

The Calvert Vision: A New Model for Church-State Relations

by

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The struggle to liberate the human mind from governmentally imposed restraints in religion escalated in seventeenth-century England and English America. The first two Catholic Lords Baltimore, George Calvert (?1580–1632) and his son Cecil Calvert (?1605–1675) challenged existing church-state norms when they established colonies in Avalon and Maryland that guaranteed liberty of conscience to all Christians. Shunning the concept of an established church, they openly embraced pluralism and denied the need for religious uniformity. George and Cecil Calvert believed that their colonists should not be denied political office because of their religion. Only individual abilities and loyalty to the proprietary family, and not religious beliefs, limited the inhabitants' chances to prosper. The Calverts further rejected the magistrate's role as the protector of the "true religion." This left individuals free to create their own religious institutions on a voluntary basis. In a bold experiment that lasted for more than a half-century, the Calverts erected a barrier between religious and civil institutions. They based their model on a vision for a society where religious practices remained private and outside the guardianship or interference of civil authorities. What circumstances led these two English Catholics to embrace such radical concepts and to challenge long-accepted ones? How were they able to pursue their material interests in a malevolent Protestant world and maintain their loyalty to the state while pledging their spiritual allegiance to the pope, a foreign prince? ¹

George Calvert seems an unlikely person to have challenged some of his culture's fundamental tenets of church-state relations. He spent the greater part of his life (1603–1625) in government service. His cautious nature, language skills, administrative abilities, lack of financial independence, and willingness to work within the idiosyncratic structure of court politics suited him well for advancement. Knighthood in 1617 and appointment as a secretary of state and a privy councillor in 1619 advanced him beyond his status and exceeded his highest expectations. For more than five years he negotiated the king's major foreign policy objectives and administered the government from London. His diligence in serving the king notwithstanding, Calvert left no significant imprint as a courtier. Ironically, he made his mark after he resigned from government service. ²

Two related developments permitted this to happen. First, Calvert's unwillingness to reverse his position on the Spanish match (the pending alliance between England and Spain) and his uncordial relationship with the royal favorite, the duke of Buckingham, forced his resignation as secretary of state. However unwelcome these circumstances were, Calvert negotiated a favorable settlement. He retired without disgrace, a rich man with an Irish title—Baron of Baltimore—and extensive land holdings in England, Ireland, and America. More important, he left on good terms with his many friends in the government. After he resigned as a privy councillor, he had the time, money, and interest to pursue his colonial enterprises. Second, during the crisis that led to his resignation, Calvert resolved a long-standing personal religious controversy by converting to Catholicism. His life illustrates some of the disruptive and contentious characteristics of the English Reformation. Those Catholics who survived, generally members of the nobility and gentry, demonstrated remarkable adroitness in avoiding the full impact of the penal laws. ³

The penal legislation defined George Calvert's life. These laws, which tried to separate the English from the Catholic, doomed Calvert and his descendants to live in two worlds, one English and one Catholic. His childhood provided him with two examples for responding to these laws. One, that of his

stepmother, modeled tenacious loyalty to the ancient faith. The other, that of his father, modeled conformity in the face of governmentally imposed prosecution. As a youthful Catholic, George experienced government harassment, followed his father's example in 1592, and conformed to the state religion. He maintained this outward conformity until he chose to convert to his childhood religion in the fall of 1624. During the remaining years of his life, Baltimore lived openly as a Catholic. His family likewise ended its conformity and remained faithful Catholics for the rest of the century.⁴

George Calvert's commitment to Catholicism conspicuously changed his life and that of his family. Why did he end his conformity to the state religion? Simon Stock, a Discalced Priest who reclaimed Calvert for Rome, wrote of the one "whom I here converted to our Holy Faith." His use of the word convert implies something more than mere recidivism. The lack of a window to peer into Calvert's soul means that the process by which he became convinced that his salvation lay in the Roman Church must remain unknown, but in making his decision he did not act precipitously. Nor did he act without consideration of his worldly interests. He did not seek martyrdom by identifying with the legally proscribed Catholic minority. Indeed, he did not see that his new religious commitment in any way sullied his loyalty to king and country. Although no longer a secretary of state, he fully expected that his position as a privy councillor would allow him to participate in the government and put him outside the reach of the penal laws. He joined a vibrant, if small, community of influential families whose status and wealth he knew and admired.⁵

His commitment to the condemned faith did raise questions about secular allegiance. In the seventeenth century, religion was not a separate and distinct category. Religious concerns permeated all aspects of English culture. Most "contemporaries were intellectually unable to separate politics and religion." From at least the 1570s, Protestants believed that it was "impossible for any one to be at once a good Roman Catholic and a good subject." They saw English and Catholic as contradictory. By giving their first allegiance to Rome, as Protestants assumed they did, Catholics forfeited their status as English.⁶

After 1625, the now Catholic Lord Baltimore acted boldly and confidently as an English subject in pursuing his colonial interests. The foundation of his early success was his willingness to accept his situation as a conforming member of the Church of England. The cornerstone of his later success was his willingness to accept his situation as an English Catholic and to make the most of it. Declaring allegiance to Catholicism did not necessarily define him as a conservative or a traditionalist. It neither required that he risk his worldly interests to create a religious haven nor compelled him to implement Catholic thinking or Utopian concepts.⁷

Beginning in the mid-sixteenth century, a few Englishmen saw the unlimited possibilities in, and risked life and capital to take advantage of, their sovereign's expanding domain. George Calvert joined a growing but select company of adventurers who saw an opportunity to gain wealth, enhance their status, and enlarge the king's dominions. He invested in overseas enterprises such as the Virginia and East India Companies for very practical reasons—to assert his national loyalty and to prosper. As his wealth increased, the Protestant Calvert diversified his holdings by purchasing or securing grants for land in Yorkshire, Newfoundland, and Ireland.⁸

In pursuing his colonial interests, Calvert acted from a complex set of motives that did not change after his conversion. As a Catholic entrepreneur, he wanted to exploit the new world's potential for economic, personal, and nationalistic reasons. Like their Protestant contemporaries, Catholics embraced capitalist concepts and acted on them. Both Newfoundland and Maryland were investments. His 1627 excursion to Avalon clearly reflected Calvert's commitment to recouping the considerable

investment made between 1623 and 1625. He returned to the island in 1628 to reside permanently and to supervise personally the exploitation of the area's natural resources. By "deare bought experience," the first Lord Baltimore learned some of the hardships inflicted upon his predecessors, who also found the Newfoundland winter beyond endurance. Those lessons notwithstanding, he did not abandon his economic objectives when he left that colony in 1629 and journeyed to the Chesapeake. Indeed, these considerations loomed ever larger in the Maryland enterprise. Not only did Avalon fail to produce any profits, the estimated £20,000 and £25,000 he risked left him with a depleted fortune. As he put it, he had "engaged" in the enterprise at "great expense" and "lost".²

Starting over in a warmer climate would not be easy for a man whose first futile enterprise had sapped his energy and his fortune. To begin anew, Baltimore had to find a better location, secure still another grant of land and authority from the government, rewrite the Newfoundland charter, seek funds to supplement his depleted reserves, and attract individuals willing to venture forth under his leadership. After a brief visit to Virginia in September, he returned to England in October determined to accomplish his goals. As the new charter neared final approval in April 1632, Baltimore died. That left management of the enterprise to his young and inexperienced son, who had to administer the enterprise and implement the new model. Cecil, who shared his father's ambitions, sought a place where he could prosper and enjoy the privileges and status that came as proprietor of his own domain.¹⁰

The Maryland charter and the documents produced to attract prospective adventurers (investors) and planters (colonists) emphasized national or imperial goals and a "pious zeale for the propagation of the Christian faith." This emphasis served two purposes. First, to achieve their objectives, the Catholic Calverts had to have the support of the Protestant government. Without that encouragement, they would not have the opportunity to succeed. King Charles I (1625-49) encouraged these Catholics to colonize his North American dominions. The expansion of the king's dominions, the need to establish a buffer between the English colonies and those established by other European rivals, and a missionary commitment justified the lucrative grant to this Catholic family. To be certain, the monarch profited, at little direct cost, from the Calverts' willingness to bear the expense and pain of enlarging his domain. Their commitment to bring Christianity to the native population further pleased the English government, while expansive nationalism served a deep-seated need of the Calverts.¹¹

Although King Charles I, as well as some of his subordinates, knew that George Calvert and his sons were loyal, their religious affiliation notwithstanding, most of his Protestant subjects did not share their monarch's confidence. Because they were Catholics, Calvert and his heirs challenged the dominant cultural characteristic that their religious practices must conform to those of the crown. As Catholics, they forged far ahead of contemporary thinking that defined identity and political allegiance in religious terms. They believed, rightly or wrongly, that they could overcome that Protestant view of Rome, which associated it with "a ritual-based vision of ignorance [and] superstition" involving allegiance to a foreign ruler (the pope) and the acceptance of reprehensible doctrines such as the right to excommunicate and depose sovereigns.¹²

George and Cecil Calvert assumed that they could find ways to bridge the gap between the competing loyalties of politics (English) and religion (Catholic). Their actions would demonstrate that English and Catholic were not mutually exclusive loyalties and that Catholics could act in the best interests of the English nation. Here they acted boldly, almost as if their Catholicism was not a factor in what they did to enhance the empire and their own well-being. Pride in England was not the exclusive domain of Protestants. In common with Protestant colonizers, Catholic colonizers wanted to further national goals. Charles's government generously granted land along the Chesapeake to the Catholic Calverts because they implemented these goals. Either the king and his closest advisers did not know of his

entente with the Jesuits, which was relatively public, or they did not consider it a matter of consequence. Either way, the government-granted charter in effect sanctioned a Catholic mission to the Indians.¹³

As English Catholics, Calvert and his family brought a unique perspective to colonization and a unique set of problems that complicated those efforts. The Calverts' decision to maintain allegiance to Roman Catholicism remains central to understanding what they attempted. Indeed, nothing makes sense without seeing that they acted to secure their religious freedom and the right of other Catholics to worship without fear of the penal laws. Here was the paradox: How to pursue that (Catholic) goal without seeming too Catholic. The brilliance of their vision, to say nothing of its execution, allowed them to resolve this paradox.

Their colonial enterprises mirrored the Calverts' minority status in Stuart England. The family's commitment to and affiliation with Catholicism after early 1625 both restricted and amplified their opportunities. The Calverts did not flee government persecution. Instead, they moved toward the positive goal of founding a viable English colonial enterprise. Whether in Newfoundland or Maryland, the Calverts never separated their capitalistic pursuits from their commitment to enlarging the king's dominions and to fostering liberty of conscience. Simply put, they intended to foster national interests along with their own material and spiritual enhancement.

Entrepreneurs George and Cecil Calvert were practical visionaries. Religious decisions made in England compelled them to be recklessly innovative as they conceived their colonial enterprises in Newfoundland and in Maryland. They carefully considered how individuals of different faiths could live together peacefully and prosper. To succeed, these English Catholic colonizers knew they could neither use religion as a unifying principle nor let religious differences spoil the effort. In an era characterized by religious strife and warfare, they believed that they could build prosperous colonial societies only if they privatized religion and reduced its prominence in the public sphere. More important, father and son understood that most men acted on the basis of their material interests, and they proposed to satisfy them.

Cecil, the new Lord Baltimore, intended to build a society on three foundation blocks—land, loyalty, and liberty of conscience. Land was his most valuable resource. The modest quit-rents paid by those who received land, along with the development of commercial enterprises, provided the opportunity to recoup the depleted Calvert fortune. The distribution of land played another significant role—it encouraged others to prosper. Given their commitment to Catholicism, the Calverts understood that religion could not be used as a means to ensure political loyalty. In writing the Maryland charter, George Calvert envisioned using the land he controlled to build his second pillar, loyalty. He reached deep into the English past for his method to accomplish this end. The manorial system offered a number of advantages. The liege men, lords of the manors who received the largest grants of land, would provide the needed stability for the colony's peaceful growth, produce a much needed income for him, and create a group of men who recognized that their interests were best served by remaining loyal to the proprietor. Equally important, their manorial courts would deal with issues such as religion to keep them from disrupting the community.¹⁴

To see either Calvert as only championing an anachronistic feudal system of land distribution misses the ingenuity of the vision. George Calvert knew that the self-contained manorial system had been instrumental for Catholic survival outside of London. He relied upon it as a means of keeping religious concerns as private as possible. By adopting the manorial system, he was looking forward, not backward. Only hindsight revealed that system's limitations. In 1632 or even 1657, a manorial society appeared to be ideally suited to accomplish two main goals: generating revenue for the Calverts and ensuring the loyalty of the manorial lords. The third foundation block, a laissez-faire approach to the

religious conscience, related closely to the others and seemed remarkably well suited to the manorial system. ¹⁵

Cecil Calvert sought a place where he and his coreligionists could worship without the threat of the vexatious penal laws. He understood that he could not effectively guarantee liberty to Catholics without guaranteeing it to all who came to his colonies. His vision was simple. He offered the colonists liberty of conscience, that is, the opportunity to worship as they pleased without interference or assistance from the government and an opportunity to pursue worldly goals unimpeded by the usual religious restraints. This, he reasoned, would ensure the cooperation and loyalty of both Protestants and Catholics who now had a material stake in the enterprise and a reason to work for its success. He was no social leveler or political democrat. By dissolving the traditional ties between church and state, he sought to build a stable body politic by ensuring that religious practices, essentially a private matter, would neither privilege one group nor disadvantage another.

Traditional hostility toward Catholics naturally complicated the effort to separate religious considerations from secular ones. For one thing, recruiting colonists proved vexing. Although ably assisted by Father Andrew White of the Society of Jesus, the second Lord Baltimore attracted only a few Catholics for leadership roles. This meant he had fewer than twenty Catholics with whom to build the manorial system and that the majority of recruits were Protestant. In seeking worldly success in America with a religiously diverse group of colonists, the Calverts surely knew that they sailed in treacherous waters. ¹⁶

George Calvert was no stranger to the problems of governing a religiously diverse population. As the king's secretary and as a privy councillor, he had witnessed the entanglements that occurred when his Protestant monarch moved, however hesitantly, toward toleration of loyal Catholics. All the king's eloquence could not change how the majority of English Protestants viewed even the most limited concessions to Catholics. For another, to satisfy their own spiritual needs (and those of their Catholic colonists), the Calverts had to introduce priests, agents of the pope, who were guilty of treason by their very presence in England. The priests paid their own costs and came under the same conditions as the other freemen. The uncertainty for the proprietor was the Protestant majority's ability to coexist with these papal agents. Priests, a religiously diverse population, and Catholic leadership made for a volatile situation that required extraordinary management skills on the part of the proprietor and his surrogates. ¹⁷

To overcome some of the problems they faced as Catholic colonizers, the Calverts embraced freedom of conscience as their *modus operandi*. If they accepted the concept because no better alternative existed, it was a concept that was not inimical to their beliefs. As Catholics and as a small minority of the population, they willingly abandoned the concept of religious uniformity and its concomitant belief that it was the magistrates' duty to protect the true faith. Given their peculiar circumstances, this radical departure seemed an obvious solution.

The second Lord Baltimore may have lacked his father's long experience in government and direct involvement in managing a colonial enterprise, but he demonstrated great skill in fending off the many threats to the colony's existence. Untested as a leader, in some ways he became the most remarkable of the three Catholic Lords Baltimore. He had to attract investors and recruit parties interested in risking their lives and fortunes with him. Challenges, couched in the most virulent anti-Catholic language possible, emanating from supporters of the defunct Virginia Company delayed the expedition's sailing, escalated its costs beyond the limits of the young proprietor's diminished inheritance, and forced him to remain in England. These events created formidable obstacles for the absentee proprietor, who was forced to govern through surrogates. ¹⁸

Most of the difficulties he faced in Maryland stemmed from four sources: The Virginians, who never forgave George Calvert for his role in the dissolution of the Virginia Company or for claiming land they thought theirs; the political authority, which was situated in the person of the (absentee) proprietor and the assembly of freemen; the religious faith of the founding family (Roman Catholic); and the religiously mixed population (Catholic, Church of England, "Puritan," indifferent, and atheist) that ventured to Maryland. These impediments notwithstanding, Baltimore sent forth his expedition in November 1633 with great expectations. ¹⁹

The "Maryland designe," as one of Baltimore's associates styled it, was an audacious attempt to prosper from a colonial enterprise by creating a new model for church-state relations. Lord Baltimore's Instructions, issued on November 13, 1633, placed responsibility for civil peace squarely on the shoulders of his Catholic relatives and friends. By executive fiat he required them to be very careful "to preserve unity & peace amongst all the passengers on Shipp-board, and that they suffer no scandall nor offence to be given to any of the Protestants, whereby any just complaint may hereafter be made, by them, in Virginia or in England." To prevent discord, he ordered his officers to "cause all Acts of Romane Catholique Religion to be done as privately as may be," and to "instruct all Roman Catholiques to be silent upon all Occasions of discourse concerning matters of Religion." Finally, Baltimore, who wanted no repetition of his father's Avalon experience, ordered that government officials treat the Protestants with as much mildness and favor as justice would permit. He expected his injunctions to be observed "at Land as well as at Sea." This strategy was intended to curb disputes and prevent potentially contentious religious issues from destroying the project before it had a chance to succeed. ²⁰

What the second Lord Baltimore sought in his 1633 Instructions was too novel, too radical, to have unfolded without wrinkles. Events in the first twenty-seven years, from 1634 to 1661, severely tested the second Lord Baltimore's skills, resources, and patience. Time after time, his colonists challenged the basic vision. Not even his coreligionists fully grasped the "Maryland designe" and the constraints under which the proprietor labored as an English Catholic. Many of his liege lords sided with the Jesuits, who sought privileges for the Church enjoyed in Catholic countries and subverted his land claims. An exasperated proprietor came close to expelling the Jesuits as a threat to his colony's existence. ²¹

Changing circumstances in England in the late 1640s forced the ever flexible proprietor to foster a revolution in his own government. His appointment of Protestants as governor and councillors necessitated further changes. He first sought to protect his coreligionists through a series of oaths that he required of his officials. The Protestant governor, for example, had to swear not to trouble, molest, or discountenance any person professing to believe in Jesus Christ and in particular no Roman Catholic for or in respect of his or her Religion nor in his or her free exercise thereof as long as they remained faithful to the proprietor and did not disturb or conspire against his government. Equally important, the governor attested that he would not discriminate in conferring offices, rewards, or favors on the basis of religion but would confer them on inhabitants found "faithful and well deserving of his said Lordship." To complete his revolution, Baltimore initiated the Act Concerning Religion in 1649. This law concluded his effort to alleviate tensions in an increasingly pluralistic society and to mute the potential for calamitous religious wrangling. Through this Act he sought to enlist the support of the remainder of the inhabitants. The assembly, the first under a Protestant governor, only needed to accept his wisdom.

The freemen, a majority of whom were still Catholic, balked at approving the proprietor's body of sixteen laws, which he had sent on "three Sheets of Parchment." They rejected his code that would have replaced all existing laws for the colony and reasserted the proprietor's prerogative to initiate

legislation. They argued and debated and finally wrote their own version of the bills. Then, having made their point, they passed a code of twelve laws that incorporated their laws and the proprietor's. The Act Concerning Religion was an amalgam that juxtaposed the assembly's bill with the proprietor's.²²

This act, which made formal the policies initiated by his Instructions, responded to a variety of concerns. To contain civil strife, the ordinance restrained freedom of expression by outlawing the use of derogatory religious terms. Marylanders could no longer call any other inhabitant "an Heretick, schismatick, idolater, Puritan, Independent, Presbyterian, Antinomian, Barrowist, Roundhead, Separatist, Popish Priest, Jesuit, Jesuited Papist, Lutheran, Calvenist, Anabaptist, Brownist" or any other name or term in a reproachful manner relating to religion without incurring a penalty. To satisfy the newly arrived Virginia radical Protestants, the law penalized those who profaned "the Sabbath or Lords Day Called Sunday by frequent swearing drunkenness or by any uncivill or disorderly recreation by working on that day when absolute necessity doth not require it." Finally, to satisfy the proprietor this act guaranteed that no one who professed "to believe in Jesus Christ shall from henceforth be any ways troubled molested or discountenanced for or in respect of his or her Religion nor in the free exercise thereof within this Province." Moreover, it assured Christians that they would not be compelled to "the Belief or exercise of any other Religion against his or her consent so as they be not unfaithful to the Lord Proprietary or molest or Conspire against the Civil Government established or to be established in this Province."²³

Protestant leadership, protective oaths, and the new Act brought no immediate relief. Despite his best efforts, Baltimore's implacable enemies from Virginia, who enjoyed the support of the new parliamentary government in England, triumphantly occupied his colony in 1652. Their conquest forced the plundered proprietor to recover his colony by skillfully manipulating the political and imperial bureaucracy in Cromwellian England. Beyond the legitimacy of his claim to his colony, the Act Concerning Religion served Baltimore well in his negotiations with Cromwell's government. Both the Protestant Lord Protector and the Catholic Lord Proprietary came down squarely in favor of liberty of conscience.²⁴

The next twenty-seven years, from 1661 to 1688, proved remarkably tranquil and peaceful in comparison. The defeat of the Virginians in the late 1650s, the restoration of Charles II in 1660, and the appointment of Philip Calvert, the proprietor's half-brother, as governor helped to stabilize the fragile situation. When Charles Calvert, the proprietor's son, arrived to assume the governor's post in 1661, the Calverts were at long last ready to enjoy the fruits of their long labor. The government enforced the Act Concerning Religion to ensure that religious disputes did not interfere with the planters' chances to flourish. The new era proved most beneficial to the colony's Catholic minority. The brick chapel they built at St. Mary's in the late 1660s testified to their increasing prosperity and success. The irony is that the success of the Calverts and the Maryland Catholics sowed the seeds of their failure.²⁵

Charles Calvert, as governor and then as the third Lord Baltimore and second proprietor after 1675, enjoyed a position denied to his father: He lived and ruled in Maryland. He was indeed the "the prynce" of Maryland, a term employed earlier to describe the proprietorship. He proved incapable of sustaining the new model and eventually lost the colony. Why he failed is critically important to understanding what the Calverts attempted. Certainly human frailties played a part. Success in colonization and survival as Catholics depended on the political and managerial skills of the proprietors. The third Lord Baltimore lacked his father's consummate political skills and blundered at critical junctures. To him, the defense of his proprietary land claims against the encroachments of William Penn took precedence over other, more pressing, matters. Perhaps because he never lived as a

Protestant, he lacked the sensitivity that his father and grandfather displayed. Indeed, actions taken, and, more importantly, actions not taken, indicated that he did not understand the simple proposition on which the colony had been founded, namely, that he had to adjust to ever-changing circumstances. His conviction that toleration was something forced on his father obscured the brilliance of the Calvert vision. Faced with an influx in the 1680s of Church of England immigrants who coupled traditional views of church and state with malignant anti-Catholic sentiments, the third Lord Baltimore failed to accommodate them into his unique society. Beyond these considerations, Charles was a terrible judge of character; those he left in charge when he departed the colony only exacerbated an already tense situation.²⁶

Catholics, always a minority of the population, represented a success story while the Episcopal Protestants faced an uncertain future. When two groups compete for scarce resources such as access to office, the success of one group becomes the other group's failure and creates a breeding ground for conflict. When groups compete within a relatively small community as Maryland was, two important changes sometimes occur: increased hostility between groups, and an intensification of group loyalty. In the face of an alienated group (unchurched Episcopal Protestants who saw only continued exclusion from political appointments and diminished chances to prosper) and their increased hostility, the successful group (proprietary Catholics and their associates) closed their ranks. As proprietor, Charles alone had the opportunity to stem the tide. Instead of reaching out, he retracted. He left those in opposition little choice but to take up arms against a government closed to all but a few proprietary cronies.²⁷

The failure of the "Maryland design," however, went beyond the actions of a few individuals. The Calverts had challenged some fundamental tenets of their age. To maintain civil peace they dictated that religious practices be kept as private as possible. They established neither religious institutions nor their handmaidens, educational ones. The Calverts offered planters freedom to fend for themselves when it came to religion and education, reasoning that if religion remained an essentially private matter, Catholics would enjoy the same rights as other planters and not be penalized for their choice. This marked a significant departure from the status quo and exposed the experiment to attacks from those who wanted to continue the traditional intimate relationship between church and state that existed in England. Many of the English men and women that the Calverts invited into their colony demonstrated that they were not yet ready to put aside religious differences to build a prosperous and tranquil society under Catholic leadership. Beyond the third Lord Baltimore's inept responses lurked the forces of tradition, and in 1692 those forces triumphed. The Maryland Assembly, now led by a Protestant royal governor, ratified the rebellion and established the Church of England by a law that deliberately mocked the 1649 Act Concerning Religion. Freedom of conscience for Catholics and Quakers came to a crashing end.²⁸

In the wake of Coode's Rebellion, which destroyed Calvert proprietary rule in 1689, royal governor Nathaniel Blakiston stated an accepted English conviction regarding church-state relations. He assumed that the assembled members of the legislature were sensible as to how useful "Religion is in the Good Government of a Nation or a province." Religion not only united the inhabitants, it restrained their evil tendencies. His 1700 statement repudiated the Catholic Calvert's bold attempt to establish religious freedom in their Maryland. Protestant critics, who believed that Maryland's only salvation lay in establishing a church that conformed to the English model, had triumphed.²⁹

By attempting to separate Marylanders' religious concerns from the political sphere, the Calverts pointed to the future. Whether intended or not, the Catholic Lords Baltimore moved toward the creation of a more secular society, one in which religious practices were to be kept as private as possible. For better or worse, they contributed to "one of the major social processes which have

shaped Western society in the past five hundred years." Secularization was an extremely complex development and the process "was not always obvious to the clergy and laity who participated in it." Their circumstances as English Catholics led the Calverts to challenge two accepted theological tenets of their world—uniformity and the state's responsibility to protect the "true" religion. The corollary, however, was a society that was too secular for many of its inhabitants.³⁰

When it came to the creation of a new society based on a fresh relationship between religious and political institutions, the Catholic Calverts' vision ranged too far ahead of their contemporaries. That they eventually lost their enterprise is perhaps not surprising. That they held it for almost sixty years is remarkable. Nor must their failure sully their effort. The first and second Lords Baltimore were neither priests nor theologians. They embraced the concept of freedom of conscience for temporal reasons. They rightly understood that a publicly supported religion in a pluralistic society could corrupt the body politic. The new relationship between church and state, the new thinking on freedom of conscience and political allegiance, and the move to a more secular society that the Catholic Lords Baltimore envisioned and struggled diligently to implement was not for their times. In attempting to create a stable society by removing religion from the public realm, they stood closer to Thomas Jefferson than to their contemporaries. The unfortunate result was that, with exception of a small, legally restricted Catholic community, Marylanders dumped the 1649 Act Concerning Religion and the Catholic proprietary family responsible for it into the dustbin of history.³¹

James Wilson, a prominent patriot during the American Revolution and a distinguished jurist, recognized the visionary nature of the Calvert enterprise and decried the "ungracious silence" that denied recognition to the second Lord Baltimore for his part in fostering American understanding of religious toleration. The Calvert family may have lost its place in the history of religious liberty, but the first amendment to the Constitution affirmed the radical concepts advanced by George and Cecil Calvert. The establishment clause of that amendment ("Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion") does more than buttress freedom of religion, which the same amendment separately protects. Its authors sought to defuse potentially explosive situations by uncoupling religion and politics. For contemporary Americans, the "establishment clause separates government and religion so that we can maintain civility between believers and unbelievers as well as among the several hundred denominations, sects, and cults that thrive in our nation, all sharing the commitment to liberty and equality that cements us together." George and Cecil Calvert would have agreed with a statement that prohibited the legislature from passing any laws abridging freedom of religion or establishing an exclusive form of worship.³²

The lack of recognition (Wilson's "ungracious silence") of the Catholic Calverts as radicals and innovators resulted from a number of factors. Among them are the pervasive anti-Catholicism that long dominated American historiography, the continuity of Protestant radicals to the present, the overstatements made by Catholic apologists, the absence of any learned treatises on religious freedom by the Calverts, and the failure of Charles Calvert to sustain their great experiment. But these factors should no longer obscure the brilliance of their vision or the contribution that they made to advance human freedom during the seventeenth century.³³

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Footnotes:

1. *The Calvert Vision, a brilliantly conceived plan that allowed the Calverts to align their national and spiritual commitments, is more fully developed in John D. Krugler, English and Catholic: The Lords Baltimore in the Seventeenth Century (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).*
2. *Acts of the Privy Council of England, 1616-1617, 56. The Letters of John Chamberlain, ed. Norman Egbert McClure, 2 vols. (1939, repr. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979), 1:503, 514; 2:25, 216. Calvert to Carleton (April 10, 1619), Public Record Office SP84/19/125. Sir Thomas Wynne to Carleton (February 14, 1619) PRO SP14/105/104.*
3. *A. B. Forbes, "'Faith and true allegiance,' The Law and the Internal Security of England, 1559-1714: A Study of the Evolution of the Parliamentary Legislation and the Problem of its Local Administration and Enforcement" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1960), 94. John Bossy, The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976). Caroline Hibbard, "Early Stuart Catholicism: Revisions and Re-revisions," The Journal of Modern History, 52 (May 1980): 1-34.*
4. *Hugh Aveling, Northern Catholics: The Catholic Recusants of the North Riding of Yorkshire, 1558-1790, (London: Chapman, 1966), 176-77; James W. Foster, "George Calvert: His Yorkshire Boyhood," Maryland Historical Magazine, 55 (December 1960): 272-74; and George Calvert: The Early Years (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1983), 27.*
5. *Stock to Propaganda Fide (February 8, 1625, new style) in Luca Codignola, The Coldest Harbour of the Land: Simon Stock and Lord Baltimore's Colony in Newfoundland, 1621-1649, translated by Anita Weston (Kingston, Ont.: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 77; John D. Krugler, "'The Face of a Protestant, and the Heart of a Papist': A Reexamination of Sir George Calvert's Conversion to Roman Catholicism," Journal of Church and State, 20 (1978): 507-31; Peter Burke, "Religion and Secularisation" in The New Cambridge Modern History, volume 13, Companion Volume (Cambridge, 1979), 295. George Cottington, a Protestant who served in Secretary Calvert's household, discerned Calvert's shift in commitment before he made it public. Cottington to Sir John Finet (April 7, 1628) Sloane MS 3827, ff 124-125v, British Library. Reprinted in Newfoundland Discovered: English Attempts at Colonisation, 1610-1630, ed. Gillian Cell (London: Hakluyt Society, 1982) 277-79.*
6. *Catherine Drinker Bowen, The Lion and the Throne: The Life and Times of Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634) (London: Hamilton, 1957), 254; Select Statutes and other Constitutional Documents, ed., G. W. Prothero, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1906), xlvi. Susan R. Falb, Advice and Ascent: The Development of the Maryland Assembly, 1635-1689 (New York: Garland, 1986), 289.*
7. *Michael James Graham plausibly argued that toleration was not "a well considered synthesis of Roman Catholic reflection on human conscience and free will suddenly transplanted to the New World." See "'The Collapse of Equity': Catholic and Quaker Dissenters in Maryland, 1692-1720," Maryland Historical Magazine, 88 (1993): 4-5.*
8. *The Records of the Virginia Company of London, ed. Susan Myra Kingsbury, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1906-35), 3:81. The East India Company admitted him at the meeting of September 5, 6, 1609. Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, East Indies, China, and Japan, ed. W. Noel Sainsbury, 5 vols. (London, 1862-), 1513-1616, 192, 273; 1617-1621, 274. Alexander Brown, The Genesis of the United States: A Narrative of the Movement in England, 1605-1616, Which Resulted in the Plantation of North America, 2 vols (repr., New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), 2:841-42. Foster, Calvert, 72, 103, 104. "A History of Yorkshire North Riding: Danby Wiske," in The Victorian History of the County of York: North Riding, ed. William Page (London, 1914), 1:172-72. G. Bernard Wood, "Kiplin," Yorkshire Illustrated (July 1950), 14-16. Constance B. Schulz, Kiplin Hall and Its Families: A History (Cleveland, UK, 1994), 7. Raymond J. Lahey, "Avalon: Lord Baltimore's Colony in Newfoundland," in Early European Settlement and Exploitation in Atlantic Canada: Selected Papers (St. John's, 1982), 120. Chamberlain to Carleton (January 8, 1624/25), Chamberlain, Letters, 2:595. Cottington to Sir Dudley Carleton, PRO SP 84/122/115b. (February 9, 1624/25), APC, 1623-1625, 453-54.*
9. *Baltimore to Wentworth (August 29, 1629) Sheffield City Library, Wentworth Papers, 12/75. PRO Colonial Office 1/9/43. Cell, Newfoundland, 298. Stock reported that Baltimore left behind "some 30 heretics and two or three Catholic women, with no priest or minister." Stock to [Propaganda] (January 1, 1631), Codignola, Coldest Harbour, 122.*

10. Governor John Pott et al. to Privy Council (November 30, 1629). PRO CO1/5/40 reprinted in William Hand Browne et al., eds., *Archives of Maryland*, 72 vols. (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1883-), 3:6-17 (hereinafter cited Arch. Md.). Mead to Stuteville (January 23, 1629/30) and Mr. Pory to Mead (February 12, 1629/30), *Court and Times of Charles the First Illustrated by Authentic and Confidential Letters From Various Public and Private Collections Including Memoirs of the Mission in England of the Capuchin Friars in the Service of Queen Henrietta Maria*, ed. Thomas Birch, 2 vols (London, 1848), 2:53-54. William Waller Hening, *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia*, 13 vols. (Richmond, 1809-1823), 1:522. "The Lo: Baltemores Declaration to the Lords," *The Calvert Papers*, 3 vols. (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1889-1899). 1:222. Baltimore signed his will on April 14 and died the next day. *Ibid.*, 1:48.

11. The Maryland Charter is printed in *A Relation of Maryland; together with a Map of the Countrey, the Conditions of Plantation, with His Majesties Charter to the Lord Baltimore* (London, 1635), in *Narratives of Early Maryland, 1633-1684*, ed., Clayton Colman Hall (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 101-12. Calvert statements about their national goals must be taken seriously. Furthering English national goals was one of two reasons given in the charter and one of three emphasized by Lord Baltimore in his instructions to his colonists. John D. Krugler, "English and Catholic: Nationalism, Catholicism and the Calverts' Motivation in Founding the Maryland Colony," paper presented at "Maryland, A Product of Two Worlds" Conference St. Mary's City, May 1984. Michael James Graham also recognized that nationalism has been understated as a motive for the Calverts. See "Lord Baltimore's Pious Enterprise: Toleration and Community in Colonial Maryland, 1634-1724" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1983), 11-13

12. Thomas Cogswell, "England and the Spanish Match," in *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603-1642*, ed., Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (London, 1989), 109. Peter Lake, "Anti-poperly: the Structure of a Prejudice" in *ibid.*, 77, 79.

13. George Calvert did not proclaim, as one zealous exiled Protestant clergyman did in 1558, that "God is English!" but he did evidence a deep commitment to England. See John Aylmer, *An Harborowe for Faithfull and Trew Subjects*, quoted in Carl Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen, 1590-1632* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 13. Baltimore publicly sided with the Jesuits in the Archpriest Controversy and their priests accompanied him to Newfoundland in 1628. See *Lay Catholics of England to Richard Smith, Bishop of Chalcedon (1627)* in Thomas Aloysius Hughes, *History of the Society of Jesus in North America: Colonial and Federal, Text*, 2 vols. (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907-1917), 1:204-6. Bossy, *English Catholic Community*, 49-58.

14. Garry Wheeler Stone, "Manorial Maryland," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 82 (1987): 3-36; Krugler, "Lord Baltimore, Roman Catholics, and Toleration: Religious Policy in Maryland during the Early Catholic Years, 1634-1649," *The Catholic Historical Review*, 65 (January 1979): 49-75.

15. Both George and Cecil Calvert might well have agreed with William Penn's later statement "Though I desire to extend religious freedom, yet I want some recompense for my trouble." Quoted in Sally Schwartz, in "A Mixed Multitude": *The Struggle for Toleration in Colonial Pennsylvania* (New York: New York University Press, 1987), 22.

16. Russell R. Menard, *Economy and Society in Early Maryland* (New York: Garland, 1986), 32-36.

17. Baltimore benefited not only from the Jesuit interest in a mission but from the fact that the years of the personal rule of Charles I had been good ones financially for the English Jesuits. In the early 1630s, they could afford the proprietor's hard bargain. Thomas M. McCoog, "'Laid up Treasure': The Finances of the English Jesuits in the Seventeenth Century," *The Church and Wealth*, eds. W. J. Sheils and Diana Wood (Oxford: Ecclesiastical History Society, 1981), 1. The Calvert Vision, a brilliantly conceived plan that allowed the Calverts to align their national and spiritual commitments, is more fully developed in John D. Krugler, *English and Catholic: The Lords Baltimore in the Seventeenth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

18. Jesuit priest Andrew White ably assisted Baltimore in the recruitment effort. Even the Jesuits failed to recruit a significant number of Catholics willing to venture as their servants and had to rely on Protestants to fill their quota. See *A Declaration of Lord Baltimore's Plantation in Maryland, nigh upon Virginia: manifesting the Nature, Quality, Condition, and rich Utilities it Contayneth* (London, 1633).

19. The proprietor stated his goal rather than fact when he wrote to Wentworth that 325 émigrés sailed for Maryland. Baltimore to Wentworth (January 10, 1634), *Strafforde's Letters I*. 178-79. CSP, Venice, 1632-1636, 158. Menard calculated the number of colonists on the first expedition at about 140. "Population, Economy, and Society in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 79 (1984): 71.

20. *Instructions 13 Novem: 1633* in Hall, ed. *Narratives*, 16. The case involving William Lewis, the Catholic overseer at the Jesuit plantation, tested Baltimore's religious policy in 1638. The court, composed of prominent Catholics, found Lewis guilty of disturbing the peace when he prohibited some Protestant servants from negative discussion of the Catholic religion. Arch. Md., 4:35-39. Robert Wintour, an associate of the Calverts who settled in Maryland, coined the term 'Maryland designe' in 1635. He employed it to summarize the essence of the recently launched enterprise. I use Wintour's phrase to signify that, even though the Calverts never fully articulated their objectives in print, they had a carefully structured purpose for their overseas adventures. See *To Live Like Princes: "A Short Treatise Sett Downe in a Letter Written by R. W. to His Worthy Freind C. J. R. concerning the New Plantation Now Erecting under the Right Ho[nora]ble the Lord Baltemore in Maryland*, ed., John D. Krugler (Baltimore: Enoch Pratt Library, 1976). Graham adopted the term in his study of the Catholic and Quaker communities. "Toleration and Community," 28-29, 66.

21. Krugler, "Lord Baltimore, Roman Catholics, and Toleration," 74-75.

22. "A Letter sent to his Lordship from the Assembly," *Archives of Maryland*, 1:238-43. Only the results of the last day of the three-week 1649 Assembly remain. Baltimore's original draft did not survive. Any assessment of responsibility for various parts of the Act must be tentative. David W. Jordan, *Foundations of Representative Government in Maryland, 1632-1715* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 52-53. Defying the proprietor was not a religious issue. Catholics undoubtedly still dominated this assembly. The majority of Independents had yet to enter Maryland. However, an "accurate reconstruction of the membership is impossible." See Falb, "Advice and Ascent," 309.

23. Arch. Md, 3:244-46. Baltimore may have added this last section to induce further Puritan migration. He may have been already negotiating with Robert Brooke, "a well-to-do English Puritan" who intended "to transport himself his wife eight sons and family and a Great Number of other Persons" to Maryland. *Ibid.*, 3:237-41. On the other hand, the assembly, reflecting the views of the newly arrived Virginians, may have added the clause prohibiting certain phrases. As a New England Puritan put it: "The persecution of the Tongue is more fierce and terrible than that of the hand." John Davenport to My Lady Vere (ca. 1633), *Letters of John Davenport: Puritan Devine*, ed. Isabel MacBeath Calder (New Haven: Published for the First Church of Christ in New Haven by Yale University Press, 1937), 38-39.

24. Cromwell believed that he imposed on men's consciences far less than Parliament and that he had plucked many from "the raging fire of persecution." At one point, he even stated optimistically that he intended to remove the impediments for Catholics "as soon as I can." See J. C. Davis, "Cromwell's Religion," in *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*, edited by John Morrill with J. S. A. Adamson . . . et al. (New York: Longman, 1990), 187, 198. Roger Williams to the truly Christian Reader in *The Forth Paper, Presented by Major Butler, To the Honourable Committee of Parliament, for the Propagating of the Gospel of Christ Jesus . . .* (London, 1652). Cromwell to Mazarin (December 26, 1658), *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell. With an introduction, notes and a sketch of his life by Wilbur Cortez Abbott, with the assistance of Catherine D. Crane*, 4 vols. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1970), 4:368. Blair Worden, "Toleration and the Cromwellian Protectorate" in *Persecution and Toleration [Studies in Church History, vol. 21]* (London, 1984), 190-231. Alison Gilbert Olson, *Anglo-American Politics 1660-1675: The Relationship Between Parties in England and Colonial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 34.

25. The frequent disagreements over policy between Chancellor Philip Calvert and his nephew, Governor Charles Calvert, did not help the proprietary cause. Philip had a better grasp of the importance the proprietor placed on the 1649 Act. For example, when Philip Calvert issued licenses for ordinaries, he did so with the stipulation that the inn keeper would not permit evil rule or disorder especially upon the Lord's day by gaming or excessive drinking during the time of Divine services. See the licenses issued on January 30 and March 4, 1660/61. Arch. Md., 41:399, 412. These licenses attest to the proprietary desire to placate the congregationalists from Virginia.

26. Charles, in his 1678 reply to a set of queries from the English government, incorrectly implied that the impetus for toleration originated with the people who did not conform to all particulars, that they made toleration a precondition for emigration, and without it Maryland in all probability would have never been planted. The statement indicated that the son failed to grasp the genius of his father's thinking. Arch. Md., 5:267-68. Lois Green Carr and David William Jordan, in *Maryland's Revolution of Government, 1689-1692* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), argued that Charles failed to provide for the social education of the inhabitants and that this helped to foster rebellion.
27. Stephen L. Franzoi, *Social Psychology*, 2nd ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 236. Realistic group conflict theory assumes that "group conflicts are rational in the sense that groups do have incompatible goals and are in competition for scarce resources." The proposition that a real threat causes ingroup solidarity helps to explain why the third Lord Baltimore in specific and the Catholics and proprietary adherents responded as they did. Robert A Levine and Donald T. Campbell, *Ethnocentrism: Theories of Conflict, Ethnic Attitudes, and Group Behavior* (New York: Wiley, 1972), 29, 31.
28. 1692, "An Act for the Service of Almighty God and the Establishment of the Protestant Religion within this Province," Arch. Md., 13:425-30. The assembly did not pass an act that both the colonists and the British government accepted until 1702. Establishment proceeded under the 1692 law even without formal approval. Carr and Jordan, *Maryland's Revolution of Government*, 201.
29. Governor Nathaniel Blakiston (April 26, 27, 1700), Arch. Md., 24: 7, 37-38
30. Burke, "Religion and Secularisation," 293-94. C. John Sommerville, *The Secularization of Early Modern England: From Religious Culture to Religious Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 116.
31. The declining legal status notwithstanding, Maryland Catholics worshiped privately without interference from colonial authorities. See Beatriz Betancourt Hardy, "Papists in a Protestant Age: The Catholic Gentry and Community in Colonial Maryland, 1689-1776," (PhD dissertation, University of Maryland, 1993) and Tricia Terese Pyne analyzed Catholic religious practices in pre-revolutionary Maryland, "The Maryland Catholic Community, 1690-1775: A Study in Culture, Religion, and Church" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Catholic University of American, 1995). For Jefferson, see John Ferling, *Setting the World Ablaze: Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 158-59.
32. *The Works of James Wilson*, ed., James DeWitt Anderson (Chicago, 1896), I, 4-5. James Hennesey, "Roman Catholicism: The Maryland Tradition," *Thought: A Review of Culture and Ideas*, 51 (September 1976): 282-95. Leonard W. Levy, *The Establishment Clause: Religion and the First Amendment*, 2d ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), xiii-xiv.
33. For a fuller analysis see John D. Krugler, "An 'Ungracious Silence': The Calvert Vision and Historians," pages 374-88