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The Politics of Providentialism in England, *c*. 1640-1660

Abstract

This thesis seeks to show that providentialism was an indispensable constituent of political decision-making during the English civil war and Interregnum. Providentialism exerted both a broad, underlying influence to console, reassure and motivate, and also displayed a more specific, narrowly-defined, but potentially radical aspect as statesmen and soldiers acted upon their often divergent readings of God's purposes. Honouring providence became public policy for royalists and parliamentarians alike and under Cromwell was a primary function of the State and a measure of the success of reformation. However, while providence helped shape events, it was itself shaped by circumstances. Comprising a richly textured language that invited contemporaries to explore a variety of possible meanings to current events, during the 1650s this plurality inhibited the construction of a viable constitutional settlement and probably therefore increased the likelihood of Restoration. The thesis explains how providence refracted and informed local and national politics and military decision-making in many different ways: injecting the passion that helped sustain hostilities and inhibiting compromise by making the war one fought for the highest possible purpose: God's honour.

It is argued that providentialism accentuated divisions within the royalist and parliamentarian camps, prolonging the war and hindering the conclusion of a lasting peace. The phenomenon of royalist providentialism is rescued from comparative obscurity in Chapters Two and Three, while the radicalising effect of the doctrine on the New Model Army, and the importance to the republic of the myth of divine intercession in its formation, are also considered in detail in Chapters Four and Five. The achievements of the Army were credited to God, and this legacy exerted a profound effect upon the policies of its beneficiaries, the Cromwellians, who sought, for example by means of the Major Generals, to propagate this foundation-myth throughout the republic, with mixed results. It is suggested in Chapters Six and Seven, finally, that the failure of the revolution to live up to its early promise destroyed confidence that the republic was, indeed, sponsored by God: a shortcoming exploited by the royalists in 1660. The doctrine that had strengthened the collective resolve of Parliament, the New Model Army and the republic, ultimately provided the occasion for bitter recrimination that it is argued hastened the demise of the republican experiment.

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Abbreviations

Abbott	Wilbur Cortez Abbott, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, 4 vols (Cambridge, 1937-47)
Aulicus	*Mercurius Aulicus*, reprinted in Robin Jeffs ed., *The English Revolution III: Newsbooks I*, 4 vols (1971)
BL	British Library
BL TT	British Library, Thomason Tracts
Bod.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
CJ	*Commons' Journals*
Clarke Papers	Charles Firth ed., *The Clarke Papers*, 4 vols, *Camden Society*, n.s. 49, 62 (1891, 1901)
Cl SP	*Clarendon State Papers*, published as Thomas Monkhouse and Richard Scrope eds, *State Papers Collected by Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1773)
CSPD	*Calendar of State Papers Domestic*
CUL	Cambridge University Library
DNB	*Dictionary of National Biography*
EHR	*English Historical Review*
HLQ	*Huntington Library Quarterly*
HMC	*Historical Manuscripts Commission*
HJ	*Historical Journal*
IHS	*Irish Historical Studies*
JBS	*Journal of British Studies*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
LJ	*Lords' Journals*

OPH	*Old Parliamentary History*, published as *The Parliamentary or Constitutional History of England*, 24 vols (1751-61)
PP	*Past and Present*
Politicus	*Mercurius Politicus* reprinted in Robin Jeffs ed., *The English Revolution III: Newsbooks 5*, 19 vols (1971)
Somers Tracts	Walter Scott ed., *A Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts*, 13 vols (1809-15)
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
TSP	*Thurloe State Papers*, published as Thomas Birch ed., *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe*, 7 vols (1742)

This work is dedicated to my parents, family and friends in gratitude for their love, kindness and support.

Preface

I would like to thank Dr Kenneth Fincham for the insightful criticisms and helpful advice that he has contributed during the course of his supervision of this thesis, but also in particular for the good humour, great patience and moral support he has provided especially during the period of private misfortune that I have recently experienced. My thanks are also extended to the Department of History at the University of Kent, and to the members of the Religious History of Britain seminar at the Institute of Historical Research for their constructive comments and suggestions on how the work could be improved. A debt of gratitude is also owed to the librarians and archivists of the British Library and the Department of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library for their help and assistance.

The usual conventions have been followed in writing this thesis. Spelling and punctuation has been modernised, except in titles. Dates are Old Style, although the year is taken to begin on 1 January. The place of publication is London unless otherwise stated, and titles that appear throughout the thesis are cited in full in the first instance in each consecutive chapter, except for those that appear in the table of abbreviations.

Chapter One: Introduction

(i) Historical Background

The concept of an interventionist deity pre-dates Christianity and was a feature of a pagan antiquity. In the medieval world, too, divine providence played a central role, and a complex theology quickly evolved breaking down the ordinary and extraordinary actions of God. The divine will was manifest in the original act of Creation, and beyond this singular event, outwards into the lives of all God's creatures, the universe that they occupied, and as Augustine showed, also throughout human history.[1]

God's general providence could be understood as the maintenance of Creation in its broadest sense: the causal order, the passage of the seasons and other natural regularities, and the conservation of social and political certitudes such as hierarchy, patriarchy and monarchy. His special providence, on the other hand, comprised specific and particular interventions that either occurred directly, usually in the form of some sudden event like a violent accident, or indirectly via secondary causes or means, often through the instrumentality of God's human agents, be they willing or unwilling. The purpose of providences was held to be exemplary and admonitory: a series of mercies or correctives whose purpose was to reform conduct, prepare the individual for death, or in a collective sense to remind communities or nations of the requirement placed upon them to serve God diligently and render thanks for the provision of life's bounty through prayer and other religious exercises.[2]

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[1] William Earl Burns, 'An Age of Wonders: Prodigies, Providence, and Politics in England, 1580-1727', Ph.D., University of California, Davis, 1994, p. 13; Alex Walsham, 'Aspects of Providentialism in Early Modern England', Ph.D., University of Cambridge, 1995, Chapter 1; *idem.*, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999), Chapter 1. On the providence of the Stoics and their influence on Calvinism, see P. H. Reardon, 'Calvin on Providence: The Development of an Insight', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 28 (1975). T. J. Gorringe, *God's Theatre: A Theology of Providence* (1991); Jacob Viner, *The Role of Providence in the Social Order: An Essay in Intellectual History* (Philadelphia, 1972); Saint Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans,* 7 vols., ed. and trans. George E. McCracken (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1957-72); Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Mystery of Continuity: Time and History, Memory and Eternity in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Charlottesville, Virginia, 1986), pp. 35, 50.

[2] *Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches in the time of Queen Elizabeth* (1817); on catechisms the best recent survey is Ian Green, 'Emergence of the English Catechism', *Journal of European History*, 37 (1986); *idem.*, *The Christian's ABC: Chatechisms and Catechizing in England, c.1530-1740* (Oxford, 1996). On the fast, see Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth Century Revolution* (1993), Chapter 3; Winthrop S. Hudson, 'Fast Days and Civil Religion', in *Theology*

Both Roman Catholics and protestants drew inspiration from the doctrine, as did 'Arminians' and 'puritans' in seventeenth century England.[3] It featured in sources as diverse as the printed sermon, the state-sponsored homily and in private diaries, journals and commonplace-books as a testament to the singular devotion and piety of those who craved assurance of the appearance in their lives of God's saving grace. Furthermore, as scholars such as Margaret Spufford, Tessa Watt and Alexandra Walsham have recently noted, the wide distribution of popular broadsheet ballads, the evolution of the penny chapbook, and the rapid rise to popularity of the almanac, sustained a vigorous tradition of providential cautionary tales: lurid and often titillating or bloodthirsty stories of God's humiliation of sinful or proud individuals, communities or nations. These anthologies of the miraculous grew out of the medieval tradition of saints' lives, and satisfied a craving for entertainment, amusement and a loosely defined, though ever-present demand for the realisation of justice in a world filled with the unpredictability of the violent, the greedy and the capricious.[4]

Reformed theology stressed the absolute sovereignty of God over all nature and all human affairs. In John Calvin's writings, particularly influential in Elizabethan and Jacobean theology, the distance between the sublimity of the supreme deity and the awful fact of the depravity of an unworthy, corrupt and fallen humanity became a gap

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in Sixteenth Century and Seventeenth Century England (Los Angeles, 1971); Henry P. Ippel, 'Blow the Trumpet, Sanctify the Fast', in *HLQ*, 44 (1980-81); Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Fast Sermons of the Long Parliament', in *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (1972); John F. Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism during the English Civil Wars, 1640-1648* (Princeton, 1969).

[3] Brian Vickers ed., *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 375; J. Sears McGee, *The Godly Man in Stuart England: Anglicans, Puritans, and the Two Tables, 1620-1670* (New Haven and London, 1976), Chapter 1; Barbara Donagan, 'Providence, Chance and Explanation: Some Paradoxical Aspects of Puritan Views of Causation', *Journal of Religious History*, 11 (1981), p. 385; *idem.*, 'Godly Choice: Puritan Decision-Making in Seventeenth Century England', in *Harvard Theological Review*, 76 (1983), p. 319; Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales, 1500-1700* (Basingstoke,1994), pp. 366-7 and see note 28 in Chapter 10 on Catholic providentialism. See Peter Lake, 'The moderate and irenic case for religious war: Joseph Hall's *Via Media* in context', in Susan Amussen and Mark Kishlansky eds, *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early-modern England* (Manchester and New York, 1995); Steven Edward Jablonski, 'Evil Days: Providence and Politics in the Thought of John Milton and His Age', Ph.D., Princeton University, 1994, pp. 89-90, for Thomas Jackson's providentialism and Arminian providentialism in general.

[4] Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories* (Cambridge, 1981); Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge,1991); Walsham, 'Aspects of Providentialism', *idem.*, *Providence in Early Modern England*; David Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York, 1989); Jerome Friedman, *Miracles and the Pulp Press During the English Revolution* (1993); Bernard Capp, *English Almanacs, 1500-1800: Astrology and the Popular Press* (Ithaca, New York, 1979).

bridgeable only with the assistance of God's grace.[5] Calvin's God exercised an active and continual preservation and care of each of His creatures and it was a derogation of His sovereignty to suggest that the divine superintendency constituted only a mild-mannered general beneficence. God represented an extreme, though reconcilable duality that combined the indifference and seeming arbitrariness of a distant, all-powerful megalomaniac, with the absolute and discrete tenderness and solicitude of tender guardianship. His was not a pseudo-sovereignty consisting of a Creation followed by aeons of bored indifference, punctuated by occasional intercessions: 'by Providence, we mean, not an unconcerned sitting of God in heaven . . . but that all-active and all-concerned seatedness on his throne above'. God was not 'vain, idle and almost asleep, but vigilant, efficacious, operative and engaged in continual action'. A sovereign God was an active God, and 'providence consists in action'.[6]

It would seem that God's providences were not only intended to provoke reformation or reward godliness, however, but were an end in themselves: manifestations of the unfathomable and inscrutable divine will, the theatrical flourishes of a heavenly impresario. Since the true apprehension of providences was an *act of faith* necessarily conferred by God, it followed that the power of discernment was ordinarily denied to the reprobate. Moreover, Calvin urged caution in interpreting providences because God's secret will was a great deep or abyss, and those presumptuous enough to believe they were able to fathom this decree might themselves provoke the appearance of divine correctives. The providential devotional exercise was therefore one that it was recommended be approached with circumspection.[7]

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[5] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971), p. 91. Theologians often cited Luke 12: 7 ('But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered'), Matthew 10: 30 ('But the very hairs of your head are all numbered') and Romans 9: 21 ('Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour'), to describe better the specificity and all-embracing nature of God's sovereignty. Peter Lake, 'Calvinism and the English Church 1570-1635', *PP*, 114 (1987); Conrad Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford, 1990), Chapter 4; Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c.1590-1640* (Oxford, 1987); *idem.*, 'Puritanism, Arminianism and Counter-Revolution', in Conrad Russell ed., *The Origins of the English Civil War* (1973).

[6] *A Defence of the Secret Providence of God*, in Henry Cole ed., *Calvin's Calvinism*, 2 vols. (1856-7), vol. 2, pp. 4-5; John Allen ed., *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia and London, 1935), vol.1, pp. 185-7.

[7] *Institutes*, pp. 196-7; *A Defence*, pp. 11, 36, 54; Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 120.

Calvin argued that reflection on providence served to reassure the individual amid the general chaos of life. The godly were compelled to chart the progress of providence in the course of their spiritual careers, exploring the purifying, disciplining effects of mercies and judgments and applying their lessons in a perpetual search for evidences of election and sainthood.[8] A jealous God demanded credit for every achievement. The Almighty ordered all things for the best, rewarding patient endurance of affliction and inspiring a spirit of dependence: anything less betrayed a fatal murmuring against God's works. This unquestioning loyalty might imply a conservative acceptance of the status quo in the sphere of politics, but this was not necessarily the case: political change could, after all, signify not mere divine permission – the toleration by God of sinful actions for some higher purpose – but evidence of positive divine approbation, with success the mark of such supernatural endorsement.[9]

Proper regard for the evidences of God's power and justice was, therefore, an indispensable devotional tool designed to shepherd the pious away from the path of depravity, and towards a necessary acceptance of irresistible grace. Providences also visited the unregenerate, though, of course, for different purposes. Sanctified afflictions – illness, accident, bereavement – were loving corrections designed to elicit personal reformation among the faithful, whereas wrathful judgments were administered most often as punishment to the massed ranks of the spiritual proletariat: epidemics of plague often fitted this category. This practical aspect of providentialism is what made it so important in political terms because the conduct of every member of the community – in

[8] Examples of the autobiographical impulse and its providential component include Nehemiah Wallington, *Historical Notices of Events Occurring Chiefly in the Reign of Charles I*, ed. Rosamond Webb, 2 vols (1869); Alan Macfarlane ed., *The Diary of Ralph Josselin, 1616-1683* (Oxford, 1991); J. O. Halliwell ed., *The Autobiography of Sir Simonds D'Ewes*, 2 vols (1845); T. T. Lewis ed., *Letters of Lady Brilliana Harley, Camden Society* o.s. 58 (1853); R. Spalding ed., *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke* (Oxford, 1990); J. Horsfall Turner ed., *The Rev. Oliver Heywood B.A., 1630-1702; His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, 4 vols (Brighouse, 1882-5). See also, Patrick Collinson, ' "A Magazine of Religious Patterns": An Erasmian Topic Transposed in English Protestantism', in *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (1983); Paul Delany, *British Autobiography in the Seventeenth Century* (1969); William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (New York, 1938), pp. 99-100; Heal and Holmes, *The Gentry*, p. 366; John Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (Oxford, 1991), Chapter 2: 'Patriarchs, Providence, and Paranoia: Subjectification and Autobiographical Narrative'; J. T. Cliffe, *The Puritan Gentry: The Great Puritan Families of Early Stuart England* (London, Boston and Melbourne, 1984), pp. 24-55.

[9] *A Defence*, pp. 10-11; *Institutes*, pp. 195-6; William Gouge, *God's Three Arrowes:Plague, Famine, Sword in Three Treatises* (1631), pp. 388-9; Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (1966), pp. 35-8, 170.

that it might attract a heavenly scourge – suddenly assumed great significance. The jeremiad permitted preachers to locate and identify the possible causes of such judgments, even when these originated in government circles such as the ecclesiastical or foreign policies of Charles I. Everyday politics, meanwhile, also required an appreciation of the hints and subtle clues God provided policy-makers to guide them in the right direction, and a commitment to make use of the opportunities for protection and advancement God had provided. Whilst trusting in providence, they were still expected to keep their powder dry.[10]

The literature of cautionary tales, almanacs, ballads and chapbooks point to an attachment to a popular providentialism that was responsible for rendering bibliocentric Calvinist theology more readily accessible to a population alienated from a religion of the word. Recent scholarship on the subject led by Patrick Collinson has challenged the assumption of Keith Thomas's groundbreaking study, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, that protestant providentialism sought to replace older, popular, superstitious religious practice and folk belief. They have instead stressed the versatile nature of the negotiation between protestantism and traditional religious practice, and the accommodation with rival explanatory systems such as Epicureanism.[11] The model of polarisation between a godly culture characterised by Sabbath observance, hostility towards the alehouse and the Book of Sports and intolerance of blasphemy, profanity and fornication, and a semi-Pelagian popular culture based around the traditional festive calendar and hostile to godly reformism, has given way to a picture of more promiscuous cultural transfer and exchange, mediated by the consensual appeal of providential literature. It has been argued that Calvinist religious culture was neither remote nor inherently unpopular: the unyielding determinism of orthodox Calvinism, for

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[10] *Institutes*, pp. 186, 191; Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, p. 136; John Downame, *Guide to Godliness* (1622); John Preston, *The Breast-plate of Faith and Love* (1630); Henry Scudder, *The Christian's Daily Walk in Holy Securitie and Peace* (1627). On 'co-working', see J. C. Davis, 'Cromwell's Religion', in John Morrill ed., *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (Harlow, 1990); Christopher Hill, *God's Englishman: Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (1970), pp. 234-5. For plague, see Paul Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (1985).

[11] *Institutes*, p. 187; Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 91, 130, 762. On the 'rise' of Epicureanism and the dating of providential enthusiasm, see Blair Worden, 'Providence and Politics in Cromwellian England', *PP*, 109 (1985), pp. 59, 65-6. Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 201-2; Walsham, 'Aspects of Providentialism', p. 17.

example, in practice tending to be diluted in the course of subjective religious experience. This thesis accepts as its starting point such a plural reading of the interpretation of providences that acknowledged a voluntarist measure of men's capabilities in relation to God: the business of war by definition demanded that men seek to shape their circumstances rather than passively receive their portion.[12]

Consciousness of the political importance of providentialism in England predated the civil war: the events of the mid-seventeenth century were far from being unique. Anglo Saxon and Norman chronicles, for example, described the divine punishment of sinfulness and rebellion against God by successive waves of immigrants, be they Roman, Saxon, Viking or Norman, while the thirteenth century *Song of the Times*, composed in the reign of Henry III, interpreted his defeat at the hands of the barons in providential terms, warning that God 'treads upon the necks of the proud'. Such divine humiliation of tyrannical or irreligious monarchs was a familiar element in medieval culture that later was given coherence by works such as Giovanni Boccaccio's *De*

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[12] Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 89, 797; Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants*, pp. 251-2; *idem.*, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Basingstoke and London, 1988), Chapter 4: 'Protestant Culture and the Cultural Revolution'; *idem.*, 'Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritanism as Forms of Popular Religious Culture', in Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales eds, *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700* (Basingstoke and London, 1996). R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford, 1979); Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, pp.153-5. Stephen Brachlow, *The Communion of Saints: Radical Puritan and Separatist Ecclesiology, 1570-1625* (Oxford, 1988), p. 34; Walsham, 'Aspects of Providentialism', pp. 29, 193; Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525-1700* (Oxford, 1995); Derek Hirst, 'The Failure of Godly Rule in the English Republic', *PP*, 132 (1991); Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (1978), pp. 208-32; David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England, 1603-1660* (Oxford,1987), Chapter 3: 'Cultural Conflict'; Perez Zagorin, *The Court and the Country: The Beginning of the English Revolution* (1969); P. W. Thomas, 'Two Cultures? Court and Country under Charles I', in Russell ed., *Origins*; Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge, 1987), Chapter 1; Margaret Spufford, 'Puritanism and Social Control?', in Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson eds, *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1985); Peter Lake, 'Puritanism, Arminianism and a Shropshire Axe-Murder', *Midland History*, 15 (1990); *idem.*, 'Popular form, Puritan content? Two Puritan appropriations of the murder pamphlet from mid-seventeenth-century London', in Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts eds, *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson* (Cambridge, 1994); *idem.*, 'Deeds against Nature: Cheap Print, Protestantism and Murder in Early Seventeenth-Century England', in Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake eds, *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (1994); Jim Sharpe, 'Last Dying Speeches', *PP*, 108 (1985); G. F. Waller, 'The Popularization of Calvinism: Thomas Beard's *The Theater of Gods Judgements*', *Theology*, 75 (1972); Ronald Van der Molen, 'Providence as Mystery, Providence as Revelation: Puritan and Anglican Modifications of John Calvin's Doctrine of Providence', *Church History*, 47 (1978).

casibus virorum illustrium and the Elizabethan *Mirror for Magistrates.*[13] Kings such as Henry V, meanwhile, tried to portray their actions as synchronous with providence: for example by describing his role in the 1415 campaign in France as, 'the scourge of God', and his instructing the clergy to pray for divine intervention on the side of the English. A century later, moreover, Tudor propagandists like Polydore Vergil and Thomas More employed providentialism to discredit the Yorkists and establish the credit of the new dynasty. Providence was deployed by the state to justify Henry VIII's break with Rome, while the death of the reformer Edward VI and the reign of Mary were explained in terms of God's punishment of the people for their ingratitude in not embracing the protestant gospel with sufficient enthusiasm. The Elizabethan homilies reflected the importance that the state placed on fostering a practical providentialism in which socially conservative notions of sobriety, modesty and patience were buttressed by warnings of God's punishment of their antitypes such as disobedience. This was all the more important in view of the comparative insecurity of the Elizabethan establishment in the face of domestic and foreign intrigue that made the providential interpretation of recent history an urgent task.[14]

The providential enterprise possessed historical breadth in that England now came to be viewed as a choice instrument in the progressive revelation of God's purposes, leading as it would to the eventual extirpation of the antichristian papacy and the fulfilment of biblical and contemporary prophecies that anticipated the millennium, and that had became popular in the pre-civil war period.[15] Preachers modelled England

[13] Michael Winterbottom ed., *Gildas: The Ruin of Britain and other Works* (London and Chichester, 1978), pp. 17, 24-7; Diana Greenway ed., *Henry of Huntingdon's Historia Anglorum* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 5, 15, 73-7, 247; J. R. Lander, *Conflict and Stability in Fifteenth Century England* (1977), p. 56; G. L. Harris, *Henry V: The Practice of Kingship* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 119-22; Peter Coss ed., *Thomas Wright's Political Songs of England from the Reign of John to that of Edward II* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 73-8, 83, 89-91, 107; Louis Brewer Hall ed., *De casibus virorum illustrium* (New York, 1965); Lily Campbell ed., *The Mirror for Magistrates* (Cambridge, 1938).

[14] Joy Shakespeare, 'Plague and Punishment', in Peter Lake and Maria Dowling eds, *Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth Century England* (1987); 'An Homily Against Gluttony and Drunkenness', and 'An Homily Against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion' in *Sermons or Homilies*, pp. 520-21.

[15] Thomas Brightman, *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos* (1609); John Henry Alsted, *Diatribe de Milleannis Apocalypticis* (1627); Joseph Mede, *Clavis Apocalyptica* (1627). Bryan Ball, *A Great Expectation: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660* (Leiden, 1975); Michael Barkun, *Disaster and the Millennium* (New Haven and London, 1974), pp. 19, 38-9, 45, 107, 148; Katherine Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530-1645* (Oxford, 1979); Christopher Hill, ' "Till the Conversion of the Jews" ', in Richard H. Popkin ed., *Millenarianism and Messianism in English*

on Israel. Though this did not necessarily imply the exclusive identification of the nation with the body of the elect, England's contingent of godly nevertheless constituted a saving remnant likely to divert God's wrath and therefore prove indispensable to the welfare of a majority of the unregenerate. England's special place in God's affections was celebrated on the anniversaries of notable national deliverances such as the defeat of the Armada in 1588 and the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. These were intended to teach appropriate reverence for the works of the Almighty and instil a sense of communal loyalty in the context of an inclusive Church: an expression of the inter-relatedness of the sins of the nation's inhabitants. Conversely, their neglect constituted security and presumption that threatened the visitation of divine correctives such as plague and war.[16]

Providentialism could become a polemical tool, and this progressive politicisation of the doctrine under James I and Charles I has been the subject of a recent work by Alexandra Walsham. She has described how puritan preachers supplied

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Literature and Thought, 1650-1800 (Leiden, 1988); David Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England, 1603-1655* (Oxford, 1982); William Lamont, 'Richard Baxter, the Apocalypse and the Mad Major', *PP*, 55 (1972); Harry Rusche, 'Prophecies and Propaganda, 1641 to 1651', *EHR*, 84 (1969); *idem.*, 'Merlini Anglici: Astrology and Propaganda from 1644 to 1651', *EHR*, 80 (1965); Rupert Taylor, *The Political Prophecy in England* (New York, 1911); Peter Toon ed., *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology 1600-1660* (1970); Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'Three Foreigners: The Philosophers of the Puritan Revolution', in *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change*; Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Millennium and Utopia: A Study in the Background of the Idea of Progress* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1949), pp.34-6; Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge,1992).

[16] Robin Clifton, 'The Popular Fear of Catholics During the English Revolution', *PP*, 52 (1971); Caroline Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot* (Chapel Hill, 1983); Peter Lake, 'Anti-popery: the Structure of a Prejudice', in Richard Cust and Ann Hughes eds, *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603-1642* (1989); John Miller, *Popery and Politics in England, 1660-1688* (Cambridge, 1973); Carol Z. Wiener, 'The Beleaguered Isle. A Study of Elizabethan and Early Jacobean Anti-Catholicism', *PP*, 51 (1971); David Loades, 'Relations between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in J. C. H. Aveling, D. Loades and H. R. McAdoo eds, *Rome and the Anglicans* (Berlin, 1982). William Haller, *The Elect Nation: The Meaning and Relevance of Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (New York, 1963); Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto, 1978); Jane Facey, 'John Foxe and the Defence of the English Church', in Lake and Dowling eds, *Protestantism and the National Church*, p. 173. Paul Christianson, 'From Expectation to Militance: Reformers and Babylon in the First Two Years of the Long Parliament', *JEH*, 24 (1973); Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition*, pp. 106-8; Anthony Fletcher, 'The First Century of English Protestantism and the Growth of National Identity' in Stuart Mews ed., *Studies in Church History*, 18. See David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (1989), pp.50-66, 110-29, 141-55 for detail of the annual, state sponsored celebrations. See Roger T. Forster and V. Paul Marston, *God's Strategy in Human History* (Crowborough, 1989) for the scriptural basis of the Israelite paradigm, and the saving remnant in the case of Abraham and Sodom, pp. 52, 63-6; Peter Lake, 'Presbyterianism, the Idea of a National Church and the Argument from Divine Right', in Lake and Dowling eds., *Protestantism and the National Church*, p. 206.

inventories of the nation's sins that implied criticism of the policies of the clerical or secular establishment such as Jacobean non-intervention in the Thirty Years War after 1618, or the attempted match between Prince Charles and the Spanish Infanta in 1623. Plague was one issue that had the potential to polarise opinion: some preachers like Lancelot Andrewes argued that excessive religious enthusiasm provoked outbreaks of disease, others like William Warde blamed non-attendance at church for such judgments, while conversely, plague and other divine arrows were often popularly attributed to profanation of the Sabbath and 'Arminian' policies on altar rails, the relegation of the preaching ministry and marginalisation of predestinarian theology.[17] Fear of the effects of the broken covenant with God was also perhaps reflected in the migration from 1630 of the godly to Massachusetts.[18]

Polarisation was hastened by the mixed interpretation of auguries, the signs and wonders predicted to herald the disintegration of the old world. These portents might take the form of, say, celestial phenomena or monstrous births, and drew upon an

[17] On the jeremiad: Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison, 1978); John F. Berens, *Providence and Patriotism in Early America, 1640-1815* (Charlottesville, Virginia, 1978), pp. 20-23; Francis Bremer, *Puritan Crisis: New England and the English Civil Wars, 1630-1670* (New York and London, 1989), pp. 355-71; Marvin Breslow, *A Mirror of England: English Puritan Views of Foreign Nations, 1618-1640* (Cambridge, Mass.,1970) Michael McGiffert, 'God's Controversy with Jacobean England', *American Historical Review*, 88 (1983); Walsham, 'Aspects of Providentialism', Chapters 5-6; *idem.*, ' "The Fatall Vesper": Providentialism and Anti-Popery in Late Jacobean London', *PP*, 144 (1994); *idem.*, '*Vox Piscis*: or The Book Fish: Providence and the Uses of the Reformation Past in Caroline Cambridge', *EHR*, 114 (1999). Sermons include: Lancelot Andrewes, *A Sermon of the Pestilence* (1636); William Ward, *Gods Arrowes, or Two Sermons, concerning the Visitation of God by the Pestilence* (1607); Henry Leslie, *A Warning for Israel* (Dublin, 1625); Sampson Price, *Londons Remembrancer: For the Staying of the Contagious Sicknes of the Plague* (1626). For examples of judgments on sabbath-breakers and the effects of 'prelacy', see Wallington, *Historical Notices*, pp. 25-6, 41, 61-72; William Prynne, *Divine Tragedie Lately Acted, or a Collection of Sundry Examples of God's Judgments upon Sabbath-breakers* (1636). On the Israelite paradigm and the apparent breaking of the covenant with God, see Anthony Fletcher, 'The First Century', pp. 313-16; McGiffert, 'God's Controversy'; Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, pp. 63-74. Baskerville, *Not Peace But a Sword: The Political Theology of the English Revolution* (London and New York, 1993); Christianson, 'From Expectation to Militance'; Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford,1971), Chapter 2.

[18] Berens, *Providence*, pp. 6-9; Theodore Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill and London, 1988), pp. 84, 98-9, 311-42; Bremer, *Puritan Crisis*; *idem.*, *Shaping New Englands: Puritan Clergymen in Seventeenth Century England and New England* (New York, 1994); David Cressy, *Coming Over: Migration and Communication Between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 175; David Hall, *Worlds of Wonder*, pp. 19-20, 71-2, 86-9, 212; Susan Hardman-Moore, 'Popery, purity and Providence: deciphering the New England experiment', in Fletcher and Roberts eds, *Religion, Culture and Society*, pp. 265-72; R. C. Winthrop ed., *Life and Letters of John Winthrop*, Massachusetts Historical Society, 2 vols (1864); J. Franklin Jameson ed., *Johnson's Wonder Working Providence, 1628-1651* (New York, 1910); Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals, 1596-1728* (New York, 1971), pp. 104-19; Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956).

understanding of man and nature as connected by the threads of an indispensable divine utility that inspired the Creation with a singular purpose.[19] Celestial visitations were commonplace in medieval accounts, but the English civil war witnessed a remarkable increase in the frequency of these prodigies ranging from birth deformities to the appearance of a fiery tornado in Cambridgeshire in 1646. Often highly politicised, usually extremely popular, they sought to illustrate how the respective sins of cavalier or roundhead were contriving to shake the established natural order and incite the wrath of God, for example by endorsing sacrilege or sectarianism. Furthermore, as Jerome Friedman has recognised, the prodigy-story provided an important means of rendering intelligible to the mass readership the principal points of difference between the rival wartime contestants.[20]

(ii) The Politics of Providentialism, *c.* 1640-1660

This thesis seeks to demonstrate that the doctrine of providence played a pivotal role in the unfolding of events during the civil war and Interregnum. Providence radicalised politics, making reconciliation harder; providence provided the common thread that bonded men into parties and factions; providence prolonged war by attaching possibly universal historical significance to the consequences of defeat; providence made restoration possible by endorsing the validity of constitutional experimentation. War and revolution were, and are perfectly explicable outside the context of a providential worldview, but not this war, not this revolution.

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[19] Rusche, 'Prophecies and Propaganda'. Signs and wonders were also associated with the appearance of antichrist during the last days, Mark 13: 22, and therefore constituted false symbols leading men astray. James Howard Robinson, *The Great Comet of 1680: A Study in the History of Rationalism* (Northfield, Minnesota, 1916); Burns, 'An Age of Wonders'; Katherine Park and Lorraine J. Daston, 'Unnatural Conceptions: The Study of Monsters in France and England', *PP*, 92 (1981); Anne Jacobson Schutte, '"Such Monstrous Births": A Neglected Aspect of the Antinomian Controversy', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 38 (1985); Walsham, 'Aspects of Providentialism', Chapter 4; Dudley Wilson, *Signs and Portents: Monstrous Births from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment* (London and New York, 1993).

[20] G. N. Garmonsway ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London and New York, 1953), pp. 54-5; J. O. Halliwell ed., *A Chronicle of the first Thirteen Years of the Reign of King Edward the Fourth*, Camden Society o. s. 10 (1839), pp. 9, 22; *Signs and Wonders from Heaven* (1642), BL TT E 295 (2); *The Most Strange and Wonderfull Apperation of Blood in a Poole . . . in Leicestershire* (1645), BL TT E 303 (23); *Sad Newes from the Eastern Parts* (1646), BL TT E 344 (16); *A Blazing Starre Seene in the West* (1642), BL TT E 128 (8); *The Visible Vengeance* (1648), BL TT E 476 (40). Friedman, *Miracles and the Pulp Press*.

Several cultural-political studies of the period are relevant to this work, including those of Walsham, William Burns and Jerome Friedman. Walsham's 1995 thesis and recent monograph on the subject of providence have sought to demonstrate the popularity of Calvinism in pre-civil war England by reference to the providential sermon, prodigy story and chapbook narrative. In her view, providential literature served as a 'cultural cement' connecting learned with street culture, and a means by which Calvinism could be mediated and refracted to appeal to the masses. Her chapters on the politicisation of the doctrine in the generation before war are particularly useful in explaining the divisiveness of providentialism after 1642: the ancestry of the Long Parliament fast sermons of the 1640s lay in the jeremiad of the 1620s and 30s. This recognition that providence could constitute the subject of conflict and division became an abiding theme of the 1640s as is apparent below in Chapters Two and Four.[21]

William Burns' 1994 doctoral thesis addresses the political impact of the prodigy between 1580 and 1727. His study of war time prodigies tends to be descriptive rather than analytical, outlining the appearance and possible meaning of a range of royalist and parliamentarian signs and wonders such as the monstrous birth and celestial battles, and illustrating how propagandists like William Lilly and George Wharton used the prodigy to undermine the veracity of the policies of rival parties. Burns suggests that this exchange had the effect of undermining belief in providential theory by 1660. His study is undoubtedly a useful contribution to recent scholarship, though I disagree with his suggestion that the royalists sought not to canvass immediate divine support for their cause, but chose instead to mediate this exclusively through the person of the King. The status of the King as providential intercessor was important, but not exclusively so, as we shall see in Chapter Two, the first to consider the subject of royalist providentialism.[22]

Lastly, Jerome Friedman's study of the popular press during the revolution has shown how royalist and presbyterian authors regarded the regicide as a rebellion against God's order. The failure of the Cromwellian experiment was in this view brought about by divine disapproval with this iniquitous landmark and its supporting philosophy of sectarianism. Friedman's study is particularly important in the way it highlights the

[21] Walsham, 'Aspects of Providentialism', *idem*., *Providence in Early Modern England*.

'enchanted', 'magical' frame of reference that permitted many ordinary people throughout the war to express political allegiance via the popular, if unconventional outlet of the providential press, while his suggestion that the Restoration was made easier by the strength of residual belief in the sacerdotal qualities of kingship, is persuasive. The following thesis, however, though it draws upon the popular homiletic literature to have inspired Friedman, Burns and Walsham is closer in spirit to Blair Worden's work in its use primarily of correspondence and other first hand accounts. It is less a study of belief, therefore, and more a study of applied theory.[23]

A number of other scholars have considered particular aspects of providentialism in these years. J. Sears McGee, along with Richard Ollard, Michael Finlayson and Martin Dzelzainis, have all acknowledged the existence of royalist providentialism. Ollard in particular has highlighted the importance of providence to Edward Hyde and the presence of a moral imperative within royalism that affected the prosecution of the royalist war-effort, and influenced the circumstances of its aftermath. According to Ollard, Hyde decried what he viewed as a propensity for expediency in royalist decision-making that marginalised the moral, providential dynamic he believed would be an essential component in any royalist renaissance following defeat in war in 1646 and the regicide in 1649. Ollard tries to show that Hyde's later moral account of the war, the *History of the Rebellion*, was no mere exercise in retrospective self-justification, as has been alleged, but reflected genuine divisions within royalism, especially at the Court of the exiled Charles II: between courtiers like Henry Jermyn, loyal to Queen Henrietta Maria, without a fixed view of the providential status of royalist policies such as a proposed alliance with the Scottish presbyterians, and Hyde's party of 'Old Royalists', who adopted a more principled stand on the need to appease the Almighty. Ollard's great strength lies in his sympathetic account of Hyde's perspective, but he declines to develop the idea of royalist providentialism further by examining the position of other royalists, especially the clergy. Chapters Two and Three will help correct this deficiency by examining some of the more distinctive characteristics of royalist providentialism such as the sacerdotal aspect of kingship and fear of sacrilege, and by showing that Hyde was not alone is espousing his views. I will introduce the idea of 'royalist puritanism': a

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[23] Burns, 'An Age of Wonders', pp. 82-148.

reaction to misconduct that sought to placate a God angry at the reputation for moral corruption and disingenuousness acquired by the royalists. Accounts of royalist misconduct are too often taken at face value, while the efforts of the royalist clergy during the 1640s to reform morals and provide spiritual succour has largely been disregarded. It is therefore hoped that Chapter Two in particular will serve as a basis for further, more detailed enquiry in future.[24]

The providentialism of the New Model Army and its preachers has been addressed by Ian Gentles in his study of the origins, organisation and history of that body. Gentles describes the conditions of intimacy calculated to heighten religious fervour in its ranks, and instil its work with a sense of divine mission, that progressive agenda which matured in the aftermath of the war and hardened into a commitment to execute justice against Charles I. Gentles' work serves only as an introduction to the subject because his principal aim is to show how the religious character of the Army contributed to its unity and military effectiveness. The wider political implications of its activities, especially in relation to the Putney debates and the events of 1647 are also explored in great detail by Austin Woolrych. The providential dimension to this history is, however, considered only fleetingly. The final section of Chapter Four of the thesis will therefore seek to connect the providential character of the Army to the events leading up to the regicide in a clearer and more systematic way than has hitherto been the case.[25]

The Engagement controversy and pamphlet campaign that accompanied the infant republic's search for legitimation is a subject that has exercised the minds of a number of scholars recently including Quentin Skinner, Glenn Burgess and Steven Jablonski. They show how providence was employed by the authors of a number of important pamphlets to defend the seizure of power in 1649, justify it as consistent with God's will, and enjoin obedience to the powers that be. Though this thesis will not seek

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[23] Friedman, *Miracles*, pp. 13-14, 34-7, 43-5, 52, 91, 262.
[24] J. Sears McGee, *The Godly Man in Stuart England. Anglicans, Puritans and the Two Tables, 1620-1670* (New Haven and London, 1976); Richard Ollard, *Clarendon and His Friends* (1987); Michael Finlayson, 'Clarendon, Providence and the Historical Revolution', *Albion*, 22 (1990); Martin Dzelzainis, '"Undoubted Realities": Clarendon on Sacrilege', *HJ*, 33 (1990).
[25] Ian Gentles, *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland, 1645-1653* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 87-119; Austin Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen: The General Council of the Army and its Debates, 1647-1648* (Oxford, 1987).

to replicate such recent scholarship, nevertheless the problem of legitimation is one developed in the second part of Chapter Five that examines the extension of the Commonwealth's power into Ireland and Scotland. It will be argued that an intrinsic element in these campaigns lay in exporting the Commonwealth's brand of providentialism to the outlying regions of the British Isles. This was consistent with a domestic English agenda that sought to establish a monopoly for Commonwealth providentialism among an English population hostile or indifferent to the republic.[26]

The historiography of political providentialism during the civil war and Interregnum is clearly modest, and Worden's 1985 *Past and Present* article, 'Providence and Politics in Cromwellian England', which describes the impact of the doctrine on political strategy, remains the alpha and omega of the subject. Worden rightly acknowledges the reality of cavalier providentialism and the fact that the doctrine 'exercised its widest influence as an encouragement to acquiescence and submission', most probably amongst the majority of the population uncommitted to either of the two main parties. Significantly, though, he suggests that providence devalued political planning because God's management of the war lay outside the purview of English politicians. They sought in consequence to remain the loyal and undemonstrative followers of providence. He argues, rightly, that paradoxically this tendency sometimes encouraged 'flexibility' and 'agility' in decision-making by liberating and encouraging men to propose quite radical change that subsequently could be justified as the will of God. Occasionally, though, it also promoted caution amongst those who feared alienating the Almighty. Cromwell, Worden suggests, exhibited all these contradictions, which help explain the particular circumstances of his government such as the fluctuation between a conservative desire to protect the constitution one moment, and a dramatic endorsement of innovation, the next.

Worden's work relates in particular to Oliver Cromwell, complementing a series of important recent biographies by among others, Robert Paul, Christopher Hill and Peter Gaunt, which are described in greater detail at the beginning of Chapter Five. These show how the political flexibility that characterised Cromwell the politician can be explained in providential terms. Cromwell sought out the will of God, wrestling with

[26] For a summary of this historiography, see below, pp. 142-3.

his conscience to discover the divine purposes hidden within contemporary events. Providence overwrote established institutional arrangements, often rendering traditional civil or ecclesiastical forms redundant, a consistent theme of that impressive volume of essays edited by John Morrill, *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*. Worden's particular strength lies in the impressionistic sweep of his observations surrounding the possible impact of providentialism in the political arena, and in providing a methodological framework – a point of reference from which scholars might approach the subject – rather than in a detailed chronological survey of its effects. It is also unclear how far Worden's observations are relevant to other leading parliamentarians during the civil war and Interregnum. In view of this, one primary purpose of the thesis will be to extend and broaden the scope of Worden's scholarship into a more comprehensive and fully rounded study of a wider range of Cromwell's contemporaries, both parliamentarian and royalist. It is hoped this will show Cromwell's reaction to be far from unique and to confirm that providentialism provides an indispensable tool to understanding the politics of the period.[27]

Where I do disagree with Worden, moreover, it is more on a point of emphasis than of substance: in Chapter Six, for example, I suggest that he probably overstates the significance of the Hispaniola defeat in 1655, the subject of a 1985 contribution entitled 'Oliver Cromwell and the Sin of Achan'. Worden has argued that the incident marked a turning point in the fortunes of the Protectorate by encouraging Cromwell to adopt a more cautious approach to interpreting providences. Instead, I will argue that though the setback was undoubtedly viewed as a necessary corrective to Cromwellian ambitions, it did not necessarily have a lasting effect: the search for home-grown sins that occasioned such scourges was a perennial concern of the puritan legislator and Hispaniola was not unique in precipitating such a moral audit.[28]

The current historiography on the parliamentarian side could thus be said to be overdependent upon studies of Cromwell, or limited to the New Model Army or the effects of the regicide and the Engagement. On the royalist side, considerable attention

[27] Worden, 'Providence and Politics', pp. 79, 86, 92-6; Morrill ed., *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*. For a discussion of the recent biographical literature relating to Cromwell, see below pp. 144-8.
[28] Blair Worden, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Sin of Achan', in Derek Beales and Geoffrey Best eds, *History, Society and the Churches* (Cambridge, 1985).

has been paid to Edward Hyde, but at the risk of neglecting the broader context of royalist practice. The purpose of this thesis is to rectify these deficiencies by developing the suggestions of Worden and others into a more systematic study of the impact of providence on political decision-making across a twenty-year period, concentrating on the events following the outbreak of war in 1642. Chapter Five in particular will address the problem of an over-emphasis upon the study of Cromwellian providentialism by examining the providential belief of a selection of his contemporaries. Many of the episodes outlined below, however, such as the Putney Debates in 1647, the regicide, the relationship between Oliver Cromwell and his parliaments, the Western Design, the regime of the Major Generals, and the kingship controversy of 1658, will undoubtedly be familiar to the reader. Narrative accounts for these and other important developments are readily available, but with the exception of the sphere of foreign affairs, their providential dimension has largely been disregarded. The primary sources that have been employed are again familiar ones consisting predominately of published sermons, public declarations, speeches, ordinances and injunctions, contemporary correspondence belonging to leading political and military personalities such as Cromwell, Thomas Harrison and John Owen, and lastly a selection of printed pamphlet literature. This final category of material remains a vast source neglected by scholars and has been particularly useful in assessing the reception of providentialism among parliamentarians, but while the other categories have been employed in recent biographies of Cromwell or the collection of essays on the Lord Protector edited by John Morrill, their significance in the context of providence has otherwise never been considered systematically until now.[29]

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[29] For pamphlet literature, see a cross section of titles listed in G. K. Fortescue ed., *Catalogue of the Pamphlets, Books, Newspapers . . . Collected by George Thomason*, 2 vols (1908). Injunctions and other public documents can be consulted in editions such as: the *OPH*; Charles Firth and R. S. Rait eds, *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, 3 vols (1911); Edward Husband ed., *A Collection of all the Publique Orders, Ordinances and Declarations of Both Houses of Parliament* (1646), BL TT E 1058; John Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, 8 vols (1721); James Larkin ed., *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1983); E. J. S. Parsons, 'The Proclamations Issued by Charles I During the Years 1642-1646', 2 vols, B. Litt., Oxford University, 1935. Printed sermons can be located using Fortescue's Thomason Tracts catalogue and Falconer Madan's *Oxford Books: A Bibliography of Printed Works Relating to the University and City of Oxford. Or Printed or Published There*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1895-1931), or via collections such as Robin Jeffs ed., *The English Revolution I: Fast Sermons to Parliament*, 34 vols (1971). For correspondence, see, for example, Abbott ed., *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, 4 vols (Cambridge, 1937-47); Henry Cary ed., *Memorials of the Great Civil War in England from 1646 to 1652*.

The potential problems in using such sources are considerable. It is difficult, probably counterproductive, to seek to quantify or measure such belief; to compare whether men were more or less 'providential', since it was not a fixed and unchanging absolute, but plural, diverse, amenable to continual rediscovery and renegotiation. It is perhaps more rewarding to envisage providentialism operating on a number of different levels. As a private, indispensable and ever-present resource on which people could draw for comfort, support and consolation, it rarely became a matter of public policy. This 'soft' providentialism probably influenced conduct in many subtle, perhaps even subconscious ways, stiffening resolve, encouraging dependence upon the Lord instead of force of arms, but was less visible than the 'harder', applied providentialism often voiced in the heat of battle, for example by religious Independents in the New Model Army. This sought the modification of conduct in the wider community in order to serve God's purposes through a variety of religious exercises, and that made the honouring of providences a primary function of state.

Gauging the extent of the cynical use of providentialism for political advantage is potentially a significant problem. Unsurprisingly, opponents charged each other with dishonouring the doctrine by invoking it for the objective of material or other advancement. The royalists in particular accused parliamentarians of employing providentialism as a stalking horse for rebellion and sequestration. Parliamentarian or republican critics accused Cromwell especially of insincerity when he invoked providence to justify changes of government during the 1650s. Such criticisms undoubtedly contain an element of truth. Cromwell's speeches to the Irish and Scottish nations, and to Parliament, which are considered in greater detail in Chapters Five and Six, were expertly tailored to their respective audiences. Leading parliamentarians including many preachers to Parliament or congregations of soldiers in the New Model Army, for example, were conscious of the potential power of the doctrine to inspire listeners and not unreasonably exaggerated the contribution of providence to make their point. But this in no way excludes the possibility that they also sincerely believed providence exerted a profound influence over the course of the war. The willingness to manipulate a vocabulary of the miraculous in fact points to a confidence that auditors

2 vols (1842); Thomas Carte ed., *A Collection of Original Letters and Papers, Concerning the Affairs of*

would comprehend and co-operate with such eloquent conceit. Cromwell's audiences of Parliament-men, for example, were not unfamiliar with the conventions and nuances of providential rhetoric, passive victims of Cromwellian 'spin', but instead participants in a public celebration of the providential that itself constituted a collective exercise in petitioning the Almighty. By carefully comparing public with private pronouncements, it is often possible to identify the occasions when providentialism was invoked to emphasise a point, but equally also to acknowledge the probable sincerity of a majority of correspondents with no obvious political or other interest in seeking to deceive. I would argue that such an exercise in comparison shows the purely cynical deployment of providentialism in speeches and correspondence to be a comparatively rare occurrence.[30]

The thesis will seek to broaden and contextualise otherwise familiar episodes such as the kingship controversy by locating them within a chronological schema. This is because providentialism was often, though not exclusively, viewed as progressive or teleological: the providential experience did not remain static, but underwent change and evolution across the period in question. For example, royalist accounts are often marked by an early 'ecumenical' acceptance of collective guilt for a breakdown in order that was shared by many moderate parliamentarians, characteristic of the period of psychological 'phoney war' during the first year of the conflict. The distribution of large numbers of parliamentarian pamphlets employing a providential vocabulary for partisan ends, probably heightened an inherent royalist suspicion of the deployment of providentialism for political purposes, and this led some royalists, during the remainder of the war, to distance themselves from a providential agenda apparently associated with rebellion. Defeat in war, the regicide in 1649, and the persecution of royalists during the 1650s, however, undoubtedly rejuvenated royalist providentialism in the face of affliction. Royalism entered a phase of reflection and self-criticism as it sought to identify the reasons for recent judgments: focussing attention on the sins and corruptions that it was believed must have alienated God from the King. However, an event of the magnitude of 1649 could not but shake Heaven's foundations: it might be expected henceforth that God's scourges would be transferred to the architects of the republic: patient

England, From the Year 1641 to 1660, 2 vols (1739); *Cl SP*; *TSP*.

prayerfulness could now prepare the faithful for the recovery of the Crown's fortunes. The parliamentarians, meanwhile, became divided during the 1640s over competing interpretations of God's purposes, between a tolerationist God and a deity committed to a presbyterian form of Church government, a subject discussed in Chapter Four. During the 1650s, further divisions became apparent centred upon the nature of the God-wrought republican experiment and the extent of Cromwell's divergence from that model, as we shall see in Chapter Seven. The failure of republicanism to become properly established eroded confidence in providence, a tendency encouraged by the constitutional confusion that followed Cromwell's death in 1658. It will be argued that in the final event, a plurality of alternative readings of God's will in the political sphere gave way to a more traditional unitary pattern of the state-sponsored reading of the divine objectives with the re-establishment of the Crown. Indeed, it is probable that the Restoration was facilitated in part by a popular frustration at the constitutional experimentation that was a consequence of the multiple interpretation of providence after 1658. One purpose of this thesis, then, will be to try and convey a clearer sense of the evolving aspect of providentialism than has otherwise emerged from recent historiography.

But why is *political* providentialism the subject of this thesis? Walsham's recent thesis and monograph have described the growing importance of providence in the political sphere during the pre-civil war period by the way it provided polemical ammunition to puritans in disputes over Caroline ecclesiastical and foreign policy. Furthermore, we have seen how Worden has established the importance of providence to Oliver Cromwell and other senior commanders during the war. This work will address the need for a study that examines in greater depth what was arguably the high-point of political providentialism in England during the seventeenth century: the culmination of a generation of activism. A number of related factors conspired to ensure that the period 1640 to 1660 provided a suitable environment for the flourishing of such ideas. Providence provided a useful explanatory tool as contemporaries sought to make sense of the outbreak of civil war. As a indispensable arrow in the Lord's quiver, its inception was unquestionably both a scourge for the sins of idleness and security in time of peace,

[30] For criticism of opposition use of providentialism, see below, pp. 43-6, 104-6.

but also an opportunity for the realisation of change, the sublime purpose of which lay hidden amid otherwise contradictory and unrelated events. Surrender to the divine will made deprivation easier to bear by conferring upon it meaning and locating it within the context of a more profound historical movement. The eschatological fervour recorded by recent historians of millenarianism such as Katherine Firth, that reached a height during the 1640s and 1650s, also made that period one that was especially receptive to the doctrine. God was then evidently highly active in moving across the face of the nation, and this encouraged an unprecedented level of speculation in the press and among congregations and private audiences as to the possible outcome of this activity. The rapid expansion of publishing in the wake of a breakdown of effective censorship also extended and deepened the pre-war market place for providentialism that Spufford, Watt, Walsham and others have described. Civil war printer-publishers were no doubt conscious of the popularity of providential tales, and their output tacitly acknowledged the extent to which the providential was woven into the fabric of contemporary discourse. Printed newsletters, news periodicals like *The Scottish Dove* and a large body of popular exemplary pamphlet literature often employed providentialism to describe victory or defeat on the battlefield, celebrate the raising of sieges, commemorate the sealing of alliances or otherwise record the intercessory powers of the Lord. As we shall see in Chapter Two, however, some royalists were sceptical about such claims of divine partisanship, reminding their own readers that God's true purposes were shrouded in mystery and that material prosperity was an unreliable indicator of divine sponsorship.[31]

Providentialism was one of the most potentially political of theological doctrines because the interpretation of God's purposes, though largely a subjective exercise designed to facilitate the quest for assurance, might also form the basis of collective action. The identification of the sins and vices believed responsible for God's judgments against communities or nations – and searching out these causes was a central duty of the active Christian – was by its very nature a process that was open to a plurality of private interpretations beyond the control of the authorities. Providence might in these

[31]Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition*; Popkin, *Millenarianism*; Toon ed., *Puritans*. Spufford, *Small Books*; Watt, *Cheap Print*; Walsham, 'Aspects of Providentialism', *idem.*, *Providence in Early Modern England*. For examples of pamphlets and newsletters describing providential intercession, see references on pp. below, pp. 39-43.

circumstances become a test or enquiry into the fitness of governors, who were expected to respond appropriately to hostile manifestations and to prepare their populations to celebrate mercies and honour their supernatural architect. Co-operation with what were believed to be God's purposes had the potential to dissolve bonds of obligation as a now uninhibited deity signalled His intention to move beyond tradition and rule in a more immediate and direct fashion. As we shall see in Chapters Four and Five especially, Parliament and the Commonwealth government were aware of this danger and sought to reconstruct a model of national providential celebration in order to petition God's support for the war-effort and the republican cause. Protecting and upholding God's honour was a inescapable duty of contemporaries, and this made it unwise for them to ignore or disregard the policies of opponents if these threatened to disparage the divine order by casting doubt on the validity of supposed providences. This was especially pertinent in the area of the public fast or thanksgiving, the neglect or boycott of which was thought likely to poison relations with the Almighty. The dignity of God and His work were indistinguishable and providences were more than simply a call to action or a useful gauge of the Lord's temper, but were in their own right a source of inspiration, a manifestation of the glory of God worthy of worship and celebration. The purpose of innumerable sermons and injunctions was to encourage such diligent application by the population, and it will be argued throughout the thesis, but especially in Chapter Four, that the honouring of providences became a primary objective of the parliamentarian war effort and a measure of the success of failure of further reformation. Providence was thought too important to be left to the private individual and both royalist and parliamentarian believed that the one certain duty of the state was to ensure the successful appeasement of the Almighty.[32]

The number of possible interpretations of providence was potentially limitless, and though in practice people often observed similar patterns in its operation, for example in a victory or defeat in battle, providence often intervened to confound these expectations in novel, unpredictable and unexpected ways, turning events on their head and twisting and manipulating them playfully. Contemporaries therefore did not always seek a bland assurance from the observation of providences, whether soteriological or

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[32] See below, pp. 167-9, 175-83.

otherwise, but rather delighted in celebrating the splendid diversity of its operation that itself was a visible reminder of God's sovereignty. Providence was not so much a means to an end – the extirpation of popery, the triumph of the saints – as an end in itself: a way of demonstrating the greater glory of God. Though men were not generally equipped with the perspective to appreciate the broader picture of God's purposes – that cosmic *Pointillist* painting made up of a thousand points of light – they were nevertheless exhilarated by the hope that the jagged pitching and yawing of providence instead disguised a graceful arc describing the progress of God through history.[33]

The composition of the thesis, with two chapters allotted to the King's party, and four to their adversaries, relates directly to the relative importance accorded to providentialism by royalists and parliamentarians. Royalist sources often betray a measure of ambivalence towards providence that is absent in parliamentarian accounts, stressing its private, devotional implications and tending to distrust the extension of providential interpretation into the sphere of public policy. Some royalists were evidently embarrassed by the passionate intensity of opposition providentialism, and exhibited an awkwardness when confronted with the evidence of the private fast and the unauthorised prayer meeting. However, other sources such as sermons, support the idea of a 'puritan royalism', a commitment to religious exercises, rigorous instruction and preaching that, at least at Court and the headquarters in Oxford, is at odds with the popular perception of royalism as embodying a moral laxity reflecting the practice of traditional festive religion. Royalist preachers were, after all, probably as fearful of the Almighty as their parliamentarian counterparts, describing a God 'infinitely just, inflexibly angry': a brooding presence that hovered menacingly over an indurate and rebellious nation. Repentance was enjoined all the more loudly because of regrettable evidence of the royalists' own guilt and contribution to the stock of national sins. These vices included profanity, sexual excess and an absence of true devotion to God, a 'yawning instead of sighing', compounded by the empty ritual of the fast. Purity and innocence in the face of the suffering of the true Church were called for: men had either to 'repent or perish irreversibly'.[34]

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[33] On the celebration of providence, see for example, below, pp. 110-18, 189, 196-200, 216-28.

[34] Richard Watson, *A Sermon Touching Schisme* (Cambridge, 1642), p. 24; Reginald Heber and Charles Eden eds, *The Whole Works of . . . Jeremy Taylor*, 10 vols (1854), vol. 4, pp. 21-2; W. Fulman ed., *The*

Hence the debate within royalism in the wake of defeat in war between moral reformers and those who were prepared to disregard the lessons of providence and compromise the integrity of the Church of England in order to win the support of potential Scottish presbyterian allies. Such a debate within the ranks of the movement shows that the royalists, like their counterparts, were a broad church in which many different opinions about the direction of providence might command attention. This leads us to consider another important theme that we will encounter throughout the course of the thesis, namely the way in which divisions *within* the main parties over alternative readings of providence were probably more important in facilitating political change than the differences *between* royalist and parliamentarian. In Chapter Four, for example, we will see how differences between presbyterian and Independent readings of providence probably encouraged the development of an assertive, providentialist, New Model Army. The divisions within the Army over the question of negotiating with Charles I between 1646 and 1648 are another example of this tendency. Such disputes carried enormous potential leverage because of their pivotal role in determining the strategic direction of the war or the prospects for peace. Providential propaganda between the principal protagonists, royalist and parliamentarian, on the other hand, was possibly only widely influential over the longer term in conditioning a general readership to associate royalism with iconoclasm, for example, or puritanism with rebellion and sacrilege, with their attendant providential punishments. It had little short-term effect and exerted only modest political torque.[35]

The solidarity exhibited by members of the Army in their shared commitment to perfect the mercies vouchsafed to the nation since 1640, and to honour the workings of providence in the business of state, is the central theme of Chapters Five to Seven. The experience of providence exerted a profound and lasting influence upon the survivors of Marston Moor, Naseby and Preston, one that was reflected in the policies of the Commonwealth and Protectorate such as the reform programme of the Major Generals: a demand that God be appropriately honoured for His decisive, near-miraculous interventions between 1645 and 1651. The bonds of providential collegiality inspired by

Works of . . . Henry Hammond, 4 vols (1684), vol. 4, pp. 513-17, 519-20. On puritan royalism, see Chapter Two, section iv.

[35] On the divisions within parties, see pp. 106-12, 124-9, below, and Chapter Three as a whole.

the conviction that God now demanded great things of the republic, contributed an early vigour and single-mindedness to the republican experiment that reached its apogee around the time of the Worcester triumph in September 1651.

However, I will attempt to show that the policy of wrestling with God and chasing after providences resulted in the disjointed and experimental quality of domestic and foreign politics during the 1650s that prevented the republic from becoming properly institutionalised. Divisions emerged over interpreting God's purposes as Commonwealthsmen accused Cromwell and his officers of squandering the fruits of providence and earning the disapproval of the Almighty. Following Cromwell's death especially, God's purposes, once so clear, now appeared opaque and ill-defined, inhibiting the reconstitution of the old republican coalition that had depended in large measure for its unity and strength upon the memory of the near-miraculous deliverances of the late 1640s and early 1650s. Charles II exploited this confusion, offering a potential resolution to an anarchy of competing interpretations that proved compelling both to former parliamentarians as well as to the King's traditional supporters. Ironically, it might be said that his reading of providence proved more accurate and durable than that belonging to the self-styled saints for whom providence was a way of life as well as an objective standard of reference.

This is then the first systematic attempt to trace the effects of providentialism on the politics of the mid-seventeenth century that takes the form of a full-length enquiry. Political decision making was refracted, distorted, continually redefined by providence and cannot be reconstructed or understood without a proper appreciation of its effects, least of all during the period of civil unrest. It is possible, for example, that the course of the war may have been different if the King had been less conscious of his obligations to providence, more ready to compromise with moderate opponents; or if the leadership of the New Model Army had remained unmoved by the call to execute justice against Charles I because of his incitement of God's wrath. Should Oliver Cromwell have accepted the offer of the crown during the 1650s, instead of having rejected the proposal for fear of alienating the Almighty, subsequent English history may have taken a very different course. And had Commonwealthsmen forged a lasting constitutional settlement

in the aftermath of Cromwell's death instead of engaging in an intemperate and injudicious exercise in constitutional experimentation to discover the mind of God in the whole affair, then the Restoration may have been postponed indefinitely.

Chapter Two: The Oxford Court and the Politics of Royalist Providentialism during the 1640s

This chapter will explore the characteristics of royalist providentialism during the 1640s. Following a historiographical introduction, it will outline the principal differences between royalist and parliamentarian applications of the doctrine and identify the negative and positive attributes of royalist providentialism. The second section will examine in more detail the impact of providence on the Court at Oxford until 1646. One purpose of this chapter will be to help correct the misapprehension that providentialism was not a concern of the royalists and to suggest that while royalist providentialism generally supported a private, undemonstrative form of devotion, it nevertheless was of considerable importance in determining the outcome of the war and its political ramifications. I will tentatively suggest that during the closing stages of his life, the King was motivated by a desire to honour providence as the best and most practicable means of protecting the integrity of the Church of England. This mirrored Edward Hyde's belief that to be successful politically and militarily, the Court needed to negotiate a more active engagement with providence. This made compromise especially difficult with an intransigent Army similarly convinced of the need instead to honour God by exercising condign punishment on irreligious malefactors, beginning with Charles I himself. The intractableness of these mutual positions prevented fruitful dialogue and arguably hastened the demise of the King.

(i) Historiography

The historiography of royalist providence is modest, possibly because the doctrine has been viewed unjustifiably as the exclusive province of 'puritans', despite its indisputable position as a Christian commonplace. The divisions within royalism have been the subject of a number of important studies by Ian Roy, Ronald Hutton and David Smith, among others. Whilst these sidestep the question of providence, the particularisation of the royalist camp that they document provides an important clue to its importance during the war. Roy has divided the royalist command into three broad

categories: swordsmen, comprising professional soldiers such as Prince Rupert, courtiers such as George Digby and John Ashburnham, and civilian moderates like Sir Edward Hyde unhappy with the conduct of the war and antithetical to the courtiers. The fortunes of each group waxed and waned with the swordsmen suffering a serious setback in September 1645 with the fall from favour of Rupert after the surrender of Bristol. The civilians, meanwhile, also suffered eclipse when representatives including Hyde, Arthur Capel and Gilbert Sheldon were compelled to accompany the Prince of Wales to the South West of England, removing them from contact with the Court. Ronald Hutton has modified Roy's model, dividing royalists into moderates, ultra-royalists and military specialists, but also has suggested that the moderates were gradually out-manoeuvred by the extremists, making a negotiated settlement with Parliament more difficult.[1]

Roy and Hutton's models are supplemented by David Smith's important study of the 'Constitutional royalists' such as Hyde, Lord Falkland, the Marquis of Hertford and Earls of Dorset and Southampton: a party which overlapped to an extent with Roy's 'civilian' camp and Hutton's 'moderates'. Smith portrays the Constitutionalists as supporters of mixed government proclaiming a respect for the powers of the King within a framework of law, a position not dissimilar to the views held by many moderate parliamentarians. A reverence for the institution of the Church of England under episcopacy, a distrust of excessive godly zeal and a desire for a negotiated settlement with Parliament were also defining characteristics. Constitutionalist writers such as Dudley Digges Jr. and John Bramhall stressed the voluntary and limited aspect of the King's authority in contrast to advocates of divine right theory like Griffith Williams and Michael Hudson who argued that the King was answerable for his actions only to God. While neither uncritical of the King nor the Laudian establishment, and though supportive of the civil and ecclesiastical reforms undertaken during the early stages of the Long Parliament, the Constitutionalists rallied to the defence of the Church, which they believed increasingly was endangered by religious radicals and by the concessions to presbyterianism proposed by courtiers such as George Digby, Henry Jermyn and John

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[1] J. Sears McGee has compared the puritan and royalist devotional mentality: *The Godly Man in Stuart England. Anglicans, Puritans and the Two Tables, 1620-1670* (New Haven and London, 1976); Ian Roy, 'The Royalist Army in the First Civil War', D. Phil., University of Oxford, 1963, pp. 79-91; Ronald Hutton, 'The Structure of the Royalist Party, 1642-6', *HJ*, 24 (1981).

Ashburnham who looked to the Queen for inspiration and sponsorship, particularly following the failed Treaty of Uxbridge in January 1645. Smith argues that the rise of this group now willing to negotiate with presbyterianism following defeat in war and the King's flight to the Scots, provoked a political reaction by Hyde and his colleagues to a potential threat to episcopacy. This can be contrasted with the King's private hesitation and wavering over the question of Church government, despite his public commitment to the status quo.[2]

Smith's model is open to a number of criticisms. For example, he overstates the distinctiveness of Constitutionalism: commitment to the rule of law and a reverence for the Church were ideals with which few royalists would have dissented. Indeed, judging by Smith's rather nebulous definition, almost all royalists could at some point have been described as Constitutionalists. Nevertheless, Smith's description of the close ties between moderate royalists and parliamentarians is persuasive, as is his description of how Constitutionalists, conscious of the danger of sacrilege and defensive of episcopacy, reacted with alarm to pressure from courtiers that the King concede at least a limited presbyterianism as the price of peace. Smith's schema provides the outline of the following two chapters in which I argue that fear of dishonouring God and misapplying the lessons of providence lay at the heart of the confrontation of the Hyde camp with the courtiers. Hyde and his colleagues tried to stiffen the resolve of the King to prevent the royalists contracting the judgment of God. In this they were aided by sympathetic clergy – Laudian and non-Laudian – who had spearheaded the effort to introduce a moral dimension to the royalist cause.

The subject of Sir Edward Hyde's character and the source of his philosophy have been the subject of recent work. Some scholars have now acknowledged that providentialism played a significant role in shaping his political decision-making, correcting earlier views of Hyde that neglected his private opinions and concentrated too readily upon the study of his famous *History of the Rebellion*, which appears to draw on providence as an explanation for events far less readily than comparable chronicles. Sir Charles Firth, for example, stressed the very practical reasons for Hyde penning the *History*: to provide guidance on the causes of the war and thus avoid its recurrence,

[2] David Smith, *Constitutional Royalism and the Search for Settlement, c. 1640-1649* (Cambridge, 1994).

describing how Hyde emphasised the role of contingency, the breakdown of trust and character flaws in explaining the progress of the war. However, even the stolid and worthy Firth concedes that the *History* contains explicit references to providence, for example when Hyde acknowledges that the peace talks between the Crown and the Irish rebels – the so-called Glamorgan negotiations – were responsible for drawing down God's wrath on the royalists. In fact, the *History* often belies its 'modern', sceptical, secular style and temper, sometimes resembling more closely a providential morality tale, as Michael Finlayson has recognised in an important recent study. Hyde succeeds in weaving a providential thread into his story with great subtlety and without the clumsy signposting of many comparable narratives: his central thesis is that the King ignores the necessity for collective reformation and discovery of God's works and is punished with defeat and eventual destruction. The preface to the first edition in 1703 is itself highly providential, warning of the misuse of the January 30 anniversary of Charles I's death and celebrating the Restoration as a solemn deliverance, the culmination of 'the secret steps of the return of God's mercy'. The *History* was to be a salutary reminder to Queen Anne that faction and intrigue in particular were dangerous diversions from the path of righteousness. Hyde's opening paragraph acknowledges the war to have been divine punishment for the sins of the English, 'the hand and judgment of God [being] very visible, in the infatuating a people . . . into all the perverse actions of folly and madness'. Furthermore, Hyde argued that the growth of such sins as ambition and pride, and the descent of the nation into a condition of disorder was explicable, avoidable and replicable: kingdoms swollen with 'long plenty, pride, and excess' invariably confronted sooner or later the 'castigation of Heaven', and Hyde's task in compiling the *History* was to account for this process of degeneration. The *History* was also in part a justification for Constitutionalists like himself who argued that God would reward the royalists if the King stood firm and protected the integrity of the Church: it should be remembered, after all, that Hyde began compiling the *History* in 1646 when the future direction of royal policy was still to be finalised.[3]

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pp. 3-4, 7-11, 60-106, 112-55, 220-53.

[3] C. H. Firth, 'Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*', *EHR*, 19 (1904); Michael Finlayson, 'Clarendon, Providence and the Historical Revolution', *Albion*, 22 (1990); Martine Brownley, *Clarendon and the Rhetoric of Historical Form* (Philadelphia, 1985), pp. 20-22; W. Dunn Macray ed., *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars Begun in the Year 1641*, 6 vols (1888), I, Preface, 1-2.

Hyde's biographers have supplemented this description of him as a moralist critical of the 'doctrine of expediency' and its sponsor, the Queen. Richard Ollard, for example, shows how Hyde was anxious that royalist tactics for regaining power during the 1650s should remain untainted by accusations of 'gamesmanship': instead, diligent planning combined with judicious prayer would sustain royalist innocence in the face of adversity. Brian Wormald, meanwhile, has shown that Hyde remained at heart a moderate parliamentarian, anxious to reach a peaceful settlement rather than fight the war to a bloody conclusion. Womald addresses the central paradox of Hyde's career: an early openness to concessions in negotiations that apparently gives way to a 'moral intransigence' during the late 1640s in which he demanded that the King hold firm in the defence of the Church at the risk of attracting divine wrath. Wormald has argued instead that Hyde's position remained consistent throughout the period, only apparently dropping a negotiated strategy in 1646 when the possibility of compromise had disappeared. Thus while God had appeared to support negotiations with moderate parliamentarians during the early 1640s, by 1646-7, a shift in the political climate now demanded, from Hyde's point of view, a more rigorous and uncompromising defence of providential fundamentals. Martin Dzelzainis, furthermore, has shown that proposed concessions to presbyterianism such as the sale of bishops' lands were interpreted by Hyde as being potentially sacrilegious and thereby risked implicating the royalists in a grievous sin. Unsurprising, then, that writing in the interval between defeat in war and the death of the King, Hyde recommended reform of royalism, beginning with an undiluted commitment to protect Church lands and the episcopal system.[4]

Charles I's responsibility for the outbreak of war and the implementation of 'Laudian' churchmanship has been the subject of much recent scholarly enquiry. The relative importance of structural factors and the King's personality flaws in determining the causes of war have been compared at length. What emerges from this often contradictory historiography is a picture of a king preoccupied with the dignity of kingship and the beauty of holiness in the Church, distrustful of Calvinist dogma and fearful of the 'popularity' of puritanism. Julian Davies, for example, though perhaps exaggerating the importance of an ideology of 'Carolinism' and undervaluing the role of

[4] Brian Wormald, *Clarendon: Politics and Religion, 1640-1660* (Cambridge, 1951), pp. 162-82; Martin

the King's subordinates such as Laud, has rightly identified a strongly sacramental and sacerdotal dimension to Charles's kingship that helps explain the related stress upon upholding the proper order and ritual of Church and Court and the unstinting defence of his prerogative.[5] Kevin Sharpe's sympathetic studies have also painted a picture of a idealistic, chaste, even 'puritan' king, devoted to rules and determined against all the odds to defend his principles: ideal martyr material. Charles was acutely conscious of his duty to maintain an orderly commonwealth, a task to which he had been raised by God; he expected the support of his people in fulfilling his coronation oath and took to heart their apparent indifference to his programme of reform, resenting it as a private insult that by implication dishonoured the Almighty. Sharpe has shown how Charles made use of public prayer and his later contemplative exercises incorporated into the *Eikon Basilike* to strengthen his perceived role as the conscience of the nation charged with protecting the community from the consequences of its own rebellion against God. In the aftermath of war, torn between compromising his principles in a search for peace and remaining resolute in defence of his coronation oath, Sharpe argues Charles chose the path of martyrdom. Sharpe, I think, possibly undervalues the calculating aspect of Charles's personality in his attempt to rehabilitate the King from charges of Machiavellianism in his negotiations with Parliament during the 1640s. However, his description of a king anxious to appease providence on behalf of his people is nevertheless highly persuasive, and as we shall shortly see, consistent with the aspirations of royal preachers and reflected in the objectives of numerous proclamations and fast orders issued by the wartime Court. The following chapter will seek to make more explicable these observations concerning Charles I, Hyde and the moderates at Court by outlining for the first time some of the defining characteristics of royalist providentialism that helped condition the behaviour of such prominent figures.[6]

Dzelzainis, ' " Undoubted Realities": Clarendon on Sacrilege', *HJ*, 33 (1990).

[5] Julian Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 2-3, 10-18, 24; John Bowle, *Charles I* (1975); Charles Carlton, *Charles I: The Personal Monarch* (London and New York, 1995); Pauline Gregg, *King Charles I* (1981); Michael Young, *Charles I* (Basingstoke and London, 1997).

[6] Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 5, 13, 19; *idem*., *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven and London, 1992), pp. 60, 183, 193-4, 210-11, 954; *idem*., 'Private Conscience and Public Duty in the Writings of Charles I', *HJ*, 40 (1997).

(ii) The Characteristics of Royalist Providentialism: Sources

Royalist providentialism is nebulous and difficult to define, reflecting, of course, the fact that the royalist party was a broad church and comprised individuals with a wide variety of reasons for supporting the King ranging from anti-Scottish sentiment to an emotional attachment to the Prayer Book. The comparatively small volume of relevant source material compared with parliamentarians, and its type, comprising fewer devotional treatises and sermons that tend to concentrate on describing the effects of providence, also make assessment more difficult. Despite the otherwise impressive efforts of Leonard Lichfield and Henry Hall at Oxford, royalist printers were unable to match the prodigious output of their parliamentarian cousins.[7] However, the destruction of many official documents with the capture of Oxford in 1646 and evidence that only a fraction of sermons preached behind royalist lines found their way into print, suggests that the material we have inherited is but a small part of a much larger total.[8]

Nevertheless, there is considerable evidence to show that many royalists paid close attention to the lessons of providence in private and public discourse. Numerous proclamations and orders issued by the Court to royalist armies and garrisons, for example, called for the exercise of moral discipline in order to assuage divine indignation.[9] A cross section of the sermons that were published at this time also show that many royalist clergy were preoccupied with highlighting the dangers of alienating the Almighty.[10] Especially since lurid tales of the riotous and ungodly behaviour of

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[7] Compare Falconer Madan, *Oxford Books: A Bibliography of Printed Works Relating To the University and City of Oxford. Or Printed or Published There*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1895-1931) with a majority of items in G. K. Fortescue ed., *Catalogue of the Pamphlets, Books, Newspapers . . . Collected by George Thomason*, 2 vols (1908).

[8] Bod. Rawlinson MS E 155: 'Notes for sermons'; MS E 199: 'Notes of about 42 sermons'; Bod. MS Eng th, f 63 and BL Add MS 20066: lists of Robert Sanderson's sermons; Balliol College, Oxford, MS 259: James Ussher sermons; Christ Church Muniment Room, CC DP ii c1: preachers before the King and Parliament at Christ Church, 1645.

[9] See, for example, *Private Formes of Prayer, Fit for These Sad Times* (Oxford, 1645), BL TT E 1176 (3); *A Forme of Common Prayer . . . For a Blessing on the Treaty now Begunne* (Oxford, 1645); E. J. S. Parsons, 'The Proclamations Issued by Charles I During the Years 1642-1646', 2 vols, B. Litt., Oxford University, 1935; James Larkin ed., *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1983), pp. 910, 954-5, 1021-2, 1047.

[10] For example, Richard Chalfont, *A Sermon Preached at the Pulique Fast the Tenth Day of May 1644* (Oxford, 1644), BL TT E 9 (10) ; William Chillingworth, *A Sermon Preached at the Publike Fast . . . at Christ-Church* (Oxford, 1644), BL TT E 52 (16); Henry Ferne, *A Sermon Preached at the Publique Fast*

royalist troops subsequently struck down by providence that appeared as parliamentarian propaganda, focussed the attention of royalist writers on the urgent need for moral reform.[11] Surviving correspondence, news reports and private devotions from this period likewise attest to a willingness to celebrate the intercessory powers of providence, for example in granting victory on the battlefield in closely fought contests, in raising sieges and protecting the lives of soldiers and civilians. Not least of these was when the royalist headquarters, Oxford, was protected from capture by the intervention of a miraculous thunderstorm. Witness also the description of Ralph Hopton's campaign in the south west between 1642-44, which in its early prosperity apparently boasted the sponsorship of the Lord, or the narrative of the opening phase of the conflict compiled by the King's Secretary of War, Sir Edward Walker.[12] Careful attention was paid to prominent signs and wonders that made their appearance in the aftermath of the war, for example by royalists such as James Stanley, 7th Earl of Derby, a leading campaigner for the cause of the King in Cheshire and Lancashire until his execution in 1651. Stanley returned thanks to God for the deliverance of his wife from the siege of Lathom House in 1644 and his escape to congenial exile in the Isle of Man. In the wake of the regicide he counselled royalists '[to] fear and apprehend mischances, crosses and disgraces', recommending the value of repentance in the face of adversity. 'God', said Stanley, 'governs the world and

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the Twelfth Day of April (Oxford, 1644), BL TT E 46 (5); Richard Harwood, *The Loyall Subject's Retiring-Roome* (Oxford, 1643).

[11] Examples of these include: *The Wicked Resolution of the Cavaliers* (1642), BL TT E 127 (42); *An Exact and True Relation of a Most Cruell and Horrid Murther* (1642), BL TT E 117 (20); I. W., *The Bloody Prince* (1643), BL TT E 99 (14); *One Argument More Against the Cavaliers, Taken from their Violation of Churches* (1643), BL TT E 101 (20); *The Just Reward of a Debauched Cavallier* (1643), BL TT E 101 (21); *A Relation of a Strange Apparition* (1641), BL TT E 180 (19). The very archetype of this genre was, of course, John Goodwin's *Anti-Cavalierisme* (1642), BL TT E 123 (25). See Stephen Greenberg, 'Cavalier: Propaganda Stereotypes in Seventeenth-Century England', Ph.D. Columbia University, 1983.

[12] For correspondence see, for example, Sir Gyles Isham ed., *The Correspondence of Bishop Brian Duppa and Sir Justinian Isham, 1650-1660, Northamptonshire Record Society*, 17 (1955), pp. 12, 84, 76-9, 102-3, 178; BL Harleian MS 6942: letters to Gilbert Sheldon, fols 7, 131 159, 161, 163, *passim*; BL Egerton MSS 2533-5: Edward Nicholas Papers, including 2534, fol. 80, 2535, fol. 38; Henry Cary ed., *Memorials of the Great Civil War in England from 1646 to 1652*, 2 vols (1842), II, 58-9, 63-6, 75-100, 117-19 *passim*; Thomas Carte ed., *A Collection of Original Letters and Papers, Concerning the Affairs of England, From the Year 1641 to 1660*, 2 vols (1739), I, 400-403, 406, 436, II, 26, 36; W. N. Darnell ed., *The Correspondence of Isaac Basire* (1831), pp. 57, 70, 92, 96, 98, 104, *passim*; *Cl SP*, II, 143, 188-91, 237, 248-9, 284, 286, *passim*. *Aulicus*, vol. 3, p. 104; Charles Chadwyck Healey ed., *Bellum Civile: Hopton's Narrative of His Campaign in the West* (1902), pp. 37, 43; 'A True and Briefe Relation of the Great Victory Obtained by Sir Ralph Hopton', in *Aulicus*, vol. 1, pp. 57-64; Sir Edward Walker, 'His Majesty's Happy Progress and Success from the 30th of March to the 23rd of November 1644', in *Historical Collections of Several Important Transactions Relating to the Late Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* (1707), pp. 6, 10, 19, 22, 43-4, *passim*.

all things therein by His Providence', an order Stanley envisaged as the Lord 'setting, as it were, the diverse strings of the world in tunes to make one harmony'. Stanley acknowledged that the sins of individual royalists contributed significantly to the King's predicament. Nevertheless, till the end he remained optimistic that divine justice would intervene on behalf of the faithful, contenting himself with the observation that God makes use of wicked men to 'draw good out of evil', while in a rehearsal of the Restoration he predicted the appearance of a speedy, 'sudden, strange, unexpected Judgment' that would overturn the Commonwealth and compel the republicans to repent of their sins.[13]

The war was interpreted by some royalists as a legitimate judgment against the sins of the nation and of the King's party in particular, Buckinghamshire royalist, Col William Campion, for example, declaring in 1646 that 'I see and feel that God oweth a judgment to this land, and is now repaying it for our sins'.[14] Similarly, Norfolk royalist Thomas Knyvett doubted not but that a just God, scrutinising the action of parliamentarian plunder of the Eastern Association witnessed by Knyvett, would 'reward them according to their demerrits'. However, as a moderate with neutralist sympathies, Knyvett interpreted the failure of either side to gain ascendancy during the early stages of the war as indicative of God's desire 'that a middle way of accommodation . . . would best please him'. Furthermore, he warned that 'God may grow angry for neglecting of peaceable ways and turn his promise of a Blessing into a continuation of these Bloody distractions'. Instead, Knyvett placed his trust in the Lord to deliver him from captivity, his observation that 'we must have patience and rest upon Gods providence' becoming the refrain of many disillusioned royalists as the war began to turn in Parliament's favour during 1644.[15]

Not all royalist texts reflected a preoccupation with providence, however. Significantly, these included the leading diurnal, *Mercurius Aulicus*, published at Oxford

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[13] George Ormerod ed., *A Journal of the First Siege of Lathom House*, in *Chetham Society*, 2 (1844), pp. 155-86; F. R. Raines ed., *Stanley Papers Part III: Private Devotions and Miscellanies of James Seventh Earl of Derby*, *Chetham Society*, 70 (1867), pp. 6, 17-18, 28-41, 85-9.
[14] Robert Willis Blencowe ed., 'Extracts from Manuscripts in the Possession of William John Campion', in *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 10 (1858), p. 6.
[15] Bertram Schofield ed., *The Knyvett Letters, 1620-1644* (1949), pp. 118, 124-5, 160.

by the Laudian controversialists, Peter Heylyn and John Berkenhead, also the licenser of books in royalist Oxford.[16] *Aulicus* represented the authentic voice of those at Court who opposed the efforts of more moderate Constitutionalists like the Duke of Richmond, Earl of Dorset, and Edward Hyde, to reach a compromise settlement with Parliament.[17] The newsbook distanced itself from the vulgar providentialism of the well-established newsbook form which often combined stories of the bloody and bizarre with unreliable information, and which had been further discredited by the partisanship of the spate of recent London-based publications on the Irish rebellion.[18] Consequently, *Aulicus* employed 'news' of the providential and miraculous very sparingly, perhaps reflecting an undercurrent of scepticism, which while embracing the broad definition of God's government of creation, was unwilling to take the more extraordinary stories of the Almighty's special or specific intervention at face value.[19]

To what extent, then, does *Aulicus* reflect the distrust of Laudian courtiers with providence, and with the providential aspirations of Hyde and his colleagues? The absence of a vocabulary of the miraculous in *Aulicus* is explicable, I think, without attributing deeper motives to the editors. Other parliamentarian newsbooks like *Mercurius Britanicus* and *The Parliament Scout*, it should be remembered, exhibited a degree of journalistic restraint and also employed providence in a rather considered and controlled manner.[20] Furthermore, the mocking, sarcastic tone employed by Berkenhead and Heylyn proved difficult to reconcile with a solemn, didactic form of presentation,

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[16] *Aulicus*, vol. 1, pp. 157-8. See also Peter Heylyn, *The Rebells Catechisme* (Oxford, 1644), BL TT E 35 (22); *idem.*, *A Letter To a Gentleman of Leicestershire* (Oxford, 1643), BL TT E 102 (7); *idem.*, *Cyprianus Anglicus: Or, The History of. . . William . . . Lord Archbishop of Canterbury* (1668).

[17] P. W. Thomas, *Sir John Berkenhead, 1617-1679. A Royalist Career in Politics and Polemics* (Oxford, 1969), p. 78. On the moderates at Oxford, see Smith, *Constitutional Royalism*, Chapter 3; *idem.*,' "The More Posed and Wise Advice": The Fourth Earl of Dorset and the English Civil Wars', *HJ*, 34 (1991).

[18] For example, *A Perfect Relation of the Beginning and Continuation of the Irish Rebellion* (1642), BL TT E 131 (35); *An Order From the Committee, that Eleven Thousand Three Hundred Horse be Conducted into Ireland* (1642), BL TT E 132 (11); *A New Plot Discovered in Ireland* (1642), BL TT E 147 (2). Recognition of this partisanship spawned counter-publications such as, *No Pamphlet, but a Detestation Against all such Pamphlets as are Printed, Concerning the Irish Rebellion* (1642), BL TT E 134 (3). See also, Keith Lindley, 'The Impact of the 1641 Rebellion upon England and Wales, 1641-1645', *IHS*, 18 (1972); M. Perceval-Maxwell, *The Outbreak of the Irish Rebellion of 1641* (Dublin, 1994); Ethan Shagan, 'Constructing Discord: Ideology, Propaganda, and English Responses to the Irish Rebellion of 1641', *JBS*, 36 (1997).

[19] There were a number of exceptions. *Aulicus*, vol. 1, pp. 120, 242, vol. 2, pp. 96, 273, vol. 3, pp. 127, 197, 205.

hence the publication of supplements detailing particular incidents that provided an opportunity for more moralistic expression. It is likely that *Aulicus* reflected the discomfort felt by many royalists with the employment for political purposes of illustrations of special providence, and there were evidently clear benefits in developing a distinctive rhetoric distancing the newsbook from a mode which was becoming associated with oppositional politics, a subject to which we will now turn.[21]

Royalist writers rarely missed an opportunity to question Parliament's employment of providentialism in an effort to demonstrate that their own application was more theologically sound and consequently more potent. For example, stories of the reported destruction of leading royalists like Ralph Hopton and Prince Rupert by divine thunderbolts and other prodigious mechanisms were easily disproved, helping to undermine the promiscuous application of providentialism by parliamentarian pamphlet writers. *Aulicus*, meanwhile, argued that the Almighty was belittled and mocked when parliamentarians instituted thanksgivings for 'victories' that were in reality defeats for the rebels. God would take a dim view of such deceit and turn forged thanksgivings into days of humiliation. Moreover, thanksgivings for the execution of captured royalists were even worse, being acts of gross impiety that sought to sanctify murder. Furthermore, preachers William Chillingworth and William Stampe highlighted the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate fasts that were mere exercises in formality rather than demonstrations of sincere religiosity, and which they recognised were a danger even among royalists.[22]

It was an article of faith for the royalists that their opponents concealed greed, ambition and disloyalty behind a smoke screen of religious rhetoric. A prominent

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[20] Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks, 1641-1649* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 128-44, 149. This restraint gradually disappeared, especially after the launch of the presbyterian *The Scottish Dove*, distinguished by its angry radicalism and providential hyperbole.

[21] For example, George Digby, *A True and Impartiall Relation of the Battaile . . . neare Newbury* (1643); Peter Heylyn, *A True and Briefe Relation of the Great Victory Obtained by Sir Ralph Hopton, neare Bodmin* (1643); *idem., The Round-Heads Remembrancer* (1643); *idem., A Briefe Relation of the Death and Suffering of . . . the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury* (1645).

[22] *Aulicus*, vol. 1, pp. 77, 87, 276, 341, 347, 396; vol. 2, pp. 82, 88, 240, 242, 311; vol. 3, pp. 76, 350; vol. 4, pp. 39, 111; *Works of John Taylor the Water Poet*, 4 vols (1870-7), III, 333; William Stampe, *A Sermon . . . at Christ Church . . . 18 of April 1643* (Oxford, 1643), BL TT E 101 (1), p. 1; Chillingworth, *A Sermon . . . At Christ-Church*, pp. 27-9; Heylyn, *Remembrancer*, pp. 1-2; *Certain Queres* (Oxford, 1643), BL TT E 67 (23), p. 6; *Verses on the Death of . . . Bevill Grenvill* (1643), BL TT E 65 (6), pp. 14, 19.

example of such hypocrisy, according to critics, was the national fast always observed on the final Wednesday in every month, and established to help protestant victims of the Irish rebellion. With good reason it was alleged that the money collected for the relief of the victims was diverted to held finance the English war: a misappropriation of the fast and thanksgiving for purely political ends that demonstrated a dangerous and cynical contempt for God. Only the royalists, it was countered, could be trusted to pay a truly pious regard for God's providence in a manner consistent with the maintenance of His honour, and this comprised the decency and order of authorised and appropriate devotions reinforced by set forms of prayer and backed by episcopal oversight.[23]

John Aston, brother of Cheshire royalist, Sir Thomas Aston, meanwhile, highlighted the social implications of a simplistic formula equating success with divine sponsorship, warning that this tended to appeal to the weak-willed and vulgar, 'commonly more superstitiously than judicially devout'. Clearly, providentialism was potentially a powerful tool with which to attract converts to any prospective cause, no matter how misguided. Nevertheless, apocryphal tales of parliamentarians questioning providence in the wake of miscarriages on the field of battle during 1643 were seized upon greedily as possible evidence that Parliament's own polemical foot soldiers had begun to doubt the Lord's commitment to the cause.[24]

Many royalists censured Parliament's apparent enthusiasm for co-opting providence and assigning to every military success the unqualified approbation of the Lord, accusing their opposite numbers of effectively dictating their own terms to God, 'contract[ing], or dilat[ing] the Hand of God's mercy, according as he sees the purse open, and shut, to the cause and himself'. The Oxford Parliament, meanwhile, was warned never to seek to 'prescribe unto God' how His providence should be apportioned.[25] Critics furthermore condemned a perceived 'familiarity' with God, or

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[23] On the establishment of the Wednesday fast, see John F. Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism during the English Civil Wars, 1640-1648* (Princeton, 1969), p. 62. For accusations of the diversion of money destined for Ireland, see *Aulicus*, vol. 1, p. 149, vol. 1, p. 434, vol. 2, pp. 284-6; Karl Bottigheimer, *English Money and Irish Land* (Oxford, 1971), p. 39.

[24] J. C. Hodgson ed., 'The Journal of John Aston, 1639', in *Surtees Society*, 118 (1910), p. 32; *Aulicus*, vol. 1, pp. 347, 396; vol. 2, pp. 27, 171.

[25] William Stampe, *A Sermon . . . at Christ Church*, p. 9; Thomas Warmstry, *Ramus Olivae: Or, An Humble Motion For Peace: Presented To His Sacred Majesty, and the Honourable Houses of Parliament* (Oxford, 1644), BL TT E 46 (3), p. 52; Richard Harwood, *The Loyall Subject's Retiring-Roome . . . A Sermon at St Mary's, on the 13th day of July . . . before both Houses* (Oxford, 1645), p. 13.

'sauciness', implied by this comprehension of God's motives: royalists were instead depicted as respectful of God as they were of the King.[26]

Sir Henry Spelman compared the scrambling to follow and interpret providences by parliamentarians with a supposed Roman Catholic contempt of Scripture and consequent will-worship: parliamentarians witnessed the patterns they wanted to see in current events and impudently, disobediently and anarchically fitted providence to meet their private and predetermined expectations. Resistance to lawful authority, a pretension to infallibility and a trust in the creature and not providence made such comparison with 'popery' instructive, argued preacher Edward Symmons. A propensity to 'forge' stories of miracles for polemical effect and the meritorious effects of good works in influencing the allotment of providences completed the picture of a Parliament infected by Jesuitical principles. Peter Heylyn, writing in 1657, accused his 'puritan' opponents of, in effect, placing God at the disposal of men through the employment of exhortatory devotions. The puritans, Heylyn alleged, used 'raw and indigested prayers of their own devising' as a kind of charm or 'holy water' to ward off the harmful and encourage the beneficial. Informal, arbitrary, unauthorised prayer represented an unlawful invocation of God, a subjective, privatised form of devotion greedily apportioning to itself a monopoly of the effectual. Parliament's use of providence too closely resembled the confidence of the heathen in the potency of charms or spells, thought Sir Edward Hyde: the true Calvinist was careful not to draw hasty conclusions from dispensations because to do so was to diminish the hegemonic sovereignty of the Lord. After all, the Almighty kept His own season and prayers were never necessarily efficacious. Who was man to judge the works of God? George Savile, later Marquis of Halifax, and a prominent critic of enthusiasm, noted with satisfaction that his Anglican patron during the 1650s, Lady Dorothy Pakington, 'never made any applications of God's Judgements [believing] God hath thrown a veil over these things'. Yorkshire royalist Sir Henry Slingsby similarly sprang to the defence of orthodox Calvinism in which the true meaning of providences remained indecipherable and God's secret will a great deep to be approached with trembling solicitude. Slingsby denied that a permanent

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[26] Hyde, 'Contemplations and Reflections Upon the Psalms of David', in *A Collection of Several Tracts of the Right Honourable Earl of Clarendon* (1727), p. 69; *The Historical Passages, of England Since the Beginning of this Miserable Blood-shed* (Oxford, 1643 ?), p. 38; *Aulicus*, vol. 2, p. 147.

divine estrangement from the royalists could be inferred from their eclipse in 1646 and 1649. The Christian was required to take events 'in good part, and not to be interpreters and controllers of God's secret designs, presuming to find out the incomprehensible motives of his works'. Grounding faith in the historical and political handiwork of God was a recipe for confusion and uncertainty, and therefore at odds with the defining philosophy of royalism as its apologists saw it: the authority of an unchanging deity mirrored in the King's constitutional integrity, and in the decency of a sober, dignified and appropriate churchmanship. A stress on the unknowability of God beyond a few fundamental points of faith accessible to all, encouraged the cultivation of an active virtue characterised by its appeal to reasonableness. Men could not know for certain which sins were responsible for which afflictions. Consequently, they were best advised to apply themselves to quiet devotions, in contrast to the devotion of supporters of Parliament that was perceived to be presumptuous, agitated, subjective, independent instead of the necessarily dependent, an activism that sought to make prayer work by understanding the ways of God.[27]

(iii) The Attributes of Royalist Providentialism

Royalist providentialism, in common with that of its parliamentarian rivals, consisted of both negative and positive characteristics: cataloguing the sins and virtues that merited mercies and judgments. Royalists listed rebellion, sacrilege and sectarianism as among the most dangerous of current provocations responsible for prolonging the extent of the war. On the other hand, God was shown to be a conscientious custodian of King, Church and Prayer Book.

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[27] Spelman, 'A Protestant's Account of his Orthodox Holding in Matters of Religion', in *Somers Tracts*, IV, 32-49; Symmons, *A Loyall Subjects Beliefe* (1643), BL TT E 103 (6), pp. 85-6; *idem.*, *A Vindication of King Charles* (1647), BL TT E 414 (17), pp. 89-90; Heylyn, *Ecclesia Vindicata; Or, The Church of England Justified* (1657), BL TT E 917 (8), pp. 155-7; Hyde, 'Contemplations', p. 435; Carte, *A Collection*, I, 79; Mark Brown ed., *The Works of George Savile*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1989), II, 474; Rev. Daniel Parsons ed., *The Diary of Sir Henry Slingsby of Scriven* (1836), pp. 28-30; Thomas Bayly, *The Royal Charter Granted Unto Kings By God Himself* (1649), BL TT E 1356 (1), and see the alleged remarks of Charles I on the impossibility of grounding religion on the observable. Truth lies at a deeper level than the shifting sands of the political or the uncertainties of battle: Bayly, *Certamen Religiosum: Or, A Conference Between His late Majestie . . . and Henry late Marquess and Earl of Worcester . . . at Raglan Castle, 1646* (1649), BL TT E 1355 (1), p. 26.; Henry Hammond, 'John Baptist's Warning', in W

Royalists fastened upon the biblical comparison of rebellion with witchcraft, an unnatural disturbance of the divinely sanctioned balance of nature. The King was identified as God's anointed, a semi-divine vicegerent who enjoyed the special protection of the Lord in time of peace and war.[28] Rebellion and sacrilege were therefore closely related in this sacerdotal conception of kingship rendered especially conspicuous in Charles's gift of healing victims of scrofula and that had been represented at Court by the neoplatonic symbolism of the masque.[29] Treason against the King was equated with treason against God and rebels like John Hampden, John Pym and the Hotham family in Hull predictably were shown to suffer at the hands of an indignant deity. The parliamentarians had 'tempted God so far, so insolently, that less than a miracle could not preserve [them]', while the royalists were the beneficiaries of a true wonder: the sudden appearance of volunteers in 1642, 'as if Regiments fell from the Clouds'. Furthermore, lack of respect accorded to England's nursing father translated into an impudent and dishonourable bearing towards the Lord of Hosts that was felt might have dangerous repercussions for the nation. Rumour, innuendo and malicious accusations directed against the King also calumniated God and burdened the nation with additional sins. No wonder, then, that probably the most common royalist injunctions were to 'fear God, honour the King' and to obey 'the powers that be': in this way, England's relationship with its divine sponsor might be restored to a proper balance of love, fear, deference and respect.[30]

Fulman ed., *The Works of the Reverend and Learned Henry Hammond*, 4 vols (1684), IV, 494 on the 'indiscernibleness' of God's intentions.

[28] Witchcraft: I Samuel 15: 23; 'Anointed': Psalm 105: 15; Thomas Barton, *A Sermon of the Christian Race* (1643), BL TT E 106 (17), pp. 22-3; *Wiltshires Resolution* (1642), BL TT E 130 (22), p. 4; *Christus Dei, The Lords Annoynted* (1643), BL TT E 62 (19), pp. 2-3, 10-12; *Aulicus*, vol. 2, pp. 67, 84; *Mercurius Davidicus, Or A Patterne of Loyall Devotion* (1643), BL TT E 1144 (7), pp. 2-3; Symmons, *A Loyall Subjects Beliefe*, pp. 2-3, 6, 9-10, 19, 43-5; N. P., *Jeremiah Revived: Though in his Prison* (1648), BL TT E 435 (1), p. 3; Nathaniel Bernard, *A Looking-Glasse for Rebellion* (Oxford, 1644), pp. 1, 11-15; Symmons, *A Vindication*, pp. 30, 51. Bod. Ashmole MS 36, fol. 266; Margaret and Frances Verney eds, *Memoirs of the Verney Family During the Seventeenth Century* (1907), vol. 1, p. 282: Edmund to Ralph Verney, September 1642.

[29] Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch. Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France* (1973), pp. 208-10; Douglas Brooks-Davies, *The Mercurian Monarch: Magical Politics from Spenser to Pope* (Manchester, 1983), pp. 85-103, 151.

[30] 'Fear God. Honour the King': I Peter 2. 17; 'Powers that be': Romans 13: 1; *Aulicus*, vol. 1, pp. 216, 354; vol. 2, p. 235; vol. 3, pp. 394-5; vol. 4, p. 94; Heylyn, *Remembrancer*, p. 1; *idem.*, *A Sermon, Equally Pointing Forward and Backward* (1647), pp. 2, 29-31; Richard Watson, *A Sermon Touching Schisme*, 1642, BL TT E 128 (9), pp. 15-16; Griffith Williams, *Vindiciae Regum; Or, The Grand Rebellion That is a Looking-glasse for Rebels* (1643), BL TT E 88 (1), pp. 27-9, 38, 49, 59-61, 79, 103-5; *Lord have Mercie*

The King was no mere appointee, the puppet of popular sovereignty, though some royalist moderates like Henry Ferne countenanced a measure of such consent in the selection of a king. Both advocates of divine right theory and more moderate opinion, however, tended to argue that the right of appointment and removal of kings rested exclusively with God. It followed that the popular election of kings merely confirmed a decision already taken by the Almighty and that there existed no mechanism for the deposition of tyrannical or irreligious monarchs except through prayer. Innocent sufferers were required to exercise patience and be reassured that the truly wicked king could expect divine judgments to catch up with him sooner or later. Non-resistance and trust in providence and prayer to vindicate the righteous were the most effective means to combat tyranny. Besides, vengeance belonged exclusively to the Lord and subjects who presumed to anticipate divine justice against the King were likely to face censure. However, just as providence rewarded the obedient, so it chastised injudicious rulers. Divine right was never a licence for absolutism and kings were constrained by obligations to their subjects and to God such as a duty to advance the Christian religion.[31]

Royalist apology of episcopal government predated the war. Joseph Hall was its most potent advocate, stressing the apostolic and scriptural basis of the order and attempting to prove its divine institution. Bishops were instruments of God's glory and the first line of defence against popery, and Hall predicted that those who sought their

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upon us: Or, A Plaine Discourse Declaring that the Plague of Warre [began in] London (1643), BL TT E 75 (5), p. 10; *The Grand Question Concerning Taking up Armes against the King Answered*, BL TT E 70 (17), pp. 5-10; *No Peace 'till the King Prosper* (1645), BL TT E 298 (7), p. 1; *The Visible Vengeance* (1648), BL TT E 476 (40), pp. 4-6; *Great Britans Vote: Or, God Save King Charles* (1648), BL TT E 431 (26), pp. 3-5, 8, 13-15. Quotations on insolence and on regiments appearing miraculously: *A Letter from an Officer in His Majesties Army to a Gentleman in Gloucestershire* (Oxford? 1643), pp. 11-12.

[31] 'To me belongeth vengeance': Deuteronomy 33: 35; *A Looking Glasse for Rebells* (1643), BL TT E 65 (19), sig. A2; Matthew Griffith, *A Sermon Preached in the Citie of London . . . Touching the Power of a King* (1643), BL TT E 104 (17), pp. 3, 5-6, 9-10, 19, 21-22; Edward Fisher, *An Appeale to thy Conscience* (1643), BL TT E 99 (4), pp. 1-4, 6, 8, 38; *The Grand Question*, pp. 2-4; 'Of Resisting the Lawful Magistrate Under Colour of Religion', in *The Works of . . . Henry Hammond*, I, 302-3; *Great Britans Vote*, pp. 17, 22, 25; 'The Divine Right and Irresistibility of Kings and Supreme Magistrates', 1645, in *Somers Tracts*, V, 56-62; Bod. Sancroft MS 233: Robert Filmer? 'Two Treatises against Rebellion', fols 77-104. On divine right theory, see John Figgis, *The Divine Right of Kings* (New York, 1965); James Daly, 'The Idea of Absolute Monarchy in Seventeenth-Century England', *HJ*, 2 (1978); Conrad Russell, 'Divine Rights in the Early Seventeenth Century', in John Morrill, Paul Slack *et al*, *Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford, 1993); J. Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England, 1603-1640* (London, New York, 1986); *idem.*, 'English and European Political Ideas in the Early

abolition would be punished severely by God, a point reiterated by subsequent writers.[32] Parliamentarians were accused of craving innovation, which was equated with sacrilege: the royalists, however, could be depended upon to protect the historical continuity of English reformed religion in the Elizabethan tradition. Unsurprising, then, that royalist apologists professed to venerate John Foxe: episcopal sufferers were potentially a generation of martyrs comparable to ancient exemplars like Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer, and parliamentarians were warned that God would judge their tormentors harshly. God consistently protected the underdog – in this case loyal churchmen – and defended the innocent: the providences that flowed from such a covenant more potent still, since God's 'strength is made perfect in weakness'.[33]

Royalist providentialism was characterised by a hatred of iconoclasm and fear of the effects of Parliament's supposed sacrilegious assault on church fabric. Royalist accounts, such as Bruno Ryves' Oxford newsbook, *Mercurius Rusticus*, which ran from May 1643 until March 1644, concentrated on reporting stories of sacrilege, iconoclasm and the persecution of orthodox clergy, and described in lurid detail the supposed judgments that befell despoilers of Church property.[34] The Kentishman Colonel Edwin Sandys, for example, made the mistake of leading an assault on Canterbury Cathedral in August 1642, when the altar was overturned and the rails damaged.[35] The following month, royalist forces, following an engagement at Powick Bridge near Worcester, seized the mortally wounded Sandys. His captors lost no opportunity in exploiting their prisoner for propaganda purposes, triggering a spate of pamphlets describing Sandys'

Seventeenth Century: Revisionism and the Case of Absolutism', *JBS*, 35 (1996); David Wootton, *Divine Right and Democracy* (London, 1986); John Butler, *James I and Divine Right* (Tokyo, 1999).

[32] Joseph Hall, *Episcopacie By Divine Right Asserted* (1640), pp. 51-5; *idem.*, *An Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament* (1640), BL TT E 204 (5), pp. 21, 27, 30-31; John Theyer, *Aerio-Mastix, Or, A Vindication of the Apostolicall . . . Government of the Church of Christ by Bishops*, 1643, BL TT E 62 (6), p. 154; Thomas Cooke, *Episcopacie Asserted* (1641), BL TT E 171 (6), p. 11; Bod. Rawlinson MS E 115: William Creed, 'The Copy of a Sermon Preached at St Maryes . . . December 1642'.

[33] *Aulicus*, vol. 3, pp. 205, 261; Rawlinson E 115, Creed sermon, p. 11; Barton, *Christian Race*, p. 10; Symmons, *A Loyall Subjects Beliefe*, p. 58. 'Strength is made perfect': II Corinthians 12: 9.

[34] *Mercurius Rusticus* in Robin Jeffs ed., *The English Revolution III: Newsbooks 1, Oxford Royalist*, 4 vols (1971).

[35] Henry Francis Abell, *Kent and the Great Civil War* (Ashford, 1901), pp. 80-1; Patrick Collinson, Nigel Ramsay and Margaret Sparks eds, *A History of Canterbury Cathedral* (Oxford, 1995) pp. 195-7; Elizabeth Melling ed., *Kent and the Civil War* (Maidstone, 1960), p. 15. On other acts of violence committed by Sandys in Kent, see *Archaeologia Cantiana*, vols 1-4, 'Sir Roger Twysden's Journal', II, 190-2. On the Sandys family, see E. S. Sandys, *History of the Family of Sandys*, 2 vols (Barrow-in-Furness, 1930); Comley Vivian and Thomas Myles Sandys, *Some Notes for a History of the Sandys Family* (1907).

conscience-stricken death-bed conversion and penitent acknowledgment of the legitimacy of his punishment at God's hands. Depicted as eaten up by gangrene and guilt, Sandys is made to perish in the knowledge of one final irony demonstrating the appropriateness of his chastisement: the Colonel's grandfather, we are told, was none other than Archbishop of York, Edwin Sandys who had, of course, once served as bishop of Worcester. Clearly, then, failure to live up to historical and familial responsibilities compound the apostasy of the younger Sandys. In his condign punishment can be seen the hand of God resolving a discontinuity between the duties of a man of Sandys' status, requiring an uncompromising defence of the historical continuity and integrity of the Church of England, and the actuality of his crimes of rebellion and sacrilege.[36] Similarly, and in an echo of the pre-Reformation worship of saints, prominent royalists including William Laud and Edward Hyde duly noted the significance of the fate of the parliamentarian Lord Brooke, shot through the eye and killed during a lull in his assault on Lichfield Cathedral Close on 2 March 1643, the Cathedral founder's day.[37]

Providence is often depicted in these accounts as intervening to protect the orthodox clergy from violence and in the face of irreverent behaviour by parliamentarian forces in local parishes. 'Rude and sacrilegious soldiers' guilty of indecent behaviour in a Taunton church are the first to be cut down in an engagement with the pious Ralph Hopton: 'God's most righteous judgement in bringing those unchristian . . . wretches to such a speedy execution.' One Hunt, a parliamentarian guilty of committing sacrilege in his parish church, is punished with death on the battlefield of Newbury in 1643. A clergyman in Northamptonshire is protected by divine intervention when profane and rowdy troopers ride into church, and nearby the attempt to set a captured dancing bear

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[36] Clarendon, *History*, vol. 2, p. 322; C. V. Wedgwood, *The King's War, 1641-1647* (1983), pp. 122-3; *HMC 12th Report, Part 2, The Manuscripts of the Earl Cowper*, p. 322; John Corbet, 'An Historical Relation of the Military Government of Gloucester', in *Bibliotheca Gloucesterensis: A Collection of Scarce and Curious Tracts, Relating to the County and City of Gloucester; Illustrative of, and published during The Civil War* edited by John Washbourn (Gloucester, 1825) pp. 12-13; *Rusticus*, vol. 4, p. 278; *A Letter Sent from The Lord Falkland* (1642), BL TT E 121 (22); *A Letter 'To Colonel Edwin Sandys'*, in BL TT E 126 (8), p. 8.

[37] William Scott and James Bliss eds, *The Works of The Reverend Father in God, William Laud*, 7 vols (Oxford, 1847-1860), III, 'Diary', 249; Clarendon, *History*, II, 474; Sir William Dugdale, *A Short View of the Late Troubles in England* (Oxford, 1681), pp. 117-8; *Aulicus*, vol. 1, pp. 157-8.

upon another orthodox minister is defeated by providence, which unexpectedly renders the animal docile and compliant.[38]

We have seen, then, that many royalists were critical of their adversaries' deployment of providential rhetoric for partisan ends: by definition they regarded its operation as necessarily supportive of the status quo. It is possible, also, that some loyalists were uncomfortable with the proliferation of fasts and other religious exercises that were viewed as sanctioning rebellion and sacrilege. This may have reflected continuity with the authorities' pre-war distrust of devotional free-enterprise and endorsement of a spiritual command-economy: a febrile and restless political providentialism was generally frowned upon in contrast to a private, undemonstrative form of devotion in which the effects of providence were limited to the personal experimental arena. Promiscuous interpretation of providences and its application to current affairs was discouraged. Nevertheless, God was depicted as vindicating the King and intervening to protect orthodox clergy and the sacred space of consecrated ground. The sins of the nation, and of individual royalists, were similarly thought to be of great importance in determining the outcome of war, and the Almighty was evidently far from satisfied with the record of the King's party in this respect: a subject to which we now turn.

(iv) 'Puritan' Royalism

The Oxford Court and its circle of preachers made strenuous efforts to reform the behaviour of both royalist armies and its civilian followers in order to mollify God. This was especially important when royalist arms had acquired an unenviable reputation for ill-discipline and for public displays of sinfulness with offences ranging from drunken debauchery and gambling, through to the alleged employment of a company of women soldiers described by controversialist John Vicars as notorious for their 'naughtiness'.[39]

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[38] *Aulicus*, vol. 2, p. 96; *Rusticus*, pp. 175-8, 191-3, 203-5.

[39] Joseph Brandon, *The Oxonian Antippodes. Or, The Oxford Anty-Parliament* (1644), BL TT E 31 (8), pp. 21-6; John Hadsred, *A Wonderfull and Strange Miracle or Gods Just Vengeance against the Cavaliers* (1642), BL TT E 126 (36); G. B., *The Great Eclipse of the Sun* (1644), BL TT E 7 (30), p. 5; *Gods Revenge Upon his Parliaments and Peoples Enemies, by the examples of some great Malignants,*

The need to instil moral fibre and reform wayward conduct was taken seriously by the King and his bishops and expressed in various proclamations and military orders issued to regimental chaplains employed throughout the war.[40] These spoke of the need to outlaw 'unlawful oaths' and 'scandalous acts in derogation of God's honour', and were evidently motivated by a fear that wickedness alienated both the Almighty and the royalists' fellow countrymen.[41] The injunctions were reinforced in June 1643 amid fears that their neglect was inhibiting the speedy conclusion of the war, and required the performance of divine service twice a day, a Sunday sermon, and holy communion at least once a month.[42] Further setbacks for the royalists between 1643-5, including the raising of the sieges of Hull and Gloucester, the inconclusive battle of Newbury and the Scottish invasion of England, induced the publication of additional instructions. These authorised closer scrutiny of records of church attendance and encouraged private religious instruction by military chaplains to combat the sins of swearing, blasphemy and drunkenness believed responsible for recent royalist defeats.[43]

The theme that the royalists were being undermined by their own immorality was one taken up enthusiastically by preachers at Oxford. Henry Hammond penned his *Practical Catechism* with the objective of combating profaneness, an aim Hammond took seriously in his private life with the strict observance of a weekly office of fasting and humiliation.[44] Meanwhile, in an evident sideswipe at the aspirations of cavalier swordsmen, Richard Harwood cautioned royalists against carnal confidence and overdependence upon force of arms: peace was delayed while royalists remained 'at

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whom God hath punished to give others warning (1642), BL TT E 91 (13). On the company of women, John Vicars, *The Burning-Bush not Consumed* (1646), p. 447.

[40] *Private Formes of Prayer*, BL TT E 1176 (3), pp. 5, 8.

[41] *Military Orders, And Articles, Established by His Majestie* (Oxford, 1643), BL TT E 246 (22).

[42] 'A Proclamation for the inhibiting all manner of Oathes, other Abuses and Prophanations by any of His Majesties Army', 12 June 1643, in James F. Larkin ed., *Stuart Royal Proclamation of King Charles I, 1625-1646* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 909-11. On these war time proclamations, see E. J. S. Parsons, 'Some Proclamations of Charles I', in *The Bodleian Quarterly Record*, vol. 8, no. 90 (1936); *idem.*, 'The Proclamations Issued by Charles I'.

[43] 'A Proclamation for the further restraint of Prophane Swearing and Cursing', 8 April 1644, in Larkin ed., *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, pp. 1021-3; *Injunctions Concerning the Garrison of Oxford, In Order To Religion* (Oxford, 1645), pp. 1-5; BL Harleian MS 6804, fols 75, 81; *Cl SP*, II, 188-9. See also J. W. Willis Bund ed., *Diary of Henry Townshend of Elmley Lovett, 1640-1663*, 2 vols (1920), II, 91-3.

[44] David Lloyd, *Memoires of the Lives, Actions, Sufferings and deaths of Those Noble, Revered, And Excellent Personages That Suffered for the Protestant Religion, and the great Principle thereof, Allegiance To their Soveraigne* (1668) pp. 384-5. See Hammond, 'A Lent Sermon at Oxford 1645', in *The Works of... Henry Hammond*, vol. 4, p. 518.

open war with Heaven'.[45] The moderate Henry Ferne, moreover, reminded the Oxford Parliament that 'every man there stands guilty of provoking this wrath [of war]'. He accused the royalists of a 'senselessness of Gods wrath [and] such carelessness of using means to appease it'. Consequently, Ferne recommended a thorough personal reformation and a purge of private vices to stimulate contrition and reunite the nation with God, but warned that the Lord's patience was running out: royalists and parliamentarians needed to work quickly to negotiate a peace and prevent God from cutting off England entirely for its stubborn attachment to sin.[46]

Henry Leslie, Bishop of Down, argued that the enemy had the upper hand not because their cause was just, but because 'God cannot endure that in his own people [namely sinfulness], which for a time he will in his enemies'. The prolongation of immorality and vice in the midst of the appearance of divine correctives, moreover, threatened more dangerous judgments as God raised the stakes. In a similar vein, William Stampe, a fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford, explained why royalist devotions had so far been singularly ineffective. This was because God's mercy did not follow as a matter of course from any prayers, pious intentions or exercises in fasting, but rather prayers qualified with faith, 'thoughts regulated by obedience', and 'fasting governed by sincerity'. Only a legitimate, unfeigned and genuine reformation would halt the slide of the royalists.[47]

The moral condition of the royalist headquarters itself provided cause for concern, not least when a serious fire destroyed a large area of the city to the west of Carfax on 6 October 1644. Parliamentarians were quick to attribute the disaster to the judgment of heaven against the Oxonians, in particular against a piper of St Giles who commonly profaned the Sabbath 'with his unhallowed Minstrallry and debauched company'. *Aulicus*, though, turned the disaster on its head, claiming that providence had intervened to prevent worse damage. However, one of the King's chaplains, Humphrey Peake, begged to differ: the significance of successive sieges of Oxford was clear, in that

[45] Richard Harwood, *King David's Sanctuary* (Oxford, 1643), pp. 26-7; *idem*., *The Loyall Subject's Retiring-Roome*, p. 36.
[46] Ferne, *A Sermon . . . At the Publique Fast the Twelfth Day of April . . . Before the . . . Commons* (Oxford, 1644), BL TT E 46 (5), pp. 12-22.

they showed a just return by God for the city's perceived sins of luxury, excess and epicureanism. Rather, freedom from the sins of presumption and the tyranny of vice required that 'the glory of the whole work must be Almighty God'.[48]

Polemicists who were worried about immorality targeted the common soldier. Ralph Hopton, the architect of several significant royalist successes in the west, for example, published orders designed to restrain rape and profaneness, fearing that such conduct was drawing down God's displeasure against his forces.[49] The author of *The Camp at Gilgal*, Henry Ferne, warned that too many royalist soldiers were imitating 'the manners of Egypt', and also cautioned against believing that the pursuit of a good cause would in itself win favours from God. Even the strongest and most just claim, it argued, could be gravely weakened by the sinfulness of the rank and file. Likewise, Edward Symmons, a chaplain in the Prince of Wales's Lifeguard, and a man who seems to have had close connections with Hyde's party, called upon soldiers to cultivate a reputation for piety, prudence, liberality and honesty, and recommended keeping a strict Sabbath and fast observance and enforcing a prohibition of public swearing 'lest thereby we obstruct the concurrence of divine aid'.[50]

Royalists adopted their own fasts and thanksgivings to counteract those organised by Parliament, for example in October 1643 replacing the monthly Wednesday fast in aid of Ireland by a fast scheduled for the second Friday in every month.[51] The King issued an accompanying form of prayer enjoining repentance and

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[47] Henry Leslie, *A Sermon . . . at the Publique Fast . . . in St Maries Oxford . . . Before the . . . House of Commons* (Oxford, 1644) pp. 36-7; William Stampe, *A Sermon . . . before His Majestie At Christ-Church* (Oxford, 1643), p. 12.

[48] William Hamper ed., *The Life, Diary and Correspondence of Sir William Dugdale* (1827), p. 73, f.n.; *Aulicus*, vol. 3, p. 285; Peake, Essay on sieges dedicated to Charles I, Bod Wood 501 (43). On the fire, see Stephen Porter, 'The Oxford Fire of 1644', *Oxoniensia*, 49 (1984).

[49] Lloyd, *Memoires*, p. 343. See the opinion of James Chudleigh who defected to Hopton's army in 1643: *Serjeant Major James Chudleigh His Declaration to His Countrymen* (1643), p. 3. For an account of Hopton's campaigns, see Healey ed., *Bellum Civile*.

[50] *The Camp at Gilgal. Or A View of the Kings Army, and spirituall provision made for it* (Oxford, 1643), BL TT E 1178 (2), pp. 3, 9. For Ralph Hopton's alleged remarks regarding his soldiers, see Lloyd, *Memoires* p. 344. Edward Symmons, *A Militarie Sermon, Wherein By the Word of God, the nature and disposition of a Rebell is discovered* (Oxford, 1644), pp. 11, 14, 16, 25-7, 31-2. See also, W. C. (William Cockburne) *A Manuall of Prayers: Collected For the use of Gentlemen Soldiers* (Oxford, 1643), pp. 13-14; *idem.*, *A Manuall of Prayers, Collected, For the use of Sir Ralph Dutton's Regiment* (Oxford, 1642); Richard Parr ed., *The Life of the Most Reverend Father in God, James Usher* (1686), p. 57, for Ussher's warnings of the detrimental effect of debauchery.

[51] Regular and irregular fasts were a common feature in Parliament and in those areas under parliamentary jurisdiction. See, for example, 'An Order for a Thanksgiving for the Victory under the command of Sir

humiliation, alongside which were published reprints of the famous homily against disobedience and wilful rebellion, the prayer of thanksgiving issued on the occasion of the Queen's safe return to Oxford in July 1643, and the *Hymn of General Thanksgiving* expressing gratitude to God for having preserved the King's life through the vicissitudes of war. These and other liturgies, penned by Brian Duppa, Bishop of Salisbury, were consistent with pre-war practice requiring the appropriate honouring of God via the structured and predictable means of set prayers.[52] Both the Court and Parliament at Oxford appear to have taken the new fast seriously to judge from the texts of surviving sermons and by the evidence of Oxford churchwardens' accounts that show a substantial expenditure on fast sermons and prayers alongside celebration of November 5 and the King's coronation day. Victories in the north and west of England in 1643 and 1644 were among many to be celebrated by public thanksgiving in Oxford.[53]

William Waller' (1 April 1644), 'An Order for a Publique Fast in several Churches for a blessing on the Lord General in the West' (9 August 1644), 'An Order of the Lords and Commons . . . for setting apart Thursday next for a day of publique Thanksgiving' (27 September 1645) in Edward Husband ed., *A Collection Of all the publique Orders Ordinances and Declarations of both Houses of Parliament* (1646), BL TT E 1058, pp. 476, 534, 744 respectively. See Macfarlane ed., *The Diary of Ralph Josselin*, p. 22 for a complaint about Parliament supporters ignoring fast injunctions. 'A Proclamation for a Generall Fast', in *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, pp. 954-5.

[52] *A Forme of Common Prayer, To Be Used Upon The Solemne Fast Appointed By His Majesty's Proclamation* (Oxford, 1643), BL TT E 76 (20); Brian Duppa, *Two Prayers: One For the safety of His Majesties Person, The Other For the Preservation of this University and City of Oxford* (Oxford, 1644); *A Collection of Prayers and Thanksgivings, Used in His Majesties Chappel, and in His Armies Upon Occasion of The Late Victories Against The Rebells, And For The Future Successe of The Forces* (Oxford, 1643), BL TT E 69 (6); *Private Forms of Prayer*, BL TT E 1176 (3). For older liturgies, see *A Forme of Common Prayer . . . For the Averting of Gods Heavy Visitation Upon Many Places of this Kingdome* (1625); *A Forme of Common Prayer . . . For The averting of Gods heavie Visitation upon many places of this Kingdome* (1636); *A Forme of Common Prayer; To Be Used Upon The Eighth of July . . . For the averting of the Plague, and other Judgements of God from this Kingdom* (1640).

[53] Sermons: for example, Henry Vaughan and Griffith Williams on 8 March 1644. M. G. Hobson and H. E. Salter eds, *Oxford Council Acts, 1626-1665*, pp. 425-31; Carteret J. H. Fletcher, *A History of the Church and Parish of St Martin (Carfax) Oxford* (Oxford and London, 1896), pp. 45-78; Hamper ed., *Diary of Dugdale*, pp. 72-3, 80. Royalists continued to adhere to the Wednesday fast for some months at the beginning of the war: see Brian Twyne, 'An Account of the Musterings of the University of Oxford', in Thomas Hearne, *Chronici Sive Annalium Prioratus De Dunstaple*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1733), II, 741, 773. Oxford celebrated the northern victory by the Marquis of Newcastle at Adwalton Moor (30 June 1643) on 8 July 1643, for which a special prayer was provided: 'A thanksgiving for His Majesties late great Victory over the Rebells in the North', in *A Collection of Prayers and Thanksgivings*, pp. 5-6. The victory in the West probably refers to Stratton (16 May 1643), Lansdown (5 July 1643) or Roundway Down (13 July 1643). For the Western prayer, see *A Collection*, pp. 6-7. For Parliamentarian condemnation of Oxford thanksgivings, and the Edgehill thanksgiving in particular, see Vicars, *Jehovah-Jireh. God in the Mount* (1644), p. 203. Some royalists criticised the employment of fasts for political purposes, however, arguing that competition between fasts needlessly widened the schism within English society and in itself earned divine correctives: John Eglington Bailey and William Axon eds., *The Collected Sermons of Thomas*

The moral dimension seems to have been advanced at the highest levels at Court. Sir Edward Walker, the King's Secretary of War, for example, was commissioned by the King in 1645 to compile a history of the recent royalist campaign. Walker's text ascribed to providence the preservation of royalist arms which is shadowed by the blessings of heaven during a series of remarkable trials and sufferings that progressively shepherded the faithful towards a more complete union with God. The King is depicted as inspired directly by God at critical moments in the strategic direction of the war, a point highlighted by the publication of excerpts from the sovereign's speeches during the successful campaign in the West Country during the autumn of 1644. The King's objective is national reconciliation facilitated by divine grace and mediated by Charles. His peregrinations are interpreted as a progress intended to bind up wounds and accompanied by the presence of confirmatory mercies. Clearly, then, the Court was required to show that it was as capable as Parliament had shown itself to be, of ordering its affairs to take account of providence for the good of the nation. The high ground of providential discourse was too important to be yielded cheaply, and defeat in war and the fate of the King was to soon demonstrate the consequences of alienating the Almighty.[54]

(v) 1646: The End of the War and the Royalist Rededication of Providence

The King's defeat in war brought the question of a negotiated settlement to the fore. Charles adopted a tough approach during the treaties of Newcastle and Newport in 1646 and 1648 by obstructing proposals to replace episcopacy with presbyterianism. Some royalists like Sir Edward Hyde supported this strategy, which as we have noted was driven by fear that unwarranted concessions would still further alienate God from the King. The sale of bishops' lands, moreover, threatened to implicate the whole land in the sin of sacrilege: the King's duty of care demanded that he refuse to endorse a misguided pragmatism that would prolong current judgments against the nation. Significantly, shortly before his enforced departure from Oxford in April 1646, the King

Fuller, 2 vols (1891), I, Preface, ccccviii-ccccix; *HMC 13th Report, Appendix, Part I: Portland MSS*, p. 241. Edward Hyde, 'Of Sacrilege', in *A Collection of Several Tracts*, pp. 211-2.

[54] Walker, *Historical Collections*, pp. 3-4, 6, 10, 44-5, 84, 96 *passim*.

vowed to return to the Church all alienated crown impropriations and Chapter lands should God choose to restore his authority, and he appealed to the Almighty to respond to this solemn commitment by blessing his future undertakings and reversing his singular ill-fortune.[55] This was far from being an isolated example of the King's concern to respond to the effects of divine judgments and mercies, Charles having initiated a solemn and private annual remembrance on the anniversary of Edgehill, a battle which appears to have held a special significance for him, and a weekly service held every Tuesday, possibly to atone for the death of Strafford.[56]

Following his flight from Oxford, Charles opened negotiations with the Scots, to whom he had surrendered in May 1646. The King rejected demands that he abandon episcopacy and embrace the Covenant and presbyterianism, which he argued was inimical to monarchy. Charles argued that his defeat in war was due in part to earlier examples of his surrender of principle to convenience, namely his acceptance of Strafford's attainder and the surrender of bishops' votes in the Lords, actions which the King thought had received their deserved punishment from God at Marston Moor and Naseby. The revelation of Glamorgan's commission that came to light with the publication by Parliament of *The King's Cabinet Opened* in the aftermath of Naseby in June 1645, also seriously damaged Charles's reputation because it showed he was willing to treat with Irish rebels, despite his protestations to the contrary, and risk contracting their providential blood-guilt. Further compromise, particularly over episcopacy, was certain to provoke God into issuing additional judgments against the royal cause.[57] Conscience demanded that Charles remain true to his word and anyway, he asked, 'how can we expect God's blessing, if we relinquish his Church?'.[58] Instead, the King chose to rely upon a miraculous providence that would divide his opponents among themselves, a 'wait and see' strategy not without its merits considering the spirit

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[55] The vow is reprinted in Vernon Staley, *The Life and Times of Gilbert Sheldon* (1913), p. 42.

[56] 'Sir Edward Lake's Account of His Interviews with Charles I' ed., T. P. Langmead, *Camden Miscellany* vol. 4 (1859), p. 14. On Tuesday services, see Thomas Fuller, 'Jacob's Vow', in Bailey and Axon eds., *Sermons of Thomas Fuller*, I, 405-32, and the note by the editors on the origins of the Tuesday observance in their introduction, ccccix-ccccx; *Aulicus*, vol. 3, p. 103.

[57] King to Queen Henrietta Maria, 19 Feb. 1646, 30 November 1646 in John Bruce ed., *Charles I in 1646*, *Camden Society* o.s. 63 (1856), pp. 18-20, 80-81. On the Glamorgan embassy, see S. R. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War, 1642-1649*, 4 vols (1901), III, Chapter 39.

[58] *Cl SP*, II, 248-9.

of rancour now characterising relations between presbyterians, Independents and the New Model Army.[59]

For their part, the Queen, and Charles's close servants, Henry Jermyn and John Ashburnham argued that the King's proud and stubborn refusal to accept his defeat was endangering the royalist cause by encouraging a more violent sectarian reaction. It was better that the King negotiate now with moderate parliamentarians in England and Scotland and even yield temporary strategic concessions if it ensured his longer term survival. In holding out for the best possible terms, the King risked presumptuous over-reliance upon the intervention of a miracle to save the crown.[60]

Nevertheless, the decision by the King to take a hard-line position in negotiations was consistent with the voices at Oxford from the mid-1640s that had warned against a precipitous agreement of peace terms with the enemy by the Oxford Parliament.[61] George Wilde cautioned the Parliament there against the dangers of bartering away 'the Glory of Gods House, to buy the Peace of your Own', arguing that negotiations which were not guaranteed by force, risked the imposition of an unjust peace and the punishment by God of those apparently unwilling to defend His Church.[62] In another sermon to the Oxford Parliament, Paul Gosnold similarly defended a policy of fighting and praying. Denial of the useful secondary means, which God provided for the defence of the cause, represented a dangerous presumption of the willingness of the Almighty to intervene directly to effect a miraculous rescue of the royalists.[63] Griffith Williams, bishop of Ossory, and a hard-line defender of episcopacy, also warned the Commons at Oxford that peace was impossible if it meant innovation in Church government, arguing that God would not be appeased until an account was made for all the innocent blood shed so far in the war.[64]

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[59] Ibid., 274.

[60] Ibid., 207, 261-4.

[61] The Oxford Parliament appears to have been a moderate body closely aligned with Constitutionalists at Court like Edward Hyde: David Smith, *Constitutional Royalism*, p. 117.

[62] George Wilde, *A Sermon . . . Upon Sunday the Third of March in St Mary's Oxford, Before . . . The Honourable House of Commons* (Oxford, 1644), BL TT E 36 (12), quotation: p. 28, unjust peace, pp. 1-9. On Wilde, see Lloyd, *Memoires*, pp. 622-3.

[63] Paul Gosnold, *A Sermon . . . at the Publique Fast the ninth day of August 1644* (Oxford, n/d), p. 16.

[64] Griffith Williams, *A Sermon . . . at the Publique Fast the eighth of March . . . before . . . the Honourable House of Commons* (Oxford, 1644), BL TT E 46 (1), pp. 34-6.

Henry Hammond, meanwhile, extolled the value of a purity and innocence of suffering that avoided compromising the integrity of religious fundamentals, while a preference for submission to affliction instead of surrender to sin was the message of Brian Duppa at a crucial juncture in the Newport negotiations in 1648.[65] The moderate Henry Ferne also told an audience at Newport that the royalists could not rely on the support of God if they surrendered their innocence by compromising episcopacy in peace negotiations with the opposition, or indeed if they failed to initiate their own programme of reformation to overcome home-grown sins. The righteous often suffered alongside the sinful: by this means they might be refined and grow closer to God. Dependence upon the Lord, repentance for former indiscretions and a spirit of humiliation rather than irreligious compromise, were the most effective means for the royalists to recover their fortunes. Moreover, the captivity of the King from 1646 provoked many one-time adversaries to switch sides, making possible the second civil war. This conservative reaction reinforced the King's preference for principled negotiation. The sacred quality of the King's body, now abused by his confinement, and the integrity of his precious reputation, undermined by rumours of his implication in the death of James I circulating throughout 1648, contrived a rededication of the providential credentials of royalism in that year, centred upon a renewed emphasis on protecting the Church. Providence would watch over the soldiers brave enough to vindicate this cause. The least the King could do was to avoid disappointing this encouragingly broad coalition by surrendering to the Newport demands. The terms of the Army *Remonstrance* in November 1648 alienated still further those conservative presbyterians appalled at the prospect of the arraignment of the anointed. In the words of William Prynne, 'we have a God to please, who will be displeased if we please the Army in their unjust demands', and Charles probably calculated that in such circumstances, men like Prynne would be more willing to accept a retention of limited episcopacy.[66]

[65] Hammond, 'A Lent Sermon at Oxford, 1645', in *The Works of . . . Hammond*, vol. 4, pp. 518-20; Duppa, *The Soules Soliloquie* (1648), BL TT E 472 (1), pp. 10-12. On such sentiments, see Raymond Anselment, *Loyalist Resolve: Patient Fortitude in the English Civil War* (London, Toronto and Newark, 1988).

[66] Henry Ferne, *A Sermon . . . At the Publique Fast . . . Before the . . . House Of Commons* (Oxford, 1644), BL TT E 46 (5), pp. 23-5. On innocence, see Ferne's remarks in *A Sermon . . . Before His Majesty at*

The King's rediscovery of principle appealed to long-standing supporters like the redoubtable minister Edward Symmons, who accompanied Hyde and the Prince of Wales to the south west in 1645. According to Symmons, the King dared not yield to demands of episcopacy for fear of consequent divine judgments made worse by the unrepentant profaneness exhibited by the current generation of cavaliers. 'Wickedness', he complained, is rather 'a matter of laughter than of sorrow'. Hyde's support of the King's negotiating position was similarly made easier by his exile in Jersey that removed him from the uncomfortable realities faced by those politicians closer to the front line of debate. Hyde's influence at this point was limited by his distance from Court, but nevertheless his post-war warning that surrender to temptation would risk the rebuke of heaven was consistent with his deep commitment to preserving the constitutional integrity of the Church of England: a commitment that became especially important after 1649, as we shall see in Chapter Three. God had declared against the recent international trend Hyde had observed, which had subordinated religion to the convenience of policy. Hyde acknowledged his 'honest', principled approach of depending upon providence instead of pragmatism was unpopular with many royalists and was disparaged as 'now called expecting miracles'. Yet Hyde argued that it was surely 'more miraculous that God should not only pardon, but reward a desertion of those rules of conscience and honour . . . than that he should preserve and restore by the exercise of conscience, courage and constancy'. Furthermore, he concurred with Secretary of State, Sir Edward Nicholas, that those who preserved their innocence during this difficult time would in due course find their steadfastness rewarded by providence. Hyde anticipated God's judgments upon the actors of the war, but

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Newport . . . November the 29 1648 (1649), pp. 10-11, 14-15, 17-20; *Certain Prayers . . . to be used in His Majesties Armies* (1648), BL TT E 1146 (5), pp. 4, 7, 14-17; *The Declaration of Sir Marmaduke Langdale* (1648), BL TT E 446 (17); *Rombus. The Moderator: Or the King Restored* (1648), BL TT E 446 (26); *Treasons Anatomie* (1648), BL TT E 427 (24); *A Brief Discourse of the Present Miseries of the Kingdome* (1648), BL TT E 467 (24); William Sedgwick, *Justice upon the Armie Remonstrance* (1648), BL TT E 475 (34), pp. 1, 4, 10-11, 20, 46; *The Substance of a Speech Made in the House of Commons by William Prynne* (1648), BL TT E 539 (12), p. 89. See editions of the royalist newsbooks *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, *Mercurius Elencticus* and *Mercurius Melancholicus* threatening divine punishment of the King's persecutors, for example BL TT E 537 (19), 466 (8), 469 (10). On the negotiations at Newport, see for example, *His Majesties Finall Answer Concerning Episcopacie* (1648), BL TT E 469 (17); *His Majesties Paper Containing severall Questions . . . Touching Episcopacy* (1648), BL TT E 466 (6); *His Majesties Message to the Parliament* (1648), BL TT E 470 (27). For an overview of the royalist revival, see Robert Ashton, *Counter-Revolution: The Second Civil War and its Origins, 1646-8* (New Haven and London, 1994), Chapter 6. On the King's body, see Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (Princeton, 1957).

significantly, made peace dependent upon 'equal judgments upon the atheism of those, who have been enemies enough to the Rebellion', namely his erstwhile colleagues among the royalists.[67]

Hyde's beliefs concerning the value of preserving innocence in the face of persecution and suffering were articulated in more detail in his private devotional compiled during exile, entitled *Contemplations and Reflections upon the Psalms of David*. Hyde contrasts the simplicity of the Christian ideal of innocence with the labyrinthine intricacies of a Machiavellian reason of state characterised by conspiracy, slander and the exercise of power for its own sake. Hyde's central point is that the devout must be prepared to risk danger of capture, the seizure of estates or exile from family and friends in their defence of principles. Duty to God, Hyde says, admits to no considerations of hazard, convenience, or danger, and he feared that the profitability of the opposition's immorality and wickedness would constitute a dangerous attraction to lazy, weak or cynical royalists willing to find excuses rather than submit to these inconveniences. Hyde believed the royalists were guilty in such circumstances of either over-reliance on force of arms to engineer a rescue, or at the opposite extreme, a fatalistic dependence on God to provide an extraordinary deliverance. The royalists had to do all they lawfully could to bring about a change of government. If this policy should fail, Hyde argues, then the individual royalist should accept destruction rather than participate in the dismantling of the Church.[68]

(vi) Towards Regicide: Royalist Martyrdom and the Eikon Basilike

Charles's Passion and martyrdom immediately raised to a position of unassailable and unimpeachable authority his deeply held beliefs concerning the value of public service, the unnegotiable obligations of religious oaths, and the Christian virtues

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[67] Symmons, *A Vindication*, Epistle; *ClSP*, II, 237, 284-90, 292-3, 306-10, 317-19, 326, 332-3.

[68] 'Contemplations', pp. 405, 412-13, 418, 420, 424-5. Hyde, 'Of Patience in Adversity', in *A Collection*, pp. 120-7. See the similar response of Robert Sanderson to defeat: the necessity for piety, meekness, patience, obedience and humility in the face of disaster, the need to avoid blaming God for the King's overthrow, the placing of an absolute trust in the Almighty to engineer a deliverance, and the promise by God to rescue the righteous at the moment of greatest danger to them, William Jacobson ed., *The Works of Robert Sanderson*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1854), I, 354-73, 396, *passim*.

of self-sacrifice and magnanimity in the face of adversity: a necessary dependence upon, and surrender to, the providential imperative. Charles's 'altruism' was rehearsed in the trials and execution of numerous royalist sufferers during the 1640s, and imperfectly mirrored subsequently by another generation of royalist martyrs during the 1650s such as Sir Henry Slingsby.[69] This reflected the greater willingness of royalists to draw upon the native tradition of protestant martyrology: conscious of their role as self-appointed guardians of lawful authority, and of their status as underdogs throughout the latter stages of the war, royalists were able to comfort themselves with the knowledge that God protected the afflicted and vindicated the righteous. The King's death contrived to make royalist providentialism for the first time a convincing rival philosophy in the market place of ideas against its now state-sponsored alternative. But while parliamentarians could draw upon the example of an extraordinary series of battlefield mercies as evidence of God's approbation, their opponents relied upon the record of the King's sufferings, immortalised with the speedy publication of *Eikon Basilike*, to provide consolation in the value of the purging and refining effects of affliction as a precondition for peace.[70]

National figures such as Laud and Strafford, and lesser royalists like Robert Yeomans and George Boucher, the Bristol men charged with conspiring to surrender the city to the King in 1643, and Sir George Lisle and Sir Charles Lucas, executed following the surrender of Colchester in 1648, provided accessible if not always ideal material for royalists anxious to construct a countervailing theory of the accumulation of parliamentarian blood guilt. While few royalists were willing to counter the wave of anti-Laudian polemic that followed the death of the archbishop and that portrayed his demise as divine justice against idolatry, the ghost of Strafford, however, exercised a proportionally greater influence by strengthening the King's resolve in the wake of defeat in 1646. Charles regretted his acceptance of Strafford's attainder in 1641, though

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[69] Parsons ed., *Diary of Sir Henry Slingsby.*

[70] 'Eikon Basilike', in *The Works of King Charles the Martyr* (1687); Francis Falconer Madan, *A New Bibliography of the Eikon Basilike* (Oxford, 1950). Charles I exemplified the best qualities of David, Solomon and Moses (soldier, wise man and innocent) according to Gilbert Sheldon in 1660: 'David's Deliverance and Thanksgiving. A sermon before the King at Whitehall, 28 June 1660', in Staley, *Gilbert Sheldon*, pp. 217-64; 'Contemplations', p. 415. See Patricia Crawford, 'Charles Stuart, That Man of Blood', *JBS*, 16 (1977); Helen W. Randall, 'The Rise and Fall of a Martyrology: Sermons on Charles I', *HLQ*, 10 (1946-7); Byron S. Stewart, 'The Cult of the Royal Martyr', *Church History*, 38 (1969)

one needs to take care to distinguish between perhaps this genuine remorse felt by the King at the surrender and destruction of a loyal minister, and the rather idealised formula employed by *Eikon Basilike* and Restoration histories, depicting the King's subsequent humiliation and contrition. In this sense, Strafford exercised one important final function even in death: to help reconstruct Charles's posthumous reputation as a man conscious of the consequences of immorality.[71]

The *Eikon Basilike* mythologised the King as an archetype of devotion and piety, engaging in a retrospective justification of his conduct, as its critics like Milton were quick to point out. Charles's own contribution to the exercise was probably substantial, however, and motivated by a genuine desire for atonement as well as to influence the future conduct of his son and justify his actions for posterity in the face of hostile commentary. The King acknowledged that his sins 'sometimes prevailed against the justice of my cause', and reiterated the commonplace that dependence upon God and not the arm of flesh is the route to material prosperity and spiritual contentment. Charles made a virtue of his weakness as an ideal purgative for vice, but also petitioned God to punish his tormentors. In doing so, the King depicted himself as better suited to honour providences than his rivals, for example by using mercies as a springboard for national reconciliation rather than an excuse for war. This 'trustworthiness' and responsibility with the sober interpretation of providences was clearly viewed by Charles a central attribute of kingship, and *Eikon Basilike* was also evidently a celebration of the unique importance of the institution in negotiating with God in the national interest. Kings were the chief debtors for the sins of the people, intermediaries and buffers separating the

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[71] Bristol sufferers, see Samuel Sever ed., *Memoirs Historical and Topographical of Bristol and Its Neighbourhood* (Bristol, 1821) pp. 349-81; *Aulicus*, vol. 1, p. 342; Heath, *A New Book*, pp. 84-6, 98, 105; Colchester: *The Triumph of Loyalty* (1648), BL TT E 463 (3), pp. 15-18, 22; *An Elegie, On the most Barbarous, Unparallel'd . . . Murder* (1648), BL TT E 465 (1); *The Cruell Tragedy Or Inhumane Butchery of Hamor and Shechem* (1648), BL TT E 462 (30), pp. 10, 15. On Laud, see *Aulicus*, vol. 3, p. 392; Sir Edward Hyde condemned the 'murder' of Laud and anticipated God's judgment against it: *Cl SP*, II, 328-9. St. John's College MS 261, 'A Sermon Preachd in St. Mary's Oxon, pp. 9-15; Lloyd, *Memoires*, p. 231; Heylyn, *Cyprianus*, p. 529. Anti-Laud, see Joshua Hoyle, *Jehojadahs Justice Against Mattan, Baals Priest* (1645), BL TT E 25 (15). Strafford: King to Henrietta Maria, 30 November 1646, in 'Charles I in 1646', pp. 79-82; *A Brief Discourse*, E 467, pp. 20-23; Sir Philip Warwick, *Memoirs of the Reign of King Charles the First* (Edinburgh and London, 1813) p. 178; Lloyd, *Memoires*, p. 249; Walker, *Historical Collections*, p. 269. Lois Potter, *Secret rites and secret writing. Royalist Literature, 1641-1660* (Cambridge, 1989) pp. 157-210.

sinful from divine justice.[72] The King's Book should not, therefore, be dismissed as an unreliable and cynical exercise in rehabilitating Charles by its editor, Dr Gauden. The King's speeches, for example, also show that he was conscious throughout the 1640s of the power of providentialism to move audiences: defending his own honour and God's as part of the same indistinguishable struggle that was central to the prosecution of his war. In the aftermath of the November 1648 Army *Remonstrance*, Charles again reiterated his submission to God and willingness to follow providence and bear the cross of Christ. When viewed in this wider context, then, the *Eikon* cannot be understood as a mere propaganda exercise bearing no relation to the real personality of Charles, but a genuine representation of his weaknesses and at least one important aspect of his complex character: the desire to honour providence and thereby realise the dignity of his office.[73]

Other royalist commentators compared Charles's sufferings to Christ's. Sir William Dugdale and Hopton's chaplain, Richard Watson, for example, were impressed by the King's fortitude in his condemned days, a time when 'the great hand of God [was] eminently at work'. Tortured by rebellion, misrepresented and slandered by his enemies, 'sold' by the Scots, tempted by the rewards of relinquishing the true Church, his internment and demise were accompanied by signs and wonders ranging from the miraculous curative properties of his blood to a flight of ducks vacating St James's Park in order to intercept the Whitehall scaffold. The sins of every man, but especially guilty cavaliers, were to blame for God having taken away the King, and ominously, it was said that just as the Almighty had removed Josiah for the sins of Judah, so now there was 'nothing [to] hinder the stroke of his vengeance'. Royalists and rebels alike had 'smote God himself in the face', and monumental consequences were predicted.

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[72] 'Eikonoklastes', in Don Wolfe et al, *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 8 vols (New Haven and London, 1953-1982), III. *Eikon Basilike*, pp. 273-324; on kings as debtors, see Robert Weldon, *The Doctrine of the Scriptures concerning the Original of Dominion* (1648), BL TT E 521 (2), pp. 135, 147, 159.

[73] 'Three speeches', in *Somers Tracts*, VI, 478-83; *A Speech Delivered By the Kings Most Excellent Majesty* (Oxford, 1643), BL TT E 84 (27); *His Majesties Speech* (Oxford, 1643), BL TT E 84 (43); *CI SP*, II, 189-90; *His Majesties Declaration concerning the Remonstrance of the Army* (1648), BL TT E 473 (20), p. 2; *His Majesties Queries Upon the Remonstrance* (1648), BL TT E 473 (30); Charles Petrie ed., *The Letters, Speeches and Proclamations of King Charles I* (1968), pp. 144-7, 154, 162, 174, 261-73.

However, it remained to be seen exactly how the exiled Charles II, and more importantly, the Almighty, would respond to this revolutionary challenge.[74]

This chapter has highlighted the particular concerns of royalist providentialism, helping to rectify an over-emphasis on its parliamentarian equivalent. An impression of the Court or royalist ranks as less disciplined and more willing to provoke heaven with its sins, than Parliament's forces, is not without foundation. Why otherwise would the Court have been so concerned at curbing such excess? Perhaps also, it was feared that Parliament's misapplication of providentialism, for example through the calling of 'false fasts', was damaging royalist faith in an interventionist deity, a concept quickly becoming associated with the politics of 'rebellion' and 'sacrilege'; hence the need to 'rescue' the doctrine from its abusers by stressing the inscrutability of the divine will. Usefully, this contributed to the campaign by the royalists to be seen as the guardians of the historical integrity of English protestantism against unwarranted innovation. Anti-royalist propaganda helped prejudice public opinion against the King, though Charles heightened this distrust through his own actions, such as the Glamorgan embassy to Ireland. Perhaps towards the end of his life, Charles, liberated from the burden of a multiplicity of competing moral choices characterising wartime command, was able to act in a manner closer to his true character, and the King was exhilarated by the opportunity provided by defeat to affirm the dignity of his office and celebrate its providential basis. This was a profoundly pragmatic, not impractical, development since further compromise in negotiations could only alienate the Almighty still further. Indeed, the successful outcome to the Newport treaty, though negated by the Army's putsch, was a testament to how close this strategy came to fruition. It is to the legacy of this principled retreat that we now turn.[75]

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[74] Hamper ed., *Dugdale*, p. 218; Richard Watson, *The Martyrdom of King Charles, Or his Conformity with Christ in his Sufferings* (The Hague, 1649), pp. 6-7, 11-12, 17-19, 21-4; William Juxon, *The Subjects Sorrow . . . Upon the Death of Britaines Josiah* (1649), BL TT E 546 (16), pp. 12, 16, 18-19; Henry Leslie, *The Martyrdome of King Charles* (1649), BL TT E 569 (10), pp. 6-7, 12, 16, 21; *The Teares of Sion Upon the Death of Josiah* (1649), BL TT E 560 (18), pp. 12, 15; *The Scotch Souldiers Lamentation Upon the Death of . . . King Charles* (1649), BL TT E 560 (15), pp. 9, 13-17, 19-21; *A Miracle of Miracles* (1649), BL TT E 563 (2); *Mercurius Elencticus*, April 1649, BL TT E 550 (15), pp. 1-2; *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, June 1649, BL TT E 560 (19). Bod. Sancroft MS 118, fols 16-45.
[75] On Glamorgan, see above, p. 25.

Chapter Three: Royalist Providentialism During the 1650s

The preceding chapter outlined some of the characteristics of royalist providentialism, focussing as it did upon describing the crying sins of the parliamentarians that included sacrilege and rebellion, and its own positive contribution stressing the central role of the King and the established Church in God's scheme. It endorses a broadly sympathetic reading of Charles's conduct in which the King's intransigence in the course of negotiations can to some extent be explained by his desire to honour providence, as can his self-sacrifice in 1649, commemorated in the *Eikon Basilike* that incorporated a pattern for future royalist conduct in the face of defeat. This chapter will explore the divisions within the exiled Court following the regicide in 1649. These were a continuation of the fractured royalist politics of the late 1640s between 'Old Royalists' led by the Chancellor of the Exchequer Sir Edward Hyde and his friends and allies such as Sir Edward Nicholas and Ralph, Lord Hopton, and the so-called Louvre party, based at the Court of Queen Henrietta Maria in Paris. At the heart of this dispute over royalist tactics lay the question of whether the royalists ought to abandon support for episcopacy and other religious and constitutional fundamentals in a bid to acquire the support of the Scottish presbyterian leadership. The Louvre party broadly endorsed such a strategy while Hyde and his colleagues fought a rear-guard action to defend Charles I's legacy, arguing that this unprincipled approach risked hardening and intensifying evident divine displeasure against the royalists.[1]

[1] This chapter is based largely on two sets of sources: records of the Scots' presbyterians with whom Charles II reached agreement during 1650; and the correspondence of Hyde, Nicholas, Ormonde, Christopher, Lord Hatton, Richard Watson and other 'moral fundamentalists', drawn from the Clarendon and Carte MSS in the Bodleian Library and from the British Library. The correspondence of the Louvre party, such as Grenville, is more widely dispersed and less comprehensive, which helps explain the generally anti-Louvre party sentiment reflected in the principal accounts. The Louvre party was not as amoral as the correspondence suggests, nor the Hyde interest as singularly selfless as its apologetics imply. Many of the most important letters concerning the exiled Court have been reproduced in modern editions: *Cl SP*; George F. Warner ed., *The Nicholas Papers*, 4 vols, *Camden Society* n.s. 40-3rd series 31 (1886-1920); Thomas Carte ed., *A Collection of Original Letters and Papers, Concerning the Affairs of England. From the Year 1641 to 1660*, 2 vols (1739). I have also drawn heavily on certain published and unpublished texts, such as Hyde's 'Contemplations and Reflections Upon the Psalms of David' in *A Collection of Several Tracts of the . . . Earl of Clarendon* (1727). For the general narrative history of the Louvre party and of the Court during the 1650s, see Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion* ed. by W. Dunn Macray (Oxford, 1888), vols 5-6; Keith Feiling, *A History of the Tory Party, 1640-1714* (Oxford, 1970); Paul Hardacre, 'The royalists in exile during the puritan revolution, 1642-1660', *HLQ*, 16 (1953) and *The Royalists During the Puritan Revolution* (The Hague, 1956); Ronald Hutton, *Charles the Second*

(i) Historiography

Scholarly enquiry into the role of providentialism at Court during the 1650s has been fragmentary. Richard Ollard has furnished the most important accounts in two recent biographies of Charles II and Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon. Ollard has reconstructed Hyde's circle of exiles, the so-called 'Old Royalists', and described their preferred strategy of seeking the overthrow of the republic without compromising the royalists' basic integrity. Keith Feiling and David Smith, who have highlighted the fear that God would reject the royalist cause if it were to abandon the pillars of the constitution, meanwhile, have explored briefly the Constitutionalist antipathy to a Scottish presbyterian treaty in the aftermath of the regicide. Bosher and Packer's studies of the defeated royalists, moreover, have examined the theme of royalist fortitude in the face of divine judgments, identifying uncompromising 'Laudian' defenders of the Church of England like Henry Hammond, Gilbert Sheldon, William Sancroft and Jeremy Taylor, with Hyde's party in exile: both sought to prevent the dilution of the legacy of Charles I and thus avoid alienating the Almighty. With the exception of Ollard, whose study is wide ranging, no scholar has explored the contribution of providentialism to this contemporary debate in any systematic and specific way. It is not proposed here to duplicate Ollard's analysis in its entirety, but to focus upon one aspect of his work that needs developing in greater detail: Hyde's hostility to a treaty with the Scottish presbyterians he believed might jeopardise the royalists' already fragile relationship with their divine sponsor. It will be suggested that just as providentialism proved to be a unifying philosophy for the New Model Army during the late 1640s and early 1650s, it constituted a point of contention and conflict between royalists divided over alternative strategies for recovering political power in England, a strategic confusion that did nothing to contribute to the successful early restoration of the King.[2]

(Oxford, 1989); Richard Ollard, *The Image of the King: Charles I and Charles II* (1979); Eva Scott, *The King in Exile: The Wanderings of Charles II from June 1646 to July 1654* (1905); David Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracy in England, 1649-1660* (New Haven, 1960).

[2] Richard Ollard, *The Image*, pp. 54-99, 103-127; *idem.*, *Clarendon and His Friends* (1987), pp. 123-212; R. W. Harris, *Clarendon and the English Revolution* (1983), pp. 189-223; David Smith, *Constitutional Royalism and the Search for Settlement, c. 1640-1649* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 259-89; Feiling, *Tory Party*, pp. 77-86; John W. Packer, *The Transformation of Anglicanism, 1643-1660* (Manchester, 1969), Preface;

(ii) The Factions

The Louvre party's philosophy of action appealed to the young Charles II anxious for military glory, and relied upon Queen Henrietta Maria as a source of inspiration and of material support via the pension she received from the French government. Its leading figures included the Queen's Secretary, Henry Jermyn, George Villiers, the 2nd Duke of Buckingham and the childhood companion of Charles II; Henry Percy, the younger son of the Earl of Northumberland, and Lord Chamberlain; Robert Long, Charles II's Secretary; Sir Richard Grenville, a veteran of the Irish wars and parliamentarian turncoat; John Culpepper, now an ambassador to Russia and Holland, and Sir John Berkeley, Governor to the Duke of York. Among its ranks were some notable opponents of Edward Hyde from the 1640s, like Grenville, but it was broad and inclusive enough to attract friends such as Berkeley, and even, for a time, Ormonde.[3]

In a sense, it was a party held together less by any ideological agreement and more by the absence of ideological conviction. Several of its adherents, including Jermyn and Culpepper, had significantly tried to persuade Charles I to accept the conditions that were placed before him at Newcastle and at Newport after the conclusion of the first and second civil wars. These demanded the imposition of some form of presbyterian church government and the sale of Dean and Chapter lands, whose loss the King believed would constitute sacrilege with the threat of God's consequent punishment of the royal cause for its acquiescence in sinful conduct.[4]

Robert Bosher, *The Making of the Restoration Settlement: The Influence of the Laudians, 1649-62* (1951), pp. 27-38, 55.

[3] For evidence that Ormonde was, for a time, associated with the Louvre, see *The Nicholas Papers* I, 221, 225, and an extract from *Mercurius Politicus* contained within a newsletter sent to Nicholas, in Carte, *A Collection* I, 420, and Ormonde's reassurance to Nicholas of the falseness of this article, but admission that a more flexible and pragmatic approach by the Court was necessary to take advantage of divisions within the Commonwealth, Carte, *A Collection* I, 427-33.

[4] *Cl SP*, II, 248-9, 261-6, 425-44, 448-9; George, Earl of Ashburnham ed., *A Narrative by John Ashburnham of his Attendance on King Charles the First from Oxford to the Scotch Army, and from Hampton-Court to the Isle of Wight*, 2 vols (1830); John Bruce ed., *Charles I in 1646*, *Camden Society* o.s. 63 (1856), pp. 18-20, 79-82; J. G. Fotheringham ed., *The Diplomatic Correspondence of Jean de Montereul*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1898-9), I, 104, 106-7, 212, 219, 307; Henry Cary ed., *Memorials of the Great Civil War in England from 1646 to 1652*, 2 vols (1842), II, 65.

The Louvre envisaged a temporary accommodation with hard-line Scots' Covenanters led by the Marquess of Argyll who had been installed by Cromwell after the defeat of the more moderate Engagers, led by the Marquess of Hamilton, at the battle of Preston in 1648. The Scots insisted that Charles subscribe to the Covenants, promise to introduce Scottish-style presbyterianism into England, prosecute the anti-recusancy laws and commit himself to the wholesale purge of the Court and the replacement of the King's servants by their own appointees.[5]

The Louvre faction were pragmatists prepared to endorse temporary strategic alliances with former adversaries in order to restore the King. This *Realpolitik* mirrored that aspect of Charles I's character that had lost him the support of many otherwise faithful Englishmen who could not accept his assurances that once restored to his full rights, he would honour the spirit of any agreements made with erstwhile rebels.[6] The Louvre interest were therefore prepared to justify a flexible view of the operation of providence in which ends justified means and were associated with the circle of philosophers and poets in 1640s Paris sponsored by the exiled royalists Sir Charles Cavendish and his brother William, the Earl, and later Marquess, of Newcastle. This group included such luminaries as the philosophers Hobbes and Pierre Gassendi and the poet William Davenant. The significance of the Cavendish group in the context of the exiled Court lay in its neo-epicurean philosophy, which was consonant with the political style of the Louvre. The epicurean philosophy was characterised by a denial of providence, and by the belief that a disinterested God ignores human virtue and vice. When judged by these criteria, Hyde's plan to curry favour with the Almighty on behalf of the royalist party was both futile and unprofitable. Royalist success would instead depend exclusively upon mundane necessity: upon the royalists' martial preparedness, its ability to conclude successful alliances and upon its political acumen. Not that Hyde, of course, denied the importance of these means, but he *did* argue that they were not

[5] On the circumstances of Argyll's rise, and the defeat of the Engagers, see David Stevenson, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Scotland, 1644-51* (1977), pp. 97-125; Stevenson, *The Covenanters: The National Covenant and Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1988), pp. 55-6; F. D. Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland, 1651-1660* (Edinburgh, 1979), Introduction: 'Scotland's Relations with England, 1637-1651', pp. 2-12.

[6] Cardinal Mazarin's agent in England, Jean de Montereul, noted this climate of brinkmanship: *Montereul* I, pp. 39-40. See above, p. 25 on the Glamorgan embassy and the breakdown in trust. On the argument that Charles II and the Louvre had inherited the policy of insincere concession, see Ollard, *The Image*, p. 75.

enough in themselves to guarantee the return of the King. Only a providential component to royalist politics could bring about that objective.[7]

It is clear that some advocates of neo-epicureanism, such as Gassendi, strove to disassociate themselves from this denial of providence, while Hyde praised Sir Charles Cavendish's steadfast refusal to compromise his conscience by compounding with the enemy.[8] Nevertheless, its broadly sceptical temper and acknowledgment that chance might play a part in settling human affairs undoubtedly chimed with the prevailing mood at Court following the regicide. This favoured a break with the obstinate moralism of Charles I's final years which had prevented a life-saving deal with the presbyterians in Parliament, and instead sought to employ exclusively utilitarian criteria in the selection of allies and in the formulation of policy. In a sense, Charles had been too inadequate a politician to make a success of Machiavellian policies such as the Glamorgan embassy to Ireland or the Engagement with Hamilton in 1647: conscience had no place in the politics of the smoke-filled room. While his providentialism converged with the Army's in 1648-9, Charles II's was progressively divergent and less narrowly defined. The incomparable sin of regicide had caused God to take off the gloves and as a result some embittered royalists probably felt less inhibited speculating about quite novel expedients, including authorising temporary presbyterianism as the price for peace.[9]

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[7] Helen Hervey, 'Hobbes and Descartes in the Light of Some Unpublished Letters of the Correspondence between Sir Charles Cavendish and Dr John Pell' in *Osiris*, 10 (1952); Kathleen Jones, *A Glorious Fame: The Life of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, 1623-1673* (1988); Robert Hugh Kargon, *Atomism in England from Hariot to Newton* (Oxford, 1966); Richard Kroll, *The Material World: Literate Culture in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore and London, 1991); Thomas Mayo, *Epicurus in England, 1650-1725* (Southwest Press, 1934); Margaret Osler ed., *Atoms, pneuma, and tranquility: Epicurean and Stoic Themes in European Thought* (Cambridge, 1991), esp. Ch. 8: 'Fortune, Fate, and Divination: Gassendi's voluntarist theology and the baptism of Epicureanism'; *idem.*, *Divine Will and the Mechanical Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1994); L. Sarasohn, 'The Ethical and Political Philosophy of Pierre Gassendi', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 20 (1982); *idem.*, 'Motion and Morality: Pierre Gassendi, Thomas Hobbes and the Mechanical World View', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 46 (1985); Charles Kay Smith, 'French Philosophy and English Politics in Interregnum Poetry', in R. Malcolm Smuts ed., *The Stuart Court and Europe: Essays in Politics and Political Culture* (Cambridge, 1996); Geoffrey Trease, *Portrait of a Cavalier: William Cavendish, First Duke of Newcastle* (1979). For Newcastle's papers, see HMC *Portland MSS.* Margaret Cavendish's published work provides an insight into the atomism and scepticism of the group. See, for example, *Sociable Letters*, ed. by James Fitzmaurice (New York and London, 1997), *Natures Pictures Drawn by Fancies Pencil* (1656), *The Philosophical and Physical Opinions* (1655). See also R. T. Petersson, *Sir Kenelm Digby: The Ornament of England, 1603-1665* (1956), on Digby's connections with the group, and with Descartes.

[8] On Gassendi's voluntarism and his reassertion of providence, see Osler, 'Fortune, fate, and divination'; *idem.*, *Divine will*, pp. 41-57, 222.

[9] Margaret Cavendish, *The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle*, ed. by Charles Firth (1907), pp. 47, 53-4.

The defeat of the King at Worcester in September 1651, however, undermined this policy, rendering bankrupt the recent alliance with the Scottish presbyterians, with the result that its representatives found themselves progressively marginalised at Court. Charles II instead turned to Hyde and his allies, led by Secretary of State, Sir Edward Nicholas, and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Marquess of Ormonde.[10] Other leading royalists linked with this camp included Ralph, Lord Hopton, a veteran of the Western Campaign during the Civil War; Christopher Hatton, the former Comptroller of the Household; and Richard Steward, Dean of the Chapel Royal.[11] All shared a strong suspicion of the Scots and the Louvre party and feared that an alliance would alienate the Almighty and English public opinion in equal measure. In the words of Joseph Jane, 'it's an ill exchange to gain a kingdom by rooting up religion and piety': presbyterianism threatened to unleash punishment for the sin of Jeroboam in erecting 'altars and priests that had no succession from those God ordained'. Their alternative strategy acknowledged that the royalists first needed to assuage the Almighty if they were to be successful on the battlefield and if they were to win the hearts and minds of Englishmen. They called for a remodelling of royalist statecraft so that it might reflect better the politics of visible and manifest integrity designed to impress both the English nation and God, combining waiting patiently upon the Almighty to sow the seeds of division amongst the ranks of the republicans, with a principled, uncompromising defence of the royalists' core beliefs, especially episcopal government: an exercise in patience, patriotism and providentialism. This switch in tactics was essential, they said, if the Almighty was to endorse the royal cause and effect a restoration. They warned that the royalists would continue to endure misfortune if they insisted on employing sinful or illegitimate means, because it was believed that even a good and just cause could not prosper if it was undertaken in a dishonest or wicked manner, or if it entailed the use of manifestly unjust expedients such as the concession to presbyterianism implicit in the June 1650 treaty with the Scottish presbyterians. Speedy divine justice was eagerly

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[10] Nicholas's Secretaryship lapsed between 1649 and 1654. See Donald Nicholas, *Mr Secretary Nicholas (1593-1669): His Life and Letters* (1955); Thomas Carte, *The Life of James, Duke of Ormond*, 6 vols (Oxford, 1851). On the increasing importance of Ormonde and Hyde in the counsels of the King after Worcester, see *TSP*, II, 398, 510-11, IV 122, V, 141, 362; Smith, *Constitutional Royalism*, p. 281.
[11] Steward and Hopton died in 1651 and 1652; Hatton retired from public life and returned to England in 1656.

anticipated against the perpetrators of the 'black act' of regicide, better that the otherwise loyal avoided becoming implicated in this apocalyptic intervention by appeasing rebels themselves guilty of rebellion against God and the anointed.[12]

Both the Clarendon and Nicholas papers tend to exaggerate the ideological basis of differences between courtiers, however. The politics of exile were more fluid, the parties less dichotomous, than the accounts of Old Royalists might suggest. Ormonde and Hatton, for example, moved freely in Louvre circles. Confusion also arose over defining the limits of lawful policy, beyond which the royalists would cease to enjoy God's protection. Where exactly did Hyde and his supporters believe the line should be drawn? This is difficult to say with certainty when there existed an unquantifiable gap between rhetoric and action, and when the Old Royalists themselves produced different answers to this question. Ormonde, for example, was more willing to countenance direct action, and to make use of presbyterianism than either Hatton or Hopton's chaplain, Richard Watson. In general, however, the Hyde camp argued that the definition of the pragmatist was he who was prepared to think and act providentially. For surely, an intelligent politician would always seek to praise and please God and to avoid displeasing Him? Hyde was a practical man for whom the most profitable means of effecting beneficial change was to be witness to the lessons of divine providence. Defeat in war seemed to teach that a constant, honourable and patient dependence upon God, and a steadfast defence of constitutional fundamentals was the most efficacious means of appeasing the Almighty. It is to these lessons of war that we now turn.[13]

(iii) The Lessons of War

Following the humiliation of the royalists in the civil wars and the regicide in 1649, there seemed little doubt that the sins of the King's party had in some way caused God great offence. Hyde's response to this was to begin compiling his *History* in 1646. One of its central purposes was to seek an explanation for the failure of the royalist

[12] Ollard, *Clarendon*, pp. 133, 157, 168; Feiling, *Tory Party*, p. 76. It was wrong for the royalists to 'quit the proper ends for preservation only', Hyde quoted in Feiling, p. 77; Cary, *Memorials*, II, 117-8; *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 113, 115, 138, 276.
[13] *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 436; 'Contemplations', pp. 407, 459.

cause, which he partly blamed on a moral vacuum within royalism, and manifested in the form of a dangerous factionalism, particularly in relation to the western campaign of which Hyde had direct experience. Later supporters of the Louvre party like Richard Grenville were singled out for criticism for their contribution to this misguided relativism: in this sense, the *History* was a prospectus for royalist revival based upon a candid assessment of the royalists' weaknesses. Significantly, Hyde's supporters urged the Chancellor during the early 1650s to publish the unfinished manuscript in order to reinforce the current case against the Louvre party by highlighting the parallel with events during the first civil war. Some historians, however, have suggested that the *History* is an unreliable record of Hyde's personal belief, retrospectively exaggerating his reputation for moralism: the *real* Hyde, they counter, was as disingenuous as his Louvre party rivals. This is to overstate the case: Hyde was clearly not as singularly selfish as he has been depicted, and there are strong grounds for believing he was sincere in seeking to promote a reforming agenda during the early 1650s in order that the Court of Charles II tailor its policies to honour providence.[14]

Eikon Basilike, too, undoubtedly proved a useful text for Old Royalists because the importance of the myth of Charles's self-sacrifice lay not so much in what it told contemporaries about the late King, as in the influence the narrative could exert on the direction of policy under Charles II. Its message was that God rewarded kings who defended their consciences resolutely and who adhered to their solemn promises in the face of temptation. It reaffirmed the value of defending innocence and of maintaining an unblemished reputation, and stressed the danger that a conceited royalist party might reach the incorrect assumption that fleshy ingenuity, instead of the power of the Almighty, was sufficient to defeat the Crown's enemies.[15]

For the post-war, post-regicide divisions at Court constituted only the most recent example of intrigue that extended far back into the 1640s. The Old Royalists pointed to what they saw as a continuity of bad advice and faulty reasoning underlying

[14] Bod. Clarendon MS 47 fols 389-90; *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 115, 187, 207; Charles Firth, 'Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*', *EHR*, 19 (1904). Other historians critical of Hyde's motives, include Mark Bence Jones, *The Cavaliers* (1976), and especially Ronald Hutton: 'Clarendon's History of the Rebellion', *EHR*, 97 (1982).

the Crown's political and military decision-making, in particular a war-time propensity to 'defraud' God of His honour by ignoring evidences of divine approbation and disapprobation. This continuity extended to personnel, with the Queen as the common denominator. Henrietta Maria had been blamed for contributing to Charles I's unpopularity and for provoking otherwise loyal subjects to rebel, and she was now charged with undermining Charles II. An indignant deity had punished royalist hypocrisy and insincerity during the 1640s, now only by resisting the temptation to compromise the Church of England for the sake of Scottish presbyterian assistance could the royalists hope to rebuild bridges with the English and with the Almighty. This also meant endorsing the campaign of the Marquess of Montrose in Scotland, 'a man sent from God for to be a chief instrument of the delivery . . . from under the bondage and slavery of those tyrants', but who was now an enemy of the Covenanters. The price of a presbyterian army was the burnt offering of Montrose's head: but at the risk of duplicating Charles I's provocation of God when he had sacrificed Strafford.[16]

The early 1650s represented a moment of truth for the royalists when the exiles would either succeed in convincing God that they merited deliverance, or instead permanently alienate the Almighty in an undignified scramble for power. The royalists' duty was to seek the reconnection of the nation with their God, but were unable to exercise this function while remaining indurate, obstinate and unreformed. Without God's assistance, the King stood little chance of regaining the throne: only by seeking the Lord, and bearing witness to the power of His providence, could the royalists possibly hope to overcome their adversaries. This meant abandoning the policy of reconciliation with Argyll, working to secure moderate Scottish support, and seeking to exploit the heaven-sent unpopularity of the Commonwealth and Protectorate. Exile or imprisonment were preferable to compounding with the enemy and Hyde was evidently concerned that some royalists would rather choose a quiet life and sign the Commonwealth's Engagement than stand outside the protection of the law. In view of

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[15] *Eikon* in William Fulman and Richard Perrinchief eds, *The Works of King Charles the Martyr* (1687); Claire Marie Fowler, 'The Politics of Myth-Making in English Literature, 1640-1658', PhD., Columbia University, 1990, Chapter 3.

[16] *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 186-7, 207, 305, 412, 414, 417, 424, 442; Carte, *A Collection*, I, 412, 434, 442, II, 22; 'Contemplations', pp. 430, 438, 449-50; Bod. Clarendon MS 39 fol. 158v; Bod. Carte MS 130, fol.

this, the preservation of innocence, the eschewing of worldly Machiavellianism, and the profitable and right use of persecution as an aid to reformation, became Hyde's objectives for the royalists during the remainder of the 1650s.[17]

The task of ensuring that royalists learnt to distinguish between religiously lawful and unlawful means for engineering the restoration of the Crown was thus an eminently practical one. Common sense dictated that men should take advantage of the means provided by God. This is shown by Hyde's sanctioning of policies on the margins of legality and propriety, such as the murder in Spain by royalist agents of the Commonwealth's representative, Anthony Ascham, the Chancellor's willingness to entertain the possibility of Cromwell's assassination, and his open-mindedness on the question of an alliance with the Levellers. Hyde's definition of 'legality' was narrow and even sophistic, relating as it did to the rights of the established Church and the role of legitimate parliaments alone to ratify international treaties, such as that envisaged between the Scots and the King. Thus Hyde was able to protect his conscience by insisting that the honouring of the terms of any alliance with the Crown's former opponents in England or Scotland be conditional upon subsequent confirmation by a free and full Parliament. Hyde argued that though the royalists had necessarily to rely upon the Almighty instead of the arm of flesh, they ought to take advantage of opportunities when they arose.[18]

258, 264; Smith, *Constitutional Royalism*, pp. 3-36, 60-61, 259-90, *passim*. Wormald, *Clarendon*, pp. 168-78, 237.

[17] Sir Philip Warwick, *Memoirs of the Reign of King Charles the First* (Edinburgh and London, 1813), Supplement: Memoirs . . . on the State of Affairs after the King's Murder', p. 428. On composition, see Hyde's advice to Sir Charles Cavendish in *The Life of Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1827), I, 294-7; 'Contemplations', pp. 403, 440, 448; *Cl SP*, II, 284, III, 23-4, 26-7, 34-6. On Nicholas's attitude on this subject, see *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 273, 277; BL Egerton MS 2533 fol. 468r; Nicholas, *Mr Secretary Nicholas*, pp. 256, 268, 277. Other royalists, including Buckingham, were also plagued by doubts concerning composition: Bod. Clarendon MS 37 fols 75-6; George D'Oyly, *The Life of William Sancroft* (1840), pp. 24-6, 28-9, 39; George Lewis, *Robert Sanderson* (1924), p. 100, 'The Cases Determined', in William Jacobsen ed., *The Works of Robert Sanderson*, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1854), III; Sir Robert Filmer, 'On the lawfulness of participating in rebel fasts' (Bod. Tanner and Sancroft MSS 233 fols 172-81); Filmer, 'Two Treatises against Rebellion' (Bod. Tanner and Sancroft MS 233 fol. 42). See Perez Zagorin, *A History of Political Thought in the English Revolution* (1954), p. 196; James Daly, *Sir Robert Filmer and English Political Thought* (Toronto, Buffalo and London, 1979), pp. 36-7. H. Egerton Chesney, 'The Transference of Lands in England, 1640-1660', *TRHS*, 4th Series, 15 (1932); H. J. Habakkuk, 'Landowners and the Civil War', *Economic History Review*, 18 (1965).

[18] 'Contemplations', pp. 413, 459; Jason Peacey, 'Order and Disorder in Europe: Parliamentary Agents and Royalist Thugs, 1649-1650', *HJ*, 40 (1997); 'Advises to be considered of upon all occasions of Treaties and Ouvertures', a briefing paper drawn up by Hyde for the King, 30 Sep 1649, in *The Nicholas*

Courtiers were charged with setting a good example to their fellow exiles and their English cousins by acknowledging a 'Religion of the Hand, as well as . . . the Heart', and thus 'make us fit for God's favour'. This involved a concentration on trying to live well according to broad Christian principles instead of by the divisive rule of doctrinal exactness, an objective consistent with the tolerant humanism of Great Tew, of which Hyde had been a member. In this respect, as in others, the anti-Louvre party manifesto constituted a restatement of pre-1640 providentialism: trust in the Almighty, recognition of the attendant weakness of the human vessel, and an acknowledgment of the importance placed by God on a measured and appropriate response to adversity.[19]

Hyde believed the royalists had to wait on God to precipitate the internal collapse of the republic. This would ideally be aided by the English themselves who were to be reassured that the work of the royalists' was now consonant with providence.[20] This meant the avoidance of morally ambiguous and worldly policies which acted as a discouragement of God's assistance, and seeking to preserve the exiled Church of England from the surrender of its independence by joining in communion with French Huguenot congregations. Both Richard Steward, the Dean of the Chapel Royal until his death in 1651, and John Cosin, who administered to protestants at the Queen's Court, strove to preserve the integrity of the Church, for example by the provision of frequent English services in the chapel of Sir Richard Browne, the King's resident in Paris.[21] Cosin, his colleagues like Archdeacon of Northumberland, Isaac Basire, and other exiled churchmen, feared the consequences of a possible defection by fellow sufferers to Roman Catholicism, especially during the Court's residency in Paris, and they were careful to stress the Church's apostolic legitimacy during this difficult period.[22] In England a number of leading clergy such as Henry Hammond and Gilbert Sheldon

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Papers, I, 138-47; Ollard, *Clarendon*, pp. 158-163. On the lessons of providence and patience, see 'Contemplations', pp. 388-9, 391, 399, 415, 418, 421, 430.

[19] Bod. Clarendon MS 41, fol. 176; 'Contemplations', p. 421.

[20] Hyde to Newcastle, 14 Dec 1652 in *HMC Portland MSS*, II, 139; and Hyde to Langdale, 25 May 1657, in *HMC Various Collections*, II, 357; *TSP*, I, 305-6.

[21] E. S. De Beer ed., *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 6 vols (Oxford, 1955), III, 1-54. See S. Elliott Hoskins ed. *Charles the Second in The Channel Islands*, 2 vols (1854), II, 325, for services during the Court's stay in Jersey.

[22] See, for example, Cosin, 'Validity of the Ordination of Priests in the Church of England', 'Regni Angliae Religio Catholica', and correspondence on the danger from Roman Catholicism and the Huguenots, in J. Sansom ed., *The Works of the Rt Rev Father in God John Cosin*, 5 vols (Oxford, 1843-55) IV; Basire, *The Ancient Liberty of the Britannick Church* (1661).

defended employment of the Book of Common Prayer in the face of calls for a flexible use of the liturgy during a time of persecution: providence on the contrary demanded an unwavering commitment to maintaining such fundamentals. Indeed, Hammond argued that God's continuing displeasure with royalists showed they needed to intensify their programme of reform in order to seek the Lord's forgiveness. Sir Robert Shirley, meanwhile, urged that Charles promise to restore alienated church lands in order to avert further judgments. The approach of Hammond and his colleagues, therefore, closely resembled Hyde's recommendation that the royalists defend fundamentals such as the liturgy, episcopacy and the sanctity and inviolability of church lands.[23]

(iv) Providentialism and the Scottish Alliance, 1649-1651

Hyde and Nicholas complained of being marginalised at the new Court by the Queen and her agent Henry Jermyn: discord and disunity marking an inauspicious beginning to the new reign.[24] Exhausted by these intrigues, and at the behest of William II, Charles II's brother-in-law and currently his host at the Hague, Hyde decided to accept Lord Cottington's offer to join the old diplomat on an embassy to Spain in May 1649. Hyde rightly feared that the malign influence of the Louvre party lay behind the invitation, which provided a useful method of removing the Chancellor from Court for an extended period. William had also promised to speak up for the Scottish commissioners who had arrived in Holland in March 1649 to treat with the King, and it

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[23] For the views of Hammond, Sancroft and Jeremy Taylor and others on the subject, see W. Fulman ed., *The Works of Henry Hammond*, 4 vols (1684) and BL Harleian MS 6942, letters from Hammond to Gilbert Sheldon; BL Harleian MSS 3783-4, letters to William Sancroft; the Bod. Tanner and Sancroft MSS, comprising letters, sermons and devotional works. Many Sancroft letters from the Tanner collection are reprinted in Cary's *Memorials*, II; D'Oyly, *Sancroft*; R. Heber ed., *The Whole Works of the Rt Rev Jeremy Taylor*, 10 vols. (1854); Sir Gyles Isham ed., *The Correspondence of Bishop Brian Duppa and Sir Justinian Isham, 1650-1660, Northamptonshire Record Society*, 17 (1955). On sacrilege and church lands, see Hyde, 'Of Sacrilege', in *A Collection of Several Tracts*, pp. 211-17; Martin Dzelzainis, ' "Undoubted Realities": Clarendon on Sacrilege', *HJ*, 33 (1990); and for the view that sale of such lands is permissible, see Jeremy Taylor to Richard Bayly, in Cary, *Memorials*, II, 75-100. For a view similar to Hyde's see Isaac Basire, *Deo et Ecclesiae Sacrum* (Oxford, 1646) with its discussion of the curse to befall the purchasers of monastic lands in the sixteenth century, and especially Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1991), pp. 113-21. Shirley: Bod. Clarendon MS 50, fol. 105v. On Hammond and the events of 1655, see Hammond, 'A Paraenesis, or, Seasonable Exhortatory to All True Sons of the Church of England', in N. Pocock ed., *The Miscellaneous Theological Works of Henry Hammond* (Oxford, 1847-50), II.

[24] *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 116-7, 124; *ClSP*, III, 3.

is possible that the Spanish scheme arose out of suggestions made by the Scots who were finding Hyde a stubborn obstacle to a successful outcome to the negotiations.[25]

The Scottish commissioners representing the Committee of Estates and the Commission of the General Assembly of the Kirk arrived at Court with high hopes of negotiating their principal objective, the introduction of presbyterianism into England in return for military assistance in a war against the republic.[26] They quickly realised the weakness of their current bargaining position, however, when it became apparent that most courtiers favoured an Irish alliance in the wake of the recent peace secured there by the Marquis of Ormonde, and were hostile to the anti-Engager Act of Classes which excluded the supporters of Hamilton from office. Though Charles is said to have been close to accepting the proposals at this point, the commissioners withdrew without agreement in June, 'much unsatisfied'.[27]

The King set out for Jersey shortly after the conclusion of the negotiations in order to be closer to Ireland when he was called upon to take charge there. However, Oliver Cromwell's campaign during the autumn of 1649 destroyed hopes on that front and strengthened the hand of the Louvre party that preferred a Scottish treaty. Sir John Berkeley, for example, warned Hyde that 'we must expect no degree of perfection in this world', and proposed that the King make use of a broad alliance of Roman Catholics, presbyterians, and other interested parties prepared to assist in the task of restoration. The shift in mood at Court resulted in the resumption of negotiations with the Scots at Breda in March 1650, though in the teeth of opposition from Nicholas and Hopton. They were consequently excluded from the treaty and counterbalanced by the appointment to the Council of Newcastle, Hamilton and Buckingham.[28]

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[25] *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 124. The commissioners sailed from Scotland on 17 March, arrived at Rotterdam on the 22 March, and appeared at Court the following week, G. R. Kinloch ed., *The Diary of Mr John Lamont* (Edinburgh, 1830), p. 2; David Laing ed., *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1841-2), III, 78, 86; Clarendon, *History*, V, 36.
[26] Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, III, 66, 87-8.
[27] Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, III, 72, 82, 88, 90, 100-101; *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 121; *Cl SP*, II, 473-4, 476, 479; HMC *Bath MSS*, II, 84; Carte, *A Collection*, I, 379, 401, 404; *Lamont*, p. 2; Montrose to Charles II, 21 May 1649, in Mark Napier ed., *Memorials of Montrose and His Times*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1848-50), II, 376-82. On Montrose, see V. Wedgwood, *Montrose* (1952).
[28] Bod Clarendon MS 37 fol. 156. A fast was kept by royalists to elicit God's protection during the voyage: BL Egerton MS 2533 fol. 493v; Samuel Gardiner, *Letters and Papers Illustrating the Relations Between Charles the Second and Scotland in 1650* (Edinburgh, 1894), Introduction, xvi, pp. 1-3; BL Egerton MS 2533 fol. 508v; *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 173; Carte, *A Collection*, I, 378-9. Nicholas accounted Jermyn responsible for his exclusion, *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 187. See also *Cl SP*, III, 19-20;

Despite the Scottish representatives tabling additional demands thought by many to be unrealistic, such as the expulsion of various courtiers, the renunciation of Ormonde's peace treaty with the Irish and Charles's abandonment of Montrose, the Old Royalists feared a weakening of the King's resolve.[29] Hatton warned that any such deal would earn the disapproval of the Almighty and the King's English subjects, and that consequently, 'God will never prosper him nor the world value him'. Hyde feared that 'there is a judgement upon us to disunite us amongst ourselves, and make us jealous of one another then of our enemies', but also warned that the King was in danger of 'prostituting his conscience and his honour': in these circumstances, God would most likely intervene miraculously to save the nation.[30]

Hyde and Nicholas argued that the Louvre counsels had been those most injurious to Charles I during the 1640s. The English were weary of their apparent handiwork: the Army Plots, Glamorgan's embassy to the Irish and the second civil war had destroyed trust in the Crown. Moreover, whereas the late King's conscience had proved a redeeming barrier to their connivance, his successor's youth and inexperience left Charles II exposed to the dangerous attractions of political adventurism. Indeed, Hyde claimed that he was disheartened not so much by the present strength of the Commonwealth, as by the expedients and excuses the royalists were prepared to make to defend the indefensible. Whereas God could be expected to contrive the eventual destruction of the republic, this did not necessarily mean the royalists would inherit the nation as a result. Their actions in coming months were critical in determining whether the new King would be chastised along with Cromwell. Hyde denounced the opinion that Charles II would be free to renounce the Covenant oaths once he had dispensed with the services of the Scots, as 'folly and atheism', fearing that it ran contrary to the commandment that men should not take the name of the Lord in vain. Perjury would justly earn the rebuke of Heaven: the royalists could never expect to reverse their ill

Sir Edward Walker, 'A Short Journal of Several Actions Performed in the Kingdom of Scotland . . . 24 June 1650 until the end of October following', in *Historical Collections*, p. 158; Nicholas, *Mr Secretary Nicholas*, p. 248; Ollard, *The Image*, p. 75.

[29] The Scottish demands were related in a letter to the King from the Scottish Parliament, delivered by the commissioners, see *Cl SP*, II, appendix, lii; Stevenson, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 157. For a list of the courtiers whom the Scots sought to remove, see James Haig ed., *The Historical Works of Sir James Balfour*, 4 vols (Edinburgh, 1824-5), IV, 65. On the excessive demands, see Carte, *A Collection*, I, 379; Bod. Clarendon MS 39 fol. 155; *Cl SP*, II, 517.

fortune by mimicking the crafty behaviour of their opponents by concealing their true objectives.[31] Curiously, these fears mirrored those of hard-line Covenanters like Alexander Jaffray and Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston, who were to argue that the Scottish-royalist defeat at Dunbar in September 1650 was a divine punishment for the King's eventual, insincere, conversion to the Covenants in June 1650.[32] To English royalists, that moment of reckoning came at the battle of Worcester. It was especially significant, after all, that Dunbar and its equivalent English defeat, took place on the very same day a year apart: September 3.[33]

The King's position during the negotiations was ambiguous: he was far from being the puppet of either English faction or of the Scots. He feared making a martyr out of Montrose should he abandon the Scottish royalist to his fate and also prevaricated over the demand that he renounce the Irish peace. Charles requested the advice of his chaplains as he sought to resolve his troubled conscience, accepting a blessing from the anti-Scottish Bishop John Bramhall and receiving communion kneeling. Furthermore, many of the condemned courtiers remained at his side even after his arrival in Scotland towards the end of June 1650, showing that the King was reluctant to accede to Scottish demands that his advisers be purged.[34]

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[30] *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 165; *ClSP*, II, 529; Clarendon MS 39 fols 158v, 198v; 45, fols 488-9.
[31] *ClSP*, II, 337, 516-18, 522; III, 14-15.
[32] John Barclay ed., *Diary of Alexander Jaffray* (1833), pp. 32-4; *Diary of Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston*, Scottish History Society, 2nd Series 18 (1919), xxxvii. The quotation is from *Johnston*, p. 7.
[33] For a cross section of Scottish opinion concerning the providential significance of Dunbar, see Baillie to Christopher Love ? 20 December 1650, in Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, III, 105-7; 'Causes of a solemn public humiliation upon the defeat of the army' and 'A Short declaration and warning to all the congregations of the Kirk of Scotland', 12 September 1650, in Christie, *The Records of The Commissions of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland*, 3 vols (1892-1909), III, pp. 49-54; *Jaffray*, pp. 36-41. The Dunbar defeat produced a mixed reaction at Court. Many realised it provided an opportunity for the King to divide his Scottish 'allies' and win their support on easy terms. See Clarendon, *History*, V, 149; Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth* (1889), p. 168. Others such as Hatton, argued more conventionally that the defeat demonstrated God's willingness to undermine any settlement based on unjust accommodation and the abandonment of principle. *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 197; John Loftis ed., *The Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshawe* (Oxford, 1979), p. 54. Comparisons of Dunbar and Worcester by Parliamentarians, are legion. See for example, Thomas Scot and R. Salway to the Speaker, 3 September 1651, in Cary's *Memorials*, II, 353. See also, Ollard, *The Image*, p. 82.
[34] The King was warned by supporters of the Marquess of the probable consequences of an abandonment of Montrose in providential terms: Bod. Carte MS 130 fols 258-9, 263-5. Bod. Clarendon MS 39 fol. 155v. On the blessing and communion, see Thomas M'Crie ed., *The Life of Mr Robert Blair* (Edinburgh, 1848), p. 227. Bramhall wrote *A Faire Warning Against the Scotes Disciplin* against the claims of the 1649 commissioners including Robert Baillie. Baillie responded with *A Review of Doctor Bramble, Late Bishop of Londonderry* (Delf, 1649), and in turn, Richard Watson, Ralph Hopton's chaplain, penned a counterblast against Baillie entitled, *A Second Faire Warning To take heed of the Scottish Discipline In*

How far can Charles II be held responsible for this current policy of expediency? There is no doubt, I think, that the King played a larger part in initiating these developments, which appeared to minimize the role of providence, than many contemporary accounts are willing to concede. These records, which consist principally of the papers of Hyde, Nicholas and Ormonde, allocate a disproportionate measure of blame to those courtiers who were already established opponents of Hyde. The Chancellor had a vested interest in exaggerating the uniform deviousness and insincerity of Long, Percy, Jermyn, and the others, and in highlighting the uniform selflessness and constancy of his own supporters. The Louvre constituted a ready scapegoat, where casting blame on the King was not an option.

A diligent student of his father's weaknesses and political failings, the self-confident Charles II believed with some justification that he would be able to deploy his youth and charm to make a success of a policy of expediency in contrast to Charles I, whose own dissemblance had merely provoked distrust. Little is known about Charles II's religion, though it is the subject of vigorous debate. His providentialism is even less well understood. He does, however, appear to have distrusted its rhetoric, presumably on the grounds of its implausibility. He may well have regarded as unreasonable the demand that men try to fulfil the superhuman expectations of Calvinist providentialism, just as Calvinism's soteriological implications appeared harsh, unyielding, and potentially unjust. The King did not discard the notion of providence entirely, or deny that God did indeed intervene in human affairs from time to time, but he did refuse to be dogmatic on the subject. Rarely were the actions of God transparently obvious, and the Hyde party and its English episcopal allies were in no position to say with certainty that their uncompromising defence of fundamentals was, indeed, God's preferred method of protecting the integrity of the Crown. It was possible to envisage instead, not one proper and exclusive path leading to restoration, but rather a variety of possibilities. Men were duty bound to use the means available to them at any given time in order to do justice to

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Vindication of The First (The Hague, 1651). Bramhall is remembered chiefly for his political philosophy, and led the field in anti-Hobbes rhetoric. See Wallace, *Destiny His Choice*, p. 19; Samuel Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan* (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 110-23; John Sanderson, 'Serpent-Salve, 1643: the Royalism of John Bramhall', *JEH*, 25 (1974). Bod. Clarendon MS 40 fols 103, 110, 113; *Blair*, p. 234; *Balfour*, pp. 75, 83, 109-12; *Johnston*, p. 11; Christie, *The Records of The Commissions*, III, 16; Carte, *A Collection*, I, 395-7.

this plurality and to honour God appropriately by seeking the speedy reconstitution of monarchy and episcopacy.[35]

Many Scots expressed dissatisfaction at the evident inadequacy of Charles II's conversion to the presbyterian cause. Cromwell's invasion of Scotland in July 1650 compelled the General Assembly to examine the causes of God's evident displeasure, and concluded that the King was the chief culprit. His reluctance to disclaim the Irish peace, rid himself of the company of malignants and failure to express due sorrow, humiliation and contrition for the sins of Charles I and his own iniquity were conspiring to pull down the wrath of God on the Scottish nation. It was held to be of overwhelming practical importance that the King respond appropriately if Scotland were to survive the war. However, the interest of many of these critics lay not so much in condemning the King for his dissemblance than in apportioning guilt to the Argyll faction that had pressed for the successful conclusion of a treaty. Argyll was pursuing his own agenda that included the projected marriage of his daughter to Charles and it was suspected that he had urged the King to accept the demands of the Kirk in order to satisfy his own ambitions.[36]

The ambiguous nature of the King's conversion forced a twofold response from his Scottish subjects. First, acceleration in the rate of the dismissal of Engagers from active service: mixed forces produced 'mixed dispensations' and a saving remnant of pure covenanters would be a powerful bulwark against the Cromwellian hordes. Second, the Commission and the Committee of Estates drew up a joint declaration presented to

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[35] On Charles II learning from the mistakes of his father, see Ollard, *The Image*, p. 54. On reason of state, see Peter Burke, 'Tacitism, scepticism, and reason of state', in J. H. Burns ed., *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700* (Cambridge, 1991). Ronald Hutton, for example, is more convinced by evidence of the King's piety than John Miller, who believes Charles saw organised religion in purely political terms, and that his devotion went no further than an adherence to basic Christian precepts. See Hutton, *Charles the Second*, pp. 122-3; John Miller, *Charles II* (1991), pp. 3-4. Richard Ollard agrees with Miller, arguing that Charles II's religious beliefs were characterised by a broad tolerance and scepticism: *The Image*, pp. 103-13. The King's use of a providential vocabulary in his letters and declarations to the Scots appears insincere and disingenuous. He couched these communications in a style and in a language he believed the Scots would appreciate, while his letters to fellow royalists rarely make use of such rhetoric. For an example of such a Scottish communication, see Bod. Clarendon MS 49 fol. 75; 52, fol. 77v.

[36] *Jaffray*, pp. 32-3; Christie, *The Records of the Commissions*, III, 15; *Johnston*, p. 12. Some of the King's servants *had* been excluded by this point: see *The Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett*, p. 53. For later expulsions, see also *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 206. On Argyll: Sir George Radcliffe to Nicholas, in *CSPD 1650*, p. 310; Bod. Clarendon MSS 41 fol. 16; Stevenson, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 163, for the marriage proposal.

the King at Dunfermline around 5 August 1650, which was designed to compel the King to choose sides. The Scots also probably threatened to surrender Charles to Cromwell to pressurise the King to endorse the document. The Dunfermline declaration called on Charles to pledge that he had not entered into the agreement in June out of any 'sinister intention and crooked design for attaining of his own ends', but instead, 'in the . . . sincerity of his heart'. It went on to reiterate the terms of the Breda treaty, and the importance of maintaining the anti-Engager Act of Classes, and committed the King unambiguously to the introduction of presbyterianism into England and Ireland.[37]

The declaration presented the King with real difficulties for his conscience, in particular the passages that required Charles to ascribe to his parents the exclusive responsibility for the pursuit of idolatry that had resulted in divine punishment of the nation during the 1640s. The King was willing to confess his own guilt but objected to this demand, especially in view of the continuing importance of Henrietta Maria in supporting the cause of the exiled royalists. Charles was also worried that the declaration implied his enthusiastic personal abjuration of episcopacy, instead of merely an undefined commitment to its eventual extirpation required by the Covenant. He feared that it went much further than the June treaty in committing him to reform and to the extension of that reform into England, leading to the loss of royalist support in the southern kingdom.[38]

The King's objection to the blood guilt clause of the declaration engendered a crisis in the 'peace process'. Representatives of the Army and the Kirk were dispatched on 9 August 1650, but left empty-handed, 'the King denying absolutely to declare anything [that] might rub upon his father'.[39] There then followed several days of diplomatic activity comprising threats by the Scots to consider Cromwell's terms and appeals by the royal Council that Charles be exempted from perjuring his parents out of 'filial duty and piety'. A compromise statement was negotiated blaming Charles I for

[37] *Balfour*, IV, 89; Walker, 'A Short Journal', p. 165; Christie, *The Records of the Commissions*, III, 15; Carte, *A Collection*, I, 79, 401, 404; Bod Clarendon MSS 40 fols 106, 140; Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, III, 72. For copies of the declaration, see Christie, *The Records of the Commissions*, III, 33-40; BL TT E 1030 (8); Bod. Clarendon MS 40 fols 157-66; Walker, 'A Short Journal', pp. 170-76.
[38] *CI SP*, II, appendix, lxv; Christie, *The Records of the Commissions*, III, 26; *Johnston*, p. 14; *Balfour*, IV, 90; *Blair*, p. 235. Bod. Carte MS 130 fols 129, 134-5, commentary on the implications for the Church of England of the declaration.
[39] *Johnston*, p. 14. Quotation from *Balfour*, IV, 90.

having followed the ill advice of evil councillors, but which accepted that his wrongdoing was not the result of innate wickedness. The role assigned to the Queen in attracting divine disapproval was retained, however. The King finally signed the declaration on the 16 August.[40]

The Dunfermline declaration quickly attained notoriety throughout Europe. The English Parliament and newsbooks such as *Mercurius Politicus* belittled the King for his apparent 'gross hypocrisy' in signing the document, and questioned his new-found credentials as a sincere covenanter, heaping mock praise on the King for the acknowledgment of the guilt of his parents, and revelling in the suggestion that God would now punish the King and the Scots for the crookedness of the 'conversion'. Charles II was in this view 'a true inheritor of his father's principals and counsels', capable of agreeing to whatever demands were placed before him for immediate advantage while secretly pledging to break his promises at the first available opportunity.[41]

Critics of concessions – the so-called 'Protester' party – suggested that the apparent unwillingness of many in the Commission and Committee of Estates to hold Charles to the terms of the Dunfermline declaration had provoked the judgment at Dunbar on 3 September 1650.[42] God would not be mocked with 'declarations contrary to intentions': Dunbar was the outcome of the King's disingenuousness, the fallaciousness of negotiations with him since the spring, and the continued presence of malignants and

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[40] *Blair*, p. 236; Christie, *The Records of the Commissions*, III, 26-8; *Balfour*, IV, 90-92, 95-6; *Lamont*, p. 20.

[41] Carte, *A Collection*, I, 401; *Politicus*, vol. 1, pp. 18-130, 208; The Commons read the declaration on 28 August and drafted their own response the same day, *CJ* 6, 1648-51, pp. 459-60; see BL TT 669 f 15 (51): *An Act and Declaration of the Parliament of England, Touching a Pamphlet, Entituled, A Declaration by the King's Majesty* (1650); BL TT E 613 (2): *The Answer of the Parliament of England to a Paper Entituled, A Declaration by the Kings Majesty*. The quotation is taken from E 613 (2), p. 19; Matthew Sylvester ed., *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (1696), p. 66.

[42] The King hoped that the requirement that he denounce his mother be omitted from the declaration, but he was refused this request. See Christie, *Records of the Commissions*, III, 32-3, 41. See Bod. Carte MS 130 fol. 234: Scottish Moderator to Charles II, 19 August 1650. During September, the Commission attempted to pin down the King still further, criticising his slowness in repenting for his father's provocations to God and for the slow purge of the household of undesirables. See the 'Declaration to all congregations from the Commission', 12 September 1650, and the list of causes for national humiliation, drawn up by the Commission, 11 September 1650, in *Records of the Commissions*, pp. 49-54; *Blair*, p. 245, *Balfour*, IV, 98. Fasts took place across the land as congregations sought to discover the causes of God's wrath. See *Nicoll*, p. 34; *Lamont*, p. 23.

Engagers in positions of importance.[43] The 'Resolutioners', on the other hand, argued that the purges of the army, which had preceded defeat, had so weakened the Scottish forces that they had made disaster inevitable. God's anger at Scottish disunity, rather than the presence of political undesirables, had precipitated the military defeat, and they recommended that Engagers be admitted into commands so long as they had made a public display of their contrition and apology.[44] The confrontation between Scottish factions led to the formation of rival armies and the separation of anti-Engagers from the affairs of Church and State. The resulting confusion was exploited by the King who skilfully played off Argyll and the hard-line covenanters, opening the way to the readmittance of the Engagers into command with the repeal of the Act of Classes in June 1651.[45]

The Hyde party was horrified by recent events. Hatton spoke of the King sacrificing his 'honour and conscience' and warned that Charles's subscription to the Covenants had destroyed the faith of English royalists in their King. Writing to Nicholas, Sir George Ratcliffe warned that so long as the King kept the company of 'suspected men' who neglected 'honourable Principles', the royalists would continue to be dogged by inauspicious visitations: 'speedy prosperity' had replaced a patient waiting upon providence.[46] Nicholas also lamented the 'dishonourable' and 'ridiculous' terms agreed at Breda that he said had shaken the confidence of English royalists in their King: until Charles learned to trust in 'true royalists' like Hyde and himself, God would never reward the King with success.[47]

The Marquis of Ormonde, in contrast, believed that the Louvre was being misrepresented. Whilst also condemning 'pernicious counsels', Ormonde argued that the King's servants ought to do all they reasonably could to affect a restoration, and that

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[43] Opposition to the more conciliatory approach of the Church and State towards the King following Dunbar and the King's flight from Court in early October, the so-called 'Start', was expressed in the Western Remonstrance, 22 October. See Christie, *The Records of the Commission*, III, 95-106. Quotation 'with declarations', p. 99; *Blair*, pp. 246-7; *Lamont*, p. 24; *Balfour*, IV, 141-58.
[44] Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, III, 105-8; *TSP*, I, 163. For a narrative outline of these events, see Stevenson, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, pp. 181-92, *The Covenanters*, pp. 57-9.
[45] See *Blair*, pp. 247-8, 252; *Lamont*, p. 24; *Balfour* IV, 160-77.
[46] *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 190; BL Egerton MS 2534 fol. 112; Bod. Clarendon MS 39 fol. 196; *CSPD 1650*, pp. 186.
[47] *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 186; Carte, *A Collection*, I, 412, 440-3, II, 22. Nicholas's hostility to the Louvre is evidenced by many letters, for example Carte, *A Collection*, I, 418, 452-4; *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 188, 204, 224-5.

they should continue to assist the King even after he had accepted unwise counsel. As a practical man, Ormonde sought to utilise anti-Commonwealth forces in the interests of the Crown. He warned that the royalists had to act quickly if the Commonwealth wasn't to become a familiar and accepted part of English life. Consequently, he was willing to accept the possibility that the Scots might prove useful to the King, and even speculated that they constituted divine instruments in the work of restoration, though not on the terms the Scots envisaged. He argued that Nicholas and Hyde were being unrealistic in holding out for an ideal Council given the divisions within royalism, and he did this to try and prevent those men from carrying out their threat to retire from public life and to wait patiently for providence to restore royal fortunes.[48]

Hyde, however, argued that the treaty showed the royalists needed to spend longer in opposition in order to effect a process of internal moral renewal. The fact that they appeared constitutionally incapable of acknowledging the displeasure of the Almighty against their worldly policies showed that God required them to endure exile for some time to come. Hyde was confident, though, that steady hands would live to see their honesty rewarded by God, while those 'dextrous compliers' within the royal party would be confounded. Councillors needed to set an example, demonstrate punctiliousness in the carriage of their offices, and thereby 'convince all men that no temptation can make us decline the severe principles we have professed': the Almighty set the duration and measure governing the chronology of all occurrences, and it could only harm the royalists to force the pace of change before God was ready to reward their endeavours.[49]

Hyde's fears appeared borne out by the events of the autumn of 1651. Following the destruction of Charles's largely Scottish army at Worcester, the fugitive King was forced to try and evade capture by the authorities, moving between hideouts in the West Midlands, Bristol, Wiltshire and Dorset, most famously resting in the branches of an oak

[48] Carte, *A Collection*, I, 406, 439-40, 451.
[49] Hyde spoke of the royalists being not yet 'qualified': BL Harleian MS 6942 fol. 7. See also *CSPD 1650*, p. 186; *Cl SP*, III, 22-3; Carte, *A Collection*, II, 36: 'God's judgments and his mercies are wonderful: and when we are as ripe for the one as those worst of rebels are for the other, he will pardon us and punish them.' 'Contemplations', p. 436; *TSP*, I, 306. Hammond also spoke of the royalists being unqualified to receive God's blessings at this time: BL Harleian MS 6942 fol. 7.

in the grounds of a gentry house at Boscobel.[50] Charles was forced to rely on the help and support of a cross-section of English loyalists, including Roman Catholics.[51] Our information on his travels comes from post-Restoration accounts, which sought to exploit the popularity of the drama and romance of the escape story. Indeed, the escapade became a favourite narrative recounted by the King himself after 1660, when it became safe to reveal the precise details of the route he had taken and the names of those who assisted him.[52]

These accounts stressed the lowly station of those who assisted the King, in order to portray Charles as a man of the people.[53] The King was also depicted as travelling

[50] The best modern accounts describing the route taken by Charles II, are Ollard, *The Escape of Charles II from the Battle of Worcester* (1966) and William Matthews ed., *Charles II's Escape from Worcester* (1967). On Boscobel, see Henry De Bunsen, *Boscobel: An Account of The Royal Oak; Boscobel House; And The Whiteladies* (1878).

[51] Including Thomas Whitgreave and Father John Huddleston at Moseley Hall, near Wolverhampton, and in the vicinity of Boscobel, and the King's first destination after the initial escape from Worcester, Whiteladies Priory.

[52] Such as *A True Narrative and Relation of His Majesties Miraculous Escape from Worcester* (1660); *White-Ladies: Or His Sacred Majesties Most Miraculous Preservation After The Battle of Worcester* (1660); Thomas Blount, *Boscobel: Or the Compleat History of his Sacred Majesties Most Miraculous Preservation After the Battle of Worcester* (1660); Abraham Jenings, *Miraculum basilicon: Or the Royal Miracle* (1664); Anne Wyndham, *Claustrum Regale Reseratum: Or the King's Concealment at Trent* (1667); John Danvers, *The Royal Oake: Or, An Historical Description of the . . . Miraculous Escapes and Strange Accidents of his Sacred Majesty* (1660). See also *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Stephen Fox* (1717); Thomas Whitgreave and John Huddleston, *A Summary of Occurrences, relating to the Miraculous preservation of our late Sovereign Lord, King Charles II* (1688); Dr George Bates, *Elenchus Motuum Nuperorum in Anglia* (1662-3); Captain Alford's Narrative and Col. Gounter's Narrative, both published in Allan Fea, *The Flight of the King* (1897), and concerning the final stages of the King's journey; Captain Ellesdon's letter to Clarendon in Bod. Clarendon MS 42 fols 155-61, and the letter from a prisoner at Chester, MS 42 fols 149-50. These and many other important accounts are republished in modern editions: Allan Fea, *After Worcester Fight* (London and New York, 1904) and *The Flight of the King*, A. M. Broadley, *The Royal Miracle* (1912), J. Hughes, *The Boscobel Tracts* (1830). There is ample evidence that Charles sought to hide the true details of his escape upon his arrival in Paris. Enemy newspapers reported his being in London, and even that he had combined forces for a time with the royalist highway robber, Captain Hind. See Ollard, *The Escape*; *idem.*, *The Image*, pp. 84-91; Scott, *The King in Exile*, pp. 221-83. Harold Weber, *Paper Bullets: Print and Kingship under Charles II* (Lexington, 1996), Chapter 1; *A Mad Design: Or, A Description of the King of Scots Marching in his Disguise, after the Rout at Worcester*, BL TT 669 f 16 (32); *The Declaration of The King of Scots, to the King and Councel of France*, BL TT E 645 (5); *The Charge and Articles of High Treason . . . Against The Earl of Derby*, BL TT E 641 (18); *The True Speech Delivered on the Scaffold by James Earl of Derby*, BL TT E 641 (19). The King narrated his own story to Samuel Pepys while en route for England in 1660, which Pepys set down formerly in 1680 (Pepysian Library MSS 2141, reprinted in Fea, *After Worcester Fight*). See also, Clarendon, *History*, V, 213. On the story-telling of escapes, see Tighe Hopkins, *The Romance of Escapes* (1916).

[53] For example, the Penderel family, 'A True Narrative', in Fea, *The Flight of the King*, p. 190. The King's travels are distinguished by plainness and simplicity in clothing and victual, for example, 'An Account of His Majesty's Escape from Worcester', in Fea, *After Worcester Fight*, p. 17; Blount, 'Boscobel', in Fea, *After*, p. 148.

incognito and dressed in servants' clothing.[54] In this respect, narratives of the Worcester escape drew on the medieval tradition of role reversal, the Lords of Misrule, and the established historical and literary device of a king whose identity is hidden, mingling with his subjects to understand better their discontents and troubles, such as Henry V on the eve of battle in Shakespeare's play, or the example of Lear.[55] The depiction of Charles as kitchen-hand is borrowed from the traditional tale of Alfred and the cakes, while accounts bore witness to the influence of works such as Boccaccio's *Fates* describing the humiliation by God of kings and great men.[56] The purity of motive ascribed to locals is enhanced by the pastoralism of the setting within which his adventures take place, the symbolic and mythological centrepiece of this eclogic domain being represented by the famous Royal Oak. The oak came to signify the surrender of Charles into the protective embrace of providence, the simplicity of its naturalism a vivid counterpart to the innocence and naivety that characterise the actions of many of the actors in Charles's escape.[57]

The King, then, is protected by a stream of strange dispensations to overcome prodigious odds and escape to rededicate the Cause.[58] The King's rescue was greeted by contemporaries as a providential deliverance, which provided an early indicator of a likely restoration to be engineered by the Almighty. The response by Hyde and his party

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[54] 'White-Ladies', in Broadley, *The Royal Miracle*, pp. 56, 60; 'An Account of His Majesty's Escape', in Fea, *After Worcester Fight*, pp. 19, 23-5; Blount, 'Boscobel', p. 101; W. Lee, *A Brief Chronicle of All the chief Actions . . . from the year 1640 to . . . 1661* (1662), p. 41. See Weber, *Paper Bullets*, pp. 43-5.

[55] See Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (1978), pp. 152-3; Weber, *Paper Bullets*, pp. 27-8; Bernard Capp, 'Popular Literature', in Barry Reay ed., *Popular Culture in Seventeenth Century England* (1988), pp. 209-13.

[56] Henry Jones, 'The Royal Patient Traveller', in Broadley, *The Royal Miracle*, p. 94; Weber, *Paper Bullets*, p. 42; Louis Brewer Hall ed., *De casibus virorum illustrium* (New York, 1965).

[57] On pastoralism, see Helen Cooper, *Pastoral: Medieval into Renaissance* (Ipswich, 1977); E. Kegel-Brinkgreve, *The Echoing Woods: Bucolic and Pastoral From Theocritus to Wordsworth* (Amsterdam, 1990); Laurence Lerner, *The Uses of Nostalgia: Studies in Pastoral Poetry* (1972); Corinne J. Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (Cambridge, 1993); David Young, *The Heart's Forest: A Study of Shakespeare's Pastoral Plays* (New Haven and London, 1972). On the Royal Oak in particular, Paula Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics: Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore and London, 1993), pp. 17, 23; Geoffrey Bishop, *The History and Legend of the Oak* (Leeds, 1975); Douglas Brooks-Davies, *The Mercurian monarch: Magical politics from Spenser to Pope* (Manchester, 1983), p. 151; R. A. Clarke, A. Wright and B. Barnett, *The Blasted Oak. The Oak Tree: Natural History, Art and Myth in European Culture* (Coventry, 1987), p. 29; John Evelyn, *Silva: Or, A Discourse of Forest Trees* (1825), pp. 73-5.

[58] For example, the so-called 'Miraculous Divergence' which saw him shake off his pursuers. See Ollard, *The Escape of Charles II*, pp. 65-6; Broadley, *The Royal Miracle*, Appendix V, p. 265. 'Claustrum Regale Reseratum', in Fea, *After Worcester Fight*, p. 179; Blount, 'Boscobel', pp. 105-7, 113.

in the aftermath of the episode prefigure later accounts. Cast into a wilderness of poverty, Charles undergoes a process of moral instruction and renewal. He learns that in order to recover the Crown he must entrust restoration to his English subjects and to God, becoming an exemplar for the patient endurance of suffering and thus helping to expiate the guilt of his people and preparing them for God's wonder-working in 1660.[59]

Worcester was a catalyst for change: the opportunity to realise the agenda of moral renewal promoted unsuccessfully by Hyde during the 1640s. In this view, the King was punished by God on September 3 1651 for his decision to abandon episcopacy in the summer of 1650. Charles's miraculous escape from Worcester relied on the good will of ordinary citizens who forfeited substantial rewards and risked punishment for sheltering and assisting him in his travels that autumn. According to Hyde, the English people bore collective responsibility for the sin of having failed to support the late King with the loyalty, obedience and material assistance which duty had demanded: the curse of Meroz. God subsequently punished the people for this iniquity by means of the execution of Charles I and by the establishment of the Commonwealth. The protection of Charles II during his travels constituted, in part, an atonement for this excecation, and for others, a purging of popular guilt which, coupled with a progressive marginalisation of the Louvre counsels, admitted for the first time the possibility of royalist renewal. Hyde was now more free to follow policies which he believed would encourage God to assist the cause and help restore the King, policies designed to win the trust of the kind of cross-section of English people upon whom Charles had relied for his survival after Worcester.[60]

According to Hyde and Nicholas, the defeat was not so much a 'crowning mercy' granted to the sectarians, as a divine judgment against the way their Court opponents had always conducted royalism. Outwardly, Worcester seemed a conclusive and certain indicator of the Commonwealth's favour in the eyes of God, and of the Almighty's disfavour with the King. But really, it disguised the secret workings of God

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[59] Bod. Clarendon MS 42 fols 191, 275; *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 279; John Fell, *The Life of . . . Dr Henry Hammond* in *The Works of . . . Henry Hammond*, I, x; Clarendon, *History*, V, 212. Blount, 'Boscobel', pp. 148-52; Bod. Sancroft MS 118 fol. 12; BL Harleian MS 6942 fol. 163. On the immediate effects of Worcester at Court, see Hutton, *Charles the Second*, pp. 67-73; Ollard, *Clarendon*, pp. 146-68; *idem.*, *The Image*, pp. 83-92; Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracy*, pp. 52-5.

for contrary ends.[61] For now it was possible for the King's party to adopt policies and to reform conduct in such a way as to reposition itself to successfully take advantage of God's other substantial piece of macropolitical engineering of the late 1650s: the internal conflict within the ranks of their republican opponents, especially following the death of Cromwell in 1658.[62] This explains why some royalists expressed approval at the outcome of the battle at Worcester. The King's allies, the Scots, who comprised the majority of the army there, were guilty men charged with the original responsibility for the civil wars, and the defeat in 1651 constituted a delayed response by God to punish this overhanging guilt.[63] It was also a divine verdict on the dangers of political brinkmanship. The 'plain, easy virtues' and uncomplicated honesty of Charles's protectors during the escape had signposted the necessary direction royal policy needed to take if God was to reward the King with the recovery of his throne. The value of dependence upon God and a repudiation of the arm of flesh were the two principal lessons to emerge from the episode.[64]

The Louvre party was damaged by the failure of the Scottish policy and the following three years saw a gradual decline in its influence as the King came to rely for advice upon Hyde, Nicholas and Ormonde. Though Worcester did not mark an historical dividing line between old-style policy and counsel and a period of virtuous rule under the guidance of Hyde, Nicholas and Ormonde, it did constitute the beginnings of a recognisable turning point in the management of royalist affairs away from transient and pragmatic policies, provocative in the eyes of God, and towards a style of politics

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[60] On collective guilt, see 'Contemplations', pp. 428-9; Bod. Clarendon MS 41, fol. 176v; 46, fol 55; Carte, *Life of... Ormonde*, VI, 603; Dzelzainis, "Undoubted Realities", p. 539.

[61] Lois Potter has noted the tendency for royalist writing to 'explain events in terms of secret purposes', see Potter, *Secret rites*, pp. 209-10.

[62] John Wallace, *Destiny His Choice: The Loyalism of Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge, 1968), p. 3; Wormald, *Clarendon*, pp. 168, 172.

[63] Royalists generally welcomed the Scots' comeuppance, just as they had earlier savoured the irony that Pride's Purge had afforded them, of watching the revolution devouring its children. See Sir William Dugdale, *A Short View of the Late Troubles in England* (Oxford, 1681), pp. 364, 401; Walker, 'Observations', p. 357; Richard Watson, *Historicall Collections of Ecclesiastick Affairs in Scotland* (1657), pp. 4-5; BL Harleian MS 6942 fol. 131: ill success had 'fallen on some of those who were the first Agents to contrive the misery'.

[64] Richard Ollard makes the point that Charles II's courtiers did not save him during the escape, but a 'cross section of the nation', *The Image*, p. 86. See especially, Bod. Clarendon MS 42 fol. 191: Hyde to the King, 10 November 1651; Sir George Radcliffe to Nicholas, 14 October 1651, *The Nicholas Papers*, I. 272.

identified by a steadier and more patient desire to slowly re-acquire the trust of the English people and of God.[65]

This shift did not take place overnight. During 1653 it was reported that the Louvre faction was once again trespassing on God's providence, which it was feared would 'undoubtedly pull down a new heap of vengeance' upon the King. Until the Court's relocation from Paris to Germany in 1654, the Queen remained influential, especially from the point of view of the financial support she was able to provide. This period was marked by confrontation between the Chancellor and his old adversaries Long and Grenville, from which Hyde emerged the victor, and a breakdown in relations between Charles II and his mother when she attempted to convert the young Duke of Gloucester to Roman Catholicism in late 1654. These developments were in themselves disadvantageous since while unity among royalist factions was believed to earn propitious providences, disunity could only prolong the Lord's controversy with the exiles.[66]

Hyde also faced criticism that his 'English-first' philosophy, symbolised by the Sealed Knot, which sought to minimise reliance on the use of overseas assistance in any attempt to restore the King, was overly cautious. The failure of Penruddock's rebellion in 1655 thus reflected badly on the Chancellor, and encouraged younger, more impatient royalists, to circumvent the Hyde organisation.[67] Hyde also had problems countering the licence of the exiled Court. Enforced idleness encouraged gaming, the playing of sports, and duelling. Hyde and Nicholas feared that this inappropriate conduct earned the disapproval of God, and the censure of English audiences, who were treated to salacious gossip about these affairs in Commonwealth and Protectorate propaganda.[68] Clearly, despite the experience afforded by his English sojourn, Charles could not be said to have undergone a wholesale conversion to Hyde's agenda, as the latter may have hoped he

[65] On the Louvre being discredited by the defeat, see Feiling, *A History*, pp. 78 - 80; Hutton, *Charles the Second*, pp. 72-3; Ollard, *Clarendon*, p. 146; Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracy*, p. 52.
[66] See Bod. Clarendon MS 45, fols 158-9, 259-62; 46 fols 89-90, 93-4, 146; Clarendon MS 47 fols 11, 103-4, 156, 258-9, 263-4, 266, 284, 376, *passim*; Clarendon MS 49 fols 143v, 152; *The Nicholas Papers*, II, 39, 49; Clarendon, *History*, V, 316-26; Hutton, *Charles II*, pp. 84, 90-92.
[67] Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracy*, pp. 73-125.
[68] Andrew Browning ed., *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby* (Glasgow, 1936), p. 7; *HMC Portland MSS*, p. 140; William Bray ed., *Diary of John Evelyn to Which are Added a Selection From His Familiar Letters*, 4 vols (1906), IV, 273; *The Nicholas Papers*, I, 221, 303, 315-16, II, 14; Hoskins, *Charles the Second*, II, 328; Hutton, *Charles the Second*, pp. 122-4; Ollard, *The Image*, pp. 100-1.

would in the immediate aftermath of Worcester. Rather, the King found himself rejecting the counsel of the Louvre because it had failed him in practice. The King had not lost his eye for the main chance, it was just that the party to which he had pinned his hopes of engineering intrigue had shown itself to be singularly ineffective. Charles had not undergone a Pauline conversion to embrace providential politics, but *had* returned from Worcester a wiser man and more aware of his limitations.

Crucially, then, though the King expressed impatience at Hyde's alternative policy of the slow build-up of support networks in England, coupled with a waiting upon providence to throw up opportunities in England through the division of the royalists' enemies, he nevertheless seems to have endorsed the overall direction of Hyde's scheme. The poverty of the Court, its peripatetic nature, and its inability to construct useful and productive military alliances with Spain, France or the United Provinces, also made Hyde's strategy the only workable model which the King had follow. This lack of interest shown by overseas powers in the plight of Charles was potentially no bad thing, thought Sir Henry Coventry, since it might indicate that God had 'destined the glory of a happy revolution to the Courage and fortune of his Majesty and the loyalty of his yet faithful subjects'. There was no real alternative to the policy of quiet planning, and of patient waiting upon God. Hyde's providentialism was well-suited to the royalists' circumstances during the second half of the 1650s, in that it enabled the Chancellor to make a virtue out of the powerlessness of the Court. The absence of a viable plan for the recovery of the kingdom meant that a strategy of prayer and a dependence upon the Almighty to engineer the downfall of the enemy, became the preferred policy of the exiles. Hyde's providentialism was essentially negative: though the precise formula for restoration might remain unclear, the Chancellor was certain he knew it would at least avoid the failed policies of the Louvre party that had proved so displeasing to God. That is not to argue that Hyde's providentialism was exclusively responsible for the Crown's recovery of fortunes in 1660, but that in its avoiding foreign and domestic entanglements that might diminish still further English confidence in the Crown, it smoothed Charles II's path back to power, assuaging the fears of moderate former parliamentarians by demonstrating that the royalists were a party with which the Lord might do business.

Providence rebuilt trust in the King and allowed him to more fully exploit the failure of the republicans.[69]

Royalists continued to pray that God initiate that great terminal disruption of the Commonwealth 'to his own glory in the shame and confusion of wicked men'. It was possible, even probable, that the Almighty would confound all expectations and contrive a restoration upon extraordinary, even miraculous, terms. The poor record of English risings against the Commonwealth and Protectorate, inspired by Hyde's agents, seemed to confirm the suspicion that men were incapable of anticipating the judgment of God, Hyde least of all. Moreover, a long exile was made lengthier by idle Court-pleasures that rendered royalists insensible of their afflictions, an induration which, Nicholas warned in 1657, 'prolongs our punishment'. As late as 1658, Joseph Lane lamented the probability that 'our time is not near', while even Cromwell's demise in September prompted a cautious Hyde to remind injudicious royalists that 'other alterations' were required 'before any eminent fruit will appear for the King'. By this he meant the Lord's softening of sympathetic hearts to the King's cause, men such as Edward Massey, William Waller and Edward Montague. The conversion of veterans implicated in the original act of rebellion conveyed an especially powerful signal of the cathartic, healing intentions of the Lord, one that in itself probably added momentum to the process of restoration. Though not inevitable, arguably this event was rendered more likely by the belief that it had become the settled will of the Almighty. This suspicion in turn attracted recruits from among the ranks of republican deserters who, sensing a decisive shift in God's purposes, migrated towards the new providential centre of gravity in the opening months of 1660. Paradoxically, then, the habits of promiscuously reading the direction of providence and the endorsement of success as the visible marker of the divine will that had become commonplace during the 1640s and 1650s, actually eased the final transition back to monarchy. In the end, the republic's strength had become its fatal, final weakness.[70]

This chapter has tried to show the continuity of concern amid the ranks of the royalists at the consequences of sin during the 1640s and 1650s. This was shrewd

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[69] Bod. Clarendon MS 48, fol. 22; Ollard, *The Image*, p. 119.

calculation rather than an irrelevant moral scruple: Hyde and other 'Old Royalists' were attuned to the providential expectations of the English people at large, for whom the untrustworthy reputations of Charles I, his son and their closest advisers, were evidence of their patent disregard of heaven. Winning hearts and minds at home and earning the sponsorship of God were inexplicably connected in the opinion of royal providentialists. This required a patient endurance of suffering and affliction and a waiting upon God to contrive the self-destruction of the republicans under the weight of their own iniquity. The royalists were, in this view, well placed to reap the rewards providing they did not depart from their duty of care with regard to the Church of England. The defeat at Worcester in 1651 marked a turning point in royalist counsels, when the balance of power began to shift decisively in the direction of Hyde and his allies, a process largely complete by 1654. Prayer, patience in affliction and a renewed attempt to win the support of moderate parliamentarians, became the preferred strategy of the royalists until 1660, especially following the abortive rebellion of 1655. Arguably, this rededication to providence allowed the royalists to take advantage of the divisions within the republican camp more successfully than might otherwise have been the case. Hyde had shown that providence was safe in the King's hands, in contrast to their opponents, who after Cromwell's death in 1658 were bitterly divided over the meaning of God's movements. It is to the question of the status of the Church and the role of the parliamentarians that we now turn.

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[70] *ClSP*, III, 407, 410, 460, 464, 494, 497; *The Nicholas Papers*, II, 257, 302, III, 18, IV, 15, 53, 208

Chapter Four: Parliament and Providence During the 1640s

We have seen so far how some royalists were conscious of their providential responsibilities. In this chapter, we will assess the impact of providentialism on the political and military decision-making of Parliament and its armies during the period of the first civil war and in its aftermath. It is divided into two sections beginning with an examination of the historiography of the debate, followed by a comparison of royalist and parliamentarian providentialism, and an outline of the principal lines of enquiry. The second part will employ a chronological methodology to expand more fully the themes introduced in the first section.

The chapter will argue that the various readings of providence made political decision-making of the early 1640s reflexive and reactive rather than progressive. Continual fluctuation in policy characterised the actions of the military and civilian leaderships as they struggled to keep pace with unexpected alterations in the direction of providence. During the first half of the 1640s, after all, neither side was able to press home a clear advantage in battle over its opponent, which made a confident analysis of God's motives and purposes at this time more difficult. With the pendulum swinging first one way, then another, the various parties in Parliament approached the problem of tracing and delineating God's plan with relative caution and hesitancy. Thus confusion over alternative strategies of 'war' and 'peace', the evolving perception of the Scottish role in English affairs, disagreement surrounding the various peace proposals submitted to the King during the war, and differences over Church reform, all in part had their origins in the 'wait and see' policy implicit in a political strategy in which the initiative for purposeful, progressive change was believed to lie with God alone.

The early 1640s, therefore, were characterised on the side of Parliament by caution, a lack of clear motive and direction, and by the absence of triumphalism. This had its origins in a deeply held belief in the inscrutability of God's providence and fear that God might intercede to humble His otherwise loyal servants if they exhibited signs of pride and overconfidence. Clergymen reminded audiences that in spite of successes

such as Marston Moor in July 1644, things could still all go wrong for Parliament.[1] The Naseby victory in June 1645 and the rise of the self-styled saints of the New Model Army, however, began slowly to modify this conservative outlook as the gathering momentum of military success from 1645 appeared to confound the fears of the mid-war period that continuing sinfulness would contrive to lose Parliament the peace which was then in prospect. The New Model's military victories vindicated the war-party's policy of fighting the war to a conclusion and seemed to provide evidence of God's now unambiguous support for the cause. More so than many parliamentarians, the Army rank and file were motivated by a desire to bring to justice individual royalists, and to make profitable and to 'perfect' the mercies and deliverances God had supplied since 1640 by instituting far-reaching constitutional, legal and other reforms. These would act as visible tokens of the saints' appreciation and acknowledgment of God's good works to date, and in thus honouring the Almighty, help ameliorate the effects of any overhanging guilt that might otherwise jeopardise the victory of 1646. It will be argued that though the germ of this more progressive interpretation of God's purposes can be traced to the beginning of the war, it only really acquired momentum during 1647, and among the Army leadership, following the second civil war in 1648.

Section One: Themes

(i) Historiography

The historiography of providence in relation to Parliament during the 1640s is limited. Bernard Capp has described with characteristic thoroughness the popularity of the almanac throughout this period of chiliastic excitement: prophecy was employed as propaganda by both sides during the war to anticipate the defeat of the enemy's cause. The prophecy also served to make sense of contemporary confusion by incorporating it within a providential schema. Stephen Baskerville's study of the political theology of the civil war describes how parliamentary preachers employed providence to make sense of rapid change and contributed to the severe militarism of much parliamentarian rhetoric:

[1] Such as Jeremiah Whitaker, *The Danger of Greatnesse* (1646). BL TT E 316 (1).

God as judge and warrior presiding over the sinful royalists. Barbara Donagan, meanwhile, has shown how parliamentarian commander and presbyterian, William Waller, interrogated providence to provide consolation and guidance in time of war, but also has highlighted Waller's disillusionment with the rise of the Independents, and his tendency towards a less frenetic scrutiny of divine works, and a more passive, interior religion. This chapter aims to build on Donagan's observations by considering how Independents and presbyterians were defined partly by differences over their interpretation of providence. Ian Gentles' study of the New Model has outlined the strong bonds of providential collegiality that permeated its ranks, encouraged by ambitious chaplains such as William Dell. This was important in fostering an independent identity for the Army based around an acute consciousness of the political danger of sin and the need for the nation to expiate the blood guilt of the royalists. The final section of this chapter extends and develop the themes introduced by Gentles through a brief study of contemporary army declarations and sermons which catalogued the growth of resentment at a presbyterian Commons. This will then be followed by an examination of the Putney and Whitehall debates of 1647-8 that tested whether the *Agreement of the People* conformed to what was believed to be at the time God's will.[2]

(ii) General Lines of Enquiry: the Parliamentarian Providential Identity

This chapter has drawn on a wide range of material with a 'high' political content including sermons, official declarations and ordinances, and despatches and correspondence between leading parliamentarians like Sir William Waller, Sir William Brereton, Sir Samuel Luke, Sir Robert Harley and the Earl of Manchester.[3] The private

[2] Capp, *English Almanacs, 1500-1800: Astrology and the Popular Press* (Ithaca, New York, 1979); Harry Rusche, 'Prophecies and Propaganda, 1641 to 1651', *EHR*, 84 (1969); *idem.*, 'Merlini Anglici: Astrology and Propaganda from 1644 to 1651', *EHR*, 80 (1965). Stephen Baskerville, *Not Peace But a Sword: The Political Theology of the English Revolution* (London and New York, 1993), Chapter 1; Donagan, 'Understanding Providence: The Difficulties of Sir William and Lady Waller', *JEH*, 39 (1988); Ian Gentles, *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland, 1645-1653* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 87-119.

[3] Sermons included many parliamentary fast sermons reproduced in Robin Jeffs ed., *The English Revolution I: Fast Sermons to Parliament*, ed. Robin Jeffs, 34 vols (1971). For ordinances see C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait eds., *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, 3 vols (1911). Declarations and other public notices are reproduced in *CSPD* and *LJ* and *CJ* and independently in the Thomason Tracts, including Edward Husbands', *A Collection of all the Publicke Orders, Ordinances and Declarations of both Houses of Parliament* (1646), BL TT E 1058. Despatches and letters of information can be found in

diaries and accounts of a number of parliamentarians and of the Scottish representatives in London have been consulted.[4] Some use has also been made of 'low' political discourse, primarily newsbooks such as *Mercurius Civicus, Mercurius Britanicus* and *The Scottish Dove*, and provincial news reports of examples of local providences. These all provide a useful insight into regional variations in the exercise of practical divinity.[5]

Lastly, I have examined the role of providentialism in the New Model Army by reviewing a cross-section of declarations issued by the Army Grandees and 'agitators' reprinted among the published works of John Rushworth, Secretary to the Army's

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CSPD and in Thomason, examples include E 84 (24), E 85 (30), E 86 (15), E 94 (2), E 97 (2), E 325 (26). Papers relating to Waller include numerous letters in *CSPD* and on his piety, see Edward William Harcourt ed., *The Harcourt Papers*, 14 vols (Oxford, 1880-1905); Donagan, 'Understanding Providence'. Papers relating to Brereton's role in the campaign in the North West can be found in BL Add MSS 11331-3, published as *The Letter Books of Sir William Brereton*, edited by R. N. Dore, in *The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vols 123, 128 (1983-4, 1990), and on Brereton's religion see 'Travels in Holland, the United Provinces, England, Scotland and Ireland, 1634-1635', edited by Edward Hawkins, *Chetham Society*, 1 (1844). For Luke, see H. G. Tibbutt ed., *The Letter Books of Sir Samuel Luke, 1644-45* in *Bedfordshire Historical Record Society*, 42 (1963); I. G. Philip ed., *Journal of Sir Samuel Luke* in *Oxfordshire Record Society*, 29, 31, 33 (1947-53). For Harley and his family see Jacqueline Eales, *Puritans and Roundheads: The Harleys of Brampton Bryan and the Outbreak of the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1990); BL Add MSS 70105-6, letters to Sir Robert Harley; *HMC Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Bath*, vol. 1 (1904); T. T. Lewis ed., *The Letters of Lady Brilliana Harley*, Camden Society o.s. 58 (1853). For the Earl of Manchester see John Bruce ed., *The Quarrel between the Earl of Manchester and Oliver Cromwell*, Camden Society n.s. 12 (1875). Other important correspondence can be found in George W. Johnson and Robert Bell eds, *Memorials of the Civil War*, 4 vols (1848-9).

[4] Sir John Harington, BL Add MS 10114; Walter Yonge, BL Add MSS 18781-2; Nehemiah Wallington, BL Sloane MS 922, BL Add MSS 21935, 40883. See also BL Add MS 31116: Lawrence Whitacre's diary of proceedings in the Commons, 8 October 1642-8, July 1647; John Webb and T. W. Webb eds., *Military Memoir of Colonel John Birch* in *Camden Society* n.s. 7 (1873); BL Add MS 35297: 'John Syms' Journal of the Civil War, 1642-1649'; Alan Macfarlane ed., *The Diary of Ralph Josselin, 1616-1683* (Oxford, 1991); Thomas Juxon's MS diary, Dr. Williams's Library MS 24. 50, published as Keith Lindley and David Scott eds, *The Journal of Thomas Juxon, 1644-1647, Camden* 5th Series, 13 (1999); E. M. Symonds ed., 'The Diary of John Greene (1635-57)', in <u>EHR</u>, 43-44 (1928-29). The most important account of Wallington is by Paul Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (1985). On the Scots and the Westminster Assembly, see Henry Meikle ed., *Correspondence of the Scots Commissioners in London, 1644-46* (Edinburgh, 1917); W. M. Hetherington ed., *The Works of Mr George Gillespie*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1846); David Laing ed., *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1841-42); John Rogers Pitman ed., *The Whole Works of the Rev. John Lightfoot*, 13 vols (1825); John L. Carson and David W. Hall eds., *To Glorify and Enjoy God: A Commemoration of the 350th Anniversary of the Westminster Assembly* (Edinburgh, 1994); Alex F. Mitchell and John Struthers eds., *Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, November 1644-March 1649* (Edinburgh and London, 1874); Robert S. Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord* (Edinburgh, 1985); Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and its Work* (New York, 1931); J. R. De Witt, *Jus Divinum: The Westminster Assembly and the Divine Right of Church Government* (Kampen, 1969).

[5] Such local news reports include BL TT E 7 (25), 40 (1), 75 (19), 271 (1). For Thomason Tract references for *Civicus* and the other newsbooks, see index in G. K. Fortescue, *Catalogue of the Pamphlets, Books, Newspapers and Manuscripts relating to the Civil War . . . collected by George Thomason, 1641-1661*, 2 vols (1908), II.

Council of War, and of the Putney Debates of 1647 drawn from the manuscripts of Rushworth's assistant, William Clarke, which have been reproduced by the Camden Society.[6] This work has been supplemented by a study of the sermons of a number of military chaplains including William Dell and John Saltmarsh, and by Joshua Sprigge's official account of God's sponsorship of the Army, *Anglia Rediviva*.[7]

Changing circumstances often account for variations in the 'providential' content of different classes of document. Sieges and pitched battles, for example, provoked intense reflection on the meaning behind these incidents, expressed most often in private journals and letters, and in despatches to Parliament or its committees.[8] These were understandably more numerous during the campaigning season, and concentrated in those regions which had witnessed the greatest long-term friction between the combatants such as the Welsh Marches, West Midlands and the North West, and glamorous causes like the sieges of Hull and Gloucester during the autumn of 1643.[9] Areas which had witnessed a growth in godly or 'puritan' communities in the decades proceeding war, such as Lancashire, the West Riding and parts of the South West, were especially vocal in delivering thanks to God for His merciful dispensations, and

[6] John Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, VII (1721); Gardiner ed., *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution, 1625-1660* (Oxford, 1906); Firth ed., *The Clarke Papers*; *OPH*, vols 15, 18 (1763); *A Declaration of the Engagements, Remonstrances, Representations . . . from His Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax* (1647), BL TT E 409 (25) (this collection is entitled the 'Army Book of Declarations' by Ian Gentles and others); Don M. Wolfe ed., *Leveller Manifestoes of the Puritan Revolution* (New York, 1967); A. S. Woodhouse ed., *Puritanism and Liberty* (1950). The Worcester College manuscripts are available in a Harvester Microfilm edition, see introduction by Gerald Aylmer, *Sir William Clarke Manuscripts, 1640-1664* (Harvester, 1979).
[7] Including Dell, *Power from on High* (1645), BL TT E 282 (8); *idem.*, *Right Reformation* (1646), BL TT E 363 (2-3); *idem.*, *The Building and Glory of the Truly Christian and Spiritual Church* (1646), BL TT E 343 (5); Saltmarsh, *A Letter from the Army* (1647), BL TT E 392 (6). Sprigge, *Anglia Rediviva* (1647). On Dell and the New Model chaplains and other parliamentarian chaplains, see Eric C. Walker, *William Dell: Master Puritan* (Cambridge, 1970); William Haller, 'The Word of God in the New Model Army', *Church History*, 19 (1950); Anne Laurence, *Parliamentary Army Chaplains, 1642-1651* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1990); Leo Solt, *Saints in Arms* (Stanford and London, 1959).
[8] For example, Oliver Cromwell to Speaker Lenthall, 14 September 1645 on the taking of Bristol, in Abbott, I, p. 377; Cromwell to a member of Parliament, 11 July 1645 on the battle of Langport, Abbott, I, 365; Fairfax to his father Ferdinando, Lord Fairfax, 24 July 1645 on battle of Bridgewater, in Bell ed., *Memorials*, I, 240; *A Famous Victory . . . before . . . Exeter . . . Against Sir Ralph Hopton* (1643), BL TT E 84 (24); Sir John Seaton, *A Perfect Relation of the Taking of the Towne of Preston in Lancashire* (1643), BL TT E 89 (22); *Magnalia Dei, A Relation of Some of the Many Remarkable Passages in Cheshire Before the Siege of Namptwich*, (1644), BL TT E 31 (13).
[9] See T. C., *Hulls Pillar of Providence Erected* (1644), BL TT E 37 (30); *Eben-ezer. A full and Exact Relation of the Several Remarkable and Victorious Proceedings of . . . Colonel Massy, Governor of Gloucester*, June 1644, in John Washbourn ed., *Bibliotheca Gloucestrensis: A Collection of Scarce and Curious Tracts, Relating to the County and City of Gloucester* (Gloucester, 1825).

conversely in initiating humiliations in the face of disaster.[10] In addition to these pockets of regional godly enthusiasm, 'puritan' and anti-puritan elements within diverse urban and rural communities clashed over the proper response to manifestations of providence and in particularly over the observance of rival public fasts and thanksgivings, as Mark Stoyle's recent study of Exeter has highlighted.[11]

Private religious journals and diaries such as those belonging to London turner Nehemiah Wallington, Essex minister Ralph Josselin or Yorkshire clergyman John Shaw, made note of private and public examples of God's agency, celebrated His sovereignty, sought the opportunity to repent for past indiscretions, and disavowed the arm of flesh in order to wait patiently upon God's providence to protect the Lord's servants. This experimental devotional mentality made an easy transition to the national arena: the task with which the Long Parliament had been entrusted represented nothing less than the historical realisation of these long-standing godly objectives throughout the three kingdoms. Parliamentary fast sermons, reforming legislation such as the suppression of stage plays and the removal of 'superstitious' monuments, correspondence and public declarations all reflected the immersion of the participants in a culture which made acknowledgment of God's agency the *raison d'etre* for war. War both punished and purified, and while it had once been avoidable, it was now necessary and preferable to a '30s peace which had dishonoured God by its appeasement of the crying sin of idolatry.[12]

The letter of information or news report on local aspects of the fighting represents perhaps the largest category of civil war pamphlets, and one that usually

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[10] See, for example, *A True Relation of Two Great Victories . . . by Sir William Brereton in Cheshire . . . Sir John Meldrum in Lancashire* (1644), BL TT E 7 (25); *A True and Exact Relation of the Great Victories Obtained by the Earl of Manchester, and the Lord Fairfax; Against the Earl of Newcastles Army in the North* (1643), BL TT E 71 (22); *Fresh Intelligence of Another New and Great Victory Obtained by the Lord Fairfax . . . Against the Popish Army in Yorkshire* (1643), BL TT E 71 (12); G. Hughes, *A Dry Rod Blooming And Fruit-Bearing* (1644), BL TT E 48 (9); George Newton, *Mans Wrath and Gods Praise. Or, A Thanksgiving Sermon, Preached at Taunton*, BL TT E 344 (6); John Bond, *Occasus Occidentalis: Or, Job in the West* (1645), BL TT E 25 (22); *A True Narration of the Most Observable Passages, in and at the Last Siege of Plymouth* (1644), BL TT E 31 (15).

[11] Stoyle, *From Deliverance to Destruction: Rebellion and Civil War in an English City* (Exeter, 1996), pp. 50-4, 95; *idem.*, *Loyalty and Locality: Popular Allegiance in Devon During the English Civil War* (Exeter, 1994) on the background to the divisions in Devon.

[12] For reference to Wallington and Josselin, see f. n. 4 above; *The Life of Master John Shaw*, in *Surtees Society* 65 (1879). See also especially Sir John Harington's diary: BL Add 10114, John Syms' journal: BL Add MS 35297, Richard Parkinson ed., *The Life of Adam Martindale*, in *Chetham Society*, 4 (1845).

exhibited a 'soft' providentialism, observing but rarely drawing substantial moral or other conclusions from individual examples of God's participation in the war. The use of the eye-witness device lent these short tales a quality of dramatic authenticity and subjectivity, which also conveyed to an eager City and provincial audience the immediate and determining impact of the battlefield providence. Their pithy didacticisms communicated a series of required truths: that the Lord protects the righteous against the unrighteous and rescues the covenanted in the very nick of time, but also that God expects His servants to acknowledge the divine handiwork in prayer and public declaration as a precondition of future patronage and support, and that the arm of God and not the strength of parliamentarian forces is always responsible for military success. These reports emphasised smaller parliamentarian forces overturning the numerical advantage of opposing armies, or tales of unlikely escapes from danger by individual soldiers, to demonstrate evidence of the protective embrace of the Lord of Hosts.[13] Accounts often concentrated on the exploits of particular commanders, which lends weight to the suspicion that such propaganda played a part in a lobbying process between the localities and the central administration in which the heroic aspects of soldiers like Sir William Waller in the South and West and Sir Thomas Fairfax in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire were complemented by descriptions of providential patronage that potential critics or rival claimants for scarce resources would be compelled to acknowledge. Supplicants exploited the rhetoric of providence to argue the case for additional aid and assistance from London or from sympathetic parliamentarians. Examples of local providence were highlighted in order to show that a prudent Parliament would be better advised to follow God's lead in also tendering assistance to these outposts. The fragmentary and localised nature of Parliament's armies and garrisons during the early part of the war intensified this development, reminding us that there was no single unitary conception of the use of providence by Parliament, but a series of overlapping initiatives reflecting variations in regional

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[13] *A Miraculous Victory Obtained by . . . Ferdinanado, Lord Fairfax* (1643), BL TT E 104 (13), p. 3; Thomas Browne, *A True Relation of the Prosperous Successe, and Proceedings of the Parliaments Forces in the Counties of Somerset and Devon* (1643), BL TT E 104 (11), unpag; W. I., *A More Full Relation of the Continued Successes of His Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax* (1646), BL TT E 325 (2), p. 1.

emphasis such as the proximity to royalist strongholds, and the presence of established communities of godly.[14]

In contrast to these classes of document, the news periodical either concentrated on presenting straight information on the war, or deployed a similar vein of scurrilous humour and witty point-scoring as the royalist journal, *Mercurius Aulicus*, a style that characterised the early *Mercurius Britanicus*. Most news journals did not develop providential stories as a leading theme in their descriptions of the war and its causes, choosing instead to concentrate on deploying well-established propaganda points such as the threat from Roman Catholicism. This reluctance to embrace the vocabulary of the miraculous stemmed in part from the adoption of a 'plain' style of delivery reflecting a desire for acceptance as serious journalism. This required that editors distance themselves from the more fantastic end of the market for almanacs and prognostications such as the astrology and political prophecy of William Lilly.[15]

What do these and other sources tell us about parliamentarian providentialism? Firstly, that such literature was more copious than its royalist equivalent. Both sides responded to the very uncertainty of war and the greater need now to record its extraordinary effects and make sense of them within a providential framework. However, the end of censorship in London, the fact of the machinery of State with its own substantial literary output, the far greater capacity of the London presses compared with their royalist equivalents, and the more sizeable market for news and ephemera in the capital all accounted for the larger volume of pamphlets, sermons, news reports and published letters produced by supporters of Parliament.[16]

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[14] Sir Thomas Middleton to Richard Moore, 6 October 1643, *HMC 13th Report, Portland Manuscripts*, vol. 1, p. 134; Bond, *Occasus*, Epistle, sig. A3, p. 9; Lord Fairfax to Committee of Safety, December 1642, in Bell ed., *Memorials*, I, 29; *CSPD 1644*, pp. 83, 99, 130, 249, 389, *passim*.

[15] This paragraph is based on a survey of a cross-section of periodicals, including *Aulicus*, *Britanicus*, *Civicus* and *The Scottish Dove*. See for the plain style, and on competition with the almanac, Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks, 1641-1649* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 128- 225; Joseph Frank, *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper, 1620-1660* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1961), pp. 20-1, 24-5, 129, *passim*. On the almanac, consult Capp, *English Almanacs*. Lilly and political prophecy: Ann Geneva, *Astrology and the Seventeenth Century Mind: William Lilly and the Language of the Stars* (Manchester and New York, 1995); Rusche, 'Prophecies and Propaganda', *idem.*, 'Merlini Anglici'; Rupert Taylor, *The Political Prophecy in England* (New York, 1911).

[16] This paragraph is based on a study of titles in Wing's *Short Title Catalogue*, Fortescue's *Catalogue*, and Falconer Madan, *Oxford Books*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1895-1931). Madan's introduction provides the best account of the royalist presses in Oxford. See also Lois Potter, *Secret rites and secret writing. Royalist literature, 1641-1660* (Cambridge, 1989); Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660*

Yet such statistics might prove misleading if considered out of context. For example, the destruction of many royalist documents in 1646 conveys the false impression that royalist clerics were idle or their congregations indifferent to demands for reform or the amendment of morals and manners to reflect the requirements of providence. In fact, I have shown in chapters Two and Three that many royalists took seriously their duty to respond speedily to comminatory manifestations, including Court preachers like Thomas Swadlin and laymen such as Ralph Hopton and Edward Hyde. In view of these qualifications, is it true to say parliamentarians were in fact more 'providential' than their counterparts, and proportionally did they write more often and at greater length on the subject?[17]

Though the ministrations of Hyde and others on the necessity to earn God's support for the cause were important, they only really began to win acceptance among loyalists in the early 1650s. Until then, most royalists remained content to acknowledge and apply the lessons of individual providences as private Christians, but were reluctant to take these conclusions a step further. Critics of the Book of Sports and anti-Sabbatarianism during the pre-war period had been less reticent in describing God's disapproval of these and other policy developments, and the royalists carried over the authorities' suspicion of such pejorative commentary into the 1640s. The providence, it must be remembered, constituted a challenge or test on the part of God directed towards a fallen humanity. Its scrutiny courted controversy since Christians were expected to respond to God's encouragement and engage in a perpetual process of assessment, comparison and critical examination of their own lives, and by extension, the lives of neighbours and the wider community to determine whether they matched required standards of godliness and sobriety. Providentialism could also exercise a levelling effect on Christians since all were subject to God's judgments, 'Be thou a Church-man, a Citizen, a Knight, an Earl, a Duke, a Prince'.[18] Royalists, however, were familiar with the notion of such equality before the throne of God, and may have felt instead that

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(New Haven and London, 1994); P. W. Thomas, *Sir John Berkenhead, 1617-1679: A Royalist Career in Politics and Polemics* (Oxford, 1969).

[17] Compare the publication of parliamentary and royalist fast sermons. See John F. Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism during the English Civil Wars, 1640-1648* (Princeton, 1969), pp. 7-15, and Chapter Two, above, pp. 39-40, 43-4.

danger lay not so much in a levelling tendency but conversely in the erection of a standard which elevated a godly contingent above other members of the community by placing a premium upon God's allocation of mercies and judgments and the response by men to these experiences.

Royalist providentialism was more 'static' than its counterpart, centred on the unique and unchanging role in God's scheme envisaged for the King and placing special emphasis on the Prayer Book.[19] Parliamentarians embraced a more dynamic model in which the historical convergence of anti-Laudian forces in the late 1630s and early 1640s, and the unexpected success which the Long Parliament enjoyed in its reforming programme, 1640-41, served as incontrovertible evidence that the country had entered a period of unprecedented divine activity. Parliamentarians and their opponents were seen as being active, morally responsible characters in an unfolding historical drama in which God compelled individuals to cast certain moral and religious choices which were to exert a profound influence on the course and direction of the war. This worldview was underscored by an acute consciousness that the millennium lay close at hand. Few could have failed to be moved with excitement and fear at the prospect of the acceleration of history towards a such a denouement, though to a majority of Parliament's supporters its precise aspect remained undefined until after the second civil war and the momentous decision to place the King on trial.[20]

Unlike their royalist opponents, the parliamentarians were not slow to draw political conclusions from the study of providences. They were on the whole more consistent and thorough than the royalists in identifying, labelling and applying the lessons of providence via state-sponsored iconoclasm, national fast injunctions, and

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[18] Robert Baillie, *Errours and Induration, Are the Great Sins and the Great Judgements of the Time* (1645), BL TT E 294 (12), p. 36.

[19] See, for example, *A Revindication of Psalme 105. 15. Touch Not Mine Anointed* (1643), BL TT E 245 (28); Griffith Williams, *Vindiciae Regum; Or the Grand Rebellion* (1643), BL TT E 88 (1), pp. 18-19; Dudley Digges Jnr., *The Unlawfulnesse of Subjects Taking up Armes Against their Soveraigne* (1644), BL TT E 29 (1), pp. 13, 41, 47-8.

[20] John Goodwin, *Anti-Cavalierisme* (1642), BL TT E 123 (25), p. 1; Matthew Newcomen, *A Sermon Tending To Set forth the Right Use of the Disasters that befall our Armies*, September 1644, in *The English Revolution I*, vol. 12, pp. 282-83; William Gouge, *The Progresse of Divine Providence* (1645), BL TT E 302 (25), Epistle, sig. A3v; John Shaw believed that 'God draws neerer and neerer with his judgments and warnings', *The Three Kingdomes Case* (1646), BL TT E 330 (1), p. 28; *idem.*, *A Broken Heart* (1642), BL TT E 95 (13), p. 33; E. S., *The Saints Travel From Babylon* (1643), BL TT E 94 (5), p. 22; *Englands Remembrancer, Or A Warning From Heaven: Setting Forth the Two Judgements of God now upon the Land* (1644), BL TT E 50 (4), p. 2.

through the wording of collective oaths and protestations like the Solemn League and Covenant. Additionally, the ultra-witty style employed by much royalist literature proved unsuitable to serious enquiry into God's purposes. The effect of this greater emphasis on providence by supporters of Parliament was for the doctrine at the popular level to become identified exclusively with the parliamentarian cause as many royalists increasingly sought to distance themselves from what they viewed as an article of faith now tainted by association with rebellion. Anecdotal evidence supports the view that some royalist soldiers did indeed seek to mock their opponents' faith and reliance on providence in time of battle, with parliamentarians regularly accusing their opposite numbers of denying the efficacy of fast days, wilfully organising false and 'anti' fasts and ignoring providences out of an irreligious fearlessness of God.[21] Though this polemic hardly constitutes objective evidence of a pattern or habit of royalist rejection of providence, it is suggestive of a gradual divergence of views on the subject as the war progressed and as the rival positions became more firmly entrenched. A gradual reduction in the frequency of royalist fasts and thanksgivings at Court in Oxford, which one recent study has highlighted, supports this thesis.[22]

Parliamentarian providentialism was also more thoroughly steeped in the language of war and its rhetoric more belligerent than its counterpart. In this respect, the parliamentarian God was first and foremost Lord of Hosts. This reflected the attention accorded to war-like episodes in the Old Testament in the sermons, pamphlets and exemplary literature of the parliamentarians.[23] Ian Gentles' recent study of the campaign standards of the opposing armies during the civil war highlights this trend. The author found that the largest classes of subjects represented by parliamentarian colours were providential icons and mottos. These often depicted the 'arm' of God displayed against the background of an imaginary scene of battle or which otherwise quoted from the bible

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[21] *CSPD 1644*, p. 270; *Englands Wolfe with Eagles Clawes* (1646), BL 669 f 10 (106); 'An Exact Relation of the . . . Massacre at Bolton', May 1644, in George Ormerod ed., *Tracts Relating to Military Proceedings in Lancashire During the Great Civil War* in *Chetham Society*, 2 (1944), pp. 192, 194; Adam Eyre, *A Dyurnall, Or catalogue of all My accions and Expences From the 1st of January 1646*, in *Surtees Society*, 65 (1879), p. 20; John Bond, *A Doore of Hope* (1641), pp. 7-11. For the text of the Solemn League, see Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, pp. 267-71.

[22] Ian Roy, 'The City of Oxford', in R. C. Richardson ed., *Town and Countryside in the English Revolution* (Manchester and New York, 1992), p. 154.

to declare a regiment's trust and confidence in the intercessory powers of the Lord. Royalist colours, in contrast, rarely featured such providential iconography, instead reflecting a stress on defending the person of the King and vowing to protect the integrity of traditional religious practice.[24]

Royalists, then, displayed an inherent distrust of the plurality, assertiveness and judgmental character of parliamentarian providentialism, fuelled by the suspicion that the latter was derived from the kind of confrontational puritanism that the authorities had recently tried to suppress on the grounds of that it was inimical to public order. The parliamentarian approach was perhaps more sensitive to the ebb and flow of history, more dynamic and progressive than the royalists', whose concentration upon the reassuring certainties of a safe and predictable general providence reflected a restorationist tenor. Next, I will consider in more detail some of the more positive qualities that defined parliamentarian providentialism and ask whether these characteristics applied equally to all supporters of Parliament.

Any assessment of parliamentarian providentialism must, of course, begin with the acknowledgment that individuals exhibited a complicated variety of responses to incidence of providence: the heat of battle, for example, generated short-lived passions that may not have prevailed for long once the fevered atmosphere had abated. Most fighting during the war consisted of inconclusive skirmishes and long marches that would have sapped enthusiasm still further. No man's life was lived entirely and exclusively by the rule of providence, not even the most godly and self-critical members of the community who often bewailed their own concupiscence, or worldliness, and who periodically sought to rededicate and relaunch their spiritual careers.[25] Individuals might display variation in their enthusiasm for applying the lessons of providence. A small minority like Oliver Cromwell sought to incorporate an acknowledgement of the providential into civilian and military policy at every available opportunity. Others, godly commanders such as Sir William Brereton in Cheshire or Sir Samuel Luke in

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[23]Examples include Stephen Marshall, *Meroz Cursed*, February 1642, in *The English Revolution I*, vol. 2. Thomas Case, *Gods Rising, His Enemies Scattering* (1642), in vol. 4; John Arrowsmith, *The Covenant-Avenging Sword Brandished* (1643), in vol. 5; John Ley, *The Fury of Warre, Folly of Sinne*, in vol. 6.
[24]Gentles, 'The iconography of revolution: England 1642-1649', in Gentles, John Morrill and Blair Worden eds., *Soldiers, writers and statesmen of the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 1998).

Newport Pagnell, were more selective in taking notice of God's promptings, but nevertheless initiated campaigns of moral reform in their local jurisdictions by instituting occasional fasts and prayer meetings.[26] However many, perhaps like Denzil Holles, probably followed the lead of a majority of royalists when they confined the application of providence to their own lives as an instinctive response in moments of danger and doubt, and were reluctant to draw wider political conclusions from events.[27]

This is not surprising since the parliamentarian movement itself evidently represented a very broad set of ambitions and aspirations: opposition to perceived Roman Catholic infiltration of the establishment, suspicion of the King's ministers, and hostility to Laudianism numbering among the concerns of the royalists' detractors.[28] The relative strength of the King's party during the first two years of the war had consolidated this alliance beneath the familiar protestant banner of the righteous and persecuted minority. It was during this early stage that preachers and polemicists propagated the myth that Parliament's mission was one which had received the endorsement and support of God: this presumably assisted recruitment and impressed the capricious, but also reflected a deeply-held and ingenuous appraisal of the importance of the legislature in the divine plan.[29]

Once the war had begun to move in Parliament's favour during the first half of 1644, however, the divisions within the movement became more explicit. This development was aggravated by the realignment of Westminster parties beginning in mid-1644 that witnessed the active alliance between the Scots and the peace party led by Denzil Holles, and as the royalists began to make overtures to the Scottish covenanters

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[25] For example, Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, pp. 67, 78-118; Wallington, BL MS 40883 fols 6, 28v, 35, 68, 84, *passim*.
[26] See Brereton, *Letter Books* and Luke, *Letter Books*.
[27] For Holles, see Patricia Crawford, *Denzil Holles, 1598-1680: A Study of his political career* (1979), pp. 208-10 on his religion; *Memorial of Denzil Lord Holles*, in Francis Maseres ed., *Select Tracts Relating to the Civil Wars in England* (1815), pp. 191-310.
[28] For example see the text of the Grand Remonstrance or the Nineteen Propositions, June 1642, in Gardiner ed., *Constitutional Documents*, pp. 202-32, 249-54.
[29] Stanley Gower to Robert Harley, July 1643, in *HMC 14th Report, Appendix, Part 2*, p. 113; *Boanerges, Or The Parliament of Thunder* (1643), BL TT E 88 (25); Thomas Case, *The Root of Apostacy* (1644), BL TT E 46 (11), Epistle, sig. A2; William Gouge, *The Progresse of Divine Providence* (1645), BL TT E 302 (25), Epistle, sig. A3; Newcomen, *A Sermon*, p. 301: 'was there ever a Parliament that had so many Prayers, Deliverances, Wonders waiting upon it as you?'; John Vicars, *Magnalia Dei Anglicana, Or, Englands Parliamentary Chronicle* (1646), subtitled '[an] Exact Narration of all the most memorable

from 1645.[30] In view of these splits, during the second half of the 1640s it becomes more difficult than ever to talk of a singular 'parliamentarian providentialism' representing a unified opposition to the policies of the Crown. Religious presbyterians and Independents identified many of the policies and objectives of their erstwhile allies as an incitement to God and a threat to the nation. Presbyterians pointed to the tardiness of Parliament and the Westminster Assembly in erecting the presbyterians' preferred form of Church government, the widespread failure to implement the provisions of the Solemn League and Covenant, and the threat posed by implicit toleration of sectarianism, as possible causes of God's further controversy with England.[31] Independents for their part argued that the demanding comprehensiveness of the proposed presbyterian Church settlement left no room for conscience and mimicked the papal infallibility and prelatical presumption of divinely-delegated authority that the Long Parliament had striven to overturn. Presbyterian intolerance, they countered, itself risked divine censure.[32]

Even within the presbyterian and Independent camps, there existed wide differences of opinion. 'Rigid' or *jure divino* presbyterians looked to Scotland for inspiration, and argued that the growing anti-Scottish sentiment in England from 1645 threatened the unappreciative and ungrateful English with God's arrows.[33] 'Independency' was a term covering a range of opinions with both a civil and religious bearing, at first synonymous only with the efficacy of semi-separatist church government, but that was later also to encompass separatism and heretical

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Parliamentary-Mercies, and mighty (if not miraculous) Deliverances'; Hezakiah Woodward, *The Churches Thank-Offering To God Her King* (1641), BL TT E 122 (1), p. 43.

[30] The best single history of these changes is David Underdown, *Pride's Purge* (Oxford, 1971), Chapter 3; Valerie Pearl, 'London's Counter-Revolution', in G. Aylmer ed., *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement, 1646-1660* (London and Basingstoke, 1972).

[31] James Nalton, *Delay of Reformation Provoking Gods further Indignation* (1646), BL TT E 334 (14); Robert Baillie, *Satan the Leader in Chief to all Who Resist the Reparation of Sion* (1644), BL TT E 35 (17), Epistle, sig. A2v-A3, p. 52; Richard Vines, *The Authors, Nature, and Danger of Heresies* (1647), BL TT E 378 (29).

[32] Henry Robinson, *The Falsehood of Mr William Pryn's Truth Triumphing* (1645), BL TT E 282 (11), p. 9; William Walwyn, *Toleration Justified, and Persecution Condemned* (1646), BL TT E 319 (15), pp. 1, 14; Hezakiah Woodward, *Inquiries into the Causes of our Miseries* (1644), BL TT E 22 (1), p. 10.

[33] Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, II, 298; Thomas Edwards, *Gangraena* (*The Rota* and University of Exeter, 1977), Pt. 2, pp. 207-11.

sectarianism.[34] The changing face of Independency was reflected in the greater stress placed on God's possible endorsement of toleration and the threat of divine retribution for the silencing of the saints.[35] The evolution of a distinctive identity within the component armies of Parliament, and after 1645, the New Model, resulted in the splintering still further of the once broadly unitary nature of parliamentarian providentialism, providing formidable backing to the religious Independents, and shifting the balance within the nation towards a more progressive interpretation of providences. 'Justice' for soldiers and free worship for God's saints became two of the objectives of this politicised Army.[36]

Complaints that Parliament's armies harboured the dangerously irreligious sparked calls for Scottish-style purges of the rank and file and contributed to the mood of disillusionment and doubt that became a dominant theme of sermons from 1644 onwards.[37] Parliament certainly felt the need to reach out to its armies and provide moral and religious support through the dissemination of prayer-books, catechisms and other exemplary literature which all portrayed the war as a providential mission and which demanded that soldiers pay close attention to recording examples of battlefield providences.[38] This may have reflected concern at the discovery that soldiers possessed a comparatively poor knowledge of the gospel or alternatively might indicate an existing *demand* for edifying literature among the rank and file. Certainly, the cohesion of individual units, local loyalties, regional differences, and the attitude of the respective commands towards the matter of organising proper religious exercises and the education of soldiers to recognise and appreciate acts of God, all help explain perceived variations in religiosity and providential awareness among the rank and file. The London Trained Bands, for example, quickly acquired a reputation for bravery, endurance and prayerfulness: their religiosity may have stemmed from the fact that London had become

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[34] On the changing meaning of the term 'Independent', see Rosemary Bradley, 'The Failure of Accommodation: Religious conflicts between Presbyterians and Independents in the Westminster Assembly, 1643-1646', *Journal of Religious History*, 12 (1982).
[35] *A Letter to Mr Thomas Edwards* (1647), BL TT E 378 (3), p. 2; William Bridge, *The Saints Hiding-Place in the Time of Gods Anger* (1646), BL TT E 359 (4), p. 21.
[36] See below, pp. 129-36.
[37] Matthew Sylvester, *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (1696), p. 51; Laurence, *Army Chaplains*, pp. 22, 24; Bod. Tanner MS 62/1 fol. 65.

refuge to many politically and religiously motivated men eager to contribute to the spiritual and material war effort. Other units, meanwhile, such as William Waller's southern army, acquired a contrasting reputation for the neglect of its soldiers' spiritual welfare.[39]

A complicated picture therefore emerges of points of difference across the broad alliance which constituted the parliamentarian movement, between Scottish and English notions of what were God's priorities for the Church, between laity and clergymen for whom providentialism was an indispensable tool in their frequent exhortations, and between the puritan members of the community and their perhaps less enthusiastic cousins more concerned with attaining limited objectives in the secular sphere, such as acquiring control over the appointment of the King's ministers and prosecuting delinquents. Providentialism had to adapt to these changing priorities and objectives since the different parties requisitioned God's particular sponsorship and endorsement. Nevertheless, the work of Parliament rested upon a foundation of certain basic points of agreement, at least until the end of the first civil war. These were threefold: a recognition of Parliament's covenant with God; the need to accomplish reform of the Church in order to root out idolatry and dismiss scandalous ministers before perfecting Church government and liturgy; and the erection of a proper means of glorifying and commemorating God's mercies and judgments and so enhancing the spiritual and material wellbeing of the commonwealth.

The parliamentarian war-effort rested upon the promise of a covenanted relationship with God. This introduced a dimension of reciprocity in which the individual was expected to participate, and contribute to, the erection of the godly nation. Men and women were neither bystanders nor simply pawns in a much larger game, and God demanded that His children evolve spiritually by making continual reference to acts of providence. A covenant required conscientious application by the

[38] Such as *The Christian Souldiers Magazine, of Spirituall Weapons* (1644), BL TT E 1189 (7); *The Souldiers Catechisme; Composed for the Parliaments Army* (1644), BL TT E 1186 (1); *The Souldiers Pocket Bible* (1643), BL C 54 aa 1 (2).

[39] Letters describing the marches of the City Volunteers: *CSPD 1642*, pp. 371-3, 382, 388, *passim*; Henry Foster, *A True and Exact Relation of the Marchings of the two Regiments of the Trained Bands . . . for the Relief of Gloucester*, in *Bibliotecha Gloucesterensis*, pp. 251-71; Laurence, *Army Chaplains*, p. 27.

godly individual in order that they heed the implications of God's apportioning of mercies and judgments, and a national covenant likewise committed the whole nation to examining the implications of God's actions. Whilst it was accepted that God might pay particular attention to the prayers and supplications of a section of the community, a national covenant envisaged the participation of the greater part of the nation in the kind of self-examination and repentance once restricted to a godly minority. The war required a kind of spiritual mobilisation, which was envisaged as a means to an end: attracting the support of God in a closely-fought contest, but which also constituted a primary purpose of the war.[40]

This federal relationship was institutionalised and made concrete in the Solemn League and Covenant between England and Scotland in September 1643 that followed the example of other nationally-tendered vows and protestations such as the oath of loyalty to God and Parliament in June 1643, celebrating the discovery of Edmund Waller's plot to secure London for the royalists.[41] Their purpose was to employ a vocabulary of atonement and divine intercession to encourage the confession of sins and to seek repentance, helping to facilitate a process of national unification under the banner of providence. The Covenant was one component in the translation onto the national stage of the practical and experimental divinity which had characterised the private lives of the pre-civil war godly. Moral reform that included legislation against idolatrous images and promoting Sabbatarianism, and the hundreds of fasts and thanksgivings celebrated across the land were part of this national agenda to mobilise the prayers of the nation to 'cast the balance' and win over God.[42] Providentialism would be used to promote an active participation of these recruits in the work of Parliament; the Home Front became in effect the prayers of every family, the celebration of every fast, and every commitment to hold true to God's ordinances.

What was more, the Covenant appeared to work its spell, at least for a time. The experience of the Scots during the Bishops' Wars had held out this promise and now the

[40] Hezakiah Woodward, *A Good Souldier, Maintaining his Militia* (1644), BL TT E 46 (7), p. 83.
[41] *CJ* vol. 3, 1642-44, p. 118; *A Sacred Vow and Covenant*, BL TT E 105 (26); John Pym, *A Discovery of the Great Plot For the Ruine of the City of London* (1643), BL TT E 105 (21); *A Brief Narrative of the Late Treacherous Horrid Designe, Which by the Great Blessing and Speciall Providence of God hath been Lately Discovered* (1643), BL TT E 106 (10).

run of good fortune the parliamentarian armies enjoyed during the autumn of 1643 were proof for many that God was delivering on the September pledge.[43] But more money still was needed, more supplies to fulfil Parliament's side of the bargain, neglected at its peril.[44] Preachers began to warn of the terrible risk of Covenant-breaking and the uniquely destructive punishments it incurred, while many other pamphlets were being published designed to 'sell' the Covenant's message of providential self-help.[45]

Covenant-breaking and refusal was characterised as 'treason' against God, a 'land-destroying sin' threatening to cut off forever all hope of further assistance from heaven.[46] Some critics, principally presbyterian, blamed wholesale Covenant-refusal for the fact that the cessation of hostilities in 1646 apparently failed to bring with it a diminishing of England's woes. They argued that the prospect of toleration of heretical religious opinions, tardiness in completing the reformation of the Church and widespread refractoriness among the general population under parliamentary jurisdiction were contriving to lose Parliament the peace.[47] This refrain was heard with the most clarity and vehemence from the Scots, who had invested more political capital in the project than their English co-signatories. Their concern escalated in proportion to the growth of sectarianism in England: this contravened the stated ambition of the two

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[42] Alexander Henderson speaking at the tendering of the Covenant, 25 September 1643 in *The Covenant with a Narrative of the Proceedings*, BL TT E 70 (22), p. 34.
[43] These successes included the relief of Hull and the battle of Winceby in Lincolnshire (11 October); *A Full Relation of The Scots Besiedging Newcastle and also Fairfax's taking of Whitby* (1644), BL TT E 33 (25), described as 'a plaine demonstration of Gods blessing since the taking of the Covenant'; Newcomen, *A Sermon*, p. 316; *An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons . . . concerning the growth and spreading of Errors* (1647), BL TT E 373 (12), pp. 1-2. On the efficacy of covenant-taking, see *The Scottish Dove* (1643), BL TT E 75 (21), p. 29.
[44] Edmund Calamy, Jeremiah Burroughes *et al*, *Foure Speeches Delivered in Guild-Hall on Friday the Sixth of October 1643*, BL TT E 338 (1), pp. 1-2, 22, 25, 37-8.
[45] *The Equity of the Solemn League and Covenant* (1644), BL TT E 39 (20); Philip Nye, *The Excellency and Lawfulnesse of the Solemn League and Covenant* (1643), BL TT E 318 (7); Joseph Caryl, *The Nature, Solemnity, Grounds, Property and Benefits of a Sacred Covenant* (1643), BL TT E 72 (12); Thomas Coleman, *The Hearts Ingagements* (1643), BL TT E 72 (11); E. W., *The Solemn League and Covenant of Three Kingdomes, Cleared to the Conscience of Everyman* (1643), BL TT E 71 (13); *The Three Kingdomes Healing-Plaister. Or, The Solemn Covenant of Reformation and Defence explained* (1643), BL TT E 71 (14); *The Declaration of the Kingdomes of England and Scotland* (1644), BL TT E 31 (3).
[46] Edmund Calamy, *The Great Danger of Covenant-refusing, And Covenant-breaking* (1646), BL TT E 327 (6), pp. 10, 14, 17.
[47] *The Scottish Dove* (1645), BL TT E 26 (16), p. 527; *A Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ and to Our Solemn League and Covenant* (1647), BL TT E 423 (3), pp. 26-9; Simeon Ashe, *Religious Covenanting Directed, And Covenant-keeping perswaded* (1646), BL TT E 327 (5); Herbert Palmer, *The Glasse of Gods Providence* (1644), BL TT E 6 (8), pp. 41-3; Robert Jenison, *The Return of the Sword . . .*

countries to bring their religious practices into disciplined uniformity.[48] Scottish angst was also directed at English Erastianism, which promised to water down the Covenant's proposed theocracy, and by information that many soldiers in the New Model had refused to take the Covenant, leading to the Scottish alliance with the City authorities and London presbyterianism (1646-7) and eventually with the royalists (1647-8).[49]

Virtually all parliamentarians were in agreement that one of the primary objectives of the Long Parliament was to carry out reform of the Church. This meant the reversal of Laudian churchmanship and ceremonialism and the rooting-out of idolatrous imagery, which was believed to have provoked God into striking down the nation with war. The first of these objectives was largely accomplished before the outbreak of hostilities, while the removal of 'monuments of superstition' began in earnest in the spring of 1643.[50] While the rooting out of profaneness through Sabbatarian legislation and the suppression of playhouses were uncontentious measures, Parliament and the Westminster Assembly, which was convened in July 1643 to advise the legislature on the next steps in reform, soon became divided over these more positive aspects such as the replacement for the Prayer Book and the preferred form of Church government.[51] Critics like Bedfordshire clergyman, Oliver Bowles, alleged that such delays distracted Parliament from its primary task of erecting a godly nation and betokened indifference to reform, singularly displeasing to the Almighty.[52] Similarly, Thomas Hill, shortly to be appointed Master of Trinity, Cambridge, at an August 1644 humiliation alerted both Houses to the wider failure of Parliament and its supporters to purge the land of sins of lukewarmness, covetousness and a deeply ingrained habit of sinning, and expedite

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Manifesting that Breach of Covenant is a Prognostick of the Return of the Sword (1646), published 1648. BL TT E 434 (12).

[48] *OPH*, vol. 15, pp. 17-19.

[49] Gillespie, *Works*, I, 'A Brotherly Examination of Some Passages of Mr Coleman's late Sermon'; Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, II, 199; *OPH*, p. 222.

[50] *CJ*, vol. 3, 1642-44, pp. 57, 63, 142, *passim*; Firth, *Acts and Ordinances*, I, 265-66, 425-26; Anthony Fletcher, *The Outbreak of the English Civil War* (1989), pp. 91-124; Claire Cross, 'The Church in England, 1646-1660', in Aylmer ed., *The Interregnum*, p. 100; William Shaw, *A History of the English Church During the Civil Wars and Under the Commonwealth, 1640-1660*, 2 vols (1900), II, 103-4, 112-14.

[51] Firth, *Acts and Ordinances*, I, 26-7, 420-22, 1070-72. John Morrill, 'The Church in England, 1642-9', in *The Nature of the English Revolution* (1993), p. 148. George Yule, *Puritans in Politics: The Religious Legislation of the Long Parliament, 1640-47* (Sutton Courtenay Press, 1981); Paul, *The Assembly*; Rosemary Bradley, ' "Jacob and Esau Struggling in the Wombe": A Study of Presbyterian and Independent Religious Conflicts, 1640-1648', PhD., University of Kent, 1975.

reconciliation with God.[53] Hill's pronouncement was seconded by another preacher that day, Herbert Palmer, Master of Queens', Cambridge, who complained of deeper deficiencies than simple delay of formal Church reformation, pointing to the need for justice against delinquents and suggesting the creation of a taskforce of investigators to be charged with the discovery and punishment of scandalous members of the public, to complement the investigation of scandalous clergymen. This, he said, would 'mightily lesson the number and weight of the Nation's sins', and hence God's anger.[54]

The early promise of the war gave way to dissatisfaction and disappointment as the reform programme appeared to stall. But at a deeper level the prospect of individual regeneration also appeared as distant a prospect as ever. According to critical observers, the pride and impenitence of individual supporters of Parliament was if anything enhanced by the victories of 1645-46, and this spoiling of God's generous and extraordinary bounty was felt to bode ill for the future.[55] Hill and Palmer, along with other preachers especially from about 1643, were all keen to stress the more general failure of Parliament and its supporters to install a deeper, permanent acknowledgment of God and His works into the consciousness of the time. They envisaged a sea-change that would witness England's transformation into a nation that would make sorrow, regret and thankfulness at mercies and judgments the central pillar of public and private life, not only out of a desire to earn the acclamation of God but as an indisputable matter of worship for its own sake. It is to the question of acknowledgment of God's providence and the role of the fast and thanksgiving that we now turn.[56]

Encompassing both authorized national occasions and more spontaneous local initiatives, fasts constitute a unique record of the response by parliamentarians across the nation to the ebb and flow of providence. In addition to the monthly fast initiated by

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[52] Bowles, *Zeal For Gods House Quickned*, BL TT E 63 (6).
[53] Thomas Hill, *The Season For Englands Selfe-Reflection, And Advancing Temple-Work* (1644), BL TT E 6 (7), pp. 19, 22-9, 31.
[54] Palmer, *The Glasse*, pp. 48-50. See also Palmer, *The Necessity and Encouragement of Utmost Venturing for the Churches Help* (1643), BL TT E 60 (3), pp. 62-80; D. P. P., *The Six Secondary Causes of the Spinning out of this Unnaturall Warre* (1644), BL TT E 18 (13), pp. 1-9.
[55] BL Sloane MS 922 fol. 158; for a list of the sins of the people prepared by a committee of the Assembly, 10 September 1644, see *The Works of John Lightfoot*, VIII, 310; Newton, *Mans Wrath*, p. 12.
[56] Hill, *Season*, pp. 12-15; Palmer, *Glasse*, pp. 23-4; Joseph Caryl, *The Saints Thankfull Acclamation*, (1644), BL TT E 48 (1), Epistle, pp. 45-6; Matthew Newcomen, *The All-Seeing Unseen Eye of God* (1646), BL TT E 369 (6), p. 22; Calamy, *Englands Antidote, against the Plague of Civil Warre* (1644), in *The English Revolution I*, vol. 13, pp. 139-41.

Charles I and Parliament at the start of 1642 to call for the lifting of God's judgments from Irish protestants, Parliament authorized fasts and thanksgivings in response to a wide variety of dangers and deliverances that called for solemn asseveration and recapitulation of the saints' commitment to repentance and reform. God's glory was magnified by the celebration of victories like Marston Moor (July 1644) and Naseby (June 1645), and the Lord delighted in surprising His followers with dramatic last-minute rescues accomplished against all expectation. God was something of a showman, and many providences seem to have been engineered primarily to allow the Almighty to bask in His own reflected glory.[57] Conversely, it was feared that reticence in proclaiming God's handiwork might indicate the dreaded hardness of heart that presaged the striking down of the complacent. The faithful always sang the Lord's praises, while blasphemous and ungodly royalists, like the unrepentant Archbishop Laud, suffered from a fatal excecation or spiritual blindness by refusing to recognise and acknowledge the rightness and appropriateness of the divine judgments ranged against them.[58]

The public or private fast represented one of the most important ways in which the practical divinity of the pre-civil war and civil war godly was translated into the political arena. The purpose of the fast was to compel a community to acknowledge and praise the handiwork of God. This searching after God was a sacred duty in its own right, but was also efficacious, 'Thankfulness for blessings past, being an invitation of blessings to come'.[59] A leading news journal described this as 'the best begging . . . a kind of ingaging of God to bestow another [mercy]', but warned that 'not to return thanks according to what we receive, were to procure wrath instead of a blessing'. Public acknowledgment of examples of providence indeed served to magnify God's

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[57] George Walker, *A Sermon Preached before the . . . Commons* (1645), BL TT E 26 (22), pp. 37, 40; Richard Vines, *Magnalia Dei ab Aquilone* (1644), BL TT E 3 (1), p. 12; Caryl, *Saints Thankfull Acclamation*, pp. 18, 40, 45; Newton, *Mans Wrath*, pp. 23-25; *God appearing for the Parliament, In Sundry late Victories* (1645), BL TT E 271 (22); Ormerod ed., *Tracts*, p. 109; Shaw, *Three Kingdomes*, pp. 21-2; Stephen Marshall, *A Sacred Record To be made of Gods Mercies to Zion*, June 1645, in *The English Revolution I*, vol. 17, p. 165; BL Add MS 35297 fol. 10v.

[58] Francis Roberts, *A Broken Spirit, Gods Sacrifices* (1644), BL TT E 365 (14), pp. 18-24; *The Scottish Dove*, February 1644, BL TT E 321 (12), pp. 130-32; Hezakiah Woodward, *The Life and Death of William Laud* (1645), BL TT E 26 (7), p. 38; Henry Burton, *The Grand Impostor Unmasked* (1645), BL TT E 26 (4).

[59] I Chron 16; *A Miraculous Victory obtained by . . . Ferdinando Lord Fairfax* (1643), BL TT E 104 (13). On the fast, see Tom Webster, *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1997), Chapter 3, 'Fasting and Prayer'.

glory, and consequently failure to observe such public and private acts of worship indicated an incorrigible attachment to sin, a dangerous, Pharaoh-like spiritual hardening in the hearts of men that presaged the execution of terminally destructive judgments. Fasts and thanksgivings in the army, meanwhile, combated the presence of dangerous Achans in its mongrel ranks and instilled a sense of common purpose.[60]

Though the exiled Court instituted official fasts and thanksgivings, these were more infrequent than those of its opponents and such injunctions were clearly more central to the work of Parliament and what it was seeking to achieve by fighting the war.[61] Royalists inherited the Church's pre-war suspicion of the unregulated fast and thanksgiving. Before 1640, it was envisaged that providence would only acquire a national political dimension during periods of public calamity or celebration such as official responses to outbreaks of plague or the commemoration of the Gunpowder Plot deliverance. Such local and national responses were furthermore circumscribed by diocesan and metropolitical oversight, and regulated by liturgical discipline. The unauthorized fast had been viewed as evidence of *de facto* nonconformity, and this now made many royalists especially reluctant converts to the culture of lamentation, abasement and humiliation followed so assiduously and with such painful enthusiasm by their opponents.[62]

Fasting and prayer were constituted a most potent weapon in the hands of the parliamentarians, having in theory 'a great prevalency with the great God; a wrestling power, and binding power'.[63] Time and again it was said that God appeared to reward the parliamentarian armies with military success when they elected to undertake solemn humiliation prior to battle, in the fashion of the Israelites who had once fasted and prayed to elicit guidance and support from Yahweh during their defeat of the Canaanites. In this spirit, Obadiah Sedgwick, preaching to the Commons in celebration

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[60] *The Scottish Dove*, February 1644, BL TT E 32 (12), p. 130.

[61] See Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament* and Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Fast Sermons of the Long Parliament', in *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (1972) on parliamentary fast sermons. Examples of royalist fast injunctions can be found in *Private Formes of Prayer . . . and also a Collection of all the Prayers Printed since these Troubles Began* (Oxford, 1645), BL TT E 1176 (3); James F. Larkin ed., *Stuart Royal Proclamations of King Charles I, 1625-1646* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 909-11, 1021-23.

[62] On pre-war attempts to control the fast, see Canon 72 of the Canons of 1604 in Gerald Bray ed., *The Anglican Canons, 1529-1947* (Church of England Record Society, Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1998), p. 363; Kenneth Fincham ed., *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church* I (Church of England Record Society, Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1994), 116-7, II (1998), 14, 27, 58, 224.

of Sir William Waller's victory at Cheriton in March 1644, declared that this military breakthrough should be attributed to the humiliation observed by Waller's forces on the eve of battle, furthermore declaring that 'an Humbling Army, a praying Army, a God-trusting Army . . . that is the Army which is most likely to overcome men'.[64]

Besides Westminster, the fast and thanksgiving seem to have been celebrated with the greatest conviction in the City and within the lines of communication surrounding the capital, encouraged by proximity to Parliament and its fast preachers; witness the regular religious exercises undertaken by presbyterian turner, Nehemiah Wallington, or the concentrated periods of fasting and prayer organised across a number of parishes in response to an extraordinary series of events such as the Naseby victory in June 1645.[65] The City government took seriously the need for collective expression of prayer and humiliation by Londoners to divert God's wrath and protect London from the conflagration it was expected would engulf the City if the English civil war were to follow the pattern set by the destruction of continental cities during the Thirty Years' War.[66] This task took on greater urgency with the breakdown of relations with the Army in 1646-7 and the consequent fear of reprisals or plunder.[67] A strengthening of London presbyterianism from 1644, and the inception of the London Provincial Assembly from 1647, became the occasion for rededication of the Solemn League and Covenant and the increased frequency of petitionary supplications to the Almighty amid the perception that 'sectarianism' and anti-Scottish sentiment now threatened to sideline the Covenant and dishonour God with predictably catastrophic results for London.[68]

Fasts and thanksgivings were observed in other counties which were predominantly parliamentarian, including Essex, Cheshire, Yorkshire and Lancashire,

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[63] Shaw, *A Broken Heart*, p. 2.
[64] Sedgwick, *A Thanksgiving Sermon . . . preached before the house of Commons . . . April 9 1644*, p. 23.
[65] See Symonds ed., 'The Diary of John Greene', *EHR*, 43-44 (1928-9), 43, pp. 599-600, 604; 44, p. 107, for examples of this frequency in the City. BL Add MS 40883, fols 52v, 68, 76, *passim*. *Mercurius Veridicus*, BL TT E 288 (19), p. 69. Besides Naseby, another key period was January 1644, which witnessed the victory at Nantwich, Cheshire and the entry of the Scottish army into England. This resulted in several days of humiliation in London churches. *Mercurius Civicus*, February 1644, BL TT E 32 (4), p. 396.
[66] *The Miseries of War. By a Lover of Truth and Peace* (1643), BL TT E 85 (13), pp. 10-11.
[67] Corporation of London Record Office, Common Council Journals, vol. 40, fols 96, 128v, 160.
[68] Ibid., fol. 160. Renewal of the Covenant took place in St Michael, Bassishaw, 14 January 1646, see sermons by Calamy, *The Great Danger of Covenant-refusing*, and Ashe, *Religious Covenanting*. Charles E. Surman ed., *The Records of the Provincial Assembly of London, 1647-1660*, 2 vols (1957), I. 26, 39, 78-80, 83, *passim*.

during the celebration of significant national successes such as Naseby in June 1645 or following setbacks such as the defeat of Essex at Lostwithiel in Cornwall in September 1644.[69] The closely-fought nature of the war in Lancashire, for example, together with its strong nonconformist traditions perhaps resulted in a greater emphasis on the emergency prayer-meeting to overcome such immediate dangers: more so than in counties where the war was merely transitional. Hence the dependence on prayer and fasting by Sir William Brereton's administration of Cheshire during the siege of royalist Chester in 1645 when he ordered his armies surrounding the city to confess their sins and render an humiliation to facilitate an early end to the war there.[70] The bitterness of the war in the North West explains the appeal by one Lancashire parliamentarian for Londoners and others to join locals in a solemn commemoration of the seizure of Preston by Parliament in February 1643.[71] This assistance by the national godly community had already proved decisive in the case of the siege of Manchester in September 1642, according to a pro-Parliament pamphlet: 'for thus succours came into Manchester from all parts of the Kingdom, Armies of Prayers'. The enemy's cannon are silenced by the resulting divine intervention and further days of humiliation observed by the godly inhabitants, 'to succeed our Forces, that were upon their march'.[72]

It was not uncommon, in fact, for frontline forces to request assistance in the form of the intercessory prayer and praises from other parliamentarian counties. London itself weighed heavily for Parliament's forces, not only because of the men and resources it was able to contribute to the cause, but through the quantity and quality of its prayer and thanksgivings. Inhabitants took seriously their duty to support their brethren in the spiritual war-effort. Since God's participation in an engagement was always decisive, it was believed that any help London could provide in strengthening God's commitment to those forces must be beneficial. London constituted an exchange through which flowed the representations of a people to their God, the focal point in the

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[69] BL Add MS 37343, 'Whitelocke's annals of his own life', fol. 390. Examples from around the country include Devon: Syms' journal, BL Add MS 35297, fols 68v-69v and Essex, *Josselin*, pp. 14-15, 17, 19, 22, 24, 26, 42, 74. Other South West thanksgivings and fasts included those recorded in *A True Narration of the Most Observable Passage in and at the late Siege of Plymouth* (1643), BL TT 31 (15).

[70] *Brereton Letter Books*, p. 366.

[71] *A True Relation of a Great and Wonderfull Victory . . . against the Earl of Derby at Whalley*, BL TT E 100 (32), pp. 7-8. On fasting and thanksgiving in Manchester, see *Martindale*, p. 54; Ormerod ed., *Tracts*, pp. 73, 88-93, 97.

co-ordination of a national network of godly out-workers who laboured tirelessly, searching out sin and reforming local manners, and whose exercises in private prayer, fasting and thanksgiving constituted the indispensable work of a secret army engaged in the important task of acknowledging the mercies, deliverances and threatenings of the Lord and turning them to the advantage of the saints.[73]

Parliament therefore ascribed great importance to collective spiritual endeavour as a prerequisite for a successful outcome in the war. Preachers demanded that all members of the community play their part by responding to acts of providence through prayer, solemn atonement and personal reformation of manners, helping to remove impediments to Parliament's success on the battlefield. This inclusive approach differed from both the rigid Scottish presbyterian method which employed excommunication and widespread purges of state and army to expel ungodly elements attracting divine displeasure, and on the other hand the exclusive approach of the separatists who envisaged a winnowing of the unleavened mass of godly and reprobate to isolate pure-bred communities of 'visible saints'.[74] Rather, the entire nation was expected to participate in a process of reform and renewal as a condition of success. The war provided the opportunity for the godly to break out of their local strongholds and apply in this way their cherished practical divinity on the national stage. The war also constituted a test, a grand enquiry by God into the spiritual fitness of the parliamentarians, and in this sense the outcome of battles or episodes in civil affairs mattered less than the opportunity they provided for soul searching.[75]

Section Two: Narratives

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[72] Ibid., pp. 115-17, 126-7. See Herbert Palmer, *Necessity and Encouragement*, p. 80.

[73] For example, see Nehemiah Wallington's remarks on the role of the saints' prayers and thanksgivings in the establishment of the Long Parliament in 1640, BL Add MS 40883 fol. 24v-25r, and the effect of parochial fasts organised by Thomas Case, *Victories obtained (by Gods blessing on the Parliaments forces) . . . As also other Speciall Mercies to this Kingdom* (1647), BL 669 f 10 (112). The Westminster Assembly received requests for intercessory prayer from, among others, Lady Waller, whose husband was then engaged in fighting at Arundel: *The Works of John Lightfoot*, VIII, 100-1.

[74] On the Scottish approach, see James Christie ed., *The Records of the Commissions of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland*, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1892-1909) and above, Chapter 3. On the saints' exclusiveness in comparison with the presbyterianism, see Murray Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 33, 42, 101.

[75] Hill, *Season*, p. 15.

Section Two: Narratives

(i) Introduction

The second half of this chapter will explore in more detail how the parliamentarian cause came to be divided over the question of the direction of Church reform and other policies as the war drew to a close. This period was marked by disillusionment and disappointment that the early reforming promise of the Long Parliament had remained unfulfilled. Critics charged Parliament with having ignored the disturbing fact of its own sinfulness, and pointed to the damaging effect this iniquity had had on the legislature's relationship with God. It was feared that Parliament's hard-fought victory would be wasted on the victors, and that God would now punish the parliamentarians for having betrayed the reforming ideal in which He had invested such providential capital. The evident high opinion God had held of the parliamentarians made their fall from grace all the more dangerous and troubling; the expected judgments which were the necessary punishment for this estrangement likely to be all the more severe for the presumption of Parliament's having scorned and despised the merciful dispensations of their omnipotent ally.

As we have seen, both presbyterians and Independents blamed each other for the sins now for the intensification of the nation's woes at a time when England should have been enjoying the dividend of peace. The presbyterians argued that delay in erecting their ideal form of Church government, Covenant-breaking and sectarian heresy threatened to attract divine disapproval.[76] The Independents for their part, lambasted presbyterianism as an intolerant ecclesiastical system whose presumption of infallibility risked offending God. The Almighty had evidently entered into a period of great productivity: far be it for man to inhibit this freedom of action.[77] Such developments within Independent thought clearly represented a move away from biblical literalism and

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[76] For details of Erastian/Independent co-operation, see Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, II. 360; Bradley, "Jacob and Esau", p. 438; Bradley, 'The Failure of Accommodation', p. 46.

[77] Such as Woodward, *Inquiries*, p. 10; John Goodwin, *Sion-College Visited* (1648), BL TT E 425 (2), p. 4; Goodwin, *Theomachia; Or The Grand Imprudence of Men Running The Hazard of Fighting Against*

faith in tradition because what mattered more than the definitions of heresy described by the Bible and promulgated by the Early Church was the endorsement God now gave to particular forms of worship. This endorsement took the form of the Inner Light of faith and the presence of external confirmatory providences. Thus the victories of the predominantly Independent New Model Army from 1645 served as signs that God expected His saints to be accorded a measure of freedom of worship. The providence thus no longer took a supporting role only, a dim and uncertain guiding light open to misinterpretation, but instead assumed centre stage as a means of reference in charting the progress of the nation. Pre-civil war practice with its Calvinist inheritance stressing the unfathomable nature of God's true motives had emphasised the danger of such a too-literal interpretation of providences. God disguised His real intentions, misleadingly making use of the wicked instrumentally and in the process according them temporary material prosperity. The proponents of free grace were in this respect deceived by the Army's spectacular successes during the years 1645-6 into thinking that this run of good fortune reflected the unqualified approbation and endorsement of the Lord.[78]

This model of the uncritical interpretation of providence ushered in a period of particularly unstable politics since it had the effect of removing impediments to quite radical change. This was especially true in the hands of an Army with time on its hands and grievances to pursue. Yet paradoxically for men who proclaimed their intention to follow the spirit of God wherever it took them, the initiative for interpreting providences now rested more firmly than ever with God's human instruments. A dominant theme among the soldiery was the demand for justice: against royalist delinquents who had crept back into positions of local influence and who were now exercising jurisdiction over loyal, God-fearing soldiers; and justice in the form of the expurgation of the blood guilt accumulated by the King's party before and during the war.[79] 'Justice' entailed the proper honouring of the providences vouchsafed during the conflict by the perfecting of a more thorough and complete reformation and constitutional settlement, and by

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God (1644), BL TT E 12 (1), pp. 18-20; Henry Robinson, *The Falsehood of Mr William Pryn's Truth Triumphing* (1645), BL TT E 282 (11), Epistle.

[78] This is the central claim of Clement Walker's *The Compleat History of Independency*, in 4 parts (1661, first published 1648), BL TT E 1052, see especially Epistle at beginning of Pt 2. J. K. D. T., *A Salve for the Sufferings of the Loyall Party* (1648), BL TT E 433 (16), Preface, pp. 2-23.

[79] John Saltmarsh, *A Letter From the Army* (1647), BL TT E 392 (6), p. 2.

guaranteeing some limited measure of liberty of conscience. The Army had become the primary instrument of God's work now that the Almighty had lost confidence in a backsliding Parliament. With the rise to pre-eminence there towards the end of 1646 of Holles's peace party, came the prospect of an unjust settlement with the King that might betray the sacrifice of the fallen saints.[80] Hence the activism exhibited by the Army during the spring of 1647, and the decision by the Army Grandees to march on London in order to intimidate Parliament: better to risk a constitutional crisis and a second war than permit the wilful dishonouring of God and the cynical betrayal of His servants.[81]

(ii) The Sins and Judgments of Parliament (1642-1644)

During the early stages of the war sympathetic critics complained that Parliament risked the rebuke of God for its own iniquitous conduct. The anti-royalist party, after all, was not free of the guilt that had compelled God to visit war upon the nation. The diarist John Greene, Recorder of London, in this way spoke for the views of many moderate parliamentarians when he described the war as God's means of humbling a near-universal pride and propensity for excess allegedly characterising the pre-war period. Writing in 1642, Greene pessimistically saw little prospect of accommodation or of either side clinching an outright victory, probably because the author then believed God was unprepared to sponsor either party unconditionally since little distinguished the two sides in terms of their moral worth.[82]

Central to these and other observations lay the fact that God chose to punish the faithful alongside the unrepentant and was generally less tolerant of godly iniquity than that of the self-evidently reprobate. The sins of puritans weighed more heavily when God apportioned His mercies and judgments, and the godly therefore were required to exercise greater restraint and responsibility in the matter of their personal moral and

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[80] 'An Agreement of the People', in Wolfe, *Leveller Manifestoes*, p. 228.
[81] 'A Declaration From His Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax And his Councell of Warre', in *Army Book of Declarations*, pp. 120-9.
[82] 'Green', *EHR*, 43 (1928), p. 391. For parliamentarians acknowledging their shared guilt, see BL Add MS 10114 fol. 4.

religious duties than the ungodly or neutrals.[83] Too often, preacher Thomas Hill told the Houses, men were unprepared to shoulder their portion of responsibility for the effects of the accumulation of sin: all were required to declare the extent of their personal contribution to the 'Great Stock of National sins'.[84] Preachers of all hues warned against delays in purging idolatry and removing scandalous ministers: a criticism that Parliament took to heart, for example sponsoring in February 1643 a general and nationwide confession and humiliation designed to combat national sins at what was now a low point in the fortunes of Parliament's armies.[85]

The neglect or mis-use of the fast was a common complaint of the mid-war period, circa 1644-5, by which time the early confidence of Parliament's initial injunctions relating to public worship had begun to wear off. It had become apparent that too many parishes were ignoring the fast altogether, or else celebrating it only in a formal sense rather than honouring its true purpose with sincere observance, a particularly dangerous contempt of God, as the censorious re-issues of the original legislation pointed out.[86] Yorkshire clergyman John Shaw, for example, doubted whether the monthly exercises designed to alleviate the suffering of Ireland's protestants had provoked the requisite lamentation and mournfulness.[87] Herbert Palmer meanwhile suggested that in spite of an unprecedented frequency of fasts, the religious exercises were decreasing in effectiveness as they came to be treated merely as social occasions at which, he said, women competed for attention in expensive clothes intended to 'outface

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[83] Palmer, *The Glasse*, pp. 12, 16. On all men as sinners, see for example, *The Plotts Revealed, And the Parliament Vindicated* (1642), BL TT E 63 (20), p. 1; Stephen Marshall, *A Sacred Panegyrick* (1644), BL TT E 30 (2), p. 29.
[84] Hill, *Season*, p. 17; Firth, *Acts and Ordinances*, I, 81.
[85] Herbert Palmer, *The Necessity and Encouragement of Utmost Venturing For the Churches Help*, 1643, in *English Revolution I*, vol. 7, pp. 25-6, 44. Firth, *Acts and Ordinances*, I, 26-7, 80-2, 425-6, 1070-72; Thomas Carter, *Prayers Prevalencie For Israels Safety* (1643), in *English Revolution I*, vol. 7, p. 102; George Gillespie, sermon to the Commons, 27 March 1644, in Gillespie, *Works*, I, 5, 9; Nathaniel Rogers, *A Letter Discovering The Cause of Gods Continuing Wrath against the Nation* (1644), BL TT E 53 (20), pp. 3-5.
[86] Firth, *Acts and Ordinances*, I, 22-4; *A Collection of Certaine Statutes in force . . . for the Better Observation of the Lords Day, and the Fast Days*, BL TT E 16 (26); *All Ordinances and Orders for the Better Observation of the Lord's Day and the Fast* (1646), BL TT E 377 (7); William Spurstowe, *Englands Eminent Judgements, Caus'd by the Abuse of Gods Eminent Mercies* (1644), BL TT E 19 (14), p. 15-17. For local examples of the decline in observance, see *Josselin*, pp. 22, 74; BL Add MS 40883, fol. 68.
[87] Shaw, *A Broken Heart*, pp. 12-13.

God'.[88] In general, familiarity seems to have bred contempt and widespread 'insensibleness' as the novelty of the exercises wore off.[89] The ideal of unfeigned national repentance evidently seemed as remote in 1644 as it had been in 1642, preacher Matthew Newcomen commenting sadly that, 'After two years of extraordinary judgements, and three years of extraordinary mercies and days of humiliation, we remain an unhumbled people'.[90]

Critics excoriated parliamentarians both for their lukewarmness in repenting and reforming, and for exhibiting the terrifying symptoms of a hardening of the soul in the habits of sin, or 'induration' as this was better known, a redoubling of sinful endeavours in the face of the plain facts of God's providence that presaged the execution of some terrible final judgment on an incorrigible nation.[91] A deepening of divisions within the ranks of Parliament, a forgetfulness and impenitency in respect of God's recent mercies, and a carnal over-reliance on force of arms instead of the redeeming power of faith and prayer, all contributed to a needless prolongation of the war, and in particular to the shocking series of setbacks for Parliament that marked the late summer and autumn of 1644: the loss of Essex's infantry at Lostwithiel in Cornwall (2 September 1644), the unexpected extrication of the King from a position of near-certain defeat at the Second Battle of Newbury (27 October 1644), and the royalist relief of nearby Donnington Castle (7 November 1644).[92]

Parliament's misfortune at Lostwithiel and in Berkshire appeared all the more significant from a providential point of view for having occurred in the wake of the Marston Moor victory, conveying the impression that God had chosen to humble a now

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[88] Palmer, *The Glasse*, pp. 24-5.
[89] John Shaw, *The Three Kingdomes Case* (1646), BL TT E 330 (1), p. 27; Thomas Coleman, *Gods Unusual Answer to a Solemn Fast* (1644), in *English Revolution 1*, vol. 12, p. 337.
[90] Newcomen, *A Sermon*, p. 291.
[91] John Eachard, *Good Newes For All Christian Souldiers* (1645), BL TT E 271 (6), Epistle; Bond, *Occasus*, p. 16; John Geree, *Irelands Advocate: Or, A Sermon . . . at a Publike Fast, 27 July 1642* (Dublin and London, 1642), pp. 2-6; Hezakiah Woodward, *A Dialogue Arguing That Arch-Bishops, Bishops, Curates, Neuters, are to be cut off by the Law of God* (1644), BL TT E 34 (10), pp. 43-8; Baillie, *Errours*; Roberts, *A Broken Spirit*, pp. 18-24; *The Scottish Dove*, January 1645, BL TT E 26 (16), p. 522.
[92] On divisions as a provocation of God: D. P. P., *The Six Secondary Causes*, pp. 37-8; William Bridge, introduction to *The Loyall Convert* (1644), BL TT E 257 (2), p. 5; on impenitency, see Nalton, *Delay of Reformation*, p. 13; Newcomen, *A Sermon*, 1644, p. 292; Nicholas Proffet, *Englands Impenitencie Under Smiting, Causing Anger to Continue* (1644), BL TT E 16 (22); carnal confidence: Sir Thomas Wrothe to John Pym, 20 January 1643, in *HMC 13th Report*, p. 92; Stanley Gower to Robert Harley, 15 July 1643, in *HMC 14th Report, Appendix Part I*, p. 113.

over-confident army. It also had quite profound political ramifications, provoking a series of self-critical sermons at Westminster and elsewhere, an abortive investigation by the Westminster Assembly into the sins of Parliament, and providing ammunition to critics of the policy of accommodation and peace favoured by the Earls of Essex and Manchester. 1644-5 witnessed the rapid development of splits within Parliament, with the Scottish interest in London moving across to the peace camp as they became increasingly distrustful of the religious Independency of the war party, and the peace party and their new Scottish allies consequently becoming synonymous with presbyterianism. The picture was complicated still further by the presence of anti-Scottish presbyterians and a sizeable middle party led by Oliver St John that approved of the war-party's military objectives, but which was mainly composed of religious presbyterians.[93] Both presbyterians and Independents exploited these divisions and the termination of a voluntary pact in 1641 by which the denominations had agreed to desist from the publication of mutually damaging polemic in the broader interests of reformation.[94] The result was a pamphlet exchange that reflected the divergent opinions of the parties on the question of providence and God's purposes now the war had moved into its closing phase. This will be the subject of the next section.

(iii) Presbyterian v Independent (1644-1647)

The loss of Essex's infantry at Lostwithiel on 2 September 1644 provoked a series of parliamentary sermons initiated by Matthew Newcomen and Thomas Coleman at an extraordinary humiliation on 12 September. These were unstintingly critical the failings of Parliament and the army, and identified the principal reasons for Parliament's current controversy with God as Independent demands for toleration, the spread of

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[93] See Lawrence Kaplan, 'Presbyterians and Independents in 1643', *EHR*, 84 (1969); *Politics and Religion during the English Revolution: The Scots and the Long Parliament, 1643-1645* (New York, 1976); Valerie Pearl, 'The 'Royal Independents' in the English Civil War', in *TRHS*, 5th Series 18 (1968); Avihu Zakai, 'Religious Toleration and its Enemies: The Independent Divines and the Issue of Toleration during the English Civil War', *Albion*, 21 (1989).

[94] The so-called 'Calamy House Agreement': Tai Liu, *Discord in Zion: The Puritan Divines and the Puritan Revolution, 1640-1660* (The Hague, 1973), p. 9; Zakai, 'Religious Toleration', p. 9; Bradley, " Jacob and Esau", pp. 26-8.

profaneness (meaning sectarianism), and a failure to progress with Church reform as required by the terms of the Solemn League and Covenant.[95]

The defeat also provoked a full-scale debate within the clerical Westminster Assembly initiated by resident presbyterians who likewise blamed the disaster on sectarianism, the inability of Parliament to enforce moral legislation, and failure to bring English and Scottish religious practice into uniformity.[96] Presbyterian members of the Assembly had on other occasions criticised parliamentary negligence in the field of thanksgiving, compensating for this deficiency with a plethora of their own.[97] On 17 May 1644, for example, the Assembly conducted a fast at the behest of the Earl of Essex that reiterated the need for a firm stance to be taken on sectarianism.[98] The debate of 9-10 September 1644, however, focussed attention as never before on the imminent danger posed by sectarianism and the extent of the divisions within the parliamentarian camp, highlighted in this case by the attempt by Thomas Goodwin and other leading Independent members of the Assembly to suppress the findings of the committee established to enquire into the precise nature of Parliament's and the army's misdemeanours in the wake of Lostwithiel.[99]

Presbyterians were in agreement that more thorough discipline was required to defend God's honour against the depredation occasioned by the spread of heretical doctrines such as the denial of Christ's divinity, the proclamation of God's authorship of sin, and repudiation of the Scriptures as the Word of God. In fact, many points of difference divided sectarians such as the Baptists from semi-separatist Congregationalists like the so-called 'Dissenting Brethren', authors of the Independent pamphlet, *An Apologetical Narration*, published in January 1644 with the very intention of distancing mainstream religious Independency from the more extreme sects.[100]

[95] Coleman, *Gods Unusual Answer*, Newcomen, *A Sermon*, in *English Revolution I*, vol. 12.
[96] *The Works of John Lightfoot*, VIII, 309-10; Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, II, 228; Gillespie, *Works*, II, 69-70.
[97] *The Works of John Lightfoot*, VIII, 118; Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, II, 152, 182, 184, 204, 305.
[98] Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, II, p. 184.
[99] Many other members of the Assembly had doubts about the wisdom of submitting such an openly critical protestation to Parliament, especially Alexander Henderson, Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, II, p. 228; *The Works of John Lightfoot*, VIII, 310; Gillespie, *Works*, II, 70.
[100] This edition of the *Narration*: BL TT E 80 (7). See Yule, *Puritans in Politics*, Chapter 6. Bradley, 'The Failure of Accommodation', p. 34 and Avihu Zakai, 'Religious Toleration', pp. 8-11, 15. Lists of the sects' presumed heresies can be found in presbyterian critiques such as Edwards' *Gangraena*, pp. 18-36,

Increasingly, many presbyterians conflated Congregationalism and sectarianism in order to present a more rounded and comprehensive case that Independency represented a general threat to established religion.[101] This was especially true in London, which boasted a concentration of the sects and 'mainstream' gathered churches, and which was also became the centre of presbyterian classical organisation, aided and abetted by the resident contingent of representatives of the Scottish Church and State based at Worcester House.[102]

The publication of the *Narration*, far from achieving its objective of distancing Congregationalism from sectarianism, marked the beginning of a pamphlet exchange with the presbyterians that only accentuated the differences between the two sides. This began in earnest in February 1644 with the publication of 'Adam Stewart's' *Some Observations And Annotations Upon the Apologeticall Narration*. The author condemned the high tone of the Independent manifesto and its implied disregard for the Assembly, to whom he felt its complaint should have been addressed directly, and reminded the Independents that God had protected presbyterian exiles in the past from persecution by hostile critics, implying that the Independents now constituted such an obstacle to the realisation of God's objectives.[103]

The defeat at Lostwithiel and the resulting fast sermons by Coleman and Newcomen in September 1644 provoked John Goodwin into penning the first significant statement of Independent providentialism, his animadversion, *Theomachia*, revealingly subtitled 'The Grand Imprudence of Men Running The Hazard of fighting Against God'. Goodwin warned his polemical adversaries that by seeking the persecution of the 'godly' (by whom he meant the Congregationalists), they risked contracting the

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Baillie, *A Dissuasive From the Errours of the Time* (1646), BL TT E 317 (5), Ch. 6; Ephraim Pagitt, *Heresiography* (1645), BL TT E 282 (5).

[101] On the way sectarians and congregationalists came to be confused, see especially John Graham, ' "Independent" and "Presbyterian": A Study of Religious and Political Language and the Politics of Words During the English Civil War, c. 1640-1646', PhD., Washington University, 1978.

[102] On London gathered and other nonconformist churches, see Tolmie, *Triumph*; Geoffrey Nuttall, *Visible Saints: The Congregational Way, 1640-1660* (Oxford, 1957). For the Scots' influence over the Parliament and in the polemical battle between presbyterian and Independent, see Kaplan, *Politics and Religion*; Pearl, 'London's Counter-Revolution'.

[103] Stewart, *Some Observations and Annotations Upon the Apologeticall Narration*, BL TT E 34 (23). 'Adam Stewart' is a pseudonym, the real author is unknown, but is believed to have had close connections with the Scottish *jure divino* presbyterian camp in the City. Rosemary Bradley has suggested he was Robert Baillie, see "Jacob and Esau", p. 179.

displeasure of the Almighty. He suggested that the presbyterians possessed insufficient evidence to enable them to determine conclusively that the ways of the Congregationalists were not of God. Goodwin argued that without the cast iron guarantee of some unambiguous special providence revealing God's disapproval of unorthodox opinions, the authorities should instead exercise caution lest they offend the Almighty by anticipating divine justice without good cause. Furthermore, rejecting 'heretical' doctrines out of hand was dishonourable to the Almighty because it implied that the divine justice was in some way flawed in being too slow-moving. Parliament's recent setbacks were, said Goodwin, directly attributable to God's punishment of this uncharitable presumption.[104]

In contrast, William Prynne, the Laudian sufferer and parliamentarian propagandist, warned that an uncontrolled spread of heresy risked offending God and pulling down disaster upon the land. The Almighty was also angry, Prynne said, that His servants appeared more interested in fighting among themselves than in doing their duty to assistant Him in the battle against Rome and malignancy. Parliament and the nation should unite to fight heresy.[105] Goodwin replied to this stinging charge with characteristic eclat after a delay of three months, reinforcing the central argument of *Theomachia* that the civil magistrate should respect conscience and should not force other men 'to obey what they conceive is the mind of God'. To punish men in these circumstances, he said, placed presbyterians in the same position as the pope, who also proclaimed an unwarranted jurisdiction over men's souls. Like the pope also, such authoritarian posturing was equally deserving of God's disapprobation.[106] This argument had already received coverage during the debates of autumn 1644, when an anonymous animadversion had questioned how Prynne, the puritan sufferer of the 1630s, could now justify the persecution of the 'saints' of the 1640s.[107] The tract had warned that

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[104] *Theomachia* (1644), BL TT E 12 (1), pp. 18-20, 52.

[105] Prynne, *A Full Reply to Certaine briefe Observations and Anti-Queries on Master Prynne's twelve Questions about Church-Government* (1644), BL TT E 257 (7), p. 3. See also *Faces About, Or, A Recrimination charged upon Mr John Goodwin, In point of fighting against God* (1644), BL TT E 13 (17), p. 8.

[106] Goodwin, *A Moderate Answer to Mr Prins full Reply to Certaine Observations on his First Twelve Questions* (1645), BL TT E 26 (20), p. 19. See also Goodwin, *Innocencies Triumph* (1644), BL TT E 14 (10), p. 3.

[107] *An Answer to Mr William Prynne's Twelve Questions Concerning Church Government* (1644), BL TT E 15 (5), possibly by Henry Burton or Henry Robinson.

presbyterians risked setting up an ecclesiastical 'tyranny' more comprehensive even than prelacy.[108] It pointed to the failure by both sides in the war to press home an advantage in battle as evidence that God was offended that they sought to impose exclusivity for their own faiths and beliefs at the expense of other men's consciences, 'his infinite wisdom [finding] neither of them capable of such mercy whilst they are so merciless to one another'.[109]

May 1645 witnessed the publication of three pamphlets that reinforced the arguments tendered by both sides in the debate so far. Separatist merchant Henry Robinson's *The Falsehood of Mr William Prynne's Truth Triumphing* again compared presbyterianism's proposed national coverage of discipline with popery, and he supported Goodwin's point that persecution of purported saints risked the inadvertent engagement of the nation in a needless controversy with God.[110] Ephraim Pagitt's catalogue of the sects, *Heresiography*, in contrast petitioned Parliament and the City to do more to help isolated presbyterian ministers to stem the heretical tide.[111] The third of these pamphlets, penned by Prynne's Laudian co-sufferer, John Bastwick, was an altogether more ambitious project designed in part to show that implied toleration of a multiplicity of religions - 'a very fighting against God' - had dishonoured the Almighty and thereby prolonged the civil war.[112]

The remainder of 1645 and 1646 saw the mobilisation of a more organised presbyterian resistance to toleration, centred on the City and in reply to the growth in Congregationalist and sectarian support in the New Model, which was raised in the spring of 1645. It was a congress of City ministers that established a lecture at Christ Church, Newgate Street especially for Thomas Edwards to preach against the sects, and the fruit of his work was realised in the three-part publication during 1646 of his

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[108] Ibid., p. 2. On this point, see also Henry Burton, *A Vindication of Churches Commonly Called Independent* (1644), BL TT E 17 (5), p. 15.
[109] *An Answer*, p. 16.
[110] BL TT E 282 (11), pp. 26-8.
[111] Pagitt, *Heresiography*.
[112] Bastwick, *Independency Not Gods Ordinance*, in two parts, BL TT E 285 (2), BL TT E 287 (9), Pt 1: pp. 116, 152, 163; Pt 2: Preface, pp. 10, 32, 61, 66-8. Other anti-separatist sources include: Thomas Edwards, *Reasons Against the Independent Government of Particular Congregations* (1641), BL TT E 167 (16); Thomas Horton, *Sinne's Discovery and Revenge* (1646), BL TT E 369 (4); Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, II, 328, 396-99; Walker, *A Sermon*, pp. 18-40.

masterpiece, *Gangraena*.[113] This was designed to combat what it viewed as a prevailing mood of appeasement: a warning to Parliament that without firm corrective action in the form of a speedy establishment of the classical system, it risked partaking of the sins and divine punishments that were the portion of the sects.[114]

What *Gangraena* lacked in analytical method, it more than made up for with its impressive comprehensiveness: listing, cataloguing and cross-referencing innumerable 'true stories' supplied by indignant provincial presbyterian clergymen, *Gangraena* tried to bounce out the opposition by dint of sheer repetitiveness and multiplication of example.[115] Edwards exploited the fears of the anarchy, licence and free-living supposedly associated with antinomianism, bolstered by stories of the lowly origins and trades boasted by London and Home Counties' separatists like Paul Hobson, Henry Denne and John Goodwin. These 'whirlegigg spirits' damaged the war effort: their toleration threatened its ruin.[116] Worryingly, too few clergymen seemed alert to this 'immediate danger . . . of God's intervention'.[117] Parliament also needed to respond quickly, fasting, praying, humiliating and renewing the Covenant in a bid to divert God's now certain wrath.[118] Sectarian infiltration of the Army presented the greatest danger, though: scorning those godly progenitors of the Long Parliament and reform, the Scots, ignoring solemn religious festivals, preaching free grace, even baptizing a horse.[119] The Army had once enjoyed the status accorded to the garlanded saviours of religion, but had evidently now become its most potent threat, and what was worse than its role as a shameful loadstone drawing judgments ever closer to a complacent nation, was that a sectarian Army itself constituted the 'greatest plague and judgment of God that hath been upon this kingdom', the fitting and final punishment of the Almighty for

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[113] Edwards' appointment: Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, II, 216, August 1644.

[114] The edition used here: *Gangraena* (*The Rota*, and University of Exeter, 1977). On *Gangraena*, see Ann Hughes, ' "Popular" Presbyterianism in the 1640s and 1650s: the cases of Thomas Edwards and Thomas Hall', in Nicholas Tyacke ed., *England's Long Reformation, 1500-1800* (London, 1998).

[115] Edwards supplied hundreds of such examples, usually contained within letters the author had claimed to have received, for example, Pt 1, pp. 57-9, 70-1, 101. Edwards' lectureship and his fame following the publication of part 1 undoubtedly must have led to considerable feedback, as is evidenced from Edwards' remarks in the prefaces to Parts 2 and 3.

[116] Ibid., Pt. 1, Epistle sig. A2. On Hobson, see Pt. 1, pp. 89-92; Denne: Pt. 1, pp. 76-7; Goodwin: Pt 2, pp. 25-43.

[117] Ibid., Pt. 1, p. 153.

[118] Ibid., Pt. 1, Epistle, sig. A2-A3.

[119] Ibid., Pt. 3 is devoted almost entirely to the Army. Scorning of Scots, pp. 21-2; fast days, see espec. pp. 21-2, 80, 114, 191, *passim*; free grace: p. 45; horse being baptized: p. 18.

the cumulative sins of the godly, past, present and future.[120] The New Model was no convenient external threat, the progeny of the pope or the King of Spain, but instead the child of a flawed godly experiment. The moment of Parliament's greatest triumph in 1646 appeared hollow, barely disguising the terrible suspicion that at the heart of the movement lay the tragic finality of permanent and inescapable irredeemableness.

(iv) The New Model Army

Gentles has suggested that providentialism was an important factor in explaining the unity and military effectiveness of the New Model. This section seeks to build on his work by examining the role of providential rhetoric in helping to shape the political response of the Army to events between 1646 and 1649. The Army quickly acquired a reputation for the piety of its soldiers, not least those of its commanders such as Sir Thomas Fairfax and Oliver Cromwell. However, it would appear that considerable tensions were present during the early stage of the Army's existence, presumably while its component regiments were being integrated into a more centralised command structure. Sir Samuel Luke, Governor of Newport Pagnell, for example, described how some officers surrendered their commissions in June 1645 because of the intolerable strain of being compelled to live alongside ungodly soldiers.[121] Richard Baxter, lecturer at Kidderminster, and one time Army chaplain, also described how he thought a majority of common soldiers and especially infantry, 'were ignorant men, of little religion', easily seduced by the leadership's promises of manna from heaven. Baxter, however, probably underestimated the general mood of godliness and sobriety that characterised the Army since this fact conflicted with his thesis that a sectarian minority held sway over an uncommitted rank and file.[122] Indeed, the depth of providential sentiment in the Army most probably was enhanced as successive victories appeared to heap blessing upon blessing on the Army's endeavours, and as a hard-core of officers and men were bonded by the shared experience of war. The Army also took its responsibilities for the spiritual

[120] Ibid., Pt. 3, p. 265.
[121] *Letter Books of Sir Samuel Luke*, pp. 618-9. This is supported to a degree by an account sympathetic to the New Model that admits to drunkenness and profaneness in the Army: W. G., *A Just Apologie For An Abused Armie* (1647), BL TT E 372 (22), p. 12.
[122] *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, p. 53.

welfare of its men more seriously than its predecessor forces. Chaplains like Hugh Peters, William Dell and John Saltmarsh all played very active roles in the Army, supplemented by widespread lay preaching, reflecting once again how all levels of the Army exhibited a sophisticated degree of spiritual self-sufficiency which communicated unerringly and unnervingly the sense of its being engaged in some higher undertaking.[123]

The Army had a highly evolved sense of its providential mission that charged all its endeavours with a transformatory dynamic. William Dell, for example, announced that 'we have seen his goings and observed his very footsteps: for he hath dwelt among us . . . from Naseby to Leicester and from thence to Langport and Bridgewater and Bath . . . to Oxford'.[124] Joshua Sprigge, author of the panegyric *Anglia Rediviva*, a description of God's shadowing the New Model during its triumphant progress, 1645-6, was equally unambiguous: 'I make no question but you will easily discern a thread of divinity running through the whole proceeding of this Army'. Sprigge's account almost certainly received the endorsement of the Army leadership on whose behalf he expended many pages describing God's direct blessing of their actions.[125] *Rediviva* was more than simply a spontaneous expression of faith in providence but a calculated attempt to show that God's sponsorship made the Army indispensable. This became especially important as resistance to the Army became more pronounced during 1646-7 amid resentment at taxes and other impositions, and fear that the Army might devour the revolution's children and turn on Parliament. Hence the many pamphlets and broadsheets published at this time detailing the exploits of the New Model and highlighting the certainty of divine underpinning for the train of unexpected victories that followed Naseby in June 1645.[126]

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[123] For chaplains, see Lawrence, *Army Chaplains*, pp. 48-65; Austin Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen: The General Council of the Army and its Debates, 1647-1648* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 19-22; Solt, *Saints in Arms*; Gentles, *New Model Army*, pp. 87-119; lay preaching, Gentles, pp. 100-1, and see for example, John Knowles, *A Modest Plea For Private Mens Preaching. Or An Answer to a Booke intiuled Private men no pulpit men*, 1648, BL TT E 434 (8). On religiosity in the Army, see Sprigge, *Anglia Rediviva*, pp. 112, 141. For an example of the wide reading of millenarian and other works by New Model Army officers, see Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, pp. 10, 23-4, 63, 78.

[124] Dell, *The Building and Glory of the truly Christian and Spiritual Church*, preached to Fairfax and his officers at Marston, 7 June 1646, BL TT E 343 (5), Epistle.

[125] *Rediviva*, pp. 8-11, 42-4. Fairfax is said to be 'more like an Angell then a man' (p. 42); Thomas Juxon's MS Diary, Dr Williams's MS 24.50 fol. 48.

[126] Probably dozens of these documents survive. They include: *Memorable Dayes and Workes of God, In the Yeare Past* (1645), BL TT E 314 (6); *A More Full Relation of the Continued Successes of His*

Opposition to the Army was centred among the City authorities and the presbyterian community and expressed in the famous *Remonstrance* to the Commons in May 1646 and in other petitions published at this time. The rise of Denzil Holles' peace party towards the end of 1646 saw determined moves to counteract heresy amid suggestions that a costly and over-mighty army now be disbanded.[127] Supporters of the Army warned critics that God would interpret efforts to disband the force as a direct challenge to divine authority. Presbyterian criticism of Independency was also viewed as an unjustified slander of God's agents in the Army that would goad the Almighty into releasing arrows of vengeance and justice against the perpetrators of such unwarranted calumny.[128]

The Army's complaints during 1647 centred on proposed Irish service and arrears, the question of indemnity for veterans in civil cases arising from damage and injury caused during the war, and a presbyterian House of Commons now thought to be under the thumb of neo-malignant incendiaries plotting to disable and wage war on the New Model. They shared a strong providential and progressive basis relating to the honouring and perfecting of past providences and a powerful call for justice for the sake of God.[129] It was felt by many in the Army that the New Model was required to protect the integrity of the mercies with which God had blessed Parliament during the dark days of war by defending these hard-fought gains from surrender in over-generous treaty with the King.[130] The target of activist regiments quickly shifted in the summer of 1647 from a presbyterian Commons to the Army leadership then in negotiation with Charles following his removal from Parliament's custody in June 1647, a development encouraged by the emergence of anti-Cromwellian Leveller polemic that accused the

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Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax (1646), BL TT E 325 (2); *A Perfect Table of Two Hundred Ninety Nine Victories* (1646), BL 669 f 10 (72).

[127] *The Humble Remonstrance and Petition of the Lord Mayor and Commons of the City of London*, May 1646, BL TT E 338 (7); *The Humble Petition of the Lord Mayor . . . Concerning Church Government* (1646), BL TT E 316 (20); *A Remonstrance of Many Thousand Citizens*, July 1646, in Wolfe, *Leveller Manifestoes*, pp. 112-130; petition from Scots commissioners to the Committee for Religion, December 1646, in *OPH*, vol. 15, pp. 252-7; *An Ordinance*, BL TT E 373 (12); Reginald Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom*, 3 vols (1894-95), II, 235.

[128] W. G. *A Just Apologie*, p. 1; Dell, *Right Reformation*, p. 29.

[129] For these documents and their contents, see *Army Book of Declarations*; *OPH*, vol. 15 (1763), pp. 338-488; Rushworth, VII, 738-846, *passim*. Gentles, *New Model Army*, pp. 151-2.

[130] Dr Williams's Juxon MS 24:50, fol. 48; *A Second Apologie of all the private Souldiers*, in *Army Book of Declarations*, pp. 9-11.

leadership of betraying its principles by contemplating erecting a new tyranny in place of the old.[131]

The rank and file appear to have been motivated by a strong desire to bring to justice delinquents and others that they believed were responsible for the war. Many parliamentarians throughout the course of the conflict had held the view that until this blood guilt had been expiated satisfactorily, God would never bless England wholeheartedly.[132] Critics throughout the 1640s complained that Parliament was treating delinquents leniently by way of composition and the early release of prisoners. Instead, speedy trial of detainees such as Laud was essential if the parliamentarians were to avoid contracting the royalists' guilt.[133] Furthermore, God was provoked by the prospect of guilty royalists returning to take up their judicial functions in the localities. Now, Holles' plan to disband the Army before its grievances had been addressed, and to raise a rival force drawn from the ranks of the City reformadoes, threatened to overturn everything the Army had fought for in its very moment of triumph. No wonder this caused 'a mighty spirit [to be] raised up in the Army for Justice and Righteousness'.[134]

The New Model by its own admission was no mere 'mercenary army' but instead an instrument of the Almighty set up to protect the liberties of the people, and its moves to impeach the eleven leaders of the presbyterian movement at Westminster on 14 June and its marches on London between June-August 1647, seemed to bear out this claim.[135] The Army's role constituted a progressive agenda of extending and safeguarding what it

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[131] John Wildman, *Putney Projects* (1647), BL TT E 421 (19); John Lilburne, *England's New Chains Discovered.*

[132] BL Add MS 37343 fol. 299v; Ormerod, *Tracts*, p. 93; John Eachard, *Good Newes For All Christian Souldiers* (1645), BL TT E 271 (6), pp. 22, 30-31; Samuel Gibson, *The Ruine of the Authors and Fomentors of Civill Warres* (1645), BL TT E 302 (27), p. 24; Spurstowe, *Englands Eminent Judgements*, p. 26; Horton, *Sinne's Discovery*, pp. 25-30; *The Kingdomes Weekly Intelligencer*, 1644, BL TT E 6 (12), pp. 537-8; *The Souldiers Catechisme*, p. 9; William Whitefield, *Idolaters Ruine and Englands Triumph; Or The Meditations of a Mamed Souldier* (1645), BL TT E 25 (3), p. 5; *Englands Humble Remonstrance to their King* (1644), BL TT E 81 (2); Katherine Chidley, *Good Counsell, to the Petitioners for Presbyterian Government* (1645), BL 669 f 10 (39).

[133] D. P. P., *The Six Secondary Causes*, pp. 12-24. *The Lawes And Statutes of God, Concerning the Punishments to be Inflicted upon Wilfull Murderers* (1646), BL TT E 325 (24), pp. 1-7.

[134] *A Remonstrance From his Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax*, 23 June 1647, in *Army Book of Declarations*, pp. 129-44; John Saltmarsh, *A Letter*, p. 2; *Clarke Papers*, I, p. 131.

[135] *The Poore Wise-mans Admonition unto all the Plaine People of London* (1647), BL TT E 392 (4), pp. 9-10; charge against the eleven members, *Army Book of Declarations*, pp. 47-9, 79-94; Rushworth, VII, 749; *A Declaration or Representation from His Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax*, 14 June 1647, in *Army Book of Declarations*, p. 39; *An Humble Remonstrance from his Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax*, 23 June 1647, in *Army Book of Declarations*, pp. 57-67, *Clarke Papers*, I, 220-1.

saw as English liberties and perfecting and 'improving' the providences God had vouchsafed to the nation during the early 1640s. Discourse from at least the middle period of the war reveals the concern among many parliamentarians that God's blessings be exploited to the full. This tendency can be identified more with the war-party that sought to press ahead and make full use of any military advantage with which Parliament found itself, than the opinions of peace party advocates like the Earl of Manchester who saw in such momentary strategic advances, an indication that God had deemed the time right for the pursuit of conciliatory overtures. Providences had to be chased and victory pursued since the window of opportunity provided by God would undoubtedly be short-lived; this had been thought especially true of Marston Moor in July 1644.[136]

By 1647, radical elements within the New Model had interpreted 'improvement of providence' to mean substantial constitutional change designed to protect freedom of conscience and to reform a corrupt Parliament. The substance of *The Case of the Army Truly Stated*, the radical manifesto published in October 1647, had been to warn that 'eternal vengeance' awaited those men who failed to take up this challenge: a pointed reference to the Army leadership of Fairfax, Cromwell and Ireton who were viewed as constitutional conservatives.[137] Even the more conciliatory *Agreement of the People*, published in early November 1647, spoke in apocalyptic terms when it argued that without the adoption of its recommendations, which included redistribution of seats, biannual parliaments, equality under the law, and freedom of conscience, God would call to account those responsible.[138] The *Agreement* was to represent the very 'fruits and ends of the victories which God hath given us' to exploit, make public, and realise to the full the talents of the wider constituency of God's servants. While the war may have started out with limited aims, the evidence of successive providential manifestations, especially since Naseby and more importantly during 1647, had demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Levellers and other radicals that God's objectives had now become

[136] Manchester's defence against charges of seeking peace on 'unfavourable' terms: BL Add MS 70107, Misc 31, fol. 6v; *CSPD 1644*, pp. 83-4, 214, 359. See also Brereton, *Letter Books*, vol. 2, p. 404

[137] *The Case*, in Wolfe, *Leveller Manifestoes*, p. 219.

[138] *An Agreement*, and petition of January 1648, in Wolfe, pp. 226-9, 264-5.

much more ambitious and far-reaching. It remained to be seen how Cromwell and his colleagues would respond to this development.[139]

The debates conducted at the Army headquarters at Putney at the end of October and beginning of November 1647 helped clarify these differences in approach towards interpreting God's current purposes. The debates took place at a General Council of the Army at which agitators led by Edward Sexby attempted to have the draft *Agreement* adopted as official Army policy. The mood was one of confusion surrounding God's purposes rather than certainty or triumphalism: the euphoria that had accompanied the Army's entry into London in August had by now been diminished by widening divisions over Cromwell's proposed accommodation with the King. With reference to this, Sexby argued that God had withheld from the civil war victors the true measure of peace and prosperity they might otherwise have enjoyed because of Cromwell's courting of Charles I, the nation's Achan-in-Chief. Sexby then compared the Army's sounding out of royalists to a hypothetical return to Egyptian bondage by post-Exodus Israelites.[140]

Cromwell responded by warning the meeting that they might easily misinterpret God's motives. Men must be careful, he said, that in their search for guidance they do not confuse true faith with mere 'carnal imagination', and this was especially true of those in positions of political authority. Cromwell thus sought to argue that God did not automatically endorse the most radical solution to any political problem, and defended his policy of sending out peace-feelers to Charles by admitting that circumstances might dictate compromise from time to time.[141] Both Grandees and radicals were in agreement that unanimity of opinion within the Council was a sign of God's consent. Members were required to pray together and to search their hearts to discover common ground: its absence now showed that God had temporarily withdrawn His support from the Army. Without speedy correction, warned radical William Goffe, the Army risked going the way of the royalists and the presbyterian Parliament.[142] Goffe's speech made a distinct impression on his auditors, including the otherwise sceptical Ireton, with the result that a

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[139] *An Agreement*, p. 229; Rushworth, VII, 845-6: 'God hath given no man a talent to be wrapped up in a napkin, and not improved'.

[140] *Clarke Papers*, I, 227. On the providentialism of the Putney debates, see Samuel Glover, 'The Putney Debates: Popular Versus Elitist Republicanism', *PP*, 164 (1999), pp. 71-3.

[141] *Clarke Papers*, I, 238-50.

[142] Ibid., 253-55.

prayer meeting was called to search out hearts in order to 'recover that presence of God that seems to withdraw from us'.[143] Goffe was fearful that the meeting and those like it might be a ploy on the part of Cromwell to delay the proceedings, warning that 'it is a dangerous thing to refuse what comes of God', meaning that it would gravely offend the Almighty if the Council were to ignore the results of their petitioning exercise.[144] Replying to Goffe and Sexby, who had warned that the negotiations with the King would needlessly implicate and involve the Army in God's certain punishment of Charles, Cromwell reiterated his central warning that members should exercise caution in presuming to speak for God.[145] It was mistaken, he said, for Sexby and others to assume that the Almighty was necessarily set on destroying the King. Even if that was the Lord's intention, Cromwell argued, God could accomplish the task without reference to the Army or other men. Prudence dictated that the Army should wait until God's intentions were unambiguous before risking its reputation and inevitable scandal should the Army move against Charles unilaterally.[146]

The debate surrounding the *Agreement of the People* was resumed during the conference among the Council of Officers at Whitehall in December-January 1648-49, and centred on the question of whether the civil magistrate ought to exercise powers of compulsion in matters of religion. Advocates of freedom of conscience like John Goodwin and John Wildman argued that God's reduction of such authority in recent times was a signal to the Army to prevent its incursion now. Troubled times required a leap of faith: 'let us do that which is right, and trust God with the rest'. Other speakers like Hugh Peter recommended that the Army grab the opportunity and move quickly to establish the new constitution. Since there were surely no clearer signs of the true path of providence than the recent chain of miracles that had delivered the nation to the brink of revolution with the Purge and imminent trial of the King, now was not the time to 'put our hands in our pockets and wait what will come'. Joshua Sprigge, Philip Nye and Henry Ireton demurred, arguing that a restrictive power was necessary to prevent the growth of heresies likely to attract God's plagues. The common good demanded that

143 Ibid., 258.
144 Ibid., 374.
145 Ibid., 375-79.
146 Ibid., 282.

such damaging provocations and judgments be avoided, and they counselled caution in the framing of the new constitution, instead arguing that God had still to reveal His final set of instructions on what appearance the republic should take. The Army, it was said, ought not to be 'too forward to settle', an opinion that struck a chord with Cornet Joyce and others who were concerned that the Army might voluntarily surrender its authority in the forthcoming changes. Thomas Harrison meanwhile articulated the fears of the constituency of religious radicals, that the *Agreement* would fail to place power in the hands of the saints and, alluding to the Purge, instead return it into the hands of those that God had recently cast out. The time was not yet ripe when 'the works of men shall be answerable to his works', that sublime convergence when the providence of God and human efforts would achieve a measure of equilibrium. The Lord would ensure the *Agreement* would fall short of expectations while it remained demonstrably a human contrivance, rather than being the product of the divine agency. While the *Agreement* was a step in the right direction, to be successful any new constitution needed instead to recognise the unique role of the saints and seek to place providence at the centre of the decision-making process.[147]

The trial of the King was the culmination of a hardening of opinion and narrowing of options faced by the Army leadership since the revelation of Charles's Engagement with the Scots in December 1647 and the Vote of No Addresses in January 1648. The latter event demonstrated the shift of Cromwell away from his preferred option of compromise with the King, a decisive moment when God foreclosed a series of alternative outcomes and pushed the political nation more firmly in one particular direction that would require the exercise of justice upon the arch-delinquent.[148] This was highlighted in the three day prayer meeting of officers at Windsor in April 1648 at which Cromwell and the other participants declared their intention to search out the reasons for the imminent resumption of hostilities. The conclusion reached by the meeting was that the Army's own 'want of faith' was to blame for this reproof, the moral weakness that had permitted it to enter into negotiations with the King following the end of the first civil war. The officers present pledged to call the King to account as a 'man of blood',

[147] Woodhouse, *Puritanism*, pp. 125-78.
[148] John Adamson, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Long Parliament', in John Morrill ed., *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (Harlow, 1990), p. 77.

and this determination was a characteristic feature of the many Leveller and other pamphlets published throughout the remainder of 1648 in response to the outbreak of the second civil war, particularly in relation to the siege of Colchester and the decisive battle of Preston in August.[149]

The Commonwealth's solicitor John Cook, among others, declared that it was wrong of divine right theorists to conclude that a tyrant King could be punished only by God: sovereignty resided with the people, magistrates were of human not divine creation and kings were bound to govern according to the laws of the land for the higher purpose of the good of the nation. Charles had been rendered powerless recently when he had pursued war in the face of God's desire for peace, his breach of trust and the murder of innocents furthermore compelled Parliament and Army to punish the King on pain themselves of excommunication: clemency was not an option.[150] The need to exercise justice on the King was the central demand of the influential *Remonstrance* of November 1648, penned by Henry Ireton, a pivotal figure now in strengthening the Army's resolve during the current absence from London of Cromwell. The *Remonstrance* complemented numerous provincial petitions and declarations that were addressed to the Commons by local governors and radical regiments such as that led by Col Richard Ingoldsby. Collectively, and in an obvious reference to the proposed personal treaty and parliamentary accommodation with the King, they declared their belief that the granting by God of a final and lasting settlement would be delayed until justice had been done against the royalists and the nation's blood guilt expiated through the sacrifice of their leader. Charles I constituted the principal obstacle to peace, the accusation of attempting to subvert the fundamental laws of the nation and introduce arbitrary government, compounded by his engagement in a second bloody conflict against which the Lord had delivered a decisive 'double Judgment'. Furthermore, the

[149] William Allen, 'A faithful Memorial of that remarkable Meeting of many Officers of the Army in England, at Windsor Castle', in *Somers Tracts*, VI, 498-504; Patricia Crawford, 'Charles Stuart, That Man of Blood', *JBS*, 16 (1977).

[150] J. R., *Little Benjamin Or Truth Discovering Error* (1649), BL TT E 544 (4), pp. 13-16; *Eye Salve to anoint the Eyes of the Ministers of the Province of London* (1649), BL TT E 542 (16), pp. 2-3, 6; John Cook, *King Charls his Case* (1649), BL TT E 542 (3), pp. 5-6, 11, 19, 25; *The Peoples Right Briefly Asserted* (1649), BL TT E 538 (13), pp. 5, 8; John Redingstone, *Plain English to the Parliament and Army* (1649), BL TT E 538 (4), pp. 2-3, 6; Eleutherius Philodemius, *The Armies Vindication* (1649), BL TT E 538 (3), pp. 2-3, 17, 64; Samuel Richardson, *An Answer to the London Ministers Letter* (1649), BL TT E 540 (8), pp. 3-5, 22.

obstinacy and intransigence of the King, which as we have suggested, may have been strengthened by his resolve to defend his reading of providence in relation to reform of the Church, paradoxically was interpreted as incontrovertible evidence of the King's lack of remorse and failure to acknowledge the justice of the judgments ranged against him. Arguably, this hardening of respective positions with regard to providence reduced the opportunity for concessions and diminished the possibility of a successful outcome to the negotiations. Both parties had witnessed what they believed were the damaging effects of a neglect of the lessons of providence: a need to reform the Court and to refuse to countenance accommodation with the enemies of the Church, the presbyterian Scots; and to improve the mercies enjoyed by the parliamentarians during the 1640s by purging Parliament of royalist sympathisers and convicting the impenitent guilty of prolonging God's controversy with the nation. Both parties could no longer afford to tolerate the consequences of further failure to interpret God's will satisfactorily, with the resulting deadlock only to be resolved by the destruction or humiliation of either King or military leadership at each other's hands: victims of divine retribution. Ultimately, there was no room in the political nation for two competing authorities appointed exclusively by the Almighty. Until the mid-1640s neither side viewed this fact with sufficient dramatic exclusivity to eliminate the possibility of subordination to the other in any potential settlement; thereafter the strengthening of royalist providentialism and the emergence of a self-confident providential identity by the Army made a destructively cathartic termination to the conflict a probability.[151]

We have seen in this chapter how variations in the interpretation of providence helped fragment the parliamentarian party with presbyterians and Independents identifying the sins of their opponents as a significant cause of the failure of the saints to take full advantage of their growing success on the battlefield. Nevertheless, the participants shared important points in common such as an appreciation of the divine sponsorship of the institution of Parliament and the importance of collective fasts and thanksgivings. The role of the New Model Army was crucial in encouraging the

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[151] *OPH*, vol. 18, pp. 30-35, 120-21, 158-239. On the trial, see C. V. Wedgwood, *The Trial of Charles I* (London, 1964), and for various texts of the proceedings, see J. G. Muddiman, *Trial of King Charles the*

evolution of a more self-assertive providentialism that celebrated victories as landmarks on the road to the fulfilment of prophecy, unambiguous evidences of God's approbation and endorsement, and that made religious liberty the cornerstone of what God was seeking to achieve in authorising the nation's current troubles. In the following chapter, we will examine in greater detail the legacy of this activism after 1649 among prominent Cromwellians and in the Commonwealth's campaigns in Ireland and Scotland.

First (Edinburgh and London, 1928), Appendices, and 'Trial of Charles Stuart', in Sollom Emlyn ed., *A Complete Collection of State-Trials*, 6 vols (1730), I, 940-9.

Chapter Five: Providence and the Establishment of the Commonwealth

This chapter will explore the role of providentialism in the establishment of the Commonwealth. After an assessment of the relevant historiography, it will provide a brief survey of the careers of ten prominent political players from the period: representative figures for whom providence was as central to their decision-making as it was to their spiritual and devotional lives. It will conclude that the shared faith in, and fear of, the mercies and judgments experienced during the civil wars until the climactic battle of Worcester in 1651, inspired a strong sense of collegiality and fraternalism among veterans and civilians alike that helped to sustain the otherwise loose coalition of support for the Commonwealth: a necessary myth with Cromwell as its lynchpin. The second half of the chapter will examine more closely how the new government tried to monopolise access to providentialism in order to stamp its authority on the nation, focussing on the example of the Irish and Scottish campaigns that were important in cementing the reputation of Oliver Cromwell as a uniquely important instrument in the fulfilment of God's purposes.

(i) Historiography

This section aims to summarise some of the most important historiography on not only the establishment of the Commonwealth – the subject of this chapter – but also on Cromwellian providence during the 1650s as a whole and thereby also serves as an introduction to Chapters Six and Seven. The work of Sean Kelsey has highlighted the importance of providential symbolism during the Commonwealth, particularly in relation to the celebration of the Army's victories, complementing elements of the concluding chapters to Gentles' *New Model Army* with their descriptions of the campaigns in Scotland and Ireland. Kelsey in particular has described how the construction of a providential foundation-myth by the infant republic was to a large extent a conscious act of public policy designed to help legitimise the fledgling regime,

an observation that I have enlarged upon later in this chapter in relation to the campaigns of 1649-51.[1]

The problem of legitimation was one that exercised the pens of polemicists during the opening months of the Commonwealth, and has been the subject of a number of important studies by, among others, Quentin Skinner and Glenn Burgess.[2] They show how providential explanations often complemented arguments based upon popular sovereignty or pragmatic necessity in defending the change of constitution: the two were not necessarily at odds. The writings of apologists such as Milton, John Goodwin, John Dury and Marchamont Nedham called upon providence in different ways to justify the republicans' dramatic seizure of power. While supreme sovereign power resided in the people, this did not exclude the possibility that the Army had acted as the instrument of the Lord in delivering England from the clutches of antichrist. For even legitimate authority might become corrupted, popular liberties trampled upon; in this case providential necessity, jealous of civil and spiritual liberties, would override the injunction of Romans 13:1 that enjoined men to subject themselves to the higher powers. Furthermore, though legal title and the exercise of power were distinct, providence might still demand qualified obedience for reasons of public safety: the history books showed that God often made use of wicked governors for His own ends and it was not for men to question the reasons behind a divinely-authorised transfer of power.[3]

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[1] Sean Kelsey, *Inventing a Republic* (Manchester, 1997); Ian Gentles, *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland, 1645-1653* (Oxford, 1994).

[2] See Glenn Burgess, 'Usurpation, Obligation and Obedience in the Thought of the Engagement Controversy', *HJ*, 29 (1986); Margaret Judson, 'From Tradition to Political Reality: A Study of the Ideas Set Forth in Support of the Commonwealth Government in England, 1649-1653', in *Studies in British History and Culture*, 7 (1980); Quentin Skinner, 'Conquest and Consent: Thomas Hobbes and the Engagement Controversy' in Gerald Aylmer ed., *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement, 1646-1660* (London and Basingstoke, 1972); John Wallace, *Destiny His Choice: The Loyalism of Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 45-69; Sarah Barber, 'The Engagement for the Council of State and the Establishment of the Commonwealth Government', *Historical Research*, 63 (1990). Also useful are: Steven Jablonski, 'Evil Days: Providence and Politics in the Thought of John Milton and his Age', PhD., Princeton University, 1994, Chapter 3: 'Political Providentialism: God and the Change of Government'; Kelsey, *Inventing a Republic*, p. 212; Felix Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli* (London and Toronto, 1965), Chapters 4-5; Jonathan Scott, 'The English Republican Imagination', in John Morrill ed., *Revolution and Restoration: England in the 1650s* (1992), pp. 36-51; Perez Zagorin, *A History of Political Thought in the English Revolution* (1954), pp. 63-95.

[3] E. P., *The Armies Vindication* (1649), BL TT E 538 (3), Epistle and pp. 7-9, 17-19; Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649), BL TT E 542 (12), pp. 3-10, 13-17; John Goodwin, *Right and Might Well Met*, BL TT E 536 (28), pp. 3-5, 9-11, 14-16, 31-2, 38-40; Dury, *Considerations Concerning the Present Engagement* (1650), pp. 2-6, 10-21; *idem.*, *Conscience Eased* (1651), BL TT E 625 (4), pp. 13, 29; *idem.*, *Objections Against the Taking of the Engagement Answered* (1650), BL TT E 608 (20), pp. 7-

The other principal body of scholarship on the politics of providence during the 1650s is centred on Oliver Cromwell's providentialism that has proved a rich vein of enquiry for his recent biographers such as Robert Paul, Barry Coward and Peter Gaunt. Despite the enigmatic quality of Cromwell's writings, mirroring the indecipherability that characterised the operation of providence itself, they have noted how Cromwell in essence retained an honest and uncomplicated faith in God's sponsorship of the cause of which he was a representative. He prayed that men be afforded the opportunity to know the mind of God and what was expected of them as His loyal servants. Cromwell also held that it was inconceivable that the Lord would work battlefield miracles unless it was with the intention of rescuing His servants from bondage and confounding their mutual enemies. While he was reluctant at first to read too much into outward signs, the longer these mercies and deliverances continued, the stronger grew his belief that they were indeed a mark of divine approbation and approval. Paul, Gaunt and others also stress the very personal and Davidic association of deliverances with Cromwell which elevated his standing above that of other senior officers, his habit of 'waiting upon God' to reveal the divine purpose during the course of his political career, and the role of providence in justifying landmark developments such as the dissolution of the Rump in April 1653, the establishment of the Major Generals in 1655 and Cromwell's refusal to accept the crown in 1657.[4]

Christopher Hill, John Morrill and Blair Worden have enhanced our understanding of Cromwell considerably in recent years. Hill has emphasised Cromwell's belief that providence made redundant rigid doctrinal, secular political or constitutional forms, and instead his preferring to 'co-operate' with providence to see where it took the nation: what mattered was what worked, what worked was God's will, hence the Protectorship which Cromwell said was contrived by the Almighty to protect

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23; Francis Rous, *The Lawfulnes of Obeying the Present Government* (1649), BL TT E 551 (22), pp. 1-10; Burgess, 'Usurpation', pp. 518-21; Nedham, *The Case of the Commonwealth of England, Stated* (1650), BL TT E 600 (7), pp. 6, 17, 25, 31; Anthony Ascham, *The Bounds and Bonds of Publique Obedience* (1649), BL TT E 571 (26), pp. 3-5, 23, 33.

[4] Robert S. Paul, *The Lord Protector* (1955), pp. 59, 67, 148, 177, 213, 271, *passim*; Barry Coward, *Cromwell* (1991), pp. 29, 40, 60, 72, 79, 86-87, 125, *passim*; Peter Gaunt, *Oliver Cromwell* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 52, 93, 96, 101, 105, 122, 186-191, 203, *passim*. Other useful biographies include Charles Firth, *Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Puritans in England* (Oxford, 1953); Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell Our Chief of Men* (1989); Roy Sherwood, *Oliver Cromwell: King in all but Name, 1653-1658* (Stroud, 1997);

the nation during time of unrest. Cromwell believed 'substance', rather than mere form, was what counted in government. Just as Cromwell had venerated the God-fearing soldier regardless of his status or education, so pragmatically he believed government needed to be flexible in order to realise God's purposes in the midst of the 'strange windings and turnings of providence'. This antiformalism accounts for the disjointed, experimental feel of Interregnum politics: a politics of action that sought out God's will, for good or ill, from external evidences. For Hill the Marxist, then, providence could provide an explanation for the progressive ideological developments that he has catalogued in his scholarship of the period, though he concedes that it might also have conservative repercussions.[5]

John Morrill and some of the other contributors to his *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* have adopted Hill's work on Cromwell's antiformalism. They illustrate Cromwell's 'distrust of . . . human agencies', and trust in providence to supersede and render superfluous faction-ridden human politics through the application of a practical Christianity. In this view, the historical evolution of toleration seemed to point towards God's preference for a spiritual unity of the godly that would transcend futile disagreements over such questions as ecclesiastical organisation. Providence would overcome these worldly distractions, 'subverting the shells of form that were irrelevant to it'. Hence the Cromwellian Church settlement envisaged as a 'loose framework' that while respecting traditional structures such as the parochial system, was to permit sufficient plurality to allow providence to do its work, unhindered by rigid bureaucracy and irrelevant forms. In the sphere of civil government, too, Cromwell's providentialism made him reluctant to endorse one rigid form over another, though for much of his career he subscribed like many parliamentarians to a loose notion of contractual government. Providence would reveal which model was appropriate at any given moment, and since military success was for most supporters of the republican

Ivan Roots ed., *Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (1989), pp. 57-73, 113-16, 136; Abbott, I, 619, 629 644-5; II, 186, 235.

[5] Christopher Hill, *God's Englishman* (1970), pp. 87, 136, 203-214; *idem.*, 'Providence and Oliver Cromwell', in Ivan Roots ed., *Cromwell: A Profile* (1973), a reprint of a chapter from Hill's *God's Englishman*, which should be consulted in full; Roots, *Speeches*, pp. 10, 41-2, 133, 136.

regime a stamp of God's approval, this form might temporarily include military dictatorship, paradoxically so long as it guaranteed civil and religious liberty.[6]

The duty of the magistrate was to seek the mind of God, 'in all that chain of providence', to wait upon the season: it was foolhardy and potentially dangerous for men to upstage God by reaching precipitous decisions that were not based upon long hours of prayer and the close scrutiny of contemporary events for evidence of changes in the divine mood. Appealing to Robert Hammond in November 1648, Cromwell proposed that they, 'look into providences, surely they mean somewhat. They hang so together . . .' It was precisely this newly-discovered clarity in the series of events that preceded the trial of the King that had convinced Cromwell to abandon his neutrality and support the Army's *Remonstrance* in November 1648 – the document that made possible the regicide. Preceding events such as the second civil war had one-by-one eliminated alternative possibilities to leave only one possible outcome – trial and execution – as God's preferred choice. Cromwell was often cautious until the weight of available evidence signalled that God had given the signal for change, for example with the dissolution of the Rump. Until then, Cromwell adopted an experimental and incremental approach, testing and feeling out providence by way of relatively limited policy changes, and establishing his longer-term strategy on the relative success or failure of these qualified explorations and excursions into the mind of God. Cromwell's last and perhaps most important example of wrestling with God and of his caution not to misinterpret outward visible signs was, of course, the kingship controversy of 1657, when Cromwell was compelled to heed the warnings of his officers, acknowledge God's controversy with the title of king and concede the possible dangers inherent in its readoption.[7]

We have noted already how Blair Worden's work has been central to recent scholarship on providence and politics during the civil war and Interregnum. Worden discounts the possibility that Cromwell was being disingenuous and insincere in his

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[6] John Morrill ed., *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (Harlow, 1990); J. C. Davis, 'Cromwell's religion', in Morrill, pp. 181-208, esp. pp. 190, 193, 199-208; Anthony Fletcher, 'Oliver Cromwell and the godly nation', in Morrill, pp. 209-233.

[7] Sommerville, 'Oliver Cromwell and English political thought', in Morrill, *op cit*, pp. 234-58. See especially, pp. 235, 245, 248-253. See also Derek Hirst, 'The Lord Protector, 1653-1658', in Morrill, *op cit*, pp. 119-148; Abbott, I, 644-5, 677, 697-9; II, 177; IV, 484-97; Roots, *Speeches*, pp. 3, 114.

declarations on providence, attempting to blame providence for his own deficiencies as critics alleged. His attachment to the doctrine was entirely conventional and representative of the ideology of the political elite of his day. These conventions, according to Worden, included avoiding the temptation of believing that worldly success was evidence of God's favour, recognising that God punished the non-apprehension of providences, and the belief that the saints were uniquely equipped and obliged to discern the workings of the divine will. Worden also argues that the shared experience of wartime deliverances by the Cromwellians, the significance of biblical parallels in their motivation, and the radicalising effect of their need to expiate royalist blood-guilt, were among the important consequences of the application of the doctrine at this time. Cromwell's sometimes tearful and emotional disquisitions on providence might appear to the uninitiated to be the mere contrivances of an actor, but they were consistent with the passionate fervour of many officers touched by the Holy Spirit. This is not to say Cromwell and others were blissfully unaware of the propaganda value of providentialism, on the contrary, they not unreasonably stressed its importance in the circumstances when it most suited them. We have seen how garrison commanders and others used stories of providential intercession in their locality to argue the case for greater support from Westminster, and Cromwell did the same during the Irish campaign. However, the political value of providential discourse itself depended upon a recognition of the durability and receptivity of the doctrine in the population at large. Cromwell and other political and military leaders were not providentialists only because it suited them to appear to be so, but it *is* true that they took advantage of the fact that many others also closely followed the outward appearance of the divine will, and they did this to motivate, coerce and instruct.[8]

Worden has in addition described the growing fears within the Protectorate of latter-day Achans, the stubbornly sinful who were pulling down God's judgment on the nation's innocents through the prevalence of their own private guilt. Cromwell's concerns in this respect appeared well founded with the confluence of a number of setbacks during 1655, that series or chain of events that invariably betrayed the presence of the Lord, such as the defeat of the Western Design, the massacre of protestants in

[8] Worden, 'Providence and Politics in Cromwellian England', *PP*, 109 (1985), pp. 57, 67, 71, 77, 84-96.

Piedmont and Penruddock's royalist rebellion. Worden presents the case that Cromwell's uninhibited confidence in providence underwent modification in the light of these disasters. There was a sense in which the growing sophistication of the Protectorate was corrupting the ancient purity and simplicity of the Cause, and that the saints were growing away from God and His providences. Submission to the Almighty and spiritual reunion in Christ was needed to recover this lost innocence, thought Cromwell, though he also recognised the limitations of remedial action, acknowledging that 'it is not in man to direct his way'. Hence the greater caution that Worden has noted in Cromwell's decision-making following the events of 1655, such as his reluctance to accept the crown in 1657 on the grounds that the reintroduction of the monarchy might fatally poison relations with the Almighty. As we shall see in Chapter Six, I suggest Worden probably overstates his case: while Hispaniola was a serious setback, the reflection on the sins of the republic it provoked cannot be said to be especially unusual or significant. An irrepressible scold, God often despatched warnings to the faithful that were welcomed as signs of continuing divine interest in the saints, rather than of imminent destructive judgment.[9]

It is clear that the historiography of providence during the 1650s is centred upon Cromwell to the exclusion of other public figures. The following three chapters will seek to redress this balance somewhat, beginning in this chapter with a biographical section examining for the first time the impact providence had on the political activities of a number of his closest colleagues. I will suggest that their understanding of providence approximated Cromwell's, and that the shared experience of wartime providences before and during the early stages of the Commonwealth encouraged this consciousness of collegiality in the face of adversity. This was unsurprising since to an extent, the Council of State and General Council of the Army resembled gathered churches whose members were collectively bonded by their shared experience of God. In Chapters Six and Seven, I will argue that in peacetime this became a weakness: encouraging the divisiveness of conflicting interpretations of how the nation should respond to events especially after Cromwell's death, thereby weakening the republic; an over-dependence on the biblical-

[9] Worden, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Sin of Achan', in Derek Beales and Geoffrey Best eds, *History, Society and the Churches* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 125-145, see esp. pp. 132-45; Abbott, III, 226-28, 572-3; IV, 148-9, 361-2.

archetype of Cromwell preventing institutional development. The requirement that all significant domestic and foreign policy decisions display evidence of appropriate divine validation prolonged the sense of emergency, the siege mentality that was once persuasive evidence of godly status, becoming a liability that discouraged the evolution of stable government. The latter sections of this chapter on Ireland and Scotland will argue that Commonwealth governments were unhappy with a plural reading of providence and sought to reconstruct the pre-war near-monopoly of State-providentialism across the British Isles as a practical and spiritual necessity. In this respect, as in others, I would contend that the Interregnum constituted a less radical departure from conventional political practice than has been imagined, though this should not diminish our acknowledgment of the unprecedented theocratic ambitions of the new government.

(ii) Case studies

Oliver Cromwell was first among equals in the new Commonwealth, answerable to Thomas Fairfax until 1650 and also to a parliament which boasted the likes of Henry Vane, Henry Marten and Oliver St John. Great weight was accorded to the executive powers of the Council of State in the new constitution and under the later Instrument of Government. In practice, the Commonwealth and Protectorate were coalitions of men with often very different reasons for supporting the status quo, ranging from fear of royalism and an unadulterated commitment to republican constitutionalism, to sympathy for religious toleration. I would argue, however, that the collective experience, remembrance and commemoration of the mercies and judgments showered upon the saints since 1645 served as a point of agreement for this disparate constituency. This nostalgic imperative was one necessary myth that temporarily held together the republican and Protectoral experiments.[10]

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[10] Kelsey, *Inventing a Republic*, pp. 1-5; Gerald Aylmer, *The State's Servants. The Civil Service of the English Republic, 1649-1660* (London and Boston, 1973), pp. 18, 45-7; Peter Gaunt, "The Single Person's Confidants and Dependants"? Oliver Cromwell and his Protectoral Councillors', *HJ*, 32 (1989), pp. 537-60.

The case studies that follow demonstrate that this common interest in honouring God was the major preoccupation of the times. They are selected because of their intimacy with Cromwell and because of the availability of source material, representing a mix of lawyer and active parliamentarian (Bulstrode Whitelocke), professional soldiers (John Lambert, Charles Fleetwood, Thomas Harrison, Henry Cromwell and George Monck), preachers (Peter Sterry and John Owen) and one bureaucrat (John Thurloe). The selection reflects a number of other contrasts. While Harrison's career had by 1654 suffered eclipse, Monck's reached its zenith towards the end of the 1650s. Fleetwood and Harrison were renowned for their religious fervour, unlike Lambert and Monck. The charismatic Christianity of the former can also be contrasted to a degree with the more detached rationalism of Whitelocke. Thurloe was perhaps more typical of the junior administrators that the government depended upon to function. He, Whitelocke and Henry Cromwell all supported the kingship proposal in 1657, while the surviving members of our group did not.

The Yorkshireman John Lambert (1619-1684) was a key figure in the politics of the 1650s, effectively deputising for Cromwell and occupying a prominent position in the Commonwealth and Protectoral Councils of State. Lambert had a reputation as being a bluff, no-nonsense soldier's soldier, a practical man of action. He commanded substantial personal support in the Army which made him a potential rival to Cromwell and which he was to draw upon in 1659 in opposition to the restored Rump Parliament. As with other leading military personalities to make the transition to civilian administration under Cromwell, Lambert drew his strength from association with the remarkable train of providences that had underwritten the work of the New Model Army and made possible the regicide. These providences had solemnised the Army's mission and legitimised its otherwise doubtful constitutional credentials. That said, Lambert was regarded as one of the least zealous of Cromwell's lieutenants, as is shown by two of his writings: the moderate *Heads of the Proposals* that he co-authored with Henry Ireton in 1647, and the conservative *Instrument of Government* of 1653. Lambert was an advocate

of toleration, but more out of indifference to religious forms than any passionate attachment to the principle of freedom of conscience.[11]

Lambert appears to have been conventionally pious, though this is difficult to establish with certainty because so few of his private writings appear to have survived. Undoubtedly his status in the Army and the fact of his rapid promotion point to a recognition among the New Model's senior officers that he shared at least some aspects of their providential mind-set. An account, purported to be by his wife Mary, describes Lambert's pilgrimage out of the spiritual wilderness and his consequent rediscovery of Christ. Lambert declared his willingness to yield to God's commandments, but revealingly adds that this submission was conditional upon his judgment that these dispensations were indeed the will of the Almighty. Lambert's religion was clearly no blind faith, but practical and reasoned and he evidently sought to avoid taking providences at face value.[12]

Like some of his more charismatic colleagues, however, Lambert endorsed the broad providential interpretation of the republic's origins and functioning, though he avoided the enthusiastic excesses of the likes of Fleetwood and Harrison.[13] Whilst acknowledging the divine impetus to current events, he did not share Cromwell's reading of its consequences in which prudent policies were defined as those thought most likely to please a discriminating God. Lambert was perhaps sufficiently confident of the strength of his relationship with God not to have to make reference to divine providences at every turn; his fear of God was less pronounced than some of his colleagues and that led him to adopt a style of decision-making that might appear more conventionally 'secular' and disengaged from the minute by minute reference to the will of God that was the preferred style of the providential Cromwellians. His colleagues' terror of offending God lent their decision-making a keenness, vigour and immediacy that is perhaps absent in Lambert, who may have conceived God as being supportive of the Cause but detached from its day-to-day management, leaving that work to the

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[11] William Dawson, *Cromwell's Understudy: The Life and Times of General John Lambert* (1938), pp. 57, 182-89, 192, 205, 222, *passim*; Maurice Ashley, *Cromwell's Generals* (1954), Chapter 6. On his military career see entry in Richard Greaves and Robert Zaller eds, *Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century*, 3 vols (Brighton, 1982-4).
[12] BL Add. MS 4459, fols 162-63.

judgment of His instruments. Hence his questioning the wisdom of the expedition to Hispaniola in 1654-55 on grounds of its impracticality and against Cromwell's providential-prudential calculus.[14] His backing for the Major Generals, among whom he could be numbered, was similarly motivated more from a desire to reassert the power of the State over a recalcitrant population, than from a realisation that a purgative offering was needed to turn aside God's punishment of a sinful people. Lambert exhibited a 'soft' providentialism that while conscious of God's sponsorship of the Cause was reluctant to allow the minutiae of decision-making to be guided exclusively by its revelation. Hence Lambert's enthusiasm for a more settled constitution that might preserve the civil and religious liberties that had recently been acquired, and distrust of antiformalism and *ad hoc* government directed by the constantly shifting priorities of the Holy Spirit. Lambert's career illustrates the broadly based nature of Cromwell's administration after 1653 that contrasts with that of providential enthusiasts like Thomas Harrison.

Harrison (1616-1660) was a radical regicide and Fifth Monarchy supporter who like Lambert had risen quickly up the ranks of the New Model. Harrison was instrumental in helping to defend the Commonwealth during the war against Scotland, the success of which he attributed to faith and prayer. He demanded that the nation's governors try always to live up to God's expectations and make providence their primary concern in framing policy, telling Cromwell that 'waiting after Jehovah [must] be the greatest and most considerable business you have every day'.[15] He initially backed the Commonwealth, and belonged to a group of radical members who included Charles Fleetwood that encouraged the abolition of tithes and radical reform of the law, an establishment of 'the ways of righteousness and Justice'.[16] However, when it demonstrated its apparent unfitness to govern, not least by refusing to renew the Commission for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales, of which he was President and which he used to sponsor extremists like Vavasor Powell, Harrison lent his support to the dissolution of the Rump in April 1653. Like many radicals at this time, he believed

[13] Letters reprinted in Dawson, *Cromwell's Understudy*, pp. 299-302, 328-29, 333, 398; *HMC 13th Report, Appendix, Pt I*, p. 551.
[14] Dawson, *Cromwell's Understudy*, p. 228.
[15] C. S. Simpkinson, *Thomas Harrison: Regicide and Major-General* (1905), p. 108. On Harrison see also Ashley, *Cromwell's Generals*, Chapter 5.
[16] Simpkinson, *Harrison*, p. 292.

God's latest dramatic intervention in political affairs constituted the beginning of an apocalyptic transformation in the nation's fortunes that heralded the establishment of the fifth monarchy in which 'our blessed Lord will shortly work with eminence'.[17] With this in mind, he proposed the creation of a Sanhedrin, a parliament of saints enforcing Mosaic Law that was approximated in the Barebones Parliament established on 4 July 1653.

This survived until December 1653, and its premature demise was the subject of Harrison's ire. Harrison had earlier informed Cromwell that he thought the saints must play a waiting game, depending upon God to reveal His purposes; now there was a danger that the republic might run ahead of God and thereby incur His wrath.[18] Harrison's subsequent implication in Fifth Monarchy conspiracy led to his imprisonment and effective withdrawal from public life, though neither these events, nor his Restoration trial and death sentence, diminished his commitment to the Good Old Cause or the strength of his faith in the testimony of God to His saints. Harrison's providentialism differed from Cromwell's in that it was sought to accelerate and advance the realisation of prophecy in a more aggressive fashion than his conservative colleague; he did not share Cromwell's doubts as to God's purposes, thus explaining his impatience with the pace of reform.[19]

Charles Fleetwood (1618-1692) rose to prominence in the Army of the Eastern Association and then the New Model in which he adopted a radical religious position characterised by a vocal providentialism and pronounced activism. His engagement at the head of the Commonwealth's cavalry, marriage to Cromwell's daughter, Bridget, and his appointment to the posts of commander-in-chief and then Lord Deputy in Ireland, distinguished him as a central figure in the Commonwealth and Protectorate. Whilst in Ireland, Fleetwood was accused of condoning the infiltration into the Army of Baptists and other radicals, with serious consequences for his successor, the moderate Henry Cromwell. Fleetwood's radicalism never extended to the sedition displayed by his colleague, Harrison, however, and Fleetwood remained on intimate terms with his

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[17] Harrison to John Jones in Joseph Meyer ed., *Inedited Letters of Cromwell, Col Jones, Bradshaw and other Regicides*, in *Transactions of the Historical Societies of Lancashire and Cheshire*, n.s. 1 (1861), p. 214.

[18] John Nickolls ed., *Original Letters and Papers of State, Addressed to Oliver Cromwell* (1743), p. 10.

[19] *The Speeches and Prayers of Some of the Late King's Judges* (1660), p. 7.

father-in-law, the Lord Protector. This was borne out in his appointment as a Major General in 1655. Fleetwood was a man of independent disposition, however, and was critical of the offer of the crown to Cromwell in 1657. His passionate faith in the Interregnum experiment subsequently led Fleetwood and his fellow officers to seek the overthrow of the Protectorate of Richard Cromwell and contrive the resurrection of the Rump in May 1659. This marked the beginning of a turbulent period that witnessed the dismissal and then reinstatement of Fleetwood as commander-in-chief in England, and the removal then triumphant return of the Rump, culminating in the arrival of George Monck's army in London in February 1660.[20]

Fleetwood's providentialism was an integral feature of his politics. In common with Cromwell, who placed great weight on the need for magistrates to seek after God through prayer in order to acquire a clearer understanding of His will and apply the conclusions to the business of state, Fleetwood argued that 'the more conversant we are therein, the greater comfort and success we shall have in our designs in management of public affairs'. He was critical of what he saw as the neglect of such application to God during the early period of the Protectorate, however, which he deduced from the tardiness of the new administration in addressing the outstanding problems of clerical maintenance and law reform.[21] Fleetwood's answer to the divisions and disagreements of the first Protectorate Parliament in 1654, was to counsel Cromwell to depend exclusively upon God, 'that we may be kept firm in ways well pleasing to him'. By this he meant that the Protector should pay closer attention to the concerns of Fleetwood and his more radical colleagues, 'the interest of good men', whose saintly communion with the Lord had left them better qualified to determine which policies were acceptable to the Almighty. Though he retained confidence in the Protector to do what was right, he acknowledged the great trials and tribulations faced by Cromwell and feared that he might be tempted to compromise the saints for the sake of administrative convenience.[22] Fleetwood's fears and expectations were to an extent borne out by the royalist rising of March 1655, and by God's humiliation of the rebels. The conspiracy was a warning sign

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[20] On this stage of Fleetwood's career, see Ashley, *Cromwell's Generals*, Chapter 11. Fleetwood in Greaves and Zaller eds, *British Radicals*.
[21] *TSP*, II, 445.
[22] Ibid., 620, III, 23.

designed to awaken the saints to the dangers of complacency, but equally its overthrow was also a renewal of God's promise. The saints were required to learn from the episode by forsaking damaging internal wrangling and walking together in a spirit of mutual love of Christ.[23]

Fleetwood backed vigorous action against the Duke of Savoy during the Piedmont crisis in 1655, lamenting news of the massacres of protestants carried out in the Duke's name and praying that Cromwell might serve as an instrument of divine correction against the perpetrators of the atrocities, 'a polished shaft in his quiver'.[24] He was more critical of the failure of the West Indies expedition of the same year, blaming it upon unsound, irreligious recruits. Fleetwood believed the disaster taught the Protectorate an important lesson in that it should return to 'the good old way of seeking [God's] face, and seeing his presence to go before us in all our undertakings'. The increasing urbanity and sophistication of the Protectorate was encouraging pride and concupiscence and Fleetwood called for a rediscovery of the formerly pure and innocent relationship between the saints and Jehovah.[25] This comprised faith in prophecy, reliance upon God and distrust of the arm of flesh, and Fleetwood's subsequent pronouncements were consistent with these basic principles. The saints must 'improve the season', and 'search and try [their] ways, and turn to the Lord', he told Henry Cromwell in 1658 in the aftermath of Oliver's death.[26] Sentiments such as these formed the basis of Fleetwood's participation in the events of 1659-60, in which he was heavily implicated as commander-in-chief of the Army. Fleetwood then declared that 'we have been led to look back and examine the cause of the Lord's withdrawing his . . . presence from us . . . that through mercy we might return and give him the glory'.[27] They were developments, Fleetwood informed his rival, Monck, that were fruits of the division that he prophesied will 'be our ruin', but which were the product of a providential necessity. God had guided Fleetwood and his fellow officers to this juncture, the ultimate test of their commitment to the Cause, but also a supreme test of their faith in the all-sufficient

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[23] Ibid., 292, 305, 363.
[24] Ibid., 466-7.
[25] Ibid., 690; BL Lansdowne MS 821, fol. 83.
[26] *TSP*, VII, 494.
[27] Bulstrode Whitelocke, *Memorials of the English Affairs*, ed. Arthur, Earl of Angelsea, 4 vols (Oxford, 1853), IV, 344.

rightness of providence, come what may, should God appear to authorise their self-denial and voluntary surrender of power to a Parliament with an ambition to restore the King.[28]

Henry Cromwell (1628-74) was the fourth son of Oliver Cromwell who achieved distinction from 1654 in the service of the Protectorate in Ireland. Henry Cromwell's presence had a normalising effect on the government in Dublin, which had hitherto been administered under quite harsh conditions approximating martial law. He softened the implementation of the act that sought the transplantation of the native Irish to Connaught as divinely-inspired punishment for their rebellion during the 1640s, adopting a more conciliatory approach towards the Irish and towards those native protestants, such as presbyterians, who had remained loyal to the King. Cromwell also began excluding Baptists and other religious radicals from positions of influence, in a move that reflected the moderate, irenic quality of Henry's administration.[29]

Henry Cromwell's providentialism was conventional and was located in the mainstream of opinion on the subject, being distanced from the activism of a Harrison or the passionate intensity of that archetypal Jeremiah, Fleetwood. Cromwell appears to have been highly regarded as a thoughtful and religious man who was assiduous in keeping fasts and other religious exercises with the specific intention of honouring providence.[30] Henry also appears to have accepted some of his father's recommendations when he was advised to 'roll yourself upon God' and to 'cry to the Lord to give you a plain simple heart', that is to avoid alienating religious zealots and to try and unite the people of God through gentle persuasion and the example of his own piety.[31] Henry rejected revolutionary change, arguing that providence usually worked steadily and incrementally. He distrusted sectarians and other religious radicals with their very free, open and fluid interpretation of providences, arguing that the widespread

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[28] *OPH*, vol. 22, pp. 13-14.
[29] On Henry Cromwell, see *DNB*, Greaves and Zaller eds, *British Radicals*. Robert Ramsey, *Henry Cromwell* (London, New York, Toronto, 1933) remains the standard reference work. On Henry Cromwell in Ireland and the Transplantation, see T. C. Barnard, 'Crises of Identity among Irish Protestants, 1641-1688', *PP*, 127 (1990); Peter Berresford Ellis, *Hell or Connaught: The Cromwellian Colonisation of Ireland, 1652-1660* (Belfast, 1975); Phil Kilroy, 'Radical Religion in Ireland, 1641-1660', in Jane Ohlmeyer ed., *Ireland from Independence to Occupation, 1641-1660* (Cambridge, 1995); John P. Prendergast, *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* (Dublin, 1996).
[30] For example, *TSP*, V, 586; Ramsey, *Cromwell*, p. 61.
[31] Ibid., pp. 113-14.

adoption of such an approach would introduce into the constitution an element of permanent instability. This free-for-all offended Henry's stolid commitment to government by known laws flowing in proper channels, modified by and in co-operation with, providence.[32] Unlike his father, Henry was not indifferent to the form of government and was sympathetic to monarchy. However, he argued that the 'tossings and turnings' of the kingship controversy in 1657 had taught the participants that God preferred the status quo and was angry at 'too wanton and bold' a change in an otherwise settled constitution. Change for the sake of change betokened insufficient care and attention to discover and satisfy God's will, though in this instance it was clear to Henry that his father had indeed struggled with his conscience in order to lay bare the Lord's preferences.[33] In some respects, Henry's relative success as a politician might be thought of as being unexpected in view of his declaration to 'let us observe his providences, and not be to sollicitous to please man'.[34] Henry Cromwell was a loyal servant of his father who inherited the Protector's propensity to seek out the mind of God, and who accorded great importance to submission to the Lord's will, characterising him as a typical, if rather conservative member of the establishment.[35]

Bulstrode Whitelocke (1605-75) was a lawyer and moderate Parliamentarian who in his youth had been a close friend of Selden and Edward Hyde. He shared some of the tolerant rationalism of the Great Tew circle and venerated constitutionalism. Despite, or perhaps because of, his affection for the institution of Parliament, he opposed Holles and Stapleton's proposal in 1647 to disband the Army and thereafter backed the Independents and supported the rise of Oliver Cromwell. Whitelocke served as ambassador in Sweden between 1653-4, repaying the considerable trust that had been placed in him by the Council of State and remained an important participant in affairs up to and including the Protectorate of Richard Cromwell. It is unsurprising, then, that his extensive archive has become one of the most illuminating sources for the political history of the period.[36]

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[32] *TSP*, VII, 454.
[33] Ramsey, *Cromwell*, pp. 173, 223.
[34] *TSP*, VII, 155.
[35] Ibid., 73, 384, 400.
[36] Ruth Spalding, *The Improbable Puritan: A Life of Bulstrode Whitelocke, 1605-1675* (1975). Papers include BL Add MSS 37343-4, 53726-8.

Whitelocke was a somewhat flamboyant figure and a lover of the fine things in life, leading his biographer, Ruth Spalding, to characterise him as an 'improbable puritan'. Nevertheless, he appears to have held quite conventional puritan views that locate him in the mainstream of Cromwellian providentialism, but seems also to have regarded them more as a matter of private devotion than of public concern. Whitelocke was assiduous in keeping private fasts and in setting aside time for bible reading, but also shared his devotions with Cromwell and other leading players on occasions such as the eve of the Irish and Scottish expeditions in 1649-50.[37] His diary also conveys the strong sense of solidarity and brotherhood that pertained among the survivors of the great mercies conferred upon the New Model since 1645, expressed in frequent reunions at which experiences were shared, prayers exchanged and at which stories of providential intercession were related excitedly. These parties were opportunities for old friends to meet and discuss significant providences and keep their memory alive. No doubt also, they were a chance for participants to compare and apply the lessons of their adventures to the state of contemporary politics, an opportunity to voice dissent, and thus an important constituent of contemporary decision-making.[38]

Whitelocke's embassy to Sweden provided him with ample opportunity to reflect upon providence, most especially by offering thanks to the Almighty after his vessel ran aground during the return journey.[39] Whilst in Sweden, Whitelocke was careful to order the affairs of his retinue by enforcing high standards of moral rectitude in his household, a commitment that was reflected in his encouragement of lay preaching and, rather ungenerously, in the prohibition of attendance by his men at a celebratory ball thrown by Queen Christina.[40] The ambassador also explained for the benefit of his hosts the central importance that had been accorded to providence by the Commonwealth and Protectorate, declaring that, 'it hath pleased the Lord to own the Parliament and our Commonwealth in a strange series of His providences'. Revealingly, Whitelocke assumed that 'most parts of the world' were familiar with these facts, showing that he evidently considered his embassy an opportunity to reveal to other nations the strength

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[37] Ruth Spalding ed., *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 184, 210, 213, 233, 241, 260, 266.
[38] Ibid., pp. 233, 271, 389.
[39] Charles Morton ed., *A Journal of the Swedish Embassy*, 2 vols (1855), II, 423-9.
[40] Ibid., I, 109, 143, 247, 276, *passim*.

of England's covenant with God in order to discourage any thought of challenging its new found influence, but also in order to convert neighbouring protestant nations to a similar worship of providence.[41]

Providence remained for Whitelocke an indispensable personal guide through the troublesome years ahead. Perhaps with an eye on a possible restoration of the old order, he describes his concern at the direction of the revolution during 1659-60, but acknowledges his submission to God in all these changes, implying that his participation was unavoidable necessity.[42] This reads like Whitelocke safeguarding his posterity by distancing himself from revolutionary change – if so, it was ineffective considering Whitelocke's leading role in the dying months of the Interregnum. Even in defeat, however, Whitelocke remained confident of the value of prayer, intolerant of the moral degradation of impiety, and committed to fulfilling God's will.[43]

John Thurloe (1616-1668) became one of the republic's most important administrators as Secretary to the Council of State from 1652. Initially, Thurloe's influence appears to have been modest, but his personal standing grew steadily until he entered Cromwell's inner counsels under the Protectorate. His position as the head of the intelligence network of the Protectorate enhanced his standing and lent his political and religious opinions a greater weight than they might otherwise have warranted. It is possible, however, that the impact of the vast archive of state papers accumulated by Thurloe that has become the principal source for the political history of the period, has resulted in the exaggeration of the Secretary's role in events, in which he generally occupied the role of interpreter rather than innovator.[44]

Thurloe was a conservative and uncharismatic in his personal and constitutional views, but while in favour of Cromwell's coronation in 1657, he nevertheless remained loyal to the idea of the revolution. He was typical of probably a majority of the republic's supporters in being a vocal providentialist and in subscribing to the view that God had blessed the republic for some unique purpose. Thurloe placed great importance upon the extraordinary collective experience of the mercies enjoyed by Parliament

[41] Ibid., 376.
[42] Whitelocke, *Diary*, p. 511.
[43] BL Add MS 53728, fols 22, 25, 163.
[44] Philip Aubrey, *Mr Secretary Thurloe* (1990), pp. 9, 19, 27, 50. On Thurloe's intelligence work see D. L. Hobman, *Cromwell's Master Spy* (1961).

during the 1640s, an experience that cast a long shadow over the Interregnum and that provided the passionate dynamic underlying the sense of brotherhood and fraternity found among Cromwell's supporters. He tended, however, to avoid expressing extreme millennial sentiments and belonged to the more rational, pragmatic wing of Cromwell's party occupied by Broghill, Whitelocke and others. Thurloe's privileged position at the head of the intelligence network influenced his opinions, perhaps making him more acutely aware of the fragility of the regime in the face of intrigue and conspiracy. In spite of this, he remained resolutely optimistic about the prospects for the revolution, even during its final ignominious months of existence. His comparatively junior status also probably encouraged a propensity to throw himself upon the dependence of his superiors, including God. Thurloe possessed a highly developed sense of duty, especially towards Cromwell, but when confronted by news of the death of his master, resolved to acquiesce in the face of God's judgment. Thus submission to the divine will, a desire that Protectorate policy be framed with the intention of pleasing God, and a steadfast commitment to trust in the Lord's protection of the fruits of revolution, all characterised the providentialism of this loyal public servant.[45]

John Owen (1616-83) had become an established and influential parliamentary preacher by the time he was appointed a chaplain of Oliver Cromwell in 1649. Owen occupied a position at the heart of Cromwell's establishment, accompanying his patron on the campaigns to Ireland in 1649 and Scotland in 1650. Whilst in Scotland, Owen tried to persuade the imprisoned political leadership to acknowledge the outgoings of the Lord against them, with mixed success. He accepted appointments as Dean of Christ Church in 1651 and Vice-Chancellor of Oxford in 1652, served as a prominent Trier and on various important committees concerned with formulating providential policy, in particular the committee for the relief of the Piedmont refugees in 1655. Despite his distrust of religious extremism and his broadly mainstream Congregationalist views, Owen became allied with critics of the Protectorate when he opposed the offer of the crown to Cromwell in 1657, drafting the key petition of army officers that was ultimately to derail the proposal. Subsequently, Owen became a leading player in the

[45] *TSP* V, 472, 708, 787, VI, 8, 243, 580, VII, 4, 38, 155-7, 192, 354-5, 372-3, *passim*.

defence of the Good Old Cause, gathering a church at Fleetwood's Wallingford House, the loyalist officers' headquarters.[46]

Owen's providentialism was central to his religious experience and he argued that providence worked for the greater glory of God and the good of His Church.[47] He held that the regicide and republic were 'God-wrought', and insisted that 'God hath a peculiar design in hand, and we are to find it out'. This placed a great burden of responsibility of its governors to use their power wisely, especially by educating the population in the ways of the Lord and out of their lascivious and apathetic habits.[48] When viewed in these terms, the choice was stark: either God would 'purge us or burn us'.[49] Hence the need for reform of the preaching ministry, proposals for which Owen championed. In common with many preachers sympathetic to the government during the 1650s, however, Owen feared that it might become a victim of its own success and become 'puffed-up on its own account', opening the way to being humbled by God like the Israelites of old.[50] And, as Owen never tired of reminding audiences, God's 'treasury of judgments can never be exhausted'.[51]

He shared Cromwell's craving for discovering the mind of God in directing the course of events and believed that this understanding was both inspirational and the fruit of the saints' special communion with the Lord.[52] He also shared Cromwell's fear of spiritual hardening and the risk of dishonouring God by questioning His judgments during difficult times. Instead, Owen subscribed to the necessary duties of submission and trust in the Lord to resolve problems at His own pace, though he occupied a position on the cusp between Cromwell's distinctively cautious approach to pre-empting God, and the activism of the Fifth Monarchists that sought to quicken and move forward the timetable of divine prophecy. Hence his involvement with Fleetwood and the Wallingford House group between 1659-60. The Wallingford officers sought to take

[46] Peter Toon ed., *The Correspondence of John Owen (1616-1683)* (Cambridge and London, 1970), pp. 21-48; *idem.*, *God's Statesman: The Life and Work of John Owen* (Exeter, 1971), pp. 19, 39, 42-3, 91, 98, *passim*.
[47] William Goold ed., *The Works of John Owen*, 24 vols (London and Edinburgh, 1850-55), I, 475-76.
[48] Peter Toon ed., *The Oxford Orations of Dr John Owen* (Callington, Cornwall, 1971), pp. 7, 11-12; Goold ed., *Works*, VIII, 417.
[49] Ibid., p. 26.
[50] Toon ed., *Orations*, pp. 13, 21, 43.
[51] Goold ed., *Works*, VIII, 92.
[52] Ibid., II, 'Of Communion with God', IV, 126, VIII, 87, 348.

charge of events and resurrect the formerly propitious relationship of the nation with its God.[53] Despite this late brush with activism, however, Owen's opinion on the subject of man's engagement with providence remained broadly consistent – that one should respect the dark mystery of God's will and not seek to probe too deeply into its secrets. Indeed, Owen voiced his fears that men too often misread providences, and confused private desires and aspirations with the mind of God, to 'run before the will of God' in a misdirected spirit of unwarranted innovation. In this respect, Owen remained firmly in Cromwell's traditionalist camp with regard to providence: that men should more often seek to follow rather than indiscriminately to anticipate its dispensations, a preference that informed the hesitant and cautious tenor of the decision-making of the Protectorate in particular.[54]

Another of Cromwell's personal chaplains was Peter Sterry (1613-72), who was also preacher to the Council of State at Whitehall. Sterry was a fellow of Emmanuel and a protégé of Benjamin Whichcote, one of the Cambridge Platonists. In keeping with his education, Sterry's stressed the unity of God, the immanence of the deity, and the elevation of the spiritual world over the material, wrapped up in a prose that acquired a reputation for mystical obscurity. The powerful logic of his rhetorical style, combined with acknowledged other-worldliness, appealed to Cromwell during his more visionary and transcendental moods. Sterry's mysticism approximated elements of Quakerism, but he was careful to distance himself from antinomians like the Ranters, and he maintained conventional opinions on the Trinity.[55]

Sterry held Cromwell in high regard, lauding him as a latter-day David. His faith in a unity of the Spirit transcending petty differences between men and sealing up the nation's wounds in a process of sublime and supernatural reconciliation, also closely approximated Cromwell's belief in the spiritual unification of the godly. Thus Sterry, perhaps unrealistically, anticipated the day when 'Righteousness and Peace kiss each other in these lands . . . [when] England and Scotland, Presbyterians and Independents, shall feed together in fat pastures'.[56] Sterry always emphasised the transitional nature of

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[53] Ibid., VI, 52-3, 570-72, 615, VIII, 141, 240, 332; Toon ed., *Correspondence*, pp. 106-8, 113.
[54] Goold, *Works*, VIII, 410, 416.
[55] Vivian de Sola Pinto, *Peter Sterry: Platonist and Puritan, 1613-1672* (Cambridge, 1934), pp. 3-5, 16, 90-113; *idem.*, *The Doctrine of Peter Sterry* (Geneva, 1931), pp. 8-13.
[56] Sterry, *The Spirits Conviction of Sinne* (1645), BL TT E 310 (4), p. 36.

the Interregnum experiment and was concerned that the revolution should continue its primary function of upholding the glory of the Almighty, warning that the Commonwealth risked being diverted from its holy duties by 'fleshy confidence'. He may have considered that its military ambitions too closely resembled the hated carnality and worldly ambition that symbolised divorce from God and from the simple, interior communion with the Almighty with which Sterry felt comfortable. In this respect, the purpose of preachers like Owen, Sterry, Caryl and Hugh Peter, then, was to guard against triumphalism and protect the innocence of the revolution. Sterry's career is important for illustrating the eclecticism of Cromwell's court and providing a glimpse of the prophetic and providential nature of the private spiritual advice that he must have received.[57]

George Monck (1608-70) was a professional soldier who served under Ormonde in Ireland. Despite his early commitment to royalism, in 1647 Monck defected to the cause of Parliament. He joined Lord Lisle's expedition to Ireland and then served under Cromwell during the Scottish invasion in 1650. Apart from a successful interlude during the Dutch war as a General at Sea alongside Blake and Richard Deane, Monck was to spend the remainder of his career until 1659 in Scotland. It was then that he championed the cause of Parliament against the Council of Officers, marching his army to London and setting in train the course of events that was to lead to the restoration of the King.[58]

Like Lambert, Monck was a popular and talented soldier able to command an impressive personal following. A taciturn man, Monck was reluctant to reveal his religious opinions and even his chaplain and biographer, Thomas Gumble, was subsequently unable to shed much light on this aspect of his life. However, it seems likely Monck was a moderate puritan who practised a quiet and undemonstrative religion. The fact that Robert Overton and other radical officers in the Scots' army intrigued against their commanding officer also lends weight to this reading of Monck's private beliefs. His providentialism was unremarkable and was more restrained than

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[57] *Idem.*, *England's Deliverance From the Northern Presbytery* (1651), BL TT E 645 (2), pp. 2-5; *The Commings Forth of Christ in the Power of his Death* (1649), BL TT E 578 (1), pp. 2, 12-13, 28-9; *The Appearance of God to Man In the Gospel* (1710), p. 12.

[58] J. D. Griffith Davies, *Honest George Monck* (1936); Thomas Gumble, *The Life of General Monck* (1671); Ted Jamison, *George Monck and the Restoration* (Fort Worth, Texas, 1975); Oliver Warner, *Hero of the Restoration* (1936).

most servants of Cromwell but conventional when the circumstances demanded, such as when reporting naval victories over the Dutch in 1653.[59] Though loyal to the Protectorate, Monck was by nature more of a Parliament-man, and so approved of Fleetwood's restoration of the Rump in May 1659, which he celebrated as God's revival of a moribund cause.[60] Lambert's dissolution of the Rump in October 1659, however, elicited an angry response from Monck, who sprung to the defence of Parliament and the Good Old Cause. God, he said, had declared His opposition to arbitrary government and Monck warned his erstwhile colleagues that they would answer to the Almighty for unnecessary bloodshed.[61] It was in this context that Monck was persuaded to abandon his waiting game, purge his army of malcontents and march into England. Monck excused this development by arguing that his army had received a calling from God, shrewdly reading the signs of a change in the direction of providence to outflank Lambert and contrive to restore the members of Parliament secluded by the Purge of 1648, securing an opportunity for the restoration of Charles II. It was yet another example of one of those peculiar ironies by which God delighted in confounding the expectations of men, that perhaps the least enthusiastic of Cromwell's providentialists should preside over the most extraordinary series of dispensations experienced during the Interregnum.[62]

This brief survey of prominent Cromwellians shows how widespread was the view that God had underwritten the revolution and how men looked for continued validation to the remarkable series of providences that the nation experienced between 1645 and 1651. Cromwell and his lieutenants lauded providence and accorded priority to the apprehension and worship of the Lord's works as a religious duty to which other objectives such as tithe reform were subordinate. Yet they also feared losing the love and support of the Lord: a consistent theme throughout the 1650s, but one that became especially important after 1653 with the dissolution of the Rump and the coming of the Protectorate, an institution many men could not be certain enjoyed the sponsorship of God. I will suggest in Chapters Six and Seven that troubled by self-doubt, many officers

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[59] Griffith Davies, *Monck*, pp. 293-94, 306-307.
[60] Ibid., pp. 330-32; *OPH*, vol. 21, pp. 414-17.
[61] Ibid., vol. 22, pp. 4-6.
[62] *Clarke Papers*, IV, 114, 121-124, 151-54, 184-5, 228.

in particular remembered those former mercies with fondness and longing, freezing them in aspic and paradoxically rendering the Army less able to respond flexibly to providential innovation. Ironically, the generation of men that feared God and that had risen to power on the back of their professed ability to read the runes and react to events, now proved incapable of keeping up with the fresh challenges which the Almighty had set for the nation, particularly after Cromwell's death.[63]

Cromwell and his closest friends and colleagues generally believed that God was, 'very near' in the events following the regicide, events that seemed to herald a period of great activity by God in the affairs of man and possibly the fulfilment of prophecy.[64] Collectively, they were committed to the defence of God's honour by educating their subjects in the ways of the Lord, transforming the population so that they were able and eager to apprehend and worship providences. This meant they assumed responsibility for the moral condition of the entire population of the British Isles by suppressing profaneness and irreligion, for example by means of the Major Generals in 1655-6. It also meant that they insisted upon the submission and conversion of those English, Irish and Scottish people still sceptical that God had sponsored the regicides and republicans. Their incorrigibility was not only a potential security problem, but also a standing insult to the Almighty, and therefore Cromwell accorded priority to the dissemination of what was now the only legitimate brand of providentialism, a subject to which we now turn.[65]

(iv) The Establishment of the Commonwealth in Ireland and Scotland, 1649-52: Background

This section will examine the attempt by the republic to quell dissent in the parts of the British Isles that still lay outside its suzerainty in 1649. It will concentrate on the experience of Ireland, contrasting it with government strategy in relation to Scotland, home of co-religionists perhaps thought less deserving of God's outright punishment than the Roman Catholic majority that characterised the troublesome Western Kingdom.

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[63] See Chapter Seven.
[64] Abbott, II, 104, III, 89.
[65] Ibid., I, 651-2, II, 160-61, 173, 226; Roots, *Speeches*, pp. 9-26.

The study of the inter-relation of the component nations comprising the British Isles has become fashionable in recent decades with the work of J. G. A. Pocock, Conrad Russell, Steven Ellis and others.[66] This is especially true of early modern history and in the context of this chapter the alleged apostasy of the Scottish Hamiltonians who had invaded England in 1648, and the fact of the Irish Rebellion of October 1641 with the attendant 'massacres' of Irish protestants that accompanied the revolt.[67]

The period of the 1650s witnessed the advancement of an agenda of providential nationalism, which in the case of the English colonisation of Ireland had its origins in a pre-war spirit of adventurism and protestant triumphalism. Alongside this ideological motivation, however, lay more prosaic reasons for campaign commanders to invoke the providential in their published despatches, namely to win a greater allocation of central funds with which to prosecute the war. Evidence of divine favour could provide incontrovertible evidence for the domestic political audience that their cause was just, when some voices such as Henry Marten and Thomas Fairfax had been questioning the

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[66] J. G. A. Pocock, 'British History: a plea for a new subject', *Journal of Modern History*, 47 (1975); Conrad Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637-1642* (Oxford, 1991); Steven Ellis and Sarah Barber eds, *Conquest and Union: Fashioning a British State, 1485-1725* (1995); B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1991); R. Asch ed., *Three Nations: A Common History? England, Scotland, Ireland and British History c. 1600-1920* (Bochum, 1993); Brendan Bradshaw and Peter Roberts eds, *British consciousness and identity* (Cambridge, 1998); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven and London, 1992); J. H. Elliott, 'A world of composite monarchies', *PP*, 137 (1992); D. Hirst, 'The English republic and the meaning of Britain', *Journal of Modern History*, 66 (1994); B. P. Levack, *The Formation of the British State: England, Scotland and the Union, 1603-1707* (Oxford, 1987); John Morrill, 'The causes of Britain's Civil Wars', in Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (1993).

[67] Sarah Barber, 'Scotland and Ireland under the Commonwealth: a question of loyalty', in Ellis and Barber eds, *Conquest*; T.C. Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland* (Oxford, 1975); *idem.*, 'The Uses of 23 October 1641 and Irish Protestant Celebrations', *EHR*, 106 (1991); Karl Bottigheimer, *English Money and Irish Land* (Oxford, 1971); Thomas Coonan, *The Irish Catholic Confederacy and the Puritan Revolution* (Dublin, 1954); F. D. Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland, 1651-1660* (Edinburgh, 1979); Brendan Fitzpatrick, *Seventeenth-Century Ireland: The War of Religions* (Dublin, 1988); Hugh Hazlett, 'The Financing of the British Armies in Ireland, 1641-9', *IHS*, 1 (1938); Keith Lindley, 'The Impact of the 1641 rebellion upon England and Wales, 1641-5', *IHS*, 18 (1972); *idem.*, 'Irish Adventurers and godly militants in the 1640s', *IHS*, 29 (1994); John Lowe, 'Charles I and the Confederation of Kilkenny, 1643-9', *IHS*, 14 (1964); J. R. MacCormack, 'The Irish Adventurers and the English Civil War', *IHS*, 10 (1956-7); T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin and F. J. Byrne eds, *A New History of Ireland, Vol. III: Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691* (Oxford, 1976); John Morrill, 'The War(s) of the Three Kingdoms', in Glenn Burgess ed., *The New British History* (London and New York, 1999); M. Perceval-Maxwell, *The Outbreak of the Irish Rebellion of 1641* (Dublin, 1994); John P. Prendergast, *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* (Dublin, 1922); Ivan Roots, 'Union and Disunion in the British Isles, 1637-1660', in Roots ed., *'Into Another Mould': Aspects of the Interregnum* (Exeter, 1981); David Stevenson, 'Cromwell, Scotland and Ireland', in Morrill ed., *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*.

merits of the expeditions to Ireland and Scotland.[68] Indeed, such self-promotion by Oliver Cromwell and Henry Ireton enhanced their reputations considerably by identifying them very particularly with evidence of divine approbation afforded to the saints during the wars of 1649-51. The wars in Ireland and Scotland especially were crucial in cementing Cromwell's reputation and status as a man whose work was sponsored immediately by God, paving the way for the dissolution of the Rump in 1653 and Cromwell's direct assumption of power.

Was, then, the state-sponsored providential polemic, which accompanied Cromwell's invasion and which characterised the colonial administration thereafter, merely a smokescreen to disguise naked ambition and greed, or designed to stir up a religious patriotism in order to strengthen an otherwise weak and disunited regime lacking a popular mandate? Certainly, the providences associated with the Irish war proved useful at a time when the Commonwealth urgently needed spectacular battlefield visitations of the Almighty to confirm the providential credentials of the new government and to dispel lingering doubts as to its legitimacy. Little wonder, then, that some contemporary critics like Edmund Ludlow charged Cromwell and his allies with dishonouring the Almighty by promiscuously invoking the vocabulary of the miraculous in order to raise the political temperature for partisan advantage.[69]

Providential discourse, however, was versatile enough to accommodate deployment for the objectives both of piety and devotion – the edifying spectacle of the celebration and glorification of acts of God which was the principal aim of commemorating the miraculous – and in the sense of being premeditated advertisements intended to strengthen partisan resolve, a flexing of polemical muscles by among the earliest of England's muscular Christians. In practice, both objectives were closely related since the acknowledgment of providences was a practical, prudential business: it came close to, but did not cross the line into becoming a puritan doctrine of works in which control of the nexus of reward and punishment was ceded to an empowered

[68] Barber, 'Scotland and Ireland', pp. 208-9. See Norah Carlin, 'The Levellers and the conquest of Ireland', *HJ*, 30 (1987). Fairfax surrendered his commission rather than command the army in a Scottish invasion.

[69] C. H. Firth ed., *The Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1894), I, 343-4, 390; Roger Howell, 'Images of Oliver Cromwell', in R. C. Richardson ed., *Images of Oliver Cromwell* (Manchester and New

humanity and away from a sovereign deity. Glorifying God's wonder working was never a private affair, but necessarily public, designed with conversion in mind. Providence exercised such a powerful hold over the thoughts of godly contemporaries that no authority could afford to ignore its propaganda potential, nor could risk ceding the moral high-ground by allowing alternative readings of God's ordering of current affairs to go unanswered for long.

The utterances of Oliver Cromwell, Charles Fleetwood, John Owen and others in relation to Ireland betray the characteristic anger, passion and sense of unworthiness and the omnipresence of sin that preoccupied the generation of men that feared God.[70] The state-sponsored distribution of narratives based upon their observations show that an attempt was made to ensure all parts of the British Isles shouldered their portion of that dreadful burden of searching out providence by prayer, a collective responsibility to forsake fleshy reasoning for all time and to live henceforth by God alone: a 'paradigmatic breakthrough' that would propel the nation into the realm of the perpetual consciousness of the providential.[71] Additionally, the Commonwealth needed to acclaim its work in Scotland and Ireland as the product of providence in order to win recruits, justify its policies to the sceptical, and to fulfil the obligations the civil war victors had contracted as a result of the deliverances which they had been afforded during the 1640s.[72]

The Commonwealth also sought to oust rival narratives that depicted examples of divine intervention on the side of the republic's enemies, proprietarily declaring exclusive ownership of the providential canon in public discourse that perpetuated the republic's foundation-myth. The Commonwealth evidently could not afford to ignore or allow to go unanswered the conflicting appropriation of divine sanction for Irish nationhood and Scottish Presbyterianism evidenced, for example, by the Irish Roman Catholic clergy in the so-called Clonmacnoise Decrees of December 1649 or by the

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York, 1993), p. 26; Toby Barnard, 'Irish Images of Cromwell', in Richardson ed., *Images*, p. 182, for stress on the Cromwellian propaganda machine in Ireland.

[70] See Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, Roots ed., *Speeches*; for Fleetwood, see *TSP* and espec. BL Lansdowne 821–823, letters to Henry Cromwell; Owen see Toon ed., *Correspondence of John Owen*; *idem.*, *Orations*.

[71] See *CJ* 6, pp. 278-9, 414, 438, 464-5, *passim*.

[72] *HMC 13th Report, Appendix, Part 1*, p. 515; *OPH*, vol. 20, pp. 38, 55; Nickolls, *Original Letters*, pp. 29-32.

authorities in Scotland in the aftermath of the English invasion of 1650. Indeed, the Commonwealth experiment could be said to rest upon the success of the conversion of the islands' providential *refuseniks*, since it was felt, presumably, that such rhetoric might become the focus for a resurgent royalism that would threaten the security of the regime, while the refusal of opponents of the regime to accept the Commonwealth's version of divine history constituted a standing insult to the Lord. Instead, though a mixture of education, ministration and compulsion, they were to be brought progressively into sublime conformity with the current of providence by acknowledging God's ownership of the cause of the English Parliament. This monopoly over the application of the divine would serve as a point of mutual recognition and interest binding the faithful together in grateful thanks to the Almighty and quell the perennial fears that the intransigence of the royalists, Irish, Scots and English presbyterians showed that secret sins among the faithful were retarding the cause and undermining the integrity of the republic.[73]

(v) The Establishment of the Commonwealth in Ireland

This section will firstly examine briefly the background to Cromwell's Irish policy, arguing that it was the culmination of a long pre-history of attempts at civilising the island by the introduction of the protestant gospels, a task assigned to England by God. An illustration of this is provided by Edmund Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, published in 1633 by the historian Sir James Ware with the intention of influencing the policies of the new Lord Deputy, Thomas Wentworth.[74] During the

[73] Clonmacnoise in Denis Murphy, *Cromwell in Ireland: A History of Cromwell's Irish Campaign* (Dublin, 1883), pp. 406-410. *Politicus*, vol. 1, pp. 228, 275, 323, 348; Nickolls, *Original Letters*, p. 23; *TSP* I, 161-62; *OPH*, vol. 19, pp. 505-6; *HMC 6th Report*, p. 431; Abbott, II, 160-1, 483.

[74] Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, ed. by W.L. Renwick (1934). On Spenser's contribution to the Irish debate, see Willy Maley, 'Spenser's Ireland: A Select Bibliography', in *Spenser Studies*, 9 (1988); *idem*., 'How Milton and some contemporaries read Spenser's *View*', in Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley eds, *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of Conflict, 1534-1660* (Cambridge, 1993); Bradshaw, 'Robe and sword in the conquest of Ireland', in Claire Cross, David Loades and J. J. Scarisbrick eds, *Law and Government under the Tudors* (Cambridge, 1988); Mercedes Camino, ' "Methinks I See an Evil Lurking Unespied". Visualizing Conquest in Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland*', in Patrick Cullen and Thomas Roche eds, *Spenser Studies*, 12 (1991); Nicholas Canny, 'Edmund Spenser and the Development of an Anglo-Irish Identity', in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 13 (1983)

1650s, Spenser's work was utilised by religious radicals in the expeditionary army like Richard Lawrence to justify the violent assimilation of the Irish into an English providential empire, though their harsh interpretation of the *View* did not go unchallenged, as the more conciliatory policies of Henry Cromwell demonstrate.[75] Other commentators who inspired the Commonwealth settlers included one-time Irish Attorney General, Sir John Davies, who forecast the overthrow of the Irish nation as the fulfilment of the popular prophecy of the medieval historian, Giraldus Cambrensis, whose works on the providential basis on English intervention in Ireland were published for the first time in Frankfurt in 1602.[76]

The debate was intensified by the outbreak of rebellion in October 1641 and by propaganda designed to encourage subscription to the Adventurers' scheme to raise funds to defeat the rebels. Polemicists catalogued the alleged atrocities committed against protestant settlers and detailed the pitiful condition of survivors: the persuasive voice of a weak and persecuted minority appealing to its brethren across the water. The persistence of these appeals and the lurid and exaggerated providentialism they display attests to the relatively weak position of the English settlers and to the comparative indifference of the English Parliament to the Irish war. But what does the output of the pamphlet press tell us about the role of providence in the early history of the rebellion? One anonymous tract of 1642 which came to the attention of Parliament provides a clue in its description of how God has intervened to raise a tempest, destroying a Spanish ship *en route* to supply the rebels, the author commenting that by this 'we may see the just Judgement of Almighty God, whose omnipotence will not permit such ravenous wolves to devour his little Flock'. The Irish protestants were isolated in their plight, and evidently while God was prepared to act, Parliament was not.[77] The many letters received in England at this time supported this interpretation, inviting MPs and

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[75] Canny, 'Edmund Spenser', p. 18; Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland*, pp. 12-13, 106-32.

[76] Sir John Davies, *Discoverie of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued nor Brought under Obedience* (1747), pp. 74-7. Other commentaries on Ireland written at this time of heightened public awareness of Ireland's problems combined the same workmanlike approach to the examination of the country's problems, with a forewarning of troubles to come. See, for example, Sir George Carey, 'A Discourse of Ireland, sent to Sir Robert Cecil . . . from Sir George Carey', 1601, and 'A Discourse of the present state of Ireland', 1614, in volume one of John Lodge ed., *Desiderata Curiosa Hibernica*, 2 vols (Dublin, 1772), pp. 5-12, 430-40.

[77] *An Order from the Committee* (1642), BL TT E 132 (11). Or see *A Perfect Relation of the Beginning and Continuation of the Irish Rebellion*, BL TT E 131 (35).

committed protestants to 'do a thing most acceptable to God', sacrificing their worldly chattels to the cause of 'demolishing the kingdom of Antichrist'.[78] Tales of deliverance from the rebels, such as the raising of the siege of Drogheda in 1642, followed a similar pattern designed to shame a domestic audience by highlighting God's work in the absence of substantial assistance from England.[79] Clearly, piety and providence obliged the English to intervene against the rebels and purge Irish protestant communities of the sins that had attracted divine displeasure.[80]

Numerous letters and accounts during the early 1640s justified expropriation by the need to punish the Irish for the massacres of protestant innocents.[81] However, it was the publication in 1646 of Sir John Temple's popular *The Irish Rebellion* which served to organise these concerns into a general philosophy.[82] Temple was Master of the Rolls in Ireland from 1641, and a client of Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester. His *magnum opus* was intended to provide supporting arguments to Leicester's son, Lord Lisle, and his faction of interventionist Independent parliamentarians who sought to use providence to

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[78] Quotations from *A Declaration of Both Houses of Parliament* (1642), BL TT E 140 (15), p. 1. See also, for example, *The last true Newes from Ireland* (1642), BL TT E 135 (12); *A Letter sent from Dr Barnard* (1642); *Approved, Good, and happy Newes from Ireland* (1642), BL TT E 140 (9); *God's Vengeance Upon the Rebels in Ireland* (1641), BL TT E 180 (22).

[79] Sir Simon Harcourt, *A Letter . . . To a Worthy Member of the House of Commons*, BL TT E 140 (2); *The Best and Happiest Tydings from Ireland* (1642), BL TT E 144 (26); *A New and true Relation from Ireland* (1642), BL TT E 148 (14).

[80] *Weighty Considerations Manifesting the Great Advantages of Prosecuting the Irish Wars*, BL TT E 134 (32), pp. 5-8; 'Rebels in the highest degree': *A Geographical Description of the Kingdom of Ireland* (1642), BL TT E 149 (11), p. 103. See also *Timely Advice, or, Motives to Incite all men of Ability to Subscribe to the Propositions for Ireland*, BL TT E 136 (28); *A True Relation of the Passages of Gods Providence* (1642), BL TT E 242 (15).

[81] *That Great Expedition for Ireland is heere Vindicated*, BL TT E 83 (37). Punishment of blood-guilt is invoked by many tracts including, *A Discourse concerning the Rebellion in Ireland* (1642), BL TT E 153 (2), p. 9, and by correspondents, see the 'Declaration of the Protestant subjects of Munster', 1644, drafted by the Earl of Inchiquin, Lord Broghill and others, in Edmund Borlace, *The History of the Irish Rebellion* (Dublin, 1743), pp. 199-201; *The last Newes from Ireland*, October 1641, sig. A3; *Worse and Worse Newes from Ireland* (1641), BL TT E 180 (15), pp. 1-3. Other atrocity-tracts at this time include, *The Rebels of Irelands Wicked Conspiracie* (1641), BL TT E 181 (12); *Still Worse Newes from Ireland* (1641), BL TT E 181 (13).

[82] Temple, *The Irish Rebellion . . . Together with the Barbarous Cruelties and Bloody Massacres which Ensued Thereupon* (1724). Cox, *Hibernia anglicana, Or, The History of Ireland*, 2 vols (1690). Temple's work spawned later spin-off publications such as *An Accompt of the Bloody Massacre in Ireland* (1679). See T.C. Barnard, 'The Uses of 23 October 1641 and Irish Protestant Celebrations', *EHR*, 106 (1991).

justify harsher treatment of the Irish and to confound Denzil Holles and other Commons' presbyterians who wished to conclude a peace deal with Ormonde.[83]

Temple employed the myths and half-truths surrounding the St Bartholomew-style massacres of 1641 to argue that God required the English to avenge the rape of innocents and expiate the dreadful blood guilt that had cast its pall over the land. The pursuit of the rebels became a narrative through which ran the thread of a sublime and terrible divine involution. Irish protestants are depicted as undertaking a journey towards the redemption and triumph of God's servants, and here the author drew upon popular recognition of incidents such as the suffering and death in 1642 of Bishop William Bedell of Kilmore, an early martyr in the English providential cause.[84] Temple selected the most salacious and brutal crimes collected by the commission entrusted with the accumulation of evidence of systematic atrocities committed against protestants. He concentrated on reporting allegations of unusual violence, stressing the inhumanity and unnaturalness of the attacks in order to anticipate the spectacular thoroughness of God's justice when it did finally manifest itself. Temple's choice of exemplars was highly selective, emphasising as it did displays of retributive justice by God. The depositions from which Temple drew many of his accounts were compiled during an investigation under the oversight of Henry Jones, later Scoutmaster-General of the Commonwealth's army in Ireland. It was he who presented a summary of the findings to the Commonwealth's Commissioners in Ireland in 1652 that were to kick-start the programme of settlement and transplantation that characterised English rule in the 1650s.[85]

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[83] John Adamson, 'Strafford's Ghost: The British Context of Viscount Lisle's Lieutenancy of Ireland', in Ohlmeyer ed., *Independence to Occupation*, pp. 130-56; T. C. Barnard, 'Crises of Identity among Irish Protestants, 1641-1685', *PP*, 127 (1990), pp. 50-58.

[84] E. S. Shuckburgh ed., *Two Biographies of William Bedell* (Cambridge, 1902), p. 124.

[85] Mary Hickson, *Ireland in the Seventeenth Century. Or the Irish Massacres of 1641-1642*, 2 vols. (1884). Hickson published a large number of the MSS depositions from the extant 33 volumes now deposited in Trinity College Dublin Library. Hickson's work is itself selective since her intention was to defend the veracity and authenticity of the depositions and the commissioners who compiled them, against late nineteenth century historians sympathetic to Irish nationalism. They were anxious to demonstrate that the atrocities were essentially works of fiction designed to justify the Cromwellian settlement. See J. T. Gilbert ed., *History of the Irish Confederation*, 7 vols (Dublin, 1882-91), and P. F. Moran, *Historical Sketch of the Persecutions Suffered by the Catholics of Ireland Under the Rule of Cromwell* (Dublin, 1884).

Temple's *Rebellion*, then, the pamphlet literature of the 1640s and the exchange of private correspondence across the Irish Sea, fostered a belief that a deeper historical process was at work, a redemptive dynamic leading towards the construction of a protestant ascendancy in Ireland. Whether for reasons of factional intrigue at Westminster, greed for Irish land or genuinely from fear of alienating the Lord, they shared the opinion that the English should act quickly to appease the Almighty. The establishment of the republic in 1649 provided this opportunity, and the republic itself thrived on the ecumenical impulse that came from association with the providential deliverances that accompanied the campaign.

The conquest of Ireland was an early priority of the republic, which sought to humble the infant Commonwealth's many enemies and give glory to God.[86] Significantly, the defeat of Leveller unrest around this time was interpreted as the Lord authorising a programme to extend obedience and compliance throughout the British Isles, hence the thanksgiving feast for both events at Grocers' Hall on 7 June 1649 attended by MPs and the City authorities.[87] However, the Commonwealth could not take the approbation of God for granted: underneath the rhetoric of triumphalism in the midst of confirmatory providences lay the disturbing possibility that the Lord did not in fact own the cause as it appeared from outward manifestations, and the message of leading preachers like John Owen at this time was that while the Lord smiled upon the Commonwealth in its good fortune, this support was potentially fragile. The wise Christian recognised that the godly society subsisted in a condition of perpetual probation that required the minute-by-minute reaffirmation and renegotiation of innumerable covenants with the Almighty.[88]

Nevertheless, the unprecedented chain of providences that accompanied the expeditionary force convinced sceptics like many soldiers within the rank and file of the army, now anxious to return to civilian life, and Ulster presbyterians hitherto loyal to the

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[86] Roots ed., *Speeches*, pp. 3-6.
[87] Whitelocke, *Diary*, p. 239. For an example of a rival Leveller reading of providence, see Richard Overton, *The Picture of the Counsel of State* (1649), in William Haller and Godfrey Davies eds. *The Leveller Tracts, 1647-1653* (New York, 1944), p. 228.
[88] *CJ* vol. 6, 1648-51, p. 218; Toon, *God's Statesman*, pp. 37-38. George Wither, *Carmen Eucharisticon* (1649), BL TT E 572 (6).

King, that God's sympathies lay with the Commonwealth.[89] Not least of these spectacular manifestations was Michael Jones's victory at Rathmines outside Dublin in August 1649, described by Cromwell as 'an astonishing mercy; so great and seasonable as indeed we are like them that dreamed'. Jones was lauded as 'both a saviour and a Redeemer', while the event was celebrated in parishes throughout the land in a national thanksgiving.[90] Cromwell believed that the scale of the Rathmines victory indicated that the Lord was 'very near': God evidently expected His servants to respond by pursuing the war with renewed vigour.[91]

The focus of Cromwell's campaign following his arrival in loyal Dublin on 15 August was the strategically important town of Drogheda on the Boyne, currently in royalist hands. In early September, Drogheda was by degrees besieged, stormed and many of its inhabitants put to the sword, an event that has since entered folklore as indicative of the brutality of Cromwell's Irish war. The Lord General, however, was in no doubt that the victory constituted a great blessing, 'a righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches, who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood'.[92] Writing to Lenthall, Cromwell stressed the fact of God's ownership of the victory in order to pressurise Parliament into granting more supplies at a time when the assembly was concerned at the expense of the war. He implied that the English Parliament would be dishonouring God if it were to respond to mercies such as Drogheda with inadequate provisioning. Conversely, Cromwell argued, speedy assistance might encourage God to draw the war to a close prematurely.[93]

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[89] See Raymond Gillespie, 'The Churches, Ireland and the Irish: The Presbyterian Revolution in Ulster', in *Studies in Church History*, 25 (1989); 'A Necessary Representation of the present evils, and eminent dangers to Religion, Laws and Liberties, arising from the late, and present practises of the Sectarian party in England', by the Belfast presbytery, February 1649, in M. Hughes ed., *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton, vol. III, 1648-49* (New Haven and London, 1962), 296-9.
[90] Abbott, II, 102-3; *The Speech of Philip Herbert . . . in the Commons upon the passing of an act for a Day of Thanksgiving for Colonel Jones* (1649), BL TT E 571 (25); *CJ* 6, 1648-51, pp. 278-279, text of Act, *The Perfect Weekly Account*, 15-22 August 1649, BL TT E 571 (15); Michael Jones to Lenthall, July 1649, *HMC 13th Report*, Appendix Pt. I, p. 486. For Jones on Rathmines, see also Cary, *Memorials*, II, 161-62.
[91] Abbott, II, 103-4; Whitelocke, *Diary*, p. 241.
[92] Abbott, II, 107, 110-11, 127. On Cromwell's campaigns, see Jane Ohlmeyer, 'Cromwellian conquest and occupation (August 1649-May 1660)', in *Civil War and Restoration in the Three Stuart Kingdoms* (Cambridge, 1993).
[93] Abbott, II, 124-28, 130, 154.

The Commonwealth's Army next turned its attention to the city of Wexford which similarly fell to the leaguer before its walls in October 1649, again with heavy loss of life on the Irish/royalist side when a misunderstanding led to a panic-stricken evacuation and mass drowning. Cromwell inferred from the circumstances of the Irish defeat that this unexpected situation had been engineered by the Almighty: Wexford had been the centre of the Irish-royalist naval effort against English shipping and it was wholly appropriate and just that His judgments should be manifest in this way. God would not let the guilty go unpunished, and for many English this meant the entire Irish nation rather than a proportion notionally responsible for isolated atrocities during the initial 1641 rebellion and thereafter. The Irish as a whole had collectively contracted specific guilt and made it general: a national sin demanding national restitution in the form of the Cromwellian settlement. [94]

Cromwell required the Irish to submit to the Commonwealth by repudiating their own providential rhetoric and by acknowledging that God now owned and protected the cause of the Commonwealth. This was demonstrated in November 1649 in an exchange of letters between the inhabitants of the port of Youghal and Cromwell, in which the former conceded that Cromwell's movements betrayed the unmistakable signature of the Lord. However, such a submission was not always forthcoming, as is shown by the marked failure of Cromwell's successor in Ireland, his son-in-law, Henry Ireton, to obtain a similar submission from Irish confederate commander, Thomas Preston, at the siege of Waterford in July 1650.[95] This pointed to the durability of Irish Roman Catholic providence in the market place of alternative ideologies during the 1640s that probably reduced the effectiveness of the penetration of the Commonwealth's God into Ireland after 1649.[96]

Such resistance-providentialism originated within the more extreme party among the Confederacy during the 1640s and had strong clerical backing. The Irish hierarchy's self-critical Clonmacnoise decrees of December 1649, for example, following the

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[94] Ibid., 141-3. On Wexford as the centre of Irish privateering, see Jane Ohlmeyer, 'Irish Privateers During the Civil War, 1642-50', *Mariner's Mirror*, 76 (1990).
[95] Abbott, II, 160-61; Borlase, Appendix, pp. 18-19, 37-42.
[96] For examples of 1640s providentialism by Irish or Anglo-Irish, see John Lowe ed., *Letter-Book of the Earl of Clanricarde, 1643-47* (Dublin, 1983), p. 36, 39, 57-58; Denis Murphy, *Cromwell in Ireland*,

example of earlier declarations and accounts, appealed to God to repel the scourge that was the Cromwellian invasion and to disperse the English invaders, and recommended prayer, fasting and confession to help bring this about.[97] The Clonmacnoise decrees did not go unanswered by Cromwell: he condemned the malign influence of the Roman Catholic clergy and defended the honour of his army against accusations that it sought to extirpate the Irish. Rather, declared Cromwell, it aimed to punish those Irish guilty of tempting providence by assisting in the massacres in 1641-2. Those Irish who repented and submitted to the divine right of the English Army might expect the conferral of English liberties, those that did not, the full effects of God's judgments. The essence of the approach of Cromwell in Ireland, and his successors such as Charles Fleetwood and Henry Cromwell, was that the Irish should be offered the opportunity for comprehension on the Commonwealth's terms, that is the enjoyment of English justice and civil and religious liberties. They were to be folded into the mainstream of the religious of the three kingdoms and would share in the spiritual bounty of living day by day in the consciousness of the providential. Their loyalty to the new government would be founded not upon expediency but the effects of God's grace on their hearts and the evidence of unambiguous providences afforded to the English State of late. In practice, of course, transplantation and penal sanction against many Roman Catholic natives and the comparative short duration of the Interregnum administration in Ireland, prevented such comprehension and the recognition of the Commonwealth's providential sanction became instead a crude loyalty test with no deeper significance.[98]

This model of submission by the Irish to a state-sponsored providential ideal endured beyond Cromwell's withdrawal from Ireland in 1650. The Commissioners appointed by Parliament to oversee Irish affairs during the transitional period following the campaign sought to please God by advancing religion, suppressing idolatry and prosecuting men responsible for the massacres of 1641-2. They and successive Lord Deputies also responded to the surfacing of doubts on the mainland as to God's continuing support for the cause, and to outbreaks of plague and the mixed results of

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Appendix V, pp. 388-392; Gilbert ed., *History*, I, 36-37, 132-35, 265-266, II, 229, 320-7, IV, 92-3, V, preface, vi-vii, 29-30.

[97] 'An Aphorismical Discovery of Treasonable Faction', in Gilbert ed., *History*; Borlace, *History*, p. 297; Murphy, *Cromwell*, pp. 406-410.

[98] Abbott, II, 196-205.

attempts to propagate the gospel in Ireland. A particular worry was that the visitation of plague within English garrisons might comprise a remedial scourge intended to scold the English for their tardiness in bringing the Irish murderers to justice, while the death of Oliver Cromwell in September 1658 pointed to the effects of unreformed sinfulness.[99]

The providential interpretation of events in Ireland was shaped to a large extent by differences within the English camp. For example, some Levellers believed the harsh treatment of the Irish was motivated by greed and rendered palatable by an appearance of providential propriety. Conversely, certain radical army officers in Ireland led by the Baptist Richard Lawrence, and aided by Lord Deputy Charles Fleetwood, argued that God had committed to the English Army the task of punishing the Irish, and transforming their society and religion through transplantation of the natives to the wastes of Connaught and the settlement of the remainder of the country by protestants. Lawrence's polemical adversary, Vincent Gookin, backed by Fleetwood's successor, Henry Cromwell, criticised the process of transplantation, claiming that it comprised a brutal substitute for satisfactory missionary work in the task of converting the Irish and risked punishing the innocent alongside the guilty and so earning divine disapproval.[100]

The Commonwealth thus drew much of its inspiration for the Irish campaign from pre-war proposals for reform and the propagation of the gospel, but its real impetus came from events in the early 1640s - the desire to champion what was conceived as a persecuted minority in Ireland and satisfy calls to avenge spilt blood in order to turn away God's further judgments. The political reality was always rather different from the rhetoric: in spite of their prejudices, many supporters of Parliament were compelled to pin their hopes on the success of a royalist – Ormonde – in the early years of the Irish war when Parliament was preoccupied by the English troubles. The presence of a sizeable Scottish army in Ulster prone to the vagaries of fluctuating opinion in Scotland, and the need sometimes to negotiate with the Irish, compelled a softening of the hard

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[99] Robert Dunlop ed., *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, 2 vols (Manchester, 1913), I, 1-4, 6, 17, 35-40, 50, 76, 98, 179, 195-6, 216, 236; II, 307-8, 385, 462-4, *passim*; BL Lansdowne MS 823, fol. 87, 134; Ireton, *A Declaration and Proclamation of the Deputy General*, BL TT E 612 (3); *A Declaration of the Lord Deputy* (Dublin, 1658) (for humiliation re. death of Oliver Cromwell); *His Highness Declaration For a Collection towards the relief of divers Protestant Churches* (Dublin, 1658).

[100] Carlin, 'The Levellers', pp. 276-86; Vincent Gookin, *The Great Case of Transplantation in Ireland Discussed*, BL TT E 234 (6); Richard Lawrence, *The Interest of England in the Irish Transplantation*, BL TT E 829 (17); Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland*, pp. 106-132; *idem.*, 'Crises of Identity', pp. 59-69.

edge of the rhetoric of expropriation. Commonwealth policy in Ireland comprised material concerns, principally the search for land with which to settle soldiers owed substantial arrears, and strategic ones such as the fear of its value as a royalist recruiting ground after 1649. These were justified and overlaid by providential rhetoric which provided the excuse for the land settlement, but a sensitivity to the providential also provided a primary motivation and spur to action by an infant republic in search of validation and substantiation.

(vi) The Establishment of the Commonwealth in Scotland

David Stevenson and John Morrill among others have supplied recent brief introductions to the subject of providence and the covenanting movement. These studies have been supplemented recently by the work of Steven Pincus on the First Dutch War. Comparing the invasion of Scotland in 1650 to the outbreak of the war in 1652, Pincus has argued that both owed more to the republic's disappointment and anger at the fact that their brothers-in-arms had apparently forsaken God's providences for private gain and for having sinned in clutching to their bosom the 'rebel' Charles Stuart, than for other reasons such as Dutch expansionist tendencies and the desire to safeguard trading privileges, hitherto the conventional explanations for the conflict of 1652-4. The purpose of this section will be to develop Pincus's suggestion further by examining the Scottish campaign in greater detail and to argue that a primary purpose of the war was to bring Scotland into line with the Commonwealth's understanding as to the current purpose of providence, namely to confound Charles II, soften a harsh presbyterian discipline and occasion the extension into Scotland of free government and religious toleration.[101]

Unlike the Roman Catholic Irish, the Scots were mainly co-religionists, though their presbyterian discipline and the elevated position that their political nation afforded to the clergy conflicted with an Erastianism and a stress on freedom of conscience commonplace in the English Army and in the Commonwealth post-1649. The Irish war

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[101] D. Stevenson, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Scotland, 1644-1651* (1977); J. Morrill ed., *The Scottish National Covenant in its British Context, 1638-1651* (Edinburgh, 1990); Steven Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism, 1650-1668* (Cambridge, 1996). On the Pincus thesis in relation to the Dutch War, see below, pp.

could be portrayed in convenient black and white terms as a Manichaean struggle between good and evil, but the Scots enjoyed the status of important instruments in God's evolving masterwork, partners in the exodus from Caroline Egypt that was the special and signal accomplishment of the Lord. During the later 1640s, however, they had exhibited a fatal and inexplicable attachment to the King and to presbyterian theocracy that fatally damaged their relationship with God. The English campaign of 1650 was a belated response to this apostasy which had deepened with the treaty of Breda and the Dunfermline Declaration in July 1650 that had conditionally endorsed the struggle of Charles II to regain his throne: developments against which the Lord was expected to appear eminently. The fact that most Scots were protestant did not alter this reasoning but instead enhanced its potency: the Scots of all people should have known better than to have questioned the Commonwealth's providential credentials. For their part, even sympathetic Scots looked upon the English 'sectarians' as a plague of heretics despatched by God to account for Scottish sins, but in truth, both English and Scots accused each other of having forsaken the Covenant and therefore for having contracted God's displeasure at the breaking of a solemn agreement with the Almighty.[102]

The Rump tried without success to persuade the Scots to overturn their decision to recognise Charles Stuart as King: if Scotland were to disown Charles II, its 'Baby-Majesty', and acknowledge the justice of the proceedings against his father, then in future Parliament's policy towards the Scots could be one of peaceful co-existence under the umbrella of religious toleration. This position was clearly one at odds with the Scottish political and religious establishment – while providence gratified and indulged toleration south of the border, it maintained presbyterian discipline to the north, and there appeared no possibility of compromise between these two extremes. The Scottish accused the English of having blinked first to break the Covenant by changing the terms of the first civil war to pursue a personal vendetta against Charles I, which was never the intention of the Solemn League; the Commonwealth accused the Scots of mocking God

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[102] Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland*, pp. 1-12; Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'Scotland and the Puritan Revolution', in *Religion, The Reformation and Social Change* (1967); Russell, *British Monarchies*, pp. 61-63, 84-86, 139-40, *passim*; Stevenson, 'Cromwell, Scotland and Ireland', pp. 151-5; *idem.*, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, pp. 2-192; Roots, 'Union and Disunion', pp. 7-11. Dunfermline Declaration: James Christie ed., *The Records of the Commissions of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland*, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1892-1909), III, 33-40; Bod. Clarendon MS 40 fols 157-66.

by proclaiming their continuing love-affair with the Covenant after having clearly trampled upon its central provisions by invading the country in 1648.[103]

Evidently, the behaviour of the Scots in welcoming Charles Stuart out of exile represented a significant challenge to the integrity of the new Commonwealth, but there were many in England who were constrained from giving their assent to a pre-emptive strike against their northern cousins – held back by bonds of religious fraternity and nostalgia for the days of closer relations between the neighbouring nations. Not least of these doubters was the commander-in-chief, Thomas Fairfax, who threatened to resign his commission rather than lead an expeditionary force. Despite a hastily convened conference between Fairfax, Cromwell, Harrison and others at Whitehall in June 1650, designed to resolve Fairfax's objections, he remained adamant that his leadership was contrary to the terms of the Covenant and thus unconscionable, a decision critics said was due to the malign influence of his strongly presbyterian wife, but which may have had more to do with representations such as that by the President of the Scottish Parliament who had warned Fairfax that 'God's justice will pursue whatsoever party of either nation that shall unjustly and unneccessarily invade the other kingdom'. Cromwell and Harrison for their part argued that God was now ready to confer His glorious dispensations on the English Army in this latest conflict, the realisation of the prophesy of the 110th Psalm.[104]

The Rump ignored the protests of Fairfax, accusing the Scots of trusting in the arm of flesh and tempting God's providence by threatening to invade the very land instrumental in their humiliation at the hands of the Lord in 1648. Instead, it promised that England would seek to advance God's glory by establishing true religion north of the border, to achieve a unanimity among the God-fearing in both nations based upon the apprehension of a single, English, reading of the Almighty's recent shakings of the political and social fabric of the British Isles.[105] The Army responded to Scottish

[103] 'Parliament's Answer to the Scottish Commissioners' and Remonstrance by Scottish Commissioners, Act justifying Parliament's late actions in *OPH*, vol. 19, pp. 17-36, 40-47, 69; 'Baby-Majesty' from *Politicus*, vol. 6, p. 98.
[104] BL Add MS 37345, fols 80v-84r. Reported Ludlow conversation in Abbott, II, 273. Psalm 110: 'The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies', and 'The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath'. BL Add MS 37345, fol. 81; *HMC 13th Report, Appendix, Pt. I*, p. 526.
[105] *OPH*, vol. 19, pp. 276-283.

provocation in its own inimitable fashion: via a fast designed to acquire God's blessing for the forthcoming campaign and that declared its intention to educate the Scots in a proper understanding 'of the great and wonderful transactions wrought amongst us'. It also warned of Achans threatening Scottish life through their stubborn refusal to acknowledge the workings of providence against them, alluding to the re-entry into Scottish public life of Engagers and royalists.[106] This message was reinforced by unofficial reports, which may have reached the ears of English soldiers, depicting a Scotland decayed through hypocrisy, pride and blasphemy. The campaign, then, was to be a holy war to rid the Scots of protestant priest-craft, break the power of the General Assembly and spread the gospel of Good News attached to the presence and apprehension of English mercies and deliverances.[107]

Correspondence also depicted the campaign as a holy war. For example, the Governor of Hull, Robert Overton, in a letter published in *Mercurius Politicus*, decried the profaneness of a Scottish thanksgiving for the rains which had temporarily halted the English advance and declared his confidence that the Army's work was God's.[108] Similarly, Thomas Harrison reassured Cromwell that God would once more support the English, though he recommended waiting upon God and strengthening the English Army's hand through prayer to counteract any growth of pride that would attract divine correctives.[109] Meanwhile, the diplomat Richard Bradshaw expressed his confidence that God would use the Army to 'discover their [the Scots'] hypocrisy and juggling to the world': the Commonwealth's forces were engaged in a mission to expose the Scots' alternative reading of providence and replace it with the genuine article.[110]

Buoyed up by these and other communications, Cromwell and his religious advisers, led by the redoubtable John Owen, compiled a list of demands that they addressed to the General Assembly. Cromwell complained that the Scots were too ready to 'judge us in the things of our God, though you know us not'. Instead, they had

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[106] Abbott, II, 242-7.
[107] BL Add MS 37345, fols 87v, 88; 'Letter from an English Soldier in Scotland' in S. R.Gardiner ed., *Letters and Papers Illustrating the Relations Between Charles the Second and Scotland in 1650* (Edinburgh, 1894), pp. 135-7; Col John Okey to John Bradshaw, August 1651, in H. G. Tibbutt ed., 'Colonel John Okey, 1606-1662', in *Bedfordshire Historical Record Society*, 35 (1955), p. 42.
[108] *Politicus*, vol. 6, p. 181.
[109] Harrison to Cromwell, 3 July 1650, in Nickolls, *Original Letters*, p. 10.
[110] *HMC 6th Report*, Appendix, pp. 430-31.

revealed themselves to be dangerously overconfident of receiving the endorsement of God. This 'carnal confidence' was symbolised by their idol-worship of the Covenant and unfortunate propensity for fraternisation with the Stuart enemy despite the divine sentence of excommunication served on that family, and Cromwell reinforced his warning by urging the Scots to make reference to Isaiah 28: 5-13 with its depiction of the damaging consequences of pride.[111]

Naturally, the Scots saw things differently and were robust in asserting their own providential reading of events, at odds with Cromwell's. The General Assembly called on members of the Kirk to draw near to God and make their peace with the Almighty, initiating fasts and humiliations throughout the kingdom to help divert God's wrath, particularly in the wake of the shattering Dunbar defeat of 3 September 1651.[112] That event threw the Scots into a flurry of mutual recrimination, occasioning complaints at the neglect of public observances, at the insufficiency of the purging of delinquents from public administration, the carnal confidence of the army and especially at the insincerity of the King's recent declaration at Dunfermline.[113]

The English greeted news of Dunbar with wonder. They had been outnumbered two to one and had their backs to the sea, but God had once more interceded to grant victory with extraordinary seasonableness - a typical piece of stage management by the Almighty to guarantee the maximum impact for His providences.[114] Cromwell was diligent in ascribing the victory to God and in downplaying the role of the English Army in those events. Dunbar was an 'exceeding mercy', a 'great handiwork of the Lord's', and 'one of the most signal mercies God hath done for England and His people, this war'. The commander-in-chief reminded Parliament in particular, however, that good use must be made of it by perpetually glorifying God and by instituting long overdue reforms, such as in the legal profession.[115] He told the Scots they, too, needed to reform: abandoning their stubborn attachment to Charles Stuart, tempering the hysteria of

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[111] Abbott, II, 302-3.
[112] John Nicoll, *A Diary of Public Transactions and other Occurrences Chiefly in Scotland, 1650-1667* (Edinburgh, 1836), pp. 17, 34; *The Diary of Mr John Lamont* (Edinburgh, 1830), pp. 20, 23.
[113] Christie ed., *Records of the Commissions*, III, 47-51. News of Scottish prayers against the 'sectaries', was reported in London: BL Sloane MS 922, fol. 174r.
[114] BL Add MS 37345, fols 97-99; *Politicus*, vol. 1, pp. 284-5; Nickolls ed., *Original Letters*, pp. 18, 22-6; *OPH*, vol. 19, pp. 353-7.
[115] Abbott, II, 321-5, 327.

covenanting ministers whose irrational animosity towards Independency had blinded them to God's ownership of the cause of the English Army, above all recognising the obvious – that providence had engineered their defeat: 'I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, search after the mind of the Lord in it towards you; we shall help you by our prayers, that you may find it out'. He anticipated that God would grant them spiritual contentment in the form of a long-awaited reformation providing they yielded 'to the mind of God' and embraced the English interpretation of providence. Hence the offer or 'tender' of union in 1652, that sought to capitalise upon the widespread belief in Scotland that their domestic sins had in some way occasioned the English invasion, and upon the fact that many Scots were equally hostile to the royalists and 'sectarians', and in a quandary over deciding who was more likely to attract the Lord's baleful arrows – Charles II or Cromwell. Union, it was thought, might allow the Scottish people to enjoy the benefits of association with a nation currently basking in God's favour: some English believed that the war was in the Scots' best interests even if, inexplicably, the Scots themselves were slow to appreciate this fact.[116] Cromwell was confident of taking advantage of the divisions within the Scottish nation that had been occasioned by the defeat at Dunbar and the King's obvious insincerity in adopting presbyterianism. The siege of Edinburgh castle in December 1650 gave occasion for Cromwell and his spiritual advisers, Owen and Caryl, to plead that their opponents consider the lessons of providence, demonstrating that the war was as much an exercise in missionary work as it was about strategic aggrandisement. Correspondents reported that the English Army ordered regular prayer meetings, humiliations and religious conferences to seek the mind of God and glorify His work, and one prominent royalist indicated that Cromwell's men thought they were now close to winning over their charges to an acceptance of English providence. Yet despite the surrender of the castle on 24 December, these exercises had limited success in petitioning God to reverse Scottish opinion. The Scots united behind their King, who led his forces south of the border and to the fateful interception with the Commonwealth's Army at Worcester in September 1651.[117]

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[116] Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland*, pp. 27-28, 35, 39; Abbott, II, 335, 337-40; Silvanus Taylor to Richard Baxter in N.H. Keeble and Geoffrey Nuttall eds, *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1991), I, 62.

[117] *Politicus*, vol. 3, p. 79; Cary, *Memorials*, II, 233; Abbott II, 357; Goold, *Works*, VIII, 283.

The Scots invasion of England drew comparisons with Hamilton's ill-fated 1648 campaign, when God had intervened spectacularly at Preston and elsewhere to humble that apostate nation. Yet English commanders also warned against the sin of presumption: though God appeared to own the cause of Parliament, there was no guarantee that the Almighty might not seek now to abase English pride by affording the Scots a measure of military success, hence the urgency to undertake humiliation and to acknowledge dependence on the Lord.[118] The Worcester victory, however, was a defining moment in the relationship between the saints and God. The date of the battle, 3 September, the day of the Dunbar triumph, was no mere coincidence but the fingerprint of the Lord.[119] *Politicus* declared that God had spoken louder here than ever before to give a 'full and final Decision of the Controversy, and seems as it were with his own Finger'.[120] Thomas Harrison attributed the success to God: now the difficult work would begin for Parliament to translate the mercy into action by propagating the Gospel.[121] Whitelocke, too, displayed qualified delight, amid the celebratory sermons and lay preaching that accompanied Cromwell's triumphal entry into London, reminding his children, 'to be careful that we our selves do not provoke the Lord of Hosts by our sins'. His mood was darkened still further by the death in Ireland shortly afterwards of the respected Henry Ireton, a timely reminder of men's dependence upon God and a possible divine commentary upon excessive English celebration.[122] Similarly, Cromwell warned against the 'fatness of these continued mercies [occasioning] pride and wantonness, as formerly the like hath done to a chosen Nation.' Now more than ever, the saints needed to display a suitable humility and fear of the Lord to avoid turning triumph into tragedy.[123]

Worcester provided incontrovertible proof, if proof was needed, of God's sponsorship of the English republicans. It was, in Cromwell's words, a 'crowning mercy', and a humiliating and possibly terminal judgment against the royalists eliminating the possibility of a rapid recovery in their fortunes. Though the Lord had

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118 Cary, *Memorials*, II, 291-94, 297, 341-4.
119 Ibid., 353-4.
120 *Politicus*, vol. 3, pp. 245-47, 251-55.
121 Cary, *Memorials*, II, 373-5.
122 Ibid., 392; BL Add MS 37345, fols 150-162, 170.
123 Abbott, II, 463.

appeared marvellously for the English, however, repaying their faith, confidence and prayers in full measure, Cromwell realised the victory constituted only the beginning of a challenging new chapter in the history of the Commonwealth rather than a final settlement. Now the difficult task would begin to translate these recent mercies into more tangible gains to perfect the work of the Lord in permanent reformation. This would not be easy when sections of the Rump and the Army were in disagreement over God's purposes. In his moment of triumph, Cromwell remained deeply troubled by the inscrutability of the sovereign divine will. Writing to the New England divine John Cotton in October 1651, Cromwell acknowledged that God had appeared marvellously against the Scots. Yet he conceded that 'the Lord is [as] greatly to be feared, as to be praised', and declared that, 'we need your prayers in this as much as ever'. Questioning, agonising, Cromwell continued: 'how shall we behave ourselves after such mercies? What is the Lord a-doing? What prophecies are now fulfilling?' Seeking to understand the ways of the Lord, but painfully aware of the limitations of his knowledge, Cromwell was beguiled by the prospect of his own ignorance. 'Who is a God like ours?' he cried out to Cotton. This was indeed to be the defining question of the 1650s.[124]

This chapter has suggested that providentialism was an essential component in the decision-making of a number of Cromwell's closest colleagues and lends weight to a reinterpretation of the period away from an over-emphasis on Oliver Cromwell, important though he undoubtedly was, and towards a more balanced assessment of the achievements of the Commonwealth of the kind that Sean Kelsey has championed and to which recent biographies of Sir Henry Vane and others have contributed. Providentialism did not stop with Cromwell, though as the revolution began to disappoint many of its natural supporters with the coming of peace and in the absence of supporting battlefield providences, republicans came increasingly to depend upon his iconic status to uphold the myth of their divine sanction. The history of the conquests of Ireland and Scotland are stories that have been well told, but one particular angle has been neglected, to which the second part of this chapter was addressed, that is the need by the Commonwealth to disseminate its providential message and practice as widely as possible to counteract widespread scepticism of its rule throughout the British Isles.

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[124] Ibid., 463, 483

Submission to the idea of the Commonwealth's God was a duty that it was thought an impatient deity required from a refractory population, a duty the new government believed was too important to ignore, but which also illustrated the remarkable extent of their ambition to convert the population of the British Isles to the ways of God.[125]

[125] On Vane, see Violet Rowe, *Sir Henry Vane the Younger* (1970); on Algernon Sidney, see Jonathan Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the English Republic, 1623-1677* (Cambridge, 1988).

Chapter Six: Parliaments, Foreign Policy and the Major Generals, 1649-1658

This chapter will explore some aspects of the Commonwealth and Protectorate concentrating on the relationship between the Army and the various Interregnum parliaments, on foreign affairs and on the Major Generals and moral reform. The historiography of these subjects is generally broad, but in the context of providence, typically narrow. While Hugh Trevor-Roper, Charles Firth, David Underdown, Austin Woolrych and others have described in detail the relationship between Cromwell and his parliaments and the circumstances of the dissolution of the Rump, for example, they have tended to ascribe to providential rhetoric merely a supporting role. The first section of this chapter seeks to rectify this deficiency by providing a brief narrative summary of the impact of providence on successive parliaments beginning with the Rump and ending with the kingship controversy in 1657. Historians of the foreign policy of the Commonwealth and Protectorate are divided over the relative importance to it of a protestant providential dynamic. Stephen Pincus in particular has accorded such a motivation considerable significance in his study of the first Dutch war, which he has compared with the Scottish campaign of 1650. In both cases, Pincus has claimed that the wars were justified by the demand that the Commonwealth's protestant allies be punished for their apparent apostasy. The aim of the foreign policy section of this chapter is briefly to examine Pincus's thesis in more detail before assessing the impact of providence on the conduct of the wartime navy, complementing Bernard Capp's study of the navy during the Interregnum. The Western Design to capture Hispaniola has been the subject of an important study by Worden, who has assessed the impact of this judgment on Cromwell's subsequent conduct. However, a short dissertation on that ill-fated expedition will examine a series of little-used eyewitness accounts to modify Worden's conclusions. It will argue that the episode should be viewed in the context of a perennial expectation that God would helpfully seek to purge the Commonwealth of vainglory: the Hispaniola disaster was more a necessary affliction, and a predictable reminder of the impermanence of human ambition, than an event of permanent significance. Finally, studies of the moral reform agenda of the republic, and the regime of the Major Generals by Barry Reay, Christopher Durston, Derek Hirst and others.

concentrate on their institutional impact on the Church or have focussed exclusively upon the question of why such reform could be said to have failed. This chapter will conclude with a short examination of that programme, arguing instead that it was the culmination of a decade-long effort to instil in the population a consciousness of the providential to help bridge the gap between a puritan minority and a majority at best indifferent to the aspirations of the Commonwealth in the sphere of conduct and manners, at worst demonstrably carnal and worldly in their habits. An awareness of the need to placate a restful deity, and the demand for public order, were seen as complementary, all the more so because the incorrigible royalists, those notorious unbelievers in the truth of parliamentarian providence, also posed the most visible security threat: this was no coincidence but a consequence of their irreligion and profaneness that prevented them recognising where their best interests lay, namely in an appropriate relationship with God.

(i) Providence and Parliaments

Evidence for a providential basis to the Rump was a prominent feature of numerous sermons, declarations and preambles to legislation that were published from 1649 onwards.[1] This promotional campaign was especially important since as David Underdown and Austin Woolrych have emphasised, the Rump was an uneasy coalition of different interests and comprised only a minority of ideologically committed regicides, making the unifying power of an officially sanctioned providential myth that much more important.[2] The early period of the Rump's existence was characterised by inertia on the question of long awaited reforms of the law, tithe provision and the propagation of the gospel, and this generated a backlog of frustration, impatience and disappointment among more radical MPs and their compatriots in the Army.[3] Criticism

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[1] *OPH*, vol. 19, pp. 35, 69, 162-64. Firth and Rait eds., *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, 3 vols (1911), II, 286, 456-7; *The English Revolution I: Fast Sermons to Parliament*, vol. 33 (1971), covering the opening period of the Commonwealth: *CJ* vol. 7, 1651-59, pp. 12, 45, 284, 297, 299, *passim*.

[2] David Underdown, *Pride's Purge* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 174, 182-3, 205, 263, *passim*; Austin Woolrych, *Commonwealth to Protectorate* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 5-8; Toby Barnard, *The English Republic, 1649-1660* (1997), pp. 10-13.

[3] *CJ*, vol. 6, pp. 352, 365, 374, 400. On the subject of Interregnum parliaments, see Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'Oliver Cromwell and his Parliaments', in Roots ed., *Cromwell: A Profile* (1973); John Adamson, 'Oliver

of the worrying evidence of Parliament's tardiness in honouring God by perfecting the mercies vouchsafed to the nation during the 1640s was limited before 1651. However, the Worcester victory in that year seemed to confirm the special status of the Army in the eyes of God and diminish the standing of Parliament, and thus made more urgent the rapid implementation of reforms essential if the Lord was not to look upon the republic with disfavour.[4]

Parliament itself had recognised the danger of 'defection and Apostasy from these good and public ends by some'. Unity of purpose, uncorrupted affections and 'undaunted' resolutions of old, were compared unfavourably with the unfortunate evidence of current disharmony and the threat from malignants and Levellers apparently implacable in the face of God's judgments against them. Parliament rededicated itself to honouring providence: its self-appointed task was to prove the royalists wrong in their 'low thoughts' of the republic's ownership of the doctrine and compel them to 'feel God's Hand lifted up, which they would not see'.[5] In the words of former presbyterian William Jenkins, 'a refusal to be subject to this present Authority . . . is a refusal to acquiesce in the wise and righteous pleasure of God'. Despite its oft-stated commitment to freedom of conscience, then, toleration did not extend to the freedom to deny the Commonwealth's brand of providence.[6]

Via a set of fast instructions in February 1650, Parliament further warned that recent mercies had not produced that spirit of obedience with their rule that they had expected. Instead, the crying sin of blasphemy threatened to incite God's wrath, illustrating the truth that God engineered providences principally as a test of faith, one England was now in danger of failing. The situation had not improved by June 1650, when a humiliation narrative condemned the flourishing of sins in the midst of recent blessings. It complained that sinful or morally indolent citizens were jeopardising the revolution by attracting divine correctives, and this on the eve of the crucial expedition

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Cromwell and the Long Parliament', in John Morrill ed., *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (Harlow, 1990).

[4] *CSPD 1651*, p. 440; *HMC Leybome-Popham MSS*, p. 81.

[5] *OPH*, vol. 19, pp. 177-200.

[6] Ibid., vol. 20, pp. 73-5.

against Scotland. It was this climactic event that provided the context for the moral reform legislation of mid-1650 that sought to reconnect the people with their God.[7]

Disaffection in the Army with the inability of the Rump to initiate the far-reaching reform of law, clerical maintenance and the erection of a satisfactory preaching ministry began to spread during 1652. The Army had always to some extent claimed proprietorial rights over providence, supported by enthusiastic preaching and propaganda such as Joshua Sprigge's *Anglia Rediviva*. The events of 1647-9 all involved a greater measure of independence of thought and action and an identification of the Army with God's will. Now leading officers began to question whether the Long Parliament was indeed the chosen instrument to perfect the work of God as it had been throughout the 1640s. Might not the Army be this agency instead?[8]

Discontent with the Rump gathered pace in the aftermath of Worcester when Cromwell was urged by a meeting of representatives of various congregations, army officers and parliamentarians, to grasp the opportunity provided by the victory to complete the work of national reformation and renewal. This meeting was followed by increased activity among London congregations sympathetic to the radical Fifth Monarchy message of accelerated reformation and desiring a return to the more intimate communion with God that supposedly characterised the years of national emergency. Critics like Welsh radical, John Jones, warned Cromwell that the saints' material advancement should not occasion pride or a forgetfulness of God's former mercies, Jones writing that, 'the prosperous state is the slippery and dangerous state of a Christian . . . the higher we are advanced in the world, the more dangerous is the pinnacle we stand upon, and this should teach us not to be high minded'.[9]

Renewed criticism was directed against the Rump for delays in the progress of reform and amid allegations of high living by MPs, culminating in August with a

[7] Ibid., vol. 19, pp. 249-50, 261-62. For example, 10 May 1650, 'an Act for suppressing the detestable sins of incest, adultery and fornication', 28 June 1650, 'An Act for the better preventing of prophane swearing and cursing', 9 August 1650, 'An Act against several atheistical, blasphemous and execrable opinions, derogatory to the honour of God', in Firth and Rait eds., *Acts and Ordinances*, II, 387-89, 393-96, 409-12.
[8] Sprigge, *Anglia Rediviva* (1647). Ian Gentles, *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland, 1645–1653* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 106-15.
[9] John Nickolls, *Original Letters and Papers of State, Addressed to Oliver Cromwell* (1743), pp. 80-82, 88-9; Mayer ed., *Inedited Letters of Cromwell, Col Jones, Bradshaw and other Regicides*, *Transactions of the Historical Societies of Lancashire and Cheshire*, n.s. 1 (1861), pp. 200-203; BL Add MS 37345, fols

petition to Parliament from leading army officers that called for the speedy propagation of the gospel, removal of the profane from positions of authority, poor law reform and reform of the law.[10] The Army's Council of Officers convened on numerous occasions between now and the dissolution of the Rump in April 1653 seeking God's understanding of the true cause of the nation's troubles, now compounded by war with the Dutch. Despite these and conferences designed to reconcile Parliament to the Army, Cromwell moved quickly to dissolve the Rump on 20 April 1653.[11]

Cromwell and the other senior officers responsible for forcing out the Rump declared that Parliament had wasted a golden opportunity after Worcester to harvest the labour of its citizens and enshrine civil and spiritual liberties. Furthermore, negotiations with Parliament had confirmed the suspicion that it was both corrupt and negligent. The Army, by contrast, felt compelled as witnesses of God's former dispensations, to 'consider of some more effectual means to secure the Cause'. Providential necessity demanded action to avert the continued provocation of the Lord by the Rump. The Army, the officers told the nation, had been forced by providence to act more precipitously than they had intended to remove Parliament and replace its personnel by God-fearing reformers.[12]

Cromwell's role in the dissolution has been the subject of debate, with contemporary critics like Ludlow and Clarendon accusing him of naked ambition in conspiring in advance to remove obstacles to personal rule. Recently, scholars such as Charles Firth and Austin Woolrych have stressed the more immediate circumstances that prompted the move by the Army against Parliament.[13] Our knowledge of Cromwell's providentialism supports this second reading of a reluctant Cromwell acting only when it became absolutely necessary. Certainly, Cromwell was under considerable pressure to confront Parliament by November 1652, when he shared his concerns with Whitelocke

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170-171; Bernard Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (1972), pp. 56-9; Louise Brown, *The Political Activities of the Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men* (1912), pp. 19-29.

[10] *OPH*, vol. 20, pp. 97-8. The corruption of the Rump is a central theme of Sean Kelsey's *Inventing a Republic* (Manchester, 1997).

[11] Barry Coward, *Cromwell* (1991), pp. 86-7.

[12] *OPH*, vol. 20, p. 137-43.

[13] C. H. Firth ed., *The Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1894), I, 355-8; Clarendon, *History*, V, 285; Charles Firth, 'Cromwell and the Expulsion of the Long Parliament in 1653', *EHR*, 8 (1893); Austin Woolrych, 'The Calling of the Barebones Parliament', *EHR*, 80 (1965); *idem.*, *Commonwealth*, pp. 68-102, 105.

about the danger of the alleged pride and corruption of MPs alienating the Almighty.[14] Cromwell was also coerced by his rank and file to confront the perceived problem of the Rump in January 1653 when a two-day prayer meeting at St James's communicated the concerns of the junior officers to their superiors. The meeting had then concluded that the work of the Lord was at a standstill, and it called for a new parliament to remove provocations to God.[15] This mood was hardened by army suspicion that Parliament's republican contingent, led by Henry Marten, intended to water down the commitment to exercising vengeance against the native Irish, to the dishonour of God.[16] Yet in spite of this considerable weight of opinion, Cromwell delayed his action against the Rump until April 1653, in the mean time placing his trust in providence and extensive negotiations to find a formula agreeable to both sides. He only moved when it became apparent that Parliament intended the rapid passage of a bill for a new representative that would probably perpetuate the sitting of existing MPs and possess the power to determine the qualification of new members, to the detriment of the Army's members. Cromwell acted when providence had shown Parliament's 'spirit was not according to God' and alternative possibilities such as a negotiated compromise had proved fruitless. The commander-in-chief was by then sufficiently confident of correctly interpreting the mind of God to take decisive action.[17]

The Army's move delighted the religious radicals in the provinces, who witnessed in these developments the fulfilment of prophecy. A declaration from the Army officers in Scotland, for example, lauded Cromwell and his colleagues as instruments of God designed to revive the perceived rights and privileges of the saints, and build what the Council of Officers called 'the mountain of his house on the top of the mountains'.[18] Meanwhile, Cromwell himself was celebrated as a latter-day Moses, leading out the saints once again from bondage.[19] The dissolution spawned a series of congratulatory declarations from several counties during April and May 1653, probably

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[14] Ruth Spalding ed., *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke* (Oxford, 1990), p. 281.
[15] *Politicus*, vol. 6, pp. 234-36.
[16] Sarah Barber, 'Irish Undercurrents to the Politics of April 1653', *Historical Research*, 65 (1992), pp. 315-28.
[17] Ivan Roots ed., *Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (1989), pp. 9-26; *Several Proceedings* No. 187, BL TT E 211 (24), p. 2954.
[18] *Politicus*, vol. 7, pp. 57-9, 90-91.

originating from representatives of the gathered churches. These spoke of their fear that the presence of the Lord had been withdrawing from Cromwell, but also their renewed faith in him as an instrument of God following the dissolution, a willingness to in future, 'follow [in] the footsteps of providence with you'.[20] The churches were encouraged by the decision of the Council of Officers to consult congregations in the choice of candidates to be nominated for the new assembly that was to begin work in July 1653.[21] Cromwell shared the high hopes of the Barebones Parliament and the prospect of it honouring of the works of providence, advising it to seek reconciliation with the presbyterians and recalling the prophesy of the return of the Jews to their homeland. Perhaps at long last, a parliament of saints could bridge the gap separating man from a true understanding of God.[22]

The congregations' expectations remained unrealised. Though distinguished by its very public religiosity, Barebones soon became divided over the central questions of a national ministry and law reform that had delayed proceedings in its predecessor, and as John Jones told Thomas Harrison in August 1653, these divisions were the product of lustful ambition and continued sinfulness.[23] This was evidently a time of rumour and prophecy, especially among the active London congregations like that at Blackfriars under Fifth Monarchy preacher, Christopher Feake. Speculation on God's intentions was fuelled by such reports as blood raining from the clouds in Poole and news of women preachers being struck down by God-sent apoplexy in the midst of proclaiming Cromwell the instrument of the clergy's downfall. Recent victories against the Dutch also lent weight to the belief that momentous change was at hand.[24]

Thus the dissolution of Barebones in December, though dramatic, was not wholly unexpected, the decision to adopt Lambert's Instrument of Government as the

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[19] John Spittlehouse, *A Warning–Piece Discharged* (1653), BL TT E 697 (11), pp. 6-10; BL TT E 211 (24), p. 2954.
[20] Nickolls, *Original Letters*, pp. 90-91.
[21] Ibid., pp. 92-6; *The Perfect Diurnall* No. 179, BL TT E 213 (13), p. 2702; No. 182, BL TT E 213 (28), p. 2750; *Severall Proceedings* No. 190, BL TT E 213 (14), p. 3004; No. 193, BL TT E 213 (29), pp. 3041-4.
[22] Roots, *Speeches*, pp. 10, 22, 26.
[23] *TSP*, I, 338; Mayer ed., *Inedited Letters*, pp. 237-9.
[24] *CSPD 1652-53*, p. 441; Politicus, vol. 7, pp. 198-203, 263-4; Bod. Clarendon MS 46, fols 31-34, 112v, 130-31; *OPH*, vol. 20, pp. 184-9, 193-5, 207-8; Abbott, III, 89; William Erbury, *The Bloody Almanack* (1653), BL TT E 221 (1); *idem.*, *The Babe of Glory* (1653), BL TT E 718 (7); *idem.*, *The North Star: Or, Some Night- Light Shining in North Wales* (1653), BL TT E 718 (8).

new constitution with Cromwell at its head, emerging after several days of seeking after God by the officers in a series of lengthy prayer conferences.[25] Reaction to the developments was mixed, with widespread criticism from the likes of Edmund Ludlow.[26] Observing events from nearby Sweden, a surprised Bulstrode Whitelocke, however, seemed satisfied that God had ordained the new constitution, and was pleased with news that the population had quickly accepted the change.[27] Addresses from as far afield as Hamburg and Barbados submitted to this latest seismic shift in the political landscape, those 'several mutations of supreme authority', engineered directly by God for the greater good of His people. In time of crisis, God was able and willing to act decisively and without reference to established constitutional proprieties – needs, and providence, must.[28] Closer to home, the Fleet celebrated the Protectorate as the God-sent remedy for the confusion of recent history, with Cromwell as the Almighty's chosen instrument. These sentiments received some support from the provinces: the nobility and gentry of Yorkshire, for example, lauded Cromwell as the divinely-appointed guardian of the nation against tyranny, while the commonality of the county proclaimed Cromwell an instrument of peace and a lasting settlement.[29]

The Protectorate's honeymoon was short-lived. A prolonged period of drought the following spring was apportioned to the nation's sins, in particular an absence of gratitude at the work of the Protectorate in safeguarding the legacy of the expenditure of blood and treasure with which the post-Worcester generation was burdened. Complainants spoke of the 'thick darkness' of God's current providential path, recently distinguished by the propensity to 'pluck up' the highest powers in fulfilment of higher purposes.[30] The Council of State, managing the nation's affairs exclusively in the absence of a parliament, called for a return to old-fashioned 'Puritan, or rather Primitive simplicity', to combat apostasy, neglect of the gospel, profanity and revelry 'by the

[25] *Perfect Diurnall* No. 210, BL TT E 222 (27), p. 3197; *The Faithful Scout* No. 157, BL TT E 200 (30), p. 1250.
[26] For the debate on the dissolution of Barebones, see, for example, *A True Narrative of the Cause and Manner of the Dissolution of the Late Parliament*, BL TT E 724 (11); *An Answer to a Paper entituled A True Narrative* (1653), BL TT E 725 (20).
[27] Charles Morton ed., *A Journal of the Swedish Embassy*, 2 vols (1855), I, 329; *TSP* II, 23.
[28] Ibid., 88, 99.
[29] *OPH*, vol. 20, pp. 260-8, 275-8.
[30] *Politicus*, vol. 9, p. 34.

generality of men', a Protectoral 'Back to Basics' campaign.[31] Unlike its modern equivalent, the March 1654 humiliation proved surprisingly successful: by May the nation was celebrating the double deliverance of rain and peace with the Dutch, a sure sign that 'the Lord has not cast us off, that his Spirit yet strives with us'.[32]

The challenge of adapting to the rapid changes initiated by God was the theme of Oliver Cromwell at the opening of the first Protectoral Parliament in September 1654 when he spoke of the recent 'turnings and tossings' of providence. He called on the Parliament to endorse a period of settlement and civil peace by combating the blasphemy of the sects and returning to a more established churchmanship, in particular by putting a stop to 'every man making himself a minister and a preacher'. He warned, however, that the work done so far was merely preliminary to a more thorough gospel-revolution, but that disagreement ('murmuring') threatened a speedy return to the Wilderness. This was clearly a shot across the bows of those newly elected representatives whose plans might conflict with Cromwell's. He made it clear that any challenge to his agenda was considered to be an indirect challenge to providence, and under Cromwell there was room for only one legitimate reading of God's will: his own and that of his closest supporters.[33]

This was borne out by Cromwell's move to swiftly exclude 'troublesome' members who had initiated debate on the Instrument, the basis of the Lord Protector's personal power. He did this by making attendance dependent upon a prior acceptance of the constitution, the so-called 'Recognition'. Cromwell claimed that his calling to the office of Protector was not his own doing, but the result of a higher ordination. The Protector warned Parliament not to abuse the trust placed in them by God. The Almighty had provided a golden opportunity to settle the constitution once and for all and not to waste this blessing by squabbling over established details, such as the precise definition of Cromwell's powers. The Lord had been unconcerned with these minutiae and Cromwell urged Parliament also not to be too absorbed with the constitutional small print and so miss the deeper, embedded meaning of individual providences, or fail to glimpse the overall direction of God's will which was necessary to govern responsibly.

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[31] Abbott, III, 225-8.
[32] Ibid., 289-91.
[33] Roots ed., *Speeches*, pp. 28-39.

Parliament was insufficiently *conscious* of the providential, that mark of effective magistracy.[34]

Parliament and Protector humiliated themselves shortly afterwards, acknowledging their complicity in the nation's provocations to God, principally ingratitude in the face of divine blessings. A laodicean spirit of lukewarmness, neglect and complacency, including an unwillingness to punish heresy with sufficient rigour, were the crying sins damaging England's relationship with its God.[35] This at the time of conspiracies against Monck in Scotland by Robert Overton and other officers who were part of a radical contingent in the Army and country that believed direct action against the Protectorate was the now only option available to recapture the bracing and invigorating intensity of the youthful revolution, now matured into flabby and corpulent middle age.[36] Criticism of Parliament as neglectful of providence was probably unfair: it had also sought to invoke providence to legitimise its actions, and the doctrine featured in the ill-starred debates on the Instrument when Cromwell's detractors pointed out that dispensations heralded as confirming Cromwell's right to rule might instead be merely a misleading temporary conferral of title.[37]

The dissolution of Parliament followed shortly afterwards in January 1655 amid bitter recriminations from Cromwell. He bewailed its 'dissettlement and division, discontent and dissatisfaction', which he said had destroyed hopes that the nation might at last 'sit down and contemplate the dispensations of God, and our mercies'.[38] Once again, a dissolution was followed by prayer meetings at Whitehall at which the Council of Officers sought divine guidance during troubled times.[39] These were exemplified by the outbreak of royalist rebellion in the west in March. The destruction of cavalier forces triggered an outbreak of joy and a return of thanks to the Almighty, Cromwell telling the Worcestershire bench that 'the hand of God [has gone] along with us in defeating the late rebellious insurrection'. Charles Fleetwood, however, whilst expressing his relief at this 'signal and eminent appearance of the Lord', warned that it should teach humility

[34] Ibid., pp. 41-56; *TSP* II, 620.
[35] *Politicus*, vol. 9, pp. 385-8.
[36] *TSP*, III, 29-30, 47, 55, *passim*.
[37] John Rutt ed., *Diary of Thomas Burton*, 4 vols (1828), I, xvii, xxix-xxx, lxix.
[38] Roots ed., *Speeches*, pp. 57-73.
[39] *Clarke Papers*, III, 21.

and respect for the Almighty in order that the stream of mercies not dry up and that the division of the saints be avoided.[40]

The discovery of Penruddock's conspiracy heralded a year of providential tumult evidenced by excessive rainfall, the persecution of protestants in Piedmont and the disappointing failure of the expedition to the West Indies, the combined impact of which suggested that England's national sins had reawakened the dormant controversy with the Lord.[41] These events and the need to pay for war with Spain brought about the second parliament of the Protectorate, which opened in September 1656. Cromwell warned at its inception that a refusal by Parliament to support this divinely-inspired conflict might constitute a rebellion against God: the legislature was not to defy God by passing laws against the grain of providence revealed in unfolding events. Cromwell appealed to Parliament to avoid needless internal debate and turn to God and ask His counsel 'and hear what he saith'. The Lord's message was one of peace and co-operation among the saints, while a spirit of reformation was the means to this end, hence Cromwell's recommendation of Psalm 85 for the consideration of the assembled representatives.[42]

The Parliament to some extent met with Cromwell's approval and busied itself with debating the role of providence in the case of James Nayler, the Quaker accused of blasphemy, the providential aspects of which have generally been overlooked by historians. Opinion was divided on what was thought an appropriate penalty for the miscreant: death or corporal punishment. Members who were suspicious of toleration argued that such a high provocation of God by Nayler merited a harsh response if the State were itself to avoid contracting divine disapproval. Philip Skippon was typical in arguing that the perceived recent growth of heresy compromised God's honour, warning that 'this offence is so high a blasphemy, that it ought not to be passed'. Leniency would, he said, more than likely 'draw down national judgments', a view supported by steadfast providentialists like the redoubtable William Goffe.[43]

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[40] *CSPD 1655*, p. 88; *HMC 5th Report*, Lechmere MSS, p. 300; *TSP* III, 305, 363.
[41] Blair Worden, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Sin of Achan', in Derek Beales and Geoffrey Best eds, *History, Society and the Churches* (Cambridge, 1985); See below for Hispaniola and the Vaudois. On the flooding, see *The Sad and Dismal Year. Or, England's Great and Lamentable Flood* (1655), BL TT E 853 (1); Robert Gell, *Noah's Flood Returning* (1655), BL TT E 852 (14).
[42] Roots ed., *Speeches*, pp. 79-105.
[43] Burton, I, 24, 48, 63, 108-10. On Nayler and his trial, see William Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism* (1912), Chapter Eleven; *Copies of Some few of the Papers given in to the House of Parliament*

Tolerationists, on the other hand, warned against exercising too harsh a judgment against Nayler for fear that his alleged blasphemy might have been confused with a misguided enthusiasm. If this were indeed the case, then the persecution of an innocent saint would be certain to contract God's ire. Blasphemy was difficult to define: better to allow the Almighty to execute judgment immediately and unambiguously on His own behalf than permit Parliament to make a perhaps fatal misjudgment in a mood of misplaced zeal. God's honour required careful and not over-hasty judgment on the part of Parliament. To do so before seeking out God's will was presumptuous, and the most reliable indicator of God's will was unanimity of opinion among the judges present. Since this manifestly was not in evidence, then it behoved Parliament to ere on the side of caution until the wishes of the Almighty be more clearly discerned through mutual agreement.[44]

The Nayler debate showed the care taken by Parliament to consider the mind of God, and this concern spilled over into the kingship controversy of February to May 1657, when Parliament tried unsuccessfully to settle the constitution and succession by offering Cromwell the crown.[45] The debates split the House and divided the nation. Enthusiasts like Sir Charles Wolseley and Nathaniel Fiennes pointed to the general mood in the nation for settlement and a return to more normal political relations. This shift in opinion was evidently God's doing and suggested that the Almighty was now agreeable to the restoration of the title of king. Fiennes in particular argued that while magistracy as a whole was an ordinance of God, its local variations were human contrivances. Just as providentialism had made possible the regicide, Commonwealth and Protectorate, by the same token it might permit one further revolutionary turn to bring about the restoration of the crown. Crucially, Fiennes contended that God had not condemned outright the title of king. Rather, he believed the Lord sponsored the forms of government that ideally furthered the safety and prosperity of the people. Providence

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in the time of James Naylers Tryal, BL TT E 896 (13); *A True Narrative of the Examination, Tryall and Sufferings of James Naylor*, BL TT E 699 (6); Geoffrey Nuttall, *James Nayler: A Fresh Approach* (1954).

[44] Burton, I, 29-31, 39, 54, 62, 71, 97, *passim*.

[45] Charles Firth, 'Cromwell and the Crown', *EHR*, 18 (1903); Barnard, *English Republic*, pp. 59-63; Sherwood, *Cromwell*, Chapter 7; Arthur, Earl of Angelsea ed., *Memorials of the English Affairs*, 4 vols (Oxford, 1853), IV, 287-310; BL Lansdowne MS 821, fol. 350v.

would confirm whichever form fitted and fulfilled that necessity most closely, whether republic or monarchy.[46]

Other speakers like Sir Richard Onslow argued that the return of a monarchy remained a possibility, warning that 'we ought not to limit Providence'. The secret will of God confounded human expectations, replacing monarchy with Commonwealth, and Commonwealth by Protectorate. Onslow suggested that perhaps the logical next step in this sequence of God's plans was a return to a more traditional constitution; it was possible the legislature, 'by the same series of Providence, as well set up kingly government, as that Parliament took it away'. Another moderate, the former royalist, Lord Broghill, declared that since government in a single person had enjoyed the apparent approval of God since its reappearance in 1653, this was evidence that God at least tolerated monarchical-style government. God had placed the opportunity for settlement within the grasp of the nation's rulers and they were now compelled to embrace this unique opportunity or risk a rebellion against the Lord.[47]

Opposition to the proposal was concentrated among the officer corps of the Army for whom the experience of wartime miracles had provided incontrovertible evidence of God's sponsorship of a free state and distrust of monarchy. This group can be contrasted to some extent with the mainly civilian membership of the 'yes' camp. The unofficial headquarters of the opposition were the lodgings of John Desbrowe, who along with the other Major Generals rejected the kingship proposal.[48] It was here that the officers met under Lambert's chairmanship to seek God's direction in their course of dissent.[49] The negative reaction of the Major Generals was perhaps to be expected since in January 1657 Parliament had thrown out the Decimation Bill that would have confirmed their legal basis and perpetuated their jurisdiction. At one level, representatives of both sides of the debate threw themselves upon the Lord, declaring their willingness to accept whatever outcome God decreed.[50] Yet in reality the 'antis' in particular believed too much was at stake to leave the issue to prayer alone, and their dissent anticipated the spirited defence of the Good Old Cause that characterised the

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[46] *OPH*, vol. 21, pp. 81-6, 103-9.
[47] Ibid., pp. 96-115.
[48] Firth, 'Cromwell and the Crown', p. 59; *Clarke Papers*, III, 91; BL Lansdowne MS 821, fol. 312.
[49] Abbott, IV, 414-5.
[50] *TSP* VI, 157, 241, 243, 579.

period after Cromwell's death in September 1658. In this view, God punished those of His servants who having been made free were prepared to surrender those freedoms cheaply. God had been declared England's King and it needed no other.[51] It was furthermore conceivable that the proposal represented a test of resolve engineered by God to determine how steadfast the Army would be in defending God's honour.[52]

Crucially, Cromwell struggled with his own conscience in the matter, wavering between an initially favourable response, to one of indecision, and finally to outright rejection.[53] The Protector received the representations of the Army that warned of the grave consequences for the nation in the readoption of the title after God had declared against it in such unambiguous fashion in 1649: this was clearly also a direct threat to Cromwell's rule. The Army had broadly supported the Protectorate from 1653 despite serious reservations because it evidently witnessed the hand of God in Cromwell's governorship. But its support was not unconditional, and would be threatened by Cromwell's apparent departure from the ways of the Lord in compromising a cornerstone of the revolution. In his deliberations, Cromwell was minded to seek out God's true intentions, to wait to see how God influenced his heart. He feared confusing his own ambitions with the true direction of providence, and this threw up many confusing dilemmas, for example if it were to become obvious that the crown, against which God had declared in 1649, had become the safest means to preserve religious and civil liberties, two fundamentals of successive Interregnum administrations. Yet during the course of his considerations during March 1657, Cromwell came to be influenced most heavily by the arguments of his officers, soldiers upon whom he had relied for advice, friendship and religious fellowship through dark and confusing times. He concluded that 'good men do not swallow this title', and that he believed God would never bless undertakings that conflicted with the consciences of his men. 'Truly', said Cromwell, 'the providence of God hath laid this title aside'. The Protector was uncompromising in his assessment, denying that he would seek to set up what providence had 'laid in the dust'. 'I would not', declared Cromwell, 'build up Jericho

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[51] *English Liberty and Prosperity Asserted*, BL TT E 905 (2), p. 8; Samuel Chidley, *To the Parliament of the Commonwealth*, BL TT E 905 (3), pp. 1-4.
[52] *TSP* VI, 244-6; BL Lansdowne MS 823, fol. 37.
[53] Compare, for example, his speeches, 27 Feb 1657: Abbott, IV, 417-8, and 13 April, 21 April and 8 May in Roots, *Speeches*, pp. 128-66.

again'. Nevertheless, he remained enthusiastic to settle the constitution and recognised that providence seemed to endorse the remainder of the Humble Petition and Advice.[54]

Without doubt, Cromwell was genuinely troubled by the choice he had to make during the spring of 1657, especially as a man normally unconcerned about 'mere words or such things'.[55] Nevertheless, the title of king carried with it an emotional resonance that stirred up the fears of the Army. Recent events such as the failure of the expedition to Hispaniola lent weight to fears that all was not well in the nation and a diplomatic Cromwell probably felt it necessary to respond to these concerns by rejecting the title but assuming the substance of kingship in his reappointment as Lord Protector in June 1657. These events had preyed upon Cromwell's mind, too, and with good reason: God's providence appeared more unsettled and opaque than at any time since 1653, or perhaps even 1649. Events since 1655 had also taught that not all men shared the myth of providential mission as firmly as some officers or their radical religious fellow travellers like the now dissident Henry Vane. Paradoxically, elements within the Army became trapped by the reputation of the Good Old Cause that after Cromwell's death left them unprepared for the bewildering circumstances of rapid providential evolution, a development that will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.[56]

(ii) Overseas relations

England's overseas relations were a central concern of the Rump and later of the Lord Protector and his Council. Successive administrations were required to balance England's trading interests with an agenda of protestant expansionism that looked for inspiration to the example of Elizabethan adventurism.[57] This ideological component to the foreign policies of the Commonwealth and Protectorate was inspired to an extent by the demands of providence, explaining the outbreak of war with the Dutch in 1652, the

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[54] Roots, *Speeches*, pp. 114, 134-7, 145-6.
[55] Ibid., p. 136; *TSP* VI, 219-20, 243.
[56] For Vane, see his *A Healing Question*, BL TT E 885 (8) and *The Retired Mans Meditations*, BL TT E 485 (1); Violet Rowe, *Sir Henry Vane the Younger* (1970).
[57] Roger Crabtree, 'The Idea of a Protestant Foreign-Policy', in Roots ed., *Cromwell*, pp. 160-61; Charles Korr, *Cromwell and the New Model Foreign Policy* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1975), p. 2; Frank

Western Design in 1655 and the relief operation to help persecuted protestants from the Duchy of Savoy. It also explained the campaign in 1650 with a Scotland that refused to acknowledge English providential right, and the Dutch War against Orangists whose apostasy compelled them to support the exiled King.[58] It should be remembered, though, that the English Parliament and Council of State were also required to be pragmatic and consider England's wider economic and strategic interests. This is shown, for example, by the treaty with the Roman Catholic French crown in 1655 that was concluded despite the hostility of the English authorities to popery. It would appear that providence often required the exercise of prudence to ensure that God's wider plans were not endangered needlessly by threatening the survival of the latter-day Israel. Hence the cautious policy of preventing combinations among England's potential enemies, led by France and Spain, that betokened a fiercely protective attitude towards the fruits of providence.[59]

The series of wartime mercies and miracles that the Commonwealth enjoyed within the context of the British Isles constituted the springboard for an international campaign in defence of protestantism. God had owned the cause at home, might the English not now be the spearhead of the Almighty's global ambitions? Charles Fleetwood told Thurloe in 1654 that, 'the worke begun will not ende in these three nations'.[60] Cromwell, too, certainly thought this a strong possibility, justifying the decision to launch the Western Design in these terms: 'wee consider this attempt because wee thinke God has not brought us hither where we are but to consider the worke that wee may doe in the world as well as at home'.[61] A vacancy existed for Cromwell to assume the mantle of Gustavus and finish the job he had begun, that promise of crusade, 'to all States not free', anticipated by Andrew Marvell's *Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland*.[62] Hence Cromwell's ambitions to foster relations between the different protestant denominations in Europe, in fulfilment of the

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Strong, 'The Causes of Cromwell's West Indian Expedition', *American Historical Review*, 4 (1898-9), p. 233.

[58] Pincus, *Protestantism*, pp. 27-29, 37-38, 59-61.

[59] Timothy Venning, *Cromwellian Foreign Policy* (1995), p. 9.

[60] *TSP* II, 493.

[61] Abbott, III, 377-78.

[62] Marvell, 'Ode', in *The Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250-1918* (Oxford, 1968), p. 396. On the ambiguities surrounding the Ode, see Blair Worden, 'The Politics of Marvell's Horatian Ode', *HJ*, 27 (1984).

long-term hopes and expectations of proponents like John Dury and Samuel Hartlib.[63] Clearly, it was thought the task of the new republic to proselytise and spread the revolution where this was appropriate and apparently in accordance with God's will. The dramatic domestic events that had brought the regime to power created widespread international interest; the Commonwealth and Protectorate were keen to leverage this reputation and to employ the nation's now formidable naval forces to good effect. Yet their representatives were acutely conscious of the international obligations they had acquired, though these were far from being unambiguously pro-protestant and hostile to Roman Catholicism. Cromwell's style of government in foreign as well as domestic policy might be mistaken for calculating opportunism, but a more plausible explanation for this pragmatism, of avoiding precipitous decision-making and leaving open his options for as long as possible, was to create the space and time within which the divine will might manifest itself. Permitting oneself to be led by providence and not by worldly, human reasoning required patience, and what appeared to be indecision was in reality a waiting upon God to reveal His true aims and objectives.[64]

The scholarship of the First Dutch War (1652-54) has been transformed by the recent work of Steven Pincus. Pincus has challenged the traditional model that explained the war largely in secular terms of a commercial and mercantile rivalry between the two republics, triggered by the provocative Navigation Act of 1651. Instead, he has located providence as a central motivation behind the outbreak of hostilities. Pincus has interpreted the war as an alliance between two parties of Rumpers: apocalyptic protestants and the classical republicans described by Blair Worden, Jonathan Scott and others.[65] According to Worden, the classical republicans, men such as Marchamont Nedham and Algernon Sidney, propounded a predominantly secular anti-monarchical philosophy that invited the Commonwealth to emulate Roman triumphs in the context of

[63] Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'Three Foreigners: The Philosophers of the Puritan Revolution', in *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (1972); G. H. Turnbull, *Hartlib, Dury and Comenius* (Liverpool, 1947).
[64] Crabtree, Protestant foreign policy', pp. 180-89.
[65] Ibid., p. 14; Worden, 'Classical Republicanism and the Puritan Revolution', in Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Valerie Pearl and Blair Worden eds., *History and Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh Trevor-Roper* (1981); Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the English Republic, 1623-1677* (Cambridge, 1988); *idem.*, 'The English Republican Imagination', in John Morrill ed., *Revolution and Restoration: England in the 1650s* (1992); Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth Century Commonwealthsman* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959).

an expansionist foreign policy.[66] Scott modified Worden's reading to assign a greater significance to religion in the thought and practice of Sidney, Vane and others, albeit a sceptical neo-Platonism: an amalgam of puritanism and republicanism to be distinguished from the republicanism of Henry Marten and others that was predominantly secular in outlook. The Sidney party that numbered such luminaries as John Milton, is depicted as the driving force behind the prosecution of an aggressively protestant foreign policy that reflected the belief that politics should constitute a 'seeking after God', the realisation of a practical religious morality rather than a mere utilitarian governance. In this view, God had not contrived the execution of the King and establishment of the republic for it simply then to moulder in idle retirement. Instead, the Commonwealth was duty-bound to pursue and realise God's purposes in the domestic setting and on the world stage.[67]

Pincus has drawn on Scott's reading of a religious, providential dimension to republicanism, to conclude that the origins of the Dutch War lie in the reaction to the failure of the mission to the Low Countries in 1651 conducted by Oliver St John and Walter Strickland. The disillusionment this engendered stemmed from the belief that the Dutch were mimicking the apostasy of the Scots by pursuing their own selfish economic interests at the expense of international protestantism, compounding their neglect by denying the providential basis of the English republic. The Dutch were depicted as self-interested, materialistic and worldly, proud and haughty: the task of the Commonwealth was to shake the Dutch out of their complacency and redirect their energies towards the proper appreciation of providence. According to this view, the Dutch came to avow peace because they interpreted their military defeats as signs of God's disapprobation. Cromwell was in a position to respond positively to their overtures because he had assumed power personally in December 1653, but faced the criticism of hard-liners like Thomas Harrison who in the recent Barebones Parliament had demanded the prosecution of the war until total victory was assured, as the first stage in a march on Rome and the beginning of the divine end-game the Fifth Monarchists so eagerly anticipated.[68]

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[66] Worden, 'Classical Republicanism', pp. 196-99.

[67] Scott, *Algernon Sidney*, pp. 16, 18, 27-29, 109-11.

[68] Pincus, *Protestantism*, pp. 25-38, 40-43, 50, 79, 98, 109-10, 116-128, 125-28. Meyer ed., *Inedited Letters*, p. 226. Pincus, 'England and the World in the 1650s', in Morrill ed., *Revolution and Restoration*.

According to Pincus, the dissolution of the Rump marked the effective end of this apocalyptic foreign policy and its replacement by a more traditional policy of brinkmanship and brokerage between England and its neighbours: a Great Power diplomacy that relegated the importance of ideological intervention. Pincus here appears to overstate his case: he chooses to ignore the ideological dimension to the Western Design and the domestic outcry over the Piedmont massacres in 1655. His dismissal of commercial ambitions in explaining the outbreak of war also seems inherently implausible. Might not ideology have been used to disguise opportunism? Pincus neglects to develop what was surely the central motivation for war: incapacitating potentially the most capable provider of succour for the exiled Charles II. Nevertheless, he presents a powerful case for providentialism provoking the outbreak of war, and in the remainder of this section I will examine its consequences in more detail, focussing unlike Pincus on the reaction within the English navy.[69]

Oliver St John and Walter Strickland's embassy to the Netherlands in March 1651 proclaimed the English desire for peace: its providential fraternalism would delight God and underwrite the nations' common prosperity.[70] With the collapse of the embassy and the conclusion of a swingeing Navigation Act in October 1651, however, discussion of collaboration was brought to a close and replaced by a spirit of competitiveness in which the war would become an apocalyptic duel to test which republic had a stronger claim on God's affections. The Dutch, understandably enough, believed God to have been on the side of their navy, but accepted that this support ought not to be taken for granted. The States General, for example, appealed to its officers to place their trust in the Lord and examine their conduct closely to find the reasons for specific disappointments.[71] Like their English cousins, the Dutch tended to eschew triumphalism; one account of an unsatisfactory engagement of Tromp with his enemy concludes with the observation that a capricious God had chosen to deny either side the advantage on

pp. 130-37; Menna Prestwich, 'Diplomacy and Trade in the Protectorate', *Journal of Modern History*, 22 (1950), pp. 104-5.

[69] Pincus, 'England and the World', p. 130.

[70] *HMC 13th Report, Appendix Pt 1*, p. 561. S. R. Gardiner ed., *Letters and Papers Relating to the First Dutch War, 1652-54*, Navy Records Society, 6 vols (1898-1930), I, 231.

[71] Ibid., 348.

account of their respective sins.[72] In general, accounts by the Dutch mirror English fears and expectations with regard to providence.[73]

From an English perspective, the Dutch were to blame for the collapse of negotiations and the descent into war. The Almighty would deliver His verdict on this unwarranted belligerence and defend the integrity of His blameless English servants.[74] Unlike the English saints, the Dutch regarded not the ways of providence, but were men 'caught in the devices and imaginations of their own hearts', whose Machiavellianism contrasted unfavourably the dutiful religiosity of their opponents.[75] The English remained confident that though 'the arm of flesh and numbers is what most of them look to', it was hoped 'God will learn them another lesson ere long'.[76] The English complained that the Dutch appeared concerned only with base material and commercial ambitions, though as one correspondent of Strickland predicted ominously, 'I am confident God in his due time will fit them for higher employment'; the task of the Commonwealth's navy being to re-educate the Dutch in the ways of providence and break their love affair with Mammon that they might then rejoin the protestant struggle.[77]

The English were anxious to use the war to mortify themselves, appealing to the Lord to 'keep us humble, loyal and valliant', fit for future mercies.[78] During the 1640s, the navy had at first been unreliable adjunct to Parliament's war effort, numbering many royalists among its personnel, but following Pride's Purge, the radicals were able to strengthen their hold over administration and command, the Navy and Admiralty committees becoming dominated by regicides and republican hard-liners like Vane and Henry Ireton. The Navy was home to many godly enthusiasts; the close confinement provided by the overcrowded vessels constituting the ideal environment for the growth of religious fellowship and comradeship. Long periods at sea and the hostile conditions encountered by sailors strengthened an awareness of the immediate presence of God,

[72] Ibid., 403.
[73] Ibid., II, 185, 197, 212-14, 234, III, 71, V, 61, 341, VI, 164. For a good summary of the war from a Dutch perspective, see Simon Groenveld, 'The English Civil War as a cause of the First Anglo-Dutch War, 1640–1652', *HJ*, 30 (1987).
[74] Gardiner ed., *Letters and Papers*, I, 256.
[75] Ibid., IV, 172.
[76] *CSPD 1651-52*, p. 477.
[77] *TSP* I, 273.

and the rapid expansion of the navy under the Commonwealth increased its relative importance as a nursery of providentialists.[79]

Godly enthusiasts such as Robert Blake, William Penn and Edward Popham fronted the operational command of the navy. Other officers included members of prominent gathered churches at Stepney, Great Yarmouth and elsewhere, and Baptists and Quakers were also counted among their number. Under their leadership, prayer meetings and fast days became common, and moral ordinances concerning Sabbath observance and the punishment of profaneness were more strictly enforced.[80] It was therefore unsurprising that providence was a prominent feature of the English contribution to the Dutch War. At a mundane level, the doctrine was invoked to help maintain discipline: the behaviour of sailors at this crucial juncture was held in check by fear of the all-seeing eye.[81] During war, dispensations were carefully noted and catalogued. Writing in October 1652, and following a recent success, John Mildmay, for example, spoke of the praiseworthy appearance of the Lord of Hosts to quell Dutch pride and arrogance, 'in his power, putting terror in the hearts of our enemy'. Henry Hatsell, in response to the recent battle of Portland in February 1653, praised the goodness of God appearing for the English, and anticipated further mercies.[82] The victory had been God's work almost exclusively, declared another account; 'It may be that we did the less, that God might appear to have done all'. Referring to a favourable change in wind direction that disadvantaged the Dutch, the account proclaims that 'if ever the constellations of heaven might be said to fight for men, it was now manifest for England'.[83]

Commander-in-chief Robert Blake feared the consequences on the fortunes of the Commonwealth's fleet of a growth of pride. He was therefore keen to reassure Parliament and the Council that the circumstances of the war placed an onus on the English to depend more readily upon God and cast aside their reliance on human ingenuity. They would not fall into the trap of the Dutch, whose cleverness and dexterity was divorced from reference to the Almighty, and was consequently inherently flawed.

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[78] J. R. Powell ed., *The Letters of Robert Blake*, Navy Record Society 76 (1937), p. 165.
[79] Bernard Capp, *Cromwell's Navy* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 45, 54, 129-38.
[80] Ibid., pp. 296-320. See articles of war in Gardiner, *Letters and Papers*, III, 293.
[81] Gardiner, *Letters and Papers*, II, 129.
[82] Ibid., IV, 103.
[83] Ibid., 108.

Were the English to make adequate return to God in the form of prayer and praises, and be motivated by a faithful courage to improve the mercies the Lord had vouchsafed, then they might expect preservation and enjoy prosperity. Hymns of thanksgiving and solemn mortification were to be the secret weapons that would give the English the edge in the war.[84]

For Blake, the minutiae of decision-making relied upon a seeking after God. Thus appealing to his fellow officers in December 1652, he called on them to await God's signal to commence battle and thereafter to commit themselves to providence.[85] In this respect, it seems likely that the sea-fight, with its dependence upon the capricious elements, provided a more suitable arena for the sudden and immediate twists and turns of providence in which God delighted, than more predictable land-based conflicts. Naval commanders might quite literally have to wait on providence to reveal God's intentions, as vessels rode out storms, awaited changing tides, cautiously navigated uncharted waters and anticipated changes in wind direction. With this in mind, the senior commanders during the Dutch campaign sometimes convened Councils of War to interpret providences and position forces ready to wait on further directions and instructions in the form of shifting natural conditions.[86] This happened at the battle of Portland in February 1653, at which Blake, on board the *Triumph*, petitioned God to provide a clue to the whereabouts of the enemy following a fruitless cat and mouse chase. That evening the answer came in the form of the words of the text to which the crew made application: 2 Chronicles 20: 16, ' tomorrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook'. The text described a test of faith: God would provide for those who placed their trust in Him, and as promised, the following morning the Dutch fleet duly sailed into view. 'Throughout the whole conflict everyday', declared Blake, 'we might see the Lord's right hand stretched out. It was that, and not our skill or valour, or strength of shipping, that gave us victory'.[87] Writing to Blake at the commencement of hostilities, the Council of State expressed their satisfaction with this policy of seeking the guidance of the Holy

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[84] Powell ed., *Blake*, p. 203; Meyer ed., *Inedited Letters*, pp. 239-41. For Blake, see also J. R. Powell, *Robert Blake: General at Sea* (1972).
[85] Gardiner, *Letters and Papers*, vol. 3, p. 168.
[86] Powell ed., *Blake*, pp. 183, 186, 215.
[87] Gardiner, *Letters and Papers*, IV, 93-95.

Spirit. Though victory could never be guaranteed by these religious exercises, they nevertheless bode well for a prosperous issue to the proceedings.[88]

The English suffered defeat off Dungeness in December 1652. This provoked soul-searching by politicians at home, and by the fleet at sea. One possible response was a sanguine observation that, 'if our mercies were not mixed with some bitter pills, we should be either lifted up or undervalue them': reverses were a necessary reminder of man's dependence upon God.[89] More readily, commentators blamed the corruption and unworthiness of commanders when faced with the unequal struggle of war. God had engineered this reverse in order to compel the administration of the navy to be reformed and to promote officers capable of living up to the expectations of the Lord, and in the aftermath of the recriminations that flowed from the humiliation, this structural reorganisation did in fact take place.[90] Having overcome the setback of the Dungeness defeat in December 1652, the English forces enjoyed a progressive improvement in their prospects. After the battle of the Gabbard in June 1653, Richard Lyons wrote that God had inspired the English with courage and deprived the Dutch of resolution. The low number of casualties at Texel similarly signalled the presence of the Lord. His appearance was further demonstrated by a singular trick of allowing the advantage in any engagement to swing to and fro between the combatants before in His own time conferring victory upon one or other of the participants; an assertion of divine sovereignty that required the return of appreciative thanks and the exercise of appropriate wonderment.[91] The danger that English pride would sap the patience of the Lord remained ever-present, however, and was probably enhanced by the establishment of the Barebones Parliament that adopted a harsher apocalyptic tone to the progress of the war; a triumphal note that might provoke God into once again exposing the vanity of human expectations.[92] It was perhaps appropriate, then, that the dissolution of Barebones and establishment of the Protectorate should herald a rapprochement with the enemy. The effective end of hostilities after Texel anticipated the peace of May 1654, another 'Link to this golden chain of [God's] loving kindness', but one that placed an additional

[88] Ibid., I, 307-308.
[89] *CSPD 1652-53*, p. 243.
[90] Gardiner, *Letters and Papers*, III, 9.
[91] Ibid., V, 84-85, 347-350, 365.
[92] Ibid., 303.

responsibility on the English to commemorate this latest mercy by strengthening commitment to domestic reformation.[93]

Cromwell's commitment to protestant internationalism faced perhaps its most significant test in relation to the massacre of Vaudois protestants in April 1655. These descendants of pre-Lutheran reformers inhabited a series of French and Italian alpine valleys under the suzerainty of the Duke of Savoy. The authorities had tolerated their presence amid predominantly Roman Catholic populations but this arrangement had broken down irretrievably by 1654, leading to the demand that they submit to conversion to Catholicism upon pain of death. When these demands were ignored, the ducal forces launched a violent clearance campaign resulting in the murder of an indeterminate number of the protestants.[94]

The massacre horrified protestant opinion throughout Europe, and not least in England. It also posed problems for Cromwell who was in the midst of concluding a treaty with the French King, to whom the Duke of Savoy owed allegiance. The status of French Huguenots had long proved a stumbling block to the conclusion of the deal, and the Vaudois incident exacerbated these tensions. The massacre threw down the gauntlet to Cromwell to defend God's honour, as Milton's famous sonnet on the episode shows. Rumours of Irish mercenary participation in the episode focussed attention on the possible parallels with the October 1641 rebellion. Just as the blood of Irish protestants had then cried out to God for vengeance, to which the Lord had responded by launching the Cromwellian blitzkrieg, so the Waldensians might also expect the intervention of the Lord to fight their corner, too. How would Cromwell respond to this challenge?[95]

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[93] *Politicus*, vol. 9, pp. 88-91.

[94] For accounts of the episode, see Samuel Morland, *The History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piemont* (1658); Randolph Vigne, ' "Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered Saints". Cromwell's Intervention on Behalf of the Vaudois', *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London*, 24 (1983); Venning, *Cromwellian Foreign Policy*, pp. 91-7; Robert Vaughan ed., *The Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell*, 2 vols (1839), a collection of diplomatic correspondence covering the crisis.

[95] For examples of comment on the massacres, see *Politicus*, vol. 11, pp. 201-5; *Perfect Proceedings*. BL TT E 842 (15), pp. 4729-32; J. B. Stouppe ed., *A Collection of the Several Papers Sent to his Highness . . . Concerning The Bloody and Barbarous Massacres*, June 1655, BL TT E 842 (11). Miltonian sonnet: John Carey and Alastair Fowler eds, *The Poems of John Milton* (London, 1968), pp. 411-12. On the supposed Irish involvement, see Abbott, III, 731; Vigne, 'Cromwell's Intervention', p. 14.

Commentators highlighted the massacre's providential impact.[96] The cruelties inflicted upon the innocent victims constituted a terrible provocation to the Lord, and prominent voices like that of Francis Willoughby, speculated that England would probably be required to play a leading role in the inevitable divine retaliation.[97] The massacres were an event which Cromwell 'lay very much to heart' and he set about organising assistance from neighbouring protestant princes, and ordering his chief negotiator, Samuel Morland, to deliver in person the strongest possible protest to the Duke of Savoy. Provocatively, Morland's speech to the Duke suggested God would frown upon the clearances, and pointedly, he called upon the Lord to spare the wicked perpetrators of the massacres from divine vengeance. Since many of his audience were probably implicated in these crimes, his intervention comprised a stark warning of the consequences of a failure of the Duke to reach a satisfactory settlement with the Waldensians, namely divine justice with Cromwell and his allies acting as the instruments of its application.[98]

Cromwell softened his stance somewhat with a conciliatory appeal to the Duke that proclaimed God's blessing of religious toleration. This had worked in England, might the model not now work in a continental context?[99] The Lord Protector was compelled to compromise: both because his mooted protestant moral union was undermined by the divergent strategic aims of its participants, but also because the Savoy crisis may have failed to provoke the commensurate level of concern and introspection among a domestic audience that Cromwell and his allies would have desired. Cromwell's providential role in the affair was perhaps exaggerated by a sympathetic press that sought to compensate for the reality of his relative weakness and impotence, made embarrassingly obvious by the treaty of Pignerol negotiated independently between the combatants. Furthermore, the wider strategic situation demanded conciliation with France; hence Cromwell's caution in relation to Savoy. The national humiliation of 30 May 1655 designed to focus attention on the crisis and encourage the donation of charitable aid to the dispossessed, also needs to be viewed in

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[96] *TSP* III, 466-8; *Politicus*, vol. 11, pp. 197-8.
[97] *CSPD 1655*, pp. 184-85; Vaughan ed., *Protectorate*, I, 239.
[98] Ibid., 175, 185; Morland, *History*, pp. 568-71.
[99] Vaughan ed., *Protectorate*, I, 572-4.

the context of the perennial fear that England's returns to God were dangerously insufficient. The mixed success of the subscription campaign added to these fears, raising concerns that God would punish the deficiency. Evidently, the significance of Savoy for England lay not so much in its international effect but rather in that it encouraged domestic reformation at a time when critics such as the Quakers were lamenting an alleged growth in national corruption overseen by a complacent government.[100]

The providential impact of the Western Design has been the subject of recent studies by Blair Worden and Karen Kupperman. The purpose of this section is briefly to modify Worden's reading by downplaying the episode, which while a serious blow to the Protectorate, was unlikely on its own terms to have caused Cromwell to adopt a more pessimistic approach to interpreting providences. Worden has demonstrated admirably that the confluence of setbacks experienced during 1655 served as reminders of the necessity of serving God appropriately. I would argue that experienced providentialists expected as much: the possibility of divine disapproval with the work of the Protectorate was an unmistakable signal that demanded serious attention, but was a necessary consequence of the faithful wrestling with their God. The end of war with the Dutch made redundant a substantial naval force of over one hundred and sixty ships. Cromwell argued in July 1654 that the availability of this armada was no coincidence: the Almighty demanded that it be put to use by championing God's cause beyond the bounds of England's shores, more specifically by launching a raid upon the Spanish colony of Hispaniola. As in Ireland, this would avenge Spanish injustices to English in those parts and entail the propagation of the Gospel. Cromwell's consultant on colonial affairs, Thomas Gage, also emphasised the role of his master as a divinely appointed liberator of dispossessed American Indians. The expedition in addition served England's strategic and secular interests with the establishment of more friendly relations with France complementing demands for the settling of substantial strategic trading base in

[100] On the collection, see Vigne, 'Cromwell's Intervention', p. 20. For examples of criticism of moral turpitude, see Christopher Taylor, *A Warning from the Lord to this Nation* (1655), BL TT E 848 (4); *A Warning from the Lord to the Town of Cambridge* (1655), BL TT E 853 (20); *The Whirl-wind of the Lord gone forth as a Fiery flying Roule* (1655), BL TT E 853 (6).

the Caribbean, the long-standing ambition of Providence Island investors and other godly enthusiasts. Nevertheless, the precise details of the expedition were left purposefully vague to avoid obstructing providence: God would determine the precise distribution of forces upon the arrival of the fleet; in the mean time the navy and the Council would patiently petition the Lord for its success.[101]

The fleet arrived in the English colony of Barbados on 29 January 1655 in order to recruit locals to bring the Army up to strength. This recruitment process was dogged by the poor quality of local recruits, including transported English, Irish and Scottish delinquents; hardly willing and enthusiastic volunteers. More seriously, subsequent inquests into the disaster identified this company of ungodly men as one possible cause of divine disapproval. An assault upon the capital of Hispaniola in April was defeated by a combination of poor planning, unsuitable equipment and supplies, disease and the cowardice and inexperience of the soldiers. Though Penn and Venables launched a successful assault in May to grab the consolation prize of Jamaica, the damage had already been done. Jamaica, too, appeared more of a liability than an asset. Its mountainous terrain protected an effective guerrilla force that was to terrorise the English for a further five years, while rampant dysentery transformed the remnants of Cromwell's proud expeditionary force into a band of demoralised invalids.[102]

News of the scale of the disaster shocked Cromwell and English public opinion and prompted demands for a public enquiry to call to account those thought guilty of mismanagement, beginning with the imprisonment of commanders William Penn and Robert Venables upon their arrival back in England in August and September 1655. Though Venables' deficiencies as a commander and inadequate planning were cited as important contributory factors in the defeat, it otherwise appeared dangerously like the handiwork of an indignant God. Hispaniola was to cast a long shadow over the Protectorate, marking the end of the republic's triumphant run of battlefield providences and provoking the suspicion that some deep-seated corruption was weakening God's

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[101] Abbott, III, 377-8, 533-8, 551, 878-91; *TSP* III, 16-17, 59-61; Prestwich, 'Diplomacy', p. 107. Karen Kupperman, 'Errand to the Indies: Puritan Colonization from Providence Island through the Western Design', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 45 (1988); Frank Strong, 'The Causes of Cromwell's West Indian Expedition', *American Historical Review*, 4 (1898-9); S. A. G. Taylor, *The Western Design* (1969), pp. 4-5; Venning, *Cromwellian Foreign Policy*, pp. 71-8.

[102] Kupperman, 'Errand', p. 94; Taylor, *Western Design*, pp. 15, 15-97.

commitment to the cause. However, many drew strength from the defeat: that it was a timely warning from the Lord delivered more as a loving reproof than the first in a series of terminal judgments against the republic.

Robert Venables was anxious to vindicate himself in the face of charges of culpability, defending the Design as a holy war sponsored by God. Its execution, by contrast, was bedevilled by 'cross Providences'. Venables tried to distance himself from responsibility in the disaster by casting blame on the irreligious and undisciplined nature of his recruits, whom he said had 'drawn this heavy affliction upon us'. These 'very sweepings of some part of England', both common soldiers and officers, had turned God against the expedition; its noble objectives corrupted by unfit instruments. Venables, of course, excepted himself from association with the guilty, an unconvincing assertion: in particular his decision to forgo normal practice and allow his wife to accompany him on the voyage was the subject of ribald comment.[103]

The observations of another member of the expedition, Francis Barrington, support Venables' remarks. Writing to his brother, Barrington blamed the idle and loose life led by the expedition members for provoking God. He also highlighted the appropriation of firearms without satisfaction to the owners as a cause of God's displeasure, showing a dangerous reliance on the arm of flesh. The fact that sickness claimed more lives than the sword, Barrington said, starkly demonstrated the disapproval of the Almighty with the conduct of the English army because it was a more direct measure of God's disapproval. Worse still, though many soldiers died each day due to disease, few men were willing to amend their loose lives as a result, compounding the sin and its judgment.[104]

Writing to Cromwell, Major General Robert Sedgwick, who had replaced Venables' successor, Richard Fortescue, as commander-in-chief in the West Indies, acknowledged that the expedition had been characterised by over-confidence and dependence upon fleshy reasoning. This had caused a righteous God to step in to lay low this pride. Recovery required that the English force make it known to God that it now

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[103] C. H. Firth, *The Narrative of General Venables*, *Camden Society* n.s. 60 (1900), pp. 30, 42, 76, 89, 105. James Crossley ed., 'Some Account of General Venables . . . Together with the . . . Diary of his Widow, Elizabeth Venables', *Chetham Society* 83 (1872), p. 28.

[104] *HMC 7th Report, Appendix*, pp. 571-5.

relied entirely upon the Almighty for its strength, but Sedgwick admitted that he thought the employment of profane and 'wicked' persons upon the expedition might reduce the possibility of this necessary reform. Whilst conceding that God might soften the hearts of his subordinates in time to complete the mission successfully, he recommended the employment of 'more honest men', sufficiently attractive to God to earn His trust.[105]

The suffering of the expedition members was prolonged. Sedgwick informing Thurloe and Cromwell in January 1656 that the visitations of God had weakened the armed forces in the Indies and lain them in the dust; 'God hath torn us and scattered us'. Yet the Western commanders remained curiously confident about their ultimate prospects. Sedgwick warned against feeling 'over despondent'; he suggested that God might have humbled the Army in order to prepare it for some more glorious work. The Lord had done the expedition a favour if He had applied remedial pressure in time to confound earthly expectations and wean men away from worldly ambition. A slackening in the incidence of sickness was reported, showing that, 'God begins somewhat to smile upon us'. This perhaps indicated that the Almighty was easing His injunctions and preparing the Army for the next stage in their work. Even if the current force proved irredeemable, it was anticipated that God would raise an alternative army made up of instruments of 'a purer spirit'. By the early part of 1656, then, correspondents began to celebrate a modest improvement in the fortunes of the expedition.[106]

In Cromwell's eyes, it was 'not to be denied but the Lord hath greatly humbled us in that sad loss sustained at Hispaniola; [there] is no doubt but we have provoked the Lord, and it is good for us to know so, and to be abased for the same'. Addressing Vice Admiral Goodson, however, the Protector counselled against despair. The setback had been the Lord's work, and the Lord's work was always worthy of praise. The situation was redeemable, 'though [God] hath torn us, yet He will heal us; though He hath smitten us, yet He will bind us up'. In mid-1656, Cromwell and the Council sought out God through prayer in order to ascertain His will regarding the expedition and decide whether to initiate a strategic withdrawal, but concluded that, 'we could not satisfy ourselves to desert this cause'. Clearly, to abandon the mission when the going had got tough might be thought to be dishonouring God by displaying a marked absence of trust in the

[105] *TSP* IV, 4-5.

Almighty to recover the situation. Cromwell did, however, order a tightening of discipline to purge and correct the avarice, pride and debauchery that purportedly characterised the expedition.[107] In the short term, this appeared singularly insufficient since soon after this order was despatched, Sedgwick fell ill and died, ironically the victim, said his successor, Edward D'Oyley, of his failure to rely upon providence sufficiently because he had managed operations exclusively from on board ship for fear of contracting disease. Mirroring domestic critics of the expedition like radical, Vavasor Powell, and in a sideswipe at Cromwell, D'Oyley suggested that the mixed motives for the expedition, in particular the prospect of booty, plunder and material gain, had corrupted the pure, religious motives for the war that had attracted men like himself to the Design. This had provoked God and produced disastrous consequences for the nation, demonstrating how far the government had departed from the idealism of 1647-51. It is nevertheless clear that important voices in government, headed by Cromwell, had duly noted the significance of the rapid train of providences to descend on the nation during 1655: Hispaniola, Penruddock's rebellion and the Savoy crisis. These were correctives, and correctives were cause for guarded optimism because they were the product of a loving God and not an exclusively destructive deity, providing the opportunity for domestic reform which was to be a quest to rediscover the innocence of the early republic's relationship with God. While Hispaniola was not a major dividing line as Worden has supposed, it did have an impact on contemporary politics, though one that was not uniquely important. This leads us next to consider the domestic and moral reform programme of the Major Generals.[108]

(iii) The Major Generals and Moral Reform

The Major Generals have been the subject of several recent studies, but the providential aspect of their work has been overlooked by historians. The purpose of the following short section is to correct this oversight. Penruddock's rebellion in March 1655, along with the series of other plots and conspiracies that had beset the

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[106] Ibid., 389-90, 451-58, 601-602.
[107] Ibid., V, 129-31; Abbott, III, 858-60, 874.
[108] *TSP* V, 138-39.

Commonwealth and Protectorate, led in August to the division of England and Wales into a series of military precincts each under the nominal charge of a Major-General.[109] The Major Generals reflected the preoccupation of the Protectorate with a variety of security and moral concerns. These were closely interconnected in the minds of Cromwell and his acolytes: an important way of safeguarding the security, and ensuring the future prosperity of the Protectorate, was to effect moral and religious reform. Other decisions such as the prohibition of dangerous assemblies like horse races combined both providential and secular concerns since they were believed to be providing cover for the organisation of elicit activities and conspiracies, but were also an excuse for riotous behaviour that was in itself displeasing to the Almighty.[110]

In essence, the government subscribed to a vision of a well-ordered commonwealth of godly individuals, obedient and religious, eschewing immorality and marvelling at God's providences. This would reflect both the self-interested demand for security in the presence of a generally hostile or indifferent population, and the fact that the ordering of individuals' lives along religious lines was a spiritual duty. At the heart of the religious policy of the Commonwealth and Protectorate lay a possible contradiction, the conflict between its tolerationist heart and its providentialist head.[111] Respect for freedom of conscience meant the Commonwealth had placed limitations on its own ability to enforce moral uniformity and compel the English to acknowledge the workings of providence, most obviously by its repeal of the compulsory celebration of the monthly national thanksgiving and humiliation, and of compulsory church-attendance. Yet respect for providence demanded that the state seek to challenge wider sinfulness through the promotion of national reformation of manners. Responsibility for the safety and good of the population as a whole meant it could not afford to ignore the

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[109] C. Firth, 'Cromwell and the Insurrection of 1655', *EHR*, 3 (1888); David Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracy in England, 1649-1660* (New Haven, 1960).

[110] David Rannie, 'Cromwell's Major Generals', *EHR*, 10 (1895); Stephen Roberts, 'Local Government Reform in England and Wales during the Interregnum: A Survey', in Ivan Roots ed., *'Into Another Mould': Aspects of the Interregnum* (Exeter, 1981); Roots, 'Swordsmen and Decimators–Cromwell's Major Generals', in R. H. Parry ed., *The English Civil War and After, 1642-58* (Los Angeles, 1970); John Sutton, 'Cromwell's commissioners for preserving the peace of the Commonwealth: a Staffordshire case study', in Ian Gentles, John Morrill and Blair Worden eds., *Soldiers, writers and statesmen of the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 1998). 'An Ordinance prohibiting Horse-Races for six Moneths', in Firth and Rait eds, *Acts and Ordinances*, II, 941-2. Instructions to the Major Generals: *Politicus*, vol. 12, pp. 243-4. See also Christopher Durston's 'The Fall of Cromwell's Major Generals', *EHR*, 113 (1998).

[111] Instrument of Government in Shaw, *English Church*, II, 85.

moral status of the unregenerate or uncommitted, but instead had to take the lead in turning away dangerous judgments and correctives by repudiating sinfulness.[112]

This raised the question of where governments should set the limits of legitimate interference in matters of conscience. Cromwell's answer was necessarily ambiguous: providence would show the way and an appropriate system would emerge as God's purposes became clearer. The Protectoral religious settlement was flexible and informal, creating the space within which God could operate more directly and immediately. Cromwell sought to inspire a spiritual unity among the different denominations that was based upon certain fundamentals upon which presbyterians, Independents and Baptists could agree, and when this did not prove feasible, fundamentals of heresy against which they could at least be united in opposition, those 'prodigious blasphemies' that always threatened to provoke God into catapulting the saints back into the wilderness of exile.[113] The Cromwellian Church settlement was one that incorporated diversity and pluralism of worship at its heart. It comprised a broad, loose, compromise based upon an optimistic reading of the probable limits of godly unity. This new paradigm required an immediate and intimate relationship with God that looked for continual validation to confirmatory and guiding providences and required the sweeping away of hindrances to direct contact by the godly with the divine.[114]

However, the nature of this settlement did not preclude the state from playing a role in discouraging immoral conduct such as swearing, drunkenness and Sabbath-breaking. It was incumbent upon the State to suppress wickedness in the national community as a whole, not just among the visible godly: 'part [of] the return we owe to God'.[115] This was accomplished through the medium of such instruments as the

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[112] 'An Act for . . . Repealing the former Monthely Fast', 'Act for the Repeal of Several clauses imposing Penalties for not coming to Church', in Firth and Rait eds, *Acts and Ordinances*, II, 79-81, 423-25; Shaw, *History*, II, 174.

[113] Blair Worden, 'Toleration and the Cromwellian Protectorate', in W. J. Sheils ed., *Persecution and Toleration, Studies in Church History*, 21 (1984), pp. 216-17. On the differentiation between godly and ungodly, see Patrick Collinson, 'The Cohabitation of the Faithful with the Unfaithful', in Ole Grell, Jonathan Israel and Nicholas Tyacke eds, *From Persecution to Toleration* (Oxford, 1991), p. 69. Quotation from Roots, *Speeches*, p. 31. On unity among denominations, see Cromwell's remarks in Abbott, I, 677.

[114] On the Cromwellian Church settlement, see Claire Cross, 'The Church in England, 1646-1660', in G. E. Aylmer ed., *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement, 1646-1660* (1972); Worden, 'Toleration'; J.C. Davis, 'Cromwell's religion', in Morrill ed., *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*; Ann Hughes, 'The Frustrations of the Godly', in Morrill ed., *Revolution and Restoration*.

[115] Abbott, IV, 25.

Committee for the Propagation of the Gospel, furthering the ends of a godly commonwealth by declaring the limits of toleration in the form of the 1650 Blasphemy Act, and establishing a system of Triers and Ejectors in 1654 to vet clergy and exclude the insufficient or heretical.[116] Hence, too, the Major Generals. They were an embodiment of the Lord Protector's belief that the rapidly shifting currents of providence in the realm of public affairs required a flexible, pragmatic response that was not hindered by unnecessarily rigid preconceptions or delayed by the inertia hindering formal governmental structures. This pragmatism was reflected in their commissions that lacked detailed descriptions of how their duties were to be exercised. The Major Generals were a means by which the central government could heighten the awareness of local communities to the unfolding works of providence; they were to be educators in the practical ways of the Lord, despatched to make available to the provinces the fruit of a generation of experience in how to govern with respect to works of God.[117] But also, as Worden has suggested, they were a reaction in the wake of Hispaniola to the fear that domestic corruption and debasement was to blame for the setback: a Cromwellian 'Thorough'.[118]

The Major Generals were an important component in the programme of moral reform undertaken by Parliament and the Commonwealth and Protectorate during the 1640s and 50s. While unprecedented in its scope, this was both unremarkable and unoriginal in what it was seeking to achieve, building upon the several generations of 'puritan' interest in a local and national reformation of manners. Opposition to the Book of Sports, Sabbatarian enthusiasm and demands for stricter alehouse licensing were all well established in many parishes by 1640. This godly intolerance of blasphemy, profanity and fornication sometimes conflicted, sometimes coexisted, with a more traditional popular culture based around the traditional festive calendar and hostile to godly reformism. The civil war accentuated this religio-cultural differentiation with royalist strongholds in Wales and elsewhere often providing the most visible resistance

[116] For the propagation of the gospel, see Shaw, *History*, II, 79, 86-9; Peter Toon, *God's Statesman: The Life and Work of John Owen* (Exeter, 1971), Chapter 4: 'Ecclesiastical Statesman'; Firth and Rait eds. *Acts and Ordinances*, II, 383-9, 393-6, 409-12, 968-90.
[117] *TSP* IV, 179, 211, 224, 239.
[118] Worden, 'Achan', pp. 135-140.

to the assault on 'Merry England', for example exhibiting weaker habits of Sabbatarian observance, and being generally more unsympathetic to Calvinist doctrine with its 'unpopular' and unpalatable description of a vengeful and unyielding deity.[119]

This model has undergone modification recently with a stress upon the consensual appeal of much Calvinist or pseudo-Calvinist literature; study of so-called 'last dying speeches' emphasises their mass appeal and the theatrical quality of their Calvinism. Not dry, inaccessible doctrine, hopelessly and embarrassingly out of sync with the natural rhythm of familiar religious practice, but popular, even trendy: a 'People's Calvinism'. The popular 'puritan' literature of the chapbooks and news pamphlets distorted and refracted Calvinism to create a working dialogue with less disciplined religious practice: the nation was not polarised, all or nothing, between reformers on the one hand, disturbers of the peace frightening the children and animals with wild warnings of providential doom in the absence of repentance; and on the other, 'Anglican' apologists, comfortable with a benign God and uncontroversial providentialism. Puritan enthusiasm might have appeared less strangely alien to the broad ranks of a literate society familiar with the psychological cues and expectations of providential discourse. Anyway, as we have seen, many royalists took these concerns seriously since apparently they, too, believed reform was too important to be left to chance.[120]

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[119] Kenneth Parker, *The English Sabbath* (Cambridge, 1988), espec. pp. 55-208. Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525-1700* (Oxford, 1995); Wrightson, 'The Puritan Reformation of Manners: With Special Reference to the counties of Lancashire and Essex, 1640-1660' (Cambridge University Ph.D. 1973); Derek Hirst, 'The failure of godly rule in the English Republic', *PP*, 132 (1991). Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (1978), pp. 208-32; Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England* (Oxford, 1994); Mark Stoyle, *From Deliverance to Destruction: Rebellion and Civil War in an English City* (Exeter, 1996); *idem.*, *Loyalty and Locality: Popular Allegiance in Devon During the English Civil War* (Exeter, 1994); David Underdown, *Fire from Heaven* (1992); *idem.*, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England, 1603-1660* (Oxford, 1987).

[120] Alexandra Walsham, 'Aspects of Providentialism in Early Modern England', PhD., University of Cambridge, 1995, p. 29; Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 325-27; Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Basingstoke and London, 1988), Chapter 4: 'Protestant Culture and the Cultural Revolution'; Peter Lake, 'Popular form, puritan content? Two appropriations of the murder pamphlet from mid-seventeenth century London', in Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts eds *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1994); Jim Sharpe, 'Last Dying Speeches', *PP*, 108 (1985); Margaret Spufford, 'Puritanism and Social Control?' in Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson eds, *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1985). Barry Reay, ' Radicalism and Religion in the English Revolution: an Introduction', in Reay and J. F. McGregor eds., *Radical Religion in*

While acknowledging the persuasive case presented by these modifications, the model of entrenched hostility or indifference to puritan reform does help explain the relative failure of this programme during the 1640s and 50s, suggested, for example, by continued use of the Prayer Book, celebration of Christmas and disregard for official fasts and other religious exercises. The regicide probably resulted in a hardening of attitudes since its construction of the myth of the royal martyr and his blood sacrifice reinforced royal providentialism and discredited its alternative at the very moment it reached its apogee.[121] The slow pace of reform engendered radical disillusionment with the Rump and later with the Protectorate, the failure lent greater urgency by millennial rhetoric. The Major Generals were an *ad hoc* response to fears that unless remedial action was taken quickly, God would ensure that the Protectorate would suffer for its sins of omission.[122]

The Major Generals arose during a period of emergency prompted by the failure of the first Protectorate Parliament, the Piedmont crisis and the failure of the Western Design, evidence that the nation was in danger of severing itself from its original, fruitful communion with the Almighty to indulge in self-aggrandisement. This was a time of trial, of 'wretched jelosies that are amongst us', and of prodigies by land, sea and air: haunting forecasts of possible destruction, premonitions to be viewed dimly and with trembling.[123] Gossips noted that the sinking of Cromwell's carriage on a ferry journey across the Thames at Lambeth resembled an accident that befell Archbishop Laud shortly before his imprisonment in the Tower, speculating that the event constituted an evil omen presaging the downfall of the Lord Protector.[124] What was more, the defeat of

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the English Revolution (Oxford, 1986); Bernard Capp, 'Popular Culture and the English Civil War', *History of European Ideas*, 10 (1989).

[121] For the effects of royal martyrdom, see Claire Marie Fowler, 'The Politics of Myth-Making in English Literature, 1640-1658', PhD., Columbia University, 1990, p. 134; Helen W. Randall, 'The Rise and Fall of a Martyrology: Sermons on Charles I', *HLQ*, 10 (1946-47); Byron S. Stewart, 'The Cult of the Royal Martyr', *Church History*, 38 (1969).

[122] Christopher Durston, 'Puritan Rule and the Failure of Cultural Revolution, 1645-1660', in Durston and Jacqueline Eales eds., *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700* (1996); 'The Church in England, 1642-9', in John Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (1993); Anthony Fletcher, *A County Community in Peace and War: Sussex, 1600-1660* (London and New York, 1975), pp. 107-114.

[123] *TSP* III, 521-22, 572.

[124] *HMC 5th Report, Appendix*, p. 148.

Penruddock's rebellion had been a great mercy but was evidently a shot across the bows urgent reform was needed to prevent destructive divine correctives.[125]

Recommending the scheme to his second parliament, Cromwell reassured his audience that 'reformation . . . will be your best security', to 'avert the present danger' and demonstrate a worthy return for all the blessings the commonwealth had so far enjoyed. The nation had exhibited dangerous signs of dissatisfaction with the reformation of manners by begrudging the disappearance of horse racing and other pursuits. Cromwell implied that until the legislature had engineered a decisive and irreversible shift in attitudes on this point among the wider population, the nation could never hope to enjoy divine favour for prolonged periods. God, warned the Lord Protector, 'will not bear with us'. Parliament must go with the grain of providence revealed by events by legislating to prolong the war with Spain and by maintaining the work of the Major Generals in collecting the Decimation tax from royalist delinquents.[126]

This work was wide-ranging: the Major Generals were employed in a troubleshooting capacity to assist the efforts of county militia commissions established in the wake of Penruddock's rebellion in March 1655. Their primary task was security: assessing, levying and collecting the Decimation and helping to organise the militia out of the proceeds, in other words tightening the reins of government in a variety of different ways. However, probably their most important duty was the jurisdiction of morals, 'the bridling of idle and licentious persons who threaten an inundation of sin and consequently of wrath and ruin'.[127] This involved the suppression of riotous and ungodly pursuits such as horse races, stage plays, cockfights and bear baiting. The Major Generals were further ordered to assess the progress of the county 'ejectors'; to enforce blasphemy legislation, Sabbatarian and other statutes concerned with honouring God in appropriate fashion; to suppress alehouses; and in their general conduct and demeanour to promote godliness and discourage profaneness. The Major Generals were expected to instruct by example.[128]

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[125] *TSP* III, 305, 650-1, 686, IV, 4-5; *Politicus*, vol. 10, p. 399, vol. 11, p. 18; *HMC 7th Report, Appendix*, p. 572.
[126] Roots ed., *Speeches*, pp. 79-105.
[127] Ibid., 583.
[128] Instructions to Major Generals, October 1655, in *OPH* vol. 20, pp. 461-7.

Soliciting contrition and preparing royalists to receive the fruits of grace by opening their hearts to the reality of providence were to be two of the prime objectives of the Major Generals.[129] The royalists had stubbornly refused to accept God's will by ignoring the visible evidence of divine disapproval with their cause during the 1640s. During the 1650s, their aptitude for conspiracy and refusal to acknowledge the providential basis of the power of the Interregnum governments showed that their controversy with God had continued unabated. Now, they were required to be punished once again. Appropriately, they would provide the financial means by which the nation might be secured, and the folly of their distrust of providence made naught.[130]

The Major Generals, their deputies and militia commissioners, appear to have been a diverse collection of men, chosen for their local knowledge and status, loyal, of course, to Oliver Cromwell and the Protectoral party. Many of the twelve had earned reputations for religious zeal during the course of their military careers, most especially Charles Worsley, William Goffe and William Boteler. Others were more senior councillors of Cromwell commanding independent support in the Army including John Desbrowe, John Lambert and Charles Fleetwood. Most if not all the Major Generals were men who ascribed to a particularly Cromwellian understanding of what God's purposes currently meant for the nation. All, except perhaps Lambert, were godly enthusiasts, but also Protectoral loyalists rather than radical republicans or religious extremists who might have viewed Cromwell's assumption of power in December 1653 with suspicion. Nevertheless, there were limits to their loyalty to Cromwell: all the Major Generals objected to the proposal to offer the kingship to Oliver in 1657 on the grounds that the resurrection of a title apparently so displeasing to the Almighty would attract divine disapproval. Little is known, however, about the militia commissioners upon whom the Major Generals relied for implementation of their orders, earning their description as the 'invisible men of Interregnum politics'. One recent study of Staffordshire commissioners has concluded, however, that they were conservative godly

[129] *TSP* IV, 509.
[130] Declaration showing reasons for securing the peace of the Commonwealth, in *OPH* vol. 20, pp. 434-60; Commission to William Boteler, October 1655, in Abbott III, 849.

committed to the national church and enthusiastic in their reforming intentions, likely, in other words, to be sympathetic to Cromwellian providentialism.[131]

The Major Generals and their subordinates appear to have undertaken their work with enthusiasm, and were generally encouraged by the zeal they encountered. Charles Worsley in the North West, for example, worked assiduously at reforming local habits and customs, apparently with some success, suppressing over two hundred alehouses: 'the places of receipt of wickedness, drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, and other impieties'. Worsley was impressed with the local response to the work, telling Thurloe in November 1655 that, 'I find in them a spirit extraordinarily bent to the work', concluding that 'I plainly discern the finger of God going along with it'. God, said Worsley, had 'already put into his people a praying spirit for this great and good work'; with His blessing, the Major Generals might go far in assuaging the Almighty and initiating a permanent commitment to prayer, godliness and consciousness of the action of providence.[132]

Though Worsley was fortunate in operating in a region with an established infrastructure of godly rule, his enthusiasm for moral transformation was mirrored elsewhere, in particular by William Boteler in Nottinghamshire who, despite the temporary setback of provincial obstructionism, anticipated the day soon when, 'greedily we shall pull down profaneness'.[133] James Berry of North Wales and Edward Whalley of the Midlands similarly reported a warm local response from officials.[134] Reform varied widely: good progress in ejecting scandalous ministers was reported from Lincolnshire in November, but the process was delayed in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. Whalley complained that their ungodly colleagues were undermining the work of godly magistrates; eternal vigilance was required to prevent the immediate reopening of alehouses and to combat the problem of drunkenness on the Sabbath. Additionally, the Major Generals complained that too many royalists were avoiding the Decimation.[135]

[131] Lists of Major Generals can be found in *Politicus*, vol. 12, p. 103 (which features eleven of the twelve). Sutton, 'Cromwell's commissioners', pp. 172-75.
[132] *TSP* IV, 149, 179, 187, 189, 247, 523.
[133] Ibid., 207.
[134] Ibid., 197, 211, 215.
[135] Ibid., 229, 234, 237, 293, 434, 511.

The disposition of the royalist delinquents in their midst was a central concern of the Major Generals. This reflected a preoccupation with obtaining the submission of the regime's enemies since an impatient God was believed to be demanding more than a grudging acknowledgment of the republic's right to rule; His honour required sincere and serious repentance from those who had rebelled against the visible and unambiguous dispensations that had brought the republic to power. In refusing to submit, stiff-necked royalist rebels demonstrated their incorrigibility in the face of divine justice: their conspiracy and treachery was more than a security problem, it was an affront to the Almighty that demanded a vigorous corrective response. The refusal of many royalists to embrace the republican divine right produced consternation and disquiet. How was it that countrymen could fail to discern the obvious? One possibility was that the rebels were atheists permanently exiled from God's grace. In this view, God had abandoned hope of rehabilitating these serial recidivists, allowing the enemy to engineer their own destruction by permitting this 'implacable generation of men' to wallow ever deeper in sin. Another possibility, however, was that the victory of the Saints had not been as clear-cut as it had seemed. After all, the Lord might make use of the royalists and other domestic opponents at any time to chastise the faithful for their periodic lapses. The absence of confidence in a republican providence exhibited by the royalists, together with a wider indifference to the reforming imperatives of the republic, began to contribute to a growing climate of doubt as to the Saints' ownership of providence. The Major Generals were a reaction to this abiding fear; terrified of losing the support of God, and distrustful of controversial and ineffectual parliaments, Cromwell turned to men who had shown themselves precious in the eyes of God – soldier saints directly animated by the holy spirit, conduits of providence able to initiate grassroots reform.[136]

In view of this, the Major Generals grasped at the flimsy anecdotal evidence of a positive response by many royalists to their rule; pointing as it did towards the penetration of the Holy Spirit down to the indurate bedrock of English profaneness. Major General Haynes anticipated that a righteous God would 'not only make them [the royalists] (though most unwilling) to see, but also make them ashamed for their envy to

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[136] Ibid., 225, 468. This opinion had been voiced at the time of the second civil war in 1648. The royalists' repetition of bloodshed in the knowledge that God had already delivered His verdict against such conduct, constituted a dangerous renewed insult to the Lord. See Abbott, I, 691-92.

his people'.[137] Worsley declared that the 'visible hand of God' was necessary to explain the 'unexpected submission and subjection' of delinquents under his jurisdiction, admiring how bad men were now compelled to study peace.[138] Whalley explained how he thought God had blessed the work of the Major Generals by now inclining the hearts of one-time opponents of Cromwell towards the Lord Protector: the Decimation and the prescriptive and missionary activities of the Major Generals was softening incorrigible hearts, preparing them for the work of grace that was sure to follow.[139]

As well as seeking the conversion of the royalists to their brand of providentialism, the Major Generals were concerned with motivating their own supporters after a period of disappointing setbacks for the cause, and in reconciling differences among the saints. This seems to have been at least partially successful since numerous accounts praise God for moving Cromwell to initiate this lively new phase of reform.[140] Serious doubts remained, however, concerning the effectiveness of reform, and Major Generals complained variously of stubborn malignancy, the spread of heterodoxy and lack of support from Westminster.[141] On balance, however, Cromwell believed the Major Generals to have made a success of their wide-ranging remit. Their effectiveness in promoting long-term reform remained unproven, but he declared his satisfaction that they had kept the people from sin and wickedness and excited virtue and piety. The country, Cromwell told a London audience early in 1656, had grown stronger in virtue, depressing the tendency towards licence that had diminished the good effects of the revolution of 1649 and that had threatened the saints' special relationship with God.[142] The judgment of contemporary critics was considerably harsher: the Major Generals as instruments of a hypocritical Lord Protector intent of smothering opposition, agents of a policy of divide and rule, either symbols of the oppression of royalists sufferers, the injustice of which called out to heaven for restitution, or of the betrayal of the Good Old Cause by the arch apostate, just as equally deserving of divine

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[137] Ibid., 216.
[138] Ibid., 340, 449-450.
[139] Ibid., 495, 509; Burton, I, 115.
[140] *TSP* IV, 207-208, 225, 229, 305, 434, 583.
[141] Ibid., 393, 408, 412, 486, 687-8, 727; V, 166.
[142] Ibid., IV, 587-88; *Clarke Papers*, III, 65; Abbott, IV, 112-13.

punishment.[143] The controversy surrounding the Major Generals, 'decimators and swordsmen', reached a height in the Commons debate of Christmas 1656 between the advocates of the Major Generals, led by the officers, and opponents led by civilian reformers Whitelocke, Broghill and Claypole. The defeat of the officers arguably showed that the attempts by the Cromwellians to appropriate exclusive ownership of providence had failed.[144] Shortly before their demise, the Major Generals were reporting renewed attempts by their opponents to swing elections to the second Protectorate Parliament in their favour. The interest of those 'that fear God in the nation' was once more thrown into doubt. Provincial governors such as Thomas Kelsey and Major General Haynes declared their pious hope that the Lord would continue to own the cause of the saints, but somehow these lacked conviction and read more like wishful thinking.[145] Sanguine speculations such as these probably stemmed from the realisation that the state was unable to impose a unitary conception of providence onto a nation whose religious settlement rested upon the principle of diversity. Perhaps this latest twist in the tail of providence was only to be expected; God routinely confounded the expectations of those presumptuous enough to try to chart the progress of divine dispensations and make predictions based upon these findings. Providence had made and shaped the institution of the Major Generals; now it had terminated the experiment. The saints continued to place their trust in God, in all his 'varietyes, turnings, and changes', and this was to remain the only constant at a time of the breaking and confounding of policy.[146] Cromwell himself declared that 'wee have beene lately taught that it is not in man to direct his way. Indeed all the dispensation of God, whether adverse or prosperous, doe fully read that lesson'. The Major Generals had embodied that principle since they sought to track providence closely and allow themselves to be guided by it. Renewed emphasis on the submission of the heart to the ways of providence, the realisation that God's will was a complicated mystery, and an attempted rediscovery of the innocent relationship that the Army once enjoyed with its God, were three ways in

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[143] Burton, I, 237-38; *CSPD 1655*, p. 375; 1655-56, p. 50. On Cromwell's 'hypocrisy', see Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel John Hutchinson*, ed. Julius Hutchinson (1806), pp. 285, 309, *passim*; Ludlow, *Memoirs*, I, 405.
[144] *Clarke Papers*, III, 87-8.
[145] *TSP* V, 172, 312, 328, 384; *CSPD 1656-57*, pp. 87-88.
[146] *TSP* V, 548-49.

which the saints responded to the internal and external troubles with which the Protectorate was faced in the mid 1650s.[147]

The study of Parliament, foreign relations and the reformation of manners from 1651 displays neither smooth transition nor undifferentiated progression but hesitant and discontinuous activity consequent upon a process of experimental politics. Providence has received insufficient attention as an explanation for the absence of continuity and the failure of the republic to become settled and institutionalised: a deficiency this chapter has set out to rectify. Throughout the period, constitutions foundered when they were shown to compare unfavourably with the ideal of intimate and passionate communion with God experienced by the Army until 1651. This politics of nostalgia was reinvigorated by the acceleration of providence-in-history initiated during 1653, but was cut short by the establishment of the Protectorate, pointing to the fragmentation of an uneasy consensus on the direction of God's works. This fragmentation was shown by disagreement between Cromwellians and critics of the Protectorate who believed that it represented a betrayal of the founding principles of the revolution, a crying sin. The kingship controversy also provided a focus for divergent interpretations of recent providential developments. The differences probably reinforced Cromwellian providentialism – tolerant, constitutionally conservative – prompting episodes such as the regime of the Major Generals, charged in part with converting stubborn royalists to proper repentance and constructing a persuasive model of the divine status of the State. Recent events, such as the Western Design, were cause for deep concern, suggesting a possible divine controversy with the nation in the light of godly disunion. Such disharmony was both a sign, and an encouragement, of correctives. Arguably, however, the attempt to replace the plurality of providential readings ended with the death of Cromwell, a subject to which we now turn.

[147] Ibid., IV, 744: Oliver Cromwell to Blake, April 1656; on innocence, see Abbott, IV, 146: to Henry Cromwell, 'Study still to be innocent . . . roll yourself upon God'.

Chapter Seven: Towards Restoration – Providence and the End of the Protectorate, 1658 – 1660

This chapter will show how the guardians of the republican experiment became divided over their interpretation of providence following the death of Oliver Cromwell in September 1658. It will consider the nature of evolving opposition to Cromwell, concentrating on the examples of the Fifth Monarchy Men and the Quakers, before describing how disquiet at the direction of the revolution, particularly since the establishment of the Protectorate in 1653, became identified with a defence of the 'Good Old Cause'. This rallying cry was explicitly providential since at the heart of the Cause was the demand that the nation be transformed to enable the permanent and perpetual worship of divine works. The common good required unselfish unity among the 'honest party' based upon a willingness to follow God's providence. The instrument of heaven – Cromwell – became instead an obstacle to the perfecting of revolutionary gains, while his demise signalled a scramble to catch up with history and make prophecy come true. This was the ultimate test of the saints' resolve, set in motion by an increasingly impatient God. The very loss of political direction testified by the confused ebb and flow of events during 1659, made understanding the divine will more difficult than ever and itself promoted an experimental style of politics as practitioners explored the limits of providence by often sudden and contradictory changes of government. Surely one of these at least would prove an appropriate form that might usher in a period of settled administration under God's protection? The manic search for civil peace and order established, God's honour vindicated, the gains of revolution successfully defended, the godly party, now in sublime agreement, would be left free to fulfil the expectations of the Lord. However, their failure to reach agreement on determining what precisely was at this time God's will, instead enhanced the appeal of the exiled royalists' reading of providence, now an attractive prospect given the undoubted weariness of the general population with the inconclusive merry-go-round of domestic political changes, and the growing fear among conservatives of a social breakdown in the shadow of the rapid growth of the Quakers. The King could offer an uncomplicated focus for allegiance, but

significantly one that might respect the mainstream providentialism of moderate parliamentarians and army-men, essential for accommodation and oblivion.

The work of Christopher Hill in particular has focussed attention on the growth of disillusionment with the failure of the revolution to live up to its early promise. Hill has charted the evolution of opposition sentiment beginning with the Levellers, through to the pamphlet war waged by the Fifth Monarchy Men and the Quakers who were disappointed by what they interpreted as a betrayal of republicanism and the hopes of the gathered churches and sects for an end to tithes and other remnants of a national ministry and parochial system: a reaction to the more conservative political climate of the later 1650s. The establishment of the Protectorate reintroduced the concept of government by a single individual that some supporters of the revolution, particularly within the Army, regarded as a betrayal of the founding principles of the republic as constituted in 1649. Similarly, the evolution of a Court party in Parliament centred on the personality cult of Cromwell, disquieted many who saw in this development the growth of pride and a failure of the nation's rulers to demonstrate sufficient humility in the midst of relative prosperity. Hill has shown how sectarians like William Erbury, George Fox and Christopher Feake all warned of the dangers of divine displeasure at what they interpreted as the apostasy of the Cromwellians and a deepening moral corruption in the nation. He has also highlighted how such dissidents combined these threatening words with the promise of imminent and radical change in the long overdue fulfilment of prophecy. Austin Woolrych, too, has focussed on the disappointment of many formerly steadfast supporters of the republic, such as John Milton, complementing Hill's extensive scholarship on the poet and Latin Secretary. In all these cases, it is significant that dissidents appealed to God to rescue the Good Old Cause, and threatened Cromwell with the appearance of divine correctives in the absence of reform. While Hill and Woolrych have drawn attention to contemporary providential arguments, they omit to develop these ideas further. The purpose of this chapter will be to supplement their scholarship by examining in greater detail the impact of the belief that God was now deserting the cause.[1]

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[1] Christopher Hill, *The Experience of Defeat* (1984), pp. 52-309; *idem.*, *Milton and the English Revolution* (1977), pp. 185, 189-209, 345-54; Don Wolfe, *Milton in the Puritan Revolution* (New York, 1963).

(i) The Quakers

The Quakers were among the more vociferous of the radical religious activists of the Interregnum period. Their rapid rise to prominence from around 1652 coincided with growing dissatisfaction with the Cromwellian settlement and in particular with the Protectorate's ecclesiastical policy with which the Quakers were especially disaffected. The Quaker movement spread quickly from its northern roots to London and the South West, and it was this speedy development, combined with its evangelism and the unorthodox quality of its doctrine, that drew from the local and national authorities and from many local communities a generally hostile response. Contemporary Quakers such as George Fox, James Nayler, William Dewsbury and Richard Farnworth, were enthusiastic self-publicists, penning a wide range of pamphlets designed to justify their position, criticise the authorities and engage in debate with opponents. Diary accounts of conversion experiences and descriptions of the suffering of Quaker communities augment this impressive body of surviving Quaker literature from the 1650s. The Quakers were vocal providentialists and this was consistent with the intensely prophetic quality of their religion that predicted the imminent triumph of the Spirit over antichrist. Individual Quakers, who experienced the immediate, intimate presence of the Lord in their own hearts, were conspicuously sensitive to the workings of special providence in the course of their private lives and missionary work. With the exception of the scholarship of Alan Cole, Christopher Hill and Hugh Barbour in relation to the response of the Quakers to the events of 1659, modern studies of the movement have tended to neglect the importance of providence among the early Quakers, and the purpose of the

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Chapter 14; Austin Woolrych, 'Historical Introduction', in Don Wolfe ed., *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 8 vols (New Haven and London, 1953-1982), VII; *idem.*, 'The Good Old Cause and the Fall of the Protectorate', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 13 (1957); *idem*, 'Last Quests for a Settlement, 1657-1660', in Gerald Aylmer ed., *The Interregnum: the Quest for Settlement, 1646-1660* (1972). For a general overview of the late 1650s, see Charles Firth, *The Last Years of the Protectorate, 1656-1658*, 2 vols (1909); Godfrey Davies, *The Restoration of Charles II, 1658-1660* (San Marino and London, 1955); Ronald Hutton, *The Restoration* (Oxford and New York, 1993), pp. 3-123.

following section is to rectify this deficiency with a brief survey of contemporary Quaker writings.[2]

The early Quakers were less pacific than their modern counterparts and though the 'warfare' they espoused was generally confined to the realm of the spirit, their ranks included many current and former soldiers who often threatened the authorities with the wrath of God. The Quakers generally regarded local magistrates with more suspicion than the national leadership in Whitehall because they were perceived to be at the forefront of an alleged programme of intimidàtion and persecution the Quakers believed was inspired by antichrist. In this view, their arrest under vagrancy and public order legislation disguised more sinister objectives designed to silence the 'righteous seed of God', the latter-day prophets now engaged in demolishing the idea of a national Church and advancing the promise of universal redemption.[3] Quaker tracts predicted the imminent and violent demise of magistrates at the hand of God, either individually, or collectively at the Day of Judgment. Perhaps more significantly from a national political perspective, some Quakers also predicted God's overthrow of the Protectorate. Unsurprisingly, Cromwell and his Council interpreted this as a threat to their government, though the Lord Protector personally remained sympathetic to the plight of individual Quakers such as James Nayler, and respectful of their right to freedom of conscience. As Barry Reay has shown, Quaker agitation provoked a conservative backlash during 1659 that increased the likelihood of Restoration, and I would suggest that the royalists' reliable and rather conventional version of providence based upon a

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[2] Alan Cole, 'The Quakers and the English Revolution', in Trevor Aston ed., *Crisis in Europe: 1560-1660* (1969); Hill, *Experience*, Chapter 5; *idem.*, *The World Turned Upside Down* (1984), Chapter 10. On the early Quakers in general, see Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* (New Haven and London, 1964); William Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism* (1912); John Ferguson, *Politics Quaker Style* (San Bernardino, California, 1995); James Maclear, 'Quakerism, the End of the Interregnum: A Chapter in the Domestication of Radical Puritanism', *Church History*, 19 (1950); Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (1985); *idem.*, 'The Quakers, 1659, and the Restoration of the Monarchy', *History*, 63 (1978); *idem.*, 'Quakerism and Society' in J. F. McGregor and Barry Reay eds, *Radical Religion in the English Revolution* (Oxford, 1986). On Quaker spiritualism, see Robert Barclay, *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth* (1876), especially Chapter 19; Geoffrey Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 42-58, 86, 157-9.

[3] George Fox, *Newes Coming up out of the North, Sounding towards the South* (1653), BL TT E 725 (5), p. 4.

restored monarchy and national Church proved an attractive alternative to the Quaker interpretation of the doctrine that was thought to endanger the established social order.[4]

The revolutionary character of Quakerism coincided with the dramatic changes to government experienced during 1653. Quakers became convinced that these events heralded the creation of God's own kingdom in which the Lord would vindicate the righteous and execute judgment on the Quakers' enemies. Thus Richard Hubberthorn predicted the final overthrow of all religious forms and the advancement of the revelatory Inner Light; the established Church was incapable of protecting its practitioners from imminent judgment.[5] George Fox, the Quakers' nominal leader, declared his belief in December 1653 that the Lord would soon avenge the saints, scattering the proud now 'the bonds of iniquity are breaking'. England, said Fox, had enjoyed fruitful mercies in the victories of Parliament, but had since degenerated to chase worldly riches and honour. Promises made during time of adversity remained unfulfilled: the nation's rulers urgently needed to repent and acknowledge the status of the Quakers as true prophets if they were to avoid destruction. The divine controversy was directed particularly at the clergy, lawyers and judges, those engines of oppression singled out for attention by an angry God.[6] The plagues of God would be poured out against those who meddled with the true Church of Christ and made laws contrary to conscience. James Nayler, against whom Parliament launched its proceedings in 1656, had argued in 1653 that the day of the Lord's wrath lay close at hand - and justifiably. Despite the extraordinary nature of its recent deliverances, England had wasted these mercies and an outraged Nayler accused its magistrates of being prepared to tolerate drunkards and ballad-sellers ahead of the Quakers. God, said Nayler, was full of jealousy for Sion, His patience at an end.[7] Similarly, Richard Farnworth warned the

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[4] Reay, 'Popular hostility towards Quakers in Mid-Seventeenth-Century England', *Social History*, 5 (1980); *idem.*, 'The Quakers, 1659'; *idem.*, *The Quakers*, pp. 49-96.

[5] Hubberthorn, *Truths Defence Against the Refined Subtilty of the Serpent* (1653), BL TT E 724 (12), sig A2.

[6] Fox, *Newes Coming up out of the North*, pp. 4-20. On Fox, see H. Larry Ingle, *First Among Friends: George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism* (New York and Oxford, 1994); Michael Mullett ed., *New Light on George Fox* (York, 1991); Olive Munro ed., *George Fox, 1624-1691: Our Living Contemporary* (1992).

[7] Fox and Nayler, *A Lamentacion Over the Ruines of this Oppressed Nacion* (York, 1653), BL TT E 727 (9), pp. 3-9, 13-15. On Nayler, see Mabel Brailsford, *A Quaker from Cromwell's Army: James Nayler* (1927); William Bittle, *James Nayler, 1618-1660* (York, 1986); Braithwaite, *Quakerism*, Chapter 11.

nation's rulers against protecting that which God was in the process of throwing down, namely a national ministry. Alluding to the end of the Rump, Farnworth reminded his readership that the Almighty was casting out the mighty from their thrones, implying that the divine revolution might soon extend to the remainder of the political nation if they did not quickly end the 'carnal maintenance' of tithes that supported the priesthood of 'blinde guides' and their 'Idol Temples'.[8]

Fear at the consequences of the re-emergence of a political culture centred at Court was not wholly without foundation, nor merely the product of paranoid imaginations. As Sean Kelsey has noted, the dissatisfaction of some army officers and others with the Rump was enhanced by the conspicuous wealth of some of its members and disquiet at the expense and ostentation of republican state spectacle. The growing sophistication of the Court recalled the years of Caroline excess which were held to have provoked God into declaring war against His servants, though in reality the Cromwellian Court was much smaller than its predecessor. Government in a single person might be viewed as a repudiation of parliamentary government proclaimed in 1649, but the material trappings of such a transformation arguably exerted greater symbolic influence on veterans of the revolution. The Protector inherited a number of the more grand royal palaces such as St James's, Whitehall, Greenwich and Hampton Court. Many paintings and other national treasures were withheld from sale and put to use in illuminating the power and reinforcing the legitimacy of the governments of the 1650s, particularly in relation to visiting foreign dignitaries whom the Commonwealth and Protectorate were especially keen to impress. The reinstitution of a more traditional structure of household staff after 1657 and the greater pomp accompanying the Lord Protector's inauguration in that year must have alarmed purists who yearned for the primitive simplicity of the New Model's communion with the Almighty. Furthermore, the weddings of Mary and Frances Cromwell featured lavish entertainment that disturbed puritan traditionalists, while the epic scale of the funeral of the Lord Protector himself was criticised for being potentially idolatrous. According to its historian, Roy Sherwood, the Cromwellian Court

[8] Farnworth, *The Generall Good To all People* (1653), BL TT E 703 (6), pp. 1-6; *idem.*, *Englands Warning Peece Gone Forth* (1653), BL TT E 703 (14), pp. 6, 10; *An Easter Reckoning* (1653), BL TT E 703 (5), pp. 8, 10, 15, 20-21.

was modest in terms of scale and complexity in comparison with its Caroline predecessor and Cromwell himself evidently remained acutely aware of the danger of divine punishment of luxury, sensuality and pride, hence his decision to refuse the crown in 1657. However, it is also clear that Quaker and other criticism of the Protectorate was potentially so dangerous because it to some extent reflected legitimate fears about the direction of the nation's affairs.[9]

Quaker spokesmen were generally tolerant of the Protectorate at its commencement in December 1653. It could be said of the Protectorate, after all, that it was merely the latest example of gubernatorial engineering by a God contemptuous of rigid forms of government: now the Quakers looked to Cromwell with some expectation that he would advance freedom of conscience still further by amending penal sanctions such as the Blasphemy Act. Nevertheless, Quakers quickly became disillusioned with the Protectorate: imprisonment of its leaders was compounded by the proclamation of February 1655 designed especially to counter perceived Quaker intimidation and disruption of ministers which it alleged were poisoning the nation's relationship with God and blackening the memory of the great foundation-mercies upon which the republic rested. Additionally, the institution of the Major Generals, the failure of tithe reform and the system of Triers and Ejectors all showed that the Protectorate appeared to be moving in the wrong direction, that is away from an experience of the Spirit and towards the realm of the Beast. The Humble Petition and Advice in 1657 with its narrower definitions of what was tolerable in the sphere of religious devotion, Cromwell's flirtation with monarchy and the reinstitution of compulsory church attendance, convinced many observers that the fruits of revolution were at risk.[10]

Quakers like William Dewsbury embraced their role as martyrs with enthusiasm; their persecution constituted a mark of grace and was emblematic of their status as prophets in the tradition of supposedly charismatic early Christianity. With this in mind, Quaker tracts often display a deep-seated consciousness of victimhood and resentment; oppression and imprisonment confirmed the Quakers' prejudices and provided the

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[9] Sean Kelsey, *Inventing a Republic* (Manchester, 1997), pp. 30-39, 53-68, 152, 200-212; Roy Sherwood, *The Court of Oliver Cromwell* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 15-6, 26-30, 41-5, 135-6; *idem*, *Oliver Cromwell: King in all but Name, 1653-1658* (Stroud, 1997), pp. 4-20, 45-53, 118-21, Chapter 13.

motive power behind their fiery providentialism: that God would rescue, vindicate and avenge His servants. Furthermore, the prophetic quality of the Quakers' pronouncements lent their jeremiads additional legitimacy since there was now no justification for the nation's civil and military leaders to misinterpret the Lord's warning signals since they were spelt out in plain English.[11]

George Fox, for example, appealed to the first Protectorate Parliament in 1654 to avoid the mistakes of the Rump and Nominated Parliaments, demanding that they remain faithful to the Inner Light of their consciences in order to cleanse the land of iniquity. He was soon to be disappointed: the legislature quickly proclaiming a national fast aimed at the sectarians and designed to combat loose opinions that had regrettably 'turned the grace of God into wantonness'. Parliament had chosen instead to repudiate the indwelling Light and without rapid reformation, they could expect humiliation at the hands of the Lord.[12] James Nayler similarly bewailed the disappointment of the hopes and expectations of the youthful revolution, questioning whether the nation had 'looked for Reformation, but all in vain'. Nayler told the leadership of the Army that 'God is highly displeased with you, and He will not establish you, who have neglected Mercy and Justice'. The nation's rulers did not fear the Lord as of old; rather they had hardened themselves against God, neglecting His merciful dispensations to threaten liberty of conscience. [13] In a similar vein, William Dewsbury wrote that Christ's army, raised in the north of England but marching south, represented a 'mighty power to cut down high and low, rich and poor, Priest and People, and all the Powers of the Land . . . that are fruitless trees'. He reminded the nation's rulers that God's power had disposed of over-mighty bishops, Lords and King, and warned that God would not prosper the government until the judges, lawyers and priests were reformed or purged. Then, and

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[10] *Politicus*, vol. 10, pp. 333-4.
[11] On tithes, see Barry Reay, 'Quaker Opposition to Tithes, 1652-1660', *PP*, 86 (1980).
[12] Fox, *A Message from the Lord, to the Parliament of England* (1654), BL TT E 812 (2), pp. 1-4, 8; *A Warning From the Lord To all such as hang down the head for a Day* (1654), BL TT E 813 (15), pp. 1-6. For the text of the fast order, see BL TT E 1064 (46).
[13] Nayler, *A Collection of Sundry Books, Epistles and Papers Written by James Nayler* (1716), pp. 53-4, 95, 99-107, 165-7, 188-190.

only then, Dewsbury told Cromwell and the supporters of the Protectorate, 'would the mighty power of God go along with you in your ways'.[14]

The Triers and Ejectors and the regime of the Major Generals deepened Quaker scepticism of the Protectorate. The stiff-necked and indurate, guilty of shedding the innocent blood of the saints, would be held to account by God and suffer a similar fate to their antichristian predecessors, the bishops.[15] Fox noted a terrible silence in the nation: the silence of an absence of fear in the Lord. Too many were guilty of hawking their fleshy lusts in dancing, fencing and playing ball, and he predicted a 'day of howling' that would bury the hypocrisy and dissemblance that disguised these sinful pursuits beneath a veneer of godly propriety.[16] James Parnell, a prominent Quaker sufferer, warned that mockery of the Quakers was likely to earn the clergy a sharp rebuke from heaven.[17] Dewsbury reminded the rulers of the world that their reign self-love was at an end: 'sudden destruction, as a whirlwind, shall overtake you'. England in particular lay in a 'lost and fallen state, separated from the true and living God by [its] iniquities'; its magistrates would be required to answer before the Lord for 'inventing evil devices against the innocent'.[18] More specifically, George Rofe in 1656 charged Cromwell with apostasy: 'thou art fallen from thy first integrity'. The Lord Protector had set up a tyranny, but would be held to account by God for his persecution of the Quakers. Meanwhile, Cromwell's army officers, once so assiduous in trying to please the Almighty now were reduced to pleasing themselves, but, concluded Rofe ominously, 'God resisteth the proud'.[19] James Nayler reminded Cromwell that God had given him success on the battlefield in order to protect and extend freedom of conscience; the Lord Protector was not to squander this inheritance but build Sion upon its foundations.[20] Nayler's comments, though, did not fall on deaf ears since Fox appears to have enjoyed

[14] William Dewsbury, *A True Prophecy of the Mighty Day of the Lord, Which is coming* (1654), BL TT E 726 (15), pp. 1, 6-12.
[15] George Whitehead, *The Path of the Just Cleared* (1655), BL TT E 860 (7), pp. 8-9, 13, 24-6; *The Saints Testimony Finishing Through Sufferings* (1655), BL TT E 857 (7), pp. 11-12.
[16] Fox, *The Vials of the Wrath of God* (1654), pp. 5-11.
[17] Parnell, *The Trumpet of the Lord Blowne* (1655), BL TT E 830 (5), pp. 1-2, 6-11.
[18] Dewsbury, *The Mighty Day of the Lord is Coming* (1656), BL TT E 863 (5), pp. 2, 6; Edward Smith, 'Life of William Dewsbury', in *The Friends' Library*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, 1838), pp. 255-7. See also, George Fox, *A Voice of the Lord to the Heathen* (1656) which describes the national alienation from God
[19] Rofe, *The Righteousnes of God to Man* (1656), BL TT E 885 (3), pp. 12-13.
[20] Nayler, *A Collection*, pp. 183-8.

a measure of success in eliciting a sympathetic reaction from Cromwell when he recommended that the Lord Protector keep from hardness of heart and that he seek to obey the voice of God.[21]

The Quakers were confronted with the disapproval and hostility of the authorities and various pamphlet writers, and this grew more pronounced with the publicity surrounding the Nayler controversy and with the increasingly conservative-minded civilian component to national politics towards the end of Oliver Cromwell's life. Quaker refusal to participate in national thanksgivings and fasts, implying as it did a denial of the myth of the providential underpinning of the republic promoted so enthusiastically by the Cromwellians, raised the suspicion that they were generally unwilling to accept civil jurisdiction.[22] This was an erroneous belief: Quaker tracts proclaim the willingness of their writers to adhere to the civil government and most probably believed that the Commonwealth and Protectorate, however flawed, were preferable to the Babylonish captivity of the royalist era. Criticism of the Quakers tended to follow the traditional approach of that arch heresy-hunter of the 1640s, Thomas Edwards, by warning that the nation faced the wrathful arrows of God for not suppressing the Quakers and other 'heretics' with sufficient rigour. Thus Samuel Morris argued that the relative tolerance afforded to the Quakers demonstrated that there was 'no truth . . . nor knowledge of God in the land'. He urged his readers to distance themselves from damnable heresies, or risk contracting the divine punishment that was certain to follow on from these errors.[23] Richard Baxter accused the Quakers of ignoring providences that unequivocally demonstrated the hand of God against them. However, he struck a warning note when he reminded his readers that the Quakers and other sectarians were a 'spiritual plague' sent by the Almighty against a sinful population, an all too visible testimony of the Lord against the recalcitrant people.[24] The veteran controversialist, William Prynne, argued that the Quakers were the foot soldiers in a

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[21] John Nickalls ed., *The Journal of George Fox* (Cambridge, 1952), p. 199-200.
[22] *CSPD, 1655*, p. 183.
[23] Samuel Morris, *A Looking-Glasse For the Quakers or Shakers* (1655), BL TT E 830 (17), pp. 2-4. See also Thomas Underhill, *Hell Broke Loose or an History of the Quakers* (1659), BL TT E 770 (6), sig., A2, pp. 17-39. For an excellent list of anti-Quaker tracts, c. 1655-9, see George Fox, *The Great Mistery of the Great Whore Unfolded* (1659).
[24] Baxter, *The Quakers Catechism* (1655), BL TT E 842 (22), sig. B2, p. 5.

papist conspiracy to destroy the republic. He pointed to supposed doctrinal similarities between the Roman Catholics and the Quakers, such as a repudiation of predestination, to support this assertion. In both cases, their heretical opinions and spirit of rebellion directed at the governing powers distinguished them both as instruments of divine correction and the recipients of divine wrath.[25]

Quaker agitation arguably reached a height in response to the events of 1659. The dissolution of Richard Cromwell's parliament and the reinstitution of the Rump encouraged some Quakers to view this development as a welcome return to primitive simplicity that might ease their suffering and expedite far reaching social and religious reforms.[26] A delighted George Fox spoke of the movement's deliverance out of the mouths of hirelings, meaning corrupt clergy. Now the Lord was arisen, Fox believed that He would work to gather the righteous, break their enemies and 'grind them to powder'.[27] The Quaker leadership initiated a petitioning campaign designed to secure the release of Quaker prisoners that drew a comparison between their persecution and the sufferings of protestants under Mary Tudor. Recent popular provincial agitation against Quakers reinforced their faith that as a persecuted minority, they might expect the special protection of the Almighty.[28] Other Quakers warned the Rump not to waste this evident blessing, reminding its members that the Parliament's unexpected reconstitution had placed its members on probation: the fate of the Rump in 1653 showed what happened when a dissatisfied God turned on His erstwhile servants.[29]

(ii) The Fifth Monarchy Men

The Fifth Monarchists were a political movement drawn predominantly from the radical sects that predicted the imminent creation of the Kingdom of Christ prophesied by the Book of Daniel. The Fifth Monarchists believed political power should be

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[25] Prynne, *The Quakers Unmasked* (1655), BL TT E 843 (6); *idem.*, *A New Discovery of Some Romish Emissaries, Quakers* (1656), BL TT E 495 (2).
[26] *The Declaration and Proclamation of the Army of God* (1659), BL TT E 985 (26), p. 4.
[27] Fox, *Mistery*, Epistle.
[28] *A Declaration of the Present Sufferings of above 140 Persons of the People of God* (1659), BL TT E 977 (7), pp. 25, 32-7.

transferred to the saints who would govern by way of a Sanhedrin that would enforce Mosaic Law. Their confident prediction of imminent revolutionary change, coupled with a well developed organisation, ensured that they aroused the suspicions of the authorities, who feared their intention was to hasten the downfall of the government by violent means, not least following the dissolution of the Barebones Parliament. The movement has received the attention of a number of scholars including Louise Brown and Bernard Capp, who have highlighted their strongly millenarian providentialism at political turning points such as the regicide. The purpose of this short section will be to supplement these comments by a closer study of the providential belief of a number of its leading supporters: Fifth Monarchist criticism helped fragment the republican-sectarian coalition and discredit its reading of providence, making the Restoration possible.[30]

Christopher Feake (1612-1683?), a prominent London clergyman during the Commonwealth period, campaigned tirelessly against the corruption of the Rump and later against the Protectorate. For his pains he was imprisoned at Windsor and later on the Isle of Wight along with fellow Fifth Monarchist, John Rogers. Feake complained that pride had caused the 'mighty men of war', the victors of Edgehill, Dunbar and Worcester, to grow lazy, 'Princes of Babylon' interested now only in acquiring and retaining the spoils of vanquished royalists. Feake refused to acknowledge the lawfulness of the Protectorate, though he sensibly submitted to its judgment over him as the will of God. Nevertheless, he continued to inveigh against his gaolers, describing Cromwell as an apostate and hypocrite and predicting his punishment at the hands of a jealous God. Feake argued that the Almighty had delivered the nation from the royalist Babylon, giving England a golden opportunity to return the land to a fruitful original purity. During this early stage, which reached its apogee in 1651, the nation's leaders had impressed the godly with the spirit of prayer that had animated Whitehall and had turned its dead bricks into a living monument to providence. Yet Feake complained that since the battle of Worcester, the nation's magistrates, civilians and army-men alike, had

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[29] John Hodgson, *Love and Kindness . . . By Way of Warning to the Parliament* (1659), BL TT E 988 (12), pp. 3-8.

succeeded in exalting themselves and diminishing reliance on God: the steadily rising number of prophecies and providences showered on the nation in the mid-1650s showed that 'the powers of Heaven be shaken'. Furthermore, the very level of sinfulness now apparent to Feake, 'the inexpressible wickedness and sadness of these times', served itself as an 'unerring sign and token of the certainty and neerness of deliverance', since as far as the saints were concerned, the darkest skies prefigured the dawn rising. The Lord would soon appear to discover and punish the falsehood and 'prodigious perfidiousness' of an adulterous generation of men, while the remnant of Fifth Monarchists stood by to inherit Sion.[31]

John Canne (c.1590-c.1667) had pursued a career as a prominent separatist in Amsterdam before returning to serve under Robert Overton in Hull. He maintained a marked hostility to the Rump and welcomed its dissolution in April 1653 but subsequently broke with Cromwell and proved one of the most critical voices warning that God's fearsome destructive capabilities might soon be turned on the Lord Protector and his acolytes. In June 1653, for example, he warned Cromwell not to follow in the footsteps of Charles I who had signally failed to interpret the lessons of Daniel, or to make use of the mercies he had enjoyed to improve the kingdom, a prominent sign of profaneness being an inability to recognise the writing on the wall. Like many of the republic's natural supporters, Canne had expressed confidence in 1649 that England under the Rump would be an example to the whole world 'of minding God's providence, and improving His mercy'. It had soon disappointed in this capacity, however, and suffered an appropriate fate at Cromwell's hands, with Canne proclaiming his confidence in the replacement Barebones Parliament. Recent political developments had indicated that the time of the Lord was close when prophecies would be unsealed and God would 'move so contrary to mens expectations and self interest'; that strange, dreamlike period when confusions and contradictions would be reconciled marvellously

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[30] Louise Fargo Brown, *The Political Activities of the Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men* (1912); Bernard Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (1972); Philip Rogers, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (1966).
[31] Feake, *The New Non-Conformist* (1654), BL TT E 737 (1), preface and pp. 12, 22; *idem.*, *The Oppressed Close Prisoner In Windsor Castle* (1654), BL TT E 820 (10), pp. 37-9, 41, 44-8, 53; *idem.*, Epistle in Anon. *The Prophets Malachy and Isaiah Prophecying* (1656), BL TT E 888 (2), pp. 8, 10, 16, 28, 59-60, 66; *TSP* II, 88; Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, pp. 58-65.

and the fruit of God's intricate and infinite cleverness would be revealed to the amazement of the world.[32]

John Rogers (1627–1665?) had been a presbyterian minister but renounced this affiliation shortly before the regicide, becoming a celebrated critic of tithe maintenance. However, his criticism of the established powers was less pronounced than that of his Fifth Monarchist colleagues and he offered guarded support to Cromwell in December 1653, though his subsequent repeated arrest and imprisonment on charges of sedition probably diminished his confidence in the Lord Protector. Thus we find Rogers warning Cromwell that if he were to 'engage for Antichrist and his interests', then the prayers of the saints and the providence of God would ensure his downfall, significantly choosing as a sermon text at Newgate shortly afterwards in January 1654, Jeremiah 42: 20, which talks of the God's punishment of dissemblers and those who had betrayed their solemn pledges to the Almighty.[33] Cromwell on the eve of the Protectorate remained 'the Peoples Victorious Champion', charged by God with satisfying their just rights, though he and his colleagues awaited 'with confidence for the next notorious change in England' that Rogers correctly predicted was imminent. Rogers' conviction that apostates were drawing down the divine arrows became more pronounced during 1654, no doubt enhanced by his very personal sense of grievance that accompanied his arrest in that year. The new government was sinful and iniquitous and had allowed private gain to replace the noble common interest of the war years. Instead of the saints uniting under the warm glow of communion in adversity, sharing a hypersensitivity to the mazings of providence, they were confronted with a witheringly corrupting peace and silence from God. This state of affairs was also unforgivably unexciting and like many supporters of the republic, Rogers wished to relive on the national stage the drama and vividness of the experience of providence enjoyed between 1642-1651. In more private or intimate capacities, he did do so each day, along with the members of other gathered churches and congregations of the expectant, waiting in nervous tension for the call to battle, in the mean time trusting in faith and prayer as their only weapons. In 1657, Rogers was

[32] Canne, *The Improvement of Mercy* (1649), BL TT E 571 (20), pp. 2-5, 7-10; *A Voice From the Temple to the Higher Powers* (1653), BL TT E 699 (16), pp. 2-6, 9-10, 15-21.

still waiting patiently for divine vengeance against the apostates, though his earlier cautious, moderate interpretation of prophecy had surrendered in part to a more fervent and fevered prediction of Cromwell's downfall: indeed, the authorities could never be certain that the Fifth Monarchists did not intend to act on their reading of providence as the Army had done in December 1648 or April and December 1653, assisted by sympathetic patrons like Thomas Harrison.[34]

Disquiet within the ranks of the Army at the establishment of the Protectorate came to the fore with the opening of the first Protectorate Parliament in 1654. This saw the publication of a petition signed by several prominent officers including John Okey, Matthew Alured and Thomas Saunders, which declared that the 'price of our blood is brought to the utmost crisis of danger'. A war prosecuted for the cause of 'just rights' and 'liberties' and against the tyranny of Charles I was now in danger of being betrayed by its nominal guardians. The petition warned that the Army and Parliament would find itself answering to God should such hard-fought freedoms be lost through negligence.[35] Fear that God would scourge the saints for their delay in questioning the providential credentials of the Protectorate characterised Henry Vane's *A Healing Question*, a prominent 'honest party' manifesto published in 1656. Vane called for unity among Fifth Monarchists and Commonwealthsmen 'willing to follow [God's] providence'. Furthermore, he warned of a troubling 'great silence in heaven' since 1653, which he interpreted as a period of watching and waiting during which God was testing the saints' resolve. Vane predicted that England would contract an Achan-like guilt if the fruits of victory were for much longer 'mis-improved'. Angry words were insufficient: the Almighty demanded action against the Protectorate and the time was near when 'Heaven will speak again'.[36] An abortive Fifth Monarchist rising in London, set for April 1657, briefly answered Vane's call: its proclamation praised the early work of the Army and

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[33] On Rogers, see Greaves and Zaller eds *British Radicals*; Edward Rogers, *Some Account of the Life and Opinions of a Fifth–Monarchy Man* (1867), pp. 108-11.
[34] Rogers, *Sagrir: Or Doomesday Drawing Nigh* (1653), BL TT E 716 (1), Epistle, and p. 149; *idem.*, *Jegar-Sahadutha: An Oyled Pillar* (1657), BL TT E 919 (9); *idem.*, *Mene, Tekel, Perez. Or, A Little Appearance of the Hand-writing . . . Against the . . . Apostates of the Times* (1654), pp. 3, 8.
[35] H. G. Tibbutt ed., *Col John Okey, 1606-1662*, in *Bedfordshire Historical Record Society*, 35 (1955), pp. 64-8.

saints in the Long Parliament and Barebones. They had fulfilled God's purposes: instruments of salvation raised up by the Lord to loosen the nation's chains and put to death a tyrant king. But the apostate Cromwell had subsequently abandoned the work of the Lord, setting his face against the evidence of God's hostility to monarchy by resurrecting government in a single individual. God's presence had also been apparent in the Dutch war; its premature termination wasted the blessings enjoyed by the English navy. More recently, the Almighty had declared against Cromwell in the Hispaniola humiliation. Tyrant, hypocrite, apostate, the righteous judgment of God loomed before Cromwell now the standard of Christ was flying.[37] Ideally, God's purposes would be best served by the assassination of Cromwell, declared the authors of *Killing Noe Murder*, a pamphlet published in the wake of the Sindercombe plot of January 1657 and in the context of the kingship controversy. They argued that the Lord Protector's pride and ambition had replaced a free government by sword government: swift and summary divine punishment, delivered at the point of a dagger, would be a fitting reward for this self-appointed prince.[38]

What these examples show is the evident failure of the Commonwealth to construct a unanimous State-sponsored interpretation of providence that might sustain political decision-making and effect the transition from emergency government to a settlement that would indefinitely exclude from power the royalists and other pretenders. Providentialism, with the infinite potential variety of its combinations and recombinations always outgrew its restraints to offer its practitioners a multiplicity of possible national or local political outcomes. Arguably, in 1659, the political nation – civilian or military – was unable to reconcile these conflicting demands, or cope with the tensions implicit in this range of possibilities. Providences came thick and fast beginning with the death of Cromwell, followed by the fall of Richard Cromwell and his Parliament, the reinstatement of the Rump, the defeat of Booth's rising in August 1659, the eclipse of the Rump in October at the hands of John Lambert, the third and final

[36] Henry Vane, *A Healing Question*, (1656), BL TT E 879 (5), pp. 3, 6, 11, 14-5, 22-3.
[37] *A Standard Set Up*, (1657), BL TT E 910 (10), pp. 1-4, 7-8, 11-12, 22, 25.
[38] S. Titus and William Sexby, *Killing Noe Murder* (1657), BL TT E 501 (4).

appearance of the Rump in December, Monck's move on London arriving in February 1660 and the readmission of the secluded members of Parliament, the Convention and Restoration that followed in due course. God had evidently entered into an extraordinary period of accelerated creativity the outcome of which He chose mischievously to conceal from His faithful. The saints, for their part, delighted by the reawakening of the sovereign Lord, wallowed in His dispensations. It was precisely this self indulgence, risking as it did compromising the common interest of trade, and admitting the spread of the contagion of Ranterism and sectarian heresy by neglect of the Church – the original and best purpose of the civil war and regicide – that made the Restoration a viable proposition. The very confusion and tumult of the final months of the republic constituted the most severe test of resolve yet encountered by the saints and one they conspicuously failed. Consequently, and extraordinarily, many moderates, including former parliamentarians, undoubtedly came to believe that Charles II might safeguard the fruits of providence more successfully than the Long Parliament alone or by a fractious and disunited army. God had reviewed the republican combinations on offer between Cromwell's death and the intervention of Monck and had condemned each to short duration and inglorious life. Perhaps this pointed to some irretrievable sinfulness that had fatally and finally betrayed the Good Old Cause, a corruption located either among the faithful or the unregenerate mass of the population, in the mind of Milton and others, too ignorant or morally feeble to rise to the challenge of providence. Alternatively, and horrifyingly, lay the possibility that all along the true Good Old Cause had belonged to the family of blood, the Stuarts. What was more, the miraculous manner of the crown's reappearance and the rapid and painless disintegration of the republican interest strengthened these suspicions.

(iii) The Death of Cromwell and of the End of the Good Old Cause

Cromwell's death on the very day of mercies – 3 September – the anniversary of Dunbar and Worcester, undermined the compromise that had reconciled the Army high command, the radical junior officers, the civilian republicans or Commonwealthsmen, and the civilian Cromwellians. Cromwell's rule had depended in large measure upon his

position as a unifying Biblical type, a Moses, Joshua, David or Solomon, a divine instrument blessed by repeated success on the battlefield until 1651, his survival from numerous internal conspiracies thereafter and spectacular triumphs on the high seas engineered by Blake, 'Truths defender, Spains destroyer'. Cromwell's demise removed any prospect of a prolonged providential consensus, the 'Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace'.[39] Cromwell's death was a bitter blow to his colleagues, though not necessarily to the general population, as Ralph Josselin observed of his Essex neighbours.[40] The judgment was, however, lessened by virtue of the easy succession of his son, Richard. It had been feared that God might take the opportunity of Cromwell's death to cast the nation into a period of possibly violent confusion. Richard's succession minimised this possibility, as John Thurloe noted with relief: he and other moderate Cromwellians had most to lose if the Army were to challenge the hand-over. Thurloe declared the death a 'stroke . . . so sore, so unexpected, the providence of God in it so stupendious', that he was compelled to abase himself and search out the true cause of the judgment. Submission to the divine will became Thurloe's refuge. However, while providence had removed Oliver, it had raised up Richard, and Thurloe remained confident at the beginning of the new year, 1659, that the Lord would bless the continuity of the constitution, telling Henry Cromwell that the 'cause is as good as ever, and the same that it ever was'. If the saints were able to 'believe that God will be with us', Thurloe predicted, 'he will be with us'.[41] Dr Edward Worth, a leading Irish cleric, shared Thurloe's optimism, suggesting that though God had punished the British nations for either undervaluing or overvaluing Oliver Cromwell, He had softened the reproof by virtue of the mercy that was the smooth transition to the personal rule of Richard Cromwell. He reminded Thurloe that Moses was never to enter Canaan; it had required Joshua to complete the return journey. Similarly, the reign of warrior David had been followed by that of the wise King Solomon and Worth suggested, however improbable

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[39] *OPH*, vol. 21, p. 276. Blake portrait, see George Harrison, *An Elegie on the Death of . . . Robert Blake* (1657), BL 669 f 20 (61).
[40] Alan Macfarlane ed., *The Diary of Ralph Josselin, 1616-1683* (Oxford, 1991), p. 430.
[41] *HMC 5th Report, Lechmere MSS*, p. 300; *TSP*, VII, 372-3, 497, 588.

in retrospect, that Richard might fulfil the positions occupied by his illustrious biblical predecessors.[42]

The diplomat George Downing argued that though Oliver's death was an undoubted chastisement for the sins of his people, he thought it unlikely this presaged a more general change in the form of government. The Lord, after all, had recently confounded designs against the Lord Protector such as the Sindercombe plot in January 1657 and Venner's abortive Fifth Monarchist rising in April 1657. Downing thought this showed that the time was not yet ripe for a divine overthrow of the existing order; instead God had without fuss installed Richard Cromwell as Protector.[43] Henry Cromwell threw himself upon God's will when he learnt of the death of his father. Like most correspondents had this time, he remained unsure of the eventual outcome now God had set the revolutionary ball rolling. 'God knows', he declared, 'what is in the womb of this severe stroke'. Thereafter, Henry recommended a programme of repentance and humiliation to petition mercy from God and he in particular warned against the adoption of the Fifth Monarchist solution of a Sanhedrin in any subsequent constitutional realignment. This would, he said, betray his father's dream of an inclusive religious settlement and implicate the general population in the sins of these heretical extremists, prolonging God's controversy with the nation. Instead, a specifically moderate, and Cromwellian, settlement, was the best solution to heal the breach with God.[44]

Cromwell's death on the noteworthy date of 3 September was an especially important sign of divine agency, a self-conscious expression of God's handiwork and dramatic reminder of human subordination to the government of the Lord. It also pointed to some crying sin such as a failure of the Protector to make proper use of the mercies of Dunbar and Worcester. The preacher Thomas Harrison declared in a Dublin humiliation sermon before the government of the territory that he was satisfied that the general population there recognised the significance of the event and were mourning Cromwell's passing with an eye upon their own sins and failings. He recommended that

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[42] Ibid., p. 401.
[43] Ibid., p. 379.
[44] Ibid., pp. 399, 454.

people redouble efforts to reform themselves since 'if the Lord make us a reforming People, we shall certainly be a preserved People'. Clearly the event demanded very public lamentation, not least because it was feared it would be succeeded by an 'inundation of calamities' such as those that followed Joshua's death. The revolutionary potential of the event was enhanced by the appearance of marked prodigies, such as celestial battles, witnessing the stirring of the Lord from His long providential slumber, but also by the fact that 1658 had been a plague year, and the year in which illness had dispatched the Lord Protector's daughter, Elizabeth. This pointed to the possibility that 1658 marked the beginning of a phase of more wide-ranging changes engineered by the Almighty.[45]

Richard's Council acknowledged this suggestion, instituting a fast to encourage the nation to pay proper attention to Oliver's death, 'to meet the Lord in the way, both of his judgements and of his mercies, in a solemn maner', and to accept this punishment for their sins.[46] Charles Fleetwood, too, feared the significance of Oliver Cromwell's demise, especially so soon after the signal mercy that characterised the capture of Dunkirk from the Spanish in June upon the very day of a fast proclaimed in order to assist the work of the expeditionary army. That God would turn this triumph to dust in so short a space of time was a slap in the face of the faithful and alarming evidence of the Lord's indignation. Fleetwood insisted that all people pay attention to the fearful dispensation: the death of the great and good was especially significant and noteworthy and in this case Fleetwood believed that it was a warning against security and complacency. Fleetwood's pessimism was more pronounced than in John Thurloe because Fleetwood did not greet the protectorate of Richard Cromwell with uncritical relief and enthusiasm. The full consequences of Oliver's death would only become apparent with time, Fleetwood told Henry Cromwell in November 1658. The true 'bottom' of the dispensation remained encrypted and hidden, running silent and invisible

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[45] John Rowland, *Upon the much Lamented Departure of the High and Mighty Prince Oliver* (1658). BL 669 f 21 (11); Thomas Harrison, *Threni Hybernici; Or, Ireland Sympathising With England and Scotland* (1659), pp. 4-6, 12-23; George Lawrence, *A Good Prince Bewailed by a Good People*, (1658), BL TT E 959 (4), pp. 16, 24; *A True Relation of a Very Strange and Wonderful Thing*, (1658), BL TT E 955 (4); *The Publick Intelligencer* 141-2, August-September 1658, BL TT E 756 (20, 22), pp. 794-6, 801; Robert Ramsey, *Henry Cromwell* (1933), p. 246.
[46] *A Declaration . . . For a Day of Publique Fasting*, BL 669 f 21 (15).

in channels below the realm of the senses: 'this will not be a blow felt now', wrote Fleetwood, but was a providence that called for 'deep heart-searching', a commitment to 'search and try [our] ways' and 'improve the season'. Fleetwood believed the recent shakings of the nation taught what 'an uncertaine abiding place we have here', and he was concerned the Army and other public bodies should do nothing to provoke God at this delicate moment while men waited to see which direction the Lord would cast affairs. Considering Fleetwood's now premier position among the senior officers, his current 'wait and see' policy, combined with an impatience to 'improve the season', is important in explaining the course of events during the subsequent twelve months. This is because it was typical of a hypersensitivity and hence over-reaction to the smallest indications of a change in the direction of God's plans that demanded the attention of the faithful, but also to an ignorance of God's intentions in the post-Oliver period. The style of politics that stemmed from this paradox reflected a prudent caution in the early days following Oliver's death, but also exhibited the signs of an undignified scramble to keep pace with God in the latter stages, as expressed in the frequent changes of government during 1659-60.[47]

During the weeks and months that followed the succession, the new Protector received the endorsement of the civil authorities and of gathered churches in many counties and boroughs and from army units throughout the British Isles. These tended to reflect moderate elements within the republican constituency, rather than the sects or Commonwealthsmen. Collectively, they bewailed the 'heavy dispensation' of Oliver Cromwell's death and bemoaned the sins of the people that had incited God to deprive the nation of their 'Captain'. Oliver is remembered in these addresses as having 'great acquaintance with the Lord' via his prayers, from which army and people had reaped the benefits in repeated merciful deliverances. Now not least of these was the smooth transition of power to Richard: God had carried away Moses but supplied a Joshua to perfect the work of reformation and heal divisions in 'our little Judah'. September was a month of prayers; of humiliation and thanksgiving that reflected apprehension at the original causes of the stroke, combined with relief at the revival of fortunes and a

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[47] *TSP*, VII, 367, 493, 582.

commitment to rededicate the nation to its duties of theodicy and permanent reformation.[48]

Richard Cromwell quickly summoned a parliament that convened in January 1659, accompanied by copious prayers and a national fast to petition God for its success. In speeches at its opening on 27 January, the Lord Protector and his Lord Keeper, Nathaniel Fiennes, paid due attention to the 'All-disposing Hand of God' in current events. The Almighty, declared Fiennes, 'doth . . . chequer out his Work unto us, and seemeth to pave his way amongst us in Black and White', alternating Oliver's death with the blessings of peace an unworthy nation now enjoyed. The patience and loyalty of the Army in recent times was also a noticeable blessing, said Fiennes, though in reality it had soon become divided over the merits of the new Protector, with the high command coming under increasing pressure from its junior officers alarmed in particular by Richard's civilian advisers such as Broghill and Thurloe.[49]

Opponents of the new parliament rallied to the defence of the 'Good Old Cause', a slogan that encapsulated the nostalgic longing for the passionate intensity of the early glory days, a response to the blunting of the movement's hard edge down to the cosy conviviality of a fireside-Calvinism with its perennial forgetfulness of God. Its very articulation symbolised the absence of unity within the movement and its inability to guarantee civil and spiritual liberty and reflected to an extent a generational gap: its supporting myths of providential salvation during the war years meant less with the passing of each year, the spontaneity of its thanksgivings having hardened by repetition into mere legalistic formulae that dishonoured God. As a tetchy Nathaniel Bourne observed, many members of the new Protector's Parliament were simply too young to appreciate the significance of the miracles of the 1640s by which God had delivered the nation out of the Caroline Egypt, and were similarly unable to comprehend the motives that drove Fleetwood, Disbrowe, Sydenham and other of the older army officers to confront the Parliament. Many supporters of the original revolution had therefore become excited with the possibilities that became available after Oliver Cromwell's

[48] *Politicus*, vol. 18, pp. 85-462, vol. 19, pp. 14-15, 40-41.

death, including those like Robert Overton, John Okey and Matthew Alured that had previously expressed their indifference or hostility to the Protectorate. The fall of Richard's Parliament in April 1659 and the demise of the Protectorate soon after confirmed their fears about the nation's disengagement with God, but were also hopeful signs to many that God now intended to give the nation another chance to perfect the reformation and sanctify the revolution.[50]

The dissolution of Richard's Parliament was preceded by a Council of War and a giant prayer conference involving up to 500 officers at Wallingford House, Fleetwood's London headquarters. The meeting was addressed by John Owen, now identified with the Army high command and the Good Old Cause, and by John Disbrowe, who voiced his fear that God's blessing of the Army might shortly end. He warned that the 'Sons of Belial' had crept in and that only a wholesale purge would eradicate these elements and stave off a likely judgment. The opposition of Broghill, Goffe and Whalley to these tests suggested Disbrowe had in mind such supporters of the Protectorate when he made his 'Sons of Belial' address, and it was therefore unsurprising when Okey and Lambert among other 'exiles' replaced these protesters who were quickly cashiered. The Army broadly backed the restoration of the Rump that had been dissolved in April 1653, overlooking the detail that they had themselves originally engineered its removal. Its recall was an acceptance by the Army that all the intervening attempts to plot a righteous course for the nation had been confounded by providence. The Army command declared that they had investigated why the Lord had apparently withdrawn His support from the Cause and had concluded that the best way to reacquire this favour was to place government back in the hands of legislators who had previously enjoyed 'a special presence of God with them', namely the purged Long Parliament. This crude attempt to associate with those who had once stood high in God's regard highlighted the danger that the revolution had run out of ideas and now had to resort to such unimaginative, retroactive politics rather than renegotiate their current relationship with God.[51]

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[49] *OPH*, vol. 21, pp. 265-81. *The Cause of God, and of these Nations* (1659), BL TT E 968 (11), pp. 4-11, speaks of a 'dangerous relapse' of court vanities and state-sponsored celebrations provoking an indignant God.

[50] Bourne account, see *Clarke Papers*, III, 209-17.

[51] *OPH*, vol. 21, pp. 358-9, 367-9.

The destruction of the Protectorate and recall of the Rump coincided with a pamphlet campaign on behalf of the Good Old Cause, inspired by an uneasy coalition of republicans like Arthur Hesilrige, mystics like the redoubtable Henry Vane, and providence-conscious officers. Tracts such as *The Plain Case of the Common-weal* in March 1659 invited the Army to revive past glories eclipsed by the apostasy of the Cromwellian period, dispensing with the Protector's Parliament and relieving the suffering of the saints by the recall of the blessed Long Parliament. Senior officers were warned that 'ever since the great revolt from [fundamental] principles' instigated by Oliver Cromwell, all schemes to 'espouse the National Pomp and Greatness' had been condemned to failure. The Army was urged to 'take Counsell together, as in the dayes of old, when the blessed presence of the Lord was like fresh springs of water in our souls', and to 'return into that path, where the Lord met you and owned you'. Now God had charged the Army with restoring the integrity of the revolution and it was important officers continued to pay close attention to providences and not rush to 'carnal reasonings' or compromise with 'painted interests'.[52]

The restored legislature was petitioned by several counties to purge the Army of moderate Cromwellians, to reform the law, abolish tithes and turn back the tide of profaneness of which many accounts complained. The new Parliament was demonstrably the contrivance of God, shown principally in its unexpected reappearance that demonstrated once again that the Lord delighted in confounding the expectations of men. The petitions were hopeful it would reverse the propensity for arbitrary imprisonment and cavalier disregard for parliamentary privilege apportioned to Oliver

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[52] *To his Excellencie the Lord Charls Fleetwood* (1659), BL 669 f 21 (24); *A Call to the Officers of the Army* (1659), BL TT E 968 (8), pp. 3-5; *The Plain Case of the Common-weal* (1659), BL TT E 972 (5), pp. 3, 6-9, 15-16, 33; J. R. , *The Sad Suffering Case of Major-General Robert Overton* (1659), BL TT E 972 (4); *A Secret Word to the Wise* (1659), BL TT E 986 (6); *A Declaration of the Well-affected to the Good Old Cause*, 2 May 1659, BL 669 f 21 (27); *Twelve Plain Proposals*, BL 669 f 21 (26); *An Invocation to the Officers of the Army, For Preventing their own and the Ruine of the Good Old Cause* (1659), BL TT E 979 (1), pp. 1, 5; *A True Copie of a Paper Delivered to Lt General Fleetwood . . . Wherein the Good Old Cause is Stated* (1659), BL TT E 979 (4), pp. 3-5; *To the Right Honourable The Lord Fleetwood . . . Humble Representation of divers . . . Persons of the City of Westminster* (1659), BL TT E 979 (5), pp. 1-2, 5; *Some Reasons . . . For the Speedy Re-admission of the Long Parliament* (1659), BL TT E 979 (8), pp. 6-7; *The Humble Petition and Advice of divers Well-affected to the Good Old Cause* (1659), BL TT E 980 (1), pp. 2-3, 5, 7-8; *A Declaration of the Faithful Soldiers of the Army* (1659), BL TT E 980 (7); *The Armies Dutie* (1659), BL TT E 980 (12), pp. 5-8; *A Faithful Remembrance and Advice*

Cromwell. However they were also highly conditional in their support, warning of the danger of forgetfulness of God and of the Rump revisiting the mistakes of its previous incarnation by being 'negligent in the worke of the Lord'.[53] George Monck and his officers in Scotland significantly struck a conciliatory note, reminding the political nation of the guilt of every man in provoking God into withdrawing from Israel. The new Parliament was a crucial, possibly final, opportunity provided by the Lord to unite the nation and settle the constitution permanently. This in the midst of vigorous debates inside and outside Parliament as to the nation's constitutional future, attracting the participation of John Milton and James Harrington among others. And significantly, this understanding that the true path of providence among the many false trails could be found in the efforts of those who sought a lasting settlement, became the most important contribution to discussion of the doctrine during the months leading up to the Restoration. In this view, frustrated by months of self indulgent in-fighting, God was now prepared to sponsor whichever settlement best guaranteed a peaceful outcome, even if that were to entail the readmission of the monarchy: the Army's former service to God and nation no longer carried the weight it had once done with the Lord and the Cause could not now command the automatic support of the Almighty but was forced to compete for attention in the market place of devotion.[54]

The reconstituted Rump moved quickly to proclaim a fast to warn of God's displeasure with the nation for the failure of its leaders to stamp out blasphemy and atheism. Signs of conservative resistance to wholesale reformation, reflected in anti-sectarian sentiment and in its refusal to abolish tithe maintenance, together with the factional intrigue within the new Parliament as the Vanists and Hesilrige's interest parted company, damaged sectarian and other radical confidence in the legislature. The Quakers in particular imposed unrealistically high expectations on the Parliament, an institution they now claimed was on trial before the Almighty and enjoying one final

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to the General Council of Officers (1659), BL TT E 980 (16), pp. 1-5. Quotations from E 980 (16), pp. 3, 5 and E 968 (8), p. 3.

[53] For examples of these petitions, for Hertfordshire, Southampton, Kent and Bedfordshire, see BL 669 f 21 (32), (40), (45), (51). Quotation from 669 f 21 (51). On the sudden reappearance of the Rump as a providence, see *A Short discourse Concerning the Work of God* (1659), BL TT E 986 (19), p. 4; *A Commonwealth and Commonwealthsmen Asserted and Vindicated* (1659), BL TT E 988 (19), p. 3; *A Word of Settlement in these Unsettled Times* (1659), BL TT E 995 (12), pp. 3-4.

opportunity to perfect the work of God. Its predecessors had suffered for ignoring God's warnings; now the suffering of the saints must end if it were not to disappear in a blast of righteous indignation from on High. Edward Burrough, for example, towards the end of the year warned the Lord would 'rebuke the mighty' for the sake of the Quakers, attacking a 'spirit of arrogance and cruelty' on the part of the authorities despite the opportunity for reconciliation provided by the Lord in the form of mercies during the course of 1659.[55] John Canne, among the Fifth Monarchists now anxiously awaiting God's next move, praised the restoration of the Rump as a great work of God, but remained undecided whether the Almighty intended to heal the nation's breaches or deepen its wounds. He appeared pessimistic about the chances of the Rump avoiding the destructive self-love of the old Long Parliament. Christopher Feake's *A Beam of Light* was typical of the guarded optimism of addresses made by the Fifth Monarchists at the outset of the new parliament in May 1659. Feake celebrated this evidence of recent 'very strange and extraordinary mutations and shakings, as if the old Heaven and Earth were giving place to the new Heavens'. These matched those of the 1640s, the high point in the glorious Cause that reached its peak at Worcester and in the Dutch War, that millenarian adventure so close to radical hearts. The War had been betrayed by 'its pretended friends', but now the saving remnant was at hand to petition God to exercise vengeance on 'that spirit of Hypocrisy and Apostacy, which was carrying us back to the Garlic and Onions of Egypt'. The *Beam* provided a manifesto for action among Fifth Monarchists impatient with the rate of progress in the appearance of Christ's Kingdom; a calling to an army of providential recruits whose time was at hand to step into the breach should the restored Rump prove to disappoint expectations.[56]

Criticism of the Rump's progress came not least from the ranks of Lambert's forces in the wake of their defeat of Booth's Cheshire rising in August 1659. Hence the so-called 'Derby Petition' raised by Lambert's officers in September, and the General

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[54] *OLP*, vol. 21, pp. 414-7.

[55] Barry Reay, 'The Quakers and 1659: two newly discovered broadsides by Edward Burrough', *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, 54 (1977), pp. 106-11.

[56] *A Declaration of the Lord Protector*, 18 May 1659, BL TT E 983 (8); John Hodgson, *Love, Kindness and Due Respect, By Way of Warning to the Parliament* (1659), BL TT E 988 (12); *The Fifth Monarchy, Or Kingdom of Christ . . . Asserted* (1659), BL TT E 993 (31); Canne, *A Seasonable Word To the*

Council's own declaration in October that spoke of the recent dangerous experience of apostasy and the need for civil and religious liberties to be guaranteed under the stewardship of senior commanders – Fleetwood, Desbrowe and Monck – who had enjoyed the personal endorsement and protection of God, but who were now being sidelined.[57] The Rump boasted prominent advocates, however, not least John Milton who suggested it enjoyed the special protection of the Lord.[58] Some of the more radical officers such as Okey and Alured also bemoaned the intervention of the grandees in October, though they predicted the imminent fall of 'sword-government' beneath the destructive arrows of a jealous God acting on behalf of the ideal form of government: a free and popular parliament.[59] Robert Overton, Governor of Hull, similarly observed of the recent confusion of events that like Israel of old 'we knew not where to pitch our tents'. Overton had been unimpressed by the Rump: too many of its members were, he said, mere Court creatures and 'kingling champions'. Now Fleetwood, Monck and the other senior officers had an opportunity to make amends for their former apostasy, but ominously, Overton suggested that if reconciliation should fail, it should be 'an occasion for your final fall', an eventuality hastened by Monck's mobilisation of forces north of the border, and an event described by Overton as 'diametrically [opposed to] the design of God'.[60]

Monck indeed quickly emerged as the most prominent critic of the Committee of Safety when it had replaced the Rump in October. Monck and his army in Scotland, which he set about purging of supporters of Fleetwood and Lambert, became the focus of the expectations of a wide constituency of men sympathetic to the Rump that in addition to moderate Cromwellians like its commander-in-chief, numbered republicans such as Hesilrige among its ranks. Monck, Fleetwood, Owen and Lambert all exchanged

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Parliament Men (1659), BL TT E 983 (1), pp. 1-3; Feake, *A Beam of Light* (1659), BL TT E 980 (5), Preface and pp. 20-22, 31-4, 44-8, 51-9.

[57] Sir Richard Baker, *A Chronicle of the Kings of England* (1679), p. 635; *A Declaration of the General Council of the Officers of the Army* (1659), BL TT E 1001 (12), pp. 3, 5, 7-8.

[58] Milton, *Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings* and *A Letter to a Friend* in Wolfe ed., *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, VII, 274, 324-8. For this view, see also George Bishop, *Mene Tekel* (1659), BL TT E 999 (13).

[59] *TSP*, VII, 771-4.

[60] Robert Overton, *The Humble and Healing Advice of Colonel Robert Overton* (1659), pp. 1-6.

a series of letters justifying their positions in terms of the workings of providence. These accompanied the reorganisation of the Scottish army by Monck and fears that it would shortly invade England. Monck claimed recent upheavals were evidence of intended mercies and he thought it especially significant that he detected a sense of misery and a spirit of prayer in the nation. This showed that the people longed now for a permanent settlement: Monck suggested this shift in opinion was God's work and that its conclusion was close at hand. Furthermore, Monck interpreted recent developments as a sign from God calling him to intervene in English politics against arbitrary government and in defence of free parliaments. Monck was careful to distance his actions from talk of secret negotiations with the exiled Charles Stuart and maintained that he only acted in the best interest of the Good Old Cause. Were the Cause to be betrayed by its erstwhile protectors, Monck argued, then they would be left vulnerable to the charge that their actions during the 1640s and 50s had been unconscionable all along as the royalists maintained, and consequently likely to be punished by God. The Good Old Cause, in this view, had to be continually vindicated and rededicated if veterans were not to now suffer for their sins. What was more, God had signalled His impatience with the self-interested diversions of the Army and a political nation engaged in reliving old disputes instead of furthering God's glory, the primary purpose of civil society. The time had come to settle the nation and providence would support the man who recognised this fact and acted decisively to protect God's honour.[61]

How far did Monck himself endorse these justifications, addressed as they were to among the most solemn providentialists in England? Monck was a conventionally religious man who throughout his career exhibited a soft providentialism, conscious of God's handiwork in time of crisis but reluctant to draw hard conclusions from its visitations. A sanguine man, he was careful to do his duty in relation to his superiors and the Almighty where he believed this supported the national interest. The political confusion that followed the death of the Protectorate provided such a test of his loyalty for his moderate principles: confidence in the sense and sensibility of a free and full parliament and a religious settlement that would exclude the sectarians rising rapidly

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[61] *HMC 6th Report, Duke of Argyll's Papers*, p. 616; *OPH*, vol. 22, pp. 4-6, 7, 40, 46-8, 51, 88-90; *Clarke Papers*, IV, 70, 75-6, 89-91, 114, 151-4.

during the course of 1659 and with whom he had come into conflict in his capacity as commander-in-chief in Scotland. The latter were a clear sign that decisive action was required to prevent a descent into antichristian confusion and he argued that God would support him in this work.[62]

The Council of Officers and their allies denied that the dissolution of the Rump was a unilateral action motivated by private greed, but rather a necessity: 'that which the providence of the most wise God prepared to our hands, and led us out to'. They reasserted their commitment to liberty and a free state, but acknowledged that the providence evident in the Booth episode had convinced senior officers that God now demanded reform of government. Booth's rebellion was no accident, but a signal for the grandees to act quickly to settle the constitution in the interests of the saints. They indicated that providence was 'working things towards a closure', but warned Monck that God would look with displeasure upon any needless bloodshed initiated by the Scottish army. At the very least, Monck and his colleagues were hindering 'a Work the Providence of God [that] is carrying on', and therefore could expect little mercy from the Almighty.[63]

Restoration emerged from a mood of public weariness with the absence of settlement and longed-for constitutional stability, and from fear of sectarian-inspired anarchy. There was also a sense in which God had acted to reconcile the parties concerned and to magnify His name through an unambiguous demonstration of sovereignty. Hence the manner of Restoration – peacefully and without the intervention of foreign armies, and speedily when a substitute republican constitution still appeared the most likely option to emerge from the ruins of the Protectorate – was probably thought more important than the fact that it took place at all. Few had ever doubted that monarchy was consistent with God's law, only that in recent years particular kings had suffered the consequences of their rebellion against the divine superintendent.

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[62] See above, pp. 163-4.

[63] *Clarke Papers*, IV, 63, 72, 121-4; *OPH*, vol. 22, pp. 15-16; Peter Toon ed., *The Correspondence of John Owen* (Cambridge and London, 1970), pp. 106-13; *A True Copy of a Message Sent to General Monck*, (1659), BL 669 f 22 (1); The *Humble Representation and Petition of the Officers of the Army*, (1659), BL TT E 1000 (5); *A Declaration of the General Council of the Officers of the Army*, (1659), BL TT E 1001 (12); *The Lord General Fleetwoods Answer* (1659), BL TT E 1010 (6); *A Timely Warning and Friendly Admonition to the Forces in Scotland* (1659), BL TT E 1010 (18).

Controversialists like William Prynne laid the groundwork by predicting that the Army would be dashed to pieces by a wonder-working providence. The nation had to be prepared, said Prynne, to lay hold of the first available opportunity provided by God to readmit the King. Meanwhile, some Quakers began to chart a more quietist approach in their propaganda, recommending a peaceful, agreed constitutional solution that, while falling short of calling for the recall of Charles Stuart, nevertheless recognised that the republic had lost God's favour and that further changes should not be collectively resisted but that each man should fly to God in his own private devotions.[64]

The Restoration was an unexpected and profound mercy that bound up and healed twenty long years of divisions and bloodshed, magnifying the name of God, vindicating the anointed, and invigorating a fainting people. The amazing circumstances of its occurrence justified the silent prayers of a generation of exiles and sufferers and rejuvenated royalist faith in providence, but also demanded from erstwhile enemies suitable recognition of the *digitus Dei*. Leading royalists like Edward Hyde warned of the serious obstacles to a restored monarchy still faced by the Court during the opening months of 1660, making the actual event that much greater and more remarkable an occurrence. During this time, the Almighty brought the mind of George Monck into conformity with His will, assisted by the convergence of a series of mercies such as the notable City riots against the Committee of Safety in December 1659. The confusion of the enemy during the final period of the republic also pointed to the justice of the divine intervention: until Monck's loyalty could be assured, Hyde prayed that he and Lambert might engage and cancel each other out in a sublime moment of providential irony orchestrated by the divine impresario.[65]

The sudden readmission of the King in May 1660 contrary to the experience of the 1650s showed that God's will remained a mystery and able to confound the expectations of men. Clearly, it was dangerous or delusory for men to inquire too deeply into providences and take them at face value, a reassertion of the traditional Calvinist

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[64] Prynne, *A Brief Necessary Vindication of the Old and New Secluded Members* (1659), BL TT E 772 (2), p. 61; *idem*., *A Short, Legal . . . Prescription, to Recover our Kingdom* (1659), BL TT E 772 (1); *idem*., *The Signal Loyalty and Devotion of Gods True Saints* (1660), BL TT E 772 (5), p. 90; Edward Burrough, *A Declaration From the People Called Quakers* (1659), BL TT E 1011 (3), pp. 4-6.

position that had been overshadowed in recent years by a divinatory approach involving a degree of freedom of interpretation when assessing the significance of particular mercies and judgments. As Edward Parry, later to become an Irish bishop, remarked in 1660, God was capable of turning the 'greatest disorders to a perfect harmony'. Parry was typical of many preachers and commentators at this time who called for reconciliation between former enemies. Such voices included Richard Baxter, that apostle of religious unity. Thus he reminded the Commons during a fast sermon on 30 April 1660 that though a time of joy, the imminent Restoration required more than ever the nation's governors to locate, identify and expiate their sins: all men were to some extent responsible for attracting the divine displeasure manifest in the civil wars and the experience of the Interregnum and so he appealed for all to lay aside their differences and set out to reform the nation. John Price, preaching to the Commons on 10 May, similarly attributed the troubles of the recent generation to a universal propensity to sin and an equality in the apportioning of divine punishment. Price ascribed to all participants in the troubles – both royalists and parliamentarians – Achan-like responsibility for drawing down and prolonging the troubles. The story of the King's deliverance after the battle of Worcester combined with the anniversary of the martyrdom of Charles I to establish a new national calendar of thanksgiving; a suitable replacement for the commemoration of 3 September, but also one that to an extent respected the lessons of the republican national celebration of God's works. The Almighty had been justified in punishing the sins of the faithful, however misplaced the republicans' interpretations of its significance. This was consistent with the Breda Declaration itself in which the King had gone to great pains to stress the importance of indemnity for the Crown's former enemies, regicides excepted.[66]

Other commentators added their voices to the call for reconciliation based upon a shared appreciation of God's punishment of wrongdoing. Gilbert Sheldon spoke of the

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[65] Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion*, ed by W. Dunn Macray, 6 vols (Oxford, 1888), VI, 98-203; *Cl SP*, III, 605-6.
[66] Baxter, *A Sermon of Repentance*, BL TT E 1023 (14), pp. 3, 17, 34, 39; *idem.*, *A Holy Commonwealth* (1659), BL TT E 1729, p. 485; John Price, *A Sermon Preached before the . . . Commons*, BL TT E 1027 (1), Epistle, 26-7, 34-40, 36; For a list of contemporary and modern accounts of the escape, see W. A. Horrox, *A Bibliography of Literature Relating to the Escape and Preservation of Charles II After the*

gratitude owed to God for the great blessing, but also emphasised the collective guilt of the participants in the wars and the need to extend forgiveness to the former enemy under the umbrella of the binding, unifying deliverance of Restoration. John Gauden told the Commons the impending Restoration-miracle was undeserved and whilst admiring the 'wonderful revolutions and intricate riddles of Gods providence' since Charles II's miraculous escape from Worcester, he recommended to his audience the virtues of justice, mercy and humility and warned of the danger that presumption would rekindle the controversy with the Lord. Now was not the time for triumphalism: rather the Restoration was to be a sublime seal on the collective guilt, sanctification and promise of deliverance that was the nation's experience since 1642.[67] James Warwell, rector of Boxford in Suffolk, thought that by means of this pre-eminent providence, the nation's hearts would be knit together more closely to God. Simon Ford made reunion one of the main themes of a thanksgiving sermon in June 1660, celebrating the return of legitimate authority over illegal tyranny. Unlike the illegitimate Interregnum governments, the King was capable of representing all his subjects: the providence that had elevated Charles II was not merely permissive but acclamatory. Furthermore, the absence of bloodshed during the Restoration and the avoidance of foreign involvement in the episode were a singular and remarkable feature of the event that pointed to God's preference for pacification and accommodation.[68]

Perhaps the most important examples of reconciliation through the shared experience of mercies and judgments were a remarkable series of declarations and proclamations issued during March and April 1660 by royalist gentry in a swathe of counties ranging from Dorset and Shropshire in the West to London and Kent in the

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Battle of Worcester (Aberdeen, 1924); On post-1660 thanksgivings, see David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells* (1989), Chapter 11. Breda Declaration: BL TT E 765 (11).

[67] Gilbert Sheldon, *Davids Deliverance and Thanksgiving* (1660), BL TT E 1035 (1), pp. 29, 32, 33-6, 41-7; Gauden, *Gods Great Demonstrations and Demands* (1660), BL TT E 1023 (12), Epistle, pp. 5, 15, 63. Not all commentators endorsed reconciliation, warning that leniency sometimes attracted divine judgments: George Starkey, *Royal and Other Innocent Bloud Crying Aloud to Heaven for due Vengeance*, BL TT E 1032 (7), pp. 7-8, 10, 12.

[68] Robert Mossom, *England's Gratulation For the King and his Subjects Happy Union* (1660), BL TT E 1033 (12), p. 24; Gilbert Ironside, *A Sermon Preached at Dorchester* (1660), BL TT E 1034 (15), p. 17; *HMC 5th Report, Appendix*, p. 153; Ford, *The Loyall Subjects Exultation For the Royall Exiles* (1660), BL TT E 1038 (5), pp. 1-3, 7-8, 19, 28, 41-2; Warwell, *Votiva Tabula* (1660), BL TT E 1033 (4), pp. 2-4, 7, 9-11, 27, 73-4.

East. These differ in their details but share similarities in terms of style bearing the hallmark of Sir Edward Hyde who alludes to them in his subsequent *History*. They all celebrate the deliverance of the nation by God but acknowledge the justice of the chastisements meted out to the faithful since 1642. Their primary purpose, however, was to refute rumours that the resurgent royalists were plotting revenge on their erstwhile opponents at the first opportunity afforded by the readmission of the King, and to reassure sympathetic moderate presbyterians and others that they had nothing to fear from Restoration. Instead, a sober counter-revolution recognised that God had rightly punished the royalists, making a violent reaction now against the republicans and their allies more difficult to justify. Providence had declared against faction during twenty years of confusion that had now been brought to a close in a extraordinary act of unification binding collective wounds under the seal of a new covenant incorporating King, Lords, Commons and a restored Church of England. In essence, the declarations represented the fruit of Hyde's political agenda, pursued against the odds at Court since 1642. This comprised a patient waiting upon God to undermine iniquity, coupled with a necessary repentance and commitment to reform the royal cause: a myth of One-Nation royalism. Like its champion, the Chancellor, this was to flourish briefly during the 1660s before being confronted once again by the disturbing consequences of God's changeable temperament expressed in the form of denominational strife, factional intrigue and renewed international warfare.[69]

This chapter has demonstrated how the ambition to impose a unitary, Cromwellian conception of State-providentialism outlined in Chapters Five and Six foundered when confronted with the alternative readings inspired by Commonwealth republicanism. The Protectorship destroyed trust in Cromwell to honour the revolution's ideals and to sustain the momentum of reform. More importantly, this disjuncture from the early promise of the republic comprised a betrayal of a divine pattern reflected in the circumstances of victory in the war and the regicide, as endorsed by many soldiers and civilians, parliamentarians and laymen, sectarians and religious moderates. In this view God had witnessed against government in a single individual and was evidently

[69] Declarations, see BL TT 669 f 24 (1, 66, 67, 69, 74), f 25 (1, 2). Clarendon, *History*, VI, 211.

distrusting of a national Church. Cromwell's retention of a national ecclesiastical framework, his installation as Protector and flirtation with monarchy, and his distrust of sectarian 'heresy', therefore appeared to obstruct the work of the Lord. Cromwell's death in 1658 removed this hindrance to providence. The nation then entered into a period of sustained political excitement reflecting the diversity of alternative scenarios plotted and sustained by God: providentialism both refracted and projected this confusion and undoubtedly deepened its effects. The political flux encouraged experimentation as men struggled through a maze of often startlingly contradictory dispensations. Avenues and passages opened and closed in quick succession as republicans tested providence through a process of trial and error. The royalists exploited the consequent delay of permanent constitutional settlement: the King-in-waiting provided a tangible and persuasive providential motif that contrasted favourably with the confused and self-indulgent rehearsal of a variety of political outcomes characterising the post-Protectorate landscape. While republicans played games with providence, the royalists in contrast promised the peace and quiet of reconciliation, exploiting the suspicion that the shadowy and tortuous windings of providence were now leading inexorably towards the restoration of the monarchy.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

This conclusion is divided into two sections. The first part surveys recent scholarship on the development of providentialism beyond 1660, while the second section reviews the key findings of this thesis and makes a series of suggestions about the possible direction of future enquiry.

The Restoration predictably witnessed a reaction to the jealous and partisan appropriation of providential rhetoric encountered during the civil war and Interregnum. This consisted of a return to more traditional theological practice concerning the inability of man to interpret successfully the progress of providence; unsurprising since the Almighty had shown Himself to be scornful of the expectations of royalist and parliamentarian alike, particularly during periods of accelerated divine intercession such as 1648-9 and 1659-60. Former adversaries could at least agree on the danger now of forecasting the direction of the arrow of providence in an unqualified fashion having experienced at first hand its fickle and capricious whip. Predictions of the consequent death of providence are probably exaggerated, however; its obituary was not to be written until the twentieth century, its resuscitation remains a possibility in the chaotic universe of the twenty-first.

Nevertheless, a reaction to enthusiasm temporarily inhibited freedom of interpretation, as a number of scholars have noted.[1] Michael Winship has suggested the equation of divinatory excess with social anarchy constituted a calculated tactic of Anglicans like John Tillotson who were anxious to discredit former parliamentarians.[2] Their characteristic theology of moderation and reasonableness avoided unnecessary reflection on what must necessarily be unknowable, an unreasonable, tyrannical and arbitrary God being replaced by one exercising self-restraint and preferring to engineer change in a steady and orderly fashion through established institutions. A gradual shift

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[1] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1991), p. 127; William Burns, 'An Age of Wonders: Prodigies, Providence and Politics in England, 1580-1727' (Ph.D., University of California, Davis, 1994), p. 148. On distrust of enthusiasm, see Michael Heyd, 'The Reaction to Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth Century: Towards an Integrative Approach', in *Journal of Modern History*, 53 (1981); John Spurr, '"Virtue, Religion and Government": the Anglican Uses of Providence', in Tim Harris, Paul Seaward and Mark Goldie eds, *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* (Oxford, 1990).

[2] Michael Paul Winship, 'A Theater of Gods Judgments: Providentialism and Intellectual Change in Early Massachusetts Orthodoxy' (Ph.D., Cornell University, 1992), Chapter 3.

took place from the interpretation of nature using scriptural precedent to its independent examination, with the logical corollary of a universe in which at least some actions lay outside the remit of the ordinary and usual application of providence.[3] God's providence became more remote and less immediate, though there remained many occasions when the intimate and tangible presence of the Almighty could command the attention of the faithful: the deity had not yet been condemned to frigid and impotent exile in the spiritual *gulag*. In general, however, providential accounts became more cautious and less certain in their elaboration of the punishments sinners could expect, stressing instead the *possible* consequences of wrongdoing.[4]

As we have seen, Christopher Hill has explored the consequences of defeat for republicans, suggesting that God's omnipotence and His goodness were both called into question as men struggled to make sense of their rapid fall from grace.[5] In keeping with his Marxist analysis of historical evolution and synthesis, he has claimed that the providential paradigm and the popular recognition of millenarianism were progressively replaced in elite circles after 1660 by a more characteristically 'modern' discourse appropriate to an age of commercial enterprise and property-owning citizenship.[6] In this view, a rude and vulgar form of providentialism survived among the poorly educated, but that otherwise the doctrine fell out of fashion, sidelined as the belief of the uncultured and the credulous. However, the relatively early date attributed by Hill to this transition appears highly implausible, as work undertaken during the past twenty years has confirmed.[7]

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[3] Margo Todd, 'Providence, Chance and the New Science in Early Stuart Cambridge', *HJ*, 29 (1986). On the Gataker debate, see also Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 143-4.

[4] Peter Lockwood Rumsey, 'Acts of God: The Rhetoric of Providence in New England, 1620-1730' (PhD., University of Columbia, 1984), pp. 277-88; Barbara Donagan, 'Providence, Chance and Explanation: Some Paradoxical Aspects of Puritan Views of Causation', *Journal of Religious History*, 11 (1981), pp. 387, 403.

[5] Christopher Hill, *The Experience of Defeat: Milton and Some Contemporaries* (1984), pp. 15, 280-2, 307; Barbara Donagan, 'Understanding Providence: The Difficulties of Sir William and Lady Waller', *JEH*, 39 (1988), pp. 443-4.

[6] Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth Century Revolution* (1993), p. 434; *idem.*, *Antichrist*, p. 173; Steven Pincus, 'Popery, Trade and Universal Monarchy: The Ideological Context of the Outbreak of the Second Anglo-Dutch War', *EHR*, 107 (1992); Pocock, *Politics, Language and Time* (1972), pp. 124, 138, 147. On the question of secularization, see C. John Sommerville, *The Secularization of Early Modern England: From Religious Culture to Religious Faith* (Oxford, 1992).

[7] J. C. D. Clark, *English Society, 1688-1832: Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice During the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge, 1985), which argues for the continuing importance of religious discourse in the

The continuing importance in politics of religious rhetoric, and the fundamental importance accorded to both a broad providentialism and special providence by empiricists and members of the Royal Society, have been stressed by opponents of the secularisation thesis and of belief in the 'rise' of a science supposedly inimical to the Christian faith.[8] The royalist reaction to the *Mirabilis Annus* affair, for example, shows that an attempt was made not to discard providentialism, but rather to reconstitute it on a basis that was more friendly and benign to the political mainstream. The episode involved the underground publication of a series of tracts hostile to the restored monarchy detailing the sudden and miraculous appearance of a number of prodigies that were interpreted as signs of God's disapproval of the new administration.[9] Royalist polemicists like Robert Clarke responded by calling into question the reliability of the accounts and the truthfulness of the stories, and it was this demand for verifiability and corroboration that formed such a distinctive feature of tracts defending providence in the years which

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eighteenth century; John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor eds, *The Church of England, c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993) makes a similar point, rescuing the eighteenth century Church from charges of decay and pluralism. J. C. D. Clark has argued that along with Britain, eighteenth century American political discourse retained a distinctively seventeenth century theological flavour that conflicts with the conventional understanding of the American Revolution as reflecting a secularized individualism, radicalism and liberalism: Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660-1832* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 14-15. The Revolution becomes a religious war with an explicitly providentialist justification, and the American nation inherits the seventeenth century providential nationalism of the English: pp. 30-67. John F. Berens has similarly argued for the over-riding importance of providentialism in eighteenth century America. The pursuit of American 'liberty' is shown to have been equated with the cause of God, whilst the jeremiad was used to defend and justify war against the French and the British, and in the internal political disputes which followed Independence during the 1790's and 1800's: Berens, *Providence and Patriotism in Early America, 1640-1815* (Charlottesville, Virginia, 1978).

[8] Brian Vickers ed., *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 13, 15, 28, 30, which argues for the co-existence of hermeticism and metaphysics with the new mechanical philosophy in mid-seventeenth century England and for a more subtle reading of contemporary understandings of 'reason'. Revelation and the occult were shown to be legitimate means of pursuing reasoned enquiry, rather than inimical to it. See especially, Lotte Mulligan, ' "Reason", "right reason", and "revelation" in mid seventeenth century England', in Vickers ed., *Occult and Scientific Mentalities*, pp. 396-7. Mulligan argues that ideological opponents in mid-century England shared 'similar epistemologies' (p. 397). On the continuing importance of the study of demonology and of the marvellous and miraculous irregularities of nature, and attempts at distinguishing between the supernatural and the unusual by the members of the Royal Society, see Stuart Clark, 'The scientific status of demonology', in Vickers ed., *Occult and Scientific Mentalities*. Timothy Gorringe has drawn attention to the points of similarity between scientific and theological methodology. *God's Theatre: A Theology of Providence* (1991), p.21; Michael Hunter, *Science and Society in Restoration England* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 187, is a reminder that Restoration 'scientists' were keen to renounce atheism by re-asserting providence.

[9] On *Mirabilis Annus* see Thomas, *Religion*, p. 111; Burns, 'An Age of Wonders', Chapter 3: ' "England is Grown Africa": The *Mirabilis Annus* Affair and its Consequences'; Michael McKeon, *Politics and Poetry in Restoration England: The Case of Dryden's 'Annus Mirabilis'* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1975). Titles included *The Lords Loud Call to England* (1660), *Eniantios Terastios, Mirabilis Annus, or the Year of Prodigies and Wonders* (1661) and *Mirabilis Annus Secundus* (1662).

followed, and which contributed to the attempt by Newton, Boyle and others to relocate the doctrine on a firmer evidential basis.[10]

Hence the project initiated by presbyterian minister Matthew Poole for the collection of stories of the providential, his so-called 'Design for registring of Illustrious Providences', drawing as it did upon the recommendations of Francis Bacon earlier in the century for the proper cataloguing of providences within an innovatory epistemological schema.[11] The most significant feature of the nationwide scheme which Poole proposed was the incorporation of safeguards to ensure that stories of the prodigious and providential were truthful and accurate, and supported by sworn testimonies provided by witnesses.[12] Though still-born, the scheme had the support of those, like Richard Baxter, who were concerned about the effect of unsubstantiated and unlikely or ludicrous stories that brought into disrepute the wider political use of providence.[13] It also influenced subsequent attempts to collect evidences of providences that incorporated a similar degree of methodological rigour.[14] Royal apologists like John Spencer also argued that the doctrine had been brought into disrepute in recent times by its being associated with natural irregularities, freaks and deformities such as monstrous births, and that instead it should be aligned with the glories of an ordered cosmos regulated by a merciful,

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[10] Robert Clarke, *The Lying Wonders, or rather the wonderful Lyes* (1660). Parallel attempts were made to provide a firmer evidential basis for the existence of witches and witchcraft. Belief in witches underwent a decline in educated circles. See Barbara Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1983), esp. pp. 206-13; Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 538-9, 546-7, 681-98.

[11] A copy of the outline proposals for Poole's scheme are found in CUL MS Dd III/64 (61), and contemporary comments on this draft at CUL MS Dd III/64 (62). For Bacon's proposal, see Bacon, 'Preparative Towards a Natural and Experimental History', in James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis and Douglas Heath eds, *The Works of Francis Bacon*, 7 vols (1857-70), IV, 312-3.

[12] CUL MS Dd III/64 (61) and CUL MS Dd III/64 (62). 64(61), p.136: 'Wee . . . judge it very expedient that there be a diligent enquiry made into all remarkable Providences . . . that the reports may bee followed to their originals, and collected from their several fountains, and evidenced'; see p. 137, point ten, for the requirement that witnesses be *bone fide*. See 64 (62), p. 140 for a criticism in 1657 by a supporter of the scheme, of old-style melodrama and lewdness in providential accounts: 'civile persons will loathe the Discourse and abhor the memory [of the account]'. On the Poole scheme in general, see Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 110-11.

[13] On Richard Baxter's views, see Thomas, *Religion*, p. 111; Burns, 'An Age of Wonders', p. 181; N. H. Keeble and Geoffrey Nuttall eds, *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1991), which features several letters between Baxter and Poole on the scheme during 1657-8, I, 197, 206, 260-61, 262-3, 264-6.

[14] For example, Increase Mather's works: *The Doctrine of Divine Providence Opened and Applyed* (1684), and *An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences* (1684), and William Turner, *A Compleat History of the most remarkable Providences* (1697).

beneficent God.[15] Instead of the study and recording of pretergenerations, an attempt was made to provide examples of the ways providence highlighted the *regularities* of nature.[16]

The attempt to establish a recognised and common standard for the observation and corroboration of providential experiences formed an important part of the work of the founding members of the Royal Society, as Michael Hunter has recently highlighted. Leading natural philosophers like Robert Boyle, Isaac Newton and Samuel Clarke feared the consequences of a fashionable attachment to immorality and atheism by seventeenth century blue-stockings. They appreciated that to combat belief in the remote, disinterested God of the Deists required the demonstration of the continuing intervention of the Almighty via special providences. They further found it necessary to refute the belief that such miraculous or quasi-miraculous manifestations of God's immediate power had ended in biblical times. Natural laws and the beauty and diversity of Creation proclaimed the intervention of the benign hand of the Lord, they argued.[17] Newton, for example, suggested that gravity itself proclaimed the awe inspiring handiwork of the Lord, a statement of divine munificence that counteracted the views of 'eternalists' who posited a universe without a creation and without the need for providence, and the pessimistic opinion that the world was trapped in a spiral of decay.[18]

Tony Claydon has traced the 1690's revival of the public recognition of special providences as the new joint monarchy of William and Mary sought legitimation and the discouragement of Jacobite pretensions, and striven to justify to the political nation an expensive war against the French.[19] Royal propaganda under the auspices of Bishop

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[15] John Spencer, *Discourse Concerning Prodigies* (1663). See Burns, 'An Age of Wonders', pp. 197-207.
[16] Ibid., p. 252.
[17] Hunter, *Science and Society*, pp. 8-9, 30, 33-5 and Chap 7; Sommerville, *Secularization*, p. 166, for the recognition by contemporaries like Richard Allestree that the Christian faith was under threat; Christopher Hill, 'Newton and His Society', in Robert Palter ed., *The Annus Mirabilis of Sir Isaac Newton, 1666-1966* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1970); David Kubrin, 'Providence and the Mechanical Philosophy: The Creation and Dissolution of the World in Newtonian Thought. A Study of the Relations of Science and Religion in Seventeenth Century England' (Ph.D., Cornell University, 1968). Such opinion included Robert Boyle, *Of the High Veneration Man's Intellect Owes to God* (1685), John Ray, *The Wisdom of God Manifest in the Works of the Creation* (1691). On these, see Richard Westfall, *Science and Religion in Seventeenth Century England* (New Haven, 1958), pp. 83-93; Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty*, pp. 92-4.
[18] Kubrin, pp. 39-41, 92-6. Other opponents of eternalism included Thomas Burnet, author of *The Sacred History of the Earth*, 2 vols (1681-89), a history of the origins and early development of the Earth. His objective was to demonstrate the providence of God by describing the physical changes that had taken place in the formation of the planet.
[19] Tony Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 122-52. On Williamite use of providentialism see also, Gerald M. Straka, 'The Revolution Justified by Divine Right', in *Problems in*

Gilbert Burnet, and apologists for *de facto* rule such as William Sherlock, lauded the Williamite fusion of patriotism and providence in the crusade against France. Domestic moral reformation was advanced to help strengthen English ties with a protestant God, and at a time when economic and social dislocation threatened such a covenant. Hence attempts to root out corruption and moral delinquency in Court and country, and the renewed importance assigned to national days of thanksgiving like November 5 and 30 January, the anniversary of Charles I's martyrdom, and the addition of fast days to pray for success in the war against the French. National scourges such as the Jamaica earthquake and the death of Mary in 1692, and economic dislocation with the fiscal burden of war and urban overcrowding contributed to a sense of social crisis to which Parliament responded with legislative action against vices such as profanity and blasphemy, and that witnessed calls by high-Anglicans and Dissenters for a return to a primitivist piety, reflected in the missionary work of the new voluntary organisations such as the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK).[20]

We find also a growing tendency to apply providentialism to social questions as rapid urbanisation in the early eighteenth century brought these issues into sharper focus. Structural inequality, reflected in the logic of the Great Chain, was generally still viewed as God's will, part of a cosmic balancing of interests that was in itself ultimately beneficial and just. Poverty, for example, brought consolations and its own peculiar advantages, avoiding the problems engendered by excess wealth and making charity possible. Other commentators argued, however, that rather than an unequal society riven

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European Civilization 24 (1963). On Jacobitism, see Paul Kleber Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788* (Cambridge, 1989). The Jacobites employed providential rhetoric to defend the Stuart cause. Nonjuring texts attacked the *de factoist* arguments of Sherlock and others in the early 1690's by claiming that the overthrow of the Stuart monarchy would provoke God's judgment on the nation.

[20] Claydon, *William III*, pp. 90-116, 127-30, 142, 153-75. Eamon Duffy, 'Primitive Christianity Revived: Religious Renewal in Augustan England', in Derek Baker ed., *Renaissance and Renewal in Christian History* (Oxford, 1977); David Hayton, 'Moral Reform and Country Politics in the late Seventeenth-Century House of Commons', *PP*, 128 (1990); Tina Isaacs, 'The Anglican Hierarchy and the Reformation of Manners, 1688-1738', *JEH*, 33 (1982); Craig Rose, 'Providence, Protestant Union and Godly Reformation in the 1690's', in *TRHS 6th series, 3* (1993); Robert B. Shoemaker, 'Reforming the City: The Reformation of Manners Campaign in London, 1689-1738', in Lee Davison, Tim Hitchcock, Tim Keirn and Robert Shoemaker eds, *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England, 1689-1750* (New York and Stroud, 1992). On Jamaica, Mary, and the differences between Williamite and Jacobite jeremiads, see Craig Rose, 'Providence', pp. 152-6. There were also secular motivations behind reform such as demands for social control by elites. See Shoemaker, 'Reforming the City', esp. pp. 99-100; Mary Fissell, 'Charity Universal? Institutions and Moral Reform in Eighteenth Century Bristol', in Lee Davison et al., *Stilling the Grumbling Hive*.

by poverty and hunger being a true outward reflection of God's purposes, the mystery of God's will might disguise a desire for *progressive* social change.[21] Evangelical reformers and paternalists like Shaftesbury and Henry Drummond argued that an interventionist God, willing and able to use special providences to interfere in the general course of nature, should be imitated through a human interventionism to seek to minimise the social ills of industrialisation.[22] On the other hand, advocates of *laissez-faire* economics and the invisible hand of self-regulating economic forces, it has been argued, were more likely to work towards an approximation of the general providence of a clockwork universe in their non-interventionist social policy: part of a debate that reached a head with the controversy surrounding the Irish potato famine.[23]

This thesis has sought to trace the intimate relationship between contemporaries' various plural readings of God's providence and the direction of politics in mid-seventeenth century England, concentrating upon a series of 'trigger points' when sharp changes in the direction of policy can be explained by a corresponding reinterpretation of the divine purpose by the King, Parliament or Army. The King sought to protect God's dignity, mirrored as it was by the office that he occupied: periodic peace treaties promised rapprochement but endangered the nation's relationship with its heavenly sponsor. Charles vowed after his defeat in 1646 that he would never permit the Church to be compromised in any treaty with a predominantly presbyterian Parliament, never again would his loyal servants be abandoned to their fate, as Strafford had once suffered. The King's sacrifice of Strafford had earned the disapproval of God and Charles's recognition of this fact hardened his resolve now to avoid a prolongation of these judgments.

The King's consequent intransigence delayed a negotiated settlement until it was too late: the consciousness of his duty to God coincided with the hardening of the Army's position in the face of the royalists' agreement with the Scottish Hamiltonians and

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[21] Richard Harvey, 'English Poverty and God's Providence, 1675-1725', *The Historian*, 41 (1979), pp. 500, 503. Jacob Viner, *The Role of Providence in the Social Order: An Essay in Intellectual History* (Philadelphia, 1972), Chapter 4; Harvey, 'English Poverty', pp. 511-2.

[22] Boyd Hilton, 'The Role of Providence in Evangelical Social Thought', in Derek Beales and Geoffrey Best eds, *History, Society and the Churches* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 224-8.

Ormonde's peace with the Irish. The second civil war in 1648, furthermore, convinced otherwise sceptical officers that God's controversy with the nation would be silenced only by the King's trial and execution. The New Model had been blessed by the Almighty since its inception in 1645. Its many military successes had provided tangible evidence of God's approbation, a fact of which rank and file and the officer corps were well aware. This contributed to the growing self-confidence of the Army and an appreciation of its unique historical mission to reform Church and state in order to honour providence. Consciousness of the possible significance of mercies such as Naseby in 1645 strengthened the resolve of the war-party at Westminster at a crossroads in the history of Parliament's war. A cheap peace would become an expensive option if God's honour were impugned: demands that the Army's grievances be resolved and that delinquents be brought to justice were rendered more potent by reference to providence. Officers and Independent clergy combined fear of God with a self-conscious awareness of the power of providential discourse, more so because the parliamentarian camp was itself disunited. Providential rhetoric proved a useful tool in extracting support at Westminster for prominent officers, where tales of divine dispensation attracted the undivided attention of Parliament. This was especially significant because many religious presbyterians evolved a distinctive providential identity of their own that revolved around God's support for the Scots and the Solemn League and Covenant. Theocratic discipline and an intolerance of sectarianism combined with a suspicion of the motives of the Army to distance the presbyterian position from the alternative Independent reading of the work that God was bringing to fruition. Many presbyterians inaccurately equated Independency with sectarian excess: flirtation with toleration risked attracting the most terrible judgments against Parliament and the nation. These conflicting positions were mirrored in the national pamphlet press, reflecting the fact that political providentialism was not exclusively the preserve of metropolitan elites but was recognised to be a powerful propaganda tool useful in shaping the allegiance of county communities, particularly in strategically important locations. Descriptions of divine intercession to either protect or reduce vulnerable outposts like Hull, Bristol or Chester provided consolation during time of adversity and inspired loyalty in the face of the tempting alternative of neutrality. Tales

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[23] Ibid., pp. 224-5; Charles Cashdollar, 'The Social Implications of the Doctrine of Divine Providence: A

abounded of judgments against stereotypical cavalier or roundhead: on the one hand exhibiting the damnable sins of profanity and drunken debauchery, all too willing to slander the saints and protect the fearful vice of idolatry; on the other, guilty of rebellion against God's deputy, of sacrilege against the fabric of the Lord's house, and of proclaiming the advantages of heaven-rending heresies such as socinianism. Both major participants, then, were the principal players in a sophisticated ballet competing for the hand of the Lord with a supporting cast of millions.

The regicide in 1649 at once transformed the political landscape, rejuvenating royalist providentialism and supplying ammunition to Sir Edward Hyde's party, which all along had warned against the danger of the royalists dishonouring God. The *Eikon Basilike* provided them with an important polemical weapon which might be used to discredit the Queen Mother and her coterie now recommending that the young King disregard the lessons of providence and compromise the Church in order to regain power. Replying to accusations that Charles I had been untrustworthy and devious, and an unqualified threat to the very liberties and laws he had promised to safeguard, the *Eikon* sought to convey an impression of his essential integrity, reinventing the late King as a pious and self-critical student of providence and loyal and patient sufferer on behalf of the Almighty. The undoubtedly substantial contribution of Charles I himself to the exercise allowed a reticent King in death to communicate with his subjects with a comfortable honesty and clarity absent during his life. It represented an idealised conception of submission to the Almighty, but also served a very practical purpose as a prospectus for Charles II's reacquisition of the throne. Unfortunately for Hyde, Sir Edward Nicholas, Ralph Hopton and other royalist providentialists, the young King had other ideas, entering into an unholy alliance with the presbyterian Scots and endangering his credit with the Almighty in return for Scottish military assistance. In the opinion of Hyde, the high cost of such a strategy was borne out in the defeat at Worcester in September 1651, when God had delivered His judgment upon royalist perjury and dissemblance. Charles II undoubtedly learnt from his mistake and was distrustful of presbyterian assistance during the remainder of his exile, though he fell short of a wholesale endorsement of Hyde's tripartite recommendations of reform at Court,

Nineteenth Century Debate in American Theology', *Harvard Theological Review*, 71 (1978)

necessary dependence upon the Lord, and careful preparation to take advantage of the opportunities God would provide to engineer the downfall of the republic. Nevertheless, the all too obvious consequences of royalist sinfulness during the 1640s prompted a reappraisal of royalist tactics following the 1651 debacle, though in a sense, the exiles and royalist sufferers in England had little choice but to accept their current punishment at the hands of the Lord: providentialism furnishing a valuable substructure of consolation. Finally, probably its most important contribution was to the inclusive settlement of 1660, an equality of punishment and atonement rendering tolerable the pardoning of all but the most unrepentant regicides.

The republic, meanwhile, reinforced its miraculous credentials with numerous military triumphs throughout the British Isles. In so doing, it demonstrated a distrust of the plural reading of providence that had become a commonplace during the 1640s. Instead, its preachers and military leaders lauded a unitary interpretation of providence as it sought legitimation throughout Britain. The history of subsequent Irish and Scottish resistance to such an ambition shows that it failed to overcome the divisions within the republican camp or to outlive Oliver Cromwell. His Davidic status at the heart of the republic's myth of providential mission ensured that domestic and foreign policy decisions were frequently made with reference to inconsistent and infinitely variable readings of opaque and often obscure glimpses of providential purpose, deeply embedded within contemporary events. Arguably, this state of flux prohibited the formation of more settled constitutional structures such as the institution of a new dynasty with Cromwell as its head, and inhibited continuity and consistency in decision-making, ultimately undermining the republic. Perhaps the most dramatic example of such discontinuity lay in the formation of the Protectorate itself in 1653. The fruit of Cromwell's analysis of God's distrust of the Barebones Parliament, it was denounced by critics as a repudiation of an apparent consensus concerning the purposes of God at the conception of the republic. Cromwell would have denied this: in his view the very unfolding of providence in history required a flexible, pragmatic response by magistrates. It was to be this very chasing after providence, the constitutional experimentation that comprised the period after Cromwell's death in 1658, which in my view compromised republican providentialism. The promise of an uncomplicated faith in King and God cut through the confusion of

alternative providential outcomes discredited by their short duration and unhappy history. Providence found its own level in the Restoration of the monarchy.

Providence, then, interacted with contemporary politics in a variety of different ways, and implicated the royalist as well as the parliamentarian. The principal parties comprised individuals with often very different readings of God's purposes – readings that were essentially projections of their own socio-political or ecclesiastical priorities and ambitions, whether comprising episcopal government, toleration, presbyterianism or republicanism. Royalists in general, however, were more sceptical of the untrammelled application of providentialism in the political sphere, and preferred to retain the doctrine simply as a devotional resource useful in assisting the private individual in spiritual self-discovery. When providence was applied to the larger political picture by royalists, it tended to be restorationist in tenor and supportive of the status quo. Many moderate parliamentarians were no doubt sympathetic to this approach, perhaps even suspicious of too eager a reduction of complex problems to a series of providential certitudes, rendered palatable to the general population by often crude polemic. In the main, however, parliamentarians, and especially religious Independents, were more willing to draw potentially radical conclusions from their interpretations of providence, and the consequences of this freedom were felt in particular in the relationship between the Army and the political nation between the end of the first civil war and the regicide. Providence widened and exacerbated divisions within the principal parties, forcing its way into the crevices and expansion-joints of the political nation, raising the political temperature, causing debate to become more rancorous and making compromise more difficult. God demanded that His works be treasured and publicly celebrated: installed at the heart of every policy, providentialism served as a rigorous standard by which the work of the Lord's servants might be judged. However, we have seen how the search for validation in the eyes of God – that stamp of divine approval signalled in the pattern of dispensations vouchsafed to the saints – was often a destabilising influence, not only because men disagreed in their interpretations of the divine plan, but also because in essence it was an exercise that was doomed to failure. God continually redefined the parameters of reformation, making the work of government progressively more difficult, while a flawed humanity demonstrated its inability to co-operate with God and keep up with providence.

One key finding of this work is to confirm that the doctrine exerted an influence beyond that of Oliver Cromwell, hitherto the main focus of attention by scholars of the subject. Further research could extend an assessment of its impact to a wider cross-section of the population, in particular by comparing lay and clerical providentialism. This would be especially helpful because comparatively little is known about relations between the clergy, their patrons and congregations during the civil war and Interregnum, beyond the statistical facts of sequestration. It has been necessary to limit this study very largely to central government, and one other fruitful possible line of enquiry would be to consider the impact of providentialism in local politics by drawing upon the resources of county record offices. This would enable a more thorough comparison of royalist and parliamentarian attitudes and permit an exploration of 'royalist puritanism', contributing to a more balanced assessment of royalism that would redirect historians away from the stereotype of the debauched cavalier. However, the most pressing need now is to compare the role of providentialism at other key moments in English history, such as the upheavals of the fifteenth century, and the later seventeenth century, to determine whether any broad patterns can be discerned. It is possible, after all, that the mid-seventeenth century did not in fact mark the high point of political providentialism in England, but was one of a series of such peaks of activity. What we have learnt about the impact of providentialism during the civil war and Interregnum might then take on a more far-reaching significance.

Providence undoubtedly retained its importance in English intellectual exchange well into the nineteenth century, and of course in theological discourse until the present day. However, the intense personal drive to observe, ponder and act upon the strange and signal manifestations of the secret will of the Creator which were so in evidence during the era of civil war, has fallen out of favour with the decline of soteriological impetus. The circumstances of salvation have become unknowable – and people seem to prefer it that way: the search for signs of our standing with God has given way to the search for mutual validation and personal fulfilment. This arguably makes the study of providentialism, as with other aspects of antique private and public belief, potentially treacherous territory for the modern historical navigator alienated from its conventions. It

is too easy to surrender to that imperious condescension and lazy reductionism that would deconstruct into oblivion the deepest convictions of, say, Cromwell or Charles I. They were, after all, living, breathing, passionate individuals, not paradigmatic ciphers. Early modern providentialism was no mere linguistic conceit, though it was sometimes called upon to serve this purpose, nor was it simply a rather predictable response to a psychological need for validation and explanation of the inexplicable: the invention of the tidy minds of philosophers. Indeed, often individuals instead immersed themselves in the rich texture of its contradictions, permitted themselves the indulgence of exploring its byways, and were delighted and thrilled by its very mystery. Rather than seeking resolution, which more often than not, disappointed, the very purpose of providence lay in its method, the evolution of men and man towards God. To its practitioners, this was both a selfless and a selfish duty – the higher end to honour the Lord and seek to win His confidence for practical advantage, but taken to an extreme might paradoxically appear self-indulgently anthropocentric. Arguably, many parliamentarians in victory succumbed to this danger, examining the circumstances of divine activity so precisely and particularly that the wider purpose of the war and republic, that broader historical sense of the interconnectedness of events and personalities, was ignored. Towards 1660, fashion began to favour the undemonstrative dependence upon God favoured by the royalists, the passionate intensity of alternative readings of providence rendered tiresomely shrill, raucous and clamorous in the eyes of a tired population unable ever to meet the exacting standards demanded of them by their then governors. In that respect, the choice in 1660 of that splendidly, languidly imperfect monarch, Charles II, proved to be stunningly appropriate. The Almighty, once again, had confounded expectations, and what was more, He had done so mischievously, and with a twinkle in His eye.

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