

University of North Carolina at Asheville

“Shew Yourselves to be Freemen.”
Quakers, Presbyterians and the North Carolina Regulators

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On December 5, 1754, Herman Husband, a Quaker traveled through North Carolina, on his way from Maryland and wrote to the General Assembly of the colony to pass along his thoughts on its current status. Husband's disgust at the implementation of the Church of England in North

Carolina was apparent, "For allowing the Church of England to be the most sound of any Christian society in its foundations and principalls... yet experiance daily teacheth us that the establishing a maintenance for the clergy by law opens a door for wiked designing men..."¹

Husband had left Maryland to escape what he called the "yoke of bondage" only to discover it in North Carolina where he accused the Anglican clergy of being able to purchase their gown with official recommendation.² For Husband, something was wrong in North Carolina.

The preceding story prefaces a tumultuous time in North Carolina just prior to the start of the American Revolution. Known as the War of the Regulation, the conflict pitted the North Carolina colonial government against the mostly poor and disenfranchised of the Piedmont and Western counties. The movement began as a protest against the corrupt practices of sheriff's and tax collectors in Orange, Anson and Rowan counties, however it came to define the final years of Governor William Tryon's administration, culminating in the Battle of Alamance on May 16, 1771. The Regulators represented a new kind of colonial political force one that sought to effect change in the day to day practices of local government. It is also no coincidence that the Regulator cause was advanced by religious leaders in the affected counties. In fact, religion was an important factor in the rebellion, particularly Quakerism and Presbyterianism's stout opposition to the Church of England. Their concepts of authority, justice and equality resonated with the abused citizenry and rallied many members to their cause.

The role of religious philosophy had not been given much thought when contemplating why the Regulators responded with violence to their list of abuses. The great North Carolina historian John Spencer Bassett argued, "The regulation was not a religious movement... it was

¹ Herman Husband, "To the Governor and Assembly of North Carolina (December 5, 1754)", in A. Roger Ekirch, "A New Government of Liberty: Herman Husband's vision of Backcountry North Carolina, 1755". *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 34, no. 4 (1977), 632-646, (accessed April 24, 2012), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2936186>.

² Husband in A. Roger Ekirch, 644.

not only not religious, it had the opposition of at least four of the leading five denominations...³ Mr. Bassett was correct on the point that the main goal of the Regulation was not religiously based, but he overlooked the fact that much of the opposition facing the eastern establishment originated from the pulpit. Religious philosophy born in the dissenter faiths and cemented by Great Awakening fervor had gripped the Regulators. As Marjoleine Kars wrote in *Breaking Loose Together*, “The Great Awakening helped Piedmont farmers gain the individual and collective self confidence to attempt to reform their government and rid it of corruption.”⁴ This self confidence was nurtured by men such as Husband, Alexander Craighead and David Caldwell, who sought to reform the backcountry in accordance with the ideals of their faith and their ideals of government.

It is important to note, before delving into the specifics of each denomination’s involvement in the rebellion, that these groups did not seek separation from Britain. They simply sought to be treated with fairness and equality that they believed their creator had granted them. As Herman Husband wrote in a letter in 1769, “Now shew yourselves to be freemen, and... assert your liberty and maintain your rights... let us... show, that we will not through fear, favour or affection, bow and subject ourselves to those... who have long drawn calamities upon us.”⁵ To contextualize what Husband advocated, it is necessary to begin by examining some of the research done on this subject to provide a point of reference.

The role religion played in fueling the Regulators has largely been overlooked by many historians, who instead have focused on the economic condition of corruption in the Piedmont.

³ John Spencer Bassett, “The Regulators of North Carolina (1765-1771),” Docsouth: Documenting the American South, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/bassett95/basset95.html> (accessed April 24, 2012).

⁴ Marjoleine Kars, *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 5.

⁵ Herman Husband, “Show Yourselves to be Freemen”: Herman Husband and the North Carolina Regulators, 1769, History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web, <http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6233> (accessed April 24, 2012).

However, men such as Husband, Craighead, and Caldwell did not act without some motivating force beyond money. Their convictions towards ideas of ‘liberty’ and ‘natural rights’ were steeped in religious overtones. All three ministers figure prominently in *Breaking Loose Together*, by Marjoline Kars. Kars delves into the often overlooked religious arguments being made from the clergy. Ms. Kars focuses mainly on Herman Husband and neglects the efforts of the Presbyterians in the Piedmont, but her research is meticulous. Her coverage of Husband’s expulsion from the Cane Creek meeting in 1755 is comprehensive and portrays the firebrand ideology that would characterize Husband in the years to come.⁶

For more on the evolution of the political thought of Husband and his transition from Anglican youth to Quaker manhood, Mary Elinor Lazenby’s, *Herman Husband: A Story of His Life*, provides the most complete background on the man. Even though the biography is dated (published in 1940), it is the only scholarly background of Husband. Lazenby specifically documented Husband’s religious development from his time as a young man on his grandfather’s farm, to his enchantment with the sermons of George Whitefield during the famed itinerant’s revivals. For the purpose of Husband’s involvement in North Carolina politics, Lazenby recounts his travels from a mission to Barbados and his return to Maryland through the North Carolina backcountry. He would move there permanently in 1754-5.⁷

The Quaker historian Steven Jay White, wrote an article titled “Friends and the Coming of the Revolution” describing the tumultuous history of Quakers in North Carolina. Coupled with the research on Husband, a more complete picture of the Quakers resistance to colonial practices can be obtained. White argues that the natural tendency for Quakers to reject authority led Friends such as Husband to “resist excessive taxes, graft and corruption in the backcountry.”

⁶Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*.

⁷ Mary Elinor Lazenby, *Herman Husband: A Story of His Life, 1729-1795*, (Silver Spring, MD: Westland Printing Company, 1940).

As the Regulation emerged from the tension in the Granville district, this is an important article detailing one of the early fights that Quakers became entangled with, and that Husband used to examine his ideas of freedom.⁸

The most important secondary source detailing the overall events of the Regulation is an article written by North Carolina historian John Spencer Bassett. In “The Regulators of North Carolina (1765-1771)” Bassett provides a lengthy overview of the rebellion from an economic standpoint of colonials in the east versus farmers in the west. He almost completely discounts the idea that religion played any role in the continuation of the rebellion. He wrote that several denominations, especially the Presbyterians, denounced the violent outbursts of the Regulators. Bassett, to his detriment, does not fully embrace the specter that religious dissent played in the Regulator movement, as many of the Presbyterian clergy he uses as examples preached an ideology very similar to that of the Regulator’s demands.⁹

For an idea of the Presbyterian dissenter philosophy that Mr. Bassett overlooks, Alice M. Baldwin’s “Sowers of Sedition: The Political Theories of Some New Light Presbyterian Clergy of Virginia and North Carolina” seeks to fill in missing spaces. Exploring the extent to which Scottish and Scotch-Irish clergy implemented the Solemn League and Covenant in colonial America, Baldwin provides evidence that Presbyterian dissatisfaction with Britain (namely the Church of England) stretched back to the English Civil Wars. By chronicling the continual usurpation of the Scottish Church, Anglican clergy and officials are almost universally reviled by the immigrant Presbyterians. Settling in the Shenandoah Valley and Carolina Piedmont, these raucous individuals, including Reverends David Caldwell and Alexander Craighead, preached

⁸ Steven Jay White, “Friends and the Coming of the Revolution,” *Southern Friend* 1, no. 4 (1982): 16-27. *America: History and Life with Full Text*. [Database Online]. EBSCOhost/ (accessed April 24, 2012), 19.

⁹ Bassett, “The Regulators of North Carolina.”

that a contract between God and man existed further as a contract between man and state. This philosophy would become central to Regulator advertisements and petitions.¹⁰

Prior to the onset of violence in North Carolina, the primary focus of the Regulators was to obtain justice against corrupt officials in the contested Granville district of the colony. After the eight Lords Proprietors vacated their leases to their holdings in 1729, one, Lord George Carteret, the Second Earl of Granville, maintained his holdings and opened them for public purchase. The purchase of land tracts and the collection of property taxes that to conflict. In the early days of the district, the most prominent speculator and land agent was Henry McCulloh. It was McCulloh's vision to gain wealth and status in the Granville district by implementing the hated *quintrent* system of taxation, along with enforcing the Stamp Act in 1765.¹¹ The ability of McCulloh and his agents to get away with such abuse in the Granville district was simple. The district was not a chartered section of the Royal Colony of North Carolina. As A. Roger Ekirch wrote in *Poor Carolina*, the Granville district occupied something of a "collective status."¹²

The collective status did not sit well with the colonists who settled these lands, who had no idea who their money was going to, or even who held the deed to their land tract.¹³ Finally, in 1765, schoolteacher George Sims published his attack on the government entitled, "An Address to the People of Granville County." Sims wrote his address, "for the common people to understand," so its tone and content would resonate more with the reader. Reaffirming the rights entitled to the inhabitants of Granville county as free Englishmen, Sims declared his, "indispensable duty, to exert myself in vindication of the rights and privileges, which our

¹⁰ Alice M. Baldwin, "Sowers of Sedition: The Political Theories of Some New Light Presbyterian Clergy of Virginia and North Carolina," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 5 (1948), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/192047>, (accessed April 24, 2012).

¹¹ Lindsay Butler, *North Carolina and the Coming of the Revolution, 1763-1776*, (Zebulon, NC: Theo Davis, Inc., 1976), 35.

¹² A. Roger Ekirch, "*Poor Carolina*" *Politics and Society in Colonial North Carolina, 1729-1776*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 92.

¹³ Kars, 30-33.

Constitution has endowed to us...”¹⁴ Sims explained to the inhabitants of the district that clerk officers and tax collectors, “tell us there is no law to ascertain their fees and, therefore... are at liberty to tax our bills as they please.”¹⁵ Sims was arguing against the belief of station of order. Many of the agents in the Granville District were appointed by a royal official. They were highly educated and most likely members of the eastern aristocracy. Sims argued that these men were bound by law, both legal and moral, to treat the citizens under their purview with a decent and honest respect. They had no justification to gouge prices or to invent fees.

George Sims, in the publication of his address, started the Regulation. His address proved to be a blueprint for Herman Husband’s “An Impartial Relation,” in which he continued in the same vein as Sims, deriding the conduct of public officials in the backcountry:

Who can justify the Conduct of any Government who have countenanced and encouraged so many Thousands of poor families to bestow their all, and the Labour of many Years, to improve a piece of waste Land, with full expectation of a Title, to deny them Protection from being robbed of it by a few roguish individuals, who have never bestowed a Farthing thereon?¹⁶

Following the publication of Sims address, the first Regulator meetings were held and in 1766, Regulator Advertisement No. 1 was published. Widely believed to have been written by Husband, Advertisement No. 1 proclaimed, “there is certainly more honest men among us than rouges & yet rouges is harbored among us and sometimes almost publickly...” The following year, no improvements had been made by Governor Tryon, so another pamphlet was published calling for representatives from the afflicted counties in the district (now including Orange,

¹⁴ George Sims, “An Address to the People of Granville County,” in William K. Boyd, *Some Eighteenth Century Tracts Concerning North Carolina*, (Raleigh, NC: Edwards and Broughton Company, 1927), 183-4, digitized 2011 Internet Archive, <http://www.archive.org/details/someeighteenthce00boyd> (accessed April 24, 2012).

¹⁵ Sims, “An Address to the People of Granville County”, 187.

¹⁶ Herman Husband, “An Impartial Relation of the First Rise and Cause of the Recent Differences (1770), Powell, Huhta, and Farnham, *Regulators in North Carolina*, 226.

Anson, and Rowan Counties) to meet at Maddock's Mill to discuss their next attempts at reforms.¹⁷

By 1768 events in the backcountry had reached a boiling point. Edmund Fanning, leader of the Orange County militia, as well as a clerk and attorney, wrote to Governor Tryon and declared that the attempted meeting of the Regulators represented a rebellion. In response, Tryon authorized Fanning to utilize the militia and to arrest the leaders of the mob responsible for the "riot that resulted in the crowd firing on Fanning's home."¹⁸ The men captured and held responsible for the fracas were William Butler and Herman Husband. Arrested in the middle of the night, Butler and Husband were imprisoned at the Hillsborough jail while awaiting trial. While Husband made a deal to be released, Butler remained defiant, claiming, "I have but one life, and I can freely give that up for this Cause."¹⁹ Butler's defiance of authority would resemble the moral justification that the Regulators claimed in defense of their actions. Their tactics were justified by a higher power than that of the Governor or his officials. The cause of bringing some sense of justice to the Piedmont was a feat worth dying for.

After the arrests, a mob appeared outside of the Hillsborough Courthouse with the intent to break the men out of prison if they were not released. Now, Governor Tryon was forced to face the specter of a revolution in Orange County, and the possibility of it spreading, as new Regulator chapters were formed in Anson and Rowan counties as well. In September of 1768, following yet another appeal to the Governor for protection from county officials, the Superior Court in Hillsborough indicted Fanning on six counts of extortion during his term as clerk.²⁰ With Tryon present in the courtroom, Fanning plead guilty to the charges, was removed from

¹⁷ Herman Husband, "Regulator Advertisement No. 1 (August 1766)," Powell, Huhta, and Farnham, *Regulators in North Carolina*, 35-36.

¹⁸ Kars, 145.

¹⁹ Kars, 145.

²⁰ Wheeler, *Historical Sketches of North Carolina...*, 35.

office and fined one penny. Similarly, Husband was acquitted and released from jail, however William Butler was sentenced to prison for his role with the Regulators.²¹ Satisfied that the rebellion had been quashed Tryon returned to New Bern.

The rebellion was far from crushed and less than two years after the trial, the Regulators returned to Hillsborough and their return set them and Governor Tryon on the path to Alamance. On March 22, 1770, the Regulators attended the annual assembly in Hillsborough and, still upset that Fanning was involved in the political realm, began attacking lawyers outside the courthouse, broke into the court session and ran Judge Richard Henderson off the bench and out of town.²² After breaking up the court the Regulators held their own mock session, described as, “bitter, sarcastic, and sometimes vulgar.”²³ The violence of the Hillsborough Riot sealed the fate of the Regulators, as Governor Tryon raised militias from eastern counties to quell the resistance. The armies met May 16, 1771 at Alamance, just over a thousand men with Tryon and over 2,000 fighting for the Regulators. The battle was a one-sided affair, as the disorganized Regulators were routed by Tryon’s disciplined troops. Following the battle, Regulator James Few was hung on the battlefield, while other prisoners were marched to Hillsborough to stand trial. On June 19, 1771, twelve of the captured Regulators were led to the gallows where six were hung, the other six being pardoned at the “mercy” of the Governor.²⁴

The Regulator rebellion was as much a clash of arms as it was of ideology, and that ideology was forged in Great Awakening and dissenting religious philosophy. The men who spearheaded the rebellion were identified dissenters, many with notions of “natural rights” and

²¹ Kars, 159.

²² Troy L. Kickler, “Hillsborough Riot (1770),” North Carolina History Project, <http://www.northcarolinahistory.org/commentary/174/entry>, (accessed April 24, 2012).

²³ Hugh T. Lefler, and William S. Powell, *Colonial North Carolina: A History*, (Ann Arbor, MI: Scribner, 1973), 236.

²⁴ No Author, “Journal of the Military Campaign against the Regulators,” DocSouth: Documenting the American South, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr19-0008> (accessed April 24, 2012), 845-53.

“liberty” being derived from God, not man. In this instance the pulpit served as a political arena, with religious moralism as its dogma. Men were created equal. They were to be treated fairly and with respect. To the Quakers, Presbyterians and others, this cause was not only about taxation or competent officials. It was a battle for souls, and no one was prepared more for that battle than the ‘mouth’ of the Regulation, Herman Husband.

Husband had an enduring fascination with the links between religious tenets and political ideology from his youth. Born October 3, 1724 in New Castle County, Maryland, Husband was born into a moderately wealthy, Anglican family.²⁵ At an early age, Herman was sent to live with his grandfather on his farm, and it was here that his fascination with religion began. He followed his grandfather’s field hands into their living quarters at night and watched them pray.²⁶ As with many of the faithful in the northern colonies, Husband was exuberant when he heard the Rev. George Whitefield preach on his tours of North America. At the age of 15, Husband converted from Anglicanism, to Presbyterianism and then finally joined the Society of Friends, or Quakers. He was excited by the passion with which Whitefield delivered his sermons, commenting once, “I understood him clearly” and upon his conversion from Anglicanism that Whitefield’s words were like, “the sun breaking through darkness at midday.”²⁷ By all accounts Husband was a model Quaker, as Eli Caruthers said of him, “a man of superior mind, grave in deportment, somewhat taciturn, wary in consternation, but when excited forcible and fluent in argument.”²⁸ It was Husband’s forcible and fluent arguments that would define his role in the Regulation.

²⁵ Mary Elinor Lazenby, *Herman Husband: A Story of His Life, 1724-1795*, (Silver Spring, MD: Westland Printing Company, 1940), 3.

²⁶ Lazenby, 1.

²⁷ Lazenby, 7-13.

²⁸ Steven Jay White, (accessed April 24, 2012), 18.

It was this combative streak that often got Husband into the public arena. He settled in North Carolina in 1755 after a Quaker mission to free slaves in Barbados. Within his meeting at Cane Creek he was a respected leader, but he was expelled for his particularly strong views regarding the conduct of some Friends, and his sense of the Society becoming too moderate that led to his expulsion.²⁹ After forming a new association at Sandy Creek, Husband turned his attention outside of the Quaker community. He had heard the grumblings about corruption in the Granville district, and in response he wrote a letter to John Carteret, the holder to the deed for the whole district.

Husband infused his letter with Quaker ideology of fairness and equality, deriding the current system in New Bern, and indicting the foundation of British colonialism in the colonies. Outraged that money was being spent buying slaves to work land, while poor white farmers had nothing, Husband proposed, “the money that goes to purchase those blacks would be put into their hands [poor whites] for their labour, wherewith they would soon be able to procure a farm to themselves...”³⁰ Husband combined the Quaker repulsion of slavery with the economic interests of the poor settlers in the Granville district to attack the institution in place there. In a larger sense, he had initiated his first attack against the corruption he saw within the colonial bureaucracy, that royal officials simply did not care much for those in their provinces. Husband equated the treatment of settlers in the Granville district to the African slaves enriching the landholders in the eastern part of the colony³¹. This powerful rhetorical tool would come to be Husband’s favorite as the Regulation set in. He used it as the ultimate contract between Man and government, freedom or slavery.

²⁹ Kars, 113-115.

³⁰ Herman Husband letter to John Earl Granville, 8/9/1756, printed in A. Roger Ekirch, “A New Government of Liberty: Herman Husbards Vision of Backcountry North Carolina,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 34, No. 4 (1977), , <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2936186> (accessed April 24, 2012), 9-11.

³¹ Herman Husband letter to John Earl Granville, 10.

Husband's resolve to determine God's plan had been a constant quest since childhood. His earliest written pamphlet, "Some Remarks on Religion" recounted his search for truth. Husband wrote that from the age of eight or nine, he felt an "inward manifestation" when he slept that he interpreted to be the will of God, guiding him to do what was right, "and I had perfect knowledge of what it wanted of me..."³² This manifestation that Husband described, is central to the theology of the Quakers, known as the Inner Light of God. The founder of the Quakers, George Fox, had similar experiences in his childhood that God somehow spoke to him and imparted his will through an inner feeling. Fox wrote in his journal, "For the Lord showed me that though the people of the world have mouths full of deceit, and changeable words, yet I was to say Yea and Nay to all things."³³ The simple, devoted life of a Quaker appealed to Husband, and after his conversion he became dedicated to reconciling Quaker principles with his own passion for political activism. The Regulation offered him a perfect opportunity in which to fully engage his fellow North Carolinians in a struggle for liberty. It was a struggle that did not offer solace to the colonial administration or the Church of England.

Following his successful conclusion to the Husband/Butler affair in 1768, Governor Tryon attended a sermon dedicated to him by Rev. George Mickeljohn, the senior most Anglican minister in North or South Carolina. Early in his sermon, Mickeljohn pronounced, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers-and it comes to us by the *Authority* of the same God and Savior who has given us every other precept that we meet."³⁴ Mickeljohn was reciting what Governor Tryon had deftly showed just days before at Husband and Butler's trial. That any attempt to resort to violence in order to effect change would be punished. Further, it was not just

³² Herman Husband, "Some Remarks on Religion" in Boyd, *Some eighteenth century tracts*, 202.

³³ George Fox, *George Fox's Journal*, ed. Percy Livingstone Parker, (Ann Arbor, MI: Isbister and Company, limited, 1903), 2. Google e-book.

³⁴ George Mickeljohn, "On the Important Duty to the Subjection to Civil Powers," in Powell, Huhta, and Farnham, *The Regulators in North Carolina*, 173.

a citizen's duty to respect their place in society, it was a religious commandment, as Mickeljohn continued, "We are commanded... to be subject to the higher powers, because the authority they are invested with is from Heaven: The Powers that be are ordained of God!"³⁵ The Anglican notion of place proved to be the most controversial for the religious Regulators. God had given the elite authority; they therefore acted by the will of God. Legitimacy had been established by their positions of power; the population had no duty to question that. To do so would have been to question the very Creator of Heaven and Earth. However, for Herman Husband, God did not just place a leader into the world. Divine authority had little bearing on the machinations of man. God had granted consciousness to humanity and it was up to humanity to use it. Liberty of Conscience was the litmus test Husband believed in, that Man could choose who to give authority to.

Husband was not the first to propose this notion. One hundred and twenty years before Husband's theological sparring with Mickeljohn, Roger Williams left John Winthrop's party in Boston, proclaiming that the true corruption of the Church of England rest not with its clause of forcing officials to be pledged members of the Church, but that, "It is the foulest of crimes to force people's bodies to a worship where they cannot bring their spirits."³⁶ For Williams the debate was religious politics. It is impossible to have a 'national church' because a national church is political and therefore corrupt. Husband reiterated his attack on the dangers of a politicized church in "A Sermon," published after his acquittal in 1768.³⁷ In the sermon, Husband decimated the established order of North Carolina, comparing the backcountry settlers to Issachar, a donkey kneeling before two burdens. "What do these two burdens mean?"

³⁵ Mickeljohn, "Important Duty of Subjection," *Regulators of North Carolina*, 174-175.

³⁶ Edwin S. Gaustad, "Liberty of Conscience" *Roger Williams in America*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 16.

³⁷ Herman Husband, "A Sermon" in *The Regulators in North Carolina*.

Husband asks, “Civil and Religious slavery no doubt. Strange that such a number of rational creatures [enlightened human beings] should bear two such insupportable burdens. Ah! I had forgot they were asses...to be sure no people of any rational spirit could endure such grievous bondage.”³⁸ The donkey, Issachar, was contrasted against a hind (deer), Naphtali that, “giveth goodly words.”³⁹ The difference between the two was the freedom of the deer in the forest, over the pack animal. Husband argued that for too long, the people of the colony had been abused and taken advantage of by the civil authority. Those endowed with power by God, had abused their divine right to authority. For Husband and other followers of Great Awakening principles, this could only mean that the oppressed must resist.

Men such as Rev. Mickeljohn and Governor Tryon maintained order by reminding the population that they were ordained by God to have authority. Resistance to civil authority was resistance to divine authority. Defying a monarch was interpreted as defying the spirit of God on Earth. However, Great Awakening principles combined with philosophical interpretations of concepts such as liberty, aroused an intellectual backlash to the duty of subjection. By the time of the Regulation, Rev. Mickeljohn could no longer preach, “there cannot be offered a greater insult to the Almighty God, than...to disregard his will, and despise those sacred powers whom he has ordained and appointed to carry on the...purposes in the world,” and expect every listener to acquiesce.⁴⁰ To bow before the lash, metaphorical or otherwise, would be to submit to a false authority and to betray the God granted liberty each human being was born with. It would betray the duty humanity had to resist tyranny and devolve the species into blind, obedient slaves.

Men had more to offer than blind obedience. Husband took the citizens of North Carolina to task, for allowing the abuses that occurred to begin in the first place. As he wrote,

³⁸ Husband, “A Sermon,” *The Regulators in North Carolina*, 227-8.

³⁹ Husband, 227.

⁴⁰ Mickeljohn, “On the Important Duty of Subjection,” *The Regulators in North Carolina*, 177.

“when through laziness, and love of a little ease they give up the publick welfare, they are unworthy of the protection of Heaven.”⁴¹ God protected the oppressed, but only those who were willing to address the causes of their abuse, “God gave all men knowledge of their privileges, and a true zeal to maintain them.”⁴² Husband urged the people to assert their liberty, and while he abhorred the violence of the Regulators, it was his pamphleteering and his sermons that came to define its core message. That message was finalized when Husband wrote, “We must make these men subject to the laws, or they will enslave the whole community.”⁴³ For Husband, this struggle was for the soul of North Carolina. Either North Carolina, led by the Regulators, would assert their rights as free men, as Naphtali, or they would bend under their dual burdens, as Issachar did. Husband was not alone in his condemnation against the abuses of the colonial government. The influx of immigrants from the British Isles brought to North Carolina many Scottish and Scotch-Irish who were just as averse to the practices of the colonial as well as religious establishment.

Where Husband and the Quakers in North Carolina were long seen as a threat to the British control of colonial politics, the influx of many Scottish Highlanders and Scotch-Irish immigrants to the Carolina backcountry posed a new challenge. Beyond just an allegiance to the Church of Scotland, many Scotch-Irish came into the Piedmont with open hostility towards the established colonial structure. The most contentious issue for many Scotch-Irish Presbyterians was the control of the colony by the Church of England. Many of the Presbyterians were Covenanters, or adherents to the National Solemn League and Covenant, an agreement struck between Scottish dissenters and the English Parliament on the outbreak of the First English Civil War. Scottish Presbyterians viewed the Covenant and Solemn League as a social contract

⁴¹ Husband, “A Sermon,” *The Regulators in North Carolina*, 228.

⁴² Husband, 231.

⁴³ Husband, 233.

between all Presbyterians. They entered into it to form a community based on their ideas and bylaws. The Solemn League declared that the Scottish Reformed Church (the Presbyterians) would fight alongside the Protestants in Parliament against the monarchy. Once the war was won, the Parliament in England would declare that Presbyterianism would become the official religion of the British Isles.⁴⁴

Unfortunately for the Scots, establishment of Presbyterianism did not occur and after failing to secure the implementation of the Solemn League after joining with former Royalists during the Second English Civil War, many Presbyterians were content to maintain the autonomy of the Church of Scotland. However, after the Restoration, Charles II launched a series of campaigns to interfere within the political body of the *kirk* (Scottish term for the Church of Scotland). Interference within church politics did not sit well with many Presbyterian clergy who felt that their legitimacy was derived directly from God. The tension between the Churches of England and Scotland would continue to play out with Presbyterian resistance during the Regulation. In North Carolina, this meant resisting the influence of the Church of England which sought to limit the power of the Covenant or itinerancy by demanding Presbyterians swear an oath of allegiance to the governor of the colony. That sticking point would have forced Presbyterians to swear to the head of a foreign church over the head of their church. Under the terms of the Covenant, the legitimate head of the Presbyterian Church was God.

The Covenant is the core of Presbyterian theology that God formed a compact with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to provide them with everlasting life, in exchange for not

⁴⁴ Alasdair Raffae, "Presbyterianism, Secularization, and Scottish Politics after the Revolution of 1688-1690," *Historical Journal* 53, no. 2 (2010), Master FILE Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed April 24, 2012).

eating from the Tree of Knowledge.⁴⁵ Many Presbyterians saw the Covenant as a binding legal agreement between God and the true church, sacrosanct and inviolable from the laws of man.

It seemed, though, that the British were determined to assimilate the *kirk* back into the Anglican fold. Many Presbyterians, in response left Scotland and traveled to England's new holdings in North America. Settling in Pennsylvania, under the Protection of the Concessions and Agreement of 1677, the Presbyterian immigrants established the Log College under the direction of William and Gilbert Tennent.⁴⁶ One of the founding principles that the Log College endowed to its students was the need to share the truth with as many adherents as possible. The ever increasing number of Scottish immigrants reinforced the need for ministry outside of the Church of England's Anglican parishes, with established churches and living quarters for clergy.⁴⁷

The solution was itinerancy, or sending ministers into rural areas and conclaves of citizens living without an official church. Such was the situation in North Carolina, where many in the Piedmont refused to pay dues to a non-existent Anglican parish. The Church of England had attempted itinerancy, but the utter disgust many Church officials had for the backcountry settlers was evident. The journal of one Anglican minister, Charles Woodmason, reveals how disconnected the population and the Church had become. Woodmason, ordered from Charleston to preach to the Piedmont settlers wrote, "It will require much time and pains to new model and form the carriage and manners, as well as morals of these wild people." The situation of backcountry Anglican devotion could be reported as lacking, as Woodmason continued that,

⁴⁵ Randall Balmer & John R. Fitzmier, *The Presbyterians*, (Westport, CT: Prager Publishers, 1994), 8.

⁴⁶ Edward Byllynge and William Penn, "The Concessions and Agreements of the Proprietors, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the Province of West New Jersey (1677)," in *The Founders Constitution*, <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch14s4.html>, under Chapter 16, (accessed April 24, 2012).

⁴⁷ Archibald Alexander, *The Log College: biographical sketches of William Tennent and his students, together with an account of the revivals under their ministries*, (London, England: Banner of Truth Trust, 1968).

“...seldom could I use the Litany, because they know not the responses.”⁴⁸ Woodmason’s contempt for the backcountry settlers was apparent. They resembled the dissenters who had poisoned the well of the Church of England. They were not worthy of the Majesty of Salvation. Traveling Presbyterian clergy disagreed with Woodmason’s assessment of backcountry faith.

The Presbyterian act of itinerancy would lead to a split in the national Presbytery in Philadelphia, the New Side-Old Side Controversy. The New Siders held that ministering should follow the example of George Whitefield’s revivals, use the Bible as an, “equilibrium” between the Covenant and the education many received at the Log College.⁴⁹ After the split from the Philadelphia Synod, many New Side clergy followed the migrating Presbyterians South into Virginia and North Carolina’s Piedmont and western regions. It was here, amongst the suffocating grip of the Church of England, that these clergy reaffirmed the rights of their Scottish forefathers and resisted such demands as oaths of allegiance or the use of a unified Anglican Book of Common Prayer. These restrictions chafed the New Side Presbyterians, especially the oath of allegiance which, as Samuel Davies preached in 1751, “Man has a natural right to challenge authority, to compare it with certain principles of justice and of righteousness, and if he finds them incompatible, to act as seems to him right...”⁵⁰ Davies’ philosophy was aligned with New Side Presbyterianism of the time. Rejection of civil authority could be religiously justified, if the acts of the government were antithetical the teachings of the Church. If they were found to be unjustifiable, it was a *duty* of individuals to resist. They were mandated by God to resist tyranny and attempt to implement something better.

⁴⁸ Charles Woodmason, “It Will Require Much Time to Model the Manners and Morals of these Wild Peoples,” *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant*, ed. Richard Hooker, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web*, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6386>, (accessed April 24, 2012).

⁴⁹ Alice M. Baldwin, “Sowers of Sedition: The Political Theories of Some New Light Presbyterian Clergy of Virginia and North Carolina,” *The William & Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 5, no. 1 (Jan, 1948), JSTOR, <http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/1920947>, (accessed April 24, 2012), 4.

⁵⁰ Baldwin, “Sowers of Sedition,” 6.

One such man who challenged authority was Rev. Alexander Craighead, an Irish Presbyterian minister and one of the foremost New Side clergymen, who began preaching in Mecklenburg County in 1758, at the request of the Rocky Creek Church.⁵¹ Rev. Craighead had a long and, to some, offensive past dealing with the Church of England. His most pernicious act was a 1743 document, which Foote described as, “ahead of his ministerial brothers...in his views of religious liberty and church government.”⁵² The document was a pamphlet entitled, *Renewal of the Covenants, National and Solemn League*, and testified to the Presbyterian ideal of the contract theory the Covenant represented, that God had made a legal binding with mankind, one that the Church of England was violating. The beauty that Rev. Craighead saw enshrined within the Covenant was that God was the only judge necessary to oversee the renewal. As the reverend wrote, “the necessity of renewing the covenants [does not] flow from any coercive or constraining power...either from Civil Magistrates or Ecclesiastical Authority of this corrupt church.”⁵³ The Covenant, as defined by Craighead, could only be described as, “a party between two parties, by which each party is bound and obliged to fulfill whatever the conditions are.”⁵⁴ Two types of covenants existed to Craighead, a civil covenant and religious covenants. Religious covenants were a, “dedication of a person, soul and body to the Lord and his service.”⁵⁵ Therefore there could be only one head of a church, and that head could not be a royal mortal. Rev. Craighead used this belief structure to attack fellow Presbyterians for their

⁵¹ Foote, *History of the Presbyterians*, under “Churches in Mecklenburg County,” 1221-1222.

⁵² Foote, 1222.

⁵³ Alexander Craighead, “Renewal of the Covenants, National and Solemn League; A Confession of Sins; and Engagement to Duties; and a Testimony; as they were carried on at Middle Octorara in Pennsylvania, November 11, 1743 together with an introductory preface,” *True Covenanter*, under “The Preface to the Reader,” http://www.truecovenanter.com/covenants/octorara_covenant_renewal.html#back35, (accessed April 24, 2012).

⁵⁴ Craighead, under *Preface to a Candid Reader* (accessed April 24, 2012).

⁵⁵ Craighead, under *Preface to a Candid Reader*, (April 24, 2012).

acceptance of the Adopting Act of 1729, which Craighead saw as, “*their* rule of admittance of persons into the Church and not the Word of God.”⁵⁶

Craighead’s dismissal of the Adopting Act and those who followed it stemmed from his belief in the finality of the National Solemn League and Covenant. The need for consent from royal governments into the affairs of the Church was an insult. As Palmer and Fitzmier argue under the Solemn League and Covenant, the Presbyterians operated on a representative system. The presbytery was an elected group of clergy to order the affairs of the church. This government was endowed with its powers from God, to uphold the contract he forged with Adam and Eve. Rev. Craighead saw the Old Side clergy, and their embrace of the Adopting Act, as an attempt to subvert the will of God, by taking the power out of representative hands and placing their trust in the hands of the royal government, i.e. a monarch.⁵⁷ His derision for Old Side clergy was evident as he condemned them for believing the Covenant as a “yoke of bondage” and believing that it was beneficial to be, “more in league with the avowed enemies of God’s Glory, than with himself.”⁵⁸ Craighead did not make enemies everywhere though. He found an audience willing to believe in his ideology and ministering in the colonial settlers of the North Carolina backcountry.

Rev. Craighead proved to be a very popular minister with the settlers of the Carolina Piedmont. His contempt for the Church of England and his impassioned defense of the Solemn League and Covenant resonated with the abused settlers in the backcountry. As William Foote documented, “In Carolina he found a people remote from the seat of authority... so united in their principles of religion and church government, that he was the teacher of the whole

⁵⁶ Craighead, under *Preface to a Candid Reader*, (accessed April 24, 2012).

⁵⁷ Palmer and Fitzmier, *The Presbyterians*, 15-16.

⁵⁸ Craighead, under the *Preface to a Candid Reader*, (April 24, 2012).

population.”⁵⁹ So effective was Rev. Craighead in the Piedmont, that Richard Locke, the minister representing the Church of England’s Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, recorded that, “Covenanters who receive their sacrament with a gun charg’d and drawn sword; profess they’d fight for Christ against civil government.”⁶⁰ The radicalism that Rev. Craighead brought to North Carolina solidified the character of religious resentment against Anglican entitlement and reiterated belief in the right of individuals to change corrupt practices. Craighead preached that Covenant theology provided a clear path to religious as well as civil liberty. God was the supreme sovereign, and he was just. Contracts must be formed with Him, not fallible emissaries on Earth.

Rev. Craighead was not the only Presbyterian clergy denouncing the corruption of the Church of England, and reinforcing the natural laws of liberty and equality as described by the National Solemn League. Other New Side Presbyterians had migrated to North Carolina from Pennsylvania and New Jersey, bringing with them the radical ideology that would shape the Regulators. Rev. David Caldwell entered North Carolina on May 23, 1764 and would prove to be just as passionate about civil resistance as Husband and Craighead.⁶¹ Much as Husband did in his “Sermon,” Rev. Caldwell also preached that the abuses in the backcountry were of the royal governments doing, but that the laity had allowed the abuse to take place by seeking the isolation the backcountry offered. “Paying tribute or tax is an acknowledgement of subjection and dependence,” Rev. Caldwell wrote in a sermon entitled, ‘The Character and Doom of the Sluggard,’ and this sermon coincides with Husband’s as an attack upon the unfair tax system that

⁵⁹ Foote, *History of the Presbyterians*, DocSouth, under “Churches in Mecklenburg County,” 1222.

⁶⁰ Baldwin, “Sowers of Sedition,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1920947>, 15.

⁶¹ Foote, *History of the Presbyterians*, DocSouth, 1218.

has been forced upon the settlers.⁶² Caldwell preached against the “slothfulness” of the backcountry settlers, who he argued have neglected their civic duties by non participation. This is similar to what Rev. Craighead was arguing against in his *Renewal of the Covenants*, that mankind had forsaken their contract with God, and now the punishment was to live under oppression until they overcame their injuries.⁶³

Those injuries had been inflicted on the Regulators by their own hand, as Rev. Caldwell explained his view on the relationship between man and state at the time of the Regulation. Continuing in his “Character and Doom of the Sluggard” Rev. Caldwell spoke that the sluggard would not realize when the king or his officials had overstepped their authority. The diffuse nature of colonial North Carolina and the introversion of most of her inhabitants had allowed the royal government to chip away at the rights and freedoms they were allowed to enjoy. For Caldwell, the erosion was proof of one thing, laziness. Laziness of mind and faith had allowed “ambitious and designing men” to slowly subject the residents of Granville and Hillsborough, and that subjection was no one’s fault but their own. Caldwell’s disgust was apparent as he preached, “While the sluggard continues... no wonder he is easily awed into slavery... and yields to all the unjust demands of usurped prerogative.”⁶⁴

Rev. Caldwell did provide the Regulators hope. Their cause is moral, they are on the side of God, defending their rights and renewing the contract with God that all men are created equal. In his “Doctrine of Universal Salvation,” Rev. Caldwell described that in the final judgment, those who followed the law or lived under it would prosper. “The Scriptures will certainly be the

⁶² Rev. David Caldwell, “The Character and Doom of the Sluggard,” in Eli Washington Carruthers, *A sketch of the life and character of the Rev. David Caldwell D. D., nearly sixty years pastor of the churches of Buffalo and Alamance*, (New York, NY: Swaim and Sherwood, 1842), digitized 2007, Google e-book, (accessed April 24, 2012), 273.

⁶³ Caldwell, 274.

⁶⁴ Caldwell, 277.

rule for all...and the moral laws or precepts which they contain, being founded in the nature and relations of man, and the immutable difference between right and wrong, must be to all men the standard of moral rectitude.”⁶⁵ The activities of the Regulators to protest, the petitions, the boycotts, were justifiable because the insidious activities of the royal government demanded action. The corruption suffered had to be contested for it violated the equal treatment God had afforded to all humans. However, the mob actions at Fanning’s home and the Hillsborough Riot were not, and as Caldwell put it, “What is the amount of guilt, or the desert of the transgressor, is not for us to determine...God must be the interpreter of his own laws and of their penalties too.”⁶⁶ The Regulators could not act as judge, jury, and hangman. That took the righteous anger away from God, who would have directed it at those guilty of violations.

Rev. Caldwell attempted to assuage the vitriol of the Regulators by reaffirming the true power of God’s mercy for the abused, when he preached, “infinite love (of God) *must harmonize* with infinite Justice...for without...it would be infinite injustice.”⁶⁷ The guilty would pay at some point for their transgressions, justice, what the Regulators desired most, would be handed down from the judge of all of creation. “He is *just!* This expresses his disposition to give unto all their due- blessings to whom blessings, and curses to who curses are due.”⁶⁸ Men such as McColluh and Fanning, men who gouged, stole, lied would receive harsh penalties. They might not be punished by civil law, but as Regulator anger grew, their indictment under divine law

⁶⁵ Rev. David Caldwell, “The Doctrine of Universal Salvation Unscriptural” in Eli Washington Carruthers, *A sketch of the life and times of Rev. David Caldwell, D.D., nearly sixty years pastor of the churches of Buffalo and Alamance*, (New York, NY: Swaim and Sherwood, 1842), digitized 2007, Google e-book, (accessed April 24, 2012), 286.

⁶⁶Caldwell, 287. Some arguments have been made that the mob violence taken by the Regulators was justified under English common law. To read more, see Wayne E. Lee’s *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina*, (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2001). To read more about David Caldwell’s disapproval of Regulator violence, see “An Address by some North Carolina Presbyterian ministers concerning the behavior of Presbyterians seeking redress for grievances,” signed by Rev. Caldwell, Rev. Hugh McAden, Rev. James Cresswell, and Rev. Henry Patillo, *DocSouth: Documenting the American South*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Library) March 27, 2010, (accessed on April 24, 2012).

⁶⁷ Caldwell, 289.

⁶⁸ Caldwell, 296.

grew as well. According to Caldwell, “The Judge of all the earth will do right.”⁶⁹ However, humanity could not intervene in the implementation of that justice. To do so, would be usurping power from God and force his hand by punishing those with grievances as well. On May 16, 1771, the Regulators were punished.

The Battle of Alamance was over before it started. Outnumbered but better organized, the militia under the personal command of Governor Tryon routed the undisciplined force of Regulators. According to the military campaign journals, the day after the battle, May 17, one of the captured prisoners from the Regulators was hanged. The hanging deeply divided the North Carolina troops who had been sent to crush the rebellion. The journal records that after the execution, “some refused to march forward while others declared they would give no quarter in the future.”⁷⁰ The Regulators were no more. Beginning as small protests against corrupt officials in the backcountry of North Carolina, the Regulators had transformed into a political movement that was crusading to save their colony from cruel and greedy interests. It was religion that drove this transition from political protest to violent rebellion. The roots of the Regulators stretch far back into the upheaval of the Reformation in Europe. Factions such as the Presbyterians and the Society of Friends developed new theologies and interpreted the bible to hold different truths from the other denominations.

Those differences helped to coalesce in the Quakers and Presbyterians an independent ideal, one in which God was the ultimate source of authority. They also united the Regulators in their opposition to Governor Tryon who, was accused in an anonymous letter after he had

⁶⁹ Caldwell, 297.

⁷⁰ No Author, “Journal of the Military Campaign against the Regulators,” *DocSouth: Documenting the American South*, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr19-0008>, (accessed April 24, 2012), 845.

departed North Carolina of forcing colonists to “submit and become slaves.”⁷¹ God had instilled in humanity a divine knowledge to explore the human condition and to question those who claimed legitimacy. If those rulers were found lacking it was the duty of the people to resist and to institute new leaders who would protect their god given right of liberty. The experience of the Quakers and Presbyterians in England galvanized those denominations when they migrated to the New World and found their way to North Carolina. Among the colonial Tar Heels they found autonomy to spread their beliefs almost unmolested. They found a populace that was willing to tolerate dissenter faiths and in some cases convert to join them. The radical ideas espoused by Husband, Craighead and Caldwell resonated in the Piedmont and western counties. They found an audience ready to listen to the message they had to spread. That message spurred the Regulators to fight for a province in which they were treated with the same regard as the merchants or the Governor. Corrupt officers must be brought to the justice of the people, a sentiment shared by Herman Husband who closed his *Impartial Relation*, “These Sentiments of Justice are so natural, that they strike very man in the same light, and it is to be hoped will do so for ever.”⁷²

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⁷¹ No Author, “Letter from Atticus to William Tryon (as printed in the Virginia Gazette),” *Docsouth: Documenting the American South*, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr08-0370>, (accessed April 24, 2012), 720.

⁷² Husband, “An Impartial Relation,” in *The Regulators in North Carolina*, 226.

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