

## Reimagining the American Revolution: Jonathan Boucher's Loyalist Perspective

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### History

It has been, and it is, *the curse* of men every where, in their collective capacities, as well as individuals, to mistake change for reformation.

-Jonathan Boucher<sup>1</sup>

By 1775, Anglican minister Jonathan Boucher's firm footing in the American colonies had become increasingly tenuous. As the American Revolution started gathering momentum in Britain's North American colonies, it grew dangerous to propagate the Crown's preferred branch of Christianity. Not only were Boucher's social ties broken and reputation tarnished when he refused to use the pulpit to support the Revolution, but he, and other Anglican ministers like him, found themselves subjected to violent acts and intimidation. In one instance, Boucher was surrounded by two hundred armed men who commanded him to abandon his ministry.<sup>2</sup> By the end of his time in America, Boucher never climbed the pulpit without two loaded pistols to protect himself from the threats of revolutionaries.<sup>3</sup> In a stunningly brief moment on the eve of the Revolution, Anglican clergy members went from shepherding their flocks to becoming their prey, as their parishioners appeared to truly have been wolves in sheep's clothing.

Boucher and his colleagues found themselves in this situation because British colonists were redefining the relationship between God and country. Anglican ministers not only served their Lord, but were supposed to dutifully serve their king, the titular head of their Church, as well; this did not bode well for them in a revolutionary context that aimed to dissolve such a relationship. While these men of the cloth are fascinating subjects, Boucher himself is even more intriguing. Although his is not the only Anglican experience, his proximity to the dawning of the American Revolution and his refusal to abandon his assiduous loyalty to the British Crown make

him a character worthy of attention. By examining Boucher's life and ministry in the American colonies, historians can complicate common assumptions about the American Revolution by better understanding what motivated some colonists toward Loyalism. Long seen as a nagging detractor from an inevitable and virtuous revolution, Jonathan Boucher helps illuminate many of the legitimate reservations Loyalists had about the Revolution and the rhetoric that inspired it. He also reveals how integral personal relationships and emotional experiences were in navigating and interpreting the events that unfolded amidst the revolutionary fervor.

This study is based on a new branch of scholarship about the American Revolution that understands Britain's American colonies as having a distinctly Anglican identity right up to the precipice of the Revolution. In essence, "Anglicanization explains the process through which the English colonies of the Americas emerged from their diverse beginning to become increasingly more alike, expressing shared Britishness in their political and judicial systems, material culture economies, religious systems, and engagements with the empire," which meant, "the thirteen mainland colonies had never been more British than they were on the eve of their War of Independence from Britain."<sup>4</sup> This reframing of the colonial world is absolutely essential for reinvestigating an event that has long been conceived of as inevitable and progressive. As historian Brendan McConville observes, "Despite decades of proclaimed hostility to 'whiggish' and teleological history, most historians still treat the years between 1688 and 1776 as a long prologue to the revolutionary crisis or American society's broader modernization."<sup>5</sup> A close study of Anglican ministers like Boucher provide avenues to address this historiographical issue. Their voices and experiences raise questions like: What were the merits of revolution? Did the American Revolution actually enjoy a genuine, broad base of support from colonists? Was the Revolution a result of government dysfunction or humans' insatiable longing for unrealistic

utopias? Investigating these lines of inquiry enables historians to find new facets of the ever-evolving analysis of the American Revolution.

In addition to assessing British identity in the Revolution, Boucher also allows historians to more properly situate Loyalists in the conflict. Rather than merely viewing them as naysayers futilely trying to stem the oncoming tide of revolution, thereby minimizing the legitimacy of their arguments, historians must take their criticisms of the Revolution seriously. Doing so not only locates their voice in the Revolution, but also calls into question the long-accepted causes and consequences of the conflict. Robert M. Calhoon, Timothy M. Barnes, and George A. Rawlyk make this point clear when they write, “The Loyalists bedevil the study of the American Revolution. The more we learn about them, the harder it becomes to depict the Revolution as a straightforward contest between American liberty and British oppression.”<sup>6</sup> Therefore, Anglicans like Jonathan Boucher usefully disrupt traditional interpretations of the American Revolution, as they highlight how British the colonies actually were, and how the revolutionaries may, indeed, have misstepped in their pursuit of independence from the Crown.

Utilizing a methodological approach provided by Alison Games in *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* also helps contextualize Boucher’s contributions to the colonial conflict, resuscitating his legacy as an individual historical actor. Games’ main assertion is that the British Empire was developed through the cosmopolitan travelers who discovered and explored the world in its name. “Cosmopolitanism facilitated survival and success overseas, and thus emerged in part as a series of learned behaviors,” she saw, as “[T]hey fabricated connections over thousands of miles, linking ties of knowledge and custom and practice. Cumulatively, they wove the web of empire.”<sup>7</sup> Her study also emphasizes the human experiences of such interactions: negotiating personal beliefs with local customs,

developing and maintaining relationships with those outside the British Isles, and travelers' emotions and attitudes as they pieced the Empire together. These considerations are especially useful when applied to Boucher, as they imbue him with a greater sense of agency and reveal historical significance in his more human qualities, like the emotions found within his writings and correspondence that documented the turbulent times in which he lived. Although Games' chronology stops roughly a century before Boucher arrived in North America, her methodology can easily be extended to shed light on his life. While her monograph takes readers to the origin of the British Empire in America, the Empire's cohesiveness had to be constantly maintained by agents of the Crown. What Boucher offers is a look into one of the British Empire's final agents in America, who tried to keep its imperial web intact as control over its colonies in this region quickly waned. Furthermore, reinvestigating Boucher's life with these perspectives in mind allows us to draw new meanings about the American Revolution, etching fresh contours into a field long unwilling to reimagine the role Loyalism played in its unfolding.

In 1738, Jonathan Boucher was born in Cumberland County, England, to parents of great talents, but meager resources.<sup>8</sup> Although Boucher's father received an ample inheritance, he constantly drew on it as he struggled to find success in the business world. Boucher attributes his father's wasted talents on his more vulgar habits, primarily his propensity for drunkenness.<sup>9</sup> Although his parents could not give him fortune, they gave him the drive to obtain an education. He explains that, "It always has been, and still is, much the fashion of the people where I was born to bring up their children to be what they call scholars. My parents had this ambition also."<sup>10</sup> However, the Boucher family's poverty periodically forced Jonathan to stop attending school and go to work for wages. Dissatisfied by the prospects of a life of toil, Boucher eventually convinced his father to let him return to school so he could train to become a school

master.<sup>11</sup> It was his skills as a scholar and tutor that enabled Boucher to voyage across the Atlantic to Britain's colonies, a journey that would forever change his life.

Through Boucher's relationship with the Saint Bees schoolmaster, Reverend Mr. James, he became a tutor for a gentleman's son in Virginia.<sup>12</sup> On July 12, 1759, Boucher's ship arrived near the mouth of the Rappahannock River in Virginia, and once ashore, he embarked on a journey to serve the children of Virginia and Maryland's elite families.<sup>13</sup> This allowed him to brush shoulders with the British gentry in a way that the poverty of his childhood had precluded. As wealthy, genteel Virginians sent their children to learn from and live under Boucher's tutelage, they formed bonds cemented by his service to them and their common British identity. However, when the Revolution arrived, many of these once loyal, elite colonial families became the Empire's ardent dissidents. The relationships Boucher formed with them were broken, and the revolutionary experience became deeply personal for him.

A few years after Boucher's arrival to Virginia, he found himself leading St. Mary's parish in Caroline County and had thirty boys boarding with him.<sup>14</sup> Of those thirty boys, "most of them [were] sons of persons of the first condition in the colony."<sup>15</sup> Perhaps no other boarder living with Boucher is of greater interest than John Parke Custis, George Washington's stepson. George Washington wrote to Boucher on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1768, after Custis' tutor left Virginia to return to Great Britain, requesting he house and tutor his stepson. Washington wrote, "If he comes, he will have a boy...and two Horses, to furnish him with the means of getting to Church, and elsewhere as you may permit; for he will be put entirely, and absolutely under your Tuition, and direction to manage as you think proper in all respects."<sup>16</sup> Boucher accepted Washington's request and Custis relocated to live with Boucher.

Through John Parke Custis, Washington and Boucher were yoked together. As the two corresponded about the young man's education and future, they repeatedly had an audience with each other in written and spoken word. But while Boucher came to call Washington friend, the day would come that would find these two men pitted against each other on opposing sides of the American Revolution. Thus, Boucher's relationship with Washington presents one of the greatest quandaries of the minister's life: how could someone be so close to one of the most iconic figures of the American Revolution and not abandon his loyalty to the Crown? How could Boucher's loyalty persist when someone he so cared for and respected transformed from ideal British gentleman to quintessential American revolutionary?

These questions, however, emphasize Washington's eminence and detract from appreciating Boucher's perspective. The American colonies to which Boucher moved were distinctly Anglican in character, and Washington himself was an incredible affirmation of the British world Boucher inhabited. A British officer during the Seven Year's War, a public supporter of the Church of England, and a husband to the landed elite: everything about George Washington exuded British gentility when Boucher first met him. Therefore, Boucher had good reason to question how Washington, and those like him, could so wantonly spurn the monarchical social order they all previously upheld.

Boucher's relocation to a ministry in Annapolis, Maryland, also demonstrates how strongly Anglicized the colonies were in the 1760s and 1770s. The move to Annapolis was prompted by Boucher's general dissatisfaction with Virginia and was facilitated by his relationship with Reverend Mr. Henry Addison, who enabled, "the greatest moment in all the subsequent years of my life": the promise of becoming Rector of Saint Anne's parish in

Annapolis, once the position was vacant.<sup>17</sup> Although contests over the Rectory took Boucher on a circuitous route to his future, he eventually succeeded to Saint Anne's in 1770.<sup>18</sup>

On waiting for a vacancy at Saint Anne's, Boucher wrote, "My unsettled state in Virginia for the two or three preceding years, in which I was almost daily looking for a call to Maryland, had been of considerable detriment to my interests."<sup>19</sup> Part of the reason for this restlessness is that Virginia had always been too crude for Boucher's liking.<sup>20</sup> When he moved to Smith's Mount in Virginia, he noted it, "Was a pleasant place, but there was little water, and that bad, a circumstance always much attended to in that part of the world; and I had been of late dreadfully unhealthy at it. Above all, the house though a good one, did not suit my purposes...Saint Mary's was not a pleasant place, neither had it good water."<sup>21</sup> This lack of refinement represented the kind of paucity Boucher had been trying to evade since his meager upbringing. In contrast, upon his arrival to Annapolis, he remarked on its sophistication and gentility by stating, "On my removal to Annapolis the scene was once more almost quite new to me. It was then the genteel town in North America, and many of its inhabitants were highly respectable, as to station, fortune, and education. I hardly know a town in England so desirable to live in as Annapolis then was."<sup>22</sup> Boucher's initial description of Annapolis is quite telling; although Annapolis was on the periphery of the Empire, it embodied British ideals so well that it could contend with any of the towns at the Empire's core across the Atlantic.

It is quite possible that Boucher exaggerated the Britishness of Annapolis either to accentuate his achievement of becoming Rector of Saint Anne's or because he was simply partial to the town. Regardless, examining key features of Annapolis' layout from the late-seventeenth century reveals that the town plan itself emanated a central British value: the marriage of religious and political institutional power. Therefore, when Boucher dwelled in Annapolis from

1770-1775, he was not just living in a world of British ideas and social structures, but he was living in an environment that affirmed them.

Founded in 1649 and originally called Anne Arundel Town, Governor Francis Nicholson renamed the town Annapolis when he made it the colony's capital in 1696. The relocation was emblematic of the times. St. Mary's City had been Maryland's original capital, but it was a Catholic stronghold; therefore, Nicholson moved the capital to a small Protestant town.<sup>23</sup> The movement symbolized colonial leadership's endorsement of Protestantism and the Church of England, as it moved away from the colony's Catholic roots. By doing so, Nicholson brought the Church and Crown closer together. But Nicholson did much more than relocate the capital to represent this union: he redesigned the town to illustrate the alignment of the British Church and state in the colony.

Nicholson's design of the town is an invaluable source for understanding how physical space and architecture emitted symbolic meaning in the colonial capital. In *Holy Things Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia*, Dell Upton provides an exciting methodology for studying these sources in the colonial world.<sup>24</sup> Upton writes, "[F]or the churches were inseparable from the secular life of the parish community. Holy things *and* profane, fused in an eloquent manner, animated the Church and gathered parishioners, in a process in which the church building and its contents were catalysts. The construction and use of the church were symbolic acts."<sup>25</sup> By evaluating the colonists' use of physical space and religious architecture, historians can find embedded meanings that illuminate the relationship between religious and secular power and order, and chart the way they change over time.

At the center of Annapolis there are two essential features: State House Circle and Church Circle. Nicholson used the circles' placement and proximity to one another to convey the

relationship between Church and state, one that was echoed throughout the Empire. Nicholson used the two highest points in the town to serve as focal points for his capital. In the highest circle he placed the State House where the Maryland Assembly met, and in the second-highest circle he placed St. Anne's Episcopal Church, Jonathan Boucher's church.<sup>26</sup> In addition to their elevation, Nicholson utilized baroque techniques by creating streets that radiated out of both circles and situated the Assembly House and St. Anne's Church in natural landscapes. The effect drew attention to the two most essential colonial institutions, and naturalized their power and the social structure they created.<sup>27</sup> To further emphasize the point, Nicholson used a single street to connect State House Circle and Church Circle, "to symbolize the recent union of British Church and State".<sup>28</sup>

Nicholson's layout of Annapolis speaks volumes about the relationship between Church and state in the British colony. The literal elevation of church and state houses raises them above all other institutions in Annapolis and the roads that stretch out from them are a statement of their centrality to life, as well as the reach of their power. However, there is a hierarchy between them. St. Anne's rests below the State House, communicating where the ultimate authority would lie in the colony. In both practice and placement, the Church would be in relationship with the state, but always accountable to it.

Boucher was keenly aware of the relationship between the Church of England and political authority. However, his experience demonstrates that while the state had ultimate authority over the Church of England, the Church could also influence the state. When Boucher took over St. Anne's parish, he became, "*ex-officio* chaplain of the Maryland Assembly, and thenceforth politics and religion would for the parson be inextricably interwoven."<sup>29</sup> He claims

that he did much more than minister to the Assembly; it appears he did everything short of holding a title or office.<sup>30</sup> With a decided lack of modesty, he explains:

I was in fact the most efficient person in the administration of Government, though I neither had a post nor any prospect of ever having one. The management of the Assembly was left very much to me; and hardly a Bill was brought in which I did not either draw or at least revise, and either got it passed or rejected...All the Governor's speeches, messages, etc., and also some pretty important and lengthy papers from the Council were of my drawing up.<sup>31</sup>

While some may view Boucher's participation in politics as compromising his role as minister, he believed it was well within the boundaries of his ministry. As the single road connecting State House Circle to Church Circle confirmed, the two institutions were linked in mutual support of each other, and any boundaries separating them proved to be remarkably porous.

The colonial world that Jonathan Boucher knew was distinctly British. It was reflected in the families whose sons he tutored, the role of the Church of England in his colony, and the geography he encountered every day in Annapolis. This British context helps shed light on Boucher's disposition and reaction to the American Revolution. When viewed through this lens, he becomes a defender of order and tradition, not a mere impediment to progress.

Additionally, Boucher understood that, "politics, economics, and education were parts of an organic whole, and all were suffused by religious purpose. Church and state, in particular, were irrevocably joined."<sup>32</sup> Therefore, when religious sects emerged independent of the Church, the Church of England's colonial parishes' requests for a bishop in America were continually denied, and revolutionary political sentiment emerged, Boucher interpreted the ensuing conflict and tumult as a betrayal of the social order that God and king ordained. While history often remembers the march towards the Revolution as inspired by the best of the colonists' republican virtues, for Boucher it was a reflection of the worst in humankind that had to be harnessed and brought back into order.

One of the greatest resources scholars have to analyze Boucher's perspective is his 1797 publication, *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution in Thirteen Discourses*. Boucher produced the work when he returned to Britain after being forced out of the colonies in 1775. Over five-hundred pages in length, it can be mined for endless historical pursuits: its dedication to George Washington reveals a complex relationship with his previous employer; its preface offers a brief historiography of the American Revolution, his "objective" conceptions of the event, and the future he sees for the disorderly and disobedient colonies; and a collection of thirteen sermons, preached in Virginia and Maryland from 1763-1775, invites the reader into Boucher's mind from the end of the Seven Years' War to the eve of the American Revolution. While there are a variety of issues, events, and controversies that Boucher addresses in the text, a few common themes emerge that lend great insight into what motivated the minister to resist the Revolution and should persuade scholars to reimagine the role of Loyalism in the conflict.

A dominant theme in *A View of the Causes and Consequences* is Boucher's resistance to change. He writes, "In arts and sciences it is commendable in men to be always aiming at *something new*, and even to be *given to change*; as far at least as real improvements imply *change*. It is in matters only which concern government, morality and religion, that this propensity to *change* becomes dangerous; because, in those points more especially, mankind are most apt to mistake innovation for improvement."<sup>33</sup> Statements like this appear throughout the entirety of the text and shed light on how fiercely conservative and of the old order Boucher was. To better contextualize Boucher's skepticism toward change, one must look to seventeenth-century political theorist, Sir Robert Filmer.

As revolutionaries were inspired by John Locke's assertion of universal, natural rights, Boucher and his fellow Loyalists turned to Sir Robert Filmer. Boucher became an especially ardent supporter of Filmer's ideas. As Michael D. Clark writes, "[Boucher] felt obliged to ground his conservatism in a fully articulated theory which would answer his Lockean opponents in America. To this end, Boucher became a latter-day apostle of Sir Robert Filmer."<sup>34</sup> Echoes of Filmer's 1680 work, *Patriarcha: or the Natural Power of Kings*, reverberate throughout Boucher's many sermons.<sup>35</sup> At the core of Filmer's political beliefs was that God ordered society through monarchy. Using the lineage of the early biblical patriarchs to demonstrate how God ordered the world, Filmer writes: "I see not then how the Children of Adam, or of any man else can be free from subjection to their Parents: And this subjection of Children being the Fountain of all Regal Authority, by the Ordination of God himself."<sup>36</sup> Thus, he uses both a familial and biblical model to justify the supremacy of monarchy. As children are expected to respect the authority of their hereditary and heavenly father, so too, must they obey their civic father, the king. He ends the first portion of *Patriarcha* by stating, "If we compare the Natural Rights of a Father with those of a King, we find them all one, without any difference at all but only in the Latitude or Extent of them: as the Father over one Family, so the King as Father over many Families extends his care to preserve, feed, cloth, instruct and defend the whole Commonwealth."<sup>37</sup> As Filmer would have it, this was the proper socio-political structure through which all subjects had to interpret their natural rights.

This civic and religious interpretation became a cornerstone of Boucher's theological and political worldview. For example, in his eighth sermon, Boucher reiterates *Patriarcha* when discussing the lessons to be learned from the ancient Israelites. He explains that, "The head or supreme of the state was, emphatically, God; and to that circumstance it owes its title: but, under

him, at least in their earlier periods, each family and each individual were trained, in whatever related to the general weal, to look for no other law than the will of the father of the family; and his will was regarded as the will of God.”<sup>38</sup> With this theological viewpoint, he perceived any criticism of the Church or state as an attack on the other. He explains that, “Thus formed and fitted for each other, Church and State mutually support, and are supported by each other. Each is a part of each; each a part of the constitution: and an injury cannot be done to the one without the other’s feeling.”<sup>39</sup>

For Boucher, the link between God and king was as essential to being British as it was to being a Christian. As this connection came to be tested and renegotiated in the colonies, Boucher grew increasingly alarmed. To appreciate his opinions, his conviction of the rightness of this worldview has to be taken into account. He was, “Unswayed by any eighteenth-century current or undercurrent of relevelism [and] he started with the assumption that an idea was either true or false...The truth was unalterable, revealed by God, and best interpreted by the Church of England.”<sup>40</sup> It was his conception of the cosmic order which manifested itself through monarchy that led him to participate so actively in government and feel so passionately about the challenges to clerical and monarchical authority. His willingness to fight for authority and order was exacerbated by the fact that the first major conflicts in the colonies, which laid the eventual foundation for the American Revolution, were centered around renegotiating the link between Church and state.

As Thomas Buckley discusses in his book, *Church and State in Revolutionary Virginia, 1776-1787*, the campaigns Rationalists and Dissenters waged in Virginia prior to the Revolution to dissolve the Church and state’s relationship constructed an intellectual infrastructure that was eventually used to politically separate from Great Britain.<sup>41</sup> Those who advocated for the

strengthening of the Church of England were often ill-received, as they first were seen as impediments to religious liberty, and later seen as apologists for the King. The rise of Dissenters and the continued resistance to seating an Anglican bishop in the colonies were two of the primary issues the Church of England faced prior to the Revolution. Boucher's response to both controversies exemplifies how he tried to keep the relationship between Church and state intact, which eventually led to his expulsion from the colonies.

When Dissenters began establishing their own churches and congregations in colonial Anglican parishes, they represented some of the first dissolutions of the imperial order.<sup>42</sup> As Rhys Issac explains, "Social disquiet was arising [in Virginia]...by mid-century from a variety of causes, but the most dramatic signs of change appeared in the sphere of religion...The parish community at the base of the barely consolidated traditional order was beginning to fracture. The rise of dissent represented a serious threat to the system of authority."<sup>43</sup> For Boucher, these Dissenters were unacceptable and un-Christian. He testifies that, "It is neither illogical nor uncharitable to say, that the mere circumstance of separating is no inconsiderable proof that the separatist is in an error; because it proves him to have lost, or never to have fully possessed, that Christian disposition and temper which would have made him anxious to be *like-minded; having the same love; of one accord, and of one mind* with fellow Christians."<sup>44</sup>

Boucher believed the Dissenters betrayed the authority God granted the Church of England and, worse, they encouraged the development of political parties. To address the evangelical sects emerging in his own day, Boucher invokes the example of ancient Israel: "To each tribe there was a civil magistrate called a *ruler*, who, as well as the judges, was subordinate to the high priest, the immediate representative of God. When the people would not obey this mild system of government, nor hearken to the voice of the Lord their king, but *corrupted*

*themselves*, and degenerated into the idolatries of the nations around them, the Lord delivered them into the hands of their enemies.”<sup>45</sup> When Israel rejected God’s hierarchy, He let their enemies harm them; why would He not do the same to the colonists? Boucher also feared that sectarianism in churches would lead to schisms in politics, further fracturing the imperial order. He laments that, “It has been observed, that sects in religion, and parties in politics, generally prevail together. By a sort of mutual action and re-action they produce one another; both, in turns, becoming causes and effect.”<sup>46</sup> As the Dissenters indeed helped lay the framework of the Revolution, Boucher sensed the frustration in the colonies and feared the conflict he was certain would ensue.

Boucher believed that appointing an Anglican Bishop in the colonies could head off this conflict by providing administrative support for the Church of England, and by extension, maintain its and the King’s legitimacy. However, the colonies continually refused to allow for such an appointment, which was incomprehensible to Boucher. He claims that, “Never before, in any period of our history, or in any part of the empire, was a measure so harmless, so necessary, and so salutary, resisted and defeated on the grounds so frivolous, so unwise, and unjust.”<sup>47</sup> This was problematic for Boucher because, “To oppose the episcopacy is in effect to fly in the face of, and to oppose, the established Church.”<sup>48</sup> He continues, “Every country acts naturally and prudently in making it’s ecclesiastical polity comfortable to it’s civil government: and it certainly is not easy, if it be possible, to name a government that ever subsisted long without some connexion or alliance with religion.”<sup>49</sup> On one hand, the refusal to establish a colonial episcopate was an assault on the Church of England’s privileged status, and on the other it was a denial of the essential marriage of Church and state.

While it is tempting to convey Boucher as a minister lost in the past, or as a cleric worried about losing access to the political power he obtained through the Crown's sponsorship of the Church of England, other themes in *Causes and Consequences* demonstrate the depth and legitimacy of his challenges to the American Revolution. Additionally, Boucher's relationships with other colonists suggest that his reservations stemmed from a concern for others, not simply a concern for maintaining his power.

Throughout Boucher's sermons, he repeatedly expressed his belief in the fallen nature of humankind. He states, "[Humans] continue to act the same part which they have always done. They are still jealous of power, still fond of change, and still easily persuaded to believe that they are not so well governed as they ought to be. These are the standing characteristics of mankind, verified by almost every page of every history."<sup>50</sup> Boucher thought humans would never be satisfied with their present reality and would cause chaos in their pursuit of an unrealistic, imagined future. It was up to the Church and state to maintain order and protect humans from themselves as they tried to placate their discontentedness. According to Boucher, human fickleness causes people to constantly change course in pursuit of their self-interest and they can be easily led astray by any malcontent instigating change; it was the mission of the Church and state to be a constant in the lives of their subjects, as humans would devolve into anarchy if left without structures to corral their less virtuous nature.

Whether it was the Revolution, the rise of Dissenters, or the bishop controversy, Boucher never believed social upheaval had much broad support from the colonists. Instead, he thought that an opportunistic few aroused chaos and restlessness amongst the colonists, who, under normal circumstances, never would have challenged the status quo. Boucher explains:

When once a multitude is tumultuously collected, there is no saying to what a pitch of mischief they may be easily led. It matters not that, as individuals, they are mild,

beneficent, and humane: I would not trust the milkiest man on earth, when he is one in a disorderly and riotous crowd. It matters not that in our individual capacities we are wise, temperate, and just: collected together in a mob, we inevitably become irrational, violent, and tyrannical.<sup>51</sup>

In fact, Boucher believed that once the dust finally settled from the Revolution, many Americans would see the error of their ways and seek to reconcile with Britain, claiming “it never was the serious wish either of [the people of Great Britain or the American States] to separate.”<sup>52</sup>

Therefore, according to Boucher, the Revolution was not a legitimate rejection of the Crown, but a momentary lapse in judgement; a torrent of wind stirred by a small cohort that briefly mobilized the colonists to abandon their loyalties, only to remember them once reason returned.

In responding to some colonists’ criticisms of establishing an American episcopate, Boucher provides a response that would root his understanding of the Revolution yet to come: “And when time shall have cooled men’s passions, and prejudice shall give way to reason, not a doubt can be entertained but that...this resolve will be rescinded from their journals.”<sup>53</sup>

From this perspective, it is clear why Boucher “distrust[ed] republicanism and regard[ed] democracy as little more than anarchy.”<sup>54</sup> While his anti-republican sentiments clearly violated the Lockean ideas espoused by some colonists, exploring Boucher’s thoughts on human nature and his understanding of liberty raises new questions about the merits of the colonists’ push for freedom. *Patriarcha* provided Boucher with a strong foundation to oppose the liberty the colonists claimed as their natural right. Filmer asserts, “That the desire of Liberty was the first Cause of the Fall of *Adam*,” and, “The greatest Liberty in the World...is for a people to live under a *Monarch*. It is the *Magna Carta* of this Kingdom, all other shews or pretexts of Liberty, are but several degrees of *Slavery*, and a *Liberty* to destroy *Liberty*.”<sup>55</sup> These ideas are clearly echoed in Boucher’s sermons, such as, “On Fundamental Principles”: “Let us now at length, in good earnest, unite our hands, our hearts, and our prayers, against those enemies...who meditate

war, not only against the Parent State, but against every thing that is established, venerable and good...and more especially let us set ourselves against those worse enemies, our own sins.”<sup>56</sup> For both Filmer and Boucher, pleas for liberty were often thin veneers that masked selfish desires. While Boucher openly admitted the Empire was not always perfect in its administration, he firmly believed that the problems the colonists faced stemmed primarily from within, not from the Crown.

Boucher also viewed the colonists’ pursuit of liberty as regressive. He understood human history as a progression from a sinful state of nature to a state of peace and order that came through Christian, monarchical governance. Boucher articulates this in a sermon entitled, “On the Strife Between Abram and Lot”:

The only rational idea of civil liberty, or...of a legitimate and good government...is, when the great body of people are trained and led habitually to submit to and acquiesce in some fixed and steady principles of conduct. It is essential...to Liberty, that such principles shall be of power sufficient to control the arbitrary and capricious wills of mankind which whenever they are not so controuled, are found to be dangerous and destructive to the best interests of society. The primary aim...of all well-framed Constitutions is, to place man...out of the reach of his own power...by placing him under the power of law.<sup>57</sup>

As he watched the rise of colonial mobs, intimidation, violence, and other acts of lawlessness directly before the Revolution, Boucher’s claims appear to be quite legitimate. His convictions were clear: eradicating the power of the Church of England and the British Crown would not solve colonists’ problems, but leave them susceptible to the worst in their nature. Why deliver colonists their supposed natural rights when it was the state of nature from which they needed to be saved? This was a task reserved for the Crown, not the masses.

As Boucher ascended the pulpit each Sunday to espouse his Loyalist ideology, he found himself face to face with audiences that increasingly found his message abhorrent. The high position of rector at St. Anne’s that once brought him prestige and power began making him a

target of public scorn and rejection. Once a respected agent of maintaining the Empire through its religious institutions, he struggled to keep the ties that bound the colonies, Church, and state together from fraying. What is remarkable about the colonists' evolution from loyal subjects to disobedient revolutionaries is how quick and emotionally charged it was. As Brendan McConville points out, "In the royal America that existed between the Glorious Revolution and 1776, that which we call political culture...was decidedly monarchical and imperial...almost to the moment of American independence."<sup>58</sup> McConville further explains that from the Glorious Revolution to the American Revolution there was a new interpretation of kings in British culture. Structured around Newton's discovery of a hidden force that held the world together, political writers, "suggested that a more benign, more natural form of political organization held together by love, the human form of gravity...These Newtonian sun kings...were at the center of the British universe, and colonials revolved in their orbit."<sup>59</sup> In essence, it was colonists' emotional ties to the monarchy that compelled them to remain loyal; only when they felt betrayed by King George III himself did they elect to revolt.

While this emphasis on emotion has been used to describe the revolutionaries' experiences, it can also be found in the Loyalists'. As members of the political solar system McConville describes, Loyalists, too, were fixed to the monarchy through their emotional attachments. Revolutionaries were not the only American colonists to feel betrayed; as the colonists revolted against the Crown, shirking all of the duties and obligations required of good subjects, Loyalists also felt the sharp pains of this divorce. Although Boucher often spoke about the importance of reason and rationality, his experience illustrates how central his relationships and emotions were to navigating and interpreting the budding American Revolution. Boucher's writings are replete with emotionally charged messages, as he struggled to use his imperial

position to maintain order, grasping at the last strands that held the American colonies in the Empire together.

One of the most important aspects about Boucher's experiences in Virginia and Maryland is how relational his roles as tutor and minister were. Both positions deeply intertwined and invested him in the lives of others; he was an essential part of the communities in which he lived as he provided nourishment for the mind and soul. For instance, when he left Virginia for Maryland, he explains that, "My parishioners...gave me such testimonies of their regard as I still feel with the most lively gratitude."<sup>60</sup> Therefore, when he found himself on the wrong side of the Revolution, his former supporters broke with more than the Church and state; they broke with him.

Perhaps the greatest betrayal Boucher experienced in the Revolution is seen in the transformation of his relationship with George Washington. As previously mentioned, Boucher served as a tutor for Washington's step-son, John Parke Custis. Additionally, Boucher and Washington carried out a correspondence with each other for nearly three decades, albeit with fluctuating frequency. Once a harmonious relationship that worked well within the confines of the colonial, monarchical order, when revolution came, the two British subjects took divergent paths and became pillars of their respective positions: George Washington became one of the few immovable icons of the American Revolution and the Early Republic, while Boucher became one of the staunchest Loyalists in the British colonies.

The fracture between the two men was something that Boucher felt quite deeply. This is most palpable in a letter Boucher sent to Washington on August 6, 1775. He begins with a paragraph describing their relationship: "For having now been in your acquaintance several years, I could not help considering myself, nor indeed help hoping that I was considered by you,

as an old friend: and of course I counted on our living together in the pleasing intercourse of giving and receiving the mutual good offices of neighbourhood and friendship.”<sup>61</sup> However, the outbreak of war rendered that impossible. “On the great points so long and so fruitlessly debated between us it is not my design now again to solicit your attention. We have now each of us taken and avowed our side, and with such ardour as becomes men who feel themselves to be in earnest in their convictions.”<sup>62</sup> But he had tried mightily to convince his once admired friend to remain loyal to his king. This is quite impressive given that Washington went on to lead the Continental Army and serve as the first President of the United States. The letter quickly emphasizes the different paths they took in the Revolution, and Boucher concludes by bitterly lambasting Washington’s character:

I have at least the merit of consistency: and neither in any private or public conversation, in anything I have delivered from the pulpit, have I ever asserted any other opinions or doctrines than you have repeatedly heard me assert in my own house and in yours. You cannot say that I deserved to be run down, vilified, and injured in the manner which you know has fallen my lot, merely because I cannot bring myself to think on some political points just as you and your party would have me think. And yet you have borne to look on, at least as an unconcerned spectator, if not an abettor, whilst, like the poor frog in the fable, I have in a manner been pelted to death... You are no longer worthy of my friendship: a man of honour can no longer without dishonor be connected with you. With your cause I renounce you.<sup>63</sup>

On September 10, 1775, a little over a month after Boucher penned this letter to Washington, he left Annapolis and returned to Great Britain.<sup>64</sup> Clearly, George Washington violated more than the sacred ties between Church, state, and colonies; he violated the bonds of love and friendship with Boucher. Not only had Washington, a perfect representative of British gentility, failed to uphold his duties to the Crown, he allowed violence to fall on those who fought to maintain order on its behalf.

Boucher’s bitterness towards Washington remained unabated for some time, which can be seen in a section in his autobiography, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist*. Under the

March 11, 1786, section, Boucher writes: “I did know Mr. Washington well...I cannot conceive how he could, otherwise than through the interested representations of party, have ever been spoken of as a great man. He is shy, silent, stern, slow and cautious, but has no quickness of parts, extraordinary penetration, nor an elevated style of thinking. In his moral character he is regular, temperate, strictly just and honest...But he seems to have nothing generous or affectionate in his nature.”<sup>65</sup> It appears that Boucher spurned Washington because of the aggrieved terms on which their relationship ended. So intent on the colonists utilizing their heads instead of their hearts, Boucher seems to have fallen into the same trap. As much as he tried to fight it, the Revolution was as much a distinctly relational and emotional experience for him as it was for the colonists.

However distressed Boucher had been with Washington, it seems that he eventually reconciled his anger with his former friend. When Boucher wrote *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution*, he dedicated it to George Washington, of all people!

Sir, In prefixing your name to a work avowedly hostile to that Revolution in which you bore a distinguished part, I am not conscious that I deserve to be charged with inconsistency. I do not address myself to the General of a Conventional Army; but to the late dignified President of the United States, the friend of rational and sober freedom...That, in the discharge of your duty as head of this Government, you have resisted those anarchical doctrines, which are hardly less dangerous to America than to Europe, is not more an eulogium on the wisdom of our forefathers, than honourable to your individual wisdom and integrity.<sup>66</sup>

This is a dramatic reversal of the description Boucher provides in *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist*. He even signs the dedication, “I have the honour to be, Sir, Your very sincere Friend, And most obedient humble Servant, Jonathan Boucher.”<sup>67</sup>

Part of the reason Washington worked his way back into Boucher’s good graces was because he became a Federalist and supported the United States Constitution, which Boucher perceived as an echo of the monarchical order that had just fallen. However, there is something

to be said for the more human characteristics of history. While, “Time heals all wounds,” is a tired maxim, it may be appropriate here. Coupled with Washington’s ability to bring order out of the licentious chaos Boucher saw in the years of the Revolution and Articles of Confederation, time and distance greatly impacted Boucher’s emotional response to the Revolution. Boucher long argued that colonists would see the error of their ways once the dust settled from the Revolution, but in the end, it was he who was transformed by the passage of time.

Despite his reconciliation with George Washington, Jonathan Boucher never abandoned his commitment to the British monarchy or the sacred bond between Church and state. His convictions were too strong and his spirit resilient enough to endure the consequences of speaking out against the American Revolution. Ironically, these consequences were a result of the same allegiance that helped him garner a good reputation in the colonies. While Boucher’s resolve may, at first glance, make him appear intractable, an investigation into the ideological framework that inspired him to resist the Revolution, and his personal experience as an agent of the British Empire, reveal the depths of his protest. Locating historical figures like Boucher is essential to expanding the historiography of the American Revolution. Boucher exposes the Britishness of the American colonies, while framing the Revolution in relational terms. For Boucher, and others like him, the Revolution was not a long time coming; it was a sudden shift in the colonies that had drastic impacts on relationships, livelihood, and long-held beliefs. From this vantage point, the Revolution proved to be a simultaneously liberating and damning experience. Jonathan Boucher helps establish this revelation and beckons historians to return to the Revolution in order to study the Loyalist perspective with new eyes.

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Boucher, *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution, in Thirteen Discourses*, rev. ed. (1797; repr., New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), 347.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist, 1738-1789*, ed. Jonathan Bouchier, rev. ed. (1925; repr., Port Washington: Kennikat Press, Inc., 1967), 121.

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- <sup>3</sup> Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist*, 113.
- <sup>4</sup> Ignacio Gallup-Diaz, Andrew Shankman, and David J. Silverman, eds., *Anglicizing America: Empire, Revolution, Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 1. Brendan McConville puts this nicely in *The King's Three Faces* on page 251: "As counterintuitive as it may seem, the love of the king and country reached its zenith at the split second before imperial collapse." Brendan McConville, *The King's Three Faces: The Rise & Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).
- <sup>5</sup> McConville, *The King's Three Faces*, 3.
- <sup>6</sup> Timothy B. Barnes, Robert M. Calhoun, and George A. Rawlyk, eds., introduction to *Loyalists and Community in North America* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 1.
- <sup>7</sup> Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 10.
- <sup>8</sup> Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist*, 8.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-41.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.
- <sup>16</sup> George Washington, *George Washington to Jonathan Boucher, May 30, 1768*, Letter, from National Archives, *Founders Online*, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/02-08-02-0066>, accessed December 1, 2017.
- <sup>17</sup> Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist*, 50-54.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> Philip Evanson, "Jonathan Boucher: The Mind of an American Loyalist," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 58, no. 2 (1963): 126, accessed October 17, 2017, [villanova.illiad.oclc.org](http://villanova.illiad.oclc.org).
- <sup>21</sup> Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist*, 40-41.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.
- <sup>23</sup> "State Circle," *Archeology in Annapolis*, accessed November 15, 2017, <http://www.aia.umd.edu/state.html>.
- <sup>24</sup> Dell Upton, *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).
- <sup>25</sup> Upton, *Holy Things and Profane*, xxi.
- <sup>26</sup> "A Brief History of Annapolis," *Visit Annapolis*, accessed December 8, 2017, <http://www.visitannapolis.org/discover/articles/a-brief-history-of-annapolis>.
- <sup>27</sup> "State Circle."
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup> Evanson, "Jonathan Boucher," 126.
- <sup>30</sup> Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist*, 92.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 92-93.
- <sup>32</sup> Michael D. Clark, "Jonathan Boucher: The Mirror of Reaction," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (1969): 23, accessed October 18, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3817013>.
- <sup>33</sup> Boucher, *A View of the Causes and Consequences*, 202-203.
- <sup>34</sup> Clark, "Jonathan Boucher: The Mirror of Reaction," 27.
- <sup>35</sup> Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha, or, The Natural Power of Kings* (London: Printed and are to be sold by Walter Davis, 1680), Early English Books Text Creation Partnership, <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A41308.0001.001>.
- <sup>36</sup> Filmer, *Patriarcha*, 9.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 11-12.
- <sup>38</sup> Boucher, *A View of the Causes and Consequences*, 329.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.
- <sup>40</sup> Clark, "Jonathan Boucher: The Mirror of Reaction," 23.
- <sup>41</sup> Thomas E. Buckley, *Church and State in Revolutionary Virginia, 1776-1787* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1977).
- <sup>42</sup> Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia: 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).
- <sup>43</sup> Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, 147.
- <sup>44</sup> Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist*, 66.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

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- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., 79.
- <sup>47</sup> Boucher, *A View of the Causes and Consequences*, 92.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid., 101.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid., xxvi-xxvii.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid., 388-389.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid., lxxiii.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid., 96.
- <sup>54</sup> Evanson, "Jonathan Boucher: The Mind of an American Loyalist," 128.
- <sup>55</sup> Filmer, *Patriarcha*, 6-7.
- <sup>56</sup> Boucher, *A View of the Causes and Consequences*, 323-324.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid., 363.
- <sup>58</sup> McConville, *The King's Three Faces*, 7.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid., 204-205.
- <sup>60</sup> Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist*, 59.
- <sup>61</sup> Jonathan Boucher, *Letters of Jonathan Boucher to George Washington*, ed. by Worthington Chauncey Ford (Brooklyn: Historical Printing Club, 1899), 47.
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid., 48.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid., 49.
- <sup>64</sup> Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist*, 141.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid., 50.
- <sup>66</sup> Boucher, *A View of the Causes and Consequences*, Dedication (no page number provided).
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid.

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