

# Introduction

## *Authority and Obedience in Revolutionary America*

In the spring of 1764, an ailing George Whitefield embarked on his sixth preaching tour of the American colonies. Not shy about his abilities despite his declining health, the famed Anglican evangelist from Gloucester, England, reported that the crowds remained large and enthusiastic, and that the invitations for him to preach “come so thick and fast from every quarter, that I know not what to do.”<sup>1</sup>

Not all colonists proved so welcoming. After a successful stay in Philadelphia, Whitefield wanted to preach at St. John’s Church in Elizabeth Town, New Jersey, where Anglicans and others “bewitched” by the Grand Itinerant were clamoring to hear him speak. St. John’s pastor—an irascible Anglican missionary by the name of Thomas Bradbury Chandler—said no.<sup>2</sup>

In the long, controversial career of Thomas Bradbury Chandler, the incident was a telling one, for it said much about the values and beliefs of one of the leading royalist thinkers in British North America. To his critics, Chandler was an “Ecclesiastick,” a term of opprobrium they reserved for high church Anglicans who they believed persecuted their religious foes and longed for a pre-1688 world in which a strong monarch ruled.<sup>3</sup> Chandler was, indeed, a royalist. He believed in the union of church and state. He argued, passionately and defiantly, that governmental authority was essential to the smooth functioning of society. He prized hierarchy and abhorred democracy. To Chandler, the evangelical movement threatened to upend this traditional world by attacking the clergy, exalting the power of the laity, and encouraging the reborn to create a new, democratic society atop the rubble of the old, hierarchical one. The mere

presence of Whitefield, whom Chandler derided as a “common incendiary,” appalled him. The revivals, he explained years later, divided communities and undermined order; they were “productive of divisions and separations without end. . . . Enthusiasm, like faction, is utterly ungovernable.”<sup>4</sup>

Chandler’s rejection of Whitefield dismayed his parishioners, even angered them. But he stood his ground, “and after a while the tumult subsided,” he reported to his superiors in London. Chandler viewed the incident as a teachable moment during a perilous time in American history. Protests against parliamentary authority were only beginning to stir in the mid-1760s, but Chandler well understood the direction American society was heading. In both the religious and political spheres, democracy was gaining ground and a royalist America was increasingly under assault. Whitefield’s proposed visit came at a time when Chandler was already working to strengthen British authority and the Church of England in the colonies by aggressively campaigning for an American episcopate.<sup>5</sup>

Chandler’s attempt to bring an Anglican bishop to the colonies in the 1760s, followed by his efforts to stave off American independence in the early 1770s, left him a figure of scorn in radical circles. His powerful tracts in 1774 and 1775 mocking the revolutionary movement, the Continental Congress, and New England were burned by the Sons of Liberty and nearly got him killed. And his full-throated campaign for hated bishops branded him for posterity as a high church crank woefully out of step with his revolutionary times.

The real Chandler, as a result, has been lost to history. We have no biographies of Chandler; instead, in study after study, usually on the bishop’s cause, he emerges in brief mentions as a one-dimensional figure—the outspoken Anglican churchman hurling incendiary rhetorical bombs at Whigs and opposing the glorious cause that was the American Revolution.<sup>6</sup>

Chandler deserves a careful reappraisal, and for reasons that go beyond the need to understand the life of an American who pursued unpopular causes during the revolutionary era. Chandler the high church royalist stood at the head of an important segment of the American population that opposed the American Revolution and supported traditional British values. What these beliefs meant, and how Chandler came to hold them, is the subject of this book.

To many Americans today, a Chandlerian world of monarchy and hierarchy, of order and obedience, is little known and understood. In the popular imagination, the founding generation shared a love of individualism and democracy while abhorring monarchy and strong government. In a 2019 book,

the erudite George F. Will, a syndicated columnist and influential conservative thinker, portrayed the founding generation as classical liberals devoted to democracy, individual liberty, and limited government—values antithetical to those held by Chandler and other “Friends of Government” (as Chandler and his allies described themselves). The revolutionaries, of course, won both the war and the fight over what kind of society the new nation would become, and with their victory, the alternative vision that Chandler promulgated has receded from historical memory.<sup>7</sup>

In 1775, however, the outcome was very much in doubt. A large part of the American public (possibly a majority on the Revolution’s eve) admired monarchy, feared rebellion, and understood the importance of authority to society. Alexander Hamilton—an aide-de-camp to General George Washington during the war, a co-author of *The Federalist Papers*, and the subject of a wildly popular twenty-first-century musical that interprets the revolutionary period through a contemporary lens—was a social conservative who feared democracy and admired monarchy and the British constitution. In 1780, Hamilton proposed creating a monarchical government with republican liberties. “[The monarch] ought to be hereditary and to have so much power that it will not be [in] his interest to risk much to acquire more,” he wrote. Hamilton also embraced the Chandlerian view that order was important to good government, and he worried that citizens in a republic might not share the deep respect for law and authority that they did under a monarchy.<sup>8</sup>

This concern with order might seem surprising, but it should not be. Across the political spectrum throughout the eighteenth century, leading Americans—merchants, planters, lawyers, and clergymen—wrestled with the question of how to preserve order and the deference owed to the elite in a democratizing world. The assault on Chandler’s beloved hierarchy, with a monarch on top and a mass of commoners on the bottom, was coming from many quarters and had many causes. Extensive geographic mobility in the colonies was undermining community, weakening traditional social bonds, and allowing ordinary people to assume leadership roles, especially in the backcountry. In addition, Protestantism was undercutting the authority of leaders: the Great Awakening and evangelism placed salvation in the hands of the individual, while Presbyterian synods and Congregationalist covenants gave power to laymen in the running of their congregations. In the teeming seaports from Boston to Charleston, merchants enlisted the aid of laborers and seamen in the defense of American rights in the 1760s, but then struggled to keep them in line in the protests and riots that followed the Stamp Act and

other British measures. As a leading urban historian noted, merchants came “to fear the awful power of the assembled artisans and their compatriots.” The elites’ fears of the masses only grew in the 1770s and 1780s as the newly declared United States embarked on its grand republican experiment. They saw ordinary people gaining power and state legislatures kowtowing to popular whims. As one historian said of the 1780s, revolutionary leaders came to believe “that the American Revolution had gone too far. Their great hope was that the federal convention [of 1787] would find a way to put the democratic genie back in the bottle.”<sup>9</sup>

It was this fear of democracy that Chandler and other loyalist intellectuals sought to exploit when they campaigned against the revolutionary movement in the 1770s. For their American audience, they phrased the question simply: How could social and political order survive when subjects had the right to challenge authority? The leading voice for this view was Thomas Bradbury Chandler. In a particularly elegant passage summing up Bernard Bailyn’s seminal *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, historian Robert M. Calhoun, the dean of loyalist studies, neatly captured Chandler’s importance to American history: “Bernard Bailyn’s groundbreaking analysis of the pamphlets of the American Revolution peeled layer after layer from more than a decade of imperial and constitutional debate until he reached the core of their meaning. He found this meaning *not* in a pamphlet by Adams or Jefferson or Paine, but in a challenge to Whig ideology penned by the high Tory theorist and polemicist Thomas Bradbury Chandler.”<sup>10</sup> Bailyn had, indeed, praised “the elegant, scholarly Thomas Bradbury Chandler” as being in the forefront of loyalist writers who attacked the revolutionary movement at its weakest point. Bailyn summed up Chandler’s challenge succinctly: “What reasonable social and political order could conceivably be built and maintained where authority was questioned before it was obeyed?”<sup>11</sup>

In his three tracts urging colonists to reject revolution, Chandler warned them about the dangers rebellious subjects posed to government and society. “The bands of society would be dissolved,” he wrote in *A Friendly Address to All Reasonable Americans*, “if reverence, respect, and obedience, might be refused to those whom the constitution has vested with the highest authority.”<sup>12</sup>

Virtually all loyalist thinkers, from Jonathan Boucher to William Smith and Samuel Seabury Jr., said much the same thing in their denunciations of the revolutionary movement. In June 1775, Smith, provost of the College of Philadelphia, could be found preaching “that without order and just subordination, their [*sic*] can be no union in public bodies. However much you may

be equals on other occasions, yet . . . every individual is bound to keep the place and duty assigned him, by ties far more powerful over a man of virtue and honour, than all the other ties which human policy can contrive.”<sup>13</sup>

Chandler’s colleague Samuel Seabury Jr., an Anglican minister in New York, maintained that “government was intended for the security of those who live under it—to protect the weak against the strong—the good against the bad—to preserve order and decency among men, preventing every one from injuring his neighbor. Every person, then, owes obedience to the laws of the government under which he lives, and is obliged in honor and duty to support them.” If a person has the right to disregard the law, Seabury continued, “*all* have the *same* right; and *then* government is at an end.”<sup>14</sup>

High church clergy were not alone in sounding these alarms. In April 1775, Frederick Smyth, chief justice for the colony of New Jersey, lectured the Middlesex County grand jury about the importance of respect for government and the threat posed by “a Tyranny of the People.” “Every individual hath an interest in the public tranquility, which once destroyed all private rights will sink and be absorbed,” Smyth said. “If Liberty and the Common rights of the Subject are really the objects in view, let it be remembered that Liberty is never more in danger than when it vergeth into Licentiousness—Liberty must ever be founded in Law, and protected by it.”<sup>15</sup>

Americans’ views of order, obedience, democracy, and rebellion had roots deep in English and Western history. On the Whigs’ side, historians since the 1950s have been methodically uncovering the sources of revolutionary thought. Among the most influential remains the work of Gordon S. Wood. In *The Creation of the American Republic*, Wood noted that American revolutionaries drew their inspiration from classical antiquity, British history, and European rationalism. From history, American revolutionaries came to understand how power corrupted rulers and threatened the liberties of the people. Antiquity—a time when Athens and other republics flourished—was a source of inspiration to these budding liberals, while the fall of these ancient republics was equally instructive. British history provided further powerful lessons, especially the seventeenth century, a time when the people triumphantly overthrew Stuart rulers and saved the nation from Catholicism and tyranny.<sup>16</sup>

Numerous historians have also shown how important religious history—especially dissenter history—was in Whig circles. The English Civil Wars of the 1640s, which witnessed the execution of Charles I and the establishment of a Cromwellian protectorate, were particularly searing. The successful rebellion against the Crown, and the accompanying emasculation of the state

church and its hated bishops, inspired American radicals. So did a dissenting tradition in the British Isles that saw Puritans and Presbyterians repeatedly challenge Anglican and royal power in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This dissenting tradition, with its deep distrust of the state church and British authority, made the colonists' conspiracy fears of the 1760s and '70s especially intense, as historian J. C. D. Clark has shown.<sup>17</sup>

Clark also demonstrated the ways that the heated religious rivalries of earlier centuries shaped politics and concepts of liberty. "In the rivalry and antagonism of religious sects," he observed, "is to be found a crucial component of imperial politics and a central theme in the history of political thought, hitherto largely the province of church historians, but deserving of a more central place in the historical arena." John Seed made a similar argument, positing that the history of persecution of dissenters in the seventeenth century was a central and shaping force among dissenters in the eighteenth century. The return of the Stuarts and the state church in 1660, accompanied by a crackdown on dissent, left a legacy of distrust and hatred in coming decades that greatly affected politics.<sup>18</sup>

How American loyalists made use of history is another matter. As on the Whig side, many scholars recognize that history played a crucial role in shaping loyalist beliefs. But analyses of this history share a common weakness: historians view the Americans who defended the king in 1775 as a mirror image of their revolutionary counterparts. Loyalists read the same sources and shared the same historical memories as the revolutionaries but came to opposite conclusions. "If republican ideology was a hybrid of classical ideas conceived in a Machiavellian moment, loyalism drew on principles deeply embedded in English politics, philosophy, and literature," observed Jerry Bannister and Liam Riordan. "These principles manifested themselves in an eclectic range of thinkers—from Hobbes and Locke to Burke and Durham—as Britons debated the covenants that bound subjects to their king."<sup>19</sup>

In a 1972 essay, historian Mary Beth Norton presented one of the most powerful cases for this school of thought as she concluded that loyalists, just like their radical American cousins, were Lockean and Whigs. Loyalists, she explained, were not backward conservatives clinging to a romanticized British past but were in the mainstream of eighteenth-century English Whig thought; American revolutionaries, by contrast, embraced a radical variant of Whiggism discredited in England. "Instead of characterizing the American Revolution as a struggle between Whigs and Tories, I would argue that in ideological terms, it should be seen as a contest between different varieties

of Whigs, Whigs whose respective world views brought some of them to become revolutionaries and others to become loyalists,” she wrote. Norton’s loyalists, in short, cited the same authorities as American radicals. “Copious references to Locke, Hume, Montesquieu, Grotius, and Vattel line the pages of works by Joseph Galloway and other loyal essayists,” she observed. In addition, according to Norton, the loyalists argued from Lockean premises. They accepted the constitutional settlement that followed the Glorious Revolution of 1688–89 and rejected the Jacobite movement that sought to return the Stuarts to the throne.<sup>20</sup>

In accounts of radical and loyalist thought, the Glorious Revolution was especially important. Norton and other historians note that both loyalists and radicals accepted the outcome of the constitutional settlement that followed the peaceful overthrow of James II. In the words of Robert Calhoun, “The Glorious Revolution transformed the concept of order throughout the Anglo-American world. It settled once and for all the question of parliamentary supremacy. And by securing the Protestant succession to the throne . . . the Glorious Revolution insured that the absolutism of the kind Louis XIV was then instituting in Catholic France would not develop in the British Isles.”<sup>21</sup>

In a study of colonial Anglican clergy during the revolutionary era, Nancy L. Rhoden agreed. “As inheritors of the Glorious Revolution Settlement, which had included provisions for constitutional monarchy and religious toleration,” she wrote, “colonial Anglican clergymen of the late eighteenth century did not wish to dispute or unravel the political changes since 1688. Even Anglican loyalists, who affirmed the political superiority of British institutions, wanted to separate themselves from non-juring, and therefore disloyal, doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance.”<sup>22</sup>

The life of Thomas Bradbury Chandler presents a fascinating test of these theses, for he left behind a trove of documentary sources—most importantly, a catalog of his extensive library—that allows us to climb into the mind of a leading loyalist and critic of the revolutionary movement. Like his radical counterparts, Chandler was enthralled by the Glorious Revolution, but not quite in the way Norton and Calhoun posited. Chandler did indeed understand that, after 1688, Parliament reigned supreme in the British constitutional system. Responding to American claims that Parliament had no right to tax the colonies, he argued for parliamentary authority over British North America. But to read these arguments as “acceptance” of the Glorious Revolution distorts, and simplifies, Chandler’s beliefs. As his library holdings and life experiences reveal, Chandler’s fascination with the Glorious Revolution had

little to do with constitutional issues involving parliamentary authority or the fate of the Stuart line. Instead, he studied the various debates surrounding the 1688–1720 period intently—most of them quite obscure and rarely mentioned in analyses of Americans’ intellectual heritage—in order to gain a deeper understanding of revolution, governmental authority, obedience, and the importance of episcopacy to a well-functioning state. Chandler’s library holdings and his forays into dusty corners of English history help solve key puzzles: Why did Chandler love monarchy so strongly and hate democracy so passionately? Why did he value order so highly? Most of all, why did he see revolution as folly?<sup>23</sup>

Thomas Bradbury Chandler was born in 1726 and raised in a Congregational world, the eldest child in a wealthy Puritan family from Connecticut with roots extending to the Great Migration of the 1630s. The Chandlers were farmers and militia officers, town officials and church deacons. Thomas wanted nothing to do with that world. As an undergraduate at Yale, he converted to Anglicanism and, after graduating in 1745, studied theology under the Reverend Samuel Johnson of Connecticut, a brilliant high churchman and strong supporter of episcopacy. At the conclusion of his studies and after a brief stint teaching school in his hometown of Woodstock, Chandler arrived in the picturesque village of Elizabeth Town near New York City in 1748 to become a catechist and, three years later, minister at St. John’s. There, he would spend the next forty-two years, except for a ten-year exile in London during the American Revolution. Despite the Whitefield incident, Chandler was beloved by his parishioners, and he succeeded in building an impressive membership for the struggling church, so much so that St. John’s became one of the largest Anglican congregations in colonial New Jersey.<sup>24</sup>

Chandler’s personality was far more complicated than his reputation as a high church extremist would suggest. His letters to London could be impudent and impatient, but also reasoned and powerful as he pleaded for an American bishop. His published writings suffered the same flaws and exhibited the same strengths: they were—mostly—calm in an attempt to persuade a “reasonable” public, but they were also peppered with insults so penetrating that his outraged targets labeled Chandler an enemy to the people. In person, he had a kindly, even cherubic face, defined by pencil-thin eyebrows, “uncommonly” blue eyes (in the words of one of his daughters), and an aquiline nose. His health was poor—he struggled with smallpox and had a painful, cancerous nose—but he exuded energy and a capacity for work until his final



years. Despite his bookish propensities, Chandler was gregarious, known for a friendly manner and engaging voice. Unlike Samuel Johnson, he enjoyed the demanding social responsibilities of a colonial parson in a small village.

Yet Chandler, the first born in a wealthy family who married into the upper crust of New Jersey society, could be haughty and hot-tempered. In his dealings with his religious rivals, Chandler alternately charmed and insulted his dissenter neighbors. Among the Anglican clergy, he had his share of critics and supporters. Detractors such as William Smith believed Chandler's campaign for an American episcopate was poorly conceived and ill-timed. His supporters felt otherwise. Possessing a first-rate mind and the confidence of someone born into wealth, Chandler was a natural leader. With Samuel Johnson's health failing in the 1760s, Chandler assumed the mantle of leadership as the northern Anglican clergy campaigned for an American episcopate. This coterie of clergy—primarily Charles Inglis, Samuel Seabury Jr., and Myles Cooper—looked to Chandler for guidance. It was Chandler who organized petition campaigns to London, wrote the main tract for episcopacy, and spearheaded the defense of their campaign.<sup>25</sup>

Opponents and supporters alike agreed that Chandler was a scholar of distinction. The patriot clergyman Ezra Stiles—no fan of Chandler and his high church beliefs—praised Chandler's intellect and considered him one of the best-read churchmen in America. Chandler was a serious bibliophile of nearly Jeffersonian ambitions who amassed one of the largest private libraries in early America. After his death in 1790, Chandler's estate put his library up for sale, listing each work and the price. The catalog of Chandler's holdings—a fabulous source that historians have noted but not examined—reveals both the breadth of his interests and the sources of his intellectual thought. It is this library that gives us important insights into what educated colonists read and how a leading loyalist used history to construct a mental world that rejected rebellion.<sup>26</sup>

Chandler is best known for his campaign for an American bishop, but episcopacy was merely the means to an end. Chandler prized order, and he disdained the two biggest threats to order—democracy and revolution. As he saw democracy and the revolutionary movement gaining ground in the colonies, Chandler wanted to better understand the forces at work and to devise ways to counter them. Thus he accumulated an impressive collection of books about the founding of the Church of England in Tudor England, the rise of Puritanism in the sixteenth century, and the debates about obedience and rebellion that followed the Glorious Revolution of 1688–89. For

Chandler, this history reinforced the dangers of democracy and the value of a hierarchical society centered on monarchy and a state church whose mission was to buttress governmental authority.

American revolutionaries knew their history, too, but they focused not on the minutiae of the 1688 period as did Chandler, but on the tumultuous events in seventeenth-century England: Laudian persecution in the 1630s, followed by the Civil Wars of the 1640s, the Restoration of 1660, and the overthrow of James II in 1688. For American Whigs, this history provided valuable lessons on the dangers of a tyrannical king and state church as well as the importance of resistance. Whig heroes included James Tyrrell, whose *General History of England* (a copy of which Chandler owned) defended the rights of the people to rebel, and the greatly admired John Locke, who laid out a contractual society in which government rested on the consent of the governed.

Chandler owned four of Locke's works and likely read him closely, mulling over Locke's views of family and his analysis of order and rebellion, but Chandler never accepted Lockean contractualism. Central to his understanding of rebellion and obedience were two pivotal, and now obscure, events from the Glorious Revolution: the protests of the nonjurors—those Church of England clergy in the British Isles who refused to take the oath of allegiance when William and Mary ascended to the throne in 1689—and the Bangorian controversy, so named because Benjamin Hoadly as Bishop of Bangor sparked a fight over church powers following a sermon he delivered on March 31, 1717. For Chandler, the views of Hoadly were more damning than those of Locke because of the former's attacks on hierarchy and authority.<sup>27</sup>

A critic of religious strife, Hoadly wanted to curb the powers of the institutional church and end the practice of forcing people to worship at the state church. Chandler owned more than ten works by Hoadly and a far large number of tracts by his critics. These critics warned that Hoadly's doctrines would destroy church authority and all laws imposed on matters of faith or conscience. The nonjurors and high church polemicists rejected the idea that ordinary people could be on an equal footing with their superiors. Hoadly's philosophy, they said, would mean that every man had the right to judge Scripture for himself.

For Chandler, the debates surrounding the Glorious Revolution helped him make sense of the growing crisis in Britain's North American colonies. He was concerned about more than the religious divisions in America and the growing violence of street protests, both of which threatened British authority; he worried about what kind of society British North America would become.

Chandler saw individualism rising in both church and state. He saw growing economic prosperity creating a middle-class society. And he saw representative democracy expanding, which undercut deference and threatened the elite's ability to lead. As alarming as the political protests of the 1760s and 1770s were, Chandler was little surprised by what was happening. The trends had been obvious to him for years, and he drew parallels between America of the 1760s and England of the seventeenth century.

Chandler, as a result, was not merely a backward-looking royalist refighting the political battles of earlier centuries. He saw the contest between dissenter and churchmen, between rebellious subject and central authority, as not only ongoing but entering a dangerous new phase in the 1760s that threatened the traditional, monarchical society he loved. This fight was a key reason he wanted a bishop so badly for the American branch of the Church of England. Historians typically portray the bishop's campaign as an outgrowth of the persecution and impotence the northern Anglican clergy felt. As Peter W. Walker observed in a 2016 dissertation on loyalist clergy,

The [Anglican] missionaries believed that the Church of England was the established church in America—at least in principle. They considered it staggeringly unjust that colonial Dissenters had arrogated that role to themselves. Not only this, the missionaries believed they received worse treatment from American Dissenters than English Dissenters received from the Church of England. In 1759, the Connecticut missionary Samuel Johnson told the Archbishop of Canterbury, “the Church is really in a State of Persecution under them here, where they have, without any warrant from their Charter, pretended to establish themselves.”<sup>28</sup>

There is much truth to this interpretation. Chandler and his clerical allies did see themselves in a position of weakness, and they did see themselves as victims, unlike their brethren in the South, where Anglicanism was the established church in Virginia and the Carolinas. Northern missionaries for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts felt surrounded and besieged by their far more numerous rivals, and they complained bitterly about their treatment at the hands of the dissenters and about London's supposed lack of support for northern Anglicans.

But the wellspring for the bishop's campaign ran deeper than the clergy's frustration with their supposedly inferior status. Flowing through Chandler's writings and reform campaign were insights gleaned from the Glorious

Revolution and the ways religion can help prevent revolution and protect monarchy. His campaign for an American episcopate pulled together all the threads in his religious and political thought. The arrival of a bishop, he believed, would strengthen the Church of England in America and the Crown's authority in the fractious colonies, where democracy was gaining the upper hand. For Chandler, his collection of books and tracts on England and Scotland in the seventeenth century provided ample proof that episcopacy was an essential pillar in a monarchical society and that Anglicanism promoted respect for authority and government.

It is striking just how important the 1680–1720 period was to Chandler, and how deeply he read into this period of history. Unlike other American intellectuals, he did not look to the ancient world for guidance. On the radical Whig side, Athens and the Roman republic were a model to emulate and study. On the loyalist side, the ancients provided words of wisdom on the dangers of democracy and how the rule of commoners could lead to anarchy. Aristotle, for one, believed people of low birth or from the mechanical occupations were unfit to rule. If his library catalog is any indication, Chandler's gaze did not go so far back. He instead trained his telescope on Scotland and England in the closing years of the seventeenth century and the early years of the eighteenth. Nor did he look to continental sources for guidance. The Protestant Reformation and religious wars of the early modern period produced a robust body of literature on the importance of obedience, everything from Martin Luther's admonitions to obey earthly rulers to Jean Bodin's *Six Books of the Republic* (1576), which stressed the patriarchal nature of governmental authority. Bodin's work is especially interesting given its parallels to key Chandlerian themes: that a family was most stable when the patriarch exercised absolute authority and thus that a state was strongest when a monarch enjoyed similar authority. Patriarchy and hierarchy were important in Chandler's writings, but it was Robert Filmer (1588–1653)—the leading English apologist for monarchy—and not Bodin who inspired Chandler.<sup>29</sup>

In important ways, Chandler's outlook was also shaped by American conditions. He came away from his Connecticut upbringing with a visceral hatred—and hatred is not too strong of a word—of New England, Congregationalism, and the Great Awakening. As an undergraduate at Yale, he naturally gravitated to the Anglican orbit. The reasons were not hard to find. To an extraordinary degree, the Church of England's values of hierarchy and order were his values, and Chandler reveled in the church's three-century history, even the controversial chapters that Whig foes seized on in an attempt to discredit it. Chandler especially admired Richard Hooker, the famed Anglican

theologian and apologist, and defended William Laud, the reviled archbishop who persecuted Puritans in the 1630s and spurred the mass migration that led to New England's founding. The Church of England was a state church that defended monarchy and preached the importance of obedience to, and duty and respect for, one's superiors. Kings and God were conjoined, as the former ruled with the divine blessing of the latter. As the Bible commanded, according to Anglican dogma, subjects owed allegiance to both king and God. As a result, rulers "have a right to be obeyed in all things, wherein they do not interfere with the commands of God: for in obeying them, we obey God, who commands by their mouths and wills, by their laws and proclamations," explained a 1755 edition of the church's primer on obedience, *The Whole Duty of Man*.<sup>30</sup>

Chandler's arrival in Elizabeth Town landed the pugnacious, and proud, young minister in a fierce religious contest pitting "dissenters"—primarily Presbyterians—against Anglicans. He came to Elizabeth at a critical juncture, when the Church of England was working hard to expand in the American colonies. The effort was succeeding, especially in New England. The church grew from 111 parishes in 1700 to 289 in 1750. The expansion was largely the result of an aggressive missionary effort that followed the founding of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in 1698 and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) in 1701. The former was the brainchild of Thomas Bray, the Bishop of London's deputy in Maryland, who was alarmed by the shortage of Anglican ministers in the colonies. The SPCK published religious literature and established schools, while the SPG supplied missionaries to the colonies who would work among the king's subjects and prevent the spread of infidelity and popery.<sup>31</sup>

But the Church of England still had much work to do in America, especially in the northern colonies. In Elizabeth and its environs, the Presbyterians were dominant and membership at St. John's had fallen off when Chandler arrived in 1747. He worked tirelessly to change that over the next twenty-seven years. Driving him was his belief in the superiority of episcopacy and the state church. As a missionary, Chandler sought to inculcate Anglican values in his parishioners and neighbors. But more than that, he viewed the contest with the dissenters as a battle for a traditional society. Presbyterianism and Congregationalism, he concluded, posed grave dangers to monarchy and hierarchy, and he wanted their expansion slowed and their influence contained.

This battle in Elizabeth Town occurred at the same time as London's authority in the colonies was deteriorating. And for this development, Chandler heaped a good deal of blame on dissenters—they were, according to

Chandler, cantankerous, divisive, and hostile to good government and monarchy. Equally damning in Chandler's view, the dissenters were encouraging individualism. Individuals who followed their own inclinations in church made for disobedient, and potentially rebellious, subjects in the political realm. English Puritans, after all, had been stirring up trouble for the Crown since the days of Queen Elizabeth and Archbishop John Whitgift. Chandler saw similar challenges in the colonies—and specifically in New England, obviously, with its Puritan heritage, democratic ethos, and hostility to Anglicanism. Whitefield and the Great Awakening posed a second serious threat because of evangelicals' questioning of authority. Jonathan Edwards and his *Freedom of the Will*, published in 1754, posed a third.

Edwards, the brilliant theologian and philosopher from the Connecticut River Valley, attempted in his famous treatise to carefully define free will and to account for human sin in a Calvinistic world. An all-powerful God bestowed on his human creations the ability to choose between multiple courses of actions, Edwards reasoned, but they choose within a range of behaviors that God selected. Edwards's purpose was to counter liberal thinkers who maintained that free will resided within individuals and not God. Edwards and other Calvinistic theologians worried that an expansive notion of free will would empower individuals and undercut moral agency.<sup>32</sup>

Edwards's definition of free will was an elaborate compromise between two extremes, but Chandler rejected it anyway because Edwardean free will would give too much power to the individual. Chandler brooded about *Freedom of the Will* and its implications for years after its publication, and he declared in 1768 that Edwards "must be confuted, or submitted to; for I cannot much longer bear the opprobrium of his continuing unanswered."<sup>33</sup>

The fears of the dangers posed by selfish individuals were only one part of Chandler's disdain toward democratic society and what eventually became the independence movement. He hated what the revolutionaries represented. The Continental Congress, Chandler complained, was a "government of unprincipled mobs"—a term in English history reserved for the vulgar. He further warned that "ignorant men, bred to the lowest occupations," were guiding political affairs. These ignorant men, Chandler warned, threatened to bring ruin to the colonies, even in the unlikely event the ragtag American forces managed to defeat superior British forces. Both the economy and civil liberties would suffer outside the protection of the empire. The English constitution "has always been the wonder of the world," he reminded Americans. Like other loyalists, he decried the Continental Congress for both circumventing British authority and empowering the people.<sup>34</sup>

The impact of Chandler's three pamphlets on wavering colonists is unclear, but the tracts sold well and succeeded in enraging the revolutionaries, who worried about their effect on public opinion. His non-Anglican neighbors were certainly none too pleased with Chandler's defense of the king—Elizabeth Town was a radical stronghold, home to the revolutionary Governor William Livingston of New Jersey and a base for the Sons of Liberty. Chandler put his life on the line by defending monarchy and Parliament. As did other places throughout the colonies, Elizabeth violently opposed the Stamp Act, but Chandler defended it. The same pattern unfolded in the 1770s. Elizabeth—primarily its Presbyterian residents—backed the revolutionary cause; Chandler and most of his parishioners rejected it. In 1775, Chandler's relationship with his radical neighbors reached a breaking point following the publication of his latest attacks on the revolutionary movement. A large crowd led by the Sons burned Chandler's writings at the courthouse in December 1774, and inebriated militia members marched on his house in early 1775. Chandler became so fearful for his life that he abandoned his family and escaped to New York City in late April 1775. A few weeks later, he took passage to London aboard a British naval ship.

*The Folly of Revolution* tells this dramatic story by taking the reader deep into a now lost monarchical world. The opening chapter recounts Chandler's early life, the reasons he became a high church Anglican, and Samuel Johnson's influence on his intellectual development. Chapters 2 and 3 describe Chandler's experiences as a missionary and explore his studies of Tudor and Stuart history—two eras that heavily influenced Chandler's views of episcopacy and rebellion. Chapters 4 and 5 examine the central cause of Chandler's life: his effort to create an American episcopate and the firestorm it created in the American colonies. Chapters 6 and 7 look at Chandler's opposition to the American Revolution and his lonely exile in London, which lasted for a decade. An epilogue visits Chandler's final years and the fate of his traditional, British world in the tumultuous decades of the 1780s and 1790s.

A note about terminology and sources. Chandler was a "conservative" in the limited sense that he was defending tradition as he perceived it at the time, but I avoid the term because of the complexity of his thought. Chandler did not oppose change, for example, and he embraced "New Learning"—Samuel Johnson's term for the Enlightenment and the great secrets it was unlocking—and supported religious toleration in the colonies. Chandler *was* a high church royalist whose beliefs were anchored in an Anglo-British value system with roots extending to the reign of Queen Elizabeth. This traditionalism

prized monarchy, episcopacy, a state church, and hierarchy, and it shared much with the “high church” values with which Chandler’s foes tarred him. The two terms, however, were not synonymous. High church Anglicanism emphasized divine-right episcopacy and sacramental worship, as opposed to the low church emphasis on the evangelical. It also emphasized the close alliance between the Crown and the church.

Loyalism, meanwhile, refers to those Americans who remained true to the king and the British empire. Like Chandler, many loyalists valued monarchy and abhorred democracy and rebellion, and some (but not all) were high church Anglicans. A number of loyalists were moderates who criticized Parliament, including its attempts to tax the colonists, but rejected independence. I do not use the term “Tory” to refer to loyalists because American supporters of independence deployed the term as an insult in an effort to discredit their foes. Likewise, I do not use the term “patriot” because of its bias toward the revolutionaries. The implication was that “patriots” loved America while supposedly unpatriotic loyalists did not. But this was not true; Chandler and other loyalists loved America just as much as the revolutionaries did. They wanted America to thrive, and they were convinced the colonies would fare best by remaining in the empire. In the loyalist mind, it was the revolutionaries who were unpatriotic because they wanted to secede from Great Britain and bring ruin on the colonies.

Primary sources, of course, dictate much of what we can learn about Chandler. When Chandler fled to London in May 1775, his family burned many of his private papers to prevent them from falling into radicals’ hands. As a result, we know little about his marriage or his family life. In addition, unlike many other ministers, Chandler did not publish any sermons—with one exception—and his sermon notes are not extant, so it is difficult to know what kind of preacher he was and what he told parishioners as the revolutionary movement gained strength.

*The Folly of Revolution* rests on the catalog of Chandler’s library, which provides an outstanding window into his mind and the British roots of his thought; his extensive correspondence with Anglican colleagues and with London as an SPG missionary; his writings on the bishop’s cause and the revolutionary crisis; and a diary he kept in London. Together, these sources enable us to reconstruct Chandler’s life and the monarchical world he fought so hard to preserve.