas Prince, *The People of New England*, Plumstead, 208; Samuel Cook, *An Election Sermon* (Boston: Edes & Gill, 1770), Plumstead, 335; Samuel Wigglesworth, *God’s Promise to an Obedient People, of Victory Over Their Enemies* (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1755), 2, and *The Blessedness of Such as Trust in Christ the King Whom God Hath Exalted* (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1755), 9, 24-25.

76 Colman, *God is a Great King*, 4

77 Cotton Mather, *The Way to Prosperity* . . . [Massachusetts election sermon, 1689] (Boston: Richard Pierce, 1690), Plumstead, 129. See also Edward Holyoke, *Integrity and Religion*, 13.

78 Coleman, *God is a Great King*, 2-3.

79 Charles Chauncy, *The Counsel of Two Confederate Kings*, 28. See also John Barnard (Harvard 1709), *The Presence of the Great God in the Assembly of Political Rulers* . . . [Massachusetts election sermon, 1746] (Boston: J. Draper), 12-13.

80 “Open Letter to the Clergy of Virginia from William Dawson of William and Mary College,” *Virginia Gazette*, Jan. 16, 1746.

Children, and Religion must be sacrificed.”⁸¹ Should the Pretender succeed, said Maryland Anglican minister and poet Thomas Cradock, “how miserable had we been! better by far not to have lived . . . , we should have been governed with a Rod of Iron;” forced to submit to a Catholic Tyrant, “had we been so obstinately honest as to have stood to this, then what remains for us but the *Smithfield* fire?”⁸² For American colonists the success of the Jacobite cause augured nothing more than a return to the misery and oppression that their forefathers had experienced under the Old Pretender’s father, James II, and a renewed threat to their Protestant faith.

Most English Protestants viewed the Glorious Revolution as a triumph over Roman Catholicism. English Protestants in North America believed that William had saved the nation from Popery and that his successors were the defenders and protectors of English Protestantism. The king of England was, after all, the “Defender of the Faith,” and colonists evidently took this royal title seriously. Americans celebrated the Hanoverian succession because the German line had impeccable Protestant credentials. The Hanovers were “a powerful Bulwark of the Protestant interest in Europe.”⁸³ British subjects considered the Hanoverian succession a guarantee against the encroachment of Popery. American colonists feared Catholicism as much as Englishmen did at home. Memories of the persecutions of English Protestants under Mary Tudor and the “popish plots” of James II colored American colonists’ perceptions of Catholicism as much as those of Englishmen across the Atlantic. These fears were brought into starker contrast by the fact that the English colonies in North America were surrounded on all sides by foreign Catholic powers that periodically challenged Britain for control of Anglo-America and thus threatened their very existence. Colonists’ fears of Catholic incursion from France and Spain increased between 1715 and 1746, because those two nations were seen as allies to the Stuart pretenders who threatened the security and religion of England. Colonists, like many Englishmen, dreaded the possibility of a Stuart restoration that would inevitably be accompanied by the curse of Popery and the undoing of William’s Revolution.⁸⁴ George Whitefield summed up the sense of foreboding that Englishmen had about their religious future under a restored Roman Catholic Stuart Pretender. While a restored Stuart tyranny chiefly threatened bodily harm and thus “must necessarily terminate in the grave,” English Protestants everywhere would also suffer “Spiritual mischiefs.” England and the colonies would be overrun by

81 “Twelve Good Reasons for Rejecting the Pretender, Which ought to be Kept in the Study of Every Protestant,” *New York Weekly Journal*, Feb. 17, 1746.

82 Thomas Cradock, *Two Sermons. . . Preached on the Occasion of the Suppression of the Scotch Rebellion . . .* (Annapolis, 1747), 9. Under Mary Tudor, Protestants were burned at the stake at Smithfield in London. The “Smithfield Fire” became an English symbol for Protestant martyrdom. See also John Barnard (Harvard 1709), *The Presence of the Great God*, 11-12; Charles Chauncy, *The Counsel of Two Confederate Kings*, 24; and George Whitefield, *Britain’s Mercies*, Sandoz, 126-127.

83 Edward Holyoke, *Integrity and Religion*, 13. See also Charles Chauncy, *The Counsel of Two Confederate Kings*, 43; John Gordon, *A Sermon*, 30; Ebenezer Pemberton, *A Sermon*, 22; George Whitefield, *Britain’s Mercies*, Sandoz, 125; “Governor Belcher’s Speech to the Massachusetts Assembly, February 10, 1731,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 10, 1731; “Governor of New-York’s Speech to the General Assembly, April 15, 1741,” *General Magazine*, April, 1741; “The Humble Address of the Synod of Philadelphia, conven’d May 25, 1743,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 9, 1743; “Address of the Rev. Presbyteries of New-Brunswick and New-Castle,” *Pennsylvania Journal*, May 31, 1744; “From the *Portsmouth Gazette*, October 21, 1745,” *Maryland Gazette*, February 25, 1746; “Celebration of the Duke of Cumberland’s Victory, Annapolis,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 31, 1746.

84 See Charles Chauncy, *A Sermon Occasioned by the Present Rebellion*, 24; John Gordon, *A Sermon*, 12-17; Thomas Cradock, *Two Sermons*, 10; “Copy of a treaty between the Pretender and the King of France, (from a South Carolina Gazette Reader),” *South Carolina Gazette*, February 9, 1747; “Address of the House of Representatives or Nova-Caesaria, or New Jersey . . . , St. James, February 17, 1747,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 4, 1747; “Twelve Good Reasons,” *New York Weekly Journal*, February 17, 1747; “From the *Portsmouth Gazette*, October 21, 1745,” *Maryland Gazette*, February 25, 1746; “Open Letter to the Clergy of Virginia from William Dawson of William and Mary College,” *Virginia Gazette*, January 11, 1746; “A Genuine Intercepted Letter, From Father Patrick Graham, Almoner and Confessor to the Pretender’s Son, in Scotland, to Father Benedict Yorke, Titular Bishop of St. David’s at Bath,” *Virginia Gazette*, January 23, 1746.

“whole swarms of monks, Dominicans and friars, like so many locusts” and “foreign titular bishops” would fill England’s sees. English universities would teach “all the superstitions of the church at Rome.” Protestant Bibles would be taken away, “and ignorance every where set up as the mother of devotion.” How long, Whitefield asked Philadelphians, would English Protestants be able to keep their faith? How soon would it be before their new Catholic masters instituted the inquisition, replete with all “the tortures which a bigotted zeal, guided by cruel principles, could possibly invent? How soon would that mother of harlots have made herself once more drunk with the blood of saints.”⁸⁵ Whitefield announced to his Philadelphia listeners that these horrors had been thankfully put off when George II’s son, William, the Duke of Cumberland, “like his glorious predecessor the Prince of Orange,” defeated Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender, and “once more delivered three kingdoms from the dread of popish cruelty and arbitrary power.”⁸⁶

If William III was seen as a defender of Protestantism in general, Dissenting Protestants viewed the Hanovers as special friends. Through much of her reign, Queen Anne’s government, while reasonably tolerant of dissenting sects until 1714, had been generally staunchly Tory and Anglican. In that year, while the Queen was on her deathbed, Bolingbroke used the old Tory slogan, “The Church in Danger,” to promote his own primacy in government with the passage of the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts.⁸⁷ Dissenters expected better treatment from George I, who had promised to help them.⁸⁸ Dissenting leaders praised the new German house for their Protestant tolerance as much as for their wisdom as rulers, and their sentiment on the subject appears to have speedily crossed the Atlantic. “We see ascending the throne a King” Cotton Mather wrote of George I, “in whose Dominions *Lutherans* and *Calvinists* live Easily with One Another . . . [who] will discern and Pursue the *True Interest of the Nations*; and give the Best Friends of His House and the Nations, cause to Rejoice.”⁸⁹

George I, himself a Lutheran, had a reputation for religious tolerance toward his German subjects, and his new Whig government wished to reward Dissenters for their support of their party and king. Thus, Whig leaders like James Stanhope and Robert Walpole saw both justice and political gain in maintaining a more liberal policy toward Calvinist Dissenters and Quakers in Britain. Parliament repealed the Occasional Conformity Act and the hated Schism Act in 1718 and two years later attempted to reform the established Church in order to bring at least some Dissenters back into the fold. The government closed the 1719 Convocation when Whig clergy under the leadership of Bishop Hoadly failed to execute its church reform measures because of High Church opposition in the Lower House. After that embarrassment, the Whig government generally ignored laws meant to force conformity and Anglican church attendance among Dissenters.⁹⁰ In 1732, Robert Walpole was able to get an annual grant of £500, the *Regium Domum*, to be dispersed among the widows of Dissenting ministers, and from 1728 on he promoted annual Indemnity Acts that gave some protection to Dissenters who were in office but could not

85 George Whitefield, *Britain’s Mercies*, Sandoz, 127.

86 *Ibid.*, 130. For a similar view of England under a restored Pretender, see “Cato’s Vision,” *New England Courant*, May 3, May 10, 1725; and Davies, *Religion and Patriotism*, 13.

87 The Occasional Conformity Act allowed dissenters to qualify for office if they took the Anglican Communion intermittently. The Tories had promoted the act in order to draw Country Dissenters away from the Whigs. The Schism Act was primarily created for the purpose of excluding Dissenters from the universities. See Sir David Lindsay Kier, *The Constitutional History of Modern Britain Since 1485*, 9th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967), 284.

88 Owen, 10-11.

89 Cotton Mather, *The Glorious Throne*, 35. See also Benjamin Colman, *A Sermon Preached at Boston*, 13; Daniel Lewes, *Good Rulers*, 18, 25; Samuel Mather, *Funeral Sermon*, 28; and Jonathan Mayhew, *A Sermon Preached at Boston*, 29-30.

90 Mark Goldie, “The Nonjurors, Episcopacy, and the Origins of the Convocation Controversy,” in *Ideology and Conspiracy: Aspects of Jacobitism, 1689-1759*, Eveline Cruickshanks, ed. (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1982), 17-18.

take the sacrament of the Church of England.⁹¹ Toleration of dissent and Church reform was one of the political “hot potatoes” of the first half of the eighteenth century. Ministerial leaders continually tried to maintain a wider coalition to preserve their governments by trying to balance the interests and needs of Dissenters and Old Whigs against those of Church Whigs and staunchly Anglican country backbenchers. Often, as in the case of Walpole’s pre-election policies of 1735, these flirtations were brief and disappointing for the Dissenters and Old Whigs. Nevertheless, they were frequent enough to preserve the impression, sometimes undeserved, that the Hanovers and their ministries supported the dissenting religious interests.⁹² American Dissenters were gratified at the government’s policies of toleration and credited their king with the efforts. Massachusetts Governor Jonathan Belcher even went so far as to remind the colonial assembly that, if King George II could exercise his “Royal Indulgence” and tolerate English Dissenters at home, the Massachusetts assembly should surely do no less toward Quakers and Baptists in a colony founded as a haven for dissenting Protestants.⁹³

As the protectors of Protestant religion, the Hanover rulers simultaneously became the protectors of English liberty. Just as Popery and slavery were inextricably bound, so also Protestantism and liberty went together. Hanover rulers quickly acquired a better reputation in the colonies as rulers who were solicitous of the rights and liberties of their subjects than they had in Britain, where there was still an active Jacobite movement hostile to the Whig political ascendancy and fearful for the preservation of the High Church, as well as a constant “highly vocal and rancorous” Whig opposition movement.⁹⁴ From the beginning of the reign of George I, colonial political sermons reflected support for the Hanover ascendancy. In his eulogy for Queen Anne, Cotton Mather dwelt in detail on the attributes of the new Hanover king.⁹⁵ In proceeding sermons New England divines characterized George I and George II as ideal English monarchs, benefactors to their subjects, solicitous, paternal rulers, who zealously guarded and protected the rights and religion of Englishmen. Colonial religious leaders of all flavors praised the German monarchs and frequently tied their religious and political liberty to the continuation of the Hanoverian line. Samuel Sewell, as moderator for the 1747 convention of Massachusetts ministers, remarked that, “[w]e cheerfully rely on your Majesty’s Royal Goodness, under God . . . to protect us and our Churches in the Possession of our invaluable Rights.” Sewell went on to link the continuing security of their liberties with the “longer Prosperity [sic] of your Majesty’s Reign, and the Continuance of your Crown in your Royal Family, through the Generations.”⁹⁶ Ministers and newspapers frequently characterized the Hanover rulers as being especially solicitous of the rights of their colonial subjects,

91 Owen, 39.

92 T.F. Kendrick, “Sir Robert Walpole, the Old Whigs and the Bishops, 1733-1736: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Parliamentary Politics,” *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1968, 429-445.

93 Governor Belcher to the Massachusetts Assembly, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, September 24, 1730.

94 Jack P. Green, “The Gifts of Peace: Social and Economic Expansion and Development in the Periodization of the Early American Past, 1713-1763,” in Jack P. Green, *Negotiated Authorities: Essays in Colonial Political and Constitutional History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 98. Green states that “A number of international and metropolitan conditions,” notably peace, political stability, and government promotion of the expansion of trade, especially under Walpole, positively impacted the American colonial economy and eased tensions between the colonies and London (99-100).

95 Cotton Mather, *The Glorious Throne*, 33, 35.

96 “The Humble Address of the Pastors of the Churches . . . of the Massachusetts Bay . . . at Their Annual Convention, May 28, 1746,” *New York Weekly Journal*, February 2, 1747. A few more examples with similar content in addresses to the King or governors include “Address from the Reverend Presbyterians of New Brunswick and New-Castle . . .,” *Pennsylvania Journal*, May, 31, 1744; “Humble Address of the Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia, May 27, 1747.” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 4, 1747; “Address of the Clergy of South Carolina to Governor James Glen, Esq.,” *South Carolina Gazette*, April 16, 1744; and addresses of the South Carolina Royal Council, and Commons House, *South Carolina Gazette*, November 26, 1750. See also John Gordon, *A Sermon*, 30; Ebenezer Pemberton, *A Sermon*, 33; Charles Chauncy, *Civil Magistrates Must be Just*, 34; Cotton Mather, *A Funeral Discourse*, 28.

especially in those times when the Hanover succession appeared to colonists to be in danger.⁹⁷

The Rebellions of 1715 and 1745 lent urgency to fears of a Stuart return, and fears of slavery and Popery reverberated through the texts of colonial writers throughout the mid-eighteenth century. This threat, combined with the tendency among some Anglican clergy in the 1750s to elevate the execution of Charles I to martyrdom and revive Filmerian notions of kingship, gave American clergy of all denominations food for both thought and declamation. The source of ideas of absolute monarchy associated with Stuart rule—"the hereditary, inalienable right of succession; of the despotic unlimited powers of kings by the immediate grant of heaven," according to Jonathan Mayhew, were not "drawn from holy Scriptures but from a far less pure and sacred fountain . . . from him who was a politician from the beginning."⁹⁸ Mayhew was not the only minister in America (or Britain) during the mid-eighteenth century to revive visions of the fires of Smithfield, the admonitions of Pym and Prynne in the 1630s and 40s, and the rhetoric of the Popish Plot and the Revolution of 1688.⁹⁹ "Would one that brings his Religion from Rome" asked Charles Chauncy of the Pretender, "turn enemy to the Pope, and encourage and promote the Cause that is opposite to his and subversive to it? Had not the *Nation* full experience of this in the Reign of Queen Mary, notwithstanding her Promises to the contrary?"¹⁰⁰ In general, however, so long as a Hanover was on the throne, fears of arbitrary rule were dismissed. As John Gordon of Annapolis stated of George II:

Blessed be God, we are favoured with a King, who may truly be stiled the indulgent Father of his people, under whose administration we may worship God according to the dictates of our conscience, and have none to terrify and disturb us, . . . [we] *may dwell under our own vines and figtrees, and have none to make us afraid.*¹⁰¹

As a result of the development of Whig notions of kingship, the English ruler became an active participant along with his subjects in the preservation of the liberty, property and religion of those under his care. The pre-Glorious Revolution stereotype of the king as "dread sovereign," distant, aloof, and independent, an estate unto himself, and hence always a potential danger to the well-being of his subjects, gave way to the Whig characterization of the king as an active participant in the pursuance of the first great aim and goal of government, the preservation of "the true rights, liberties, and privileges of the

97 For a few examples, see "Address of the Representatives of New Jersey," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 21, 1730; "Letter to the Editor," *South Carolina Gazette*, April 29, 1732; *New York Weekly Journal*, January 14, 1733; "Ode for His Majesty's Birthday, by Colly Cobber," *Virginia Gazette*, February 11, 1736/7; "Address of the Clergy to Governor James Glen," *South Carolina Gazette*, April 16, 1744; "Address of the Rev. Presbyteries of New-Brunswick and New-Castle," *Pennsylvania Journal*, May 31, 1744; "Twelve Good Reasons," *New York Weekly Journal*, February 17, 1746; "Humble Address of the House of Delegates to His Excellency Thomas Blader, esq., Governor of Maryland," *Virginia Gazette*, April 3, 1746; "A Short *Eulogium* on His Present Majesty King George II," *Maryland Gazette*, December 31, 1746; "Humble Address of the Pastors of the Churches in His Majesty's Province of Massachusetts, May 28, 1746," *New York Weekly Journal*, February 2, 1747; "Speech of William Ball, Representative of the South Carolina Assembly, to the Lt. Governor, Council and Assembly," *South Carolina Gazette*, March 28, 1761.

98 Jonathan Mayhew, *Election Sermon*, Plumstead, 291.

99 Jonathan Mayhew, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission*, Baily, *Pamphlets*, 213-247, and *An Election*, Plumstead, 283-319. See also as examples, John Barnard (Harvard 1709), *The Presence of the Great God; [Peter Annet?], A Discourse on Government*. Fears of the return of a Stuart Pretender were long lived in the Colonies, stretching even into the Revolutionary Era. John Adams as "Humphrey Ploughjogger" parodied anxiety about the return of a "pritandur" and "popiree" in his first letter in 1763. See *Papers of John Adams*, Robert J. Taylor et al., eds. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1977), 1:62.

100 Charles Chauncy, *The Counsel of two Confederate Kings*, 24.

101 John Gordon, *A Sermon*, 20.

subject.”¹⁰² Although the ideal Whig ruler was kind and benevolent, solicitous of the liberties of his subjects—in short a “nursing father”—colonists still characterized their Hanoverian rulers in terms that the staunchest enthusiast of the divine right of kings would not find inappropriate. Good English kings ruled with a divine authority. They were ministers of God among their people.

Yet the divinity of Whig kings was conditional. It was contingent upon their good behavior and adhered to the ruler only so long as he continued to govern by law and for the good of those whom God had placed under his care. The king and the people were principals in a contract, what Richard Bushman calls a “protection-and-allegiance covenant,” in which the king was obligated to rule by the laws of the nation and to protect and defend the lives, liberties, property and Protestant faith of his subjects. Britons, in turn, were obliged to obey and serve the king, to pray for him, and to help, where necessary and proper, to preserve his powers and prerogatives.¹⁰³ From the Hanoverian Accession up to the summer of 1776, American colonists imagined their king to be a benevolent protector, a powerful ally, who, godlike by definition, never slept, never died, and could do no wrong. The protection-allegiance covenant gave colonists an ally against those who would deprive them of their rights, even when, as was often the case, the people’s adversaries were the agents of the king himself. The covenant allied the king with his assembly in each colony, creating a sort of “king in parliament” in miniature in each of his Majesty’s provinces and uniting king and people in the defense of the liberties, property, and religion of the English subjects in the King’s possessions far away in North America.

102 John Barnard, *The Throne Established*, Plumstead, 250. See also Ebenezer Gay, *The Character and Work of a Good Ruler*, 12; Elnathan Whitman, *The Character and Qualifications of Good Rulers, and the Happiness of Their Administrations . . .* (New London: T. Green, 1745), 24; Charles Chauncy, *The Counsel of Two Confederate Kings*, 31; John Gordon, *A Sermon*, 30; Nathaniel Hunn, *The Welfare of the Government Considered*, 10; Gilbert Tennant, *A Sermon Preach’d at Philadelphia, January 7, 1747/8* (Philadelphia: W. Bradford, 1748), 13; Jonathan Mayhew, *A Sermon*, Plumstead, 298-299; Jonathan Mayhew, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission*, Bailyn, *Pamphlets*, 231, 247.

103 See Bushman, 51-52.