

was not to be operative until nine months after its passage, before which time it was felt that the Proprietary's attitude towards such legislation could be learned (pp. 304-305, 315, 319, 361, 383, 400, 405, 406, 412, 420). But Sharpe, although favorable to the bill, felt that he should not give his assent to any act that might affect the prerogative of the Proprietary even with the nine-months' suspension clause, until he had learned the attitude of Frederick, Lord Baltimore, towards it. Under date of June 23, 1768, the Governor wrote the Proprietary that the bill had been "laid aside by him until he knew his Lordship's sentiments upon it" (*Arch. Md.* XIV, 510). It was not until three years later, when the Proprietary had finally acquiesced in its passage, that legislation of the same general character was passed at the October-November, 1771, session (Hanson's *Laws of Maryland*, 1787; Acts of 1771, chap. xxxi).

Coventry Parish, Worcester County, had had for twenty years as its rector, the notorious Reverend Nathaniel Whitaker, who died November 3, 1766. After his death Governor Sharpe had written to the Lord Proprietary of Whitaker, that "by his Sottishness and immoral Behaviour [he] had long been considered an intolerable Burthen by his Parishioners" (*Arch. Md.* XIV, 480). Daniel Dulany referred to him as "a Man not only unfit for the Station in which he was placed, but so infamously profligate that it would have been a discredit to any Person of Character to admit him to the Regard and notice of a common acquaintance" (*Arch. Md.* XXXII, 225). A petition, signed by 183 parishioners of Coventry Parish, of whom six were vestrymen and two church wardens, dated May 16, 1767, is printed in the Appendix. It requests the Governor to appoint as Whitaker's successor a rector who met the approbation of the parishioners, and suggests the name of the Reverend Dr. Thomas Bradley Chandler (pp. 513-517). It will be recalled that the appointment of the clergy in Maryland was the exclusive prerogative of the Lord Proprietary and one which he jealously exercised. Five prominent parishioners of Coventry Parish on November 25, 1766, two days after Whitaker's death, signed a letter to Governor Sharpe, urging that no appointment be made without the approbation of the congregation. This letter requested that the Reverend Andrew Morton be appointed rector, the writers saying that "you will not conceive that we claim this as an absolute right", but expressed the hope that they may be granted this indulgence as more than twenty years had passed without their having had the Gospel preached to them except by visiting clergymen and this at their own expense (*Arch. Md.* XIV, 349). An undated letter, but one obviously written somewhat later, from the vestry and church wardens of Coventry to Sharpe, shows that the Governor had without consulting the parishioners appointed the Reverend John Rosse. This appointment resulted in such violent opposition developing against him that he had refused to accept (*ibid.*, p. 363-369, 480-481). Sharpe then appointed the Reverend Philip Hughes as rector. His appointment seems at first also to have aroused opposition, which however, soon quieted down (*ibid.* 481). It was doubtless such episodes as these that contributed to the attempt at the 1768 session to secure the passage of the law for the regulation of the clergy.