

**William Stevens (1732-1807): Lay
Activism in late Eighteenth-Century
Anglican High Churchmanship**

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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Abstract

Set within the context of a neglected history of lay involvement in High Churchmanship, this thesis argues that William Stevens (1732-1807)—a High Church layman with a successful commercial career—brought to the Church of England not only his piety and theological learning, but his wealth and business acumen. Combined with extensive social links to some of that Church's most distinguished High Church figures, Stevens exhibited throughout his life an influential example of High Church 'lay activism' that was central to the achievements and effectiveness of High Churchmanship during the latter half of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth.

In this thesis, Stevens's lay activism is divided into two sub-themes: 'theological activism' and 'ecclesiastical activism'. Theological activism was represented primarily by Stevens's role as a theologian or 'lay divine', a characteristic that resulted in numerous publications that engaged in contemporary intellectual debate. Ecclesiastical activism, on the other hand, represented Stevens's more practical contributions to Church and society, especially his role as a philanthropist and office holder in a number of Church of England societies. Together, Stevens's intellectual and practical achievements provide further justification of the revisionist claim that eighteenth-century Anglican High Churchmanship was an active ecclesiastical tradition. Additionally, however, Stevens's life challenges conventional assumptions about the High Church tradition—especially its tendency to emphasise the lives and experiences of clerics. Stevens, it is argued, though a layman, was one of the influential High Churchmen of his age.

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Doing a PhD is a memorable and enriching experience. As disappointing as it was to see my university classmates going off into a job-rich Perth during the height of the mining boom in late 2007, my determination to complete a doctorate always overrode any temptation to enter the workforce straight after graduation. It was a worthwhile goal. The last four years have, of course, had their trials and challenges, but I have enjoyed the experience immensely. I have not only learned a lot about my subject matter, I have learned a lot about myself. I am grateful to Murdoch University for allowing me the privilege of doing a PhD.

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Doing a doctorate on eighteenth-century British history from the antipodean outpost of Western Australia is always going to suffer from the 'tyranny of distance'.

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Introduction

In recent years there has been a growing scholarly trend to take the eighteenth-century High Church tradition within the Church of England more seriously. With only a few exceptions, it was for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries common to treat eighteenth-century High Churchmanship as moribund and as a movement significant only as preparation for the Oxford Movement. Thus, if eighteenth-century High Churchmanship was discussed, it was mostly viewed as a precursor to the Oxford Movement, rarely as a tradition studied for its own ends or merits.¹ Yet as a number of historians of the last three decades have demonstrated, the High Church tradition in the Georgian era was an active ecclesiastical force.² Building and expanding upon this revisionist historiography, this thesis represents an exploration of the life and achievements of William Stevens (1732-1807), a High Churchman and lay member of the Church of England who, in addition to a successful commercial career, dedicated his life to the defence and advancement of the Church of England. In doing this, it is argued that far from being an exclusively clerical force, Anglican High Churchmanship from the mid-eighteenth to early nineteenth century, received much of its influence and direction from Stevens. Stevens was by no means the sole leader of the High Church movement, but he was nonetheless a figure of leadership, especially within the group of High Churchmen known as the ‘Hutchinsonians’.³ Such was Stevens’s involvement in High Church affairs that this thesis has coined the term ‘lay activism’ to describe his life and work. In discussing Stevens as a lay activist, this thesis has drawn attention to a

¹ For a discussion of this historiography, see Chapter 1, 31ff.

² See Chapter 1.

³ For the Hutchinsonian elements in Stevens’s life, see Chapter 4, 169-173 & Chapter 5, 285-317.

number of neglected aspects in the recent historiography of Anglican High Churchmanship. One of these is the rich history of lay involvement within the High Church movement, of which Stevens is a notable example; another is the involvement of lay High Churchmen in the commercially-dominated society of late eighteenth-century England—a context made evident from Stevens’s own background in trade and industry. Like other recent biographies of High Church figures, this thesis shows that a biographical study has wider implications than simply the life and achievements of the individual in question.⁴

Since the nineteenth century there have been numerous references and discussions highlighting Stevens’s life and achievements within the context of late eighteenth-century High Churchmanship.⁵ With the recent rise in revisionist

⁴ Peter B. Nockles, ‘The Waning of Protestant Unity and Waxing of Anti-Catholicism? Archdeacon Daubeny and the Reconstruction of “Anglican” Identity in the Later Georgian Church, c.1780-c.1830’ in William Gibson and Robert G. Ingram (eds), *Religious Identities in Britain, 1660-1832*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, 181.

⁵ See W. R. W. Stephens, *The Life and Letters of Walter Farquhar Hook*, 6th edn, London, 1881, 100-101; John Henry Overton, *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century*, London, 1894, 30-31; T. P. Carter, *Undercurrents of Church Life in the Eighteenth Century*, London, 1899, 208-210, 213-214; John Henry Overton and Frederic Relton, *The English Church: From the Accession of George I to the End of the Eighteenth Century (1714-1800)*, London: Macmillan, 1906, 1, 204-205, 207-208; Francis Warre Cornish, *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century Part I*, London: Macmillan, 1910, 70-71; Henry Broxap, *The Later Non-Jurors*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924, 297-300; W. K. Lowther Clarke, *Eighteenth Century Piety*, London: SPCK, 1944, 113-17; A. B. Webster, *Joshua Watson: The Story of a Layman 1771-1855*, London: SPCK, 1954, 24-25; G. F. A. Best, *Temporal Pillars: Queen Anne’s Bounty, The Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Church of England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964, 122-123; J. A. W. Gunn, *Beyond Liberty and Property: The Process of Self-Recognition in Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*, Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1983, 174-178, 185, 189, 191; Peter B. Nockles, ‘The Oxford Movement: historical background 1780-1833’ in Geoffrey Rowell (ed.), *Tradition Renewed: The Oxford Movement Conference Papers*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986, 26, 28, 36; Perry Butler, ‘From the Early Eighteenth Century to the Present Day’ in Stephen Sykes and John Booty (eds), *The Study of Anglicanism*, London: SPCK, 1988, 35; Emily Lorrain de Montluzin, *The Anti-Jacobins 1798-1800: The Early Contributors to the Anti-Jacobin Review*, Houndmills: Macmillan,

historiography,⁶ further mentions of Stevens have been frequent.⁷ When all that has been written on Stevens is viewed as a whole, there is a convincing suggestion that Stevens's life merits a full-length, scholarly examination. It is noteworthy in this regard that the most substantial, authoritative and cited account of Stevens's life remains Sir James Allan Park's (1763-1838), *Memoirs of William Stevens*, the first edition being published in 1812 by the Philanthropic Society, London.⁸ An important repository of primary sources and contemporary anecdotes, Park's *Memoirs* also provides an important account of traditional High Church spirituality and one generation's esteem of an individual (Stevens) who provided a model of Anglican faith and practice that he and others greatly admired and sought to emulate.⁹

1988, 133, 146-148; Robert Hole, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order in England 1760-1832*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 16, 20, 24, 35, 48, 61; Aidan Nichols OP, *The Panther and the Hind: A Theological History of Anglicanism*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993, 76-77; Nigel Aston, *Christianity and Revolutionary Europe c.1750-1830*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 246; Chris Evans, *Debating the Revolution: Britain in the 1790s*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2006, 54-160.

⁶ For an overview and analysis of this revisionist historiography, see Chapter 1.

⁷ See E. A. Varley, *The Last of the Prince Bishops: William Van Mildert and the High Church Movement of the early nineteenth century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 7-10, 30-32; F. C. Mather, *High Church Prophet: Bishop Samuel Horsley (1733-1806) and the Caroline Tradition in the Later Georgian Church*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, 14, 122-127; James J. Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative: Reaction and orthodoxy in Britain c. 1760-1832*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 190-193; Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760-1857*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 14 n47, 16 n59, 23, 318; Nockles, 'Stevens, William', *ODNB*; Geoffrey Rowell, *The Club of 'Nobody's Friends': A Memoir on its Two-Hundredth Anniversary*, Edinburgh: The Pentland Press, 2000, 14-31.

⁸ James Allan Park, *Memoirs of William Stevens*, 1st edn, London, 1812. The edition of Park's *Memoirs* that this thesis will use is James Allan Park, *Memoirs of William Stevens*, 4th edn, London, 1825 (see below, 7-9).

⁹ For a development of this theme, see Robert Andrews, '“Master in the Art of Holy Living”: The Sanctity of William Stevens' in Peter Clarke and Tony Claydon (eds), *Saints and Sanctity*, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011, 307-317.

Park was well placed to write Stevens's life. Both men had been friends since the late 1780s.¹⁰ Scottish by birth, Park was raised in England from a young age after his father (an Edinburgh surgeon) moved his practice to Newington, Surrey.¹¹ After attending a grammar school in Northampton, Park entered Lincoln's Inn and was called to the bar on 18 June 1784.¹² Park was fortunate to receive the patronage of the influential Scottish-born, Lord Chief Justice of England, William Murray (1705-1793).¹³ With Murray's encouragement, Park published a treatise on Marine insurance that proved popular in the field of conveyancing law into the nineteenth century.¹⁴ Park married in 1791 and prospered in the legal profession, gaining in social stature.¹⁵ Also receiving the patronage of Murray's successor, Lloyd Kenyon (1732-1802), Park is said to have been one of the most eminent barristers in London by the turn of the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Success in law finally earned him the two major promotions of his life: in 1799 as a King's Counsel and, in 1816, a Judge of the Common Pleas (he was knighted the same year).¹⁷ On 10 June 1834, four years prior to his death, Park was awarded a Doctor of Civil Law (DCL) from Oxford University.¹⁸

¹⁰ See Chapter 6, 353.

¹¹ Edward Foss, *The Judges of England*, vol.9, London, 1864, 229; for more on Park's father, see Chapter 3, 137-138.

¹² *The Gentleman's Magazine*, new series, February 1839, vol.11, London, 1839, 210.

¹³ James Oldham, 'Murray, William', *ODNB*.

¹⁴ James Allan Park, *A System of the Law of Marine Insurances*, 1st edn, London, 1787; see also, Richard Whalley Bridgman, *A Short View of Legal Bibliography*, London, 1807, 234; J. A. Hamilton and Jonathan Harris, 'Park, Sir James Alan [sic]', *ODNB*.

¹⁵ Foss, *The Judges of England*, 230; Hamilton and Harris, 'Park, Sir James Alan [sic]', *ODNB*.

¹⁶ George T. Kenyon, *The Life of Lloyd, first Lord Kenyon*, London, 1873, 356; Hamilton and Harris, 'Park, Sir James Alan [sic]', *ODNB*.

¹⁷ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1839, 210.

¹⁸ G. E. Cokayne, *Biographical List of the Members of 'The Club of Nobody's Friends'*, London, 1885, 7.

Park was remembered as a stern and proprietorial figure, who conducted his judicial duties with a reputation for maintaining a high degree of courtroom punctuality and etiquette.¹⁹ His record of gaining convictions is said to have made him a favourite of government when attempting to convict ‘eminent malefactors’.²⁰ Not surprisingly, he gave out harsh sentences, a fact that has led some historians to be critical of him.²¹ Park may, of course, have been a stern judge, though he was not averse to acts of judicial kindness. For instance, as a barrister he is known to have sought clemency on at least one occasion to get a capital forgery conviction reduced to transportation.²² Additionally, Park’s membership within the Philanthropic Society and his association with Stevens, attest to a figure with charitable interests.²³ On his death, Park was not remembered as an uncaring judge, but a kind and charitable individual who often helped the poor.²⁴

The aspect of Park’s life that most impressed observers was his fervent High Church devotion to the rites and teachings of the Church of England.²⁵ This is seen

¹⁹ Even to the point of ejecting people from his court if he thought they were dressed too ostentatiously. See, for example, the following story: ‘At the Winchester assizes, ... Sir Frederick Williams was stopped in the very threshold of his exordium by the worthy judge [Park], who said, “I really cannot permit it, Brother Williams; I must maintain the forensic dignity of the bar.” The advocate looked unutterable things at his lordship, and said, “I do not understand you, my lord.” “Oh, yes, you do; you have a most extraordinary wig on; a very extraordinary wig indeed; really I can’t permit it. You must change your wig. Such a wig as that is no part of the costume of this bar” ’ (*The Gentleman’s Magazine*, February 1839, 210-211; see also, Foss, *The Judges of England*, 231).

²⁰ *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, February 1839, 210.

²¹ See J. L. Hammond and B. Hammond, *The Town Labourer: The New Civilisation*, London, 1920, 75.

²² James Allan Park to Joshua Watson, 13 November 1810, Lambeth Palace Library, Joshua Watson Papers, ff.26-27.

²³ [Anon.], *A List of the Members of the Philanthropic Society*, London, 1809, 84.

²⁴ *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, February 1839, 211.

²⁵ [Anon.], *Public Characters of all Nations*, vol.3, London, 1823, 95; *The Edinburgh Review*, April 1839, vol.69, Edinburgh, 1839, 13; Foss, *The Judges of England*, 230.

in his publication in 1804 of a short tract promoting the frequent reception of Holy Communion.²⁶ The work proved popular; according to Park's testimony given in the preface to the 1813 edition, 21,000 copies had been sold since its first edition.²⁷ Park's name would become intimately associated with the circle of High Churchmen who coalesced around Stevens. Park was, for example, a founding member of the dining club formed in Stevens's memory in 1800, the Club of Nobody's Friends.²⁸ The club would become the chief body that fostered Stevens's memory and achievements.²⁹ It is thus not surprising to see Geoffrey Rowell in his recent history of the Club of Nobody's Friends, note that sometime in November 1812, Park presented to the club the first edition of the *Memoirs of William Stevens*.³⁰ The club's members are reported to have acclaimed and accepted Park's account of their founder's life.³¹ The following year, at a meeting on 29 May, the club requested Park to publish the *Memoirs*. Park agreed to do so at his own expense, deciding to dedicate the profits of the publication to the Scottish Episcopal Church.³² However, given that a first edition had already been released, it can be assumed that the 1812 edition had perhaps not been widely circulated outside of Park's social network.³³ This makes sense given that the title page of the 1812 edition notes that it was printed by the Philanthropic Society, thus perhaps only being issued privately

²⁶ See James Allan Park, *An Earnest Exhortation to a Frequent Reception of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, 1st edn, London, 1804.

²⁷ James Allan Park, *An Earnest Exhortation to a Frequent Reception of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, 8th edn, London, 1813, 4.

²⁸ Cokayne, *Biographical List of the Members of 'The Club of Nobody's Friends'*, 6-8.

²⁹ See Chapter 6, 370-379.

³⁰ Rowell, *The Club of 'Nobody's Friends'*, 35.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ See Park, *Memoirs*, 1st edn, 1812; Alexander Chalmers, *The General Biographical Dictionary*, vol.28, London, 1816, 402.

amongst that society's members—in addition to some associated members within the Club of Nobody's Friends. As has been noted, Park was a member of the Philanthropic Society, though it is uncertain if Stevens was ever associated with this charity.³⁴ However, given that the Philanthropic Society put their name to Park's *Memoirs*, it can be assumed that this charity was aware of Stevens and endorsed his memory. In fact, the Philanthropic Society's name continued to appear on the second edition of the *Memoirs*, published in 1814, though the title page of this edition indicates that the *Memoirs* were attempting to reach a wider audience. A number of publishers, including the High Church publisher, Rivingtons, had been employed and it was stated that the profits from sales would go to the Scottish Episcopal Church.³⁵ As a demonstration of this, a dedicatory letter penned by Park to the Scottish Episcopal Bishop of Aberdeen, John Skinner (1744-1816), is also present in this edition.³⁶

Park's *Memoirs* would go through three more editions, in 1823, 1825 and 1859.³⁷ In the 1823 and 1825 editions, the connections with the Philanthropic Society and the Scottish Episcopal Church had been dropped, as had the dedicatory letter to Skinner. However, a postscript had been added, which was a short obituary of another High Church layman, John Bowdler (1746-1823), a close friend of Stevens who had been present at Stevens's deathbed.³⁸ By 1823 Rivingtons had also become the sole publisher of the work. The final edition of the *Memoirs*, published

³⁴ [Anon.], *A List of the Members of the Philanthropic Society*, 84.

³⁵ James Allan Park, *Memoirs of William Stevens*, 2nd edn, London, 1814, title page.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, iii-vi.

³⁷ James Allan Park, *Memoirs of William Stevens*, 3rd edn, London, 1823; James Allan Park, *Memoirs of William Stevens*, 4th edn; James Allan Park, *Memoirs of the Late William Stevens*, 1859 edn, London, 1859.

³⁸ Park, *Memoirs*, 3rd edn, 133-139; Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 133-139; see also, Peter B. Nockles, 'Bowdler, John', *ODNB*.

in 1859, was not in fact the sole work of Park (who died in 1838), but was edited by Christopher Wordsworth Jnr (1807-1885) and was an edition prepared for the Club of Nobody's Friends.³⁹ Wordsworth Jnr was a member of the club from 1839 onwards.⁴⁰ His influence on the 1859 edition can be seen in his editing and simplification of Park's grammar, the re-introduction of the dedicatory letter to Skinner and his inclusion of three appendices—the first, a short treatise by Stevens on Confirmation; the second, an annotated booklist penned by Stevens; the third, a membership list of the club.⁴¹ The fact that this edition came out with the fingerprints of the Club of Nobody's Friends all over it is a strong indication that Park's depiction of Stevens's life and achievements still resonated within the club's collective memory.⁴²

This multiplicity of editions did not, however, make for a greatly changed text. The 1812 edition is almost exactly the same as the 1825 edition. As an historical source, the *Memoirs* remain crucial in examining Stevens's life and influence. They indicate Park had access to many of Stevens's personal papers and financial records, much of which now seems lost. Thus, Park's extensive quotations from Stevens's correspondence, in which he frequently quotes entire letters, provides us with one of the few remaining repositories of correspondence penned by Stevens. Also, given the fact that Park personally knew Stevens and had personal knowledge of him and his friends, the *Memoirs* could be said to almost qualify as a primary source. Yet despite its historical value in this regard, Park's biography was nonetheless a distinctly hagiographic and uncritical piece of writing that almost

³⁹ Andrews, ' "Master in the Art of Holy Living" ', 316 n49.

⁴⁰ [Anon.], *A List of the Members of the Philanthropic Society*, 126.

⁴¹ Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, 147-216.

⁴² Andrews, ' "Master in the Art of Holy Living" ', 316 n49.

elevated Stevens to High Church sainthood, thus requiring the work be read with a highly critical eye.⁴³ Park, indeed, left no uncertainty regarding his desire to promote the sanctity of Stevens. This was as much of a motive for the work as his desire to narrate the life of Stevens itself. For Park, Stevens was a ‘master in the art of holy living’, linking him to a High Church tradition of sanctity promoted by divines such as Jeremy Taylor and William Law.⁴⁴ Stevens’s sanctity was evidenced by a strong commitment to philanthropy and ecclesiastical activism, a devout piety manifested in a regular commitment to the services and rites the Church of England and a religious fervour that rejected all forms of ‘enthusiasm’.⁴⁵ Enthusiasm was a bug-bear for eighteenth-century High Churchmen. The term had a pejorative meaning and was used to label what were seen as religious deviations such as excessive emotionalism, a claim to private revelation or the overuse of one’s imagination and emotions.⁴⁶ It was usually used against Methodists and other Nonconformists, though sometimes Church of England Evangelicals were also labelled as such.⁴⁷ Ideologically sound and pious, Stevens was presented as a figure whose religious faith opposed all that was heterodox in his age. Moreover, Stevens’s life was put forward as a model of how holiness could be achieved for those who sought to make religion the central aspect of their lives. This motive is evident on the title page where Park quotes the seventeenth-century English writer, Owen Felltham (c.1602-1668), from his popular work, *Resolves, Divine, Moral, and Political* (1623): ‘He, who desires that the table

⁴³ See *ibid*, *passim*.

⁴⁴ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 14, 36, 85, 131; see also, Andrews, ‘“Master in the Art of Holy Living”’, 308.

⁴⁵ Andrews, ‘“Master in the Art of Holy Living”’, 310-313.

⁴⁶ John Mee, *Romanticism, Enthusiasm and Regulation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 2, 25-37; Andrews, ‘“Master in the Art of Holy Living”’, 312-313.

⁴⁷ Andrews, ‘“Master in the Art of Holy Living”’, 313.

of his life may be fair, will be careful to propose to himself the best examples; and will never be content, till he equals or excels them.⁴⁸ Given that Stevens had combined a devout religious life with a successful lay career in commerce and industry, Park thought young readers especially would most benefit from reading about Stevens's life, taking him as a model they themselves could emulate.

One view, therefore, which the Author has in submitting this sketch of the life of Mr. Stevens to the world is to prove, and particularly to the young, how much every man has it in his power, even under very discouraging circumstances, by diligence, fidelity, and attention, to advance himself, not only in worldly prosperity, but in learning and wisdom, in purity of life, and in moral and religious knowledge.⁴⁹

This moralistic and religiously didactic motive in the *Memoirs* provides a plausible explanation regarding the link to the Philanthropic Society present in the 1812 and 1814 editions. The Philanthropic Society was a charity that had as its object the prevention of crime through the reformation of criminal minors, making it a charity with a *modus operandi* that corresponded to Park's background in the judiciary.⁵⁰ The charity thus had a desire to promote a more virtuous manner of living to those children it was attempting to help. Whether the Philanthropic Society actually envisaged using the *Memoirs* to teach its subjects that a moral and religious life was of benefit to its charitable recipients is uncertain. Nonetheless, a connection between the society and Park's motive in presenting Stevens as a model for young

⁴⁸ See the title pages for all five editions of the *Memoirs*; see also, Owen Felltham, *Resolves, Divine, Moral, and Political*, 2nd edn, London, 1820, 362; see also, xxv-xxvi, where the editor of Felltham's *Resolves* makes reference to Park's biography and Stevens's life.

⁴⁹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 3.

⁵⁰ [Anon.], *An Address to the Public, From the Philanthropic Society*, London, 1792, title page.

people is apparent.⁵¹ However, if any group of individuals had a vested interest in promoting and nurturing the memory of Stevens, it was his close High Church network of friends, many of whom lived on into the nineteenth century within the Club of Nobody's Friends.

Park's influence has meant that those writing up until the present day have usually always relied upon him as their main source when discussing Stevens. It is true that some nineteenth-century writers, like Edward Churton and John Skinner, did add to what is known about Stevens by contributing a small amount of original research; but these writers were an exception to the majority of those who have relied primarily on Park.⁵² It is, of course, true that in more recent times some of the revisionist historians mentioned above, especially E. A. Varley, F. C. Mather, Geoffrey Rowell and Peter Nockles have all made original contributions in highlighting Stevens's importance as a lay ecclesiastical figure, as well as his neglected role in recent historiography.⁵³ These writers have all incorporated Stevens into broader revisionist claims regarding the vitality of late eighteenth-century High Churchmanship. They highlight Stevens as a figure who played a significant role in

⁵¹ See for example, Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 7 (emphasis in original): 'I repeat the assertion for the benefit of the rising generation; for the fact is so, however improbable and strange it may appear to the indolent and slothful; whose sole employment in the period of youth is *to kill time*, as they call it, by literally doing nothing; or by doing what is worse than nothing, indulging in criminal pleasures, which ruin the constitution both of body and mind. But so did not the excellent person, whose life we are now recording, spend his youth and strength: for from his earliest years he was, what he continued during his long life to be, an example of the strictest purity of life and sobriety of manners, patient industry and attention to business, and of incorruptible integrity'.

⁵² See Edward Churton, *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, vol.1, 1st edn, London, 1861, 22-44; John Skinner, *Annals of Scottish Episcopacy*, Edinburgh, 1818, *passim*.

⁵³ See Varley, *The Last of the Prince Bishops*, 7-10, 30-32; Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 14, 122-127; Rowell, *The Club of 'Nobody's Friends'*, 14-31; Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 14 n47, 16 n59, 23, 318; Nockles, 'Stevens, William', *ODNB*.

making High Churchmanship an influential ecclesiastical tradition during this time; his combined abilities within the spheres of commerce, theology, philanthropy, practical activism and ecclesiastical networking singling him out as an influential or ‘remarkable layman’, to use Mather’s phrase.⁵⁴ All of this scholarship suggests that there was something unique about Stevens’s contribution to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century High Churchmanship.

Some of this recent scholarship was among the first to draw upon the Jonathan Boucher Papers, now housed at the College of William and Mary, Virginia.⁵⁵ This important repository contains ninety letters from Stevens to Boucher. Rowell, in particular, has made much use of these letters.⁵⁶ Mather also used these letters to draw attention to Stevens’s previously undiscussed commercial ventures within Wales, in addition to his role in the formation of the *British Critic*.⁵⁷ The Boucher correspondence contains a great deal of information about Stevens’s life not contained in the *Memoirs*—much of which, despite Rowell and Mather’s contributions, is yet to be discussed at length. Indeed, the many facets of Stevens’s life—commercial, theological, ecclesiastical and philanthropic—suggest a type of lay activism worthy of a more detailed examination and synthesis.

However, before this thesis proceeds, some discussion regarding terminology is needed regarding to the use of the terms ‘Anglican’ and ‘Anglicanism’ in this study. To this day, owing greatly to the worldwide expansion of the Anglican

⁵⁴ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 14; see also, Varley, *The Last of the Prince Bishops*, 10; Nockles, ‘Stevens, William’, *ODNB*.

⁵⁵ See Earl Gregg Swem Library, Jonathan Boucher Papers, B/3/1-90. When Mather accessed these papers they were held at East Sussex Record Office (see Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 14 n58 & 60, 314).

⁵⁶ See Rowell, *The Club of ‘Nobody’s Friends’*, 1-31.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 17; Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 14 n60, 213-216.

Communion since the nineteenth century,⁵⁸ the terms have a wide and common historiographical usage, yet their use date mostly from the mid-nineteenth century, giving them an element of anachronism when applied to individuals living before then who themselves would not have adopted the term.⁵⁹ Moreover, given the theological diversity present among Anglicans over the centuries, it is technically more accurate to speak of ‘Anglicanisms’ in the plural.⁶⁰ Though aware of this problem, this thesis has nonetheless continued to make use of ‘Anglican’ and ‘Anglicanism’. This is both for historiographical and pragmatic reasons. Not only do the terms have a wide use among historians, a lack of viable alternatives to label individual and collective members of the Church of England (later the Anglican Communion) means such terminology can be maintained.

The structure of this thesis is largely thematic. Chapter 1 deals with the broad history and historiography of High Churchmanship. Here the historical background of the High Church tradition is given, as is a definition of what beliefs and principles constitute High Churchmanship. Similar to the problems relating to the term ‘Anglicanism’, this chapter also contains a discussion dealing with the problems of terminology that relate to ‘High Churchmanship’. From here, the evolution of historical opinion regarding High Churchmanship is analysed. This section has a focus on recent revisionist accounts of High Churchmanship and the recent challenges to this perspective.

⁵⁸ Mark Chapman, *Anglicanism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 4.

⁵⁹ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 39-40; see also, Nockles, ‘Survivals or New Arrivals? The Oxford Movement and the Nineteenth Century Historical Construction of Anglicanism’ in Stephen Platten (ed.), *Anglicanism and the Western Christian Tradition: Continuity, Change and the Search for Communion*, Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2003, 144-191.

⁶⁰ Nockles, ‘Survivals or New Arrivals?’, 191.

Chapter 2 introduces the lay context of this thesis by a historical survey of notable High Church laymen and laywomen who lived before Stevens. Given the neglected role that the laity has played within High Church historiography, it is necessary to set the context of Stevens's life by demonstrating that his presence as a lay ecclesiastical figure has a rich—and largely unexamined—tradition within High Church Anglicanism.

Chapter 3 gives the early biographical details of Stevens's life and then focuses on his commercial background as a wholesale hosier and sometime part-owner of a Welsh ironworks. This aspect of Stevens's life is emphasised as its importance within previous representations of Stevens has been neglected. Such a discussion gives rise to the similarly neglected relationship between commerce and High Churchmanship in general. Stevens, far from being a lone example of a lay High Churchman who combined piety with commerce, was in fact only one of many High Church laymen who arose to prominence from within the commercially-dominated society of eighteenth-century England.

From here Stevens's lay activism is studied in detail. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss what this thesis has termed 'theological activism'—that is, Stevens's role as a lay divine and theological controversialist. Chapter 4 begins by noting the theological sources specific to Stevens's own style of High Churchmanship (especially the dominance of Hutchinsonianism), before dealing with the 1770s and Stevens's role in responding as a published author to the ideological threat of latitudinarianism, the American Revolution and the biblical scholarship of Benjamin Kennicott. Chapter 5, on the other hand, relates mostly to the 1790s and the threat of the French Revolution. Here, Stevens helped launch a number of High Church initiatives—all of which were aimed at the ideological threat of the French

Revolution and the boarder intellectual movement of the late Enlightenment. Later in that decade, the continuing (and divisive) presence of Hutchinsonianism within the thought of Stevens and his circle of High Church friends becomes the chief object of discussion.

Chapter 6 is dedicated to ‘ecclesiastical activism’, what is argued as Stevens’s more practical contributions to Church and society. Here Stevens’s activities as a wealthy and dedicated philanthropist are noted and set within the context of a High Church spirituality that emphasised good works as evidence of salvation. Ecclesiastical activism, however, designates a wider involvement in Church and society than simply an individual contribution charity or parochial church life—hence, Stevens’s contributions within Church of England societies and organizations such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) and Queen Anne’s Bounty are analysed. Following the consecration of Samuel Seabury in 1784, Stevens’s lay activism is shown to have a British and, to a lesser extent, a trans-Atlantic context in his work on behalf of the Scottish Episcopal Church. The final section in this thesis deals with the significance of the Club of Nobody’s Friends, founded in 1800.

These chapters will lead to the conclusion that Stevens was one of the most influential High Church figures of his age and that his contributions as a lay activist necessitates a revision of the historiography of High Churchmanship. His rise to ecclesiastical prominence from a commercial background, and his exercising of intellectual and practical influence within an Anglican tradition commonly viewed as clerical, emphasises the importance of the laity to the High Church tradition, and of the need for Church historians to broaden their focus when writing about this Anglican tradition.

Chapter 1. An Historiography of Anglican High Churchmanship

Writing on the importance of the rite of Confirmation to his close friend Jane Hookham on 7 July 1760,¹ William Stevens observed that in the sacrament of Baptism ‘we receive grace to undertake our duty, ... in Confirmation we receive grace to perform it, and are further renewed in our minds’.² As a High Churchman, Stevens valued the rite of Confirmation, seeing it as a physical means of God further bestowing his grace through the ordained ministry. However, like most classical High Churchmen, he resisted referring to Confirmation as a sacrament in the full and proper sense, preferring instead the term ‘ordinance’.³ Similarly, in concurrence with traditional High Churchmanship, Stevens cautioned against restricting the operation of God’s grace only to outward sacramental means. Despite these carefully stated qualifications, however, Stevens was nonetheless adamant that unless some extraordinary means was employed by divine providence, the normal way of God bestowing grace was through the sacraments and rites that he had ordained to be used in the Church, including the ancient rite of Confirmation. Stevens explained his point to Hookham, emphasising the need for Christians not to neglect God’s normal means of bestowing his grace:

Seeing Confirmation is of Divine institution, and ordained by God as a means of conveying a further supply of grace to all those that have been baptized, is it not our duty to wait upon Him for His grace in that way which He has

¹ James Allan Park, *Memoirs of the Late William Stevens, Esq. Treasurer of Queen Anne’s Bounty*, new edn, London, 1859, 147-150. Jane Hookham (1746-1813) was a High Church laywoman and daughter of Stevens’s employer, John Hookham (see Chapter 3, 130-131; Chapter 4, 154).

² Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, 150.

³ *Ibid*, 147.

appointed for the conveying of it to us? And though the grace of God is not so confined to His ordinances that it cannot be had without them, have we any reason to expect He should give it to us in an extraordinary manner, if we neglect the ordinary means which He has appointed, when they are in our power?⁴

This sort of moderate and nuanced sacramental theology was an important aspect of what has often been referred to as the High Church tradition within Anglicanism: an ecclesiastical tradition of high sacramental piety, coupled with an equally high view of episcopal and monarchical governance that was originally expounded by a number of late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century divines. They included Richard Hooker (1554-1600), Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626), William Laud (1573-1645), Henry Hammond (1605-1660) and Herbert Thorndike (1598-1672), among numerous others. It was a theological tradition that was continued into the first decade of the nineteenth century by the layman, William Stevens, and his close-knit circle of lay and clerical friends.⁵

As Jeffrey Chamberlain has observed, however, being able to define Anglican High Churchmanship with any sort of clear-cut precision is not an easy task for the historian. Chamberlain observes that ‘The moment a definition is tried it is found wanting because “High Churchmen” can be found who do not seem to fit the pattern’.⁶ This is indeed true, though there are other problems. One is the fact that the label ‘High Church’ originally had a pejorative use—used by opponents to label

⁴ Ibid, 150.

⁵ See Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760-1857*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 13-22.

⁶ Jeffrey S. Chamberlain, *Accommodating High Churchmen: The Clergy of Sussex, 1700-1745*, Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 1997, 13.

churchmen whom they charged with holding Tory or Jacobite views; it was not, in other words, originally used as a form of self-application by ‘High Churchmen’ themselves.⁷ Nonetheless, despite what Chamberlain refers to as ‘the pitfalls inherent in the task’,⁸ some sort of a broad starting definition is required for any effective study of the subject to proceed.

Preferring to speak of a High Church ‘ethos’ so as to be as comprehensive as possible, Chamberlain writes that ‘In the broadest and most general sense, High Churchmanship was concerned with two overarching principles: loyalty to the Church and loyalty to the Crown’.⁹ Regarding the Church, first and foremost this took the form of a strong emphasis upon episcopacy, that is, upon the government of the Church by bishops who could claim a lineal succession back to the Apostles—a teaching otherwise known as the doctrine of Apostolic Succession. High Churchmen prided themselves on the fact that the Church of England had preserved this ancient form of church governance and not infrequently chided those Christian churches that had abandoned it. Also, as part of this ecclesiological emphasis, High Churchmanship was distinguished by a strong commitment to the principle of sacramentalism. ‘High Churchmen’, writes Chamberlain, ‘stressed that grace came through the sacraments, particularly baptism and the Eucharist.’¹⁰ Thirdly, High Churchmen revered the *Book of Common Prayer*, emphasizing the theological truth and liturgical correctness of the reformed liturgical formularies found within it.

⁷ Peter B. Nockles, ‘Church parties in the pre-Tractarian Church of England 1750-1833: the ‘Orthodox’ – some problems of definition and identity’ in John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor (eds), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 334-359.

⁸ Chamberlain, *Accommodating High Churchmen*, 13.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid, 14.

Frequently conducted with a 'high' degree of ceremonial,¹¹ High Church worship was always to be in strict conformity to the prayer book. Regarding politics, loyalty usually took the form of Tory monarchical beliefs that were *jus divinium*, that is, monarchy being a divinely ordained system of government.¹² Strict political obedience thus became an important political and ecclesiastical attribute for High Churchmen, an uncompromising trait that would get some High Churchmen into divisive political positions owing to their persistent adherence to the Stuart line following the Revolution of 1688.¹³ Another notable feature of High Church political theory was what became known as 'passive obedience' or 'non-resistance'. Taking as its starting point the belief that monarchy is *jus divinium*, political thinkers in the High Church tradition advocated that if a monarch decreed laws that were unjust, that is, against the constitution or against Christian principles, 'obedience' could only take the form of passivity or 'suffering', that is, of neither actively obeying nor actively rebelling (a practice that could incur civil punishment).¹⁴ However, conforming to Chamberlain's point that exceptions can always be found to a definition, not all High Churchmen were this far to the political right; indeed, it

¹¹ See Nigel Yates, *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, 10-39; F. C. Mather, 'Georgian Churchmanship Reconsidered: Some Variations in Anglican Public Worship 1714-1830', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol.36, no.2, 1985, 255-283.

¹² Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 26.

¹³ Known as Jacobitism. The Nonjurors are perhaps the most notable English Jacobite High Churchmen, though even many conformist High Churchmen possessed a strong reverence to the Stuart line which they surreptitiously held to. The non-established Scottish Episcopalians, most of whom were very High Church, were also Jacobite.

¹⁴ The Nonjuring priest, Abednego Seller (1646/7-1705), in his 1689 treatise, *The History of Passive Obedience Since the Reformation*, defined passive obedience as follows: 'That it is the duty of every Christian, in things lawful, *actively* to obey his superior; in things unlawful, to *suffer* rather than obey, and in any case, or upon any pretence whatsoever not to resist, because, whoever does so, shall receive to themselves *Damnation*' (Abednego Seller, *The History of Passive Obedience Since the Reformation*, Amsterdam, 1689, ii, emphasis in original).

should be noted that a number of Church of England figures over the centuries have combined a ‘high’ ecclesiology and sacramental theology with Whig political views. Thus the Archbishops of Canterbury, William Wake (1657-1737), Thomas Secker (1693-1768) and John Potter (1673/4-1747) are all regarded as being Whigs politically, but High Churchmen ecclesiologically.¹⁵ Other Whig High Churchmen included the Bishop of Durham, William Talbot (1659-1730).¹⁶ Though this thesis will generally deal with High Churchmen who were strong Tories, it was nonetheless entirely possible to be a High Churchman and not be a Tory or a Jacobite; one could easily display ‘loyalty to the Church and loyalty to the Crown’ without being on the right of English politics.

Of course, this discussion presumes that the High Churchmanship being spoken of was situated within a British context in which a British monarch was owed political obedience. In the late eighteenth century a High Churchmanship would develop in North America that owed no obedience at all to the British monarchy, namely the High Church tradition within the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, pioneered and championed by bishops such as Samuel Seabury (1729-1796) and John Henry Hobart (1775-1830). Thus, just as the Scottish Episcopal Church would develop a High Church identity separate from the fact of

¹⁵ Jeremy Gregory, ‘Introduction’ in Jeremy Gregory (ed.), *The Speculum of Archbishop Thomas Secker*, Woodbridge: The Church of England Record Society, 1995, xix, ix-xxx; see also, Robert G. Ingram, *Religion, Reform and Modernity in the Eighteenth Century: Thomas Secker and the Church of England*, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007 and the *ODNB* entries for Wake, Secker and Potter.

¹⁶ William Gibson, ‘William Talbot and Church Parties: 1688-1730’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol.58, no.1, 2007, 26-48.

establishment, the United States High Church tradition would develop an identity distinct from monarchy.¹⁷

One aspect of High Churchmanship that Chamberlain has neglected was its appeal to the primitive Church as a hermeneutical principle.¹⁸ Loyalty to Anglican standards meant that, in the words of Article VI of the Thirty-nine Articles, High Churchmen were bound to accept that the ‘Holy Scriptures containeth all things necessary to salvation’.¹⁹ However, as Peter Nockles has pointed out, ‘High Churchmen tended to argue that Scripture needed to be understood in the light of antiquity, properly understood’.²⁰ The phrase ‘properly understood’ reflected the High Church belief that, despite its close historical proximity to the apostolic age and thus to apostolic truth, the early Church had nonetheless erred at various times. Because of this High Churchmen only accepted the testimony of the first three or four Ecumenical Councils of the early Church.²¹ They fully accepted the Protestant belief in the fallibility of the early Church as well as the later corruptions of mediaeval Catholicism. Though they expressed the point with more nuance than continental Protestantism, High Churchmen usually always agreed that the sixteenth-

¹⁷ See Rowan Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, 11-21; E. Clowes Chorley, *Men and Movements in the American Episcopal Church*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1946, 133-193.

¹⁸ Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context*, 104.

¹⁹ See Article VI, ‘Of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation’: ‘Holy Scriptures containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation’.

²⁰ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 104.

²¹ The first three or four being deemed to be in conformity to the Scriptures (see *ibid*, 104-106, 113-119). There was significant disagreement on this question (see John C. English, ‘The Duration of the Primitive Church: An Issue for Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Anglicans’, *Anglican and Episcopal History*, vol.73, no.1, 2004, 35-52).

century Reformers had rightly distanced themselves from the doctrinal corruptions of the Roman Church that they thought had developed from roughly the early mediaeval period until the Reformation.²² Despite there being no consensus on the precise role antiquity played in the formulation of Christian doctrine, the Fathers of the early Church were nonetheless frequently referenced and consulted in High Church writings.²³

The qualified way in which High Churchmen regarded the early Church as a hermeneutical principle highlights the nuance needed when describing the various positions distinctive to High Churchmanship. High Church positions were not clear-cut and could, at times, vary considerably.²⁴ In recent times Peter Nockles's attempt at defining High Churchmanship has been more aware of this.²⁵ For example, where Chamberlain speaks of the strong High Church commitment to episcopacy, Nockles makes a similar point, though he adds the additional point that a commitment to episcopacy did not mean that a High Churchman automatically rejected the church polity of the non-episcopal Protestant churches of Europe, only 'those reformed bodies which had abandoned episcopacy without any plea of necessity'.²⁶ Principles such as this allowed High Churchmen to possess both an exclusive and an inclusive aspect to their ecclesiology. For example, in excluding those bodies from the visible Church who, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, had abandoned episcopacy without sufficient reason (e.g. English Dissent), High Churchmen could

²² Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 122-123.

²³ *Ibid*, 105-107.

²⁴ Some of this variation amongst High Churchmen has been described in Aidan Nichols OP, *The Panther and the Hind: A Theological History of Anglicanism*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993, 58-79.

²⁵ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 25-26. The same definition is also given in Nockles, 'Church parties', 335-336.

²⁶ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 26, 156-164.

feel they were committed to the apostolic order of early Christianity and what they saw as its exclusive commitment to catholicity. Yet at the same time, High Churchmen nonetheless felt able to include within the universal Church those non-episcopal bodies (such as the Lutherans) that through ‘necessity’—that is, historical circumstance—had been supposedly ‘forced’ to adopt some other form of Church government. Though open to criticism, principles such as this gave the High Church tradition the mandate to claim that the Church of England faithfully represented what was true of the early Church as well as what was true of the Reformation whilst simultaneously rejecting the errors of mediaeval Catholicism and the more radical off-shoots of the Protestant tradition. As Alan Webster has described it, High Churchmanship was ‘a tradition emphasizing the Catholic heritage of the Church, regretting much of the destruction which took place at the Reformation, but not denying the need for the Reformation itself’.²⁷

As a final note to his definition, Nockles added the important point also mentioned by Chamberlain; namely, that there were degrees and variations of High Churchmanship—that some features of High Churchmanship ‘would be held more prominently and unequivocally by some than by others to whom the term “High Church” has been applied’.²⁸ This leads to the implication that though a great deal of common ground existed among High Churchmen, the definition of who was and who was not ‘High Church’ was by no means set. David Newsome, for example, has argued that High Churchmanship ‘must be ... understood as a loose and general description covering a conglomeration of various groups which differed greatly in

²⁷ A. B. Webster, *Joshua Watson: The Story of a Layman*, London: SPCK, 1954, 19.

²⁸ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 26.

their interpretation of the needs of the Church'.²⁹ This probably overstates the reality; for though High Churchmen may not have been unified around a single point of view, they nonetheless had a unity on basic points of doctrine.³⁰ Still, Newsome's general concern that High Churchmanship be defined as broadly as possible should be heeded. There was, in fact, much in the way of overlap concerning doctrine and practice that High Churchmanship shared with Evangelicalism and Latitudinarianism. For though it has been common amongst writers, particularly since the theological conflicts of the nineteenth century, to often see Anglicanism as having always been mired in 'party' strife,³¹ there has been a tendency amongst recent historians to argue that the various factions may have had fewer differences than has often been assumed. William Gibson, for example, has recently questioned what he describes as 'the hard and fast religious divisions into which historians neatly compartmentalize men and women in the eighteenth century'.³² Gibson has recently presented the argument that the divisions between High Churchmen and other forms of churchmanship have, on the whole, been unnecessarily exaggerated: that up until the 1830s a much greater doctrinal unity existed amongst those churchmen normally labelled as operating within mutually exclusive 'church parties'.³³ In her 1995 study, *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society*,

²⁹ David Newsome, *The Parting of Friends*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993 (1966), 318.

³⁰ Nockles, 'Church parties', 340-341.

³¹ *Ibid*, 334.

³² William Gibson, "'Quo Vadis?'" Historiographical Trends in British Studies: The Church of England in the Eighteenth Century' in Mario Caricchio and Giovanni Tarantino (eds), *Cromohs Virtual Seminars: Recent historiographical trends of the British Studies (17th-18th Centuries)*, 2006-2007, http://www.cromohs.unifi.it/seminari/gibson_quo_vadis.html.

³³ William Gibson, *The Church of England 1688-1832: Unity and Accord*, London: Routledge, 2001, 1-3.

Frances Knight argued along similar lines.³⁴ Citing examples of clergymen who combined aspects of High Churchmanship with other styles of churchmanship, Knight argued that Anglicans cannot be pigeon-holed into neat categories. On a similar note, Richard Brent, in his study of liberal Anglican politics during the 1830s, has argued that the post-Tractarian divisions that opened up between the liberal Noetic school of Anglicanism and High Churchmanship, as well as Tractarianism, cannot be read back into the decades preceding the 1830s. Prior to the period there was more of a unified front.³⁵ On the whole there is a great deal of truth to this sort of argument. At a certain level all variations of Anglican churchmanship claimed to be faithful to the Church of England, even though they may have disagreed with their interpretations of how Anglicanism should be expressed. There is also the often-forgotten reality that there would have existed many Anglican clergy and laity who simply did not attempt to label themselves or explicitly identify with any particular ecclesiastical tradition or party. It may well be that within Anglicanism those who identified as ‘Evangelicals’, ‘Latitudinarians’, ‘Noetics’ or ‘High Churchmen’, were in fact minorities within the Church of England who are noticed by historians because of the issues they vociferously championed through pulpit and print. In this regard Knight’s study can be viewed as most perceptive. In the descriptions she gives of two clergy whose diaries she made use of, the first, Francis Massingberd, a Lincolnshire clergyman, is described in terms that seem to place him midway between an old High Churchman and a Tractarian. For example,

³⁴ Frances Knight, *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 210.

³⁵ Richard Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics: Whiggery, Religion, and Reform 1830-1841*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987, 148-149; see also Pietro Corsi, *Science and Religion: Baden Powell and the Anglican Debate, 1800-1860*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 61.

Knight notes how Massingberd used to attend the highly ritualistic Margaret Street Chapel when in London yet showed himself to be nothing more than a traditional High Churchman.³⁶ Similarly, on the one hand he lamented Newman's conversion to Rome in 1845, yet felt sympathy for Manning's conversion in 1851.³⁷ Similar to Massingberd was John Rashdall, an Exeter curate who possessed 'clear Evangelical sympathies', a regard for nonconformity, yet whose 'dancing, socialising and novel reading', not to mention his view of other Evangelicals as being 'a good deal bigoted', seems to have made him incapable of being placed squarely within the Evangelical camp. What was distinctive about Knight's study was her focus on the parochial clergy and the laity. The picture she paints is of a Church that for the most part did not regard 'churchmanship' as a paramount issue at the parochial level.³⁸

Regarding the term itself, Nockles argues that 'High Church' came into use during the seventeenth century and was originally political and pejorative in its usage—denoting those churchmen who were seen to be Tories or Jacobites.³⁹ This is not to say the term did not also have an ecclesiological meaning. For example, William Wake defined a 'High Churchman' in 1695 as 'one [who] bows at going into the Chapell, [sic] and at the name of Jesus: he obliges his family to a great strictness in prayers: lets his chaplains say grace: and seems to mind little in his family more than that they strictly conform to the Church service and ceremonies'.⁴⁰ Similarly, Henry Sacheverell (*bap.*1674-*d.*1724), an outspoken High Churchman,

³⁶ Knight, *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society*, 210.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 149.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 209-210. This is the same position recently taken by William Jacob in his revisionist study, *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1680-1840*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 23-26.

³⁹ Nockles, 'Church parties', 336-337.

⁴⁰ Quoted in George Every, *The High Church Party 1688-1718*, London: SPCK, 1956, 1.

though acknowledging on the one hand the term's pejorative use, nonetheless employed the term himself on occasions, yet in the end seemed to prefer being called a 'True Church-Man' or simply 'Church-man'.⁴¹ A mostly derogatory usage continued into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries until Samuel Horsley (1733-1806), Bishop of St David's, adopted the term in the late eighteenth century, finally making it a term of positive self-identification.⁴² In light of the term's origins as a negative political label, Nockles has recently argued that those who would later become more popularly known as 'High Churchmen' did, in fact, prefer another label, 'Orthodox', to describe their churchmanship.⁴³

Nockles attributes the origins of the label 'Orthodox' to William Laud during the 1620s, and cites a number of mid-eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century High Church witnesses who themselves used the term, as well as non-High Church sources.⁴⁴ Of course, like all definitions in history, the label 'Orthodox' is not without its own problems when adopted by contemporary historians. For example, there is the theological meaning of 'Orthodox' which typically refers to 'right belief' or 'right doctrine' (as contrasted with heresy). The implication from this being that it was the Orthodox who were the 'theologically orthodox' of the Church of England, whilst Evangelicals, Latitudinarians and others were not. It also needs to be noted that 'Orthodox' is used as shorthand to denote members of an Eastern Orthodox Church. In addition, there is the objection that Nockles himself notes, namely, that the label 'Orthodox' has been interpreted by other historians in much narrower terms

⁴¹ Henry Sacheverell, *The Character of a Low-Church-Man: Drawn in an Answer to the True Character of a Church-man*, London, 3rd edn, London, 1710, title page, 17, 19.

⁴² Nockles, 'Church parties', 337.

⁴³ Ibid, 338-342; Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 27-32.

⁴⁴ Ibid; Ibid, 30-31.

than Nockles' broader usage. G. M. Ditchfield, for example, argues that the label 'Orthodox' denoted a position of Trinitarianism only and thus did not have the broader theological, sacramental and political meaning which would make it interchangeable with High Churchmanship.⁴⁵

The first problem seems to be an issue that contemporary historians have with the adoption of the term, rather than one that has any serious historical weight. Given that Nockles has supplied Evangelical witness in support of his case that 'Orthodox' was the preferred terminology for 'High Churchmen',⁴⁶ there does seem to be a case that the use of the label 'Orthodox' was not offensive to contemporaries in the above-mentioned theological sense. To counter those who have called for a narrower definition, Nockles has argued that defining 'Orthodox' in narrow terms takes away 'those distinctively ecclesiastical, sacramental and liturgical preferences' that also belonged to those who claimed to be 'Orthodox'.⁴⁷ Certainly Nockles seems to have produced enough contemporary sources that argue against defining 'Orthodox' in such narrow terms, but rather to imply a churchmanship that is holistic in the sense of being theological, sacramental and political. Also, despite the fact that most historians have chosen to use High Churchmanship as the preferred label, Nockles has not been the only historian to adopt the label 'Orthodox'.⁴⁸ Nockles's case for the adoption of 'Orthodox' is certainly strong; yet notwithstanding this, the use of terms such as 'High Church', 'High Churchmanship' and 'High Church tradition', among other variations, have been used by historians for a long time now

⁴⁵ G. M. Ditchfield, 'Anti-Trinitarianism and Toleration in Late Eighteenth-Century British Politics: The Unitarian Petition of 1792', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol.42, no.1, 1991, 39.

⁴⁶ Nockles, 'Church parties', 341-342.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 339.

⁴⁸ See John Henry Overton, *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century*, London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1894, 24-50.

and, indeed, continue to be used.⁴⁹ Historiographically, there is much justification for continuing to use the traditional terminology. William Jacob, for example, in a very recent examination of the clerical profession in the long eighteenth century, notes the changing evolution of the term ‘High Church’ that has been discussed here, yet still continues its use throughout his book.⁵⁰ Though keeping the above problems in mind, this study will, for the most part, continue to use the traditional terminology.⁵¹

One term that will not be used when speaking of High Churchmanship will be the language of referring to a ‘High Church party’. As Arthur Burns has noted, the terminology of ‘party’ creates the more substantial problem of denoting the existence of ‘tightly defined groupings’ that, once stated, become very difficult to identify with any degree of accuracy.⁵² As can be seen, for example, in W. J. Conybeare’s famous mid nineteenth-century essay on ‘Church Parties’, attempting to classify and define the nature and makeup of such ‘parties’ is a task that cannot be achieved without a great deal of subjectivity and ahistorical labelling.⁵³ This is evident in Conybeare’s use of the sub-divisions of ‘exaggerated’, ‘stagnant’ and ‘normal’ (notwithstanding the pejorative nature of such labels) and is evidence of the inadequacy of the generalizing engendered through the use of party labels, whether they be applied to High, Low or Broad Church.⁵⁴ The reality, as Burns has further

⁴⁹ See for example, Richard W. Vaudry, *Anglicans and the Atlantic World: High Churchmen, Evangelicals and the Quebec Connection*, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003.

⁵⁰ Jacob, *The Clerical Profession*, 23-26 & *passim*.

⁵¹ Even Nockles, despite his adoption of ‘Orthodox’, continues to use the traditional terminology throughout *The Oxford Movement in Context*.

⁵² Arthur Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England c.1800-1870*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999, 21.

⁵³ See W. J. Conybeare, ‘Church Parties’ in Stephen Taylor (ed.), *From Cranmer to Davidson: A Miscellany*, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1999, 213-385.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 259.

pointed out, is that ‘churchmanship’, of whatever variant, is capable of existing independently without reference to ‘party’. Thus he observes that ‘We speak of “evangelicals” and of an “evangelical party”’. But the two are not the same. The former can exist without the latter’.⁵⁵

In referring to High Churchmanship, it is important to note that the post-1830s phenomenon of Tractarianism and Anglo-Catholicism are not being referred to, despite the fact that Tractarianism and Anglo-Catholicism would eventually appropriate the terminology of ‘High Church’. As recent revisionist scholarship has demonstrated, the two strands of Anglican Churchmanship are more unrelated than has previously been assumed.⁵⁶ Tractarians and Anglo-Catholics often interpreted their respective movements as being in continuity with the High Church tradition—though, as will be seen, not in continuity with the eighteenth century, a period which they frequently criticised. The result of such a belief was the blending of the two strands of churchmanship in a manner that is now recognized as misleading. Indeed, for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the main influence upon the historiography of High Churchmanship has been Tractarianism, which, from its beginnings, created perceptions that it was bringing renewal to a sleeping and corrupt Church unprepared for the changes the Reform Era was bringing upon English society from the late 1820s onwards. What the Church needed, so the Tractarians argued, was a new acceptance of the fact that the Church of England was an apostolic and catholic church of divine foundation with divine prerogatives and sacraments. This would protect the Church against what they saw as an increasingly

⁵⁵ Arthur Burns, ‘Introduction [to Conybeare, ‘Church Parties’]’, 251.

⁵⁶ See Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, *passim*; George Herring, *What Was the Oxford Movement?*, London: Continuum, 2002, 6-10.

erastian and hostile state. Moreover, the High Church tradition of the previous century, they further claimed, had failed to uphold this truth with vigour.⁵⁷

The Tractarians disparagingly labelled the eighteenth-century High Churchmen as the ‘High and Dry’, the ‘old Orthodox Two Bottles’ and the ‘Z’s’.⁵⁸ According to the narrative that the Tractarians constructed, the golden era for High Churchmen had been the seventeenth century, the period of the Caroline Divines.⁵⁹ The eighteenth century, on the other hand, had been a period of decline and neglect in which ‘Catholic’ principles were not taught as they had been in the seventeenth century. What resulted from this was the belief that the Oxford Movement had revived High Church principles that had long been neglected—a belief that allowed Tractarian radicalism to be disguised simply as the revival of an older, neglected, tradition. It was to become a predictable historical narrative that would be retold by sympathetic Tractarian and Anglo-Catholic historians for well over a century.⁶⁰ Though some were more extreme than others in their condemnation of the High Churchmen of the pre-1830s, the result was a more or less general construction of the pre-Tractarian Church of England that painted the High Church tradition as at best ineffectual, and at worst, spiritually moribund.

⁵⁷ For example of this perception, see John Henry Newman, ‘Advertisement’ in *Tracts for the Times*, vol.I, London, 1834, iii-v.

⁵⁸ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 33.

⁵⁹ See for example, Newman, ‘Advertisement’, *Tracts for the Times*, iii.

⁶⁰ See R. W. Church, *The Oxford Movement: Twelve Years*, G. Best (ed.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970 (orig.1891); H. P. Liddon, *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey*, Vol.I, London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1894; S. L. Ollard, *A Short History of the Oxford Movement*, London: Faith Press Reprints, 1963 (orig.1915); S. L. Ollard, *The Anglo-Catholic Revival*, London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1925; F. L. Cross, *The Oxford Movement and the Seventeenth Century*, London: SPCK, 1933; Desmond Morse-Boycott, *The Secret Story of the Oxford Movement*, London: Skeffington & Son, 1933.

Despite its popularity, however, a minority of historians bucked the trend of accepting the Tractarian denigration of the eighteenth-century High Churchmen. One notable example was J. Wickham Legg's *English Church Life: From the Restoration to the Tractarian Movement* (1914).⁶¹ Legg (1843-1921), a layman and liturgical scholar, has been described as 'a strong high-churchman in the Tractarian tradition' though, disliking ritualism, he appears to have had greater sympathies with pre-Tractarian High Churchmanship.⁶² In *English Church Life* Legg's aim was to recover the pre-Tractarian period and its High Churchmen from their nineteenth-century denigration through a presentation of primary sources that, in his view, supported his notion of a vibrant High Church presence during the eighteenth century.⁶³ Legg speculated that Victorian notions of 'progress' had caused a depreciation of the age that had preceded it—that, in Legg's words, 'The lustre of the age in which they wrote would be heightened by darkening the age which went immediately before'.⁶⁴ Thus, though arguing for a more positive reading of the clerical, pastoral and liturgical reality of the period, Legg did not attempt to recreate the eighteenth century as a sort of golden era: 'That there were bad clergymen in the eighteenth century no one is prepared to deny. That they were all bad is another proposition which can be readily refuted'.⁶⁵ Though Legg's method of gathering sources has been criticised as being too random to warrant the generalisations he

⁶¹ J. Wickham Legg, *English Church Life: From the Restoration to the Tractarian Movement*, London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1914.

⁶² G. Martin Murphy, 'Legg, John Wickham', *ODNB*.

⁶³ Legg, *English Church Life*, vii.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, viii.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 10.

made, Legg was nonetheless able to correct some of the more sweeping accusations levelled against the eighteenth-century Church.⁶⁶

Whilst 1934 would see Norman Sykes's pioneering work in reviving the eighteenth-century Church of England from the more extreme charges of spiritual and pastoral negligence in the Tractarian narrative of decline,⁶⁷ Legg's revisionism does not appear to have been taken very seriously. Thus the centenary of the Oxford Movement in 1933 saw a plethora of commemorative historical works on Tractarianism that were largely reverential and uncritical in their praise of the movement and its leaders.⁶⁸ However, one scholar during this period, Yngve Brilioth, had—in 1933—republished his 1925 monograph, *The Anglican Revival: Studies in the Oxford Movement*.⁶⁹ An important contribution to Oxford Movement studies (and, it must be said, one of the more sophisticated and original works to come out of the centenary period), *The Anglican Revival* still typified a tendency to see little that was positive in eighteenth-century High Churchmanship.⁷⁰ Referring to the Oxford Movement through the use of phrases such as 'the Anglican Revival', 'Neo-Anglicanism', 'the coming restoration' and even the 'Anglican Renaissance',⁷¹ Brilioth gave little credit to the achievements of eighteenth-century High Churchmen, other than of barely maintaining the 'torch of Andrewes and Ken'.⁷²

⁶⁶ Mather, 'Georgian Churchmanship Reconsidered', 256.

⁶⁷ See Norman Sykes, *Church and State in England in the XVIIIth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934.

⁶⁸ For a full list of such titles, see Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 7 n23-25.

⁶⁹ Yngve Brilioth, *The Anglican Revival: Studies in the Oxford Movement*, London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1933.

⁷⁰ It contained, for example, an important chapter on the Oxford Movement's possible relationship with Romanticism (see *ibid*, 56-76).

⁷¹ See for example, *Ibid*, title page, 22, 23, 28, 45, 56.

⁷² *Ibid*, 22.

Even when it was clear that Brilioth had come across a notable proponent of High Church principles—for example, Hugh James Rose—it was concluded that ‘he lacked the spark of creative genius’.⁷³ Similar sentiments were made regarding other eighteenth-century High Churchmen. His chapter entitled, ‘The Fullness of Time’, left no illusion as to his deep regard for the vivifying impact he thought the Oxford Movement—or ‘Anglican Renaissance’—had upon the Church of England.

The research of J. R. H. Moorman and Alan Webster seems to have been the most positive evaluation of High Churchmanship that appeared during the first half of the twentieth century.⁷⁴ Moorman’s contribution was a short paper published in *Theology* to coincide with the 1933 centenary. One of the few positive evaluations of High Churchmanship to come out of 1933, Moorman’s article was a short examination of eighteenth-century High Churchmanship, highlighting the contributions of men such as Stevens, William Jones of Nayland (1726-1800), and Joshua Watson (1771-1855). Webster’s contribution was a biography of the layman, Watson. Central to both Moorman and Webster’s claims that High Churchmanship was more vibrant during the pre-Tractarian era was the contribution of what became known as the ‘Hackney Phalanx’,⁷⁵ a network of influential London High Churchmen led by Watson and the rector of Hackney, Henry Handley Norris (1771-

⁷³ Ibid, 28.

⁷⁴ J. R. H. Moorman, ‘Forerunners of the Oxford Movement’, *Theology*, vol.26, no.151, 1933, 2-15; Webster, *Joshua Watson: The Story of a Layman*, *passim*.

⁷⁵ Given Hackney’s proximity to the district of Clapton (Watson had a house at Clapton), the name ‘Clapton Sect’ has also been applied to the Hackney Phalanx. The term is an obvious play on the Evangelical ‘Clapham Sect’. ‘Clapton Sect’, however, seems to have only been invented sometime during in late nineteenth century. Given that the Evangelical designated ‘Clapham Sect’ was not a term of use until the mid nineteenth century, the High Church counterpart is not likely to have been used by Phalanx members. Its earliest use may be George Perry, *A History of the English Church: Third Period*, London, 1890, 163.

1850).⁷⁶ The Phalanx would come to dominate ecclesiastical affairs during the first three decades of the nineteenth century.⁷⁷ Defining the Phalanx as ‘a body of friends (and to some extent of relations) sharing a common theological and political outlook, forming a compact group with an agreed attitude to most of the religious and political measures of the day’,⁷⁸ Webster went on to caution against over-defining the Phalanx into something more organised and specific than it actually was. Thus Webster explained that ‘We might have described it as a “pressure group” if this did not exaggerate the self-consciousness of the Phalanx. They remained to the end a body of friends, rather than an ecclesiastical or a religious party’.⁷⁹ The lack of self-consciousness in the Phalanx is made clear when the origin of the term is examined. ‘Hackney Phalanx’ thus appears not to have been deployed by the ‘Phalanx’ itself but became popular owing to Edward Churton’s adoption of the term⁸⁰ in his two-volume life of Joshua Watson, published in 1861.⁸¹ Churton attributed ‘Hackney Phalanx’ to William Hales, the Church of Ireland rector of Kilashandra who, Churton writes, ‘was one who loved to speak afterwards of what he called “the Hackney Phalanx”’.⁸² Whilst this does appear to be the origin of the term, there seems no doubt that the Phalanx had a sense of its own cohesiveness and purpose in being a rallying point for High Churchmen. For instance, in a letter from Norris to

⁷⁶ Webster, *Joshua Watson*, 18-32.

⁷⁷ Who was, and who was not, a member of the Phalanx is not known with certainty. The most thorough documentation of its members, however, can be found in Clive Dewey, *The Passing of Barchester*, London: Hambledon, 1991, 149-168.

⁷⁸ Webster, *Joshua Watson*, 18.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Mark Smith, ‘Hackney Phalanx’, *ODNB*.

⁸¹ Edward Churton, *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, 2 vols, London, 1861.

⁸² *Ibid.*, vol.1, 97.

John James Watson (1767-1839) written sometime in mid 1809,⁸³ Norris not only spoke of being proud of his relation to Hackney given its clerical connections, he referred to his desire to see Hackney become ‘a centre formed, to which every zealously-affected Churchman may resort, and counterplot the numerous and most subtle devices against our very existence which everyday is bringing to light’.⁸⁴ The Hackney Phalanx became such a centre of ecclesiastical action. Operating during the first three decades of the nineteenth century, the Phalanx’s members recognised the need for a revival in theological, ecclesiastical and social activism from a distinctly High Church perspective. Their subsequent role in promoting High Church principles and performing much-needed social reforms, primarily through the creation (or revival) of Church societies, would become a key focus of revisionist historians working mainly in the 1980s and 1990s.

The first substantial look at the Hackney Phalanx following Webster’s biography was Nancy Uhlar Murray’s 1976 Oxford University DPhil thesis, entitled: ‘The Influence of the French Revolution on the Church of England and its Rivals, 1789-1802’.⁸⁵ A comprehensive examination of the way in which various Church of England factions reacted to events in France during the 1790s, Murray’s thesis remains a frequently-cited work, despite the fact that it was never published. High Churchmen feature prominently in her investigation, though her sub-division of High Churchmanship into two separate camps: ‘High Church’ and ‘Orthodox’ requires some explanation given the previously identified fact that ‘High Church’ and ‘Orthodox’ are largely interchangeable terms.

⁸³ Joshua’s elder brother. John James Watson was the rector of Hackney.

⁸⁴ Undated, probably c.1809; as quoted in *Ibid*, vol.1, 99-100.

⁸⁵ Nancy Uhlar Murray, ‘The Influence of the French Revolution on the Church of England and its Rivals, 1789-1802’, Oxford University, DPhil Thesis, 1975.

For Murray, ‘Orthodox’ was a term used to designate not High Churchmen as classically understood, but Churchmen who were ‘high and dry’.⁸⁶ The Orthodox thus were seen as representatives of an ecclesiology that merely emphasised the establishment of the Church of England and the good order to society that such an establishment brought to its subjects, provided they remained staunchly loyal. Thinking the Orthodox to be the majority of the English clergy, Murray sometimes mislabels Churchmen who would otherwise be counted as High Churchmen in the classical sense. Thus, Samuel Horsley, who cannot be regarded as ‘high and dry’,⁸⁷ is counted among them;⁸⁸ as is Robert Nares, the editor of the High Church *British Critic*, a periodical initially launched by the classically High Church Society for the Reformation of Principles.⁸⁹ Murray saw the Orthodox as emphasising the religious virtue of political and ecclesiastical submission, in addition to promoting a sacred union between Church and State.⁹⁰ Yet given that this was a classical High Church trait, the question arises as to what distinguished the ‘High Churchman’ from the ‘Orthodox’. Murray’s claim was that the ‘Orthodox’ held to an erastian and ‘barren’ ‘high and dry’ spirituality⁹¹ whereas the ‘High Church’ were more fervent in their beliefs. Numbering what she thinks to be no more than a hundred, Murray’s analysis of those she labelled ‘High Church’ was more positive.⁹² For her the key difference between the ‘Orthodox’ and the ‘High Church’ was that for High Churchmen the constitution of Church and State was sacred, a ‘status quo’ they were intent on

⁸⁶ Ibid, 9.

⁸⁷ See F. C. Mather, *High Church Prophet: Bishop Samuel Horsley (1733-1806) and the Caroline Tradition in the Later Georgian Church*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.

⁸⁸ Murray, ‘The Influence of the French Revolution’, 40.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 30.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 37.

⁹¹ Ibid, 42-43.

⁹² Ibid, 4. It is uncertain how Murray comes up with this figure. It appears to be arbitrary.

preserving and promoting. As Murray states: ‘Although ... their writings were not animated by an extraordinary personal piety, they were pervaded by a reverence for existing sources of authority which gave them an intensity shared only, at the time, by the Evangelicals’.⁹³ Murray specifically had in mind those High Churchmen who loosely came together under their common adherence to the distinctive physico-theology of Hutchinsonianism—High Churchmen that included Stevens and Jones.⁹⁴ Though it is true that these High Churchmen regarded both episcopacy and monarchy as sacred, divinely-ordained institutions to be revered and defended, to claim that such figures ‘were not animated by an extraordinary personal piety’ is to have done them a severe injustice. Of course, such men abhorred the sin of ‘enthusiasm’, but this did not mean a personal piety that lacked fervour.⁹⁵ Another fault with Murray’s thesis was her labelling of the Hutchinsonian High Churchmen as belonging to the Hackney Phalanx, an attribution that is chronologically too early. Though the Hutchinsonians can be regarded as representing the Phalanx’s pre-history, the Phalanx did not come to the fore until the first decade of the nineteenth century. By that time, most of the prominent eighteenth-century Hutchinsonians had died.

If the centenary of the Oxford Movement had seen a proliferation of works that bordered on hagiography, the one-hundred and fiftieth anniversary marked a significant shift toward a much more revisionist perspective. This is evident in Geoffrey Rowell’s edited collection of papers, *Tradition Renewed: The Oxford*

⁹³ Ibid, 44-45.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 45; regarding Hutchinsonianism, see Chapter 4, 169-173.

⁹⁵ See Robert Andrews, ‘“Master in the Art of Holy Living”: The Sanctity of William Stevens’ in Peter Clarke and Tony Claydon (eds), *Saints and Sanctity*, Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2011, 307-317.

Movement Conference Papers (1986), a volume that opened with three papers that were all of a strictly revisionist bent.⁹⁶ Richard Sharp began by writing on the period from 1730 to 1780.⁹⁷ Sharp contended that High Church principles were widely diffused during this period, a contention shared by Peter Nockles, who covered the period from 1780 to 1833, making reference to what he claimed was a ‘rich varied high church tradition’.⁹⁸ Unlike the 1933 celebrations, it was clear that High Churchmanship was not this time being reduced to a pre-Tractarian preparation, but was rather beginning to emerge as an area of study important in its own right and deserving of its own analysis. In relation to Tractarianism, however, Reginald Fuller’s article made it clear that the High Church tradition, far from being redundant, had in fact protested at what was viewed as Tractarian innovations to classical Anglican doctrine.⁹⁹

Tradition Renewed indicated a new scholarly direction to Tractarian studies—much more critical and significantly less hagiographic. Indeed, by the 1980s a clear shift had taken place in High Church scholarship, most of which had become revisionist in nature. This could be seen in a number of important biographical and semi-biographical studies that appeared from the early 1980s through to the early 1990s. The first of these had, in fact, pre-dated the publication of

⁹⁶ Indeed, Rowell’s introduction stressed the collection’s ‘historical reassessment and critical appraisal of the Oxford Movement’ (see Geoffrey Rowell, ‘Introduction’ in Geoffrey Rowell (ed.), *Tradition Renewed: The Oxford Movement Conference Papers*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986, 2.

⁹⁷ Richard Sharp, ‘New Perspectives on the High Church Tradition: historical background 1730-1780’ in Rowell (ed.), *Tradition Renewed*, 4-23.

⁹⁸ Peter Nockles, ‘The Oxford Movement: historical background 1780-1833’ in Rowell (ed.), *Tradition Renewed*, 24-50.

⁹⁹ Reginald H. Fuller, ‘The Classical High Church Reaction to the Tractarians’ in Rowell (ed.), *Tradition Renewed*, 51-63.

Tradition Renewed: namely, William J. Baker's *Beyond Port and Prejudice* (1981), which examined the life of Charles Lloyd of Oxford (1784-1829).¹⁰⁰ Lloyd, a member of the Hackney Phalanx, was Bishop of Oxford from 1827 until his death; a position he held concurrently with that of Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford from 1822. Baker revived the memory of a High Church theologian and prelate who, up until the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832, had exercised a considerable hegemony over the intellectual climate of Oxford and the direction of Anglican High Churchmanship. Upon his appointment as Regius Professor of Divinity, Lloyd led a revival in the study of theology primarily through reinstating regular, disciplined and well prepared lectures.¹⁰¹ Thus, 'Within seven years', Baker claims, 'he [Lloyd] transformed the teaching of theology and impressed himself ... upon the memory of an entire generation of Oxford ecclesiastics'.¹⁰² This phenomenon would later be confirmed by Donald A. Withey in *John Henry Newman: The Liturgy and the Breviary* (1992). Withey confirms Baker's account by detailing the influence Lloyd had upon the theological direction of Newman's (1801-1890) theological interests, especially his interest in the Roman Breviary.¹⁰³

Aside from Newman, Baker documents the influence Lloyd had on a generation of men who would themselves go on to become influential nineteenth-century theologians. Included in this group were Edward B. Pusey (1800-1882), Richard Hurrell Froude (1803-1836), Robert Wilberforce (1802-1857), R. W. Jelf

¹⁰⁰ William J. Baker, *Beyond Port and Prejudice: Charles Lloyd of Oxford, 1784-1829*, Maine: University of Maine at Orono Press, 1981.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 94-96. The situation was not as dire as Baker paints it (see Jacob, *The Clerical Profession*, 43-63).

¹⁰² Baker, *Beyond Port and Prejudice*, 93-94.

¹⁰³ Donald A. Withey, *John Henry Newman: The Liturgy and the Breviary*, London: Sheed & Ward, 1992, 8-9.

(1798-1871), W. R. Churton (c.1800-1828), Edward Churton (1800-1874), Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880), Edward Denison (1801-1854), Thomas Mozley (1806-1893), F. E. Paget (1806-1882), and George Moberly (1803-1885).¹⁰⁴ What differentiated Lloyd from his predecessors was not only his preparation and diligence, but also his discipline and the fact that he went beyond the required university statutes by giving private lectures to his more keen students.¹⁰⁵ Though not being prolific himself as an author of published theology,¹⁰⁶ the fact that so many High Churchmen and Tractarians attested to Lloyd's influence as a teacher is, at the very least, a testament to his influence as an expositor of the High Church tradition. To be sure, Baker did not, as one reviewer put it, present a Churchman 'far beyond the "port and prejudice" ' that critics derisively saw as defining Oxford in the late eighteenth century;¹⁰⁷ nonetheless, Baker's life of Lloyd was, if not a piece of radical revisionist scholarship, a sympathetic effort at understanding a largely unexamined figure and period.

Somewhat different to Baker's straightforward biography was Pietro Corsi's *Science and Religion* (1988), an analysis of the intellectual development of Baden Powell (1796-1860).¹⁰⁸ Powell was a theologian and scientist who became the first prominent Anglican thinker to endorse Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.¹⁰⁹ Significantly, and unlike earlier presentations of Powell, Corsi emphasised Powell as

¹⁰⁴ Baker, *Beyond Port and Prejudice*, 103.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 102-108.

¹⁰⁶ Though he can be counted as the inspiration behind William Palmer's important liturgical work, *Origines liturgicae*, London, 1832 (see Withey, *John Henry Newman: The Liturgy and the Breviary*, 9).

¹⁰⁷ Dale A. Johnson, 'Review of William A. Baker, *Beyond Port and Prejudice*', *Church History*, vol.52, no.2, 1983, 226.

¹⁰⁸ Corsi, *Science and Religion: Baden Powell and the Anglican Debate, 1800-1860*, *passim*.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 221.

a theologian and scientist who had emerged out of the Hackney Phalanx. Though later a proponent of a more liberal theology, Powell was, initially, a member of this conservative network of High Churchmen. As Corsi demonstrates, Powell, like most members of the Phalanx, was linked to the group through family ties.¹¹⁰ Powell's father, Baden Powell Snr, was closely connected to leading Hackney figures, Thomas Sikes and Henry Handley Norris, both of whom had married Powell's sisters.¹¹¹ This close hereditary link, combined with clear intellectual talent, saw Powell actively involved in the Phalanx's activities, most notably through his anonymous authorship of articles and reviews in High Church periodicals such as the *Christian Remembrancer* and the resurgent *British Critic* (later to become a Tractarian mouthpiece),¹¹² as well as his publication of *Rational Religion Examined* (1826), a critique of Unitarianism.¹¹³ Though Powell's evolving intellectual journey—one that eventually led to a break in his involvement in the work of the theologically conservative Phalanx—is Corsi's main focus, *Science and Religion* nonetheless ends up highlighting the existence of an active intellectualism in High Church ranks.

The Hackney Phalanx did, in fact, become a central feature in two more biographical works that appeared in the early 1990s, a further indication of its importance in Church affairs. These were Clive Dewey's *The Passing of Barchester*

¹¹⁰ See Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 15.

¹¹¹ Corsi, *Science and Religion*, 11.

¹¹² See S. A. Skinner, 'Newman, the Tractarians and the British Critic', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol.50, no.4, 1999, 716-759; S. A. Skinner, *Tractarians and the Condition of England: The Social and Political Thought of the Oxford Movement*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, 33-65.

¹¹³ Corsi, *Science and Religion*, 21-35, 61-72.

(1991) and E. A. Varley's *The Last of the Prince Bishops* (1992).¹¹⁴ *The Passing of Barchester* was a highly revisionist attempt at reviving the reputation of High Churchmanship. Seeing a parallel with some of the devout High Churchmen in Anthony Trollope's novels *The Warden* (1855) and *Barchester Towers* (1857), Dewey highlighted the life and context of the Phalanx-aligned cleric, the Dean of Canterbury, William Lyall (1788-1857), and the coterie of clerics that surrounded him during his career. It was Dewey's contention that the extreme threats faced by the Church of England during the Reform Era of the 1830s were averted by the very people and methods that the Church's critics were claiming to be the cause of its decline: namely, the old High Churchmen and their skilled use of patronage.¹¹⁵ According to Dewey the Hackney Phalanx was able to use patronage effectively because its members displayed a high degree of internal cohesion. Combined with a 'dense web of personal contacts' that 'made it possible for them to pool information in a way no individual could hope to do',¹¹⁶ the Phalanx was able to recruit talented individuals to its ranks. Lyall, a prominent author, theologian and preacher, is singled out by Dewey as an example of how a talented individual could be recruited into the Phalanx's ranks and then, as his own clerical career advanced, become himself a patron in his own right, dispensing patronage to other noteworthy undergraduates or curates who had potential. In this way, Dewey notes, the cycle of patronage was self-perpetuating.¹¹⁷ Claiming patronage as a strength of the High Church tradition, *The Passing of Barchester* was a bold attempt at rehabilitating an

¹¹⁴ Dewey, *The Passing of Barchester*, *passim*; E. A. Varley, *The Last of the Prince Bishops: William Van Mildert and the High Church Movement of the early nineteenth century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

¹¹⁵ Dewey, *The Passing of Barchester*, vii-viii.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, 5.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 6.

aspect of High Churchmanship that has commonly been dismissed as ineffective by historians critical of the Church of England.¹¹⁸ The way the Phalanx operated, Dewey contended, was fundamentally an outworking of the conservative way in which British institutions characteristically reformed themselves: that is, slowly, through the use of traditional means.¹¹⁹ Yet if Dewey's work emphasised the way in which the Hackney Phalanx exercised a profound amount of hegemony over the early nineteenth-century Church of England through its use of patronage, the work suffers from having overstated its case. Dewey's descriptions of 'patronage broking' deals between Phalanx members (though quite plausible), frequently lacks sufficient footnotes directing the reader to appropriate primary sources describing or justifying such events.¹²⁰ Also, given that Dewey often describes the Phalanx as having operated as a sort of self-conscious, organised distributor of patronage, there is a sense in which Dewey is attributing too much internal cohesion and sense of organised mission to the Phalanx. His references to the Phalanx as possessing 'talent scouts',¹²¹ and an almost organised apprenticeship process through which talent rose to the top may be going too far in this regard. Though Dewey has done a service by pointing out the important role patronage played in giving the Hackney Phalanx cohesion, the circle of friends and relatives, centred geographically on the London parish of Hackney and bound together by common theological and ecclesiastical principles, was probably not as self-consciously organised as Dewey portrays it.

¹¹⁸ See especially, Peter Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence*, Cambridge: James Clark & Co, 1989, 171-190.

¹¹⁹ Dewey, *The Passing of Barchester*, 3-4.

¹²⁰ Take for example Dewey's account of the way in which Lyall was recruited by the Phalanx. His single footnote contains no primary sources and it is hard to determine which sources back up which points Dewey is attempting to justify given that the footnote covers over a page of small, densely printed text (see *ibid*, 34-35 n3).

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 5.

Less bold in its claims, though arguing along similar lines to Dewey, was E. A. Varley's, *The Last of the Prince Bishops* (1992), a study of the High Church Bishop of Durham, William Van Mildert (1765-1836) and his contribution to High Churchmanship again as a part of the Hackney Phalanx. Like Lyall, Van Mildert was an important figure to Varley for his connections as much as his own accomplishments. Linked firstly with William Stevens and his late eighteenth-century circle of High Church friends and contacts, Van Mildert later became active in High Church causes through his association with Phalanx activities.¹²² As a High Church cleric committed to the traditional social and ecclesiastical values he had inherited from his predecessors, Van Mildert's career highlights many of the dangers Dewey has rightly noted in criticising practices deemed to be incompatible with modern expectations regarding clerical duties, especially patronage and its close bed-fellow, nepotism. Varley, of course, concedes that family responsibilities influenced Van Mildert's own appointments once he became able to dispense patronage himself. However, she argues that such acts of patronage did not preclude clerical effectiveness.¹²³ Van Mildert, she argues, 'put the needs of the Church above all else. He never gave preferment to anyone, family or not, whom he thought unsuited to it; and in general, none of his protégés let him down'.¹²⁴ The process, in other words, was based on merit and could work because the intimacy of the family circle often meant the candidates were well known to the distributor of patronage. Although operating according to methods now deemed 'corrupt', Van Mildert—like Lyall—was another example of a conscientious High Churchman in an age traditionally seen as devoid of such figures. While patronage could result in negligence and corruption,

¹²² Varley, *The Last of the Prince Bishops*, 7-10, 63-88.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 109.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*.

in the right hands the Hackney Phalanx demonstrated it could also advance genuine talent.

In emphasising the fact that Van Mildert had initially been connected to William Stevens's late eighteenth-century circle of friends, Varley's biography highlighted that Van Mildert had arisen to power and influence from within a High Church movement that had pre-dated the activity of the Hackney Phalanx. Given that the Hackney Phalanx had its main influence during the first three decades of the nineteenth century, the question thus arises as to the extent and influence of High Churchmanship in the previous century, especially the second half of the eighteenth century? In addition to Stevens, one other figure in this period she highlighted was Samuel Horsley (1733-1806), successively Bishop of St David's, of Rochester and, in 1802, of St Asaph. Varley described Horsley as 'the most influential High Church bishop of his day' and (perhaps overstating the case) that 'No figure of comparable stature emerged among High Churchmen until the Oxford Movement'.¹²⁵ Of course, there is no doubting Horsley's influence over late eighteenth-century High Churchmanship. Indeed, it was an influence that was to be confirmed by F. C. Mather the same year in his important biography of Horsley: *High Church Prophet: Bishop Samuel Horsley and the Caroline Tradition in the Later Georgian Church* (1992).¹²⁶ Despite failing to be elevated to a major episcopal see during his ecclesiastical career,¹²⁷ Mather contends that Horsley was 'a national figure', actively involved in the social, political and religious upheavals of his age, especially in his opposition to Unitarianism, the French Revolution and political radicalism.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Ibid, 11, 63.

¹²⁶ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, *passim*.

¹²⁷ Mather speculates that this was perhaps owing to his middle-class origins (see *ibid*, 191).

¹²⁸ Ibid, vii.

However, as Mather admitted in the preface of the work, his aim in the biography was not simply to demonstrate Horsley's national fame, but to show how Horsley was typical of 'the persistence of a significant strain of Caroline Anglicanism ... and even its revival during the second half of the eighteenth century'.¹²⁹ In arguing this Mather provided much detail that elucidated the pre-history of the Hackney Phalanx. Mather shows how the Hackney Phalanx was preceded by an equally significant connection of High Churchmen: namely, the previously mentioned Hutchinsonians—a group that included Stevens as a leading figure.¹³⁰ Bound together by common principles, Mather sees the Hutchinsonians as having not only provided an important defence of Church and state, but with giving the late eighteenth century a High Church presence that brought with it the 'genuine spirit of religious revival'.¹³¹ Moreover, though Hutchinsonianism itself did not survive into the nineteenth century, its adherants paved the way for the rise of the Hackney Phalanx during the first decade of the nineteenth century.¹³²

In light of the works examined so far, it can be seen how important the biographical genre has been in bringing new light to an ecclesiastical tradition that has long been neglected.¹³³ It seems reasonable to conclude that the combined weight of these works sufficiently modifies, at the very least, the more extreme denunciations of the High Church tradition during the pre-Tractarian period. Yet as important as these modifications are, it has been the scholarly contribution of Peter

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 10-16.

¹³¹ Ibid, 12.

¹³² Ibid, 158, 218.

¹³³ Peter B. Nockles, 'The Waning of Protestant Unity and Waxing of Anti-Catholicism? Archdeacon Daubeny and the Reconstruction of "Anglican" Identity in the Later Georgian Church, c.1780-c.1830' in William Gibson and Robert G. Ingram (eds), *Religious Identities in Britain, 1660-1832*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, 181.

Nockles that has been the main cause for a revision of opinions concerning the old High Churchmen.

Originally a doctoral thesis completed at the University of Oxford in 1982 (and thus preceding and influencing most revisionist scholarship since this time),¹³⁴ *The Oxford Movement in Context* (1994) argued that Tractarianism and the historical interpretations of High Churchmanship that it engendered needed revising because the Tractarians (and their later Anglo-Catholic heirs), failed to pay attention to what Nockles refers to as ‘the context of a rich and varied “High Church” tradition within the Church of England’.¹³⁵ Like previous scholarship, the Hackney Phalanx was again emphasised by Nockles as being central to success of High Churchmen. Members of this High Church network, as well as those of the previous generation, notably the Hutchinsonians, had preserved High Church principles in spite of Tractarian claims that they had failed to do so. Nockles’s work was the first general attempt at reviving the reputation of the ‘Z’s’ as a whole, as well as placing their contribution within the context of the development of Tractarianism.

Written with a thematic structure, the work examined the various doctrinal areas the Tractarians and the High Churchmen shared a common interest in—e.g. political theology, the role of the church fathers, ecclesiology, spirituality, liturgy, justification, sacramentalism, etc.¹³⁶ Nockles argued that not only did each area possess a developed High Church precedent in the century preceding the Oxford Movement, but that the Tractarians had diverged from the doctrinal positions traditional High Churchmanship held to. Thus the Tractarians, Nockles argued, were

¹³⁴ Peter Nockles, ‘Continuity and Change in Anglican High Churchmanship 1792-1850’, D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1982.

¹³⁵ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 1; see also, 1-43.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, chapters 1-5.

wrong to regard themselves as the inheritors of an earlier seventeenth-century High Church tradition, as they had so often claimed: the discontinuities were significant.¹³⁷ Moreover, adding to previous revisionist scholarship, the narrative of decline constructed by the Tractarians was incorrect and misleading. For Nockles there existed an alternative historical narrative of the events surrounding 1833 and their pre-history that had largely been forgotten: namely, the testimony of the High Churchmen who had not only preceded the Oxford Movement, but had also lived through it and had expressed criticisms of its course and direction.

Nockles narrates that though many High Churchmen were initially supportive of the Tractarians, the Oxford Movement's later more contentious pro-Roman Catholic, anti-Protestant developments (such as, for example, the publication of Richard Hurrell Froude's *Remains and Tract 90*), saw the High Church tradition slowly back-off from endorsing and participating in the movement as their unease with Tractarian radicalism grew. Additionally, in various publications, written mostly during the latter half of the nineteenth century, a number of influential High Churchmen had expressed their disagreements with what they claimed was a Tractarian attempt at blackening the reputation of the pre-Tractarian Church and in some ways distorting history for their own ends. These works included: Edward Churton's *Memoir of Joshua Watson* (1861), William Palmer's *Narrative of Events connected with the 'Tracts for the Times'* (1883), John William Burgon's *Lives of Twelve Good Men* (1889), Charles Wordsworth's *Annals of my Early Life* (1891) and G. W. E. Russell's *Household of Faith* (1902).¹³⁸ Compared to the popular Tractarian memoirs and histories, particularly Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*

¹³⁷ Ibid, 307.

¹³⁸ See *ibid*, 11.

(1864), R.W. Church's, *The Oxford Movement: Twelve Years* (1891) and H. P. Liddon's, *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey* (1893-1894), most of these works did not achieve the equivalent levels of fame or influence; nor, as Nockles pointed out, have historians paid sufficient attention to them.¹³⁹

Nockles documents how these traditional High Church writers (many of whom had lived through the Oxford Movement) were of the opinion that a Tractarian, Anglo-Catholic history of their party had been told that they themselves did not agree with. John William Burgon, for example, in his biography of the eminent Orthodox High Churchman, Hugh James Rose (1795-1838), stated the historiography of the Tractarian position succinctly, along with his disagreement with it.

To read of the great Church Revival of 1833 as it presents itself to the imagination of certain writers, one would suppose that in their account the publication of the earliest of the '*Tracts for the Times*' had the magical effect of kindling into glory the dead embers of an all-but-extinct Church. The plain truth is that the smouldering materials for the cheerful blaze which followed the efforts made in 1832-3-4 had been accumulating unobserved for many years: had been the residuum of the altar-fires of a long succession of holy and earnest men.¹⁴⁰

Thus, according to Burgon, '*Church feeling was EVOKED, not CREATED, by the Movement of 1833*'.¹⁴¹ In contrast to Tractarian opinion, Burgon argued that the pre-Tractarian Church of England had, in fact, been the home of an effective and

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ John William Burgon, *Lives of Twelve Good Men*, vol.1, London, 1888, 153-154. Quoted by Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 11.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 155 (emphasis in original); see also, 178.

diffusive High Church tradition that had born ‘faithful and fearless witness’ to High Church principles.¹⁴² Though Burgon did believe that the result of this witness ‘was at first unperceived’, it was nonetheless ‘very real, and only waited the arrival of the occasion to make itself distinctly felt and seen’.¹⁴³ Importantly, Burgon provided a list of thirty-seven Churchmen whom he considered representative of pre-Tractarian High Church divinity.¹⁴⁴ After listing these churchmen, Burgon concluded that “‘time would fail me,’ were anything like a complete enumeration to be attempted’.¹⁴⁵

The influence of *The Oxford Movement in Context* on the historiography both of Anglican High Churchmanship and Tractarianism has been immense. Boyd Hilton’s comment that the original thesis was ‘probably the most widely consulted dissertation on religious developments in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain

¹⁴² Ibid, vol.1, 154.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ The complete list is as follows: Thomas Randolph (1701-1783), Thomas Townson (1715-1792), George Horne (1730-1792), William Jones (of Nayland) (1726-1800), Samuel Horsley (1733-1806), William Stevens (1732-1807), John Randolph (1749-1813), William Cleaver (1742-1815), John Frere (1740-1807), John Shepherd (1759-1805), Thomas F. Middleton (1769-1822), John Bowdler (1754-1823), Charles Daubeney (1744-1827), Reginald Heber (1783-1826), Charles Lloyd (1784-1829), Alexander Knox (1758-1831), John Jebb (1775-1833), John Davison (1777-1834), Thomas Sikes (1766-1834), Richard Laurence (1760-1839), William Van Mildert (1765-1836), William Howley (1765-1848), Christopher Wordsworth (1774-1846), H. H. Norris (1771-1851), Martin J. Routh (1755-1854), John Oxlee (1779-1854), John Kaye (1783-1853), Joshua Watson (1771-1855), C. J. Blomfield (1786-1857), Hugh James Rose (1795-1838). To which Burgon added six names which he regarded as having contemporary significance: John Miller (presumably of Worcester College, dates not known), John Keble (1792-1866), W. H. Mill (1792-1853), William Palmer of Worcester (1803-1885), Benjamin Harrison (1808-1887) and Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1855), the grandson of the above named Wordsworth (Ibid, 154-155). See Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, pp.11-12 n38, for an annotated version of this list containing biographical and bibliographical details of these individuals.

¹⁴⁵ Burgon, *Lives of Twelve Good Men*, vol.1, 155 n.6.

since John Walsh's Cambridge PhD of 1956' is likely close to the truth.¹⁴⁶ Nockles's revisionist perspective would soon be expanded by other scholars. Probably the most important in this regard has been Arthur Burns's, *Diocesan Revival in the Church of England* (1999).¹⁴⁷ In his study of diocesan reform from 1800 to 1870, Burns—like Nockles—critiques the perspective that Church reform was a phenomenon that began in the 1830s, arguing instead that a 'Diocesan Revival' reform began much earlier: specifically, during the first three decades of the nineteenth century (though Burns does suggest that it had its roots in the 1790s).¹⁴⁸ This places the advent of Church reform years prior to the reforms of the 1835 Ecclesiastical Commission, as well as the Oxford Movement. It also highlights that Church reform, far from being the domain solely of reformist governments or talented diocesan ordinaries, was instead carried out by senior diocesan clergy via lesser-known diocesan structures and functions. According to Burns, the Diocesan Revival took place through a variety of means, including, but not limited to: the diocesan visitation; a vigorous reform and employment of the archidiaconate in diocesan functions; and the revival of rural deans and ruridecanal chapters.¹⁴⁹ Central to Burns's thesis is that the success of the 'Diocesan Revival' was due to the reforming activity of the old High Churchmen who, though no longer wielding the political power they enjoyed during the 1830s, had become widely dispersed throughout the Church of England.¹⁵⁰ Though Burns does not, by any means, exclude the roles played by Tractarians and Evangelicals, the numerical weight of High Churchmen within diocesan structures

¹⁴⁶ Boyd Hilton, 'Apologia pro Vitis Veteriorum', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol.50, no.1, 1999, 117.

¹⁴⁷ Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England*, *passim*.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 266.

¹⁴⁹ See *ibid*, chapters 2-4.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 20-22, 71-72.

meant they had more of a combined affect on the Diocesan Revival.¹⁵¹ Moreover, Burns contended that High Churchmanship was more suited to diocesan reform than Tractarianism and Evangelicalism owing to its ability to work in close consort with the Church's hierarchy, especially the diocesan bishops. This was enabled by their theology which 'in its high regard for episcopacy and the historic continuity of the Church of England ... was particularly congruent with the emphases which characterized the Diocesan Revival and its accompanying legitimation'.¹⁵² Thus Burns could argue that 'this [High Church] ecclesiology was ... central to the Revival, as were many Orthodox High Churchmen themselves'.¹⁵³ In Burns's view, High Churchmanship had a crucial advantage over Tractarianism owing to the latter's frequent conflict with the episcopate and its 'theological absolutism', factors that made 'the messy business of compromise often required to get practical reform off the ground' more difficult.¹⁵⁴

The recent rise of revisionist historiography has in many ways fed off a move amongst historians of the last fifty years to see the Church of England during the eighteenth century as generally being in much better condition than the once-common descriptions of pastoral neglect, nepotism and ecclesiastical corruption that held sway for so long.¹⁵⁵ Recent works, especially Jeremy Gregory's *Restoration, Reformation and Reform, 1660-1828: Archbishops of Canterbury and Their Diocese*

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 21.

¹⁵² Ibid, 19; see also, 14-15.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 19.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 18-19.

¹⁵⁵ For an extensive overview of this historiography, see John Walsh and Stephen Taylor, 'Introduction: The Church and Anglicanism in the "long" eighteenth century' in John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor (eds), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 1-64.

(2000)¹⁵⁶ and William Jacob's *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1680-1840* (2007) have further confirmed this position.

Yet despite the recent dominance of the revisionist scholarship, not all historians have been persuaded by it. Perhaps the first significant critique came from Boyd Hilton who wrote a review article in 1999 examining Nockles's work.¹⁵⁷ Of issue to Hilton was not so much Nockles's claim that High Churchmanship was strong when it came to worship and theology (though Hilton was unconvinced of its dominance over the Church of England in general),¹⁵⁸ but Nockles's reliance on the influential, though highly contested, arguments presented by J. C. D. Clark in his now classic study, *English Society* (1985, revised 2000).¹⁵⁹ Clark's scholarship can generally be classed within the revisionist school when applied to his views on High Churchmanship. Yet Hilton thinks Nockles has been over reliant on Clark's thesis, especially in reference to Nockles's claims regarding the persistence of 'sacral royalism' as a political force up until the 1830s. At the risk of simplifying, 'sacral royalism', at least according to Nockles, was the belief among High Churchmen that the British monarchs were *jus divinium* in addition to having a religious and quasi-sacramental role as 'nursing fathers' and 'mothers' of the Church of England.¹⁶⁰ Clearly, given the changing political circumstances of English history (especially owing to the Revolution of 1688), High Churchmen had been forced to evolve this theory over the course of the eighteenth century to adapt it to changed political

¹⁵⁶ See Jeremy Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation and Reform, 1660-1828: Archbishops of Canterbury and Their Diocese*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000.

¹⁵⁷ See Hilton, 'Apologia pro Vitis Veteriorum Hominum', 117-130.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 123.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 122, 124-130; J. C. D. Clark, *English Society: 1660-1832*, 2nd edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

¹⁶⁰ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 57; see above, 19.

circumstances.¹⁶¹ Nockles thinks ‘sacral royalism’ survived as a political force into the nineteenth century.¹⁶² Hilton, on the other hand, is extremely doubtful that a specifically High Church theory of sacral monarchy had a major influence during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹⁶³ Needless to say, Nockles’s reliance on Clark spurred what Boyd saw as a contradiction in Nockles’s claim of the existence of a continuous High Church tradition through the 1830s and into the mid to late nineteenth century. As Hilton explained, ‘Clark’s emphasis on the upheaval of 1828-33 as a grand amen—the ‘end of the ancien regime’—is really more in keeping with the traditional view of the Oxford Movement—that it marked the end of one style of High Churchmanship and the start of another—than with Nockles’s emphasis on the continuity of old High Churchmanship before and after 1833’.¹⁶⁴ For Hilton, Nockles’s reliance on Clark had made his thesis too much of ‘a hostage to fortune’, for while Clark’s thesis has proved persuasive to some, its findings have been widely disputed by others.¹⁶⁵

More recently, James Pereiro’s *‘Ethos’ and the Oxford Movement* (2008)¹⁶⁶ has contained the most detailed critique of the revisionist thesis. The work was a study of the concept of ‘ethos’ and its importance within the history of Tractarianism.¹⁶⁷ This was achieved via a focus on the historiographical work of

¹⁶¹ Or in the case of the Nonjurors, decide not to adapt.

¹⁶² Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 57-63.

¹⁶³ Hilton, ‘Apologia pro Vitis Veteriorum Hominum’, 130.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 125.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 122.

¹⁶⁶ James Pereiro, *‘Ethos’ and the Oxford Movement: At the Heart of Tractarianism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

¹⁶⁷ The exact meaning of the term is difficult to define, though it seems to refer to the thought and character that guided the patristic and hence, ‘catholic’ mindset in its theological, aesthetic and moral pursuits—and of which, so Pereiro claims, subsequently influenced the Tractarians. The ambiguity is

Samuel Francis Wood (1809-1843), a lay Tractarian who, according to Pereiro, penned the earliest account of the history and pre-history of the Oxford Movement,¹⁶⁸ and to whom the concept of ‘ethos’ was a guiding intellectual principle in directing the course of early Tractarianism. Yet despite this seemingly very specific agenda, *Ethos and the Oxford Movement* is, in fact, a work that engages broadly with recent revisionist perceptions regarding the alleged strength of High Churchmanship during the late eighteenth century.

According to Pereiro, the history of the pre-Tractarian period is more complex and nuanced than has been depicted by the narrative of events constructed by revisionist historians. According to him, revisionist scholarship has focused too narrowly on looking for evidence of ‘vitality or decline’ within High Churchmanship. In doing this, it has failed to take into account ‘the study of contemporary perceptions’ in forming its views—that is, the views of High Churchmen themselves who lived during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹⁶⁹ For Pereiro such perceptions reveal that prior to the Oxford Movement ‘the language of crisis and decline’, far from being simply a narrative created and sustained by the Tractarians was, in fact, widespread and pre-dated the Oxford Movement.¹⁷⁰ Such language had, in other words, originated from all sections of the Church, including a number of important and influential High Churchmen. Pereiro cites the High Church testimony of John Miller, William Palmer of Worcester College, Charles Daubeny, William Jones of Nayland, Alexander Knox, John Jebb—

not helped by the fact that Pereiro fails to give a brief definition—an aspect of the work that makes it difficult at times to follow.

¹⁶⁸ For the full text of this see *ibid*, Appendix II, ‘Revival of Primitive Doctrine’, 252-265.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 48.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*.

all of whom, Pereiro documents, expressed dissatisfaction, at one level or another, with the tenor of religion and Church life in period they lived in. This is contrary to revisionist claims which have generally depicted a narrative of decline as being a Tractarian construction.¹⁷¹

Specifically, Pereiro thinks there are two areas where High Churchmen can be charged with having been a tradition in decline (and thus in need of Tractarian renewal): firstly, the poor state of theological studies (most notably, for the training of clergy) and, secondly, the need for a more vibrant spirituality that was more emotionally engaged.¹⁷² Though most of the evidence Pereiro cites is anecdotal (for instance, Bishop John Henry Hobart's observation on a visit to England in 1824 that many of the educated English clergy were theologically ignorant),¹⁷³ a number of other important testimonies are cited as evidence that there was a perception among many High Churchmen that theological knowledge among the clergy was less than ideal.¹⁷⁴ Similarly, Pereiro documents perceptions that saw the need for High Church spirituality to engage more with the human affections, though here his evidence is less convincing as only Daubeny and Knox are cited. Daubeny, to be sure, was a well-known High Churchman (one of the most famous of his day),¹⁷⁵ but it is questionable whether Knox can be said to speak for High Churchmanship as his theology—with its debt to Methodism and Evangelicalism—is not representative of

¹⁷¹ See for example Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context*, 1-7.

¹⁷² Pereiro, *'Ethos' and the Oxford Movement*, 52-60.

¹⁷³ Edward Churton, *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, 2nd edn, Oxford, 1863, 156; see also, Pereiro, *'Ethos' and the Oxford Movement*, 54. Pereiro has misread this as he refers to the 'Bishop of Hobart' not 'Bishop Hobart'.

¹⁷⁴ Pereiro, *'Ethos' and the Oxford Movement*, 54.

¹⁷⁵ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 15.

classical High Church spirituality.¹⁷⁶ Pereiro also cites Tractarian testimony complaining of the dry state of Anglican spirituality, but this does not add much to his argument given that his claims ultimately depend upon High Church testimony.¹⁷⁷

Pereiro further corrects revisionist historiography by arguing that later attempts by High Church writers to minimise the significance of the Oxford Movement in reviving High Church principles represented a re-writing of history. As Pereiro puts it, following the Oxford Movement Tractarianism had become ‘a cuckoo in the High Church nest’.¹⁷⁸ That the old High Churchmen had eventually parted company with the Tractarians was understandable given the genuine doctrinal differences that emerged between the two groups; yet Pereiro contends that in parting company with the Tractarians there was a tendency amongst High Churchmen from the 1840s onwards to unduly minimise the links they had once shared with the early Oxford Movement of the 1830s. This, Pereiro argues, was combined with a High Church tendency to minimise the genuine role Tractarianism had played in reviving High Church principles. ‘Part of the strategy of disengagement from the Oxford Movement’, he writes, ‘was an attempt on the part of High Churchmen to exaggerate the healthy condition of the pre-Tractarian Church’.¹⁷⁹ This was accompanied by a tendency ‘to overstate the harmony and unity among the pre-Tractarian High Churchmen, and even between High Church and Evangelicals’.¹⁸⁰ For Pereiro, the truth is that the Church in the pre-Tractarian

¹⁷⁶ Peter Nockles, ‘Knox, Alexander’, *ODNB*.

¹⁷⁷ Pereiro, *‘Ethos’ and the Oxford Movement*, 59.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 71.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 76.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 77.

era was not as healthy as it could have been and the Tractarian narrative of decline was closer to the truth than either the traditional High Churchmen of the late nineteenth century, or their later revisionist defenders, have been willing to admit. Pereiro concluded by quoting the Oxford Movement's most famous historian. 'Dean Church seems closer to the truth when, recalling Ezechiel, he claimed that the Oxford men had been successful in breathing life into the dry bones of a previously prevailing orthodoxy.'¹⁸¹

Pereiro's argument that the Church of England needed a revival in the teaching and study of academic theology has its salient points, there clearly was a lack of academic theological training among Church of England ordinands;¹⁸² but Pereiro's desire to see only morbidity and complacency within pre-Tractarianism High Churchmanship prior to a Tractarian 'revival' makes for an incomplete picture. As William Jacob has recently argued, despite a lack of academic theological study, clergy throughout the 'long' eighteenth century were mostly well educated and theologically literate, and there is a good case to argue that though the teaching of academic theology required significant improvements, it was taught to a reasonable degree, whether formally through Oxford or Cambridge or through other informal or non-graduate means established by diocesan bishops.¹⁸³ Recognition, however, that the theological learning of its clergy could be improved through better training was aired during the eighteenth century.¹⁸⁴ Frequently it was High Church bishops who

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 78.

¹⁸² See Trevor Park, 'Theological Education and Ministerial Training for the Ordained Ministry of the Church of England 1800-1850', Open University, PhD thesis, 1990; Trevor Park, *St Bees College: Pioneering Higher Education in 19th Century Cumbria*, 2nd edn, St Bees: St Bees Publications, 2008, 8-17.

¹⁸³ Jacob, *The Clerical Profession*, 41-63.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 52-53.

not only proposed reform, but actually achieved notable advances in their own dioceses. In 1788, Samuel Horsley proposed strict regulations for the theological learning required of non-graduate ordinands.¹⁸⁵ Horsley's successor, the High Church-inclined, Thomas Burgess (1756-1837),¹⁸⁶ went further than his predecessor by creating a theological college, St David's College, Lampeter, which finally opened in 1827.¹⁸⁷ Though the idea was original to Burgess, St David's had, in fact, been preceded by another venture in 1816, the creation of St Bees College, Cumberland.¹⁸⁸ St Bees's foundation was the first theological college to operate outside of Oxford and Cambridge. It was founded by a High Churchman: George Henry Law (1761-1845), then the Bishop of Chester. In 1830 the High Churchman, Charles Blomfield, Bishop of London, proposed not only a more vigorous system of clerical training, but also the creation of new seminaries.¹⁸⁹ All this took place *prior* to Edward Pusey's famous call for a renewal in theological learning and clerical training made in 1833.¹⁹⁰ Though heavily cited by Pereiro as evidence of Tractarian prowess in the area of clerical education reform,¹⁹¹ the actual record reveals that

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 58.

¹⁸⁶ Burgess is difficult to categorise. His support of the interdenominational British and Foreign Bible Society and the Church Missionary Society were certainly not High Church characteristics. Nonetheless his biographer, John Scandrett Harford, regarded him as a devout High Churchman (see John Scandrett Harford, *The Life of Thomas Burgess*, London, 1840, 179), as do a number of other contemporary scholars (see Corsi, *Science and Religion*, 27; Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 26 n104).

¹⁸⁷ David A. Dowland, *Nineteenth Century Anglican Theological Training: The Redbrick Challenge*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, 9-23.

¹⁸⁸ Park, *St Bees College*, 18-29.

¹⁸⁹ *The British Critic*, January 1831, vol.9, London, 1831, 224-225; Jacob, *The Clerical Profession*, 59-60.

¹⁹⁰ See E. B. Pusey, *Remarks on the Prospective and Past Benefits of Cathedral Institutions, In the Promotion of Sound Religious Knowledge and of Clerical Education*, 2nd edn, London, 1833.

¹⁹¹ Pereiro, 'Ethos' and the Oxford Movement, 52-53.

Tractarians were, despite their undisputed energy and contribution, late-comers to proposing such reform.

Pereiro's analysis of the state of traditional High Churchmanship additionally suffers from the fact that its judgements of High Churchmen are based too narrowly on evidence taken from an exclusively English context. This contrasts with recent scholarship which has documented the continuity and vitality of pre-Tractarian High Churchmanship within a much broader British context. For example, commonly thought of as a weak or almost non-existent tradition, Peter Nockles has shown how High Churchmanship within the Church of Ireland was a much more robust tradition than previous perceptions have seen it.¹⁹² Though only a minority tradition, Irish High Churchmanship underwent a revival during the three decades prior to the Oxford Movement. In a recent examination of the religious condition of Ireland during the years between 1770 and 1850, Nigel Yates has confirmed the strength of Irish High Churchmanship, claiming that the High Church tradition of theology and worship 'was still active and well in the early years of the nineteenth century'.¹⁹³ Moving north, recent work on the history of Scottish Episcopalianism has also highlighted a strong and active High Church tradition intent on internal reform and interaction with English High Churchmen—a movement beginning in the early 1780s that included Stevens and that will be discussed in a later chapter.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Peter B. Nockles, 'Church or Protestant Sect? The Church of Ireland, High Churchmanship, and the Oxford Movement, 1822-1869', *The Historical Journal*, vol.41, no.2, 1998, 457-466.

¹⁹³ Nigel Yates, *The Religious Condition of Ireland 1770-1850*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 279.

¹⁹⁴ See Chapter 6, 344-370; Rowan Strong, *Alexander Forbes of Brechin: The First Tractarian Bishop*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995; Rowan Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth Century Scotland: Religious Responses to a Modernising Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002; Peter B. Nockles, "'Our brethren of the north": the Oxford Movement & the Scottish Episcopal church', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol.47, no.4, 1996, 655-682; Mather, *High Church*

Examining High Churchmanship through a British context also highlights the fact that High Churchmen in England maintained strong links with High Churchmen within a wider trans-Atlantic context, formed and sustained by an expanding British Empire.¹⁹⁵ The interplay between English and Scottish High Churchmen during the last decades of the eighteenth century—an interaction that included the consecration of Samuel Seabury in November 1784 by Scottish bishops for Episcopalians in North America—is a notable example of how High Churchmanship not only was an active ecclesiastical force, but also had interests in promoting Anglicanism that extended beyond Britain.¹⁹⁶ In addition, recent research by Rowan Strong has highlighted the work of the SPG and the existence of an ‘authentic missionary culture’ amongst High Churchmen, both in England and the British Empire; a trait commonly seen as belonging only to Evangelicals.¹⁹⁷ As the eighteenth century developed into the nineteenth, traditional High Churchmen would become crucial in the propagation of Anglicanism in a colonial context. The founding of St Augustine’s Missionary College in 1848 was equally indebted to High Church

Prophet, 116-138; Mather, ‘Church, Parliament and Penal Laws: Some Anglo-Scottish Interactions in the Eighteenth Century’, *The English Historical Review*, vol.92, no.364, 1977, 540-572.

¹⁹⁵ See Vaudry, *Anglicans and the Atlantic World*, 71-72; Peter M. Doll, *Revolution, Religion, and National Identity: Imperial Anglicanism in British North America, 1745-1795*, Cranbury: Associated University Press, 2000, *passim*.

¹⁹⁶ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 121-122; Mather, ‘Church, Parliament and Penal Laws’, 548; Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth Century Scotland*, 16-17; Gerald M. D. Howat, ‘Seabury, Samuel’, *ODNB*.

¹⁹⁷ Rowan Strong, *Anglicanism and the British Empire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 15 & *passim*; Howard Le Couteur, ‘Anglican High Churchmen and the Expansion of Empire’, *Journal of Religious History*, vol.32, no.2, 2008, 193-215; William Jacob, ‘George Augustus Selwyn, First Bishop of New Zealand and the Origins of the Anglican Communion’, *Journal of Anglican Studies*, vol.9, iss.1, 2010, 1-18.

support as it was to the efforts of Tractarians.¹⁹⁸ Pioneering missionary bishops such as William Grant Broughton (1788-1853) and George Augustus Selwyn (1809-1878), though influenced by Tractarianism, remained classical High Churchmen¹⁹⁹ with links to the Hackney Phalanx and the support of missionary-minded High Churchmen in London—most notably, Joshua Watson, who helped establish the Colonial Bishops Fund in 1841.²⁰⁰

Of course, this is not to say that some of Pereiro's corrections to the narrative constructed by revisionist historians have not been timely. There is, for instance, some truth regarding Pereiro's contention that some late nineteenth-century High Church writers downplayed the significance of the Oxford Movement. For some, there was perhaps 'an anxious effort to disclaim a connection which had by then had become odious'.²⁰¹ Thus, though John William Burgon's claim that '*Church feeling was EVOKED, not CREATED, by the Movement of 1833*'²⁰² was closer to the truth than Pereiro may be willing to admit, Burgon's revisionist claim that the Oxford Movement really had its origins in High Church circles (such as Hugh James Rose) rather than through Keble and Newman, etc., is a good example of what Pereiro has argued against.²⁰³ Yet Pereiro underestimates just how unpalatable Tractarian radicalism was to the ways and means of traditional High Churchmen. To be sure,

¹⁹⁸ R. J. E. Boggis, *A History of St Augustine's College, Canterbury*, Canterbury, 1907, 63-95; J. Mordaunt Crook, 'Hope, Alexander James Beresford Beresford', *ODNB*; Webster, *Joshua Watson*, 140; Michael Blain, 'College of St Augustine Canterbury: Participants at the Consecration, S. Peter's Day 1848', Project Canterbury, http://anglicanhistory.org/england/sac/blain_opening2007.pdf.

¹⁹⁹ Churton, *Memoir*, vol.1, 167-168 & vol.2, 112-138; Strong, *Anglicanism and the British Empire*, 230-231, 273-274.

²⁰⁰ Strong, *Anglicanism and the British Empire*, 198-221; Webster, *Joshua Watson*, 140-142; Nockles, 'Watson, Joshua', *ODNB*.

²⁰¹ Pereiro, '*Ethos*' and the Oxford Movement, 77.

²⁰² Burgon, *Lives of Twelve Good Men*, vol.1, 155 (emphasis in original); see also, 178.

²⁰³ See *ibid*, 158-162.

Pereiro admits that the Tractarians were intent of pursuing a radical theological agenda, well at odds with the traditional High Churchmen, but he is dismissive of High Church opposition, describing it variously as ‘dry’ and limited by a ‘narrow theological compass’.²⁰⁴ The reality is that traditional High Churchmen were always obedient to the broadly Protestant nature of Anglicanism.²⁰⁵ In their view, Tractarianism had diverged from High Church principles, not promoted them.²⁰⁶ This was not necessarily a triumphal accusation either—nor was always it an anxious and dishonest attempt to disown a ‘cuckoo ... in the High Church nest’.²⁰⁷ The truth is that the defection of the Tractarians from Anglican orthodoxy genuinely distressed them. Moreover, many of the older High Church figures had once held friendships with the younger Oxford men. Joshua Watson, the revered lay elder of the Hackney Phalanx, had for instance been sympathetic to Newman during much of the Oxford Movement,²⁰⁸ even donating money to his community at Littlemore in 1835.²⁰⁹ Yet upon reading Tract 90, Watson wrote to Henry Handley Norris, expressing a dispirited emotional reaction to its contents. ‘I am distressed more than I can tell you, and send an express to ascertain whether I read and understand aright the

²⁰⁴ Pereiro, *‘Ethos’ and the Oxford Movement*, 72-75.

²⁰⁵ See above, 21-22.

²⁰⁶ Churton, *Memoir*, vol.2, 139-158.

²⁰⁷ Pereiro, *‘Ethos’ and the Oxford Movement*, 73, 77.

²⁰⁸ See Edward B. Pusey to John Henry Newman, 11 September 1839 and 18 September 1839, in Gerard Tracey (ed.), *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol.7, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, 143, 147.

²⁰⁹ John Henry Newman to Joshua Watson, 12 July 1835, Lambeth Palace Library, Joshua Watson Papers, Ms.1562 f.24. This may explain why in 1840 Newman later dedicated his fifth volume of his *Parochial and Plain Sermons* to Watson (see John Henry Newman to Joshua Watson, 14 October 1840 & 20 October 1840, in Tracey (ed.), *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol.7, 406, 410). Watson declined Newman’s offer, though Newman still went ahead with the dedication. (see John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol.5, London, 1869).

Introduction to No. 90. I have just perused it, and it is so startling that I cannot rest until I know whether there is, in your apprehension, ground for half the fears which oppress your affectionate friend.’²¹⁰

It is by no means the aim of this chapter to argue that High Churchmanship was faultless and not culpable in any way for failings within the pre-Tractarian Church of England. However, it is the contention here that High Churchmanship’s contribution to ecclesiastical renewal in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, though hardly perfect, was nonetheless genuine, significant and widespread; that notwithstanding those few recent studies that have contested this revisionist thesis, it is difficult to maintain the traditional view of a corrupt and moribund High Churchmanship during the eighteenth century and the decades that preceded the Oxford Movement. This distinctive form of Anglican churchmanship—so frequently criticised in history for its alleged ‘dryness’ and lack of emotion—had not died out, neither had it become identical with spiritual and pastoral lethargy. Of course, many questions and historical avenues remain unanswered: for instance, approximately how many High Churchmen—clerical and lay—were there during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? (If, indeed, such a question is even answerable). Did High Churchmanship have a large parochial following? At the moment no one seems to have any precise idea and those scholars who have tried to name a figure (e.g. Murray)²¹¹ have probably underestimated what is likely to have been a much more substantive number.²¹² It certainly seems that despite the attempts of scholars such as Frances Knight to shift the focus away from famous clerical personalities, the overwhelming focus on well-known clergy and prelates by revisionist scholars—

²¹⁰ Joshua Watson to Henry Handley Norris, undated, in Churton, *Memoir*, vol.2, 143.

²¹¹ Murray, ‘The Influence of the French Revolution’, 4.

²¹² Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 213.

though greatly illuminating—has made it difficult to speak of High Churchmanship as anything but a clerical tradition. Additionally, it seems that the revisionist concentration on the early nineteenth century and the ‘crucial’ decade of the 1830s has meant that High Church interactions with the major social and political events of the late eighteenth century have been neglected at the expense of focusing on the Hackney Phalanx, as significant as that important High Church movement was. Though scholars such as Peter Nockles, F. C. Mather and Nigel Aston²¹³ have been successful in examining an earlier generation of late eighteenth-century High Churchmanship and its interactions with the major social, political and religious events of that period, there remain unexamined areas that require further study. One of these is the lay aspects of High Churchmanship, an important—but largely neglected—area of Anglican history that is the focus of this thesis.

²¹³ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context, passim*; Mather, *High Church Prophet, passim*; Nigel Aston, ‘Home and Heterodoxy: The Defence of Anglican Beliefs in the Late Enlightenment’, *English Historical Review*, vol.108, no.429, 1993, 895-919.

Chapter 2. The Lay Precedent in High Church Anglicanism

This chapter will examine the historical context of what this thesis terms ‘lay activism’ in Anglican High Churchmanship. Put simply, ‘lay activism’ denotes laymen and laywomen who have had notable impacts upon the history and development of High Churchmanship beyond the general boundaries of parochial life. Such activism can mean a number of avenues of church involvement, be it through publication as an author or some practical means, especially philanthropy or an involvement in a religious society, in which the eighteenth century abounded.¹ Lay activists were, in other words, members of the laity who in one way or another stood out from the majority of their lay counterparts, thus making a name for themselves within the broader context of High Church piety and values. With a brief look at the sixteenth century, this chapter will mainly focus on instances of lay activism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, ending at the end of eighteenth century—the period when William Stevens was most active. It should be noted that this chapter is not intended to be exhaustive. Its purpose, instead, is to set the context for an examination of Stevens’s life by arguing that a rich and varied lay activism within Anglican High Churchmanship is an important part of the Church of England’s history and, by doing this, emphasising that William Stevens was part of a much wider and largely unexamined spectrum of English church history.

In *The Oxford Movement in Context*, Peter Nockles made reference to what he described as a ‘tradition of High Anglican lay piety’ within High

¹ Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000, 60, 94-96 & *passim*.

Churchmanship.² He and other revisionist scholars have noted the presence of notable laymen within eighteenth-century High Churchmanship, emphasizing especially the roles of Stevens and Joshua Watson.³ Yet with only one (now rather dated) exception,⁴ there is a lack of recent biographical studies of Anglican laymen and laywomen that focus on their roles as ecclesiastical figures, despite a number of recent works that have had a focus on the general parochial experiences of Anglican laity during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵ Perhaps there remains a hesitation to treat High Church Anglican laity seriously when compared to the achievement of High Churchmen in holy orders? It would not be surprising if this were the case. As William Jacob has observed, for a long time historians writing in the area of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Anglicanism, particularly those writing on High Churchmanship, have been largely preoccupied with writing history

² Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760-1857*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 14 n47. See similar comments by Nockles in his *ODNB* entries for John Bowdler and William Stevens. The idea of a tradition of lay High Church piety is not, however, new. See for example, Christopher Wordsworth Jnr's preface to his edited edition of James Allan Park's *Memoirs of the Late William Stevens*, new edn, London, 1859, iv.

³ Nancy Uhlar Murray, 'The Influence of the French Revolution on the Church of England and its Rivals, 1789-1802', Oxford University, DPhil thesis, 1975, 45, 51; A. B. Webster, *Joshua Watson: The Story of a Layman 1771-1855*, London: SPCK, 1954, 24-25; William J. Baker, *Beyond Port and Prejudice: Charles Lloyd of Oxford, 1784-1829*, Maine: University of Maine at Orono Press, 1981, 79; E. A. Varley, *The Last of the Prince Bishops: William Van Mildert and the High Church Movement of the early nineteenth century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 7-10 & *passim*; F. C. Mather, *High Church Prophet: Bishop Samuel Horsley (1733-1806) and the Caroline Tradition in the Later Georgian Church*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, 14 & *passim*; Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 14 n47.

⁴ See Webster, *Joshua Watson*, *passim*.

⁵ See especially, Frances Knight, *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995; W. M. Jacob, *Lay People and Religion in the Early Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. See Jacob, *Lay People and Religion*, 5 n13, for a full list of recent works with a lay focus.

from a ‘clerical and hierarchical’ perspective.⁶ The recent contributions to High Church historiography that were examined in the previous chapter, especially the biographical studies, are evidence of a long-established tradition of interpreting the High Church tradition through the lives of influential clergy, usually members of the episcopate. To an extent this is understandable: it is bishops and priests who are usually the most vocal and active personalities in a parish or diocese owing to the leadership roles they are expected to perform; and it is usually such figures, the vast majority of whom were educated at Oxford or Cambridge, who have left most in the way of records. No doubt the common labeling of High Churchmen as belonging to a ‘Church party’ has added to the perception of High Churchmen being mostly clerics. There may also be a general perception that regards High Churchmanship—with its exaltation of the episcopal office and the sacerdotal nature of the priesthood—as never having been a form of churchmanship with a lay tradition championing its cause. Frances Knight, William Jacob and Judith Maltby have all recently argued that committed lay Anglicans have been unfairly devalued when seen in relation to their Nonconformist and Roman Catholic counterparts.⁷ There has, in other words, existed a false assumption that conformist members of the English laity lacked the fervor and dedication of their Nonconformist and Roman Catholic counterparts.⁸ Either, as Jacob suggests, they have been characterized as unwilling participants who had nothing but contempt for the established Church; or, as Knight argues, their allegiance has been attributed to ‘a mixture of class or social

⁶ Jacob, *Lay People and Religion*, ix, 2.

⁷ Ibid, ix-x; Knight, *Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society*, 22; Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 8.

⁸ Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, 8.

factors’ thus minimizing ‘the significance of any religious motivation’.⁹ In recent years Knight, Jacob and Maltby, have done much to reverse such assumptions—each historian arguing that at a popular level Anglicanism had a deeply committed lay following. In doing this, each of these historians has generally been sympathetic to High Churchmanship, nowhere singling it out as being less attractive to lay Anglicans than any other tradition. But these works did not focus on the issue of ‘churchmanship’. Indeed, as was noted in the last chapter, it has been Knight’s contention that a focus on specific ‘churchmanships’ was not a concern that particularly drove the focus of lay Anglicans, nor even for a majority of the lesser parochial clergy.¹⁰ Jacob came to basically the same conclusion regarding the laity.¹¹ Yet though this may have been the case at the parochial level, there is ample evidence pointing to a significant body of Church of England laity for whom the issue of ‘churchmanship’—that is, a particular ecclesiological expression of Anglicanism—was of much greater significance.

In his introduction to *The Layman in Christian History* (1963), Stephen Neill noted that there has always existed ‘shifting degrees of ecclesiasticism among laymen [and laywomen]’,¹² that is, different ways in which lay people have related to the Church. Though many lay people—seemingly the majority—live out their lay vocations with minimal exposure to, and involvement in, ecclesiastical affairs beyond parochial bounds (which often makes them more difficult as subjects of research for the historian), it is evident that others have been much more active, at

⁹ Jacob, *Lay People and Religion*, ix; Knight, *Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society*, 22.

¹⁰ Knight, *Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society*, 209-210.

¹¹ Jacob, *Lay People and Religion*, 111-112.

¹² Stephen Neill, ‘Introduction’ in Stephen Neill & Hans-Ruedi Weber (eds), *The Layman in Christian History*, London: SCM, 1963, 18.

least in terms of exposure and single-handed achievement. In Neill's words, these are individuals who 'though not dependent on the Church for a livelihood, have so identified themselves with it as to make it the centre of their existence'.¹³ Both Neill and F. C. Mather have documented how this type of dedicated lay vocation became, by the turn of the nineteenth century, one of increasing importance to Anglican affairs.¹⁴ Yet, as this chapter will demonstrate, notable High Church laymen and women have, in fact, been present within Anglicanism since its origins in the sixteenth century.

It is difficult to discuss lay precedents within a High Church context without at least commenting the role of English monarchs as heads of the Church of England. Indeed, had it not been for the theological, ecclesiastical and political interests of Henry VIII (1491-1547), specifically his desire to declare himself head of the English Church in 1534, Anglicanism and its various churchmanships would never have developed in the first place. Henry VIII's interest in divinity and ecclesiastical affairs has been well documented.¹⁵ He also had an interest in ecclesiastical reform. Here, Anne Boleyn was an important influence on the king, highlighting the fact that the ecclesiastical policies of reigning monarchs have frequently been influenced by their spouses.¹⁶ The beginnings of Anglicanism also saw the prominence of a layman

¹³ Ibid, 17-18.

¹⁴ Stephen Neill, 'Britain 1600-1780' in Stephen Neill & Hans-Ruedi Weber (eds), *The Layman in Christian History*, London: SCM, 1963, 191-215; F. C. Mather, 'The British Layman in Modern Times 1780-1962' in Stephen Neill & Hans-Ruedi Weber (eds), *The Layman in Christian History*, London: SCM, 1963, 216-239.

¹⁵ Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'Henry VIII and the Reform of the Church' in Diarmaid MacCulloch (ed.), *The Reign of Henry VIII: Politics, Policy and Piety*, MacMillan: Houndmills, 1995, 159-180.

¹⁶ Ibid, 167-168.

closely connected to royal authority, Thomas Cromwell (c.1485-1540).¹⁷ Cromwell was pivotal in advising and implementing Henry VIII's ecclesiastical policies. As the chief minister of the monarch from 1532 until his death, it was Cromwell who was responsible for actively bringing about the ecclesiastical reforms envisaged by the monarch. His unique position included the role of vicar-general and vicegerent of spirituals from 1535. Thus, Cromwell was for a time a very powerful figure in the Church of England—second only to the monarch, but with an expansive authority that extended over the entire English episcopate.¹⁸ Cromwell would oversee and implement the royal supremacy, the dissolution of the monasteries, and promote the first authorised vernacular translation of the Bible, among many other actions. Cromwell's period of authority ended in 1540 when he came into conflict with Henry VIII and, like so many unlucky people associated with that monarch, was executed. Though Cromwell's role in ecclesiastical affairs was mostly administrative, his evangelical views and his friendship with the first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556), make him not only one of

¹⁷ For Cromwell's role within the ecclesiastical politics of Tudor England, see A. G. Dickens, *Thomas Cromwell and the English Reformation*, London: English Universities Press, 1959; S. E. Lehmborg, 'Supremacy and Vicegerency: A Re-Examination', *The English Historical Review*, vol.81, no.319, 1966, 225-235; J. J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968; G. R. Elton, *Reform and Reformation: England 1509-1558*, London: Edward Arnold, 1977; G. R. Elton, *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government*, vol.3, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 373-390; F. Donald Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency: a revisitation', *English Historical Review*, vol.103, no.108, 1988, 658-667; G. R. Elton, *England under the Tudors*, 3rd edn, Abingdon: Routledge, 1991, 127-159; Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991; Howard Leithhead, 'Cromwell, Thomas', *ODNB*.

¹⁸ Lehmborg, 'Supremacy and Vicegerency: A Re-Examination', 225-235; C. S. L. Davies, 'Popular Religion and the Pilgrimage of Grace' in Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (eds), *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 68-69.

the most influential statesmen of Tudor England, but an important early example of Anglican lay activism.¹⁹

Despite their royal blood, exalted social and quasi-sacramental status, it is important to note that monarchs, for all their pomp and majesty, were still members of the laity. Of course, a figure such as Henry VIII shunned any notion that he was a mere layman on equal terms with everyone else. He was, instead, a Christian prince, chosen by God to govern the English people and their Church.²⁰ With varying degrees, a belief in a divine commission to rule was one that stayed with most of Henry's successors throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. From the period beginning with Henry VIII and ending with Charles II, the practical effects of such a belief upon the course of English and British history would be significant. This was seen most clearly in the reign of the Charles I (1600-1649), the monarch who reigned from 1625 until his execution. Though historians continue to debate Charles's exact role in the ecclesiastical controversies that led up to his execution, there is no doubt regarding the exalted view Charles had of his role as the divinely-anointed head of the Church.²¹ Yet not all English monarchs were as ecclesiastically controversial as those who reigned from Henry VIII to Charles II. Indeed, following the Revolution of 1688, one begins to witness a number of less contentious examples of English monarchs exhibiting not only an interest in theology, but also taking a proactive role in promoting the welfare of the Church. Of specific relevance to eighteenth-century High Churchmanship was Queen Anne (1665-1714), inaugurator

¹⁹ Rory McEntegart, *Henry VIII, The League of Schmalkalden, and the English Reformation*, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002, 104-106.

²⁰ Neill, 'Britain 1600-1780' in Neill & Weber (eds), 191.

²¹ Michael B. Young, *Charles I*, Houndmills: MacMillan, 1997, 107-115; Julian Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church: Charles I and the Remolding of Anglicanism*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, 14-16.

of Queen Anne's Bounty, a fund set up in 1704 to provide financial assistance to poor clergy that was financed by the traditional ecclesiastical revenues of the first-fruits and tenths. Given Stevens's role as the Treasurer of the Bounty from 1782 until his death, more will be spoken about the origins and purpose of the Bounty in a later chapter.²² Nonetheless, Anne's interest in religion and the resurgence of High Church Anglicanism during her reign deserve to be highlighted. Though disliking the factiousness displayed by some High Church clergy during her reign, she was nonetheless 'in sympathy with High Church views and practice'.²³ Another early eighteenth-century example of royal involvement in Church affairs that has been raised in recent times has been that of Queen Caroline of Ansbach (1683-1737)—spouse to George II.²⁴ In a recent article, Stephen Taylor has argued that from 1727 to 1737, the period Caroline reigned as royal consort, she was the primary influence behind at least four of the thirteen bishops created at that time. In addition, though the evidence is less certain, Taylor notes another four bishops can be credited with having been heavily influenced by the queen's hand, thus in all probability making the number closer to eight.²⁵ Though Caroline was by no means classically High Church (for example, she had latitudinarian sympathies and appears to have been quite eclectic in her theological beliefs),²⁶ her role as an ecclesiastical lay patron was nonetheless influential.

²² See Chapter 6, 330-333.

²³ Edward Gregg, *Queen Anne*, London: Routledge, 1980, 145.

²⁴ Stephen Taylor, 'Queen Caroline and the Church of England' in Stephen Taylor, Richard Connors & Clyve Jones (eds), *Hanoverian Britain and Empire: Essays in Memory of Philip Lawson*, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998, 82-101; see also Neill, 'Britain 1600-1780' in Neill & Weber (eds), 192.

²⁵ Taylor, 'Queen Caroline and the Church of England', 96.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 89.

One of the consequences of Henry VIII's move to declare himself head of the Church of England was that Parliament became a body with the power to legislate ecclesiastically. Richard Hooker believed that, though it was 'unnatural not to think the pastors and bishops of our souls a great deal more fit' to be the Church's ecclesiastical legislators, 'than men of secular trades and callings', it was nonetheless in his view against the true principles of Christianity that the clergy alone should legislate for the Church.²⁷ Thus, up until 1828 parliament was officially an entirely Anglican body, the members of whom being required by law to profess their allegiance to the Church of England in order to take their seats. For a long time this fact had given Parliament the status of being a sort of Anglican 'lay synod', especially since the demise of the purely clerical convocations of Canterbury and York in 1717. Additionally, it remains a notable aspect of the Church of England's history that the Church's main liturgical text, *The Book of Common Prayer*, has received its authority not from Convocation, but from Parliament through the Acts of Uniformity of 1549, 1552, 1559 and 1662.²⁸ It is, therefore, reasonable to note that throughout its history, the Church of England, far from being an ecclesiastical body dominated from above by ordained ministers, has also been partly under the legislative hegemony of an elected group of laity who have ruled from Westminster.²⁹ Of course, in making this point, it should always be stressed that the nature of this hegemony was never complete; bishops, sitting in the House of Lords, complemented the lay aspects of the Church's governance.

²⁷ John Keble (ed.), *The Works of Mr. Richard Hooker*, Oxford, 1865, 404, 410; quoted in Neill, 'Britain 1600-1780' in Neill & Weber (eds), 193.

²⁸ J. P. Parry and Stephen Taylor, 'Introduction: Parliament and the Church of England from the Reformation to the Twentieth Century', *Parliamentary History*, vol.19, no.1, 2000, 1.

²⁹ Neill, 'Britain 1600-1780' in Neill & Weber (eds), 196-197; Timothy Briden and Brian Hanson (eds), *Moore's Introduction to English Canon Law*, 3rd edn, London: Mowbray, 1992, 4-7.

William Jacob's recent examination of the clerical profession in the 'long' eighteenth century highlights another important way in which the laity exercised ecclesiastical influence within the Church of England—namely, though the presentation of advowsons to aspiring clergymen.³⁰ Usually the prerogative of the landed classes, advowsons made patronage a central aspect of Church life during the eighteenth century. Though the process could—and did—become the object of corruption (for example, through nepotism or the of pressuring clergy to tow a certain political line), patronage—more often than not—obliged powerful members of the laity to act for the good of Church and society.³¹ Jacob discusses how the effective use of advowsons was employed by Evangelicals and Tractarian lay patrons to promote their form of churchmanship, but does not discuss the almost certain probability that lay partons of a classically High Church persuasion would also, at times, have used their power to grant livings to clergymen of the same ecclesiastical persuasion.³² Jeffrey Chamberlain, for example, has observed how in late seventeenth century Sussex, the gentry (who were mostly Tories) usually appointed clergymen of similar views.³³

Though often depicted as developing out of an exclusively clerical context during the seventeenth century, lay exponents of the High Church tradition emerged conjointly with its more famous seventeenth-century clerics, such as William Laud, Lancelot Andrewes and Jeremy Taylor. What is noticeable about these individuals

³⁰ William Jacob, *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1680-1840*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 74-94.

³¹ *Ibid*, 76, 79-80.

³² *Ibid*, 90-91.

³³ Jeffrey S. Chamberlain, ' "A Regular and well-affected" Diocese: Chichester in the eighteenth-century' in Jeremy Gregory and Jeffrey S. Chamberlain, *The National Church in Local Perspective*, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003, 93.

was how diverse their contributions to High Churchmanship were—a fact, no doubt, reflected by their lay status and hence their ability to take High Church theology and spirituality into avenues associated with the lives of the laity.

The political theorist and theologian, Sir Robert Filmer (1588-1653), for example, provided an important defence of the theoretical foundations for divine-right monarchism—generally a defining principle of High Church political theology.³⁴ Originating from Kent, Filmer was the eldest son of Sir Edward Filmer, a wealthy member of the rural gentry. Educated at Cambridge and called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1605 (though never practicing law), Filmer became head of his family in 1629.³⁵ By this stage, Filmer had come to associate mainly with royalist and High Church circles. One of his friends was the influential Anglican poet, George Herbert (1593-1633); others included Ambrose Fisher³⁶ and Peter Heylyn (1559-1662). Filmer grew up and lived within a world that placed a strong emphasis upon obedience, tradition and social order. Family obedience was of particular importance. Filmer believed himself to be patriarch over his family, as his father had been. Primogeniture—that is, the belief that a male heir should succeed a father, inheriting his authority—was a foundational belief for him, divinely-founded and evident in scripture. A related truth followed for monarchs. Originally granted to Adam, from the time of Noah power had been divided up among numerous divinely-sanctioned individuals. That subjects owed their monarchs obedience was for Filmer

³⁴ Jeffrey S. Chamberlain, *Accommodating High Churchmen: The Clergy of Sussex, 1700-1745*, Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 1997, 15-16; Glenn Burgess, 'Filmer, Robert, *ODNB*.

³⁵ Biographical details are taken from Peter Laslett, 'Sir Robert Filmer: The Man versus the Whig Myth', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, vol.5, no.4, 1948, 523-546.

³⁶ Dates unknown. Fisher was reputed to be blind. He wrote *A Defence of the Liturgie of the Church England*, London, 1630. This work was dedicated to Filmer (Laslett, 'Sir Robert Filmer: The Man versus the Whig Myth', 526 n9).

a point as logical as sons and daughters being commanded to obey their fathers.³⁷ Filmer articulated these views in his classic work, *Patriarcha: A Defence of the Natural Power of Kings against the Unnatural Liberty of the People* (1680),³⁸ a treatise that only had a limited unpublished circulation during the author's life.³⁹ However, as modern liberal theories of political obedience grew during the eighteenth century, *Patriarcha* came to have a notorious reputation as an expositor of an outdated traditionalism. Yet as Peter Laslett has argued, Filmer wrote and published much more than this during his life and has been unfairly judged by this one work.⁴⁰ The Whig philosopher, John Locke (1632-1704), for instance, dedicated the first volume of his influential, *Two Treatises of Government* (1690), to the refutation of Filmer.⁴¹ Filmer, of course, did have his defenders—for example, the Irish Nonjuring theologian, Charles Leslie (1650-1722)⁴²—though his exact place in the evolution of eighteenth-century political thought remains ambivalent. Both Peter Nockles and Jeffrey Chamberlain see Filmer as a key seventeenth-century source for High Church political theology;⁴³ yet James Daly, whose study of Filmer is easily the most exhaustive to date, disputes the idea that Filmer was in anyway

³⁷ For an overview of Filmer's patriarchalism, see Peter Laslett, 'Introduction' in Peter Laslett (ed.), *Robert Filmer: Patriarcha and Other Political Works*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1949, 11-20.

³⁸ See *ibid*, *passim*.

³⁹ Laslett, 'Sir Robert Filmer: The Man versus the Whig Myth', 531-533.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 524.

⁴¹ The full title of Locke's work was as follows: John Locke, *Two Treatise of Government: In the Former, The False Principles and Foundation of Sir Robert Filmer, And His Followers, Are Detected and Overthrown. The Latter is an ESSAY concerning The True Original, Extent, and the End of Civil Government*, London, 1690.

⁴² Robert Cornwall, 'Charles Leslie and the Political Implications of Theology' in William Gibson and Robert G. Ingram (eds), *Religious Identities in Britain, 1660-1832*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, 29-30.

⁴³ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 45 n4; Chamberlain, *Accommodating High Churchmen*, 15-16.

representative of High Church political theology.⁴⁴ J. C. D. Clark, whose first edition of *English Society* in the mid 1980s seems to have been largely responsible for rejuvenating recent consideration of Filmer as a political thinker of influence during the eighteenth century,⁴⁵ has now backed off from this position in the revised edition of this work as he appears to have accepted Daly's revisionist perspective. Seeing Filmer as 'atypical' of the eighteenth century, Clark even refers to Filmer as an 'extremist' and claims he even denied the traditional High Church doctrine of passive obedience, a centrepiece of divine-right monarchialism.⁴⁶ Clark's revision of his previous position regarding Filmer seems to correspond with what others have written about this period;⁴⁷ yet High Churchmen who espoused a political theology similar—though by no means identical—to Filmer's are evident into the late eighteenth century (they included Stevens and his Hutchinsonian circle of friends). Though labelled by their Whig opponents as having 'out-Filmered Filmer',⁴⁸ they were not blind or uncritical in their espousal of Filmer's ideas. Nonetheless, as the intimate friend of Stevens, Jonathan Boucher (1738-1804), made clear at the end of the eighteenth century, Filmer's name and basic ideas remained valid. As Boucher observed, the key to Filmer's importance was that he had emphasised the divine

⁴⁴ James Daly, *Sir Robert Filmer and English Political Thought*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979, xi-xii, 124-150.

⁴⁵ J. C. D. Clark, *English Society 1688-1832*, 1st edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 45, 75, 84, 79, 123-126, 150, 274-276.

⁴⁶ Clark does not specifically cite Daly in these revisions, though his ideas seem identical to Daly's conclusions. See J. C. D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832*, 2nd edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 17, 58 n55, 71, 135, 176-178, 301.

⁴⁷ Robert Hole, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order in England 1760-1832*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 61; Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, & Dangerous People? England 1783-1846*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 26.

⁴⁸ This was a comment made by Benjamin Kennicott in 1756 when attacking a sermon preached by the Hutchinsonian High Churchman, Nathaniel Wetherell (See Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 227).

origin of human government. ‘The leading idea, or principle, of Sir Robert Filmer's Patriarcha is, that government is not of human, but divine origin; and that the government of a family is the basis, or pattern, of all other government. And this principle, notwithstanding Mr. Locke's answer, is still (in the opinion of the author of these sermons) unrefuted, and still true.’⁴⁹ With few exceptions, the vast majority of High Churchmen of Boucher's generation would have readily assented to such an assessment.

Famous for his contributions to the promotion of trout fishing, the biographer, Izaak Walton (1593-1683), was just as influential in shaping the evolution of High Church ethos. Unlike Filmer, Walton was not born into wealth or social standing.⁵⁰ At Stafford, Walton's father kept an inn and Walton became an apprentice to a wealthy linen draper who lived within the parish of St Dunstan-in-the-West, London. During the 1620s, Walton became friends with his vicar, who was none other than the poet John Donne (1572-1631). Already having an interest in poetry, Walton helped edit Donne's papers for publication after his death in 1631. A decade after Donne's death, Walton wrote the first of five biographies that—along with the *The Compleat Angler*—would establish him, not only as the premier Anglican biographer, but as one of the fathers of the modern biographical genre. The *Life of John Donne* was soon followed by four other biographies: the *Life of Sir Henry Wotton* (1675), the *Life of Mr Richard Hooker* (1675), the *Life of Mr George Herbert* (1675) and, finally, the *Life of Dr Sanderson* (1681).⁵¹ All of the *Lives* went

⁴⁹ Jonathan Boucher, *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution*, London, 1797, 530.

⁵⁰ Biographical details come from Jessica Martin, ‘Walton, Izaak’, *ODNB*.

⁵¹ The most up to date edition of Walton's *Lives* is George Saintsbury (ed.), *The Lives of John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker, George Herbert & Robert Sanderson*, London: Oxford University Press, 1927.

through a number of editions with much rewriting—hence the dates shown are those signifying the final edition. Ironically, Walton’s most famous work has turned out to be his fishing manual, *The Compleat Angler* (1676).⁵² Yet his real and lasting impact—at least within an Anglican context—was as a lay biographer imbued with the ethos and values of a deeply-held High Churchmanship shaped by the events of the Civil War, the Interregnum and Restoration. Indeed, on closer examination Walton’s lay status is more significant than simply marking him out as a layman of significance. In a recent examination of Walton’s biographies, Jessica Martin has argued that Walton’s style was fundamentally shaped by his lay status.⁵³ Being a High Churchman, Walton had a deep reverence for the clerical office. As a layman, however, he could not speak with the same authority as a clergyman. Walton’s method was, therefore, to develop an authorial voice as a biographer that allowed his subjects to be the ones who primarily spoke through the text. As Martin has documented, this method of writing influenced not only Samuel Johnson but, most importantly for the development of the biographical genre, James Boswell.⁵⁴ From a literary perspective this is significant, yet when viewed within a High Church context, Walton’s *Lives* had a seminal impact upon the creation of a High Church ethos, piety and hagiography. The mythical High Church image of the pious, rural country parson, typified in the example of George Herbert, was arguably just as

⁵² This work’s references to the peaceful and arcadian world of rural English trout fishing has been taken by some to be analogous to Walton’s High Church views of the Church of England, and of the ‘peace’ of establishment over and against the ‘anarchy’ of Dissent. ‘Angler’, for example, has been taken by some to be a reference to ‘Anglican’ (P. G. Stanwood, *Izaak Walton*, New York: Twayne, 1998, 67-68).

⁵³ Jessica Martin, *Walton’s Lives: Conformist Commemorations and the Rise of Biography*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, x-xi, 271, 315.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 302-305.

much a creation of Walton as it was of Herbert.⁵⁵ Read by no less than Johnson, George Horne, William Stevens and John Keble, and numerous other High Church Anglicans, Walton's reputation as High Church lay activist deserves to be noted.

The seventeenth century was a period when High Churchmanship sometimes suffered at the hands of Puritan prohibitions. The writer, John Evelyn (1620-1706), was a deeply committed Anglican who, like Filmer, stayed faithful to the Established Church during the interregnum. 'I found no Rest', he wrote, 'but in the boosome [sic] of my old Mother, the Church of England ... I found in her alone the Golden Meane [sic], neither too streite [sic], nor too wide, but of a just dimension and admirable Constitution'.⁵⁶ Evelyn was a writer of a similar calibre to Samuel Pepys (1633-1703), with whom he shared a friendship and correspondence.⁵⁷ Though some of his many publications and unpublished writings were of a religious nature, such as his translation of John Chrysostom's *Golden Book* (1659), Evelyn's role within a context of lay High Churchmanship can be regarded as being an example and promoter of a dedicated, conformist lay piety. Like Pepys, Evelyn came to be admired by nineteenth-century Englishmen. For example, when Christopher Wordsworth junior spoke of Evelyn as having been one of the great Anglican laymen, it was probably this type of dedication to High Church principles that was in mind.⁵⁸

Following 1688 a few important developments took place that would affect the future direction of the High Church tradition. The first event to note was the

⁵⁵ Helen Wilcox, 'Herbert, George', *ODNB*.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Gillian Darley, *John Evelyn: Living for Ingenuity*, Yale: Yale University Press, 2006, 107-108.

⁵⁷ See Guy de la Bédoyère (ed.), *Particular Friends: The Correspondence of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn*, Woodbridge: the Boydell Press, 1997.

⁵⁸ Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, iv.

secession of the Nonjurors from the Church of England following their refusal to take the oath of allegiance to William III in 1689. Including nine bishops⁵⁹ and around four hundred clergy, the depletion of the Church of England's clerical stocks was significant.⁶⁰ The story of the Nonjurors and their various ventures following their deprivations has been told by a number of historians. Despite some recent works examining aspects of the Nonjuror phenomenon,⁶¹ the main general history remains John Henry Overton's century-old publication.⁶² A point made by Overton is that the history of the Nonjurors contained numerous prominent lay members.⁶³ Of course, laity who sympathised with the Nonjuring movement approached the issues at stake differently than the clergy, who were required to take oaths; as Overton noted, unless they held a 'post which necessitated swearing allegiance to the Government, their hands were not forced; they could play the game as they chose'.⁶⁴ And indeed, this is exactly what they did, the relative freedom of their lay status giving them an ability to be flexible—both in mind and in action. An early leading Nonjuring layman was Henry Dodwell (1641-1711), a scholar, lay theologian and one of the early leaders of the movement.⁶⁵ For over a decade Dodwell was an

⁵⁹ William Sancroft (1617-1693), Archbishop of Canterbury; Thomas Ken (1637-1711), Bishop of Bath and Wells; John Lake (*bap.* 1624-*d.* 1689), Bishop of Chichester; Francis Turner (1637-1700), Bishop of Ely; Thomas White (1628-1698), Bishop of Peterborough; Thomas Cartwright (1634-1689), Bishop of Chester; William Thomas (1613-1689), Bishop of Worcester; Robert Frampton (*bap.* 1622-*d.* 1708), Bishop of Gloucester; William Lloyd (1636/7-1710). See *ODNB*.

⁶⁰ Robert D. Cornwall, 'Nonjuring bishops (*act.* 1689-1710)', *ODNB*.

⁶¹ See for example, J. C. Findon, 'The nonjurors and the Church of England, 1689–1716', Oxford University, DPhil Thesis, 1978; Robert D. Cornwall, *Visible and Apostolic: The Constitution of the Church in High Church Anglican and Non-Juror Thought*, Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1993.

⁶² John Henry Overton, *The Nonjurors: Their Lives, Principles, and Writings*, London, 1902.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 228-229.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 228.

⁶⁵ Dodwell was referred to as 'the great lay dictator' (*ibid.*, 229).

apologist for the Nonjuring position, publishing a number of works defending their actions and the theological principles behind them.⁶⁶ In 1691 Dodwell moved to a house in the small village of Shottesbrooke, Berkshire, owned by another Nonjuring layman, Francis Cherry (*bap.1667-d.1713*).⁶⁷ With their own resident chaplain, Dodwell's house became the centre of a scholarly Nonjuring community.⁶⁸ Not only Cherry, but the laymen Thomas Hearne (*bap.1678-d.1735*)⁶⁹ and Robert Nelson (1656-1715)⁷⁰ had links with Shottesbrooke, as did a number of clerics, notably Thomas Ken (1637-1711), George Hickes (1642-1715) and Charles Leslie (1650-1722), among others.

In 1710 Dodwell, Nelson and a number of the 'Shottesbrooke group' returned to communion with the Church of England, believing that a state of schism—resulting in nonconformity—should not be maintained after the death of the last of the original nine Nonjuring bishops.⁷¹ Of these, Nelson remains the most famous. He had become a Nonjuror in 1691 when he returned to England from many years spent on the continent.⁷² Intimate friends with the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Tillotson (1630-1694),⁷³ Nelson's commitment to the Nonjuror cause did not

⁶⁶ Dodwell's importance has recently been emphasised by C. D. A. Leighton (see Leighton, 'The religion of the Non-Jurors and the early British Enlightenment: a study of Henry Dodwell', *History of European Ideas*, vol.28, 2002, 247-262; C. D. A. Leighton, 'Ancienneté among the Non-Jurors: a study of Henry Dodwell', *History of European Ideas*, vol.31, 2005, 1-16).

⁶⁷ Overton, *The Nonjurors*, 238-240.

⁶⁸ Theodor Harmsen, 'Dodwell, Henry', *ODNB*.

⁶⁹ Overton, *The Nonjurors*, 240-245.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 245-250.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 234-237.

⁷² C. F. Secretan, *Memoirs of the Life and Times of the Pious Robert Nelson*, London, 1860, 1-48.

⁷³ Tillotson's advice does, in fact, seem to have been one of the main figures to help persuade Nelson to become a Nonjuror in the first place. Secretan, Nelson's biographer, quotes a line from Tillotson reflecting on Nelson's growing conviction that he could not join in prayers that commemorated the new monarch. Tillotson is reported to have said to Nelson: 'As to the case you put, I wonder men

stop him from being a friend and co-worker with many in the Church of England—a fact made easier by the flexibility of his lay status. This was witnessed in Nelson’s involvement in the early formation of Thomas Bray’s (c.1658-1730) two pioneering Anglican societies: the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), founded in 1698 and the SPG, founded in 1701. Throughout the eighteenth century numerous Anglican laymen—mostly of a High Church disposition—would come to be involved in these two important Anglican initiatives. Indeed, Bray’s original plan had envisaged a strong lay presence. As Bray himself wrote, he foresaw the creation of two societies, consisting ‘both of ... Clergy of the chiefest note, and of such Lay Gentlemen as are eminent for their worth, and affection to Religion’.⁷⁴ Nelson joined the SPCK in 1700 and the SPG in 1701 and additionally helped in Bray’s efforts to enlarge the parochial libraries of the poorer clergy.⁷⁵ Though Nelson’s most effective contributions to the Church came through his association with Bray’s achievements, he was also active in other areas where the Church was in need. A vigorous supporter of charities, one could additionally highlight Nelson’s advocacy regarding the building of new churches.⁷⁶

Part of Nelson’s contributions to Bray’s efforts was not only to promote the SPCK and SPG through his time and money, but also through his best-selling catechetical and devotional treatise, *A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the*

should be divided in opinion about it. I think it plain that no man can join in prayers in which there is any petition which he is verily persuaded is sinful. I cannot endure a trick anywhere, much less in religion’ (quoted in *ibid*, 46-47).

⁷⁴ W. O. B. Allen and Edmund McClure, *Two Hundred Years: The History of The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge 1698-1898*, London, 1898, 22.

⁷⁵ Secretan, *Memoirs*, 100-142.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 142-147.

Church of England (1704).⁷⁷ In that work Nelson wrote in praise of ‘the religious societies’, speaking of membership within them as a rewarding religious discipline and practice that the laity could avail themselves of. The societies great strength, he argued, was their strong conformity to the doctrines and sacramental discipline of the Church of England and their ability to allow clergy and laity to participate in extra-parochial religious efforts.⁷⁸ Nelson’s commendation was gladly received by members of the SPCK,⁷⁹ one of a number of publishers that would go on to distribute *A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts* into the nineteenth century.⁸⁰ Nelson wrote other devotional works, the best known being *The Practice of True Devotion* (1698)—a manual of practical piety that became famous after the success of *A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts*—and, *The Great Duty of Frequenting the Christian Sacrifice* (1706).⁸¹ Yet none of these ever rivalled the success of *A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts*. By 1800 a twenty-eighth edition was running off the printing presses.⁸² The work would continue to be published well into the late nineteenth century, also appearing in Welsh and German translations⁸³ and being adapted for use by Episcopalians in the United States of America.⁸⁴ James Boswell records that Samuel Johnson once remarked that *A Companion for the*

⁷⁷ Robert Nelson, *A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England*, 1st edn, London, 1704.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, ix-xii.

⁷⁹ Secretan, *Memoirs*, 95.

⁸⁰ Alan Cook, ‘Nelson, Robert’, *ODNB*; William Thomas Lowndes and Henry J. Bohn (eds), *The Bibliographers Manual of English literature*, pt.6, London, 1861, 1658.

⁸¹ Secretan, *Memoirs*, 156.

⁸² See Robert Nelson, *A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England*, 28th edn, London, 1800.

⁸³ Cook, ‘Nelson, Robert’, *ODNB*.

⁸⁴ See John Henry Hobart, *A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, New York, 1851.

Festivals and Fasts had ‘the greatest sale of any book ever printed in England, except the Bible’.⁸⁵ This is obviously a claim that is hard to confirm, though Johnson’s further comment that the work was ‘a most valuable help to devotion’ was, judging by its success, an opinion shared by numerous Anglicans during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁸⁶ As C. J. Stranks has observed, Nelson was, above all else, a practical man and his writings encouraged the furtherance of practical piety among members of the Church of England.⁸⁷ Indeed, Nelson’s example of fusing a practical, philanthropic and society-based piety within a context of strict obedience to the Church of England’s doctrine and episcopate would, as the eighteenth century merged into the nineteenth, become a distinctly High Church speciality, exemplified most especially in the example of Stevens.⁸⁸

The famous lexicographer, Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), also deserves to be highlighted within the context of this chapter. Moulded by the *Book of Common Prayer*, William Law’s *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1729), as well as the writings of the Church Fathers, the Caroline Divines and the writings of the Nonjurors,⁸⁹ James Boswell was correct to state that Johnson was a ‘sincere and zealous Christian, of high Church of England and monarchical principles, which he would not tamely suffer to be questioned’.⁹⁰ Yet this was not the whole truth. Recent scholarship by J. C. D. Clark, in particular, has begun to highlight the centrality of

⁸⁵ James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970 (orig.1791), 703.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ C. J. Stranks, *Anglican Devotion*, London: SCM Press, 1961, 169.

⁸⁸ See Chapter 6, 318ff.

⁸⁹ Charles E. Pierce, *The Religious Life of Samuel Johnson*, Hamden: Archon, 1983, 29-31, 73-8.

⁹⁰ James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, vol.I, Boston, 1832, 325.

Johnson's Nonjuring principles.⁹¹ In many ways these were similar to Nelson's, for Johnson continued to maintain elements of conformity to the Church of England, especially in regard to his presence at services. This can be seen in Johnson's persistent attendance at the notoriously High Church and Jacobite-inclined parish of St Clement Danes, located at the eastern end of the Strand.⁹² As Richard Sharp has documented, many lay Nonjurors attended this church and had their children baptised there.⁹³ Included amongst its clergy were Thomas Lewis (1689-1749), John Rogers (1679-1729) and, later in the eighteenth century, George Berkeley jnr (1733-1795), friend of Stevens.⁹⁴ Across the road from St Clement Danes was the Crown and Anchor tavern, later an important gathering place for Stevens and his High Church friends.⁹⁵

Johnson was a deeply religious man.⁹⁶ Whilst pious and full of conviction, his spirituality was nonetheless characterised by a recurring melancholy that had a tendency to lead him to doubt God's mercy and engage in excessive moral

⁹¹ J. C. D. Clark, *Samuel Johnson: Literature, religion and English cultural politics from the Restoration to Romanticism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994; J. C. D. Clark and Howard Erskine-Hill (eds), *Samuel Johnson in Historical Context*, Palgrave: Houndmills, 2002. The perspectives of Clark and Erskine-Hill were critiqued in Paul J. Korshin (ed), *Age of Johnson: A Scholarly Annual*, vols.7-8, Brooklyn: AMS Press, 1996-1997.

⁹² Richard Sharp, 'The Religious and Political Character of the Parish of St. Clement Danes' in Clark and Erskine-Hill (eds), *Samuel Johnson in Historical Context*, 44-54.

⁹³ Ibid, 48.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 46-47.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 48-50; Clark, *Samuel Johnson*, 154; regarding the Crown and Anchor, see Chapter 5, 272-273; Chapter 6, 354-355, 373.

⁹⁶ See for example: Michael J. Quinlan, *Samuel Johnson: A Layman's Religion*, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1964; Chester F. Chapin, *The Religious Thought of Samuel Johnson*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1968; Pierce, *The Religious Life of Samuel Johnson, passim*; Clark, *Samuel Johnson, passim*; Clark & Erskine-Hill (eds), *Samuel Johnson in Historical Context, passim*.

scrupulosity.⁹⁷ Johnson's religious life is evident throughout his many writings. These reflect not only his commitment to the spiritual tradition of the Nonjurors, but also his role as a transmitter of that tradition. The *Dictionary* (1755), for example—Johnson's most famous work—'was a profoundly theologically-conscious work', observes Clark,⁹⁸ containing numerous quotations and references from Nonjuring and High Church sources—especially Robert Nelson.⁹⁹ From the perspective of viewing Johnson as a High Church lay activist, however, there is the more interesting phenomenon of Johnson as a professional—part-time—sermon writer; his sermons being composed for clergy unable or unwilling to write their own.¹⁰⁰ It remains a significant fact that an entire volume of his collected works is devoted to sermons that were written by his own hand.¹⁰¹ There are twenty-eight sermons in his collected works, though Johnson is believed to have composed many more than this. From his own testimony Johnson claimed in 1773 to have composed 'about forty sermons' and there is evidence he was writing sermons as late as 1778.¹⁰² Testimony from Johnson's friend, John Hawkins, reveals that Johnson only wrote sermons on the condition that he would be paid for his services—which, Hawkins records, was usually two guineas per sermon.¹⁰³ Upon completion of a sermon, Johnson was said to have always regarded the finished work as the sole property of the cleric for

⁹⁷ Pierce, *The Religious Life of Samuel Johnson*, 16-17, 23, 34, 60-61, 109.

⁹⁸ Clark, *Samuel Johnson*, 125.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 130, 211-212.

¹⁰⁰ James Gray, *Johnson's Sermons: A Study*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972; Jean Hagstrum and James Gray, 'Introduction' in Jean Hagstrum and James Gray (eds), *Samuel Johnson: Sermons*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978, xix-lix; Quinlan, *Samuel Johnson: A Layman's Religion*, 85-100.

¹⁰¹ See Hagstrum and Gray (eds), *Samuel Johnson: Sermons*, *passim*.

¹⁰² Hagstrum and Gray, 'Introduction', xxi.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, xxi-xxiii.

whom he wrote, thus taking no credit for the composition.¹⁰⁴ Mostly, Johnson wrote for John Taylor (*bap.*1711-1788), the somewhat lax clergyman for whom Johnson nonetheless had a high regard.¹⁰⁵ Many of these sermons would posthumously reach the published sphere,¹⁰⁶ including, most notably, the un-preached sermon written by Johnson for the funeral of his wife, Elizabeth, who died in 1752.¹⁰⁷ Another clergyman for whom Johnson wrote was William Dodd (1729-1777), who famously suffered the death penalty for committing forgery.¹⁰⁸ During his final days, Johnson penned Dodd's last sermon, *The Convict's Address to His Unhappy Brethren* (1777),¹⁰⁹ which Dodd preached to his fellow prisoners of Newgate Prison.¹¹⁰ Johnson's role as a lay sermon writer may not have been one that had a wide social impact, but it was, nonetheless, a notable achievement that received a favourable public reception when the fact of Johnson's sermon writing became more widely known following his death in 1784.

Though not a High Churchman in the classical sense, through his immense influence on British politics and society during the late eighteenth century, as well as his continuing impact on political thought, it is worth paying attention to the religious aspects of Edmund Burke (1730-1797). Frequently accused throughout his

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, xxii.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, xxx-xxxv; Michael Bevan, 'Taylor, John', *ODNB*.

¹⁰⁶ See John Taylor, *Sermons of Different Subjects, Left for Publication by John Taylor, LL.D.*, vol.2, London, 1789; Hagstrum and Gray, 'Introduction', xx-xxi.

¹⁰⁷ See Samuel Johnson, *A Sermon, Written by the Late Samuel Johnson, L.L.D. for the Funeral of his Wife*, London, 1788; Hagstrum and Gray, 'Introduction', xix-xx.

¹⁰⁸ Philip Rawlings, 'Dodd, William', *ODNB*.

¹⁰⁹ See William Dodd, *The Convict's Address to His Unhappy Brethren*, Cork, 1777.

¹¹⁰ Hagstrum and Gray, 'Introduction', xix.

life of being a Catholic on account of his Irish origins,¹¹¹ Burke was in fact a member of the Church of England by conviction, though his churchmanship remains ambiguous. Burke described his Anglicanism in 1791 in terms that emphasised a religious conviction that was primarily devoted to the Church of England's established place within England's social order. He wrote: 'I have been baptised and educated in the Church of England; and have seen no cause to abandon that communion ... I think that Church harmonises with our civil constitution, with the frame and fashion of our Society, and with the general Temper of the people ... I am attached to Christianity at large; much from conviction: more from affection'.¹¹² As F. P. Lock has recently pointed out in an exhaustive two-volume biography,¹¹³ Burke's religious convictions seem to have been based on 'political utility', especially given the way he regarded religion as a positive aspect of England's social and political fabric.¹¹⁴ Frederick Dreyer, who wrote about Burke's religious views in 1976, saw Burke as one who thought of the Church as a merely human institution, capable of change as the needs of society saw fit.¹¹⁵ For Dreyer, Burke was a latitudinarian after the manner of Locke, Hoadly and Paley.¹¹⁶ Labelling Burke as a latitudinarian has been continued by J. C. D. Clark, who, though cautiously using the term, has corrected Dreyer's assertions that Burke was an extreme liberal in religion.¹¹⁷ Clark notes that Burke had little in common with the heterodox aspects

¹¹¹ J. C. D. Clark, 'Introduction' in J. C. D. Clark (ed.), *Edmund Burke: Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001, 25-27.

¹¹² Quoted in *ibid*, 28.

¹¹³ E. P. Lock, *Edmund Burke Volume I: 1730-1784*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; E. P. Lock, *Edmund Burke Volume II: 1784-1797*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

¹¹⁴ Lock, *Edmund Burke Volume II*, 304.

¹¹⁵ Frederick Dreyer, 'Burke's Religion', *Studies in Burke and His Time*, vol.17, no.3, 1976, 201.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁷ Clark, 'Introduction', 27.

of some latitudinarians; his Trinitarian theology was, for example, orthodox and his commitment to natural religion was counterbalanced by a belief in divine revelation.¹¹⁸ Indeed, as the above quote hints at, Burke does seem to have developed a genuine spiritual attachment towards the necessity of an established Church.¹¹⁹ The date of the remark is significant, for by the early 1790s Burke had moved closer to a theological position that High Churchmen began to respect, though certainly not endorse in its details.¹²⁰ The key event was, of course, the French Revolution, which Burke responded to in his classic political treatise, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790, revised 1791).¹²¹ Burke's horror at what had taken place in France coupled with his desire to defend the place of the established Church led him to pen what Clark has previously described as an 'eloquent but unoriginal expression to a theoretical position largely devised by Anglican churchmen'.¹²² In general this claim is true, but needs qualification. Burke, for example, did not base his defence on the established Church with the same appeal to its episcopal order and primitive character as High Churchmen.¹²³ Clark notes that Burke did not even hold any seventeenth- or eighteenth-century High Church writings in his library.¹²⁴ For Burke religion was a positive force, especially in its established Anglican manifestation, but his appreciation of it derived from a more general concern to defend its necessary

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Lock, *Edmund Burke Volume II*, 304.

¹²⁰ Nigel Aston, 'A "Lay Divine": Burke, Christianity and the Preservation of the British State, 1790-1797' in Nigel Aston (ed.), *Religious Change in Europe 1650-1914: Essays for John McManners*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, 194.

¹²¹ See Clark (ed.), *Edmund Burke: Reflections on the Revolution in France*, *passim*.

¹²² Clark, *English Society*, 1st edn, 249.

¹²³ Aston, 'A "Lay Divine": Burke, Christianity and the Preservation of the British State', 194-195; Clark, 'Introduction', 27-28.

¹²⁴ Clark, 'Introduction', 28.

place within the social and civil order. His belief, for example, that established churches could differ in governance depending on their circumstances (Scotland, for instance) is evidence of this,¹²⁵ as was his appreciation of Catholicism, especially in its Irish and French settings.¹²⁶ Nonetheless, his basic conclusion that the French Revolution was an evil force and that the established church and monarchy were institutions to be preserved was good enough for many High Churchmen. By the mid-1790s he had earned their deep regard.¹²⁷

Nigel Aston and J. C. D. Clark are two historians who have drawn most attention to the figure of Burke as a religious thinker within what they both see as a broadly High Church, late eighteenth-century Anglican context. Aston's recent claim—echoing a remark made by Joseph Priestly in 1791—that Burke was a 'lay divine', may not be a title that readily comes to mind when considering Burke, yet there are strong grounds for using it. It is true that Burke does not easily fit into any single Anglican stereotype—his churchmanship seems to have been as unique as his impact on political thought;¹²⁸ however, his deeply-held conservatism on so many religious issues, coupled with the esteem he was held in by many High Church divines gives him a place in this discussion.¹²⁹

Despite the earlier mention of Queens Anne and Caroline, the role of women within the history of High Churchmanship has so far been left untouched. Indeed, it is a topic rarely discussed by ecclesiastical historians who write on High Churchmanship. This is in contrast to Evangelicalism. When David Bebbington

¹²⁵ Lock, *Edmund Burke Volume II*, 304.

¹²⁶ Aston, 'A "Lay Divine": Burke, Christianity and the Preservation of the British State', 197-205.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 195.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 195, 200, 205-206.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 194-196, 198, 201, 203.

wrote his influential history of Evangelicalism in 1989 he made numerous mention of the role of women within that movement.¹³⁰ A still more prominent focus on the role of women in Evangelicalism can be seen in G. M. Ditchfield's *The Evangelical Revival* (1998),¹³¹ and the prominent female Evangelical, Hannah More (1745-1833), has recently had a large amount of scholarly attention paid to her.¹³² Yet the same attempt to correct the gender-imbalance has not taken place with regard to High Churchmanship. In fact, women rarely feature in studies devoted to Anglican High Churchmanship, despite the fact that High Churchmanship—as we shall soon see—was not a style of Anglicanism only of interest to men. There is no question that a 'men and movements'¹³³ approach to writing the history of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century High Church Anglicanism has been the dominant historiographical approach, even if it has not been conducted with the express purpose of excluding the role of women. It goes without saying that to think of the

¹³⁰ D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, London, 1989, 25-26, 118, 128-129, 174-175.

¹³¹ G. M. Ditchfield, *The Evangelical Revival*, London: UCL Press, 1998, 6, 48-49, 63, 65, 101-105. A similar—albeit lesser—focus on gender is found in Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys*, Leicester: Apollos, 2004, 250-253.

¹³² Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 12, 25, 26, 69-70, 75, 169; Christine L. Krueger, *The Reader's Repentance: Women Preachers, Women Writers, and Nineteenth Century Social Discourse*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992; Anne Stott, 'Hannah More and the Blagdon Controversy, 1799-1802', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol.51, no.2, 2000, 319-346; Anne Stott, 'A singular injustice towards women': Hannah More, Evangelicalism and Female Education' in Sue Morgan (ed.), *Women, Religion and Feminism in Britain, 1750-1900*, Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002, 23-38; Anne Stott, *Hannah More: The First Victorian*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003; Anne Stott, 'Evangelicalism and Enlightenment: The Educational Agenda of Hannah More' in Mary Hilton and Jill Shefrin (eds), *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain: Beliefs, Cultures, Practices*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2009, 41-56; Patricia Comitini, *Vocational Philanthropy and British Women's Writing, 1790-1810*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.

¹³³ Sean Gill, *Women and the Church of England: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, London: SPCK, 1994, 2.

great names of the High Church tradition throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is to think only of men. Yet women were attracted to High Churchmanship, not simply as pious wives, but as visible laywomen of distinction.

As it was for many laymen, the most tried way for High Churchwomen to make a name for themselves was as religious writers, be it of a devotional, theological or controversialist genre. The most prominent High Churchwomen of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries include: Susanna Hopton (1627-1709), Frances Norton (1644-1731), Elinor James (1644/5-1719), Mary Astell (1666-1731), Anne Coventry (1673-1763), Elizabeth Stuart Bowdler (*d.*1797), Mary Deverell (*fl.*1774-1797), Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806) and Sarah Trimmer (1741-1810).¹³⁴ In one degree or another, all these women fit into the category of religious writers, though a few—such as Elinor James and Sarah Trimmer—went beyond this role, turning their ideas into a more practical lay activism. A number of these women have, in fact, had recent historical attention paid to them, yet this research has mostly been conducted by historians writing within a feminist genre rather than employing an ecclesiastical focus.¹³⁵ Whilst much of this scholarship has helped to correct a historiographical gender imbalance, it has yet to find its way into ecclesiastical historiography.

¹³⁴ All these women are credited with recent entries in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

¹³⁵ The most substantial account to interact with an ecclesiastical historiography is Gill, *Women and the Church of England*. Other contributions include: Joan T. Kinnaird, 'Mary Astell and the Conservative Contribution to English Feminism', *The Journal of British Studies*, vol.19, no.1, 1979, 53-75; Julia J. Smith, 'Susanna Hopton: A Biographical Account', *Notes and Queries*, vol.38, no.2, 1991, 165-172; Patricia Springborg, 'Mary Astell (1666-1731), Critic of Locke', *American Political Science Review*, vol.89, No.3, 1995, 621-633; Charles Wallace Jr, 'The Prayer Closet as a "Room of One's Own": Two Women Devotional Writers at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Women's History*, vol.9, no.2, 1997, 108-121; William Kolbrener, 'Gendering the Modern: Mary Astell's Feminist Historiography', *The Eighteenth Century*, vol.44, no.1, 2003, 1-93; Sarah Apetrei, '“Call No Man Master Upon Earth”: Mary Astell's Tory Feminism and an Unknown Correspondence', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol.41, no.4, 2008, 507-523.

Moreover, given that all these women were politically and religiously conservative, their presence has raised for these feminist historians the self-admitted problem of ‘Tory feminism’¹³⁶ and how this fits within a stereotype that traditionally associates feminism with radicalism and anti-establishmentarianism (e.g. Mary Wollstonecraft).¹³⁷

Though much of this scholarship shows that High Churchmanship was not necessarily antithetical to the early development of a feminist worldview,¹³⁸ it does need to be admitted that in some cases the link between some of these High Churchwomen and an early ‘protofeminism’ is sometimes weak, or at least strained. For example, in Charles Wallace Jr’s examination of the seventeenth-century High Churchwoman, Susanna Hopton, the attempt to view this woman within the development of a ‘proto-feminism’ has resulted in highly questionable interpretations. Publishing his study of Hopton in the *Journal of Women’s History*, there seems to be an inability on Wallace’s part to accept Hopton as a conservative Tory with staunchly High Church views. Thus Hopton’s famous work: *A Collection of Meditations and Devotions, in Three Parts* (1717),¹³⁹ is regarded as being ‘dualistic, hierarchical, rigorous, traditional, and wordy’.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, only five pages of this work (a meditation dedicated to the wonders of divine creation) seems to have been regarded as praiseworthy by Wallace—that is, as ‘an Enlightenment sunbeam

¹³⁶ Apetrei, ‘“Call No Man Master Upon Earth”’, 508-510.

¹³⁷ Kinnaird, ‘Mary Astell and the Conservative Contribution to English Feminism’, 55; Apetrei, ‘“Call No Man Master Upon Earth”’, 509-510.

¹³⁸ Apetrei, ‘“Call No Man Master Upon Earth”’, 519-520.

¹³⁹ Edited by the Nonjuror, George Hickeys. This did not bear Hopton’s name on the cover when it was published in 1717. See [Susanna Hopton and George Hickeys (ed)], *A Collection of Meditations and Devotions, in Three Parts*, London, 1717.

¹⁴⁰ Wallace Jr, ‘The Prayer Closet as a “Room of One’s Own”’, 112.

in an otherwise bleak and somewhat flesh-deprecating, world-denying outlook'.¹⁴¹ Despite this severity, Wallace remarkably sees enough material to conclude—albeit not very confidently—that 'Hopton managed to choose texts and address concerns that might represent an under-the-counter, no doubt unconscious, protofeminism'.¹⁴² What is 'an under-the-counter, no doubt unconscious, protofeminism'? This is surely anachronistic scholarship that is attempting—unsuccessfully—to see Hopton as a feminist when she was, in reality, a willing conservative High Churchwoman. It is likely Hopton's *Meditations and Devotions, in Three Parts* was more widely valued by its eighteenth-century readers than the mere five pages Wallace highlighted. It is little wonder that Wallace had initially admitted that *A Collection of Devotions* 'could easily be the devotional outpourings of any high churchman' and that 'The over 400 page *Collection* would not be mistaken for modern spirituality—much less modern feminist spirituality'.¹⁴³

Yet even if one cannot discern a specific feminist spirituality within Hopton, her contemporary influence as a High Churchwoman was important. Hopton published her first devotional work, *Daily Devotions* in 1673.¹⁴⁴ A friendship with the Nonjuring bishop, George Hickes, whose principles she supported, led to Hickes becoming influential in getting Hopton's writings published, which were issued anonymously.¹⁴⁵ *Daily Devotions* was followed by a sort of lay breviary, entitled: *Devotions in the Ancient Way of Offices* (1700), an Anglican adaptation of a Roman

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 113.

¹⁴² Ibid, 114.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 112.

¹⁴⁴ Julia J. Smith, 'Hopton, Susanna', *ODNB*.

¹⁴⁵ Julia J. Smith, 'Introductory Note' in Julia J. Smith (ed.), *Susanna Hopton: Printed Writings, 1641-1700*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2010, x-xi.

Catholic work by John Austin.¹⁴⁶ *Devotions in the Ancient Way of Offices* would become a famous work of Anglican devotion into the eighteenth century with numerous editions being published. Because of Hickes's role in its publication, it has sometimes been thought of as one of his publications.¹⁴⁷ This is understandable given the fact that Hopton always published anonymously. However, this seems to have been Hopton's choice—an act of modesty on her part which Hickes was charged with maintaining. All her manuscripts she would submit to male clerics (most often, Hickes) and she would not write prefaces or directly address the reader.¹⁴⁸ Yet posthumously, Hopton's reputation as a religious writer became known and accepted into the eighteenth century.¹⁴⁹ Hopton combined her love of compiling devotional literature with a strongly ascetic spirituality that was semi-monastic. After her husband's death in 1696, she lived a life of structured daily prayer, rising for matins at four and praying five times a day.¹⁵⁰

Elinor James combined writing with political and ecclesiastical activism. Her best known works were *Mrs. James's Vindication of the Church of England*

¹⁴⁶ Smith, 'Hopton, Susanna', *ODNB*.

¹⁴⁷ See for example, Stanley Morison, *English Prayer Books*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943, 117; Gordon Rupp, *Religion in England 1688-1791*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, 195-196.

¹⁴⁸ Smith, 'Introductory Note', x-xi.

¹⁴⁹ Smith, 'Susanna Hopton: A Biographical Account', 165. Smith makes note of a number of eighteenth-century works that attested to Hopton's fame (and that of other pious Anglican women of a High Church disposition): George Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain, who have been Celebrated for their Writings of Skill in the Learned Languages, Arts and Sciences*, Oxford, 1752; [Anon.], *Biographium Fæmineum: The Female Worthies*, 2 vols, London, 1766; Mary Hays, *Female Biography; Or, Memoirs of Illustrious and Celebrated Women*, 6 vols, London, 1803; [Anon.], *English Churchwomen of the Seventeenth Century*, Derby, 1845.

¹⁵⁰ Smith, 'Hopton, Susanna', *ODNB*.

(1687)¹⁵¹ and *Mrs. James's Defence of the Church of England* (1687).¹⁵² A staunch monarchist and High Churchwoman, James was a tradeswoman who owned her own printing press and frequently handed out broadsheets she had printed and written herself.¹⁵³ It was not unknown for her to publicly engage in political discourse—for example, by disrupting public meetings she disagreed with. She once was assaulted by Titus Oates, when he hit her with his cane following remarks by James that had apparently questioned his right to dress as a cleric.¹⁵⁴ James's pushed the boundaries of what was considered appropriate for women during the late seventeenth century,¹⁵⁵ demonstrating that in at least one example that being High Church did not necessarily equate an adherence to a rigid social conservatism.

Other, less publicly active, female High Church writers included Lady Frances Norton (1644-1731),¹⁵⁶ who published two works of religious devotion: *The Applause of Virtue in Four Parts* and *Memento mori* (1705).¹⁵⁷ Norton's religious views were stated by herself as 'grounded upon, the best Orthodox Writers of our True and Pure Religion'.¹⁵⁸ Anne Coventry (1673-1763), countess of Coventry,

¹⁵¹ Elinor James, *Mrs. James's Vindication of the Church of England, in an Answer to a Pamphlet Entitled [sic], A New Test of the Church of England's Loyalty*, London, 1687.

¹⁵² Elinor James, *Mrs. James's Defence of the Church of England ... With a Word or Two Concerning a Quakers Good Advice to the Church of England, Roman Catholic, and Protestant Dissenter*, [London], 1687.

¹⁵³ Paula McDowell, 'James, Elinor', *ODNB*.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Paula McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace 1678-1730*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, 33-35.

¹⁵⁶ Sarah Ross, 'Norton, Frances', *ODNB*.

¹⁵⁷ Both published together under the convoluted title: *The Applause of Virtue: In Four Parts. Book I. Consisting of several Divine and Moral Essays Towards the Obtaining of True Virtue. Memento mori. Book II. Consisting of Meditations on Death*, London, 1705.

¹⁵⁸ Quoted in Ross, 'Norton, Frances', *ODNB*.

continued this devotional tradition by publishing *The Right Honourable Anne, Countess of Coventry's Meditations, and Reflections Moral and Divine* (1707).¹⁵⁹

Some women, however, went beyond this type of devotional literary genre. Elizabeth Stuart Bowdler (d.1797),¹⁶⁰ for instance, wrote *Practical Observations on the Revelation of St John* (1775).¹⁶¹ Though written as a commentary, *Practical Observation* was also forceful statement of High Church principles, in which various doctrines inimical to High Churchmanship—e.g., Roman Catholicism, Deism, Socianism, etc.—were refuted.¹⁶² Four of her children—Jane Bowdler (1743-1784),¹⁶³ John Bowdler,¹⁶⁴ Henrietta Maria Bowdler (1750-1830)¹⁶⁵ and Thomas Bowdler (1754-1825)¹⁶⁶—would all go on to become distinguished lay Anglicans themselves. John Bowdler would become an intimate friend of Stevens.¹⁶⁷ Henrietta Maria Bowdler would anonymously publish, *Sermons on the Doctrines and Duties of Christianity* (1801),¹⁶⁸ a work that had similarly been preceded by Mary Deverell's (fl.1774-1797) *Sermons on the Following Subjects* in 1774—though unlike Bowdler, Deverell had put her name on the cover.¹⁶⁹ The potential

¹⁵⁹ Emma Major, 'Coventry, Anne', *ODNB*.

¹⁶⁰ Emma Major, 'Bowdler, Elizabeth Stuart', *ODNB*.

¹⁶¹ This was reprinted in 1800. See Elizabeth Stuart Bowdler, *Practical Observations on the Revelation of St John. Written in the Year 1775*, Bath, 1800.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, 76-79.

¹⁶³ See Rebecca Mills, 'Bowdler, Jane', *ODNB*. Jane Bowdler was herself a poet and essayist, some of whose works were later published. See Jane Bowdler, *Poems and Essays, by a Lady Lately Deceased*, 2 vols, Bath, 1786. Published by Henrietta Maria Bowdler, this work would later go through numerous editions.

¹⁶⁴ See Introduction, 7 for dates; Peter B. Nockles, 'Bowdler, John', *ODNB*.

¹⁶⁵ M. Clare Loughlin-Chow, 'Bowdler, Henrietta Maria', *ODNB*.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁶⁷ See Introduction, 7; Chapter 6, 379-380.

¹⁶⁸ Henrietta Maria Bowdler, *Sermons on the Doctrines and Duties of Christianity*, Bath, 1801.

¹⁶⁹ Mary Deverell, *Sermons on the Following Subjects*, Bristol, 1774.

controversy that such titles could engender was a fact not lost on both women. In the preface of Deverell's work, she had included 'An Apology to the Public'.¹⁷⁰ There, she admitted that she had chosen a controversial title and felt a need to justify 'so daring an usurpation of the sacred province'.¹⁷¹ Though admitting that she would have been willing to change the title out of respect for the clerical office, she maintained that the use of 'sermons' was justified, claiming not only that her subscribers had paid her with the expectation of reading such 'sermons', but to give them another title would have been incorrect given that they were sermons and not essays.¹⁷² In any event, there is evidence that Deverell had a number of male clerical supporters¹⁷³ and that men did indeed read her book with approval.¹⁷⁴ Unlike Deverell, Bowdler published anonymously, a fact that seems to have fooled the Bishop of London, Beilby Porteus (1731-1861), into thinking the work had originated from the pen of a clergyman. Porteus is reputed to have been so taken by Bowdler's *Sermons* that he contacted the publisher seeking to offer the author—whom he took to be a clergyman—a benefice.¹⁷⁵ Similarly, the High Church *Anti-Jacobin Review*, which gave the book a very positive review, likewise presumed the author to be male.¹⁷⁶ Also *The Monthly Review*, which declared the sermons to be 'very short, extremely serious, and minutely practical', hinted at their High Church pedigree by noting that 'The doctrines of the Established Church are uniformly

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, iii-x.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, iii.

¹⁷² Ibid, iv-v.

¹⁷³ Ibid, viii.

¹⁷⁴ See for example, the list of subscribers and the balance of men and women: Ibid, 11-30. See also the following review: *The Monthly Review*, January 1775, vol.52, London, 1775, 44-46.

¹⁷⁵ John Gorton, *A General Biographical Dictionary*, vol.3, London, 1833, [no page numbers printed in this work].

¹⁷⁶ *The Anti-Jacobin Review*, February 1803, vol.14, London, 1803, 177.

inculcated, and her rites and ceremonies are warmly recommended: the preacher exhorting *his* hearers and readers “not to follow strange teachers,” nor “to listen to those who intrude into another man's fold” .¹⁷⁷ Another endorsement came from the moderately High Church Bishop of Lincoln, Sir George Pretyman Tomline¹⁷⁸ (1750-1827).¹⁷⁹ By the middle of the nineteenth century Bowdler's *Sermons* had gone through almost fifty editions.¹⁸⁰

All these women were influential female exponents of Anglican High Churchmanship, yet it can be argued that the two most notable High Churchwomen, in terms of their achievements, were Mary Astell (1666-1731) and Sarah Trimmer (1741-1810). It has already been observed that Astell—a philosopher and theologian—has had a lot of recent attention owing to her outspoken promotion of the place of women in English society.¹⁸¹ Yet if Astell's ‘Tory feminism’ and religious conservatism has been difficult to reconcile with her advocacy of the place of women in early eighteenth-century English society,¹⁸² it has nonetheless

¹⁷⁷ *The Monthly Review*, 2nd series, April 1802, vol.37, London, 1802, 426 (emphasis added by author of thesis).

¹⁷⁸ For a discussion on Tomline's High Churchmanship, see G. M. Ditchfield, ‘Tomline, Sir George Pretyman’, *ODNB*; Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 28-29.

¹⁷⁹ [Anon.], *Bibliotheca probata. Catalogue of Books Selected, Examined, And Arranged*, New York, 1857, 58.

¹⁸⁰ Loughlin-Chow, ‘Bowdler, Henrietta Maria’, *ODNB*.

¹⁸¹ Some of this literature has already been listed, see above, 95 n137. The most thorough examination is Ruth Perry, *The Celebrated Mary Astell: An Early English Feminist*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986. Other works include: Patricia Springborg (ed.), *Astell: Political Writings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996; Patricia Springborg, *Mary Astell: Theorist of Freedom from Domination*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005; Christine Mason Sutherland, *The Eloquence of Mary Astell*, Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005; William Kolbrener and Michal Michelson (eds), *Mary Astell: Reason, Gender, Faith*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007.

¹⁸² Springborg, *Mary Astell*, 34.

highlighted her as a champion of the High Church tradition.¹⁸³ Astell originated in Newcastle and was born into a successful family of coal merchants. Educated by a clerical uncle, Astell began a love of the intellectual life at a young age and excelled in philosophy and theology. Astell moved to London sometime in 1687-8, after the death of her father and the decline of the family business.¹⁸⁴ In need of material help in 1688, she appealed to the charity of William Sancroft, the deprived Nonjuring Archbishop of Canterbury. He provided her not only with money but social contacts.¹⁸⁵ Moving to Chelsea, Astell soon began the writing career that would distinguish her. Her first publication, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694),¹⁸⁶ was soon followed by *Letters Concerning the Love of God* (1695).¹⁸⁷ The latter was the intellectual correspondence Astell had engaged in with the Cambridge Platonist and cleric, John Norris of Bemerton (1657-1712). It was the former title, however, that has become Astell's most remembered work; primarily owing to the attention paid to it by recent feminist historians. *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* was an appeal to women to engage themselves in philosophical and theological interests rather than simply pursuing the vain, self-centred goal of attracting gentlemen. The text is generally regarded by feminist historians as representing an early statement of feminism.¹⁸⁸ It contained a unique proposal: namely, for single women join together by living in community; a sort of intellectual convent where ladies who chose not to marry could live lives of personal piety and holiness.¹⁸⁹ The idea received

¹⁸³ Ibid, 34-39.

¹⁸⁴ Perry, *The Celebrated Mary Astell*, 28-54.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 57-69.

¹⁸⁶ [Mary Astell], *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, London, 1694.

¹⁸⁷ [Mary Astell], *Letters Concerning the Love of God*, London, 1695.

¹⁸⁸ Perry, *The Celebrated Mary Astell*, 98-119.

¹⁸⁹ Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, 73, 76; Perry, *The Celebrated Mary Astell*, 129-130.

contemporary attention with many—such as Daniel Defoe and Samuel Richardson—approving the idea; while others—for instance, the Nonconformist minister, Richard Steele, and Bishop Gilbert Burnet of Salisbury—were critical.¹⁹⁰ Steele and Burnet related the Protestant objection that such a community was too much like Roman Catholic monasticism.¹⁹¹

Though feminist historians have understandably placed an emphasis on what Astell had to say regarding gender, Astell's main concerns were first and foremost religious, a fact that again raises the question of anachronism in the feminist historiography cited here.¹⁹² Like all the women discussed here, Astell's historical significance can thus be equally claimed by ecclesiastical historiography, which so far has paid little attention to her.¹⁹³ As Hannah Smith has noted, Astell's goal was primarily to 'enable women to live as devout Anglicans rather than intellectually liberated individuals'.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, it was her theological composition, *The Christian Religion, as Profess'd by a Daughter of the Church of England* (1705)¹⁹⁵ that she considered to be her *magnum opus*, a fact suggesting that her place within the

¹⁹⁰ Perry, *The Celebrated Mary Astell*, 130-131; Ruth Perry, 'Astell, Mary', *ODNB*.

¹⁹¹ Frances Harris, 'A Revolution Correspondence: Elizabeth Parker Geddes and Elizabeth Burnet' in Susan Broomhall and Stephanie Tarbin (eds), *Women, Identities and Communities in Early Modern Europe*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008, 175.

¹⁹² Hannah Smith, 'Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694), and the Anglican Reformation of Manners in Late-Seventeenth-Century England' in Susan Broomhall and Stephanie Tarbin (eds), *Women, Identities and Communities in Early Modern Europe*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008, 31-32; Sarah Apetrei, *Women, Feminism and Religion in Early Enlightenment England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 61, 112, 272-277.

¹⁹³ However, a move towards seeing Astell more within an ecclesiastical context can be seen in Broomhall and Tarbin (eds), *Women, Identities and Communities in Early Modern Europe*, *passim*.

¹⁹⁴ Hannah Smith, 'Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694), and the Anglican Reformation of Manners', 32.

¹⁹⁵ [Mary Astell], *The Christian Religion, as Profess'd by a Daughter of the Church of England*, London, 1705.

development of feminism is probably less convincing than is her place within ecclesiastical historiography.¹⁹⁶ Other works by Astell that had a theological content included the anti-Dissent: *Moderation Truly Stated* (1704) and *A Fair Way with the Dissenters and their Patrons* (1704). Combined with her other political treatise *An Impartial Enquiry into the Causes of Rebellion and Civil War in this Kingdom* (1704), Astell's status as an exponent of the High Church tradition in both its theological and political aspects is significant.

Active during the late eighteenth-century, Sarah Trimmer has recently received a high degree of contemporary scholarly attention, mostly from historians of British education;¹⁹⁷ and only recently has Trimmer had a full-length, scholarly biography dedicated to her.¹⁹⁸ Contemporary ecclesiastical historians have largely ignored her.¹⁹⁹ This neglect is curious given the theological and ecclesiastical nature

¹⁹⁶ Perry, 'Astell, Mary', *ODNB*.

¹⁹⁷ See Wilfried Keutsch, 'Teaching the Poor: Sarah Trimmer, God's Own Handmaid', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, vol.76, no.3, 1994, 43-57; Donelle Rowe, 'Guarding the British Bible from Rousseau: Sarah Trimmer, William Godwin, and the Pedagogical Periodical', *Children's Literature*, vol.29, 2001, 1-17; M. O. Grenby, ' "A Conservative Woman Doing Radical Things": Sarah Trimmer and The Guardian of Education' in Donelle Ruwe (ed.), *Culturing the Child 1690-1914: Essays in Memory of Mitzi Myers*, Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2005, 137-162; Mary Hilton, *Women and the Shaping of the Nations Young: Education and Public Doctrine in Britain 1750-1850*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007, 2, 8, 11, 48, 84, 112, 133, 145-60; Heather E. Weir, 'Helping the Unlearned: Sarah Trimmer's Commentary on the Bible' in Christiana De Groot and Marion Ann Taylor (eds), *Recovering Nineteenth-Century Women Interpreters of the Bible*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007, 19-30.

¹⁹⁸ P. M. Heath, *The Works of Mrs. Trimmer*, Saarbrücken: Lambert, 2010. Previous to this, see: D. M. Yarde, *The Life and Works of Sarah Trimmer*, Bedford: The Hounslow and District History Society, 1971; Henry Scott Trimmer (ed.), *Some Account of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Trimmer*, 1st edn, 2 vols, London, 1814; Henry Scott Trimmer (ed.), *Some Account of the Life and Writings of Sarah Trimmer*, 3rd edn, London, 1825.

¹⁹⁹ Though these are not detailed accounts of Trimmer, some exceptions include: W. K. Lowther-Clark, *Eighteenth Century Piety*, London: SPCK, 1944, 118-125; James J. Sack, *From Jacobite to*

of Trimmer's achievements. Though from an educational perspective it has been argued that 'Sarah Trimmer was perhaps the most important individual influence on late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century British children's literature',²⁰⁰ like Astell all that Trimmer did was led and inspired by a strong devotion to the Church of England.²⁰¹

Born on 6 January 1741 at Ipswich, Trimmer was the only daughter of the artist, Joshua Kirby (1716-1774). Though not from a rich family, her father nonetheless moved in distinguished circles, especially following their move to London in 1755. There, Joshua Kirby had, for example, the honour of teaching the method of perspective to the Queen and the Prince of Wales—the future King George III. In 1759 he would be appointed Clerk of the Works to the Royal Household at Kew Palace—with the family living on the Royal Estate. Aside from being a distinguished artist and having as his friends, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough and William Hogarth, Kirby was a devout Anglican who was well read in theology and kept to High Church circles. As a young child, Trimmer remembered visits to her house by Samuel Johnson and the ensuing theological and intellectual discussions that would occur.²⁰² Influenced by a solidly Anglican upbringing, especially the writings of Johnson,²⁰³ Trimmer herself came to be devoutly attached to the Church of England.²⁰⁴ Married in 1762 to James Trimmer and giving birth to twelve children (nine of which survived), family—especially the

Conservative: Reaction and orthodoxy in Britain c. 1760-1832, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 232; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, & Dangerous People?*, 182.

²⁰⁰ Grenby, '“A Conservative Woman Doing Radical Things”', 137.

²⁰¹ See Trimmer (ed.), *Some Account of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Trimmer*, 3rd edn, *passim*.

²⁰² Yarde, *The Life and Works of Sarah Trimmer*, 16-17.

²⁰³ Trimmer (ed.), *Some Account of the Life and Writings of Sarah Trimmer*, 3rd edn, 76-77.

²⁰⁴ Weir, 'Helping the Unlearned: Sarah Trimmer's Commentary on the Bible', 19-20.

care of her children—would become central to her growing interest in the religious education of children.²⁰⁵ Thus in the early 1780s she published a number of texts designed to be used in the religious and moral instruction of children.²⁰⁶ Trimmer had become convinced of the need not only to provide her own children with a solid religious education, but to extend her knowledge and help to others. Seeing the work of the Evangelical pioneer of Sunday Schools, Robert Raikes (1736-1811), Trimmer was inspired to begin her own Sunday school in 1786 which, in a few years, had over three-hundred pupils in attendance.²⁰⁷ It is not certain how many schools Trimmer began, but a number of others are known to have existed.²⁰⁸ With interested patrons such as Queen Caroline, Trimmer set a significant High Church influence upon the early development of the Sunday School movement.²⁰⁹ Throughout her life Trimmer was a prolific writer, publishing over twenty-five works.²¹⁰ Many of these were textbooks designed for use in the Sunday Schools or Charity Schools that

²⁰⁵ Yarde, *The Life and Works of Sarah Trimmer*, 19-21.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 21; Barbara Brandon Schnorrenberg, 'Trimmer, Sarah', *ODNB*.

²⁰⁷ Yarde, *The Life and Works of Sarah Trimmer*, 30-31; Schnorrenberg, 'Trimmer, Sarah', *ODNB*.

²⁰⁸ Yarde, *The Life and Works of Sarah Trimmer*, 31.

²⁰⁹ Though High Churchmen and Evangelicals would come to have sharp disagreements over the issue of Sunday Schools, especially following the French Revolution, many High Churchmen of repute supported such institutions. If some High Churchmen—such as Charles Daubeny—did come to oppose Sunday Schools, it was mostly due to a belief that their Evangelical founders could not be trusted when it came to their loyalty to the Church of England and its episcopal and sacramental structure, in addition to its loyalty to the Crown. For discussions, see: Richard A. Soloway, *Prelates and People: Ecclesiastical Social Thought in England 1783-1852*, London: Routledge, 1969, 363-364; Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 279-281; Nigel Aston, *Christianity and Revolutionary Europe, 1750-1830*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 249-250; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, & Dangerous People?*, 181; Peter B. Nockles, 'The Waning of Protestant Unity and Waxing of Anti-Catholicism? Archdeacon Daubeny and the Reconstruction of "Anglican" Identity in the Later Georgian Church, c.1780-c.1830' in William Gibson and Robert G. Ingram (eds), *Religious Identities in Britain, 1660-1832*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, 194-195.

²¹⁰ Schnorrenberg, 'Trimmer, Sarah', *ODNB*.

Trimmer had founded; though other works—such as *The Economy of Charity* (1787)—were influential statements on the educational needs of England and how institutions such as Sunday Schools and Charity Schools could be of beneficial use.²¹¹ Trimmer also founded and edited two important journals, *The Family Magazine* (1788-9) and *The Guardian of Education* (1802-6). In all her endeavours Trimmer's main concern was that education should always be religious in nature, and that English religious education be taught in strict conformity to the Church of England. As contemporary testimony demonstrates, the publishing endeavours of Trimmer were highly respected by other High Church Anglicans,²¹² a fact confirmed not long after Trimmer's death when the High Church periodicals, the *Christian Remembrancer* and the *British Critic*, highly praised Trimmer's contributions to Anglican education.²¹³ The *British Critic* particularly singled-out the way Trimmer had combined religious education with the teachings of the Church of England.²¹⁴ It is not without reason that Trimmer has been interpreted by Nancy Murray as representing the High Church equivalent of Evangelicalism's Hannah More (1745-1833),²¹⁵ a laywoman associated with the Evangelical Clapham sect, who, like Trimmer, promoted Sunday Schools and engaged the public mind through the publication of religious works—notably, *Practical Piety* (1811)—in addition to

²¹¹ Sarah Trimmer, *The Economy of Charity; Or, An Address to Ladies Concerning Sunday Schools*, London, 1787.

²¹² See *The Orthodox Churchman's Magazine*, April 1804, vol.6, London, 1804, 273-8.

²¹³ *The Christian Remembrancer*, June 1819, vol.1, London, 1819, 373-376; *The British Critic, New Series*, Oct 1814, vol.2, London, 1814, 373-380.

²¹⁴ *The British Critic, New Series*, Oct 1814, vol.2, London, 1814, 373-380.

²¹⁵ Murray, 'The Influence of the French Revolution', 51.

writing numerous treatises and tracts that sought to refute ideological and political threats such as the French Revolution.²¹⁶

Making reference to Sunday Schools and individuals such as More raises the fact that lay activism was a pan-Anglican phenomenon, embracing as it did Evangelicals, with the former much more prominent in scholarly literature than their High Church equivalents.²¹⁷ Though not a part of the High Church tradition, the influence of a number of prominent lay Evangelicals—especially within the Clapham Sect—on Church and society during the late eighteenth century necessitates some reference to them in this discussion.²¹⁸

Evangelicalism in Britain had its origins in a number of spiritual conversions that occurred around the 1730s and that contributed towards what has been referred to as the ‘Evangelical Revival’: an international religious movement that spread through parts of Europe, Britain and North America from the 1730s onwards.²¹⁹ According to David Bebbington’s well-used description, Evangelicals (within and without the Church of England) held to four basic theological principles: what he described as ‘conversionism’, ‘activism’, ‘biblicism’ and ‘crucicentrism’.²²⁰ ‘Conversionism’ represented the belief that mankind, being fallen through the effects

²¹⁶ See Stott, *Hannah More: The First Victorian*, *passim*; S. J. Skedd, ‘More, Hannah’, *ODNB*.

²¹⁷ See Ford K. Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians: The Age of Wilberforce*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961; Doreen Rosman, *Evangelicals and Culture*, London: Croom Helm, 1984; Kenneth Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals in the Church of England 1734-1984*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988, 79-93; Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, *passim*; Christopher Tolley, *Domestic Biography: The Legacy of Evangelicalism in Four Nineteenth-Century Families*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997; Grayson Carter, *Anglican Evangelicalism: Protestant Successions from the Via Media, c.1800-1850*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

²¹⁸ Tolley, *Domestic Biography*, 4; Mather, ‘The British Layman in Modern Times 1780-1962’ in Neill & Weber (eds), *The Layman in Christian History*, 217.

²¹⁹ Ditchfield, *The Evangelical Revival*, 9-23.

²²⁰ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 5-17.

of original sin, was in need of salvation and that this was to be received from Christ by faith alone (hence also the centrality of the doctrine of Justification by Faith alone). 'Activism' referred to an intense dedication on the part of the ordained to the pastoral and preaching aspects of ministry, especially the mandate of the ordained to bring the Gospel message to as many as possible. 'Biblicism', on the other hand, reflected a strong devotion to scripture (it being the primary means through which God revealed the Gospel message to sinful humanity), whilst the awkwardly-phrased 'crucicentrism' reflected the strong Evangelical belief that central to God's redemption of mankind was the atoning death of Christ on the cross.

Within the broad tradition of Anglican Evangelicalism, no group was more influential during the late eighteenth century than the Clapham Sect. Henry Venn (1725-1797), curate of the parish of Clapham from 1754 to 1759, is significant for being one of the clerical originators of the Clapham Sect; yet it was the layman, John Thornton (1720-1790), a wealthy merchant and philanthropist, who acted as the sect's founding patron.²²¹ Thornton, who owned an estate at Clapham, contributed to the group's future dominance of the Anglican Evangelical tradition primarily through his financial influence, especially his support of Evangelical clergy. Thornton's youngest son, Henry Thornton (1760-1815), a banker and political economist, carried over his father's legacy by also playing a similar leading role within the sect. Thornton junior was a close friend of the politician and emancipator, William Wilberforce (1759-1833). Wilberforce's influence upon the anti-slavery movement makes him one of the most famous and influential Anglican lay activists

²²¹ Edwin Welch, 'Thornton, John', *ODNB*; John Wolffe, 'Clapham Sect', *ODNB*.

of the late eighteenth century.²²² Along with Thornton, he became a leading and unifying figure within Evangelicalism, promoting—in addition to the anti-slavery cause—overseas missions and what became known as the ‘reform of public manners’.²²³ Associated with Thornton and Wilberforce were the Anglican laymen Charles Grant (1746-1823), the Director of the East India Company from 1794 until his death; John Shore (1751-1834), the Governor-General of Bengal and, from 1798, the first president of The British and Foreign Bible Society; James Stephen (1758-1832), the Scottish lawyer and abolitionist; and, finally, Zachary Macaulay (1768-1838), a former slave-owner, Governor of Sierra Leone and later, an active abolitionist. Tied together through closely-related family connections, these laymen came to dominate Anglican Evangelical activism during the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries.

In his short but perceptive essay on the High Church Hackney Phalanx contained within the online edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Mark Smith has drawn attention to the fact that the Phalanx, though theologically different from the Clapham Sect, had much in common with that group. Smith writes that ‘Despite their theological differences, Hackney and Clapham both demonstrate the increasing weight of the commercial classes in the highest councils of the church and the success of the church in attracting the wealth, energy, and initiative of a stratum of society often associated primarily with religious nonconformity’.²²⁴ Indeed, though often viewed as an ecclesiastical phenomena, the High Church

²²² It should not be thought that the abolition of slavery was solely an Evangelical cause. The abolitionist, Granville Sharp (1735-1813) for example had High Church leanings, despite his close Evangelical ties (see Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism*, Williamsburg: University of North Carolina Press, 2006, 171-174).

²²³ Christopher Tolley, ‘Thornton, Henry’, *ODNB*; Tolley, *Domestic Biography*, 1, 3-4.

²²⁴ Mark Smith, ‘Hackney Phalanx, *act.* 1800-1830’, *ODNB*.

Hackney Phalanx (in which William Stevens was an important precursor) and the Evangelical Clapham sect were, in reality, related movements that emerged out of powerful upper-middle class commercial contexts—contexts that had come to dominate English society during the eighteenth century. Stevens, for instance, was a wholesale hosier; John Thornton, on the other hand, was a merchant who traded in Russian markets; his son, Henry Thornton, a banker. In their own ways, all these men brought their ‘wealth, energy, and initiative’ from the commercial world into ecclesiastical contexts. This merging of commercial talent into ecclesiastical contexts also suggests another fact of a vigorous and organized lay involvement in the Church of England than perhaps has hitherto been evident. In Stevens’s case, commercial success led to a life devoted mostly to ecclesiastical and philanthropic concerns. For Stevens, as for his lay Evangelical counterparts, success in commerce bought wealth which, in turn, also bought him the freedom, skills and means to influence Church affairs in ways that no average member of the laity, nor even any cleric, ever could. It is time to examine that context and the young William Stevens who was born into it.

Chapter 3. William Stevens: A Man of Faith and Commerce

William Stevens was born on 2 March 1732 within the Southwark parish of St Saviour's, London, and was baptised at St Saviour's Church on 27 March 1732.¹ Most of what is known about Stevens's early life comes to us from Park's *Memoirs*, an account that is substantially one-sided in its presentation of Stevens's family origins. Only a slight mention is made of Stevens's father, whilst his mother and her family connections all receive a substantial coverage. The reason for this becomes obvious as Park reveals that Stevens's mother was the sister of Samuel Horne, the rector of the parish of Otham, Kent, and the father of the well-known eighteenth-century High Church prelate and theologian, George Horne (1730-1792).² In contrast, only one sentence is recorded about Stevens's father, whom Park describes as an unspecified tradesman, 'certainly much inferior in station to the mother of Mr. Stevens'.³ Consequently, Geoffrey Rowell has observed that 'there is a hint that some thought she might have somewhat married beneath her station'.⁴ But this downplays Park's obvious intent, that he regarded Stevens's father as being unworthy of any sort of detailed elucidation owing to his inferior social standing, compared with Stevens's connection to the Horne's family. However, some of the information lacking in Park's account can be filled-in through consulting a copy of

¹ James Allan Park, *Memoirs of William Stevens*, 4th edn, London, 1825, 5; St Paul's Cathedral Library, Club of Nobody's Friends Archive, CUP W (east) 1&5. St Saviour's is now the cathedral for the Diocese of Southwark (formed in 1905).

² Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 5; for Horne's importance to eighteenth-century High Churchmanship, see Nigel Aston, 'Horne and Heterodoxy: The Defence of Anglican Beliefs in the Late Enlightenment', *English Historical Review*, vol.108, no.429, 1993, 895-919.

³ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 5.

⁴ Geoffrey Rowell, *The Club of 'Nobody's Friends': A Memoir on its Two-Hundredth Anniversary*, Edinburgh: The Pentland Press, 2000, 14.

Stevens's baptismal certificate. In that document it is revealed that Stevens's father was also named William and that he was in fact a butcher.⁵ This helps to partly explain Park's silence. Butchers were one of the many numerous lower-middle class trades; business directories, often only used by the wealthy and fashionable, rarely listed trades such as butchery.⁶ It was a line of work that seems to have rarely raised its practitioners beyond the lower middle-classes. In addition to revealing some information about his father, Stevens's baptismal certificate also gives his mother's name as Mary. Park further adds to the information regarding Stevens's family origins by telling us that he also had an unnamed sister who, like his father, is only mentioned in passing. Nothing more is ever heard of her. It is possible she died at a young age.

Sometime during the mid to late 1730s Stevens's father died of unknown causes.⁷ This was a period during which Stevens was taught by a 'Mr. Crawford' at a school in Newington Butts.⁸ However, the death of his father would lead to a change in Stevens's living arrangements, for not long after his father died his mother took him to Maidstone, Kent, to be closer to her brother. There, Stevens became close childhood friends with the young George Horne who, born on 1 November 1730, was only a little over a year older than his friend.⁹ Stevens continued his education at Maidstone, with both himself and Horne being taught for a time by a clergyman, the

⁵ St Paul's Cathedral Library, Club of Nobody's Friends Archive, CUP W (east) 1&5.

⁶ David Barnett, *London, Hub of the Industrial Revolution: A Revisionary History 1775-1825*, London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998, 27-28.

⁷ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1807, vol.77, London, 1807, 173. Peter Nockles estimates that Stevens's father died 1733 (see Peter Nockles, 'Stevens, William', *ODNB*).

⁸ According to Edward Churton, this is the same schoolmaster and school that would later have Joshua Watson as a pupil (see Edward Churton, *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, vol.1, 1st edn, London, 1861, 12-13, 23).

⁹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 5.

Reverend Deodatus Bye, at Maidstone School. At that institution, Stevens and Horne were given the rudiments of a classical education.¹⁰ Bye's strength as a teacher was his competent knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew, which we can assume laid the foundation for Stevens's later proficiency in these languages.¹¹

Given the hagiographic tendency of the *Memoirs*, Park's concern with Stevens's early life was in charting what he saw as the formation of a virtuous moral and religious character that he thought had begun in Stevens at a young age.¹² Though he overplays this theme, Park's view of Stevens as a morally and religiously obedient child was evidently shared by others. Jones of Nayland, for instance, though he does not identify Stevens by name, records 'that there was under the said Deodatus Bye another scholar, very nearly related to Mr. Horne, of whom the master was heard to say, that he never did any thing which he wished him not to have done'.¹³ When told this, it is noted that the child (who is identified by Park as being Stevens) replied by saying 'that he had done many things which his master *never heard of*'.¹⁴ For Park, as well as Jones of Nayland, this was evidence of an honesty they claimed Stevens constantly retained and exhibited throughout his life.¹⁵

Stevens's education ended in August 1746 when at the age of fourteen he was placed as an apprentice to a 'rich London merchant', a wholesale hosier by the

¹⁰ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1792, vol.62, London, 1792, 135; William Jones, *Memoirs of the Life, Studies, and Writings of the Right Reverend George Horne, D.D.*, 2nd edn, London, 1799, 18-19; Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 5; J. M. Russell, *The History of Maidstone*, Maidstone, 1881, 178.

¹¹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 5, 7; Jones, *Memoirs*, 18.

¹² Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 5.

¹³ Jones, *Memoirs*, 18.

¹⁴ *Ibid*; Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 6.

¹⁵ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 6; Jones, *Memoirs*, 18-19.

name of John Hookham.¹⁶ Hookham lived at 68 Old Broad Street, City of London.¹⁷ Stevens moved into the Hookham residence where he lived as a bachelor for the rest of his life.¹⁸ That same year Horne was enrolled at Oxford, a move that would eventually see him receive holy orders in the Church of England in 1753, going on to a distinguished career as a theologian at Oxford, as the Dean of Canterbury and, from 1790, as the Bishop of Norwich.¹⁹ But though separate from each other, and in the beginnings of their careers seemingly very different from each other, the two men would nonetheless remain close friends and correspondents throughout their lives.²⁰

Park neglects the commercial world Stevens entered in 1746 when he became an apprentice to Hookham, revealing almost nothing of significance about Hookham, the business he ran, or the type of commerce that would eventually come to create Stevens's wealth and, in turn, the spare time to devote to High Church causes. Park instead focused on the development of what he considered to be Stevens's exemplary moral character, religious piety and intellectual talent. These facets of Stevens's life and character were, of course, significant and deserve to be discussed; yet it would be foolish to pass over the commercial background of Stevens's life, for without such commercial success it is almost certain his role as an Anglican lay activist would have been far less prominent. Indeed, as was highlighted at the end of the previous chapter, the rise of so many powerful Church of England laity at this

¹⁶ Bartle Frere, 'Memoir' in *The Works of the Right Honourable John Hookham Frere in Verse and Prose*, 2nd edn, vol.1, London, 1874, 6.

¹⁷ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 6.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Nigel Aston, 'Horne, George', *ODNB*.

²⁰ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 6.

time—High Church and Evangelical—was too profuse to be unrelated to the growth of British industry and commerce during the latter-half of the eighteenth century.

From roughly the 1750s onwards, mild price inflation coupled with low taxation and an increasing international demand for British manufacturing helped Britain's economy grow substantially into the early nineteenth century.²¹ Despite historians continuing to debate the exact chronological boundaries of when this period of noticeable industrial growth occurred,²² since the late nineteenth century it has been traditional to label this period as representing some sort of an 'Industrial Revolution'.²³ It is true that the use of this phrase is no longer employed without major qualification, even if it is still used at all; for though it was a period of substantial economic growth, this phenomenon is now generally seen as being less revolutionary and dramatic than has traditionally been depicted.²⁴ Yet when used specifically in relation to the rapid growth of the coal and cotton industries, as well as an overall rise in incomes, an 'Industrial Revolution' during the eighteenth century was by no means mythical.²⁵ Highlighting the related growth of commerce, Paul Langford refers to the period as an age dominated by commerce and trade.²⁶ Indeed, Langford thinks that commerce had more of an effect upon English society

²¹ Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, 68.

²² Most generally agree that it took place between 1700 and 1850 (see Steven King and Geoffrey Timmins, *Making Sense of the Industrial Revolution: English economy and society 1700-1850*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001, 5).

²³ *Ibid*, 6.

²⁴ John Rule, 'Manufacturing and Commerce' in H. T. Dickinson (ed.), *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Malden: Blackwell, 2002, 128; John Stevenson, 'Industrialization' in Ian McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776-1832*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, 134.

²⁵ Stevenson, 'Industrialization', 134.

²⁶ Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, 1-7.

than simply an increase in material conditions. For him, the period also saw the rise and importance of the middle-class, especially what he terms the ‘middling entrepreneur’ who through trade, manufacture or farming, reaped the benefits of Britain’s growing economy.²⁷ This economic growth would also come to be linked with a growing sense of nationhood and confidence in British culture and progress, especially as Britain’s overseas imperial ambitions (inseparably linked to industry and commerce) began to grow.²⁸ A number of recent historians have expanded this analysis by bringing religion—or more specifically, Anglicanism—into this context. Rowan Strong makes the point that commerce—which in his words ‘permeated eighteenth-century English culture’—became part of an imperial, missionary—and predominantly High Church—discourse, originating out of the SPG.²⁹ Evangelicals, similarly, have been shown to have had strong commercial links that were similarly bound up with missionary-related, religious concerns, both at home and within the British Empire.³⁰ Their own missionary societies—for example, the Church Missionary Society (or CMS; 1799) and the British and Foreign Bible Society (1804), among many others—had the backing of many powerful and wealthy businessmen. Individuals such as Clapham Sect members, John Thornton, Samuel Thornton (1754-1838), Henry Thornton, Charles Grant, Zachary Macaulay (1768-

²⁷ Ibid, 61.

²⁸ Ibid, 2; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992, 55-100; Andrew Porter, ‘An Overview, 1700-1914’ in Norman Etherington (ed.), *Missions and Empire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 50.

²⁹ Rowan Strong, *Anglicanism and the British Empire c.1700-1850*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 67-71.

³⁰ Boyd Stanley Schlenther, ‘Religious Faith and Commercial Empire’ in P. J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Volume II: The Eighteenth Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 128-150; Porter, ‘An Overview, 1700-1914’, 46-47, 50; Hilary M. Carey, *God’s Empire: Religion and Colonialism in the British World, c.1801-1908*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 149-154; John Wolffe, ‘Clapham Sect’, *ODNB*.

1838) and John Shore (1751-1834), are prominent examples of this sort of business-minded Christian. The place of commerce in these men's lives adds an extra dimension to their lay identity—already highlighted in the previous chapter. Their commercial success provided much of the funding for Clapham's religious ventures.³¹ Whilst the relationship between industry, commerce and religion has been noted and explored in some depth by scholars of Evangelicalism, especially within the context of missions and empire,³² High Church connections with commerce and industry have rarely been explored. One suspects that a tendency—perhaps begun by the sociologist, Max Weber—to associate eighteenth-century commerce primarily with Dissent; and, in turn, to associate Anglicanism with the nobility and landed gentry, still reigns as a hermeneutic among historians.³³ However, as this chapter will elucidate, this is a bias that deserves to be questioned. Strong's study—along with the contributions of Mark Smith—suggest that High Churchmanship did have important connections to eighteenth-century commerce and industry.³⁴ Anglican businessmen and entrepreneurs with High Church links appear to have been just as much of a force in eighteenth-century Britain as were those who

³¹ Christopher Tolley, *Domestic Biography: The Legacy of Evangelicalism in Four Nineteenth-Century Families*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, 3-4; David Newsome, *The Parting of Friends: The Wilberforces and Henry Manning*, Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1993 (orig. 1966), 21-23; Wolffe, 'Clapham Sect', *ODNB*.

³² See for example, Andrew Porter, '“Commerce and Christianity”: The Rise and Fall of a Nineteenth-Century Missionary Slogan', *The Historical Journal*, vol.28, no.3, 1985, 597-621; 'Porter, 'An Overview, 1700-1914', 50; Carey, *God's Empire*, 14, 23 n78.

³³ Stanley Chapman, *Merchant Enterprise in Britain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 43.

³⁴ See also Schlenther, 'Religious Faith and Commercial Empire', 128-150; Mark Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society: Oldham and Saddleworth 1740-1865*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994; Mark Smith, 'Hackney Phalanx', *ODNB*.

were members of Evangelical or Dissenting traditions.³⁵ One of these was William Stevens.

Stevens's home, London, is now seen as having been important to England's commercial prosperity during this period. Traditionally thought of as having been marginal to the commercial growth of England during the eighteenth century, especially when set aside the manufacturing might of Manchester or Leeds,³⁶ recent research has argued that London played a much more influential role in stimulating the British economy.³⁷ The key period for the city, argues David Barnett, was between 1775 and 1825, when through a combination of manufacture, trade and consumption, the city 'not only doubled in size' but also 'became the largest single business and industrial centre and market of the world's first modern industrial economy'.³⁸ Within this commercial growth, one key market that dominated London's economy was foreign trade, an area of commerce that formed, in his words, 'the single most important group of businesses in London'.³⁹ The prominent Evangelical banker, Henry Thornton, noted this importance when in 1803 he claimed

³⁵ James E. Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism: Nonconformity in Eighteenth-Century Politics and Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, 61-69; R. G. Wilson, *Gentlemen Merchants: The Merchant Community of Leeds 1700-1830*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971, 181-186; Chapman, *Merchant Enterprise in Britain*, 43.

³⁶ See for example, M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*, Chicago: Academy Chicago, 1984 (orig.1926), 15; Fernand Braudel, *Capitalism and Material Life 1400-1800*, New York: Harper Colophon, 1975, 440.

³⁷ See Barnett, *London, Hub of the Industrial Revolution*, *passim*; Roy Porter, *London: A Social History*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1994, 187, 374.

³⁸ Barnett, *London, Hub of the Industrial Revolution*, 1.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 202.

that 'London ... is become, especially of late, the trading metropolis of Europe, and indeed, of the whole world'.⁴⁰

Stevens would become one of these London-based merchants. Broadly defined as one engaged in the buying and selling of a particular product (including humans where the slave trade was concerned), within the period under discussion merchants tended to be those who traded in foreign markets.⁴¹ By the middle of the eighteenth century the merchant profession had come to be highly esteemed owing to its ability to add significantly to the overall wealth of Britain. 'Wherever he [the merchant] comes, wherever he lives', wrote R. Campbell in the mid eighteenth century, 'Wealth and Plenty follow him: the Poor is set to work, Manufacturers flourish, Poverty is banished, Public Credit increases. The Advantages of Commerce is evident to all mankind.'⁴² Campbell felt merchants could be distinguished from the other trades of London due to the disproportionate impact they had on the economy. With a required start-up capital of anything between £1,500 to £10,000, wealth and social status also elevated them above most trades.⁴³ Because of this, merchants at the upper-end of the economic spectrum were, on the whole, representatives of an elite class, though they were by no means socially exclusive.⁴⁴ Many entrepreneurially-minded tradesmen often broke through ranks of the lesser trades to become wealthy merchants themselves, thus climbing the social ladder and demonstrating that eighteenth-century English society was socially fluid in this area

⁴⁰ Henry Thornton, *An Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Paper Credit of Great Britain*, London, 1802, 59.

⁴¹ R. Campbell, *The London Tradesman*, 1st edn, London, 1747, 284-292.

⁴² *Ibid*, 284.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 27-27.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 24, 28.

at least.⁴⁵ There are a number of noteworthy High Church Anglicans that illustrate this phenomenon. One is the ironmaster, Richard Crawshay (1739-1810), a future business partner of Stevens who, though starting out with little wealth, became the most powerful and commercially successful British ironmaster of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁴⁶ Another is John Watson (*d.*1821), the father of the High Church layman, Joshua Watson, who who made his fortune as a London wine merchant after beginning on the shop floor of a London business.⁴⁷ Joshua Watson would later exceed his father's commercial success, as well as becoming the most dominant High Church layman of the early nineteenth century.⁴⁸ There is also the example of John Henry Newman's father, John Newman (*d.*1824), rising from relative obscurity to—at least for a time—becoming a moderately wealthy banker (a profession closely connected to merchant activity)⁴⁹ during the final decade of the eighteenth century.⁵⁰ The Evangelicals had similar examples, such as Charles Grant (1746-1823), who began his commercial life as a poor apprentice, eventually to become the director of the East India Company.⁵¹ The lives of such men testify to the Smilesian narrative of self-improvement and individual entrepreneurial endeavour that captured the minds of nineteenth-century writers who looked back on the commercial age of the century that had preceded them.

The mercantile life in the latter half of the eighteenth century sadly does not possess a Samuel Pepys, so it is difficult to gain a detailed insight into the day-to-day

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 24, 28.

⁴⁶ Chris Evans, 'Crawshay, Richard', *ODNB*; see also, below, 140-146.

⁴⁷ Churton, *Memoir*, vol.1, 2-12.

⁴⁸ See Chapter 6, 377-379.

⁴⁹ Campbell, *The London Tradesman*, 1st edn, 294.

⁵⁰ Sheridan Gilley, *Newman and His Age*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1990, 7-14.

⁵¹ Penelope Carson, 'Grant, Charles', *ODNB*.

running of a merchant business.⁵² Nonetheless, an insight into mercantile life and the various skills employed within it can, at a basic level, be found when examining the educational requirements that were common to merchants as a whole. Though schooling and other forms of education often laid the foundations for a career as a merchant,⁵³ much of the education of a merchant was achieved through the training provided by an on-the-job apprenticeship, at least until the late eighteenth century when the formal apprenticeship system began to decline.⁵⁴ All apprenticeships varied in the training they offered, but at the basic level an apprenticeship offered the ability to learn skills based around finance, accounting and the inventory of goods. For example, Stanley Chapman notes that apprenticeships ‘saw trainee merchants keeping accounts for their principals, attending to customers, and busy at the quayside keeping tally of incoming and outgoing cargoes. Later they might serve as a supercargo on ships sailing abroad or represent their firms in foreign markets’.⁵⁵ None of this training was ever free, especially if the apprentice came from outside the family circle that owned the business. In the early eighteenth century the cost of an apprenticeship could vary immensely. A few studies note that in Leeds prices varied between £40 and £450, a range that appears to have been similar in London.⁵⁶ Cost depended on the wealth, social standing and reputation of the master offering

⁵² A. D. Francis, *The Wine Trade*, London: Adam & Charles Black, 1972, 232.

⁵³ This was the case with Joshua Watson during the late eighteenth century, where attendance at a special commercial school tailored his education to the mercantile life (See Churton, *Memoir*, vol.1, 13-14).

⁵⁴ Wilson, *Gentlemen Merchants*, 23-25; David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 244; Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, 180-181.

⁵⁵ Chapman, *Merchant Enterprise in Britain*, 3-4; see also, Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 244.

⁵⁶ Wilson, *Gentlemen Merchants*, 23; W. A. Speck, *Stability and Strife: England, 1714-1760*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977, 74-75.

it.⁵⁷ For an aspiring merchant coming from a well-to-do (usually upper middle-class) family, entry into a successful career could be a smooth and easy process, but for those who were poorer there was never guarantee that a cheaper apprenticeship could lead to greater wealth and thus a rise in social standing—though of course it always contained this alluring potential.⁵⁸

The need for on-the-job training was understandable given the variety of merchants and the various markets they traded within, each having its own specific knowledge and detailed methods of transaction. There was much to learn. Campbell stressed this point in the *The London Tradesman*, where he noted that in addition to being ‘a Man of an extensive Genius’ and possessing a ‘genteel’ education, there was a need to possess not only a deep knowledge of the general principles of trade within foreign markets, but also to master the specific skills and information required for the market one traded within. As Campbell illustrates, these specific skills were many and clearly must have required the acquisition of an immense amount of information.

[A merchant] must understand not only Goods and Merchandize in general, and be a Judge of every particular Commodity he deals in, but must know Mankind and be acquainted with the different Manners and Customs of all the Trading Nations; he must know their different Products, the Properties of their Staple Commodities, their Taste in the several Sorts of Goods they want, their principal Marts and Markets, the Seasons proper for buying and selling, the Character and Humour of their Traders, their Coins, Weights, and Measures, their particular Manner of keeping Accompts, the Course of their

⁵⁷ Wilson, *Gentlemen Merchants*, 23.

⁵⁸ Speck, *Stability and Strife*, 74-75.

Exchange, &c. the Duties chargeable at their several Ports, their Methods of Entry and Clearance; their peculiar Mercantile Customs and Usages, relating either to Payments, or Buying and Selling; the common Arts, Tricks and Frauds, put in practice by the Dealers: In a word, he must be as well acquainted with the Manners and Customs of all the Nations he trades with as his own; all which requires an extensive Genius and great Experience.⁵⁹

Campbell's emphasis upon being acquainted with the manners and customs of the nations a merchant traded with highlights the international element in mercantile trade and how this also required another key skill on the part of the merchant: a knowledge of foreign languages. Thus, in addition to being able to 'understand his Mother Tongue perfectly', both in writing and in comprehension, a merchant also needed to possess a good knowledge of what Campbell referred to as 'the Trading Languages': that is, French, Dutch and Portuguese.⁶⁰ Like English itself, a merchant needed to be able to understand these languages and be able to write and converse in them. A classical education that taught its students Greek and Latin was not, in Campbell's view, essential for the skills needed for a merchant, but such knowledge could be helpful in obtaining a proficiency in the other more essential languages. Being competent in the above-mentioned areas of one's trading speciality, in Campbell's opinion, ensured the high likelihood of a successful mercantile career, whether in the employ of another or, given time and success, oneself.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Campbell, *The London Tradesman*, 1st edn, 292-293.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 293.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 293-294.

Stevens's master, John Hookham, is described by Park as having been an 'eminent wholesale hosier'.⁶² In Park's 1807 obituary of Stevens, published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, there is further information on Hookham's business: namely, that he ran a 'most extensive wholesale Nottingham Warehouse' from his house on Old Broad Street.⁶³ In a contemporary London commercial directory, however, Hookham is simply described as a 'hosier'.⁶⁴ To further confuse things, in the *Biographical List of the Members of 'The Club of Nobody's Friends'* (1885), Hookham is described as a 'Silk Throwster', that is, as someone involved in the process of turning raw silk into a thread that could then be used to make (mostly) silk stockings on a device known as a 'stocking-knitting-frame'.⁶⁵ What to make of these different terms? At a basic level, 'hosiers' are known to have been the sellers and makers of silk stockings, though other garments such as socks and gloves were also produced.⁶⁶ 'Silk Throwster' highlights the manufacturing aspect of the hosiery trade—in Hookham's case, the overseeing of its manufacture. The term 'wholesale hosier', however, is somewhat more difficult to define and requires a level of unpicking. There are, for instance, eighteenth-century London business directories that list a number of wholesale hosiers, though no information is given regarding what

⁶² Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 6.

⁶³ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1807, vol.77, London, 1807, 173.

⁶⁴ [Anon.], *The Universal Pocket Companion: Containing Among many other necessary and entertaining Particulars*, London, 1760, 151; see also, [Anon.], *A Complete Guide to all Persons who have any Trade or Concern with the City of London, and Parts Adjacent*, London, 1752, 159.

⁶⁵ G. E Cokayne, *Biographical List of the Members of 'The Club of Nobody's Friends'*, London, 1885, 24.

⁶⁶ R. Campbell, *The London Tradesman*, London, 2nd edn, 1757, 215.

type of businesses these wholesale hosiers engaged in.⁶⁷ In contemporary terms, one thinks of wholesalers as those who sell goods to retailers, and though this was often the case in the eighteenth century, the division between wholesale and retail was not quite as simple then as it is today. *Johnson's Dictionary*, for example, notes that 'to retail' referred merely to sale by small quantities, whilst 'wholesale' was defined as 'sale in the lump'—that is, in large quantities.⁶⁸ This is commensurate with a description given by the Dissenting novelist and sometime hosier, Daniel Defoe (c.1660-1731), who is recorded as having stated that the difference between wholesale and retail hosiers was primarily the difference between large-scale manufacturers and small-scale manufacturers.⁶⁹ To illustrate this, Defoe described the difference between wholesale and retail hosiers as the difference between large-scale brewers and small-scale brewers, both of whom sold directly to the public.⁷⁰ To further confuse things, many wholesalers additionally listed themselves as retailers.⁷¹ This was particularly the case in regard to the clothing and textile trades—especially in London, where it was common for wholesalers to deal in retail for the city market, but to sell wholesale elsewhere.⁷² Park's attribution of Hookham as an 'eminent wholesale hosier' indicates that Hookham's business would have likely been substantial in size, a conclusion strengthened by the attribution of a much later

⁶⁷ See for example, [Anon.], *The Complete Pocket Book, Or, Gentleman and Tradesman's Daily Journal*, London, 1775, 27; [Anon.], *The New Complete Guide to all Persons who have any Trade or Concern with the City of London, and Parts Adjacent*, London, 1777, 256.

⁶⁸ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, vol.1, London, 1773 (edition does not contain page numbers).

⁶⁹ *The British Quarterly Review*, Jan 1886, vol.83, London, 1886, 193.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ See for example, Campbell, *The London Tradesman*, 2nd edn, 215.

⁷² Barnett, *London, Hub of the Industrial Revolution*, 130, 132.

source that describes Hookham as ‘a rich London merchant’.⁷³ As Campbell made clear, large-scale merchants were known to sell their goods not simply within Britain, but also to overseas markets.⁷⁴

At the basis of the eighteenth-century hosiery trade was the ‘stocking-knitting-frame’, a device first invented by the Englishman William Lee in 1589.⁷⁵ Though initially made for the use of wool, a silk version was created in 1599. Technological modifications made to the original design ensured that by the middle of the seventeenth century the frame was in use not only in England, but all over Europe.⁷⁶ Those involved in the hosiery trade ranged from the lowly-paid journeyman and apprentices at the bottom levels who actually worked the stocking-frames, to the wealthy merchant-hosiers at the top, who both oversaw the making of stockings in large numbers and then sold them to various domestic and foreign markets. Small and profitable hosiery businesses were common in England during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, though from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards the hosiery trade would become increasingly dominated by a commercially powerful capitalist class of merchant-hosiers, who had major financial stakes in foreign trade.⁷⁷ Though the exact size of Hookham’s business is not able to be determined, nor indeed the exact types of products he made and sold, it is likely that Hookham resided somewhere within this latter category of larger

⁷³ Frere, ‘Memoir’ in *The Works of ... John Hookham Frere*, 6.

⁷⁴ See above, 124-125; Johnson’s *Dictionary* defines ‘Merchant’ as ‘One who traffics [sic] to remote countries’ (Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, vol.2, London, 1773, [no page numbers given in edition]).

⁷⁵ Joan Thirsk, ‘Knitting and Knitware, c.1500-1780’ in David Jenkins (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles*, vol.1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 573.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 576-578.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 582-583; Stanley Chapman, ‘The Hosiery Industry, 1780-1914’ in Jenkins (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles*, vol.1, 824-825.

merchant-hosiers. This conclusion is strengthened given that Hookham possessed a warehouse in Nottingham, in addition to a house of residence in London from which he conducted his business. Nottingham was a well-known centre of hosiery manufacture in England, and had been from the mid-seventeenth century.⁷⁸ Moreover, large-scale wholesale hosiers who owned warehouses in places like Nottingham were known to buy or rent large houses from which they lived and worked.⁷⁹ Though the majority chose to rent permanent rooms in hotels when working in London,⁸⁰ Hookham, running his business from his home in London, may not have been unusual given the strong business links that existed between hosiers in London and Nottingham.⁸¹

The exact circumstances that brought Stevens to Hookham in 1746 are not known, though it is likely some sort of prior arrangement, based on a social or religious connection, led to Stevens's apprenticeship. Hookham's fees would likely have been substantial, perhaps at the upper-end of the scale, and it is doubtful that his mother would have been able to afford such a promising commercial position on her own, certainly not without the help of some other patron such as her brother. Little is known of Hookham himself, though the fact that he never produced a male heir—having only one daughter—perhaps explains why Stevens was given such a privileged position within Hookham's firm and household.⁸² It was not uncommon for young, educated men to be apprenticed to hosiers in this way, though such

⁷⁸ F. A. Wells, *The British Hosiery and Knitwear Industry: Its History and Organisation*, Newton Abbot, 1972, 47-49.

⁷⁹ Chapman, 'The Hosiery Industry, 1780-1914', 828.

⁸⁰ Stanley Chapman, *Hosiery and Knitwear: Four Centuries of Small-Scale Industry in Britain c.1589-2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, 22.

⁸¹ Wells, *The British Hosiery and Knitwear Industry*, 49.

⁸² Frere, 'Memoir' in *The Works of ... John Hookham Frere*, 6; Gabrielle Festing, *John Hookham Frere and His Friends*, London, 1899, 4.

apprenticeships were usually given to family. F. A. Wells, for instance, in his study of the British hosiery trade, noted that the common practice was for Midland hosiers to apprentice their sons to London merchants and that often such apprentices were related to the merchant through family connections.⁸³ Stevens, obviously, came from a different situation than this; but a similar connection, perhaps based on friendship rather than family relations, may explain how he came into Hookham's employ.

That Hookham was relatively well-known as a businessman of London is likely, not only because of his appearance in a number of London trade directories,⁸⁴ but also owing to his membership within the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.⁸⁵ Being a governor of St Thomas's Hospital, Southwark, there also is evidence that he had an interest in philanthropy.⁸⁶ Religiously, there is little reason to doubt that Hookham would have shared—or at least was amenable to—the High Church principles of the Hornes' and was a dedicated member of the Church of England. This is a reasonable conclusion to draw given that his only daughter, Jane Hookham (1746-1813), was known as being a pious Anglican. Described as 'a sound Tory and Churchwoman', Jane Hookham's interest in things academic, especially history and theology, was well known to those who remembered her.⁸⁷ Indeed, her main reading interests would later come to be directed by Stevens himself, who came to act as a sort of religious and educational

⁸³ Wells, *The British Hosiery and Knitwear Industry*, 59.

⁸⁴ See [Anon.], *The Universal Pocket Companion: Containing Among many other necessary and entertaining Particulars*, London, 1760, 151; see also, [Anon.], *A Complete Guide to all Persons who have any Trade or Concern with the City of London, and Parts Adjacent*, London, 1752, 159.

⁸⁵ See [Anon.], *A List of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce*, London, 1762, 30.

⁸⁶ See [Anon.], *A List of the Governors of St. Thomas's Hospital, in Southwark, 1773*, London, 1773, 8.

⁸⁷ Festing, *John Hookham Frere and His Friends*, 5.

mentor, advising her in matters of religion, politics and history.⁸⁸ John Hookham's likely High Churchmanship becomes more certain when it is considered that Jane Hookham would marry Stevens's friend, the Hutchinsonian High Church layman and MP, John Frere (1740-1807), in 1768.⁸⁹ The Frere's were a devout High Church family and John Frere would become an intimate friend of Stevens, Horne and others within Stevens's circle.⁹⁰

With little attention focused on Stevens's commercial activities, Park instead details how his friend, despite the rigours of full-time employment, dedicated all of his spare time to religion, private study and the enrichment of his intellect. Regarding Stevens's personal commitment to Anglicanism, there seems no reason to doubt Park's claim that Stevens 'was early tinctured with the deepest convictions of religion'.⁹¹ His parents would likely have been pious and his childhood amongst the Horne's would have been imbued with the principles of a strong Anglican faith and practice. Not surprisingly, Park painted a detailed picture of Stevens's piety, describing how a devoutly orthodox High Church spirituality became the central aspect of Stevens's life from a young age. As Park characteristically put it in the early pages of the *Memoirs*, 'from his earliest youth, his mind was deeply impressed with pure and unaffected feelings of devotion, undebased by gloom or fanaticism'.⁹² Elsewhere, Park described Stevens as 'a firm and conscientious believer in all the doctrines of religion, as professed in the Church of England', as well as being 'an

⁸⁸ Frere, 'Memoir' in *The Works of ... John Hookham Frere*, 6-7; Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, 147-167.

⁸⁹ David Stoker, 'Frere, John', *ODNB*.

⁹⁰ Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760-1857*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 16.

⁹¹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 9.

⁹² *Ibid*, 13; see also, 10, 14, 35-37.

attentive observer of all her ordinances'.⁹³ Given, at times, Park's overtly hagiographic portrayal of Stevens's piety, the extent to which Park was accurately interpreting the early religious history of his friend undoubtedly suffers from being uncritically praiseworthy; yet despite this, Park remains an important source, especially owing to his description of the practice of Stevens's faith, which he claims were a habitual part of his life from a young age. These included Stevens's attendance at Sunday services in both the morning and afternoon.⁹⁴ Added to this was his attendance at the weekly Prayer Book offices, at the very least on Wednesdays and Fridays.⁹⁵ When communion services were held, he was said to be a frequent recipient of the sacrament.⁹⁶ Theological advice to Jane Hookham, to be examined further in the next chapter, confirms that Stevens held a very high view of Holy Communion, seeing the sacrament as a sacrificial offering: 'You will find there has been an altar, priest, and sacrifice from the Fall, and will be till the end of time; that the commemorative unbloody sacrifice of the Eucharist under the Gospel has succeeded to the prefigurative bloody sacrifices of slain beasts, which lasted during the patriarchal and legal dispensations'.⁹⁷ A High Church view of Holy Communion meant that Stevens preferred the priest to administer the elements to him with the words, 'The body of the Lord' and 'The blood of the Lord', but cautioned that 'I suspect, it would be thought *Popery!*'⁹⁸ Another aspect of Stevens's faith that may have been considered 'Popery' was his cautious approval of praying for the departed, an optional aspect of High Church spirituality that some endorsed but others

⁹³ Ibid, 37.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 38-39.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 38.

⁹⁷ Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, 153.

⁹⁸ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 38 (emphasis in original).

rejected.⁹⁹ In a letter to Jonathan Boucher on 12 September 1785, Stevens made mention of Samuel Johnson's *Prayers and Meditations* (1785), published just after his death. Johnson had endorsed the practice of praying for the faithful departed and Stevens, noting this fact, commented: 'It doesn't succeed to my mind: and yet as Sam managed it I don't see much to condemn in it'.¹⁰⁰

In Stevens's public attendance to religious duties, Park emphasised that from an early age, he always maintained an exemplary level of attentiveness, punctuality and fastidiousness;¹⁰¹ yet though Park saw this as a sign of sanctity, one may interpret Stevens's piety as being, at times, somewhat eccentric in its manifestation. Park observed, for instance, observed that Stevens had the habit of standing up during services 'when the praises of God were sung, even though in a congregation, where he might be the solitary instance of this decorous and becoming usage'.¹⁰² Towards the end of his life Stevens even adopted clothes strikingly similar to the dress of the clergyman—'in black clothes, and a bushy clerical wig', as Park put it; a fact that caused one cleric—John Prince, curate of St Vedast, Foster Lane—to think that Stevens, a congregant, was in holy orders.¹⁰³ An early nineteenth-century account of Stevens's presence at a service where his friend George Horne was preaching, sheds further light on Stevens's odd manner.

Attending divine service at a church where the excellent Prelate [George Horne] was to preach, he [Stevens] could not help expressing the pleasure he felt on seeing him enter the pulpit; and during his subsequent discourse, by

⁹⁹ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 122, 221.

¹⁰⁰ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 12 September 1785, Earl Gregg Swem Library, Jonathan Boucher Papers, B/3/21.

¹⁰¹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 38.

¹⁰² *Ibid* (emphasis in original).

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 39-40.

rubbing his hands, and laughing to himself. An old woman, accustomed to attend the church, stopped the Bishop after the service, to thank him for the benefit she expected to derive from his admonitions; “but,” said she “Sir, there was a good-for-nothing gentleman in a wig, who sat in yonder pew, who did nothing but laugh and make faces at you the whole time you were in the pulpit.”¹⁰⁴

Stevens was not, however, simply a pious member of the Church of England, for at a young age he also began substantial private academic study. Stevens’s intellectual development occurred primarily through the acquisition of classical and foreign languages, specifically: Latin, Greek, Hebrew and French.¹⁰⁵ Park believed that in this way it could be claimed that Stevens was achieving academic attainments similar to those of his cousin, Horne, who had studied at Oxford.¹⁰⁶ Of these languages, Park notes that Stevens was most skilled in French and, to justify this claim, quotes from Stevens himself who reveals that he received private lessons for the duration of a year, during which a French tutor visited him for an hour three times a week.¹⁰⁷ Of the three classical languages, Park claims Stevens further studied these during this period as well, developing his linguistic abilities from the basic knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew he would have received under the Reverend Bye’s tuition at Maidstone.

Of Steven’s procurement of these languages, his acquisition of French is perhaps the most interesting. Park gives the distinct impression that learning French

¹⁰⁴ *London Literary Gazette, and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, etc.*, 10 October 1818, no.90, 655.

¹⁰⁵ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 7.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 6-7.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 7.

was for Stevens simply a private academic attainment, a goal pursued for his own intellectual attainments during his own leisure hours.¹⁰⁸ This may have been true, however, it is equally possible that learning French was in fact a commercially-related pursuit. Hosiers in the late eighteenth century had French connections and it may be that the French language was required by Stevens for trade purposes.¹⁰⁹ William Felkin's 1867 history of the hosiery industry noted that the influential English hosier, John Heathcoat (1783-1861), spent years learning French so as to engage in cross-Channel trade.¹¹⁰

Stevens's time as an apprentice lasted for about a year, after which he continued to work in Hookham's firm. Further indicating some sort of prior arrangement based on a social or religious connection that Stevens had with the Hookham family, in 1754 Stevens was rewarded with a share in Hookham's business and was made a full partner.¹¹¹ However, Stevens had apparently worked tirelessly to achieve this, for as Park observed Stevens was soon suffering for what he had achieved: 'Soon after this most advantageous change in his worldly circumstances had taken place, it appears that the constant attention paid by him to the immediate duties of his station, and his laborious studies, overpowered his health'.¹¹² Specifically, two years after he was made a partner in Hookham's business Stevens was forced to spend time at the Bristol Spa to recuperate. Writing from Bristol in 1756 to an unnamed male friend, Stevens described how it was his hope that his 'heavenly landlord' would 'thoroughly repair this poor ruinous clay cottage of

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Chapman, 'The Hosiery Industry, 1780-1914', 825-827.

¹¹⁰ William Felkin, *A History of the Machine-Wrought Hosiery and Lace Manufactures*, Cambridge, 1867, 251.

¹¹¹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 8.

¹¹² Ibid.

mine'.¹¹³ He does not reveal what illness he was suffering from, but Stevens could nonetheless report that his health was recovering: 'the Doctor does not apprehend *any* danger, as the phrase is'.¹¹⁴ Yet the letter does make known that by his late twenties Stevens's religious faith had cemented itself as a central part of his life. In replying to what appears to have been a request for some sort of religious or moral instruction,¹¹⁵ Stevens replied that he was not able to do this in the required timeframe, but nonetheless hoped that his short letter will be of comfort. 'If I have been any way instrumental to your good I thank God for it: and by the *weakness* of the *means is his strength made perfect*. To him be all the glory! for what am I? a worm, and no man. Of this truth I am more and more convinced every day. You need not desire me to excuse your faults: I see too many in myself to be severe on others.'¹¹⁶ Park interpreted this letter as a sign of Stevens's early dedication to faith and piety.¹¹⁷ In fact, most of Stevens's period as an apprentice and as a partner in Hookham's business is interpreted as having been a religious triumph over commercial normality: that is, of a layman who transcended the day-to-day activity of a trade and put his mind to higher things.¹¹⁸

There is very little appreciation on the part of Park towards Stevens's commercial life, despite its importance in creating for Stevens the wealth, freedom and skills that would ultimately account for much of his success as a lay Anglican. In quoting a letter Stevens wrote in his thirty-third year to the widow of the High

¹¹³ Ibid, 9.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ For example, Stevens writes: 'I wish, my dear friend, I was able to comply with one part of your request as the other; *and had it in my power to afford you instruction and comfort*' (As quoted in *ibid*, emphasis in original).

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 9-10.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ See for example, *ibid*, 19.

Church physician, Thomas Randolph (who had attended to Stevens during his recuperation), Park praised the sentiments of piety and consolation expressed by Stevens to Randolph's widow, 'when this letter is known to be the production of a young layman of thirty-three, and that layman a tradesman, whose general employment was so uncongenial to studies calculated to produce a letter of this nature, so full of Christian consolation to the afflicted lady to whom it was addressed'.¹¹⁹ Yet it is questionable why Stevens's employment should have been regarded as 'uncongenial' in this way. As has already been highlighted, commerce and religion were commonly linked pursuits during the eighteenth century. The Evangelical Henry Thornton was a banker; the High Churchman, Joshua Watson, was a wine merchant—as had been his father. Even the laywoman, Elinor James had been a printer—a trade that was central to her own style of lay activism.¹²⁰ All of these individuals had much time for religious pursuits. Park's evaluation suggests a denigration of commerce that is out of place when considering its connections to eighteenth-century religion. One can only speculate why this was the case. A possible explanation is related to Park's dismissive attitude towards the occupation of Stevens's father—a reflection that Park may have been dismissive of his own family origins.¹²¹ As has been noted, Park's father was a surgeon.¹²² Surgeons were not highly esteemed in Georgian Britain, especially in the early eighteenth century. Seen as being a trade lower on the social scale than a physician—a class of professionals who also had to struggle to gain a positive reputation—surgery had the added problem of being thought of as a manual trade not involving a great deal of

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 12-13.

¹²⁰ See Chapter 2, 99.

¹²¹ See Chapter 3, 113-114.

¹²² See Introduction, 4.

intelligence, with the additional negative associations of constant bloody amputations.¹²³ A trade that earned its fees from amputations and blood-letting (prior to the invention of general anaesthetic) did not carry with it a high social reputation.¹²⁴ A mid nineteenth-century description of Park's father as being 'a respectable surgeon' was probably purposeful in this regard.¹²⁵ Though entirely speculative, it is not at all outside the realm of possibility that Park would have rather forgotten his father's background in trade and, as a reaction to this, disparaged—perhaps unwittingly—the role that business played in his friend's life.

Stevens's later reputation as a lay divine indicates that his own investment in private study must have been substantial and, as is highlighted by his physical breakdown, perhaps even damaging to his health when placed alongside his work commitments. But it is also likely that following his rise to success in the hosiery trade, especially from the mid 1750s onwards, Stevens would increasingly have more time to devote to the religious causes that Park devoted his memoir to elucidating. Because so little is known about the fine details of Stevens's commercial life, especially his work hours and the exact size of the fortune he would amass, an element of speculation is involved here. However, his later contributions to Church-related activities indicates that success in business had brought with it the time to devote to the causes he loved, and for which Park and so many of his friends so lauded him. This hardly points to a trade 'uncongenial' in the way Park describes it.

¹²³ Roy Porter, *Bodies Politic: Disease, Death and Doctors in Britain, 1650-1900*, London: Reaktion Books, 2001, 173-174; Allan Everett Marble, *Surgeons, Smallpox and the Poor: A History of Medicine and Social Conditions in Nova Scotia, 1749-1799*, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993, 3-4.

¹²⁴ Porter, *Bodies Politic*, 173-174; Marble, *Surgeons, Smallpox and the Poor*, 3-4.

¹²⁵ Edward Foss, *The Judges of England*, vol.9, London, 1864, 229.

There is, however, an indication of a more direct link between commerce and religion in Stevens's life, one that raises broader historiographical implications than simply illustrating the importance of commerce in the life of this High Church layman. Interestingly, the link does not involve the hosiery trade, but instead focuses on the only other commercial venture that we have evidence for in Stevens's life (which Park makes no mention of): namely, a short-lived speculative involvement in the Welsh iron trade from the mid-1780s onwards.

From 1786 to 1791 Stevens became part owner of an important ironworks of Cyfarthfa, located within the Welsh parish of Merthyr.¹²⁶ Welsh industry had grown exponentially during the eighteenth century, and this was especially the case with regard to a huge expansion in Welsh mining and metal refinement from the 1750s onwards.¹²⁷ In northern Wales copper ore was exploited, whilst the south became centred around the refinement of iron ore at a number of ironworks located around Merthyr.¹²⁸ A coke-smelting furnace had been built there at Cyfarthfa in 1766. The original owner was the London-based merchant and MP for Aylesbury from 1764 to 1784, Anthony Bacon (*bap.*1717-*d.*1786), who combined his commercial influence with political and religious interests. Bacon had originally been a tobacco merchant at Whitehaven, but had made his fortune in London executing government contracts and transporting slaves to North America.¹²⁹ According to Chris Evans, Bacon

¹²⁶ Chris Evans, *'The Labyrinth of Flames': Work and Social Conflict in Early Industrial Merthyr Tydfil*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993, 131; F. C. Mather, *High Church Prophet: Bishop Samuel Horsley (1733-1806) and the Caroline Tradition in the Later Georgian Church*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, 14.

¹²⁷ Geraint H. Jenkins, 'Wales in the Eighteenth Century' in H. T. Dickinson (ed.), *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Malden: Blackwell, 2002, 396.

¹²⁸ Haydn Jones, *Accounting, Costing and Estimation, Welsh Industry: 1700-1830*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1985, 3.

¹²⁹ Evans, *'The Labyrinth of Flames'*, 16-17.

shared Stevens's High Church views¹³⁰ and, one assumes, also shared a friendship with him given that Stevens, along with the clergyman, Samuel Glasse (1734-1812),¹³¹ were executors of his will when he died in 1786.¹³² After he entered parliament Bacon began to make money supplying iron cannon to the East India Company and consequently built the ironworks at Cyfarthfa. By the late 1770s Bacon had formed a business partnership with the self-made ironmaster and High Church-inclined merchant, Richard Crawshay (1739-1810).¹³³ Both men would become leading munitions suppliers to European markets.¹³⁴ When Bacon died he left his assets—which included the Cyfarthfa works—to his three sons. Too young to inherit such concerns, Bacon's assets were temporarily leased out to friends and associates; and the Cyfarthfa ironworks was divided up into three parts,¹³⁵ a third of which was leased out to Stevens, the other shareholders being Crawshay and an ironmaster from Yorkshire, James Cockshutt (*d.*1819)—the latter being the ironworks onsite manager.¹³⁶ To keep their share and profit from the ironworks, Crawshay, Stevens and Cockshutt would pay an annual rent of £1000.¹³⁷ Why

¹³⁰ Ibid, 131-132.

¹³¹ See Nigel Aston, 'Glasse, Samuel', *ODNB*.

¹³² Evans, *The Labyrinth of Flames*, 131-132.

¹³³ What separated Crawshay from Stevens's High Churchmanship was his commercial links with lay Evangelicals, especially the powerful Thornton family and individuals such as William Wilberforce—a connection Stevens appears to have avoided throughout his life (see *ibid*, 132-133; Chris Evans (ed.), *The Letterbook of Richard Crawshay 1788-1797*, Cardiff: South Wales Record Society, 1990, 136, 141, 148, 170).

¹³⁴ Evans, *The Labyrinth of Flames*, 17.

¹³⁵ His will bequeathed his estate to his three young sons. All too young to assume responsibility for his business interests, they were leased out to his friends and associates by the Court of Chancery (*ibid*).

¹³⁶ G. G. L. Hayes, 'Introduction' in Chris Evans (ed.), *The Letterbook of Richard Crawshay*, xii, 181.

¹³⁷ Alan Birch, *The Economic History of the British Iron and Steel Industry, 1784-1879*, London: Frank Cass and Co., 1967, 76.

Crawshay, Stevens and Cockshutt took on this large and demanding project was probably due to a combination of charity on behalf of a departed friend,¹³⁸ in addition to a clear desire to see the Cyfarthfa ironworks turn a profit.¹³⁹ Stevens's involvement in the project certainly indicates that by the mid-1780s he had acquired the time and money to invest in commercial projects unrelated to hosiery. Chris Evans plausibly thinks that all three men would have put in substantial amounts of capital into the project.¹⁴⁰ A later balance of working capital, revealed to be £20,000, confirms this likelihood.¹⁴¹ Crawshay certainly never hid his deep-seated ambition for commercial greatness within the iron trade—a desire he frequently made known to those who would listen, even personally confessing it to Stevens on one occasion.¹⁴² Cyfarthfa provided Crawshay with that opportunity. Stevens, on the other hand, though also likely to have been motivated to see Cyfarthfa become a commercial success, does not appear to have been as devoted as Crawshay to this goal—a fact that would be born out in his conduct as part-owner. In addition to evidence of growing wealth, Stevens's decision to enter this different commercial setting provides evidence that by the late 1780s his business influence and commercial skills were known and sought out by others within his London-based circle of High Church friends.

Both living in the City of London, Stevens and Crawshay oversaw the running of the ironworks from a distance, whilst Cockshutt worked directly at

¹³⁸ Richard Crawshay to William Stevens, 30 November 1795, in Evans (ed.), *The Letterbook of Richard Crawshay*, 151.

¹³⁹ Evans, *The Labyrinth of Flames*, 121-122.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 17-18.

¹⁴¹ Richard Crawshay to William Stevens and William Crawshay, 1 September 1791, in Evans (ed.), *The Letterbook of Richard Crawshay*, 115.

¹⁴² Evans, *The Labyrinth of Flames*, 121-124; Richard Crawshay to William Stevens, 13 August 1789, in Evans (ed.), *The Letterbook of Richard Crawshay*, 46.

Cyfarthfa.¹⁴³ However, far from simply being passive bystanders keen on seeing commercial output, Stevens, and to a lesser extent Crawshay, would make regular visits to Wales to inspect the operations and, in Stevens's case, take on accounting work related to the business. This set-up is illustrated in a letter of Stevens to his close clerical friend, Jonathan Boucher, written not long after Stevens had taken on the new venture. In the letter he described one of these early trips into Wales. Having returned to London from Cyfarthfa and clearly worn-out from the exertions of the trip, he explained to Boucher his role in helping to maintain the financial and accounting aspects of the ironworks. 'My journey into Wales has been a pleasant one, and I am very glad it was undertaken. It has removed prejudices, and been to the satisfaction of all parties. Our stay Cyfarthfa was exactly a week, and I can tell you, that part of the time I worked very hard; one day I was examining books and settling accounts from 7 oClock in the morning till near 10 oClock at night.'¹⁴⁴

Though hinting at some problems, it is not known what 'prejudices' are being referred to here. Yet if Stevens felt able to report positively regarding 'the satisfaction of all parties' towards the latter half of 1786, the situation at Cyfarthfa would soon take a turn for the worst, putting the profitability and future viability of the ironworks at risk. Part of the reason for this had to do with Crawshay's determination to make profitable a new and experimental process of refining of iron ore known as 'puddling'. Puddling was a method of refining iron ore by exposing all the metal to oxygen through a method of stirring or 'puddling'.¹⁴⁵ Puddling used coal as a fuel; up until then the iron industry in Britain had been dependent on a process

¹⁴³ Evans, *The Labyrinth of Flames*, 18; Evans (ed.), *The Letterbook of Richard Crawshay*, 181.

¹⁴⁴ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 10 August 1786, Boucher Papers, B/3/26 (punctuation in original).

¹⁴⁵ Chris Evans, 'Cort, Henry', *ODNB*; Evans, *The Labyrinth of Flames*, 40-43

of refinement that used charcoal.¹⁴⁶ The new process had been invented by the ironmaster, Henry Cort (c.1741-1800), and had the potential of producing more iron, of superior quality, and at a much faster pace.¹⁴⁷ Cort, however, was declared bankrupt in late 1789 and was unable to see his process transform the British iron industry. That task—along with industrial greatness—would become Crawshay’s unrelenting ambition, but it was not without its severe trials. In fact, it took years of experimentation and repeated failure before Cyfarthfa was able to get the new and uncertain process to work. It was a learning curve not helped by a level of incompetence on Cockshutt’s part, a fact that became an increasing concern for Crawshay and Stevens as the early years of the partnership wore on. Cockshutt’s perspective is not heard, yet from Crawshay’s testimony—often communicated to Stevens—it is revealed that Cockshutt was intent on producing iron bars at such a rapid pace that quality was being sacrificed for output.¹⁴⁸ By early 1789 Crawshay and Stevens had become highly critical of his performance, with Stevens making more trips into Wales to inspect the situation and call Cockshutt to account.¹⁴⁹ The reports Stevens sent back to Crawshay were depressing.¹⁵⁰ As profits failed to materialise, attempts to persuade Cockshutt to perform with more competence seemed to fall on deaf ears. By 30 June 1789 Stevens wanted to end his involvement in the ironworks, expressing to Crawshay his wish to sell his share.¹⁵¹ Crawshay was

¹⁴⁶ Ibid; *ibid*, 40.

¹⁴⁷ Evans, ‘Cort, Henry’, *ODNB*.

¹⁴⁸ See for example, Samuel Jellicoe to Richard Crawshay, 26 January 1789, in Evans (ed.), *The Letterbook of Richard Crawshay*, 35.

¹⁴⁹ Richard Crawshay to J. Kemeys Tynte, 18 July 1788, in *ibid*, 21.

¹⁵⁰ Richard Crawshay to William Stevens, 31 July 1788, in *ibid*, 22.

¹⁵¹ ‘Our Friends the Travellers return with reports that make me sick ... [Stevens] desires me to release him, he can no longer bear the anxiety of mind your ruinous conduct has brought upon him’ (Richard Crawshay to James Cockshutt, 30 June 1789, in *ibid*, 44).

also expressing similar sentiments but his determination to make Cyfarthfa profitable was too strong to see him back out.¹⁵² Stevens initially had a change of mind and decide to stay, yet the situation at Cyfarthfa failed to show any sign of improvement.¹⁵³ The iron was not being sold and in August 1791 a dismal balance sheet appeared to signal the imminent end of the ironworks. ‘The accounts’, Crawshay recorded in his letterbook, ‘are so completely frightful that Stevens and WC are to visit Cyfarthfa forthwith’.¹⁵⁴ Writing to Stevens on 1 September, Crawshay was equally despondent: ‘we have been trad.g 5 years with an enormous Capital for the suppos’d profit of [£]849’. In the same letter the working capital is revealed to be the enormous sum of £20,000.¹⁵⁵

Stevens was equally despondent; in fact, he had finally had enough. That same day he expressed to Boucher his exasperation with the situation and a renewed desire to be finished with the project. At the very least, Cockshutt had to be persuaded of his incompetence and leave.

[O]n coming to town the first thing I heard was that I must set off, directly for Wales, which I am actually to do to morrow [sic] morning with Will Crawshay,¹⁵⁶ to examine into matters and see if we can find out why the last half years balance, which came while I was in Berkshire, was so bad and persuade Cockshutt that as he must be conscious he is not equal to conducting the works he must wish to quit them. ... Trouble is at hand. It

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ William Stevens to James Cockshutt, 4 December 1789, in *ibid.*, 53.

¹⁵⁴ Richard Crawshay to James Cockshutt, 24 August 1791, in *ibid.*, 114.

¹⁵⁵ Richard Crawshay to William Stevens and William Crawshay, 1 September 1791, in *ibid.*, 115.

¹⁵⁶ William Crawshay (1764-1834), Richard Crawshay’s only son (see *ibid.*, 182).

should seem as if there was little more peace or comfort for me in their world.¹⁵⁷

Seeming to contradict Crawshay's claim that Cyfarthfa was making a profit (albeit a slim one), Stevens also made reference to a number of outstanding debts amounting to £2240. Speculating that auditors may be required to rescue the operation, he lamented: 'I know not what can be determined'.¹⁵⁸ He was only sure that he would no longer be a part of any future dealings with the ironworks.¹⁵⁹ Crawshay rapidly bought out both Stevens and Cockshutt, making himself sole owner and manager of Cyfarthfa. Though an inconvenience to Crawshay, Stevens's departure was nonetheless amicable and the two men remained good friends.¹⁶⁰ Cockshutt's departure, however, created a lasting rancour, especially with Crawshay. Disputing how much his share in the partnership was worth, Cockshutt would argue the matter with Crawshay until 1796—eventually ending in a legal dispute.¹⁶¹

Though Stevens seems to have kept some capital tied up with Cyfarthfa in the form of shares, at least until the late 1790s,¹⁶² the irony of his exit from the Cyfarthfa partnership is that by late 1791 Crawshay would finally master the method of 'puddling' that had, in part, held the ironworks back since the mid-1780s. To take

¹⁵⁷ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 1 September 1791, Boucher Papers, B/3/56.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Richard Crawshay to William Stevens, 9 September 1791, in Evans (ed.), *The Letterbook of Richard Crawshay*, 116.

¹⁶¹ Richard Crawshay to William Stevens, 23 August 1794; Richard Crawshay to Edward Escourt, 25 Aug 1794; Richard Crawshay to William Stevens, 17 July 1795; Richard Crawshay to James Cockshutt, 17 July 1795; Richard Crawshay to William Stevens, 2 May 1796; Richard Crawshay to William Crawshay, 5 May 1796, in *ibid.*, 138, 142-143, 156-157.

¹⁶² Richard Crawshay to William Stevens, 30 Jun 1797, in *ibid.*, 171.

control of the business, he moved to Cyfarthfa in May 1792.¹⁶³ By the early nineteenth century Crawshay would turn the mine into the largest and most productive ironworks in the world.¹⁶⁴ Nicknamed ‘Moloch the Iron King’, Crawshay created a reputation as the most powerful ironmaster of the Industrial Revolution.¹⁶⁵ He would die with an estimated £1.5 million fortune.¹⁶⁶ It is true that Stevens did not remain for the long haul, though his role in this important episode in Britain’s industrial development during the eighteenth century should not be underestimated, and Crawshay never wanted Stevens to leave.¹⁶⁷ From the beginning his investment capital and expertise were constantly made use of, especially when it came to matters related to finance and accounting. It is also noteworthy to point out that it was frequently Stevens, not Crawshay, who made the trips into Wales to inspect the situation and bring the unreliable Cockshutt to account.

Stevens’s brief role within the British iron industry during late eighteenth century illustrates a different aspect of his commercial life as well as demonstrating his influence and stature as a commercial figure. But viewed within the context of this thesis the episode is much more than simply being another facet of his commercial vocation. Just as significant are the High Church connections that are evident in the affair. It can, in fact, be argued that it was just as much of a religious connection as it was a commercial one that brought about the Cyfarthfa partnership

¹⁶³ Hayes, ‘Introduction’ in *ibid*, xvii.

¹⁶⁴ *The Monthly Review*, 2nd series, April 1805, vol.46, London, 1805, 355; Evans, ‘*The Labyrinth of Flames*’, 28.

¹⁶⁵ Chris Evans, ‘The Industrial Revolution in Iron in the British Isles’ in Chris Evans and Göran Rydén (eds), *The Industrial Revolution in Iron: The Impact of British Coal Technology in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, 25; Evans, ‘*The Labyrinth of Flames*’, 121-122.

¹⁶⁶ Jones, *Accounting, Costing and Estimation*, 118.

¹⁶⁷ Richard Crawshay to William Crawshay, 9 Sep 1791, in Evans (ed.), *The Letterbook of Richard Crawshay*, 116.

in the first place. Evans has detailed how Anglican High Church laymen dominated the Welsh iron industry at Merthyr, a trend that was begun by Anthony Bacon, who, as has already been noted, moved within the same circle of High Churchmen as Stevens.¹⁶⁸ ‘In general’, writes Evans, ‘the Merthyr ironmasters were conservatives, Anglican in their worship and Tory in their sympathies’.¹⁶⁹ Evans goes on to observe that Bacon ‘was linked to a network of conservative divines and lay activists’ that included Stevens and Crawshay.¹⁷⁰ Another High Church laymen involved in Crawshay’s iron business was Edward Frere (1770-1844), the second son of John Frere, previously mentioned as the husband of Jane Hookham, the daughter of Stevens’s master.¹⁷¹ Edward Frere, or Ned as he was known, was apprenticed into the iron trade (at Cyfarthfa) via the patronage of Stevens.¹⁷² This act of patronage was due to the shared religious principles that bound men such as Stevens, Crawshay and Frere together.¹⁷³ Just as Stevens had likely been sent to John Hookham in a similar act of patronage amongst High Church friends, Edward Frere seems to have received similar treatment, showing that High Churchmanship, already known to have received much of its cohesion from patronage, family, kinship and friendship, used shared principles to foster vocations amongst the laity as well as those in holy orders.¹⁷⁴ There were practical as well as ideological reasons for conducting business among friends of like-minded religious views. As Stanley Chapman noted in relation to Dissenting merchants in various parts of England, who frequently conducted

¹⁶⁸ See above, 139-140.

¹⁶⁹ Evans, *The Labyrinth of Flames*, 131.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 131-132.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 64; Evans (ed.), *The Letterbook of Richard Crawshay*, 21, 24, 96.

¹⁷² Evans, *The Labyrinth of Flames*, 64.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 15-17.

business amongst themselves: religious solidarity provided cohesion and reliability to commercial transactions, which were usually always dependent on understanding and trust. Keeping business within the family was one way of achieving this, but family boundaries were limited—hence the value of maintaining commercial links based on a shared religious outlook.¹⁷⁵ However, the evidence presented here shows that this was not only a Dissenting phenomenon. Indeed, this whole chapter points to a renewed need for historians to take more seriously the Anglican—and more specifically, High Church—involvement in the period that historians cautiously refer to as the Industrial Revolution.

Stevens's financial role within the Cyfarthfa ironworks highlights that by the early 1790s Stevens had become, at the very least, a moderately wealthy man. In one of the few remarks made about Stevens's mercantile life, Park observed that 'Providence had blessed his industry with great success'.¹⁷⁶ This is not surprising; the period from 1750 to 1810 was a time of significant commercial growth for the hosiery trade, one in which 'exports more than doubled'.¹⁷⁷ It is not known what sort of income Stevens earned from the hosiery trade, nor how large and influential his firm became, but that he became wealthy from the 1750s onwards is evident from not only the Cyfarthfa investment but also from the sort of sums that became normal for him to bestow as a philanthropist. It was not, for instance, unusual for Stevens to annually bestow gifts of hundreds or even thousands of pounds upon the various recipients of his aid.¹⁷⁸ However, the accumulation of wealth would have been aided by a number of practical considerations relating to Stevens's living arrangements.

¹⁷⁵ Chapman, *Merchant Enterprise in Britain*, 45.

¹⁷⁶ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 27.

¹⁷⁷ Chapman, 'The Hosiery Industry, 1780-1914', 826-27.

¹⁷⁸ See Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 23-34.

Stevens, firstly, never married and hence did not have the cost of raising and supporting a family.¹⁷⁹ Secondly, he lived his whole life in the same residence on 68 Old Broad Street, the house he entered when he became an apprentice in 1746.¹⁸⁰ Park claims that he also never kept a servant, disliking the interference it caused, but most importantly, because it allowed Stevens to give more money away to charitable causes¹⁸¹ (this, however, is contradicted by Park's own account, which notes that Stevens had a servant attend to him on his death bed).¹⁸² All of these factors left Stevens less economically encumbered to pursue those Church-related interests that he became known for.

John Hookham died sometime in the latter-half of the eighteenth century, upon which Stevens became chief partner, running his business with Hookham's nephew, John Paterson (*d.*1831),¹⁸³ along with an individual named Mr Watlington.¹⁸⁴ In 1801 Park records that Stevens began a process of partly pulling out of his business commitments, relinquishing 'a great part of the profits, in order to be relieved from the drudgery of business, and to dedicate more of his time to the society of friends that he loved, and to those studies in which he delighted'.¹⁸⁵ In 1805, two years prior to his death, Stevens gave up his business entirely, handing the whole concern over to Mr. Paterson.¹⁸⁶ Park's comment that it was the drudgery of business that had caused Stevens to give up most of his commercial activity may be

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 20, 27, 130.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 6.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 62.

¹⁸² See *ibid*, 128; Chapter 6, 379.

¹⁸³ Geoffrey Best, *Temporal Pillars: Queen Anne's Bounty, The Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Church of England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964, 224.

¹⁸⁴ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 13.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 13-14.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 14.

correct, but it is also misleading. By 1801 Stevens was almost seventy years of age and no doubt close to retirement (he would die in 1807). If the drudgery of business had finally become too burdensome at sixty-nine years of age, that is understandable; yet it also needs to be emphasised that Stevens had continued working for the vast majority of his adult life. To be sure, a much earlier letter to Jonathan Boucher on 7 July 1784 testifies that at least on one occasion Stevens had regarded business and its earnings as not worth the effort. Then, Stevens complained to Boucher, ‘I am likely to spend this whole week, perhaps you will say, as I have done many years, about nothing. I am sick of it. An apostle said on a certain occasion, Thy money perish with thee, I am almost ready to say, My money perish with thee, for it is hardly worth the trouble of getting, or rather of trying to get it’.¹⁸⁷ Nonetheless, Stevens did take the trouble of getting it, spending almost sixty years of his life as a merchant and accumulating substantial sums, possibly tens of thousands of pounds, albeit he gave much of it away to the Church and the poor.

From this chapter it can be seen how important commerce was as a shaping factor in Stevens’s life. Though no specific ideological link between commerce and religion seems to have been evident in Stevens’s life, it is nonetheless clear that, contrary to Park’s narrative, Stevens’s influence as a High Church layman was to a great extent dependent on factors unrelated to piety, learning or a high standard of morality. Not only did Stevens’s success in commerce provide the time and wealth that allowed him to devote himself to theological and ecclesiastical concerns, commercial success led Stevens into a context where the skills and energy of a successful businessman could be used within an ecclesiastical context. The chapter is also a reminder of the fact that the commercial world of late eighteenth-century

¹⁸⁷ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 7 July 1784, Boucher Papers, B/3/14 (emphasis in original).

Britain had important High Church connections. The contents of this chapter confirms Mark Smith's observation that the rise of powerful High Church and Evangelical groupings in the late eighteenth century derived much of their strength from individuals who came from the growing commercial classes.¹⁸⁸ Stevens was only one of many Anglican merchants and businessmen to inhabit a High Church connection during this period. Some of the other names mentioned in this chapter—John Hookham, Anthony Bacon, Richard Crawshay, John Frere, Edward Frere, John Watson, Joshua Watson—indicate that eighteenth-century High Churchmanship played a broader commercial-entrepreneurial role in English society—a role commonly admitted to Evangelicals and Dissenters, but rarely to High Churchmen. Exemplified in the figure of Stevens, their presence necessitates a re-evaluation of the place of High Church businessmen within Britain's late eighteenth-century religious history.

¹⁸⁸ See Chapter 2, 111-112 & n224.

Chapter 4. Theological Activism (I): the 1770s

There is reason to agree with Park that Stevens was ‘a deep theologian’ in possession of an intellect equal to that of the best theologians of his day.¹ Indeed, one could go further than this and apply to Stevens the label recently employed by Nigel Aston in describing Edmund Burke; namely, that of ‘lay divine’.² For example, Stevens’s knowledge of Greek and Hebrew saw him as a part of his morning devotions read the *Book of Common Prayer* lessons for Morning Prayer in their original languages.³ Additionally, Park claimed Stevens was well read in the writings of the Church Fathers, especially those of the first three centuries of the Christian era.⁴ He was also devoted to those Anglican divines intimately connected to the High Church tradition, especially Lancelot Andrewes, Jeremy Taylor, George Hicke⁵ and Thomas Jackson.⁶ To further strengthen his argument, Park cited the accolades made by two of the leading prelates who lived contemporaneously with Stevens. The first came from John Douglas (1721 - 1807), Bishop of Salisbury from 1791 to his death, who at a meeting for the SPG (of which Stevens was a member),⁷ is recorded to have said

¹ James Allan Park, *Memoirs of William Stevens*, 4th edn, London, 1825, 14-15.

² Nigel Aston, ‘A “Lay Divine”’: Burke, Christianity, and the Preservation of the British State, 1790-1797’ in Nigel Aston (ed.), *Religious Change in Europe 1650-1914: Essays for John McManners*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, 185-211; see also, Chapter 2, 91-94.

³ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 41.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 14. It was a standard aspect of High Church Anglicanism to regard the first three or four centuries of the Christian era as having been the most doctrinally pure; the subsequent ages being doctrinally corrupt (see Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760-1857*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 104).

⁵ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 14. Park simply wrote down ‘Dean Hicke’. The reference would most likely have been to George Hicke (1642-1715), Dean of Worcester from 1683 to 1691 and a Nonjuring bishop from 1694 to his death (see Theodor Harmsen, ‘Hicke, George’, *ODNB*).

⁶ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 14.

⁷ See Chapter 6, 327-328.

of Stevens: ‘Here is a man, who, though not a Bishop, yet would have been thought worthy of that character in the first and purest ages of the Christian Church’.⁸ The second was from Samuel Horsley, who is reported to have said, ‘Mr. Stevens, a compliment from you ... is of no inconsiderable value’.⁹ Horsley, Park observes, ‘was not given to flattery’.¹⁰ Though these comments were not strictly direct praises of Stevens’s theological acumen, and despite Park only citing these two witnesses, others, not appearing in the *Memoirs*, can also be noted to substantiate the idea of Stevens as a recognized lay divine of the late eighteenth-century Church of England. One comes from Stevens’s life-long friend, Jonathan Boucher (1738-1804). Reflecting upon the impact of Stevens’s friendship on his life, Boucher lauded both Stevens’s sanctity and his intellectual ability as a theologian, claiming him as ‘one of the prime blessings’ of his life, that he was ‘pious and charitable to an uncommon degree’ and, significantly, ‘a man of very considerable learning, and one of the ablest divines I am acquainted with’.¹¹ Perhaps the best accolade, however, comes from William Jones of Nayland (1726-1800). In a letter to Stevens written sometime after 1799, Jones observed to his friend: ‘My thoughts are full of *you* at this time. I consider you as one of the great Lay Elders of this Church; having just been reading attentively your *Treatise on the Church*; and, I must say, I think and find it one of the best elementary treatises I ever read on any subject; and I rejoice that the *Society* [for Promoting Christian Knowledge] are about to distribute it’.¹²

⁸ Quoted in Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 15.

⁹ Quoted in *ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Jonathan Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist 1738-1798*, Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1967, 146.

¹² William Jones of Nayland to William Stevens, c.1799, in *The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, May 1800, vol.6, London, 1800, 65.

The sources of Stevens's theological and intellectual talent are illuminated by an appendix that was inserted by Christopher Wordsworth Jnr into his 1859 edited edition of Park's *Memoirs*.¹³ The appendix consisted of an annotated bibliography that Stevens had compiled for his close friend and the daughter of his master, Jane Hookham. Dated 7 July 1766 the bibliography consisted of a short introductory letter to Hookham and from there was divided up into suitable subject areas. Each subject listed a selection of publications that were accompanied by commentary from Stevens, explaining and elucidating the merits and relevance of the works listed. The authors selected were, in Stevens's view, 'of real and distinguished merit, eminent' not only 'for the soundness of their principles' but more importantly, 'for the holiness of their lives'.¹⁴ Stevens also claimed the books listed to be his 'intimates',¹⁵ thus making the catalogue a significant source in determining those sources most influential to his thought—at least at an early stage in his life.

Stevens began by recommending to Hookham numerous collections of theological works and sermons composed by High Church divines. Listed were the writings of Andrewes and Taylor, Ralph Brownrigg (1592-1659), William Beveridge (*bap.*1637-1708), George Bull (1634-1710), Isaac Barrow (1630-1677), Robert South (1634-1716), William Reeves (1667-1726) and Edward Young (1641/2-1705). All were preachers and writers of High Church principles and most of the comments Stevens makes on these works were unremarkably praiseworthy and thus do not deserve elucidation. The only exceptions are Stevens's comments regarding the writings of George Bull (1634-1710). Describing Bull's writings as 'noble, yet simple', Stevens went on to highlight what he thought was an important aspect in

¹³ See James Allan Park, *Memoirs of William Stevens*, new edn, London, 1859, 151-167.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Bull's writings, namely his 'confutations of the pernicious doctrines of the enthusiasts', which Stevens considered to be 'equally useful in our time, as the *Methodists* are propagating the same pestilential notions now, that the *Puritans* did then'.¹⁶ Thus Stevens recommended George Bull's 'Discourse on *The Testimony of the Spirit of God in the hearts of the Faithful*', that particular piece being, in his view, 'an excellent preservative against their delusions on that head'.¹⁷ Enthusiasm did not, however, abide solely with dissenters. In a later section of the catalogue Stevens had recommended a number of poetic works to Hookham, though he added the caution that such authors 'are apt to give a loose to their imaginations, and do not always keep within the bounds of Christian sobriety'.¹⁸

Stevens's condemnation of 'enthusiasm' accords with what Park has written about Stevens's spiritual temper, describing it as being 'without the least tincture of enthusiasm', meaning a devotion to Christianity that Park described as 'rational, calm, and placid'.¹⁹ Stevens, Park further observed, 'was one of those who thought that a clouded countenance is not the natural result of true devotion'.²⁰ 'Enthusiasm' was a pejorative that was commonly used by High Churchmen during the eighteenth century. At a basic level the term implied what its users thought were religious deviations such as excessive emotionalism, a belief in personal revelation and any sort of superstitious behaviour.²¹ Methodists and Dissenters, as Stevens's words highlight, were the usual groups suspected of displaying these traits, though Church

¹⁶ Ibid, 157.

¹⁷ Ibid; see also, George Bull, *A Discourse Concerning the Spirit of God in the Faithful*, Boston, 1740.

¹⁸ Ibid, 165-166.

¹⁹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 40.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ John Mee, *Romanticism, Enthusiasm and Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 25-37.

of England Evangelicals also endured the criticisms of High Churchmen during the eighteenth century.²² Peter Nockles has observed that High Churchmen exhibited a spirituality that placed little emphasis upon subjectivism or emotionalism, whilst elevating the more empirical aspects of the spiritual life, such as church attendance and almsgiving. ‘He [the High Churchman] tended to cultivate a practical spirituality based on good works nourished by sacramental grace and exemplified in acts of self-denial and charity rather than on any subjective conversion experience or unruly pretended manifestation of the Holy Spirit.’²³ Stevens’s advice to Hookham provides an important illustration of how the High Church spiritual temper, typified by a practical sobriety and subdued emotionalism that was to be manifested through one’s intellect. This spirituality, with its repudiation of ‘enthusiasm’, can thus be said to represent a major aspect of Stevens’s intellectual priorities. Yet at the same time this aspect of Stevens’s thought must not be misunderstood; for as has been demonstrated elsewhere Stevens’s rejection of enthusiasm did not represent a spirituality that was devoid of cheerfulness, fervour and zeal, a charge that was often made against High Church exponents by their Tractarian and Anglo-Catholic critics.²⁴

The cultivation of a High Church view of ecclesiastical history and recent English political history can be said to form much of the rest of the booklist. Beginning with the writings of the Church Fathers, Stevens recommended to Hookham the Epistles of Clement and Ignatius, the works of Cyprian and William

²² Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 191; Rowan Strong, *Anglicanism and the British Empire c.1700-1850*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 83, 126, 196.

²³ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 26.

²⁴ Robert Andrews, ‘“Master in the Art of Holy Living”: The Sanctity of William Stevens’ in Peter Clarke and Tony Claydon (eds), *Studies in Church History Volume 47: Saints and Sanctity*, Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2011, 307-317.

Reeves's translations of Justin Martyr, Tertullian and Minucius Felix, in addition to Reeves's dissertation on 'the Right Use of the Fathers'.²⁵ Reeves's dissertation was a classic High Church statement on the authority of the Fathers of the first four centuries as highly revered but always ranked second to holy scripture.²⁶ Stevens's comment to Hookham that 'The Writings of those who lived in the earliest and purest ages of the Church must be profitable to us on many accounts',²⁷ reflected Reeves's opinion—and that of the High Church tradition in general—that the writings of the Fathers of the first four centuries were evidence of a purity of doctrine during the primitive Church that diminished at the advent of the 'succeeding and more corrupted ages'.²⁸

Ecclesiastical history was particularly important because it was capable of acting as an antidote against the error and deceits of the present age.²⁹ Expanding upon his prior concern regarding the contemporary threat posed by enthusiasm, it was Stevens's contention that he was living in an 'age of heresy and schism' and thus it was 'particularly incumbent on us to ask for the old ways'.³⁰ This was to be a constant theme for Stevens and his circle of High Church activists throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century. Of course, for Stevens the 'old ways' were to be found within the Church of England, especially owing to that Church's preservation of the episcopal, and thus in his view, truly apostolic, form of Church governance.³¹

²⁵ See William Reeve, *The Apologies of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Minutius Felix, In Defence of the Christian Religion ... Together with A Prefatory Dissertation about the Right Use of the Fathers*, vol.1, London, 1709.

²⁶ See Chapter 1, 21-22.

²⁷ Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, 158.

²⁸ Reeve, *The Apologies of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Minutius Felix*, lxxiii.

²⁹ Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, 159-160.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 160.

³¹ *Ibid*.

But one still had to examine ecclesiastical history; for it was there that one ‘would see what has been the form and government of the Church from the beginning, and how necessary it is to preserve the *unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*’.³² Citing Cyprian’s well known saying concerning the authority of the Church, that ‘no one can have God as Father who does not have the Church as mother’,³³ Stevens was highlighting in 1766 a theme that would come to dominate one of his theological publications of the 1770s: namely, the need for adherence to the authority of the Church as a means of preserving orthodoxy. It was, he claimed, ‘for want of being well grounded in these principles, that so many now-a-days are *carried about with every wind of doctrine, and cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive*’.³⁴ To help instruct in such principles, Stevens recommended to Hookham Eusebius’s *Ecclesiastical History*, Samuel Parker’s *Abridgment of Eusebius*,³⁵ Laurance Echard’s *Church History*,³⁶ Joseph Bingham’s *Origines Ecclesiasticæ: Or, The Antiquities of the Christian Church* (1722),³⁷ Jeremy Collier’s *An Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain*³⁸ and Richard Hooker’s famous statement of Anglican divinity, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Highlighted for particular notice by

³² Ibid (emphasis in original).

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid (emphasis in original).

³⁵ Specifically, the recommendation was to ‘the masterly Dissertation ... prefixed to *Parker’s Abridgment*’ (Ibid, 160), namely: Charles Lesly, ‘A Dissertation concerning the Use and Authority of Ecclesiastical History’ in Samuel Parker’s, *The Ecclesiastical Histories of Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodorit*, vol.1, 2nd edn, London, 1720, i-xx.

³⁶ Laurance Echard, *A General Ecclesiastical History from the Nativity of our Blessed Saviour to the First Establishment of Christianity by Humane Laws*, 1st edn, London, 1702. Went through seven editions; the final in 1729 (see R. T. Ridley, ‘Laurance Echard *bap.*1672-*d.*1730’, *ODNB*).

³⁷ Joseph Bingham, *Origines Ecclesiasticæ: Or, The Antiquities of the Christian Church*, 10 vols, London, 1711-1722.

³⁸ Jeremy Collier, *An Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain*, 2 vols, London, 1708 & 1714.

Hookham were Parker and Hooker. Parker, Stevens wrote, would demonstrate for Hookham that it was the Church of England that most conformed to the Church of the early centuries. Reading him would give her a ‘singular pleasure to observe ... how conformable the Church of England is to the Primitive Church, how pure and Apostolical’.³⁹ Hooker, on the other hand, would convince Hookham that schism from the Church of England was inexcusable; through reading Hooker she would be able to see the Church of England—or ‘our good Mother’, as Stevens put it—‘vindicated in all her rites and ceremonies’.⁴⁰ Having this knowledge, one would be able ‘to confute, if not convince, all gainsayers, and leave all those without excuse who separate from her communion’.⁴¹

In addition to ecclesiastical history, Stevens recommended numerous works dealing with secular history—or, ‘profane history’, as he phrased it.⁴² Such history was of secondary importance to Stevens, its purpose being subservient to God’s designs for the Church. However, when seen as an area that highlighted God’s providence, profane history could be of interest to the Christian. This was especially true concerning the history of British politics during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which possesses its own section in Stevens’s bibliography.⁴³ Giving such prominence to this aspect of British history is not surprising given the importance the political events of those centuries had to the formation of High Churchmanship as a distinctive ecclesiastical and theological tradition within the Church of England. Indeed, in his introductory letter at the beginning of the catalogue, Britain’s recent

³⁹ Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, 160.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid, 161-162; see also, Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 14.

⁴³ Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, 162-163.

political history had already been highlighted as an issue of importance for Stevens. It was clear that Stevens had as his goal to educate Hookham in a correct view of Britain's political developments from the previous century onwards. This political education had a nostalgic, royalist emphasis that looked both fondly and regrettably back to events of the seventeenth century. Thus Stevens explained to Hookham that 'though politics may hitherto have made no part of your study further than Christianity is concerned, which requires obedience to governors, yet possibly you are now deliberating in your mind whether to turn *Jacobite* or not'.⁴⁴ It was clearly Stevens's hope that she would, as is evident from the seven books he recommended to her, but also from his desire that she be particularly careful in remembering the political bias with which recent historians write. 'Histories', Stevens observed, 'are frequently wrote with particular views, and to serve a present turn'.⁴⁵ To illustrate, Stevens used the example of the French Huguenot Paul de Rapin (1661-1725), who wrote the influential pro-Whig *History of England* (1723-25).⁴⁶ Of Rapin, Stevens claimed that because his history had been written 'in order to justify the proceedings of that time, and, as a necessary step, to blacken the characters of the excluded family from the beginning'.⁴⁷ In contrast to Rapin's pro-Whig historiography, Stevens recommended to Hookham William Robertson's, *History of Scotland*,⁴⁸ Thomas Carte's *History of England*,⁴⁹ David Hume's *History of England*,⁵⁰ Lord

⁴⁴ Ibid, 152 (emphasis in original).

⁴⁵ Ibid, 162.

⁴⁶ M. G. Sullivan, 'Rapin de Thoyras [Rapin], Paul de', *ODNB*.

⁴⁷ Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, 162-163.

⁴⁸ William Robertson, *The History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and James VI*, 2 vols, 4th edn, London, 1761.

⁴⁹ Thomas Carte, *A General History of England*, 4 vols, London, 1747-1755.

⁵⁰ David Hume, *The History of England, from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688*, 8 vols, new edn, London, 1767.

Clarendon's *History of the Grand Rebellion, and Continuation*,⁵¹ the *Case of the Royal Martyr considered with candour*⁵² and *The Royal Portraiture; or, King Charles in his Solitudes and Sufferings*.⁵³ Finally, there is a work listed as 'Dalrymple's Memoirs', likely a reference to David Dalrymple's, *Memorials and Letters Relating to the History of Britain in the Reign of Charles I* and not to John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland*.⁵⁴ Of these works, Carte's strongly Jacobite history was a work that would show Hookham 'what the English constitution really is'.⁵⁵ Though Stevens felt Clarendon's *History of the Grand Rebellion* to have been badly written, his 'History of the Rebellion' cannot be read 'without a heavy heart'.⁵⁶ Indeed, for Stevens, Charles I's execution saw the death of a true Christian saint and martyr. By reading works such as the *Case of the Royal Martyr considered*, Charles I's example of saintliness would become evident to her: 'the more you contemplate the real character of the excellent prince, the more will you be delighted with him; you will say of him as the Apostle did of other eminent

⁵¹ [Lord Clarendon], *The Lord Clarendon's History of the Grand Rebellion Completed*, London, 1717.

⁵² John Boswell, *The Case of the Royal Martyr Considered with Candour*, 2 vols, London, 1758.

⁵³ [John Gauden], *Eikon Basilike. The Pourtraiture of His Sacred Majesty King Charles I. In his Solitudes and Sufferings*, London, 1727.

⁵⁴ The reference to 'Dalrymple's Memoirs' would seem on first investigation be to John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland*, Dublin, 1771. Yet the booklist is dated 7 July 1766. Dalrymple's *Memoirs* was first published in 1771. Perhaps the contradiction can be solved by assuming that either Stevens had confused the titles or whoever transcribed the booklist from the original made the error of mistaking John Dalrymple's work for David Dalrymple's, *Memorials and Letters Relating to the History of Britain in the Reign of Charles I*, Glasgow, 1766. Given the subject of David Dalrymple's work, it is likely this was the work Stevens had in mind.

⁵⁵ Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, 163.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

saints, *of whom the world was not worthy*, he was conformed to the image of his blessed Master, and, like Him, made perfect through sufferings'.⁵⁷

For High Churchmen such as Stevens the cult of the executed Stuart monarch, Charles I, occupied a central place in their religion. It was normal for such Anglicans to regard him as a saint and martyr, treating his commemoration on 30 January as a red-letter day.⁵⁸ Along with the commemoration of the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 on 29 May, what Peter Nockles describes as 'an almost mystical, sacral theory of monarchy'⁵⁹ was kept alive by a remembrance and veneration of what had happened to the Stuart monarch during the Interregnum.⁶⁰ However, in addition to the veneration of Charles I, there was also the lingering spectre of Jacobitism—namely, the potentially treasonous support a minority of British subjects had for the exiled house of Stuart that had been replaced by William of Orange in 1688. Stevens, 'a strong Church and King royalist'⁶¹—in other words a Tory—revealed to Hookham that in addition to possessing a reverence for Charles I he desired Hookham share, he also held a form of Jacobitism he was equally eager to pass on. Given the potentially subversive political nature of Jacobitism, it seems important to dwell for a moment upon this aspect of Stevens's political thought as it stood in the mid-1760s.

⁵⁷ Ibid (emphasis in original).

⁵⁸ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 51-52.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 50-51.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 51-52.

⁶¹ Geoffrey Rowell, *The Club of 'Nobody's Friends': A Memoir on its Two-Hundredth Anniversary*, Edinburgh: The Pentland Press, 2000, 24.

The problem in labelling Stevens a Jacobite is the sliding definition of what an eighteenth-century English Jacobite actually stood for.⁶² There had been, for example, Jacobites during the early eighteenth century who were active in political destabilization (the vast majority of these, however, resided in Scotland), whilst there were those who were not actively committed to bring back the Stuart line.⁶³ By the middle of the eighteenth century, it was not uncommon for English Tories to retain an element of fondness for the Stuart line and a distrust regarding what had occurred in 1688. James J. Sack, for instance, argues that though there was usually an element of Jacobitism inherent in Tory views, by the 1760s much of this political fervour had become distinctly nostalgic rather than translating into any sort of genuine political activism.⁶⁴ Sack contends that from the 1760s onwards ‘an emotional attachment to the exiled family was always an important—if not decisive—element on the British Right’.⁶⁵ Arguing along similar lines, J. C. D. Clark regards the middle of the eighteenth century as witnessing Jacobitism become merely ‘a harmless Oxford mannerism’.⁶⁶ It is almost certain that Stevens’s ‘Jacobitism’ fits somewhere into this nostalgic style. In his *Memoir of Joshua Watson* (1861), Edward Churton records an anecdote that illustrates the probable limit to which Stevens took his Jacobite views. Churton notes that Stevens, who was normally always present at church for the celebration of major festivals, chose not attend the thanksgiving

⁶² Frank O’Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political & Social History 1688-1832*, London: Arnold, 1997, 153.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 152-158.

⁶⁴ James J. Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative: Reaction and orthodoxy in Britain c. 1760-1832*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 53-62.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 58.

⁶⁶ J. C. D. Clark, *The Dynamics of Change: The Crisis of the 1750s and English Party Systems*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, 16 (cited in Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 58).

service on behalf of William of Orange on 5 November—Stevens ‘having little sympathy with the now-abolished State Service, and perhaps not a very strong sense of the benefits resulting from the arrival of the Dutch deliverer’.⁶⁷ Peter Nockles is right to think that Stevens only held to a ‘sentimental neo-Jacobitism’ stemming firstly from ‘an intense personal devotion to the memory of the “royal martyr” Charles I’ but also coupled with an unease about the ‘“deliverance” wrought by William of Orange in 1688’.⁶⁸ It is likely this is what Stevens was hoping Hookham would imbibe from reading the selected works on English political history he recommended to her. There is certainly no evidence that Stevens ever failed to regard the Hanoverian monarchs as being England’s legitimate sovereigns. In a letter to Jonathan Boucher dated 12 September 1777, Stevens spoke of looking forward to meeting Boucher at the Chaplain’s Table Inn, where, Stevens hoped, he and his friend would be able ‘to drink Church & King with sundry other constitutional Toasts after the manner of the Tories of old time’.⁶⁹ Given that at that time Stevens was admonishing the public against the absolute impossibility of rebellion against the British throne, it is clear that the monarch to be toasted would have been George III rather than ‘the king over the water’.⁷⁰ Boucher had been famously driven out of North America for loyalty to George III rather than accept the legitimacy of the independent United States of America.⁷¹ Any doubt that Stevens may have had towards the legitimacy of the Hanoverian monarchs early in his life was certainly not

⁶⁷ Edward Churton, *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, vol.1, 1st edn, London, 1861, 30.

⁶⁸ Peter B. Nockles, ‘Stevens, William’, *ODNB*.

⁶⁹ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 12 September 1777, Earl Gregg Swem Library, Jonathan Boucher Papers, B/3/3.

⁷⁰ It was common for Jacobites to toast the ‘king over the water’ by raising their glasses and passing them over a bowl of water prior to exclaiming: ‘God save the King’ (see Frank McLynn, *The Jacobites*, London: Routledge, 1985, 149).

⁷¹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 120-125.

present with him towards the end of it. In 1801, six years prior to his death, Stevens could exclaim that the Church of England was in safe hands owing to the fact that his nation was under the care of a ‘gracious ... nursing Father’: ‘[B]lessed be God for his great goodness, we have a gracious Sovereign, mindful of the oath he has taken to *maintain the church-lands, and the rights belonging to it*; who is, what his title imports, Defender of the Faith, and the nursing Father of the Church.—Long may he live! May the King live for ever!’⁷²

One of the final sections in the booklist that deserves an examination is the section wherein a number of works related to science and geography are recommended. These include Emanuel Bowen’s (c.1693/4-1767) *Complete System of Geography* (1744-1747)⁷³ and Abbé Noël-Antoine Pluche’s (1688-1761), *Spectacle de la Nature*.⁷⁴ The *Spectacle de la Nature* had a strong emphasis upon God’s effects in creation.⁷⁵ For Stevens, the natural world demonstrated not only ‘the power and wisdom of the Creator’, but also was ‘a glass reflecting the glories of the invisible’.⁷⁶ Paraphrasing Romans 1:20, it was his belief that the ‘invisible things of God’, namely his ‘Godhead’, (that is, his Trinitarian nature), were to be ‘understood’ or ‘made intelligible to us’ through creation.⁷⁷ Not only was God’s being symbolically discernable in nature, so was the reality of Christ’s redemption and many other theological truths. In contemplating the created order Stevens believed

⁷² William Stevens, ‘Life of William Jones of Nayland’ in William Stevens (ed.), *The Theological, Philosophical and Miscellaneous Works of the Rev. William Jones*, vol.1, London, 1801, xl (emphasis in original).

⁷³ Emanuel Bowen, *A Complete System of Geography*, 2 vols, London, 1744-47.

⁷⁴ Noël-Antoine Pluche and Samuel Humphreys (trans.), *Spectacle de la Nature: Or, Nature Displayed*, 7th edn, London, 1750.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

⁷⁶ Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, 164.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

‘all Nature will be found to preach the great truths of Christianity’.⁷⁸ Stevens’s recommendation of Pluche, coupled with his emphasis upon nature’s ability to demonstrate God’s workings, provides a valuable starting point for discussing the question of where Stevens stood in relation to the foremost European intellectual movement of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: the Enlightenment.⁷⁹ Pluche (1688-1781), a French Roman Catholic scholar, was a conservative Enlightenment thinker who, unlike the more sceptical French *philosophes*, had sought to adapt traditional religious views to the new intellectual currents of the time. The *Spectacle de la Nature*, in fact, became one of France’s most successful Enlightenment works.⁸⁰ It was an example of a category of Enlightenment apologetic literature known as ‘Physico-theology’.⁸¹ Physico-theology created a science-infused version of the classic argument from design, what Peter Harrison describes as ‘a detailed elaboration of the design argument for God’s existence, based on the systematic elaboration of divine purposes in the natural world’.⁸² As Stevens explained to Hookham, by examining nature, nature and its many processes would signify important theological truths.

To examine into the works of nature which so evidently display the power and wisdom of the Creator, is both delightful and profitable. God Himself has

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ It is generally regarded as more historically accurate to speak of multiple ‘Enlightenments’ rather than attempting to describe a single monolithic intellectual movement (See Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World*, London: Allen Lane, 2000, xvii-xviii). Nonetheless, following Porter, the term is still used albeit with the qualification and knowledge that the various European nations experienced the Enlightenment differently.

⁸⁰ Sylviane Albertan-Coppola, ‘Pluche, Noël-Antoine’ in Alan Charleskors (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, vol.3, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, 295-296.

⁸¹ Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism, and the rise of natural science*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 171.

⁸² Ibid.

given us a history of the Creation, at once assuring us (what we should otherwise never have discovered) whose work it is, and encouraging us in the study and contemplation of it. And you who know that *the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood*, made intelligible to us, *by the things that are made even his eternal power and Godhead*, you will receive singular instruction from meditating on the scenes of nature. To you the visible world will be a glass reflecting the glories of the invisible. *The heavens will declare the glory of God and the firmament show his handywork*, not only in the creation, but redemption of the world. By the scale of natural things is the mind's ascent to God. In the old creation you will behold, as in a picture, how all things are *created anew in Christ Jesus*. By this method it is that God teaches us in His holy Word, describing the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven under natural images and similitudes; and, considered in this view, all Nature will be found to preach the great truths of Christianity.⁸³

An example given by Stevens was the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body at the end of time, 'which', he contended, was 'illustrated and inculcated by a variety of images; the quickening of the seed that dies and rots in the ground; the return of spring after the dead of winter; the daily rising of the sun; and our awakening every morning out of sleep'.⁸⁴ Thus Stevens could conclude: 'How entertaining, how edifying, is the study of nature, prosecuted upon this plan'.⁸⁵

⁸³ Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, 164 (emphasis in original).

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 164-165.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 165.

Britain would become home to the Enlightenment phenomenon of physico-theology, most of which was conducted and expounded by clerics.⁸⁶ Not all of it was theologically conservative, but there were many thinkers willing to let nature speak of divine truths fundamental to Christianity, with the crucial proviso that nature conformed to the revelation of God contained in the Bible. In relation to Britain's experience of what is referred to as the Enlightenment, such was to become the position of Stevens and his circle of friends. Thus, if Stevens appears, at the very least, to have been at home with this very conservative wing of the Enlightenment, the Enlightenment's more liberal exponents, especially those who came to deny orthodox Christian doctrines and promote ideas of political liberty and revolution, would come to be regarded by him and his friends with the gravest of contempt and fear. Nature and science, they contended, could—and did—easily lead to theological and political heterodoxy if not moored safely to the Holy Scriptures as interpreted and received by the Church of England. It was partly out of this fear that Stevens and his close-knit circle of friends, especially George Horne and William Jones of Nayland, sought refuge within the elaborate physico-theological system of John Hutchinson and the distinctive and rather bizarre ideology that came to bear his name: Hutchinsonianism.

As Nigel Aston has recently put it, Hutchinsonianism and its eighteenth-century following was, at its essence, the story of how 'an obscure Yorkshire land agent gain[ed] a cult following among academics—notably Oxonians—for which it

⁸⁶ '[W]hose clergymen seemed to have the time to devote to natural history' (Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism, and the rise of natural science*, 171). For the argument that Britain's experience of the Enlightenment was more conservative than the rest of Europe, see John G. A. Pocock, 'Clergy and Commerce: The Conservative Enlightenment in England' in R. Ajello *et al.* (ed), *L'Età dei Lumi Studi storici sul settecento Europeo in onore de Franco Venturi*, 2 vols, Napels, 1985, 525-562.

is hard to find another contemporary counterpart'.⁸⁷ The obscure land agent in question was the Anglican layman, John Hutchinson (1674-1737).⁸⁸ Hutchinson was born in Spennithorne, a small village near Middleham, Yorkshire. Raised with the prospect of becoming a steward in the service of a member of the landed gentry, Hutchinson had received only a moderate education; nonetheless, he seems to have possessed a gifted mind and his interest in academic pursuits was awakened when, as the chief steward of the Duke of Somerset, (a position he had gained sometime in the late 1690s), he became associated with John Woodward (c.1665-1728), a physician and geologist whose interest in synthesizing geological formations with the account of creation in the book of Genesis had a great influence on him.⁸⁹ After spending a number of years as an assistant to Woodward, the two men fell out, though this did not deter Hutchinson who soon set out to establish himself as a natural philosopher in his own right. To this effect, Hutchinson published a two-volume work, the *Principia*, which appeared in 1724 and 1727 respectively.⁹⁰ The *Principia* was intended both as a refutation of Isaac Newton and as an attempt to reset physics on a firmly orthodox basis. Hutchinson's underlying claim was that scripture was sufficient, not simply in matters of faith and morals, but also in questions of science. In not following this principle Newton had gravely erred by what Hutchinson saw as

⁸⁷ Nigel Aston, 'From personality to party: the creation and transmission of Hutchinsonianism, c. 1725-1750', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, vol.35, 2004, 626.

⁸⁸ The biographical information here come from Robert Spearman, *A Supplement to the Works of John Hutchinson, ESQ*, London, 1765, i-v.

⁸⁹ J. M. Levine, 'Woodward, John', *ODNB*.

⁹⁰ See John Hutchinson, *Moses's Principia. Of the Invisible Parts of Matter; Of Motion; Of Visible Forms; and of their Dissolution, and Reformation*, London, 1724; John Hutchinson, *Moses's Principia. Part II.*, London, 1727.

an over-reliance on experience and reason.⁹¹ Scripture—especially the Old Testament and its account of creation contained in the book of Genesis—was as much a revelation of physics as it was of theology.⁹² However, to get to the truth of scripture, one had to master its original language. Hence the Hutchinsonian fascination—one may say, obsession—with Hebrew. Yet Hutchinson’s method of reading Hebrew was highly idiosyncratic. The key to his convoluted hermeneutic was the removal of the vowel points or lines that had first been added to the Hebrew text by Masoretic Jews about five hundred years after Christ. Removal of these additions allowed all of the various permutations of a single Hebrew root to be seen as interchangeable.⁹³ The result was a seeming ability to gain numerous meanings from a single Hebrew word. Perhaps the best example of this was the shared root for the words ‘glory’ and ‘heavy’, something that allowed Hutchinson to interpret gravity as a phenomenon produced by the glory of God.⁹⁴

Its idiosyncrasies has meant that Hutchinsonianism has long suffered from a reputation of being eccentric, obscurantist and highly reactionary—which to a great extent was true.⁹⁵ As an ideology it did have significant faults, but its importance to eighteenth-century ideas has become more apparent to recent scholarship which, whilst not downplaying its dubious claims to solid biblical and scientific scholarship,

⁹¹John C. English, ‘John Hutchinson’s Critique of Newtonian Heterodoxy’, *Church History*, vol.68, no.3, 1999, 583.

⁹²Hutchinson, *Moses’s Principia*, 1724, 2.

⁹³David S. Katz, ‘The Hutchinsonians and Hebraic Fundamentalism in Eighteenth-Century England’ in David S. Katz and Jonathan I. Israel (eds), *Sceptics, Millenarians and Jews*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990, 239.

⁹⁴Ibid, 239-240.

⁹⁵For example, William Warburton (1698-1779), Bishop of Gloucester, frequently mocked the Hutchinsonians (see William Warburton to Richard Hurd, 1 September 1750, in William Warburton, *Letters From a Late Eminent Prelate to one of His Friends*, 2nd edn, London, 1809, 58-59).

has nonetheless sought to emphasise that during its period of popularity Hutchinsonianism was in-step with what Aston has referred to as contemporary intellectual ‘pre-occupations and descriptive categories’.⁹⁶ Hutchinsonianism, in fact, provided for its followers what seemed to be a viable alternative to Newton’s natural philosophy. It has been noted how an ‘odor of heresy hung about Newton and his associates’, and that Newton’s denial of the doctrine of the Trinity was seen by orthodox critics as being connected to his scientific discoveries.⁹⁷ For the Hutchinsonians, any link between nature and theological heterodoxy was anathema. Both had to be in complete agreement, even when it came to Christian dogmas, especially the belief in a Triune God. Both the Hebrew Bible and nature, when taken together, revealed God as the Triune creator.⁹⁸

Though its adherents were by no means confined exclusively to Anglican High Churchmanship, Hutchinsonianism’s strongest and most influential collective manifestation was among this group. Not only was Stevens a Hutchinsonian, but so were the majority of his friends and associates.⁹⁹ They included George Horne,¹⁰⁰ who had become a Hutchinsonian at Oxford and had converted Stevens to the ideology.¹⁰¹ Other Hutchinsonian clerics who associated with Stevens included: William Jones of Nayland,¹⁰² Jonathan Boucher,¹⁰³ George Berkeley Jnr (1733-

⁹⁶ Nigel Aston, ‘From personality to party’, 625-626.

⁹⁷ English, ‘John Hutchinson’s Critique of Newtonian Heterodoxy’, 583; see also, Derya Gurses, ‘Academic Hutchinsonians and their quest for relevance, 1734-1790’, *History of European Ideas*, vol.31, no.3, 2005, 414.

⁹⁸ English, ‘John Hutchinson’s Critique of Newtonian Heterodoxy’, 583-584.

⁹⁹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 15-19.

¹⁰⁰ William Jones, *Memoirs of the Life, Studies, and Writings of the Right Reverend George Horne, D.D.*, London, 2nd edn, 1799, 22 & *passim*.

¹⁰¹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 15-16.

¹⁰² Stevens, ‘Life of William Jones of Nayland’, iii & *passim*.

1795),¹⁰⁴ George Gaskin (1751-1829),¹⁰⁵ Samuel Glasse (1734-1812),¹⁰⁶ Nathaniel Wetherell (1727-1807),¹⁰⁷ Thomas Patten (1714-1790),¹⁰⁸ John Parkhurst (1728-1797),¹⁰⁹ William Kirby (1759-1850)¹¹⁰ and the Scottish Episcopal prelate, John Skinner (1744-1816),¹¹¹ among others. Among the laymen were James Allan Park,¹¹² Francis Randolph (*d.*1764),¹¹³ John Richardson (1771-1841), and perhaps Thomas Calverley (*d.*1797) and John Bowdler (1746-1823).¹¹⁴ Amongst the clerics, Skinner's presence is important as it signifies a link Stevens and his fellow English Hutchinsonians would develop with their non-established Scottish counterparts during the late 1780s.¹¹⁵ During the eighteenth century Hutchinsonianism gained a wide and influential following within the Scottish Episcopal Church, particularly

¹⁰³ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 14 n49.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 20. In 1792 Parkhurst, a Hebraist, dedicated the second edition of his *Hebrew and English Lexicon* to Horne, Glass, Boucher and Stevens, whom he noted were all 'the favourers and promoters of the work' (See John Parkhurst, *An Hebrew and English Lexicon, Without Points*, London, 1792, ii).

¹¹⁰ John Freeman, *Life of the Rev. William Kirby, M.A.*, London, 1852, 440.

¹¹¹ William Walker, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Skinner, M.A.*, London, 1883, 68-69.

¹¹² Gavin White, 'Hutchinsonianism in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, vol.21, part.2, 1982, 165.

¹¹³ Thomas Bowdler, *Memoir of the Late John Bowdler, Esq.*, London, 1825, 26. Randolph is remembered by Park and Bowdler as having been a well known and respected layman of the High Church tradition. An 'eminent physician', Randolph also possessed a keen interest in theology (*The London Magazine; and Monthly Chronologer*, vol.4, September 1738, 465).

¹¹⁴ Both were intimate friends of Stevens for much of his life (see Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 20-21, 113, 133-139).

¹¹⁵ See Chapter 6, 344-370; White, 'Hutchinsonianism in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', 165.

amongst the Northern clergy, almost all of whom were Hutchinsonian.¹¹⁶ In addition, there were a number of peripheral individuals associated with Stevens's circle who were Hutchinsonians; for instance, the English Nonjuring bishop, William Cartwright (1730-1799).¹¹⁷ Of course, it needs to be noted that Stevens's acquaintances were not confined to the Hutchinsonians. For example, the influential High Church prelate, Samuel Horsley (1733-1806), was one notable late eighteenth-century High Churchman who was not a Hutchinsonian, yet knew Stevens and supported him and his associates in many of their activities.¹¹⁸

Of all of Stevens's Hutchinsonian connections, three individuals would constantly appear in his life, not only as close friends, but as close collaborators in his High Church activism. The first and most senior was George Horne. Some of the details of Horne's early life have already been highlighted in connection with Stevens during their shared childhoods at Maidstone.¹¹⁹ After leaving Maidstone and going up to Oxford in early 1745, Horne received his BA in 1749 and his MA in 1752.¹²⁰ The following year he was ordained by the Bishop of Oxford. Staying at the university, Horne demonstrated an impressive academic talent. In 1750 he had already been elected a Kentish Fellow of Magdalen. 1758 saw him become a Junior Proctor of the University and, ten years later, successful election to the presidency of Magdalen College in 1768.¹²¹ Further to his academic qualifications, he gained the

¹¹⁶ Rowan Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, 17.

¹¹⁷ William Cartwright to Jonathan Boucher, 23 April 1785, 11 June 1785, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Non-Juror Ms. Add. d. 30., ff.37-40, 42.

¹¹⁸ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 194.

¹¹⁹ See Chapter 3, 113-116.

¹²⁰ Jones, *Memoirs*, 20.

¹²¹ Nigel Aston, 'Horne and Heterodoxy: The Defence of Anglican Beliefs in the Late Enlightenment', *English Historical Review*, vol.108, no.429, 1993, 899.

degree of DD in 1764. With Hutchinsonianism central to his High Church ideology, Horne would become one of the leading High Church theologians and controversialists of the late eighteenth century, of which more will be discussed.¹²² By the time Stevens became active as writer, Horne had been publishing for two decades, often in connection with Hutchinsonianism.¹²³

William Jones of Nayland had become friends with George Horne at Oxford during the mid 1740s. Like Horne, he was a High Churchmen attracted to Hutchinsonianism, having also come to adopt the philosophy through Horne's influence.¹²⁴ When Jones first met Stevens is uncertain, though a friendship with him is most likely to have come through Horne.¹²⁵ Jones was ordained in 1751 into the diocese of Lincoln, and through the patronage of Archbishop Thomas Secker of Canterbury (who would also help Horne in his later ecclesiastical career),¹²⁶ gained a few livings in Kent before—in 1777—obtaining the perpetual curacy of Nayland, Suffolk.¹²⁷ Jones would live at Nayland for the rest of his life—so that the tag 'of Nayland' became attached to his name. Described by a contemporary 'As high a churchman as if he had lived in the last 4 years of Queen Anne',¹²⁸ Jones—in consort with Horne and Stevens—would spend most of his clerical life as a High Church controversialist, defending the Church of England in print against the same theological and political heterodoxy that Stevens and Horne did battle with. His most

¹²² See Chapter 5, 268-270.

¹²³ See below, 178.

¹²⁴ G. M. Ditchfield, 'Jones, William', *ODNB*; Stevens, 'Life of William Jones of Nayland', iii.

¹²⁵ G. M. Ditchfield & Bryan Keith-Lucas, 'Reverend William Jones "of Nayland" (1726-1800): Some new light on his years in Kent', *Notes & Queries*, vol.40, no.3, 1993, 339.

¹²⁶ Robert G. Ingram, *Religion, Reform and Modernity in the Eighteenth Century: Thomas Secker and the Church of England*, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007, 98-99.

¹²⁷ Ditchfield, 'Jones, William', *ODNB*.

¹²⁸ Quoted in Ditchfield & Keith-Lucas, 'Reverend William Jones "of Nayland"', 338.

famous work was *The Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity*, first published in 1753, a work that went into numerous editions during the late eighteenth century.¹²⁹

Set beside Stevens, Horne and Jones, was Jonathan Boucher. For most of his early clerical life Boucher was an outsider to the Hutchinsonian circle that Stevens, Horne and Jones inhabited. This was because Boucher spent over a decade ministering in North America after ordination in 1762.¹³⁰ In North America, Boucher became a well known clerical polemicist, especially during the years leading up to the American Revolution, which saw him become a leading exponent of the loyalist cause. Forced to return to England when the political circumstances turned against him, Boucher found patronage and support from Stevens and his friends, all of whom felt compassion for this High Church loyalist hero.¹³¹ It was through Stevens that Boucher became a part of the same High Church network. Stevens not only helped Boucher gain the position of undersecretary within the SPG, it was mainly through Stevens's influence that Boucher gained the living at Epsom in Surrey.¹³² Stevens and Boucher would come to share a close friendship. The Stevens-Boucher correspondence, which remains the best contemporary source for Stevens's life, is evidence of the close bond both men shared.

Such was the close association of these men to Hutchinsonianism that 'Hutchinsonians' has become the label by which these High Churchmen are often collectively known. F. C. Mather, for example, claims that the 'Hutchinsonians were the nearest thing to a coherent body on the High Church side of the eighteenth-

¹²⁹ Ditchfield, 'Jones, William', *ODNB*.

¹³⁰ Robert M. Calhoon, 'Boucher, Jonathan', *ODNB*.

¹³¹ Anne Y. Zimmer, *Jonathan Boucher: Loyalist in Exile*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978, 212.

¹³² *Ibid*, 231.

century Church of England'.¹³³ Peter Nockles also describes these High Churchmen as belonging to a group he refers to as the 'Hutchinsonians', though he adds the qualifying remark that 'philosophical "Hutchinsonianism" was somewhat peripheral to the High Church ecclesiastical, political and sacramental principles which they upheld'.¹³⁴ Of course, the 'Hutchinsonians' held to a much broader High Church ideology than simply Hutchinson's teachings—as Mather has noted, they 'breathed the genuine spirit of religious revival', advocating a goal of 'Christian godliness combined with Christian Order';¹³⁵ yet given Hutchinsonianism's prominence within eighteenth-century High Church discourse, it is questionable whether Hutchinsonianism's distinctive philosophical doctrines were 'peripheral' to High Churchmen such as Stevens and his associates. This fact will become apparent in examining Stevens's life.

Hutchinsonianism was, in fact, to become the catalyst for one of Stevens's first entries into public theological controversy during 1773. As the previous chapter has outlined, up until this time Stevens had been working hard building himself into a successful and wealthy man of commerce. Nonetheless, the growth of his theological education and related intellectual interests also continued. By 1773 Stevens had turned forty and felt inclined to allow his scholarly interests to take part in public intellectual debate—albeit anonymously. The initial cause was the scholarly endeavors of the Oxford Hebraist, Benjamin Kennicott (1718-1783). From the early 1750s onwards, Kennicott had been in the process of producing a new and

¹³³ F. C. Mather, *High Church Prophet: Bishop Samuel Horsley (1733-1806) and the Caroline Tradition in the Later Georgian Church*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, 13.

¹³⁴ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 13.

¹³⁵ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 12-13; see also, Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 193-194.

revised critical edition of the Hebrew Old Testament.¹³⁶ For most of his scholarly life this had been Kennicott's preoccupation. In 1753 he had published the first volume of *The State of the Printed Hebrew Text of the Old Testament Considered: a Dissertation in Two Parts* (the second volume appearing in 1759).¹³⁷ There, Kennicott had argued that through the centuries errors had crept into the existing Hebrew texts through the fallibility of the translation process.¹³⁸ Thus a new edition, free from centuries of accumulated errors, was needed. Possessing the backing of a number of noteworthy individuals, most notably, George II and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Secker, in addition to receiving significant financial support and patronage (both from within Britain and abroad), the Kennicott project was widely supported.¹³⁹ It took roughly three decades for Kennicott to finally produce a critical edition of the Hebrew text. Entitled, *Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum cum variis lectionibus*, with a first volume published in 1776 and a second in 1780, the work represented a major scholarly development in the collation of Hebrew manuscripts.¹⁴⁰

Throughout the process of his research, Kennicott had encountered opposition from churchmen who saw his work as representing a threat to revealed religion.¹⁴¹ The most notable opposition came from Stevens's circle of Hutchinsonian High Churchmen. According to them, the Church already possessed

¹³⁶ Nigel Aston, 'Kennicott, Benjamin', *ODNB*.

¹³⁷ See Benjamin Kennicott, *The State of the Printed Hebrew Text of the Old Testament Considered. A Dissertation in Two Parts*, vols.1 & 2, London, 1753 & 1759.

¹³⁸ Kennicott, *The State of the Printed Hebrew Text*, vol.1, 7-9.

¹³⁹ Aston, 'Kennicott, Benjamin', *ODNB*. For a detailed account of Thomas Secker and Robert Lowth's patronage of Kennicott's project, see Ingram, *Religion, Reform and Modernity*, 87-97.

¹⁴⁰ William McKane, 'Benjamin Kennicott: An Eighteenth Century Researcher', *Journal of Theological Studies*, vol.28, no.2, 1977, 447.

¹⁴¹ Aston, 'Kennicott, Benjamin', *ODNB*.

an accurately preserved Hebrew text: that being the version of the Masoretic text produced in Venice from 1524 to 1525, that had been used as the basis for the Old Testament in the Authorized Version.¹⁴² Moreover, the Hutchinsonians had built their entire system of natural philosophy upon this edition.¹⁴³ They had a lot at stake in preserving its scholarly use. Thus, from the 1750s onwards they staunchly opposed Kennicott's work,¹⁴⁴ a fact that caused Kennicott to respond with the anonymous treatise, *A Word to the Hutchinsonians* (1756), in which he complained of the Hutchinsonian opposition.¹⁴⁵ Rather dismissively and contemptuously, Kennicott wrote that 'The behaviour of the *Hutchinsonian* Divines, in this University and in other parts of the kingdom, is now become a matter of general complaint—the general complaint of men truly respectable, as Scholars and as Christians'.¹⁴⁶ This elicited a response from Horne, beginning a long campaign of High Church opposition to Kennicott that lasted into the 1770s.¹⁴⁷

Stevens kept an interest in this debate and, according to Park,¹⁴⁸ personally entered the controversy in 1773 by anonymously publishing *A New and Faithful Translation of Letters from Mr. L'ABBE ***, Hebrew Professor in the University of*

¹⁴² Katz, 'The Hutchinsonians and Hebraic Fundamentalism', 243.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Aston, 'Kennicott, Benjamin', *ODNB*.

¹⁴⁵ [Benjamin Kennicott], *A Word to the Hutchinsonians: Or Remarks on Three Extraordinary Sermons Lately Preached Before the University of Oxford*, London, 1756.

¹⁴⁶ [Kennicott], *A Word to the Hutchinsonians*, 6 (emphasis in original).

¹⁴⁷ See George Horne, *An Apology for Certain Gentlemen in the University of Oxford, Aspersed in a Late Anonymous Pamphlet*, Oxford, 1756; George Horne, *A View of Mr. Kennicott's Method of Correcting the Hebrew Text*, London, 1760; see also, Jones, *Memoirs*, 98.

¹⁴⁸ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 79.

***, *to the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Kennicott with an Introductory Preface*.¹⁴⁹ The *Letters from Mr. L'ABBE ... to the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Kennicott* were a translation of a French work that had been published under the title, *Lettres de M. l'Abbé de *** ex professeur en Hébreu en l'université de *** au Sr Kennicott* (1771).¹⁵⁰ The *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* was a highly critical attack upon Kennicott and his scholarship. The work consisted of a series of letters to Kennicott supposedly written by an anonymous professor of Hebrew at a similarly anonymous institution. The letters included the claim that the manuscripts Kennicott relied upon could not be trusted and that some were even frauds—the products of Jewish counterfeiting.¹⁵¹ Another claim was that there were too many variant readings contained within the manuscripts, hence making collation an impossible task.¹⁵² There was also the accusation that Kennicott did not demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the subtleties required to accurately read the Hebrew language—for example, of the need to distinguish between the literal and figurative meanings of Hebrew words.¹⁵³ This was, in essence, a pretext for the claim that Kennicott was not a competent Hebrew scholar. It was a significant accusation to make against an individual who had become one of England's most celebrated Hebraists. Nonetheless, the author of the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* was adamant that Kennicott was unqualified for the task he was attempting. '[B]efore we pretend to correct a Text, and especially one so important as that of Holy Scripture, we should understand perfectly the Language in

¹⁴⁹ [William Stevens trans.], *A New and Faithful Translation of Letters from Mr. L'ABBE ****, *Hebrew Professor in the University of ****, *to the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Kennicott with an Introductory Preface*, London, 1773.

¹⁵⁰ [Anon.], *Lettres de M. l'Abbé de *** ex professeur en Hébreu en l'université de *** au Sr Kennicott*, Paris, 1771.

¹⁵¹ [Stevens trans.], *A New and Faithful Translation*, 5-6.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, 13-36.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 60-68.

which it is written; be thoroughly acquainted with its nature, have the principles constantly before our eyes, make the most exact application of them, and more particularly not annihilate words when they speak contrary to what we would have them.’¹⁵⁴ Aside from these arguments, there was the simple fact that Kennicott had dared to presume that he alone could achieve such a momentous and historic task; that he thought himself able to correct what centuries of Jewish and Christian tradition had successfully preserved seemed, to the writer of the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé*, more than presumptuous.¹⁵⁵

On pragmatic grounds alone the writer of the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* thought that the arguments for a new text were groundless. Citing Kennicott, who had tried to argue that those errors present in the received text then in use did not affect any necessary Christian doctrine,¹⁵⁶ it was asked: ‘to what purpose is it to trouble the Church with Corrections and Innovations, which are no way serviceable to religion?’¹⁵⁷ Most significantly, however, was the danger that could result from Kennicott’s spirit of open-minded enquiry into collating Hebrew manuscripts, a task that involved the discernment of accumulated errors within the transmission of the Holy Scriptures, so as to correct them. This, the writer thought, was an attitude and approach to scholarship that could only benefit the enemies of revealed religion. ‘What matter of triumph will it be to our Infidels, when they learn from your Works, that the very original of the Versions is absolutely corrupted! Depend upon it, they will abide by that determination, and laugh at your promises to restore it to its ancient purity, and perhaps will soon write Dissertations at random on the *Hebrew*

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 91.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 1, 3-4.

¹⁵⁶ See Kennicott, *The State of the Printed Hebrew Text*, vol.1, 11.

¹⁵⁷ [Stevens trans.], *A New and Faithful Translation*, 96.

Language.¹⁵⁸ This was exactly the same concern that Horne had regarded as being a problem behind Kennicott's project.¹⁵⁹ Such biblical scholarship was seen as presenting a dangerous scholarly precedent, or a slippery-slope; one step away from orthodoxy and one step closer to skepticism. The text of the Old Testament was, in this view, simply best left alone as tradition has preserved it and handed it on.

Though appearing to have been written by a Hebrew academic from Rome, it is generally agreed that the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* was primarily the composition of one of Kennicott's former assistants, an individual by the name of Ignatius Dumay (dates unknown), written with the assistance of an obscure group of Parisian Franciscans of the Capuchin Order.¹⁶⁰ Dumay—originally named Salomon Israel Dumay—was a French Jew who in his youth had become skilled in reading and writing Hebrew.¹⁶¹ Sometime, perhaps in the 1740s, he had gone to England and, though only a struggling lower-class merchant, had drawn the attention of Jones, Horne and possibly Stevens, all of whom—being curious Hutchinsonians with a scholarly interest in Hebrew—were impressed with his linguistic skills.¹⁶² Drawing on this talent, Dumay gave up his life as a merchant, finding employment in Oxford as a writing master.¹⁶³ Returning to France, Dumay became a Roman Catholic and took the name Ignatius. After a number of personal controversies and scandals whilst

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 119 (emphasis in original).

¹⁵⁹ Jones, *Memoirs*, 102.

¹⁶⁰ See the detailed discussions in Jones, *Memoirs*, 103-109; Cecil Roth, 'Salomon Israel, Writing Master in Oxford, 1745—*alias* Ignatius Dumay', *Oxoniensia*, vol.28, 1950, 74-78; David B. Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key: Anglo-Jewry's Construction of Modern Jewish Thought*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000, 47-55.

¹⁶¹ Roth, 'Salomon Israel', 75.

¹⁶² Jones, *Memoirs*, 104.

¹⁶³ Roth, 'Salomon Israel', 75; Jones, *Memoirs*, 104-105.

serving in the French army,¹⁶⁴ Dumay returned to England and once again plied his trade as a Hebraist, becoming an assistant to Kennicott in 1761, helping in his collation of Hebrew manuscripts.¹⁶⁵ It was not long, however, before he fell out with Kennicott over criticisms of Kennicott's methods and motives. Sometime during the mid-1760s Kennicott terminated Dumay's employment. Once again returning to France, Dumay, with the help of some Capuchin Friars from the Parisian community of St Honoré, crystallized his complaints against Kennicott into the work that eventually became the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé*.¹⁶⁶ Of the French Capuchins, little, if any, detail is known, other than that they were a part of a scholarly society that went by the name, 'Societas Clementina ad linguae sacrae'.¹⁶⁷ Only three Friars supposedly constituted the society: Louis de Poix, Jerome d'Artois and Seraphin de Paris.¹⁶⁸ What role they had in the composition of the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* is uncertain, though from the testimony of Jones of Nayland's account, as well as recent research by David B. Ruderman, it has been well established that it was Dumay who was the driving force in the composition of the work.¹⁶⁹ Ruderman details how Dumay grew highly critical of Kennicott's character, methods and

¹⁶⁴ Dumay's life is interesting on its own account, as he appears to have at one time both impressed, displeased and shocked both the Kennicott camp and the Hutchinsonians with his unpredictable and unstable life disposition. Towards the end of his account of Dumay's involvement in Kennicott's project, Jones of Nayland summed-up what he thought of Dumay's life in the following remarkable passage: 'Now the reader has heard my story, let him consider, whether he can recollect a more extraordinary character, than that of this Jew, Christian, Papist, Protestant, Soldier, Scrivener, French, Englishman!' (Jones, *Memoirs*, 108). Kennicott, not surprisingly, shared the same opinion (See [Benjamin Kennicott], *A Letter to a Friend, Occasioned by a French Pamphlet Lately Published Against Doctor Kennicott and His Collation of the Hebrew MSS*, London, 1772, 33).

¹⁶⁵ Jones, *Memoirs*, 105-106; Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key*, 49.

¹⁶⁶ Jones, *Memoirs*, 107-109.

¹⁶⁷ Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key*, 47.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 48-55.

motives, putting forward in unpublished writings many of the arguments that would later appear in the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé*—including the accusation that many of Kennicott's manuscripts were corrupt and faulty.¹⁷⁰

Taking, yet again, a new name—‘Joseph Adolphe’—Dumay continued to abide in Paris, working as an English tutor.¹⁷¹ After publishing a short work on English and its method of tuition in 1774,¹⁷² Dumay sinks into obscurity. If it were not for his authorship of the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé*, he would have remained a forgotten figure. However, the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé*, with its stinging attacks upon Kennicott, caused a degree of controversy upon its publication in 1771, both in its original French and in its English translations. In English the work first appeared in 1772 under the title, *Letters of Mr. the Abbot of *** Ex Professor of the Hebrew Language, in the University of *** to Mr. Kennicott, of the Royal Society in London*.¹⁷³ According to Nigel Aston and David Ruderman this translation was the work of Stevens, Ruderman claiming that his 1773 translation was simply a re-publication of this edition.¹⁷⁴ These are claims that require further evaluation.

The first point to make is that the 1773 translation is not the same work as the 1772 translation; notwithstanding the fact that the 1773 translation claims in its title to be a ‘A New and Faithful Translation’, a quick comparison of the two shows that

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 49-51.

¹⁷¹ Roth thinks the reason for the name change was due to the French suppression of the Jesuit Order in 1767; the name ‘Ignatius’ being thus unpopular (Roth, ‘Salomon Israel’, 77).

¹⁷² Joseph Adolphe Dumay, *Méthode aisée pour prononcer et parler la langue anglaise sans le secours d'aucun maître par*, Paris, 1774. Roth thinks this was published in 1778, it was in fact re-published in that year (See J. M. Querard (ed.), *La France Littéraire, ou Dictionnaire Bibliographique*, 2nd edn, Paris, 1828, 671).

¹⁷³ [Anon.], *Letters of Mr. the Abbot of *** Ex Professor of the Hebrew Language, in the University of *** to Mr. Kennicott, of the Royal Society in London*, Paris, 1772.

¹⁷⁴ Aston, ‘Kennicott, Benjamin’, *ODNB*; Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key*, 44.

they are very clearly different translations of the same text.¹⁷⁵ In addition, the 1772 translation indicates from its title page that it was published in Paris, though it does note that it was sold in England by booksellers in London and Westminster. This is in contrast to the 1773 translation, which its title page makes clear was published and sold in England.¹⁷⁶ Of course, it is entirely possible that the inscription of Paris on the 1772 translation was spurious, placed there to give the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* an appearance of having originated in France; yet Paris being the location from which the 1772 translation was produced is entirely in keeping with Dumay having consulted Parisian Franciscans in its original production.

There is also evidence suggesting that the 1772 translation, leaving aside the question of its authorship, was not widely circulated or read upon its publication; indeed, that it may even have been suppressed in some way. Stevens himself makes this claim in his introductory preface to *A New and Faithful Translation*, where he explains the reasons why it was necessary to present an English translation of the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* to the public. 'A Translation was talked of for a while, and expected to make its appearance; but all on a sudden there was dead silence; it was by some means or other suppressed, and we heard no more of it.'¹⁷⁷ Some support for this view can be found in Jones's biography of Horne, where Jones notes that when the French edition of the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* made its way into England, the widespread acclaim of Kennicott's project meant that the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé*

¹⁷⁵ Compare, for example, the opening sentences: 'You then are absolutely determined, Sir, to make yourself conspicuous in the universe' ([Anon.], *Letters of Mr. the Abbot*, 5); 'You are absolutely resolved, it seems, Sir, to procure yourself a name in the world' ([Stevens trans.], *A New and Faithful Translation*, 1).

¹⁷⁶ See the title page of the 1773 edition.

¹⁷⁷ [Stevens trans.], *A New and Faithful Translation*, i.

became a work shunned by Kennicott's supporters.¹⁷⁸ Jones even claimed that one bookshop he knew even refused outright to stock the work on account of its criticisms of Kennicott's scheme.¹⁷⁹ Given the negative reaction Kennicott and some of his supporters had to the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé*, it is possible that some booksellers refused to stock the work. However, there is another explanation, namely, that the 1772 translation was poorly written, resulting in few sales. This point was made by a review of the 1772 translation that appeared in the September edition of the *Monthly Review* that year,¹⁸⁰ that was repeated when *A New and Faithful Translation* was reviewed by the same periodical in its July issue of 1773.¹⁸¹ Indeed, in 1773 the *Monthly Review*, commenting on the fact that a previous translation had appeared in 1772, surmised that the poor quality of that translation was the 'reason perhaps' that the 1772 translation 'was not much noticed'.¹⁸² This also explains why in 1773 *A New and Faithful Translation* (as the title emphasised) was needed, in addition to Stevens's claim that the previous one had been 'by some means or other suppressed'.¹⁸³

Who then translated the first edition? In the end, one can only speculate, though it is doubtful to have been Stevens. A number of facts speak against such a claim. The first is Stevens's own testimony in the preface of *A New and Faithful Translation*, quoted previously, where he speaks about an English translation being 'much wished for', so that 'those who did not understand the Language might reap the benefit of them [i.e. the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé*]' and how, upon its alleged

¹⁷⁸ Jones, *Memoirs*, 107-108.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹⁸⁰ *The Monthly Review*, vol.47, September 1772, London, 1772, 245.

¹⁸¹ *The Monthly Review*, vol.48, July 1773, London, 1773, 12.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ [Stevens trans.], *A New and Faithful Translation*, i.

suppression, ‘we heard no more of it’.¹⁸⁴ Inconclusive itself, these words nonetheless show an expectation on Stevens’s part for the appearance of a translation, an indication that he had not seen the 1772 translation and that it was his composition. Second is that fact that the title page of the 1772 translation gives Paris as its place of origin, indicating that the work was probably produced in France, not England. Indeed, related to this is the observation made in the *Monthly Review* in September 1772 that ‘The Translator ... appears from the ungrammatical imperfections of his English to be a foreigner’.¹⁸⁵ It is highly doubtful given Stevens’s education, scholarly ability and reputation amongst a number of scholarly High Churchmen, that he would have produced a published work of poor grammar. Later, mid-nineteenth-century testimony, also mentions nothing about Stevens as the translator of the 1772 edition and the fact that Park makes no mention of it leads strongly to the conclusion that whoever the translator was, it was not Stevens.¹⁸⁶ The conclusion that Stevens did translate the 1772 edition seems to be based on the mistaken—albeit entirely understandable—assumption that because Stevens had translated the 1773 edition, he must have also produced the first edition.¹⁸⁷ A much more plausible hypothesis is that the translator of the 1772 edition was Dumay himself, a conclusion perceptively put forward by Cecil Roth in 1950.¹⁸⁸ Dumay’s time spent in England would have meant he had a sound, if imperfect, knowledge of written English. The fact that he was teaching English in Paris, even publishing a work on the methods of

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ *The Monthly Review*, September 1772, 245.

¹⁸⁶ See also Henry G. Bohn and William Thomas Lowndes (eds), *The Bibliographic Manual of English Literature*, vol.3, London, 1865, 1265. In this work Stevens is listed as the author of *A New and Faithful Translation*, but not of the 1772 translation.

¹⁸⁷ During his early stage of research, this author made the same assumption.

¹⁸⁸ Roth, ‘Salomon Israel’, 76.

its teaching, makes him the most likely candidate. This, coupled with the fact that the 1772 translation had Paris as its place of origin, as the original French edition had, points the finger at Dumay and his continuing obsession to destroy Kennicott's scholarly endeavors.

In publishing *A New and Faithful Translation*, it was Stevens's hope 'that the Learned in general might be acquainted with the real merit of the *French Letters*'.¹⁸⁹ Such was needed, he claimed, for the reason that in the previous year there had appeared a short work entitled, *A Letter to a Friend, Occasioned by a French Pamphlet Lately Published Against Doctor Kennicott and His Collation of the Hebrew MSS*,¹⁹⁰ that he claimed had been written so as 'to put a stop to any farther enquiry' and to 'stifle the evidence of the *French Letters*'.¹⁹¹ Furthermore, Stevens speculated that the author of *A Letter to a Friend* was none other than Kennicott himself,¹⁹² a likely claim that has also been put forward recently by Ruderman.¹⁹³ If this were the case, then some contemporaries seem to have been unaware of it.¹⁹⁴ Nonetheless, Stevens felt the tone and style signified the true identity of the author. 'There is', Stevens wrote in a sarcastic manner, 'the same regard for truth, the same strength of reasoning, and the same poignancy of style so conspicuous in the

¹⁸⁹ [Stevens trans.], *A New and Faithful Translation*, i.

¹⁹⁰ See [Kennicott], *A Letter to a Friend*, *passim*.

¹⁹¹ [Stevens trans.], *A New and Faithful Translation*, i.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, ii.

¹⁹³ See Aston, 'Kennicott, Benjamin', *ODNB*; Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key*, 47.

¹⁹⁴ See *The Monthly Review*, vol.47, April 1772, London, 1772, 461; *The London Magazine*, vol.41, April 1772, London, 1772, 189. Both journals give no indication that Kennicott was known as the author. Indeed, both journals were quite critical of it—'it is written with a degree of spleen which does not serve to recommend it', observed *The Monthly Review*.

Doctor's Writings'.¹⁹⁵ Perhaps Stevens knew something about Kennicott's knowledge—or lack thereof—of the French language owing to the fact that he regarded the translations from the French contained in *A Letter to a Friend* as evidence 'that the Author does not understand the Language'.¹⁹⁶ He seemed confident that the author was Kennicott, though whoever it was, he was equally as confident that the author's reply to the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* was weak and that the arguments contained within did not stand up to scrutiny.

Though the work was a translation, *A New and Faithful Translation* nonetheless contains two revealing sections penned by Stevens that were added to the work, namely: 'An Introductory Preface by the Translator' (numbering fourteen pages)¹⁹⁷ and 'An Appendix by the Translator' (numbering eight pages).¹⁹⁸ The introductory preface deals specifically with the contents of the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* and some of the arguments made in *A Letter to a Friend*, providing some important commentary upon both works. The appendix, however, was of a different nature. There, rather than adding further commentary on the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé*, Stevens added in an original way to the Hutchinsonian opposition to Kennicott's project by outlining his opposition to Kennicott's plan to produce a new Hebrew edition of the Old Testament. Whereas the introductory preface deals specifically with the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* and its reply, the appendix is important because it is the only place where one can find Stevens's views on Kennicott's project as a whole.

In his introductory preface, Stevens, following the arguments of the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé*, also felt many of the manuscripts Kennicott had been using were of too

¹⁹⁵ [Stevens trans.], *A New and Faithful Translation*, ii.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, i-xiv.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 128-135.

poor a quality to be trusted.¹⁹⁹ Furthermore, the poor state of many of them signaled that they were in fact fabrications.²⁰⁰ A large element of Stevens's evidence for this claim was a meeting he claimed to have had with an unnamed 'Hebraist' who, Stevens claimed, had consulted Kennicott's manuscripts and was able to report to him their corrupt state. 'I had the luck', Stevens observed, 'to meet with an *Hebraist*, who had carefully inspected many of the Manuscripts collated by Doctor *Kennicott*: he declared they were for the most part wretched beyond conception, and that he suspected them either to have been written by boys, or by ignorant Scribblers to make a penny of them'.²⁰¹ It is almost certain that the unnamed 'Hebraist' mentioned here was Dumay. This claim is given justification when consulting Jones of Nayland's account of Dumay's motives and behaviour following his falling-out with Kennicott.²⁰² Jones records that Dumay, after quarrelling with Kennicott, had presented himself to Jones with 'complaints'; Dumay 'desiring to shew me some extracts he had made from the collations, that I might be a witness with him to the futility of the undertaking'.²⁰³ Jones claimed that this attempt to persuade him of Kennicott's corrupt scholarship was not successful. He notes that he sent Dumay away, admonishing him to return to Kennicott, 'make his peace with him, and go on quietly with his business'.²⁰⁴ Dumay did indeed return to Kennicott, but still harboring a strong resentment he began to use the Hutchinsonian opposition to Kennicott to his advantage; as Jones puts it, 'playing a false game between two parties; and carrying stories from the one to the other as it suited his purpose, till all

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, iii-iv.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, viii-x.

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, ix.

²⁰² Jones, *Memoirs*, 106-107.

²⁰³ *Ibid*, 106.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*.

his friends found reason to be afraid of him'.²⁰⁵ Because of this treachery, Jones notes that Kennicott was forced to terminate permanently Dumay's employment, an action that only seems to have compelled Dumay into even more bold and creative efforts to destroy his former employer's reputation and scholarship. This involved a plan to fabricate manuscripts and use them against Kennicott. As Jones explained, Dumay 'left the occupation of a collator' and 'formed a plan for forging Hebrew manuscripts, with all the appearances of antiquity, and putting them off for genuine, to shew how the world might be imposed upon'.²⁰⁶ Though Stevens's words indicate that he was not presented with any forged manuscripts that had been created by Dumay, Stevens's claim to have met 'with an *Hebraist*, who had carefully inspected many of the Manuscripts' and that this 'Hebraist' had 'declared' such manuscripts to be forgeries, corresponds closely with the motives and behaviour of Dumay. It is unlikely to have been anyone else.

Stevens, however, does not seem to have required much convincing regarding the possibility that fabrications had been behind Kennicott's project, for a large element of anti-Semitism was at work in directing him towards this conclusion. The presence of anti-Semitism in Stevens is not unusual given the Hutchinsonian context Stevens inhabited. The Hutchinsonians held that following the rise of Christianity the Jews had become purposefully adept at explaining away the messianic meanings of the Old Testament through a variety of deceitful means.²⁰⁷ The Jewish historian, David Katz, claims that 'the Hutchinsonians were blatantly, even obsessively, anti-Jewish', whilst another Jewish historian, Todd Endelman, singles out English High Churchmen—clerics and laity—as being the most

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Katz, 'The Hutchinsonians and Hebraic Fundamentalism', 239, 252-255.

predominant purveyors of anti-Jewish sentiment during the middle of the eighteenth century.²⁰⁸ In 1753 the Jewish Naturalization Bill (or Jew Bill, as it was referred to), brought in to enact the naturalization of British Jews, had been bitterly opposed by Tories and High Churchmen, many of whom had revived classic European anti-Semitic accusations such as the mediaeval blood libel and even the notion that Jews had a peculiar smell.²⁰⁹ Merchants also opposed the Jew Bill, believing they were threatened by what they feared would be an influx of untrustworthy Jewish traders and financiers.²¹⁰ David Ruderman is uncertain that the anti-Jewish feelings evoked by the Kennicott debate had anything to do with the opposition to the Jew Bill of 1753, but the relatively close proximity of the events nonetheless suggests that the anti-Semitism evoked during the 1750s was not far in the background of the Hutchinsonian opposition to Kennicott.²¹¹ Stevens, being a merchant himself, may have even been a part of the merchant-based, commercial opposition to the Jew Bill. In his preface to *A New and Faithful Translation*, he certainly made clear his belief that the Jews were inherently duplicitous in their nature, especially when it came to commerce directed at Christians. The Jews, he wrote, ‘have always accounted it one part of their profession to chouse [cheat] Christians of their money by counterfeit wares of every ... kind’.²¹² Stevens cited what he perceived to be the Jewish tendency to produce counterfeit coins, a charge against English and European Jews that dated back to the Middle Ages and which re-appeared once again in England

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 252; Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain: 1656-2000*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, 68, 75, 86-89.

²⁰⁹ Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 68, 75.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 75.

²¹¹ See Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key*, 32 n.36.

²¹² [Stevens trans.], *A New and Faithful Translation*, ix-x.

during the late eighteenth century.²¹³ As Stevens claimed, ‘When the Study of Coins came into vogue, mercenary [Jewish] artists took advantage of the public curiosity, and produced spurious coins in great abundance, with such a face of antiquity, that the best judges might be, and without doubt were, frequently imposed upon’.²¹⁴ The specific instances of alleged eighteenth-century counterfeiting Stevens was referring to are unclear. Endelman notes that though there were cases of English Jews forging coins in the late eighteenth century, there ‘were no convictions ... before 1782’.²¹⁵ Perhaps Stevens was aware of other cases of counterfeiting. He was by no means alone in viewing Jewish commerce suspiciously; a perceived problem of Jewish crime had become the subject of comment from social reformers from as early as the 1770s onwards.²¹⁶ However, even if there are references to Jews allegedly forging coins, the idea of forged biblical manuscripts seems to have been solely a Hutchinsonian accusation. Stevens certainly felt he had found the flaw in Kennicott’s project. Stevens thus enquired whether ‘the same mercenary spirit, which produces counterfeit Coins’, was able to ‘produce counterfeit Manuscripts?’²¹⁷ He was convinced that it was, claiming that ‘The State of many Manuscripts, which have an appearance of being hastily or carelessly written for mercenary purposes, is scarcely to be accounted for on any other principle’.²¹⁸

It would be wrong, however, to conclude that Stevens’s anti-Semitism was simply an outworking of his commercial background—that is, merely an entrenched

²¹³ Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*, vol.III, New York: Cosimo, 2009 (orig. 1894), 642-643;

Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England 1714-1830: Tradition and Change in a Liberal Society*, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1999, 206-207.

²¹⁴ [Stevens trans.], *A New and Faithful Translation*, viii.

²¹⁵ Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England*, 206-207.

²¹⁶ Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 46.

²¹⁷ [Stevens trans.], *A New and Faithful Translation*, viii-ix.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, ix.

distrust of Jewish commerce. His anti-Jewish views were, in fact, derived from a classical Western stereotype regarding Jews—namely, that having murdered Christ, they were religiously and racially anti-Christian in their methods and intent.²¹⁹ Thus Stevens claimed that the duplicitous behaviour of Jews towards Christians was related to their malicious attitude towards Christianity and their disbelief in Christian dogma. Stevens linked this with the theological dangers that could result through Kennicott's revision of the Hebrew text. The reason was that Kennicott was employing a Jewish anti-Christian hermeneutic. Using the analogy of Virgil's Trojan Horse, Stevens saw the danger of falling prey what he thought was a 'Pharisaical' methodology of 'picking and sifting' through the Scriptures. Thus, not only had Jews provided Kennicott with false manuscripts, they had also given him a false methodology, one ultimately designed to destroy Christianity.

The *Jews* have been inventing fables and subterfuges for above a thousand years, to defeat all the attempts of the Ministers of *Christ*, and to fortify themselves in their unbelief: and are they now of a sudden become enamoured of the labours of a *Christian* Divine? What views can they have in giving encouragement to his Work, unless they suppose he is bringing into the *Christian* Church a *Trojan* horse, replete with the instruments of discord and skepticism? At least, if no other ill purpose is promoted by it, this effect may naturally arise, that *Christian* Scholars may be tempted to waste their time in picking and sifting of Letters, like the *Pharisees* of old; till the Scripture, instead of being applied as the power of God to Salvation, ... shall

²¹⁹ Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 86-89.

dwindle into a lifeless and barren object of Criticism: and then the *Jews* may see some part of their wishes accomplished.²²⁰

Such words were, of course, a strident anti-Semitic mixture of theological speculation and unsubstantiated conspiracy theory. Amongst his Hutchinsonian friends, however, such a worldview was part and parcel of their belief that the Jews were fundamentally dishonest and manipulative. Thus, when interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures, one had to be guided by the light of Christian revelation. Kennicott's project was tainted by association with a Jewish influence that was subversive and untrustworthy, simply because it was Jewish.

Stevens recognised that Kennicott had the public backing of many individuals of influence in British society—of 'Princes, Prelates, and Universities', as he put it.²²¹ In consideration of this he was even tempted, in a sarcastic way, to see himself as 'profane in entertaining any disrespectful sentiments'; that perhaps he should hide his head, counting himself 'amongst the malignant Cavilers of the age'.²²² Continuing in a sarcastic tone, it almost seemed enough for Stevens to reconsider truth of his conclusions. 'When I review some of the names of Dr. *Kennicott's* Subscribers, I am almost persuaded to renounce my own judgement, and confess, that the design, to which *they* have given their sanction, must be serviceable to the interests of Christianity.'²²³ Yet notwithstanding the evident sarcasm in these words, when one considers that amongst Kennicott's supporters were George II, George III, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, it is possible that there may have been a genuine tension for Stevens in his opposition to

²²⁰ [Stevens trans.], *A New and Faithful Translation*, 133 (emphasis in original).

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 134.

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ *Ibid.*

Kennicott and his many patrons. Yet Kennicott's popularity would not budge Stevens's strong conviction that the project was infected with an anti-Christian Jewish influence. The final words of Stevens's appendix to *A New and Faithful Translation*, reveal just how influential this perspective was in his refusal to embrace Kennicott's scholarship. '[W]hen I consider and compare these and other glaring inconsistencies, I am then obliged to conclude, that however pious his Subscribers may be in their intentions, they have undesignedly verified what *Potiphar's Wife* falsly [sic] pretended against *Joseph*—*they have brought in an Hebrew unto us, to mock us.*'²²⁴

However, time would reveal that it was Stevens's who was being misled, not Kennicott. For, as Jones admitted many years later, the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* was a fabrication and its author, Dumay, a character who could not be trusted with the truth.²²⁵ However, no such admission ever seems to have emerged from Stevens. In fact, at the time Stevens's words indicate that he genuinely believed Kennicott was basing his project on fabricated manuscripts, received from a manipulative and subversive Jewish source. The more likely reality is that Stevens's deeply held anti-Semitism, influenced by an untrustworthy source, had blinded him to accepting the unlikely scenario that Kennicott, a skilled and widely respected Oxford Hebraist, was being misled in this extraordinary fashion. Given the strong likelihood that Dumay was the unnamed 'Hebraist' Stevens mentions as being the source for his claims, then it appears that Stevens, perhaps more than any of his friends, had been taken in by an individual later admitted by his close friend and colleague, Jones of

²²⁴ Ibid, 135 (emphasis in original).

²²⁵ Jones, *Memoirs*, 103-109.

Nayland, to have been a fraud.²²⁶ Stevens's words and sentiments in *A New and Faithful Translation* are revealing of how far this Hutchinsonian critic was willing to go in an attempt to discredit Kennicott's project.²²⁷

To what extent Stevens's fellow anti-Kennicott activists, Horne and Jones, also came under Dumay's influence is harder to discern. Jones's later recollections—penned almost three decades after the events—attempt to argue that both he and Horne had been able, at the time, to discern Dumay's untrustworthiness and thus distance themselves from him.²²⁸ However, it is possible that Jones, with the aid of time, was attempting to denounce a source he may have once regarded with more credibility than he was willing to admit decades later. That Jones had, at the very least, viewed the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* as a possible scoop during the 1770s is likely given the trouble he went to in establishing Dumay's authorship of the work—even noting that whilst in Paris he made investigations regarding the text's authorship.²²⁹ That Stevens, more than any other, highly valued the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* is evident both from his translation of the work and his own comments that embellished the charge of fabrication contained within. Indeed, Jones's comment that the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* 'was ... translated into English by a worthy gentleman, who was struck by its facts and arguments', is more than an understatement.²³⁰ To what extent Stevens remained 'struck by its facts and arguments' whilst Jones reflected on this episode many decades later during the mid 1790s is unknown, though it is perhaps not surprising that with the exception of Park's brief mention of

²²⁶ Ibid, 106-107, 109.

²²⁷ [Stevens trans.], *A New and Faithful Translation*, ix.

²²⁸ Jones, *Memoirs*, 106-109.

²²⁹ Ibid, 108.

²³⁰ Ibid.

Stevens's work in translating this French text, no more is ever heard about Stevens's involvement in translating the infamous *Lettres de M. l'Abbé*.

The *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* does not seem have been a popular work, either in its original French or in either of its translations. It was certainly not the scoop that its early supporters thought it might be. Its influence seems to have been limited only to those with a stake in the Hutchinsonian opposition to Kennicott's project. On the Kennicott side, the publication did elicit a reaction, however. Mention has already been made of the anonymous reply, likely penned by Kennicott, *A Letter to a Friend, Occasioned by a French Pamphlet Lately Published Against Doctor Kennicott and His Collation of the Hebrew MSS*. This work appears to have read the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* in its original French and perceptively labeled the Capuchin Friars of St. Honoré, Paris, as being one of the sources behind the work.²³¹ Another response came from George Sheldon, vicar of Edwardston, Suffolk, whose *Remarks Upon the Critical Parts of a Pamphlet Lately Published, Intituled, Letters to the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Kennicott, by Mr. L'ABBÉ **** came out in 1775.²³² Interestingly, both replies failed to deal with the more serious charges of the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé*. David Ruderman has suggested that this was characteristic of the contempt Kennicott displayed towards those who disagreed with him,²³³ but it may also suggest that the outlandish claims made within it were not taken seriously to begin with. Still, the fact that the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* was deemed worthy of published replies shows that it was viewed with enough seriousness to elicit a response.

²³¹ [Kennicott], *A Letter to a Friend*, 2-3.

²³² George Sheldon, *Remarks Upon the Critical Parts of a Pamphlet Lately Published, Intituled, Letters to the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Kennicott, by Mr. L'ABBÉ ****, London, 1775.

²³³ Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key*, 48.

To date, Stevens's role in the Hutchinsonian attack on Kennicott has been largely forgotten and not fully understood. That he and his friends placed such faith in arguments and claims that had little plausibility—even prior to being discovered false—shows the extent to which they were determined to preserve the Hebrew text that underlay, not only the Authorized Version of the Bible, but the Hebrew text that they, as Hutchinsonians, so revered. Stevens's role in bringing the *Lettres de M. l'Abbé* to an English readership—albeit anonymously—shows that he, like his friends Horne and Jones, was serious in discrediting Kennicott and his efforts at biblical revision. His anonymous, attacking role, revealed a mindset that was ideologically extreme, especially when it came to the Hutchinsonian distrust of Jews.

A review of *A New and Faithful Translation* places the publication date of the work some time prior to the month of July, 1773.²³⁴ The exact publication dates are difficult to establish, but evidence suggests that about six months prior to this date Stevens had already published two other works relating to theological controversy. The issue then at hand was not related to Hutchinsonian concerns, but instead to the debate over subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles that became prominent within Anglican theological discussion during the early 1770s.

The subscription issue witnessed protests by internal and external critics of the Church of England to the various requirements of compulsory subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles that existed in England. The external critics of subscription were Dissenting ministers and laity (mostly schoolmasters) who, in 1772, 1773 and 1779, petitioned parliament for relief from their obligation of subscription to the doctrinal, as opposed to the governmental or political, articles contained within the Articles. They were ultimately successful in 1779 and would go on to push for further reforms

²³⁴ *The Monthly Review*, July 1773, 12.

in the 1780s.²³⁵ However, in addition to these external Dissenting critics, there was a vocal minority within the Church of England who were also pushing for a different sort of reform. They had a problem with the doctrinal aspects of the Articles, which they regarded as being too orthodox. The most prominent of these critics were a small group of latitudinarians who became known as the ‘Feathers Tavern petitioners’ and who, during the early 1770s, campaigned vigorously to abolish all forms of clerical and lay subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles.²³⁶ It was a debate that Stevens, along with many other figures from the High Church tradition, felt threatened by, responding with a vigorous ideological counter-attack that defended not simply the need for subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, but also, as in Stevens’s case, the spiritual and ecclesiastical authority of the Church of England to impose subscription.

The background of the Feathers Tavern petition lies in the rise and development of latitudinarian thought within the Church of England. Latitudinarians claimed to be the upholders of the Reformation’s emphasis on scriptural authority, specifically on scripture’s authority over all types of ecclesiastical creeds, dogmas and traditions.²³⁷ It especially affirmed the right of one’s ‘conscience to judge upon matters of doctrine’.²³⁸ Their basic concern, writes Martin Fitzpatrick, was to stress

²³⁵ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 64-87.

²³⁶ G. M. Ditchfield, ‘Feathers tavern petitioners’, *ODNB*; Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 88.

²³⁷ That the latitudinarians were really being faithful to the Reformation ideal of *sola scriptura* is highly contentious. Given that creeds, dogmas and confessions were central to the confessional Protestantism expressed by the Reformers and Elizabethan divines, it is questionable as to whether latitudinarians were being faithful to what the English Protestant tradition has meant when it expressed the doctrine of *sola scriptura*. The same point could apply to Continental Protestantism (see Peter B. Nockles, ‘Review of William Gibson, *Enlightenment Prelate: Benjamin Hoadly, 1676-1761*’, *The English Historical Review*, vol.cxx, no.486, April 2005, 475).

²³⁸ Ditchfield, ‘Feathers tavern petitioners’, *ODNB*.

‘the common core of Christianity’ and to place traditional ‘creeds and dogma at the margins of their concerns’.²³⁹ Rising within the period surrounding the Revolution of 1688, it has also been thought that their theological views were centred on personal moral reform (rather than theological dogma) coupled with a sympathetic and reconciliatory attitude towards Nonconformity.²⁴⁰ Seen in traditional historiography as William of Orange’s chief protagonists, their goals were originally thought to have been centred upon an attempt to promote ‘latitude’ in religious dogma so as to create national uniformity and avoid the religious conflicts that had marked the seventeenth century.²⁴¹ One, however, needs to be cautious in using such a neat definition. Like ‘High Churchmanship’, ‘latitudinarianism’ can also be misunderstood by being too narrowly defined in the above terms. Tony Claydon, for instance, has highlighted how many churchmen often regarded as the first latitudinarians—e.g. John Tillotson and Simon Patrick—actually held to positions that were more High Church in orientation—such as the ‘defence of a monopolistic national church’ and a view of dissenters as schismatics.²⁴² Nonetheless, a latitudinarian tradition that held tolerance and the basics of the Christian creeds at the centre of Anglican identity had developed by the early eighteenth century. Perhaps the first notable embodiment of this sort of churchman was Benjamin

²³⁹ Martin Fitzpatrick, ‘Latitudinarianism at the parting of the ways’ in John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor (eds), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 207.

²⁴⁰ Tony Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 160.

²⁴¹ *Ibid*, 159-160.

²⁴² *Ibid*, 163.

Hoadly (1676-1761), successively bishop of Hereford, Salisbury and Winchester.²⁴³ In recent times Hoadly's reputation as a conscientious and diligent diocesan administrator has been revived.²⁴⁴ But notwithstanding his pastoral diligence, Hoadly played a leading role as a vocal protagonist of a latitudinarian tradition that was much less focused on promoting a distinctive Anglicanism with its own doctrines and church polity.²⁴⁵ For example, his thought seemed to leave little room for either episcopacy or confessions of faith.²⁴⁶ To quote a famous sermon preached by Hoadly in 1717, Christ 'left behind Him no visible, human authority ... no judges over the consciences or religion of his people'.²⁴⁷ Christ, not the Church, was the only legitimate law-giver—there being no scriptural warrant for the existence of a visible Church structure with genuine spiritual powers or the ability to define or clarify doctrine.²⁴⁸ Given the presence of the Thirty-nine Articles within the Church of England, Hoadly's theological position logically led to the question of whether subscription to the Articles was legitimate. On this question, however, Hoadly refused to move in a liberal direction, despite other latitudinarian clerics claiming he was being inconsistent in not doing so.²⁴⁹ On this issue Hoadly exhibited a pragmatic conservatism. His position seems to have been that one could subscribe to the

²⁴³ G. M. Ditchfield, 'Joseph Priestley and the Complexities of Latitudinarianism in the 1770s' in Isabel Rivers and David L. Wykes (eds), *Joseph Priestly: Scientist, Philosopher and Theologian*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 148.

²⁴⁴ See William Gibson, *Enlightenment Prelate: Benjamin Hoadly, 1676-1761*, Cambridge: James Clark, 2004.

²⁴⁵ Ditchfield, 'Feathers tavern petitioners', *ODNB*; Nockles, 'Review of *Enlightenment Prelate*', 474-476.

²⁴⁶ Ditchfield, 'Joseph Priestley and the Complexities of Latitudinarianism in the 1770s', 148.

²⁴⁷ Quoted in John Gascoigne, 'Anglican Latitudinarianism and Political Radicalism in the Late Eighteenth Century', *History*, vol.71, 1986, 24.

²⁴⁸ Gibson, *Enlightenment Prelate*, 150-51.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 260-261.

general sense of the articles without being scrupulous regarding their exact detail.²⁵⁰ Subscription was also needed if one wanted to be loyal to the Church of England, uphold its unity and promote its established place within English society.²⁵¹ However, despite his conservatism, by the time he died in 1761, Hoadly had laid the intellectual foundations for further attacks upon subscription.²⁵² One of the most influential of these came from the pen of Francis Blackburne (1705-1787), the unorthodox Archdeacon of Cleveland who, from the early 1750s, had begun to write against subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles.²⁵³ In 1766 he published *The Confessional: Or a Full and Free Enquiry into the Right, Utility, Edification, and Success, of Establishing Systematical Confessions of Faith and Doctrine in Protestant Churches*,²⁵⁴ a work that Stevens, in his life of Jones of Nayland, would much later describe as ‘an artful libel on Creeds, Confessions, Articles of Faith, &c’.²⁵⁵ Personally acknowledging Hoadly as a key figure in his intellectual development, Blackburne’s thought was revolutionary; gone were any pragmatic explanations that defended subscription.²⁵⁶ Blackburne was insistent that no case whatsoever could be made for subscribing to any sort of confession within an

²⁵⁰ Ibid, 261.

²⁵¹ Gascoigne, ‘Anglican Latitudinarianism and Political Radicalism in the Late Eighteenth Century’, 25; John Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the age of the Enlightenment: Science, religion and politics from the Restoration to the French Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 132.

²⁵² Gibson, *Enlightenment Prelate*, 150-51, 187.

²⁵³ B. W. Young, ‘Blackburne, Francis’, *ODNB*.

²⁵⁴ Francis Blackburne, *The Confessional: Or a Full and Free Enquiry into the Right, Utility, Edification, and Success, of Establishing Systematical Confessions of Faith and Doctrine in Protestant Churches*, 1st edn, London, 1766. Two subsequent editions were published in 1767 and 1770. The version being quoted from here is the 1770 edition.

²⁵⁵ Stevens, ‘Life of William Jones of Nayland’, xi.

²⁵⁶ Anthony Page, *John Jebb and the Enlightenment Origins of British Radicalism*, Westport: Greenwood, 2003, 28; see also, Gibson, *Enlightenment Prelate*, 16, 20, 40, 72.

ecclesiastical body.²⁵⁷ Central only to the Christian faith were the Scriptures alone and the right and freedom of every Christian to interpret them as they saw fit.

The sum of the whole matter then is this: Lodge your church-authority in what hands you will, and limit it with whatever restrictions you think proper, you cannot assert to it a right of deciding in controversies of faith and doctrine, or, in other words, a right to require assent to a certain sense of scripture, exclusive of other senses, without an unwarrantable interference with those rights of private judgement which are manifestly secured to every individual by the scriptural terms of Christian liberty, and thereby contradicting the original principles of the Protestant Reformation.²⁵⁸

Blackburne's arguments in *The Confessional* went much further than simply being a case against compulsory subscription to the Articles. As Martin Fitzpatrick has observed, *The Confessional* was a radical thesis of reform: 'it would not be difficult to draw up the whole programme of religious radicals in the late eighteenth century from Blackburne's work: the total separation of church and state; complete liberty of conscience; and universal toleration'.²⁵⁹

Blackburne's work elicited a High Church reaction, notably from William Jones of Nayland, who published a critique in 1770.²⁶⁰ Others, of course, read *The Confessional* and were inspired by its contents. One who did so was Blackburne's son-in-law, Theophilus Lindsey (1723-1808). Lindsey, along with Blackburne and other figures such as John Jebb (1736-1786), formed a society with the express

²⁵⁷ Blackburne, *The Confessional*, 61-81, 50-51.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 50-51.

²⁵⁹ Fitzpatrick, 'Latitudinarianism at the parting of the ways', 217.

²⁶⁰ See William Jones, *Remarks on the Principles and Spirit of a Work, entitled the Confessional*, London, 1770.

purpose of making subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles voluntary. The society was formed at the Feathers Tavern, London, in July 1771 and was referred to simply as the ‘association’.²⁶¹ With Lindsey as the groups leading protagonist, the aims of the Feathers Tavern petitioners became expressly political: namely, to petition parliament, not simply for the abolition of the requirement of clerics to subscribe to the Articles in order to be admitted to a benefice, but additionally to provide relief for laymen who were required to subscribe in order to either matriculate from Oxford or graduate from Cambridge.²⁶² However, the results of their campaigning were unimpressive. Of the petition, a mere 250 signatures were collected, about 200 of these being from clergymen.²⁶³ Similarly, the two petitions to parliament that resulted had little substantive impact. The first, presented in February 1772, was rejected by 217 votes to 71. The loss was substantial, though nothing compared to the second introduction of the petition in May 1774, which was rejected without a division.²⁶⁴ By this stage, however, Lindsay had already given up on the Church of England. Following the first rejection of the petition in 1772 he had resigned his living, soon to become England’s first Unitarian Minister at a Chapel on Essex Street, London. The failure of what G. M. Ditchfield describes as ‘a tiny, albeit articulate, minority within the Church of England’²⁶⁵ to promote a parliamentary reform of the subscription laws highlights not only its broad lack of support, but also the strength of those High Churchmen who opposed the petitioners.²⁶⁶ Amongst the

²⁶¹ Ditchfield, ‘Feathers tavern petitioners’, *ODNB*.

²⁶² *Ibid*; Fitzpatrick, ‘Latitudinarianism at the parting of the ways’, 220.

²⁶³ Ditchfield, ‘Feathers tavern petitioners’, *ODNB*.

²⁶⁴ G. M. Ditchfield, ‘The Subscription Issue in British Parliamentary Politics, 1772-79’, *Parliamentary History*, vol.7, 1988, 49-52.

²⁶⁵ Ditchfield, ‘Feathers tavern petitioners’, *ODNB*.

²⁶⁶ Ditchfield, ‘The Subscription Issue in British Parliamentary Politics, 1772-79’, 65-66.

most vocal were the clerics George Horne,²⁶⁷ Thomas Patten (both Hutchinsonians)²⁶⁸ and Lewis Bagot (1740-1802).²⁶⁹ But of equal significance was the member of parliament, Sir Roger Newdigate (1719-1806). Not only did Newdigate have the ear of the Tory Prime Minister, Lord North, he was widely read in history and theology.²⁷⁰ Newdigate's High Church views were not always popular, indeed, they were sometimes even mocked;²⁷¹ nonetheless, the High Church ability to raise fears that the Feathers Tavern petitioners were intent on bringing ruin to Church and state were, as Ditchfield has pointed out, fears that were widely shared.²⁷²

Newdigate was not, however the only layman voicing opposition to the Feathers Tavern petition. His lay voice was joined by William Stevens sometime in early 1773 when he published *Cursory Observations on a Pamphlet Entitled, An Address to the Clergy of the Church of England in particular, and to All Christians in General* (1773)²⁷³ and in quick succession, *A Treatise on the nature and constitution of the Christian Church; wherein are set forth the form of its*

²⁶⁷ See George Horne, *Considerations on the Projected Reformation of the Church of England. In a Letter to the Right Honourable Lord North*, London, 1772.

²⁶⁸ See Thomas Patten, *A Letter to the Right Honourable the Lord North ... Concerning Subscription to the XXXIX Articles*, Oxford, 1773.

²⁶⁹ See Lewis Bagot, *A defence of the Subscription to the XXXIX Articles, As it is required in the University of Oxford*, Oxford, 1772.

²⁷⁰ Ditchfield, 'The Subscription Issue in British Parliamentary Politics, 1772-79', 50-51.

²⁷¹ In 1772, for example, Newdigate openly stated in the Commons his belief that Charles I was 'the only canonized saint of the Church of England', an opinion that T. C. Hansard reports, 'occasioned an universal laughter throughout the House' (T. C. Hansard, *The Parliamentary History of England, From the Earliest Period to the Year 1803*, vol.17, London, 1813, 438).

²⁷² Ditchfield, 'The Subscription Issue in British Parliamentary Politics, 1772-79', 50-51.

²⁷³ [William Stevens], *Cursory Observations on a Pamphlet Entitled, An Address to the Clergy of the Church of England in particular, and to All Christians in General*, London, 1773.

government, the extent of its powers, and the limits of our obedience (1773).²⁷⁴ Both works were issued anonymously, though Stevens nonetheless desired that his lay status be known to his readers, thus signing both works on the title page with the following attribution: ‘By a Layman’.

Cursory Observations was a reply to a pamphlet by the latitudinarian cleric, Francis Wollaston (1731-1815), whose *Address to the Clergy of the Church of England, and to All Christians in General* had been published in 1772, with a second edition being published the following year.²⁷⁵ Wollaston was not a Feathers Tavern petitioner, though he had great sympathy with the movement and believed ‘they were actuated by a sincere and pious zeal for the cause of Christianity’.²⁷⁶ From his early years as a clergyman he had been troubled with doubts regarding some aspects of the Thirty-nine Articles. However, he thought the cause of the Feathers Tavern petitioners to be doomed and objected to their methods, viewing the desire to seek ecclesiastical redress ‘without consulting their ecclesiastical superiors upon it’ to be an error.²⁷⁷ Rather than address parliament, Wollaston favoured direct appeal to the Church of England’s episcopal bench, believing that it was there that change was most likely to be successful.²⁷⁸ Thus he records that he sent a copy of the *Address* to every bishop in the Church of England.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁴ [William Stevens], *A Treatise on the nature and constitution of the Christian Church; wherein are set forth the form of its government, the extent of its powers, and the limits of our obedience. By a Layman*, London, 1773.

²⁷⁵ Francis Wollaston, *An Address to the Clergy of the Church of England in particular, and to All Christians in General*, London, 2nd edn, 1773.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-6; Francis Wollaston, *The Secret History of a Private Man*, London, 1795, 13-15.

²⁷⁸ Wollaston, *An Address*, 6-7.

²⁷⁹ Wollaston, *The Secret History*, 15.

Wollaston's *Address* was only a short work (23 pages). It was a moderately argued case that called, not for an abolition of subscription, but for significant amendments to the Thirty-nine Articles so as to make them acceptable to those—such as the author—who had intellectual difficulties subscribing to them in their current form. Wollaston regarded the Articles as antiquated, seeing them as a residue of the Reformation and of the Church of England's need to distance itself from Roman Catholicism. However, throughout the *Address*, Wollaston never specifically declares what it is he found antiquated about the Articles, simply stating—in a vague manner—that time has shown them to be out-dated and thus in need of revision.²⁸⁰

Park would later claim that Stevens's reply to Wollaston, *Cursory Observations*, had been written in a humorous tone, demonstrating the author's ability to debate in both a serious as well as a humorous manner. For Park, this was an example of Stevens's saintliness—his ability in being able to live a serious and pious life with a corresponding cheerfulness. Thus, in language that was characteristically hagiographic, Park claimed that *Cursory Observations* was 'written in ... a strain of easy, unaffected pleasantry, accompanied with ... solidity of argument'.²⁸¹ An example of this, quoted by Park, is an observation Stevens makes at the beginning of his reply to Wollaston, where, upon reading Wollaston's statement that he had entered into holy orders despite his family and friends wishing he had chosen another vocation,²⁸² Stevens responded with the observation that 'This piece of intelligence cannot fail to give his readers a very favourable opinion of the good sense and judgement of his friends and family; and the more we see of him, the more we shall be disposed to wish that he had listened to their advice, instead of

²⁸⁰ Wollaston, *An Address*, 15-16.

²⁸¹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 83.

²⁸² See Wollaston, *An Address*, 4.

following his own inclinations'.²⁸³ The comment, however, would hardly have seemed humorous to Wollaston had he read it. Indeed, one gets the impression that Park, desiring to paint Stevens in a positive light, downplayed the acerbity of the debate for Stevens, for when reading *Cursory Observations* it is clear that it was a work addressing an issue that had little humour in it for High Churchmen like Stevens. For example, where Wollaston spoke of his being 'a sincere friend of the *Religious Establishment* in this kingdom', Stevens replied by questioning Wollaston's honesty in being a clergyman, even accusing him of having been hypocritical in taking holy orders.

[H]is *sincerity* is of such an extraordinary nature as I never desire to experience as a friend; for he confesses, that in subscribing 'the form now required, he used that *Latitude* in the interpretation of the Articles, which is nowhere expressly authorised;' that is, in plain English, he declared his *unfeigned* assent and consent to doctrines, which he did not believe, and which he heartily wished to be well rid of. This was from 'free choice,' and might be from 'a *desire* of doing good in his generation;' but it was *doing evil, that good might come*, and that is a practice not altogether warranted, I think, by the apostolical canon.²⁸⁴

In addition to lacking sincerity, Stevens suggested that Wollaston was hypocritical, keeping his private doctrinal views to himself and lacking the courage to openly express them. 'As long as there was no prospect of success from divulging his *real* sentiments, he kept them stifled within his own breast; but when the spirit of sedition began to blow at the Feathers Tavern, the *strange* fire kindled, and he spake

²⁸³ [Stevens], *Cursory Observations*, 2.

²⁸⁴ Stevens cites Romans 3:8; see *ibid*, 3-4 (emphasis in original).

with his tongue.’²⁸⁵ Thus, in Stevens’s view, Wollaston was just like the Feathers Tavern petitioners, intent on the ‘destruction of the Church’.²⁸⁶ Displaying a conspiratorial mindset evident in his reply to Kennicott, Stevens thought the only difference between the approaches of the petitioners and that of Wollaston was the way they made their attacks, ‘the former thinking to carry all by storm, and the later chusing [sic] rather to proceed by way of sap’, that is, slowly.²⁸⁷ Both, in sum, were ultimately bent on the destruction of the Church of England; both needed to be countered with equal force.

One of the first themes Stevens responded to was Wollaston’s championing of the idea of the liberty of conscience. Here, Wollaston, like Blackburne before him, had emphasised the Reformation teaching of *sola scriptura*—or at least the latitudinarian interpretation of it—and was interpolating the conclusions he thought such a doctrine inexorably led to. Blackburne, for example, had claimed that having the Scriptures as the sole foundation for the Church’s doctrines also meant that all Christians possessed the right to private judgement, which in turn meant that no religious test could be applied without violating the principle of Christian liberty.²⁸⁸ Though he was more moderate than Blackburne had been in expressing this point, Wollaston nonetheless inferred a similar conclusion: namely, that having the Scriptures as the sole rule of faith meant that such a doctrine would inevitably result in diverse interpretations regarding matters of faith and doctrine.²⁸⁹ This fact, Wollaston believed, made the imposition of any sort of religious test unwarrantable,

²⁸⁵ Ibid, 4.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, 4-5.

²⁸⁸ See Blackburne, *The Confessional*, 1-2, 50-51.

²⁸⁹ Wollaston, *An Address*, 8-10.

as no one view could be forced upon all Christians without violating their right to freedom of conscience.²⁹⁰

For Stevens, the problem was not that the Scriptures could be interpreted differently, but that such alternating interpretations could be considered equally valid—a conclusion that Wollaston seemed to be implying, but not explicitly admitting to. For Stevens, there was only one Gospel, only one message of salvation to which all people were required to adhere.²⁹¹ Thus the observation Wollaston was making had no force for Stevens, other than to point out that those who differed from doctrinal orthodoxy—as expressed in the Thirty-nine Articles—had strayed from the Christian religion; whereas in Wollaston’s mind all such differences were apparently being given the sanction of truth based merely on the fact that one’s conscience was being followed. In making this point, Stevens was correct to infer from Wollaston a type of relativism that he was not explicitly admitting to, but which was clearly implied in his arguments. For Stevens, there could only be one Gospel that the Scriptures elucidated. The fact that alternative interpretations could be drawn only showed that error had crept into those who saw the truth differently.²⁹² ‘We may presume that if men do not believe the Gospel when preached to them, it is not because they cannot, but because they will not; the fault is not in the understanding, but in the will; they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.’²⁹³

However, the main problem with Wollaston’s *Address* was not his promotion of the idea of Christian liberty, but rather his ecclesiology, because Stevens found it to be un-episcopal and highly erastian. The aspect of Wollaston’s *Address* that gave

²⁹⁰ Ibid, 8-9.

²⁹¹ [Stevens], *Cursory Observations*, 8.

²⁹² Ibid, 6.

²⁹³ Ibid, 8.

rise to this charge was where he had attempted briefly to chart the history of how the requirement of subscribing to religious tests had developed during the history of the early Church. Wollaston had claimed that the imposition of religious tests in early Christianity had been related to Christianity's establishment by the Roman state. As Wollaston observed: '[W]hen ... the governors of *Nations* became Christian, and observed such a *diversity* of opinions as had arisen among mankind, they thought it necessary to interpose in this matter; esteeming it their Duty to provide by some *farther* Examination, that the Christian Religion be taught ... in the *purest Manner*'.²⁹⁴ What this 'examination' was, Wollaston does not specify, though he may have had in mind the First Council of Nicaea (325), called into being by the emperor Constantine, and its creation of the first part of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. However, the problem with Wollaston's analysis, Stevens argued, was that he was blurring the distinction between Church and state by blending 'the Civil and Ecclesiastical power together, which ought to be carefully distinguished' and was appearing 'to look upon the church from that time, as nothing more than a creature of the state'.²⁹⁵ Such an analysis seems to have been correct, for as Wollaston later went on to state, the Church of England and the State should be counted as the same thing: 'The *Church of England*, our national Church (or the State; for in this respect they may be considered as the same), proposes on her part such Terms of Communion as to her appear right'.²⁹⁶

But, according to Stevens, the Church was a society distinct from the State, possessing its own divine powers and sphere of jurisdiction. Stevens's words explaining the Church's spiritual independence deserve to be quoted in full as they

²⁹⁴ Wollaston, *An Address*, 10.

²⁹⁵ [Stevens], *Cursory Observations*, 10-11.

²⁹⁶ Wollaston, *An Address*, 12.

represent the most lucid and detailed description of his strong conviction, that despite the fact of political establishment the Church nonetheless always remained an independent spiritual society.

There are spiritual powers inherent in the Church, which the state has no more right to exercise, than Jeroboam had to offer incense; and on the other hand, the church, *as such*, is no way concerned with the temporal authority belonging to the state. The church subsisted for three hundred years in the exercise of all its just powers, independent on the state, and so it may do again; for it derives its authority, which is purely spiritual, from Christ and not from the state. The Christian religion being established by the civil magistrate, does not make the church and a civil society become the same thing, as this gentleman [Wollaston] seems to imagine; for the church remains the same religious society it was before, subsisting on the foundation it was first built on, with the same offices and administrations, the same social rules, and the same terms of union between the members.²⁹⁷

Wollaston was implying that the Church required temporal rulers to impose doctrinal tests upon clerics. Such a position was anathema to Stevens who felt the need to emphasise the independence of the Church in examining its own clerics: ‘The rulers of the Church, who alone have the right to ordain ministers in the church, are surely the proper persons to examine into the qualifications of the candidates for orders; and they are the governors to whom the candidates are to give assurance that they will conform to the rules of the church, and be faithful ministers of it.’²⁹⁸ To Stevens, Wollaston appeared incapable of distinguishing ‘between a civil and a

²⁹⁷ [Stevens], *Cursory Observations*, 11 (emphasis in original).

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 14.

religious society’, as well as being able to ‘see how the state may support the church without encroaching upon the rights and privileges of it’.²⁹⁹

The culmination of *An Address to the Clergy of the Church of England* had been a petition by Wollaston that the Church of England’s episcopal bench heed his arguments and acquiesce in amending the Thirty-nine Articles.³⁰⁰ Stevens’s concern with emphasising the Church’s divine foundation and spiritual independence had meant that a detailed or specific focus on defending the Thirty-nine Articles was not present in *Cursory Observations*. However, for his part, the Thirty-nine Articles could be defended simply on the basis that they were, as he put it, ‘declaratory of all the great doctrines of Christianity’.³⁰¹ Stevens did not move far beyond making only a very basic justification of this claim, arguing that the doctrines contained within the Articles ‘were used in the church from the beginning’ and were thus sufficient for members of the Church of England such as himself and Wollaston.³⁰² Using an unsophisticated analogy, Stevens considered the ‘light of the Gospel’ and the ‘light of the Sun’ to be of the same nature; both have been the same from the beginning and will continue to be so until the end of time. To undo the Articles would be to undo the Gospel itself and, in Stevens mind, this was as futile as attempting to ‘petition for a new sun’.³⁰³ For Stevens, the rationale the Church provided for requiring subscription was, in his view, entirely reasonable; it originated within the Church’s teaching authority for the purpose of maintaining doctrinal unity. As a divine society, the Church needed to maintain unity in doctrinal matters—hence the

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Wollaston, *An Address*, 21-2.

³⁰¹ [Stevens], *Cursory Observations*, 21.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid, 25.

need for the Articles. ‘The church lays down what appears to her to be the doctrines of the scripture, and they have never yet been disproved. Her intention is, that none shall be admitted to the office of ministers in her communion, who do not believe them; that her teachers may *all speak the same thing, and there be no divisions*.’³⁰⁴

Emulating Wollaston’s style and grammar, Stevens ended the work with his own ‘counter-petition’, calling upon the ‘real friends of the church’ to stand up and defend the Articles and the Church of England. Speaking highly of the Thirty-nine Articles as ‘the glory and ornament of our church’, he regarded them as being scriptural and thus as representative of what made the Church of England the true and perfect heir of the Reformation. There was, quite simply, nothing in need of further reform.

That the present set of *Articles*, which, for the soundness of their doctrine, are the glory and ornament of our church, and cannot aggrieve any but its open or secret enemies, may be preserved to us whole and entire; for we have no objection to subscribing them *fairly*, as they contain nothing but what ‘is read in holy scripture, or may be proved thereby;’ and we verily think they are our best security against the Papist, the Infidel, and the Heretick [sic]. ... That *our* church may still be, what it always hath been, the honour of the reformation, the strongest bulwark of the Gospel against Popery, and the brightest star in the Christian firmament. The terms of our communion are pure and scriptural; and if they, who *now dissent* from us, will continue to do so, the fault is theirs not ours; we have done our duty, and they are to see

³⁰⁴ Ibid, 31-2 (emphasis in original).

whether separation from such a church does not involve them in the guilt of schism.³⁰⁵

Wollaston followed-up his *Address to the Clergy of the Church of England* with another publication, *Considerations on the State of Subscription to the Articles and Liturgy of the Church of England* (1774), a work which represented a commentary or history on the subscription debate up until the decade of the 1770s.³⁰⁶ Reflecting on this work decades later in his autobiography, Wollaston made reference to those ‘unfeeling’ and ‘stiff Divines and High-Church Laity’ who had opposed all application for relief—a reference, perhaps, to Stevens or Newdigate.³⁰⁷ According to Park, however, there was no ill-feeling between Stevens and Wollaston, at least in later years.³⁰⁸ Though he does not specify when, Park records that both men did in fact become ‘very sociable’ towards the ends of their lives, having been introduced through an unnamed mutual friend.³⁰⁹ Park also notes that Stevens was once recorded as saying that ‘the faults of the *book*, and not of *the man*, were the objects of his attack’ upon Wollaston.³¹⁰ This may have been true in later years, but the force of many of Stevens’s remarks reveal that the dispute was serious enough when it occurred; additionally, it needs to be noted that there were *ad hominem* arguments within Stevens’s response. Wollaston, for his part, does not mention Stevens by name in his autobiography, so his thoughts on their brief intellectual duel remain unknown. Perhaps he regarded Stevens as too insignificant,

³⁰⁵ Ibid, 32-33 (emphasis in original).

³⁰⁶ Francis Wollaston, *Considerations on the State of Subscription to the Articles and Liturgy of the Church of England*, London, 1774.

³⁰⁷ Wollaston, *The Secret History*, 26.

³⁰⁸ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 76-77.

³⁰⁹ Ibid, 77.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

though given that *Cursory Observations* was published anonymously, there is also a good chance that at the time he was unaware who had responded to him. Unlike many of the Feathers Tavern petitioners who later left the Church of England, Wollaston remained within the Church of England, though he eventually gave up writing on controversial theological issues, thinking the area too heated and dispiriting.³¹¹

On Stevens's part, *Cursory Observations* was very quickly followed by a short exposition of ecclesiological principles, entitled: *A Treatise on the nature and constitution of the Christian Church; wherein are set forth the form of its government, the extent of its powers, and the limits of our obedience* (1773).³¹² As Stevens acknowledged in the preface, the *Treatise* was not an entirely original work but was rather an adaptation for a lay readership of Archbishop John Potter's (1673/4-1747), *A Discourse of Church Government: Wherein the Rights of the Church, and the Supremacy of Christian Princes, are Vindicated and Adjusted* (1711).³¹³ But there are, as will be demonstrated, significant differences between the *Treatise* and Potter's *Discourse*; however, the fact that Stevens used Potter's work as the almost exclusive source for the *Treatise* (often lifting whole sentences and paragraphs) is a fact that needs to be noted, as neither Park nor any later writers (especially the authors of his *DNB* and *ODNB* entries) make this point known.³¹⁴

³¹¹ Wollaston, *The Secret History*, 53-5.

³¹² See above, 206 n274 for full citation.

³¹³ [Stevens], *Treatise*, iii-iv; see also, John Potter, *A Discourse of Church Government: Wherein the Rights of the Church, and the Supremacy of Christian Princes, are Vindicated and Adjusted*, London, 1711.

³¹⁴ See Gerald le Grys Norgate, 'Stevens, William', *DNB*; Peter B. Nockles, 'Stevens, William', *ODNB*.

Indeed, before this work is examined in detail, a few words need to be said about Park's brief analysis of the text, as the subsequent historiography on Stevens has erred by repeating a mistake initially made by Park in the *Memoirs*. This is the repetition of Park's incorrect rendering of the title of the *Treatise*, referring to the work as 'An Essay on the nature and constitution of the Christian Church' as opposed to its correct form, 'A Treatise on the nature and constitution of the Christian Church'. Those who have repeated this error have mostly been the various authors of biographical dictionary-style entries on Stevens's life that have appeared from time to time since the early nineteenth century.³¹⁵ The most recent example of this can be found in the otherwise excellent entry on Stevens by Peter Nockles in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. This small error, initiated by Park, has since created a misleading trail of false citations that have continued down to the present day.³¹⁶

Park was of the view that the *Treatise* had been written to counter the arguments of the Feathers Tavern petition, a point repeated recently by Nockles.³¹⁷ This, however, should be regarded as being true only in a general or indirect sense, for as we have seen in examining Stevens's *Cursory Observations*, the layman's method was not to directly attack the petition, its protagonists or its arguments by name, but rather to emphasise the Church's divinely sanctioned authority which he and felt was being derided by opponents and certain sections of the press. It is important to note that in the *Treatise* no specific mention is made of the Feathers

³¹⁵ See for example, Alexander Chalmers (ed.), *The General Biographical Dictionary*, vol.28, London, 1816, 399; Hugh James Rose (ed.), *A New General Biographical Dictionary*, vol.12, London, 1853, 122-32; Churton, *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, vol.1, 27; Norgate, 'Stevens, William', *DNB*; Nockles, 'Stevens, William', *ODNB*.

³¹⁶ A fact made clear when this writer did a bibliographic search using the falsely rendered title.

³¹⁷ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 72-75; Nockles, 'Stevens, William', *ODNB*.

Tavern Petition, its supporters, or of the need for subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, though there are what may be allusions to it. Stevens, instead, appeared to be addressing what he considered to be a much broader threat to the Church of England than specifically the attack upon the Articles. As he wrote in the preface of the *Treatise*, the threat at hand was from those within the press who were intent on attacking the Church and its doctrines.

At a Time when the Press teems with the most scurrilous Invectives against the fundamental Doctrines of our Religion, and even the News-Papers are converted into Trumpets of Sedition, by the Enemies of the Church, Silence on the Part of its Friends becomes criminal, and a cold Neutrality is inexcusable. We are called upon, each according to his Ability, to stand forth in Defence of the Doctrines and Discipline of our Church; both which are equally exposed to the Malevolence of some, and the insidious Artifices of others.³¹⁸

With this context in mind, the *Treatise* was intended briefly to instruct the average lay person with correct notions regarding the Church's powers and attributes—what Stevens referred to as 'the Nature and Constitution of the Church'. 'It was hoped', Stevens continued in the preface, 'that it may be of some Benefit to others, who require Instruction' regarding what he saw as the basic points of ecclesiology, and that 'This at least may be said in its Favour, that it lies within a narrow Compass, and is level to the Capacity of all'.³¹⁹ Stevens reveals how he felt there existed in society an ignorance regarding the Church of England's divinely established ecclesiological foundation—an ignorance that was fatal when presented

³¹⁸ [Stevens], *Treatise*, iii.

³¹⁹ *Ibid*, iv.

with the type of attacks being made upon the Church at that time.³²⁰ Stevens does not specify who was making these attacks, simply describing his enemies as being represented by ‘the specious Character of a candid Enquirer after Truth—an Advocate for Liberty of Conscience, and one who makes very great allowance for the Scruples of his weak Brethren’.³²¹ This may, of course, have been a veiled reference to either Blackburn or Wollaston. Whatever the case may be, it was Stevens’s view that ‘ignorant’ Christians had no hope of being able adequately to defend themselves against the theological arguments put forward by such latitudinarian thinkers.

Understandably, following the structure of Potter’s *Discourse of Church Government*, the *Treatise* was the systematic presentation of the major attributes that Stevens strongly believed constituted the Church of England’s ecclesiological basis, followed by further sub-points that essentially elucidated and substantiated these major points. Perhaps the most important example of this is the first major attribute regarding the Church: namely, that the Church was a divinely-ordained, cohesive social unit, made up of members who were of one mind and in pursuit of the same ends. ‘FROM the Account which the Divine Records have given us of the *Christian Church*’, Stevens writes, ‘it appears to be no confused Multitude of Men, independent one on another, but a well-formed and regular Society’.³²² From this, Stevens asserted a further sub-claim: namely, that the Church is universal and possess a binding obligation that all members of the human race join it, participate in its rites and obey its teachings. It is not, as he put it, ‘a meer [sic] *voluntary* Society’ like a club, ‘but one whereof Men are obliged to be Members, as they value their

³²⁰ Ibid, iv-v.

³²¹ Ibid, v.

³²² Ibid, 9.

everlasting Happiness'.³²³ This was a clear hit against English Dissent, even if attacking Dissenters was not the main object of the text. The argument continues like this throughout the *Treatise*, with Stevens adding additional sub-claims to each of the major points he is attempting to put forth and expand upon.

There are four major claims in the *Treatise* that in Stevens's view present a full and proper presentation of the basic ecclesiological foundations inherent to the Church of England. Firstly, Stevens argued that the Church, being 'a well-formed and regular Society', is a divinely ordained social institution with outward and visible attributes that are universal in their application to humanity.³²⁴ Secondly, having set out this foundational definition, Stevens added that this divinely ordained and instituted society, in order to function properly, has had certain sacred officers appointed to govern it, to which obedience and subordination is owed.³²⁵ Thirdly, these officers—especially the episcopate and the presbyterate—possess indispensable spiritual, sacramental and disciplinary powers.³²⁶ Lastly, as a sort of conclusion to his thesis, Stevens adds a fourth attribute: namely, that the Church sets out obligations that its members are, with dutiful obedience, required to fulfil.³²⁷ With the exception of the fourth claim, which seems to have been of Stevens's own composition, the first three claims can be found, mostly word-for word, in Potter's *Discourse*.

In all the claims made in the *Treatise*, substantiation is derived solely from scriptural texts. This is a feature that gives the *Treatise* a simplicity and forcefulness

³²³ Ibid, 10 (emphasis in original).

³²⁴ Ibid, 9-15.

³²⁵ Ibid, 15-22.

³²⁶ Ibid, 22-45.

³²⁷ Ibid, 46-48.

to its arguments—no doubt an intention on Stevens’s part. It is also a feature of the *Treatise* that contrasts it with Potter’s *Discourse*, which, as Potter stated in the preface, contained an account of the ‘constitution, government and rights of the christian church, chiefly as they are described by the Scriptures’, but also by the ‘fathers of the first three centuries’.³²⁸ Perhaps for reasons of simplicity and brevity, Stevens left out this Patristic element.

The exclusive use of the Bible, however, was not simply a literary technique, for at the very beginning of the *Treatise* it is asserted—in words that appear to be from Stevens’s pen—that the sole use of the Bible is sufficient when discerning a true ecclesiology. ‘As the Holy Scriptures are the Rule of our Faith and Practice’, he writes, ‘it is from them we are to learn the Nature and Constitution of the Christian Church, the Form of its Government, the Extent of its Powers, and the Limits of our Obedience’.³²⁹ As a High Churchman one might have expected Stevens to quote from both the testimony of the patristic era as well as the High Church divines of the seventeenth century.³³⁰ It is known that Stevens believed such authorities to be central to gaining a proper understanding of the Church of England’s faith.³³¹ Why Stevens felt the need to consult only the scriptural record probably related to his desire that the *Treatise* be a popular and accessible work, able to be appreciated by a lay readership. However, it is also possible that there may have been an additional motive to Stevens’s exclusive use of the Scriptures: namely, to counter the claims of latitudinarians—such as Blackburne—that the Scriptures were the sole source of all

³²⁸ Potter, *Discourse*, iv.

³²⁹ [Stevens], *Treatise*, 9.

³³⁰ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 26, 104-109.

³³¹ See above, 157.

that was ‘needful for spiritual living’.³³² If this were the case, his technique in actual fact accords with their views—though this would not have been his intention.

Of all the major claims Stevens makes in the *Treatise*, it is the first—that the Church is a society of divine institution—that appears to be the most central to his purpose in providing an outline and defence of the Church’s nature and constitution in the face of perceived threats to its welfare. Indeed, it is the foundational claim of the work, its major implications coming together to form a general thesis. This becomes evident when it is shown how Stevens progresses his argument by building upon this attribute. Thus, according to Stevens the Church, in the words of scripture, is a family (Ephesians 3:14-15), a city (Hebrews 12:22) and a kingdom in which Christ is the monarch (Ephesians 2:19).³³³ From this, Stevens concludes that ‘As a *Family*, a *City*, and a *Kingdom*, are Societies, and the Christian Church is represented by them, that must likewise be a Society’.³³⁴ Having established that the Church is a divinely-ordained society, Stevens draws out four important conclusions: firstly, that the Church is not voluntary, but a society in which all are obligated to be members;³³⁵ secondly, that the Church is a society that is spiritual in nature—‘founded in *opposition* to the *kingdom* of *darkness*’;³³⁶ thirdly, that the Church is outward and visible;³³⁷ and lastly, that the Church is catholic, ‘a *universal* society, both with regard to *place* and with regard to *time*’.³³⁸

³³² Blackburne, *The Confessional*, 1-2.

³³³ [Stevens], *Treatise*, 9-10.

³³⁴ *Ibid*, 10 (emphasis in original).

³³⁵ *Ibid*, 10-12.

³³⁶ *Ibid*, 12-13 (emphasis in original).

³³⁷ *Ibid*, 13-14.

³³⁸ *Ibid*, 14-15 (emphasis in original).

Stevens's second major attribute: the presence of divinely-sanctioned ecclesiastical officers was a classical restatement of what was a major tenant of the High Church tradition:³³⁹ namely, that the Church, as a part of its divine institution, has been given certain officers appointed to govern it, those being its apostolic successors, the bishops.³⁴⁰ Stevens's logic was that no society could properly function without the presence of officers 'to govern it'. By the same reasoning, the Church had also to possess its own officers. Being a divinely ordained society that is to last until the end of time, it follows that its bishops similarly had to have existed from the beginning until the present, maintaining the apostolic succession to the present day, for 'since it appears that the Christian Church is a regular Society, it must of Necessity have its *Officers*. And this Society is to be continued by a Succession of Believers to the World's End, it follows, that there must be an uninterrupted Succession of *Officers* till that Time. And as it is a Society of God's Institution, the *Officers* of it must receive their Commission from *Him*'.³⁴¹

Closely related to this was Stevens's third claim: that the Church has in its possession a number of apostolic powers crucially important to its successful functioning and existence.³⁴² These powers were as follows: the power to preach the Gospel; the privilege of praying for the Church in its public liturgies; the power to administer the Sacrament of Baptism; the power to consecrate the elements of bread and wine in the Holy Communion; the power to Confirm; the power to ordain officers; additionally, Stevens referred to the power 'of making *Canons*', that is,

³³⁹ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 25-26, 146-152.

³⁴⁰ [Stevens], *Treatise*, 15-22.

³⁴¹ *Ibid*, 15 (emphasis in original).

³⁴² *Ibid*, 22-45.

‘Laws for the Behaviour of its Members in *Spiritual Affairs*’;³⁴³ closely related to this, there lastly existed the power of exercising ecclesiastical discipline, as Stevens termed it, of exercising ‘*Jurisdiction, ... that is, the Power of judging and censuring Offenders*’.³⁴⁴

When speaking of the power of ‘*judging and censuring Offenders*’, Stevens was making reference to the Church’s power to enforce discipline—‘to exclude from its Communion such unworthy Members as endeavour to oppose these Ends by promoting Vice, Superstition, and Infidelity’.³⁴⁵ In this regard, the Church’s privileges were to be regarded as being entirely conditional. The Church’s initial requirement of faith and obedience, once professed, had to be maintained to the end. If faith and obedience were not being kept by those who had once professed it, then the Church had the legitimate right to exercise the power of excommunication: ‘For no Reason can be shewn [sic] why Men should be obliged to vow Faith and Obedience in order to their becoming Members of the Church, which does not equally hold for their *Exclusion* from it when they notoriously break that Vow: So that the Power of *Excommunication* is a manifest Consequence of the *Baptismal Covenant*, and committed to the Governors of the Church, who have the Dispensation of the Sacraments’.³⁴⁶

Though no specific mention is made of the Thirty-nine Articles when making reference to the Church requiring a vow of faith and obedience, Stevens’s reference to those who ‘notoriously break that vow’ may have been a veiled reference to the Feathers Tavern petitioners, most of whom had adopted heterodox theological views

³⁴³ Ibid, 36-37 (emphasis in original).

³⁴⁴ Ibid, 39 (emphasis in original).

³⁴⁵ Ibid, 40.

³⁴⁶ Ibid, 40-41 (emphasis in original).

following their acceptance of ordination—some even leaving the Church of England to become Unitarians.³⁴⁷ They had, in other words, once vowed ‘faith and obedience’ but had subsequently broke those vows by professing what High Churchmen viewed as infidelity towards the Church’s teachings. Despite the probability of this conclusion, it does, however, need to be reiterated that the primary purpose of the *Treatise* was as an appeal to the laity to remain faithful to the Church of England and its hierarchy amidst what Stevens saw as a sea of ecclesiastical disobedience; it was, not in other words, a direct refutation of any specific thinker or group of individuals. This point becomes apparent towards the end of the *Treatise* where Stevens ends the work with his fourth major claim: namely, that certain ecclesiastical obediences are required of the Church’s members.³⁴⁸

‘That all Lay-Christians do owe some Obedience to their Spiritual Rulers’, Stevens argued, ‘is evident from our Lord’s Command to *hear the Church*’ (see Matthew 18:17).³⁴⁹ The question for Stevens, however, was the nature and extent of that obedience. Stevens’s method for explaining this was to use an analogy, specifically that ‘all Things that are in the World may be divided into *Good, Bad, and Indifferent*’.³⁵⁰ Elucidating his meaning, Stevens argued firstly that the good—which was analogous in his mind to God’s commands—required no ecclesiastical superior to command it for the reason that its nature always requires it to be obeyed. In Stevens’s words, ‘whatever is enjoined by the positive Command of God, we are bound to do, whether they [ecclesiastical superiors] require it or not’.³⁵¹ In other

³⁴⁷ Ditchfield, ‘Feathers tavern petitioners’, *ODNB*.

³⁴⁸ This section appears to have been entirely original on Stevens’s part.

³⁴⁹ [Stevens], *Treatise*, 46 (emphasis in original).

³⁵⁰ *Ibid* (emphasis in original).

³⁵¹ *Ibid*, 47.

words, the question of obedience in relation to the good (that being God's commands) is, in a sense, irrelevant when it comes to the issue Stevens was attempting to address. Regarding the 'bad', Stevens has little to say, other than observing that in the same way that good commands by its nature, so evil is forbidden by its nature, the laity thus being under no requirement at all to obey an ecclesiastical superior who commands a bad or evil act.³⁵² This seems to have been an ecclesiastical form of the Tory idea of non-resistance or passive obedience.³⁵³ How it relates to the political concept is uncertain, but the parallels are certainly evident. In concurrence with that teaching, which stated that unlawful commands issued by government were to be obeyed by patiently suffering through non-resistance (or 'passive' obedience), Stevens may have had in mind that unlawful ecclesiastical commands were, rather than being openly obeyed, passively suffered. It is difficult to imagine Stevens advocating that Christians openly disobey their bishops in a revolutionary sense similar to political disobedience.

It is in commanding the 'indifferent' that Stevens maintained that ecclesiastical superiors have their main function within the Church. Those things that are indifferent are, according to Stevens, those things 'which relate to the outward Peace and Order of the Church; which are not enjoined by the express Word of God, but yet are in no Respects contrary to it, in no wise forbidden by it'.³⁵⁴ Given the context in which Stevens was writing, it is tempting to conclude that Stevens may be alluding to issues such as the need to subscribe to a confession of faith, such as the Thirty-nine Articles; this indeed may be true, though Stevens does not mention them, nor would he given the fact that he is addressing the laity to whom a formal

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ See Chapter 1, 19; see also, below, 248ff.

³⁵⁴ [Stevens], *Treatise*, 47.

subscription to the Articles was not required, except in a few rare cases. Stevens does not specify in great detail what he means by those things ‘indifferent’ to which the obedience of Church members is due, but Church discipline, as well as times of prayer and worship, are briefly noted as examples.³⁵⁵ The real point Stevens seems to have been attempting to convey, was to encourage the laity to see their bishops for who they are—that is, successors to the Apostles—and to give them what he and other High Churchmen considered their dutiful obedience and loyalty. This, more than anything else, seems to have been Stevens’s remedy for guarding against the infidelity that he and others saw as emanating from disloyal Anglicans, usually clerics. The laity were to guard themselves against dangers such as theological infidelity by adhering to their legitimate ecclesiastical rulers, the bishops. ‘And as it their Authority, such is to be our Submission. So that the Obedience we owe to our Spiritual Governors, consists in observing all their Injunctions, that are contained within these Bounds of their Commission; in submitting to that Discipline, which they shall inflict, either to recover us from a State of Folly, or to preserve us from falling into it.’³⁵⁶

Before concluding this analysis of the *Treatise*, it is interesting to reflect on a theme that appears briefly within the *Treatise*, but that builds upon and strengthens a central concern contained within Stevens’s reply to Wollaston. The theme is the striking absence of any mention of political establishment as being an essential part of the ‘nature and constitution’ of the Church. Potter had similarly emphasised ‘that

³⁵⁵ Ibid, 47-48.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

the church was designed to be “distinct from all earthly kingdoms” .³⁵⁷ Christ, Potter claimed, though he had submitted to Caesar in civil concerns, had nonetheless always emphasised that the Church was, in its own internal matters of governance, independent from the state.³⁵⁸ Though slightly paraphrasing Potter, Stevens nonetheless reproduced the essence of his distinction between Church and State.

As the Church is a spiritual society, all the *powers* which belong to it are of the same nature, and such as wholly relate to the next world; consequently, they are distinct from those of *civil* magistrates, which concern the affairs of this life, and are designed for the present welfare of human societies. Our Lord himself wholly disclaimed all civil power, and left the civil flights of mankind in the same state wherein he found them. And when the *apostle* exhorts the *Hebrews* to yield obedience to their pastors, he restrains it to the affairs of their *souls*, for which their *pastors* were accountable to God.³⁵⁹

Stevens’s use of Potter is interesting when it is taken into account that Potter, though High Church in theological and ecclesiastical matters, was a Whig when it came to politics.³⁶⁰ Had Potter employed strongly Whig arguments in his *Discourse* it is likely Stevens may not have been so attracted to it. However, Potter’s seeming aloofness when it came to intervening in political issues with the potential for a strong Whig and Tory divide—for example, the Jacobite rising of 1745—might have made him attractive to Stevens.³⁶¹ During his day Potter was criticized for his failure

³⁵⁷ Robert D. Cornwall, *Visible and Apostolic: The Constitution of the Church in High Church Anglican and Non-Juror Thought*, Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993, 76; see also, Potter, *Discourse*, 21.

³⁵⁸ Potter, *Discourse*, 21-24.

³⁵⁹ [Stevens], *Treatise*, 21-22 (emphasis in original).

³⁶⁰ Rebecca Louise Warner, ‘Potter, John’, *ODNB*; see also, Chapter 1, 20.

³⁶¹ Warner, ‘Potter, John’, *ODNB*.

to intervene in political issues that the Whigs sought support for, yet it seemed to be a trait of Potter's that he distance himself from political affairs, preferring instead to attend to pastoral duties.³⁶² He was at least consistent with his ecclesiological principles, consequently making this Whig archbishop useful to the intentions of a politically active Tory High Church layman. Potter and Stevens thus converged on what was for both of them a key aspect of ecclesiology: that the Church was, in its essence, a spiritual society and thus separate from the state in its functions and existence. Though not unimportant to the Church, the State was not essential for the Church to function in its fullness. As he would express it later in his life to Bishop John Skinner of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Stevens maintained that 'Making establishment necessary to the existence of the Church, as many are apt to do, is a grievous mistake'.³⁶³ Of the Scottish Episcopal Church, an institution that Stevens would later come to champion in the political sphere,³⁶⁴ Stevens came exhibit a great esteem, referring to it as 'that pure and reformed part' of the Church, precisely because it was '*not* established'.³⁶⁵ Stevens's political petitioning on behalf of the Scottish Church took place in the late 1780s, however it is important to note that this stress upon the Church's spiritual independence can already be seen in the 1770s, not only in *Cursory Observations*, but also in the *Treatise*. The Church's inherently non-erastian basis thus shows itself to have been an important feature of Stevens's own High Church ecclesiology. Moreover, it was a point of doctrine being employed as a part of Stevens's ideological reaction to theological controversy of the early 1770s.

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Quoted in Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 95.

³⁶⁴ See Chapter 6, 344ff.

³⁶⁵ Stevens, 'Life of William Jones of Nayland', xxxvii (emphasis in original).

It is difficult to measure the immediate impact of *Cursory Observations* and the *Treatise* with a high degree of accuracy. Of the two works, *Cursory Observations* seems to have been the most noticed, especially in terms of the negative reactions it elicited. If the reviews from the Whig journals, the *Monthly Review* and the *Critical Review*, are anything to go by, *Cursory Observations* contained arguments that were not appreciated. The *Monthly Review*, in particular, was scathing. Saying nothing at all about the contents of the work, the reviewer nonetheless felt an *ad hominem* attack upon the author was legitimate. Of special notice was the fact that *Cursory Observations* had been written by a layman. The reviewer took particular issue with this fact, exclaiming that the writer (Stevens) would be best served if he did not attempt to go beyond what his lay status demanded of him, namely that he keep to his business and leave such debates to those more qualified (presumably clerics). Thus *The Monthly Review* observed:

The ignorance, bigotry, uncharitableness, and ill manners of this performance render it totally unworthy of the public attention. The author styles himself a layman. If he is a tradesman, (a gentleman he cannot be) we would advise him to stick to his proper business, and to devote his leisure hours to the cultivation of the Christian virtues, and not to controversies, for the management of which he is wholly unqualified.³⁶⁶

Saying little, *The Critical Review* was much more balanced than this, though still felt Stevens had been ‘illiberal’ in ‘His attack upon Mr. Woolaston’ (sic).³⁶⁷

³⁶⁶ *The Monthly Review*, January 1773, vol.48, London, 1773, 75. No doubt borrowing from *The Monthly Review* the following month *The Scots Magazine* ran the following one line review:

‘Ignorance, bigotry, uncharitableness, and ill manners’ (February 1773, vol.35, Edinburgh, 1773, 85).

³⁶⁷ *The Critical Review*, May 1773, vol.35, London, 1773, 396.

Regarding the *Treatise*, a brief review in the *Critical Review* said almost nothing about the work except that it was extracted from Potter,³⁶⁸ though the *Monthly Review*, in a more lengthy analysis was predictably critical of the work, viewing it derisively as ‘an attempt to revive something of the high notion of church power, the divine right of episcopacy, the inherent sanctity of the priesthood, &c. about which so much noise was formerly made, and by which so much confusion was produced’.³⁶⁹ Like its review of *Cursory Observations*, there was also the same evident antipathy towards laymen whom they disagreed with. This time the reviewer thought it possible that the claim its author was a layman may have been deceptively employed ‘to procure the piece a more facile reception’.³⁷⁰

The absence of a popular High Church press in the early 1770s,³⁷¹ means that little is known about the Tory and High Church reception of Stevens’s publications, though there is good reason to be confident that both *Cursory Observations* and the *Treatise* were welcomed by High Churchmen. Indeed, the *Treatise* especially went on to become a well-circulated High Church text during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The presence of the work within the collection of High Church tracts entitled, *The Scholar Armed Against the Errors of Infidelity, Enthusiasm, and Disloyalty*, published in 1780, is evidence of this.³⁷² *The Scholar Armed* was a forerunner to the series of tracts published under the editorship of Jones of Nayland: *The Scholar Armed Against the Errors of the Time* (1795), a publication associated with the Society for the Reformation of Principles, of which Stevens and Jones were

³⁶⁸ *The Critical Review*, April 1773, vol.35, 312.

³⁶⁹ *The Monthly Review*, May 1773, vol.48, London, 1773, 419.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 420.

³⁷¹ Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 11.

³⁷² [William Jones (ed.)], *The Scholar Armed Against the Errors of Infidelity, Enthusiasm, and Disloyalty*, London, 1780.

founding members.³⁷³ The *Treatise* was not included in this publication, though evidence that the work had gained a high reputation within High Church circles by the end of the eighteenth century is evident from the *Treatise*'s republication in 1799 by the SPCK.³⁷⁴ This time the *Treatise* contained Stevens's name on the title page. In 1810 the SPCK reissued the *Treatise* and from 1800 to 1833 listed the work within the series, *Religious Tracts, Dispersed by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* in 1800, 1807 and 1833.³⁷⁵ In fact, it seems that by the turn of the nineteenth century the work had become more popular than it had been during the time of its publication. In 1800, for example, the *Treatise* received a praiseworthy review in the High Church *Anti-Jacobin Review*;³⁷⁶ similarly, *The Orthodox Churchman's Magazine*, first issued in 1800, began with a quotation from the preface of the *Treatise* (in addition to running, as its first article, Stevens's life of Jones of Nayland).³⁷⁷ In 1803 the *Treatise* even found its way into a trans-Atlantic context through the efforts of John Henry Hobart (1775-1830). Hobart, the third Episcopalian bishop of New York and a pioneer of the High Church tradition in the United States, re-edited the *Treatise* by simplifying the work into a format more amenable to younger readers. It was published in North America in an anonymous format.³⁷⁸ The *Treatise* was thus arguably to become Stevens's most successful

³⁷³ See Chapter 5, 274ff.

³⁷⁴ See William Stevens, *A Treatise on the nature and constitution of the Christian Church; wherein are set forth the form of its government, the extent of its powers, and the limits of our obedience*, new edns, London: SPCK, 1799 & 1810.

³⁷⁵ Norgate, 'Stevens, William', *DNB*.

³⁷⁶ *The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, May 1800, vol.6, London, 1800, 64-65.

³⁷⁷ *The Orthodox Churchman's Magazine*, March 1801, vol.1, London, 1801, 2 & 3-11; see Chapter 5, 304-305.

³⁷⁸ William Berrian (ed.), *The Posthumous Works of the Late Reverend John Henry Hobart, D.D.*, vol.1, New York, 1833, 90.

publication. Its general appeal to advance a High Church ecclesiology gave it a genre that transcended its contemporary desire to refute latitudinarian ideologies of the early 1770s. Jones of Nayland, writing sometime around the republication of the *Treatise* by the SPCK in 1799, expressed a high opinion on the work and its author that would have been shared by many High Churchmen of that era. The letter was published in the March 1800 edition of the *Anti-Jacobin Review*. There, Jones wrote that ‘My thoughts are full of *you* at this time. I consider you as one of the great Lay Elders of this Church; having just been reading attentively your *Treatise on the Church*; and, I must say, I think I find it one of the best elementary treatises I ever read on any subject; and I rejoice that the *Society* are about to distribute it’.³⁷⁹

How successful Stevens was in shaping English religious opinion during the early 1770s is not known. However, his contribution was one of a number of prominent and influential High Church writers who responded to the challenges posed by a vocal minority within the Church of England who were calling for a relaxation of the subscription requirements then in force. In the end the High Churchmen won the debate. There is reason to side with G. M. Ditchfield’s conclusion to his study of the subscription debates in the 1770s, that the ‘Opponents of the petitions are too easily ignored’ and that their High Church opponents possessed more of the public mind than has been assumed.³⁸⁰ This is especially evident when one considers the overwhelming defeats the Feathers Tavern petitioners suffered the two times they attempted to get the legislation regarding subscription changed. Ditchfield has further stated that the petitioners were ‘a tiny,

³⁷⁹ William Jones of Nayland to William Stevens, c.1799, in *The Anti-Jacobin Review*, May 1800, 65.

³⁸⁰ Ditchfield, ‘The Subscription Issue in British Parliamentary Politics, 1772-79’, 65-6. For a similar conclusion, see also J. C. D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832*, 2nd edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 373.

albeit articulate, minority within the Church of England'.³⁸¹ Combined with other studies of this period that show a much more marked and active High Church presence in the political, social and ecclesiastical spheres,³⁸² there is reason at least to take seriously Stevens's intellectual contribution to the debates that surrounded the 'Subscription Issue', which, despite its acknowledged role by a few historians,³⁸³ has so far remained largely unexamined.

The mid-1770s saw Stevens's interests shift to political concerns. That decade would witness the rebellion of the North American colonies which, on 4 July 1776, was formally made through the Declaration of Independence. For High Churchmen, the American Revolution was to be the first major sign that subversive political ideologies, intertwined with heterodox theological opinions, could have drastic social and political ramifications. Of course, Britain's problems with the North American colonies—related to practical issues like taxation, British regulation of the colony and the debate over political representation—had been brewing since the late 1760s;³⁸⁴ however, with the beginning of hostilities in 1775, the fact of active armed rebellion towards the Crown had become a reality. Though the question of whether a majority of the British public supported or opposed the American conflict remains contested in recent scholarship,³⁸⁵ a resurgent nationalism and

³⁸¹ Ditchfield, 'Feathers Tavern petitioners', *ODNB*.

³⁸² Here Ditchfield cites F. C. Mather, 'Georgian Churchmanship Reconsidered: Some Variations in Anglican Public Worship, 1714-1830', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol.36, no.1, 1985, pp.255-283. To this one could add Mather's biography of Samuel Horsley, *High Church Prophet*, and Nigel Aston's more recent study of George Horne, see Aston, 'Horne and Heterodoxy', 895-919.

³⁸³ Ditchfield, 'Feathers Tavern petitioners', *ODNB*; Nockles, 'Stevens, William', *ODNB*.

³⁸⁴ For discussions regarding the causes of the American Revolution, see Marc Egnal, *A Mighty Empire: The Origins of the American Revolution*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988.

³⁸⁵ A consensus of opinion seems to strongly suggest a nation close to being equally divided, at least at a popular level. See James E. Bradley, *Popular Politics and the American Revolution in England*:

political right can be discerned following the outbreak of war with the colonies.³⁸⁶ A revived and vociferous Tory-based High Churchmanship—of which Stevens was a part—was not surprisingly a feature of this swing to the right.³⁸⁷

For High Churchmen of Stevens's circle, the American Revolution raised significant ideological and theological dangers relating to political philosophy that had the potential to be religiously and socially destructive. Indeed, the conflict opened up old ideological wounds that extended well back into the previous century and that had associations with the English Civil War and the events that followed. The old and emotive political labels of 'Whig' and 'Tory' began, once again, to be used by those with an ideological stake in the debate over North America; not because they still signified actual political groupings vying for administrative power

Petitions, the Crown, and Public Opinion, Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986, 10, 210, 216; Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 237-284; James E. Bradley, 'The British Public and the American Revolution: Ideology, Interest and Opinion' in H. T. Dickinson (ed.), *Britain and the American Revolution*, Harlow: Longman, 1998, 124-154. For an alternative view, see Frank O'Gorman, 'The Parliamentary Opposition to the Government's American Policy, 1760-1782' in Dickinson (ed.), *Britain and the American Revolution*, 97-123.

³⁸⁶ See James E. Bradley, 'The Anglican Pulpit, the Social Order, and the Resurgence of Toryism during the American Revolution', *Albion*, no.3, 1989, 361-388; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, Yale: Yale University Press, 1992, 144-145; Eliga H. Gould, 'American Independence and Britain's Counter-Revolution', *Past & Present*, no.154, 1997, 107-141; Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, 538-539; Ian R. Christie, 'Great Britain in the aftermath of the American Revolution' in J. P. Green and J. R. Pole (eds), *A Companion to the American Revolution*, Malden: Blackwell, 498-499; Troy O. Bickham, 'Sympathizing with Sedition? George Washington, the British Press, and British Attitudes during the American War of Independence', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, vol.59, no.1, 2002, 103.

³⁸⁷ Paul Langford, 'Old Whigs, Old Tories, and the American Revolution', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol.8, no.2, 1980, 106-130; Bradley, 'The Anglican Pulpit', 361-388. For a position skeptical of Langford and Bradley, see G. M. Ditchfield, 'Ecclesiastical policy under Lord North' in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor (eds), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, 228-246.

within parliament, but because of the ideological issues raised by the fact of political rebellion and the divisive political philosophies used to either justify or refute the reality of a British colony declaring political independence from George III.³⁸⁸ As James Bradley and Paul Langford have established, no group took a more active or decisive role in the ideological debate over North America than Anglican clerics.³⁸⁹ With only a few exceptions, Anglican opinion, they argue, was almost entirely opposed to the colonists.³⁹⁰ Stressing obedience and submission to divinely established government (especially one that was Anglican and led by an Anglican monarch), coupled with a strong belief in political rebellion as a grave sin, it is no surprise that among Anglican opinion it was High Churchmen who preached most forcefully against the sins of the American colonists and their supporters at home.³⁹¹ For High Churchmen, most of this pulpit discourse was linked to Tory perspectives on government and monarchy that began, once again, to stress publicly ideas of passive obedience or non-resistance.³⁹² Whig Churchmen, of course, also preached against the Revolution, but their more moderate pulpit and published discourse—for example, that of Beilby Porteus—said little on the place of monarchy and, in the words of Bradley, ‘put forth only conventional expressions of loyalty for George

³⁸⁸ Langford, ‘Old Whigs, Old Tories, and the American Revolution’, 107-108, 121-128; Bradley, ‘The Anglican Pulpit’, 362, 383, 387-388; Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, 538-539.

³⁸⁹ Paul Langford, ‘The English Clergy and the American Revolution’ in Eckhart Hellmuth (ed.), *The Transformation of Political Culture: England and Germany in the Late Eighteenth Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, 275-307; Bradley, ‘The Anglican Pulpit’, 361-388.

³⁹⁰ Langford, ‘The English Clergy and the American Revolution’, 275-277; Bradley, ‘The Anglican Pulpit’, 363, 365-366.

³⁹¹ Langford, ‘The English Clergy and the American Revolution’, 283-285; Bradley, ‘The Anglican Pulpit’, 364, 367, 373, 376; see also, Langford, ‘Old Whigs, Old Tories, and the American Revolution’, 125-126.

³⁹² Langford, ‘Old Whigs, Old Tories, and the American Revolution’, 125; Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, 538-539.

III'.³⁹³ The High Church reaction to the American Revolution is well illustrated by the life and times of the exiled North American Loyalist cleric and friend of Stevens, Jonathan Boucher. In his classic High Church treatise on the North American rebellion, *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution* (1797), originally preached as a series of sermons in North America from 1763 to 1775, Boucher advanced the position of passive obedience, expressing the view that government was the ordinance of God and that, conversely, active rebellion was always a sin.³⁹⁴ Boucher had famously defied the supporters of the Revolution by preaching against them at his church in Hanover, Virginia, on 20 July 1775, a day that had been set aside by the anti-British continental congress as a day of fasting and prayer.³⁹⁵ Around this time Boucher notes that he preached 'with a pair of loaded pistols' at hand.³⁹⁶ In light of his views, Boucher had been forced to leave North America on 22 September 1775. Returning to England and becoming close friends with Stevens who provided much support to Boucher on his return, it is not surprising to find that both men also developed a relationship based on strong ideological similarities, that shared an opposition towards the North American rebels and their political principles.³⁹⁷ Both saw political rebellion as a sin and it was not long before Stevens would also respond to the political and theological questions raised by the American Revolution.

Stevens's first anti-revolutionary action was identical to his reaction to the latitudinarian threat of the early 1770s, namely, to anonymously republish, in an

³⁹³ Bradley, 'The Anglican Pulpit', 372.

³⁹⁴ Jonathan Boucher, *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution*, London, 1797, 495-560.

³⁹⁵ Calhoun, 'Boucher, Jonathan', *ODNB*.

³⁹⁶ Boucher, *Reminiscences*, 113.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 146.

edited form, a tract he deemed necessary for the times. This he did in 1776, publishing *A Discourse on the English Constitution; Extracted from a Late Eminent Writer, and Applicable to the Present Times*.³⁹⁸ In doing so he added, as a High Church layman, to a discourse that Langford and Bradley have portrayed as being solely clerical.

According to the re-publication of the *Discourse* in *A Scholar Armed Against the Errors of the Time* in 1795, the name of the original ‘late eminent writer’ who wrote the work is given as Roger North.³⁹⁹ North (1651-1734) was also a layman—a Nonjuror, in fact—who, along with acting as a legal advisor to a number of the Nonjuring bishops from 1689 (most notably Archbishop Sancroft), had, among other notable posts, previously worked as Solicitor-General to Queen Mary of Modena, consort of James II, from 1685 to 1688. He also wrote a number of political and legal works.⁴⁰⁰ One of these, a strongly Jacobite account of the political events of the 1670s and 80s, the *Examen*, was published posthumously in 1740.⁴⁰¹ This is the work Stevens borrowed from in publishing the *Discourse*. The section of the *Examen* that Stevens edited and published can be found on pages 329 to 341 of the 1740 edition.⁴⁰² A comparison of both texts reveal that though the entirety of that section was re-published as the *Discourse* and its original meaning left untouched, there is

³⁹⁸ [William Stevens], *A Discourse on the English Constitution; Extracted from a Late Eminent Writer, and Applicable to the Present Times*, London, 1776.

³⁹⁹ See [William Jones (ed.)], *The Scholar Armed Against the Errors of the Time*, vol. 1, London, 1795, 289-312. The presence of Stevens’s edited version of North’s text within the *Scholar Armed* seems to have led J. C. D. Clark to mistakenly infer that William Jones of Nayland, the editor of the *Scholar Armed*, was in fact the *Discourse*’s editor (see Clark, *English Society*, 2nd edn, 265).

⁴⁰⁰ Mary Chan, ‘North, Roger (1651-1734)’, *ODNB*.

⁴⁰¹ Roger North, *Examen: Or an Enquiry into the Credit and Veracity of a Pretended Complete History*, London, 1740.

⁴⁰² Not pages 329 to 336, as was claimed by Jamie C. Kassler (see Jamie C. Kassler, *The Honourable Roger North, 1651-1734: On Life, Morality, Law and Tradition*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2009, 392 n11).

nonetheless ample evidence that Stevens made substantial simplifications to North's antiquated grammar and mode of expression.⁴⁰³

Transformed by Stevens into a short political tract designed to support and uphold the political authority of the Hanoverian George III rather than the Stuart line, the *Discourse*, like the *Treatise*, was a popular appeal aimed at promoting the Tory principle of passive obedience or non-resistance and to defend such a principle against its main objections. In a short preface attached to the *Discourse*, Stevens stated the aim of the work in the negative, claiming it would demonstrate 'that *resistance to civil governments*, asserted on principle, is nothing but the extravagance and nonsense of designing writers, who want to be resisting every thing for their own private ends'.⁴⁰⁴ It combined this aim with a brief survey describing the main constituent parts of the English constitution, the goal being to establish the English constitution as the ultimate source of authority within England—with the monarch, most notably, as the ultimate and final source of political authority. How this authority applied to Britain and its colonial empire—specifically North America—was not specified by Stevens, though one presumes that he logically applied monarchical power to Britain and its colonies, despite the narrow use of England throughout the text. This source of political power was argued to be absolute and justified in its expectation that its subjects could not, under any circumstance or for any reason, actively resist the monarch through the use of

⁴⁰³ Take, for example, page 331 of the *Examen*, specifically section XXVII, where the terms 'passive obedience' and 'non-resistance' are discussed. In the *Examen*, North uses the following words: 'They take Notice of some Terms commonly used in this Dispute; and first, that Non-Resistance and Passive-Obedience are synonymous, and mean one and the same Thing ...' (North, *Examen*, 331). Stevens, on the other hand, renders the sentence as follows: 'Now the terms, *non-resistance* and *passive-obedience*, commonly used in this dispute, are synonymous, and mean one and the same thing' ([Stevens], *Discourse*, 7).

⁴⁰⁴ [Stevens], *Discourse*, iv (emphasis in original).

force. Its opening words wasted little space in declaring that those subjects who resisted the monarch—a clear and unambiguous reference to the North American colonists—were committing an unlawful action. ‘If it be a truth that laws (however originated) bind a people, the people of England are bound not to resist with force the King, or those commissioned by him, in any case, upon any pretence whatsoever.’⁴⁰⁵ The principle was stated more bluntly elsewhere, ‘Government resistible is no government’.⁴⁰⁶

The term ‘passive obedience’ has historically been used synonymously with ‘non-resistance’. As the *Discourse* affirmed, both terms in their essence meant the same thing, though strictly speaking, ‘passive-obedience’ only signified the action subjects were to perform when a lawful ruler or government issued a command that was itself, unlawful or, more specifically, went against a divine command. To such a situation there could only be one course of action, namely, to passively obey or, as the *Discourse* put it, ‘a choosing to suffer rather than obey unlawful commands’.⁴⁰⁷ Not without its own problems, J. C. D. Clark’s recent use of the phrase, ‘civil disobedience’, is helpful in describing the sort of political action described here.⁴⁰⁸ As Stevens claimed, it was to the law, ultimately, that obedience lay; not to rulers in and of themselves.⁴⁰⁹ Civil governments are thus not a law unto themselves, but are

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 1.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 12.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 7-8.

⁴⁰⁸ Clark, *English Society*, 2nd edn, 58. It needs to be admitted that there are problems with equating a fairly modern political term—often associated with liberal political thought—with eighteenth century conservative Toryism. It is questionable whether Tory thinkers like Stevens would have so readily adopted a phrase so often associated with twentieth century resistance to British colonial rule by Gandhi. Nonetheless, there are similarities and the two terms can be compared and contrasted (see Hugo Adam Bedau, *Civil Disobedience in Focus*, London: Routledge, 1991, 1).

⁴⁰⁹ [Stevens], *Discourse*, 8.

sanctioned, at least in England, by English law and are required to be obedient to that law as much as its subjects are.⁴¹⁰ Hence the need for the *Discourse* to distinguish between the passive obedience required in the face of unlawful government and the active obedience required in the face of lawful government.⁴¹¹

In light of the predictable objection that at times it is necessary to resist by force a government in the face of injustice, the *Discourse* stressed that those who employed passive obedience were, in reality, representing themselves as ‘the most express defenders of the laws against unbounded prerogative’.⁴¹² Suffering, especially the act of publicly suffering in light of unlawful governance, was always a more effective means of protest than armed rebellion; for ‘there can be no better means of asserting the rights of the people by law, than the disowning unlawful commands by patient suffering’.⁴¹³ Besides, because of the uniqueness of the English constitution in distributing powers amongst the Crown and parliament, it was argued that ‘all acts of the crown, against law, are mere nullities’ and those monarchs who attempt to rule under such acts are able to ‘be questioned and punished by that very power, against whom its own command is no defence or justification’.⁴¹⁴ This was the great benefit, the *Discourse* claimed, of living under the English constitution: namely, that it contained within it legal safeguards for its subjects. Yet even if this were not the case, the argument contained within the *Discourse* was not so much a defence of the uniqueness of the British constitution as it was of the wrongness, under any circumstances whatsoever, but of any sort of active resistance to

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² Ibid, 9.

⁴¹³ Ibid, 8-9.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid, 35.

government. This was true even if that government, or its leader, were despotic; for such despotism would ultimately be preferable than any sort of democratic rule: that is, ‘to live in perpetual fear and ... oppression from the most cruel of all sorts, that is (not superiors so much as) equals, or rather inferiors’.⁴¹⁵ If this meant a life of passive obedience against unlawful or ungodly rule, than so be it.

As he noted in the preface, Stevens had published the *Discourse* because of a fear that popular sentiment could be attracted to philosophical notions that espoused the principle that resistance to civil government was legitimate.⁴¹⁶ It was his hope that the *Discourse* would instruct the public, giving them ‘a few rational principles concerning the nature of civil power’, so as to demonstrate that the principle of resistance was an unfounded notion of the intellectual classes.⁴¹⁷ The danger was that the public would be swayed by the sophisticated orations of thinkers who were capable of carefully and convincingly articulating a principle that he thought led ‘directly to rebellion’.⁴¹⁸ Though he lists no specific individuals, he compared the campaigns of such intellectuals as analogous to the activities of common thieves, whose more articulate brethren attempt to convince through the means of argument that stealing is one of ‘the *common rights of humanity*’.⁴¹⁹ Stevens thought there existed in society individuals who would ‘plunder the state’ in the same way a thief would a house, if only they were given enough encouragement. It was thus the duty of ‘Every government ... to be on its guard against such men, before they have intoxicated the lower order of the people with that enthusiastic notion of natural

⁴¹⁵ Ibid, 36.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid, iii & vi.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid, 3-4; see also, 6-7.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid, vi.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, iv (emphasis in original).

privilege'.⁴²⁰ It was Stevens's belief that the *Discourse* had the ability, as he forcefully put it, to help the government in this regard by weaning the public 'from that patriotic froth, with which they have been so long treated' and to demonstrate 'that there is no liberty without law, no security without obedience', even if, as the *Discourse* would argue, such obedience had, at times, to be passive.⁴²¹ Though North America was not specifically mentioned by Stevens, the work was clearly a direct response to the liberal political philosophy that had underpinned the North American rebels. The *Discourse* exhibited a genuine fear on Stevens's part that notions of political liberty—'that enthusiastic notion of natural privilege'—once absorbed by the populace, could easily lead to political revolution in his homeland, as it had done in North America.

Not surprisingly, Stevens's words and sentiments were received negatively in some quarters, especially on the Whig side of politics. An anonymous review in the December 1775 edition of the Whig-aligned, *London Magazine*, for instance, was extremely critical, declaring that the *Discourse*'s original author was 'eminent for nothing but a blind and strenuous adherence to Jacobitism or despotism'.⁴²² Of course, the *Discourse* contained no Jacobitism nor was there any defence of despotism; nonetheless, the review further speculated that had the author's 'own liberty or property been attacked by the supreme power', he would have quickly 'discarded his slavish principles'.⁴²³ The date of the review being late 1775 indicates that the *Discourse*, despite its official publication date of 1776, must have been available prior to that. It is doubtful the *Discourse* was intended as a response to any

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, vi.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁴²² *The London Magazine*, December 1776, vol.44, London, 1776, App. to the Dec edn, 690.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*

specific thinker, though Stevens's reference to those who support 'that enthusiastic notion of natural privilege' was a clear reference to John Locke's philosophical notion of 'natural rights', which had been promoted in England by Whig and Latitudinarian thinkers for much of the eighteenth century, but that came under increasing High Church scrutiny during the American Revolution.⁴²⁴ In his second *Treatise of Civil Government* Locke had famously argued that human beings, endowed with natural rights such as life, liberty and property, were equals and gave government its legitimacy by entering into a contract of free consent.⁴²⁵ According to this view, a broken contract meant a loss of authority and a right to rebel. Locke's thought was central in providing an intellectual justification for the American Revolution, both at home and in North America.⁴²⁶ Though Stevens was not replying specifically to either Locke or any of his followers, as with the *Treatise* there was an intention to reply to current ideas through a general appeal to what he considered to be orthodoxy, this time concerning civil rather than ecclesiastical government. That Stevens responded to the politically related events of the mid-1770s in a manner similar to his response to the theologically related events of the early 1770s, suggests that this type of intellectual contribution appealed to him.

By 1777, however, Stevens had found a specific target in relation to the battle of political ideologies that the American Revolution had given birth to. The target was a man who considered himself an ideological disciple of Locke: namely,

⁴²⁴ Bradley, 'The Anglican Pulpit', 369; Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment*, 187, 220, 237.

⁴²⁵ See John Locke and Peter Laslett (ed.), *Two Treatises of Government*, revised edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963, 307-477.

⁴²⁶ See Steven M. Dworetz, *The Unvarnished Doctrine: Locke, Liberalism, and the American Revolution*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1990, vii; W. M. Spellman, *John Locke*, New York: St Martin's Press, 1997, 98, 135-139; Isaac Kramnick, 'Ideological background' in J. P. Green and J. R. Pole (eds), *A Companion to the American Revolution*, Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004, 88-89.

Richard Watson (1737-1816), an ambitious cleric who, from 1771, had been Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University, later to become the Bishop of Llandaff in 1782.⁴²⁷ Possessing inadequate theological qualifications for his academic post in theology, Watson had nonetheless applied himself to the study of theology, soon establishing himself as a vocal latitudinarian thinker, supportive of the Feathers Tavern petition (though he failed to personally sign it)⁴²⁸ and critical of High Church societies such as the SPG, which he thought had as its goal the conversion of ‘dissenters to Anglicanism not heathens to Christianity’.⁴²⁹ Politically, Watson was a committed Whig who throughout his life ‘hardly deviated from the classic principles of John Locke’.⁴³⁰ Because of his political views, Watson was pejoratively labeled the ‘Republican Bishop’ and, at other times, the ‘Levelling Prelate’ by Tory and High Church opponents.⁴³¹ For his own part, Watson preferred to style himself simply as ‘A Christian Whig’, a title he sometimes used on publications.⁴³²

⁴²⁷ See Timothy Brain, ‘Some Aspects of the Life and Works of Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, 1737 to 1816’, University of Wales, PhD thesis, 1982; Robert Hole, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order in England 1760-1832*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 17; Robert Hole, ‘Watson, Richard’, *ODNB*.

⁴²⁸ Brain, ‘Some Aspects of the Life and Works of Richard Watson’, 97.

⁴²⁹ Hole, ‘Watson, Richard’, *ODNB*; Brain, ‘Some Aspects of the Life and Works of Richard Watson’, 12-15.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid*; *Ibid*, 21-22, 136, 197-202, 310.

⁴³¹ Brain, ‘Some Aspects of the Life and Works of Richard Watson’, 311; Hole, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order*, 17.

⁴³² See the title page of Richard Watson, *A Letter to the Members of the Honourable House of Commons; Respecting the Petition for Relief in the Matter of Subscription*, London, 1772, i; Brain, ‘Some Aspects of the Life and Works of Richard Watson’, 96.

On 29 May 1776 Watson preached the Restoration Day sermon at Cambridge University. Published under the title, *The Principles of the Revolution Vindicated*,⁴³³ the sermon was an assertion of a basic point that would be contained within the Lockean-inspired American Declaration of Independence: that all of mankind were equal and possessed political rights that civil governments were bound to respect.⁴³⁴ For Watson, such a belief provided the most intellectually convincing basis ‘concerning the origin and extent of civil government’, for having established this foundational point it could be argued that any claim of political authority over another had to have its basis in what he phrased a ‘voluntary compact’ or ‘free consent’.⁴³⁵ In classically Lockean terms that would have been readily accepted by the North American revolutionaries, Watson advocated that a violation or abuse of such a voluntary compact resulted in political authority ceasing to have a reason for its existence. It could, in other words, be rejected and overthrown.⁴³⁶ Monarchs thus should not presume always to possess a right to govern. ‘Kings are not to look upon their Kingdoms as private estates, which they have an unconditional right to possess; nor to consider themselves as superior to the laws, or their subjects as slaves.’⁴³⁷ But had Britain broken its voluntary compact with the American colonists, thus making the present rebellion just? Watson, perhaps wisely, did not specifically apply his claims to the situation in North America. In fact, as he made clear at the time and in his later memoirs, he was opposed to the actual rebellion, regarding the conflict as

⁴³³ Richard Watson, *The Principles of the Revolution Vindicated in a Sermon Preached Before the University of Cambridge*, 3rd edn, Cambridge, 1776.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid*, 1-10.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid*, 10.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid*, 11, 13-16.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid*, 11-12.

both ‘inexpedient’ and ‘unjust’.⁴³⁸ What he claimed to have done in the sermon was simply to preach ‘in support of the principles of the Revolution’, because of a fear that at that time the Crown was in danger of increasing its influence and power over its subjects to the detriment of the British freedom.⁴³⁹

However, the problem with the sermon was its timing.⁴⁴⁰ In any other context the discourse would have been nothing more than an unremarkable restatement of ‘long established Lockean principles’, yet the context made it sound as though it was an endorsement of the North American rebellion.⁴⁴¹ Indeed, despite Watson’s later claim that the sermon had been ‘written with great caution’, it is easy to see how the sermon soon came to be interpreted as being pro-American.⁴⁴² At Cambridge it was noted that Watson’s views had become the ‘common topic of conversation’—a fact confirmed by Watson in the dedicatory letter present in the published edition.⁴⁴³ Watson’s memoirs note that not long after its publication he began to hear that the sermon was being regarded as ‘treasonable’ in London.⁴⁴⁴ Initially, Watson seems to have taken this accusation seriously, even making enquiries to an attorney as to the sermon’s political legality.⁴⁴⁵ Though he never seems to have been in any real danger from what he had written, he nonetheless noted that the sermon had ‘given great offence’ at Court and that very soon he had become the subject of much abuse, being

⁴³⁸ Richard Watson, *Anecdotes of the Life of Richard Watson*, vol.1, London, 1818, 154; Brain, ‘Some Aspects of the Life and Works of Richard Watson’, 205-206.

⁴³⁹ Watson, *Anecdotes*, 154.

⁴⁴⁰ Brain, ‘Some Aspects of the Life and Works of Richard Watson’, 203-204.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴² Watson, *Anecdotes*, 95.

⁴⁴³ [Anon.], *Remarks on a Pamphlet Entitled The Principles of the Revolution Vindicated*, Cambridge, 1776, 2; Watson, *The Principles of the Revolution Vindicated*, iii.

⁴⁴⁴ Watson, *Anecdotes*, 95.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.* The attorney in mention was John Dunning (1731-1783), later the first Baron Ashburton.

considered by ‘ministerial writers’ to be ‘a man of republican sympathies’.⁴⁴⁶ Some were even beginning to write against the sermon. On 19 October 1776, the antiquarian, Daniel Wray (1701-1783), observed that a particular published rebuttal of Watson had been giving much offence to those whom he simply referred to as ‘Whigs’.⁴⁴⁷ He does not name the title of this rebuttal, though he knew who had composed it, observing that ‘The *Divinity-Professor’s low-flying* Sermon has received strictures from a wealthy *Hosier*, known to the Church as a Member of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. He is a *Tory* of the old *Filmer* stamp, and will not convince, or please many readers; yet he is not without some good strokes at the *Doctor*’.⁴⁴⁸

The reference was, of course, to Stevens and his second, similarly anonymous, publication of a political nature, entitled: *Strictures on a Sermon, Entitled, The Principles of the Revolution Vindicated* (c.1776). There exist three known editions of the *Strictures*: one undated, the others—second and third editions—both of which carry the year 1777 as the year of publication.⁴⁴⁹ Park, and Nockles following him, state the work was first published in 1777, though Wray’s reference to the work in October 1776 indicates that the first edition was probably released earlier than this, some time around the latter-half of 1776.⁴⁵⁰ A reference to the *Strictures* in the ‘new publications’ listings within the September 1776 issue of

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid, 95-96.

⁴⁴⁷ Daniel Wray to John Nichols, 19 October 1776, in John Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century Consisting of Authentic Memoirs and Original Letters of Eminent Persons*, vol.1, London, 1817, 160-161.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid (emphasis in original).

⁴⁴⁹ [William Stevens], *Strictures on a Sermon, Entitled, The Principles of the Revolution Vindicated*, Cambridge, n.d. [1776]; [William Stevens], *Strictures on a Sermon*, 2nd edn, Cambridge, 1777; [William Stevens], *Strictures on a Sermon*, 3rd edn, Dublin, 1777.

⁴⁵⁰ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 78; Nockles, ‘Stevens, William’, *ODNB*.

the *Gentleman's Magazine* confirms this to be the case.⁴⁵¹ It is possible that Wray and *The Gentleman's Magazine* were making reference to the edition of the *Strictures* that, for whatever reason, carries no date upon its publication. This makes sense given that the undated edition bears the same printer as the second edition—'J. Woodyer'—in addition to the same place of publication—Cambridge. The choice of location was probably tactical; Stevens had no known connection with Cambridge, publishing the work there was likely due to the fact that Watson taught there.

Stevens considered Watson's sermon to be an attack upon the 'strong holds of *Toryism*, Reason, and Revelation'.⁴⁵² From the beginning it was made clear that the aspect of Watson's sermon that he most sought to refute was Watson's Lockean inspired claim that all men are equal and thus could form a contractual basis for civil government. This, according to Stevens, was simply an historical fiction, a theory made up to suit treasonous political goals and he challenged Watson to name a time in history when it had ever been an example of men coming together to arrange their civil government in this manner.⁴⁵³ For Stevens, historical reality concerning civil government was very different. Far from being born equal, man has always, from the moment of his birth, been 'helpless and dependent' and thus from the first moments of life under the form of a parental government.⁴⁵⁴ Stevens mocked Watson's argument that because humans are all 'from the same stock' and are 'nourished ... with the same food' that there exists equality for all.⁴⁵⁵ To justify himself he pointed out that simply because a child possesses the same physical features as his father that

⁴⁵¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol.46, September 1776, London, 1776, 426.

⁴⁵² [Stevens], *Strictures*, 3rd edn, 5.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid*, 11-12.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 5.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 6.

does not, therefore, mean both are equal.⁴⁵⁶ The true, historical, ‘state of nature is thus not a state of independence but of dependence’, all being born into a basic patriarchal, family-based government in which it was a duty to be obedient, not to be in a position to create a fictitious agreement of free consent.⁴⁵⁷

The notion that humans are born under authority and dependence naturally begins, for Stevens, with the creation of Adam in the Garden of Eden.⁴⁵⁸ Adam, created to be obedient to God, was entrusted with an authority over Eve and their children. Civil government begins at this point with a divine foundation. It followed that there could not be any sort of expediency regarding the form of government. Monarchy, for Stevens, thus has a divine and patriarchal basis and can be regarded as being *jus divinium*, of divine right, having been established by God from creation—or, more specifically, from the moment of Eve’s creation, thus giving Adam ‘kingship’ over Eve.⁴⁵⁹ The fanciful notion of political equality lasted for but a moment in the history of man. ‘From that time, at least, the natural equality and independence of individuals was at an end, and Adam became (Oh dreadful sound to republican ears!) universal monarch by divine right. He was absolute Lord of the soil; the original grant was to him, and his children, his subjects, must hold under him.’⁴⁶⁰ To further justify his argument, Stevens cited Richard Hooker’s statement from *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, that ‘nature’ has bestowed upon ‘fathers in their private families ... a supreme power’ making them ‘Lords and lawful *Kings* in

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid, 9-10.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid, 10.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

their own houses'.⁴⁶¹ Stevens does not enter into a great amount of detail explaining how monarchy historically descended and developed from its foundation in Adam at creation, other than claiming that after the flood Noah came to exercise the same authority as Adam had over his sons.⁴⁶² Stevens was convinced that history testified to the veracity of his position and to the entirely fictional nature of Watson's.⁴⁶³

It was Stevens's view that Watson's belief in human equality—leading to a contractual basis for government—was a principle that would, in the end, lead inevitably to rebellion and anarchy. This was because such a principle made government inherently unstable. Belief in human equality was 'a revolutionary principle with a vengeance' that would lead to 'as many governments as there are different opinions, and as many revolutions as there may be changes of opinions'.⁴⁶⁴ There was also an important historical precedent that was perhaps on the verge of repeating itself: namely, the English Civil War during the seventeenth century. Stevens felt the current period to be one that mirrored 'the times of Charles the First'.⁴⁶⁵ The American revolutionaries were, in his view, no different in essence to than those who had beheaded the 'innocent and blessed martyr'.⁴⁶⁶ Believing England in the decade prior to the Interregnum to have been characterised by peace, prosperity and the rule of a 'most harmless' king known for his religious piety, Stevens also saw North America as rebelling not against tyranny, but a similarly

⁴⁶¹ Ibid (emphasis by Stevens); see also, Richard Hooker and John Keble (ed.), *The Works of Mr. Richard Hooker*, vol.1, Oxford, 1845, 187.

⁴⁶² [Stevens], *Strictures*, 3rd edn, 10-11.

⁴⁶³ Ibid, 11, 15.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, 12-13.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid, 31.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid, 32.

peaceful, prosperous and secure ruler.⁴⁶⁷ By siding with the philosophical principles that were driving the American colonies to reject the rule of George III, Watson was, in the end, only giving justification to their cause.⁴⁶⁸

Watson followed up his Restoration Day sermon with another related political discourse that was preached on 25 October 1776.⁴⁶⁹ Timothy Brain suggests that the university authorities at Cambridge may have allowed Watson a second chance to explain the position outlined in the previous sermon.⁴⁷⁰ Yet there is little evidence that this second discourse was in any way an attempt to either moderate or explain the views he had previously expressed. This sermon continued to avoid making explicit reference to the American Revolution, but its contents reveal that it was nonetheless polemical in its intention to counter some Tory ideas concerning the nature of civil government and the duties and rights of those living under government. Watson was also intent on replying to his critics who had accused him of being supportive of republicanism. Had Watson read Stevens's reply to his earlier sermon? Given the date of the publication it is doubtful, though, as has been highlighted, Stevens was not the only Tory thinker at this time putting forward anti-Lockean and anti-American political discourses. Watson's polemical intent becomes apparent when one takes into consideration a quotation he used from Benjamin Hoadly's mocking attack upon Tory views, *The True Genuine Tory-Address* (1710).⁴⁷¹ Placed just after the title page, it comes in the form of a dictionary-style definition of the type of men known as 'Men of Republican Principles', namely 'A

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid, 31-32.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid, 24, 33.

⁴⁶⁹ Richard Watson, *A Sermon Preached Before the University of Cambridge, On October 25, 1776*, Cambridge, 1776.

⁴⁷⁰ Brain, 'Some Aspects of the Life and Works of Richard Watson', 207-208.

⁴⁷¹ [Benjamin Hoadly], *The True Genuine Tory-Address*, London, 1710.

Sort of dangerous Men, that have lately taken Heart, and defended the Revolution that saved us'.⁴⁷² According to Watson, this sermon was the only reply he ever specifically gave to those 'ministerial writers' who had 'abused' him with accusations of being a 'man of republican principles'.⁴⁷³ In quoting from Hoadly's *The True Genuine Tory-Address*, he was admitting he was a defender of revolutionary principles, albeit not those of the American rebels. Instead, the revolutionary principles he was claiming to defend were those of 1688, not 1776.

For Watson a certain political subset had betrayed the Revolution of 1688, namely, those Tories who taught and defended the doctrine of passive obedience. This doctrine comes under specific attack in the sermon. For Watson, passive obedience—he uses the term, 'non-resistance'—was understood by him as being a doctrine espousing 'unlimited obedience', thus taking away from 'mankind that liberty of resistance' which he believed to be always present in 'extreme cases'.⁴⁷⁴ This, he thought, was a theory based on a mistaken reading of a number of New Testament passages, especially the thirteenth chapter of St Paul's Epistle to the Romans.⁴⁷⁵ Watson thought passages such as this had 'been pressed into the service of Tyranny' and it became his goal to refute the way exponents of passive obedience saw them as representing scriptural justification for their position.⁴⁷⁶ For example, the first two verses of the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans admonished that 'every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power,

⁴⁷² Watson, *A Sermon Preached Before the University of Cambridge*, ii; see also, [Hoadly], *The True Genuine Tory-Address*, 2; Gibson, *Enlightenment Prelate*, 117.

⁴⁷³ Watson, *Anecdotes*, vol.1, 96-97.

⁴⁷⁴ Watson, *A Sermon Preached Before the University of Cambridge*, 3, 6.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 3-7.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 3.

resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation'.⁴⁷⁷ Watson admitted that this passage did enjoin Christians to a form of political obedience, but not a 'servile system of unlimited obedience'.⁴⁷⁸ Moreover, supporters of passive obedience had taken the passage out of context. Watson claimed that St Paul was refuting a number of Rome's convert-Jews whom he thought had become immersed with the belief that rebellion against Rome would be a pre-condition for Christ's second coming. Paul's admonishment against resistance was thus related specifically to the desires of this specific group of rebellious Jews.⁴⁷⁹ What St Paul was not doing, so Watson claimed, was advocating that Rome's future Christians were to 'stretch out the neck, and wait with submissive expectation, till some haughty tyrant had struck it off'.⁴⁸⁰ Following St Paul's comment that a civil ruler is a 'minister of God to thee for good',⁴⁸¹ there was the clear implication that a failure to act 'for good' on the part of a ruler rendered the Christian duty of obedience void.⁴⁸² Obedience thus had its limits and Christians were 'under no manner of obligation, either from reason or revelation, to honour or obey a prince, to the entailing slavery upon' themselves or their posterity.⁴⁸³ It was a last resort, but according to Watson there did come a point at which all forms of obedience to civil government had to cease.⁴⁸⁴ The sermon was an attempt to advocate both the divinely sanctioned duty of Christians to exercise obedience to civil government, as well as the right of Christians to hold governors to account who

⁴⁷⁷ Romans 13:1-2 (Authorized Version).

⁴⁷⁸ Watson, *A Sermon Preached Before the University of Cambridge*, 6-7.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 4-5.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 6.

⁴⁸¹ Romans 13:4 (Authorized Version).

⁴⁸² Watson, *A Sermon Preached Before the University of Cambridge*, 7.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid*, 10.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid*.

failed to respect the rule of law or who ruled corruptly, as he thought England had done in 1688.⁴⁸⁵

Watson's second foray into the political debates of the mid 1770s was again matched with an anonymously published refutation from Stevens, this time with the much more substantial work, *The Revolution Vindicated and Constitutional Liberty Asserted* (1777), numbering seventy-two pages in length.⁴⁸⁶ Mimicking Watson, Stevens placed a quotation just after the title page—an extract from a letter by the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Tillotson (1630-1694) to the Whig conspirator, William Lord Russell, dated 20 July 1683. In the letter, Tillotson, a staunch supporter of the Revolution of 1688, had stated to Russell the principle of passive obedience; that 'the Christian religion doth plainly forbid the Resistance to authority' and that 'it is not lawful' for the Church 'upon any pretence whatsoever to take up arms'.⁴⁸⁷ Tillotson was one of Watson's favourite writers.⁴⁸⁸ Whether Stevens was aware of this is unknown, yet there is no doubt Stevens was making a play upon Watson's inclusion of the quote from Hoadly, implying himself to be a defender of the Revolution. Here, Stevens was intimating that Tillotson, a known supporter of the Revolution, was also a supporter of passive obedience.

Peter Nockles maintains *The Revolution Vindicated* 'represented a conservative defence of the 1688 constitution'.⁴⁸⁹ The title of the work certainly gives the impression that this is the case; however, if the *The Revolution Vindicated* has one main thrust of argument, it did not concern 1688 specifically, but rather was

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid, 9-12.

⁴⁸⁶ [William Stevens], *The Revolution Vindicated and Constitutional Liberty Asserted*, Cambridge, 1777.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid, ii.

⁴⁸⁸ Isabel Rivers, 'Tillotson, John', *ODNB*.

⁴⁸⁹ Nockles, 'Stevens, William', *ODNB*.

centred on clarifying and defending the doctrine of passive obedience against Watson's claims that it had no foundation in the New Testament. Of course, in *The Revolution Vindicated* there was a brief discussion of the Revolution of 1688. Showing that he was not a Jacobite in an active political sense, Stevens claims that the Revolution, being founded 'on the *abdication*, and the *vacancy of the throne*', had succeeded in preserving the English constitution.⁴⁹⁰ In other words, Stevens was arguing nothing had fundamentally changed following 5 November 1688. It is likely Stevens did not approve of the means, but the throne had been vacated and, in turn, a new monarch proclaimed—all of which had been designed by divine providence. Amongst Tories of this period, this had become the standard position;⁴⁹¹ providence had replaced one king with another, England had remained a monarchy and the same reverence and obedience that had been due to the Stuart line was now due to the House of Hanover. Thus, the true and consistent defenders of 1688 were Tories like Stevens. It was they who could be politically relied upon because it was the Tories who gave 'reverence' to the monarch 'as the minister of God', as opposed to the Whigs 'who consider him as the creature of the people'.⁴⁹² Yet as has been noted, what was at stake for Stevens was not the justification of a historical position in relation to the events of 1688, but the issue of whether it was lawful for Christians to *ever* be actively disobedient to a lawfully established civil government. Following his position that had been clearly enunciated in the *Discourse*, it was obvious that only a negative answer could only be given to this question. However, Stevens felt the need, in his own words, to correct what he saw as Watson's misrepresentations of

⁴⁹⁰ [Stevens], *The Revolution Vindicated*, 3-4.

⁴⁹¹ Clark, *English Society*, 2nd edn, 109 & 105-123.

⁴⁹² [Stevens], *The Revolution Vindicated*, 5.

the doctrine of passive obedience, in addition to providing his own definition and justification of the concept.

It has been noted that Watson described passive obedience as a doctrine that taught ‘unlimited obedience’ to civil governments.⁴⁹³ However, this description was, according to Stevens, a fundamental misunderstanding of the idea. ‘If by *unlimited*, he means *passive obedience*, which I suspect he does from his using the term as synonymous to *non-resistance*, I am sorry, that a master in Israel should not know these things better.’⁴⁹⁴ Such an understanding of passive obedience meant that if a civil government were to issue an unlawful, immoral or heretical command, all would be required to obey. This misunderstood what passive obedience actually signified: namely, the need to passively suffer when active obedience could not, in conscience, be adopted. ‘There is surely an essential difference between obeying unlawful commands, implied by *unlimited* obedience, and patient suffering for not obeying them, which is, properly speaking, *passive obedience*.’⁴⁹⁵ For Stevens, passive obedience was a doctrine demanded of Christians on the basis of the Scriptures. As a doctrine it bore the same analogy as any other of the Gospel’s more difficult commands such as self-denial and ‘taking up the cross’.⁴⁹⁶ Though human nature may find commands such as these difficult to obey, God nonetheless commands them and it is the Christian duty to be obedient.⁴⁹⁷ Thus with regard to the absolute forbiddance of actively resisting civil government, Stevens observed that ‘the word of God may forbid, what the voice of depraved reason allows’.⁴⁹⁸ Not

⁴⁹³ Watson, *A Sermon Preached Before the University of Cambridge*, 3, 6.

⁴⁹⁴ [Stevens], *The Revolution Vindicated*, 13-14 (emphasis in original).

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 14.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 16.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid*.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid*.

surprisingly, Stevens rejected Watson's interpretation of St Paul's thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. His argument that St Paul was mostly concerned with refuting a number of Rome's convert-Jews whom he thought had become immersed with notions of political rebellion was, in Stevens's view, simply a fanciful piece of biblical and historical speculation, which, even if true, still neglected St Paul's seemingly clear admonition that resisting civil government was resisting God's ordinance.⁴⁹⁹ Instead of being imbued with a belief in the inherent right to resist civil government, the early Christians, Stevens argued, had been taught that active disobedience was a sin to be resisted.⁵⁰⁰ St Paul was merely teaching the Christians at Rome what Christ had already taught the Apostles. Resistance to civil government invariably involved the use of arms, but Christ, according to Stevens, had taught 'his disciples to put up the sword, and not resist lawful authority'.⁵⁰¹ Teaching his disciples to pray for those who persecuted them, Christ had himself 'illustrated' the doctrine of passive obedience 'by his own example'.⁵⁰² Being brought before Pontius Pilate he had been obedient to the will of God by submitting to Pilate and acknowledging that authority had been 'given him from above', despite the fact of Pilate 'passing sentence against him unjustly'.⁵⁰³ Christ was thus being obedient by passively suffering, as the early Christians had done under the Roman Empire. Stevens thought the numerous examples of martyrdom in the early Church to be further evidence of this. If there had been any period in Church history that demonstrated the doctrine of passive obedience to be a teaching of Christianity, it

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid, 30.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid, 22.

⁵⁰² Ibid, 41-42.

⁵⁰³ Ibid, 42.

was the period of persecution endured by the early Church. Yet the early Christians had not risen up in rebellion against Rome, rather they had passively suffered following the example of Christ.⁵⁰⁴ Quoting the seventeenth-century High Church theologian, Robert South (1634-1716), Stevens saw Christianity as being a religion in which suffering was inseparable. ‘For the Christian religion, both in itself, and in its author, is a *suffering religion*, a religion *teaching* suffering, *injoining* suffering, and *rewarding* suffering.’⁵⁰⁵ Thus, not only had Watson misrepresented the doctrine of passive obedience, he had misunderstood the nature of Christianity.

Though he was probably aware of Stevens’s refutations, Watson never said anything publicly about Stevens’s replies to his sermons. Yet others were scornful. Predictably, the *Monthly Review* was unimpressed with Stevens’s second reply to Watson, accusing the author of attempting to revive past controversies.

What, in the name of Common-sense! are the Tories aiming at, by new vamping the stale despicable jargon of Sibthorpe, Manwaring, and Sacheverel? If they have nothing better to oppose to ‘the Priestlys and Prices,’ they will afford these writers all the triumph they can wish for, and cover themselves with deserved shame and disgrace! In the polemical style, the wretched servile sophistry with which our understanding is insulted, in this publication, has been so often refuted, and is so truly contemptible, that to bestow fresh consideration on it, would be in the highest degree ridiculous. There is not a line in this pretended defence of revolution-principles but what falsifies the title.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid, 42-43.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid, 47 (emphasis in original).

⁵⁰⁶ *The Monthly Review*, June 1777, vol.56, London, 1777, 473-474.

Stevens's interventions in the political debates of the 1770s have generally been regarded with little praise or seriousness by the few later commentators who took the time to discuss his role as a writer. Robert Hole, for example, unfairly and rather rashly describes Stevens's two published replies to Watson as being 'bitter and unsubstantial'.⁵⁰⁷ The sum of Stevens's position, what Hole simply noted to be the promotion and defence of passive obedience, was in his view 'an ... extreme patriarchal line' that he thinks few serious thinkers were openly willing to advocate after the 1760s.⁵⁰⁸ Hole has even argued that amongst that group of thinkers whom he terms 'high-church patriarchalists'—of which he includes Stevens, Horne, Jones and Boucher—it was the layman Stevens who had been in the position of being able to more freely express more extreme views.⁵⁰⁹ Being a layman, Hole thought Stevens would have been less concerned with the social restraints that society imposed on clerics—such as gaining ecclesiastical preferment.⁵¹⁰ For Hole, Stevens's political views were interpreted as being a type of passive obedience similar to that advocated by Robert Filmer.⁵¹¹ J. J. Sack has echoed a similar viewpoint, also seeing Stevens as representing an extremist position. Sack has claimed that Stevens 'seemed wedded to virtually unqualified passive obedience' and that he 'evoked a Cranmerian view of society, affirming that passive obedience is a "principle of liberty," and that governments, even of evil Roman Emperors, must always be obeyed'.⁵¹² Stevens certainly did refer to passive obedience as a 'principle of liberty',⁵¹³ though it is

⁵⁰⁷ Hole, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order*, 48.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 61-62.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, 61-62.

⁵¹² Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 124-125.

⁵¹³ [Stevens], *The Revolution Vindicated*, 49.

uncertain what Sack meant by making reference to ‘a Cranmerian view of society’ given that no other mention of Thomas Cranmer can be found in his influential study of British conservatism during the eighteenth century.

Despite these critical evaluations it is, however, possible to place Stevens’s political contributions in a more serious and positive light than this. In doing this, a few incorrect assumptions regarding the doctrine of passive obedience also need to be corrected. The first point to make is with regard to Hole’s contention that Stevens’s lay status meant he could take a more extreme line than his clerical associates. There is, of course, evidence that some clerics were reluctant explicitly to revive such high-Tory doctrines such as patriarchalism and passive obedience.⁵¹⁴ For example, Stevens’s close friend, Horne, was remarkably quiet in his pulpit discourse when it came to the same issues Stevens championed, despite being in agreement with Stevens.⁵¹⁵ Yet other clerics were willing to preach sermons that echoed themes similar to those expressed by Stevens.⁵¹⁶ But notwithstanding all this, Hole forgets that Stevens himself published anonymously, never once putting his name to anything he published in the 1770s. We do not know why Stevens did this. One possibility is that Stevens did not seek the fame of being an author; but it may also be that men engaged in commerce and other non-clerical activities also had to be careful what they said in public. Another possibility is that Stevens’s lay status had no relation to what he was willing to say publicly. In the end, an element of

⁵¹⁴ J. A. W. Gunn, *Beyond Liberty and Property: The Process of Self-Recognition in Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*, Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1983 169, 171, 184-185; Bradley, ‘The Anglican Pulpit’, 370-371.

⁵¹⁵ Bradley, ‘The Anglican Pulpit’, 370.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 370-371.

uncertainty exists regarding Stevens's authorial motives and intention that Hole is insufficiently careful of.

Hole's description of Stevens's replies to Watson as being 'bitter and unsubstantial' can, however, be regarded as incorrect. Stevens certainly had strong opinions and opposed Watson on ideological grounds, but there is no substantial evidence in either the *Discourse*, the *Strictures on a Sermon* or *The Revolution Vindicated* that would give rise to the broad description of bitterness as being a characteristic of both works. The label 'unsubstantial' also fails to be a convincing description. To be sure, Stevens's publications were popular tracts, but they were nonetheless substantial intellectual contributions, even if not entirely his own work. *The Revolution Vindicated*, in particular, was a sizable and meaningful—if polemical—defence of an important political principle held by a number of High Churchmen. Indeed, there is a case to argue that in this work Stevens can be said to have rightly corrected a significant error that Watson sought to perpetuate: namely, the notion that passive obedience was a doctrine advocating unlimited obedience to political rulers.⁵¹⁷ As Stevens himself wrote, there was 'an essential difference between obeying unlawful commands, implied by *unlimited* obedience, and patient suffering for not obeying them, which is, properly speaking, *passive obedience*'.⁵¹⁸ Yet the fact that Watson had come to interpret passive obedience in this way probably means that by the late 1770s the term had, at least in some Whig circles, come to be interpreted as signifying a sort of unlimited obedience to political authority that knew no exceptions other than unquestioning obedience to (usually) royal prerogative. Daniel Wray's accusation that Stevens was 'a *Tory* of the old

⁵¹⁷ Watson, *A Sermon Preached Before the University of Cambridge*, 3, 6.

⁵¹⁸ [Stevens], *The Revolution Vindicated*, 14 (emphasis in original).

Filmer stamp⁵¹⁹ is perhaps representative of this sort of perspective. As has been previously noted, Filmer taught a form of unlimited political obedience that appears to have denied the sort of important qualifications that Stevens outlined. Moreover, his name and legacy had come to be seen by Whigs as being synonymous with royalist thought. Yet as Clark has clarified in his revised edition of *English Society*, Filmer's version of passive obedience was not the doctrine held by Tories like Stevens. Following the scholarship of James Daly,⁵²⁰ Clark notes how unrepresentative Filmer actually was amongst Tory political theorists during the eighteenth century. Filmer's doctrine of political obedience was, in fact, quite extreme and ran contrary to the classical position of passive obedience. 'Filmer argued *against* the idea of passive obedience', Clark observes.⁵²¹ Moreover, Clark notes that as a doctrine, ' "passive obedience" was later denigrated by Whigs as a synonym for total obedience: this was a misrepresentation'.⁵²² This can be argued as being the same error that Watson was guilty of. However, this point also raises significant questions regarding both Hole's and Sack's interpretation of Stevens. Thus the link Hole made between Stevens and Filmer can be questioned (Stevens never even used Filmer as a source), as can Sack's description of Stevens as being 'wedded to virtually unqualified passive obedience'. Stevens's teachings concerning passive obedience were not unqualified, neither had he ever taught (as Hole claimed) 'that governments, even of evil Roman Emperors, must always be obeyed'. In fact, as Stevens made clear in *The Revolution Vindicated*, passive obedience was always qualified. The Roman emperors had, for example, ordered some of the early

⁵¹⁹ Nichols, *Illustrations*, 160-161.

⁵²⁰ See Chapter 2, 78-79.

⁵²¹ Clark, *English Society*, 2nd edn, 58.

⁵²² *Ibid.*

Christians to sacrifice to the Roman gods, yet Stevens used the example of the early Church to illustrate how passive obedience did not advocate an unlimited form of obedience. Rather, the doctrine always possessed limits—for example, if obedience required one to follow an unlawful command. Both Hole and Sack, it seems, have misunderstood Stevens and committed the same mistake Watson and his fellow Whigs did, that is, attributing teachings to their Tory opponents that they did not in fact hold to.

Stevens's High Church response to the American Revolution deserves to be placed alongside the 'sizable minority' of Anglicans during the mid- to late 1770s that espoused similar High Church or 'high Tory' views that emphasised the doctrine of passive obedience, whilst refuting Lockean-inspired notions of contractual consent and the right to rebel against divinely-established government.⁵²³ Such writers, including Stevens, viewed the American Revolution through a theological lens, seeing political rebellion as a sin to be combated like any other heresy. However, where High Church opinion concerning the American Revolution has been studied in recent years, it has overwhelmingly been clerical voices that have been examined.⁵²⁴ Where Stevens's lay voice has been briefly examined, it has not been treated fairly or taken seriously. The latter half of this chapter has argued that it deserves to be.

It is hard to know the exact impact Stevens's anonymous lay voice had on the debate surrounding the American rebellion. The testimony of the Whig antiquarian, Daniel Wray,⁵²⁵ suggests that Stevens was probably known to some of his opposition as an author at the time, despite the anonymous nature of his publications. This

⁵²³ Bradley, 'The Anglican Pulpit', 368.

⁵²⁴ See above, 235-237.

⁵²⁵ See above, 248.

assessment can probably be applied to all of Stevens's published output during the 1770s. There may have been the knowledge, by some of his readers, but not by all, that the author behind the works discussed in this chapter came from the pen of the wealthy and well-connected hosier who resided on Old Broad Street, in the City of London. For his close friends who shared his views, Stevens had demonstrated a willingness to join them in their ideological defence of High Church views during what they perceived as a time of crisis. The 1770s show Stevens to have been a lay divine, albeit with a penchant for reactive, controversialist-style publications. He was not, in other words, a lay writer inclined to works of obscure scholarly breadth or pious manuals of spirituality. Like his High Church friends, he was convinced that theological and political heterodoxy had the potential to ruin the peace and order of the England and thus showed a willingness to react strongly—even, at times, to overreact—to perceived signs of threat with an emphasis upon the purity and truth contained within the Church of England. Adherence to the authority of the Church was his general position, if Stevens can be said to have developed one during the 1770s. Additionally, there was the added factor of Hutchinsonianism. He and his friends common adherence to Hutchinsonianism gave his social network not only a binding creed (and thus the sense of being part of a High Church group),⁵²⁶ but a narrowness of vision that added to their already reactive tendencies. As was seen in his opposition to Kennicott, this commitment to Hutchinsonianism produced—at least for Stevens—a strong anti-Semitism and conspiratorial mindset; indeed, if Stevens showed signs of extremism and bigotry it was not so much in his political theology, but rather in the effects of his espousal of the theories of John Hutchinson. Stevens's style and published output present during the 1770s hints at a similar

⁵²⁶ See Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 13.

reactive apologetic style that would intensify into the 1790s as High Churchmen like himself perceived much greater threats to the Church of England.

Chapter 5. Theological Activism (II): 1780s to 1800s

From the late 1780s through to the early years of the nineteenth century, the political event that consumed High Churchmen was the French Revolution (1789-1799). It was an ideological and political threat Stevens and his circle of friends would take a prominent role in opposing. The 1790s would also see Stevens and his High Church associates become increasingly involved in another dispute relating to Hutchinsonianism, though unlike the 1770s, the late 1790s would witness divisions amongst High Churchmen over the issue. Much of what is known about this period comes from the pen of Stevens himself who, in 1801, penned a biography of his close friend and co-activist in Anglican concerns, William Jones of Nayland. Much more than simply being a life of a friend, the biography represented a broad overview and interpretation of their High Church engagement with the intellectual battles of the 1790s. By the early nineteenth century, when Stevens reflected on this period of ideological and political turmoil that he had been a part of, he had become the last of a generation of Hutchinsonian High Churchmen who had taken a leading part in some of the main intellectual confrontations of the late eighteenth century. Not only taking an active role himself, towards the end of his life Stevens had also become an historian and interpreter of this tumultuous period in modern British history.

Following Stevens's burst of publications during the 1770s, it would be more than two decades before he published again. Indeed, during the last years of the 1770s and all of 1780s, the period was subdued for Stevens in terms of actively engaging intellectual debate. Of course, ecclesiastical issues concerning the Church of England and, from the late 1780s, the Scottish Episcopal Church continued to

involve him greatly, but these were of a more practical nature and were related to his growing involvement in the institutional welfare of the Church, especially where High Church concerns and philanthropic affairs required his attention—themes that are examined in the following chapter.

Yet if, following the 1770s, Stevens had been quieter where ideological debate was concerned, the 1780s saw his clerical friends continue to engage in the battle of ideas. With the events of the 1770s still fresh in High Church minds, the threat of the Enlightenment's more liberal theorists remained the target of High Church refutation.¹ In reality, the ideological principles threatening the Church were in essence the same as they had been in the 1770s: namely, the rise of theological heterodoxy coupled with what they perceived to be an aggressive, anti-dogmatic, rationalism emanating from some of Britain's most prominent (and more radical) Enlightenment figures. Among the critics of orthodoxy, the dissenting minister, Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), stood out. By the 1780s Priestley had been openly advocating theological heterodoxy for over a decade, even taking the step of founding—with Richard Price and Feathers Tavern petitioner, Theophilus Lindsey—England's first Unitarian congregation at Essex Street, London, in 1778.² In 1782 Priestley had published a work entitled, *A History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, which he followed-up with *An History of Early Opinions Concerning Jesus Christ*

¹ See Nigel Aston, 'Home and Heterodoxy: The Defence of Anglican Beliefs in the Late Enlightenment', *English Historical Review*, vol.108, no.429, 1993, 895-919; B. W. Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England: Theological Debate from Locke to Burke*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, 5-6, 11-12, 120-121, 136-151.

² David L. Wykes, 'Joseph Priestley, Minister and Teacher' in Isabel Rivers and David L. Wykes (eds), *Joseph Priestley: Scientist, Philosopher, and Theologian*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 35-38; G. M. Ditchfield, 'Lindsey, Theophilus', *ODNB*.

(1786).³ Both works promoted the Unitarian position and prompted a High Church response from men such as Samuel Horsley, the future Bishop of St David's, whose refutations of Priestley during the early 1780s would do much to make him 'a national figure', as his recent biographer has claimed.⁴ However, as Nigel Aston has recently shown, another future bishop, George Horne, was also raised to a wider popularity during this decade through publishing strident refutations of Priestley and his Unitarianism.⁵ Other prominent intellectuals, notably the philosopher, David Hume (1711-1776), and the notorious French *philosophe*, Voltaire (1694-1778), also came under Horne's critique.⁶ In 1784 Horne published *Letters on Infidelity*, a work that mostly attacked Hume, whom Horne referred to as 'Mr. H'.⁷ As the title implies, *Letters on Infidelity* was a work written as a series of letters to a friend. The addressee was in fact Stevens, something revealed by an introductory letter prefixed to the work that Horne addressed to 'W. S. Esq.'.⁸ Though only using Stevens as a literary device rather than a genuine recipient, the *Letters on Infidelity*—notably the introductory letter—nonetheless reveals the important ideological bond between the two High Churchmen. In the letter, Horne observes that Stevens had been encouraging him to put out a work refuting Hume that could be easily absorbed by a

³ See Joseph Priestley, *A History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, 2 vols, Birmingham, 1782; Joseph Priestley, *An History of Early Opinions Concerning Jesus Christ*, 4 vols, Birmingham, 1786.

⁴ F. C. Mather, *High Church Prophet: Bishop Samuel Horsley (1733-1806) and the Caroline Tradition in the Later Georgian Church*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, 57.

⁵ See [George Horne] 'Solomon de A.R.', *The Reply of the Jews to the Letters Addressed to Them by Doctor Joseph Priestley*, Oxford, 1787; [George Horne] 'Solomon de A.R.', *A Second Letter to Dr. Joseph Priestley*, Oxford, 1790; see also, Aston, 'Horne and Heterodoxy', 901.

⁶ Aston, 'Horne and Heterodoxy', 901-903, 918-919.

⁷ [George Horne], *Letters of Infidelity*, 2nd edn, London, 1786.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

popular readership.⁹ This reference to Stevens's preferences for publications designed for a general, non-academic readership, corresponds with Stevens's own preferred method of publication that had emerged during the 1770s. Thus, Horne spoke of Stevens's preference for 'A few strictures ... thrown out from time to time, in a concise and lively way', which 'are better calculated to suit the taste and turn of the present age, than long and elaborate dissertations; and you see no reason why a method practised by Voltaire ... *against* religion, should not be adopted by those who write *for* it'.¹⁰

By the end of the 1780s, Stevens's circle of High Church friends had an established record of attacking and refuting theological, philosophical and political ideas that went against their strict High Church views. Their Hutchinsonianism, coupled with their High Church ecclesiology and patriarchalist Tory views, combined with a highly reactionary mindset that responded quickly and with vigour to ideological threats that they thought had the potential of weakening—or even destroying—the Church of England and the monarchy. The events of the 1770s—questionable biblical revisionism, the Feathers Tavern petition, the threat of Latitudinarianism and the American Revolution—had put High Churchmen like Stevens, Horne and Jones of Nayland on edge. The French Revolution that began in 1789 would only confirm for them the potentially destructive power of ideologies that in their eyes had already demonstrated an ability to threaten the existing order.

Stevens's circle was the first conservative group in British society to react strongly, and with perceptive foresight, to events in France—years prior to the more

⁹ Ibid, 2.

¹⁰ Ibid.

famous counter-revolutionary reply of Edmund Burke.¹¹ Again, Horne was prominent in this response, though this time being aided by his protégée, William Jones of Nayland. Their response was a pulpit-based attack on events in France at a time when most conservative thinkers in Britain had failed to see the French Revolution as being any danger to civilization.¹² Horne and Jones began to preach against political revolution as early as October 1789. Both clerics spoke against the revolution with fervour, denouncing the ‘idol of liberty’ and seeing the period as even signalling the end of the world.¹³ Horne died in 1792, having only just been elevated to the See of Norwich the previous year.¹⁴ Yet his mantle as the leading Hutchinsonian High Church apologist of late-Georgian England rapidly passed to Jones of Nayland. In High Church eyes, there was a need to maintain a strong counter-revolutionary response. By 1792 anxiety about political revolution had finally captured the mind of the British elite. In France, the monarchy had been abolished and Louis XVI imprisoned—soon to be tried and executed early the following year. Moreover, in Britain, political radicalism, inspired by events in France, seemed to be on the increase creating fear amongst some conservative thinkers.¹⁵ Though Boyd Hilton has cautioned that the French Revolution did not

¹¹ Robert Hole, ‘English Sermons and tracts as media of debate on the French Revolution 1789-99’ in Mark Philip (ed.), *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 19-22.

¹² Thomas Philip Schofield, ‘Conservative Political Thought in Britain in Response to the French Revolution’, *The Historical Journal*, vol.29, no.3, 1986, 601-622.

¹³ William Jones, *Popular Commotions considered as Signs of the Approaching End of the World*, London, 1789, 1-2, 6-9; William Jones (ed.), *The Works of the Right Reverend George Horne*, vol.3, London, 1818, 384-397; Hole, ‘English Sermons’, 20-21.

¹⁴ Suffering from ill health, Horne famously said upon his consecration that he was ‘Taking my seat in the House of Lords when I should be taking my rest in the grave’ (quoted in Nigel Aston, ‘Horne, George’, *ODNB*).

¹⁵ Schofield, ‘Conservative Political Thought’, 603.

turn every British subject into a patriotic ‘ideologue’,¹⁶ nonetheless, there was fear held by some on the right that revolution could spread across the English Channel.¹⁷ Burke’s prophetic warnings of possible regicide and political terror orchestrated by an atheistic cabal of Enlightenment *philosophes* in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), caused it to become a bestseller.¹⁸ As has been noted elsewhere, Burke was not a classical High Churchman; nonetheless, he reacted to the French Revolution through a theological lens, emphasizing ‘the religious basis of social life’¹⁹ and the importance of Anglicanism to the ‘settled character of the British state’.²⁰ On one occasion Burke is known to have written to Horne congratulating him on his first episcopal charge in 1791, a charge written with a distinctly counter-revolutionary theme.²¹ However, Burke’s importance can be exaggerated, and Britain’s counter-revolutionary response should not be allowed to overshadow that of the equally-influential pulpit and religious press, especially the High Church element that appealed to the public via a discourse that was always ideologically inclined to emphasise Britain’s Anglican and monarchical constitution.²² In

¹⁶ Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, & Dangerous People? England 1783-1846*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006, 58.

¹⁷ Emily Lorrain de Montluzin, *The Anti-Jacobins 1798-1800: The Early Contributors to the Anti-Jacobin Review*, Houndmills: Macmillan, 1988, 5-7.

¹⁸ Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, & Dangerous People?*, 59-60.

¹⁹ J. C. D. Clark, ‘Introduction’ in Edmund Burke and J. C. D. Clark (ed.), *Reflections of the Revolution in France*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001, 30-31. In his first edition of *English Society*, Clark had included the following summation: ‘Burke’s achievement ... was to give eloquent but unoriginal expression to a theoretical position largely devised by Anglican Churchmen’ (J. C. D. Clark, *English Society: 1660-1832*, 1st edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 249).

²⁰ Nigel Aston, ‘A “Lay Divine”: Burke, Christianity, and the Preservation of the British State, 1790-1797’ in Nigel Aston (ed.), *Religious Change in Europe 1650-1914: Essays for John McManners*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, 192.

²¹ Hole, ‘English Sermons’, 22.

²² Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, & Dangerous People?*, 60.

reviewing the role of Samuel Horsley during the French Revolution, F. C. Mather has commented on how the events of the 1790s strengthened the influence of High Churchmen over the Church of England. The reason, Mather argues, was due to the High Church worldview that stressed the divine role of the established Church in upholding the British social order. As Mather observes, ‘The French Revolutionary Wars and Napoleonic Wars worked in favour of those who assigned to Providence a major concern with the regeneration and protection of the civil community’.²³ Thus, other than Burke, the popular Tory loyalist campaign of John Reeves (1752-1829) and John Bowles (1751-1819) also deserves to be highlighted.²⁴ Both barristers, Reeves and Bowles were High Church Tories and had an association with Stevens’s circle—though how close both men were to the distinctive Hutchinsonian-based High Churchmanship of Stevens and his friends remains unclear.²⁵ By December 1792 Reeves had founded the ‘Association for Preserving Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers’.²⁶ The meetings of the Association were held in the Crown and Anchor tavern, a popular meeting place for High Church political activism, located on the Strand, opposite the staunchly High Church parish of St Clement Danes.²⁷ Stevens and other High Churchmen are known to have frequented

²³ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 268.

²⁴ See Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, & Dangerous People?*, 60-61; Mark Philip, ‘Vulgar Conservatism, 1792-3’, *The English Historical Review*, vol.110, no.435, 1995, 42-69; Kevin Gilmartin, ‘In the Theater of Counterrevolution: Loyalist Association and Conservative Opinion in the 1790s’, *The Journal of British Studies*, vol.41, no.3, 2002, 291-328.

²⁵ They seem to have had more of an association with Joshua Watson (see Edward Churton, *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, vol.1, 1st edn, London, 1861, 82-94). Both became members of the Club of Nobody’s Friends (see G. E. Cokayne, *Biographical List of the Members of ‘The Club of Nobody’s Friends’*, London, 1885, 20-21).

²⁶ Philip, ‘Vulgar Conservatism’, 46.

²⁷ Christina Parolin, *Radical Spaces: Venues of Popular Politics in London, 1790-1845*, Canberra: ANU Press, 2010, 105-146.

the Crown and Anchor from at least the late 1780s onwards.²⁸ Reeves, with the help of Bowles, put out numerous anti-revolutionary tracts during the 1790s. With likely government assistance from William Pitt's ministry, Reeves's association and its loyalist tracts ended up becoming the vehicle for an appeal to the general public to resist French ideas—what Mark Philip has referred to as the promotion of a 'Vulgar Conservatism'.²⁹

However, notwithstanding the importance of Reeve's association, or Burke's *Reflections* before it, these counter-revolutionary efforts were again preceded by a neglected High Church movement that predates these better-known examples, in which Stevens was involved: namely, the creation of the Society for the Reformation of Principles (SRP) on 1 January 1792.³⁰ In addition to Jones and Stevens, the founding members of the group included Nathaniel Wetherell, Samuel Glasse, William Kirby, Jonathan Boucher, John Parkhurst and the layman Thomas Calverley.³¹ Of these original members, Jones was the leading figure and would become the public face of the society. Nonetheless, Stevens also played an important—albeit background role—in the running of the society that deserves to be discussed.

²⁸ See Chapter 6, 354-355.

²⁹ Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, & Dangerous People?*, 60; Philip, 'Vulgar Conservatism', 44-48; Gilmartin, 'In the Theater of Counterrevolution', 311-316.

³⁰ 'A Proposal for a Reformation of Principles' in [William Jones (ed.)], *The Scholar Armed Against the Errors of the Time*, vol.1, London, 1795, iv; William Stevens, 'Life of William Jones of Nayland' in William Stevens (ed.), *The Theological, Philosophical and Miscellaneous Works of the Rev. William Jones*, vol.1, London, 1801, xxxv; James Allan Park, *Memoirs of William Stevens*, 4th edn, London, 1825, 108; John Freeman, *Life of the Rev. William Kirby, M.A.*, London, 1852, 34-51; Churton, *Memoir*, vol.1, 27-28.

³¹ Churton, *Memoir*, vol.1, 27-28.

According to a later observation by Stevens, the formation of such a society had long been Jones's desire and as an idea went back many years. Jones, Stevens writes, 'had long meditated the establishment of a Society for the *Reformation of Principles*, with a view to take such measures, in a literary way only, as should be most conclusive to the preservation of our *Religion, Government, and Laws*'.³² The advent of the French Revolution had evidently rekindled such a want, for by August 1789 Stevens observed to Jonathan Boucher that 'Old Jones' was planning some sort of 'mighty project'.³³ Jones's long-held yearning to promote religious and moral reform through literary means explains why, in 1780, he had edited a collection of High Church tracts, entitled: *The Scholar Armed Against the Errors of Infidelity, Enthusiasm, and Disloyalty*, a work that contained re-publications of Stevens's *Treatise on the Nature and Constitution of the Christian Church* and *Discourse on the English Constitution*, as well as four of Jones's works.³⁴ Stevens later noted how the French Revolution had caused Jones (and by implication, himself) to go public in a similar manner—albeit on a much more ambitious scale. As Stevens later observed, 'When the democratical and levelling principles were spreading with so much rapidity, and to such an extent, as to threaten us with immediate destruction, this ever wakeful watchman was not backward to give warning of the danger, and use his endeavours to counteract it'.³⁵ The formation of the SRP, almost a year prior

³² Stevens, 'Life of William Jones of Nayland', xxxv.

³³ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 19 August 1789, Earl Gregg Swem Library, Jonathan Boucher Papers, B/3/37.

³⁴ [William Jones (ed.)], *The Scholar Armed Against the Errors of Infidelity, Enthusiasm, and Disloyalty*, London, 1780.

³⁵ Stevens, 'Life of William Jones of Nayland', xxxvi.

to that of Reeves's Association for Preserving Liberty and Property, necessitates a correction of the claim that Reeves's association was the first of its kind.³⁶

The aims of the SRP were explained to the public in two proposals, both of which came out of the society's first two meetings on 1 January 1792 and 11 June 1792.³⁷ At the first meeting, the SRP noted the success of Sunday Schools as a means of instructing the poor. Though not proposing anything similar, it was hoped that those in higher states of life, such as university undergraduates or aspiring scholars, could also become the targets of religious and moral instruction, that 'some similar plan will be adopted for preventing the corruption which prevails among scholars, and persons of the higher orders of life, from evil *principles*, and what may be called *a monopoly of the press*'.³⁸ The SRP was thus proposing a counter-revolutionary effort that targeted scholars and the press, an indication that it was these two groups that they saw as having a particular ability to propagate revolutionary principles in Britain. The proposal made mention of the Whig journal, the *Monthly Review*, a part of the press that had been consistently critical of Stevens's writings throughout the 1770s.³⁹ The *modus operandi* of the *Monthly Review* was perceived by the society to possess the goal of lessening 'the influence of all such works as should be written in defence of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England'.⁴⁰ Another work, the *Biographia Britannica*, was also singled

³⁶ See Philip, 'Vulgar Conservatism', 47.

³⁷ 'A Proposal for a Reformation of Principles', iii; 'A Sequel to the Proposal for a Reformation of Principles' in [Jones (ed.)], *The Scholar Armed Against the Errors of the Time*, vol.1, v.

³⁸ 'A Proposal for a Reformation of Principles', i (emphasis in original).

³⁹ See Chapter 4.

⁴⁰ 'A Proposal for a Reformation of Principles', i.

out as being dangerous, its editor⁴¹ being ‘a person of influence among the Dissenters’.⁴² The proposal cited Burke’s *Reflections*, noting Burke’s claim that it had been the work of a ‘literary cabal’ that had been a cause of the Revolution in France.⁴³ Two tentative proposals of action were initially suggested: firstly, the society may seek to republish such edifying works that could be of benefit to ‘students in divinity’; secondly, that it might be possible to disperse popular anti-revolutionary tracts or, as it phrased them, ‘Little cheap pamphlets’.⁴⁴

The second meeting witnessed the emergence of two further resolutions, indicating a development upon the initial goals set out in January. The first was the desire to start a monthly periodical that would ‘provide a just and impartial account’ of published literature in the areas of divinity, literature and politics, whilst also providing accounts of European civil, military and political developments.⁴⁵ The second was to publish works that were capable of enlightening the ‘uninformed, or to rectify those who have been falsely taught’.⁴⁶ It was noted that a collection of such works was already in formation and would soon be published.⁴⁷ Additionally, though there was no further mention of the desire to publish ‘Little cheap pamphlets’, later evidence, examined below, reveals that this initial goal remained a part of the society’s purpose. These resolutions were accompanied by practical decisions regarding how the society would function, which until that point, seems to have been informal and unstructured. Thus it was noted that in time the society would consist

⁴¹ Unnamed in the proposal but probably the Presbyterian minister, Andrew Kippis (1725-1795) (see Alan Ruston, ‘Kippis, Andrew’, *ODNB*).

⁴² ‘A Proposal for a Reformation of Principles’, ii.

⁴³ See Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 5th edn, London, 1790, 165.

⁴⁴ ‘A Proposal for a Reformation of Principles’, iii.

⁴⁵ ‘A Sequel to the Proposal for a Reformation of Principles’, v.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

of three ‘classes’. Firstly, there would exist a class of ‘acting members’, responsible for the writing and publication of the proposed High Church periodical. Secondly, there would be a general committee under which the affairs of the society would be run, especially the superintendence and direction of publications. Lastly, there would be annual subscribers.⁴⁸ Initially it was asked that one guinea be paid for membership and it was noted that after a ‘sufficient number’ had paid such a fee, the society would formally begin functioning.⁴⁹ In light of an expectation that such an event was likely to occur, the High Church publisher, Rivingtons, was employed to receive interested correspondence, take in subscription fees and register the names of new members.⁵⁰ The fact that a guinea (a valuable gold coin) was being set as the membership fee is an indication that the SRP was not designed as a popular movement, but rather an elite group targeting—for its membership and financial support—the upper-classes of society.

Though the similarities are not exact, the SRP was comparable to William Wilberforce’s Evangelical campaign for the conversion of the upper-classes during the late 1780s, at least when viewed alongside Wilberforce’s appeals to the elite sections of society.⁵¹ His creation of the Proclamation Society against Vice and Immorality in 1787, though attempting to bring about a moral reformation throughout British society and among all social classes, had as its support base a

⁴⁸ Ibid, v-vi.

⁴⁹ Ibid, vi.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Joanna Innes, ‘Politics and Morals: The Reformation of Manners Movement in Later Eighteenth-Century England’ in Eckhart Hellmuth (ed.), *The Transformation of Political Culture: England and Germany in the Late Eighteenth Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, 84; Herbert Schlossberg, *The Silent Revolution & the Making of Victorian England*, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2000, 54; Alan Hunt, *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 65.

very elite section of English society, mostly from London.⁵² However, with its strict Hutchinsonian-based High Churchmanship, coupled with its rather narrow literary focus, the younger society was more restricted in scope than Wilberforce's broader social goal of national moral reformation. Also, though appealing to the elite, its membership base would never boast the impressive aristocratic and upper-class membership of the Proclamation Society.

Jones was confident that his proposed society had much potential.⁵³ Yet despite these initially heightened expectations of success, the SRP would struggle to gain any sort of following in the months and years to come. In fact, in a mere matter of months the society seems to have almost completely come undone. What had occurred remains a mystery, though by late September 1792, Jones was mourning his failed society, even—as Stevens records—composing a Latin ode in its memory.⁵⁴ All was not entirely lost, however; a small nucleus of dedicated individuals, most notably Stevens, kept the society alive into the 1790s.

Sometime in November 1792 Stevens met the eminent London bookseller, George Robinson (1736-1801),⁵⁵ to discuss proposals for a new journal. Robinson had already published five of Stevens's works, so it was understandable Stevens would meet with him to discuss other similar business. Stevens revealed to Boucher that Robinson was willing to allow the society to take over an already existing periodical, the *Critical Review*, a publication 'He [Robinson] considers ... as very friendly to government at present'.⁵⁶ Robinson was willing to offer the *Critical*

⁵² Innes, 'Politics and Morals', 58, 79, 81, 83-85, 103-104.

⁵³ Freeman, *Life of the Rev. William Kirby*, 34.

⁵⁴ Stevens, 'Life of William Jones of Nayland', xxxvi, lvi.

⁵⁵ See William Bowyer, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, vol.3, London, 1812, 445-449.

⁵⁶ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 21 November 1792, Boucher Papers, B/3/65.

Review to Stevens on the proviso that ‘there are any divines sound in the faith, who will engage in the work’.⁵⁷ The cost, however, was going to be £2,500 and was not an offer of full control; rather, the expectation was that any contributors would have to work alongside another editor, the Whig orientalist Alexander Hamilton (1762-1824),⁵⁸ who for a long time had been a contributor to the *Monthly Review*.⁵⁹ This offer seems to have been the best Robinson could make for the society, though he was clearly eager to help Stevens. However, considering that the *Monthly Review* had been singled out by the society as being one of the chief publications promoting theological and political heterodoxy, Hamilton’s possible role in a High Church periodical would likely have been viewed as highly unsatisfactory by Stevens and Jones. But Robinson could do no more; a tie of friendship with Hamilton meant he could not give the society full control. As Stevens reported, ‘was it not for his friendship to Hamilton, and his connection with the *Critical Review*, he would set up a review himself in opposition to the *Monthly*’.⁶⁰ In addition to this news, Stevens also noted in passing that Jones had engaged Robinson on other related business: namely, to publish the short pamphlets mentioned in the first proposal. One of these, ‘Tom Bull’,⁶¹ had impressed Robinson, who suggested to Stevens that 50,000 copies would be needed for the tract to have an effect on the public. Stevens, however,

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ See Rosane Rocher, ‘Hamilton, Alexander’, *ODNB*.

⁵⁹ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 21 November 1792, Boucher Papers, B/3/65.

⁶⁰ Ibid (emphasis in original).

⁶¹ It is not possible to discern which tract Stevens is referring to here. Jones published three tracts in late 1792, all of which contained ‘Tom Bull’ in the title. See [William Jones], ‘Resolutions of Common Sense about Common Rights. By Thomas Bull’ (1792), ‘One Penny-worth of Truth from Thomas Bull to his Brother John’ (1792), ‘One Penny-worth more, or a Second Letter from Thomas Bull to his Brother John’ (1792) in [William Stevens (ed.)], *The Theological, Philosophical and Miscellaneous Works of the Rev. William Jones*, vol.12, London, 1801, 457-482.

feared for the cost, exclaiming: ‘But where is the fund?’ and noting that 50,000 copies ‘will be about £2 p[er] thousand’.⁶²

Despite its initial setback, the SRP appeared to be making progress, a fact confirmed during the first-half of 1793 when the society finally established their long awaited High Church journal. Robinson’s offer had evidently been turned down, for the society had decided to start a review from scratch rather than adopt an existing publication. Named the *British Critic*, it was taken on by Rivingtons in January 1793 and would issue its first edition in May of that year.⁶³ Rather than being in the control of Jones, however, its editorship was placed under the care of two men, the philologist, Robert Nares (1753-1829) and the classicist, William Beloe (1758-1817), two names that do not appear in connection with Jones or Stevens prior to this moment and whose connection to the SRP is rarely spoken of.⁶⁴ How they came to be in charge of the *British Critic* is not known. Nonetheless, the *British Critic*, at least in its prospectus, openly declared that it was a journal ‘under the auspices’ of the SRP.⁶⁵ Its purpose was to place in the public domain a periodical that did not contain views ‘constantly retained against the Crown and Church’.⁶⁶ Its contributors were determined to defend the British constitution and to preserve Church and State from attacks by hostile authors. All its authors were ‘firm friends to real Liberty, as established by the British Constitution, and to real Christianity,

⁶² William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 21 November 1792, Boucher Papers, B/3/65.

⁶³ Septimus Rivington, *The Publishing House of Rivington*, London, 1894, 17; *The British Critic*, May 1793, vol.1, London, 1793, 1-116.

⁶⁴ Their *ODNB* entries also make no mention of a connection with the Society for the Reformation of Principles.

⁶⁵ ‘Prospectus’ in *The British Critic*, vol.1, London, 1793, 3.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 2.

particularly as delivered in the Evangelical Doctrines of the Church of England'.⁶⁷

Its first issue would appear in May 1793.⁶⁸

Though actively involved in these counter-revolutionary efforts, Stevens did not respond with any sort of major publication, as he had done during the 1770s. Nonetheless, he was at one with his friends in viewing the French Revolution as a diabolical attack upon Christianity and divinely-appointed government. His thoughts on events across the English Channel first become clearly apparent in early 1793 in two letters to John Skinner, the Scottish Episcopalian Bishop of Aberdeen. The dates of both letters are not given, though Park indicates that they were written soon after the execution of Louis XVI on 21 January 1793.⁶⁹ The first letter reveals Stevens's reaction to the seriousness of the French Revolution. Stevens thought that within the 'diabolical fury of the French Atheists' the providence of God was still evident. God had a purpose for allowing what had occurred and there still was hope that good may come out of evil.

The times are awful, and appearances so unusual, that the Almighty, one should suppose, had some great work in hand. Extraordinary events may be expected from the extraordinary operations now carrying on. The more than diabolical fury of the French Atheists is utterly astonishing; they compass sea and land to make proselytes, and have been too successful; but one thing they cannot do, they cannot make them more the children of hell than themselves. Whether for their own punishment, or the punishment of others, all this is permitted, God only knows, and time will discover. Mischief was meant against us, but seen soon enough, I trust, to be prevented: and as God can

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ See *The British Critic*, May 1793, vol.1, London, 1793, 1-116.

⁶⁹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 106.

bring good out of evil, I am inclined to hope, from the effect it seems already to have had on us, that the fatal tendency of this levelling spirit, and dereliction of principle, will be so manifest as to lead us to ask for the old ways, that we may walk therein.⁷⁰

In the second letter to Skinner, Stevens attempted to describe the causes of the Revolution. Noting that churches had been defiled, Stevens regarded the ‘new philosophers’ as putting forth a moral relativism that denied the existence of evil and spurned all objective moral prohibitions. Referring again to his belief in divine providence being at work in the events at hand, Stevens saw in the French Revolution the chastisement of God, not only upon France, but also on Britain. In allowing the destruction of the French Church, providence was sending a signal to British Christians that they, through their own sin, had created the destruction that was now taking place. The cure needed to be found in the moral and religious reformation of the individual.

As oratory has been prostituted so much of late to the vilest of purposes, I hope you will employ yours to counteract the mischief that this speechifying seems to be bringing on all Europe. We are come to such a pass, that with the new philosophers, there is no such thing as *malum in se* or *malum prohibitum*. We have left our Bibles, and no man thinks of obedience *for conscience sake*. Therefore does all this evil come upon us: and in our punishment we may see our sin. Do not you, my young friend, suffer yourself to be carried away with the abominable principles of the present times respecting Government: but read the old black-letter: have recourse to the

⁷⁰ William Stevens to John Skinner, undated, in *ibid*, 106-107.

law of God, and to the testimony thereof: if they speak not according to them, there is no truth in them.⁷¹

Stevens's words reflected a genuine fear that England was in danger of being overtaken by revolutionary principles and that not enough was being done to counter a possible outbreak of revolution in his homeland by reasserting orthodox Christian principles throughout Britain.⁷²

In 1795 the SRP released their long awaited collection of High Church writings, the two-volume work, *The Scholar Armed Against the Errors of the Time*.⁷³ With a name and style closely resembling the 1780 edition,⁷⁴ the idea of such a work had precedent. Yet the two-volume 1795 edition had been greatly re-edited and enlarged. Its targeted audience—school and university students—was stated on the title page.⁷⁵ The work included a mixture of well-known and more obscure writers. The Nonjurors, Charles Leslie and William Law dominate the first volume, whilst Horne and Jones of Nayland, in a somewhat nepotistic fashion, dominate the second.⁷⁶ Other prominent authors include the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century philosopher and Lord Chancellor, Francis Bacon (1561-1623), Jeremy Taylor (*bp.*1613-1667), whilst more obscure figures included the Church of Ireland Bishop, Welbore Ellis (1661/2-1734) and the rector of Bemerton, Wiltshire, John Norris (1657-1712). As noted, the authors also included Stevens.⁷⁷

⁷¹ William Stevens to John Skinner, undated, in *ibid*, 107 (emphasis in original).

⁷² *Ibid*, 107-108.

⁷³ [Jones (ed.)], *The Scholar Armed Against the Errors of the Time*, vols.1-2, 1st edn, London, 1795.

⁷⁴ See Chapter 4, 231 n374.

⁷⁵ [Jones (ed.)], *The Scholar Armed Against the Errors of the Time*, vol.1, 1st edn, title page.

⁷⁶ See *ibid*, 13-126; vol.2, 1-76, 101-285, 286-352.

⁷⁷ See *ibid*, 289-312.

The release of *The Scholar Armed* was not, however, an indication that the SRP was going to have a substantial, long-term influence on English society. Though as a published work it had a moderate success among High Church readers into the early nineteenth century (it was republished in 1800 and 1812),⁷⁸ by then the society had ceased to function. A significant reason for this decline is to be found in a rift that developed between the society—especially Jones of Nayland—and the editors of the *British Critic*, not long after the journal was launched. It was a rift that Stevens would later take a leading part in as he presented his last published writings to the reading public.

In 1793 Jones had published *A Short Way to Truth*, a Hutchinsonian defence of the doctrine of the Trinity that made use of the ‘Trinitarian analogy’.⁷⁹ The Trinitarian analogy claimed that the three natural elements of fire, light and air (essential elements in the Hutchinsonian cosmology) were symbols of the three persons of the Holy Trinity.⁸⁰ The argument was a typical representation of the way in which nature was used by the Hutchinsonians to confirm and defend theological orthodoxy, particularly orthodox Trinitarianism. Yet not all High Churchmen supported the argument, a fact evident in the *British Critic* where a short review of Jones’s work respectfully expressed its disagreement with the Hutchinsonian belief.⁸¹ That the editors of the *British Critic* were in disagreement with the Hutchinsonianism of Jones and his close friends became more evident later in 1795.

⁷⁸ See [William Jones (ed.)], *The Scholar Armed Against the Errors of the Time*, 2 vols, 2nd edn, London, 1800; [William Jones (ed.)], *The Scholar Armed Against the Errors of the Time*, 2 vols, 3rd edn, London, 1812.

⁷⁹ William Jones, *A Short Way to Truth: Or the Christian Doctrine of a Trinity in Unity*, London, 1793.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 8.

⁸¹ *The British Critic*, October 1793, vol.2, London, 1793, 208.

That year Jones issued the first edition of his biography of George Horne.⁸² Stevens had featured in the publication, not only as a life long friend of Horne, but because Jones had prefaced the work with ‘A Prefatory Epistle to William Stevens’.⁸³ This was a dedicatory letter addressed to Stevens in which their shared friendship with Horne was remembered and Horne praised for his contributions to Church, society and the intellectual battles of the eighteenth century. Behind the scenes, however, Stevens had been worried about the content of the biography. In 1793 he wrote to Boucher noting his concern. ‘I found old Jones and whence I left him much occupied with the thought of the Bishop’s life, about the conducting of which I have my apprehensions, as he seems disposed to introduce what appears to me extraneous matter, and the objecting to which may occasion the throwing aside of the whole.’⁸⁴ Stevens does not reveal what this ‘extraneous matter’ was, though it may have been a reference to Jones’s concentration on Horne’s propagation and defence of Hutchinsonianism, an aspect of Horne’s intellectual life he was keen on elucidating and defending.⁸⁵ Stevens’s caution that foreseen objections might necessitate cancellation of the publication is revealing given what took place in 1799 when a second edition of the biography was released.⁸⁶

The second edition contained a new preface, which was also sold separately.⁸⁷ The new preface replied to some critical remarks related to

⁸² See William Jones, *Memoirs of the Life, Studies, and Writings of the Right Reverend George Horne, D.D.*, 1st edn, London, 1795.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, i-xiv.

⁸⁴ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 11 September 1793, Boucher Papers, B/3/68.

⁸⁵ See for example, Jones, *Memoirs*, 1st edn, 22-27, 30-32, 36-44, 59-65.

⁸⁶ William Jones, *Memoirs of the Life, Studies, and Writings of the Right Reverend George Horne, D.D.*, 2nd edn, London, 1799.

⁸⁷ William Jones, *A New Preface to the Second Edition of Memoirs of the Life, Studies and Writings, &c. of the Right Rev. George Horne, D.D.*, London, 1799.

Hutchinsonianism that had been made about Horne and Jones in a biographical entry on Horne included in the 1798 edition of *A New and General Biographical Dictionary*.⁸⁸ Significantly, this work was composed by the editors of the *British Critic*, Nares and Beloe.⁸⁹ Though mostly positive about Horne's life, the *Dictionary* had nonetheless contained a critical remark about the Trinitarian analogy and its chief expositors, Horne and Jones.⁹⁰ In response to this Jones's penned a forceful thirty-page defence of Hutchinsonianism—especially the Trinitarian analogy.⁹¹ Jones's lengthy and defensive reply to the editors of the *British Critic* signalled that a significant disagreement had developed between the founder of the periodical and its non-Hutchinsonian editors. Jones of Nayland died on 6 January 1800, not living to see the preface's review in the February 1800 edition of the *British Critic*.⁹² In the review the *British Critic* continued to criticize the Trinitarian analogy, claiming it was 'fanciful' and 'presumptuous'.⁹³ The *British Critic* also finally brought out into the open the fact that an ideological rift had developed between it and the SRP. Though the *British Critic* continued to respect 'the late Mr. Jones', they noted that he had never forgiven them for their critical remarks made back in 1793.⁹⁴ 'By this early offence', the *British Critic* reflected, 'we forfeited the expectation of his [Jones's] support and assistance'.⁹⁵

⁸⁸ Robert Nares and William Beloe (eds), *A New and General Biographical Dictionary*, vol.8, new edn, London, 1798, 236-240.

⁸⁹ M. K. C. MacMahon, 'Nares, Robert', *ODNB*.

⁹⁰ Nares and Beloe (eds), *A New and General Biographical Dictionary*, vol.8, 237.

⁹¹ Jones, *Memoirs*, 2nd edn, iv-xii.

⁹² *The British Critic*, February 1800, vol.15, London, 1800, 208.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Stevens would come to the defence of Jones of Nayland's memory with what would be his final contributions to the published sphere, firstly with the cumbersomely titled, *A Review of The Review of A New Preface to the Second Edition of Mr. Jones's Life of Bishop Horne* (1800)⁹⁶ and in 1801 with a biography of his departed friend,⁹⁷ prefixed to the published edition of Jones of Nayland's works which he also edited.⁹⁸

As its title makes clear, *A Review of The Review* was a reply to the *British Critic's* February 1800 review of Jones's preface. In this publication Stevens attempted to achieve three things: firstly, to defend Jones from what Stevens saw as an unjust attack upon his character; secondly, to say a few words in defence of the Trinitarian analogy; and thirdly, to chide and lament what Stevens saw as the growing anti-Hutchinsonian stance of the *British Critic*.

The *Review's* opening pages make it clear just how deep a division had emerged between the original members of the SRP and the *British Critic*. In Stevens's eyes, the journal had lost its credibility as a fair and balanced review. Its compliments of Jones, he thought, were dishonest—'like giving a dog roast meat, and basting him with the spit'⁹⁹—and its review of Jones's preface completely deficient with regard to interacting with his arguments. Jones's Hutchinsonianism,

⁹⁶ Two editions of the work were released, both in 1800. The text of both is the same; the only difference is that the second edition contains a postscript containing Stevens's reply to a review of this work by the *British Critic*. See [William Stevens], *A Review of The Review of A New Preface to the Second Edition of Mr. Jones's Life of Bishop Horne*, 1st edn, London, 1800; [William Stevens], *A Review of The Review of A New Preface to the Second Edition of Mr. Jones's Life of Bishop Horne*, 2nd edn, London, 1800.

⁹⁷ Stevens, 'Life of William Jones of Nayland', i-iv.

⁹⁸ Gerald le Grys Norgate, 'Stevens, William', *DNB*. For the full collection of Jones's works, see: William Stevens (ed.), *The Theological, Philosophical and Miscellaneous Works of the Rev. William Jones*, 12 vols, London, 1801.

⁹⁹ [Stevens], *A Review of The Review*, 2nd edn, 2.

especially the Trinitarian analogy, deserved more credit than simply being dismissed with a single sentence as fanciful. Yet rather than fairly attempt to state even a single point in Jones's favour, nor even to quote fairly or paraphrase one of his arguments, the *British Critic* had 'miserably slurred' in its analysis, offering only 'vain surmises'.¹⁰⁰ In Stevens's mind, the *British Critic* was acting as Nicodemus had done, that is, being blind to truths they should be able to discern as Christians. Stevens believed the Trinitarian analogy to be a perfectly scriptural manner of interpreting nature. In view of this, the *British Critic*'s tactic of dismissing it as 'fanciful' and 'presumptuous' needed to be dismissed.

[W]hy should it be thought a thing incredible, that God, who made the world, should have so made it as to enable us to see the *spiritual* in the *natural* world, I do not comprehend. Nay, we are expressly told, *that the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; even his eternal power and GODHEAD*. Now, if the Godhead is to be *understood by the things that are made*, and the Godhead is a Trinity in Unity, then may not the *Heavens, the things that are made*, which the electrical experiments shew [sic] to be a Trinity in Unity, be the appointed instruments to *declare the glory of God*; and may not what is contemptuously called the *Hutchinsonian* doctrine, which makes all nature bear witness to the truth of Revelation, be the true doctrine; and the censure of *fanciful* and *presumptuous*, which the Reviewer has prepared for others, deservedly fall on his own pate?¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 2-5.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 5-6 (emphasis in original).

Stevens's use of Romans 1:20 mirrors his use of that same verse when instructing Jane Hookham back in 1766.¹⁰² Recommending the writings of the conservative French Enlightenment thinker, Abbé Noël-Antoine Pluche, Stevens had stated to Hookham that 'Nature will be found to preach the great truths of Christianity'.¹⁰³ One could argue the Hutchinsonian Trinitarian analogy was perhaps taking this point to an extreme, but in 1800 the principle was exactly the same in Stevens's mind as it had been in 1766: namely, that 'all nature bear[']s witness to the truth of Revelation', including the doctrine of the Trinity, thus making the relationship between natural philosophy and orthodox Christian theology inseparable.

Stevens's defence of the Trinitarian analogy reveals the key role Hutchinsonianism played in the estrangement that occurred between the SRP and the *British Critic*. It had thus become a source of division among Anglican High Churchmen at a time when a united front would have been to their advantage. Stevens felt the blame lay with the *British Critic* for being unable to see the truth of the theological positions both he and Jones found so persuasive. Not only had it

¹⁰² 'To examine into the works of nature which so evidently display the power and wisdom of the Creator, is both delightful and profitable. God Himself has given us a history of the Creation, at once assuring us (what we should otherwise never have discovered) whose work it is, and encouraging us in the study and contemplation of it. And you who know that *the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood*, made intelligible to us, *by the things that are made even his eternal power and Godhead*, you will receive singular instruction from meditating on the scenes of nature. To you the visible world will be a glass reflecting the glories of the invisible. *The heavens will declare the glory of God and the firmament show his handywork*, not only in the creation, but redemption of the world. By the scale of natural things is the mind's ascent to God. In the old creation you will behold, as in a picture, how all things are *created anew in Christ Jesus*. By this method it is that God teaches us in His holy Word, describing the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven under natural images and similitudes; and, considered in this view, all Nature will be found to preach the great truths of Christianity' (Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, 164).

¹⁰³ Ibid.

expressed opinions about its founder that he thought were ‘perverse’ and ‘malevolent’, the *British Critic* had failed to give credit to the individual whose exertions gave birth to the society and the periodical ‘of which the Editors and his friends are now reaping the profits’.¹⁰⁴ ‘So much for the British Critic’, Stevens concluded. ‘We have weighed him in the balance; and I believe you will allow he is found wanting.’¹⁰⁵

Such a frank critique of the *British Critic* did not go unanswered and was reviewed by that journal in the April 1800 edition.¹⁰⁶ The review was short and did not interact with the specifics of Stevens’s arguments and accusations. Evaluating Jones as ‘a man of talents and worth, of great sagacity, and sincere piety’ and qualifying this with the claim that he possessed, ‘an imagination which sometimes appeared to out-strip his judgment’, the *British Critic* went on to criticise Jones’s friends (and by implication, Stevens), claiming they were ‘of less genius and judgement than’ Jones and who too often ‘blindly deemed him infallible’.¹⁰⁷ If they knew the author was Stevens they did not reveal it, though considering his close involvement in the formation of the SRP and the formation of the *British Critic*, it is highly likely they would have been aware of who was acting in Jones’s defence. Seeking to defend itself, the *British Critic* gave a brief account of its historic relationship with Jones. Whilst willing to give some muted credit to Jones for bringing their periodical into being, the *British Critic* blamed him and his friends for the split. ‘His aid to the British Critic consisted in this, that he belonged to, perhaps formed, the society which first proposed the plan of such a Review. But the Review

¹⁰⁴ [Stevens], *A Review of The Review*, 2nd edn, 17.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 18.

¹⁰⁶ *The British Critic*, April 1800, vol.15, London, 1800, 447-448.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 448.

might have perished a thousand times, before he, or many of his admiring friends, would have written a single line to support it; and the moment we appeared not to adopt all his opinions, he and they “complained of it.”¹⁰⁸

Written shortly after the publication of *A Review of The Review*, Stevens’s biography of Jones dealt with many of the same themes found in that shorter work. The biography had its genesis only days following Jones’s death when Stevens wrote to Boucher about a proposal by John Gifford, editor of the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, that Stevens compose a ‘short sketch of his [Jones’s] life’, presumably to appear in that journal. Stevens revealed to Boucher that he had begun the research, though he expressed doubts as to whether he could achieve it.¹⁰⁹ In fact, by June Stevens was worried that the project would not come to completion owing to problems with those who were supposed to help him by providing source materials. Exclaiming to Boucher, ‘But what shall we do about old Jones?’, Stevens related how Francis Randolph, who earlier had pledged to help Stevens, had pulled out, leaving the determined Gifford to rely further on Stevens’s ability to produce a life of their recently departed friend.¹¹⁰ The problems continued into August. In a letter written on 15 August, Stevens again spoke of having placed himself ‘into a strange hole’ and not knowing ‘how I shall get out’.¹¹¹ It seems that Gifford was placing pressure on Stevens to write a work that he did not, ultimately, feel able to complete. As a result of his problems associated with the *Anti-Jacobin*’s editor, he revealed that he was less than enthusiastic about publishing the work for Gifford.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 447-448.

¹⁰⁹ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 16 January 1800, Boucher Papers, B/3/81.

¹¹⁰ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 4 June 1800, Boucher Papers, B/3/84.

¹¹¹ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 15 August 1800, Boucher Papers, B/3/85.

¹¹² Ibid.

However, with help from Boucher—who proof-read sections of the draft—Stevens had managed to complete most of the biography by the end of September 1800.¹¹³ Yet the process of writing had tired him.¹¹⁴ By that year Stevens was almost seventy years old and his words to Boucher reveal that though he still had the desire to write within him, present health problems (to be precise, severe constipation) had made the process difficult. Nonetheless, he had managed to write most of the work. His candid use of the metaphor of constipation in explaining the taxing nature of writing Jones's life, coupled with his vanity in comparing himself to another famous Anglican lay biographer, makes for interesting reading:

As to the old Hero, whose history I wanted *somebody* to write, that it might not fall on *Nobody*, you are very good to say you would not have shrunk from the job, and are even now ready to set pen to paper, ... but there is no difficulty. As to bidding me sit down with the spirit of a man, when there is nothing left but the weakness of an old woman, why, Master Boucher, it is trifling with a poor creature. It is a strange notion people have got of my being equal to the task, but I know better. I made the experiment, and was so costive it would not do: I strained hard but had no motion. It was my complaint all the time I was in Berkshire and at Farnborough, and a serious one it was. Since I came here I have taken a few aperient pills, and whether I may say Thank God, or not, a motion has been the consequence. However, to have done with flower and figure and metaphor, my vanity (love of fame being the universal passion) has tempted me to an invitation of honest Isaac

¹¹³ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 15 August 1800 & 29 September 1800, Boucher Papers, B/3/85 & 86.

¹¹⁴ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 29 September 1800, Boucher Papers, B/3/86.

Walton, and I have actually finished a sketch, though not a finished sketch of the poor old boy [Jones].¹¹⁵

To these thoughts Stevens added that he had actually written too much (almost 40 octavo pages). What had begun as a short sketch of Jones for the *Anti-Jacobin Review* had turned into a full-length biography. Doubting that his finished version would fit into a monthly periodical—indeed, that it would even be published, he ruled out the *Anti-Jacobin* and instead hinted that the biography might be prefixed to a published edition of Jones's sermons and writings that he was also in the process of preparing.¹¹⁶ Stevens told Boucher that his name would be put down as a subscriber and suggested that Boucher honestly tell him if prefixing his biography to Jones's collected works would help sell more copies.¹¹⁷

In the end a journal was found to publish Stevens's account of Jones of Nayland's life, but only in an abridged format. The first two issues of the *Orthodox Churchman's Magazine*, begun in 1801, carried Stevens's two-part biography of Jones.¹¹⁸ The full version, which was prefixed to the Jones's collected works, also appeared that year. Three themes emerge in Stevens's biography of his departed friend. The first can be interpreted as a desire on Stevens's part to continue speaking about the reasons for the rise and rapid decline of the SRP and the ensuing fall-out that developed between Jones, himself and the *British Critic*. Second, was a related defence of Jones's Hutchinsonianism, the Trinitarian analogy and a strident justification of Hutchinson's theories and their importance to Christianity in a time of ideological crisis. Related to this was a third theme: namely, a concern to refute

¹¹⁵ Ibid (emphasis in original).

¹¹⁶ Ibid; Norgate, 'Stevens, William', *DNB*.

¹¹⁷ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 29 September 1800, Boucher Papers, B/3/86.

¹¹⁸ *The Orthodox Churchman's Magazine*, March & April, vol.1, London, 1801, 3-11, 57-66.

certain thinkers and tenets of the late-Enlightenment, particularly the theory of natural religion—a philosophy, popular amongst Anglican Latitudinarians, that religious truth could be derived independently of divine revelation. A central aspect of the British Enlightenment’s engagement with theology, for Stevens, natural religion in whatever form gave too much religious authority to reason and nature, taking away the primacy of divine revelation—a centrepiece of Hutchinsonian thought—and leading thinkers inevitably towards heterodox theologies.

Beginning with the story of the rise and fall of the SRP, Stevens spoke of Jones of Nayland as being a prophet of the times who had responded to the rise of theological heterodoxy and political radicalism with a plan that sought to preserve the rightful place of the Church of England in English society, England’s monarchical form of government and rule of law, at a time when ‘the democratical and levelling principles’ at work in France were spreading with such speed, and extent ‘as to threaten us with immediate destruction’.¹¹⁹ The cause of the French Revolution, Stevens argued, had been based on an ideological commitment to heterodox theological positions and suspect philosophical and scientific thought, ultimately a result of straying from the bounds of Christian revelation. Because the cause had been based on false ideologies, an ideological response was needed to counteract the preponderance of error that was threatening England with the same fate that France had suffered.¹²⁰ This had been Jones’s great achievement a decade prior.

This faithful seer, lamenting the corruption of the times, and the prevalence of error, through the artifices and assiduity of sectaries, republicans,

¹¹⁹ Stevens, ‘Life of William Jones of Nayland’, xxxvi.

¹²⁰ This was exactly the same view expressed by the *British Critic* at the end of 1801 (see ‘Preface’ in *The British Critic*, vol.18, London, 1801, i).

socinians, and infidels, had long meditated the establishment of a Society for the *Reformation of Principles*, with a view to take such measures, in a literary way only, as should be most conducive to the preservation of our *Religion, Government, and Laws*, and, at last, in the year 1792, he flattered himself that he had accomplished it.¹²¹

Stevens, however, was vague and unclear about the true reasons for the decline of the society. Though he admitted that the society had rapidly ceased to be an effective organizational body, no one reason was cited as to why this was the case. Instead, a few possibilities were listed: for example, that Jones of Nayland lacked an influential position in society, or that the society's members had not exerted enough effort in promoting its works. Stevens's vagueness suggested an unease in being more specific. 'But to whatever cause it was owing, whether to the humble situation of the first mover, great abilities, and "an honest and good heart," apart from outward appendages of a dignified station, not being sufficient to recommend the plan, or to the little zeal of those who should have promoted the good work, it did not meet with the countenance and protection that might have been expected, but soon fell to the ground.'¹²² Significantly, within the entire biography only a passing allusion was made regarding the dispute over Hutchinsonianism that Jones of Nayland, and afterwards Stevens, had had with the editors of the *British Critic*;¹²³ there is certainly no mention of the dispute as being a possible cause of the society's failure, nor the possibility that the staunch Hutchinsonianism of some of the society's leading members had perhaps been a cause of division. Nonetheless, Stevens thought Jones's achievements deserved to be emphasised. He had, when all

¹²¹ Stevens, 'Life of William Jones of Nayland', xxxv (emphasis in original).

¹²² *Ibid*, xxxv-xxxvi.

¹²³ *Ibid*, xli.

was said and done, given birth to the society, the *British Critic* and the *Scholar Armed*. Thus, Stevens could at least claim that Jones had done ‘what he could’.¹²⁴

Launching the *British Critic* was a major achievement, despite the fact that it was soon lost to non-Hutchinsonian interests. This should not, however, obscure the role played by Jones and Stevens in the founding of this important late eighteenth-century High Church journal. The *British Critic* was ultimately their idea and was given its start by their efforts, vision and early negotiations with possible publishers. Though the journal fell under an editorship that was not at one with the Hutchinsonianism of its founders, the *British Critic* would go on to become one of the leading High Church periodicals of the 1790s and early nineteenth century. It became part of an important anti-revolutionary High Church press revival that led to other journalistic efforts, most notably the *Anti-Jacobin Review* and the *Orthodox Churchman’s Magazine*.¹²⁵ By 1797 the *British Critic* had an estimated circulation of 3,500, a number comparable to other conservative periodicals, such as the *Quarterly Review*, which had 5000 in 1810.¹²⁶ Simon Skinner has outlined good evidence to suggest that the *British Critic*, under the editorship of Nares and Beloe, received government funding from William Pitt’s secret service fund, as did John Reeves’s loyalist association.¹²⁷ It is possible that in addition to the estrangement that Nares and Beloe had with the SRP, the *British Critic* simply took on a life of its own following its patronage by government and could not be controlled by the

¹²⁴ Ibid, xxxvi.

¹²⁵ James J. Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative: Reaction and Orthodoxy in Britain c. 1760-1832*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 13-19; Simon Skinner, *Tractarians and the ‘Condition of England’: The Social and Political Thought of the Oxford Movement*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004, 34.

¹²⁶ Skinner, *Tractarians and the ‘Condition of England’*, 34.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 34-35.

society. Whatever the effects of government patronage may have been, the *British Critic* could certainly claim to have been successful in its anti-revolutionary efforts. Even Jones had to concede to William Kirby in 1795 that the society's desires to see the *Monthly Review*'s popularity weakened had been achieved by the *British Critic*. 'They have had the good effect of lessening the sale of the Monthly Review to the value of 1000 copies a month, which is a circumstance worth all the trouble I took in giving birth to the undertaking.'¹²⁸ Yet, for all its success, the non-Hutchinsonian character of the *British Critic* would, for the rest of the 1790s and into the first decade of the nineteenth century, made it unfavourable to those High Churchmen who shared the Hutchinsonianism of Stevens's circle.¹²⁹ There is also a question regarding the theological orthodoxy of the *British Critic* as it developed during the late 1790s and early 1800s. J. J. Sack argues that the *British Critic* never truly reflected a strict theological orthodoxy and that on a number of occasions it even displayed a toleration for Joseph Priestley and Unitarianism.¹³⁰ In a footnote Sack quotes a letter from Charles Daubeny (*bap.1745-d.1827*)¹³¹ to Jonathan Boucher,

¹²⁸ Quoted in Freeman, *Life of the Rev. William Kirby*, 42-43; see also, Derek Roper, *Reviewing Before the Edinburgh, 1788-1802*, London: Methuen & Co., 1978, 181.

¹²⁹ Freeman, *Life of the Rev. William Kirby*, 42.

¹³⁰ Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 193.

¹³¹ Despite his fame as a High Churchman during the late eighteenth century, Daubeny never associated intimately with Stevens's circle and their High Church activism, though Stevens and Daubeny did share a friendship. In 1803, Daubeny called upon Stevens for advice in a legal dispute regarding Daubeny's brother-in-law, Thomas Meade, who claimed that Daubeny, during the early 1790s, had opposed his marriage to his sister. A series of letters between Daubeny and Stevens regarding this dispute can be seen in Thomas Meade, *A Reply to a Paper, Circulated under the name of the Lord Bishop of Lincoln*, Bath, 1806, 217-228. For more information on Daubeny, see Peter B. Nockles, 'Daubeny, Charles', *ODNB*; Peter B. Nockles, 'The Waning of Protestant Unity and Waxing of Anti-Catholicism? Archdeacon Daubeny and the Reconstruction of "Anglican" Identity in the Later Georgian Church, c.1780-c.1830' in William Gibson and Robert G. Ingram (eds), *Religious Identities in Britain, 1660-1832*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, 179-229; Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 217-218.

dated 3 March 1801, in which Daubeny chided the *British Critic* for being ‘one of those *half & half* publications, which will do more harm than good’.¹³² Given Boucher’s friendship with Stevens, it can be assumed that this view was widespread. In an effort to remedy this situation and restore the *British Critic* to its original charter, in 1811 it was purchased by some of Stevens’s friends following his death—namely, the influential layman Joshua Watson and the Reverend Henry Handley Norris—both leaders of the emerging Hackney Phalanx.¹³³ However, Watson, Norris and their associates, despite the profound respect and veneration that they had toward Stevens and his legacy of High Church orthodoxy, never adopted the Hutchinsonian principles that had been so important to his generation.¹³⁴ Despite Edward Churton’s claim that Watson and Norris had returned the *British Critic* to owners sympathetic to its founders,¹³⁵ they did not make the *British Critic* a Hutchinsonian mouthpiece, as its founders would have wished.

Stevens’s circle would go on to have more success with two other High Church periodicals: the *Anti-Jacobin Review* and the *Orthodox Churchman’s Magazine*. Founded in July 1798, the *Anti-Jacobin Review* was—as its title implies—begun amid the same context of deeply-held conservative fear of French Jacobinism. The *Anti-Jacobin* was the offspring of a weekly newspaper established in late 1797, the *Anti-Jacobin; or, Weekly Examiner*, by William Gifford, the future Prime Minister George Canning, John Hookham Frere (son of Jane Hookham and John Frere)¹³⁶ and George Ellis.¹³⁷ When the weekly edition ended on 9 July 1798,

¹³² Quoted in Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 193 n29.

¹³³ Churton, *Memoir*, vol.1, 96.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 41-42.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, 96.

¹³⁶ See Chapter 3, 131.

¹³⁷ Montluzin, *The Anti-Jacobins*, 21.

the monthly version bearing only a slightly nuanced title began. It had a new editor, John Richards Green (1758-1818), who went by the name, ‘John Gifford’. The *Anti-Jacobin Review* was characterised by the fact that many of its contributors were Hutchinsonian High Church clergymen.¹³⁸ Included were Jones of Nayland, Boucher, George Henry Glasse (1761-1809, son of Samuel Glasse), Francis Randolph and Joshua Watson’s elder brother, John James Watson (1767-1839).¹³⁹ Scottish Episcopalians, Bishop John Skinner and the Reverend George Gleig were also contributors. There were also numerous lay contributors. Of these, Stevens was, according to Emily Lorrain de Montluzin, ‘a pivotal figure’, as important for his social contacts among High Churchmen as for his personal contributions to the magazine itself.¹⁴⁰ Stevens only composed four short pieces for the *Anti-Jacobin*: an anti-Jacobin poem, entitled ‘The Night Mare’ (May 1799) and three short letters (December 1799, January 1800 and March 1800).¹⁴¹ All of these were signed anonymously with pseudonyms—the poem and letter dated January 1800 with ‘UCALAGON’, whilst the two letters dated December 1799 and March 1800 are signed with ‘Z’. According to de Montluzin, who has studied the original ‘office’ collection of the *Anti-Jacobin* held in British Library that contains hand-written identifications of all the contributors,¹⁴² Stevens is identified as being the author of these contributions.¹⁴³ Among them, the poem stands out as the most noteworthy,

¹³⁸ Ibid, 30-31.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 63-66, 96-97, 110-112, 134-135, 144-146, 158-160.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 32.

¹⁴¹ *The Anti-Jacobin Review*, May 1799, vol.3, London, 1799, 99; *The Anti-Jacobin Review*, December 1799, vol.4, London, 1800, 471-472; *The Anti-Jacobin Review*, January 1800, vol.5, London, 1800, 106; *The Anti-Jacobin Review*, March 1800, vol.5, London, 1800, 347-348; see also, Montluzin, *The Anti-Jacobins*, 146-148.

¹⁴² Meaning the copy with original, hand-written annotations made by the editors of the *Anti-Jacobin*.

¹⁴³ Montluzin, *The Anti-Jacobins*, 5, 146-148.

especially when considering Stevens's censure of poets back in 1766, namely that they 'are apt to give a loose to their imaginations and do not always keep within the bounds of Christian sobriety'.¹⁴⁴ 'The Night Mare' reflected Stevens's belief, no doubt held by readers and contributors of the *Anti-Jacobin*, that Jacobinism and its 'patriots' were being led and directed by diabolical forces, a sentiment previously expressed by Stevens in his letters to John Skinner.¹⁴⁵

FROM toil and trouble, wrangling and debate,
 The arch seceder, *patriot* like, retires,
 And dooms his country to th' impending fate,
 Nor cares he aught to quench th' anarchic fires.

Lo! demons hov'ring o'er his *patriot* head—
 Torment his soul—convulsions shake his frame—
 In pangs reclining in somnific dread;
 Struggling for sense, to fly his tort'ring dream.

Father of anarchy! your child behold!
 In *night-mare form* ascend—he firmly plants
 THAT Freedom's flag the sons of Gallia hold,
 On the black breast that for SUCH freedom pants.

War's phantom, too, horrific shape assumes,
 The Ægyptian hero's form, hell's fit viceroy,

¹⁴⁴ Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, 165-166.

¹⁴⁵ See above, 281-282.

With Murder's sword, and Death's awe-moving plumes,
 Salutes the patriot in rude frantic joy:

‘Patron of earthly liberty!

‘I’m Anarchy's chaotic son,

‘Come to greet thee—do not sigh!

‘Yet thy course thou hast not run:

‘Still the world shall by thy spell

‘Be made to taste the pangs of hell,

‘And Jacobins shall rally round,

‘And raise *this Freedom's banner* on a deathly mound.’

As thus the spectre, Ephialtian said,

The vision ceas'd, and vanish'd into shade.¹⁴⁶

Compared to the *Anti-Jacobin*, the *Orthodox Churchman's Magazine* (1801) had a much more focused High Church agenda and showed signs of pro-Hutchinsonian leanings.¹⁴⁷ Its origins come from the same clerics and laity active within the *Anti-Jacobin*. On 9 August 1799, John Gifford had spoken of plans to begin a new magazine, which he envisaged would be an exclusively Church of England publication aimed at combating continued ideological threats.¹⁴⁸ The magazine would contain a monthly life of a famous Anglican divine, and each issue

¹⁴⁶ *Anti-Jacobin Review*, May 1799, 99.

¹⁴⁷ *The Orthodox Churchman's Magazine*, February 1802, vol.2, London, 1802, 80-81; *The Orthodox Churchman's Magazine*, October 1802, vol.3, London, 1803, 247; see also, Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 198.

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in R. Polwhele, *Traditions and Recollections*, vol.2, London, 1826, 510-511.

to be prefaced ‘with a well engraved portrait’ of an ecclesiastic. Its main role, however, would be as a journal of theological discussion and review.¹⁴⁹ This proposed format was almost exactly how the *Orthodox Churchman’s Magazine* came to be structured when it was launched. The first issue appeared in March 1801 and declared that its chief purpose was to do intellectual battle with Dissent (to be conducted charitably if they were moderate Dissenters), infidels and, most especially, Roman Catholicism.¹⁵⁰ Coinciding with William Pitt’s resignation over George III’s refusal to support Catholic emancipation, the *Orthodox Churchman’s Magazine* declared its thanks to the monarch and lumped Roman Catholicism in with ‘Socianianism’ and ‘Atheism’ as creeds seeking to be triumphant ‘upon the ruins of the Orthodox faith’.¹⁵¹ Sack notes that this anti-Roman Catholic tone—similarly evident in the *British Critic* and the *Anti-Jacobin Review*—was a new development within the High Church press.¹⁵² It is, of course, true that High Churchmen tended to judge Rome with a more sympathetic and balanced analysis than other Protestants.¹⁵³ Moreover, the phenomenon of anti-clericalism displayed by the leaders of the French Revolution had done a lot to help strengthen High Church sympathy for Catholics, especially the 5000 or so *émigré* clergy who had sought refuge in England from 1792-1800.¹⁵⁴ Yet High Churchmen always remained broadly Protestant in their convictions, so the principle of being anti-Roman was not alien to them. In some respects it was a latent principle, if not prominent in their theological outlook. Stevens, for example, though not displaying a great degree of anti-Roman

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 511.

¹⁵⁰ *The Orthodox Churchman’s Magazine*, March 1801, vol.1, London, 1801, 1-3.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 3.

¹⁵² Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 232-233.

¹⁵³ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 94-95.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 102-106.

Catholicism throughout his life, could still refer to the Church of England as ‘the honour of the reformation, [and] the strongest bulwark of the Gospel against Popery’.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, Jones of Nayland, writing to the widow of George Horne in December 1797, expressed an unfavourable opinion of the French *émigré* clergy, thinking them full of ‘pride’ and unrepentant.¹⁵⁶ High Church opposition to Catholic emancipation, evident in the opening pages of the *Orthodox Churchman’s Magazine*, demonstrates that High Churchmen could exhibit anti-Roman Catholic tendencies if they saw Rome as a threat to the supremacy of the Church of England and its place within English society.

Stevens’s exact role within the *Orthodox Churchmen’s Magazine* is uncertain. Mather is of the view that the ‘chief mark upon it [the *Orthodox Churchman’s Magazine*] was that of William Stevens’, but this assessment is probably going too far.¹⁵⁷ Stevens’s prominence is certainly evident in the first issue where he is not only quoted in the preface, but also leads with the first article: namely, his abridged life of Jones—which ran for the first two issues.¹⁵⁸ The quote from Stevens within the preface is taken from his *Treatise on the nature and constitution of the Christian Church* where, at the beginning of that work, Stevens had reflected his fear that in the early 1770s the press teemed with theological heterodoxy.¹⁵⁹ Like the SRP in the early 1790s, the *Orthodox Churchman’s*

¹⁵⁵ [William Stevens], *Cursory Observations on a Pamphlet Entitled, An Address to the Clergy of the Church of England in particular, and to All Christians in General*, London, 1773, 33.

¹⁵⁶ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 106.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 215.

¹⁵⁸ *The Orthodox Churchman’s Magazine*, March 1801, 3-11; *The Orthodox Churchman’s Magazine*, April 1801, 57-66.

¹⁵⁹ *The Orthodox Churchman’s Magazine*, March 1801, 2. The original quote—found verbatim in the *Orthodox Churchman’s Magazine*—is as follows: ‘At a Time when the Press teems with the most scurrilous Invectives against the fundamental Doctrines of our Religion, and even the News-Papers

Magazine felt the same threat continued to be present at the turn of the nineteenth century. They singled out one unnamed monthly journal—perhaps the *Monthly Review*—as being the main culprit for the heterodox climate that once again threatened the life of the Church.

With a short life-span—the *Orthodox Churchman's Magazine* ran only from 1801 to 1808—this High Church publication remains an important, albeit understudied source for early nineteenth-century High Churchmanship. Sack thinks the journal's short lifespan marks it as a failure, though it seems difficult to judge a failure simply on the basis that the journal ran for seven years, as there could have been other factors that contributed to its end.¹⁶⁰ Mather's conclusion is more favourable. He argues that the *Orthodox Churchman's Magazine* represented a milestone in the High Church use of the press to further their ideological ambitions. 'One thing the *OCM* demonstrates was that High Churchmen could enter the expanding field of popular journalism. Well written articles and managed correspondence were used to give practical teaching on a variety of church matters ranging from the revival of Convocation to praying for the dead, from ancient fonts and baptisteries to ministerial scarves and the correct positioning of altars.'¹⁶¹ It also needs to be kept in mind that High Churchmen had been making use of the popular press prior to this and would continue to do so after the *Orthodox Churchman's Magazine* ended. It is true that it took these High Churchmen a number of years to

are converted into Trumpets of Sedition, by the Enemies of the Church, Silence on the Part of its Friends becomes criminal, and a cold Neutrality is inexcusable. We are called upon, each according to his Ability, to stand forth in Defence of the Doctrines and Discipline of our Church; both which are equally exposed to the Malevolence of some, and the insidious Artifices of others' ([William Stevens], *A Treatise on the nature and constitution of the Christian Church*, London, 1773, iii).

¹⁶⁰ Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 194.

¹⁶¹ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 215-216.

achieve success in this arena and that their progress was hampered in the 1790s by their continued adherence to Hutchinsonianism, but the original impetus that started the *British Critic*, the *Anti-Jacobin* and the *Orthodox Churchman's Magazine* began with the work of men such as Jones and Stevens.

Returning to Stevens's biography of Jones, the fact of Hutchinsonianism and its place in Jones of Nayland's life was covered at length. Given that the strict Hutchinsonianism of these two men had proved to be a source of division and thus probably a factor in restricting the impact of their counter-revolutionary efforts during the 1790s, the influence of this philosophy had to be explained and defended by Stevens. There was also the reality that by the late 1790s Hutchinsonianism was in steep decline.¹⁶² A possible revival of the philosophy as a part of a counter-revolutionary offensive, if indeed that had been the hope of Jones and Stevens, never eventuated.¹⁶³ With Horne and Jones both deceased, Stevens had—at least in England—become the last significant High Church torch-bearer of this dying counter-Enlightenment creed.

Yet despite Hutchinsonianism's decline by the time he was writing, Stevens continued to maintain a hope that history would eventually vindicate Hutchinson and prove his opponents to have been the real innovators. To illustrate his point, he related an incident that is said to have taken place between the Bishop of London, Beilby Porteus (1731-1809), and an anonymous 'Gentleman' (perhaps Stevens or Jones). The story hinges on a positive remark that Porteus (not known to be a

¹⁶² Nigel Aston, 'Hutchinsonians', *ODNB*; C. D. A. Leighton, '“Knowledge of divine things”: a study of Hutchinsonianism', *History of European Ideas*, vol.26, 2000, 172; Gavin White, 'Hutchinsonianism in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, vol.21, part.2, 1982, 168-169.

¹⁶³ Leighton, '“Knowledge of divine things”', 168; Aston, 'Hutchinsonians', *ODNB*.

Hutchinsonian) made upon seeing one of Jones's works, *The Essay on the First Principles of Natural Philosophy* (1762), sitting on his table.¹⁶⁴ Stevens related the story, claiming it illustrated that Hutchinsonianism had more support and respect than others were willing to credit.

When the Essay on the first Principles of Natural Philosophy was published, his Grace observed to a Gentleman, who saw it lying on his table 'this work of Mr. Jones is not to be treated with neglect; it is sensibly and candidly written; and if it is not answered, we little folks shall infer, that it cannot be answered;' *and it never was answered*. And he told Mr. Jones himself, by way of consolation (knowing possibly how difficult it was to get rid of old prejudices) that he must be content to be accounted, *for a while*, an heretic in Philosophy.¹⁶⁵

In other words, for Hutchinsonianism to succeed, time and a less prejudiced examination were needed. As Stevens observed, 'the time is at hand, it is to be hoped, when the subject will meet with a more impartial examination, and then, Hutchinsonianism, which has been for so many years a kind of bug bear, may turn out to be a harmless thing at last, of which no man need be afraid'.¹⁶⁶ The irony of Stevens's observation is that it would turn out to be true, though quite differently from Stevens's expectation. For as the early decades of the nineteenth century progressed and Hutchinsonianism faded with the next generation of High Church clergy and laity, the Hutchinsonian philosophy was viewed simply as a 'harmless thing', that is, as something strangely unique to the previous generation of High

¹⁶⁴ William Jones, *The Essay on the First Principles of Natural Philosophy*, Oxford, 1762.

¹⁶⁵ Stevens, 'Life of William Jones of Nayland', xii (emphasis in original).

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, xii-xiii.

Churchmen, but that had failed to gain a following in the next.¹⁶⁷ This view is especially evident in Churton's biography of Joshua Watson, where, after detailing the influence of Stevens's friendship on the young man, Churton set aside a few pages to explain why it was that Hutchinsonianism had been such a defining feature of Stevens's churchmanship, but had not influenced Watson in the same way.¹⁶⁸ Churton, always a consistent ally of the old High Church tradition during the nineteenth century, explained that though the Hutchinsonians had been imbued with a deep piety that few could match, their manner of making 'certain texts to bend to their purpose' made it impossible for Watson to follow the philosophy.¹⁶⁹ With the exception of William Van Mildert, others within the Hackney Phalanx felt the same way. As Henry Handley Norris once said of Hutchinson whilst in conversation with Joshua Watson: 'Every good man must admire his religious feelings, and his indefatigable labour in searching after truth; while at the same time he cannot help smiling at some of his strange fancies'.¹⁷⁰ A few early nineteenth-century High Churchmen were kinder to Hutchinsonianism than this. Van Mildert, a prominent member of the Hackney Phalanx, admired some of Hutchinson's theology and was possibly the last significant Church of England theologian to make use of his thought.¹⁷¹ In Scotland, John Skinner and a small number of dedicated clergy within

¹⁶⁷ See *The Quarterly Theological Review and Ecclesiastical Record*, June 1826, vol.4, London, 1826, 66-73; James Gardner, *The Faiths of the World: A Dictionary of Religions and Religious Sects*, vol.2, Edinburgh, 1858, 95; John Mason Neale, *The Life and Times of Patrick Torry, D.D.*, London, 1861, 29.

¹⁶⁸ Churton, *Memoir*, vol.1, 39-42.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 42.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 58.

¹⁷¹ E. A. Varley, *The Last of the Prince Bishops: William Van Mildert and the High Church Movement of the early nineteenth century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 40-43; Leighton, ' "Knowledge of divine things" ', 169-173.

the Scottish Episcopal Church continued to uphold this dying tradition until at least the middle of the nineteenth century.¹⁷²

In recent times, Nigel Aston has suggested that the Hutchinsonians of the late eighteenth century ‘honoured John Hutchinson and his followers less for any specific theological beliefs than for his commitment to an uncompromisingly Christological emphasis at a juncture in the life of the church when it was perceived to have fallen out of favour’.¹⁷³ This is true of the generation of High Churchmen that succeeded Stevens, but the examples of Stevens and Jones during the 1780s and 90s show that they were very much attached to Hutchinsonianism’s distinctive doctrines, especially the Trinitarian analogy. Though Jones and Stevens attempted to make Hutchinsonianism a part of their counter-revolutionary discourse, the reality is that the late 1790s signified the end of Hutchinsonianism’s grip upon High Church activism as new High Churchmen arose who did not see Hutchinson’s theories as being in any way central to a vigorous promotion of High Church orthodoxy.

Why, then, was Hutchinsonianism seen as being crucial to the High Churchmanship of Stevens’s generation? Stevens’s narrative provides an answer to this question. A major part can be found in the fact that Hutchinsonianism provided a theologically orthodox explanation of nature at a time when new scientific developments appeared to be too closely allied to theological heterodoxy and political radicalism. This is why the Trinitarian analogy was so important to Stevens and his friends; it testified that nature spoke of God in theologically orthodox, Trinitarian, terms; rather than the Deism of Voltaire or the Socinianism of Newton.

¹⁷² According to Gavin White, the last Scottish Episcopal Hutchinsonian was the Reverend John Murdoch of Keith, who died in 1848 (White, ‘Hutchinsonianism in Eighteenth-Century Scotland’, 164).

¹⁷³ Aston, ‘Hutchinsonianism’, *ODNB*.

For Stevens, nature had become too much an object of veneration in and of itself, rather than something that spoke of Christian revelation and, ultimately, pointed to the Triune God. Thus, to engage in philosophy or natural philosophy without reference to the divine revelation of a Triune Creator would inevitably lead to setting up nature—including man—as divine. Hutchinsonianism, Stevens maintained, kept philosophy and natural philosophy in check by keeping both disciplines moored to scriptural revelation and theological orthodoxy.¹⁷⁴

It is the aim and study of ... the Hutchinsonian Philosophy, not to confound God and Nature, but to distinguish between the Creator and the creature; not with the heathens to set up the heavens for God, but to believe and confess with all true worshippers, that 'it is Jehovah who made the Heavens.' ... 'Nature is Christian.' But Nature, falsely understood, as in modern philosophy, leads to such ideas of God as are contrary to the Christian Religion; it being well known, that ever since the fashion has prevailed of deducing religious truth from some fancied discoveries in philosophy, the doctrine of the Trinity hath been more and more disputed; as it is an undoubted fact, that our Arians, Socinians, and Deists, are chiefly found among those, who affect to excel in the modern philosophy, and who actually make use of it to recommend Heterodoxy and Infidelity. Let anyone read the *Physiological Disquisitions*,¹⁷⁵ and he will soon be convinced, that North and South are not more opposite than Hutchinsonianism and Materialism.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Stevens, 'Life of William Jones of Nayland', xxxiii.

¹⁷⁵ See William Jones, *Physiological Disquisitions: or, Discourses on the Natural Philosophy of the Elements*, London, 1781.

¹⁷⁶ Stevens, 'Life of William Jones of Nayland', xvi-xvii.

Stevens was critiquing the philosophical approach to theology known as natural religion—the term Stevens himself elsewhere made use of to describe this position.¹⁷⁷ This has already been briefly referred to.¹⁷⁸ Natural religion was most prominent during the early Enlightenment and was popular in England among latitudinarian Anglicans during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.¹⁷⁹ In simple terms, theorists of natural religion attempted to derive religious truth from the natural order, which included the powers of reasoning and the scientific observance of nature. It should be noted that natural theology was not always dangerous to theological orthodoxy. Natural religion did, of course, vary in the orthodoxy expressed by its opponents. Some theorists, such as the Dissenter-turned-Anglican, Bishop Joseph Butler (1692-1752), saw natural religion as a harmonious bridge to Christian revelation—the two not in any way being viewed as contradictory.¹⁸⁰ In France, however, the *philosophe*, Voltaire—whom Stevens would refer to as ‘that mischievous infidel’¹⁸¹—saw natural religion as liberating one from institutional Christianity and theological orthodoxy.¹⁸² For Stevens, however, natural religion, in whatever form, was always a fundamentally flawed and dangerous approach to theology. The foundation and guide for Christian theology had to be revealed religion, for humans are not born with an innate capacity to reason

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, xiii.

¹⁷⁸ See above, 294.

¹⁷⁹ Martin I. J. Griffin, *Latitudinarianism in the Seventeenth-Century Church of England*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992, 105; John Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment: Science, Religion and Politics from the Restoration to the French Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 63-64.

¹⁸⁰ Gordon Rupp, *Religion in England 1688-1791*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, 280-285; John Hedley Brooke, ‘Science and Religion’ in Roy Porter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Science*, vol.4, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 743.

¹⁸¹ Stevens, ‘Life of William Jones of Nayland’, 1.

¹⁸² Brooke, ‘Science and Religion’, 743.

their way to truth; it must, and can only be, revealed to them by God.¹⁸³ History, Stevens thought, spoke against the claims of natural religion; for if it were true that nature revealed certain religious truths, the diverse religious experiences of the ‘heathens’ who lived in such a ‘state of nature’, seemed to refute this position. Their lives did not reveal a consistent uniformity in religious belief.¹⁸⁴ As Stevens noted, ‘If we would know what man can do by nature, we must enquire what man hath actually done while in a state of nature; but man in that state never did discover the doctrines which are now called natural’.¹⁸⁵ In the end, nothing good could ultimately out of natural religion. ‘[I]t must be, he [Jones] always maintained, pernicious in its effects.’¹⁸⁶ This was evident, Stevens maintained, because natural religion rarely produced traditional orthodox Christian doctrines. Theorists of natural religion did, of course, promote various doctrines, but they were too often heterodox.¹⁸⁷ As Stevens explained, the type of Christianity produced by natural religion was inevitably a watered-down latitudinarianism, devoid of traditional Christian theology.

Instead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost of the Gospel, it gives us the deity of the Koran in one person; instead of the Fall of Man, it asserts the sufficiency and perfection of man; instead of a Saviour to cleanse us from sin and redeem us from death, it makes every man his own Messiah; instead of telling us that we are wrestling against invisible powers, and arming us against their devices, it knows nothing of the devil, no such Being having

¹⁸³ Stevens, ‘Life of William Jones of Nayland’, xiv.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, xiv-xv.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, xv.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

ever found a place in any system of Natural Religion. It therefore leaves us totally ignorant of the grand Enemy of our salvation, and consequently unprepared for the dreadful conflict against him.¹⁸⁸

It was not only doctrine that was in danger of being taken away from Christianity. Containing a rationality that denied mystery as unscientific or unproven, those aspects of Christianity that appeared to most defy logic were also taken away. Thus Baptism and Holy Communion were alleged by Stevens to have been rendered meaningless by those who promoted natural religion. This sort of rational tendency made Christianity meaningless because it was thus devoid of its power to enact salvation through the sacraments.¹⁸⁹

Stevens did, of course, acknowledge that many divines within the Church of England held to a form of natural religion that did not go to extremes in its denial of theological orthodoxy.¹⁹⁰ However, he nonetheless maintained that their methodology still remained flawed and contained the seeds of heterodoxy. For example, one such Anglican to be specifically chided by Stevens for promoting this sort of compromising approach to theology was William Paley (1743-1805) of Cambridge, one of the most influential English theorists of natural religion during the late eighteenth century.¹⁹¹ Yet despite his Latitudinarian associations, Paley was not a radical in either theology or politics.¹⁹² It is interesting that Stevens chose to interact, not with an overt Deist or Socinian (those one would logically assume to be the most direct threat to the Church of England), but with a fairly conservative

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, xv-xvi.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, xvi.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, xiii-xiv.

¹⁹¹ Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment*, 241-244.

¹⁹² James E. Crimmins, 'Paley, William', *ODNB*; Gilmartin, 'In the Theater of Counterrevolution', 298-299.

Anglican theorist of natural religion. Perhaps Paley's prominent presence at Cambridge, directing contemporary intellectual currents within an Anglican context, made him more of a threat than someone such as Priestley or Paine. There was probably also a resilient High Church fear in individuals such as Stevens that the latitudinarianism of men like Paley continued to be a 'cloak for heresy'.¹⁹³ Another influential Cambridge thinker, Stevens's old enemy Richard Watson (a friend of Paley), had at this time stopped using terms such as 'Trinity', 'original sin' and 'sacrament' so as to avoid, as Watson put it, using 'unscriptural words ... to propagate unscriptural dogmas'.¹⁹⁴ Paley's problem, according to Stevens, was that in having attempted to render Christianity more rational, Paley had forgotten that Christianity, from its historic foundations regarded human reason as being unable to comprehend Christian truth by its own power.¹⁹⁵ Scriptural texts that spoke of the cross being 'unto the Greeks foolishness',¹⁹⁶ or that 'natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God',¹⁹⁷ spoke for Stevens of a religion that could not be explained by the light of reason, no matter how persuasive such reasoning was.¹⁹⁸ To be a true disciple of Christianity was to approach revelation with the humbleness of a child, not that of the wise philosopher who attempts to make the truths of scripture more explainable or palatable to the present age. Quoting Jesus's words that spoke of

¹⁹³ John Walsh and Stephen Taylor, 'Introduction: the Church and Anglicanism in the "long" eighteenth century' in John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor (eds), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 39-40.

¹⁹⁴ Quoted in Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment*, 240.

¹⁹⁵ Stevens, 'Life of William Jones of Nayland', xvi-xvii.

¹⁹⁶ 1 Corinthians 1:23 (Authorized Version).

¹⁹⁷ 1 Corinthians 2:14 (Authorized Version).

¹⁹⁸ Stevens, 'Life of William Jones of Nayland', xvi-xvii.

the need to become a little child so as to enter the kingdom of heaven,¹⁹⁹ Stevens noted that for Christianity to be properly understood, ‘the soul must be even as a weaned child’.²⁰⁰

Stevens’s refutation of what he saw as the dangers of natural religion provides support for John Gascoigne’s general observation that few traditional High Churchmen were ever attracted to the philosophy.²⁰¹ According to Gascoigne, for High Churchmen scriptural revelation and the divine authority of the Church could never be equalled by nature.²⁰² Stevens never invoked ecclesiastical authority in his refutation of natural religion, yet his other writings indicate that this factor may also have been influential in his thinking. Elsewhere, Gascoigne notes that natural religion’s chief latitudinarian exponents (including Paley and Watson) represented a tradition that, by the late eighteenth century, was in decline as an influential ideology.²⁰³ By the turn of the nineteenth-century this decline was marked by what Gascoigne notes as a ‘gradual drift away from an emphasis on natural theology towards a reassertion that what was distinctive about Christianity was its revealed doctrines’²⁰⁴—precisely the emphasis that the Hutchinsonians were attempting to convey and that was evident in publications such as the *Orthodox Churchman’s Magazine*, the *Anti-Jacobin Review* and the *British Critic*. Yet if this decline were true, there was little indication of victory on Stevens’s part. Indeed, for Stevens, natural religion remained a dangerous enemy of Christianity, still possessing the

¹⁹⁹ See Matthew 18:3.

²⁰⁰ Stevens, ‘Life of William Jones of Nayland’, xvii.

²⁰¹ Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment*, 63-64.

²⁰² *Ibid*, 64.

²⁰³ *Ibid*, 247, 269.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 269.

potential of leading Anglicans away from divine revelation and theological orthodoxy.

Stevens's critique of natural religion was typical of the Hutchinsonian distrust of much of the Enlightenment, especially where it tended towards an erosion of theological orthodoxy and the promotion of political radicalism.²⁰⁵ For thinkers such as Stevens, Enlightenment thought had, throughout the eighteenth century, demonstrated that its end results inevitably led to heresy and political rebellion. The presence within the Church of England of this High Church Hutchinsonian element ensured that from the 1760s onwards England possessed a dedicated and persistent High Church counter-Enlightenment presence that was resilient in its desire to ideologically refute what Horne described as 'that modern paper building of philosophical infidelity'.²⁰⁶ The threat of the late Enlightenment was for them real and dire; its thinkers, be they radicals or conservatives, possessed the ability to destroy the Church of England through theological heterodoxy, and the monarchy through political revolution. By the turn of the nineteenth century the threat remained as fresh as ever. As Stevens observed to Boucher at the beginning of September 1801, 'Between enthusiasm and socinianism there is enough to do: the poor church is in danger all the while and it will be a merry if she escapes'.²⁰⁷

Stevens's life of Jones of Nayland was his last piece of published writing. Park thought that Stevens's biography of his friend marked him out as a latter-day Izaak Walton—a comparison that Stevens had himself made.²⁰⁸ Stevens's abilities as

²⁰⁵ C. D. A. Leighton, 'Hutchinsonianism: A Counter-Enlightenment Reform Movement', *The Journal of Religious History*, vol.23, no.2, 1999, 168-184.

²⁰⁶ Quoted in Aston, 'Horne and Heterodoxy', 896.

²⁰⁷ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 1 September 1801, Boucher Papers, B/3/87.

²⁰⁸ See above, 293.

an author were substantial, but it is difficult to compare Walton's measured and celebrated prose with Stevens's polemic and apologetic style. As has been previously noted, Walton's biographical style was characterized by an ability to allow his subject to speak and dominate the text, leaving the author (Walton) as a more anonymous figure, a narrator behind the scenes. A comparison with Walton, whilst having a superficial plausibility—both men were High Church laymen who made their livings in the commercial sphere—fails when the styles of both men are placed alongside one another. If a comparison is to be made between Stevens and another High Church biographer, it is Jones of Nayland himself, who had written Horne's life in a style similar to Stevens. Both authors had a concern to use their subjects' lives as a means to carry on an ideological argument—counter-Enlightenment and counter-revolutionary—that had been going on since the middle of the eighteenth century. Stevens's prominent place in this High Church movement places him, as a layman, alongside some of the more well-known clerical figures of this age—for example, George Horne, William Jones of Nayland, Samuel Horsley and Charles Daubeny—who engaged in a High Church ideological counter-offensive from the 1780s through to the early nineteenth century.

Of course, the influence of High Churchmen in this period was not simply the promotion of ideology and polemics. Stevens was also remembered as someone who brought his wealth, personal influence and numerous contacts, in addition to his financial, organisational and philanthropic skills, into the Church of England for its practical benefit. It is time to examine that area of Stevens's life.

Chapter 6. Ecclesiastical Activism

Having examined Stevens's theological activism in the previous two chapters, it is time to turn to the more practical areas of Stevens's contributions to Anglicanism—a characteristic of his life that may be described as 'ecclesiastical activism', to differentiate it from Stevens's more intellectual and theologically-inclined contributions to eighteenth-century High Churchmanship. For Stevens, ecclesiastical activism involved extensive contributions to philanthropy, work within a number of Church of England societies and institutions (especially the SPG and Queen Anne's Bounty), and his part in helping the Scottish Episcopal Church gain significant reforms. In making a division between theological activism and ecclesiastical activism in Stevens's life, it should not be thought that Stevens's contributions as a theologian and as a more practical church activist can be sharply differentiated or separated. The previous chapter, for example, demonstrated that in Stevens's response to the French Revolution there was a large element of practical activism—especially in helping William Jones of Nayland establish the SRP and the *British Critic*. It can also be argued that in his theological activism Stevens never acted solely on his own account, but often in consort with the ideological motives and concerns of other High Churchmen, most notably George Horne and Jones. Where High Church ideology was concerned, working in a practical way with his friends in the interest and welfare of the Church was one manner of responding to the threat of theological and political heterodoxy. Nonetheless, discussing the distinctly practical aspects of Stevens's High Churchmanship within a separate chapter is warranted given that a High Church phenomenon of practical spirituality involving a hands-on role in ecclesiastical affairs was especially evident during the eighteenth century and

early decades of the nineteenth. For individuals like Stevens—namely those with spare time, wealth and a desire to involve themselves in religious causes—the eighteenth century offered numerous avenues of involvement in church-related affairs. Amongst members of the High Church laity, Stevens represents one of England’s most influential expositors of this sort of practical and engaged High Church spirituality.

Ecclesiastical activism began for Stevens on a small scale, just as his career in commerce was being established. Its first manifestation was in a commitment to various Church-related philanthropic causes—a trait that would continue and grow in scale as his life progressed. It is uncertain when Stevens first began giving money to charities on a systematic basis, but at an early point in Stevens’s life we nonetheless have evidence of the central place charitable giving had within his religious practice. The evidence is found in the annotated bibliography written for Jane Hookham on 7 July 1766, discussed in chapter four.¹ In that document there is a section where Stevens advises Hookham on the important role that philanthropy should occupy within the Christian life. His specific advice to Hookham on the matter came after recommending to her four High Church treatises on the sacrament of Holy Communion.² The specific text that prompted Stevens’s comments on charitable giving was Daniel Brevint’s (1616-1695), *The Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice* (1673).³ Though he does not specifically link the Eucharistic offering with the requirement that Christians also offer their alms at the altar, the insinuation was

¹ See Chapter 4, 154-168.

² J. Scandret, *Sacrifice, the Divine Service*, London, 1707; Daniel Brevint, *The Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice*, London, 1754; Jeremy Taylor, *The Worthy Communicant*, London, 1701. The final text is listed by Stevens as Robert Nelson, ‘The Necessity of Frequent Communion’, which was likely Robert Nelson, *The Great Duty of Frequenting the Christian Sacrifice*, 14th edn, London, 1764.

³ Daniel Brevint, *The Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice*, Oxford, 1847.

evident.⁴ As Stevens went on to explain, a central command of the Christian life was the financial support of the Church—specifically the clergy and its poorer members.

In Dr. Brevint's piece, the chapter concerning the sacrifice of our goods I would recommend to your particular attention; and if you have not already laid down similar rules for your conduct in that respect, I dare believe it will have the same influence on you that it had on me, and determine you to set apart a proportion of your income for the service of the Clergy and the Poor, whom God has appointed the receivers of that tribute we owe to Him. Certainly we have not less obligations to the Author and Giver of all good things under the Gospel, than they had under the Law, and therefore we are bound to honour Him with at least as much of our substance. This we know, that they who labour for their daily bread are exhorted to lay up something, even of that little, that they *may have to give to him that needeth*; how much, then, ought the rich to *cast of their abundance* into the treasury!⁵

Intimating that Hookham would become a wealthy lady one day (either through inheritance or marriage), Stevens went on to warn her of the spiritual dangers that faced the rich—dangers that Stevens himself would have been personally aware of. For this class of society charitable giving was of prime importance, lest the trappings of wealth ensnare them and destroy their spiritual life.⁶ Stevens's careful and detailed advice to Hookham on how to manage her giving

⁴ James Allan Park, *Memoirs of the Late William Stevens*, new edn, London, 1859, 153-156; see also, Brevint, *The Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice*, Oxford edn, 79-97.

⁵ Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, 154 (emphasis in original).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 154-155.

reveals the sort of punctiliousness in this area of his life that Park noted as a feature of Stevens's character.⁷

Hookham was thus advised, first and foremost, to avoid being wasteful in her charity.⁸ However, Stevens quickly added that she should be equally vigilant that this characteristic did not lead to a sort of sinful frugality. Indicative of the type of generous hospitality that would become one of Stevens's legacies, he was careful to encourage Hookham to be as generous as she could. Frugality could only be of benefit if the money saved was given to the poor, rather than stored up 'where the rust and moth do corrupt'.⁹ Money had to be carefully managed so that as much of it could be given away as was possible. In the end, as Stevens exclaimed, the joy of giving far outweighed the corrupting presence of hoarding riches. 'What a happiness! Nothing can exceed it but hearing those gracious words from the mouth of your blessed Saviour, *Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, you have done it unto Me.*'¹⁰

It is not surprising that Park defined philanthropy as one of the notable features of Stevens's character and life. Indeed, Park spent much time elucidating and explaining not only the details of Stevens's giving (that is, how he gave and who his recipients were), but how important this was in creating an individual that Park saw as being saintly.¹¹ The importance of this aspect of Stevens's life towards Park's hagiographic description of Stevens as a model of High Church Anglican sanctity

⁷ See below, 323-325.

⁸ Park, *Memoirs*, 1859 edn, 155-156.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 156 (emphasis in original).

¹¹ James Allan Park, *Memoirs of William Stevens*, 4th edn, London, 1825, 23-37.

has been explored elsewhere.¹² It is, however, important to note the key theological aspect that Park highlighted as being of central importance to why philanthropy and ecclesiastical activism was so central to Stevens's life: namely, that it was an outworking of the High Church tenet that good works were an indispensable part of a genuine spirituality.¹³ As Mark Smith has recently noted in an article on the relationship between High Churchmanship and Evangelicalism at the turn of the nineteenth century, the display of good works was of such importance for High Churchmen that it represented a second soteriological justification—the first having been sacramentally conferred at Baptism.¹⁴ The Christian life thus had to possess a practicality to it that shunned introspection and embraced good works or 'holy living', as Park put it, evidently borrowing a phrase from Jeremy Taylor's influential seventeenth-century manual of High Church piety, *The Rules and Exercises of Holy Living* (1650).¹⁵ Though Park frequently mixed history with hagiography when speaking of Stevens in this context, this High Church emphasis upon good works was, according to Park, both manifested in Stevens's life, as well as being a guiding principle of his own personal religious motives.

In the journey of life we often meet with persons, who, having money, give it readily; some do it from an easiness of nature, rather than give themselves the trouble of refusing; others from a benevolence of disposition, which takes a pleasure in relieving distress, without being influenced by true Christian

¹² See Introduction, 3, 8-11; Robert Andrews, '“Master in the Art of Holy Living”': The Sanctity of William Stevens' in Peter Clarke and Tony Claydon (eds), *Saints and Sanctity*, Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2011, 310-312.

¹³ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 29, 35-41.

¹⁴ Mark Smith, 'Henry Ryder and the Bath CMS: Evangelical and High Church Controversy in the Later Hanoverian Church', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol.62, no.4, 2011, 730-731.

¹⁵ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 14, 36, 85, 131; Andrews, '“Master in the Art of Holy Living”', 308 n10.

motives. But, whenever the whole of a man's conduct is uniform, where you find charity to man, attended by piety to God, and always proceeding from his command, '*to do good unto all men,*' then we may be assured that this is true charity and pure religion. It was upon such motives that Mr. Stevens always acted, as the sequel of this narrative will manifest; he was convinced that no life is pleasing to God, that is not useful to man[.] ... He never conceived that faith and works, which God had united, could be lawfully disjoined.¹⁶

Stevens's outward religious conduct, rooted in a strict and punctilious attendance at the Church of England's weekday and Sunday services,¹⁷ represented the foundational aspect of this practicality, flowing out of an orthodox theology and a practical life of liturgical prayer, worship and conformity to the *Book of Common Prayer*.¹⁸ Charitable giving and ecclesiastical activism were, however, never far away from this life of piety.

Because of Park's close attention to this area of Stevens's life, we possess a good idea of how Stevens gave his money away and who were his favoured objects of support. Indicating that he had possession of Stevens's financial records whilst writing the *Memoirs*, Park observed that Stevens always went beyond keeping the traditional tithe of ten percent of his income for ecclesiastical and charitable purposes, 'deducting two several tenth parts' every year.¹⁹ Dividing his account books into two primary headings, 'Clericus' and 'Pauper', Stevens is said to have effectively treated these two accounts as his own private charitable funds. But these

¹⁶ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 35 (emphasis in original).

¹⁷ See Chapter 3, 131-134.

¹⁸ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 23-37.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 23.

two funds did not represent the sum of his giving; a third column, entitled ‘Gifts’, was set aside for larger sums or gifts in kind (such as wine or books) that Stevens felt could not, in conscience, be counted as true acts of Christian charity.²⁰ In accord with his advice to Hookham, this meticulous—one could add, almost professional—manner of spiritual book-keeping was lucidly described by Park, who spoke about an annual audit Stevens performed on his financial records.

He [Stevens] was very methodical and exact in his mode of keeping his private accounts; and his habit was, at the end of each year, to abstract under the heads of *Pauper*, *Clericus*, gifts, books, pocket expences, journies, and clothes, the amount of all his disbursements, setting against this the whole amount of his income received in the same year. These abstracts lay in so narrow a compass, that a single sheet of paper, presented in one view, a complete statement of the receipts and disbursements for several years. They were intended only for his private use and information, and were very rarely seen even by those who were most in his confidence. An intimate friend being once indulged, as a particular favour, with a sight of one of these sheets, observed, that every private expence of this extraordinary man, in the course of a whole year, was comprised within about 300*l.* while the aggregate of *Clericus*, *Pauper*, and *Gifts*, considerably exceeded 600*l.*; the whole income in that year amounting to about 1200*l.*²¹

Park does not indicate when Stevens began to record and distribute his income in such a manner, yet Stevens’s advice to Hookham in 1766 indicates that this trait—or something similar to it—may have been Stevens’s practice from an

²⁰ Ibid, 23-24.

²¹ Ibid, 24-25 (emphasis in original).

early point in his working life. The objects of his charity were diverse, but usually possessed an ecclesiastical connection. Among the charities and societies Stevens is known to have supported with regular financial assistance include the SPCK, the SPG,²² the Festival of the Sons of the Clergy,²³ the Corporation for the Sons of the Clergy,²⁴ the Clergy Orphan Society,²⁵ the Magdalen Hospital,²⁶ Christ's Hospital, Bridewell Hospital, Bethlem Hospital and what Park referred to simply as the Clergy Orphan School.²⁷ The 'Clergy Orphan School' was probably a reference to the Clergy Orphan Society, an organization that ran two London schools for the orphans of clergy from the middle of the eighteenth century (one for boys at Acton and one for girls at Lisson Green).²⁸ Perhaps Park was intimating that Stevens was only a benefactor of one of the schools. Whatever the case may have been, Park notes that Stevens was a 'liberal benefactor', giving £50 per annum and sometimes more.²⁹

²² Ibid, 26.

²³ Ibid, 26; George Horne to George Berkeley, 28 April 1786, British Library, Berkeley Papers vol.9, Add. Ms.39312, ff.47-48.

²⁴ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 26; [Anon.], *The Royal Kalendar; or Complete and Correct Annual Register for the Year 1797*, London, 1797, 219-220; Nicholas Cox, *Bridging the Gap: A History of the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy Over 300 Years, 1655-1978*, Oxford: Becket Publications, 1978, 96, 98.

²⁵ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 26-27; Annual Report of the Incorporated Clergy Orphan Society, Lambeth Palace Library, Clergy Orphan Corporation Misc. Papers, Ms.4570, ff. 3, 7, 9, 11, 55, 80; [Anon.], *Constitutions of the Society of Stewards and Subscribers for Maintaining and Educating Poor Orphans of the Clergy*, London, 1787, 22; [Anon.], *Constitutions of the Society of Stewards and Subscribers for Maintaining and Educating Poor Orphans of the Clergy*, London, 1788, 25.

²⁶ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 27; [Anon.], *A List of the Governors of the Magdalen Hospital*, London, 1798, 2, 29.

²⁷ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 26-27.

²⁸ [Anon.], *An Account of the Incorporated Society for Clothing, Maintaining, and Educating Poor Orphans of Clergymen of the Established Church*, London, 1834, 7-8.

²⁹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 26-27.

On the other hand, as is also revealed in his method of bookkeeping, Stevens frequently gave sums of money privately, according to his own disposition. Park gives many examples of this type of charity—too many, in fact, to list in full.³⁰ They include an annual payment of £40 for the blind son of a cleric that Stevens, along with a friend, made to the child's family.³¹ Another concerns an anonymous lady and her daughter who, in financial distress, were helped by Stevens who provided mother and child with £100 per annum for several years. Upon the death of the mother, the daughter, left without any means of support, was granted the interest off the remarkable sum of £4,000 per year—which, according to Park, produced an annual sum of £120. The young lady, however, is said to have died not long after her mother.³² A date from Park puts this instance of charity at the year 1804, thus very late in Stevens's life. That he had access to the very large sum of £4000 is a further indication of his wealth following a long and successful career in business. There are numerous other examples of philanthropy in Stevens's life that Park went to great lengths to describe;³³ they all testify to an individual who, though earning a lot of money through private industry, also gave a very substantial proportion of it away.

Large financial gifts were, however, only one part of Stevens's contribution to the welfare of Church and society. Of equal importance was the giving of his time—that is, his active involvement in a number of the Anglican charities, societies and institutions that he financially supported. Some of his roles in this regard were less significant than others. Stevens, for instance, sat on the committee of the

³⁰ Ibid, 27-37.

³¹ Ibid, 27-28.

³² Ibid, 28.

³³ Ibid, 29-35.

Magdalen Hospital in 1798 and was also a ‘Governor for Life’ of that institution.³⁴ A year prior to this, Stevens is recorded as being a member of the ‘Court of Assistants’ for the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows and Children of Clergymen.³⁵ In 1771, Stevens was admitted as a member of the SPCK and, though not seeming to have played a major role in the society, was nonetheless a supportive member until his death.³⁶ Stevens, however, was more involved with the SPG, playing a leading role in that society’s administration. In 1774 he joined the society and became their auditor the following year.³⁷ Stevens and Jonathan Boucher (who owed his position in the SPG because of Stevens’s influence and patronage)³⁸ dominated the SPG from 1778 until early 1786, when their names appear with most frequency at meetings.³⁹ Both men served on the main committee and the Barbados committee.⁴⁰ With only a few lengthy absences from 1786 onwards,⁴¹ Stevens maintained a consistent presence at SPG meetings right up until his death.⁴² Close friends with the secretary, William Morice (1733-1819),⁴³ Stevens was arguably one of the most important lay

³⁴ [Anon.], *A List of the Governors of the Magdalen Hospital*, London, 1798, 2, 29.

³⁵ [Anon.], *The Royal Kalendar*, 219-220.

³⁶ Edward Bentham, *A Sermon Preached in the Parish Church of Christ-Church, London ... To which is annexed, An Account of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*, London, 1772, 70; W. O. B. Allen and Edmund McClure, *Two Hundred Years: The History of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge 1698-1898*, London, 1898, 128.

³⁷ F. C. Mather, *High Church Prophet: Bishop Samuel Horsley (1733-1806) and the Caroline Tradition in the Later Georgian Church*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, 14; Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 15.

³⁸ See Chapter 4, 175.

³⁹ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 14; SPG Committee Books, Bodleian Library, USPG Archive, 48-50 (1781-1786).

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 14; *Ibid*, 48-59 (1781-1806).

⁴¹ Especially from 1786-1790 and 1799-1800.

⁴² SPG Committee Books, Bodleian Library, USPG Archive, 48-59 (1781-1806).

⁴³ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 19; William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 12 September 1785, Earl Gregg Swem Library, Jonathan Boucher Papers, B/3/21.

figures in the SPG during the late eighteenth century. Not only was he present at meetings of the committee, he was often in the chair, leading the meetings attended by a small group of clerics and laity. Aside from Boucher, Stevens's lay friends, Park and John Frere were also present at SPG meetings at various times—an indication that lay involvement was not simply a phenomenon displayed by Stevens.⁴⁴

As is indicated by his work within the SPG—especially his role as an auditor—it is not surprising to observe that Stevens frequently took on roles that suited his commercial talents, most of which related to his ability to manage money and engage in organisational tasks that suited the talents of a lay figure experienced in business. In 1762 and 1787 Stevens was, for instance, one of the Stewards to the Festival of the Sons of the Clergy.⁴⁵ The Festival was an annual event organized by members of the Corporation for the Sons of the Clergy since 1674.⁴⁶ Though the event was closely related to the Corporation for the Sons of the Clergy (their memberships crossed over), the Festival had effectively become a charity of its own by 1749.⁴⁷ The event was designed to raise money for impoverished clergy. Its main drawcard was a sermon culminating in the collection of funds; though in addition to this music also became a part of the Festival by the eighteenth century.⁴⁸ Stewards not only served in the Festival on a year-round basis, organising and attending its

⁴⁴ SPG Committee Books, Bodleian Library, USPG Archive, 48-59 (1781-1806).

⁴⁵ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 26; George Horne, *A Sermon Preached Before the Sons of the Clergy*, London, 1762, iv; Anthony Hamilton, *A Sermon Preached at the Anniversary Meeting of the Sons of the Clergy*, London, 1787, ii.

⁴⁶ E. H. Pearce, *The Sons of the Clergy 1655-1904*, London: John Murray, 1904, 173.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 185-186; Cox, *Bridging the Gap*, 48-49.

⁴⁸ Cox, *Bridging the Gap*, 33; L. G. D. Sanders, 'The Festival of the Sons of the Clergy, 1655-1955', *The Musical Times*, vol.97, no.1357, 1956, 133.

meetings, they also arranged and managed the annual event.⁴⁹ As E. H. Pearce has noted, skilled laymen were required for the role of steward. Indeed, for most of its early history, the stewards of the Festival were exclusively laymen.⁵⁰ Thomas Spratt (*bap.1635-d.1713*), preaching to the Festival in 1678, emphasised that it—and the Church in general—required the skills of laymen versed in business and organization.⁵¹ This respect for skills seen as residing within certain members of the laity was a sentiment carried into the eighteenth century. In fact, Stevens’s lay role within the Festival has been highlighted by Nicholas Cox in his 1978 history of the Sons of the Clergy.⁵² Cox argues that by the turn of the nineteenth century, certain lay figures had become indispensable to the efficient running of the charity. Stevens was one of these laymen, the others being Park, Joshua Watson and John Bacon (1738-1816).⁵³ Given that Park had himself witnessed and, at times, probably even cooperated with Stevens in such philanthropic activities, meant Park was probably not exaggerating when he noted the importance of the contributions of Stevens (and individuals like him) to the success of Anglican societies like the Festival during the latter half of the eighteenth century. ‘When such men, as Mr. Stevens, thus dedicate themselves to superintend the administration of public charities, it is the best security

⁴⁹ Pearce, *The Sons of the Clergy*, 195-201; Cox, *Bridging the Gap*, 77-78.

⁵⁰ Pearce, *The Sons of the Clergy*, 182-183.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 183; see Thomas Spratt, *Sermons Preached on Several Occasions*, London, 1710, 91-139.

⁵² Cox, *Bridging the Gap*, 96.

⁵³ Bacon was the most influential layman who served with the Sons of the Clergy. He was Secretary of the Stewards from 1769 to 1799 and Treasurer from 1769 to his death. Bacon was less of a theologian than Stevens (and possessed less money), but clearly possessed ecclesiastically-orientated administrative skills. In fact, Bacon would spend all of his working life as a full-time, lay ecclesiastical administrator. Bacon would almost certainly have known Stevens, for he worked not only within the Sons of the Clergy, but also within the First Fruits Office, thus having a close connection to the Office of Queen Anne’s Bounty (see Pearce, *The Sons of the Clergy*, 192; W. P. Courtney, ‘Bacon, John’, *ODNB*).

to the public, that the real objects of the respective institutions are ever kept in view, and that the funds are well administered.’⁵⁴

A fact revealed by Stevens’s ecclesiastical activism, was that the issue of clerical poverty was at the forefront of his concern and energy when it came to distributing his finances and time.⁵⁵ This concern, however, would become most conspicuous in Stevens’s role as treasurer of Queen Anne’s Bounty, an office he held from 1782 until his death in 1807. It was to be his most prominent and official involvement in the affairs of the Church of England; moreover, the role was to become the epithet through which posterity would know him: namely, as ‘William Stevens, Treasurer of Queen Anne’s Bounty’.⁵⁶

The establishment of Queen Anne’s Bounty on 3 November 1704, though a governmental department, cannot be divorced from the same voluntary impulse that impelled English men and women actively to support the welfare of the Church of England through many of the same charities and societies that Stevens supported.⁵⁷ Queen Anne shared—or at least, supported—that impulse and was favourable to those who promoted the Church’s welfare.⁵⁸ Indeed, the period surrounding the creation of the Bounty was one in which the Anglican voluntary impulse—

⁵⁴ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 25.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁵⁶ See the title page of all editions of Park’s *Memoirs*.

⁵⁷ G. F. A. Best, *Temporal Pillars: Queen Anne’s Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Church of England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964, 12-13.

⁵⁸ See for example Queen Anne’s words to the House of Commons in a speech given on 25 May 1702 following her assent to a number of parliamentary acts that awaited following her ascension to the throne: ‘I shall be very careful to preserve and maintain the Act of Toleration, and to set the Minds of all my People at Quiet; my own Principles must always keep entirely firm to the Interests and Religion of the Church of *England*, and will incline me to Countenance those who have the truest Zeal to support it’ (quoted in [Anon.], *The History of the Reign of Queen Anne, Digested into Annals*, London, 1703, 42).

manifested in incorporated societies—really began in earnest, especially on a nationally organized scale.⁵⁹ The period, for example, saw the creation of Thomas Bray’s two influential societies, the SPCK (1698) and the SPG (1701), among many others that had a religious or moral purpose. The establishment of Queen Anne’s Bounty cannot be discussed without reference to this context—sometimes called a ‘moral revolution’—that flourished at the turn of the eighteenth century.⁶⁰ Significantly, this movement had an important lay involvement.⁶¹ Not only did High Church laymen—for instance, Robert Nelson—become noticeably active during this period,⁶² other less well-known individuals, operating at a parochial level, also came forward to offer their services on behalf the established Church.⁶³ Though a government department and hence not strictly a voluntary organisation (its office holders were paid for their services), Queen Anne’s Bounty nonetheless relied upon the same class of individuals involved in these other voluntary societies—individuals who usually had other professional lives, thus giving it a status of being like a voluntary body.⁶⁴ It is, therefore, not coincidental to note that the first secretary of

⁵⁹ Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies: 1500-1800*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000, 60; Henry D. Rack, ‘Religious Societies and the Origins of Methodism’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol.38, no.4, 1987, 582-583; W. M. Jacob, *Lay People and religion in the early eighteenth century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 77-92; Geordan Hammond, ‘The Revival of Practical Christianity: The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Samuel Wesley, and the Clerical Society Movement’ in Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory (eds), *Studies in Church History Volume 44: Revival and Resurgence in Christian History*, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2008, 116-127.

⁶⁰ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 12-13.

⁶¹ John Spurr, ‘The Church, the Societies and the moral revolution of 1688’ in John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor (eds), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 131, 142; Craig Rose, ‘The origins and ideals of the SPCK 1699-1716’ in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor (eds), 173.

⁶² See Chapter 2, 84-87.

⁶³ Jacob, *Lay People and religion in the early eighteenth century*, 77-92.

⁶⁴ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 119.

the Bounty, John Chamberlayne (c.1668-1723), who held the office from 1704 until his death, was also active in the SPG and was the first secretary to the SPCK.⁶⁵ As will be seen, Chamberlayne was only one of many laymen with links to Anglican voluntary societies that would be indispensable to the efficient running of the Bounty throughout the eighteenth century; Stevens would become another.⁶⁶

In practical terms, Queen Anne's Bounty put back into the coffers of the poorer clergy (initially those benefices worth £10 or less)⁶⁷ revenue from a tax that English monarchs (with the exception of Queen Mary) had been accepting since the Reformation—a stream of revenue known as the 'first-fruits and the tenths'. The 'first-fruits' was a tax on clergy taking up benefices (the first year's profit), while the 'tenths' was an annually recurring payment of ten percent of the value of the living.⁶⁸ Not surprisingly, the 'first-fruits and the tenths' was burdensome on the many poor livings that existed within the Church, many of which had incomes of no more than £30 per annum. Many clergy fell into arrears over the payments, a fact that led to fraud and extortion as struggling clerics attempted to hold off debt collectors.⁶⁹ By the early eighteenth century it is not hard to see how the tax was, as Geoffrey Best put it, 'one of the most obvious abuses and embarrassments of the established church' and thus the one aspect of the Church of England most in need of reform.⁷⁰ Though it did take years for the Bounty to become efficient in its operation, a two-

⁶⁵ Ibid, 117; Reavley Gair, 'Chamberlayne, John', *ODNB*.

⁶⁶ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 111-126.

⁶⁷ To be progressively increased until all livings under £50 had been given financial assistance (Ian Green, 'The first five years of Queen Anne's Bounty' in Rosemary O'Day and Felicity Heal (eds), *Princes and Paupers in the English Church 1500-1800*, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1981, 233).

⁶⁸ Green, 'The first five years of Queen Anne's Bounty', 232.

⁶⁹ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 21-28.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 27.

fold solution towards helping the Church's poorest clergy had been devised. Firstly, those livings worth less than £50 were discharged entirely from paying the taxes. This lessened the income of the Bounty, but allowed the poorer livings an important measure of financial relief.⁷¹ Secondly, the Bounty made use of its income to augment poor livings with gifts of land (worth £200) that could earn rent for the clerics in need. Initially, those livings worth £10 and less were the first to receive direct augmentations, though in time this was progressively raised to livings worth £50 and less.⁷² To aid the relief of poor livings the Bounty also began to receive a large amount of its revenue from private donations; in effect, becoming an official charitable institution funded by tax revenue and private donations.⁷³

In a letter to Boucher, Stevens claimed to have obtained the treasurership of Queen Anne's Bounty because of the assistance of Anthony Richardson (dates unknown),⁷⁴ a London merchant and relative of the High Church industrialist Anthony Bacon, highlighted in Chapter 3.⁷⁵ Little is known about Richardson, though being friends with Stevens and Bacon he probably would have moved in the same commercial network of likeminded High Churchmen as Stevens.⁷⁶ Stevens never specified how Richardson had helped him, yet as he conveyed to Boucher, he was indebted for the assistance.⁷⁷ This act of patronage towards Stevens explains why, in the late 1780s, Stevens—as a return gift—provided financial aid towards the upkeep of Anthony Richardson's third son, John Richardson (1771-1741), whilst the

⁷¹ Green, 'The first five years of Queen Anne's Bounty', 233.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid, 231.

⁷⁴ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 19 August 1789, Boucher Papers, B/3/37.

⁷⁵ See Chapter 3, 139-140.

⁷⁶ W. E. Minchinton, *Industrial South-Wales 1750-1914: Essays in Welsh Economic History*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006 (orig.1969), 103 n87.

⁷⁷ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 19 August 1789, Boucher Papers, B/3/37.

boy was studying at Oxford.⁷⁸ John Richardson (later knighted) would go on to have a successful career as a barrister, living opposite Park on Bedford Square, London.⁷⁹ John Richardson, a Hutchinsonian (perhaps like his father), would form a close friendship with Stevens.⁸⁰ It is interesting to observe how patronage—so common among High Church clerics⁸¹—also operated among the laity—in this instance for Stevens’s advantage. What link Anthony Richardson had to Bounty is not known, though Best has observed that despite the fact of patronage, talent and ability were taken into consideration for potential applicants.⁸²

The fact that patronage was needed to obtain a Bounty office highlights the fact that the positions within it came with salaries. Best does not reveal how much the treasurer’s salary was when Stevens held the office, though his successor as treasurer, namely his business partner who lived with him, John Paterson (a succession again suggestive of patronage), received £500 per annum—a similar sum of which can be presumed also went to Stevens.⁸³ Best even suggests that the treasurer, who, as we will see, had access to huge amounts of capital in order to conduct his business, could even earn interest for himself on certain sums—a practice evident in other government departments.⁸⁴ What role money played in motivating Stevens to apply for a position within the Bounty office remains

⁷⁸ James McMullen Rigg, ‘Richardson, John’, *DNB*; Edward Foss, *The Judges of England with Sketches of Their Lives*, vol.9, London, 1864, 37.

⁷⁹ Rigg, ‘Richardson, John’, *DNB*; C. A. E. Moberly, *Dulce Domum: George Moberly ... His Family and Friends*, London, 1911, 47.

⁸⁰ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 113; G. E. Cokayne, *Biographical List of the Members of ‘The Club of Nobody’s Friends’*, London, 1885, 18-19.

⁸¹ See Clive Dewey, *The Passing of Barchester: A Real Life Version of Trollope*, London: The Hambleton Press, 1991; Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 15-17.

⁸² Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 114-115.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 224 n6.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 224 & n5.

uncertain. Park, predictably, made no mention of a salary, yet Stevens was a wealthy businessman who spent the vast majority of his life in commerce. It is not unreasonable to suggest the possibility that financial motives may have worked to compel him to lobby for the position within the Bounty. Later evidence, discussed below, reveals that Stevens sought at one point to give up the treasurership for a job within the First Fruits and Tenth department because the new role paid more and entailed less work.⁸⁵ Best credits Stevens with having conducted his business for the Bounty with an almost impeccable business-like efficiency,⁸⁶ and nothing suggests that he gained the role purely for profit. Although a layman, perhaps like so many ambitious and dutiful churchmen in the eighteenth-century Church, he was able to combine spiritual vigor with ecclesiastical preferment.

By the time Stevens came to work for the Bounty in 1782 its offices were located in Dean's Yard, Westminster. Only a small group of men looked after its day-to-day affairs.⁸⁷ They included the secretary, treasurer, a legal officer, and a handful of clerks. The secretary lived in a house owned by the Bounty at Dean's Yard and can be said to have overseen most of the daily tasks of the Bounty's work.⁸⁸ As will be discussed below, the treasurer seems to have had less of a daily interaction with the Bounty than this. Nonetheless, the Bounty being an institution responsible for large sums of money, the role of treasurer was crucial to the efficient function of the operation. Together, the secretary and treasurer formed the two main offices through which the important work of the Bounty was conducted. As Best explains, both roles represented the public face of the Bounty. 'The secretary and the

⁸⁵ See below, 341.

⁸⁶ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 122-123, 224.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 112-113.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 123.

treasurer were inevitably the men who “stood for” the Bounty in the minds of the religious public. All the business was done through them. When hard-up clergymen, impatient benefactors, and too hopeful applicants had to be dealt with, it was the secretary or the treasurer, but usually the former, who had to do it.’⁸⁹

The day-to-day business of the Bounty revolved around the proper and orderly redistribution of funds.⁹⁰ Firstly, the tax revenue from the First Fruits and Tenths office had to be moved into the coffers of the Bounty and only then could it be redistributed as augmentations to those clergy deemed in most need. The process was lengthy, cumbersome and the means by which it was achieved says something about the role of the treasurer and the type of trustworthy and financially-skilled mind required for its success.⁹¹

Firstly, the Board of the Bounty had to instruct the treasurer that the annual revenue from the First Fruits and Tenths had been received (from the 1790s onwards, by about the middle of June). Then, as Best explained the convoluted process, the Bounty Board ‘would instruct their treasurer to instruct the Treasury to instruct the Exchequer Officers to pay the money over to him’.⁹² On top of all this, the treasurer had to provide security for his stewardship of the funds each time he received the annual revenue from the First Fruits and Tenths Office (usually around £13,000).⁹³ Best does not specify how much security had to be put up by the treasurer, though he notes that this was on top of the £6,000 deposit surety that had to be paid by the prospective treasurer upon appointment to the office.⁹⁴ Later evidence relating to

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 126.

⁹¹ Ibid, 126-128.

⁹² Ibid, 128.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

John Paterson suggests that the treasurer may have had anything up to £30,000 on hand as part of his role.⁹⁵ Clearly, being treasurer was an office open only to wealthy individuals and, given Stevens's description of how he obtained the office, only those with the right connections. Moreover, it was additionally an office open only to individuals with book-keeping skills and an ability to prudently invest and responsibly manage large sums of money, for the annual funds from the First Fruits and Tenth were not paid directly to poor clergy but instead invested into gilt-edged stock, the interest of which was then paid out as clergy augmentations.⁹⁶ It is understandable why laymen, and not clergy, were needed to fulfil such roles.

Further insight into Stevens's role can be found when consulting the activities of Stevens's business partner, John Paterson, who became treasurer to the Bounty following Stevens's death in 1807—no doubt in an act of pre-arranged succession.⁹⁷ As has been noted in chapter three, Paterson lived with Stevens at his residence on Old Broad Street⁹⁸ and it was from here that Paterson conducted his business for the Bounty with little interference from the Bounty's governors. As Best explained, 'The governors left him [Paterson] completely on his own (except for the annual audit of his accounts), to get on with his job just as he pleased'.⁹⁹ It can be assumed that Stevens acted similarly, not simply because it is highly probable that Paterson would have conducted his affairs for the Bounty in the manner he had observed his friend and business partner conduct them, but because a 1793 London almanac puts Stevens's address as 'Old Broad-street' when it lists the Bounty and

⁹⁵ Ibid, 224.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 128.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 134.

⁹⁸ See Chapter 3, 149.

⁹⁹ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 224.

the locations of its principal officers—thus indicating the location from which Stevens worked and could be contacted.¹⁰⁰

Though only small amounts are known about Stevens's direct experiences with the Bounty, a few insights into his role as treasurer are revealed within the Stevens-Boucher correspondence. In one letter, dated 26 May 1783, not long after Stevens took on the role, he described to Boucher what was to be expected of him at a Bounty meeting that was to be called that day. Not surprisingly, Stevens was expected to provide the Board with detailed accounts of the Bounty's finances. Specifically, the Board members were to be 'provided with the present state of their capitals & values of each, at present, market price; and the amount of their Debt, that is the amount of the money appropriated to Livings, for which interest is now paid, and an account of such as stand in my books, for which no interest is at present paid; also an account of the annual interest of the present stocks, and the annual interest paid to the clergy, to show what surplus of interest amounts to; all which I am to make out; and Mr Chester¹⁰¹ hopes I shall not find much trouble in forming the said accounts'.¹⁰² It is not unexpected that Stevens related to Boucher a sense that he would be busy preparing the required material, though he conveyed to his friend that he accepted the heavy workload with an element of cheerfulness.¹⁰³

By late 1790, however, Stevens had begun to feel fatigue at the demand placed on him by his work for the Bounty. This is known because of a draft letter

¹⁰⁰ [Anon.], *The Royal Kalendar; Or, Complete and Correct Annual Register of England, Scotland, Ireland, and America*, London, 1793, 207.

¹⁰¹ Robert Chester (*d.*1790), Secretary of Queen Anne's Bounty from 1779 to 1790 (See Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 539).

¹⁰² William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 29 May 1783, Boucher Papers, B/3/13 (emphasis in original).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

Stevens planned on sending to the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Moore, that outlined his intention of resigning the treasurership of the Bounty and applying for the position of the Receiver of Tenths within the First Fruits and Tenths Office, which had been jointly held by Bounty secretary, Robert Chester, until his death that year.¹⁰⁴ Given that he was seeking a less burdensome workload, it is understandable why Stevens sought to obtain the position of the Receiver of Tenths; the position was relatively easy to perform, required only a small amount of work and, though Stevens probably did not need the money, paid more than the treasurership.¹⁰⁵ In fact, Best notes that during the 1830s ‘the receiver was only in contact with his office two or three times a year’.¹⁰⁶ One can assume things had changed little prior to that date.

Stevens’s draft letter to the archbishop is revealing in that it not only tells us in some detail about his desire for a new role after serving eight years with the Bounty, it also sheds light on how his work in the Bounty had brought him into close professional contact—and even friendship—with the primate of the Church of England.

It is rather with reluctance I now address your Grace, being not quite satisfied in my own mind about the propriety of it; but encouraged by the experience I have had of your kind indulgence to my weakness, I venture to intimate to your Grace, that provided it does not interfere with any other of your plans or wishes, it might be agreeable to me to exchange the office of Treasurer which I now possess, for that of Receiver of the Tenths, vacant by the death of Mr

¹⁰⁴ William Stevens to John Moore, n.d. c. October 1790, Boucher Papers, B/3/40.

¹⁰⁵ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 114-115; Geoffrey Rowell, *The Club of ‘Nobody’s Friends’ 1800-2000*, Durham: The Pentland Press, 2000, 27-28.

¹⁰⁶ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 115.

Chester. It is attended, I believe, with less trouble and some additional profit, two pleasing circumstances to a man, who is growing every day less fit for the fatigue of business, and to whom peace and quietness, comfort and convenience become every day more necessary. But conscious how little my pretensions are for soliciting your Grace's countenance and support in this matter, I presume no farther than to express a sort of wish; and desirous not to trouble you with the importunities of friends, I rest entirely on the present application, convinced that the most favourable construction will be put on the nature and manner of it.¹⁰⁷

Boucher responded to Stevens's draft sometime before 12 October. He had been less than impressed with Stevens's application to the archbishop, thinking the letter contained a 'touch of the ludicrous'.¹⁰⁸ Stevens does not elaborate on the exact meaning of Boucher's displeasure, though he was nonetheless thankful for Boucher's advice and explained his need for writing the letter. 'Many thanks for your letter. How differently different people see the same thing! I had no notion there was the touch of the ludicrous in my letter to his Grace. I thought it couched in the most respectful terms, and seriously assigned two most serious reasons for inclining me to wish to exchange. I have had no note, nor do I suppose I shall.'¹⁰⁹ Stevens added that he was less than hopeful about his desire to obtain the position, noting that there would be tough competition. Nonetheless, he was determined to follow-through on his application by doing his best to obtain the post.

¹⁰⁷ William Stevens to John Moore, n.d. c. October 1790, Boucher Papers, B/3/40.

¹⁰⁸ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 12 October 1790, Boucher Papers, B/3/41.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

I intend going to the Board on Friday, where probably will be another candidate, John Bacon,¹¹⁰ for he prefers the Receivership of Tenths to that of First Fruits; and I will endeavour not to sneak, for as you say, why should I? and [sic] as I say, why should you suspect me? I may have imprudence enough, tho' not a match for you. I suppose I may give his grace an opportunity of speaking first; and if he does not come forward, why then I must. Much depends, I take it, on the state of the animal spirits with both of us.¹¹¹

In the end, neither Stevens nor Bacon got the position. Instead, Richard Richards (1752-1823), a barrister and friend of Stevens was appointed to the role.¹¹² In time Richards would, according to Best, become one of the more efficient holders of this office (for example, by expediting the usually lengthy process whereby the revenue from Tenths was transferred to the Bounty's treasurer).¹¹³

Despite seeking to leave the office of treasurer in 1790, there is little reason to doubt that Stevens enjoyed contributing to the work of the Bounty, no matter how tiresome when combined with his other duties in life. The fact that he continued holding the office until his death means that the role must have been in some sense important to him. His successful background in commerce, his interest in ecclesiastical matters and his social contacts with clerics made him eminently suitable for the role. There may have also been the likely possibility that he enjoyed the extra income. Moreover, as Stevens's claim to friendship with the Archbishop of Canterbury demonstrates, the office became not only the avenue through which his

¹¹⁰ See above, 329.

¹¹¹ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 12 October 1790, Boucher Papers, B/3/41.

¹¹² George Barker, 'Richard, Richards', *DNB*.

¹¹³ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 115, 128.

involvement in the affairs of the Church of England increased significantly, it afforded him the means of establishing professional and social links with the Church of England's episcopal leadership.¹¹⁴

By early 1792, Stevens's closest link to the English episcopate, George Horne of Norwich, had passed away; but there remained other High Churchmen on the English bench with whom Stevens enjoyed close associations. John Moore of Canterbury was one of these, but another was John Douglas of Carlisle.¹¹⁵ Douglas has already been referred to in chapter four for having lauded Stevens's reputation as an Anglican layman at an SPG event.¹¹⁶ In the Stevens-Boucher correspondence there is evidence that the two men shared a friendship.¹¹⁷ Douglas was an interesting connection for Stevens to have maintained. Though a High Churchman, like Samuel Horsley, he was not a Hutchinsonian. In fact, in 1755, Douglas had distinguished himself by penning an anti-Methodist and anti-Hutchinsonian text entitled, the *Apology for the Clergy*.¹¹⁸ This, however, was a long time ago and does not seem to have affected his friendship with Stevens, which a letter to Boucher in early 1788 indicates was on close terms.

So you would not dine with your old Friends at the Paul's tavern on Thursday, no more than with those at Ewell on Monday. I heard of your being at Lambeth; did you meet with anything better than a dinner there? The Bp of Carlisle would have been glad to have seen you, and have talked over

¹¹⁴ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 26; see also Stevens's comment that he 'personally knew the whole [episcopal] Bench' (Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 47).

¹¹⁵ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 130.

¹¹⁶ See Chapter 4, 152.

¹¹⁷ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 9 February 1788, 13 February 1788, Boucher Papers, B/3/30, 31.

¹¹⁸ John Douglas, *Apology for the Clergy; With a View to expose the groundless assertions Of a late Commentator on the 107th Psalm*, 2nd edn, London, 1755.

your letter. I suspect it was not a judicious one. But don't you go to writing again. A Gentleman, to whom the Bp of London gave a living in Essex, who wishes to exchange it for Hunton, which is not yet absolutely disposed of, told me that the Archbishop was soliciting v[er]y earnestly for some friend of his own.¹¹⁹

The letter indicates that ecclesiastical gossip, combined with discussions of ecclesiastical patronage, were no doubt frequent topics of conversation at such dinners; that Stevens had a part in such conversations signifies his close involvement in ecclesiastical affairs. It is likely there were other such gatherings.¹²⁰

The following year, another letter to Boucher hinted at yet more episcopal connections on Stevens's part that had developed during the 1780s and would continue to develop into the early nineteenth century. These connections, however, were very different from ones that have just been discussed. On 30 July 1789, Stevens requested Boucher to send him all the ecclesiastical gossip he possessed, specifically 'a long letter giving me a full account of every thing you suppose I can wish to know, as well as all the chit chat and tittle tattle you can rake together'.¹²¹ One such matter Stevens was intent on hearing more about was whether Boucher had 'heard any thing of the poor Scotch Bishops or of any thing else in the North'.¹²² The reference to Scotland and its native, but non-established, Episcopal Church signified a link with Scotland that had been developing for Stevens and his friends since the

¹¹⁹ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 9 February 1788, Boucher Papers, B/3/30.

¹²⁰ Though not indicating that ecclesiastical affairs were discussed, the following letter, dated 13 February, reveals another dinner Stevens had enjoyed with the Bishop of Carlisle. He lamented that Boucher had again not been present, thinking that 'a glass or two of claret' with himself and the prelate would have greatly improved his disposition and health (see William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 13 February 1788, Boucher Papers, B/3/31).

¹²¹ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 30 July 1789, Boucher Papers, B/3/36.

¹²² *Ibid* (emphasis in original).

early 1780s and that would culminate in the early 1790s when Stevens and a number of his High Church colleagues took part in a movement of reform on behalf of that Church that aimed at granting it legal toleration and a stronger place in Scottish society. Moreover, it was through this Scottish link that Stevens would also make contact with the first bishop of the newly created Episcopal Church of North America and, albeit at a lesser level, begin a correspondence with the dying remnant of the English Nonjuring Church.

English interaction with the Scottish Episcopal Church began in 1781, when another of Stevens's Hutchinsonian friends, the Reverend George Berkeley, went to Scotland to enroll his son at St Andrews University. Berkeley had resided in Scotland for three years and developed friendships with a number of important figures in the Scottish Church, most notably, George Gleig (1753-1840) and John Skinner, who had been consecrated the coadjutor Bishop of Aberdeen on 25 September 1782. Berkeley formulated a plan that had the potential of finally alleviating North America's long-sought need for episcopal oversight by sending them a bishop consecrated by the non-established Scottish Church—a solution that solved the political problems of the monarchical Church of England providing a bishop in the newly independent republican nation. On 9 October 1782, Berkeley approached the Scottish Church with his plan yet failed to convince the episcopate.¹²³ Trying again the following year, Berkeley was finally able to convince the Scottish bishops to go ahead with a consecration. The candidate, Samuel Seabury (1729-1796), was a clergyman from Connecticut who had come to London in July 1783 to initially seek consecration—firstly from the Church of England and then

¹²³ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 121.

from the bishops of the small English Nonjuring Church.¹²⁴ Unable to dispense the oath of allegiance, the English bench kindly expressed their inability to grant Seabury's request. Similarly unsuccessful was Seabury's attempt to get the English Nonjuring bishops to consecrate him, despite the help of Jonathan Boucher.¹²⁵ In the end, the only avenue for Seabury was to head north to Scotland. Seabury's eventual consecration occurred on 14 November 1784.¹²⁶

The Seabury affair has been mythologized by both Scottish and North American Episcopalians.¹²⁷ Nonetheless, the event was of undoubted historic significance for both communions. Not only did the North Americans finally get their long-sought bishop, it was the beginning of a period of renewal for the small and languishing Scottish Episcopal Church—a renewal that involved the continued help of sympathetic English High Churchmen, including Stevens.¹²⁸ By the early 1780s the Scottish Church was certainly in need of renewal. Its history since the failed Jacobite rebellions of 1715, 1719 and 1745 had been one of weakness and decline, a trend due mostly—but not exclusively—to the restrictive penal laws imposed against it.¹²⁹ The 1745 Rebellion had, in particular, been especially devastating to the Episcopalians and their active support for the Stuart cause.¹³⁰ It

¹²⁴ Anne Y. Zimmer, *Jonathan Boucher: Loyalist in Exile*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978, 235-236.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 121.

¹²⁷ Rowan Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland: Religious Responses to a Modernising Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, 16-17; Gavin White, *The Scottish Episcopal Church: A New History*, Livingston: Digisource, 1998, 16-24.

¹²⁸ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 122.

¹²⁹ Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, 15; Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 117-118; Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws: Some Anglo-Scottish Interactions in the Eighteenth Century', *The English Historical Review*, vol.92, no.364, 1977, 540-542.

¹³⁰ White, *The Scottish Episcopal Church: A New History*, 8.

produced a severe persecution. Thus, as a result of legislation passed in 1746 and 1748, the ministries of Episcopalian clergy became completely illegal. The laity also suffered, it being illegal for them to receive the ministrations of such clergy.¹³¹ Though the active legal enforcement of the penal laws had been significantly reduced by the reign of George III, the forced semi-concealment of Episcopal services was not uncommon among some Episcopalians.¹³² Understandably, persecution had an effect on the Church's strength and resources. Not only were clerical stipends small, the persecuted state of the Church significantly decimated the numbers of clergy and laity.¹³³ At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Scottish clergy were estimated at 600 to 800. By 1744 this had fallen to 125, and by 1790 that figure had more than halved to 53.¹³⁴ Of the laity, the numbers are harder to measure, though F. C. Mather has estimated that Episcopal laity numbered 'not more than 30,000' in 1789,¹³⁵ down from a possible high of one-third of the Scottish population in 1689.¹³⁶ This all indicates a major decline. Yet one can overstate the fact of persecution on Scottish Episcopalianism, especially during the first-half of the century. Indeed, it is notable that the greatest loss of clergy occurred prior to the severe persecution following 1745. The reality was that the Scottish Church's problems were also internal. Not only was it beset with internal divisions relating to church governance,¹³⁷ there was a danger that the Scottish Church was headed the

¹³¹ Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, 15-16; Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 541-542.

¹³² Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 543-544.

¹³³ Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, 19.

¹³⁴ Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 545.

¹³⁵ *Ibid* & 546 n1.

¹³⁶ Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, 19.

¹³⁷ The internal dispute related to the Scottish Church's relationship with the exiled Stuart monarch. The episcopate was split between an older party who wanted bishops directly appointed by the

way of the English Nonjurors, that is, into theological and ecclesiological obscurity.¹³⁸ Many of the Scottish Nonjurors shared the recondite liturgical interests of their English brethren. For the Scots this became epitomized in their development of the Scottish Communion Office (1764).¹³⁹

Added to all these inhibiting factors was the problem of the qualified chapels. These were congregations that had qualified for legal toleration under the act of 1712 that permitted Episcopal worship. Mostly within the south of Scotland, these independent congregations were led by clerics ordained by bishops of the Churches of England or Ireland. However, they were effectively non-episcopal, not falling under the direct authority of either the native Scottish episcopate or the bishops who had ordained them.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, they were not Jacobite in their political views. Using the English Prayer Book they came to identify with a more moderate English High Churchmanship than the Nonjuring (and mostly northern) traditions espoused by the native Episcopal Church.¹⁴¹ Ever since the Revolution of 1688, there had been Scottish Episcopalians willing to conform and so form qualified congregations, yet from the middle of the eighteenth century increasing numbers of Scots became

monarch and a newer party, influenced by English Nonjurors, who sought to establish an independent diocesan episcopacy, with bishops elected by the local clergy (Rowan Strong, *Alexander Forbes of Brechin: The First Tractarian Bishop*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, 6-9; Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, 13-14).

¹³⁸ Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 546; Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, 17-19.

¹³⁹ With an Eastern Orthodox influence, this very High Church liturgy was developed with the help of English Nonjurors. Most notably, it included the 'usages', that is: a mixed chalice, commemoration of the dead, an Eastern epiclesis invoking the Holy Spirit upon the elements of bread and wine and a strong doctrine of the eucharist as a sacrificial offering (see John Dowden (ed.), *The Scottish Communion Office 1764*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922, 117-132; Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 119-120).

¹⁴⁰ Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 545.

¹⁴¹ Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, 17-19.

attracted to this style of Anglicanism and qualified chapels became more numerous.¹⁴² The qualified chapels contained some notable Scottish Episcopalian families, such as the Forbes family.¹⁴³ These more Anglicized Scots signified a division within Scottish Episcopalianism that, by the early 1780s, only added to the problems of the native Scottish Church.

The events leading up to the consecration of Seabury had brought the small Scottish Church to the attention of Stevens and his circle. Stevens does not appear to have been prominently involved in the Seabury affair as his friends Boucher and Berkeley had been, though Park notes that he became ‘well acquainted’ with Seabury during his time in England and that it was through Seabury’s visit that Stevens, like his friends, began to develop an interest in the Scottish Church.¹⁴⁴ Later correspondence confirms that Stevens had not only developed a friendship with Seabury during his visit to England, but continued to correspond with him following his return to North America.¹⁴⁵ It was also around this time that Stevens began a correspondence with the English Nonjuring Bishop, the Hutchinsonian William Cartwright of Shrewsbury.¹⁴⁶ Boucher’s biographer, Anne Zimmer, speculates that it may have been Stevens who introduced Boucher to Cartwright, allowing Boucher to help Seabury make contact with the English Nonjurors in the hope of finding bishops

¹⁴² Mather, ‘Church, Parliament and Penal Laws’, 545; Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 119.

¹⁴³ Mather, ‘Church, Parliament and Penal Laws’, 545; Strong, *Alexander Forbes of Brechin*, 2, 4-6.

¹⁴⁴ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 97.

¹⁴⁵ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 10 August 1786, Boucher Papers, B/3/26; E. Edwards Beardsley, *Life and Correspondence of the Right Reverend Samuel Seabury*, Boston, 1881, 162, 201-202, 300-301, 436-437, 441-442; Bruce E. Steiner, *Samuel Seabury: A Study in the High Church Tradition*, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1971, 362 n79.

¹⁴⁶ William Cartwright to Jonathan Boucher, 23 April 1785 and 11 June 1785, Bodleian Library, Non-Juror Ms. Add. d. 30, ff.37-40, 42; see also, Chapter 4, 173.

willing to consecrate him.¹⁴⁷ It could thus be argued that not only had Seabury created a link between English and Scottish High Churchmen, his consecration had also renewed English High Church contact with their own native Nonjuring community, in addition to re-establishing a more concrete ecclesiastical connection with the United States of America. Of course, through the effort of the SPG, High Churchmen had possessed a long and often successful relationship with North America;¹⁴⁸ moreover, though the American Revolution had ended the formal involvement of the SPG in what became the United States of America, the SPG and the High Churchmen who supported it had nonetheless never ceased to remember the former colony and its spiritual welfare—especially its need for bishops.¹⁴⁹ Boucher, the famous exiled loyalist, ensured that the former British colony remained, at the very least, an area of interest and concern for English High Churchmen, especially through his involvement—with Stevens—in the SPG.¹⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the Seabury consecration did represent a widening of horizons for English High Churchmen, as well as creating for them a number of important ecclesiastical contacts in England, Scotland and North America.¹⁵¹

Remarkably, Park observed that prior to Seabury's consecration, Stevens had not even been aware that the Scottish Episcopal Church existed.¹⁵² Park's testimony is confirmed by Mather's observation that Samuel Horsley was also similarly

¹⁴⁷ Zimmer, *Jonathan Boucher*, 235.

¹⁴⁸ See Rowan Strong, *Anglicanism and the British Empire c.1700-1850*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

¹⁴⁹ Travis Glasson, *Missionary Anglican and Slavery in the Atlantic World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, 207; Zimmer, *Jonathan Boucher*, 234-237.

¹⁵⁰ Zimmer, *Jonathan Boucher*, 212.

¹⁵¹ Skinner, *Annals*, 48-59; Beardsley, *Life and Correspondence*, *passim*; Zimmer, *Jonathan Boucher*, 212; Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 122.

¹⁵² Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 97.

ignorant of the existence of the Scottish Church prior to the 1780s.¹⁵³ Yet upon becoming aware of its existence, the Scottish Church soon came to be revered by Stevens and his friends. There were two primary reasons for this newfound interest. First, was the Scottish Church's non-established status, which, combined with its persecuted state, gave it a feel resonant with the non-established, pre-Constantinian Church of early Christianity. This manifested itself in an emphasis that Christian ecclesiology, in its original apostolic purity, always disavowed any connection with the State as being inseparable for its existence and function. It was an aspect of Stevens's thought that has been noted to have been prominent in both his reply to Francis Wollaston (1773) and in his edited republication of Potter's *Treatise on the Nature and Constitution of the Christian Church* (1773).¹⁵⁴ To what extent Stevens's clerical friends, most notably Horne, Jones and Boucher, shared this ecclesiological position as strongly as Stevens prior to the 1780s is less clear, though once aware of the Scottish Church they willingly elucidated a similar ecclesiology and, like Stevens, applied it—somewhat nostalgically—to the Scottish Church.¹⁵⁵ As Stevens observed to Bishop John Skinner of Aberdeen on 1 May 1797, 'Making establishment necessary to the existence of the Church, as many are apt to do, is a grievous mistake'.¹⁵⁶ This was not, of course, a repudiation of either the Church of England or its establishment; instead, establishment was simply not seen as an essential part of Christian ecclesiology. Establishment was, as Stevens noted to

¹⁵³ Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 547; Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 122-123.

¹⁵⁴ See Chapter 4, 205ff.

¹⁵⁵ William Jones, *Memoirs of the Life, Studies, and Writings of the Right Reverend George Horne, D.D.*, London, 2nd edn, 1799, 148-154; William Stevens, 'Life of William Jones of Nayland' in William Stevens (ed.), *The Theological, Philosophical and Miscellaneous Works of the Rev. William Jones*, vol.1, London, 1801, xxxvii-xxxviii.

¹⁵⁶ William Stevens to John Skinner, 1 May 1797, in Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 95.

Skinner, ‘a convenient appendage; and there is no harm in Kings being nursing fathers, if they will nurse it properly’.¹⁵⁷ The second reason was the Hutchinsonian bond that further linked the Scottish and English groups into a single ideological force.¹⁵⁸ This connection deserves emphasis given the prominent role the ideology played in directing and guiding the High Churchmanship of Stevens’s circle. Skinner, eventually primus of the Scottish Church from December 1788 onwards, was a devout Hutchinsonian—as were most of the Nonjuring Scottish clergy.¹⁵⁹ Mather notes that Stevens was introduced to Skinner by Boucher, who used their common Hutchinsonian link as a means of introduction upon their first meeting.¹⁶⁰ When reviewing the life of Skinner in the *British Critic*, an anonymous reviewer went to some lengths in noting the Hutchinsonianism that the Scot shared with the likes of Stevens, Horne and Jones.¹⁶¹ Gavin White’s assertion that the Scottish and English High Church connection of the late eighteenth century would likely have been hampered by not having the common Hutchinsonian link is a claim that deserves to be taken very seriously, as the link clearly bonded both groups together.¹⁶² White’s observation that ‘it is impossible to name a single surviving

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ George Grub, *An Ecclesiastical History of Scotland: From the Introduction of Christianity to the Present Time*, vol.4, Edinburgh, 1861, 113; Gavin White, ‘Hutchinsonianism in Eighteenth-Century Scotland’, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, vol.21, part.2, 1982, 163-164, 165, 167-168; Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, 17.

¹⁵⁹ John Skinner, *Theological Works of the Late Rev. John Skinner*, vol.1, Aberdeen, 1809, clxxiv-clxxv; Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, 17.

¹⁶⁰ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 124.

¹⁶¹ *The British Critic*, April 1812, vol.39, London, 1812, 334.

¹⁶² White, ‘Hutchinsonianism in Eighteenth-Century Scotland’, 165.

English Hutchinsonian who did *not* devote much time and effort to aiding the Scottish Episcopalians' is worth emphasizing.¹⁶³

This new Scottish-English High Church alliance continued to solidify and develop as the 1780s wore on, with both groups eventually working together from 1789 onwards in a process of political activism that aimed at the ultimate goal of gaining legality for the Scottish Church via Westminster, and thus establishing its legitimate place in Scottish society. The event that paved way for this cooperation was the death of Charles Edward Stuart on 31 January 1788. Charles Edward was the claimant to the Stuart line and while he lived the Scots could not, in conscience, change allegiance to the Hanoverian monarchs. However, the Stuart heir, the Roman Catholic cardinal, Henry Benedict Stuart, was religiously unacceptable to the vast majority of Scottish Episcopalians and thus provided the reason the Scots needed to gently break with their Jacobite past. On 25 May 1788 the Scottish Church began to pray for George III in their services.¹⁶⁴ Following this, the Scottish bishops rapidly moved to make representation to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the government's spokesman for Scottish affairs, Henry Dundas (1742-1811), petitioning for the legal toleration they thought now was owed them.¹⁶⁵ However, their initial application for relief did not gain any traction, especially from within the English episcopate.¹⁶⁶ To help their cause three of the leading Scottish bishops, Skinner, Abernethy Drummond and John Strachan made a hasty trip to London in April 1789 to campaign in person.¹⁶⁷ The occasion allowed Boucher to personally

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 549-550; Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, 19.

¹⁶⁵ Skinner, *Annals*, 79-87; Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 550-551.

¹⁶⁶ Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 550-551; Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 123.

¹⁶⁷ Skinner, *Annals*, 91, 93.

introduce Skinner to Stevens and Jones.¹⁶⁸ Not long after arriving in London Skinner recorded in his diary that he and his episcopal colleagues decided to write to the Archbishop of Canterbury. However, prior to sending the letter, Skinner was careful to have had the contents read and approved by Stevens and Jones.¹⁶⁹ In addition to meeting both men, Skinner mentioned that a young barrister, James Allan Park, had been appointed to take charge of the Scottish Bishops affairs.¹⁷⁰ This was the context through which Stevens and Park first met each other and subsequently became close friends.¹⁷¹

Despite the concerted efforts of the Scottish bishops and their English associates, the private member's bill that eventually was taken to the Commons and introduced by Henry Dundas on 16 June 1789 (passing with only a few amendments) nonetheless found itself shelved in the House of Lords. Part of the problem was its timing. English Dissenters were at that time seeking a repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts.¹⁷² A similar move that allowed for relief for a dissenting episcopal body would have appeared as favoring one side over another. To compound this situation, the very same English High Churchmen who were seeking to help the Scottish Church achieve legal toleration were actively opposing similar moves by English Dissenters.¹⁷³ How aware Stevens and his friends were of this as a problem for Scottish Episcopal interests is not known, but there were other reasons for the initial failure. One was the opposition of the qualified chapels to the bill and, more

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 95.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 100-101.

¹⁷¹ Skinner, *Theological Works of the Late Rev. John Skinner*, vol.1, clxv.

¹⁷² Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 554; see also G. M. Ditchfield, 'The parliamentary struggle over the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, 1787-1790', *The English Historical Review*, vol.89, no.352, 1974, 551-577.

¹⁷³ Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 554-555.

significantly, a fear on the part of the English episcopal bench that if legal toleration were granted Scottish clergy would attempt to come into England and gain livings in the Church of England.¹⁷⁴

Prior to sending them off on their trip back to Scotland, Stevens was present to commiserate with the distressed and upset Scottish prelates over dinner at the Crown and Anchor tavern. A letter from Horne to Berkeley dated 17 July 1789 hints at both the concern Stevens and his friends had for the Scottish bishops, and also the type of social gathering that would come to be especially associated with Stevens in his later years.

It was my hap to reach the great city just at the time when our poor scots friends were routed horse and foot; by the single arm of the giant Gogmagog in the House of Lords, there the fault, as I suppose, of Henry Dundass. Messrs Stevens, Boucher, & self, called upon them in the hour of distress, & apprehending the immediate application of a cordial might be expected, invested them to a good dinner & a bottle of claret, at the Crown & Anchor. The other two came, and the day went off extraordinarily well indeed. Abernethy was in good spirits, & Skinner said as many shrewd and arch things as one could wish from any one man in the time given. We adjourned, for our tea, to that house in Thavies Inn, where Tories & Heathens are always well received by Glass, Bacon, Stevens, & Co.¹⁷⁵

Horne further observed that when the three bishops had left for home the following day they received the ‘warmest assurances from their friends in town, that their business should be done next year, without their having the trouble of another

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 555-557.

¹⁷⁵ George Horne to George Berkeley, 17 July 1789, British Library, Berkeley Papers vol.9, Add. Ms. 39312, ff.100-101(emphasis in original).

journey'.¹⁷⁶ Determined to bring about a successful outcome, both the Scottish Episcopalians and their English supporters became more organized following their initial failure. In Scotland, the political campaigning required to gain toleration was handed over in early 1790 to a more organized committee consisting of three bishops (Skinner, Drummond and Strachan), three clergy and three laity.¹⁷⁷ Skinner was placed in charge of the committee.¹⁷⁸ Similarly, sometime in February of that year, a London committee was established with the purpose of acting on behalf of the Scottish Church.¹⁷⁹ Though small and only set up on a semi-official basis, the London committee's primary purpose, according to Skinner, was to act as a voluntary 'Committee of Correspondence with the Committee appointed in Scotland'.¹⁸⁰ This London committee consisted of three individuals: Stevens, Park and the Reverend George Gaskin (1751-1829), secretary of the SPCK.¹⁸¹ As the *Annals* further recorded, these three men initially 'determined to meet once a-week, or as often as occasion might require, for the communication of intelligence, and to deliberate on the most proper steps to be taken for the speedy relief of a Church they so much venerated'.¹⁸²

There was only so much the Scots could do themselves from home, thus making the London committee more important in the required political lobbying needed for a new application to parliament.¹⁸³ Indeed, the London Committee would

¹⁷⁶ Ibid (emphasis in original); see also, George Horne to John Skinner, 15 December 1789, in Skinner, *Annals*, 143-144.

¹⁷⁷ Skinner, *Annals*, 140.

¹⁷⁸ Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 558.

¹⁷⁹ Skinner, *Annals*, 141-142; Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 557.

¹⁸⁰ Skinner, *Annals*, 142.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 142-143; Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 94.

¹⁸² Skinner, *Annals*, 142.

¹⁸³ Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 559.

prove indispensable to the goal of legal toleration. The Scots needed sympathetic friends with access to the British legislature, who had links to both the government and the episcopal bench. The evidence points towards Stevens playing a prominent role in the affairs of this committee. His access to the English bishops via his role within the Bounty office, especially the Archbishop of Canterbury, would have been of great influence. Thus, even prior to the committee's formation, Stevens had begun to use his influence to act on behalf of the Scots. A letter from Horne to Skinner dated 15 December 1789 confirms that Stevens had been in correspondence with the Archbishop of Canterbury and had been communicating information back to Skinner. As Horne explained, 'I am glad you have heard from my friend and kinsman, Mr Stevens, who knows the trim of the times as well as any man. He has certainly had conversation with the Archbishop on the subject, and therefore I do not think it improbable his Grace may have chosen to communicate through him any advice he may have thought useful upon the occasion,—and a better adviser you cannot have'.¹⁸⁴ Not long after this, in early 1790, the London committee had begun to operate. They had, in effect, become agents acting on behalf of another Church.

It is hard to discern exactly how the London committee operated, though Gaskin's letters to Skinner indicate that the division of duties amongst the three men seems to have corresponded with each individual's contacts and area of influence within Church and state.¹⁸⁵ Sometime during the early months of 1790, Stevens, for example, had been using his friendship with Horne to discern support for the Scots within Oxford University, whilst Gaskin had similarly sought such help from

¹⁸⁴ George Horne to John Skinner, 15 December 1789, in Skinner, *Annals*, 144.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 160.

Richard Farmer (1735-1797), Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge.¹⁸⁶ Park—a ‘rising young barrister of Lincoln’s Inn’¹⁸⁷—was both an Anglicized Scotsman and a protégée of the recently retired Lord Chief Justice, William Murray, Lord Mansfield, also from Scotland.¹⁸⁸ His connections would prove equally influential. Gaskin’s leadership of the SPCK would have likewise given him numerous ecclesiastical contacts. A letter from Gaskin to Skinner on 22 April 1790 reveals that Stevens had been in contact with Moore, as had Jones of Nayland.

Mr Jones of Nayland has been in town, and has had a long, interesting, and satisfactory conference with the Archbishop on the subject of your Bill; and Mr Stevens, having just left me, is gone where he will meet his Grace, so that the next letters you receive will, I trust, be brimful of good news, at least they will contain important information. You may be assured that we act in your business in perfect unison, and are all three equally zealous in pursuing the best means in our power, and in such a way as shall be most likely to secure the end.¹⁸⁹

However, despite these early signs of optimism during the first months of 1790, including an endorsement from the Archbishop of Canterbury,¹⁹⁰ it would take a further two years for the Scots—and their English representatives—to formulate a bill that was adequate in placating the various parties in Church and state. It is fair to say that the Scots had significantly underestimated the potential opposition to their cause—both among sceptical members of the English episcopate and from within the

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 152, 155.

¹⁸⁷ Mather, ‘Church, Parliament and Penal Laws’, 551.

¹⁸⁸ See Introduction, 4.

¹⁸⁹ George Gaskin to John Skinner, 22 April 1790, in Skinner, *Annals*, 170.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 153-154.

House of Lords. Probably the main obstacle was an intention on the part of a majority of the English bishops to ban priests with Scottish orders from ministering in England.¹⁹¹ Their point was to emphasise that because the British monarch had not consented to the episcopal ordinations of Scottish bishops, neither could they consent to allowing the ministries of priests ordained by them. Though such views offended the Scots (they thought that the validity of Scottish orders were being questioned),¹⁹² Gaskin's letters to Skinner indicate that it was the London committee that was crucial to convincing the Scots to be more moderate and pragmatic in their attempts to win over English opposition.¹⁹³ There is no question that without their English allies the Scots would not have had the means to deal with the forces of Church and state centred in London.¹⁹⁴

After wearing down opposition from the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow,¹⁹⁵ throughout 1791, legal toleration was finally achieved the following year on 15 June 1792, a bill being passed in the House of Lords with the crucial involvement of the supportive High Church prelate, Samuel Horsley.¹⁹⁶ Not surprisingly, the final bill involved major concessions on the part of the Scots. As Mather puts it, the result gained was 'an imperfect toleration', granting full toleration to the laity with the condition that George III was prayed for at the services they attended.¹⁹⁷ For the clergy, however, the conditions for toleration were much more rigorous. At the last minute it had been stipulated that the doctrinal sections of the Thirty-nine Articles

¹⁹¹ Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 560; Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 127-129.

¹⁹² Ibid, 560; Ibid, 127-129; Skinner, *Annals*, 155-171.

¹⁹³ Skinner, *Annals*, 155, 157-175.

¹⁹⁴ Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 559.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 562-564.

¹⁹⁶ See Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 125-134.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 134.

had to be subscribed to.¹⁹⁸ Additionally, (though not unexpected) Scottish clergy were barred from holding office in the Church of England and were required to pray for George III, take an oath of allegiance and make an anti-Jacobite oath of abjuration.¹⁹⁹ These strict requirements proved too much for the clergy and mostly were not, in the end, formally acted upon.²⁰⁰ Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles was not, in and of itself, a major obstacle for many, but it had been stipulated that assent to the Articles had to be made at the same time as the objectionable oath of abjuration.²⁰¹ For sensitive minds that had spent all their lives in the defence of the Stuart cause, the oath of abjuration was a step too far. Nonetheless, in practical terms, the Relief Act of 1792 produced an effective—if ‘imperfect’—toleration, partly because the laity benefited from it and partly because the law requiring the objectionable oath of abjuration was not enforced. Pragmatically, the Scots had achieved a long-sought goal of historic significance.²⁰²

The primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church had been in London when the Relief Act was passed, having gone there sometime in March 1792 at the request of the London committee.²⁰³ Skinner did not, however, leave London before expressing his thanks to Stevens and the other members of the London Committee for their work on behalf of his Church.²⁰⁴ On 11 June 1792, Gaskin, Park and Stevens were thus thanked with gifts. For Gaskin and Park, both were given a ‘vase-shaped, Silver Cup and Cover’, upon which was placed an inscription of thanks. Stevens, however,

¹⁹⁸ Grub, *An Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, 109.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 109; Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 134.

²⁰⁰ Grub, *An Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, 109-111; Mather, ‘Church, Parliament and Penal Laws’, 565.

²⁰¹ Mather, ‘Church, Parliament and Penal Laws’, 567

²⁰² *Ibid*, 565-566.

²⁰³ Skinner, *Annals*, 188.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 230.

is said to have kindly refused such a gift, preferring instead ‘a literary token of regard’.²⁰⁵ He was instead presented with a similarly inscribed edition of Johann Jakob Brucker’s six-volume *Historia Critica Philosophiae* (1742-1744).²⁰⁶ In an excerpt from an undated letter from Stevens to Skinner not long after this event (presumably when Skinner had returned to Scotland), Stevens is quoted as having expressed his gratitude towards the good Scottish opinion that was held of himself and his friends on the London committee. ‘We are much flattered by the quick sense which you and the Committee of Delegates in Scotland entertain of our friendship, though we do not feel our pretensions very strong, as all we did was as little as could well be done, and you had the fairest claim to every attention paid either to your cause or to yourself.’²⁰⁷

For the remainder of his life Stevens was an active supporter of the Scottish Episcopal Church.²⁰⁸ The Scots, in turn, continued to seek the advice and help of Stevens and the other English High Churchmen close to him. Indeed, following the achievement of legal toleration there remained ecclesiastical issues that required the assistance of the Scot’s English allies. By far the most pressing was the disunity among Scottish Episcopalians because of the qualified chapels. They remained a thorn in the side of the Scottish Church and absorbing them into his communion became Skinner’s immediate goal upon returning home in 1792.²⁰⁹

Stevens had strong views on the issue of the qualified chapels, views that we can assume were rooted in his strong theological commitment to the apostolic

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ William Stevens to John Skinner, undated, in *ibid.*, 231.

²⁰⁸ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 98-105.

²⁰⁹ Grub, *An Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, 111.

authority of Protestant bishops over the territory of their native jurisdiction. The existence of qualified chapels, under no episcopal authority, represented for him a state of schism that required healing.²¹⁰ It would take over a decade before this occurred; nonetheless, according to Park, Stevens was continually on hand to offer advice and support—‘he was’, as Park put it, ‘indefatigable in his consideration and correspondence upon the subject’.²¹¹ In fact, as early as February 1793 Skinner had again requested Stevens’s help—along with that of Gaskin and Park—for a plan to bring about an end to the situation.²¹² In the early months of 1793, Skinner had come up with the notion that installing an English clergyman into the see of Edinburgh would facilitate the reconciliation of the mostly southern—and Anglicised—qualified congregations. Boucher was the chosen candidate.²¹³ The plan was audacious and, once again, required liaison and consultation with figures in London.

In September, no doubt as the plan was gaining momentum, Stevens observed to Boucher that Skinner had been seeking his and Park’s assistance regarding some matter to do with the plan, though he did not specify exactly what this was.²¹⁴ Stevens nonetheless revealed to Boucher that he was favourable towards the proposal that he be consecrated the next Bishop of Edinburgh, but was unsure how he and Park would be able to assist any further, other than in giving advice to the Scots. Nonetheless, the letter brings to light that Stevens had consulted Samuel Horsley over the matter, perhaps on behalf of Skinner. Overall, Stevens was encouraging to Boucher but also advised against hastiness.

²¹⁰ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 21 November 1793, Boucher Papers, B/3/69; Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 98-99.

²¹¹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 102.

²¹² Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 135.

²¹³ Grub, *An Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, 112; Skinner, *Annals*, 265-271.

²¹⁴ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 11 September 1793, Boucher Papers, B/3/68.

I am much concerned that poor Skinner should be uneasy from an apprehension of having tired out Mr Parke [sic] and me, which I am sure is not the case. We should both be glad to assist to the utmost of our power the poor scots [sic] church, but how to do it is the question. We gave our opinion on the proposed plan and our silence since has been from having nothing else to say on the subject. Whether St David's has learnt prudence by selling²¹⁵ among those who have found benefits of it, I don't know; but his not writing to Skinner may not be owing to his inability to say anything against the plan, for in his conversation with me that did not appear; his opinions being the same from the beginning, that to be effectual, the work must be gradual. By a letter Dr Gaskin has received from Scotland, there is great hopes for a union being accomplished; and by temperate management, if selfish views do not operate to the contrary, the business may terminate happily.²¹⁶

However, though Stevens had been hopeful of the plan in September, by November another letter to Boucher exposed the fact that obstacles had arisen. As Mather has documented, the reaction from within the Church of England to the idea of Boucher going to Edinburgh had been cold, a response that included the usually sympathetic Horsley. The reason was that Horsley had been persuaded against the plan after having been in contact with Alexander Cleeve, the minister of the qualified chapel of St George's, Edinburgh.²¹⁷ Though he was wholly supportive of the right of the Scottish Episcopal Church to exercise jurisdiction over all of Scotland's Episcopalians, especially the laity whom he encouraged to return to the Scottish Episcopal Church, he was remained unconvinced that qualified clergy could unite

²¹⁵ Word hard to read.

²¹⁶ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 11 September 1793, Boucher Papers, B/3/68.

²¹⁷ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 135-136.

with clergy who continued to refuse to take the oath of abjuration or subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles.²¹⁸ Another letter from Stevens to Boucher on 21 November revealed that Boucher had also been having doubts about the plan. Stevens, who seemed to have more faith in the plan than his friend, not only rebuked Boucher for these objections, he angrily chastised him for not having faith in his ability to negotiate on Boucher's behalf.

You attachment to the elect lady appeared to me so strong as to indispose you for hearing any objections against the union, and perhaps Mr Parke [sic] & I could not show ourselves men of sense more effectively in your estimation than by recommending it; for tho' you think yourself utterly at a loss in your mind, on what you ought to determine, and wish for salutary advice, the question is, whether you have not a secret wish what the advice may be, as has happened in other cases, and whether you are not more determined than you are aware of in regard to writing to Sir William Forbes, and what you shall say, I have little to offer. As he interests himself much in the scheme, and is intimate with the Archbishop, I should suppose the negotiation might be left to him, without your pledging yourself, as heretofore, to manage his Grace; you may as well rest on your ours, and see whether the stream will wash you of its own accord to Lambeth. However you might have approved my dexterity in arguing the case for you, I believe you will readily allow my competency for arguing it against you, as I do for arguing it either way; and

²¹⁸ Ibid, 136-137.

in this persuasion you will give me leave, without entering any farther into the subject.²¹⁹

In a different letter dated also the 11 November, Stevens again rebuked his friend for lacking a sufficient allegiance to the Scottish cause, albeit this time for apparently encouraging an English cleric to minister in one of the ‘schismatic’ qualified chapels. As the future Bishop of Edinburgh, Boucher was supposed to be on the side of the Scots, not encouraging the schismatic qualified chapels. ‘I had well nigh forgot to ask’, Stevens wrote, ‘whether you are not as bad as our own English Bishops in helping to continue the schism by recommending a Clergyman to one of the Chapels not in unity with the Scots Episcopal Church? I thought Mr Bowdler seemed to insinuate something like it in his letter to you’.²²⁰

In the end, however, no petitioning by either Stevens or one of his friends would see Boucher become a bishop in the Scottish Church. The plan was, in the end, scuttled by Horsley, who, uncharacteristically, and despite his sympathy for the Scots, was not convinced that clergy ordained by the Church of England—and who thus subscribed to its articles and royal supremacy—could move over to a non-established church that had neither a confessional or an established status.²²¹ This was in addition to opposition from Presbyterians at Edinburgh who opposed English ecclesiastical interference in Scottish affairs.²²² By early 1794, despite making a trip to Edinburgh the previous year, Boucher had given up on the plan, as had Skinner and the formerly-enthusiastic Stevens. Union would, however, become a reality in

²¹⁹ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 21 November 1793, Boucher Papers, B/3/69 (emphasis in original).

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 136-137.

²²² Ibid, 137.

Stevens's lifetime, though it would take a decade more to achieve. The event that paved the way for such an eventuation was the pragmatic adoption of the Thirty-nine Articles by the Scottish Church on 24 October 1804, a move that was coupled with a full declaration by the Scottish Church that the Anglicised qualified congregations would, if reunited, be able to continue using the liturgy contained within the English Prayer Book.²²³

The other significant aspect of Stevens's support for the Scottish Episcopal Church was a predictable philanthropic support of its clergy and laity. In 1794 a fund 'for the Relief of the Widows and Orphans of the Episcopal Clergy in Scotland' was created, no doubt modelled and inspired on the similar Church of England charities and institutions that Stevens supported.²²⁴ According to Park, Stevens gave £20 in 1794 and a further ten guineas annually until his death.²²⁵ Stevens also collected donations from other friends on behalf of the fund.²²⁶ This appears to be the same fund that is noted by John Parker Lawson as being administered by the Scottish Friendly Society (formed in 1793).²²⁷ According to the *Orthodox Churchman's Magazine*, by 1802 several widows of Episcopal clergy were in receipt of £10 per annum because of the charity.²²⁸ Further charitable activities made by Stevens are evident in his involvement in the establishment of the 'Scottish Episcopal Fund' in 1806 by the layman, Sir William Forbes (1739-1806), which was dedicated to the

²²³ Grub, *An Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, 115-124; Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, 20.

²²⁴ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 98.

²²⁵ Ibid; see also, William Stevens to John Skinner, 14 May 1806, in Skinner, *Annals*, 447-448.

²²⁶ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 98.

²²⁷ John Parker Lawson, *History of the Scottish Episcopal Church from the Revolution to the Present Time*, Edinburgh, 1843, 441.

²²⁸ *The Orthodox Churchman's Magazine*, August 1802, vol.3, London, 1803, 93.

augmentation of the incomes of Episcopal clergy—bishops and presbyters.²²⁹ Forbes, a wealthy banker, was an active member of the once-qualified St Paul's Chapel at York Place, Edinburgh. He had been an active supporter of Skinner's quest for union with the qualified chapels and, being an Anglicised Scot, enjoyed visiting England, especially London.²³⁰ A friendship with Stevens—or at the very least, an acquaintance—would have been a distinct possibility.

According to Park, the Scottish Episcopal Fund soon 'applied' to the 'friends of Episcopacy in England' to gain donations. A London committee was once again formed, with Park as the chairman, but also including the familiar figures of Stevens, Gaskin, John Bowdler and John Richardson.²³¹ Though Park would admit that the money raised by the Scottish Episcopal Fund proved inadequate to the needs of the Scottish Church, he noted that Stevens was generous in his own donations, being the first English subscriber with a donation of £100.²³²

In a letter to Skinner dated 14 May 1806, Stevens not only indicated that Skinner could draw upon him for an annual contribution, but offered Skinner some solace regarding the poverty of his Church and a reflection of his estimation regarding its ecclesiological purity. 'Your Sees not having the same means as ours, makes attention to expense necessary; this is a pity, and we have only to pray for better times. But if your Church is poor, you have the comfortable reflection that it is pure, and perhaps it is not the less pure for being poor.'²³³ Words such as this, coupled with the willingness of English High Churchmen such as Stevens to come to

²²⁹ Lawson, *History of the Scottish Episcopal Church*, 442-444; Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 103-104.

²³⁰ Strong, *Alexander Forbes of Brechin*, 2-3, 14.

²³¹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 104.

²³² *Ibid*, 105.

²³³ William Stevens to John Skinner, 14 May 1806, in Skinner, *Annals*, 448.

the aid of the Scottish Episcopal Church, strengthens F. C. Mather's observation that 'Support for the Scottish bishops became an institutionalized component of Old High Churchmanship in England in the early decades of the nineteenth century'.²³⁴ Mather correctly highlights the episcopal leadership of Samuel Horsley in this movement of support, but as this chapter has shown, Stevens (in addition to his circle of friends) was also influential in this High Church, English-Scottish interaction and convergence. Indeed, though not in a position to influence the passage of legislation in the House of Lords as Horsley was, a common Hutchinsonianism and more intimate personal relationship with the leaders of the Scottish Church, in addition to an evident ability to gain access to a number of English bishops, made Stevens more of a consistent ally of the Scots than Horsley, who was sometimes bound by political constraints. Indeed, Stevens's support for the Scottish Episcopal Church, from the 1780s through to the first decade of the nineteenth century, was consistent and unwavering. The same could be said of his fellow High Church activists.

Mather has also contended that English interaction with the Scottish Church contributed to a High Church revival in the late eighteenth century. Certainly, the interaction and proactive reformist activity that English High Churchmen engaged in from the late 1780s onwards on behalf of the Scots is clear evidence of an ecclesiastical tradition that was an active force at the turn of the nineteenth century.²³⁵ Mather, however, went further than this, arguing that Scottish Episcopalianism's non-established ecclesiology shone a light on some of the problems with the Church of England's relationship with the Crown. 'Scottish influences', he writes, 'helped to purify the English high-church ideal. They

²³⁴ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 137.

²³⁵ See Chapter 1, 32ff.

disentangled the traditional emphasis on clerical authority derived through apostolical succession, which had been part of the intellectual armoury of English high churchmen since at least the end of the seventeenth century, from the trappings of state power and earthly position through which that authority had previously been expressed'.²³⁶ Though Mather has argued that Scottish Episcopalianism influenced the ecclesiology of Samuel Horsley in this regard,²³⁷ such an assessment overstates both the influence the Scottish Church had upon the ecclesiology of English High Churchmen and the extent to which English High Churchmanship, especially its Hutchinsonian cohort, was influenced by 'the trappings of state power and earthly position'. There was certainly a reawakening on the part of the English High Churchmen—an opening of their ecclesiological horizons that not only allowed them to discover a new—more theologically pure—ecclesial body, but to also re-engage with the small and declining remnant of the English Nonjuring Church, as well as establishing a link with North American Episcopalianism. There is no question that the Scottish-link made English High Churchmen more aware that genuine apostolic ecclesiology, independent of the state, was a force to be respected and revered. Yet the example of Stevens's role in this affair provides a caution against attributing too much to the impact of Scottish ecclesiology on English minds. For, as has been demonstrated in chapter four, Stevens already possessed an ecclesiology that was not only aware of the problems presented to Church governance by an association with the state, but flatly eschewed the notion of an erastian ecclesiology of any sort. Indeed, his concern for the independence of the Church and its ability to exist and prosper without the Crown had been present since the early 1770s. It is perhaps true

²³⁶ Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Laws', 570.

²³⁷ Ibid, 570-571; Mather, *High Church Prophet*, 137-138.

that the Church of England did not always live up to the ideals that Stevens envisaged, nonetheless, Stevens was forceful in his own position that the Church of England derived its authority not from kings, but from its bishops in apostolic succession, figures who possessed their own spiritual powers independent of the state. Though more research needs to be done on the ‘pre-Scottish’ ecclesiology of theologians such as Horne and Jones of Nayland, that fact that they readily embraced the Scottish cause at a very early point, along with Stevens, points to an ecclesiology similar to their respected lay friend and theologian.²³⁸ It is, indeed, telling that Skinner, in his provocatively anti-erastian sermon preached in 1784 at the consecration of Seabury, cited numerous eighteenth-century English High Church sources, including Jones, Horne and John Potter’s *Discourse on Church Government*, the source for Stevens’s *Treatise on the Nature and Constitution of the Christian Church*.²³⁹ In reality, knowledge of the existence of the Scottish Episcopal Church and its need for help during the early 1780s, gave Stevens and his friends a real-life example that they readily applied their ecclesiological principles to. Of course, none of this is to deny the substance of Mather’s argument that the Scottish Episcopal Church was part of a late eighteenth-century High Church revival; in fact, the cooperation between English, Scottish and North American High Churchmen that the whole episode highlights points not only to a strong English High Church tradition, but to a vigorous and active late eighteenth-century Anglican High Churchmanship that was also British and trans-Atlantic in its makeup and consciousness.

²³⁸ See Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 57-58.

²³⁹ [John Skinner], *The Nature and Extent of the Apostolical Commission*, Aberdeen, 1785, 4, 8, 13-17, 20-21, 30-31, 35-36, 49.

In the same letter to Skinner dated 14 May 1806 that was previously quoted from,²⁴⁰ Stevens observed that he had read a letter from Skinner to Bowdler, which Bowdler had ‘put into my hands the other day at Nobody’s club, where nineteen members assembled, and passed an agreeable day’.²⁴¹ The reference to ‘Nobody’s club’ indicates the final legacy of Stevens’s life that merits discussion in this thesis, namely the founding of a dining club—named in his honour—in 1800, which bore the title: ‘The Club of Nobody’s Friends’.

‘Nobody’ was a pseudonym Stevens had adopted sometime around the turn of the nineteenth century.²⁴² The first apparent public use of this had been on the title page of Stevens’s 1800 reply to the *British Critic*, where the English transliteration ‘A. I. N.’ was used to identify Stevens as the author.²⁴³ ‘A. I. N.’ was claimed by Park to represent the Hebrew word for ‘nobody’.²⁴⁴ Additionally, in 1805, Stevens privately circulated a volume of his collected writings under the Greek title, ‘Ουδενος Εργα’ (‘The Works of Nobody’).²⁴⁵ According to the preface Stevens wrote to this collection (which Park quotes in full), Stevens explained the meaning of ‘Nobody’ with a series of self-deprecating character descriptions, designed to promote himself as being socially, morally and religiously insignificant—a mere ‘nobody’.

²⁴⁰ See above, 367.

²⁴¹ William Stevens to John Skinner, 14 May 1806, in Skinner, *Annals*, 448.

²⁴² Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 80.

²⁴³ See William Stevens, *A Review of The Review of A New Preface to the Second Edition of Mr. Jones’s Life of Bishop Horne*, 1st & 2nd edn, London, 1800, title page; Stevens also used the name in private correspondence in 1800 (see William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 29 September 1800, Boucher Papers, B/3/86).

²⁴⁴ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 84, 86.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 80; I have not been able to locate a copy of this publication.

Never was person better described by proper name, than the writer of the following sheets. View him in what light you will, he is NOBODY, a mere cypher, a blank in creation. Even in these papers, suggested possibly more by a desire of applause than of doing good, and of which, perhaps, he is vainer than he suspects, he is NOBODY, seeming to be something, when he is nothing; for, ‘what has he said,’ that he did not receive from one author or another?

See him in company, and you cannot hesitate to pronounce him NOBODY. His very countenance betrays it: he is shy, awkward, silent, neither profiting others by his conversation, nor to appearance, profiting by theirs; and, probably, ascribing to humility that behaviour which may be the effect of pride.

As a member of society, he is NOBODY; neither father, husband, uncle, brother; he sits solitary, wrapt up in thick gloom, musing on his own insignificance, yet absurdly shrinking from all the duties of active life. A melancholy cast, sometimes, leads him to the habitations of the afflicted; and being too indolent to withhold his money, he suffers it to be taken from him on the slightest pretence, mistaking it is to be feared, vice for virtue, self indulgence for charity.

In one respect he seems to be somebody, being blest above most men in friends, eminently wise, learned, pious; but alas! not to make suitable improvements with such advantages, he must indeed be NOBODY.²⁴⁶

Park noted the objection such a description gave rise to: that it was contradicted by a life and character that was in many respects more accurately

²⁴⁶ Ibid, 80-81.

described as extraverted.²⁴⁷ Park's answer was to claim that in the company of friends Stevens was indeed such a figure, but that in the presence of strangers he was shy and introverted.²⁴⁸ This is not, however, an entirely convincing answer. For instance, even among friends Stevens, at times, engaged in melancholic episodes that led to similar, exaggerated expressions of self-depreciation described above.²⁴⁹ One can only speculate on a causes and motives of such emotions; perhaps they were partly a consequence of a temporary depressed state, or—perhaps—at the reality of growing old (Stevens would die two years later). A letter to John Skinner the year Stevens died suggests this possibility. After thanking Skinner for personal compliments that had been expressed to him by Skinner and other of the Scottish bishops, Stevens began expressing similar despondent and negative sentiments regarding himself.

I have no pretensions to the usefulness you speak of, being at best a most unprofitable servant. I feel no satisfaction in the recollection of the past, and consequently no great comfort in the prospect of the future. In short, I seem neither fit to live, nor fit to die. My friends have no reason to fear my removal out of sight. I shall not be missed, go when I will. The vacancy will soon be filled up, and, it is to be hoped, better supplied, as it cannot easily be worse.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 81.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, 81-82.

²⁴⁹ See William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 11 January 1782, 6 August 1791, 19 August 1791, 15 November 1791, 17 November 1791, Boucher Papers, B/3/10, 53, 55, 62, 63.

²⁵⁰ William Stevens to John Skinner, 14 May 1806, in Skinner, *Annals*, 448.

Edward Churton and Geoffrey Rowell think Stevens was being humorous when describing himself in his preface to the ‘The Works of Nobody’.²⁵¹ This may be correct, though it is difficult to assess Stevens’s exact motives. Certainly, Stevens’s many friends and very active life—whether in commerce or religion—suggest that such expressions on his part should not be taken too literally. Indeed, more in keeping with the extraverted Stevens is the use of ‘Nobody’ as the name of a dining club founded in Stevens’s honour. Its first meeting was on 21 June 1800 at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, in the Strand.²⁵² The club was formed about a year prior to Stevens’s partial retirement from mercantile life in 1801.²⁵³

The origins of Club of Nobody’s Friends provides an important concluding insight into the role Stevens played in eighteenth-century High Church affairs, in addition to being emblematic of the continuity and change that the passing of Stevens would represent to the High Church tradition at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The club (which still exists to this day)²⁵⁴ has recently had its history written by Geoffrey Rowell.²⁵⁵ Rowell correctly sees the origins of the club in the personality and social connections of Stevens, who, since at least the late 1770s (and no doubt prior), had been in the habit of gathering his closest friends around him for dinners, fortified by wine, conversation and friendship based upon common High Church principles.²⁵⁶ Rowell also rightly observes that the correspondence between

²⁵¹ Edward Churton, *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, vol.1, 1st edn, London, 1861, 32; Rowell, *The Club of ‘Nobody’s Friends’*, 22.

²⁵² Rowell, *The Club of ‘Nobody’s Friends’*, 1.

²⁵³ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 13-14.

²⁵⁴ Its current president is Sir Philip Mawer.

²⁵⁵ See Rowell, *The Club of ‘Nobody’s Friends’*, 1-31.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 17-21; see above, 354-355.

Stevens and Boucher, with its accounts of dinners hosted by Stevens while surrounded by his close friends, ‘hints at the pre-history of Nobody’s Friends’.²⁵⁷ One example, dated 12 September 1777, in which Stevens admonished Boucher to join him ‘at the Chaplain’s Table to drink Church & King with sundry other constitutional Toasts after the manner of the Tories of old time’, became typical of Stevens’s desire to mingle serious ideological concerns with companionship, dinner and wine.²⁵⁸ As these gatherings became more regular towards the end of the eighteenth century, it is evident that there was something about Stevens’s character—his personality and values—that attracted others of a likemind to spend time in his company. According to Churton, Stevens had originally been in the habit of inviting his closest friends over to his house for regular dinners. These dinners, and the character of their host, are said to have given such pleasure to the invitees that when Stevens became too old to continue the gatherings, a separate venue was arranged by his friends and a club eventually instituted in his honour.²⁵⁹ As Rowell notes, however, there are problems with this version of events.²⁶⁰ An alternative account from the Club’s records suggest, not only that Stevens’s home was not the only location of the dinners prior to the club’s official founding, but that the male-dominated gatherings eventually became an inconvenience to the wives of Stevens’s friends.

Nobody’s Friends’ used to meet very often (in the latter part of the last century) at Mr. [John] Frere’s house in Stratford Place, and would often be detained (Bishop Horne, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Frere and his tall sons, in their

²⁵⁷ Ibid, 18.

²⁵⁸ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 12 September 1777, Boucher Papers, B/3/1.

²⁵⁹ Churton, *Memoir*, vol.1, 31-32.

²⁶⁰ Rowell, *The Club of ‘Nobody’s Friends’*, 1-2.

long broad skirted silk coats and powdered hair standing by, while Jones of Nayland was modulating Bach or Handel on the harpsicord) till the ladies got fidgetty and the dinner spoiled. The formation of *the club*, and the holding the meetings, as now, at a Tavern, is said to have been due to the suggestion of Lady Richards and Mrs. Frere to abate this inconvenience.²⁶¹

Though Stevens spent much time in the company of women, there is no question that Stevens's dinners had a 'bachelor' and 'masculine' quality to them that would have made such gatherings unattractive to the wives of his friends. The above description is also a characteristic reminder that Stevens was a committed bachelor his whole life; one suspects that the concerns and responsibilities of married life were somewhat alien to him. It is not surprising that the club, once founded in 1800, became an all-male gathering—a place where likeminded clerics and laymen could meet together, eat, drink and discuss the intellectual matters of the day.

Aside from Stevens, the fifteen founding members of the Club of Nobody's Friends were Park, Boucher, John Bowdler, Richard Richards, William Horne, Francis Randolph, John Prince, John Gifford, John James Watson, Joshua Watson, George Downing, Henry Handley Norris, Thomas Richardson and John Richardson. Of these, Stevens, Bowdler, Richards, Park, Gifford, Joshua Watson, Downing, Thomas Richardson and John Richardson were laymen.²⁶²

The early membership of the club is revealing both for its mix of clergy and laity, and for the names it contains. Present were many of the influential High Church figures who had lived through the latter half of the eighteenth century, in

²⁶¹ Cokayne, *Biographical List of the Members of 'The Club of Nobody's Friends'*, 24 (emphasis in original); also quoted in Rowell, *The Club of 'Nobody's Friends'*, 2.

²⁶² See Cokayne, *Biographical List of the Members of 'The Club of Nobody's Friends'*, 1-19; Rowell, *The Club of 'Nobody's Friends'*, 2.

addition to those who would continue to advance High Church views into the nineteenth.²⁶³ On the one hand was Stevens who, along with Boucher, Park, Bowdler, Randolph, Prince and John Richardson, were older and—notably—were Hutchinsonians. Three of the other names, however—Joshua Watson, John James Watson and Norris—were younger and, importantly, were not Hutchinsonians. These three men would become the leaders of the Hackney Phalanx, the High Church network of clergy and laity that dominated High Church affairs during the 1820s and 30s.²⁶⁴ The presence of these future High Church leaders within the Club of Nobody’s Friends represents an important connection and continuity between Stevens and the generation that followed him. Peter Nockles’s observation that the Hackney Phalanx was ‘[d]irectly connected to the Hutchinsonians by personal ties’ and that the Phalanx ‘represented a succeeding generation of High Churchmen’ is correct, but neglects to take full account of the discontinuities that the Hackney generation represented to the Church of England in the early nineteenth century.²⁶⁵ By far the most notable discontinuity was the abandonment of Hutchinsonianism by the Hackney Phalanx, an ideology which they respected, but failed to be convinced by.²⁶⁶

The Hackney figure that Stevens knew most intimately was the young layman, Joshua Watson. The friendship between the two men arose through

²⁶³ See J. A. W. Gunn’s comment: ‘To list ... [William Stevens’s] friends, who actually came to form a club, sounds like a roll-call of the figures who were most conspicuous in combating free thinking and democracy throughout the [eighteen] nineties and into the nineteenth century’ (J. A. W. Gunn, *Beyond Liberty and Property: The Process of Self-Recognition in Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*, Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1983, 176); see also, Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 20; Mark Smith, ‘Hackney Phalanx’, *ODNB*).

²⁶⁴ Regarding the Phalanx, see Chapter 1, 34ff.

²⁶⁵ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, 14.

²⁶⁶ See Chapter 5, 306ff.

Boucher, who had been at school with Watson's father in Cumberland.²⁶⁷ Watson's elder brother, John James, had been a curate to Boucher at Epsom in 1790, and Joshua Watson would visit his brother on weekends, staying at Epsom.²⁶⁸ It was probably here that Watson met Stevens. The two men would come to share a close bond, with Stevens acting as an older mentor.²⁶⁹ Stevens admired Watson's maturity and would jokingly exclaim upon Watson's entry into the room where Stevens was present, 'Here comes Joshua, the first man of the age'.²⁷⁰ However, in his early twenties Watson seems to have been an emotionally sensitive and physically weak individual—characteristics in the mid-1790s that Stevens expressed concern for.²⁷¹ Stevens clearly cared for Watson. When both of Watson's sons died in 1802, Stevens wrote to Watson's brother, seeking an update on his emotional and physical health. 'How does Joshua do in the midst of all his trouble? He has a tender frame, has he been able to keep from sinking under it?'²⁷²

Having made a fortune as a wine merchant and sharing Stevens's interest in theology and Church affairs, it is noticeable that following Stevens's death Watson also came to take on a leadership role among High Churchmen during the early nineteenth century. It remains a striking fact—and a testament to the prominent role that wealthy members of the laity with a background in commerce played within High Churchmanship and Anglicanism in general—that Watson came to play such a

²⁶⁷ Churton, *Memoir*, vol.1, 5, 17.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 20.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid*, iv, 17, 22-23, 38-39.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 39.

²⁷¹ William Stevens to Jonathan Boucher, 25 October 1794, Boucher Papers, B/3/74.

²⁷² William Stevens to John James Watson, 19 October 1802, Lambeth Palace Library, Joshua Watson Papers, Ms.1562, f.43.

similar ecclesiastical role as Stevens.²⁷³ Of course, there were differences between the two men. These include Watson's respectful disinclination to esteem the works of John Hutchinson.²⁷⁴ Additionally, Watson was not as much of a theologian as Stevens, nor did he engage in the sort of intense intellectual controversy that Stevens seemed to relish. Watson's fame as a lay activist came mainly through his prominent involvement in Church societies—both the rejuvenation of the older SPCK and SPG that Stevens had served within, in addition to having founding roles within the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church (1811), the Incorporated Church Building Society (1818), the Church Building Commission (1818), the Additional Curates Society (1837) and the Colonial Bishops Fund (1841).²⁷⁵ This, combined with the Phalanx's ability to influence Church patronage—especially during the administration of Lord Liverpool (1812-1827)—became the great achievements of this High Church pressure group.²⁷⁶

Stevens would not, however, live to see the Hackney Phalanx develop its influence in Church affairs. On 7 February 1807, almost seventy-five years of age, Stevens died at his life-long residence in Old Broad Street, in the presence of John Bowdler. On 6 February Stevens had experienced a pain in his chest (probably a heart-attack).²⁷⁷ Bowdler, who had been present at his house, had asked Stevens—

²⁷³ See Churton, *Memoir*, vol.1, 23.

²⁷⁴ See Chapter 5, 307-308.

²⁷⁵ See Churton, *Memoir, passim*; A. B. Webster, *Joshua Watson: The Story of a Layman 1771-1855*, London: SPCK, 1954.

²⁷⁶ Norris was particularly influential regarding the Phalanx's reach into Westminster. 'During Liverpool's long premiership Norris gained the title of 'Bishop-maker'; it was said by Thomas Mozley that every see was offered to Norris, with the request that if he could not take it himself, he should be so good as to recommend someone else' (Peter B. Nockles, 'Norris, Henry Handley', *ODNB*).

²⁷⁷ Rowell, *The Club of 'Nobody's Friends'*, 30.

whom he perceived was in pain—what was wrong, to which Stevens replied emotively, ‘*nothing but death*’.²⁷⁸ Attended by two physicians, Stevens became bed-ridden. In his presence, Bowdler read to Stevens a prayer from the Order for the Visitation of the Sick from the *Book of Common Prayer* before leaving late on the sixth. Stevens died that night at 3am. Park recorded that just prior to passing away, Stevens had said to a servant,²⁷⁹ ‘My time is come. Oh dear, good God!’²⁸⁰ Stevens was buried on 14 February at the churchyard of St Nicholas’s, Otham, the village in Kent where he had grown up. George Horne’s brother, William Horne, was then rector of Otham and became the sole beneficiary of Stevens’s will.²⁸¹ The decision to make William Horne his beneficiary perhaps attested to a desire to both leave his money to the Church, and more specifically, to leave it with a family relation and the place of his youth. An epitaph at Otham, lauding Stevens’s contributions to Anglicanism was composed sometime after his death. It attested to the esteem and regard with which those who knew him viewed his life’s achievements.

Sacred to the Memory of

WILLIAM STEVENS,

Late of Broad-street, in the City of London, Hosier,

And many years Treasurer of Queen Anne’s Bounty;

Whose remains, by his own desire, were deposited near this Church,

Which he delighted to frequent as the place of his devotion,

²⁷⁸ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 127 (emphasis in original).

²⁷⁹ See discussion in Chapter 3, 149.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 128.

²⁸¹ *Ibid*, 130; Stevens had already donated £600 towards the repair and decoration of St Nicholas’s (see *ibid*, 128).

And which he repaired and adorned by his munificence.
 Educated, and during his whole life engaged, in trade,
 He yet found means to enrich his mind
 With English, French, Latin, Greek, and especially Hebrew Literature;
 And connected by blood and affection
 With many of the most distinguished Divines of his Age,
 He was inferior to none,
 In profound knowledge, and steady practice,
 Of the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England:
 Austere to himself alone,
 Charitable and indulgent towards others,
 He attracted the young by the cheerfulness of his temper,
 The old by the sanctity of his life:
 And tempering instructive admonition with inoffensive wit,
 Uniting fervent piety towards God
 With unbounded good-will and well regulated beneficence
 towards men,
 And illustrating his Christian Profession by his own
 consistent example,
 He became the blessed means, by divine grace,
 Of winning many to the ways of righteousness,
 He finished his probation, and entered into his rest,
 On the 7th day of February, A.D. 1807,
 In the 75th year of his age.²⁸²

²⁸² Quoted in *ibid*, 129.

Conclusion

Throughout the preceding six chapters, this thesis has endeavoured to advance the claim that Anglican High Churchmanship during the latter half of the eighteenth century received much of its influence and direction from the lay activist, William Stevens. In doing this, this thesis has additionally sought to go beyond the clerical context that ecclesiastical historians frequently default to when discussing the history of the High Church tradition. This has been achieved by a focus of the concept of lay activism and its place in the history of High Churchmanship, focusing on Stevens, a successful eighteenth-century High Church merchant. But broader claims can be drawn from a study of Stevens than those that relate strictly to his life.

To a large extent this thesis derives its inspiration from the revisionist historiography of recent decades that has sought to emphasise and articulate the positive aspects of the Church of England, especially the High Church tradition, during the eighteenth century.¹ Long derided as moribund, it is now common for historians of this period to note the positive aspects of eighteenth-century High Churchmanship. More specifically, ever since studies such as those of Mather and Nockles, the High Church tradition in this period is now taken seriously in its own right. No longer is it adequate to view High Churchmanship merely as a clerical tradition preparatory to Tractarianism. Though by no means impeccable (a fact illustrative in this thesis), eighteenth-century High Churchmanship was nonetheless a strong and active ecclesiastical force.

However, seeking to broaden this revisionist historiography, this study of Stevens as a lay ecclesiastical figure—a lay activist—necessitated a discussion

¹ See Chapter 1.

regarding the historical involvement of prominent members of the High Church laity since the sixteenth century.² So often presumed to be an exclusively clerical tradition, High Churchmanship has been shown to possess a rich history of varied forms of lay involvement in Anglican affairs—from the political manoeuvrings and interests of monarchs, to the intellectual and theological pursuits of individuals such as Robert Filmer, Izaak Walton, John Evelyn, Henry Dodwell, Robert Nelson and Samuel Johnson. This discussion also demonstrated another forgotten aspect of the High Church tradition—the role of women. The names of Susanna Hopton, Frances Norton, Elinor James, Mary Astell, Anne Coventry, Elizabeth Stuart Bowdler, Mary Deverell, Elizabeth Carter and Sarah Trimmer, were all shown to be High Church activists who dedicated much of their lives to the promotion of the Church of England. Notwithstanding the interest of feminist historians in these High Church women (with the inevitable and overriding focus on gender that this has entailed), their obscure presence within ecclesiastical historiography necessitates the need for more research into this phenomenon.

Stevens, whose life from an early age became connected to the entrepreneurial world of the eighteenth century, was biographically introduced within the context of the burgeoning reality of commerce, trade and industry to this period in modern British history.³ Though Park's *Memoirs* made little of the importance of commerce to the life of his subject, Stevens's success as a wealthy wholesale hosier and part-owner of a Welsh ironworks was central to his pursuits as a religious and ecclesiastical figure. Without the wealth and skills derived through private enterprise, it is doubtful Stevens would have exercised the influence he did as

² See Chapter 2.

³ See Chapter 3.

a High Church lay activist. He was a product of the close convergence of the wealthy commercial and industrial classes with religious causes—a phenomenon that was a feature of the late eighteenth century.⁴ It is not surprising to see that commerce and industry featured more broadly in the history of High Churchmanship (and Evangelicalism) in this period—that a number of prominent laymen (and to a lesser extent, laywomen) who made their wealth through private enterprise also came to devote themselves to religious causes. Though Stevens arguably represents the most prominent and influential High Church layman who emerged from this context, he was only one of a number of High Church figures who had similar backgrounds. Long associated with Dissent, the rise of commerce and industry in the eighteenth century also had an Anglican and High Church element. Stevens's example points towards the need for historians to study in more detail not only the relationship between commerce and High Churchmanship, but the relationship between commerce and the Church of England in general.

Stevens was a deeply religious man whose beliefs and piety were a classic example of High Church spirituality. Though Park often overemphasised Stevens's sanctity, there is nonetheless a great amount of truth to his claim that Stevens was 'a firm and conscientious believer in all the doctrines of religion, as professed in the Church of England', and 'an attentive observer of all her ordinances'.⁵ Not content, however, to remain merely a devout layman and a generous—but private—benefactor to religious and charitable causes, Stevens desired to use his intellect and engage publicly as a lay divine—what this thesis has termed his 'theological

⁴ Mark Smith, 'Hackney Phalanx', *ODNB*.

⁵ James Allan Park, *Memoirs of William Stevens*, 4th edn, London, 1825, 37; see also, Chapter 3, 131-134.

activism'.⁶ The origins of Stevens's theological talent arose in his spare time as a young tradesman in the 1740s and 50s. During that time Stevens read widely, improving his knowledge of Latin, Greek, Hebrew and High Church literature. Two decades witnessed the rise of Stevens's as a religious author: the 1770s and the 1790s. For High Churchmen, ideological threats marked these decades, creating a reactive High Church ideological counter-attack against what they saw as the forces of theological and political heterodoxy characteristic of the late Enlightenment. Stevens took an active part in this response, publishing works that dealt with themes relating to latitudinarianism, political theology and Hutchinsonianism.

The Feathers Tavern petition saw latitudinarian thought become a major issue of concern for Stevens during the early 1770s. Though he never responded directly to it, two short treatises emerged from his pen that would define Stevens's style and theological commitment to the publication of anonymous and relatively short polemic treatises.⁷ One of these was his most famous and enduring work, *A Treatise on the nature and constitution of the Christian Church* (1773), which was adapted from Archbishop John Potter's more lengthy work; the other, Stevens's reply to Francis Wollaston, is less well known, but has been shown to have contained many of the same themes. By far the most striking characteristic from these works was an anti-erastian, ecclesiological emphasis upon the divine independence and authority of the Church. In response to the latitudinarian desire of the Feathers Tavern petitioners to reform the doctrinal standard of the Thirty-nine Articles, the Christian Church—Stevens asserted—possessed a divine authority to set up creeds and

⁶ See Chapters 4 and 5.

⁷ See Chapter 4.

confessions that were requisite for its members to adhere to, especially its ordained members for whom subscription was compulsory.⁸

Also in possession of a divine foundation was Britain's political establishment. To rebel against the monarch was to rebel against the ruler that God had appointed to rule over Britain and its colonies. Thus the mid-1770s and the rise of the American Revolution saw Stevens contribute to the debates related to political theology that the North American rebellion against British rule had created.⁹ Again, as in the early 1770s, Stevens replied with three similar published treatises—one of which, like the *Treatise*, was an edited and abridged publication of a previous work.¹⁰ Stevens's political theology was part of a revived Tory patriarchalism that emphasised monarchical obedience and the absolute impossibility of political rebellion. Most notable was Stevens's defence of the principle of passive obedience or, as Stevens put it, 'a choosing to suffer rather than obey unlawful commands'.¹¹ Stevens's defence of passive obedience was combined with a refutation of the Lockean-inspired thought of the Cambridge Whig, Richard Watson. Stevens's defence of patriarchalism and passive obedience has, to date, not been given a fair and balanced reading by historians of late eighteenth-century British politics, who not only have been unduly dismissive of what Stevens wrote, but have unfairly construed his defence of passive obedience as being synonymous with total obedience. Holding up Christ as the model of a figure who had himself passively obeyed by suffering at the hands of the Romans, Stevens argued that there was 'an

⁸ See for example, [Stevens], *Treatise*, 21-22 (emphasis in original).

⁹ See Chapter 4, 234ff.

¹⁰ [William Stevens], *A Discourse on the English Constitution; Extracted from a Late Eminent Writer, and Applicable to the Present Times*, London, 1776.

¹¹ [Stevens], *Discourse*, 7-8.

essential difference between obeying unlawful commands, implied by *unlimited* obedience, and patient suffering for not obeying them, which is, properly speaking, *passive obedience*'.¹²

The other theme to emerge in the 1770s was Stevens's adherence to Hutchinsonianism.¹³ This arose through his response to the biblical scholarship of Benjamin Kennicott. Stevens's translation of an original (and later, discredited) text that contained the charge that Kennicott had been deceived by manipulative Jews, revealed a blatant and provocative anti-Semitism as a part of Stevens's thought.

Stevens's adherence to Hutchinsonianism continued to be evident throughout his life, as it did with his close High Church friends.¹⁴ Following the French Revolution—an event that galvanized High Churchmen into a new and heightened phase of apologetic activity—Stevens supported and promoted William Jones's SRP, working mainly behind the scenes. Although unsuccessful as a society, Stevens helped Jones launch the High Church periodical, the *British Critic*, though even this important contribution to the revival of High Church journalism was eventually lost to editors unsympathetic to the dogmatic Hutchinsonianism of Jones and his friends. Jones's fallout with the editors of the *British Critic* demonstrates the centrality that Hutchinsonianism held for his High Churchmanship—a characteristic shared by Stevens. Jones died in 1800, leaving Stevens to defend the intellectual legacy of Jones; something Stevens did willingly and with vigour. Thus Stevens continued the divisive dispute with the *British Critic* at a time when High Churchmanship, throughout the 1790s, could have benefited from a more united and less idiosyncratic

¹² [William Stevens], *The Revolution Vindicated and Constitutional Liberty Asserted*, Cambridge, 1777, 14.

¹³ See Chapter 4, 169-198.

¹⁴ See Chapter 5, 285-318.

intellectual makeup. Stevens's attacks upon the *British Critic*, which culminated in his 1801 biography of Jones, provide justification for the claim that by the turn of the nineteenth century Hutchinsonianism had become a distractive and outdated ideology, a fact that helps explain its decline as an ideological force.

Nonetheless, despite its flaws, Hutchinsonianism had positive elements. The Enlightenment threat of natural religion, for example, and the belief held by Stevens (and Horne and Jones) that nature devoid of revelation produced theological heterodoxy—especially a denial of the Trinity—led the Hutchinsonians to make strident (albeit peculiar) defences of orthodox Trinitarianism, asserting the Hutchinsonian belief that nature and science attested to a Triune Godhead. There is also a need to acknowledge the fact that the *British Critic* and the revival of High Church journalism had its origins in the efforts of Stevens and his friends, and this, with other more successful journalistic endeavours—notably, the *Anti-Jacobin Review* and the *Orthodox Churchman's Magazine*—were important efforts at promoting High Church perspectives as well as refuting Jacobinism and the principles of the late Enlightenment. Despite its idiosyncrasies and the pedantically defensive dogmatism with which its adherents—including Stevens—exhibited, Hutchinsonianism can still be credited with providing the ideological bond for the most influential circle of High Churchmen who lived during the late eighteenth century.

Theological activism was, however, only one part of Stevens's influence within the High Church tradition. Additionally, more practical exertions on behalf of Anglicanism—what this thesis has termed 'ecclesiastical activism'—was a characteristic that was prominent in Stevens's life.¹⁵ Indeed, for High Churchmen,

¹⁵ See Chapter 6.

practicality was an inseparable part of the spiritual life—an aspect of the High Church promotion of good works as evidence of a justified life. Stevens’s life was in many ways a demonstration of this—his outward religious conduct being matched by an equally punctilious attendance to the effective and regular giving of his wealth and time to individuals and institutions that were associated with the Church of England.¹⁶ Stevens particularly supported the poorer clergy and their families, giving away what can only be estimated as thousands of pounds of his own money over the course of his life. He also personally involved himself in the running and maintenance of some of the charities and institutions he supported. The SPG, the Corporation for the Sons of the Clergy and Queen Anne’s Bounty thus benefited from Stevens’s talents, who took on roles in those societies that required the mind of a lay member versed in organisational and financial skills. Stevens’s example of practical service within Anglican institutions during the late eighteenth century—and that of numerous other dedicated members of the Anglican laity—is a demonstration of the importance that lay figures like himself had within the eighteenth-century Church of England.

Of course, ecclesiastical activism should not be interpreted as representing a distinctly separate area to that of Stevens’s ideological concerns. Indeed, the particular theological characteristics of Stevens’s style of High Churchmanship noted above—a non-erastian ecclesiology and a commitment to Hutchinsonianism—found practical outlet in his work on behalf of the Scottish Episcopal Church that

¹⁶ Stevens was certainly regarded as a classic exponent of High Church spirituality by the generation that followed him (see Robert Andrews, ‘“Master in the Art of Holy Living”: The Sanctity of William Stevens’ in Peter Clarke and Tony Claydon (eds), *Saints and Sanctity*, Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2011, 307-317).

occurred from the late 1780s through to the early nineteenth century.¹⁷ Following the events surrounding the consecration of Samuel Seabury by Scottish bishops to the episcopate for the United States in 1784, the small and persecuted Scottish Episcopal Church became the object of concern from Stevens and his friends—all of whom were theologically attracted to the Scottish Church's non-established status and predominantly Hutchinsonian clergy. Thus Stevens and a small committee that included his future biographer, James Allan Park, helped the Scots with the London-based political campaigning required for the Scottish Church to gain legal toleration, which eventually proved successful.

In other ways Stevens was supportive of the Scottish Episcopal Church, helping them financially and even attempting (in vain) to get Jonathan Boucher consecrated as the Bishop of Edinburgh in the hope that unity could be sought between the native Scottish Church and the separate qualified congregations. The interaction between Stevens and the Scottish High Churchmen, and the trust, expertise and help they sought from him, was another feature of a High Church layman respected for his ability to operate as a point of contact between the Scots and the leaders of the Church of England. The leadership of the Scottish Episcopal Church saw in Stevens a lay member of the Church of England who possessed the theological mind and the ecclesiastical skills to effectively operate on their behalf.

In 1800 when the Club of Nobody's Friends had been instituted in Stevens's honour, he had become one of the last influential High Churchmen of a generation that had great influence on late eighteenth-century Anglicanism. By the closing years of his life, Stevens possessed a collection of clerical and lay friends who esteemed and respected his contribution and legacy towards the defence and maintenance of

¹⁷ See Chapter 6, 343ff.

High Church principles during a period of ideological threat. When Stevens sat at the table of Nobody's Friends there was a recognition and respect that speaks in favour of the contention of this thesis that Stevens was one of the leading and influential High Churchmen of his age. That he was a layman makes this achievement more significant.

Indeed, Anglican High Churchmanship received much of its direction and influence from this devout and energetic lay activist. Put differently, Stevens deserves to be named alongside the likes of Samuel Horsley, George Horne, William Jones and Charles Daubeny, when the influence of the High Church tradition in the late eighteenth century is noted. Like all these High Church leaders, Stevens was representative of an expression of High Churchmanship that was at home in the ideologically combative environment of the late Enlightenment. Moreover, Nigel Aston's contention—echoed by numerous other revisionist studies in recent years—that 'Conservative forces in the Georgian Church are not to be underestimated' is given further justification by an examination of Stevens's life.¹⁸ However, Stevens's lay status makes his contributions to theological and ecclesiastical activism unique among the influential High Churchmen of his age—his life and achievements being a testament to the importance of the laity to the High Church tradition, and a corrective towards the inclination of High Church historiography to regard it solely as a clerical tradition. Stevens, of course, was no saint—and this thesis by no means attempts to advance the sort of hagiographical thesis that Park did in the early nineteenth century. Nonetheless, there is no denying Park's general contention: that Stevens's lay contribution to late eighteenth-century Anglican High Churchmanship

¹⁸ Nigel Aston, 'Horne and Heterodoxy: The Defence of Anglican Beliefs in the Late Enlightenment', *English Historical Review*, vol.108, no.429, 1993, 895.

deserves to be written about and noted as being unique to his age. To use Park's phrase, Stevens was, without question, an 'extraordinary layman'.¹⁹

¹⁹ Park, *Memoirs*, 4th edn, 97.

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