
A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland

scribed as "a laborious and judicious Performance."¹ It is probable that at this time he was in the civil service of Great Britain, and that he remained in that service until the year 1744, when on September 23d he was ordained deacon by the Rt. Rev. Thomas Wilson, Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man, who a few months later, on March 10, 1744/45, ordained him to the priesthood for the specific purpose of service in the Plantations.² He arrived in Maryland between July and November 1745, settled at Oxford in Talbot County, and within a few months had become rector of St. Peter's Parish of that county. During the thirteen years of his rectorship he exercised his pastoral functions with notable success; he established a Charity Working School for poor children of all races, and preached ceaselessly to his parishioners their duty in the spiritual care of their negro slaves. Throughout his life in Maryland he was notable for his charitable enterprises; his kindness to the Acadians, when a shipload of these distressed neutrals was landed at Oxford, was of such a nature as to have been remembered until the present day. An accomplished musician, a hearty, sociable being of excellent parts, he was, as one of his parishioners wrote, "a very considerable man here & in great Esteem with every great Man from the Governor to the Parish Clerk;" and the same admirer wrote a few months later, "I think him the worthiest clergyman I ever knew, not Excepting the Bishop."³ His good deeds, his learning and his personal charm have caused Thomas Bacon to be remembered when men of greater piety and of more rigidly correct life have been forgotten.⁴

Evidently there was in his composition a strain of impetuosity which did him great disservice. On two occasions he was fined large sums of tobacco for his disregard of the law respecting the publication of the banns of matrimony. The first of these was when he united in marriage Miss Elizabeth Bozman to a reprobate brother clergyman, and the second was the occasion of his own marriage to this lady in the year 1757. Even before this, in the year 1755, he had been indicted and compelled to stand trial on a charge

pose the Revenue of Ireland, etc. IV. The Method of Making Entries, etc. (An appendix containing forms of informations . . . on the act of excise.) 5 pts. Dublin, 1737-36. 8^o. (In British Museum. Press Mark 517. e. 6).

¹ Bacon's obituary in *Maryland Gazette* for June 9, 1768. Given in full later in this chapter.

² See Appendix B of Bishop Wilson's *Sacra Privata*, ed. Oxford and London, 1853.

³ Callister Letters. Ms. in Maryland Diocesan Library. In the second quotation, Callister, a Manxman, refers to Bishop Wilson, almost a divinity among his islanders. For a Manxman to compare any man favorably with Bishop Wilson was praise indeed.

⁴ Even the rapacious parson, Bennett Allen, who having been promised the succession to Bacon's parish of All Saints, Frederick County, could not conceal the impatience with which he awaited his colleague's death, wrote to him in 1768: "I have always loved your character for that Milkiness of Blood, (as Dryden expresses it) and Goodness of Heart, for which you are remarkable; and respected you as a Man of Letters, a Friend of the Lord Proprietary; and a Benefactor to the Public: . . ." (*Maryland Gazette*, September 29, 1768).