

property. . . . From this account of the Virginia Baptists, they appear to be a very different sect from the German Anabaptists."<sup>18</sup>

Like most other Americans, Baptists gave support to civil government through many aspects of their religious life. In their religious conformity to legal duties, in their pious adherence to the moral obligations not enforced by law (including charity and forgiveness), in their oaths taken in court, and in their prayers for the nation and its leaders, Baptists and many other Americans eased the burdens of government, helping it in ways it could not help itself. Thus, even while dissenters avoided convoluted distinctions about the permissible degree or type of connection between religion and government, they vigorously protested that their religious liberty was no threat to government, to Christian morality, or to the laws enforcing such morality—indeed, that their religion supported government and law. Committed to a vision of society in which their religion permeated their lives, and struggling to overcome the prejudice of their fellow citizens who feared religious dissent as a threat to morality and law, these dissenters had every reason to seek religious liberty and no reason to demand the disconnection of religion and government.

Separation of church and state is often assumed to have been the demand of eighteenth-century American dissenters, but these dissenters seem to have said little, if anything, about it. Ironically, to the extent anything like separation was widely discussed in America, it was a topic addressed by establishment ministers, who accused dissenters of seeking to disconnect religion and civil government. In making this allegation, establishment ministers attributed to dissenters a desire to separate religion and therefore also morality from government. A scurrilous misrepresentation, it revealed much about the fears of establishment ministers but little about the hopes of dissenters.

<sup>18</sup> *The Virginia Chronicle* (1790), in *The Writings of the Late Elder John Leland*, 120, ed. L. F. Greene (New York: 1845).

### *The Exclusion of the Clergy*

THE ROLE of separation in the controversy over establishment found quiet echoes in the occasional disagreements as to whether clergymen should be excluded from civil office. In retrospect, it may be thought that advocates of exclusion would have argued on the basis of separation, but it is difficult to locate any American who demanded clerical exclusion as a separation of religion and government, let alone a separation of church and state. Once again, separation was not a demand but an accusation.

#### *Arguments for Exclusion*

The arguments for the exclusion of the clergy from civil office were quite varied. None of them, however, came even close to separation. In seventeenth-century Massachusetts, for example, Congregationalists excluded ministers on religious grounds. In particular, they followed the approach of Calvin and some of his English dissenting followers in holding that no man should hold both temporal and ecclesiastical office. Calvin had argued that Christ wanted to "bar the ministers of his Word from civil rule and earthly authority," and when Congregationalists came to America and established a government in Massachusetts, they also assumed that civil and ecclesiastical offices "cannot come together in one man."<sup>1</sup> Although some later historians have characterized the division of offices in Massachusetts as a nascent separation of church and state,

<sup>1</sup> Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2: 1220 (IV.xi.8), trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960).

the Congregationalists of this colony surely did not share the latter perspective any more than did Roger Williams.<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, they excluded ministers from civil office while encouraging substantial cooperation between church and state. Indeed, their exclusion of ministers was part of their religious establishment, in which, as stated in their 1641 Body of Liberties, "Civill Authoritie hath power and libertie to see the peace, ordinances and Rules of Christ observed in every church according to his word[,] so it be done in a Civill and not in a Ecclesiastical way."<sup>3</sup> This was hardly a conception of separation between church and state.

Later, at the time of the American Revolution, some inhabitants of Massachusetts argued for exclusion on secular rather than Calvinist grounds, as may be illustrated by a petition from the Town of Pittsfield in 1776. After electing a Baptist elder to the state's House of Representatives, the town asked the House to disqualify him. Although the town may have been simply trying to change its representative, it petitioned on the ground that he ought not levy taxes if he was exempt from paying them:

[W]e Conceive it has been the Constant Sence and Opinion of your Honours that no Minister of the Gospel ought, to be admitted to a Seat in the House of Representatives in the General Court of this colony; on the General Principle that no Persons, not Contributing to the Support of Publick Burthens, and payment of Publick Taxes, ought to have a Voice in giving or granting, the Property of others, not so Exempted, or in Meking, and Passing any acts, or Laws, not Equally Binding on themselves, and their Constituants unless for mere Political Purposes Excused.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Edmund S. Morgan, *Puritan Political Ideas*, xxix–xxx, xxxii (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965). Morgan calls this a type of "separation of church and state," although, of course, he does not suggest that Congregationalists described their civil and ecclesiastical arrangements as such. *Ibid.*, xxxii.

<sup>3</sup> "A Coppie of the Liberties of the Massachusets Collonie in New England" (1641), in *Collections of Massachusetts Historical Society*, 226 (3d ser.; Boston: 1843).

<sup>4</sup> Pittsfield Petition (May 29, 1776), in Oscar and Mary Handlin, eds., *The Popular Sources of Political Authority: Documents on the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780*, 93–94 (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1966). The petition continued: "We further would inform your Honours that notwithstanding the Same has also been the Sence of this Town, as appears by the Instructions they gave their Representatives the year Past, injoining them to Do their utmost to prevent any Minister of the Gospel from having a Seat in the House of Representative[s]. The Inhabitants of said Town have by some Extraordinary Means Chosen one Mr. Valentine Rathbone to Represent them in this Honorable Court—Which Said Rathbone

An argument from American principles of taxation and representation, this was no more a separation of church and state than Calvin's division of offices.

In justifying constitutional prohibitions on the admission of ministers to state legislatures, Americans typically questioned whether it was proper for men of the cloth to hold office of a sort that could only distract them from higher obligations. For example, the 1778 South Carolina Constitution declared: "And whereas the ministers of the gospel are by their profession dedicated to the service of God and the cure of souls, and ought not to be diverted from the great duties of their function, therefore no minister of the gospel or public preacher of any religious persuasion, while he continues in the exercise of his pastoral function, and for two years after, shall be eligible either as governor, lieutenant-governor, a member of the senate, house of representatives, or privy council in this State."<sup>5</sup>

Notwithstanding that this constitutional exclusion purported to be sympathetic toward the clergy, some exclusion clauses clearly attempted to elicit anti-Catholic support. For example, in 1777 the earlier, New York version of the provision quoted above specified that "no priest of any denomination whatsoever" should be eligible for office. This anti-Catholic wording came from the document's primary drafter, John Jay, whose preamble to the Constitution's religious freedom clause pointedly declared that "we are required, by the benevolent principles of rational liberty, not only to expel civil tyranny, but also to guard against that spiritual oppression and intolerance wherewith the bigotry and ambition of weak and wicked priests and princes have scourged mankind."<sup>6</sup> Yet

we aver to your Honours, is and has been ever Since he lived in this Town the Minister or Elder of a Baptist Church and Congregation in this Town, and that he had never paid any Taxes either Public or private in the Town, or been assessed to the payment thereof but has from year to year for four or five years past given Certificates to the members of his Church and Congregation In the Capacity of an Elder thereof, in order to obtain their Exemption from the payment of Ministerial Charges etc.—We Therefore pray your Honours would Take the premises into your wise Consideration, and that the Said Mr. Rathbone may be Dismissed from giving his attendance as a Member of this Honorable Court, and this we are the more imboldened to ask as the Town have also made Choice of another Person to Represent them whom We Conceive to be not thus incapacitated and who upon Notice will Doubtless attend—And as in Duty Bound Shall pray." *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> S.C. Const., Art. XXI (1778).

<sup>6</sup> N.Y. Const., Arts. XXXVIII and XXXIX (1777); Tenn. Const., Art. VIII (1796). Shorter exclusion clauses appeared in the constitutions of Va. (1776); Del., Art. 29 (1776); Del., Art. VIII, §9 (1792); Md., Art. XXXVII (1776); N.C., Art. XXXI (1776); and Ky., Art. I, §24

most Americans hesitated to endorse this intemperate anti-Catholicism, and even when in 1796 the drafters of the Tennessee Constitution copied the anti-Catholic allusions in New York's exclusion provision, they did not adopt New York's diatribe about the "bigotry and ambition of weak and wicked priests."<sup>7</sup>

With or without any overt anti-Catholicism, many Americans, especially in frontier areas, probably also welcomed the exclusion of the clergy from civil office on the basis of a general suspicion of clergymen, but the evidence of this anticlerical support for exclusion remains elusive. In 1783, in Virginia and what would become Kentucky, Thomas Jefferson hoped that a new constitution would exclude "Ministers of the Gospel" from the General Assembly. His discriminatory proposal, however, elicited skepticism from James Madison:

Does not the exclusion of Ministers of the Gospel as such violate a fundamental principle of liberty by punishing a religious profession with the privation of a civil right? Does it not violate another article of the plan itself which exempts religion from the cognizance of Civil power? Does it not violate justice by at once taking away a right and prohibiting a compensation for it? And does it not in fine violate impartiality by shutting the door against the Minister of one religion and leaving it open for those of every other?<sup>8</sup>

This inequality had no justification in the antiestablishment principles shared by Jefferson and Madison, and Jefferson is not known to have defended it. Nonetheless, it should not be assumed that Jefferson was easily reconciled to the prospect of clergymen in the legislature, and if Jefferson did not spell out his reasons for wanting to exclude the clergy, this may have been, in part, because it was not entirely respectable to voice doubts about the clergy as a whole. Even anonymous anticlerical writers had reason to soften their sentiments with a vague solicitude for

(1792). For New York, see John W. Pratt, *Religion, Politics and Diversity*, 88 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967).

<sup>7</sup> For the decline of anti-Catholicism in the post-Revolutionary period, see Charles P. Hanson, *Necessary Virtue: The Pragmatic Origins of Religious Liberty in New England* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998).

<sup>8</sup> Jefferson's Draft of a Constitution for Virginia, in *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 6: 297, ed. Julian P. Boyd (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952); Madison's Observations on Jefferson's Draft, in *ibid.*, 311. More generally, see Philip Mazzei, *Researches on the United States*, 162, trans. Constance D. Sherman (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976).

the higher occupations of ministers. In Kentucky, for example, a "Corn Planter" argued in 1788 that "[t]he necessary pastoral exercises of a faithful Gospel minister is fully sufficient to imploy his whole time and attention." He was "to give himself wholly to the work," for "[t]he faithful preacher will neither have leisure nor inclination to concern [himself] in politicks, and he who is of opposite character is not to be trusted."<sup>9</sup>

Thus Americans barred clergymen from civil office for many reasons, including an odd combination of Calvinism, anti-Catholicism, theories of taxation and representation, solicitude for the clergy, and suspicion of the clergy. Strikingly, however, Americans did not exclude the clergy on grounds of separation.

### *The Silence of Dissenters*

While advocates of clerical exclusions apparently did not demand a separation of church and state, dissenters were even more reticent. They usually did not even discuss clerical exclusions.

In remaining silent about the exclusion of ministers from civil office, dissenters apparently found it politic to remain quiet about one of the few legal arrangements that, at least in some states, treated dissenting and established clergymen equally. Many evangelical dissenting leaders in the North shared the roughly Calvinist or Reformed expectations of established Congregational clergymen that ministers should not hold civil office. More generally, dissenters probably hesitated to protest an exclusion that resonated with their own doubts about excessive involvement in worldly matters, especially politics, which might distract a preacher or anyone else from his or her higher concerns. Indeed, to the extent exclusion applied not only to the legislature but also saved the clergy the trouble of serving as town and county officers, some clergymen considered it desirable.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, few dissenters wished to give

<sup>9</sup> "Corn Planter," Letter to Mr. Printer, in *Kentucky Gazette*, No. 46 (July 12, 1788). He was responding to the questions of a "Farmer": "Ought preachers to be allowed a seat in the Legislature? and ought they to bear arms?" "A Farmer" (Jan. 16, 1788), in *ibid.*, No. 23 (Feb. 2, 1788).

<sup>10</sup> For example, in 1774 in Virginia, where dissenters were not excluded from civil office, the Presbytery of Hanover requested that "the dissenting clergy, as well as the clergy of the Established church, be excused from all burdensome offices." Petition of Presbytery

established ministers the opportunity to sit in state legislatures, where these clergymen of the majority denomination (Congregationalist in the North or Episcopalian in the South) would become more influential than ever. Not least, clerical exclusions from civil office were often paired with exemptions from civil obligations, such as the obligation to pay taxes or serve in the military. Accordingly, if ministers—established or dissenting—hoped to retain their exemptions, they had reason not to protest their exclusions.<sup>11</sup> Being especially vulnerable, dissenting ministers remained notably quiet.

By failing to protest these deviations from a strict equality under law, dissenters revealed that they felt no obligation to take their most radical political principles to their logical extremes. Dissenters suffered under various unequal penalties. Most dramatically, in Connecticut and Massachusetts they paid taxes for the salaries of establishment ministers and could avoid paying these taxes only by filing a certificate as to their dissenting status. In response, dissenters demanded equality under law, without respect to religious differences, and even demanded that the laws not take cognizance of religion. If dissenters took these demands to their logical conclusions, they would have had reason to doubt whether any group of persons, even the entirety of the clergy, should be privileged or penalized on account of their being clergymen.

One of the few dissenting leaders who did take his principles to their logical conclusions was one of the most prominent—the brilliant, delightfully eccentric Baptist leader, John Leland. In 1790, while still in Virginia, he admitted that “there is not a constitutional evil in the states, that has a more plausible pretext, than the proscription of gospel ministers.”<sup>12</sup> Certainly, “to have one branch of the legislature composed of

of Hanover to the House of Burgesses (Nov. 11, 1774), in Charles F. James, *Documentary History of the Struggle for Religious Liberty in Virginia*, 45 (Lynchburg: 1900).

<sup>11</sup> Writing about militia and tax exemptions in New England, William G. McLoughlin observes: “No evidence exists that the Baptists opposed this ministerial prerogative.” McLoughlin, *New England Dissent, 1630–1833*, 2: 1019 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

<sup>12</sup> *The Virginia Chronicle* (1790), in *The Writings of the Late Elder John Leland* 122, ed. L. F. Greene (New York: 1845). He added: “I say in the states, for most of them have proscribed them from seats of legislation, &c. The federal government is free in this point.” *Ibid.*

McLoughlin interprets Leland as “eccentric” on account of his departure from Calvinism and on the basis of the comments of his contemporaries in New England, who recognized that Leland was unusually engaged in politics. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 2: 928–

clergymen, as is the case in some European powers, is not seemly—to have them entitled to seats of legislation, on account of their ecclesiastical dignity, like the bishops in England, is absurd.” Yet Americans had gone to the other extreme. “[T]o declare them [clergymen] ineligible, when their neighbors prefer them to any others, is depriving them of the liberty of free citizens, and those who prefer them, the freedom of choice.” The best that could be said of the proscription was that it “den[ie]d them the liberty of citizens, lest they should degrade their sacred office.” Not only opposed to these exclusions, Leland also rejected exemptions, arguing that the clergy should be subject to neither “degrading checks” nor “alluring baits.” More than most dissenters, Leland put his principles ahead of his personal interest and admitted of exemptions that “[t]hough this is an indulgence that I feel, yet it is not consistent with my theory of politics.”<sup>13</sup> Strikingly, however, Leland’s theory on this matter was not one of separation. Instead, it was a version of the usual dissenting demands for equality and for laws that did not take cognizance of religion. As Leland put it in 1791: “Ministers should share the

932. To this it might be added that the titles of his pamphlets, let alone his giant cheese, reveal a somewhat unconventional approach. (For the cheese, see the text of Chapter 7 at notes 23–25.) McLoughlin’s characterization, however, has been challenged by a regional interpretation that attributes Leland’s seeming eccentricity to his being a Baptist with a southern perspective who did not adapt to the prevailing views of the North when he moved there. Andrew M. Manis, “Regionalism and a Baptist Perspective on Separation of Church and State,” *American Baptist Quarterly*, 2: 213, 219 (1983). Certainly, Leland’s itinerancy, his revivalism, and his Arminian tendencies were traits strongly reinforced by his long sojourn in Virginia from the 1770s through the 1780s. Yet Manis’s account inadequately recognizes variations within the South. Arminianism prevailed among Virginia Baptists more than among their coreligionists in other states. Even in Virginia, however, Arminians never became a majority within their denomination, and already by the 1790s their numbers had sharply declined. See Chapter 7, note 62, and Gregory A. Wills, *Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South, 1785–1900*, 171, note 18 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Still more significant, Leland’s very personal, quirky style of writing was neither peculiarly northern or southern, and his degree of political involvement with the Republicans was as notable in the South as further North. To understand the remarkably political tone of many of Leland’s pamphlets, one need only observe the very different character of most other Baptist publications.

<sup>13</sup> *The Writings of the Late Elder John Leland*, 122. Leland made clear, however, that he was more concerned about the exclusions than these exemptions, for “an exemption from bearing arms, is, but a legal indulgence, but the ineligibility is constitutional proscription, and no legal reward is sufficient for a constitutional prohibition. The first may be altered by the caprice of the legislature, the last cannot be exchanged, without an appeal to the whole mass of constituent power.” *Ibid.*

same protection of the law that other men do, and no more. . . . The law should be silent about them; protect them as citizens, not as sacred officers, for the civil law knows no sacred religious officers."<sup>14</sup>

#### *An Accusation of Separation*

By now it should hardly come as a surprise that clerical exclusion was discussed in terms of separation neither by advocates of exclusion nor by dissenters, but by a defender of the New England establishments—as it happens, Noah Webster. Like Leland, Webster opposed clerical exclusions on grounds of equality. Yet the lexicographer did so for very different reasons and in a manner that played upon anxieties about separation. Webster was accustomed to defending New England's religious establishments on the ground that the clergy exerted a highly beneficial influence in society, and he therefore thought it incongruous that the clergy were excluded from some state legislatures. Accordingly, he demanded equal rights and hinted that exclusions manifested anticlerical animus and a desire for separation.

According to Webster, Americans irrationally discriminated against clergymen on account of the clergy's specialized duties. The exclusion of the clergy "iz founded on just az good reezons, az the old laws against witchcraft; a clergyman being no more dangerous in a civil office, than a witch in civil society."<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, too many American constitutions took for granted that clergymen "should hav no concern with politics." This was an "enormous error" that "seems to be rivetted in popular opinion, that the functions of clergymen are of a spiritual and divine nature, and that this order of men should hav no concern with secular affairs."<sup>16</sup> Yet, if the objection stood against the clergy, it "iz equally good against merchants, mechanics and farmers, who hav no immediate concern with legisla-

<sup>14</sup> *The Rights of Conscience Inalienable, and therefore, Religious Opinions not Cognizable by Law; or, the High-Flying Churchman, Stripped of his Legal Robe, Appears a Yahoo* (1791), in *The Writings of the Late Elder John Leland*, 188. He also wrote: "To proscribe them from seats of legislation, etc., is cruel. To indulge them with an exemption from taxes and bearing arms is a tempting emolument." *Ibid.* The unusual character of Leland's position is born out by McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 2: 1019.

<sup>15</sup> "Miscellaneous Remarks on Divisions of Property, Government, Education, Religion, Agriculture, Slavery, Commerce, Climate and Diseases in the United States" (Philadelphia: 1787), in Noah Webster, *A Collection of Essays and Fugitiv Writings*, 346 (Boston: 1790).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 346, 364.

tion." Although almost all men pursued specialized activities, "every citizen haz a concern in the laws which govern him; and a clergyman haz the same concern with civil laws, az other men."

The real danger lay not in the specialized vocation of the clergy but in the legal exclusion of the clergy from political office, which created a separation of interests. "There hav been bad clergymen and tyrannical hierarkies in the world; but the error lies in separating the civil from the ecclesiastical government. When separated they become rivals; when united, they hav the same interest to pursu."<sup>17</sup> By encouraging a separation of religious and civil government, the irrational fear of clergymen "haz laid the foundation of a separation of interest and influence between the civil and ecclesiastical orders; haz produced a rivalship az fatal to the peece of society az war and pestilence, and a prejudice against *all orders* of preachers, which bids fair to banish the 'gospel of peece' from some parts of our empire."<sup>18</sup> This prejudice against clergymen—a prejudice that encouraged a dangerous separation of interests within society—arose in response to extraordinary claims of power by the popes: "The separation of religion and policy, of church and state, waz owing at first to the errors of a gloomy superstition, which exalted the ministers of Christ into Deities; who, like other men, under similar advantages, became tyrants." Such had been the "papal hierarky."<sup>19</sup> Fortunately,

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 346. He continued: "A clergyman's business iz to *inform* hiz peepel, and to make them *good men*. This iz the way to make them *good citizens*." *Ibid.* To this end, Webster suggested that the clergy should mingle in society: "The clergymen in Boston take the right method to accomplish this business; they throw aside all *divine airs* and imperious grave superiority; they mingle in the most familiar manner, with other peepel; they are social and facetious, and their parishoners delight to hav them at all entertainments and concerts. This conduct remoovs the awful distance between them and other descriptions of men; they are not only esteemed and respected, but luv'd; their decent department iz imitated; their churches are crowded, and their instructions listened to with plezure. Such men are blessings to society." *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 364.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 347, 363. Probably following Webster, Zephaniah Swift also hinted that a separation of the clergy from the rest of society had papal and clerical origins: "The clergy usurped an uncontroverted authority in all matters, which they pretended, were of an ecclesiastical nature. They separated themselves from the civil state, they became a distinct order of men, devoted to the sole employment of religion, and forever ready to interrupt the tranquility, or impede the administration of government, when they thought it necessary to guard, or extend the rights of the church. Hence originated a government within a government, and a separation of interest between the clergy and the laity, which produced perpetual discord and contention." Zephaniah Swift, *A System of the Laws of the State of Connecticut*, 1: 134 (Windham: 1795).

there was a better solution to the political aspirations of clergymen than a mischievous separation: "The way to check their ambition, and to give full efficacy to their administrations, iz to consider them az *men* and *citizens*, entitled to all the benefits of government, subject to law, and designed for *civil* az wel az *spiritual* instructors."<sup>20</sup> To avoid clerical tyranny, it was only necessary to give the clergy the rights and interests enjoyed by other citizens.

Far from threatening free government, a learned clergy supported it. "That clergymen ought not to meddle with politics, iz so far from truth, that they ought to be *well* acquainted with the subject, and *better* than most classes of men, in proportion to their literary attainments." With such qualifications, they could sustain good citizenship by inculcating morality. Accordingly, "Religion and policy ought ever to go hand in hand; not to raize a system of despotism over the consciences, but to enlighten the minds, soften the harts, correct the manners and restrain the vices of men."<sup>21</sup> Webster hoped for a clergy fully integrated and even prominent in the life of their communities, and, from this perspective, he saw clerical exclusions as an irrational attempt to separate politics from the religion that was the basis of political and moral edification.

Thus, yet again, separation was an accusation. Richard Hooker and, much more recently, some American ministers had defended their different religious establishments by intimating that dissenters desired a separation of one sort or another. Drawing upon such accusations, Webster opposed clerical exclusions by hinting that they had been adopted in order to separate clergymen from politics and church from state. As in the establishment controversy, this was a mischaracterization, which reflected fears rather than facts. Neither the advocates of religious liberty nor the proponents of clerical exclusions appear to have sought a separation, and, if they ever did, they seem to have done so only rarely or in a most understated and elusive manner.

<sup>20</sup> "Miscellaneous Remarks on Divisions of Property," in Webster, *A Collection of Essays and Fugitiv Writings*, 347.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 346.

## Freedom from Religious Establishments

IF IN their struggle against the state establishments American religious dissenters did not demand a separation of church and state, what sort of liberty did they seek? Centuries have passed since Roger Williams dreamed of a separation between church and world, and since some later anticlerical writers, such as the Marquis de Condorcet, called for a sort of separation of church and state. So too, centuries have passed since establishment ministers attributed to dissenters a desire to separate religion from government, and since Noah Webster similarly discredited the supporters of clerical exclusions. After the passage of so much time, it should be possible to step back from all of these contentious assertions and to examine dispassionately the religious liberty sought by the late eighteenth-century Americans who struggled against establishments. If not separation, what did they request? An examination of their demands, as expressed in their own terms, will be seen to vindicate these dissenters not only from the aspersions of their opponents but also, ironically, from the accolades of their later admirers, who, with very different motives, have likewise attributed to them a desire for separation.

### *The Character of American Establishments*

During the Revolution, American establishments lost their severity. Some colonies had once penalized religious dissenters with laws constraining unauthorized worship and preaching, but, in their struggle against Britain, the states abandoned what remained of their direct penalties on religion. As a result, such establishments of religion as still sur-