

'To govern is to make subjects believe'¹: anticlericalism, politics and power, c1680-1717'

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Samuel Johnson (1649-1703), educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, 'after regular Study' took Holy Orders and was made rector of the parish of Corringham in Essex in 1670 by the generosity of his patron Mr Bidolph. The latter, 'observing Mr Johnson's inclination to the study of politicks, advis'd him to read *Bracton* and *Fortescue de Laudibus Legum Anglia*, &c. that he might be acquainted with the old *English Constitution*'. Bidolph far from encouraging Johnson to mix politics and religion in the pulpit insisted that he should by no means 'make Politicks the subject of his Sermons; because he had taken notice that many Clergymen had given their hearers bad impressions, and fill'd their heads with false notions of those things which they had a very imperfect knowledge of themselves'. Although Johnson took his patron's advice and 'never meddled with Politicks in the Pulpit', he used his knowledge of the 'English Constitution' to great effect in his printed writings 'for no man wrote with more Boldness and Zeal for the legal Polity of his Country'.² He became one of the central publicists for the radical Whig cause of the 1690s.³ His reputation as a patriot and defender of English liberty against 'Popery and Slavery' brought him to the position of domestic chaplain to Lord William Russell (d. 1683). Johnson, fiercely committed to opposing tyranny in both political and theological forms, persuaded Russell to stand firm in his advocacy of the principles of political resistance (for which he was executed in 1683) and himself suffered prosecution and

imprisonment for his writings comparing James, Duke of York to Julian the Apostate. In particular, Johnson had exposed the false doctrine of passive obedience and 'the Divine, Indefeasible and Hereditary Right of the Lineal Succession' which had been advanced by Churchmen inclined to 'Popery and Slavery'. Committed to a belief that 'Resistance may be us'd in case our religion and rights be invaded', coupled with an assertion that 'Government is not matter of Revelation'⁴, Johnson attempted to provoke 'Protestant' officers and soldiers in the Army 'not to serve as Instruments to enslave their Country, and to ruin the Religion they profess'd' by the distribution of a paper 'An Humble and Hearty Address to all the English Protestants in the present Army'.⁵ For such incitement Johnson was again brought before the King's Bench in June, 1686. He was found guilty of high misdemeanour.

The Judge, Sir Francis Withens, imposed a severe sentence upon Johnson: he was to pay 'Five hundred Marks to the King, and to lie in prison till 'twas paid: to stand thrice in the Pillory, in the Pallace-Yard, at Charingcross, and at the Old Exchange: and to be whipt by the Common Hangman from Newgate to Tyburn'.⁶ Apprehending that such punishment would bring 'scandal to the Clergy' the Judges insisted that Johnson should be 'degraded from his Ministerial Function and Preferment'.⁷

Johnson had become, in the words of the circular letter sent out by the commissioners for the suspended Bishop of London, 'infamous to the whole Order of the Clergy'. Summoned to the Convocation House at St Pauls on the 20th of November, to appear before the Bishops of Durham, Rochester and Peterborough 'with some Clergymen, and many spectators' Johnson was charged with 'great misbehaviours'. Allowed neither a copy of the libel against him, nor an advocate, the sentence was pronounced against him 'that he should be declar'd an Infamous person: that he should be depriv'd of his Rectory: that he should be a mere Layman, and no clerk; and be depriv'd of all Right and Privelege of Priesthood'. Although

Johnson appealed against the legality of the proceedings his protestations were refused and the ritual of degradation was performed: 'by putting a square Cap on his Head, and then taking it off; by pulling off his gown and girdle ... Then they put a Bible into his hands, which he not parting with readily, they took it from him by force'.⁸ With the removal of his 'vestes sacerdotales' he was reduced to the status of 'merus laicus'.⁹ On the 22nd of November[†] the sentence against Johnson was executed: he was put in the pillory, his clerical cassock having first been torn off. On the 1st December with forbearance and piety he suffered 317 lashes 'with a whip of nine cords knotted'. Johnson's living was taken away and Thomas Berrow was granted it in his stead.¹⁰

After the Glorious Revolution Johnson was released from prison and the House of Commons undertook an investigation into his treatment. His conviction and punishment was declared 'cruel and illegal', a bill was introduced to reverse the judgement and an address was 'made to His Majesty to recommend Mr Johnson to some ecclesiastical preferment, suitable to his Services and Sufferings'. Unfortunately although Johnson regained his living at Corringham he did not achieve further preferment: according to his friend John Hampden, this was because his continued opposition to divine right principles of passive obedience and non-resistance (especially in his account of James II's deposition) generated hostility amongst 'Divines of Note' who upheld such doctrine. William III did however settle a pension and compensation upon Johnson and his son.¹¹ The treatment and actions of Samuel Johnson allow some consideration of commonplace attitudes towards the status and public function of the priesthood. The evidence of his degradation indicates not only the seriousness of his 'misdemeanours', but also (ironically) the value placed upon the sacredness of the 'ministerial function'. Johnson's crime was to have meddled with the shibboleths of political ideology: in denying the injunctions

of *de jure divino* obligation he had compromised his sacred duty. 'Republican' accounts of political authority were deemed incompatible with the authority of the priesthood. In convicting Johnson of such deviance, both the King's Bench and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, did not want to impugn the public authority of the priesthood and thus he was degraded to the status of a mere layman. The corporal punishment of Johnson prompted by his excursions into political theory at the same time as it indicated the deviance of such political ideologies, reinforced and re-stated the sanctity of the priesthood. Johnson the Republican was punished to preserve the authority of the 'Holy Function' of his priesthood. To those magistrates and bishops who judged him in 1686, republican political language was incompatible with the sacerdotal office. Johnson's parishioners in Corringham, Essex saw the matter in a different light when they refused to allow the induction of his successor, 'even at a time when the Court carry'd all by violence'. Thomas Berrow who had been nominated to the parish in 1686 had difficulty in gaining legal acknowledgement of the legality of Johnson's deprivation from reputable common and civil lawyers. Indeed the three Bishops who had degraded Johnson only allowed Berrow 'institution' to the parish upon the receipt of a bond of indemnity for £500.¹² Notwithstanding these legal procedures Berrow 'could never get entrance, but was oblig'd to return *re infecta*'. Although, technically, Johnson held no legal right to the living the 'great respect' and 'good will' of his parishioners meant that he was restored 'both to his Orders and this Living' until his death in 1703.¹³ Clearly those men and women in his cure regarded his religious conduct and performance as a priest, acceptable and worthy. Johnson's career as a political polemicist in the 1690s when he became the most militant of propagandists for the commonwealth cause in defence of 'revolution principles' was not perceived to compromise his status as a cleric.¹⁴ Johnson's distinction as the pre-eminent Whig cleric was reinforced by the post-humous publication of his collected works in 1710 into a political context where

the relationship between clerical status and ideological correctness had been contested during the trial of the ultra-Henry Sachaverell.

If Johnson was meticulous about keeping 'politics' out of his sermons, Benjamin Hoadly (1676-1761) rector of St Peter Le Poor, and later Bishop of Bangor, used his position in the pulpit to declaim against the false politics of contemporary Churchmen. Johnson, in indicting false political dogma like passive obedience and hereditary succession, had cause to describe some clergy as 'pimps to divinity' for their political use of the sermon to reinforce *de jure divino* conceptions of authority. Hoadly, between 1709 and 1717, contrived a series of arguments in defence of the same 'revolution principles' advanced by Johnson which ultimately undercut the sacerdotal nature of the Christian Church. As a Churchman, Hoadly inspired the 'most bitter ideological conflict of the century'.¹⁵ As another contemporary wrote, Hoadly 'had, by his writings done more harm to the Church of Christ and the Protestant cause than any man living'.¹⁶ Between 1705 and 1708 in a series of sermons and pamphlets Hoadly had undertaken a defence of Bucerian readings of the key Biblical injunction of Romans 13 'Obey the Powers that be' to justify the deposition of unjust Jacobean regal power in 1689. Political obligation was due only to rulers who pursued the good of the commonwealth: popular resistance to tyranny was just. A key part of Hoadly's polemic concentrated upon the destructive nature of divine right accounts of political and religious authority. The 'drum ecclesiastic' was one of the loudest trumpeters of such divine right accounts. In his sermon of 1717 'The Nature of the Kingdom or Church of Christ', Hoadly, by now a Royal Chaplain, articulated a fundamental critique of sacerdotalist claims. His sermon, prompted by the post-humous publication of the Nonjuror George Hickes' *Constitution of the Catholic Church* (1716) which defended a *jure divino* conception of Church and

State, rebutted the clericalist claim that they 'stood in God's stead'.¹⁷ Key to Hoadly's argument was the rejection of supernaturalist claims by the established Church. The Church of Christ should not be confused with the Church of England: there was no 'visible' succession from Christ, through the Apostles to the contemporary Church establishment. Contrary to assertions in favour of the sacredness of the clerical order, Hoadly insisted that 'he hath ... left behind him no visible, human authority; no vicegerents who can be said properly to supply his place; no interpreters upon whom his subjects are absolutely to depend; no judges over the consciences or religion of his people'.¹⁸ The high church dominated Lower House of Convocation in committee was swift to contest Hoadly's arguments characterising them as a subversion of 'all government and discipline in the Church of Christ' which would 'reduce His kingdom to a state of anarchy and confusion'.¹⁹ Before such condemnation could be formally acknowledged and supported by Convocation, Hoadly's ministerial supporters contrived to have the institution prorogued. The suspensions of Convocational discussions did not stop controversial engagement. It has been estimated that some fifty authors contributed around two hundred tracts. Most contemporary historians have been content to dismiss the intellectual content of the controversy and merely to note the formal termination of meetings of Convocation. The marginalisation of the significance of this contestation over the relationship between clerical power and political authority needs profound reconsideration. As William Law pointed out, the conceptual logic of Hoadly's arguments led to the dissolution of 'the Church as a society'.²⁰ The practical consequence of the controversy was the silencing of the Church as a constitutional institution.

According to the commonplace accounts of the Bangorian controversy Hoadly is treated as a rather eccentric and perhaps treacherous cleric. A man over enthused by Lockean, and possibly Hobbesian, understandings of the relationship between

belief and authority, who reduced the Church to a voluntary society unhindered either by civil tests or sacerdotal direction. Hoadly's status as a clergyman has usually been dismissed with a few comments about his non-residence and pluralism. Such a limited appreciation of his churchmanship has licensed secularist understandings of his ecclesiology: since (it is argued) Hoadly cared little for the pastoral or spiritual duties of the cure, it seems sensible to regard his description of the Church as an essentially desacralised and anticlerical institution. Such an historiographical position makes an island of Hoadly's contribution and marginalises the importance of debates about the nature of the Church and the concomittant status of the clergy. Just as Samuel Johnson behaved like a bad priest because he denied divine right theories of government, so Benjamin Hoadly was an even worse churchman because he repudiated the sacerdotal status of the Church. Between Johnson writing in the early 1680s and Hoadly in the 1710s there appears to have been a continuity of Whig clergymen attacking the status and authority of the Church of England. Both Johnson and Hoadly were men of 'revolution principles': many contemporaries saw this political heritage as the font of their anticlericalism. Johnson's 'republican' credentials are unimpeachable. That Hoadly drew inspiration from the same sources can be seen in the hostile contemporary prints of 1709 which represent him at his desk composing his sermon prompted by the ghost of Cromwell and the Devil. In the background, a bookshelf complete with volumes of Hobbes, Harrington, Sidney, Toland, Locke, Baxter, Tindal and Bacon illustrate the irreligious way of print Hoadly had consumed.²¹ 'Republican' accounts of political government bred an anticlericalism even amongst Whig clergymen. Men like Johnson and Hoadly, objected not just to the status of the Clergy as 'men of God', but also to their perceived social and political authority.

In order to explore the meaning and significance of the anticlericalism articulated by men like Johnson and Hoadly (among many others) it is clearly necessary to understand what representations or constructions of clericalism they contested. What was it to be a priest? What functions, rights, duties, gifts, offices, were associated with the cure? Were the origins of such faculties divine or conventional, apostolic or prophetic, indelible or institutional? While there have been studies of the Clergy as a profession, of the economic problems of the Church, and of the complex ecclesiological models adopted by different theological movements in the administration of the church in England there has been little historical examination of the changing construction of 'priesthood' in the early modern period. Inscribing descriptions of the the rights, powers and privileges of the Church was clearly not simply a religious or spiritual matter as thinkers like Thomas Hobbes were very well aware: priests, clergymen, rectors, lecturers, curates, deans, bishops, preachers, chaplains, all attracted, wielded and performed different types of religious and social power. To define the 'Church' as the body of the congregation, or only those anointed by bishops, or baptised by ministers, or those saved, or whatever, was a matter of precise and dangerous implied practice. Defining priesthood was one of the key moments in the politics of subordination that structured early modern society. What Johnson and Hoadly attempted was to challenge one of the dominant and commonplace understandings of what priesthood and clerical authority was. In disputing the authenticity of such status a threat was posed to the heirarchical structure of social and political power.

Given that the nature of the priesthood was not a fixed quantity but being continually defined, refined and contested the intention here is to examine the most ascendant conception of clerical authority.²² It was this conception that was the subject of radical challenges both from within and without the religious establishment. One way

of exploring the hinterland of belief about the nature of the clergy is to examine the various handbooks for religious practice that structured the passage of the year. Here conceptual understandings intertwined with devotional ritual and prayer. One of the persistently popular works of this genre was Robert Nelson's *A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England* first published in 1704, described by one historian as 'a complete popular manual of Anglican theology', it had achieved some twenty-eight editions by 1800.²³ Nelson, a nonjuring layman with intimate links to the established church, was prompted to publish his work to defend the Church from the threat of impiety and atheism. As he commented, 'Among those crying Abominations, which like a torrent, have overspread the Nation, this Age seems to distinguish itself by a great contempt of the Clergy'. In describing the 'Ember Fasts' and associated instructions Nelson intended to refurbish clerical authority: 'If these subjects make any impression upon men's minds, as they will most certainly, if calmly and seriously considered, it will startle the boldest sinner, to find that in contemning this Order of Men, he affronts his Maker; and in despising the Minister of the Gospel, he despiseth Him that sent him'. If veneration for the Clergy could be 'early instilled into tender minds' it might be possible that the next generation could 'retrieve that respect to the sacred Order which we so scandalously want in this'.²⁴ In the work Nelson, in catechitical form, detailed the dignity and power of the 'Holy Orders'. Priesthood was an honourable employment with 'the same work in kind ... with that of the Blessed Angels'. Clergymen were 'minsterring spirits' bringing to mankind the benefits of baptism, the sacraments and absolution. As the primitive Christians had acknowledged 'there could be no Church without Priests', for it was 'by their means that God conveyed to men all those mighty blessings which were purchased by Christ's Death'. The clergyman was commissioned by Christ to act for God importantly in the 'administration of Holy things'. The very titles of dignity indicated their sacerdos: they were 'ministers of Christ, stewards of the Mysteries of

God ... Ambassadors for Christ in Christ's stead. Co-workers with him, Angels of the Churches'. Each priest was 'empowered and authorised to negotiate and transact for God'. Priesthood was not a trade: the divine and legal rights accrued to their dignity (such as tithes) were necessary to preserve the sanctity of their status and the respect for religion. Indeed preserving the reputation, piety and integrity of Churchmen was essential to promoting the 'interests of religion, whose fate very much depends upon the reputation of those who feed and govern the Flock of Christ'. Those who opposed revelation took every opportunity to 'represent their sacred function only as a trade'.²⁵ The priesthood then was a divine and powerful order: co-workers, administrators, stewards, ambassadors of Christ and God. Such men were 'empowered and authorised to negotiate and transact for God'.²⁶

Such a sacerdotal conception of the priesthood was clearly contentious even within the parameters of orthodoxy. While Article XIX (of the 39) had established the 'visible' Church of Christ, the ecclesiological dimensions and nature of such 'visibility' had varied greatly within Trinitarian Protestant discourses. In one form or another the Church was a mechanism for the 'incarnation' of divine justice: whether placing soteriological emphasis upon pulpit or sacrament, on baptism or absolution, the 'Church' entertained an *ordo* (that is they had a spiritual quality and function), if not *jurisdictio* (that is an authority to exercise their *ordo*), made by God. The high church ecclesiology embodied in Nelson's *Collection* was cognate with that established by the *Book of Common Prayer*. The central themes of such a description of the visible 'Anglican' communion stress order, obedience and subordination. The divine apostolicity of the institution enabled the soteriologically correct administration of the sacraments: *sallus extra ecclesia non est*. The Clergy were mediators of Christ: the spiritual succession of Bishops, priests and deacons guaranteed the holiness of the two key sacraments of baptism and eucharist.²⁷ As Clark, and more recently A.M.C.

Waterman, have indicated this hierarchical and divine model of the Christian community also implied a politics of subordination in a civil context. As Nelson put it succinctly 'that the good of the state is hereby more secured, in those instructions men receive from the Ministers of God, in the necessary Duties of Obedience, Justice and Fidelity'.²⁸ Or as the *Book of Common Prayer* enjoined that every child must learn 'to honour and obey the King, and all that are put in authority under him'. The good Christian must submit to all 'governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters'.²⁹ Just as the ecclesiastical polity was the product of Christ's incarnation, so was the civil polity: the significance of the dictum 'no bishop, no king' cannot be too heavily underscored. Priests, then, not only sanctified religion, but politics too.

Attacks upon the priesthood implied an assault upon the institution that 'made' political authority. The 'principle of subordination' (whether religious or political) was not just articulated as a conceptual discourse, but was a 'truth' or 'knowledge' made into belief by a complex interaction of print, practice and performance. As de Certeau has indicated, 'belief' is as much a matter of social relationship as propositional content. For example, the status of priest as 'co-worker' with God enabled a community to achieve a set of beliefs about the divinity of a structure of social relationships, not because of the 'correctness' of those 'beliefs', but because of the 'sacredness' of the cultural relationship between priest and laity. As Hobbes understood acutely it was precisely because most people 'believed' in the divine authority of the Church that it was such a powerful political institution. Unpicking the 'authority' of the institution was a more radical and more incisive strategy than merely targeting the (corrupt) 'beliefs' that the Church instilled in the laity: thus in Chapter 42 of *Leviathan* Hobbes deconstructed the authenticity of any claim to an apostolic, visible Church of Christ. The person of the priest, rather than just the idea of

'priesthood' was a powerful, and therefore contested, institution. To advance anticlerical suggestions within this context was a matter of dangerous import.

One historiographical benefit of taking the political status of the 'priest' seriously is that it will enfranchise a reconsideration of the nature and consequence of 'anticlericalism' in a wider than commonplace context. Treating 'anticlericalism' as the manifestation of a crisis of clerical authority, and consequently a transgression of customary structures of subordination and hierarchy, may enable a continuity of political contestation to be suggested from the 1640s to the 1720s which integrates discourses of religion into the mainstream of political debate. Surprisingly, there has been little historiographical labour devoted to the analysis of anticlericalism as a conceptual, theological or heterodox discourse in the early modern period.

Admittedly there has been some entrenched engagement between Reformation scholars over the influence and meaning of 'anticlericalism'. As Dickens has pointed out 'Anti-clericalism has become an unduly capacious word' encompassing descriptions of the systematic erastianism of theorists like Marsiglio of Padua, to petty squabbles between parish vicars and their parishioners.³⁰ Arguing against Haigh, who had suggested that 'anticlericalism' was a consequence rather than cause of the Reformation in England, Dickens, weaving together an eclectic combination of literary, legal, economic and theological positions, insisted that 'anticlericalism' exercised a profound and determining influence in the shape of the English reformation. Although here is clearly not the place to attempt any arbitration of the historiographical dispute, the contours of the debate indicate both the difficulty

and (consequent) importance of coming to some agreement about what 'anticlericalism' was.

A superficial survey of accounts of seventeenth and eighteenth century 'anticlericalism' made in the current historiography would indicate a number of key concerns. One of the most obvious, and indeed most persistent, prompts to the manifestation of anticlerical activities was the particular economic grievance of tithes. Whether prompted by price inflation, dearth, the introduction of new crops, the renegotiation of rents, individual initiative or theological principle, the imposition of tithe payment were a source for the generation of hostility towards the Church and Churchmen.³¹ There were conceptual challenges to the principles of divine right tithes, and there were many individual oppositions to particular local practices: such disagreements remained a potentially disputatious matter into the nineteenth century.³² Disagreements about such a clearly material matter as tithes when combined with the commonplace disputes focused upon the personal characteristics, corruptions or moral failings of individual clerics might legitimately be termed 'popular' anticlericalism. A second powerful moment of hostility towards the Church can be identified in the explosion of erastian legislation against the Laudian ecclesiastical establishment in the 1640s. As Morrill has indicated, the Parliamentary dis-establishment of the legal, moral, and theological authority of the Church of England, between 1640 and 1645 was both radical and prompted by popular petitioning from the localities. The civil legislation attacked not only the ecclesiological jurisdiction of the established Church, but also the religious and moral failings of the 'scandalous' clergy in each parish.³³ Such state sanctioned anticlericalism provided the context for a much more diffuse and virulent public assault upon 'clergy power' manifest in the sectarian discourses examined by Hill in *The World Turned Upside Down*. Whether articulating critiques of clerical corruption,

or more fundamental indictments of clerical vocation, Quakers, Leveller, Baptists, Diggers, Ranters, *et al* implicated 'the wicked prelates' in the polemic against tyranny. Drawing from a radical Protestant tradition that opposed conformity to episcopal authority, combined with a stress on the tenderness and liberty of Christian conscience saw the connection made between civil and priestly oppression. Public pamphleteers like Lilburne, Walwyn, Overton and Winstanley (among many others) inviegled against the 'blackcoats' who 'bewitched' and beguiled the people with 'flattering, seducing words'. As William Hartley succinctly indicated in his title to a 1649 tract, the priest's patent [was] cancelled.³⁴ Although the critique of the clergy was fundamental in many cases undercutting any notion of apostolic *sacerdos* it is important to note that the premise of much of this anticlericalism (whether articulated in the Long Parliament or in the pamphlet literature of Winstanley) was eschatological or apocalyptic.³⁵ In other words such critiques of priesthood were articulated from within a theological idiom, rather than against a religious principle. Such a tradition of reforming polemic became a commonplace of dissident Protestant communities after 1660 in particular in the challenge to the apostolicity of the established Church.

The 1640s and 1650s also saw the origins of a form of radical erastian anticlericalism that extended theological criticism into an attack upon 'priestcraft' of all clerical institutions. Contrived in an historical and conceptual form, the writings of Thomas Hobbes and James Harrington laid the foundations for a later polemic against any notion of a 'visible and apostolic' Church. Undercutting clerical authority in terms of hermeneutics and epistemology, later writers like Charles Blount, John Toland, Matthew Tindal and John Trenchard, built on Hobbes' and Harrington's arguments to deny the existence of divine *sacerdos* in any religious institutions. In

doing so they constructed deistical and freethinking platforms that would influence eighteenth century Enlightenment anticlericalism. Although there is an increasing historical interest in the anticlericalism of this deistical tradition the premise of much of the historiography is forward looking rather than contextual, in the sense that the significance of such writers is said to be found in the act of transmitting a commonwealth ideology to the intellectual culture of the eighteenth century, rather than an assessment of the place of such anticlericalism within the debates and disputes of their own time. One of the consequences of the current approach to anticlericalism is that it has been identified as a marginal, radical, unstable and intellectually heterodox quantity: 'anticlericalism' is something that radical sectarians, dissenters and perhaps 'atheists' did against the grain of traditional religious culture. Thus the sectarian dissidence of the 1640s and 1650s has little to do with the culture of radicalism after the Restoration, and the English deists are regarded as peripheral to the political history of the period after the 1690s.³⁶ This marginalisation of the significance of anticlericalism is all the more extraordinary given that the most recent development in the historiography of the Restoration and after, places emphasis upon the importance of religion to political conflicts.

It was commonly argued that the Restoration saw the waning of the importance and influence of religious culture and the shift towards a modern secular structure of politics. This was traditionally thought to be manifest most obviously in the increasing significance of Parliament, and in particular, in the growth of a party politics in both Commons and constituency. The revisions of a number of recent works have suggested that religion persisted as a determining influence in national and local life. Such research substitutes a language of the politics of religious or ecclesiastical crisis, for that of the politics of party. The politics of religious confessionality revolved around defences of toleration or insistence upon conformity, or of the

necessity of order as against the essentially adiaphoristic nature of ceremony and forms of worship. Whether in terms of national politics or the study of local communities 'religion' remained a powerful domain of contested authority.³⁷ The emphasis upon ecclesiology, and the consequent interest, in particular, in dissenting or non-conformist cleavages, has led perhaps to an over-defined appreciation of the nature of the range of contested 'religious' positions. A characterisation of the politics of religion that represents it as a battle between Anglicans and Presbyterians, or conformists and dissenters has tended to obscure the relevance of anticlericalism in favour of studying the implications (for example) of competing theologies of grace, or the debate over the efficacy of persecution. The conflicts that punctuated the Restoration and after were driven by a fierce competition for the appropriation of the communal language of 'true religion' to one particular platform. Although historians have designed the labels of 'established' and 'dissenting', it is important not to conceive of these descriptions as fully programmatic identities: the battle for capturing the high ground of 'true religion' (especially given the powerful authority of print culture) was fought out between a *melée* of shifting discursive allegiances. One of the central, and most contentious, definitional struggles was over the nature of the Church: 'anticlericalism' was intimately related to these disputes. Arguments about the standing of the 'priest' were ultimately part of the mainstream of political debate about the location and distribution of authority within the communal hierarchy.

One of the achievements of the current historiography of late seventeenth and early eighteenth religious culture is the underscoring of the strength of clerical involvement in both national and local society. Whether drawing from the research of John Spurr or the collection of important essays edited by Heydon, Taylor and Walsh it is possible to argue that from the 1660s the Church in England experienced a process of material, theological, pastoral, intellectual and cultural refurbishment. The study of

the institutional performance and practice of religion in the period has indicated the importance of a range of relationships between and among (for example) clerical discourse, parochial traditions, ceremony and the material form of church buildings, individual belief and communal convictions.³⁸ The powers of the 'clerical' world were not simply theological or spiritual but importantly also practical. Churchmen exercised authority in the world of belief. Clergymen were not limited to articulation and cultivation of doctrinal or ritual positions as codified in the *Thirty-Nine Articles*, the Act of Uniformity or the *Book of Common Prayer*: as Thomas has shown churchmen offered counsel in a far wider range of social, moral and political concerns.³⁹

One of the increasingly visible activities that clergymen undertook was periodic commentary and advice upon the principles of political subordination. Reinforcing the language of social stability and political order became a staple 'political' element in the sermonising of Restoration divines: the purpose was to inculcate the habit of obedience, consequently one of the persistent linguistic themes of 'Anglican' sermons after the 1670s was an hostility towards theories of social contract, equality, natural rights and resistance.⁴⁰ By the 1690s and 1700s such 'political' sermons became especially identified with the critical dates of the execution of Charles I (dismissed as 'general madding day' by John Toland), the restoration of his son, and the anniversary of November 5th (either the Gunpowder Plot, or the Glorious Revolution): again studies of such sermons witness the increasing stridence and confidence of Anglican clergymen in reinforcing the languages of divine right heirarchy in Church and State.⁴¹ The clergymen of the established church were more than simple voice-pieces for subordinationist ideology: Bennet writing of the early eighteenth century described the high churchmen as 'theorists, writers and election agents' for the Tory party.⁴² The relationship between churchmanship and politics

had been forged in the electoral activities during the contests for the three Exclusion Parliaments between 1679 and 1681. Although the research of Goldie and, more recently, Miller suggests that the prompt to the insurgence of clerical influence into both national and local politics was the relationship Danby forged with the Bishops in the House of Lords from the mid-1670s in his pursuit of a more effective enforcement of anti-dissent strategies, by the late 1670s such 'politicking' was not confined to episcopal figures.⁴³

In the election of 1679 the clergy exercised, for the first time, the right to vote in parliamentary elections. Many did so *en masse* for Court and King: 200 hundred 'black-coats' turned out at the poll against the Whig candidate in Essex.⁴⁴ Whether circulating letters against specific figures, haranging the electorate at the poll, or collaborating in the production of Addresses and Instruction, the clergy were certainly regarded by Whig parliamentarians as corrupters of political liberties. Effective authors of Whig propaganda like Henry Care launched a virulent polemic against 'the designs of some idle covetous sycophant Clergymen, who ... do in private parlours over the Glass, whilst healths go round, as well as in their pulpits over their cushions, set up Absolute monarchy to be de jure Divino'.⁴⁵ Country priests, it was alledged, spent more time reading the absolutist writings of Roger L'Estrange than the Bible.⁴⁶ One of the pejorative neologisms coined to describe the Tory bias of clerical behaviour was that of 'Tantivy' based upon a hunting cry. The political print *The Time Servers: or a Touch of the Times* [BMC 1112] of March 1681, indicates the thrust of such language in portraying a black coated hunter clergyman riding alongside a Tory gentleman whipping his steed on towards Rome and the Pope. That the Whig interest perceived a profound threat from the 'Tantivee Crew' is perhaps best illustrated from the various ballads and poems of the early 1680s. As one text of 1680 made clear, 'Priests were the first deluders of mankind, who with

vain faith made all their reason blind; not Lucifer himself more proud than they, and yet persuade the world they must obey'.⁴⁷ Other works denounced 'Baal's wretched curates', 'the prelate's false divinity', the 'debauched surcingled clergy', 'the tribe of Levi', 'the proud usurping priest': the main charge was the encouragement of 'blind obedience' to theories of divine right monarchy and hereditary succession.⁴⁸

Such themes can be revisited with even more emphasis in the early eighteenth century. The work of Speck on voting patterns has suggested that one of the only predictable blocs of voters were the Anglican clergy. Studying the evidence of poll books in elections in 1705 and 1710 his findings suggested that there was 'little doubt about the Toryism of the Clergy'.⁴⁹ Again Clergymen were involved in the preparation and distribution of election material such as addresses, letters of loyalty and newsletters like Dyer's. The clergy were, as one Whig put it in 1710, 'a standing and powerful interest' in the country. When such men heard the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance 'cry'd down, they think religion is at stake'.⁵⁰ The clergy again wielded influence by sermonising and by direct polling. Haranguing from the pulpit and preparation of addresses were continually noted in contemporary sources. One parson in Brentford in 1710 had 'no topics but resistance and schism, as if he was not so much afraid that his flock should be damned as that they should be Presbyterians and Whigs'.⁵¹ Moments of religious crisis like the 'Church in Danger' controversy of 1705 and the consequences of the 1710 Sachaverell Trial, saw churchmen swift to exploit the different forms of authority they could exercise. For example in Northampton in 1710 to rousing slogans like 'The Church, The Church' many clerics occupied the poll booth '(though several of them had no votes), browbeating and discouraging the electors'.⁵² At Salop county election in the same year the clergy 'came to poll in a body, with two Archdeacons at their head'. Defoe (in *The Review*, 1705) lamented that 'the parish vote with the parson, the people

ignorantly concluding that he who is, or ought to be, fit to guide them to heaven, may be supposed the best judge who is fittest to direct them in choosing members'.⁵³

The clergy then were a powerful, if informal, political instrument on behalf of the Tory interest. The insurgency of the highchurch clericalist challenge into national politics was also evident, from the mid-1690s, in a much more concrete institutional form. The history of Convocation, in particular the lower house (or Doctor's Commons), is closely associated with the reputation of Francis Atterbury who was almost single-handedly responsible for bringing it political authority with the publication of his *Letter to a Convocation Man* (1696). Brought back to life as an acting institution as the political return for the Earl of Rochester's support for William III, Convocation became the forum for the advance of clericalist programmes for reforming the nation. Although there has been much work on the ideological intentions of the 'new high church party' there has been little attention paid to the institutional history of Convocation. Without exaggeration it could be argued that Convocation (especially the lower house) was the most effective alternative forum for political opposition to the successive Whig ministries of the 1700s. However little research has been undertaken to explore the mechanics of clerical politics either within the Doctor's Commons, or in the spiritual constituencies. Elections to the lower house were concomitant procedurally with Parliamentary elections. Of the 146 members some fifty per cent were elected ex officio, 27 were elected by Cathedral Chapters or collegiate bodies and the remaining 44 by the clergy.⁵⁴ Just as there was a contested politics in the civil sphere so too there were electoral battles in each diocese, college and chapter. Little of this has been studied. The one thing that is certain is that the lower house was dominated in the 1700s and 1710s by the Atterburian interest. Although one recent commentator has dismissed the matter of Convocation as a 'dreary wasteland of strained arguments over legal precedents' it is difficult to under-

estimate the significance of the institution as representative indication of the strength of the clerical world.⁵⁵ The claims of Atterbury, and associated ideologists in the lower house, was that the clergy were a fourth estate, a central and powerful part of the constitution 'in Church and State'. At the heart of Atterbury's arguments was the assertion of the 'holy function' of the Church as the 'ministers of Christ'. After the 1710 electoral triumph (in both Convocation and Parliament) the strongest platform for clericalist reform was advanced on the constitutionalist premise of Atterbury's theory of Convocation. Establishing a link between the lower houses in both civil and spiritual institution the objective was to invoke a programme for the radical refurbishment of ecclesiastical and clerical authority: the re-invigoration of the disciplinary and judicial power of Church Courts, the improvement of clerical revenues and a schedule for the building of new churches, and the strengthening of anti-heretical powers.⁵⁶ The hierocratic premise and ambitions of the lower house of Convocation after 1710 were obvious and potential. 'Clergy power', as Winstanley might have put it, was very far from redundant. Given that the clericalist position was a powerful and effective one, entrenched both in local communities and in central offices and institutions it is hardly surprising that those who opposed convocational models of reform articulated their views in the form of a profound anticlericalism.

It was the premise of one of the most radical commonwealth pamphlets post 1689 that false principles of divinity and government had been foisted upon the people 'from the pulpit'.⁵⁷ At the end of the first decade of the eighteenth century this radical Whig critique met head on with the cynosure of *de jure divino* clericalists in the form of Henry Sachaverell DD of Magdalen College, Oxford. Sachaverell had established

a reputation as a highflyer in the early 1700 when his sermons had advanced the conjoined standards of divine right in Church and State. His arguments were notorious, not only for the extremity of their conceptual content, but also for the violence and vindictive hostility towards low churchmen, dissenters and Whigs. In his two most infamous sermons of August and November 1709 Sachaverell advanced the principles of non-resistance against the 'revolution principles' of 1689, at the same time as condemning 'false brethren' in Church and State. Toleration, occasional conformity, the non-conformists, the low church bishops, even Whig ministers of state were lashed as corrodors of true religion who should suffer punishment and reformation at the hands of the Godly priest. Prompted by the Whig John Dolben the House of Commons indicted both sermons as 'malicious, scandalous, and seditious libels, highly reflecting upon Her Majesty and her government, the late happy revolution, and the protestant succession'. Swift considered the consequent impeachment and trial of the churchman as an attempted martyrdom.⁵⁸ Although there was some hesitation about proceeding to such a public trial of clericalist principles for many Whig politicians it was a perfect opportunity perhaps once and for all to discipline a recalcitrant church. Indeed the historiographical understanding of the trial has tended to see it as a confrontation between the competing Whig and Tory ideologies: in essence a continuity of the fundamental debate about the meaning and significance of the Revolution settlement of 1689.⁵⁹ Sachaverell had insisted upon the principle of 'the subject's obligation to an absolute and unconditional obedience to the supream power, in all things lawful, and the utter illegality of resistance upon any pretence whatsoever'.⁶⁰ The threat of a Jacobite restoration made the public condemnation of *de jure divino* hereditary succession an urgent necessity to the Whig ministry and the security of a large parliamentary majority made the prosecution of Sachaverell look like a secure move. There is little doubt that the process of the trial was an opportunity to reinforce the

legitimacy of moderate 'revolution principles' in a form to benefit the party advantage of the Whigs. The popular reaction to the trial, and the reception (both in London and the provinces) Sachaverell inspired after his release, and the impact the ideological consequences of the trial had upon the general election of 1710, indicates the critical significance of the moment.

Although the intention here is not to downplay the importance of the political theory under discussion during the trial the crisis was not one simply concerned with ideological concepts but also involved a public review of the status of priesthood. That is, Sachaverell was placed on trial not simply for the content of his ideas, but for actually voicing such views: in doing so he had 'abused his Holy function'. His crime was not just to have advanced false political ideas, but as a churchman to have offered a political commentary in the first place. The trial was an attempt to rebut the clericalist idea of the 'independency' of the Church and to re-assert the principle 'by which all ecclesiastical jurisdiction ... is made subject to the civil power'.⁶¹ Indeed the opening premise of Sachaverell's *Perils* sermon had been that his role was 'to open the eyes of the deluded people' against the view that 'the pulpit is not a place for politics'.⁶² Since doctrines of church and state were 'so nicely correspondent and so happily intermixt' it was incumbent upon true churchmen to challenge all deviancy: 'heterodoxy in the doctrines of the one, naturally producing, and almost necessarily infering, Rebellion and high Treason in the other'.⁶³ Performing 'Political divinity' was Sachaverell's crime. As Robert Walpole emphasised the problem was amplified 'when the Pulpit takes up the Cudgels, when the cause of the enemies of our government is call'd the cause of God, and of the Church ... and the people are taught for their souls and conscience sake to swallow these pernicious doctrines'. The pulpit had been 'prostituted and polluted': the credit of the church had been abused.⁶⁴ Sachaverell had been insolent to suggest that civil authority could not

reverse ecclesiastical censure. Pulpits had become the 'mints of faction and sedition': Sachaverell had compounded his pride by insisting that 'the business of a Clergyman [is] to sound a trumpet in Sion'. Proper clerical language was 'prayers and tears' rather than 'arms and violence': Sachaverell had intended to 'raise the passions' of the public by the 'passion, heat and violence' of his sermon. He had manipulated Scripture, knowing the veneration and influence they held 'upon the minds of the people'. His objective was to make the people 'fancy they hear the voice of God, when they hear his words repeated'.⁶⁵ Sachaverell had insisted in his defence that he had merely done his 'duty as a clergyman'. On the contrary his prosecutors accused him of instilling 'groundless jealousies in the minds of the people': such pulpit pronounced doctrines stuck 'at the root of the present Government ...[and to] disquiet the minds, and tend to pervert the obedience of the subjects'.⁶⁶

Sachaverell's general defence was to argue that his position was no different from that held by the Church of England as established doctrine. Extracts from homilies, statutes and earlier fathers of the church all confirmed the duties of political obedience and that 'the spiritual power of Church pastors is not derived from the Civil magistrate but from God'. This *sacerdos* enfranchised the clergy to censure offenders against orthodoxy.⁶⁷ Given that, in Sachaverell's view, the state was inundated with blasphemy, irreligion and heresy there were plenty of grounds 'for a preacher in the pulpit to take notice of these matters'. Citing a 'black catalogue of prophaness and blasphemy'⁶⁸ he insisted that his 'holy function' was 'to exhort and rebuke with all Authority, and without distinction'. The dignity of his function, and the seriousness of heterodoxy, excused Sachaverell's 'zeal'.⁶⁹ Indeed in condemning impiety, Sachaverell had the cheek to suggest he was simply encouraging the enforcement of moral reformation as promoted by Royal Proclamation.⁷⁰ Sachaverell

was stalwart in his self-defence: he was simply a clergyman fulfilling the 'duty of his function'. His 'sacred profession' made him God's instrument enjoined to 'putting a stop to that overflowing of Ungodliness, and Blasphemy, which as yet no Laws, no proclamations, how well so ever design'd, and how often soever repeated, have been able to restrain'. As an 'ambassador of Christ' he was commanded 'in his name, to exhort and rebuke with all Authority'.⁷¹ For the Whig prosecution Sachaverell was an 'impostor and false prophet' who had betrayed the proper office of the priesthood.

Much of the exchange in the trial focused upon Sachaverell's claim that his position as a clergyman allowed and encouraged him to 'sound a trumpet'. He had used the biblical language of *Kings* and *Lamentations* both to condemn the iniquities of Whig society, and, to empower his critique. He had been accused by his prosecutors of deliberately mis-citing and mis-applying scriptural language to denigrate 'our present circumstances'.⁷² There was indeed no great perversion of scripture 'than to make use of the language of the Holy Ghost, to revile our *Neighbours*, to scandalize the *Government*, and to raise *Wrath*, *Sedition*, and *Rebellion* in the *People*.⁷³

Sachaverell was also challenged on his insistence that it was a clerical duty to 'sound a trumpet in Sion'. Trumpet blowing was a military matter, an instrument of war, a call to arms, not of the pulpit: the only priests who had blown trumpets in the Old Testament had 'literally' sounded them 'in the Army, in the field'.⁷⁴ If Scripture had been mis-cited by Sachaverell it was the result of faulty printing rather than hermeneutical error. As a priest Sachaverell had honestly and sincerely interpreted the meaning of Scripture, any mistakes were genuine not contrived to assail the Government. To control what clergymen issued from their pulpits was a devious and ungodly ambition: it was, as Sachaverell insisted 'the avow'd design of my

impeachment ... to have the clergy directed what Doctrines they are to preach and what not'.⁷⁵

These anticlerical themes were underscored in many of the contemporary reactions to the trial. The incident spawned a massive controversial literature which assumed a variety of forms - ballads, pamphlets, books, broadsheets, prints.⁷⁶ The response was not merely ideological but direct: the crowds and mobs of London were active and violent in their defence of 'The Church'. Such scenes of popular turbulence and violence directed against the lowchurch, the Whigs and Dissenter communities were repeated in the provinces, often prompted by Sachaverell's visit to local churchmen and their Tory patrons. Newspaper's like Swift's *Examiner* made it clear that the intentions of the Whig prosecution had been to attack the status of the clergy: 'what a violent humour hath run ever since against the Clergy, and from what corner spread and fomented, is, I believe, manifest to all men. It lookt like a set quarrel against Christianity'.⁷⁷ Antagonists like Arthur Mainwaring responded by emphasising the history of high church misdemeanour in his paper *The Medley*. In particular he berated the 'behaviour of the violent clergy before the Revolution' and 'all the fine sermons that they preach'd for Absolute Monarchy, the surrenders of Charters, which they influenc'd, the Abhorrences which they signed, and the Gineas which the two famous universities of our land, Oxford and Cambridge, contributed to Sir Roger L'Estrange, for writing on the side of Arbitrary Power'.⁷⁸ One of the persistent accusations made by Tories like Swift was that the contempt for the order of priesthood was sponsored by the 'public encouragement and patronage' the Whigs gave to men like 'Tindall, Toland and other Atheisticall writers'. As Wotton had commented with some concern to Wake, every 'well meaning Parson ... thinks that every Whig is of course a disciple of Toland and Tindal'.⁷⁹ Unsuprisingly, writers like Toland and Tindal, did indeed take every opportunity to lambast Sachaverell and

present to the public an understanding of the trial as a necessary attempt to neutralise the authority of the pulpit and clergy. Matthew Tindal had already provoked clerical ire in the immediate aftermath of the crisis of 'the Church in Danger' in 1705 by the publication of his *Rights of the Christian Church* (1706). Indeed this was one of the works cited by Sachaverell as indicating the incipient blasphemy of his persecutors.⁸⁰ Tindal, amongst other works, was responsible for publishing an historical account of high church atrocities against such figures as Leighton, Burton and Prynne: Sachaverell was another Sibthorpe or Manwayring.⁸¹ John Toland too contributed a number of commentaries upon the significance of the trial.

Those writings of Toland, directly prompted by the trial, have received little historiographical attention. He composed at least four works: three shorter pamphlets and one lengthy history of the trial itself. The latter is perhaps the most explicit condemnation of Sachaverell and clerics of his ilk. First published in 1711 and reprinted in 1713, *High Church Display'd: being a complete history of the affair of Dr Sachaverel, in its origins, progress and consequences*, was composed as a series of seven letters to an 'English Gentleman at the Court of Hanover' written between June 16th and September 27th of 1710. The didactic purpose of the volume was indicated by the title page which noted 'Fit to be kept in all Families as a storehouse of arguments in defence of the Constitution': to ease such edification the volume was completed by an alphabetical index.⁸² One of the obvious intentions of the volume was to prime the Hanoverian interest against the deceit and danger of the high church. The second edition also pointed out that it was 'abridg'd, in an easy Method, for the benefit of Common readers'.⁸³ In effect Toland's work was a very close re-working of the 'official' account of the trial published by Jacob Tonson in 1710. Toland added commentary and ancillary contemporary documents to Tonson's

transcription of the trial. Toland carefully edited the material to accent the extremism of Sachaverell's hostility towards 'revolution principles', and to point to the dangerous social consequences of his inflammation of the city of London and the provinces.⁸⁴

Toland pruned much of Sachaverell's defence and indeed censored some of the defence material which cast aspersions on the religious intergrity of his own work.⁸⁵

The message was clear if embedded in a very longwinded account: the highchurch were dangerous both to the political, religious and social constitution of Britain. Since history was philosophy taught by examples, so the historical account of the trial indicted the corruption of the priesthood.

If Toland's interpretation of the meaning of the trial was anticlerical but restrained by the rhetorical form of it being a piece of historical writing, his other pamphlets were shrill and unbridled in their critique of the Church. In *Lettre d'un Anglois a un Hollandais. Or Mr Toland's Reflections on Dr Sachaverell's Sermon* (1710) Toland made it apparent that the main business of the trial had been the impeachment of 'busie and seditious clergymen'. He condemned the 'pulpit orator' and the 'great company of black-gowns' who by 'cabal' promoted the deviant beliefs of 'PASSIVE, or unlimited OBEDIENCE, to all the commands of a Prince, tho' never so strange, illegal, unjust or prejudicial ... or pretends to believe, that disobedience to that slavish maxim, is like the sin against the Holy Ghost, which will not be forgiven, either in this world or the next'.⁸⁶ In *The Jacobitism, Perjury and Popery of High Church Priests* (1710) Toland rivetted the connection between the 'High Church drummers' who used their pulpits as the trumpets of sedition and the incipient threat of Jacobite restoration. Pulpits were 'wooden Engines' for the advance of passive obedience and other 'slavish notions'. Pulpits had been the 'armed instruments of Tyranny ... in most countries'. To allow oneself to be 'prated out' of liberty and property was foolish: 'will not the world think that we do not value as we ought our

happy constitution if they see its greatest enemies permitted twice a week to banter, ridicule, libel and insult it?'.⁸⁷

Toland's anticlericalism was refined against the specific butt of high churchmen like Sachaverell: in condemning the example of the latter he took opportunity to commend the good model of clerics like Hoadly. For Toland the clergy had a conspicuous choice between the two men.⁸⁸ In his last work related to the theme of Sachaverell's trial, *An Appeal to Honest People against Wicked Priests* (1713) Toland carefully drew a careful distinction between good priests, who were an 'order of men not only useful and necessary, but likewise reputable and venerable', and the corrupt priesthood who brought 'an unworthy reflection, a lasting disgrace, nay an inveterate Odium on the honest priests, and consequently on the whole order'. Just like the pre-Constantinian church which had been fed by ambition and party contestation, the modern church had for its own advantage set up an 'imperium in imperio'. One benefit born of the Sachaverell trial was, as Toland pointed out, 'that Clergymen shou'd not (under penalty of incapacity during life) meddle with the civil government in their pulpits, nor pretend to decide questions in Politicks'. The high churchmen, following the examples of the early church, had established a 'protestant popery' concerned only with 'advancing the pride and power of priests'. Sachaverell, like 'the Dunstans, the Anselms, the Becketts, the Huberts, or the Langtons', was in a long line of wicked priests who had challenged the authority of the civil state. Not only were the clergy immoral and drunk, haunting taverns and coffee-houses, but becoming riotous and seditious, unhinged 'wholesome order and Government'.⁸⁹

This theme of priests exploiting their social power and status, in particular the 'divine' authority of the pulpit, which had become a commonplace complaint in the early 1680s, was an especially acute problem in the 1700s and 1710s, when the politics of

religion had prompted party interests to embrace very sophisticated levels of communication methods.⁹⁰ One of the legacies of the 1710 trial was the powerful mobilisation of the clergy against the Whig interest in the constituencies which resulted in a massive electoral victory for the Tories in the General Election of that year. Newsletters, prints, ballads, pamphlets, addresses and sermons all indicate the central role of contestation over the status of the clergy and the Church. As Arthur Maynwaring complained, once again the 'pulpit heralds' took up 'their old Topics of Non-resistance, Hereditary Right, and the Church's danger'. Powerful use, in particular, was made of the language and meaning of Sachaverell's trial. The objective was 'possessing the minds of ignorant people', the means was the orchestration of a national campaign. Lists, addresses, printed pro formas were composed and distributed: 'instructions were given to their Clergy, what doctrines they were to preach'. Loyal addresses were drawn up, printed headings of subject matter for sermons were disseminated. As Maynwaring commented, 'to this end the whole power of the Party was set at work'.⁹¹ The collections of addresses to Anne made in 1710 support this claim: indeed, they were more than likely collected and published to reinforce the theme that 'the sense of the Kingdom, whether Nobility, Clergy, Gentry or Communalty, is express for the Doctrine of Passive-Obedience and Non-Resistance, and for her Majesty's Hereditary Title to the Throne of her Ancestors'.⁹² Oldmixon's *History of Addresses for 1710* illustrates time and time again both clerical involvement in the production of loyal addresses and the penetration of the language of Sachaverell's defence into these texts.⁹³ The episode of Sachaverell's trial and its electoral consequences is a very powerful illustration of the centrality and importance of anticlericalism at the heart of the politics of party and religion in the period. It is evidence that the contestation for control over the definition and authority of an important symbolic institution was not simply a discursive engagement. The trial of Sachaverell was an important ritual moment that involved

the disputation of different textual and conceptual accounts of the constitution, religion, and society, but it did not remain confined to a purely ideological sphere. Through the effect of different media the contestation insinuated action in a number of other fora: in the streets of London when mobs attacked Whig figures or Low Church Chapels, in the provincial towns and rural parishes where conversation and riotous behaviour was manifest, and also in the more formal spaces and occasions of poll booths, constituency meetings and other electoral venues. The response to the trial also indicates both the polarity of conceptions about the nature of priesthood, and ultimately the persisting strength of beliefs in the 'holy function' of the clerical order. Such contestations about the status and authority of churchmen were intimately related to the perceived stability of the civil constitution.

Debates about the role of the church and the power and the authority of Churchmen were not marginal to the political discourses and practices of the late Stuart period. One of the early acts of the Hanoverian George I was to issue a Royal Proclamation directing the 'clergy to refrain from preaching politics'.⁹⁴ As the examples of Johnson, Sachaverell and Hoadly, illustrate, the contestation about the correct ideological behaviour of the priesthood was furious and consequently consistently at the epicentre of national and local politics. It is possible to suggest an incremental heightening of the stand off between clericalist and anticlerical polemics from the 1680s to the 1710s. The power of the clergy and the prevailing ecclesiological relationship between religious conformity and political orthodoxy, was manifest in the enactment and enforcement of confessional statutes such as the Test and Corporation Acts and the Act of Uniformity after 1660. This power of clergymen to impose upon individual conscience was repeatedly challenged between 1660

and 1689 and after: these debates about the authority of the Church were not merely theological, but by default also about the nature of the limits and legality of state power: clericalism and anticlericalism were not simply 'religious' matters but a key theme in the broad discourse about power and authority. Redefining the nature of priesthood held implications not only for the nature of the Church, but ultimately for the distribution of social power also. In one sense anticlericalism can be thought of as part of the ideological battle defining the 'idea' of the state: in this way it was part of the political discourse about sovereignty that originated in the Henrician delimitations of an 'imperial' monarchy.⁹⁵ Deployment of arguments against the 'imperium in imperio' of the Church, by Whiggish commonwealthsmen (like for example Trenchard and Gordon in popular works like *Cato's Letters*) in the early decades of the eighteenth century is evidence of the continuity of this theme. Importantly as the reactions to, especially the trial of Sacheverell and the treatment of Hoadly, such critiques were not only conceptual, but directed against the practical activities and actions of the established priesthood in national and local society.

The trial of Sacheverell was contrived by the Whig prosecution to be an opportunity for resolving the political problem of the high church clergy: this crescendo was muted by the significant and tumultuous popular reaction in defence of the 'Church'. If the trial was the highwater mark of Whiggish political anticlericalism, does the reaction to it denote the essential failure of attacks upon the Church? Any answer to this question must be cautious: careful consideration must be given to the location and reception of attacks upon the Church. It is quite clear from the collective works of historians like Clark, Jacob, Taylor, Walsh and many others that a broad cultural attachment to a clericalist model of Anglican religion persisted into the nineteenth century certainly in the precincts and parishes of local communities. While maintaining this point, it should also be clear that this is not the same as suggesting

that such persistence is the same as claiming that such communities clung to an unchanging and essentially conservative pattern of worship. The work of Langford in particular indicates the changing social status and new roles adopted by the parish clergy: much of this innovation was masked by the carapace of the continuity of practice, ritual and doctrinal belief in the Church of England. The efflorescence of religiosity outside the establishment of Anglicanism is similarly testimony both to the unflagging importance of religion, but also to the diversity of forms it assumed after 1689.

Turning from the practice of religion to assessing the institutional status of cleric or Church might prompt a different answer to the question of the significance of anticlericalism. Although sacerdotalist conceptions of the Church and churchmen were robust and extensive after 1717 the same cannot be said for the constitutional articulation of the Church. The 'Convocation crisis' was a major and historically understated moment in the history of political anticlericalism: after 1717, the possibilities of an Atterburean style collaboration of Church and State to reinvigorate clerical authority were limited. Between the late 1690s and 1717, the lower house of Convocation had been a powerful forum for the assertion of clerical power to focus the concomitant campaigns from the pulpit and in printed media. Compromised by the spectre of Jacobitism, political clericalism after 1717 did not have the advantage of a national platform for the declaration of its ambitions. Such silence should not be interpreted as non-existence, but what it did mean was that in one very profound and important sense a return to the confessional ambitions of a pre-1689 model were perhaps politically unlikely, if not ideologically unthinkable. As the anticlerical Parliamentary campaigns of the 1720s and 1730s indicate the war against priests was far from over, but the ecclesiological combination of Walpole and Gibson, for the most part, dampened down controversy about the status and authority of the Church

on the national stage. The crises provoked by the Jew Bill in the 1750s and the Gordon Riots in the 1780s suggest the latent volatility challenges to the 'Church'. Direct confrontation with clericalism (in its widest possible sense) as the trial of Sachaverell indicated resulted in defeat: reform from within, as the example of Hoadly offers testimony in favour of, was perhaps more successful. English anticlericalism had by 1717 won some important victories against the Church (as an ecclesiological institution), while, perhaps, losing the bigger war against the priests.

Endnotes

¹ See M. de Certeau 'The formality of practices' in *The Writing of History* (Columbia UP, 1988) 155. For their thoughts and reactions to this piece I would like to thank Margaret Jacob and Nicholas Tyacke.

² See 'Some Memorials of the Reverend Mr Samuel Johnson; communicated in a Letter to a Friend, by one of his Intimate Acquaintance' in *The Works of the Late Reverend Mr Samuel Johnson* (Second Edition, London, 1713) iii-iv. See for a more recent account, M. Zook 'Early Whig Ideology, Ancient Constitutionalism, and the Reverend Samuel Johnson' *Journal of British Studies* 32 (1993) 139-165.

³ See M. Goldie 'The Roots of True Whiggism 1688-94' *History of Political Thought* 1 (1980) 195-236, esp. 199.

⁴ *The Works of the Late Reverend Mr Samuel Johnson* 151.

⁵ *Ibid* viii.

⁶ *Ibid* xi.

⁷ See J. Wickham Legg 'The degradation in 1686 of the Rev. Samuel Johnson' *EHR* 29 (1914) 723-742, at 726.

⁸ 'Some Memorials' xi.

⁹ See J. Wickham Legg 'The degradation in 1686 of the Rev. Samuel Johnson' *EHR* 29 (1914) for a transcription of the process of degradation, esp. 739-40.

¹⁰ 'Some Memorials' ix, xi; *EHR* (1914) 741-2.

¹¹ 'Some Memorials' xii-xiii.

¹² 'Some Memorials' ix-x.

¹³ *EHR* (1914) 742 citing the opinion of the proctor-general of the Arches, Richard Newcourt.

¹⁴ On Johnson's contributions see M. Goldie 'The Revolution of 1689 and the structure of Political Argument. An essay and an annotated Bibliography of pamphlets on the Allegiance controversy' *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities* 83 (1980) 473-564.

¹⁵ J.C.D. Clark *English Society 1688-1832* (Cambridge, 1985) 302.

¹⁶ See N. Sykes 'Benjamin Hoadly, Bishop of Bangor' in F.J.C. Hearnshaw (ed) *The Social and Political Ideas of some English Thinkers of the Augustan Age* (1928) 112-156, citing (at 120) Historical Manuscripts Commission Egmont Mss I 444.

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- ¹⁷ The best account is P.B. Hessert 'The Bangorian Controversy' (Edinburgh University PhD, 1951). See also H. D. Rack ' "Christ's Kingdom not of this World": the case of Benjamin Hoadly versus William Law reconsidered' *Studies in Church History* 12 (1975) 275-91.
- ¹⁸ Cited in Hessert 'Bangorian Controversy' 68. (Works II 404).
- ¹⁹ *Synodolia* II 'A Representation of the Lower House of Convocation about the Bishop of Bangor's sermon of the Kingdom of Christ' 829.
- ²⁰ Sykes' Benjamin Hoadly' 143.
- ²¹ See 'The Church in Danger' 1709 [reproduced in Holmes *Sachaverell*, from Magdalan College, Oxford]; 'Guess att my Meaning' 1709 [BMC 1503]; M.D. George *English Political Caricature to 1792* (Oxford, 1959) points out that (at 68) a later print 'The Apparition' [BMC 1569] also represents a Low Church library with many of the same volumes.
- ²² For an understanding of how even 'orthodoxy' was not a fixed point see J.G.A. Pocock 'Within the margins: definitions of orthodoxy' in R. Lund (ed) *The Margins of Orthodoxy* (Cambridge, 1995).
- ²³ Cited in Clark *English Society* 147 fn 129.
- ²⁴ R. Nelson *A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England* (1798) Preface x.
- ²⁵ R. Nelson *A Companion* 481, 482-3, 487-90, 520-530.
- ²⁶ Nelson, cited by R. Cornwall (78) in *Visible and Apostolic. The Constitution of the Church in High Church Anglican and Non-Juror Thought* (Delaware, 1993).
- ²⁷ Cornwall *passim*.
- ²⁸ Nelson *Visibile and Apostolic* 483.
- ²⁹ See A.M.C. Waterman 'The nexus between theology and political doctrine' in K. Haakonssen (ed) *Enlightenment and Religion. Rational Dissent in Eighteenth century England* (Cambridge, 1996) pp. 193-218, at p.205.
- ³⁰ A.G. Dickens 'The Shape of Anti-clericalism and the English Reformation' 379.
- ³¹ See C. Hill *The Economic Problems of the Church* (Oxford, 1956)
- ³² See E.J. Evans 'Some reasons for the growth of English Rural Anti-clericalism c.1750-c.1830' *Past and Present* 66 (1975) 84-109.

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- ³³ See J. Morrill 'The attack on the Church of England in the Long Parliament, 1640-1642' 105-124.
- ³⁴ See J. Maclear 'Popular anticlericalism in the Puritan Revolution' *JHI* 17 (1956) 443-470.
- ³⁵ See Morrill, 117-119; Maclear, 460.
- ³⁶ For a corrective see M.A. Goldie 'Priestcraft and the birth of Whiggism' in N. Phillison, Q. Skinner (eds.) *Political Discourse in Early modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1993) 209-231; and Champion *Pillars of priestcraft shaken*.
- ³⁷ See D. Beaver 'Religion, politics and society in Early Modern England: a problem of classification' *Journal of British Studies* 32 (1993) 314-22.
- ³⁸ See in particular Walsh, Taylor, Heydon (eds) *The Church of England* pp. 8-10.
- ³⁹ See K. V. Thomas 'Cases of Conscience in seventeenth century England' in J. Morrill, P. Slack, D. Woolf (eds) *Public duty and private conscience in seventeenth century England* (Oxford, 1993) pp. 29-56.
- ⁴⁰ See P. Harvey 'The problem of social-political obligation for the Church of England in the seventeenth century' *Church History* 40 (1971) 156-169.
- ⁴¹ See B.S. Stewart 'The Cult of the Royal Martyr' *Church History* 38 (1969) 175-187, and H.W. Randell 'The Rise and fall of a martyrology: Sermons on Charles I' *HLQ* 10 (1947) 135-167.
- ⁴² Bennett *Tory Crisis in Church and State*, 140.
- ⁴³ M.A. Goldie 'Danby, the Bishops and the Whigs' in T. Harris *et al* (eds) *The politics of religion in Restoration England* (Blackwells, 1990); Professor Miller suggested this in a seminar communication of his reaserch on Norfolk in the 1670s in the Institute of Historical Research.
- ⁴⁴ Goldie 'Danby, the Bishops and the Whigs' 98.
- ⁴⁵ H. Care *English Liberties* 93
- ⁴⁶ H. Care *Weekly Pacquet of Advice from Rome* III no.46 April 22nd (1681) 368.
- ⁴⁷ *Poems on Affairs of State* [hereafter as POAS] 2 *An Historical Poem* (1680) 157.
- ⁴⁸ POAS II 11, 347, 353, 370: POAS III 11, 19, 72, 95.

⁴⁹ See W. Speck *Tory and Whig* (1970) 24-9; W. Speck, W.A. Grey 'Computer analysis of Poll Books: an initial report' *BIHR* 43 (1970) 105-112, and W. Speck, W.A. Grey, R. Hopkinson 'Computer analysis of Poll Books: a further report' *BIHR* 48 (1975) 68-79.

⁵⁰ M. Ransome 'Church and Dissent in the election of 1710' *EHR* 56 (1941) 76-89 at 80.

⁵¹ J. Oldmixon *The History of Addresses* vol II (1711) [HOP transcripts] 143.

⁵² Cited in G.A. Holmes *Transcripts* 396 [now in the possession of the History of Parliament] *The Flying Post* Nov. 2-4 (1710). Many thanks and acknowledgement to Dr Stuart Handley for allowing me access to this material.

⁵³ Holmes *Transcripts* 417 [HOP].

⁵⁴ See P. Langford 'Convocation and the Tory Clergy, 1717-61' in E. Cruikshanks, J. Black (ed) *The Jacobite Challenge* (Edinburgh, 1988) 107-122.

⁵⁵ See J.A.W. Gunn *Beyond Liberty and Property. The process of self recognition in eighteenth century political thought* (McGill, 1983) 140.

⁵⁶ See Bennett *Tory Crisis* 125-140.

⁵⁷ See R. Ashcraft, M.M. Goldsmith 'Locke, Revolution Principles, and the formation of Whig Ideology' *HJ* 26 (1983) 773-800 at 776-77.

⁵⁸ Ellis *The Medley* 151.

⁵⁹ See H. Dickinson 'The eighteenth century debate on the 'Glorious Revolution' *History* 61 (1976) 28-45 esp. 33-35.

⁶⁰ *The Perils of False Brethren, both in Church and State* (1709) 19-21.

⁶¹ *Trial* 4, 24.

⁶² *Trial* 32.

⁶³ *Ibid* 37-8.

⁶⁴ *Ibid* 61, 75.

⁶⁵ *Ibid* 99-100, 106, 110, 114.

⁶⁶ *Ibid* 119, 121, 125.

⁶⁷ *Ibid* 156, 161-173, 185-194, 206.

⁶⁸ Sachaverell, cited from (217-230) a series of heretical works. These were later published separately, to the disgust of Whig MPs who ordered the volume burnt.

⁶⁹ *Ibid* 215, 223.

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- ⁷⁰ Ibid 243-46.
- ⁷¹ Ibid 251, 257.
- ⁷² Ibid 114-115.
- ⁷³ Ibid 115.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid 116.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid 246.
- ⁷⁶ See W. Speck's edition of F.F. Madan's *Bibliography of Sachaverell* (1977)
- ⁷⁷ Ellis *Examiner-Medley* 28 Dec 1710 *The Examiner* No. 22 128
- ⁷⁸ Ibid 156
- ⁷⁹ Ellis 400; Ransome EHR 56 (1941) 80
- ⁸⁰ On Sachaverell's bibliographical collection, its publication and burning. Speck [237] Collection of Passages referred to by Dr Henry Sachaverell (1710); reprinted in A. Boyer *The History of the Reign of Queen Anne* (1710) Appendix 137-170.
- ⁸¹ See POAS VII 440, *The Merciful Judgements of High Church Triumphant on Offending Clergymen and Others, in the reign of Charles I.* (1710). The writings of these high church precursors of Sachaverell were also republished with commentaries, see Speck *Bibliography of Sachaverell*.
- ⁸² For a full bibliographical description see G. Carabelli *Tolandiana* (Florence, 1977) 151-2
- ⁸³ Interestingly the title page of the second edition also included a scriptural citation from James 3. 5-6, 'Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! The Tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, which setteth on fire the Course of Nature, and is set on fire of Hell'.
- ⁸⁴ So for example he inserted material about the mob attack on Burges' Chapel, and similar riotous behaviour in Wolverhampton and Barnstaple 95-6, 104-6.
- ⁸⁵ See 305 on 'blasphemous books'.
- ⁸⁶ *Mr Toland's Reflections* 9, 11, 12.
- ⁸⁷ *Jacobitism, Perjury and Popery* 3, 4-6, 8-10, 11, 13, 14, 15.
- ⁸⁸ *Mr Toland's Reflections* 13.
- ⁸⁹ *An Appeal to Honest People* 2, 4-5, 11, 14, 36-7, 38, 42-7, 56, 57.
- ⁹⁰ For an early essay exploring the diversity and sophistication of party propaganda see, W. Speck 'Political propaganda in Augustan England' *TRHS* (1972) 17-32

⁹¹ A. Maynwaring *Four Letters to a Friend in North Britain Upon the Publishing the Tryal of Dr Sachaverell* (1710) 6-8, 9-10, 11, 18.

⁹² See *Collection of Addresses* (1710) Preface.

⁹³ See HOP transcript, noting that the Northants, Exeter, and Abingdon addresses used Sachaverell style arguments.

⁹⁴ Speck Bibliography [1112]

⁹⁵ See J.A. Guy 'The Henrician Age' in J.A.G. Pocock (ed) *The varieties of British political thought, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, 1993) 13-46.