

Beginning about this time, crises in Calvert's private and public life caused him to abandon his career at court and turn his full attention to the New World. In 1622 his first wife died in childbirth after bearing him eleven children. He described her to a friend as "the dearest companion and only comfort of my life," and the loss as "almost insupportable." Soon afterwards his position at court began to weaken. Early in 1625 he was finally forced to resign as secretary of state, although he did not fall entirely from favor. James I kept him on the privy council and made him Baron of Baltimore in the county of Longford in Ireland as a reward for his years of service. As these setbacks in his personal life and political fortunes mounted, his interest in religion grew, culminating in his conversion or reconversion to Roman Catholicism.<sup>4</sup>

In 1625 James I died and his son Charles I ascended the throne. Lord Baltimore, summoned to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy to the new king, declined as a matter of conscience. A good Catholic could not recognize the supremacy of the king above the pope, an attitude that many Tudor and Stuart Englishmen interpreted as treason to the crown. The oaths were intended as a test of loyalty to the king and the Church of England, and refusal to take them barred anyone from any public office. By this act Lord Baltimore gave up his seat on the privy council and all hope of future offices and the honor and profits they might bring.<sup>5</sup>

Calvert turned his full attention to his tiny Newfoundland colony, Avalon. Although displaced from court he could still serve his king by expanding the king's dominions and he surely hoped that further investment in his colony would be profitable to him. Possibly he hoped that over the long run Avalon would