

Puritan Conformity, Church Polity, and Anglican Identity, 1628-88

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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TRINITY TERM 2022

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SHORT ABSTRACT

There have been many attempts to define what Anglicanism is, through both “reformations” of the Church of England as well as rewritings of its history. Yet none have proposed a definition that can satisfy all. Instead of searching for one, static Anglican identity, this thesis follows recent scholarly endeavours to highlight the confessional diversity and conflicts that characterised the Protestant English Church, challenging traditional, and yet inaccurate dichotomies, such as puritan/conformist or puritan/episcopalian, to showcase how the very nature of the Church of England was one of struggle and fluidity rather than a definite triumph of specific strains of piety. To break through the puritan/conformist antithesis still prevalent in current scholarship, this thesis adopts a biographical approach to investigate a wide range of puritan contributions to the shaping of Anglican identity. The careers of the four protagonists in this study, William and Thomas Gouge, John Davenport, and Edward Reynolds, demonstrated that not only were the boundaries between conformity and dissent ever-changing, but both conformists and dissenters were active, self-conscious reformers of the Church of England.

While scholars in the past often narrate a story of dissent when they explore transatlantic congregationalism and presbyterianism, the four protagonists in this story show that they considered themselves active participants in, rather than opponents of, the national Church, and that even their dissenting activities, in both Old and New England, were tireless attempts to reshape the orthodoxy of the English Church. Pre-war and post-1662 puritan conformity feature prominently in this story as well, especially in William Gouge’s and Edward Reynolds’ lives. Both their conformity to the Laudian Church as well as Reynolds’ return to episcopacy as Bishop of Norwich in 1660 urge scholars today to rethink puritans’ view of episcopacy and better appreciate puritans’ legacy on the emerging Anglican identity.

LONG ABSTRACT

What is Anglicanism? Considering how doctrinally and ceremonially diverse the Anglican Communion is today, many say that Anglicanism, just like evangelicalism, has become so nebulous a term that it hardly conveys anything at all. And yet at the same time, the nineteenth-century emergence of a notion of a *via media* Anglicanism between Catholicism and Protestantism still captures the imagination of many. To understand Anglicanism, most historians have always recognised the significance of the long-standing tensions between avant-garde ceremonialism, later what has been termed the “Laudian reformation,” and various puritan traditions within the established Church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. If one thoroughly explores these tensions, one can see that the breadth of ceremonial and theological diversity within Anglicanism today is by no means a random phenomenon but owes much to its early modern past.

One way to better appreciate the ecclesiological complexity and distinctive features of Anglicanism today is to address the long-standing approach that tends to see its early modern past through the lens of polemical extremes. Religious identities are too often treated as fixed, static religious blocs that emerged and went through transformation collectively, without a due attention to the nuances and fluidity in an individual’s life and thought. To highlight the mixed motives and flexibility in one’s life and thought and resist treating individuals as part of a monolithic faction, this thesis adopts a biographical approach to the studies of Anglican identity and selects four individuals, William Gouge and his son Thomas, John Davenport, and Edward Reynolds, to trace their life-long pursuits of the ideal church polity.

The methodology of selecting a few individuals to explore a historical movement or topic is not new. Peter Lake’s *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (1982), for example, presents a study of Elizabethan religion by focusing on a few moderate

puritans such as Thomas Cartwright and Lawrence Chaderton to argue for Elizabethan divines' commitment to the Church of England and puritanism as a reforming movement within the Church. This method however has not been employed for Stuart puritan conformity and church polity—not because it would not be useful for exploring shared values and diverging thoughts in this area of puritan studies, but because scholarly attention has shifted to the rise of ceremonialists and Laudianism. Furthermore, even though some historians like Lake have attempted to focus on one or a few individuals to investigate religious themes, there has not been a work that does so by placing biographies at the centre of discussions to highlight the developments of varied puritan church polities and their significance for Anglican identity. This research can thus be described as a theme-based comparative analysis of biographies that aims to highlight both commonality and diversity within puritanism central to the emergence of Anglicanism.

To illuminate individuals' evolving motives in their formulations of church polities and changes in conformity, this thesis traces its biographical studies from 1628 to 1688, a chronological span typically viewed as three distinct periods in English history—"early Stuart," "Interregnum," and "Restoration." Being chronologically transgressive, this project can nuance traditional definitions of church polities such as presbyterianism and congregationalism and reconsider the place of episcopacy in the puritan mind. For instance, by looking into both Edward Reynolds' early Stuart and post-1642 careers, we can better appreciate how *iure divino* London presbyterianism, from which Reynolds distanced himself, differed from the "presbyterian party" in the 1640s, to which Reynolds belonged. This sets up a stark contrast between him and the Gouges, who were already part of the underground presbyterian network before the war broke out. Reynolds' return to episcopalianism in 1660, in contrast to the principled but nuanced presbyterian dissent represented by Thomas Gouge in our story, further encourages one's appreciation of the

multifaceted nature of presbyterianism and its profound influence on both pre- and post-revolutionary Anglicanism.

Our four protagonists started their careers with noticeable similarities. Part I addresses their shared starting point, with a focus on William Gouge, Davenport, and Reynolds and their London ministries in the late 1620s and early 1630s as well as their various trajectories of conformity from 1633 onwards. Chapter 1 first details how Gouge, Davenport, and Reynolds found their ways into eminent London pulpits, St Ann's Blackfriars, St Stephen's Coleman Street, and Lincoln's Inn, respectively, revealing puritan or proto-puritan leanings from a very early stage for some, if not all, of them. Gouge and Davenport's close collaborations in the late 1620s and early 1630s, including their part in the Feoffees for Improvements and fundraising for the refugees of the Thirty Years' War, showed that they were active players in the London puritan underground. Both activities deeply displeased William Laud, who would swiftly suppress the Feoffees when he became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. In contrast, Reynolds distanced himself from such militant puritanism, despite his shared Reformed convictions and connections with some of the Feoffees.

Chapter 2 further points out that despite demonstrating varying degrees of puritan zeal, all three ministers were conformable and had all adopted Elizabethan conformist narratives to endorse English episcopacy. There was little doubt that the rising Laudianism and puritanism were mutually informing. Laudian "neo-orthodoxy" not only exposed puritans' brewing discontent with the direction of church reforms, but further radicalised some of them, such as Davenport. This chapter traces how the three initially conformable ministers were confronted with different versions of Laudian discipline from 1633 onwards, which might have contributed to their diverging conformity and ecclesiology. Gouge and Davenport were compelled to withdraw from former underground activities

after repeated conflicts with the archbishop. While Gouge retreated to parish ministry and even ceased publishing, successfully convincing Laud of his conformity, Davenport never stopped being anxious about Laud's surveillance and, in fear of imminent discipline, suddenly went into hiding in mid-1633. The next years in the Netherlands were marked by yet another round of Laudian attacks and even libelling, which crushed Davenport's last hope of returning to London. Reynolds, now rector of Braunston, Northamptonshire, in quite a stark contrast to Gouge, was moving in the opposite direction, absorbing local godly spirituality and transforming into an outspoken puritan. Even if Reynolds still cautiously avoided direct challenge to Laudian reform in the mid-1630s, his public protest was soon to begin.

The contrast between Gouge and Reynolds only becomes stronger as we enter Laud's heyday in the late 1630s. Chapter 3 narrates further diversifications of puritan conformity. Gouge willingly cooperated with Archbishop Laud, affirming the exemplary godliness of the Caroline Church compared to churches in other nations. Reynolds on the other hand had turned into a vocal critic of Laudian reform in Northamptonshire, challenging the Laudian version of godliness right in front of Francis Dee, Bishop of Peterborough, during the bishop's visitation in 1637. Remarkably, when London puritans like Gouge were under tremendous pressure to silence themselves, Reynolds, further away from Laud's influence and sheltered by local puritan gentry, slipped under the Archbishop's radar, and consequently his puritan sentiments have escaped proper scholarly attention today. This chapter closes with a fascinating reversal of puritan activism at the outbreak of war. Gouge wholeheartedly celebrated the downfall of Laud and parliamentary actions against Charles, whereas Reynolds, despite his unmistakable distaste for the enforcement of ceremonial uniformity, publicly denounced Parliament's resort to war against their own king.

Part II explores the religious and political upheavals from 1642 to 1660, focusing on the puritan in-fighting in both Old and New England that drastically transformed transatlantic church polities. Chapter 4 dives into the mid-century church polity reforms. Gouge and Reynolds were fellow presbyterian advocates at the Westminster Assembly, and both, like many others, appealed to Scriptural texts to endorse a *iure divino* presbyterian government. Their differences were but a miniature of the greater fluidity within the so-called “presbyterian party,” which incorporated both whole-hearted *iure divino* presbyterians like Gouge as well as moderate puritans like Reynolds, who would not have found fault with episcopacy had England not plunged into a civil war. Enjoying a much greater autonomy compared to his former colleagues in London, Davenport, along with like-minded magistrates like Theophilus Eaton, built up a theocracy in New Haven that tied civil office to church membership. The New Haven minister was however confronted with the growing diversity among New England Congregationalists. Their disagreement over the scope of church membership and that of infant baptism would eventually escalate into multiple schisms and further fracturing of the once seemingly unified New England.

Chapter 5 digs deeper into the ecclesiological and church polity debates that troubled puritan reformers in the transatlantic world in the few years leading up to the creation of the Protectorate. Reynolds’ moderation and usefulness in mediating between independents and his presbyterian colleagues enabled him to swiftly rise to political prominence. As one of the visitors sent by Parliament to Oxford and later vice-chancellor of the University, Reynolds demonstrated a striking flexibility in navigating conflicts, and his appeal to ecclesiological ideas independents affirmed in debates confused royalists and independents alike, both tending to see his ecclesiological fluidity and inclinations to moderation in such highly polarised world as either naïve or hypocritical. Both Gouge’s St

Ann's Blackfriars and Davenport's New Haven were plagued with power conflicts and antipaedobaptist controversies. Despite operating under drastically different governments and discipline, both ministers asserted clerical authority against lay challenges to their monopoly of defining orthodoxy. In the face of diversity and lay empowerment, it is noteworthy that both presbyterians in England (and indeed Scotland) and mainstream Congregationalists in New England, just like Laudian authorities before 1640, showed a pattern of clericalism and tendencies towards religious uniformity that set them against the independents in Old England, especially the more radical among them.

Chapter 6 zooms in on the careers of Reynolds and Davenport in the 1650s, when the Cromwellian regime engaged in rather haphazard political and ecclesiastical further reforms. Reynolds and fellow presbyterians' strategic influence in the Protectorate parliaments suggests a rewrite of the story of Interregnum presbyterianism. Rather than a tale of retreat and defeat, Reynolds' return to London, frequent preaching before the City Corporation and before Parliament, and his active alliance with the kingship party, tell a powerful story of an ongoing presbyterian political activism. It becomes increasingly evident that the likes of Reynolds were a distinct type of English presbyterians who could accommodate a variety of church polity structures as long as a national control of Reformed orthodoxy and discipline with clear clerical involvement were secured. On the other side of the Atlantic, Davenport found himself caught up with the escalating conflicts among New England colonies over the Half-Way Covenant. He might have found himself consistent in principle but would inevitably realise the internal contradictions when the New England Way was put to practice. For both Reynolds in London and Davenport in New Haven, the 1650s was a time of painful realisation of their imperfect realities as well as continual attempts at their own versions of a godly reformation.

Part III narrates three separate, yet equally revealing stories about the Anglicanism emerging after the restoration of the Stuart monarchy and episcopacy: Bishop Reynolds' governance of Norwich in a distinctively puritan fashion; Thomas Gouge's establishment of the Welsh Trust that bridged latitudinarian Anglicanism and moderate dissent; lastly, Davenport's diminishing influence as a Congregationalist patriarch in New England, and a fatal exposure of his betrayal of his own professed church polity principles at the very end of his life. Chapter 7 concludes the biography of Reynolds, who became Bishop of Norwich in 1660. His high-profile return to episcopalianism provoked countless mockeries, but he rationalised his acceptance of a bishopric as a way to carry on the presbyterian reform, arguing for an essential similarity between presbyterianism and episcopacy. As a "presbyterian bishop," Reynolds spearheaded the creation of one of many competing versions of Anglicanism—one that persisted in a puritan emphasis on preaching and intentionally nurtured ceremonial fluidity. In the following decades, the diocese of Norwich saw many former puritans returning to the episcopal fold under the encouragement of its own bishop and other like-minded authorities as well as a noticeable growth of dissent, presenting a seemingly paradoxical picture of religious plurality.

Chapter 8 turns to William Gouge's son Thomas and his establishment of the Welsh Trust to present a different picture of late Stuart presbyterianism. The Welsh Trust was a seemingly uncontroversial charity project that Thomas Gouge, a presbyterian dissenter, turned to after being ejected from the vicarage of St Sepulchre, London, in 1662. The Trust brought together clergy and laity across emerging denominational divides, including presbyterians like Richard Baxter, Anglicans like John Tillotson, and even the Socinian merchant Thomas Firmin; hence, it has escaped the attention of historians wedded to confessional boundaries. The Trust, however, serves as a microcosm of the tension among many moderate presbyterians between the reality of their dissent and yet

their desire for church comprehension, revealing a definite confessional broadening of Caroline presbyterianism and its impact on post-revolutionary Anglicanism.

Chapter 9 concludes this survey of puritan conformity and church polity, finishing with the unexpected twists and turns of Davenport's last decade of ministry that sealed his reputation as a deeply problematic, if not outright scandalous, Congregationalist leader. The merger of the New Haven Colony, where Davenport was its most eminent spiritual leader, with the nearby Connecticut in 1662 meant that the pastor's strategic influence in New England was hugely compromised. For him, New Haven's decline was intimately bound up with the marginalisation of the New England Way against the now widely practiced Half-Way Covenant. In 1667, Davenport, overwhelmed by a sense of disillusionment, was desperate to secure the offer of becoming the teaching officer at the First Church in Boston, the congregation once led by the famous John Cotton. Davenport persuaded his reluctant flock to grant his supposedly temporary relocation to Boston as a way to discern God's will; he intentionally disregarded New Haven's wish to retain him. The pastor never went back to New Haven and eventually earned the appointment at Boston based on a forgery made by his own son, giving a false impression that he had been lawfully dismissed by New Haven to undertake a new ministerial post.

The last three years of Davenport's life from 1667 to 1670 were plagued by the exposure of his forgery. It not only seriously damaged his reputation then, but challenges our assessment of puritan spirituality today. Compared to Gouge and Reynolds, Davenport was once seen as more consistent in his teaching about and practice of church polity, as emigrating to New England was a costly and dangerous undertaking. We should however remember that what an individual professed or preached never fully represented the whole picture of their belief system, nor did they always live by what they believed to be right or true. Perhaps the diverging paths of the four protagonists of this thesis revealed not only

their changing convictions shaped by different influences and personal circumstances, but also their pragmatic and varied expressions of a common concern for career prospects and, not least, personal safety.

WORD COUNT: 99,778

ABBREVIATIONS

Beinecke	Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut
BL	British Library, London
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
Bremer, <i>Davenport</i>	Francis Bremer, <i>Building a New Jerusalem: John Davenport, a Puritan in Three Worlds</i> (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 2012)
DWL	Dr Williams’s Library
<i>HOSC</i>	Hamilton Andrews Hill, <i>History of the Old South Church (Third Church) Boston: 1669-1884</i> , vol. 1 (Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1890)
Jeremiah, “Reynolds”	Jeffrey Jon Jeremiah, “Edward Reynolds (1599-1676): ‘Pride of the Presbyterian Party’” (<u>PhD dissertation</u> , George Washington University, 1992)
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library, London
<i>Letters</i>	John Davenport, <i>Letters of John Davenport, Puritan Divine</i> , ed. Isabel M. Calder (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1937)
Mather, <i>Magnalia</i>	Cotton Mather, <i>Magnalia Christi Americana</i> , 2 volumes, (Hartford, CT: Silas Andrus & Son, 1853-5)
MHS	Massachusetts Historical Society
Milton, <i>ESR</i>	Anthony Milton, <i>England’s Second Reformation: The Battle for the Church of England 1625–1662</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021)
MPWA	<i>The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly, 1643-1652</i> , 5 volumes, ed. Chad Van Dixhoorn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)
<i>NHP II</i>	<i>Papers of the New Haven Colony Historical Society</i> , vol. 2 (New Haven, CT: New Haven Colony Historical Society, 1877)
<i>NHP V</i>	<i>Papers of the New Haven Colony Historical Society</i> , vol. 5 (New Haven, CT: New Haven Colony Historical Society, 1894)

- NRO Norfolk Record Office, Norwich, Norfolk
- ODNB *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. Brian Harrison, Lawrence Goldman, and Sir David Cannadine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-74444>
- Thurloe SP John Thurloe, *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe*, 7 volumes, ed. Thomas Birch (London: Fletcher Gyles, 1742)
- TNA The National Archives, London
- Webster, *Godly Clergy* Tom Webster, *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England: the Caroline Puritan Movement, c. 1620-1643* (Cambridge, England: New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
- Woodford, *Diary* Robert Woodford, *The Diary of Robert Woodford, 1637-1641*, ed. John Fielding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

INTRODUCTION

What is Anglicanism? And how did Anglicanism come into being? Considering how doctrinally and ceremonially diverse the Anglican Communion is today, many say that Anglicanism, just like evangelicalism, has become so nebulous a term that it hardly conveys anything at all. And yet at the same time, the nineteenth-century emergence of a notion of a *via media* Anglicanism between Catholicism and Protestantism still captures the imagination of many, who view the Anglican’ tradition as an essentially moderate, non-doctrinaire strain of Protestantism. History-writing is like working as a detective—gathering and analysing evidence, deconstructing myths and false narratives, in order to reconstruct a coherent story that gets as close to the truth as possible. To understand Anglicanism, most historians have always recognised the significance of the long-standing tensions between avant-garde ceremonialism, later what has been termed the “Laudian reformation,” and various puritan traditions within the established Church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹ If one thoroughly explores these tensions that paved the way for the emergence of both Anglican identity and various Protestant dissenting traditions in England, one can see that the breadth of ceremonial and theological diversity within Anglicanism today is by no means a random phenomenon but owes much to its early modern past.

Contrary to the Tractarians’ myth of the *via media* and their reading of Richard Hooker as a champion of Anglican moderation, the Jacobean consensus many scholars have observed is but one of many pieces of evidence that, once upon a time, the Church of

¹ For example, the first volume of *The Oxford History of Anglicanism*, vol. 1 Reformation and Identity, c.1520-1662, ed. Anthony Milton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), which addresses the Laudian/puritan tensions extensively.

England was solidly Reformed in its soteriology.² There has also been much scholarly attention to the escalating tensions between Reformed and Arminian clergy and those between ceremonialists and puritans, which profoundly shaped the future of Anglicanism. Recently, scholars have further recognised how puritan conformity and the inter-puritan debates on church polity played a crucial part in the moulding of Anglican identity.³ The Church of England has not always been episcopal, given the various experiments in reshaping it in the 1640s and 1650s, when its most devout adherents, puritans and conformists alike, conceived various ways to reform its church government. Furthermore, even among the most committed episcopalians, the polity was never neatly defined or consistently put to practice. There was significant disagreement over the independence of bishops' jurisdiction in the relation to the power of Crown and Parliament.⁴ The role of bishops had also been conveniently ambiguous both before and after the Henrician Reformation, tempting disputes about not only the legitimacy, but also the nature and extent of a bishop's power.

One way to appreciate better the ecclesiological complexity and distinctive features of the established Church in post-Reformation England and its subsequent importance for our understanding of Anglicanism today is to address the long-standing approach that tends to see the established Church through the lens of its polemical extremes. Anthony Milton is not the only recent scholar to have warned us against the danger of seeing the religious landscape in early modern England as one of monolithic, mutually exclusive

² Diarmaid MacCulloch, "Richard Hooker's Reputation," in *All Things Made New: Writings on the Reformation* (London: Penguin, 2017), 279-320; also see pp. 240-55; and yet this does not mean that there was no doctrinal ambiguity within the pre-war Church of England. Milton, *ESR*, 18, 27-30.

³ Elliot Vernon, introduction to *Church Polity and Politics in the British Atlantic World, c.1635-66*, eds. Elliot Vernon and Hunter Powell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 1.

⁴ Milton, *ESR*, 21-5.

groups, such as conformists, puritans, episcopalians, and presbyterians.⁵ Religious identities are too often treated as fixed, static religious blocs that emerged and went through transformation collectively, without a due attention to the nuances and fluidity in an individual's life and thought.⁶ Take the "Revisionist" and "post-Revisionist" scholarship on early Stuart England for example, which was heavily invested in a schema of the decline of the Jacobean consensus and the rise of ceremonialists and Laudianism. This focus on the rise of Laudians is inevitable given the central role they played in early Stuart polemic surrounding the nature of the English Church and their lasting impact on the national Church for the rest of the century, but a dominant Revisionist thesis that Laudianism was an aggressive doctrinal and liturgical novelty that shifted the goalposts of conformity tends to obscure the contemporary diversity in puritan conformity, ecclesiology, and church polity.⁷

A couple of issues emerge when one draws a picture of puritanism either largely through the studies of Laudianism or those of the polemics between puritans and Laudians: for example, one gets a narrower, but not necessarily more accurate, definition of puritanism. Nicholas Tyacke's *Anti-Calvinists* (1990), despite its enormous contribution to a renewed appreciation of theological ideas and the novelty of Laudian ideology, has a rhetorical tendency to turn pre-war puritans into a group of militant Calvinists who engaged in ever increasing political activism.⁸ With an assumption of an antithesis

⁵ Anthony Milton, "Arminians, Laudians, Anglicans, and Revisionists: Back to Which Drawing Board?" *Huntington Library Quarterly* 78, no. 4 (Winter 2015): 723-43.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 738. Milton quotes Nicholas Tyacke in *Aspects of English Protestantism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), "gradually English anti-calvinists evolved into Laudians," as an example of this common misstep in current scholarship.

⁷ Peter Lake's analysis of Laudians' tightening control of ceremonial uniformity is still tremendously helpful. See Peter Lake, "Moving the Goal Posts? Modified subscription and the construction of conformity in the early Stuart Church," in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560-1660*, eds. Peter Lake and Michael C. Questier (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), 179-209.

⁸ Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: the Rise of English Arminianism c.1590-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

between Arminians and Calvinists to explain the rise of Laudianism, not only are Calvinists unfairly characterised and defined by their more radical adherents, but puritans are also categorised as Calvinists without a due recognition of the theological diversity among the predominantly Reformed godly, let alone their diversity in conformity.

Furthermore, this misrepresentation of puritans can do harm to one's understanding of the nature of the Church of England. Other than puritans, who were part of the fabric of the national Church, many episcopalian conformists embraced Reformed soteriology, and the English church was considered part of a greater, international Reformed network, a reality often obscured by an overemphasis on the "Calvinist"/ conformist antithesis.⁹ This is not to say the traditional ecclesiological categories such as Laudian and puritan should be cast away. After all, without generalisation one can hardly say anything meaningful about a historical phenomenon, and yet the pattern of antithesis that one expounds should also take changes and flexibility into consideration: people change, and likewise a movement evolves over time. Neglect of nuance and a spectrum of religiopolitical thought leads to an unhelpful picture of polarisation. Despite frequent warnings against overly rigid puritan/conformist dichotomy, there have been other historiographical trends or conventions in current scholarship that reinforced such a dichotomy, including traditional periodisation, lack of sensitivity to the issues of ceremonial conformity and church polity in the international Reformed world, and finally, an overemphasis on network studies in the reconstruction of tensions among puritans over conformity and church polity.

⁹ King James VI and I certainly saw the English Church as part of the larger Protestant world and his ecumenical initiatives demonstrated that. William Brown Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Part of the Laudian agenda was to downplay England's link with foreign Reformed churches. See Milton, *ESR*, 39-40, 55.

Setting a Long Perspective

Religious tensions and church polity debates can be misrepresented or oversimplified when one focuses too much on a particular decade or decades without sufficient consideration of their historical precedents and future developments. This is of course common sense, but it is nevertheless a widespread fault in current scholarship. Ecclesiological stereotypes cannot be effectively exposed as over-simplistic or monolithic if the ever-changing and multi-faceted nature of the said group or movement is not properly appreciated. For example, if one traces the presbyterian movement throughout the seventeenth century, many figures only emerged as crucial players in church reforms after 1642 and thus they are inevitably neglected by studies on the early Stuart Church. Polly Ha's *English Presbyterianism, 1590-1640* (2011), while powerfully arguing for a presbyterian continuity from the 1590s to the 1640s, inevitably (and understandably) misses some conforming puritans like Edward Reynolds, who would become leading presbyterian divines after 1642.¹⁰ A focus on the early Stuart Church leads Ha to define English presbyterianism exclusively in opposition to episcopacy. Presbyterians were those who "posed a threat to its episcopally organized hierarchy by insisting on a model of government based on the equality of ministers and the inclusion of lay elders in the oversight of the Church."¹¹

Once rejection of episcopacy becomes crucial for Ha's criteria for counting as a presbyterian, conformable puritans who harboured presbyterian leanings have very little place in her discussion. Someone like Edward Reynolds, one of the key subjects of this

¹⁰ Polly Ha, *English Presbyterianism, c.1590-1640* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 1. The years 1640-42 marked a natural end of the early Stuart period due to the collapse of the Laudian episcopacy and the outbreak of war. Ha intentionally chooses the year 1590 due to the old scholarly consensus that it was around 1590-92 when the presbyterian movement came to a temporary end.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

research, would seem to spring up out of nowhere at the Westminster Assembly if one reads through secondary literature on English presbyterianism in the seventeenth century. This is not because Reynolds had no godly concerns before 1642, but his lack of obvious conflict with the Laudian authorities in the 1630s means that scholars tend to overlook his godly sentiments and their implications for his later change in church polity. It is true that Reynolds was not “presbyterian” in the 1630s, and for this reason it is understandable that historians choose not to look to him when they explore presbyterian activities under the Caroline regime. Reynolds was however already a conformable puritan who would later advocate presbyterianism, and this thesis proposes that an attention to the broader spectrum of godly ministers, including those who conformed in the early Stuart Church, will enrich the picture of English presbyterianism throughout the seventeenth century.¹²

In similar vein, going beyond 1660, the year the Stuart monarchy made a triumphant comeback, Reynolds’ acceptance of preferment as bishop of Norwich challenges the traditional narrative of English presbyterianism that was largely one that embraced dissent in the face of defeat. Tracing the lives of presbyterian leaders like Reynolds, Edmund Calamy, and Richard Baxter throughout both the 1650s and 1660s, one can better appreciate the ever-evolving presbyterianism that found its diverse expressions even after 1660 in the ongoing ministries of both dissenters as well as Anglicans in high office as well as parochial ministry. Without looking into both the pre-war and late Stuart careers of a Westminster divine like Reynolds, who wrestled with the boundary between presbyterianism and episcopacy for decades that go far beyond the usual scholarly

¹² Ha successfully challenges contemporary scholarship by demonstrating the intellectual vigour of presbyterianism throughout the early Stuart period, despite the dominant explanation for presbyterians’ resurgence in the 1640s as being influence from the Scots. It would be unfair to ask too much of a single-volume work to do everything, but this research proposes to expand scholarly understanding of English presbyterianism by looking either side of 1642 and arguing for a greater fluidity within English presbyterianism.

periodisation, one cannot truly grasp the distinctive differences between English presbyterianism and its Scottish counterpart.

The Importance of an International Reformed Perspective

Scholarly neglect of the broader Reformed network on the Continent, such as England's surprisingly close links with Reformed Hungarians, results in the same uncritical antithesis between puritanism and episcopalianism. Despite varying degrees of dissatisfaction with the programme of Laudian reform and discipline, many conformable puritans had advocated conformity and endorsed the Caroline Church as the New Israel. They absorbed and contributed to Reformed literature and even consciously connected the fate of England with that of the broader Reformed world. While they looked to Scotland, Geneva, or New England for aspirations for further reforms, they were more aware of the Reformed diversity in church polity than many historians are today.

Consider the Reformed Church of Hungary. As the old Catholic episcopal government collapsed, churches in Hungary and Transylvania retained clerical hierarchy in the form of provincial oversight by elected superintendents with the title of bishop, a polity still preserved today.¹³ Sixteenth and seventeenth century Reformed Hungary and Transylvania have come into more prominence for Anglophone historiography in recent years thanks to Graeme Murdock's works such as *Calvinism on the Frontier 1600–1660* (2000), which powerfully demonstrates the struggles over ceremony, liturgy, and clerical hierarchy shared between the English and the Hungarian church. While the Caroline Church witnessed a noticeable Arminian influence, the Hungarian Church stood firm within the Reformed tradition, loyally adhering to the Second Helvetic Confession and

¹³ Philip Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 2002), 276.

Heidelberg Catechism.¹⁴ While Hungarian “puritans” like János Tolnai Dali (1606-60) prided themselves on a superior Reformed commitment by following English presbyterians and independents in introducing their own ceremonial innovations and challenging clerical hierarchy, Hungarian conformists looked to the ongoing civil wars in England and denounced these “puritan” reforms as attempts to destabilise spiritual and temporal authority.¹⁵ Conformist authorities were especially wary of actual contacts between the two Reformations, best exemplified by Hungarian students in England, both in London and the two universities, whose experience abroad deepened their Reformed convictions, and, in some cases, kindled puritan-like concerns about episcopacy and the prescribed worship back home.¹⁶ Therefore, contemporaries certainly did not simplify the tension between presbyterians and episcopalians as a result of a Reformed/Arminian clash but very often recognised it as an internal conflict within the Reformed world, seen not only in England, but also in Hungary.

This is certainly not to deny the current scholarly awareness of differences within puritanism and within Calvinism. Notable examples include Peter Lake’s *Boxmaker’s Revenge: “Orthodoxy,” “Heterodoxy,” and the Politics of the Parish in Early Stuart London* (2001), which details at length a previously obscure rivalry between two puritans, Stephen Denison and John Etherington, whose theological debates and personal hostility

¹⁴ Graeme Murdock, “Reformed Orthodoxy in East-Central Europe,” in *A Companion to Reformed Orthodoxy*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis (Boston, MA: Brill, 2013), 293. The Hungarian Church demonstrated a persistent adherence to Reformed doctrines throughout the seventeenth century, such as the wide circulation and repeated royal endorsement of the Heidelberg Catechism. The sons of György I Rákóczi, Prince of Transylvania from 1630 to 1648, were publicly tested on their religious knowledge based on the Heidelberg Catechism in 1637. The Szatmár Synod in June 1646 held in presence of György I Rákóczi further sanctioned the catechism, along with catechisms compiled by János Siderius, as the only two texts for use in church. *Ibid.*, 305.

¹⁵ Graeme Murdock, *Calvinism on the Frontier 1600–1660: International Calvinism and the Reformed Church in Hungary and Transylvania* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 175-6. Chapter 6 “Hungarian Puritans and Presbyterians” presents a detailed analysis of the profound impact of English Puritan thought and practice on the Hungarian Church.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 49-52.

revealed intra-puritan polemics and theological variety.¹⁷ There has also been an increasing recognition of Reformed conformity. One recent and noteworthy example is Stephen Hampton's *Grace and Conformity: The Reformed Conformist and the Early Stuart Church of England* (2021), which persuasively showcases the strong presence of a "Reformed conformist style of piety" that resisted both militant puritanism which disregarded ceremonial piety on the one side and the Laudian version of "the beauty of holiness" and its Arminian soteriology on the other, with useful references to Reformed conformist bishops like John Prideaux and John Williams.¹⁸ As Hampton points out, however, the long existence of scholarly awareness of Reformed conformity has not effectively rooted out the binary picture of Laudian/puritan tensions that fail to see Reformed conformists as an equally significant, if not the most dominant, strain of early Stuart piety.¹⁹ Although Hampton's research successfully addresses the issue and enriches our understanding of Reformed conformity, his exclusive attention to early Stuart piety means that full appreciation of how this Reformed conformist tradition fared through the civil wars and the restoration of the Stuart monarchy and episcopacy still awaits investigation, let alone its profound impact on emerging Anglican identity.

Polarisation and Misrepresentation in Network Studies

Studies on puritan networks seem plagued by the same problem of an overly rigid puritan/conformist paradigm and serve to reinforce such a paradigm as well. Tom

¹⁷ Peter Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge: "Orthodoxy," "Heresy" and the Politics of the Parish in Early Stuart London* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).

¹⁸ Stephen Hampton, *Grace and Conformity: The Reformed Conformist Tradition and the Early Stuart Church of England* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021). Hampton has also helpfully pointed out how there has already been scholarly awareness of "Calvinist conformists," listing earlier works like Anthony Milton's *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and Judith Maltby's *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Hampton however emphasizes the need of proper attention to this "Calvinist conformist" tradition which is still underappreciated in comparison to puritanism and Laudianism.

¹⁹ Hampton, *Grace and Conformity*, 9.

Webster's *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England* (1997) presents an impressively thorough analysis of puritan social networks in relation to reactions to Laudian reform, conformity, and lastly formulation of a collective godly identity, with particular attention to Essex and Northamptonshire. Even though in the late 1990s *Godly Clergy* was rightly applauded for its attention to conformable godly ministers, it does not completely avoid the same pitfall of the puritan/Laudian antithesis when it seeks to understand them. As this study will demonstrate, an over-reliance on puritan resistance to Laudian reform has led scholars like Webster to misinterpret conformable puritans in the late 1630s like Edward Reynolds as a prime example of either exceptional and unpopular concession to Laudianism on a puritan's part or even an expression of moderate Laudianism itself.²⁰

Webster's unbalanced stress on puritan nonconformity or semi-conformity in opposition to Laudian conformity leads many to shape puritan history in the 1630s with an overemphasis on the transatlantic puritan diaspora, where alternative ecclesiologies to episcopacy were implemented. The structure of Webster's *Godly Clergy* is revealing in this regard, with the last major section of the book, "The Puritan Diaspora: 1631-1643," focusing on the puritans in exile.²¹ One of the chapters explores why some puritans chose to stay in England, but again the question and response are cast in the same mould of antithesis, categorising puritans' choices as either flight or suffering.²² Furthermore, while Webster's *Godly Clergy* remains an important analysis of puritan sociability and its profound impact on conformity, along with many other network studies, it downplays the

²⁰ Webster, "The Diocese of Peterborough: A See of Conflict," in *Godly Clergy*, Chapter 11, 215-34. See also John Fielding, editor's footnote 439, *Diary* by Robert Woodford, 212. Fielding also mistakenly attributed the vice-chancellorship of Cambridge to Reynolds, while it was Oxford where the minister served as vice-chancellor during the Interregnum.

²¹ Similarly, Polly Ha's *English Presbyterianism* depends heavily on Presbyterians in exile as well, especially the English Reformed Church in Amsterdam.

²² Webster, "Choices of Suffering and Flight," in *Godly Clergy*, Chapter 14, 268-85.

importance of ecclesiology, if not theology in general. Similarly, J. T. Cliffe's trilogy sheds light on the communities and activities of puritan gentry families and individuals throughout the seventeenth century but is unmistakably short of in-depth analysis of ecclesiological formulations, debates, and experiments among the godly. Studies on godly networks and those on ecclesiology have seemed separate research endeavours in diverging historiographical trends, whereas shared networks, temporary alliances, and common concerns about conformity could easily obscure significant differences in individuals' attitudes towards avant-garde ceremonialism and episcopacy.

This is by no means a problem previously disregarded. As early as 1938, J.H. Hexter challenged the mutually exclusive categories of "presbyterian" and "independent" in the Interregnum.²³ He meticulously points out the irony that many among the regicides and Rump MPs, traditionally regarded as a homogenous group of staunch independents for their collaborations in the beheading of Charles and subscription to the Engagement oath, willingly served as elders in their respective counties and contributed to the nation-wide presbyterian reforms.²⁴ These "Presbyterian 'Independents,'" as Hexter describes them, demonstrated that the "presbyterian party" in the 1640s was not very presbyterian after all.²⁵ Outlining the shifting political circumstances, Hexter helpfully concludes:

The average Puritan commoner...never had a chance to choose between Presbyterianism and Independency, between persecution and toleration, between war and peace. Instead of having his choice between an ideal black and an ideal white he had to pick his way among an infinite variety of grays—shifting, unstable, uncertain.²⁶

²³ J.H. Hexter, "The Problem of the Presbyterian Independents," *The American Historical Review* 44, no. 1 (October 1938): 29-49.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 32-3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 37-40, i.e., there should be a distinction between *iure divino* presbyterians and those who participated in the national presbyterian reform.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

Hexter's critique, made in the 1930s, is still relevant to current scholarship, where circumstantial factors, diversity in motives, and boundary-crossing in the lives of actual individuals still await their due attention. Historians must not simply deduce individuals' thoughts and preferred church polities from their outward commonalities in conformity and political alliances nor treat these alliances as fixed, mutually exclusive parties.

A Biographical Approach

Nicholas Tyacke has criticised the biographical genre more than once as "unsatisfactory" for its inability to explain broader themes and has long preferred "a cast of many characters."²⁷ Tyacke however admits the danger of missing the intellectual development of individuals. His observation speaks of the advantage of the biographical method much needed in current scholarship, and his own biographical studies on Lancelot Andrews and William Laud are notable examples.²⁸ Other historians have also attempted the biographical method successfully in the field. Anthony Milton's work on Peter Heylyn in 2007 powerfully demonstrates the polemicist's change of mind during the late 1620s and serves as an excellent example of how a biographical approach highlights the mixed motives and flexibility in one's life and thought: an encouragement to resist treating individuals as part of a monolithic faction.²⁹

Taking its cue from such biographies, this thesis selects four individuals, William Gouge and his son Thomas, John Davenport, and Edward Reynolds, to trace their life-long pursuits of the ideal church polity. The methodology of selecting a few individuals to explore a historical movement or topic is not new. As early as 1982, Peter Lake presented

²⁷ Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism*, 20.

²⁸ *Idem*, "Archbishop Laud," in *The Early Stuart Church*, ed. Kenneth Fincham (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), 51-70; *idem*, "Lancelot Andrewes and the Myth of Anglicanism," in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c.1560-1660*, 5-33.

²⁹ Anthony Milton, *Laudian and Royalist Polemic in Seventeenth-Century England: The Career and Writings of Peter Heylyn* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

a study of Elizabethan religion by focusing on a few moderate puritans such as Thomas Cartwright and Lawrence Chaderton to argue for Elizabethan divines' commitment to the Church of England and puritanism as a reforming movement within the Church.³⁰ This method however has not been employed for Stuart puritan conformity and church polity—not because it would not be useful for exploring shared values and diverging thoughts in this area of puritan studies, but because scholarly attention has shifted to the rise of ceremonialists and Laudianism, as analysed above. Furthermore, even though some historians like Lake have attempted to focus on one or a few individuals to investigate religious themes, there has not been a work that does so by placing biographies at the centre of discussions in order to highlight the developments and changes in the shaping of puritan church polities. This research can thus be described as a theme-based comparative analysis of biographies that aims at highlighting both commonality and diversity.³¹

To illuminate individuals' evolving motives in their formulations of church polities and changes in conformity, my thesis traces its biographical studies from 1628 to 1688, a chronological span typically viewed as three distinct periods in English history—"early Stuart," "Interregnum," and "Restoration." Being chronologically transgressive, this project can nuance traditional definitions of church polities such as presbyterianism and congregationalism and reconsider the place of episcopacy in the puritan mind. Anthony Milton's recent book, *England's Second Reformation*, has presented us with the imperative of viewing the period from the 1630s to 1660s in its entirety for a better understanding of

³⁰ Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

³¹ Lake has attempted quite a few case studies that explore seventeenth-century religious polemics, such as Peter Lake and Isaac Stephens, *Scandal and Religious Identity in Early Stuart England: A Northamptonshire Maid's Tragedy* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015); Lake and Michael Questier, *The Trials of Margaret Clitherow: Persecution, Martyrdom and the Politics of Sanctity in Elizabethan England* (London: Continuum, 2011). But these are far from biographical and focus on a much narrower time frame. These works have an essentially different methodology.

Anglican identity since contemporaries who lived through these tumultuous years consciously engaged in “a battle *for* the Church of England,” that is, a battle for the definition and further reformation of the national Church, rather than a battle between the Church and its opponents.³² In light of this, the 1640s and 1650s are the “climax” rather than a “strange lacuna” in the Church of England’s early modern past.³³ The biographies of our four individuals not only confirm that, but going beyond the 1660s and exploring their interactions with the deeply unsettled “Restoration settlement,” their life-stories also enrich our understanding of Caroline episcopacy, English presbyterianism, and transatlantic congregationalism, as well as what the emerging Anglicanism was becoming.

For instance, by looking into both Edward Reynolds’ early Stuart and post-1642 careers, we can better appreciate how *iure divino* London presbyterianism, from which Reynolds distanced himself, differed from the “presbyterian party” in the 1640s, to which Reynolds belonged. This sets up a stark contrast between him and the Gouges, who were already part of the underground presbyterian network before the war broke out. Reynolds’ return to episcopalianism in 1660, in contrast to the principled but nuanced presbyterian dissent represented by Thomas Gouge in our story, further encourages appreciation of the multifaceted nature of presbyterianism and its profound influence on both pre- and post-revolutionary Anglicanism.

This biographical medium naturally sets the geographical boundaries of our discussion as well. While the four protagonists of our story—William and Thomas Gouge, John Davenport, and Reynolds—were all conformable London ministers in the 1620s, their shared starting point over a decade in the capital was relatively brief. This study traces their footsteps beyond England to the far less adequately-resourced Church in

³² Milton, *ESR*, 4.

³³ *Ibid.*

Wales, to urban Reformed hubs like Amsterdam, and to the Congregationalist haven across the Atlantic. Revisionists and post-Revisionists have done us a tremendous favour in deconstructing the myth of *via media*, but they can at times be oversensitive to claims of commonality as if the differences between puritans and conformists are insurmountable and diversity and fluidity within the same camp negligible.³⁴ This comparative analysis, coupled with its transatlantic scope, enables us to see how these ministers consciously adhered to and aberrated from the Reformed norm and allows us to observe real commonalities between different parties that were conventionally viewed as mutually exclusive. For example, New England Congregationalists like Davenport and London presbyterians like Reynolds and the Gouges shared a strong hostility towards radical Protestantism, a zeal in collaborations with civil authorities to secure religious uniformity, and an inclination to clericalism, whereas a significant faction of the independents in Old England, if not theologically radical themselves, were much more sympathetic towards religious diversity and found a strict national control of orthodoxy distasteful.

Finally, studies of networks go closely with the biographical overview of each individual. Both godly connections and the “ungodly” ones can be discovered and analysed through the reconstruction of a person’s upbringing, education, ministry, and other aspects of life, with a particular focus on how networks on one side and conformity and views of church polity on the other created a mutually informing relationship. This can, one hopes, avoid the circular argumentation that is occasionally apparent in network studies when similarities in theology, conformity, and political opinion are often highlighted to an extent that, again, ecclesiological groups are presented to be more

³⁴ Peter Lake and Isaac Stephens’ criticisms of Alec Ryrie’s *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) in their *Scandal and Religious Identity in Early Stuart England* can be seen as an example of excessive stress on Puritan/Laudian polemic that discourages observations of commonality and shared religious experiences proposed by other historians.

cohesive and homogenous than they actually were. For example, William Gouge's and Davenport's different developments of church polity should show how friendship and partnership in godly causes did not necessarily bring people closer in the matters of conformity and ecclesiology. The two closely collaborated to arrange financial relief for the Palatine refugees during the Thirty Years' War. And yet while these perceived Catholic attacks on the Reformed world on the Continent reinforced Gouge's conviction of England's blessed leadership in this eschatological battle, the same concerns nurtured Davenport's international outlook and eventually led him abroad, first to the Netherlands and later New Haven.³⁵

Finally, thematic treatments of early modern providence and eschatology in current scholarship, such as Alexandra Walsham's *Providence in Early Modern England* (1999), have established the prevalence and importance of providentialist discourse in English Protestant consciousness and pointed out the heightened polemical nature of providentialism during the 1630s.³⁶ Taking advantage of this biographical approach to the selected individuals, I hope to dig deeper into the motives of these puritan preachers in their interpretations of the socio-political upheavals around them. Without proper attention to individuals' personal struggles over conformity and ecclesiological aspirations, historians have tended to dismiss apocalyptic warnings and optimistic predictions as purely

³⁵ Gouge, Davenport, and Reynolds could all compare England to Old Testament Israel in their exhortation for purer discipline, piety, and morality, but Gouge's heightened confidence in England as the apocalyptic Israel before the return of Christ was unique. See Graeme Murdock, *Beyond Calvin: The Intellectual, Political and Cultural World of Europe's Reformed Churches, c.1540-1620* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 119. The writings of John Bale from a century earlier were a possible influence on Gouge. Murdock again very helpfully lays out the commonality across Europe which equally enables him to point out particularities.

³⁶ For instance, Alexandra Walsham speaks of how providential interpretations took on a "treacherously polemical edge" in the Caroline Church, when preachers no longer confined "scapegoat sins" to private and domestic vices, such as adultery and drunkenness, but turned to public offences with implicit critiques of church government. Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 163.

polemical, but a closer look at individual lives and their interpretations of contemporary events discloses not only their polemical uses of providentialist language but also, very often, the actual importance of certain professed convictions in their outlooks.

As Christopher Haigh argues, “a ‘subtle’ reading of texts does not mean that if a Calvinist said it, it must be untrue.... And if they warned that God would reject his English if they failed to heed the Word, was it just a polemical strategy? Perhaps they believed it, and perhaps providence cuts both ways.”³⁷ Biographical analyses can hopefully also address the question of sincerity more effectively. It was not until the early 1640s, when William Gouge publicly denounced the Laudian episcopate and episcopacy, that Laudians who once collaborated with him finally realised that Gouge was not so moderate and conforming after all. Similarly, it was not until 1660, when Reynolds and many fellow presbyterians welcomed the return of Charles II, that many independent MPs realised that these moderate presbyterians’ former promotion of a Cromwellian monarchy as late as 1659 was but a fleeting alliance out of pragmatism rather than a true loyalty to the Lord Protector. When Davenport came up with a forged letter to secure his appointment as the new pastor for the First Church in Boston in 1668, he exposed himself as a half-hearted Congregationalist after all—prepared to obstruct the balanced judgement of a gathered congregation. An investigation into the lives of individuals sheds further light on how professed beliefs are never the only nor the most faithful expressions of personal convictions and priorities—common sense that historians have sometimes neglected.

Terminology

The nature of our inquiry demands a careful distinction between individuals or groups of people who advocated a form of church polity before such polity was

³⁷ Christopher Haigh, review of *Providence in Early Modern England* by Alexandra Walsham, *The English Historical Review* 115, no. 463 (2000): 965.

systematically put to practice in a formally established church, and those who were founders, reformers, or official members of an institutionalised church. This is to recognise that although a label on church polity, such as presbyterianism or congregationalism, has implications for a set of beliefs in what a church was and how it should be governed, its advocates were far from unified in their definitions of the label, nor were they equally committed to what they espoused. Standing in contrast to these ever-developing church polity theories and their sometimes half-hearted proponents were institutions run by an established ecclesiastical government. To distinguish between the two concepts, the following narrative adopts capitalisation for terms that refer to institutionalised polity and its participants. Otherwise, capitalisation will be generally avoided to indicate a loose set of beliefs that not only still underwent changes and diversifications, but awaited its formalisation and systematic implementations.

For example, the Church of England under the Caroline regime was a national institution, hence deserving capitalisation, whereas the church polity alliances among Westminster divines in the 1640s were not representatives of established churches; hence I refer to them in uncapitalised terms, e.g., presbyterians or independents. As my narrative progresses, some advocates of a church polity eventually founded churches of their own. Hence congregationalists like Davenport and his friends Thomas Hooker in the early 1630s in the Netherlands would become Congregationalists after they arrived in New England, drafting their own versions of church government and became founding fathers of New Haven and Connecticut, respectively.

Finally, following the dominant usage in current scholarship, the terms “Reformed” and “Arminian” in this thesis refer more strictly to doctrines of grace. The term “Calvinist” is generally avoided not only because it assumes Calvin’s dominance in the wider Reformed traditions, but following Hampton’s *Grace and Conformity*, this thesis seeks to

reinforce scholarly attention to the “Reformed conformists” as a strong strain of piety, indeed a proper tradition, within the established Church, by showcasing many moderate puritans’ conscious identifications of it, not least in their attempts to recalibrate English orthodoxy at the peak of Laud’s power. Adopting the same terminology can hopefully present a continuity of emphasis on this confessional tradition within the seventeenth-century Church of England.

Overview of the Thesis

Our four protagonists started their careers with noticeable similarities. Part I addresses this shared starting point, with a focus on William Gouge, Davenport, and Reynolds and their London ministries in the late 1620s and early 1630s as well as their various trajectories of conformity from 1633 onwards. Chapter 1 first details how Gouge, Davenport, and Reynolds found their ways into eminent London pulpits, St Ann’s Blackfriars, St Stephen’s Coleman Street, and Lincoln’s Inn, respectively, revealing puritan or proto-puritan leanings from a very early stage for some, if not all, of them. Gouge and Davenport’s close collaborations in the late 1620s and early 1630s, including their part in the Feoffees for Improvements and fundraising for the refugees of the Thirty Years’ War, showed that they were active players in the London puritan underground. Both activities deeply displeased William Laud, who would swiftly suppress the Feoffees when he became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. Reynolds on the other hand distanced himself from such militant puritanism, despite his shared Reformed convictions and connections with some of the Feoffees.

Chapter 2 further points out that despite demonstrating varying degrees of puritan zeal, all three ministers were conformable and had all adopted Elizabethan conformist narratives to endorse English episcopacy. There was little doubt that the rising Laudianism and puritanism were mutually informing. Laudian “neo-orthodoxy” not only exposed

puritans' brewing discontent with the direction of church reforms, but further radicalised some of them, such as Davenport. This chapter traces how the three initially conformable ministers were confronted with different versions of Laudian discipline from 1633 onwards, which might have contributed to their diverging conformity and ecclesiology. Gouge and Davenport were compelled to withdraw from former underground activities after repeated conflicts with the archbishop. While Gouge retreated to parish ministry and even ceased publishing, successfully convincing Laud of his conformity, Davenport never stopped being anxious about Laud's surveillance and, in fear of imminent discipline, suddenly went into hiding in mid-1633. The next years in the Netherlands were marked by yet another round of Laudian attacks and even libelling, which crushed Davenport's last hope of returning to London. Reynolds, now rector of Braunston, Northamptonshire, in quite a stark contrast to Gouge, was moving in the opposite direction, absorbing local godly spirituality and transforming into an outspoken puritan. Even if Reynolds still cautiously avoided direct challenge to the Laudian reformation in the mid-1630s, his public protest was soon to begin.

The contrast between Gouge and Reynolds only becomes stronger as we enter Laud's heyday in the late 1630s. Chapter 3 narrates further diversifications of puritan conformity. Gouge willingly cooperated with Archbishop Laud, affirming the exemplary godliness of the Caroline Church compared to churches in other nations. Reynolds on the other hand had turned into a vocal critic of Laudian reform in Northamptonshire, challenging the Laudian version of godliness right in front of Francis Dee, Bishop of Peterborough, during the bishop's visitation in 1637. Remarkably, when London puritans like Gouge were under tremendous pressure to silence themselves, Reynolds, further away from Laud's influence and sheltered by local puritan gentry, slipped under the Archbishop's radar, and consequently his puritan sentiments have escaped proper scholarly

attention today. This chapter closes with a fascinating reversal of puritan activism at the outbreak of war. Gouge wholeheartedly celebrated the downfall of Laud and parliamentary actions against Charles, whereas Reynolds, despite his unmistakable distaste for the enforcement of ceremonial uniformity, publicly denounced Parliament's resort to war against their own king.

Part II explores the religious and political upheavals from 1642 to 1660, focusing on the puritan in-fighting in both Old and New England that drastically transformed transatlantic church polities. Chapter 4 dives into the mid-century church polity reforms. Gouge and Reynolds were fellow presbyterian advocates at the Westminster Assembly, and both, like many others, appealed to Scriptural texts to endorse a *iure divino* presbyterian government. Their differences were but a miniature of the greater fluidity within the so-called "presbyterian party," which incorporated both whole-hearted *iure divino* presbyterians like Gouge and Edmund Calamy as well as moderate puritans like Reynolds, who would not have found fault with episcopacy had England not plunged into a civil war. Enjoying a much greater autonomy compared to his former colleagues in London, Davenport, along with like-minded magistrates like Theophilus Eaton, built up a theocracy in New Haven that tied civil office to church membership. The New Haven minister was however confronted with the growing diversity within New England Congregationalists. Their disagreement over the scope of church membership and that of infant baptism would eventually escalate into multiple schisms and further fracturing of the once seemingly unified New England.

Chapter 5 digs deeper into the ecclesiological and church polity debates that troubled puritan reformers in the transatlantic world in the few years leading up to the creation of the Protectorate. Reynolds' moderation and usefulness in mediating between independents and his presbyterian colleagues enabled him to swiftly rise to political

prominence. As one of the visitors sent by Parliament to Oxford and later vice-chancellor of the University, Reynolds demonstrated a striking flexibility in navigating conflicts, and his appeal to ecclesiological ideas independents affirmed in debates confused royalists and independents alike, both tending to see his ecclesiological fluidity and inclinations to moderation in such highly polarised world as either naïve or hypocritical. Both Gouge's St Ann's Blackfriars and Davenport's New Haven were plagued with power conflicts and antipaedobaptist controversies, and both ministers, despite operating under drastically different governments and discipline, asserted clerical authority against lay challenges to their monopoly of defining orthodoxy. In the face of diversity and lay empowerment, it is noteworthy that both presbyterians in England (and indeed Scotland) and mainstream Congregationalists in New England, just like Laudian authorities before 1640, showed a pattern of clericalism and tendencies towards religious uniformity that set them against the independents in Old England, especially the more radical among them.

Chapter 6 zooms in on the careers of Edward Reynolds and John Davenport in the 1650s, when the Cromwellian regime engaged in rather haphazard political and ecclesiastical further reforms. Reynolds and fellow presbyterians' strategic influence in the Protectorate parliaments suggests a rewrite of the story of Interregnum presbyterianism. Rather than a tale of retreat and defeat, Reynolds' return to London, frequent preaching before the City Corporation and before Parliament, and his active alliance with the kingship party, tell a powerful story of an ongoing presbyterian political activism. It becomes increasingly evident that the likes of Reynolds were a distinct type of English presbyterians who could accommodate a variety of church polity structures as long as a national control of Reformed orthodoxy and discipline with clear clerical involvement were secured. Across the Atlantic, Davenport found himself caught up with the escalating conflicts among New England colonies over the Half-Way Covenant. He might have found

himself consistent in principle but would inevitably realise the internal contradictions when the New England Way was put to practice. For both Reynolds in London and Davenport in New Haven, the 1650s was a time of painful recognition of their imperfect realities as well as continual attempts at their own versions of a godly reformation.

Part III narrates three separate, yet equally revealing stories about the Anglicanism emerging after the restoration of the Stuart monarchy and episcopacy: Bishop Reynolds' governance of Norwich in a distinctively puritan fashion; Thomas Gouge's establishment of the Welsh Trust that bridged latitudinarian Anglicanism and moderate dissent; lastly, Davenport's diminishing influence as a Congregationalist patriarch in New England, and a fatal exposure of his own betrayal of his professed church polity principles at the very end of his life. Chapter 7 concludes the biography of Reynolds, who became Bishop of Norwich in 1660. His high-profile return to episcopalianism provoked countless mockeries, but he rationalised his acceptance of a bishopric as a way to carry on the presbyterian reform, arguing for an essential similarity between presbyterianism and episcopacy. As a "presbyterian bishop," Reynolds spearheaded the creation of one of many competing versions of Anglicanism—one that persisted in a puritan emphasis on preaching and intentionally nurtured ceremonial fluidity. In the following decades, the diocese of Norwich saw many former puritans returning to the episcopal fold under the encouragement of its own bishop and other like-minded authorities as well as a noticeable growth of dissent, presenting a seemingly paradoxical picture of religious plurality.

Chapter 8 turns to William Gouge's son Thomas and his establishment of the Welsh Trust to present a different picture of late Stuart presbyterianism. The Welsh Trust was a seemingly uncontroversial charity project that Thomas Gouge, a presbyterian dissenter, turned to after being ejected from the vicarage of St Sepulchre, London, in 1662. The Trust brought together clergy and laity across emerging denominational divides,

including presbyterians like Richard Baxter, Anglicans like John Tillotson, and even the Socinian merchant Thomas Firmin; hence it has escaped the attention of historians wedded to confessional boundaries. The Trust, however, serves as a microcosm of the tension among many moderate presbyterians between the reality of their dissent and yet their desire for church comprehension, revealing a definite confessional broadening of Caroline presbyterianism and its impact on post-revolutionary Anglicanism.

Chapter 9 concludes this survey of puritan conformity and church polity, finishing with the unexpected twists and turns of Davenport's last decade of ministry that sealed his reputation as a deeply problematic, if not outright scandalous, Congregationalist leader. The merger of the New Haven Colony, where Davenport was its most eminent spiritual leader, with the nearby Connecticut in 1662 meant that the pastor's strategic influence in New England was hugely compromised. For him, New Haven's decline was intimately bound up with the marginalisation of the New England Way against the now widely practiced Half-Way Covenant. In 1667, Davenport, overwhelmed by a sense of disillusionment, was desperate to secure the offer of becoming the teaching officer at the First Church in Boston, the congregation once led by the famous John Cotton. The New Haven minister persuaded his reluctant flock to grant his supposedly temporary relocation to Boston as a way to discern God's will; he intentionally disregarded New Haven's wish to retain him. Davenport never went back to New Haven and eventually earned the appointment at Boston based on a forgery made by his own son, giving a false impression that he had been lawfully dismissed by New Haven to undertake a new ministerial post.

The last three years of Davenport's life from 1667 to 1670 were plagued by the exposure of his forgery. It not only seriously damaged his reputation then, but challenges our assessment of puritan spirituality today. Compared to Gouge and Reynolds, Davenport was once seen as more consistent in his teaching about and practice of church polity, as

emigrating to New England was a costly and dangerous undertaking. And yet we should remember that what an individual professed or preached never fully represented the whole picture of their belief system, nor did they always live by what they believed to be right or true. Perhaps the diverging paths of the four protagonists of this thesis revealed not only their changing convictions shaped by different influences and personal circumstances, but also their pragmatic and varied expressions of a common concern for career prospects and, not least, personal safety.

PART I GODLY REFORMS AND THE LAUDIAN CHURCH, 1628-42

Chapter 1 Puritans in Laud's London, 1628-33

The year 1628 marked a decisive turn in the direction of religious reform in England. William Laud (1573-1645) replaced George Montaigne as Bishop of London, and the new bishop's zeal for ceremonial uniformity was soon felt even more widely than before. William Gouge (1575-1653), the conformable minister of St Ann's Blackfriars, was already a celebrity preacher and leader of underground puritanism. His son Thomas (1605-81), fresh out of King's College, Cambridge, William Gouge's own alma mater, joined the parish as curate in August 1628.³⁸ Like William Gouge, John Davenport (*bap.* 1597, *d.* 1670) had also established himself as a popular preacher as vicar of St Stephen's Coleman Street in the city by 1628. In the same year, Edward Reynolds (1599-1676) succeeded John Preston to become preacher of Lincoln's Inn in October. Reynolds, Davenport, and the Gouges, all conformable puritans, shared a geographical and theological starting point and demonstrated little disagreement over church polity when Laud rose to power.

There is little doubt that these moderate puritan clergy formed a mutually informing relationship with their congregations. Some of them, like the Gouges, must have been carefully handpicked to suit the theological taste of their flock. Local ministries enabled them to deepen existing friendships and nurture ever-widening lay-clerical network that would prove useful in the following decades of turmoil. These intricate and mostly puritan connections, the focus of this chapter, foreshadowed the four ministers'

³⁸ Thomas Gouge only obtained his BA in 1629 but did become a fellow of King's College and curate of St Ann's Blackfriars in 1628. Richard L Greaves, "Gouge, Thomas," *ODNB*; John Venn and John Archibald Venn, eds., *Alumni Cantabrigienses: A Biographical List of All Known Students, Graduates and Holders of Office at the University of Cambridge, from the Earliest Times to 1900*, vol. 1 From the Earliest Times to 1751, pt. 2 Dabbs-Juxton, digitally printed version (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 232.

later divergence in conformity and ecclesiology. Gouge secured the lectureship at St Ann's Blackfriars, an unashamedly puritan parish, through a strong godly familial network, indicating both his background and convictions. Davenport lacked the same godly lineage; instead, he relied on the support of a strong vestry and the lobbying of his patron, Lady Vere, to secure his installation at St Stephen's. Reynolds' vocal Reformed convictions might have earned him the appointment as preacher at Lincoln's Inn, previously held by the renowned John Preston. In a stark contrast to Gouge and Davenport, Reynolds befriended the legal elite of the country who were mostly moderate politicians, yet with little puritan leanings.

Gouge, Davenport, and many like them deliberately created a clerical network on a national scale, accomplished through the Feoffees for Improvements, a semi-underground fundraising organisation based in London that supplied godly preachers to strategic locations in order to promote puritan preaching throughout the nation. The scheme naturally infuriated the Laudian authorities who brought the Feoffees to court and eventually suppressed the enterprise. Many lawyers from Lincoln's Inn were entangled in the controversy, either as fellow Feoffees or as their defence lawyers. Reynolds was conspicuously absent, in view of his links with several of them. The minister must have found the militant zeal among the likes of Gouge and Davenport either distasteful or unwise and consciously distanced himself from it. This effectively explains why he did not look suspicious to the Laudian authorities—a preacher who espoused a different soteriology and, especially throughout the 1630s, issued occasional critiques of the Laudian novelties, was considered to be fundamentally different from puritan activists who developed an underground puritan network that rallied financial support to push church reforms in an opposite direction of the Laudian ceremonialism.

London puritans were also internationally minded. Gouge and Davenport spearheaded a fundraising project for the Palatinate refugees of the Thirty Years' War and called for the country's military aid for the Protestant cause of the war through the pulpit. St Ann's Blackfriars offered Gouge first-hand encounters with Protestant foreigners who fled to London to secure freedom to worship, notably the Huguenot Delaunes, while Davenport, through Lady Vere, maintained close contact with many exiled puritan ministers in the Netherlands. International connections took different forms and left different marks on people: Gouge's exposure to foreigners at St Ann's Blackfriars might have contributed to his nationally focused ministry and reinforced his conformity, while Davenport's puritan clerical network extending to the Netherlands might have enabled him to envision a life overseas.

Godly Congregations

"Our Little State": William Gouge and St Ann's Blackfriars

William Gouge was brought up under the profound influence of Ezekiel Culverwell, brother of Gouge's mother, Elizabeth, and a godly minister. When Culverwell became household chaplain to Robert, third Lord Rich, at Leighs Priory, Essex, he managed to transfer the young Gouge from St Paul's School in London to Felsted school, founded by Lord Rich's infamous grandfather Richard Rich. Gouge's son Thomas remembered that his father cherished the "Felsted years" where he was educated under Culverwell and recognised it to have been a significant influence on him.³⁹ Gouge's lectureship at St Ann's Blackfriars, his first and only long-term ministry, was secured through his connection with another leading godly divine, Arthur Hildersham, one of

³⁹ Thomas Gouge, "A Narrative of the *Life and Death of Doctor GOUGE*," *A Learned and Very Useful Commentary on the Whole Epistle to the Hebrews* by William Gouge and Thomas Gouge (London, 1655: Wing G1391), a1r.

Laurence Chaderton's protégés in the Cambridge puritan network.⁴⁰ Chaderton, Gouge's uncle by marriage, spearheaded the 1603 millenary petition to James I, the presentation of which involved both Hildersham and Stephen Egerton (c. 1555-1622), incumbent of St Ann's. Both Hildersham and Egerton were outspoken puritan activists who suffered for their nonconformity. Hildersham was silenced for nonconformity by William Chaderton, Bishop of Lincoln from 1605 to 1609. Egerton had not only refused to subscribe fully to the Prayer Book in 1584, bringing him his first suspension of three in total throughout his ministry, but during the 1580s he had actively promoted the Book of Discipline.⁴¹ By the time Gouge joined St Ann's Blackfriars in 1608, Egerton had been inactive for around four years after Richard Vaughan, bishop of London, briefly suspended him. The suspension induced "a mysterious, self-imposed silence" for the rest of his life, according to Brett Usher, but the once active presbyterian spokesman must have left a lasting impact on his younger, more conformable, assistant, who took over preaching and other pastoral obligations in the 1610s and early 1620s.⁴²

Blackfriars benefited greatly from the status as a liberty. Sheltered from official interference, St Ann's grew into a puritan stronghold and, ironically, a haven for other religious and cultural outcasts as well.⁴³ At St Ann's, Gouge would be acquainted with other equally godly families. Among them was Mary Glover, daughter of London

⁴⁰ Samuel Clarke, *The Lives of Thirty-Two English Divines* (London, 1677: Wing C4539), 116-7; Lesley Ann Rowe, "The Worlds of Arthur Hildersham 1563–1632," (PhD dissertation, University of Warwick, 2009), 35, fn. 11; 154-5; 171-2; Bryan D. Spinks suggests that Hildersham was possibly a brother of Winifred Culverwell, the second wife of Ezekiel Culverwell. In that case, Culverwell's godly connections for his nephew were once again at play. See Bryan D. Spinks, "Hildersham [Hildersam], Arthur (1563-1632)," *ODNB*.

⁴¹ Paul S. Seaver, *The Puritan Lectureships: The Politics of Religious Dissent, 1560-1662* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1970), 214-5.

⁴² Brett Usher, "Egerton, Stephen," *ONDB*.

⁴³ For a thorough survey of Blackfriars' history as a liberty, see Anthony Paul House, "The City of London and the Problem of the Liberties, c1540 - c1640," (DPhil dissertation, University of Oxford, 2006), 111-52.

shopkeeper Timothy Glover and granddaughter of Robert Glover, Protestant martyr under the Marian regime.⁴⁴ Sir Samuel Luke, grandson of the high-profile puritan MP for Northamptonshire, Sir Valentine Knightley, was married at St Ann's in 1624 and possibly had his daughter Mary baptised here in January 1641.⁴⁵ Luke would become a parliamentary army officer and a staunch presbyterian under the Cromwellian government. If, as Polly Ha observes, presbyterianism was characterised by equality of ministers and lay participation in ecclesiastical oversight, Egerton's St Ann's was a perfect place to nurture future presbyterian leaders like Gouge.⁴⁶ The strong-willed and charismatic leadership of Egerton and later Gouge successfully mobilised their equally zealous parishioners to oppose the nearby activities of the Burbage family's company of players, The King's Men—an art form many puritans fervently opposed.⁴⁷ Since the actors were relying on the same exempt parochial status that protected the activist puritanism of St Ann's, the parishioners went to extraordinary lengths to wipe out this “ungodliness,” which was indeed a thorn in their side.

⁴⁴ Collinson mentions Glover as an example of a female hearer of Gouge, who came from a merchant's family: Patrick Collinson, *Richard Bancroft and Elizabethan Anti-Puritanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 174. Glover was notorious as a demoniac at the age of fourteen and was said to be “dispossessed by the ‘puritan’ method of prayer and fasting on 14 December 1602.” Marion Gibson, “Glover, Mary (b. 1587/8), demoniac,” *ODNB*.

⁴⁵ James George White, *The Churches & Chapels of Old London* (London, 1901), 32; Knightley was an influential gentry leader of the godly community in Northamptonshire. He and Sir Edward Montagu presented a petition against the suspension of the nonconforming ministers in Northamptonshire to the king and council in 1605: R.M. Serjeantson and W.R.D. Adkins, eds., *A History of the County of Northampton: Volume 2* (London: Victoria County History, 1906) 51.

⁴⁶ Ha, *English Presbyterianism*, 1.

⁴⁷ Sir William More sold part of Blackfriars to James Burbage in January 1596. Burbage renovated his purchase into a playhouse where The Lord Chamberlain's Men (The King's Men after 1603) was based. For puritan opposition to stage plays, see Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), esp. 18-47. Heinemann helpfully points out the complicated relationship between puritans and the stage—not all puritans were against stage plays, nor was their opposition a total rejection.

Just as Egerton had done in 1596, Gouge facilitated local opposition to Burbage's theatre in 1619, a failed petition soon followed by more in 1625-6, 1631, 1633, and 1641.⁴⁸ From ministers like Egerton and Gouge, influential parishioners like Lady Elizabeth Russell, sister-in-law of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, to many Protestant immigrants like the Huguenot William Delaune, who fled the St Bartholomew's Day massacre in 1572, the whole congregation united to purge what they deemed to be spiritually harmful.⁴⁹ The petitions were a display of a vibrant godliness over generations of St Ann's. Sir Thomas Posthumus Hoby, a devout puritan MP, replaced his mother Lady Russell to sign the 1619 petition after she had died in 1609. Hoby and his wife, Lady Margaret Hoby, the earliest known female diarist in England, regularly attended Gouge's lectures when they visited London. Delaune's son Paul likewise took his father's place and signed the 1619 petition. Such a strong and long-standing puritan congregation formed a mutually-reinforcing relationship between Gouge and his parishioners in their commitment to the godly cause.

Gouge enjoyed decades of immense popularity in London. His pulpit was frequented by many and praised as a must-visit for those who visited the city. Thomas Gouge recalled that both his father's Sunday sermons and Wednesday lectures were much attended by "divers City Ministers, and by sundry pious and judicious Gentlemen of the *Innes of Court* [The Temple is conveniently located next to Blackfriars], besides many

⁴⁸ Egerton's St Ann's successfully blocked Burbage's attempt to open a playhouse in 1596. Burbage then leased the property to Henry Evans, a theatrical producer, who collaborated with Nathaniel Giles, Master the Children of the Chapel Royal, and playwrights like Ben Jonson, until 1608, when Burbage reclaimed the property and the King's Men started performing there. See Christopher Highley, "Theatre, Church, and Neighbourhood in the Early Modern Blackfriars," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Age of Shakespeare*, ed. Malcolm R. Smuts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 623. St Ann's petitions are reprinted in *Shakespeare's Blackfriars Playhouse: Its Origin and its Design* by Irwin Smith (London: Peter Owen, 1966), 480-1, 489-92.

⁴⁹ Highley discusses the make-up of petitioners more thoroughly. See "Theatre, Church, and Neighbourhood in the Early Modern Blackfriars," 618-9.

other well-disposed Citizens, who in multitudes flocked to hear his heavenly Doctrine.”⁵⁰ William Gouge was fully aware of his influence as a puritan preacher. Once referring to St Ann’s as “o[u]r little state in the Blackfryers,” Gouge undoubtedly aspired to build up a godly parish as a springboard for a nationwide reform of the English Church.⁵¹ Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales helpfully observe that puritans looked up to parishes like St Ann’s as “conspicuous oases of regional and municipal puritanism” in the “English religious desert.”⁵² Gouge and Egerton were godly shepherds who fed their flock with much-needed, yet often lacking, spiritual food—preaching, catechising, and vigorous church discipline—not only for the sake of the spiritual wealth of the congregation itself, but for the wider audience to see what an ideal church should look like, against the rising tide of Laudian piety.

Davenport and Lay Empowerment at St Stephen’s Coleman Street

John Davenport had already gained notoriety as a “factious and popular” puritan for his preaching when serving as curate at St Lawrence Jewry.⁵³ Without the privileges St Ann’s Blackfriars enjoyed as a liberty, St Stephen’s inevitably ran into problems when they chose Davenport, whom the authorities deemed dangerous, as vicar in 1624. George

⁵⁰ Thomas Gouge, “Dr. WILLIAM GOUGE. The Life and Death of Dr. Gouge, who dyed Anno Christi, 1653” in *A Collection of the Lives of Ten Eminent Divines* by Samuel Clarke (London, 1662: Wing C4506), 105.

⁵¹ William Gouge to Sir Robert Harley, 24 June 1613, BL, Add MS 70001, f. 125r. The letter started with a very personal message. Gouge expressed sympathies towards Harley who had been “so long sick” and spoke of his own “part” in suffering—the death of his own “sweetest child” and only daughter in the previous week. The letter also referred to a “disturber of o[u]r peace, that busie-body Neale,” whom some scholars identify as Richard Neale (1562-1640), then bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, e.g., Francis Bremer, *Congregational Communion: Clerical Friendship in the Anglo-American Puritan Community, 1610-1692* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1994), 54; Christopher Highley, *Blackfriars in Early Modern London: Theater, Church, and Neighborhood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 43. It however seems odd that Gouge would then celebrate that this “Neale” would “now never trouble us any more in this world” because “His Head is at rest.” Similarly, Gouge spoke of Blackfriars as “our state” in a letter to Sir Thomas Posthumus Hoby on 26 December 1631: BL, Add MS 4275, f. 236r.

⁵² Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales, “Introduction: The Puritan Ethos, 1560-1700,” in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700*, eds. Durston and Eales (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 28.

⁵³ TNA, SP 14/173 f. 51.

Montaigne, Bishop of London, refused to grant Davenport's installation "till he [Montaigne] might know his Majesty's pleasure."⁵⁴ Anxious to clear his own name and secure the vicarage, Davenport turned to his patron, Lady Mary Vere (1581-1671), wife of Sir Horace Vere, army officer during the Thirty Years' War, to pull strings at court through her brother-in-law, Sir Edward Conway, Secretary of State.⁵⁵ Davenport emphasised that he was "falsely accused by some of Puritanism"—the meaning of which and the danger such label induced he knew perfectly well—hence the minister's defence: he had "always conformed to the rules and ceremonies of the Church, and persuaded others to do so," and had "preached submission to the higher powers."⁵⁶ Davenport concluded: "If by puritanically affected be meant one that secretly encourageth men in opposition to the present government [of the established Church], I profess an hearty detestation of such hypocrisy."⁵⁷

While Davenport refused to be labelled a puritan, Conway's intercession demonstrated how well-connected the twenty-seven-year-old minister already was among the godly within the established Church. Besides lobbying for Davenport through Conway, Lady Vere would frequent St Stephen's to hear him preach after the minister was successfully installed there.⁵⁸ Their patronage picked up a dynamic not uncommon in their time—Davenport constantly felt obliged to keep her informed of his activities, and besides lending support, Lady Vere sought spiritual counsel from the minister.⁵⁹ Through Lady

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Lady Vere was also patron of many other godly ministers, including John Preston and John Dod. Jacqueline Eales, "'An Ancient Mother in our Israel': Mary, Lady Vere," in *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women, 1558–1680*, eds. Johanna I. Harris and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 84-95.

⁵⁶ TNA, SP 14/173 f. 50; Davenport further specified that he had "used the surplice, the cross in baptism, and kneeling at the communion": *ibid.*, f. 56.

⁵⁷ Franklin B. Dexter, "Sketch of the Life and Writings of John Davenport," *NHP II*, 212.

⁵⁸ Tom Webster, introduction to *The Diary of Samuel Rogers, 1634-1638* by Samuel Rogers (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), xl.

⁵⁹ Eales, "'An Ancient Mother in our Israel,'" 87.

Vere, Davenport would further develop connections with the puritan diaspora in the Netherlands which proved enormously influential for his turn to congregationalism.

St Stephen's was one of the largest parishes in London, with more than 1,400 communicants in 1631.⁶⁰ The parishioners purchased the advowson in 1590 and were thus free to choose their own minister, which nurtured a distinctive lay dominance that could at times cause tensions between the church and its minister.⁶¹ Davenport was certainly aware of the huge embarrassment his deeply unpopular predecessor Samuel German had to go through. The parishioners had been trying to force out German as early as 1622 for his allegedly "many abuses both in life and doctrine," negligence in pastoral responsibilities, and hostility towards some parishioners "with continual calumnies in pulpit and out."⁶² St Stephen's withdrew German's additional annual income of £39 that had initially been voted by the vestry, but Montaigne and John Williams, then Lord Keeper and Bishop of Lincoln, intervened to settle an agreement between German and his parish.⁶³ The dispute nevertheless persisted until German's death in September 1624, when the general vestry almost immediately acted to secure Davenport as their new vicar. In October, Davenport proudly reported to Lady Vere about St Stephen's favour towards him: "Mr. Wilson [chaplain to George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury] was nominated by the vestry to be chosen with me, but when it came to voices all the vestry spoke for me, and only two for Mr. Wilson."⁶⁴ Davenport enumerated his prominent supporters, including "all the chief of the parish, yea, the Archbishop's own brother [Maurice Abbot]" as well as two of the three

⁶⁰ David A. Kirby, "The Radicals of St. Stephen's, Coleman Street, London, 1624-1642," *The Guildhall Miscellany* 3. No. 2 (April 1970): 98.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁶² Ann Williams, "London Puritanism: The Parish of St. Stephen Coleman Street," *Church Quarterly Review* 160 (1959): 468-73.

⁶³ Bremer, *Davenport*, 58.

⁶⁴ Davenport to Lady Vere, October 1624, *Letters*, 19.

trustees of the parish's property.⁶⁵ Support from powerful laity like Maurice Abbot, MP and a successful businessman, was significant. Abbot was a major spokesman of the East India Company and a board member of the Virginia Company from 1610.⁶⁶ He might have heard Davenport preach before the Virginia Company as early as 1621 and was perhaps the one who recommended the preacher to the vestry of St Stephen's.⁶⁷

While Davenport was officially chosen as vicar of St Stephen's through a clear corporate decision of its dominant lay vestry, Gouge was introduced to Egerton and St Ann's through a semi-conforming clerical network, involving clergymen like Hildersham and Culverwell, and would not be formally instituted until Egerton died in 1622. One might further speculate that Egerton's charismatic leadership, which Davenport's unpopular predecessor German had failed to provide at St Stephen's, enabled Gouge to assume similar leadership to mobilise godly reforms at St Ann's. Davenport's patronage and the strong-willed vestry at St Stephen's might have pushed the vicar towards another ecclesiological direction—a clearer recognition of lay empowerment in congregational affairs. These however remain conjectures since both ministers chose to conform and even defended episcopacy in the late 1620s.

Edward Reynolds, the Non-Puritan Preacher of Lincoln's Inn

Compared to his predecessors John Donne and later John Preston, Edward Reynolds was younger and more obscure when he was appointed preacher at Lincoln's Inn in 1628, at the age of twenty-nine. The choice was not entirely unreasonable. On 5 August

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Andrew Thrush. "Abbot, Sir Maurice (1565-1642), merchant and politician," *ODNB*.

⁶⁷ On 7 November 1621, an anonymous sponsor donated 40s to the company for a sermon to be preached in Michaelmas term and expressed their desire to provide long term financial support for such purpose. The sponsor further named Davenport as their choice for the preacher of the first sermon, which was delivered a week later on 14 November: Susan Myra Kingsbury, ed., *The Records of the Virginia Company of London* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1906), 1:545-6.

1627, the young man preached in support of John Prideaux in Merton College Chapel, Oxford, a few months after Prideaux was publicly challenged by Peter Heylyn (1599-1662).⁶⁸ Heylyn was Reynolds' age, but Prideaux, then regius professor of divinity and vice-chancellor of the university, was much more senior. The dispute, which centred on the visibility of the Protestant Church, was less ideologically based than Heylyn recalled in his memoir, but Reynolds' outspoken defence of the Reformed position against perceived papalist threats and the rise of Arminianism must have gained him wider attention.⁶⁹ This young, Reformed minister soon earned the vicarage of All Saints, Northampton (January 1628 - November 1629), whose patron was the puritan-leaning corporation of Northampton,⁷⁰ and within a year, he succeeded the recently deceased Preston, an equally moderate, Reformed minister, at Lincoln's Inn (October 1628 - March 1631).⁷¹ The next decade of the established Church however belonged to the likes of Heylyn, a fervent advocate for the Laudian reformation that would effectively weaken the English Reformed piety and its puritan variant.

Reynolds' brief ministry at Lincoln's Inn from 1628 to 1631 went smoothly, free from suspicions of strident puritanism. He edited three sermons he preached while at the Inn into a published volume, as a parting gift: *Three Treatises of the Vanity of the*

⁶⁸ The sermon is now lost.

⁶⁹ Milton, *Laudian and Royalist Polemic in Seventeenth-Century England*, 20-1.

⁷⁰ For the long-standing tensions between puritans and their unsympathetic neighbours in Northampton and Reynolds' puritan leaning predecessors at All Saints, see W.J. Sheils, *The Puritans in the Diocese of Peterborough, 1558-1610* (Northampton: Northamptonshire Record Society, 1979), 119-30.

⁷¹ Many historians dated Reynolds' ministry at Lincoln's Inn to 1622, succeeding John Donne, including Alexander Chalmers in his "Memoirs of the Life of Author" in *The Whole Works of the Right Rev. Edward Reynolds, Lord Bishop of Norwich* (London, 1826) as well as Ian Atherton in *ODNB*. But here I support the dating to be 1628 along with CCEd, "Edward Reynolds (CCEd Person ID 144634)," *The Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540-1835* <<http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk>>, accessed 12 October 2021, as well as Jeremiah, "Reynolds," 1-2. This is primarily because of clear evidence in William Paley Baildon, ed., *The Records of the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn: The Black Books*, vol. 2 1586-1660 (London: Lincoln's Inn, 1898), 277. At the council on 16 October 1628, Reynolds, "late of Martin [Merton] Colledge in Oxford, ... [was] chosen to be the Preacher of this House."

Creature. The Sinfulness of Sinne. The Life of Christ (1631), all of which reiterated his earlier anti-Arminianism and showed that the preacher consciously sided with the Reformed faction when the position was increasingly challenged. *The Vanity of the Creature* proclaimed a Reformed view of human depravity and salvation in Christ, emphasising the insufficiency of man because of his finitude and sinfulness, based on Ecclesiastes 1:14.⁷² *The Sinfulness of Sinne* directly targeted the rise of Arminian soteriology, denouncing “new Pelagians” in England who misinterpreted Romans 7 as if one’s soul could ever prevail against fleshly desires in this life.⁷³ In order to argue for the official status of the Reformed soteriology in the national Church, Reynolds intentionally cited the ninth of the Thirty-nine Articles that asserted men’s sinfulness and inclination to evil in their fallen state against the Arminian teaching that only recognised a deprivation of original righteousness rather than a positive sinfulness in human fallenness.⁷⁴

Standing against the danger of Arminianism was antinomianism. David Como points out that, through *The Sinfulness of Sinne*, Reynolds joined other puritans to condemn the antinomian extremists like Peter Shaw and Robert Towne who emerged within London Reformed circles from 1629 onwards.⁷⁵ This was mainstream puritans’ strategic alliance with the Laudians, in the hope of countering accusations that puritans’ strict adherence to Calvinism necessarily led to sedition and moral license.⁷⁶ Against those who decried the use of the Mosaic Moral Law, Reynolds asserted that preaching the Law led one to Christ rather than to despair, “for this is the method of the Holy Ghost, to

⁷² Ecclesiastes 1.14: “I have considered all the works that are done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity, and vexation of the spirit” (1599 Geneva Bible); Edward Reynolds, *Three Treatises of the Vanity of the Creature* (London, 1631: RSTC 20934), 1.

⁷³ Reynolds, *Three Treatises*, 157.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 200-1.

⁷⁵ David Como, *Blown by the Spirit: Puritanism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in Pre-Civil-War England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 100.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 100.

*convince first of sinne, and then to reveale righteousness and refuge in Christ.*⁷⁷

Reynolds then affirmed the Reformed tradition that recognised the use of law under the context of sanctification: “[The law will] make us *more carefull to keepe in Christs company*, and to walke according unto his Will.”⁷⁸ Preaching the gospel without the law would be preaching too much gospel, “or rather indeede too little,” hence it would not be preaching, but “rather perverting of the Gospell.”⁷⁹

Reynolds was certainly reacting against antinomian soteriology from the pulpit at Lincoln’s Inn, but Como is not entirely accurate in categorising Reynolds’ polemic as part of the puritan urge to defend their orthodoxy that burst forth in 1631. While the Jacobean Reformed consensus was breaking down towards the end of 1620s, Reformed theology was not exclusively the hallmark of puritanism. Without the same grievances against or at least reservation about episcopacy or the enforced ceremonies, it is difficult to decide whether Reynolds was a moderate Reformed conformist or a conformable puritan. Furthermore, *Three Treatises* went into print in 1631 because that was when Reynolds departed the Inn, to which the publication was dedicated, in order to serve as rector of Braunston, Northamptonshire. Theological differences between Laudians and puritans cannot be escalated into a mutually exclusive dichotomy.

In fact, Reynolds seemed close to those who could best be described as moderate, non-puritan, conformists. In 1632, Reynolds dedicated another collection of his Lincoln’s Inn sermons, *An Explication of the Hundreth and Tenth Psalme*, to Thomas Coventry (1578-1640), Lord Keeper of the Great Seal in 1625 and a loyal mouthpiece of Charles in withstanding Parliament’s defiance against Charles and Buckingham in 1626.⁸⁰ Although

⁷⁷ Reynolds, *Three Treatises*, 388-9.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 393, 394.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 392.

⁸⁰ Richard Cust, “Coventry, Thomas, first Baron Coventry,” *ODNB*.

lacking puritan sentiments, Coventry was a friend of many notable puritans like Preston and Gouge and pursued moderation in enforcement of Charles' policies, such as the forced loan and penalties for the recalcitrant. Reynolds praised Coventry's "many thoughts of favour and bounty" towards himself and many others, possibly referring to the lord keeper's moderate administration and supervision of the legal system.⁸¹ Coventry's active endeavours to dissuade the king from dissolving Parliament in March 1629 was but one of many attempts on his part considered to be favourable for Parliament and beneficial for the godly cause. Another moderate politician with whom Reynolds might have been acquainted during his time at Lincoln's Inn was Sir Henry Marten, judge of the admiralty court, who was highly sympathetic towards puritan causes. Reynolds dedicated a treatise to Marten in 1638, acknowledging his "many and deep engagements for [Marten's] abundant favors."⁸²

One may ask: Gouge was easily spotted as a potential troublemaker due to his godly lineage and service to Egerton, a presbyterian incumbent, but if both Davenport and Reynolds conformed and even publicly advocated conformity until the early 1630s, why did Davenport receive the same scrutiny as Gouge from Montaigne, and later Laud, while Reynolds simply slipped under the Archbishop's radar? The answer seems to lie in a real difference in their attitudes towards puritan causes. When Reynolds was still carefully navigating between the rise of Arminian authorities and puritan radicals, Gouge and Davenport had already been deeply engaged in the London underground puritan world. There were still many years ahead until Reynolds was personally confronted with the

⁸¹ Edward Reynolds, *An Explication of the Hundreth and Tenth Psalm wherein the Severall Heads of Christian Religion therein Contained* (London, 1632: RSTC 20927), A3v.

⁸² Edward Reynolds, *Meditations on the Holy Sacrament of the Lords Last Supper* (London, 1638: RSTC 20929a), A6-A7.

reality of a new orthodoxy and hard-line ceremonialism and consequently realised his affinity with those labelled puritans.

Building a Godly Nation: The Feoffees for Impropriations

While Gouge, Davenport, and Reynolds had all established themselves as influential preachers who advocated the Reformed faith in the late 1620s, their engagements outside of the pulpit revealed two diverging pastoral concerns. The Feoffees for the Purchase of Impropriations helpfully illuminated Gouge and Davenport's overlapping puritan network and active participation in London's puritan underground, of which Reynolds was not part. This godly network looked beyond London and engaged itself with further reforms on a national scale along puritan lines, clashing directly with bishop Laud and fellow ceremonialists' attempt at a drastically different, if not opposite, type of reform.

The Feoffees for Impropriations were established in 1625, soliciting funds to buy impropriations and advowsons with the aim of appointing puritan-leaning ministers to strategic places throughout the kingdom, "especially in Cities, and Market Towns," targeted clearly in order to build up godly sympathies in places that sent MPs to the House of Commons.⁸³ Besides Gouge and Davenport, other clerical Feoffees included Richard Sibbes (1577-1635), preacher at Gray's Inn and equally senior and highly respected as Gouge among London puritans, and Charles Offspring (*bap.* 1586, *d.* 1660), rector of St Antholin in the City, another notoriously puritan parish.⁸⁴

Along with these clergymen were eight lay Feoffees. Four were lawyers, John White of the Middle Temple, Christopher Sherland of Gray's Inn, as well as Samuel

⁸³ Clarke, *A Collection of the Lives of Ten Eminent Divines*, 111.

⁸⁴ Sibbes, Davenport, and Offspring were three of the four founding clerical members. Gouge joined in 1626 to replace Richard Stock, rector of All Hallows, who died earlier in the same year. See Bremer, *Congregational Communion*, 75.

Browne and Robert Eyre both from Lincoln's Inn—all notable for their vigorous opposition to Arminianism and Laudian reform.⁸⁵ White would testify against Laud during the latter's trial in 1644, recalling how the Feoffee pleaded for Laud's mercy in vain and was instead accused of being “[a]n *enemy of the Church, an underminer of Religion*” by the Bishop.⁸⁶ The Feoffees obviously thought that it was their ecclesiastical and political opponents who were the underminers of religion. Sherland, for example, was a zealous critic of Charles' counsellors like George Villiers, first duke of Buckingham, once calling Buckingham “the principal patron and supporter of a semi-Pelagian, demi-Popish faction, dangerous to the church and state.”⁸⁷ Browne, less influential than other Feoffees at this stage, would emerge as a leading presbyterian MP during the civil wars. Eyre was already a renowned bencher at Lincoln's Inn in the late 1620s, and while little is known about his theological convictions, he had familial links with other Feoffees like Charles Offspring and Samuel Aldersey.⁸⁸

Given the potential influence the Feoffees could have exerted if their enterprise had kept growing, Laudian authorities were alarmed. Attorney-general William Noy, a friend of Laud's and senior member and bencher of Lincoln's Inn, filed to prosecute the Feoffees in the Court of Exchequer in Easter term 1632. This legal dispute revealed existing tensions within the Inn itself, since the lawyers who defended the Feoffees, including William Lenthall, Edward Atkyns, and Robert Holborne, were from Lincoln's Inn as

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*; Vivienne Larminie, “Feoffees for impropriations (*act.* 1625-1633),” *ODNB*.

⁸⁶ William Prynne, *Canterburies Doome, or, The First Part of a Compleat History of the Commitment, Charge, Tryall, Condemnation, Execution of William Laud, Late Arch-bishop of Canterbury* (London, 1646: Wing P3917), 386-7.

⁸⁷ “SHERLAND, Christopher (1593-1632), of Northampton, and Gray's Inn, London,” *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604-1629*, eds. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁸⁸ Frances Rose-Troup, *The Massachusetts Bay Company and its Predecessors* (New York, NY: The Grafton Press, 1930), 131-2. Eyre's wife Anne was a daughter of Samuel Aldersey, whose second wife Margaret was a sister of Charles Offspring.

well.⁸⁹ The Feoffees started their defence on 31 January 1633 with a joint statement, protesting that purchasing impropriations to promote “good and faithfull preachers” was a “pious work” and the Feoffees had not “presented one preacher but he was conformable.”⁹⁰ Noy however quickly pointed out that the *de facto* power the Feoffees acquired to ordain and remove lecturers as they wished was questionable—the Feoffees had “taken upon them to make Canons Ecclesiasticall” to become “supreme Patrons.”⁹¹ Noy concluded that since the Feoffees set “Ordinances of their owne aucthority, as a Corporacon [*sic*]...this is *supra dom[inum] Regem vsurpare*...an vsurpation and an incroachment upon the Regality The king having the sole power for the ordeyning and appointing of bodyes politique.”⁹²

One might speculate that for Noy, there was an antipathy to puritans and their claims of piety as well. With explicit sarcasm, the attorney-general drew attention of the court to how one could “not heare any word of prayer” in the “p[ro]visions and orders” given by these “honest Gentlemen [the Feoffees],” many of whom Noy personally knew.⁹³ Two weeks later, the court issued its decision to suppress and dissolve the organisation which had “invaded the Kings aucthority, both Ecclesiasticall & Civill.”⁹⁴ It was specifically pointed out that Charles had great interest in the case and had ordered that no

⁸⁹ Isabel M. Calder, introduction to *Activities of the Puritan Faction of the Church of England, 1625-33*, ed. Calder (London: S.P.C.K., 1957), vii.

⁹⁰ “The Process in the Court of the Exchequer against The Collectors of St Antholins,” BL, Harley MS 832, ff. 3v, 4v-5r; a thorough transcription of the court records, including the whole Harley MS 832, can be found in *Activities of the Puritan Faction of the Church of England, 1625-33* as well.

⁹¹ William Noy, 31 January 1633, BL, Harley MS 832, f. 6v.

⁹² *Ibid.*, f. 8r.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, f. 6r.

⁹⁴ The sentence given on 13 February 1633, BL, Harley MS 832, f. 51v.

charges of criminal offence should be placed upon those who deserved such sentence until further investigation could be made, “which hee [the king] keepeth in his breast.”⁹⁵

Davenport was especially troubled by the imminent prospect of criminal charges. He was one of the founding members of the Feoffees for Improvements, while Gouge replaced one of the original Feoffees, Richard Stock, in 1626. Davenport also had closer links with some other Feoffees. Samuel Aldersey, treasurer of the Feoffees and a vestryman of St Stephen’s, was a close friend who would leave £20 in his will for the minister. Charles Offspring was Aldersey’s brother-in-law, Sir Robert Eyre his son-in-law, whose brother Christopher was also a member of the St Stephen’s congregation. This network of close friendship indicated Davenport’s influence and leadership among the Feoffees that Gouge perhaps did not seek to have, and Davenport undoubtedly feared that church authorities would treat active leaders of the scheme like him differently from those being sought to join the endeavour later like Gouge. Although the case would be closed without further disciplines, this incident marked the beginning of a series of Laudian acts of harassment against Davenport, who would swiftly turn into a committed nonconformist and devout critic of episcopacy.

Reynolds was absent from the story of the Feoffees, but as preacher of Lincoln’s Inn, he was familiar with many Feoffees, and the Northamptonshire connection among them is striking. Sherland came from a strong puritan family in Northamptonshire. His cousin, Christopher Yelverton (1602-54), judge and MP for Northampton, was an important gentry friend of Reynolds and would provide financial aid for the minister,

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 48r. Two days before this hearing, Davenport recorded a prayer in his Great Bible, discovered and noted down by Cotton Mather in his *Magnalia*: “I prayed...that God would assist our counsellors, in opening the cases, and be pleased to grant, that they might get no advantage against us, to punish us as *evil doers*.” After learning that no charges would be brought at this stage, Davenport wrote down a response of thanksgiving, promising to be more “industrious” in his family as well as more thankful and watchful “in remembrance of his [God’s] mercy.” See Mather, *Magnalia* I, 323.

along with Zouch Tate (1606-50), MP for Northamptonshire in the Long Parliament who would become a lay presbyterian advocate at the Westminster Assembly.⁹⁶ Sherland also befriended other godly ministers in Northamptonshire, including Thomas Ball, protégé of John Preston and successor to Reynolds at All Saints, Northampton, in November 1629. Browne and Eyre were active members of Lincoln's Inn, and Eyre was chosen Dean of the Chapel in 1629-30 and thus must have been in regular contact with the preacher.⁹⁷ Lastly, Sir Thomas Crewe (1566-1634), another prominent gentleman from Northamptonshire, replaced Sherland in 1632 after the latter died. His son John Crewe (1597/8-1679), who went to Oxford in the same year as Reynolds, would serve as MP on several occasions throughout the 1620s and represent Northamptonshire in the Long Parliament in 1640. During the Engagement controversy in 1650-1, John Crewe would seek ways to help Reynolds preserve his vice-chancellorship and deanery of Christ Church in Oxford.⁹⁸ Similar to Reynolds, Crewe would become a presbyterian with royalist sentiments and would regain influence upon the restoration of the Stuart monarchy after losing political favour after Pride's Purge.

Despite similar theological convictions and social proximity to many Feoffees through his ministry at Northampton and Lincoln's Inn, Reynolds remained distant from this group. Considering his vocal opposition to the Laudian reformation from the mid-

⁹⁶ Edward Reynolds, *Animalis Homo* (London, 1650: Wing R1236), A3r; Sherland's maternal grandfather was Sir Christopher Yelverton (1536/7-1612), a former speaker of the House of Commons widely known for his puritan leanings. David Ibbetson, "Yelverton, Sir Christopher," *ODNB*.

⁹⁷ The Dean of the Chapel, not one of the clerical staff, was and still is annually elected from among the Benchers of the Inn to oversee the running of the Chapel, including its service and repairs. See William Paley Baildon, *Lincoln's Inn Chapel* (London: Lincoln's Inn, 1899), 262; see also <https://www.lincolnsinn.org.uk/about-us/governance/>.

⁹⁸ In 1657, six years after Reynolds was forced out of his vice-chancellorship and deanery of Christ Church at Oxford, the minister expressed his gratitude towards Crewe: "your earnest and sollicitous endeavors...have preserved my Station in the University, when changes in the State caused changes there, laid so great a debt upon me, as I have no way to discharge." Edward Reynolds, *Deaths Advantage* (London, 1657: Wing R1244), B1v.

1630s onwards, it is unlikely that Reynolds disapproved of the enterprise of the Feoffees. He regarded preaching an essential part of ministry, disliked Arminian theology, and was opposed to the avant-garde ceremonialist campaign. And yet in the late 1620s and early 1630s, he was at most a sympathetic onlooker, similar to his powerful friends like Coventry and Marten, rather than the active participant in puritan causes he would soon turn out to be. Confronted with the rise of Laudianism, not every disaffected Reformed minister was radicalised—at least not all at the same pace.

Puritans and the International Protestant World

Puritans, conformable and nonconforming alike, were largely internationally-minded, but while for some, like Gouge, these concerns reinforced their zeal to cultivate English piety, others, like Davenport, with their deep-seated disillusion with the king and the episcopal Church, became increasingly drawn to a fresh start and eventually cast their lot with the New World. Besides working as the Feoffees together, Gouge and Davenport collaborated to raise funds for the Palatine refugees, seeing this charity project as an advancement of the international Reformed cause. Laud jumped on the opportunity to summon the fundraisers, who must have found the bishop's attempt to politicise their charity scheme deeply frustrating. This by no means meant that Gouge and Davenport shared the exact same outlook of how they related to the international Protestant world. The ministers' respective international circles produced different attitudes to England's role in the ongoing reformation of global Christianity as well as their own conformity to the established Church.

Puritan Fundraising for the Thirty Years' War Refugees

The outbreak of the Thirty Years' War coincided with the arrival of Halley's Comet in November 1618, a coincidence that sparked a frantic series of prophecies that

helped fuel millenarian ideas.⁹⁹ Throughout the 1620s and 1630s, the original dispute between Bohemia and the Habsburgs rapidly escalated into warfare on a massive scale, dragging most political powers in Europe into decades of military struggle. Many puritans deeply sympathised with the Protestant Frederick, absolutely convinced that this was a spiritual battle against the devilish attacks from Rome.

On 2 March 1627, Davenport and Gouge, along with Richard Sibbes, a fellow Feoffee and preacher of Gray's Inn, and Thomas Taylor, minister of St Mary Aldermanbury, composed a circular letter that detailed the dire needs of the Thirty Years' War refugees, "cast out of their houses and home out of their callings and Countryes by the furie of the merciless papists in the upper Palatinate."¹⁰⁰ The letter called for financial support for these Reformed refugees who "would be very thankful for course bread and drink if they could get it."¹⁰¹ Aware that potential donors would wonder how access to the refugees was possible, the authors assured that the funds would not be miscarried: "for wee knowe a sure and safe way, whereby whatsoever is given, shall undoubtedly come to their hands to whom it is intended."¹⁰² The ministers heard of the "Lamentable distress" of the refugees from information reported to Charles, who, the letter implied, had failed to provide timely relief.¹⁰³ The letter then asked the reader to "comiserate their pr[e]sent want and enlarge their harts and hands for some present and private supply for them till some publique meanes (which hereafter may be hoped) may be raised for their reliefe."¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Peter H. Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy: A History of the Thirty Years' War* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 262.

¹⁰⁰ "A Circular Letter of Thomas Taylor, Richard Sibbes, John Davenport, and William Gouge," *Letters*, 26-7.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

Hopes for public relief were indeed high in mid-1628. Learning of the recent “union of King & Parliament & their agreement,” referring to Charles’ third Parliament assembled in March 1628 and the king’s acceptance of the parliamentary Petition of Right in May, Davenport reinforced this message of brotherly love and financial relief through the pulpit at St Stephen’s in June, citing Canticles 9 and specifically naming “the churches of Bohemia, France, the Palatinate & other places”: “we have a little sister that hath no breasts. What shall we do for her?”¹⁰⁵ The preacher would soon be disappointed when the third Parliament collapsed and William Laud emerged on the London scene. Sniffing out these ministers’ grudge against the king and his foreign policy, once Laud became bishop of London, he seized upon the letter and summoned these puritan fundraisers before the High Commission, many of whom were the Feoffees whose activities the Bishop had already found questionable. Possibility of disciplinary actions greatly disturbed Davenport, who confided in Lady Vere:

I have hoped in vain, for, to this day, we are in the same condicion as before, delayed till the finishing of this session in parliament, which now is unhappily concluded without any satisfying contentment to the King, or commonwealth. Threatenings were speedily revived against us by the new Bishop of London Dr. Laud, even the next day after the conclusion of this session.¹⁰⁶

Even though Laud eventually dealt with the fundraisers moderately, merely admonishing them, the incident anticipated future clashes between the same puritan faction in the city and their bishop, who would continue a close supervision of Gouge, Davenport, and their friends and eventually drive some out of England. Interestingly, Gouge and Davenport resorted to different rhetoric under similar disciplinary pressure. While Gouge

¹⁰⁵ John Davenport, 8 June 1628, “Robert Keayne Sermon Notes, 1627-1628,” MHS, MS N-1516, 31. The notes have been edited by Susan B. Ortman, “Gadding about London in Search of a Proper Sermon: How Robert Keayne’s Sermon Notes from 1627-28 Inform Us about the Religious and Political Issues Facing the London Puritan Community” (MA thesis, Millersville University, 2004), 391.

¹⁰⁶ John Davenport to Lady Vere, *Letters*, 29-30.

consistently showered Laud with praise and pleas for moderation both publicly through the pulpit as well as privately as a way to pacify the bishop, Davenport became increasingly audacious, renewing his call for England's aid for the Protestants' cause in the Thirty Years' War through preaching. On 23 June 1629, at the annual meeting of the London Artillery Company, Davenport once again called for England's military intervention: "Were there no danger at home, yet the distresses of our brethren abroad should quicken us to the use of all meanes, whereby wee may bee inable to succour them."¹⁰⁷ Along with many other conformable puritans, both Gouge and Davenport affirmed England's blessed peace and the country's responsibility to advance the Protestant cause internationally. Davenport, however, was noticeably more persistent in promoting puritan causes through public ministry, while Gouge, typical of conformable puritans in early Stuart England, stopped at critiques through euphemisms and largely devoted himself to practical divinity.

Puritans and their International Connections

Most puritans shared a concern for the progress of international Protestantism, and yet not every puritan or proto-puritan had the same amount of contact with the Reformed churches in Europe, nor did involvement with the international Reformed cause bring about the same ecclesiological preferences and impact on conformity. Gouge's constant attention to the religiopolitical turmoil on the continent and the close links between St Ann's and the French Huguenot Church on Threadneedle Street never clashed with his devotion to Protestant England; instead, Gouge repeatedly preached about England's spiritual priority as the New Israel and her responsibility to lead the cosmic eschatological renewal. By contrast, the reality of England's relative peace reinforced Davenport's frustration with the king's sluggish response to the Protestant cause in the Thirty Years'

¹⁰⁷ *Idem, A Royal Edict for Military Exercises* (London, 1629: RSTC 6313), 16.

War, with which many of his friends, including Lady Vere, were personally involved. Davenport's friendships and frequent exchange with English congregationalists in London and abroad, especially those in the Netherlands, familiarised the minister with the English Reformed diaspora that, from his perspective, brimmed with new opportunities to realise his ecclesiological ideals free of episcopal shackles. Compared to Gouge and Davenport, Reynolds noticeably lacked the same breadth of international connections. His brief ministry in London exposed him to England's foreign affairs but did not give the minister the exposure enjoyed by Gouge and Davenport to the international Reformed community. Reynolds moved to Braunston in 1631 and devoted himself to parochial concerns, which rarely involved first-hand encounters with continental divines.

In Gouge's Wednesday lectures at St Ann's, he followed John Foxe's martyrology and traced God's providence over England back to John Wyclif, emphasising England's leadership in the cosmic spiritual battle against Rome, "the very seat of antichrist": "the Lord caused the light of the gospel to pierce thorow the thick cloud of Popery here in *England* before any other Nation."¹⁰⁸ Instead of lamenting England's plunge into a civil war as a divine judgment and abandonment that paralleled the downfalls of many previous "Israels," including Rome, Gouge's vision of England as the New Israel would take on apocalyptic overtones in the early 1640s. For Gouge, England was not simply one of many nations in history that had true gospel first preached to them in their respective epochs but the very last nation endowed with such divine privilege.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Gouge, *Commentary*, 421. The commentary was edited by both Gouge and his son Thomas and published posthumously in 1655, based on thirty years of Gouge's Wednesday lectures on the Book of Hebrews. It is difficult to determine when these passages were preached. But since it was extracted from Gouge's comments on 4:6, and Gouge's lectureship began in 1608 and lasted for around 45 years, it is almost certain that the sermon was preached before the first Civil War broke out in 1642, and possibly even before 1630.

¹⁰⁹ In both *Commentary* and his 1645 sermon, *The Progresse of Divine Providence* (London: 1645, Wing G1393), Gouge spoke of the "great week of the world," a pattern of history based on the six days of

St Ann's Blackfriars had a prominent French Huguenot presence, which could explain Gouge's many praises of England's blessedness and his commitment to the established Church. Some godly Huguenot refugees actively attended both St Ann's and the French Church at Threadneedle Street, notably the Delaune family. William Delaune was a physician, licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians, and a minister, briefly serving in the French Church while also attending St Ann's.¹¹⁰ His sons Gideon (1564/5-1659) and Paul (c. 1585-1655?) were also prime examples of "strangers" successfully blending in English affluent society. As an apothecary, Gideon accumulated considerable wealth and made his way to the royal court, at one point serving as Anne of Denmark's apothecary; he was one of the original members of the Society of Apothecaries in 1617 and donated his land in Blackfriars for the building of Apothecaries' Hall in 1632.¹¹¹ Gideon, along with his family, was respected as a senior and committed member of St Ann's, and on account of his services the church granted him a second pew for his family's private use in 1618.¹¹² These services included serving as churchwarden twice before 1618 and actively promoting the rebuilding of the parish church.¹¹³ Gideon's youngest brother Paul was born in St Ann's Blackfriars around 1585 and, like their father William, was a physician. In 1622, he accompanied Henry Cary, first Viscount Falkland, to Ireland, as

creation in the book of Genesis. The first five days were successive stages of Old Testament history, marked by its most faithful, divinely instituted leaders. Gouge did not elaborate on the sixth day, to which his own age belonged, in *Commentary*, but in the 1645 sermon preached before the House of Lords, he divided the sixth day into two parts in *Progresse*, pointing the "later part of the last day" to his own time and exhorting Parliament to continue ecclesiastical reforms that godly monarchs in the past had begun. See Gouge, *Commentary*, 12; *idem*, *The Progresse of Divine Providence*, 38-40.

¹¹⁰ Andrew Spicer, "Delaune, William [formerly Guillaume de Laune]," *ODNB*.

¹¹¹ Charles Littleton, "Acculturation and the French Church of London, 1600-circa 1640," in *Memory and Identity: The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora*, eds. Bertrand Van Ruymbeke and Randy J. Sparks (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 98; *idem*, "Delaune, Gideon," *ODNB*. Apothecaries' Hall was largely destroyed by the Great Fire of London in 1666 but was rebuilt and remained on the same site despite undergoing significant renovations.

¹¹² Brian Burch, "The Parish of St Anne's Blackfriars, London, to 1665", *Guildhall Miscellany* 3, no. 1 (October 1969): 17.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

Lord Falkland's physician and would only return in 1642. Paul was made professor of physic in Gresham College in 1643 and would voluntarily serve as one of the physicians for the parliamentary army.¹¹⁴

For Gouge, the Delaunes were living evidence to England's blessings that overflowed to foreigners. In *Gods Three Arrowes* (1631), Gouge laid out three signs of God's judgment—plague, famine, and sword—and, while he noted England's struggle with plagues, he pointed out how England was protected from warfare that was afflicting many other places in Europe like Bohemia, the Palatinates, and many parts of Germany and France.¹¹⁵ Through wars, idolatry had prevailed over piety and “*usurpers*” had “entred upon the rites of the true *Lords* and *Inheritours*,” let alone many lives sacrificed and many more exiled.¹¹⁶ In contrast, England was thrice more blessed than Israel under Solomon's reign because of the providential peace under the godly government of Elizabeth, James, and now Charles.¹¹⁷ In 1632, Gouge again spoke of how the whole kingdom, together with Scotland and Ireland, was blessed with “the *Gospell of peace*” and “a free use of all Gods holy ordinances requisite for our spirituall edification and eternall salvation.”¹¹⁸

These high praises, coupled with Gouge's version of godliness, exemplified in his parish ministry and the work of the Feoffees, served as a strategic exhortation for Charles to not only guard his Protestant subjects from papalist threats, but back puritan reforms. Gouge had witnessed a wide range of Laudian suppression of puritan preachers since the late 1620s. Alexander Leighton (c. 1570-1649), a Scottish physician and presbyterian

¹¹⁴ Charles Littleton, “Delaune, Gideon,” *ODNB*; *idem*, “Acculturation and the French Church of London, 1600-circa 1640,” *Memory and Identity*, 99.

¹¹⁵ William Gouge, *Gods Three Arrowes: Plague, Famine, Sword, in Three Treatises* (London: 1631, RSTC 12116), A6r-v.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, A6v.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 352.

¹¹⁸ *Idem*, *The Saints Sacrifice: Or, A Commentarie On the CXVI. Psalme* (London, 1632: RSTC 12125), 136.

advocate, was arrested in February 1630 and subsequently imprisoned and maltreated for his vocal call for the abolition of episcopacy. Davenport, who had openly defended conformity against Leighton in 1626-7, was likewise summoned before Laud to answer charges against his loose observance of the prescribed worship in January 1631.¹¹⁹ Gouge was clearly troubled by the harassment many fellow puritans faced. In October 1631, he interceded for Davenport in a letter to Laud, in which Gouge expressed concerns for “the report that [had] come to his ears of his traducing the Bishop or his proceedings,” which “much perplexed the writer’s [Gouge’s] guiltless soul.”¹²⁰ Resorting to the same strategy to confront the authorities, Gouge first commended Laud as “prudent, moderate, [and] courteous,” indeed a forbearing authority who never forced any to be deprived “but such as utterly refused to conform.”¹²¹ This diplomatic approach was to appease the bishop in order to induce him to greater tolerance, and time would tell that while Laud continued to clash with Davenport, he and Gouge managed to find a balance that would allow the celebrity puritan preacher to stay within the established Church and avoid the plight that befell some of his friends.

If Davenport seemed more persistent in promoting the unity of the international Reformed world through the pulpit and other means than Gouge did, it was possibly because many of Davenport’s friends were personally involved in the religious tensions on the continent. Lady Vere’s husband Sir Horace Vere commanded the English volunteer army against the Spanish invasion in the Palatinate in the 1620s, during which time she was in constant contact with Davenport. The Veres also spent extensive time in The Hague, where two of their daughters, Elizabeth and Mary, were born.¹²² Their chaplains in

¹¹⁹ TNA, SP 16/182, f. 83.

¹²⁰ TNA, SP 16/202, f. 33.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Jacqueline Eales, “Vere [*née* Tracy; *other married name* Hoby], Mary, Lady Vere,” *ODNB*.

The Hague were Samuel Balmford (*d.* 1657) and Obadiah Sedgwick (1599/1600-1658), both close to Davenport, who sent letters to them and sometimes greetings to them through Lady Vere. First-hand reports brought Davenport close to the calamities of war and their spiritual implications, which constantly prompted him to speak up for his friends.

Balmford, whom Davenport “love[d] unfeignedly,” and Thomas Hooker (1586?-1647), who fled to Amsterdam to escape Laud’s severity in June 1631, prefigured Davenport’s departure from England in 1633.¹²³ In 1632, the English Reformed church in Amsterdam, led by presbyterian pastor John Paget, was considering either Balmford or Hooker as an assistant pastor. Balmford, like Hooker and Davenport, supported a stricter standard for infant baptism, but Paget considered Balmford more acceptable.¹²⁴ Balmford received the offer but eventually turned it down and returned to The Hague, whereas Hooker, challenged by Paget’s twenty questions pertaining to ecclesiological issues like baptism and church government, was denied the post. Davenport watched the dispute closely from England and assisted Hooker with his answers to Paget even before Davenport turned publicly congregationalist himself.¹²⁵

Balmford, although considered more moderate than Hooker and later Davenport, would not escape Laudian scrutiny in The Hague, especially after the arrival of Sir William Boswell as English ambassador in the Netherlands in 1632; Boswell was a fervent Laudian who would pressure Balmford to enforce the prescribed worship and use the

¹²³ Davenport to Lady Vere, 26 December 1629, *Letters*, 32-3. Balmford and Hooker were fellow puritans whose time at Emmanuel College Cambridge overlapped, despite Hooker being more senior.

¹²⁴ Balmford, like Hooker and Davenport, had “expres[s]ly denied” Paget’s practice “to baptise all.” John Trasy to John Paget, 9, 30 September 1634, BL, Add MS 24666, ff. 1r-3r, 17r-19v, especially 19r. Balmford might have been more willing to accommodate presbyterian views than Hooker and Davenport. He would return to England in 1650 and engaged in presbyterian reforms, serving as Moderator of the London Provincial Assembly in 1655. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Visible Saints: The Congregational Way, 1640-1660* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 9; Keith L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches of the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 146-7.

¹²⁵ Webster, *Godly Clergy*, 299.

Prayer Book at his church, which drove the church to switch from the English Synod to the Hague Classis in 1634—a move that infuriated Boswell and Laud and anticipated Balmford’s arrest upon his return to England in 1635.¹²⁶ When Davenport arrived in Amsterdam in late 1633, he would face a strikingly similar dilemma, being caught between theological differences with the presbyterian Paget on the one side and on the other, disputes over his conformity to the established Church and even loyalty to the king with Laudian authorities like Boswell. He would consciously navigate the dangerous path his friends had tread, eventually following many of them to New England.

Conclusion

Gouge, Davenport, and Reynolds, like many other puritans of their day, shared the same Reformed convictions, stayed within the established Church, and repeatedly provided assurances of their conformity when confronted with Laudian discipline in the early 1630s. There were however noticeable differences in the ways Laud and other church authorities treated the three ministers. Gouge’s godly lineage and leadership at Egerton’s St Ann’s readily exposed him to Laud’s scrutiny. Davenport was likewise subject to Laudian ire because of what he did beyond his parish along with other godly ministers like Gouge: the Feoffees for Impropriations and fundraising for the Thirty Years’ War. These activities helped differentiate Davenport and Reynolds, who otherwise demonstrated very similar theological convictions and conformability.

While Gouge and Davenport collaborated in many puritan schemes, their different godly networks foreshadowed their future ecclesiological divergence. Other than Gouge’s presbyterian connections, his closeness to French Huguenot immigrants nurtured his England-centred approach to ministry and hence his conformity, whereas Davenport paid a

¹²⁶ Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 147; Vivienne Larminie, “Bamford [Balmford], Samuel,” *ODNB*.

closer attention to the English Reformed diaspora in the Netherlands and looked beyond England in his pursuit of ecclesiological ideals.

Reynolds' brief career at Lincoln's Inn appeared uncontroversial, but the lay-clerical network he developed and his future Braunston ministry paved a way for an emergence of a staunch puritan preacher. Despite lacking the same exposure to the international Reformed world, Reynolds transformed quietly, yet rapidly, into a troublemaker who would firmly resist the Laudian enforcement of ceremonies from the localities. As the Laudian-puritan divide continued and tensions deepened in the mid-1630s, we see an emerging diversity in conformity among moderate Reformed ministers in the face of a new orthodoxy: Gouge retreated from public engagements with puritan causes, Davenport was swiftly radicalised into a vocal congregationalist overseas, and lastly, Reynolds emerged as a puritan spokesman in Northamptonshire.

Chapter 2 Puritans and Laudian Neo-Orthodoxy, 1633-37

William Laud replaced George Abbot as Archbishop of Canterbury in August 1633, enabling a step-up in the now nationwide Laudian campaign. With the hardening of ceremonial discipline, puritans resorted to various ways of self-defence. Seeing the Feoffees suppressed and fellow puritans gone to seek refuge in foreign lands, the conformable Gouge felt compelled to retreat from his earlier godly activism. In the mid-1630s, he focused on pastoral care in St Ann's Blackfriars, with a classic puritan stress on catechising and preaching as the centre of worship. Gouge was also an active publisher, but his publishing came to a halt in 1627 and would not resume until 1637. In an interesting contrast, local militant puritanism sheltered by powerful gentry in Northamptonshire profoundly influenced Reynolds, now the Braunston minister. His 1634 sermon before the assize judges, *Shieldes of the Earth*, demonstrated his sensitivity to the local opposition to Charles' financial and religious policies and prefigured his godly leadership in the years leading up to the Civil Wars. Lastly, Davenport represents another response—outright nonconformity and advocacy of an alternative polity, in his case congregationalism. Considering the fact that none of the three protagonists started out as hard-line opponents of episcopacy, their shift to alternative church polities was highly contingent on the radicalisation of the Laudian ceremonialist rhetoric and the consequent religiopolitical turmoil.

Gouge and Reynolds, and indeed Davenport before 1633, upheld Charles as the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. Based on a wider English consensus of *jure divino* kingship, they affirmed English monarchs as “ministers of God,” often through the analogy of Old Testament monarchy.¹²⁷ Davenport stressed the divinely-bestowed

¹²⁷ Gouge, *Gods Three Arrowes*, 204.

authority and responsibilities of chief governors: “Kings imitate God, whose providence is seene, as well in defending, as in feeding his creatures.”¹²⁸ Reynolds similarly described kings as God’s “deputies and vicegerents” to protect true religion.¹²⁹ They were “shields of the earth” appointed by God and thus demanded strict obedience: “Cyrus an Heathen King, Saul an evill King, David an holy King, all these were Anointed Shields.”¹³⁰ More specifically, Gouge praised English monarchs, including Charles, as “*Defender of the Faith*,” a title “justly put into our Kings stile” by divine providence for their initiation and continuation of reformation, conveniently overlooking its papal origin; indeed it was a title Gouge was willing to use as late as 1638.¹³¹

Throughout the 1630s, Gouge, Reynolds, and Davenport appealed to Elizabethan conformist narrative to endorse English monarchs’ authority over church government, despite their different views of what this authority implied. Echoing older conformists like John Aylmer, bishop of London (1577-94), whose *An Harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subjects* (1559) promoted a notion of Queen-in-Parliament, Gouge in *Gods Three Arrowes* (1631) adopted the same comparison between Moses and Aaron in order to emphasise chief governors’ “highest authority” in God’s Church to order “all the duties of piety.”¹³² Appealing to Numbers 16, the story of the notorious Levitical rebellion led by Korah, Gouge asserted that Moses, as the chief governor appointed by God and supreme head over God’s people, prescribed the ceremonial remedy to Aaron “on just grounds.”¹³³ Both

¹²⁸ John Davenport, *A Royal Edict for Military Exercise* (London, 1629: RSTC 6313), 9.

¹²⁹ Edward Reynolds, *The Shieldes of the Earth* (London, 1636: Wing R1287A), 6.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹³¹ Gouge, *Gods Three Arrowes*, 324; *idem*, *A Recovery from Apostacy* (London, 1639: RSTC 12124), 63-4. It was Pope Leo X who granted the title “Defender of the Faith” to Henry VIII in 1521, before the King broke with Rome.

¹³² John Aylmer, *An Harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subiectes* (London: 1559, RSTC 1005), K1v; Gouge, *Gods Three Arrowes*, 323.

¹³³ Gouge, *Gods Three Arrowes*, 34-5.

Gouge and Reynolds relied heavily on John Jewel's conformist classic, *Apology or Answer in Defence of the Church of England* (1562) as well, which defended Elizabeth as the Supreme Governor against both her Catholic and Protestant critics:

Kyng Jehosaphat overthrew and utterly made away the hil aultres and Groves, wherby he saw Goddes honoure hindere.... Constantine sate not only together with them in the Councell at Nice, butte gave also advice to the Bysshoppes howe it was best to trye out the matter by the Apostles and Prophettes writings."¹³⁴

Both Stuart conformists and puritans, including Gouge, Reynolds, and even the nonconforming Davenport in 1636, would repeatedly pick up these references to Old Testament kings like Jehoshaphat and Christian emperors like Constantine. Reynolds endorsed the authority of English monarchs to govern the Church: "Jehoshaphat and Josiah did not onely make speciall provision for the service of God, but gave the Priests and Levites their charge, as well as the judges and people."¹³⁵ Likewise, Constantine "purge[d] the Church of Idolatrie, and establish[ed] the worship of God by his owne Imperiall Edicts."¹³⁶ Gouge also alluded to Jehoshaphat, who "sent *Levites* into his cities to teach the people," and Constantine, who not only "rooted out idolatry every where...and opposed himself against the errors and heresies that had crept into the Church," but also "wrote sundry letters to Bishops...for well ordering matters of piety and Church-affairs."¹³⁷

Conformable puritans appealed to this apologetic literature and affirmed the lawfulness of English episcopacy, but did so with clear intentions of asserting their own conservatism and highlighting the novelty of Laudian reforms.¹³⁸ Their focus on the duty

¹³⁴ John Jewel, *An Apologie, or Answer in Defence of the Church of England* (London, 1562: RTSC 14590), D1v.

¹³⁵ Reynolds, *The Shieldes of the Earth*, 17-8.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹³⁷ Gouge, *Gods Three Arrowes*, 34-5

¹³⁸ Anthony Milton clearly lays out how both Laudians and anti-Laudians could resort to church history, liturgical traditions, Canons, and formularies, and other authoritative texts and authors to assert their own positions and reforms as true orthodoxies. Milton, *ESR*, Chapter 2 and 3.

of the Supreme Governor to eradicate errors and idolatries that “had crept into the Church” was a dig at not only Laudians, but the King himself.¹³⁹ In reality, both puritans and moderate Reformed conformists like Williams of Lincoln had been gradually marginalised and even attacked by Laud and his followers, whom Charles unashamedly favoured. The king had not only failed to support godly reforms, but seemed to be an enabler, if not the initiator, of Laud’s crypto-papalist movement.

Even if Gouge probably had always preferred presbyterianism, and Davenport looked to congregationalism in the early 1630s, Reynolds was contentedly episcopalian before 1642. Laudian reforms and patronage did not provoke him to challenge the existing church polity, and this means that both Laudians and current historians tend to neglect him when seeking out puritans. In *An Explication of the Hundreth and Tenth Psalme* (1632), Reynolds discussed extensively the nature of episcopacy and the role of bishops. He cited Jewel along with puritan writers like William Perkins and Arthur Hildersham to defend the English Church against Rome’s claim of exclusive legitimacy.¹⁴⁰ Not only was episcopacy a given, but Reynolds also positively endorsed the office of a bishop as a biblical category of ministry that Christ assumed himself: “Prophets & Teachers are in the Scripture likewise called *Shepherds*, *Ier. 23.1, 4.* and so *Christ is a Shepheard and a Bishop.*”¹⁴¹ More than once Reynolds referred to overseers in church as bishops and discussed their qualifications and duties based on various scriptural texts, including Titus 1:9-11 and 2 Tim 1:14 and 2:2.¹⁴²

One should note that this identification of bishops as pastors and teachers was neither exactly compatible with the Laudian view nor reflected the multifaceted role

¹³⁹ Gouge, *Gods Three Arrowes*, 34-5

¹⁴⁰ Reynolds, *An Explication of the Hundreth and Tenth Psalme* (London, 1632: RSTC 12115), 83.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 134, 162.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 147, 197.

English bishops played in their dioceses. Laudians believed that bishops and lesser church authorities were not only pastors, but royal agents who could enforce the religious policies and ceremonies the king demanded. Reynolds must have been aware that the English system of regional government seemed to be on the Laudians' side as well. Both before and after the ecclesiastical reforms under Tudor monarchs, especially after 1603, bishops and some lesser clerical magistrates like archdeacons were intimately involved in temporal government, such as serving as Justices of the Peace.¹⁴³ Early Stuart bishops further blurred the lines between clerical and temporal magistrates, with large numbers of them in the House of Lords defending the royal prerogative, as in their support of the Forced Loan in 1627.¹⁴⁴ Reynolds showed no signs of acknowledging this discrepancy between his description of the episcopate and the reality, despite his awareness of puritan grudges against and his own growing detestation of the tyrannical tendencies of the Laudian bishops and lesser authorities after 1633. His prudent silence eventually served him well, since, one day, it would be his turn to sit in the House of Lords, as Bishop of Norwich, to promote bills more attuned to his ecclesiological palate.

William Gouge, a Retreating Puritan

Gouge and Davenport went through a tumultuous start in the year of 1633. The Feoffees were suppressed in February. In fear of disciplinary actions from Laud, the newly instituted Archbishop of Canterbury, Davenport went into hiding in August and eventually left for Amsterdam in November. His abrupt departure stirred speculations and enraged many conformable puritans, perhaps including Gouge, who interceded before Laud for the newly declared nonconformist when he was cited for failing to observe the prescribed

¹⁴³ Part of the Laudian agenda was to enhance the secular power of clergymen, such as serving as JPs, much to the grievance to common lawyers. See Milton, *ESR*, 57, 89.

¹⁴⁴ Andrew Foster, "Bishops, Church, and State, c.1530-1646," in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism*, I:99-100.

worship in 1631.¹⁴⁵ Gouge himself was not entirely conforming either. When the Declaration of Sports was reissued in October, Gouge seemed to have refused to read it.¹⁴⁶ There was no doubt that both Gouge and Davenport were troubled by the ceremonialist drive of the Church, but instead of feeling too threatened to stay, Gouge laid his reforming urges aside, withdrew himself from public engagements, and applied himself to his pastoral responsibilities in his parish of St Ann's Blackfriars.

Scholars have long observed that the stronger the pressure to conform and the more futile their resistance seemed, the more conformable puritans felt compelled to retreat to practical divinity.¹⁴⁷ Gouge's literary and publishing output demonstrated such a tendency, especially after Laud suppressed puritan projects like the fundraising for the Palatine refugees and the Feoffees. One example of retreat from such puritan activism would be a noticeable break in Gouge's publishing activities from 1626 to 1637. Gouge, less known as a publisher to scholars today, in fact actively promoted and published other puritans' writings and was once imprisoned for doing so. Gouge's choice of publication in the first period of publishing in the 1620s revealed a clear sense of empowering presbyterian authors, even though he did not always agree with the writings he published.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ TNA, SP 16/202, f. 33.

¹⁴⁶ Thomas Gouge, "A Narrative," *Commentary*, C1r; George Garrard to Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford, 6 December 1633, *The Earl of Strafforde's Letters and Dispatches*, vol. 1, ed. William Knowler (London, 1739), 166.

¹⁴⁷ This observation however should not obscure puritans' genuine concerns for theology. Patrick Collinson, *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: Hambledon, 1983), 316.

¹⁴⁸ The 1630s did see the reprinting of many of Gouge's pastoral writings, including *A Short Catechism*, first published in 1615 with four other editions by 1635. Gouge also produced a treatise on the Lord's Prayer, *A Guide to Goe to God*, in 1626, which was republished in 1636. His immensely popular treatises *The Whole-Armour of God*, first published in 1616, and *Of Domesticall Duties*, first published in 1622, went on into multiple editions and were combined into a single collection at times. For a thorough list of the works Gouge edited, prefaced to, or published, see Kenneth A. East, "William Gouge: Preacher and Scholar," (PhD dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1992), 418-9.

One of these presbyterian writers was Sir Henry Finch (1558-1625), a Canterbury lawyer and MP. Gouge published Finch's millenarian treatise, *The Calling of the Jews*, in 1621 due to their shared interest in the eschatological readmission of the Jews, despite not being a chiliast himself.¹⁴⁹ Finch was twenty years older, but both he and Gouge went to Cambridge, and Finch studied under Laurence Chaderton, Gouge's uncle by marriage. Finch was part of puritan lawyer William Stoughton's legal presbyterian network that involved Sir Edward Coke and Sir Christopher Yelverton.¹⁵⁰ Coke and Yelverton were not outspoken presbyterians, and yet they not only had clear sympathies towards the cause, but were both in close contact with Thomas Cartwright, the most influential presbyterian spokesman in Elizabethan England.¹⁵¹ Finch and Gouge, both intimate associates with those who publicly supported presbyterianism, certainly appreciated their shared ecclesiological concerns and preference to stay as low-profile as possible. Their pastoral writings avoided criticisms of church politics, and both willingly submitted to authorities to secure their respective careers.

¹⁴⁹ Not every scholar clearly distinguishes between Finch and Gouge when they discuss *The Calling of the Jews*, and some suggest that Gouge shared Finch's millenarian timetable and sentiments, e.g., Peter Toon, *Puritans, the Millennium and Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology 1600 to 1660* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1970), 32-4. Already in "A Treatise of the Sinne against the Holy Ghost," appended to the 1619 edition of *The Whole Armour of God*, Gouge condemned the increasingly popular "heretical position of *Chiliasts*, or *Millinaries*, or (to use our English word) *Thousandaries*, who held that the Divels and all the damned in hell should after a thousand yeeres be delivered." William Gouge, "A Treatise of the Sinne against the Holy Ghost," in *The Whole Armour of God* (London, 1619: RSTC 12123), 618. Early in his lectures on Hebrews, Gouge had also refuted this millenarian notion: "None can be freed by Christ; but with Christ they [the devils] have nothing to do." *Idem, Commentary*, 175.

¹⁵⁰ William Stoughton, epistle dedicatory to *Assertion for True and Christian Church-Policie* (London, 1642: Wing S5760), A3r-A3v. It might be John Bartlett, the publisher, who wrote this preface, which pointed out Stoughton's intellectual debt to other like-minded judges and lawyers such as Coke, Yelverton, and Finch. Bartlett was said to be "one of the victims of Laud's persecution" for his associations with presbyterians like William Prynne, whose works he helped publish. Henry R. Plomer, *A Dictionary of the Booksellers and Printers who were at Work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1641 to 1667* (London: Printed for the Bibliographical Society, by Blades, East & Blades, 1907), 15; Joseph Black, "'Pikes and Protestations': Scottish Texts in England, 1639-40," *Publishing History* 42 (1997): 5.

¹⁵¹ Ha, *English Presbyterianism*, 30-1.

The Calling of the Jews brought both Finch and Gouge into imprisonment soon after its publication around March 1621 for its prediction of an imminent creation of a new, cosmic monarchy that prepared the way for Christ's thousand-year reign.¹⁵² The treatise was obviously theological, but unfortunately the two fell prey to Laud's political game. The prediction of a millenarian kingdom on earth was twisted into a seditious prophecy of England's downfall, and to secure his release, Gouge denied that after the massive conversion, the Jews would have "a sovereignty over all the whole church," as such authority belonged properly to Christ, and further rejected Finch's millenarian timetable, which "implieth too much curiosity."¹⁵³ Gouge already attacked chiliasts in the past and would not become one after 1642.¹⁵⁴ Perhaps the imprisonment had a lasting effect on his rejection of millenarian ideas after all.

Until 1626, Gouge continued to promote works by more senior puritans who either demonstrated strong presbyterian connections or were presbyterians themselves. He wrote a preface to *The Practice of Christianitie*, Stephen Egerton's abridged edition of *Seven Treatises Containing such Directions as is Gathered out of the Holie Scriptures*, Richard Rogers' most notable work and a classic of puritan practical divinity. *Seven Treatises*, first published in 1603, received numerous endorsements from senior puritan leaders Gouge was close to, including Egerton and Ezekiel Culverwell, Gouge's uncle. As the editor who abridged *Seven Treatises* and wrote the first preface to *The Practice of Christianitie*,

¹⁵² Wilfrid Prest, "Finch, Sir Henry," *ODNB*; Thomas Gouge, "A Narrative," *Commentary*, b1v-b2r.

¹⁵³ Gouge, "A Narrative," *Commentary*, b2r. David Como has a brief discussion of how this was a deliberate political attack on Laud's part. Como, *Blown by the Spirit*, 77.

¹⁵⁴ See William Gouge, *The Progresse of Divine Providence* (1645), 29-30. "I passe by all conceits of our later *Chiliasts* or *Millenaries*, (whom in English we may call *Thousandaries*) who imagine, that Christ shall personally come down from heaven, in that nature in which after his resurrection he ascended into heaven, and raigh here a thousand years with his Saints." Gouge however consistently affirmed the readmission of the Jews as one of the "better things to come."

Egerton was most likely the one who invited his younger assistant to write the second preface, published in 1623.¹⁵⁵

In the same year, Gouge and Richard Sibbes also wrote prefaces to Culverwell's *The Treatise of Faith*, another voluminous writing on puritan practical divinity, and Gouge edited and wrote yet another preface to a puritan work, this time for his recently deceased friend Nicholas Byfield's commentary on 1 Peter 2.¹⁵⁶ The publication of Byfield's commentary was a collective effort between Gouge and Byfield's wife Elizabeth, whose death in 1626 might have prompted Gouge to publish the last of Byfield's trilogy, commentary on 1 Peter 3:1-10. Byfield was a close friend of similar age and a godly comrade, whereas Rogers, Culverwell, and Egerton, just like Finch, were Elizabethan presbyterians Gouge greatly respected. These connections allow us a peek into Gouge's strong godly network that was predominantly presbyterian. If one's upbringing and network were decisive in their later ecclesiological commitments, one can say Gouge was almost destined to become who he would turn out to be.

¹⁵⁵ Gouge's preface, written in 1618, was not published along with Egerton's preface then. *Idem*, preface to *The Practice of Christianitie, or, An Epitomie of Seven Treatises* by Richard Rogers, the third edition (London, 1623: RSTC 21222). It is unclear why Gouge's preface was not published in the first edition of *The Practice of Christianitie* in 1618, but perhaps its addition to the third edition in 1623, which compared Rogers and Egerton to "Eli[j]ah and Elishah," was prompted by Egerton's death in 1621. Egerton's own preface was misattributed by some scholars to Richard Rogers, the author of the treatise, e.g., H. S. Bennet, *English Books & Readers 1603 to 1640: Being a Study in the History of the Book Trade in the Reigns of James I and Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 9; David Hall, *Ways of Writing: The Practice and Politics of Text-Making in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 196, fn. 40.

¹⁵⁶ Ezekiel Culverwell, *The Treatise of Faith: Wherein is Declared how a Man may Liue by Faith and Finde Releeve in all his Necessities* (London, 1623: RSTC 6113.5); Nicholas Byfield, *A Commentary: Or, Sermons vpon the Second Chapter of the First Epistle of Saint Peter* (London, 1623: RSTC 4211). Gouge's publication of Byfield's commentary on 1 Peter 2 meant to follow the latter's commentary on 1 Peter 1 in 1617. Culverwell's *Treatise of Faith* was attacked by Alexander Leighton in 1624 for falling into Arminian errors for its teaching that Christ died for all on the cross rather than only the elect. This view, often termed hypothetical universalism, was in conflict with the notion of limited atonement that some Calvinists, including Leighton, believed in. David Como, "Puritans, Predestinarians and the Construction of Orthodoxy," in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560-1660*, 73-4.

Gouge's publication of Byfield's commentary in 1626 was followed by an eleven-year hiatus. His experience of imprisonment in 1621, coupled with increasing Laudian scrutiny of puritan literature, might have caused this long cessation. Corresponding with this hiatus as publisher was Gouge's deliberately quieter ministry that focused on pastoral care in St Ann's Blackfriars. From 1633 to 1640, Gouge consciously confined his pastoral energy to the parish, focusing on the routines of preaching, catechising, examining parishioners' piety, and administering sacraments. Echoing Egerton and Hildersham, two key godly leaders who collaborated to secure Gouge's installation at St Ann's, the younger minister upheld preaching and related practices like 'repetition' as the central means of cultivating godliness. Repetition was a practice of repeating the main points of a sermon, often conducted by heads of households.¹⁵⁷ Gouge, in order to exercise tighter control, chose to conduct repetitions himself, often in his house on Sundays after sermons.¹⁵⁸

Preaching and sermon repetition, primary means puritan ministers resorted to as a preparation for their parishioners to receive communion, often went closely with catechising, a practice valued by conformists and puritans alike. Gouge's *A Short Catechism*, first published in 1615 and occasionally titled as *A Briefe Method of Catechizing* when appended to *The Whole Armour of God*, again owed its intellectual debt to Egerton and Hildersham. Their sacramental theology was Zwinglian: sacraments were "seales of the covenant of grace,"¹⁵⁹ established "to testifie and confirme our faith and

¹⁵⁷ Arnold Hunt in his excellent study of early modern preaching, *The Art of Hearing*, persuasively argues for the profound influence of "repetitions" in the shaping of lay spirituality in parishes like St Ann's Blackfriars, see Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 72-81; Patrick Collinson, "The English Conventicle," *Studies in Church History* 23 (1986): 240.

¹⁵⁸ Clarke, *A Collection of the Lives of Ten Eminent Divines*, 102.

¹⁵⁹ Arthur Hildersham, "Doctrine of Communicating Worthily in the Lords Supper," in *A Preparation to the Receiving of the Sacrament, of Christs Body and Bloud* by William Bradshaw (London, 1617: RSTC 3511), 47.

obedience to him.”¹⁶⁰ Drawing from both Egerton and Hildersham, but particularly following Hildersham’s language, Gouge taught that parishioners must examine their own “knowledge, faith, repentance, and love” to be qualified recipients of the eucharist.¹⁶¹ Gouge, with his regular sermons, repetitions, and catechisms, proved a faithful follower of Hildersham, who emphasised that the prerequisite faith was “ordinarily . . . wrought by preaching”—a pastoral model carefully crafted against the Laudian rhetoric that incorporated the “beauty of holiness” into the ceremonialist version of piety.¹⁶²

A Short Catechism went through multiple editions and gradual expansions throughout the course of thirty years, starting with two unofficial editions based on the notes an assistant took that laid out the main points of Gouge’s catechising.¹⁶³ The catechism reflects Gouge’s constant attention to the pastoral needs of his parishioners with a sensitivity to the sectarian influences they might have been exposed to. For example, the third edition (1621), the first edition he officially endorsed, included an additional question about baptism, “how oft may one be baptised?,” likely to fend off Anabaptists by asserting that individuals were only to be baptised once “for once only we are borne and ingrafted into Christ.”¹⁶⁴ The 1627 edition added a prayer “drawne out of all the principles contained in this catechisme,” and the 1635 edition included an abstract of the catechism “to helpe of the younger and ignoranter sort.”¹⁶⁵ The brevity of the answers to the questions in the

¹⁶⁰ Stephen Egerton, *A Briefe Method of Catechizing* (London, 1631: RSTC 7535), 13.

¹⁶¹ Gouge, *A Short Catechism* (London, 1615: RSTC 12126), unpaginated; Hildersham, “Doctrine of Communicating Worthily in the Lords Supper,” from p. 17 onwards; Egerton, *A Briefe Method of Catechizing*, 15.

¹⁶² Hildersham, “Doctrine of Communicating Worthily in the Lords Supper,” 64.

¹⁶³ Gouge, preface to *A Short Catechism*, the third edition (London, 1621: RSTC 12127), A3r. Before the publisher embarked on the third re-publication, Gouge was “moved to review the forenamed form, & to acknowledge it [to be his]”: A3v.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, B6v.

¹⁶⁵ *Idem*, *A Short Catechism*, the fifth edition (London, 1627: RSTC 12128), C7r; *A Short Catechism*, the seventh edition (London, 1635: RSTC 12130), C1r.

catechism, the prayer that summarised the content, and the appended abstract, all intended to help parishioners memorise the basic knowledge required of communicants at St Ann's Blackfriars. Following the trend of creating "snappy one-liners" among early Stuart authors, Gouge would publish an even shorter catechism in 1642, *Briefe Answers to the Chiefe Articles of Religion*, with answers mostly consisting of only one word.¹⁶⁶ Despite his conscious retreat from godly campaigns on the national level, Gouge undoubtedly remained active in cultivating a distinctively puritan parish throughout the 1630s.

Edward Reynolds, an Emerging Puritan

When Edward Reynolds arrived in Braunston in 1631, he was already fully aware of the long-standing tensions between local puritan gentry and conformist authorities due to his ministry in All Saints Northampton from January 1628 to November 1629.

Northampton gentry had fought at the forefront of the puritan causes during James' reign. Local MPs Sir Edward Montagu and Sir Valentine Knightley vigorously petitioned against the suspension of nonconforming ministers in Northamptonshire in February 1605 and were both consequently removed from the commission of the peace.¹⁶⁷ The Caroline regime took on an increasingly hard-line approach to enforce the will of the King and his ecclesiastical deputies. On 22 February 1627, avant-garde conformist minister Robert Sibthorpe (*d.* 1662), then vicar of Brackley in Northamptonshire, notoriously preached in support of the unpopular forced loan before the assize judges at All Saints, Northampton, advocating absolute obedience to rulers: "If Princes command any thing which Subjects may not performe; because it is *against the lawes of 1 God, or of 2 Nature, or*

¹⁶⁶ *Idem, Briefe Answers to the Chiefe Articles of Religion* (London, 1642: Wing G1389). I.M. Green, *The Christian's ABC: Catechism and Catechizing in England c.1530-1740* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 250.

¹⁶⁷ *A History of the County of Northampton: Volume 2*, 51; Richard Cust "Montagu, Edward, first Baron Montagu of Boughton (1562/3–1644)," *ODNB*; "KNIGHTLEY, Sir Valentine (c.1555-1618), of Fawsley, Northants.," *The History of Parliament*.

3 impossible; yet Subjects are bound to undergoe the punishment without either resistance, or railing and reviling.”¹⁶⁸ Sibthorpe specifically demanded radical obedience to unlawful taxes, targeting local opposition to the forced loans: “if a Prince impose an immoderate, yea an unjust Taxe, yet the subject may not thereupon withdraw his obedience and dutie; Nay hee is bound in conscience to submit, as under the scourge of his sinne.”¹⁶⁹ Despite Archbishop Abbot’s attempt to block the publication of Sibthorpe’s sermon, the committee Charles appointed for this dispute eventually granted its publication. One of the committee members was Laud, then bishop of Bath and Wells. Indeed, Abbot’s failure proved to be a crucial turning point of his political downfall and Laud’s rise to power.

Throughout the 1630s, the bishopric of Peterborough was granted to one hard-line conformist after another. William Piers was bishop of Peterborough (1630-2) when Reynolds arrived in Braunston in 1631. During his brief ministry in Northamptonshire, Piers painstakingly “reformed” the Kettering lecture, strongly puritan gatherings sponsored by Sir Edward Montagu.¹⁷⁰ A list of approved preachers survives in the *State Papers*, revealing the contentious nature of this lectureship. Piers managed to include fervent Laudians like Sibthorpe and William Greenhill, vicar of Brixworth and son-in-law of future bishop of Peterborough Francis Dee.¹⁷¹ And yet Piers also felt compelled to allow

¹⁶⁸ Robert Sibthorpe, *Apostolike Obedience* (London, 1627: RSTC 22526), 13; for the Forced Loan and how a series of sermons was preached, including Sibthorpe’s, to reinforce Charles’ “ideological offensive” against resistance to tax-collecting, see Tim Harris, *Rebellion: Britain’s First Stuart Kings, 1567-1642* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 252-62.

¹⁶⁹ Sibthorpe, *Apostolike Obedience*, 16.

¹⁷⁰ Lake and Stephens, *Scandal and Religious Identity in Early Stuart England*, 97; John Fielding, “Conformists, Puritans, and Church Courts: the Diocese of Peterborough, 1603-1642,” (PhD dissertation, Birmingham University, 1989), 122.

¹⁷¹ Dee was the chancellor of Salisbury Cathedral then and had the advowson to the living of Brixworth, but the Greenhill family had a longer engagement with Brixworth than Greenhill’s appointment in 1621 because his father, also named William Greenhill (or Greenhall), was the previous vicar, presented by the chancellor of Salisbury Cathedral before Dee, Thomas Hide. “Greenhall, William (CCEd Person ID

many puritan preachers to continue, such as William Spencer, rector of Scaldwell, and Joseph Bentham, rector of Broughton, who had been presented by Edward Montagu, and Robert Lambe, rector of Cranford St Johns, sponsored by Bishop Williams of Lincoln.¹⁷²

While Piers intended to only tolerate moderate puritans, the restrictions he imposed on the Kettering lecture were countered by “a new trick,” as noted on the margin of the list: “all will be to little purpose, for...Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, and the Long Vacation are made non-le[cture]. And then inconformable factious strangers supply the place and mar all that is made at other times.”¹⁷³

Piers would soon be translated to Bath and Wells, but the same conformist vigour of his successors, Augustine Lindsell (1633-4) and Francis Dee (1634-8), only exacerbated the tensions between puritans and their Laudian colleagues and authorities. Lindsell (*d.* 1634) was one of Richard Neile’s chaplains in the 1620s and a member of Neile’s Durham House Group, a gathering of theologians including Laud and other zealous ceremonialists like John Cosin and Francis White that formed the core of the Laudian reformation.¹⁷⁴ Dee

69750),” “Appointment Record (CCed Record ID 236783),” *The Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540–1835* <<http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk>>, accessed 1 October 2020.

¹⁷² TNA, SP 16/531, f. 198. Sibthorpe is the first on this undated list of nine approved preachers, followed in sequence by Joseph Hill, rector of Loddington, John Fosbrooke, rector of Cranford, St Andrew, Nicholas Estwick, rector of Warkton, one Lloyd, rector of Woodford (this Lloyd could be either Hugh Lloyd, appointed rector in 1608 and not resigning until 1637 or Thomas Lloyd, appointed rector in 1629), William Spencer, rector of Scaldwell, Joseph Bentham, rector of Broughton, Robert Lambe, rector of Cranford St Johns, and lastly William Greenhill, vicar of Brixworth. While Lambe’s name precedes Greenhill’s on the list, he was numbered 9 and Greenhill numbered 8. This might have indicated Piers’ hesitation to include Lambe, yet another puritan preacher on the list. Fosbrooke was also supported by bishop Williams, to whom Fosbrooke dedicated six sermons preached at Kettering published in 1633. John Fosbrooke, *Six Sermons Delivered in the Lecture at Kettering in the Countie of Northampton, and in Certain other Places* (Cambridge, 1633: RSTC 11199). Estwick was another client of Montagu’s, who, along with Robert Bolton, a former puritan preacher at Kettering who died in December 1631 and was not mentioned in this list, recommended Bentham to Montagu for the benefice of Broughton. John Fielding, “Bentham, Joseph (1593/4–1671),” *ODNB*. The fact that the list refers to Bentham as rector of Broughton rather than vicar of Weekley and does not refer to Bolton at all might indicate that Bishop Piers only finalised the list and imposed the restriction in late 1631 rather than 1630, the proposed date on the *State Papers*’ record.

¹⁷³ TNA, SP 16/531, f. 198.

¹⁷⁴ Andrew Foster, “Durham House group (*act.* 1617–1630),” *ODNB*; Milton, *ESR*, 36.

was also closely associated with Neile's ceremonialist circle.¹⁷⁵ Under a series of deeply unsympathetic bishops, it was unlikely that the likes of Reynolds could preserve their posts without ceremonial conformity.¹⁷⁶ In order to conform, the Braunston minister must have been asked to wear the surplice, only administer communion to kneeling recipients, and have the communion table railed in at the east end of the chancel.

The first trace of Reynolds' largely silent transformation into an eventually outspoken puritan was his sermon before the assize judges at Northampton on 25 February 1634, where we see an already troubled, but yet to be militant, puritan preacher. The two assize judges were Sir Richard Hutton and Sir George Croke. Both senior judges were unafraid of questioning Charles' financial measures. Hutton had already refused to endorse the legality of ship money and resisted the forced loans in 1626, and both he and Croke would soon speak against the country-wide collection of ship money in 1635 and 1637.¹⁷⁷ Northampton's long resistance to Charles' unpopular taxations was also lurking in the background of Reynolds' preaching.

¹⁷⁵ Fielding, "Conformists, Puritans, and Church Courts," 36. Fielding suggests possible influences that Richard Montague, another member of Neile's Durham House Group and bishop of Chichester, might have had on Dee when the latter served as dean of Chichester from 1629 to 1633.

¹⁷⁶ Lindsell and Dee's visitation articles revealed their shared ceremonialist concerns. Lindsell's articles in 1633 largely followed those of John Overall in 1619, affirming the ceremonialist drive of the Jacobean conformist bishop, but Lindsell made significant modifications to double down on the enforcement of kneeling, requiring multiple affirmations of conformity on this matter whereas Overall only inquired once. He also greatly expanded Overall's articles concerning ministers and preachers, demonstrating a tighter control of religion and an active investigation of the exact pastoral and theological influences present in his diocese, e.g., whether the young and the ignorant were catechised based on the catechism in the Prayer Book, and if not, what alternative catechisms might have been used. Lindsell would be translated to Hereford in March 1634 and would not personally see his reforms come into fruition, but his successor Dee proved a faithful follower, who not only adopted Lindsell's visitation articles, but also enlarged the scope of ceremonial imposition. His inquiry into whether the communion table was railed in at the east end of the chancel, for example, was a conscious adherence to Laud's heavy-handed altar policy. See John Overall, *Articles to be Enquired of in the Diocesse of Norwich, in the Ordinarie Visitation of the Reverend Father in God, John Lord Bishop of Norwich* (Cambridge, 1619: RSTC 10292); Augustine Lindsell, *Articles to be Enquired of within the Diocesse of Peterbrough, in the First Visitation of the Reverend Father in God Augustine Lord Bishop of Peterbrough* (Cambridge, 1633: RSTC 10317); Francis Dee, *Articles to be Enquired of throughout the Whole Diocesse of Peterborough: In the First Visitation of the Right Reverent Father in God, Francis by Gods providence, Bishop of Peterborough* (London, 1634: RSTC 10318).

¹⁷⁷ Sir Richard Hutton, *The Diary of Sir Richard Hutton, 1614-1639 with Related Texts*, ed. W. R. Prest, Supplementary Series, vol. 9 (London: Selden Society, 1991), from p. 64 onwards.

Reynolds' sermon, later published as *The Shieldes of the Earth* in 1636, chose the conventional topic of sermons delivered before assize judges in the late 1620s and early 1630s: monarchs and assize judges as little gods and their God-given duties.¹⁷⁸ In Northampton, celebrated godly preachers like Robert Bolton (1621, 1629) and Anthony Fawkner (1633) had gone before Reynolds to remind assize judges of how they should view their king as well as themselves as "Gods," that is, divinely-instituted representatives of God.¹⁷⁹ Reynolds however stood out among the three of them for his extensive discussion of the God-given duties of kings before laying out those of the assize judges. Quoting from Augustine's *City of God*, Reynolds reminded Hutton, Crooke, and his Northampton hearers that one should not consider a king "happie" who had "raigned long and conquered enemies, *Sed qui potestatem suam divinae Maiestati famulam faciunt*, [but who had made] their power serviceable to the Majestie of God."¹⁸⁰ While other preachers stressed the duty of judges to perform godly services in this type of sermons, Reynolds wanted the judges like Hutton and Crooke as well as local worthies to know that King Charles I was equally bound by God's laws: "Bee pleased ever to remember this, it is *Scuta Deo*, that makes *Scuta Terrae*, 'Tis Religion ever that holds up Justice."¹⁸¹

Both Bolton and Reynolds used the occasion to accuse Catholics of wrongly excluding secular rulers from governing ecclesiastical affairs, but while combatting Catholicism was central to Bolton's criticisms, Reynolds purposefully upheld the

¹⁷⁸ Richard Cust, "The 'Public Man' in Late Tudor and Early Stuart England," in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, eds. Peter Lake and Stephen Pincus (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 123-4.

¹⁷⁹ Robert Bolton, *Two Sermons Preached at Northampton at Two Severall Assises there* (London, 1635 RSTC 3256), 4; Anthony Fawkner, *The Widowes Petition Delivered in a Sermon before the Judges at the Assises Held at Northampton, July 25. 1633* (Oxford, 1635: RSTC 10724), A2v, 6.

¹⁸⁰ Reynolds, *The Shieldes of the Earth*, 14.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

responsibility of rulers to take the initiative in rooting out perceived idolatries.¹⁸² Even Pope Theophilus of Alexandria did not “demolish the monuments of Idolatrie in his owne Church, till first hee had procured from the Emperour a special command so to doe.”¹⁸³ After spending more than one-third of the sermon expounding the dignity and duty of rulers, Reynolds finally addressed the assize judges directly. The opening admonishment did not set forth anything particularly new but was still revealing: “you the Reverend judges and Magistrates...since you all belong to God, above all judge for God.”¹⁸⁴

It was clear to both the preacher and his godly audience that they were serving a monarch unsympathetic towards their objections to financial and religious policies, and sensitive hearers would pick up the subversive nature of Reynolds’ teaching, couched in his exhortations for service and loyalty. The preacher asserted that, as the “*eyes of the King*,” judges were to be upholders of God’s law instead of lawless defenders of royal power.¹⁸⁵ *Scuta Terrae* were *Scuta Terrea* too—earthly shields that would “moulder and decay of it selfe”: “The gods of the Earth must die like men, *Psal.* 82. 6. The Kings of the Earth must vanish like foame upon the waters, *Hos.* 10. 7. And when they are gone from their owne Tribunals, they must appeare before a Greater.”¹⁸⁶

Aware that his admonitions could have dangerous implications, Reynolds wrapped up his message with an endorsement of the Caroline regime and even Laudian reform. Following many other English preachers at the time, Reynolds directed his hearers to the “long, uninterrupted and most blessed Tranquillity” of the three kingdoms as evidence of divine favour over England’s “*Gracious Princes*” and “*Worthies of Church and State*,”

¹⁸² Bolton, *Two Sermons*, 41-2; Reynolds, *The Shieldes of the Earth*, 17-8.

¹⁸³ Reynolds, *The Shieldes of the Earth*, 18.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

who had maintained “the Throne of Christ, and the faith of the Gospell” and established “the worship and House of God...in the Beautie of Holinesse and of Peace.”¹⁸⁷ This tranquillity was however coming to a swift end with the rioting in the northern kingdom over the newly imposed liturgy in 1637 and the subsequent Bishops’ Wars. It was tempting to wonder whether Reynolds was entirely sincere with his endorsement. This sermon, although first preached in 1634, was not published until mid-1636. Only a year later, on 12 July 1637, before Bishop Dee, Reynolds would again speak of the “beauty of holiness,” adroitly redefined as “fatherly government” that prioritised unity as one of the necessary attributes of a godly bishop.¹⁸⁸ Reynolds’ hearers in Northampton in 1634, readers of *The Shieldes of the Earth* in 1636, and those who sat under his visitation sermon in 1637, including Dee himself, could not have missed this ideologically loaded phrase, the beauty of holiness, which Laudians used to campaign for their ceremonialist reform. If in mid-1630s Reynolds was yet cautious enough to avoid direct criticisms, his 1637 sermon before Dee firmly established him as a leading puritan activist in Northamptonshire.

John Davenport, a Reluctant Congregationalist¹⁸⁹

In 1626-7, in a debate reminiscent of the one between Thomas Cranmer and John Knox in 1552, Davenport countered the challenges a Scottish presbyterian, Alexander Leighton, posed against his conformity with a typical Elizabethan conformist theory: because kneeling at communion was an ordinance of man, it demanded obedience. Davenport believed his Zwinglian view of the eucharist conveniently ruled out the

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁸⁸ *Idem*, *A Sermon Touching the Peace and Edification of the Church preached at the second triennial visitation of the right reverend father in God, Francis Lord Bishop of Peterborough, at Daventry in Northamptonshire, July 12. 1637* (London, 1638: RSTC 20931.5), 43.

¹⁸⁹ Francis Bremer’s biography, *Davenport*, provides a detailed survey of Davenport’s life and thought, and, in this thesis, I avoid repetition as much as possible and focus on Davenport’s conformity and church polity.

possibility of idolatry: “The elements are *objectus a quo scil.* significative,” signs that directed the recipients to the heavenly “spiritual object of faith,” Christ’s body and blood of Christ, which was “far from idolatry.”¹⁹⁰ The conformable minister thus deplored disputes over ceremonies among church members who should be united against not only “Atheism, Libertinism, [and] Papism,” but also Arminianism, “both at home and abroad.”¹⁹¹ Despite Davenport’s clear support for ceremonial conformity, sensitive readers of his apology would have noticed how far away his case of conformity was from the emerging Laudian reformation that had begun to promote an antithetical style of piety.

This new set of orthodoxies was taking shape in the late 1620s, spearheaded by the Durham House associates such as John Cosin (1595-1672), archdeacon of the East Riding, and Matthew Wren (1585-1667), Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge, soon to reveal himself as a devout Laudian bishop who served in Hereford, Norwich, and finally Ely in the 1630s. Around the time Davenport debated with Leighton, Cosin in his *Collection of Private Devotions* (1627), a royally commissioned devotional primer, condemned those who “rudely refuse[d], or carelessly neglect[ed] to kneel, bow, and prostrate themselves, to uncover their heads, or to stand with seemly awe and reverence” as offenders against the second commandment.¹⁹² Cosin also believed in a change in the elements of bread and wine at the consecration, although, like most ceremonialists, he denied

¹⁹⁰ John Davenport, “Reply to A. Leighton,” *A Supplement to The History and Genealogy of the Davenport Family: In England and America, from A. D. 1086 to 1850* by A. B. Davenport (Stamford, CT: W. W. Gillespie & Co., Steam Printers, 1876), 77. The original manuscript is part of the collection of “John Davenport, Sermons and Writings, 1615–1658,” Beinecke, GEN MSS 202.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁹² John Cosin, *Hours of Prayer. Collections of Private Devotions in the Practice of the Ancient Church* (London, 1627: RSTC 5816.4), C4r. Cosin’s *Collections* was a commercial success, going through three editions in 1627, the year of its publication, alone. See Anthony Milton “Cosin, John (1595-1672),” *ODNB* for a brief discussion of *Collections* and how it was ill-received and denounced as papalist among puritan polemicists.

transubstantiation.¹⁹³ This belief in a real presence of Christ's body and blood undergirded Cosin and many like-minded clergymen's denunciation of puritan oppositions to outward, ceremonial demands as sacrilegious and their emphasis on a more reverent form of worship, such as bowing and kneeling.¹⁹⁴

In a sermon before King Charles I at Whitehall in 1628 that marked the beginning of the Laudian enforcement of bowing,¹⁹⁵ Wren preached that a right fear of God involved not only an inward affection, but also an "outward deportment," so that "the performance of the Dutie [to fear God] may be *witnessed*" and acknowledged by both God and men.¹⁹⁶ God demanded outward expression of a worshipful heart so that he might be pleased to acknowledge it, "though he knew it [our heart] long before."¹⁹⁷ Another ceremonialist, Giles Widdowes, likewise argued that by "all things" in 1 Corinthians 14:40, Paul (and God) had ecclesiastical discipline in mind and thus demanded obedience to "the Rubricke in the Common-praier-booke" and "the Canons of the Church."¹⁹⁸ Quoting Philippians 2:10 and Psalm 95:6, Widdowes argued that to bow and to "kneel *at prayer*" were both "expresse scripture" rather than *adiaphora*.¹⁹⁹ Davenport would also be familiar with counterattacks from the puritan side. Fellow puritan William Prynne argued that bowing at the altar or table was bowing at the object itself and was thus one of those voices that

¹⁹³ For Cosin's refutations of transubstantiation and argumentation for a spiritual, mystical, and sacramental presence of Christ's body and blood, see John Cosin, *The History of Popish Transubstantiation* (London, 1676: Wing C6359), Chapter I.

¹⁹⁴ For a brief overview of these clashes over what a true style of piety was, a contrast between inward and outward forms of worship, and more specifically, how anti-Laudians' and puritans' versions of piety were often labelled or seen as sacrilegious and separatist, see Milton, *ESR*, 36-9.

¹⁹⁵ Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c.1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 134. For Fincham and Tyacke's discussion of the development of ceremonialist polemic that bulwarked the Laudian reformation, including a much more extensive analysis of the following conformist sources, see *Altars Restored*, Chapter 4.

¹⁹⁶ Matthew Wren, *A Sermon Preached before the Kings Majestie* (Cambridge, 1628: RSTC 26015), 11.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁹⁸ Giles Widdowes, *The Schysmatical Puritan* (Oxford, 1630: RSTC 25594), 16.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

zealously deplored enforced bowing and kneeling as idolatrous.²⁰⁰ Davenport must have found it difficult to align his case for conformity with ceremonialist polemic by the early 1630s, and in early 1633, he would be forced to confront this uncomfortable reality at a puritan conference.

In early 1633, Henry Whitfield (1590/91-1657) held a conference at his house in Ockley, Surrey, where John Cotton and Thomas Hooker temporarily hid themselves before their final departure from England. Whitfield was known for his commitment to Protestant unity and supported John Dury's endeavours for reconciliation of Protestant churches in 1631.²⁰¹ This conference was likewise an effort on Whitfield's part to seek unity: conformable ministers like Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, William Twisse, and Davenport, attended in order to change Cotton and Hooker's mind about conformity and dissuade them from sailing off to New England. Tom Webster's summary of the arguments for conformity at the conference cohered with Davenport's view in 1626-7: ceremonies as *adiaphora* could be lawfully ordered by the state.²⁰² Cotton and Hooker however disagreed: since the Church only had a restricted authority, limited to what Christ had commanded, enforced ceremonies were idolatrous. Hooker argued: "to bow at the name of Jesus is not meant at the word *Jesus*; for to give him the bow is to commit syllabical

²⁰⁰ William Prynne, *Lame Giles his Haultings* (London, 1630: RSTC 20465), 36.

²⁰¹ Francis J. Bremer, "Whitfield [Whitfield], Henry," *ODNB*. For a thorough analysis of the Ockley conference, largely based on the participants' published polemics at the time, see Webster, *Godly Clergy*, Chapter 7, 151-66. According to Webster, this conference in Surrey likely took place between January and March 1633, during which time Thomas Hooker briefly returned to England.

²⁰² Webster, *Godly Clergy*, 162. Webster observes that Nicholas Byfield (1578/9-1622), godly preacher and writer, was possibly referred to for his defence for conformity: "respect is to be had to the customs of any country or place where we live, and that God's servants have been careful to observe them, and not willing to give offence by crossing such customs. This is true of all customs that are not sinful, and against the word of God." Nicholas Byfield, *The Rule of Faith: Or, An Exposition of the Apostles Creed, so handled as it Affordeth both Milke for Babes, and Strong Meat for such as are at Full Age* (London, 1626: RSTC 4233), 441. The same argument can be seen in Davenport's "Reply to A. Leighton," as discussed above.

idolatry.”²⁰³ He unsympathetically condemned the pleas of fellow colleagues like Davenport, who appealed to pastoral needs as the reason to remain in the established Church. For Hooker, such reasoning was merely a hypocritical cover for one’s self-interest because it indicated that God “could not bring his servants to his own haven without the devils boat.”²⁰⁴

Davenport left the conference with a changed mind. Even if he was dissatisfied with the prescribed worship before, he did not question the legitimacy of conformity until such head-on confrontations with Cotton and Hooker, whom he deeply respected. Stephen Goffe, Davenport’s future enemy in Amsterdam, observed that Cotton “convinced Mr Davenport & Mr Nye two of the great preachers of the citty [*sic*] that Kneeling at the sacrament &c...[was] plaine idolatry”: “for that reason Mr Davenport hath absented himself every sacramental day w[hi]ch is once a month since Christmas [of 1632].”²⁰⁵ Davenport’s turn to full nonconformity was however more public and drastic than he would have liked. The Laudian surveillance had long seen him as a potential threat and a letter, in which he expressed doubts about ceremonies, was intercepted in 1633.²⁰⁶ The content of this letter must have revealed how far Davenport had travelled on the subject of ceremonial conformity, which he personally espoused before Laud in January 1631 when the vicar of St Stephen’s outright denied the charges raised by his own curate, Timothy Hood, of not

²⁰³ Thomas Hooker, *Writings in England and Holland, 1626-1633*, eds. George H. Williams *et al* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 249; Webster helpfully points out this and the following quote of Hooker’s in his *Godly Clergy*, 163, 164.

²⁰⁴ Hooker, *Writings*, 329-30.

²⁰⁵ Stephen Goffe to Sir William Boswell, 7 June 1633, BL, Add MS 6394, f. 137r. Goffe also reported that John Cotton was preparing to New England in the same letter.

²⁰⁶ The letter is now lost but referred to by Davenport himself. John Davenport, *An Apologeticall Reply to a Booke [by J. Paget] called An Answer to the Unjust Complaint of W.B* (Rotterdam, 1636: RSTC 6310), 109.

conforming to the Prayer Book.²⁰⁷ It would have added to Laud's displeasure, therefore, to discover that Davenport had either not been entirely sincere in his former apology or had so swiftly changed his mind. For the sake of safety, the exposed nonconformist decided temporarily to flee abroad before Laud had the chance to read the letter after returning to London from his trip to accompany the king to Scotland.

Now determined to leave London, Davenport used the pulpit to openly justify his nonconformity and prepare St Stephen's for his imminent departure. Four farewell sermons that Davenport preached at St Stephen's in June 1633 survive in a notebook, likely recorded by Edward Montagu (1602-71), then Viscount Mandeville and later second earl of Manchester.²⁰⁸ This series deliberately laid out the preacher's newly-formed nonconformist convictions that emphasised the importance of a clean conscience in worship that should be guarded from prescribed ceremonies imposed without a Scriptural warrant. All four sermons focused on one verse, Acts 24:16, "And hearin I doe exercise my selfe to have always a conscience voyde off offence toward god and toward man."²⁰⁹ In order for one's conscience to be void of offence, the worshipper "must have a warrant from God's word for it [the manner of worship]" and strictly adhere to God's rules.²¹⁰ Davenport then vividly described a godly fear of active offence towards God—clearly his explanation to St Stephen's Coleman Street of why their vicar had refrained from

²⁰⁷ Davenport assured Laud that he had not forbidden the reading of the Litany on Sundays, had maintained a "constant practise of his church to have the surpless worn, not only constantly once every month, but oftener also," and lastly had "very earnestly forbidden strangers to resort to the communion in his church." While this apology revealed Davenport's shift from a commitment to the "ordinance of man" in 1626-7 to modified conformity, as he admitted a loose observance of kneeling due to limited space in the church building, Laud appeared to be convinced and let Davenport go. John Davenport to William Laud, *Letters*, 34-5.

²⁰⁸ Francis Bremer offers a useful summary of these sermons, *Davenport*, 104-5.

²⁰⁹ John Davenport, "Sermons: [England?], 1632-1633," Beinecke, GEN MSS 58, f. 110r. I am very grateful for Professor Francis Bremer for lending me his microfilm copy of this manuscript.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, ff. 112v, 133r.

administering the communion in Easter 1633: “he [the worshipper] looks upon God as his fear in the matters of obedience and therefore he trembles at his word and he is afraid of transgressing in anything.”²¹¹ Towards the end of Montagu’s notes, Davenport touched on idolatry and condemned the tradition of bowing towards the altar, which Laudian authorities encouraged, as outright idolatrous.²¹² Davenport’s flock must have been fully aware of how controversial the message was, and, as Bremer observes, such denunciations of the prescribed worship might have prompted the notetaker to stop writing in order to avoid getting the preacher or himself into trouble.²¹³

Attacks and malicious rumours arose from all corners immediately after Davenport went into hiding on 5 August. Some rebuked the minister for forsaking his parish, and others accused him of misusing the funds of the Feoffees. The minister seemed particularly indignant at the “injurious surmises of those...[who] profess[ed] religion in an higher strayne then some others” and yet afflicted him the most, clearly referring to conformable puritans, perhaps people like Gouge, who Davenport believed should have comforted and supported him.²¹⁴ Davenport so assured his patron, Lady Vere: “the onely cause of all my present sufferings is the alteracion of my judgm[en]t in matters of conformity to the ceremonies established.”²¹⁵ With noticeable bitterness, Davenport emphasised the importance of honouring believers’ consciences, just as he did in the farewell sermons:

Wherein I doe not censure those that doe conforme (nay I account many of them faithfull, and worthy instrum[en]ts of Gods glory, and, I know that I did conforme with as much inward peace, as now I doe forbear, in both my uprightnes was the same, but my light different.... In this action [turn to nonconformity and going into hiding] I walke by that light which shineth unto mee.²¹⁶

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, f. 117r.

²¹² *Ibid.*, f. 118v.

²¹³ Bremer, *Davenport*, 105, fn. 13.

²¹⁴ Davenport to Lady Vere 1633, *Letters*, 39.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ *Idem*, “Sermons: [England?], 1632-1633,” f. 98r; *idem* to Lady Vere 1633, *Letters*, 39.

Davenport's hasty departure from England and emergence as a congregationalist apologist in the Netherlands illuminate how swiftly conformable puritans could be radicalised by the most ferocious versions of Laudianism. Now, a nonconformist, he arrived in Amsterdam in November 1633 so that "the displeasure conceived against [him] would be mitigated."²¹⁷ Little did Davenport know that more Laudian attacks were yet to come. Upon arrival in Amsterdam, Davenport immediately found himself in opposition to the presbyterian leader John Paget on the one side and the Laudian-sympathising official English representatives, Sir William Boswell, English ambassador in the Netherlands, and Stephen Goffe, chaplain to Captain Horace Vere's regiment, on the other. This presbyterian-Laudian alliance to block the appointment of Davenport as Paget's associate effectively crushed both Davenport's hope of returning to his London pulpit as well as attempts to settle in Amsterdam.

Davenport arrived just around the time when Sir Horace Vere, husband of Davenport's most important patron Mary Vere, retired. The departure of the Veres and the arrival of Sir Horace's replacement, George Goring, only added to Davenport's misfortune. Relying on the affluence of his father-in-law, Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork, young Goring purchased the office that marked the beginning of a prominent military career.²¹⁸ Goffe celebrated Goring's entrance into the highly polarised world of English diaspora in Amsterdam: "Mr Goring...will maintaine, and advance whatever I have

²¹⁷ *Idem, An Apologeticall Reply*, 111.

²¹⁸ Goring was a notorious gambler who wasted a large sum of money, including a dowry of £10,000 from the Boyle family. He made a name for himself after being wounded and permanently lamed in the siege of Breda in 1637. While being one of the most prominent royalist army officers, Goring was far from the most loyal of Charles' supporters and abandoned the royalist cause at times. See Ronald Hutton, "Goring, George, Baron Goring (1608-57)," *ODNB*.

begunne...now I can walk more openly....”²¹⁹ The energised Laudian soon raised a series of malicious attacks against Davenport.

Keen to reinforce conformity in Amsterdam as a way to please Laud, Goffe played politics. In early January 1634, the fervent Laudian brought Boswell’s attention to a new and anonymous tract *The Crowne of a Christian Martyr*.²²⁰ Goffe wrongly attributed this subversive tract to Davenport, who, like his friend Thomas Hooker, “walk[ed]...in that passage of vulgar excommunication.”²²¹ Even worse, according to the accuser, the tract showed that Davenport would be the “first man” of his party to plainly assert: “not one Diocesan B[isho]p of this latter age shall come into heaven.”²²² Goffe further proposed the following design to Gerardus Vossius, professor at the Athenaeum Illustre, a city magistrate, and a friend of Laud, to force Davenport out of the city:

It will not do to accuse Davenport in Holland of neglect of ceremonies, as that would be agreeable in that quarter rather than otherwise, but that stress must be laid rather on his carriage towards the King as the head of the State, in stealing out of England when writs were issued against him, and in not reporting himself to his Majesty’s agent at The Hague.²²³

Goffe anxiously planned to expose a politically disloyal Davenport, whose party made “love to the Dutch ministers” after the “miscarriage of Mr Hooker.”²²⁴ Goffe believed that Davenport, or “Mr Hooker under another name,” would never have left England so abruptly “if he were cleare from all other offences” besides ceremonial matters, and the minister could not have obtained “dimissorie le[tte]res” from his

²¹⁹ TNA, SP 16/252, f. 101.

²²⁰ Anonymous, *The Crowne of a Christian Martyr: With the Citie or Church of Christ, and the Fall of Babylon: Shewed out of the Testimonie of Iesus, in the Epistles to the Seauen Churches, the Description of the New Ierusalem, and other Passages of Holy Scripture* (Delft, 1634: RSTC 21009.5). The only extant copy is preserved in Merton College. For a detailed analysis of the authorship of this treatise, see Bremer, *Davenport*, 123.

²²¹ Stephen Goffe to Sir William Boswell, 5/15 January 1634, BL, Add MS 6394, f. 171r.

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ Quoted by Dexter, “Sketch of the Life and Writings of John Davenport,” *NHP II*, 224-5.

²²⁴ Stephen Goffe to Sir William Boswell, 7 January 1634, BL, Add MS 6394, f. 169r.

congregation.²²⁵ Along with these accusations were the Laudian agent's attempts to block any letters from London to clear Davenport's name and seek a written account that cohered with Goffe and Boswell's version of the story.²²⁶ Goffe however ran into a brick wall here because St Stephen's seemed ready to offer unwavering support for their former pastor: "I have an acquaintance in Colman-Street, but he is such a Creature of Damp. [i.e., Davenport] that I dare not trust him."²²⁷ The Laudian thought of another parishioner, "Mr Greaves," but he knew "not the man very well."²²⁸

To prove his innocence, Davenport eventually had to visit Boswell in The Hague with a letter from an Amsterdam merchant, John Webster, who testified that the preacher had never attacked the Church of England, nor had Webster ever "hear[d] him onc[e] to meddell [meddle] in any matter of staett [state]": "always att beginning or ending of every sermon doth [Davenport] pra[y] for our kinge and counsell."²²⁹ Davenport must have found Goffe's attacks vicious and unfounded, and thus must have been quite frustrated to see himself forced to defend his loyalty in a foreign country where he sought peace. Although successfully securing the appointment, Davenport found it impossible to rid himself of the theological and political controversies and finally declined the post.²³⁰

In 1636, Davenport published *An Apologetical Reply*, his own account of the Amsterdam dispute and his first open denunciation of episcopacy. Reluctant to fall into another round of defamation and further accusations of disloyalty, Davenport consciously adopted an Elizabethan conformist narrative to affirm chief governors as "*nursing*

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ John Webster to Sir William Boswell, 27 February 1634, BL, Add MS 6394, f. 183r.

²³⁰ For a detailed account of Davenport's time in the Low Countries, first in Amsterdam and later in Rotterdam and The Hague, see Bremer, *Davenport*, Chapter 8 and 9.

fathers of the Church,” who, like Jehoshaphat, did have an authority to govern ecclesiastical matters.²³¹ Yet Davenport, much to contemporary conformists’ horror, departed from conformable puritans like Gouge and Reynolds by suggesting that rulers exercised their authority by upholding individual congregations’ right to mind their own business and ordering “that the Churches make choise of fit officers, and that Church officers doe their duety in every kind.”²³²

Having experienced collaborative bullying in Amsterdam, Davenport denounced synods or classes that were called beyond individual congregations “by way of command, or masterly subjection” as “the first step whereby the Pope ascended into the chair of pestilence, and a mere inlet for tyranny to invade and usurp the church’s right.”²³³ Now a public congregationalist advocate, Davenport rationalised his own controversial departure from England by a comparison to Martin Luther’s return from Wartburg Castle to Wittenberg in 1522, remarkably negligent of the historical reality that Luther was returning to the official ministry of the Church under his prince: “[A]s Luther, upon the letters of the Church of Wittenburg, returned to the execution of his function, from which he had, for a time, desisted, and hidd himselfe, by the advise and command of the D. of Saxony.”²³⁴ Hence Davenport claimed to have followed this “congregationalist Luther,” obeying the will of his London flock in his departure to Amsterdam despite the politically defiant nature of his escape.

²³¹ Davenport, preface to *An Apologeticall Reply*. The notion of monarchs as nursing fathers or mothers can be traced back to John Jewel’s *Apology* in 1562. Elizabethan presbyterians agreed with this notion when it suited them, e.g., Thomas Cartwright, *A Reply to an Answer made of M. Doctor Whitgift against the Admonition to the Parliament* (Hemel Hempstead, 1573, RSTC 4712), 51.

²³² Davenport, preface to *An Apologeticall Reply*.

²³³ *Idem*, *An Apologeticall Reply*, 226.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 109. Davenport was by no means the first nor the only Protestant who appealed to Luther as their Reformation hero to endorse their own preferred form of church-state relationship. See Alec Ryrie, “The Afterlife of Lutheran England,” in *Sister Reformations: The Reformation in Germany and in England*, ed. Dorothea Wendebourg (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 213-34.

Conclusion

All three of our protagonists felt the impact of the nation-wide Laudian campaign from 1633 onwards. Under such pressure to conform, Gouge retreated from former puritan activism and returned to the basics of a godly minister, preaching, repetition, catechising, and administering sacraments. This period of relative inactivity effectively secured his ministry at St Ann's Blackfriars. Reynolds left little traces of his activities in Braunston, but his sermon in 1634 before the assize judges, published as *Shieldes of the Earth* in 1636, shows us an emerging puritan deeply familiar with the battle lines over Charles' policies in the localities. His genuine concerns for the godly causes set him apart from the younger version of himself in the 1620s, who, as preacher of Lincoln's Inn, maintained a distance from underground puritan projects, despite his clear connections with some who were involved. Years of exposure to local tensions between the godly and a series of Laudian bishops and colleagues profoundly shaped Reynolds' diagnosis of the contemporary condition of the established Church, and in only a few years, Northamptonshire would witness his rise to leadership in the local opposition to Bishop Dee's enforcement of table-railing in 1637-8. Davenport's turn to congregationalism is an even more prominent example of ideological radicalisation fostered by both anti-Laudian, anti-episcopal puritanism and aggressive Laudianism.²³⁵ Confrontations with the shift of ceremonialist polemic and Laudians' incessant attacks even after he had left England only pushed the once conformable puritan further away from his former convictions.

It is important to keep in mind that these ministers started out with very similar commitments—all conformable and comfortable with the existing episcopal government.

²³⁵ For more discussions of such radicalisation and the increasingly uncomfortable co-existence of conservative, conformable anti-Laudians and their more radical colleagues, see Milton, *ESR*, Chapter 3, especially 83-4, 90-1.

Gouge and Davenport collaborated extensively in the 1620s to promote puritan projects in London and both pledged conformity when summoned before Laud, but Davenport found himself caught between committed congregationalists like Cotton and Hooker on the one side and militant Laudians like Goffe and Boswell as well as Laud's friend Vossius on the other in 1633. Reading through Davenport's private letters in the early 1630s, one finds a real sense of fear, frustration, anger, and despair with the Laudian oppression that Gouge and Reynolds simply did not experience to the same extent.²³⁶ One might say that when confronted with different versions of Laudianism, puritans resorted to different means of self-protection. Some felt safe enough and compelled enough to speak up, like Reynolds; some kept their heads down and survived, like Gouge; and some others were cornered and had no choice but sail across the Atlantic, like Davenport.

²³⁶ Similarly, Anthony Milton argues that instead of describing someone as a Laudian, it might be more helpful to describe the rise and triumph of Laudianism in the 1630s as a "Laudian moment," in which many people, out of different motives and convictions and with varying degrees of zeal, participated. *Idem*, "Arminians, Laudians, Anglicans, and Revisionists: Back to Which Drawing Board?" 740; *idem*, *ESR*, 36.

Chapter 3 Interpreting Turmoil, 1637-42

At the height of the Laudian campaign in the late 1630s, Gouge, the former puritan activist, seemed to have been successfully tamed by his archbishop, while Reynolds, previously an uncontroversial conformist at Lincoln's Inn, evolved into an unmistakable advocate for puritanism. Reynolds' activism however demonstrated a greater official tolerance for the challenges he posed rather than a greater zeal of the minister for godly reforms compared to Gouge. The once conformable Gouge would swiftly turn into a merciless critic of Laudian novelties in the early 1640s. Laud, whom Gouge once praised as the "most reverend Father in God," and his followers had become "those [who] shew themselves like him that was *borne after the flesh*, whose doome was to be *cast out*."²³⁷ Reynolds, albeit in support of further reforms, condemned the destructive course the Long Parliament took and the threat of imminent war. Repentance and reconciliation were his key themes in 1642, setting him apart from pro-war puritans like Gouge and Davenport. Davenport, now a New Englander, was hardly a disinterested outsider. He passionately looked back across the Atlantic and wrote statements of Congregational principles for both his church-building in New Haven and the "second reformation" in Old England.

Gouge, an Unlikely Defender of the Laudian Church

After an eleven-year hiatus, Gouge resumed his work as a publisher in 1637, when he incorporated the previous three publications of Byfield's commentary on 1 Peter into a large single-volume work.²³⁸ In the years leading up to the outbreak of war, Gouge would publish two more works of practical divinity: Robert Bolton's collection of prayers in 1638 and Thomas Sheafe's *A Plea for Old Age* in 1639—both Sheafe and Bolton had clear

²³⁷ Gouge, *A Recovery from Apostacy* (London, 1639), 6; *idem*, *The Sabbaths Sanctification* (London, 1641: Wing G1395), 30-1.

²³⁸ Nicholas Byfield, *A Commentary upon the Three First Chapters of the First Epistle Generall of St. Peter* (London, 1637: RSTC 4212).

puritan connections. Gouge consciously confined himself to the genre of practical divinity, which, “being freest from offence, and fullest of divine matter,” was naturally the safest to put into print.²³⁹ His re-emergence in publishing also indicated a more amicable relationship between him and Laud, who found Gouge a useful spokesman for conformity rather than a seditious troublemaker by the late 1630s.

Gouge published Sheafe’s treatise for very personal reasons. Sheafe was Gouge’s tutor at King’s College, Cambridge, and the treatise, which focuses on the honour of the elderly and comfort they could attain, was dedicated to Laurence Chaderton (1536?-1640), Gouge’s uncle by marriage, already a centenarian by the time of the treatise was published.²⁴⁰ Bolton, on the other hand, was a godly preacher widely known for his anti-popery polemic.²⁴¹ Sensitive readers would pick up a hint of sarcasm in Gouge’s 1638 publication of Bolton’s old prayers. One recycled thanksgiving prayer had been written for Charles’ safe return from Spain in 1624 when he was still a prince, praising God who had been “a brazen wall and fiery pillar about him [Charles]...and preserv’d him, from every hurtfull snare both of soule and body, and broughtst him with peace and comfort againe unto his Fathers house.”²⁴² This imagery of the Exodus that celebrated Charles’ near escape from the match with the Catholic Infanta must have seemed ironic by 1638 because Charles was delivered from one popish marriage only to enter another. The prayer further

²³⁹ William Gouge, preface to *Certaine Devout Prayers of Mr. Bolton upon Solemne Occasions* by Robert Bolton, eds. Edward Bagshaw and William Gouge (London, 1638: RSTC 3226), A3r.

²⁴⁰ *Idem*, preface to *Vindiciae Senectutis, or, A Plea for Old-Age* by Thomas Sheafe (London, 1639: RSTC 22391.8), A6r. Not all of these titles were printed with imprimaturs, but godly writings often found their ways into print via sympathetic licensers like Thomas Wykes, chaplain to William Juxon, Bishop of London, who licensed *Vindiciae Senectutis* (see p. 210). For a thorough analysis of Caroline print culture and censorship, see Cyndia Susan Clegg, *Press Censorship in Caroline England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Chapter 4 for a detailed analysis of Laudian censorship and puritan printing in the 1630s.

²⁴¹ Already in 1629, Bolton denounced the labelling of “GODs best Servants, and the Kings best subjects” as puritans by those who “strike[d] at the very heart of grace, and power of godlinesse”: Robert Bolton, *Two Sermons Preached at Northampton at Two Severall Assises* (London, 1635: RSTC 3256), 84.

²⁴² *Idem*, *Certaine Devout Prayers*, 164.

beseched God to establish “the truth of our blessed Religion in his Princely heart,” which would have seemed timely in 1638, when controversies over Charles’ religious and financial policies had reached new heights.²⁴³ And yet even if these lines of prayer seemed slightly controversial, this was the farthest Gouge dared to go. Even in the late 1630s, Gouge was not only conformable, but could at times go the extra mile to support the regime that seemed increasingly tyrannical in the eyes of many.

On 21 October 1638, Gouge preached a sermon for Vincent Jukes, a young man readmitted into Christian fellowship. Jukes had converted to Islam after being captured and tortured by Turkish pirates but returned to England in April 1638 and publicly repented. The news reached William Juxon, then bishop of London, who conferred with Archbishop Laud and consequently ordered “a solemne...forme of *Penance*” at St Dunstan’s, Stepney, Jukes’ parish; Gouge was assigned the task of preaching.²⁴⁴ Laud clearly saw the usefulness of moderate puritan leaders like Gouge whose loyalty to the established Church was helpful propaganda when both the Caroline regime and the national church were under increasing criticism. Now sixty-three years old, the godly luminary became an unexpected defender of the English Church against many of his fellow puritans who had long suspected the papalist tendencies of the Caroline episcopate.

Gouge opened the sermon with a detailed account of how Jukes, then seventeen, was captured by Turkish pirates on the sea, sold as a slave in Algiers, and, under torture, forced to “renounce his Christian Religion, denie *Christ*, [and] acknowledge *Mahomet* to bee a great *Prophet*.”²⁴⁵ Paralleling plotlines of pirate stories familiar to English readers, Gouge narrated how Jukes miraculously escaped with three other slaves by killing most of

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 166.

²⁴⁴ Gouge, *A Recovery from Apostacy*, 6.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

the Turks onboard and sailing back to Spain, where the Spanish “dealt fairely with” the captive Turks who then converted to Christianity.²⁴⁶ Deliberately setting England against both Islam and Catholicism, Gouge then praised Jukes’ determination to return to England for “his native *Country* and reformed *Religion*.”²⁴⁷

Gouge and Laud shared convictions about the usefulness of rituals in situations like this.²⁴⁸ To restore the apostate, Gouge happily adopted an elaborate rite, laid down in 1637 by Laud and Joseph Hall (1574-1656), then bishop of Exeter and a moderate conformist.²⁴⁹ To show his contrition, Jukes likely prostrated himself at one point during the service, and across several Sundays, he might have knelt, smitten his chest, and even kissed the base of the font at various points, as dictated in Laud and Hall’s rite. Possibly to fend off accusations of being ceremonialist, Gouge defended the rite as necessary discipline that demonstrated Jukes’ “willingnesse to undergoe any penance” the Church demanded that was publicly “performed in the Catholick Church” to ensure proper discipline of excommunication and readmission.²⁵⁰

The fact that Laud, Gouge, and Hall all appreciated such elaborate form of penance counters the common misrepresentation of puritan piety as anti-ritualistic. Beyond the highly contentious campaign of the “beauty of holiness” was a widely recognised value of ritual. After all, Scottish presbyterians were known for their highly performative forms of

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 5; Margo Todd, “A Captive’s Story: Puritans, Pirates, and the Drama of Reconciliation,” *The Seventeenth Century* 12, no. 1 (1997): 48. Todd also helpfully observes that such a strong parallel between Jukes’ experience and other pirate stories might indicate some degree of invention.

²⁴⁷ Gouge, *A Recovery from Apostacy*, 5.

²⁴⁸ Todd, “A Captive’s Story,” 44.

²⁴⁹ William Laud, “A Form of Penance, &c.,” *The Works of the Most Reverend Father in God, William Laud, D. D.*, vol. 5 pt. 2, ed. James Bliss (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1853), 372-6. There were captives returning from Morocco, so Joseph Hall consulted Laud. The two then collaborated to design a form of penance, which was meant to serve as a “precedent for future times”: *ibid.*, 352. I would like to thank Professor James F. Turrell for pointing me to Laud and Hall’s construction of a rite for public penance in 1637. Todd makes no mention of Laud and Hall’s form of penance but does helpfully cite a precedent of 1628, when Laud demanded sermons for the reconciliation of an apostate in Minehead, Somerset. The rest of Todd’s article compares Jukes’ penance with the Somerset one.

²⁵⁰ Gouge, *A Recovery from Apostacy*, 15; Todd, “A Captive’s Story,” 42-3.

repentance, as Margo Todd has persuasively established, and Gouge likely aligned himself with the Kirk when he appealed to the “reformed” tradition.²⁵¹

So far Gouge said all the right things that would encourage his bishop to nod in agreement, but the puritan preacher found ways to remind his hearers of how fragile this English orthodoxy Jukes returned to was. After stressing the need of repentance and public penance, Gouge used the occasion to set forth godly examples of perseverance and martyrdom as a contrast to apostasy and exhorted his audience to prepare themselves because there was no guarantee of everlasting peace in England.²⁵² Given the newly formed National Covenant in Scotland and the ongoing revolt against Charles’ liturgical reforms that would eventually escalate into Bishops’ Wars in early 1639, Gouge’s warning about the possible loss of peace must have created some unease among his Laudian hearers.

Gouge went on to address the particular need of such preparation for “Mariners, Merchants, Merchants-factors and others” who were more frequently at sea.²⁵³ As to those who “live[d] at home safe and secure[d] under the protection of the *Defender of the true, ancient, Catholick, and Apostolick faith*,” especially those from Trinity House²⁵⁴ as well as the rich in London, Gouge called for charitable funds to redeem captives like Jukes.²⁵⁵

Gouge’s praise of Charles as defender of faith, calls for donations to safeguard sea-faring from pirates, coupled with a total silence on ship money, might have aroused some hearers’ curiosity. The controversial test case of John Hampden over ship money had just come to a close in June 1638. Gouge as well as his hearers would have been aware of

²⁵¹ Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 2002), especially Chapter 3 “Performing Repentance,” 127-82; Gouge, *A Recovery from Apostacy*, 19.

²⁵² Gouge, *A Recovery from Apostacy*, 57.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ The Corporation of Trinity House of Deptford Strond, a corporation that supported mariners and regulated sea-faring.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 63-4.

Charles' defence of non-parliamentary ship money that centred on the need to enhance coastal defence and protection from pirates and Turks—an extraordinary tax that had become a hot button issue towards the end of Charles' seemingly indefinite Personal Rule.²⁵⁶ Caught between Laudians who sought his vocal endorsement of the now deeply unpopular government and fellow puritans who looked up to him as their leader, Gouge deliberately refused to discuss the elephant in the room. This is revealing of how artful Gouge felt compelled to be, especially considering his swift turn to the parliamentary cause and denunciation of episcopacy in 1642.

Reynolds, an Unexpected Critic of the “Beauty of Holiness”

On 12 July 1637, Reynolds preached at Daventry before Francis Dee, Bishop of Peterborough, during that ardent Laudian bishop's second visitation. Throughout the sermon, Reynolds stressed the priority of peace and edification of the church over one's own “private *Liberty*,” especially regarding things indifferent: “We ought not, by imprudent and immoderate pertinacy in smaller things, to disturb or hazard the work which God hath set us to do.”²⁵⁷ Dee, who likely chose Reynolds as the preacher in order to placate moderate puritans, must have accepted this line of reasoning as perfectly compatible with his Laudian agenda.²⁵⁸ Use of coded language was however Reynolds' forte. The preacher's choice of Romans 14, St Paul's plea for restraint in the Christian community, and his outright emphasis on Christian liberty from both the spiritual bondage

²⁵⁶ The first writ for ship money, 20 October 1634, John Rushworth, *Historical Collections. The Second Part* (London, 1680: Wing R2318), 257-8; Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England*, 134, fn. 13; John Morrill, *The Revolt of the Provinces: Conservatives and Radicals in the English Civil War, 1630-1650* (London: Allen and Unwin; New York, NY: Barnes & Noble, 1976), 24-31.

²⁵⁷ Reynolds, *Peace and Edification*, 3-4.

²⁵⁸ Fielding, “Conformists, Puritans, and Church Courts,” 93.

of sin and Satan and the carnal bondage of Mosaic ceremonial laws should have rung alarm bells in Dee's mind right from the beginning of the sermon.

Considering how Laudian polemics had come to emphasise compliance with particular ceremonies, such as kneeling and bowing, as divine mandates, the fact that Reynolds extensively discussed *adiaphora* was revealing. Throughout the sermon, Reynolds kept his Laudian hearers on their toes by his repetitive warnings against unnecessary divisions and exhortations for peace and unity. The minister preached that there were false believers who taught against liberty, whose influence must be driven out of the church, and yet there were also weak believers whose conscience needed to be cared for.²⁵⁹ One wonders whether Laudian authorities were weak brothers, with whom the godly in Northamptonshire should bear, or false brothers who "exercise[d] Domination over the Consciences of men to bring them into bondage unto Doctrines of errors," with whom local puritans should contend; both featured in his sermon.²⁶⁰ Conceivably, Reynolds had no intention of spelling out what he meant more clearly, and along with these warnings that seemed to target the authorities, Reynolds added the following exhortations that definitely addressed his fellow puritans: "[I]n nothing we give offence to the Church of God; rather be willing to silence and smother our private judgements, to relinquish our particular liberties and interests...than to be in any such thing stiffe and peremptory against the quiet of Gods Church."²⁶¹

It was remarkable that Reynolds could comfortably switch from admonishing one to another. Immediately after his exhortations for obedience, Reynolds addressed the

²⁵⁹ Reynolds, *Peace and Edification*, 2.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 6, 8; Lake and Stephens, *Scandal and Religious Identity in Early Stuart England*, 163. Lake and Stephens helpfully describe Reynolds' sermon as a "studiedly ambiguous message," pointing out how Reynolds' principle of moderation must have been applied differently in the minds of his Laudian and puritan hearers.

²⁶¹ Reynolds, *Peace and Edification*, 10.

episcopal office and turned the notion of “the beauty of holiness” against his own Laudian bishop. While Reynolds’ call for moderation at a visitation sermon certainly demonstrated a real desire for peace and unity, his comments on godly bishops were unmistakably a biting critique directed at none other than Bishop Dee. Reynolds proposed four essential traits of a godly bishop, with the last being “Discipline and fatherly Government, to keepe the stones of the Building in order and to reduce all unto decency and beauty.”²⁶² While his audience might think that Reynolds was about to endorse Dee’s upcoming Laudian-style visitation, the preacher swiftly redefined this “beauty” as “unity” achieved through uniformity in correct worship that focused on preaching rather than an outward, ceremonialist piety.

Elaborating on his version of the “beauty of holiness,” Reynolds claimed: “for as God must be served with holinesse, so it must be in the *Beauty of Holinesse* too, and Unity is the beauty of the Church. *Behold how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity.*”²⁶³ He then immediately turned to an extensive exhortation for churchwardens to enforce parishioners’ participation in “the whole Liturgie of the Church” as the centre of piety.²⁶⁴ While he clearly affirmed the use of the Prayer Book, it was revealing that instead of a Laudian or ceremonialist “unity,” Reynolds spelt out a sermon-centred “unity.” After rebuking those who “seldome or never” heard one Psalm or other chapters of Scripture when they were read, Reynolds condemned the widespread contempt for preaching, the labour of which was another essential quality of a godly bishop: “nay many ... dropping in after the Sermon is begunne, and though the Preacher have taken sadde paines for what in

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 44-5.

the Name of God hee speakes unto them, having not yet the patience to stay till that piece of houre be ended.”²⁶⁵

Even if Reynolds’ earlier comments on *adiaphora* could be interpreted either way—either supporting the Laudian bishop or urging moderation from him—Reynolds’ reference to “the beauty of holiness,” reoriented to an enforcement of sermon-hearing as the focus of parish piety rather than Laud’s altar policy and other prescribed ceremonies, was certainly not to exhort the hotter sort of the godly to conform for the sake of unity, but really to urge Dee to exercise authority with a “fatherly” compassion and understanding towards a drastically different strain of devotion in Peterborough.²⁶⁶ Considering how belligerent a puritan critic Reynolds was in the Daventry pulpit, it was significant that Dee did not discipline Reynolds afterwards. The invitation to preach, Reynolds’ artful but undoubtedly bold advocacy for puritan piety, and the lack of disciplinary consequences all revealed his local influence and the immense support he enjoyed from the Northamptonshire gentry, possibly politicians like Christopher Yelverton, Zouch Tate, and John Crewe.

To Reynolds’ disappointment, his message did not change the course of Dee’s second visitation in 1637, which turned out to be even harsher than the first one in 1634.²⁶⁷ Dee chose a fervent Laudian deeply unpopular among the local godly, Robert Sibthorpe, and the equally zealous Samuel Clarke as commissioners in the western deaneries of the diocese. All Saints, Northampton, where Reynolds served eight years ago, was especially defiant against the enforced table-railing. In a report dated 26 October 1637, Sibthorpe and

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁶⁶ Webster seems to miss the apparent sarcasm when he quotes Reynolds’ reference to “the beauty of holiness” in *Godly Clergy*, 226. Lake and Stephens make no mention of it in *Scandal and Religious Identity in Early Stuart England*.

²⁶⁷ Fielding, “Conformists, Puritans, and Church Courts,” 96-7.

Clarke noted that the communion table had not been railed, many seats were conveniently concealed from sight so that it was hard to observe whether the congregants knelt at the prayers, and the communion cups resembled “common drinking bowles.”²⁶⁸ Ongoing tensions with the visitors eventually led to the excommunications of the two churchwardens of All Saints, Francis Rushworth and Peter Farren, in January 1638.²⁶⁹ The churchwardens appealed to the Court of Arches but to no avail—an entirely predictable outcome given the long history of fervent ceremonialism of the dean, Sir John Lambe, who also happened to be Sibthorpe’s brother-in-law.²⁷⁰ Undeterred by such frustration, Rushworth and Farren appealed directly to Laud in February, citing the lack of “fit workers” during Christmas as the cause of delay in table-railing, which, unsurprisingly, failed to convince the Archbishop.²⁷¹

The combative churchwardens gained a temporary triumph when they finally had their voice heard at the Court of Delegates, where Sir Henry Marten (c. 1561-1641) decisively granted an inhibition.²⁷² Marten already made his aversion to Laud’s altar policy known in 1633, when he, then Dean of Arches, supported the parishioners of St Gregory’s London in their appeal against the demand to rail the communion table to the east side of the church alterwise.²⁷³ Marten’s ruling displeased King Charles I, who explicitly affirmed the ceremonial demand and “gave commandment that if these few parishioners...p[ro]ceed[ed] in their said Appeal then the deane of the Arches...[should]

²⁶⁸ TNA, SP 16/370, f. 108v. For the minutes of proceedings from October, when the churchwardens were first cited, to December, when the visitors resorted to excommunication, see TNA, SP 16/378, ff. 186r-187v.

²⁶⁹ TNA, SP 16/378, ff. 187r-v.

²⁷⁰ John Fielding, “Lambe, Sir John (c. 1566-1646)” and “Sibthorpe [Sibthorp], Robert (d. 1662),” *ODNB*; for a more thorough discussion of Sibthorpe’s kinship and extensive collaborations with Lambe, see Lake and Stephens, *Scandal and Religious Identity in Early Stuart England*, Chapter 5.

²⁷¹ TNA, SP 16/381, f. 184r. The petition is dated 12 February 1638.

²⁷² 21 February 1638, Woodford, *Diary*, 179; Fielding, introduction to *Diary*, 61.

²⁷³ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 224-5; Fielding, “Conformists, Puritans, and Church Courts,” 97.

confirm the said order of the aforesaid Deane and Chapter.”²⁷⁴ When Laud replaced George Abbot as archbishop of Canterbury later the same year, Marten was swiftly removed from his post and replaced by Lambe. It was thus no surprise that Marten would support Rushworth and Farren at the Court of Delegates in 1638.

Lambe and Clarke would eventually secure their original verdict by a suit in the Court of High Commission. All Saints yielded, but the Laudian party in Northamptonshire had further alienated their puritan neighbours. Reynolds certainly followed the controversy closely. When one of the churchwardens, Rushworth, and his close friend, puritan lawyer and diarist Robert Woodford, visited Reynolds in Braunston in June 1638, they must have briefed the former incumbent of All Saints on the latest development of the notorious strife between the churchwardens and the Laudian authorities, including Marten’s recent favour towards the parish at the Court of Delegates.²⁷⁵ In the same year, Reynolds published a treatise, *Meditations on the Holy Sacrament of the Lords Last Supper*, directly addressing issues around the Lord’s Supper, and dedicated it to Marten. The treatise, which has never attracted as much scholarly attention as Reynolds’ 1637 sermon before Francis Dee, marked a step-up in Reynolds’ criticism of the programme of Laudian reform. Denouncing

²⁷⁴ TNA, SP 16/250, f. 29v.

²⁷⁵ 30 June 1638, Woodford, *Diary*, 212. Through Woodford’s diary we get a sense of how All Saints’ dispute with Sibthorpe and Clarke affected the everyday life of those involved. The Rushworths frequently dined with Woodford’s family, and the All Saints dispute was constantly the topic at the table in early 1638. Mrs Rushworth was especially burdened, “being heavy & sad to see her husband goe on with such resolution in the busines against dr Clarke.” Mrs Rushworth was going through a particularly difficult time. Other than the escalating tensions between her husband and church authorities like Clarke and Lambe, she must have been troubled by her father’s grave illness. She travelled to Coventry to see her father the next day. 3 March 1638, *ibid.*, 183. On a larger scale it was also the talk of the town, and godly grudges against Laudian reform must have been reinforced by what they perceived as the divine judgement, the outbreak of plague that reached Northampton in early 1638, which would last for around a year. Woodford’s prayer reflects the general anxiety among the godly in Northampton and its nearby villages: “The rayle in the Chancell is now s[ai]d almost up and its confidently reported that the sicknes is in the Towne, Oh Lord pr[e]vent it or heale it if it be thy will....” 17 March 1638, *ibid.*, 188.

the “wickednesse of a wil-worship,” Reynolds condemned those who failed to restrain themselves from ceremonial novelty:²⁷⁶

[M]ore than heathenish is the impiety of those who mixing humane inventions and ceremonies of their owne unto the substance of these sacred mysteries, and imposing them as divine duties with a necessitie of absolute obedience, do by that meanes wrench Christs owne divine prerogative out of his owne hands, and make themselves, shall I say confounders and joynt authors of his Sacraments? nay rather indeed the destroyers of them....²⁷⁷

As he had always done, Reynolds balanced his harsh criticism with a call for obedience to *adiaphora*: “the institutions of mortall men, though often in their substance needlesse, in their observance difficult, and in their end not much beneficiall, so long as they keep within the compasse of indifferent things, there is requir’d not only our obedience, but our reverence.”²⁷⁸ Reynolds’ sympathy towards moderate conformists like Marten and his fellow puritans in All Saints, Northampton, was nevertheless clear. There can be no doubt that he had the Laudians like Sibthorpe, Clarke, and Lambe in mind when he spoke of “confounders and joynt authors of his Sacraments.”

Looking beyond Northamptonshire, Reynolds’ *Meditations* also purposefully fuelled the opposition to the increased bullying by the Laudian party of those who refused to comply on a national scale. In contrast to Laud in this escalating tension over the altar controversy stood John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln (1621-41) and once Lord Keeper of the Great Seal under James. Williams’ notoriety among the Laudians started with a letter he wrote to the vicar of Grantham in 1627, advising that the communion table should not

²⁷⁶ Reynolds claimed that the treatise was his “first Theologicall Essay,” “the very first fruits” of his theological studies, intended only for his private use: Reynolds, *Meditations*, A3r, A4v. If this was true, the date of composition most likely lies between 1616 and the early 1620s. The treatise must have undergone significant modifications, however, as the 1638 publication shows a clear awareness of the heightened tensions between Laudian authorities on the one side and puritans and moderate conformists on the other. In any case, to emphasise that the treatise was written long before the controversies of the 1630s was undoubtedly a rhetorical ploy on Reynolds’ part.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 19, 21.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

be called an altar and should be placed where it was most convenient for the congregation to hear their minister.²⁷⁹ Copies of the letter were circulated widely among the opponents of the Laudian campaign, and it was thoroughly discussed during the St Gregory's hearing in 1633.²⁸⁰ Likely approved by Laud, Peter Heylyn, the Archbishop's staunch defender, initiated a series of attacks on Williams, responding to the letter as well as William's later further defence of his position, *The Holy Table, Name and Thing* (1637). Heylyn repeatedly labelled Williams as a puritan, a separatist, a like-minded comrade of Henry Burton and good friend of "I. C.," referring to John Cotton.²⁸¹ Unsurprisingly, Williams rejected these wild accusations and the label of being a nonconforming, even seditious, "puritan," with which the moderate bishop wanted nothing to do. The bishop threw Heylyn's attacks back at him, comparing Heylyn with Cartwright and Cotton by denouncing the Laudian's *A Coale from the Altar* (1636) as "a libel against a Bishop" and consequently suggesting that Heylyn was anti-episcopalian himself.²⁸² Williams' appeal to the middle ground unfortunately failed to meet with royal favour, and he would be suspended and imprisoned in 1637 for subornation of perjury, after years of defiant resistance to Laud.

In the matter of ecclesiology, conformity, and indeed soteriology, Reynolds' position came close to Reformed conformists like Williams, who heartily supported episcopal government and yet outright opposed Laudians' demand for absolute obedience to the enforced ceremonies.²⁸³ And yet while Williams shared many conformists'

²⁷⁹ Milton, *Laudian and Royalist Polemic in Seventeenth-Century England*, 56-7.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

²⁸¹ Peter Heylyn, *Antidotum Lincolnense* (London: 1637, RSTC: 13267), preface and Sec I, Ch I, 16. In the preface, Heylyn also presented a table comparing the author of *The Holy Table, Name and Thing*, Williams, and "Mr Burton of London" to stress the similarity between the two authors.

²⁸² John Williams, *The Holy Table, Name & Thing* (London, 1637: RSTC 25725.2), 58.

²⁸³ For Williams' Reformed piety as an episcopalian, see Stephen Hampton, "The manuscript sermons of Archbishop John Williams," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 62, no. 4 (2011): 707-25; for more

appreciation of ceremonialist splendour,²⁸⁴ Reynolds further aligned himself with the puritan challenges to the said benefits of prescribed worship: “the Knee, the Lip, the Eye, the Hand alone profiteth not at all, it is the spirit that worshippeth.”²⁸⁵ When there was an observable discrepancy between outward ceremonies and one’s heart, one would “never smell any sweete savor in such services.”²⁸⁶ One cannot imagine other puritans like Gouge or moderate conformists like Williams escaping Laudian scrutiny in the late 1630s if they uttered these hardly-coded criticisms even if they attempted to strike a balance. And yet again, Reynolds sailed through Laud’s heyday with relative peace, most likely because he was simply not regarded as one of those anti-Laudian troublemakers. His full conformity and lack of participation in godly schemes like the Feoffees for Improvements meant that church authorities regarded him as a moderate conformist like Williams, without the latter’s defiant resistance and influence. On the other hand, diocesan authorities naturally saved their administrative energy to deal with nonconforming parishes like All Saints, Northampton, Towcester, and Upton, an already formidable task given the strong gentry support behind these godly communities. One can say Reynolds was sheltered by local puritan activism because he was simply not as rebellious as many of his neighbours.

Interpreting Turmoil: Puritans on the Eve of War

In late 1640, only two years after Gouge’s sermon at St Dunstan’s and Reynolds’ *Meditations*, the ministers saw a remarkably swift downfall of the Laudian regime that none could have foreseen. Thomas Wentworth (1593-1641), first earl of Strafford, former

discussions of Reformed conformists’ opposition to Laud’s liturgical innovations, see Hampton, *Grace and Conformity*, Chapter 6.

²⁸⁴ Williams painstakingly decorated his private chapel at Buckden palace and built an equally splendid chapel for Lincoln College, Oxford. See Trevor Cooper, “‘Wise as Serpents’: The Form and Setting of Public Worship at Little Gidding in the 1630s,” in *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain*, eds. Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 208; Felicity Heal, “Art and Iconoclasm,” *The Oxford History of Anglicanism*, I:197.

²⁸⁵ Reynolds, *Meditations*, 163.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 163-4.

Lord Deputy of Ireland, and a strong supporter of Charles, was impeached on 11 November and sent to the Tower of London, and Laud soon followed him on 18 December. Gouge and Reynolds' many friends in Parliament were intimately involved in this reversal of fortune.²⁸⁷ New Englanders followed the news closely through connections they maintained back home. In the summer of 1641, John Winthrop noted the execution of Wentworth in May and legal proceedings against Laud, their "chief enemy," together with plans for Massachusetts Bay Colony to send people back to "congratulate the happy success there...[and] also to give any advice, as it should be required, for the settling the right form of church discipline there."²⁸⁸ There was a general excitement about a new era dawning among the like-minded in both Old and New England, and this reflected tangibly on the scarcity of both immigrants and commerce.²⁸⁹ The New Haven Colony saw forty-four people sailing back to England in total.²⁹⁰ Among the earliest to return was Samuel Eaton (*d.* 1665), minister and possibly a childhood friend of Davenport's in Coventry, who sailed home in late 1640. Through Eaton's vigorous Congregationalist gathering in Dukinfield, Cheshire, Davenport's New Haven model bore early fruit in Old England.²⁹¹

²⁸⁷ William Lenthall, Speaker of the House of Commons, and Robert Holborne were both lawyers who defended the Feoffees in 1633, and their time at Lincoln's Inn overlapped with Reynolds' lectureship. Calder, introduction to *Activities of the Puritan Faction of the Church of England, 1625-33*, vii; Sir Samuel Luke, Sir Valentine Knightley's grandson and a future presbyterian advocate, was married at St Ann's Blackfriars and possibly had his daughter baptised there. White, *The Churches & Chapels of Old London*, 32; Reynolds would also be familiar with Northamptonshire MPs, such as Zouch Tate and John Crew.

²⁸⁸ John Winthrop, 2 June 1641, *Winthrop's Journal: "History of New England" 1630-1649*, ed. James Kendall Hosmer (New York, NY: Barnes & Noble, 1953), 2:31.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁰ Susan Hardman Moore, *Pilgrims: New World Settlers and the Call of Home* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), Appendix 2.

²⁹¹ Richard Cust and Peter Lake, *Gentry Culture and the Politics of Religion: Cheshire on the Eve of Civil War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021), 230-1; James Mawdesley, "Clerical Politics in Lancashire and Cheshire during the Reign of Charles I, 1625-1649," (PhD dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2014), 169-71, 176-77; it is worth noting that while Eaton's ecclesiology represented an orthodox position in New England, his unashamed promotion of independent ideologies was deemed to be a strain of radical puritanism. Cust and Lake, *Gentry Culture*, 294, 304-5; Bremer, *Davenport*, 20; S.J. Guscott, "Eaton, Samuel (*d.* 1665)," *ODNB*; Moore, *Pilgrims*, 135, 138. Eaton's brother Theophilus was a former parishioner of St Stephen's Coleman Street and now Governor of the New Haven Colony as well as an intimate friend of Davenport's.

A Godly War: England's Nehemiahs and their Sainly Reformation

Seeing that Laudian episcopacy had collapsed and a nation-wide “de-Laudianization” had begun, Gouge joined many others, puritans and moderate conformists alike, to publicly condemn the church practices he had long disapproved of.²⁹² In 1641, Gouge published *Sabbaths Sanctification*, a catechism-like handbook that lays out Scriptural proofs and duties of sabbath-keeping, including practical advice such as things permitted, like helping women travel or quenching fire.²⁹³ In this booklet, Gouge denounced those who “put a knife to the throat of religion” by hindering sabbath-keeping and decried the lack of “Ministry or government of such” to restrain people from “sensuall workes that satisfie[d] the flesh.”²⁹⁴ Readers familiar with the godly preacher would not miss his not-so-subtle condemnation of the Book of Sports, which once he had refused to read at St Ann’s Blackfriars in 1633.²⁹⁵ Gouge and his friends seemed to have been perusing this handbook in private households for years, but with de-Laudianization and a new wave of puritan reforms underway, he not only published but must have modified the booklet to include vehement attacks clearly directed at the Laudians:

There are many not onely deceived in their understanding, but also so perverted in their will, and so impious in their heart, as they cannot endure such as are better enformed then themselves.... Therefore to discourage men from their pious

²⁹² Milton, *ESR*, Chapter 4; even some Laudians, desperate to save their own careers from peril, noticeably softened their position. See *ibid.*, 135.

²⁹³ Gouge, *The Sabbaths Sanctification*, 20.

²⁹⁴ *Idem*, “To the Reader,” *The Sabbaths Sanctification*, A2r, A2v. Kenneth Fincham seems to believe that this preface comes out of Gouge’s own hand, but it uses the third person to refer to the author and has no signature. Fincham, “Introduction,” in *The Early Stuart Church: 1603-1642*, ed. Kenneth Fincham (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 15.

²⁹⁵ Garrard to Wentworth, 6 December 1633, *The Earl of Strafforde's Letters and Dispatches*, vol. 1, 166. Many moderate conformists, including several bishops, such as John Williams and Joseph Hall, were active players in this process of de-Laudianization as well and proposed their own versions of a reformed Church. Williams, for example, also implicitly criticised the Book of Sports when he preached before Charles in 1641. See Hampton, “The manuscript sermons of Archbishop John Williams,” 710; Milton, *ESR*, 105. For more information about the history of the Book of Sports, including its first declaration in 1617-8, reissue under Charles in 1633, and its reception among puritans, see Kenneth L. Parker, *The English Sabbath, a Study of Doctrine and Discipline from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

courses, they brand them with ignominious titles, as *Precisians, Puritanes, Sabbatarians* and *Jewes*. Herein they doe exceedingly aggravate their sinne.²⁹⁶

When Gouge preached before the House of Commons on 29 June 1642, the godly luminary praised the MPs as “most worthy patriots” and England’s Nehemiahs to “redress home-grievances.”²⁹⁷ When Nehemiah came to Jerusalem, “he found many Grievances in the State, and corruptions in the Church. *Those* he redressed, *these* he remooved: and withall settled the *Sabbaths Sanctification*.”²⁹⁸ Gouge further reminded the MPs that opposed to the godly patriot, Nehemiah, were oppressive governors: “He thought it not enough to secure the City from publike enemies, unlesse also he eased the common people from the oppression of their Governours.”²⁹⁹ Affirming that “*God is the Support of Saints*,” Gouge essentially argued for divine approval of Parliament’s actions.³⁰⁰

Davenport would heartily agree with his old colleague, despite clear ecclesiological differences between them. Although already settled in New Haven, Davenport was hardly an outsider, and at one point it seemed he could have gone home to participate in this reformation. In Spring 1642, the Long Parliament had started to select members for the synod dedicated to reform the established Church, later known as the Westminster Assembly. John Winthrop noted in his journal that the religious independents in Parliament invited Davenport, Cotton, and Hooker to return to Old England.³⁰¹ Hooker decisively declined, leaving a revealing observation that it would be futile to “go 3,000 miles to agree with three men,” referring to the congregationalist minority like Jeremiah Burroughes, Thomas Goodwin, and Philip Nye.³⁰² Without a suitable replacement,

²⁹⁶ Gouge, *The Sabbaths Sanctification*, 30.

²⁹⁷ *Idem*, *The Saints Support* (London, 1642: Wing G1397), A3r, 24.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

³⁰¹ John Winthrop, 6 September 1642, *Winthrop’s Journal*, 2:71.

³⁰² *Ibid.*

Davenport and the New Haven congregation decided that their minister should stay, despite his initial desire to return. The deteriorating political conditions in England eventually forced Davenport and Cotton to abort any further planning. The trio never sailed back, but instead collaborated extensively to compose apologetic in response to English clergy who either inquired about or challenged the New England Way. Treatises Davenport helped compose included *An Apologie of the Churches in New-England* and *An Answer of the Elders of the Several Churches in New England unto Nine Positions Sent over to Them*, both written in 1639 and circulated in England before their publications in London in 1643. New Haven also initiated monthly fasts to pray for the Congregationalist cause, which Connecticut would cite as an example for them to follow on 3 January 1643.³⁰³ In Davenport's mind, his New Haven church was a carefully thought out exemplar of independency and paralleled those of the New Haven returnees.

A Sinful War: "Great Brittaines distractions"

In contrast to the hotter sort of puritans like Gouge, Reynolds lacked the militancy needed in the challenges to episcopacy. On 27 July 1642, a month after Gouge preached before Parliament, Reynolds did the same at the pulpit of St Margaret's Church and urged the MPs to get rid of "the *plague of our owne hearts*" rather than seeking external remedies.³⁰⁴ Instead of affirming Parliament's military urges like Gouge did, the Braunston minister pleaded that God "would graciously incline the hearts of this whole kingdom rather to wrestle with him for a blessing, than to struggle and conflict amongst themselves for a curse."³⁰⁵ At a moment when tension between the king and Parliament reached its breaking point, Reynolds' message was clear—keep "a spirit of peace" and pursue "the

³⁰³ Bremer, *Davenport*, 241; J. Hammond Trumbull, ed., *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut* (Hartford, CT: Brown & Parsons, 1850), 99.

³⁰⁴ Edward Reynolds, *Israels Petition in Time of Trouble* (London, 1642: Wing R1256), 14.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, A4r.

closing of those miserable breaches”—and his outright objection to a civil war unmistakable: “Babylon will clap their hands and wag their head; no such time for *Shishak* the Egyptian to trouble Jerusalem, as when Israel is divided.”³⁰⁶ Instead of seeing episcopacy as a popish device in need of a total abolition, Reynolds undoubtedly aspired for a consensus over reformed episcopacy that could save England from a civil war and international humiliation.

Another of his publications in 1642, *Eugenia’s Teares for Great Brittaines Distractions*, issued the same rebuke against those who pursued warfare and further lamented the rapid growth of separatist and sectarian voices, especially their unchecked attacks on mainstream Protestantism and episcopacy after the abolition of the Court of High Commission in July 1641: “we discerne nothing aright, but by a false light...wee waver betweene divers indifferences; each houre produceth new fantasies, every day new follies.”³⁰⁷ Reynolds presented a vivid illustration of the religious liberty that he whole-heartedly loathed: “Porters, Pesants and Horse-groomes, shall attribute to themselves the power of reformation...[,] Barbers shops shall have their Councell-Tables...[,] every Mechannick shall be a Judge and adviser; Nay the weaker Sex under pretence of Preaching shall prescribe remedies, and tell old-wives-tales.”³⁰⁸ Against those who rashly separated themselves “from the Church (breaking the bond of unity)” and thus deserved “the censure of an Schismatick,” Reynolds stressed an inseparable connection between reverence to monarchy and a well-maintained national orthodoxy.³⁰⁹ Reaffirming the once commonly-held notion that “princes whilst they live are Gods,” deliberately ignored by

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 37, 38.

³⁰⁷ *Idem, Eugenia’s Teares for Great Brittaines Distractions, or, Some Slender Observations Reflecting on those Sad Times* (London, 1642: Wing R1247), 2.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

many at this time, Reynolds condemned the attacks on Charles and the established Church as utterly unchristian.³¹⁰

Reynolds' full conformity and occasional outbursts of criticism against the Laudian regime have thwarted scholars' attempts to categorise him into a specific ecclesiological group. The confusion worsens when historians critique his opposition to the outbreak of war in 1642. Reading Reynolds' *Eugenia's Teares*, David Cressy describes him as "a champion of the beauty of holiness," and his apparently puritan criticism of Laudian innovations as "needless ceremonies" simply as a Laudian concession in 1642.³¹¹ While Cressy rightly observes that Reynolds' main grudges were against unchecked sectarianism caused by the collapse of the episcopate, he misreads Reynolds' distaste for the destructive actions of the Long Parliament as an expression of Laudian convictions.³¹² The reality is, moderate puritans were just as concerned as Reformed conformists and Laudians with the spreading of separatist thought, and for the first time, Reynolds publicly identified with those labelled as "puritan." His concerns for sectarian influences were not an expression of Laudian convictions but prefigured his presbyterian leadership in the years to come:

[L]et not any thinke...that it is my intent here to aime or invect against the truly Religious or well minded Christian, or to brand any honest man with the name of Puritan...[who are] the most zealous and well governed men of these times, who with no lesse paines then detestation, Preach downe sinne and ungodlinesse, expressing the power of the Word by its operation in a Sanctified, pure, and unspotted life, and without Hypocricie or senister ends striving both in life and doctrine to suppress all sinne, are too often and unjustly branded with that scandalous title; such Puritans we must all be which meane to see Heaven, that Character being truly placed when it meetes with the contemners of the Church and State, which ayme at the evertion of doctrine and discipline...bitterly invenomed

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

³¹¹ David Cressy, *England on Edge: Crisis and Revolution, 1640-1642* (Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 277.

³¹² For Cressy's use of *Eugenia's Tears* as a conservative voice in the early 1640s, see *ibid.*, 130, 302, 329, to name a few examples. Cressy rightly observes that Reynolds was conservative in the sense that he preferred the ecclesiological and political *status quo* rather than any radical change in government, but this in no way draws him closer to the Laudian campaign of the "beauty of holiness."

against Sovereigne Authority, the State Ecclesiasticall, and the lawfull approved decency of the Church.³¹³

The term “puritan” was Reynolds’ double-edged sword. On the one hand he defended the godly against accusations that they were “distempers” and “contemners of the Church and State”; on the other hand, Reynolds warned his fellow puritans against betraying their king and the appointed ecclesiastical government. Reynolds was purposefully redefining puritanism, restricting it to the most moderate faction of the community that restrained themselves from joining the militant cause. For him, puritans should be “royalists” too.

Conclusion

Networks and conflicts in the seventeenth century have led historians to unhelpful labelling and an overly rigid antithesis between puritans and Laudians. Gouge’s notable godly lineage, active engagement in puritan projects in the 1620s and early 1630s, and leadership in the presbyterian party in the 1640s mean that scholars tend to overlook his surprising, if very carefully-nuanced, conformity in the late 1630s. On the other hand, Reynolds’ conformity and teachings on obedience often result in scholars’ neglect of his puritan sentiments and misreading of his own subtle critique of Laudian innovations before 1642. Cressy was not alone in this misreading of Reynolds. John Fielding, in his edited diary of Robert Woodford, describes Reynolds as a “moderate Laudian.”³¹⁴ This categorisation is the conclusion Fielding draws after reading through references to Reynolds in secondary literature such as Tom Webster’s *Godly Clergy*, specifically Webster’s interpretation of Reynolds’ 1637 visitation sermon before Bishop Dee.

³¹³ Reynolds, *Eugenia’s Tears*, 20.

³¹⁴ Fielding, editor’s footnote 439, *Diary*, 212.

Webster likens Reynolds' 1637 visitation sermon to Davenport's defence of conformity in 1626-7 against Alexander Leighton and contrasts it with other puritan polemics against conformity in the 1630s.³¹⁵ He observes that Reynolds' argument for conformity on the basis of "peace, charity and love" had ceased to be persuasive among the godly, but while it is an adequate observation that "the conformable positions inhabited by Davenport, Goodwin, Nye and others in the 1620s became less tenable in the 1630s,"³¹⁶ Reynolds' conformity was definitely not an anomaly. Webster also quotes Reynolds' reference to "the beauty of holiness" as evidence for the preacher's conformity, failing to see the intended sarcasm. Reynolds' ceremonial conformity thus leads Webster too quickly to set him against other puritans who were outspoken in their nonconformity and relegate him to the margins of the puritan mainstream.

Reynolds was however an expert at harbouring critique in praise, like many other conformable clergymen, such as Gouge. Once individuals were categorised into rigid ecclesiological groups, it seemed difficult for Laudians then, just like scholars today, to see the flexibility and fluidity in the trajectories of puritans' take on the established Church and their conformity. Without the presbyterian and congregationalist networks that Gouge and Davenport respectively enjoyed, which constantly irritated Laud, Reynolds could resort to barely coded criticisms against enforced ceremonies without being targeted by the authorities. Thus ironically, despite being more outspoken and critical of the Laudian government than Gouge in the late 1630s, Reynolds was neither identified by the Laudian authorities nor by scholars today as a puritan troublemaker.

³¹⁵ Webster, *Godly Clergy*, 215-34.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 226.

PART II TABLES TURNED, 1642-60

Chapter 4 Championing Godly Ecclesiologies, 1642-48

Along with the downfall of Laud in 1640 came the Parliament-led reforms that, for a short while, especially in the early years of war, seemed to promise the realisation of all puritan ideals and the long-awaited “perfect reformation.”³¹⁷ Reynolds was called from Braunston to London to join other puritans like Gouge at the Westminster Assembly, where godly divines could finally conduct their own version of a saintly reformation. A “presbyterian party” soon emerged, led by a *iure divino* presbyterian pressure group, which Elliot Vernon calls the “Sion College conclave.”³¹⁸ Moderate puritans like Reynolds would not have considered a full-scale structural reform of church government if the hotter sort of their colleagues had not utterly rejected even notions of “reduced episcopacy.” And yet seeing presbyterianism as a safeguard for religious uniformity, clerical authority, and alliance building with the Scots, they chose to join hard-line advocates at the Westminster Assembly, like Gouge, who already had presbyterian leanings or sympathies before 1642. This marked the expansion of English presbyterianism from a minority movement on the ecclesiastical fringe to a much more accommodating and hence mainstream force of puritan reform. The dominance of this presbyterian party was short-lived, however, as it was ranged against both religious independents and an increasingly self-assertive parliament that would decisively crush the *iure divino* presbyterian scheme.

³¹⁷ Milton, *ESR*, 259-60. Here Milton borrows the language from Thomas Fuller, *A Sermon of Reformation Preached at the Church of the Savoy* (London, 1643: Wing F2461), 20-1, 23. One of the major arguments in Milton’s book is that contemporaries saw various endeavours of reform throughout the seventeenth century as diverse “reformations” rather than reactions to and aberrations from a settled, widely recognised, orthodoxy laid down under Elizabeth, and many primary sources confirm that. Milton, *ESR*, 21.

³¹⁸ Elliot Vernon, “Sion College Conclave and London Presbyterianism during the English Revolution,” (PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1999). I am very grateful for Dr Vernon’s generous provision of the digital copy of his doctoral dissertation.

Standing against Reynolds and Gouge were those who preferred congregational autonomy and looked to the New England Way as the most biblical polity. Although they were a minority at the Assembly, their counterparts across the Atlantic dominated the religious landscape. John Davenport and fellow New Englanders enjoyed unprecedented freedom to build a “New Jerusalem.”³¹⁹ The 1640s witnessed the growth of New Haven from a settlement into a colony firmly established upon principles of what many contemporaries referred to as the “New England Way,” a term that can be traced back to John Cotton’s *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New-England* (1645), which, like many other New Englanders’ tracts, had been widely circulated in manuscript for church polity debates in England long before its publication.³²⁰ In order to achieve and maintain godliness in the colonies, essentially little theocracies in New Englanders’ minds, they stipulated that only church members could be free burgesses and eligible for civic office. This ensured that both civil and ecclesiastical governments were in the hands of the godly few. Everyday life in New Haven was also intimately tied to Davenport’s pastoral oversight and Governor Theophilus Eaton’s leadership, and the justice system seemed to effectively deter crimes and grievous sins.³²¹ Unsympathetic or independently-minded laity however constantly threatened the very foundation of the New England Way, the most crushing one in the 1640s being a petition in 1646 that called for a comprehensive

³¹⁹ As suggested by the title of Francis Bremer’s definitive biography of Davenport, *Building a New Jerusalem: John Davenport, a Puritan in Three Worlds*.

³²⁰ John Cotton, *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New-England* (London: 1645, Wing C6471); Bremer, *Congregational Communion*, esp. 119-20; Robert Baillie had also referred to congregationalists returning to England from Holland as early as March 1641 as those “for New-England Way.” See Robert Baillie, *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, 1637-1662*, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: Printed for Robert Ogle, 1841), I:311; for more information about the growth of the New Haven Colony, See Bremer, Chapter 14 “From Town to Colony,” *Davenport*, 205-19.

³²¹ Bremer, Chapter 15 “Cracks in the Foundation,” *Davenport*, 220-36.

membership open to all godly men. Davenport withstood these challenges and would prove himself a persistent advocate for the New England Way.

In pursuit of godly ecclesiologies under extraordinary circumstances of a civil war and an exiled king, puritan reformers were forced to rethink the building blocks of church government. It became clear that while independents, especially the more radically-minded among them, had begun to question the traditional alliance between church and state and even the necessity of monarchy, English presbyterians and the Scots, deeply worried about the unchecked growth of sects and religious diversity, were increasingly anxious to bring about a reconciliation with their frustratingly stubborn king. Instead of a decade of triumph, the 1640s was really a period of intense puritan infighting over the power to rule and battles for the very definition of the Church. To the disappointment of many, these mid-century reforms resulted in rapid diversifications of opinion and fatal fragmentations of what once seemed to be a somewhat unified puritan movement.

English Presbyterianism

As a leading presbyterian divine, Gouge was one of the most active participants in the debates at the Westminster Assembly.³²² He participated in the revisions of the Thirty-nine Articles, the official doctrinal statement of the Church of England,³²³ and was also involved in the examinations of candidates who were recommended to replace the purged

³²² See Appendix 13 “Leading Assembly Contributors,” Table A.13.1 “The twelve most frequent contributors of the Westminster assembly,” Gouge ranks eighth in the table. These twelve contributors consist of more than 55% of about 8,000 references to members in the minutes record, MPWA I, 213.

³²³ For example, Gouge opposed the introduction of repentance into Article 11, which concerned justification, seeing it a danger to “put repentance before faith,” 14 September 1643, MPWA II, 116. The proposal to add repentance into the Article arose from many divines’ concerns with antinomianism, but this inevitably brought about debates over the *ordo salutis*, and the session ended with Thomas Gataker’s speech that repentance and remission of sins should be considered as fruit of regeneration, going “together in time”: *ibid.*, 123. For the Westminster Assembly’s discussions of the Thirty-nine Articles and creations of the Westminster Confession of Faith, see Milton, *ESR*, 223-28.

royalist ministers.³²⁴ Taking advantage of this position, Gouge ensured that his son Thomas, vicar of St Sepulchre and former curate at St Ann's Blackfriars, was given the living of Hockley, Essex.³²⁵ And yet most importantly, Gouge and many other London presbyterians dominated the church polity debates, negotiating a presbyterian model that enabled a clergy-led, centralised government and discipline with less interference from secular magistrates.

Possibly due to health issues, Reynolds came late in the debates in Westminster, only taking the Solemn League and Covenant in March 1644 and was added to the committee on antinomianism.³²⁶ Although he missed the first few months of debates, Reynolds' writings and sermons clearly supported the hermeneutics set forth by London presbyterians like Gouge in late 1643. Reynolds however represented a softer version of English presbyterianism compared to Gouge in the developing struggles between the

³²⁴ Gouge opened the morning session on 28 October 1643 with a response to the first committee's report on church officers. He challenged the readiness of ministers ill-equipped with Latin, which drew wide support among the divines and helped mobilised the creation of a committee for examining ministers recommended. MPWA II, 229, 231.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 219, 222. William Gouge and William Price (*d.* 1666), another Assembly member, provided testimonials to endorse Thomas Gouge. William Gouge had carefully prepared a path for his son, who attended Eton and went to King's College, Cambridge, just like himself. Thomas then served as his father's curate and lecturer at St Ann's Blackfriars from 1628 through the 1630s. Thomas was also his father's amanuensis for the latter's commentary on Hebrews and later helped complete the final chapter after William Gouge died in 1653. William Gouge must have been proud to see his son turning into a like-minded presbyterian minister, with whom he could collaborate. One example would be their subscriptions to *A Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ, and to our Solemn League and Covenant* (London, 1648: Wing T823) in December 1647, London presbyterians' collective statement that listed the "abominable Errors" and their proponents as part of their 1646-8 anti-toleration campaign; John Coffey, *John Goodwin and the Puritan Revolution: Religion and Intellectual Change in Seventeenth-Century England* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), 158-9. See below for more information about *Testimony* and the anti-toleration campaign.

³²⁶ MPWA II, 564. There is no direct evidence pointing to why Reynolds joined the Assembly late, but Jeffrey Jeremiah helpfully points out that Reynolds spoke of his "long infirmity" that might have made him "unserviceable" to ministry in a preface to a collection of sermons published in 1645: Edward Reynolds, *Israels Prayer in Time of Trouble* (London, 1645: Wing R1258), a2v; Jeremiah, "Reynolds," 115-6.

presbyterian majority on the one side and their independent colleagues as well as an increasingly Erastian parliament on the other from the mid-1640s onwards.³²⁷

Iure Divino Presbyterians in the Westminster Assembly, 1643-44

For many participants, stepping into the Assembly must have felt like the dawning of a new era. It was finally their moment in history to dictate what a godly Church of England should look like, and at the beginning of the sessions, there was no reason for them to doubt that they could bring about a real, positive change. The church polity debates, which lasted for slightly more than a year from October 1643 to late 1644, focused on the interpretations of several Scriptural texts. One of these exegetical debates sought a consensus among the divines over the holder of the keys, that is, “*Clavis disciplinae & doctrinae*.”³²⁸ While independents denied the existence of one visible, universal Church and instead asserted that the power of the keys were given to individual congregations, presbyterian divines advocated the exact opposite. Gouge asserted with other presbyterians that the holder of the keys was the “universall militant church.”³²⁹ Particular churches could not hold the power of the keys, Gouge argued, because although “ther may be a company that professe the truth,” they could “all be hypocrites.”³³⁰

Confronted with independents’ rejection of a visible catholic church and the perceived tendencies towards religious diversity and toleration of sectarian groups, London presbyterians like Lazarus Seaman and Gouge consciously departed from the Elizabethan and early Stuart position that had generally characterised the presbyterian polity as an

³²⁷ The use of the term “Erastian” in this thesis follows the common usage, which signifies a preference for the secular government to control ecclesiastical affairs, without the intention to imply that those described as Erastians consciously appealed to the teaching of Thomas Erastus.

³²⁸ The key of discipline and doctrine, MPWA II, 233.

³²⁹ William Gouge, *ibid.*, 234.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

“ascending model.”³³¹ Like the mid-century congregationalist ecclesiology, this “ascending model” started with individual congregations as the fundamental units of church government. Congregations then sent their officers, representatives who could authoritatively speak for their congregations, to presbyteries and synods. In contrast, presbyterian divines at the Assembly started with one visible, catholic Church, to which local congregations belonged, like branches belonged to a tree.³³² In order to advocate for the *iure divino* nature of their respective polity, both independents and presbyterians looked to the Jerusalem church in the Book of Acts, unanimously upheld by Westminster divines as the biblical model despite their drastic disagreement over how the church was governed. Independents argued that throughout Acts, there was only “one publique meeting place & but one,”³³³ but presbyterians believed that there were multiple congregations governed by one central presbytery. To enhance presbyterians’ exegesis, Gouge cited Acts 12, which referred to the house of Mary, mother of John Mark, as a place “wher the Christians were assembled [and] prayed.”³³⁴

These discussions and subtle modifications to mainstream Elizabethan and early Stuart presbyterian polity demonstrated an urge to lean towards a high, clericalist position in reaction to independents’ emphasis on congregational autonomy and lay participation. This stress on clerical power was especially prominent in the debates over Matthew 16, in

³³¹ Elliot Vernon, *London Presbyterians and the British Revolutions, 1638-64* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021), 99-100. I would like to thank Dr Vernon for sending me early drafts of his book and I deeply appreciated his advice and insights when I was writing up this thesis.

³³² *Ibid.*, 100; This is not a completely new ecclesiological model. Walter Travers had charted a tree diagram to illustrate the same point in 1612. See Ha, *English Presbyterianism*, 47-8, 192-3, fig. A2, A3.

³³³ Thomas Temple, MPWA II, 534.

³³⁴ William Gouge, MPWA II, 536. Gouge was reinforcing the argument set forth by John Lightfoot and Herbert Palmer, who argued for an existence of a presbytery in Jerusalem that governed believers, who were so large in number and diverse in language that they were unable to meet in one place. *Ibid.*, 535-6.

which Jesus entrusted Peter with “keys of the Kingdom of heaven.”³³⁵ Gouge sided with presbyterians like Seaman and Cornelius Burges against independents like William Bridge and Sidrach Simpson in insisting that Peter represented the apostles rather than all believers as receiver of the keys. As a representative of the apostles, the role Peter assumed could consequently be applied to “all pastors”, that is, the clerical estate.³³⁶ Repudiating independents’ objection that there was no specific reference to Peter as an apostle in Matthew 16, Gouge argued that Scripture did not always explicitly use the word “apostle” where there was a character of an apostle.³³⁷ Preaching before the Assembly in October 1645, Reynolds likewise affirmed this reading of Matthew 16, asserting that Peter represented the apostles rather than all believers based on the apostle’s “*first confession of Christ to be the Messiah.*”³³⁸ He spoke of two foundations of the Church: a personal foundation, which was Christ, and a doctrinal one, which was the “*Prophets and the Apostles,*” among whom Peter was “the first of those twelve foundations.”³³⁹

While Reynolds could align his ecclesiology with *iure divino* presbyterian claims, he and other moderate puritans in the presbyterian party were far from their hard-line colleagues and Scottish counterpart. Driven by a need to mobilise reform, moderate or functional presbyterians like Reynolds could accommodate distinctively independent and Erastian concerns. In September 1644, against the proposition, “those assemblies which we call synodical are made up of pastors and teachers, and other church governors,” Reynolds supported two leading independents, Philip Nye and William Bridge, to argue

³³⁵ Matthew 16.19: “And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven” (1599 Geneva Bible).

³³⁶ MPWA II, 231, 235.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 243.

³³⁸ Edward Reynolds, *Self-Deniall: Opened and Applyed in a Sermon before the Reverend Assembly of Divines on a Day of Their Private Humiliation* (London, 1645: Wing R1278), 3.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

that “others beside church officers,” that is, “all idoneous [appropriate] persons,” could legitimately have a “decisive voice in councils.”³⁴⁰ This difference of opinion sparked “a very great debate,” with presbyterians Stephen Marshall, Richard Vines, and Charles Herle supporting Reynolds based on Acts 15:23-24, which spoke of “brethren” along with apostles and elders in the council at Jerusalem. In opposition, presbyterians like Seaman, George Gillespie, and Herbert Palmer, objected that an expanded synodical membership would lead to “popular government.”³⁴¹ Behind this extreme label of popular government was the immediate political implications of extended synodical membership that everyone was aware of—the legitimisation of Parliament’s intervention in ecclesiastical affairs. If anyone was to be regarded as “idoneous,” certainly the MPs who summoned the Assembly were. A split within the so-called presbyterian party demonstrated just how flexible moderate presbyterians like Reynolds were willing to be in order to reach a consensus and actualise church reform, in other words a softer version of presbyterianism that would never fully satisfy the Kirk.

While puritan preachers could often speak of healing and reconciliation as a smoke screen to promote their own versions of church government, Reynolds seemed genuine in his exhortations in 1645 that the Assembly should prioritise peace and unity over many of their differences and was frustrated with the inefficiency of the debates. Reynolds believed that the many differences among the divines were not critical matters of faith and should not have delayed church reforms.³⁴² He even spoke of what we would call a “conspiracy

³⁴⁰ George Gillespie, *Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and other Commissioners at Westminster, Feb. 1644 to Jan. 1645*, ed. David Meek (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846), 74.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 74-7. Gillespie also noted that Reynolds denied the *iure divino* subordination of assemblies, in support of Nye. This might not be as significant a departure on Reynolds’ part from his fellow presbyterians, however, since other divines immediately responded that the question at hand concerned the prudence rather than the *jus divinum* of it. See p. 83.

³⁴² Reynolds, *Self-Denial*, 43-4.

theory” today about divisions within the pre-war, Laudian Church. Given the importance of this rationale behind his call for reconciliation and unity and its relevance to his moderation in church polity debates, his words are quoted in full:

I have long had this opinion, that a divided Ministry in this Kingdom, of Conformists and Non-conformists was fomented by an Episcopall interest; that some being zealous on the one side, and others on the other, they might never want matter for their power, having objects both for their frownes and for their favours to worke upon. Whence peradventure it was, that when former Ceremonies grew more generally to be digested, the practice of others, and more offensive, began to be introduced, to discriminate Ministers still, and by that meanes to be the *fomes* of Episcopall power. As men put vipers and flesh into vessels of wine, that by feeding on them it may be preserved from weakning it self. But what, or whence should the cause now be, that wee must still have a divided Ministry?³⁴³

Reynolds here reminded the Westminster divines of the reality of Laudian confrontationalism.³⁴⁴ This suspicion that there were enemies at work behind puritan divisions continued to sustain Reynolds’ call for compromise and unity. He lamented that the divisions over “lesser differences” in the Assembly could only please their common enemies, that is, royalists and Catholics at home and abroad.³⁴⁵ Looking back, many presbyterians would perhaps see his admonitions as ominous, foreshadowing the many more troubles coming their way in the following decade.

Presbyterians Besieged, 1645-46

Presbyterians’ alliance with Parliament was already fragile by late 1644 due to escalating tensions between the two over ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Although enjoying an overwhelming majority at the Westminster Assembly, presbyterians found themselves

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 43.

³⁴⁴ Anthony Milton observes that Laudians did seek to “force open the cracks” between Reformed conformists and the more radically minded puritans in order to shape the established Church into their version of orthodoxy, with ceremonial conformity at the centre of their agenda. See Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 539.

³⁴⁵ Reynolds, *Self-Deniall*, 43. Interestingly, Reynolds also admonished the Assembly that although many were gifted with “copious and fluent speaking,” they should “speak *Aristotle, then Cicero*; concise arguments, then copious Orations” considering the urgent need to come to agreement in ecclesiastical affairs: *ibid.*, 46.

besieged by an alliance between independents and Erastians in both the Assembly and Parliament.³⁴⁶ At the Assembly, Hebrew scholars John Lightfoot, John Selden, and Thomas Coleman effectively challenged their presbyterian colleagues on the interpretations of several key Scriptural texts, including those about the power of the keys and church discipline.³⁴⁷ Lightfoot, for example, argued that the object of “binding and loosing” in Matthew 16 referred to ideas rather than people, hence countering the presbyterian position that the text endorsed Peter’s (and consequently all pastors’) disciplinary power.³⁴⁸ A series of hermeneutical challenges like this, coupled with constant opposition from the independent divines, successfully left an impression that presbyterians were unable to draw a clear and persuasive argument for their proposed polity from Scripture.³⁴⁹

When Parliament heavily revised the proposed Directory for ordination and issued a modified version in October 1644 that eliminated much of the proposed presbyterian polity, the presbyterian majority in the Assembly was hugely disappointed, and subsequent attempts at mediating different voices proved futile.³⁵⁰ Further ordinances voted in

³⁴⁶ Elliot Vernon, “‘They Agree not in Opinion among themselves’: Two-Kingdoms Theory, ‘Erastianism’ and the Westminster assembly Debates on Church and State, c. 1641-48,” in *Church Polity and Politics in the British Atlantic World, c.1635-66*, 139-44.

³⁴⁷ These Scriptural passages included Matthew 16, 18, and 1 Corinthians 5.5. Vernon, “‘They Agree not in Opinion among themselves,’” 139; Jason Rosenblatt, *John Selden: Scholar, Statesman, Advocate for Milton’s Muse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), Chapter 4 and 5; Kirsten Macfarlane, “John Lightfoot, the Westminster Assembly, and the *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae*,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* (forthcoming), accessed 29 July 2022 via ORA, <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:35110836-1e2d-4487-a0aa-983ee8e478b1>.

³⁴⁸ MPWA II, 238; *ibid*, IV, 43-5; Vernon, “‘They Agree not in Opinion among themselves,’” 140; Macfarlane, “John Lightfoot, the Westminster Assembly, and the *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae*.” Rosenblatt also persuasively argues that Selden, despite not contributing to this debate himself, shared Lightfoot’s view: *John Selden*, 218-20. For Selden’s own discussion of binding and loosing, see his *De Synedriis & Praefecturis Iuridicis* (London, 1650: Wing S2425), I, Cap. 9, 293-5.

³⁴⁹ Vernon, “‘They Agree not in Opinion among themselves,’” 140-1; Many MPs were quick to point out that *iure divino* presbyterianism simply lacked consensus at the Assembly. Milton, *ESR*, 252.

³⁵⁰ Chad van Dixhoorn, “The Westminster Assembly and the Reformation of the 1640s,” in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism*, I:434. Oliver St John led a newly established grand committee for accommodation between presbyterians and independents at Parliament. William Fiennes, Viscount Saye and

Parliament from 1645 to 1646 to establish some form of presbyterian government, starting with one for the election of elders in August 1645, marked the decline of *iure divino* or clericalist presbyterianism that many London presbyterians initially pursued.³⁵¹ The *Directions* Parliament issued on 19 August 1645 ordered that only Parliament had the authority to call a National Assembly.³⁵² Another ordinance published in October 1645 upheld Parliament as the ultimate judge for any grievances against disciplinary decisions given by local eldership.³⁵³ Hence the Long Parliament, already enjoying *de facto* power of steering the direction of reforms since 1640 when the Convocation had lost its credibility to do so, now firmly established itself to be the supreme authority over church discipline in what Robert Baillie famously mocked as a “lame Erastian Presbyterie.”³⁵⁴

Gouge’s sermon before the House of Lords on 24 September 1645, *The Progresse of Divine Providence*, directly addressed the conflict between Parliament and the Assembly over church discipline. The preacher explicitly denied that civil magistrates should be church governors: “If it be said, that under that word, *Governments*, civill *Magistrates* are understood: I answer, that first this phrase, *God hath set in the Church* [1 Cor 12:28], and then the other particulars [in Scripture]...admit not such an

Sele, and Sir Henry Vane Jr, both of whom, like St John, were either independents themselves or were sympathetic towards independents, sought to have the proposals recommended by the committee sent directly to Parliament, bypassing the Assembly, but the Scots, along with presbyterian MPs like Zouch Tate and Francis Rous, successfully blocked the attempt. These mediating efforts effected little changes in the end.

³⁵¹ William M. Abbott, “Ruling Eldership in Civil War England, the Scottish Kirk, and Early New England: A Comparative Study of Secular and Spiritual Aspects,” *Church History* 75, no. 1 (March 2006): 39-40.

³⁵² *Directions of the Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament. After advice had with the Assembly of Divines, for the electing and choosing of Ruling-Elders in all the Congregations* (London, 1645: Wing E1523A), 10.

³⁵³ John Rushworth, *Historical Collections: The Fourth and Last Part: In Two Volumes* (London: 1701), 1:212.

³⁵⁴ Baillie, *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*, II:362. For the Long Parliament’s dominance over church reforms from 1640 onwards, see Milton, *ESR*, 132-38, 220-21.

interpretation thereof.”³⁵⁵ Gouge further affirmed the office of ruling elders as divinely-instituted, appealing to the often-quoted 1 Tim 5:17;³⁵⁶ however he explicitly bypassed the controversies over the question of whether ruling elders were a distinct office separate from preaching elders or ministers:³⁵⁷ “Apply them as you please, to Ministers or others: there are ruling Elders.”³⁵⁸ The Old Testament Levitical priesthood, according to Gouge, was God’s endorsement for the Church to have its own governors and a blueprint for a definite separation between secular and spiritual government.³⁵⁹ Citing Hebrews 13:7, 17, Gouge argued that what the author of Hebrews described as those “*that have rule*” who had “*spoken unto you the word of God*” were clearly ministers, and since Hebrews 13:17 demanded obedience to these ministers, they were church governors.³⁶⁰

Two weeks later, on 8 October 1645, Reynolds also had an opportunity to preach in support of the presbyterian majority, this time before fellow Westminster divines. Based on Matthew 16:24, where Jesus told his disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him, Reynolds decided that self-denial would be the fitting theme for the various pieces of advice he would give to the Assembly. Reynolds found the Old Testament Levitical model useful as well and exhorted fellow divines to pray for Parliament that “God would double upon them the Spirit of *Selfe-Deniall*” and “cause them still *to speak comfortably unto the Levites* [i.e., the Westminster divines],” and that

³⁵⁵ Gouge, *The Progresse of Divine Providence*, 25.

³⁵⁶ 1 Tim 5:17: “The Elders that rule well, let them be had in double honor, specially they which labor in the word and doctrine” (1599 Geneva Bible).

³⁵⁷ For more information about the contemporary debates over the nature and role of ruling elders, see Abbott, “Ruling Eldership in Civil War England, the Scottish Kirk, and Early New England,” 43-6.

³⁵⁸ Gouge, *The Progresse of Divine Providence*, 25.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 24-5.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 25.

no “jealousies” would “ever break asunder...the Civill and the Ecclesiasticall Dispensations in things pertaining to God and his House.”³⁶¹

When Reynolds applied the same principle of self-denial to the Assembly themselves, the practice looked entirely different. Like Gouge, he emphasised the divine origin of their calling and authority: “the reverence of the persons and function of his [Christ’s] Ministers should be as it were complicated and linked up together with his own honour.... *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.*”³⁶² Reynolds further denied that the Assembly had ever “pursued any private interest” in the advice and petitions they presented to Parliament, and yet there were some people “jealous with a jealousie of *suspition* [suspicion].”³⁶³ As a rejection of Erastian parliamentarians and independents’ charges that the presbyterian polity was a tyrannical clericalism that came close to Laudian episcopacy or even Roman Catholicism, Reynolds asserted that Westminster divines were “helpers” and “servants.”³⁶⁴ He then encouraged the Assembly to pray for strength to “passe through evill report, and through good report” as well as humility and wisdom in order to show all that they had never sought “*dominion* over the people of God.”³⁶⁵

Presbyterians in Retreat, 1646-48

Deeply disappointed at a series of ecclesiastical ordinances that essentially denied the Assembly its proposals for reforms, many presbyterians resisted full enforcement of Parliament’s version of presbyterian system as a protest to demand full jurisdiction, which then resulted in a “fatal delay” in setting up a nation-wide presbyterian practice—the

³⁶¹ Reynolds, *Self-Deniall*, 32.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 32-3.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 33.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 33, 34, 39.

moment was lost.³⁶⁶ In the few years that followed, London presbyterians awkwardly presented a compromise, reaffirming the power of church officers over discipline, including excommunication, and yet recognising what Elliot Vernon calls a “secondary obligation” for clergymen to answer to civil magistrates: a civil magistrate had the right to “have his Conscience satisfied in the truth of that Government of the Church” set up in their realm, and church ministers received “Authority of the publike exercise of their Offices” from the secular government.³⁶⁷ This was, as Vernon vividly describes, an “intellectual plaster” to cover the split between Parliament’s Erastianism and the Assembly’s insistence in a clearer separation between church and state, which again failed to gain ground.³⁶⁸

John Morrill described 1646-53 as a period of “teeming liberty”: confusion, opposition and procrastination in the localities obstructed the work of the Westminster reformation.³⁶⁹ Other than a passive effort on the part of the disheartened presbyterians, popular resistance to church reforms took the form of a “prayer-book rebellion” in 1647-8 and other public disturbances; what was more worrying on the other flank of the presbyterians was a growing commitment to “free forms of worship” and anticlerical sentiments in the New Model Army.³⁷⁰ This eventually led to an outburst of anti-toleration polemics from the presbyterian camp, indeed another aftermath of the failure of

³⁶⁶ Rosemary Bradley, “‘Jacob and Esau Strugling in the Wombe’: A Study of Presbyterian and Independent Religious Conflicts 1640–1648 with Particular Reference to the Westminster Assembly and the Pamphlet Literature” (PhD thesis, University of Kent, 1975), Chapter VIII.

³⁶⁷ 19 June 1646, *Certain Considerations and Cautions* (London, 1646: Wing C1690), 6, 7.

³⁶⁸ Vernon, “‘They Agree not in Opinion among themselves,’” 146. See pp. 132-3 for Vernon’s helpful discussion of how this separation between church and state, or the two-kingdoms theory, was met with various political realities in sixteenth-century Europe and how Reformed churches had to find a careful balance between asserting a degree of disciplinary power and yielding to their local magistrates.

³⁶⁹ John Morrill, “The Puritan Revolution,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, eds. John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim (Cambridge; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 73.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 73-5.

accommodation schemes in Parliament in the years 1646-8.³⁷¹ Thomas Edwards' *Gangraena* (1646), a particularly notorious heresiography, showcased a collaborative presbyterian effort to collect information from all over the country in order to advocate a strict confessional uniformity. In *Gangraena*, Edwards exhorted that there should be "some Books against the errours of our times, with joynt consent in the name of all the Ministers, to send out some grave Admonition to the people, in the name of the City- Ministers subscribed by all," and the London ministers should present such a remonstrance with a petition to Parliament.³⁷²

Taking their cue from Edwards, fifty-two London presbyterians, including Calamy, Seaman, Love, Gouge and his son Thomas, subscribed to *A Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ* in December 1647. *Testimony* reasserted London presbyterians' claims that the presbyterian government was "most agreeable to the minde of *Jesus Christ*, revealed in Scripture" and denounced those who pleaded for "a publike, formall, and universall Toleration."³⁷³ Specifically, the treatise named "*sundry odious heretikes*," such as those who espoused Socinianism, antinomianism, and the rejection of infant baptism, to reinforce its call for a centralised presbyterian government that could effectively address "*the general loosenesse and prophanenesse of our times*."³⁷⁴ As if unchecked liberty and sectarian influences were not appalling enough, Pride's Purge would effectively crush Parliament's presbyterian scheme within a year in December 1648. In January 1649, the Rump put Charles on trial, to the fury of many who briefly saw hope in the king's willingness to grant a presbyterian polity. That was part of his bargain with the Scots to

³⁷¹ Vernon, "Presbyterians in the English Revolution," in *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions*, ed. John Coffey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), I:65; Ann Hughes, *Gangraena and the Struggle for the English Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 373–8.

³⁷² Thomas Edwards, *Gangraena* (London, 1646: Wing E228), 165-6.

³⁷³ *Testimony*, 24, 31.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, bv, B4r, C3v.

start a third civil war that only sealed a death sentence for himself. If Gouge, his son Thomas, and Reynolds could still hope for some form of presbyterian government in 1647, the Rump had now thoroughly smashed their aspirations.

The New England Way

If radical independents rid themselves of the Supreme Governor by beheading their king, New Englanders did so by simply sailing across the Atlantic. Settling down in New Haven, Davenport and other Colony leaders like Governor Theophilus Eaton were finally free to create their own godly kingdom. Unlike presbyterian divines like Gouge or Reynolds, New England Congregationalists like Davenport, Cotton, and Hooker denied that the New Testament had ever spoken of a “visible Catholick Church, wherein the seales are to be dispenced,” and instead saw individual congregations as the most basic units of a church.³⁷⁵ The power of the keys was given to the “whole church,” i.e., individual congregations, and their ministers were stewards responsible for exercising this disciplinary authority.³⁷⁶ This stewardship, derived from congregational assent, was ultimately bound up with individual churches. The church had the “Office-Power” “*virtually, and originally,*” whereas church officers had it “*formally.*”³⁷⁷ Ministers were thus “limited to the Church”: “wherefore take away the relation [between the congregation and its officer], the office (and so the work) ceaseth.”³⁷⁸

Like Cotton and Hooker, Davenport not only drew up these foundational principles for a new colony, but sent his writings back to England to support the Dissenting Brethren

³⁷⁵ John Davenport, *An Answer of the Elders of the Several Churches in New England unto Nine Positions Sent Over to Them* (London, 1643: Wing M1270), 66. This treatise was first written in 1639 but published in London in 1643.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 67.

³⁷⁷ *Idem*, *The Power of Congregational Churches Asserted and Vindicated* (London, 1672: Wing D362), 98. This treatise, originally written for the church polity debates in Old England, was first lost at sea in 1647 and would not be published until 1672.

³⁷⁸ *Idem*, *An Answer of the Elders*, 67.

at the Assembly. This Congregationalist ecclesiology was embodied in a set of practices that were also promoted in his, Cotton's, and Hooker's publications as the New England Way. First of all, to safeguard the godliness of individual congregations, there must be a standardised admission to church membership, which led to a restricted access to sacraments—a controversial novelty that displeased many non-members who were excluded from ecclesiastical affairs and benefits that they used to naturally enjoy in England under the old parish system. Davenport and fellow New England Way proponents however argued that “fellowship of the Seales,” baptism and the Lord's Supper, were “Church-priviledges” given only to “particular Churches,” based on their Congregational polity.³⁷⁹ With the ongoing reforms at Westminster in mind, Davenport addressed the restrictions on infant baptism by appealing to John à Lasco (1499-1560), Polish refugee and superintendent of the Strangers' Church of London: “*wee suffer no strangers to offer Infants to Baptisme in our Churches.*”³⁸⁰ Davenport reminded his readers, especially those aspiring to finally consummate England's reformation, that it was their beloved King Edward VI who not only granted and encouraged à Lasco's evangelistic reform, but “desire[d] to settle a like reformation in the *English Churches*,” which was “in effect...the same with our practice.”³⁸¹

Limited church membership not only caused a conspicuous separation between members and non-members when sacraments were administered, but the New England Way demanded that the same restriction should extend to civil office as well. The starting point of Davenport's vision of a godly state was a “Christian Communion,” the genus, to

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 61, 62.

³⁸⁰ John à Lasco quoted in *ibid.*, 70-1.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 71; for a thorough analysis of John à Lasco and King Edward VI's attitude towards the “stranger churches,” see Andrew Pettegree, *Foreign Protestant Communities in Sixteenth-Century London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); for strategic appeals to foreign churches in England during the Westminster reformation, see Milton, *ESR*, 250-1.

which civil and ecclesiastical governments belonged as its species.³⁸² With a clear assumption of a Christian commonwealth, Davenport asserted that in the new plantation, in which the majority of people were believers and “the Foundations of the Church and Civil State, and the communion of both, was [yet] to be laid for many Generations to come,” civil magistrates should be chosen out of “free burgesses” who were godly members of the church.³⁸³ Davenport called this a “Theocratie,” or a form of government that upheld God as the governor, by whose laws the town or colony should be governed.³⁸⁴ Again invoking Israel of the Old Testament and affirming the duty of godly magistrates to advance the “good and welfare of his [Christ’s] Church,” Davenport could forget his grudges against a seemingly undue mixture of civil and spiritual governments in pre-war England and happily dictate what politics should look like in the New World.³⁸⁵

Over the course of several decades from the late 1630s onwards, Davenport would feel increasingly besieged by what he perceived to be growing presbyterian influences. As the Colonies grew and many more immigrants joined local communities, an increasing number of non-members posed a great threat to the New England Way. One representative case would be a 1646 petition, spearheaded by Dr Robert Child, to the Massachusetts General Court for full civil rights to all “truely English, equall to the rest of their countrymen” and church membership to all godly men and members of the Church of

³⁸² John Davenport, *A Discourse about Civil Government in a New Plantation whose Design is Religion* (Cambridge, MA, 1633: Wing D358), 6. The treatise was written when New Haven was settled around 1638-9 but would not be published until 1663. It was traditionally attributed to John Cotton, but Bruce Steiner has convincingly argued for Davenport’s authorship in his “Dissension at Quinnipiac: The Authorship and Setting of *A Discourse about Civil Government in a New Plantation Whose Design Is Religion*,” *New England Quarterly* 54 (1981): 14-32. Most scholars have been following Steiner’s judgment since then, e.g., Bremer, *Davenport*, 172; David Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History* (Princeton, NJ; Oxford; Princeton University Press, 2019), 228.

³⁸³ Davenport, *Discourse*, 10, 11.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 13, 15-6.

England.³⁸⁶ Child questioned the necessity to exclude those members of the Church of England, “eminent for knowledge” and other spiritual gifts, along with their children, “from the seales of the covenant of free grace” simply because they did not take the covenants of the churches they attended in New England.³⁸⁷ He painted a vivid picture of social humiliation that petitioners certainly thought was unjust and cruel: notice was taken of those “who stay[ed] not till baptism be administered to other mens children, though denied to their owne.”³⁸⁸ What the petitioners essentially called for was a traditional parish system that would accommodate all Bay Colony inhabitants, which, for New England Way proponents like Davenport, must have sounded dangerously reminiscent of the one found in the episcopal Church of England and the Kirk.³⁸⁹

To address Child’s petition, the Massachusetts General Court invited churches in New England, including New Haven, to a synod in Cambridge in May 1646.³⁹⁰ The Cambridge synod (1646-8) revealed Davenport’s divergence from some other widely respected New England leaders like John Cotton, Richard Mather, primary mover behind the subsequent *Platform of Church Discipline* (1649), and John Norton (1606-63), teacher of the Ipswich church, Massachusetts. Confronted with the reality of a younger generation that failed to meet the standard of church membership, whose children were consequently barred from baptism, these ministers had started to reassess the restrictions for infant baptism since the 1640s.³⁹¹ Norton, specifically, proposed to insert some propositions to

³⁸⁶ Robert Child *et al*, “A Remonstrance and Petition of Robert Child, and others,” in *A Collection of Original Papers Relative to the History of the Colony of Massachusetts-bay* by Thomas Hutchinson (Boston, MA, 1769), 192, 193. Other petitioners were Thomas Fowle, Samuel Maverick, Thomas Burton, David Yale, John Dand, and John Smith.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 194.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 192, 193.

³⁹⁰ Bremer, *Davenport*, 256-8.

³⁹¹ Michael P. Winship, *Hot Protestants: A History of Puritanism in England and America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), 187.

the Platform that would broaden the scope of infant baptism, but the opposition was so fierce that the proposal had to be dropped.³⁹²

Another presbyterian threat Davenport perceived in the synod concerned the exercise of ministry beyond individual congregations. Lay challenges, such as the schisms caused by Anne Hutchinson and her followers in 1636-8, prompted ministers like James Noyes of Newbury and Thomas Shepard of Newtown (later Cambridge) to promote an elevated status for ministers in church government.³⁹³ Noyes first of all affirmed the distinction between fundamental authority and derived authority that both presbyterians and New England Way proponents had made: “the key of ministry is in the Church fundamentally, in the Presbyterie for execution.”³⁹⁴ Noyes nevertheless asserted along with presbyterian divines like Gouge and Reynolds that it was the “universal visible Church” that received the key, which Christ explicitly entrusted to Peter, representatives of all Apostles who were the doctrinal, “secondary foundation” of the Church as opposed to Christ, “the fundamental Rock.”³⁹⁵ Based on these ecclesiological observations, Noyes further affirmed a “general relation” of the ministry of the Word and administration of sacraments to “all Churches equally” and attributed “a sacred-aptitude, though no indeleble Character” to ministers who held “relation[s] to holy things in all Churches.”³⁹⁶ Noyes asserted: “One Church admitteth Members for all Churches, and one Church

³⁹² Mather, *Magnalia* I, 291.

³⁹³ Bremer, *Davenport*, 255; David Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: the University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 110-1; for Anne Hutchinson’s trial, commonly known as the Antinomian Controversy or the Free Grace Controversy, and Davenport’s involvement, see Bremer, *Davenport*, 144-66, and David Hall, *The Antinomian Controversy 1636-1638: A Documentary History* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1968); for a more focused analysis of how the Free Grace Controversy exacerbated existing tensions between lay empowerment and clerical authority, see Francis Bremer, “The Free Grace Controversy and Redefining the Role of Lay Believers,” in *Lay Empowerment and the Development of Puritanism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 87-104.

³⁹⁴ James Noyes, *The Temple Measured* (London, 1647: Wing N1460), 48.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 31; Reynolds, *Self-Deniall*, 3.

³⁹⁶ Noyes, *The Temple Measured*, 48.

electeth Officers for all Churches.”³⁹⁷ This cross-congregational, universal fellowship and unity led Noyes to reject the established practice of covenant-making, constituting a direct clash in both ecclesiology and polity with the New England Way.³⁹⁸

Due to a fierce opposition from New England Way proponents like Davenport, the Cambridge Platform of 1649 eventually rejected these modifications proposed by Noyes and like-minded ministers like Shepard and Norton and affirmed many key principles of the New England Way.³⁹⁹ The Platform upheld the autonomy of individual congregations and their rights to choose their own ministers and lay elders.⁴⁰⁰ It emphasised that synods were merely advisory, and, just as the Dissenting Brethren and Reynolds had argued in 1644, synodical membership should extend to laity “endued with gifts, & sent by the churches.”⁴⁰¹ Finally, the Platform affirmed the exclusive relationship between ministers and their congregations: “*Church Officers*, are officers to one church...[and] Elders are commanded to feed, not all flocks, but that flock which is committed to their faith & trust.”⁴⁰² The triumph was however short-lived. The Cambridge synod only marked the beginning of a growing divergence between Davenport and those who preferred a broadening of church membership and a hyper-clerical view of the ministerial office that came close to presbyterianism. Decades after the Cambridge synod, Davenport would recall that, as if already anticipating an irreversible decline of the New England Way, he

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

³⁹⁸ For Noyes’ extensive criticism of “explicite covenanting” under the section “Concerning the Form of the Church,” see *ibid.*, 8-10.

³⁹⁹ Mather, *Magnalia* II, 238.

⁴⁰⁰ *A Platform of Church Discipline* (Cambridge, MA, 1649: Wing P2396), Chapter IIX.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Chapter XVI.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, Chapter X, 12.

“was present and observed with grief that the tempter was then tempting...and that an hour of temptation was then beginning upon these churches.”⁴⁰³

Conclusion

The emergence of the “presbyterian party” at the Westminster Assembly was a mainstream response among puritans to the question of authority when the old governors of the Church, Charles and his bishops, had lost power. William Gouge, as Vernon helpfully makes clear, was part of “Calamy’s *junto*” that emerged as the pressure group in the early 1640s to campaign for *iure divino* presbyterianism, while Edward Reynolds clearly belonged to a wider group of moderate puritans who were contentedly episcopalian before 1642 but consciously sided with the likes of Gouge to constitute a presbyterian majority at the Assembly.⁴⁰⁴ Concerns that congregationalist ecclesiology would compromise religious uniformity, deprive clergymen of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and even endorse popular government, drove moderate puritans like Reynolds to London *iure divino* presbyterianism. Even so, Reynolds genuinely called for moderation and at times mediated between independents and presbyterians in the Assembly, seeing compromise as a necessity in times of extraordinary crisis. This contrast between Reynolds and Gouge reflects, as scholars have observed, the ecclesiological fluidity of a clearly-identifiable, but far from monolithic, “presbyterian party” of the 1640s, a group of divines that intentionally skipped the effort of constructing one, coherent ecclesiology among themselves because they recognised that various ecclesiological routes could still reach the same conclusions about church polity.⁴⁰⁵ The problem, proposed as early as 1938 by J.H. Hexter and

⁴⁰³ Davenport quoted by Bremer, *Davenport*, 258; John Davenport and Nicholas Street, *Another Essay for Investigation of the Truth* (Cambridge, MA, 1663: Wing D356), 15.

⁴⁰⁴ Vernon, “The Sion College Conclave,” Chapter 2, 24-5.

⁴⁰⁵ Hunter Powell asks the question of “what types of presbyterianism emerged at the Westminster assembly” and seeks to tease out “a few of those presbyterian strains of ecclesiological thought, in context, and consider how they related to one another.” Hunter Powell, *The Crisis of British Protestantism: Church*

fruitfully contested by many after him, seems to be how “presbyterian” these people were, and how many versions of English presbyterianism were at play in the period.⁴⁰⁶

Unlike the Dissenting Brethren in the Assembly, Davenport and fellow New Englanders enjoyed enormous freedom and power to implement their ideal church governments and indeed their own theocracies. Hence the New England Way, born out of a desire to escape secular tyranny over the true Church, asserted its orthodoxy by restricting both sacramental benefits and civil office to actively covenanted participants in local congregations and thus ironically anticipated the Test Acts in later Stuart England that demonstrated the same urge to exclude and penalise those who dissented.⁴⁰⁷ Just like the Test Acts in the post-1662 England, the New England Way proved an inadequate means to induce comprehensive conformity. The 1640s witnessed an increasing support among New England ministers for an expanded membership, often coupled with a promotion of an elevated status of church officers, as a valid, and perhaps the only, solution to address the spiritual decline that they had clearly failed to foresee when they first set foot on the New World. These perceived presbyterian influences alarmed New England Way advocates like Davenport, whose triumph at the Cambridge synod was but the last spark of an already fragile, soon-to-crumble unity among the colonies.

Without looking across the Atlantic, it would be tempting to see a centralised control of religious uniformity and opposition to toleration as presbyterian concerns, but it is striking that presbyterians like the Gouges and Reynolds in Old England as well as Congregationalists like Davenport in New England both actively promoted a unified

Power in the Puritan Revolution, 1638-44 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 5; Chad van Dixhoorn, “Presbyterian Ecclesiologies at the Westminster assembly,” in *Church Polity and Politics in the British Atlantic World, c.1635-66*, 104-29.

⁴⁰⁶ Hexter, “The Problem of the Presbyterian Independents,” 29-49.

⁴⁰⁷ Similarly, there were multiple attempts in Parliament to exclude those who rejected the Solemn League and Covenant from civil office. See Milton, *ESR*, 246.

religious state and, as the next chapter continues to explore, were firmly opposed to “excessive” toleration. In contrast to both, the independents in Old England, by fighting for the administrative and disciplinary rights of individual congregations, often came across as dangerously permissive of religious diversity, although, as we will see, they were by no means a unified movement that championed absolute religious freedom.⁴⁰⁸

Ironically, although Davenport resisted Noyes, Shepard, and Norton’s presbyterian-leaning clericalism, the minister would be labelled as a papalist tyrant in New Haven when he attempted to tackle lay challenges on mainstream Protestant convictions and excommunicate those who spread sectarian views.

⁴⁰⁸ See Chapter 6 for a more thorough discussion of presbyterian-independent alliance for a conservative political and religious settlement in the late 1650s.

Chapter 5 Freethinking Laity and Puritan Hyperclericalism, 1646-53

The years 1646 to 1653 were a time of escalating conflicts and active adaptations for many puritans. Instead of enjoying the establishment of a presbyterian model for the national church, Edward Reynolds and William Gouge had to endure yet another round of presbyterian defeat. Reynolds' moderation and willingness to accommodate independents were deemed useful by Parliament, and this contributed to his rise to higher, more strategic offices, such as the vice-chancellorship of the University of Oxford. In London, Gouge and many other presbyterians preached in support of a peace treaty, with a real hope that Newport negotiations would finally bring the war to an end and embed presbyterian reform. Militant independents in the New Model Army however put these aspirations to an abrupt end. Pride's Purge pushed the presbyterians to the fringes of politics and the death of the king marked the most tragic and violent end of the Covenant that Reynolds and Gouge both subscribed to. Ironically, Congregationalists across the Atlantic like Davenport found themselves just as besieged by religious radicals as the presbyterian ministers in Old England, despite enjoying much greater power to enforce uniformity. Years of civil wars, the collapse of puritan unity in Parliament and the Assembly, and more recently, Pride's Purge and the killing of the king, seemed to encourage lay defiance against clerical authority and consequently the growth of sectarian influences, trends that already troubled both Reynolds and Gouge before the *coup d'état*. It seems that the lack of a centralised church government and the rapid spread of new ideas could be felt in both the "Old" and "New" worlds.

Reynolds and a Defiant Oxford

While some modern scholars have mistakenly suggested that Reynolds harboured Laudian tendencies before 1642, his royalist contemporaries once commented that Reynolds was a confusing character who seemed to entertain independent ideologies for

the sake of furthering presbyterian reforms: “Either *R.* is very subtile, and...seekes to compound with the Independents, or else very simple, and hath unawares betray’d himselfe with the Presbyterians. [It is either *Reynolds* the Fox, or *Reynolds* the Goose.]”⁴⁰⁹ This observation was based on Reynolds’ ecclesiological exchanges with independents in Oxford in 1646, when Parliament sent him and six other ministers as preachers to Oxford to “reduce the University to a better temper” after the capture of the city from the King; all seven were Oxford graduates.⁴¹⁰ Reynolds would later serve as one of the visitors appointed by Parliament for the University in 1647 and replace Samuel Fell (*bap.* 1584, *d.* 1649) as vice-chancellor of the University and dean of Christ Church in 1648, likely due to his inclination to mediate rather than incite clashes between different parties. Perhaps Reynolds’ engagement with reforms, such as his moderate leadership in Oxford, compared to that of Gouge, better represents English presbyterianism, exemplifying its fluidity, ambiguity, and tendency to stress the affinities between other church polities and itself, equally illustrated in Reynolds’ later career.

When the preachers arrived, the University was still dominated by many royalists. John Walker (*bap.* 1674, *d.* 1747), historian of Anglican clergy sufferings, described the power of these appointed preachers as one “to Invade any *Pulpit* in *Oxford*, as often as they pleased,” and this likely reflected how royalists in Reynolds’ time felt towards them.⁴¹¹ To address the objections raised by royalists and independents in the University, including challenges to the lawfulness of their authority, the preachers hosted open

⁴⁰⁹ Anon, *A Publike Conference betwixt the Six Presbyterian Ministers, and Some Independent Commanders: Held at Oxford, on Thursday Novemb. 12. 1646* (London, 1646: Wing W868), 11. The square brackets are in the primary printed source itself.

⁴¹⁰ John Walker, *An Attempt towards Recovering an Account of the Numbers and Sufferings of the Clergy of the Church of England* (London, 1714), Part I, 125; 10 September 1646, *Journal of the House of Lords* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1767-1830), VIII:486. The seven preachers are Reynolds, Robert Harris, Henry Wilkinson, Francis Cheynell, Edward Corbet, Henry Cornish, and Henry Langley.

⁴¹¹ Walker, *Attempt*, Part I, 125.

conferences, or what some sarcastically called the “*Scruple-Shop*,” every Thursday.⁴¹²

These meetings then escalated into public debates over the validity of episcopal ordination on 12 and 16 November 1646, between the preachers and William Erbury (1604/5-1654), an outspoken independent and army chaplain.

To question the legitimacy of episcopal ordinations was to dispute the authority of the preachers, all episcopally ordained. Walker, due to his royalist sentiments, judged that Erbury and other independent disputants effectively challenged the preachers, who dared not deny their past ordinations nor affirm them: “*Erbury and his party put the Presbyterian Disputants under the same Difficulties, that our Blessed Saviour did the unbelieving Jews, by his Question of John’s Baptism.*”⁴¹³ Francis Cheynell, the leading and most aggressive disputant of the preachers, told a different story. He reported to Parliament that three arguments the preachers set forth deeply offended Erbury “whether because his Auditory decreased, or his errors were refuted.”⁴¹⁴ First, the preachers argued that not all men who ordained in the pre-war English Church were “Antichristian and wicked men.”⁴¹⁵ Second, appealing to Augustine’s polemic against the Donatists, the preachers asserted that even if all men who ordained were themselves wicked, they had still “*de facto* been, Officers and Ministers in the Church” whose ministerial acts stood valid.⁴¹⁶ Finally, even if Donatists were right that ordinations of wicked men were void, when the church lost visible succession in ministry due to a “universall corruption of instruments,” “an *unusuall and extraordinary call* in the Church it self” would be valid and sufficient for

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁴ Francis Cheynell, *An Account Given to the Parliament by the Ministers Sent by them to Oxford* (London, 1647: Wing C3806A), 13.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 27-8.

those “in themselves duly qualified for that office.”⁴¹⁷ A contemporary royalist source identified the final argument to be Reynolds’ distinctive contribution that set him apart from fellow presbyterians at the debate. Unlike Cheynell’s report, which was deliberately smoothed out to present a seemingly coherent and unified defence on the part of the preachers, this hostile text clearly noted internal conflicts among these “presbyterians” and sarcastically concluded as follows:

They [the preachers] need no Opponents in this Question, every one differing and opposing the other. W. [Henry Wilkinson] stating the power of calling Ministers in the Presbyterie, winnes the Title of Presbyterian from them all. *Timocles* [Thomas Temple]⁴¹⁸ concluding the same power that makes Church-Wardens, and Constables, to appoint and call Ministers, comes of an Erastian. R. [Reynolds] To be receiv’d into the Congregation of the Independents.⁴¹⁹

We have pointed out that presbyterians often saw more than one ecclesiological route to their ideal polity. In Reynolds’ case, he demonstrated an ecclesiological affinity to the independents in his distinction between a “*set[t]led Church*,” where an outward calling was performed by ministers, and an “*unset[t]led Church, as in times of Reformation*” where such calling was done in an extraordinary way by the whole church.⁴²⁰ Without a specific reference to Reynolds, Cheynell had also linked the preachers’ affirmation of a valid, extraordinary call “where imposition of hands were impossible to be obtained” with a distinction between the authority of the church over election of ministers and the formal exercise of ordination by church officers—indeed a distinction Congregationalists like Davenport also held to, albeit with very different premises and conclusions.⁴²¹ To bypass

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁴¹⁸ Thomas Temple (c.1603-61), a moderate Westminster divine, was present in Oxford but not one of the preachers.

⁴¹⁹ Anon, *A Publike Conference*, 11.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴²¹ Cheynell, *Account*, 29. As discussed earlier, both presbyterians and independents could affirm the distinction between the virtual or original authority the whole church had and the formal power church officers exercised over discipline and clerical ordinations. One key difference lay in what the “whole church” meant. While most presbyterians believed in a visible catholic Church, independents outright denied its

challenges to their past ordinations and deliberately make an ecclesiological point independents affirmed, Reynolds emphasised: “*the ultimate and last Authority* [to call someone to ministry] *is resolv’d into the body of the whole Church.*”⁴²² As both Cheynell and Wood recognised, the debate ended inconclusively and drew mixed responses. Cheynell compared the preachers to Paul in Athens, whom “some mocked, others sleighted...but certain clave to.”⁴²³ Wood on the other hand was convinced that the debate exposed the idiocy of both sides: Erbury was applauded by many, especially among soldiers and young scholars, whereas the preachers won “love and respect from divers of the City” in the long run, “especially silly women.”⁴²⁴

Since subsequent attempts to reach consensus, such as conferences, preaching, and the visitation proved largely unsatisfactory, Parliament finally introduced physical force to ensure progress in April 1648. Ejections had not previously been possible because visitors like Reynolds had no actual power to enforce them, but now Philip Herbert, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery and the recently re-installed chancellor of the University, personally oversaw the ejection of many royalists, including Samuel Fell, vice-chancellor and the leader of royalist opposition. On April 12, Mrs Fell was “carried into the Quadrangle in a chair by Soldiers. Her children also were carried out upon boards.”⁴²⁵ In the afternoon on the same day, Reynolds took an oath and formally became the new vice-chancellor and dean of Christ Church. Wood, well aware that he was writing about the awkward past of a bishop, recorded that Reynolds delivered a “polite and accurate

existence and instead emphasised that there were only invisible universal Church and individual congregations.

⁴²² Anon, *A Publike Conference*, 10.

⁴²³ Cheynell, *Account*, 53. The Scriptural reference is Acts 17.16-34, esp. 32, 34.

⁴²⁴ Anthony Wood, *The History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford*, vol. 2 pt. 1, ed. John Gutch (Oxford, 1792), I:499-500.

⁴²⁵ *Idem*, *The History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford*, vol. 2 pt. 2, ed. John Gutch (Oxford, 1796), I:563.

Oration,” emphasising his desire that “good example and counsel might prevail more in this reformation than severity and punishments.”⁴²⁶ If Reynolds did express a wish to avoid severity, it must have sounded unbearably hypocritical to those who witnessed how the poor Fell family were cast out onto the street earlier on the same day.

Not every royalist had Wood’s benefit of hindsight. Another royalist tract, *Oxonii Lachrymae* (1649), a catalogue of all ejected royalists as well as visitors sent by Parliament, called the visitors “*comicall Actors of our Tragedy*.”⁴²⁷ Reynolds topped the list, being the leader of this “*joviall Crew*” and the “*mock Vice-Chancellor*.”⁴²⁸ While Wood replaced these epithets of mockery with positive descriptions of Reynolds as a “good Scholar” and an “excellent Preacher” when he later quoted *Oxonii Lachrymae*, he preserved the following accusation: “This is that ἀμφίβιον, which not long since hung in æquilibrio, and waited onlie for a graine of success to turne the scales.”⁴²⁹ These royalist portrayals of a double-faced Reynolds revealed a clear distinction in the minds of many between Reynolds and the more militant faction within the presbyterian party, to which Erbury’s chief opponent Cheynell belonged.

When Erbury denounced the preachers during their debate in April 1648, he argued from 1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7 that qualified ministers should not be “*strikers*,” but since all in the Church of England were strikers, they were not really ministers.⁴³⁰ The preachers replied by pointing out that Reynolds, along with two other preachers Robert

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, I:566.

⁴²⁷ The author referred to himself as an “*Oxford Schollar (not yet exil’d)*.” Anon, *Oxonii Lachrymae, Rachell Weeping for Her Children. Or, a Patheticall RELATION OF The Present Grievances of the Late Famous University of OXFORD* (London, 1649: Wing O998), 3.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁹ Wood, *History and Antiquities*, vol. 2 pt. 2, I:615-6; Anon, *Oxonii Lachrymae*, 3.

⁴³⁰ Cheynell, *Account*, 23; in other words, a bishop must not be a person of violence; 1 Timothy 3.2-3: “A Bishop therefore must be unreprouceable, the husband of one wife, watching, temperate, modest, harborous, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre, but gentle, no fighter, not covetous”; also Titus 1.7: “For a Bishop must be unreprouceable, as God’s steward, not froward, not angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre” (1599 Geneva Bible).

Harris and Henry Wilkinson, were not strikers, and therefore not all ministers of the established Church should be so described.⁴³¹ It might seem rather ridiculous that, instead of asserting that none of them were “strikers,” the preachers decided to differentiate among themselves and picked out three whose mild temperament was evident to all. When public opinion about the parliamentary reforms was so polarised, there was no room for Reynolds’ ambiguity in ecclesiology and politics and being labelled as a hypocrite was likely unavoidable. Royalists would soon see a different Reynolds, however. By 1650, when the presbyterians suddenly found themselves pushed to the political margins, they would find Reynolds a faithful comrade by their side. Perhaps he was not so double-faced after all.

Pride’s Purge in December 1648 and the following disciplinary measures the Rump Parliament imposed hugely frustrated the presbyterian agenda in politics and church reforms. On 2 January 1650, the Rump demanded all men of and over eighteen years old to subscribe to the Engagement oath: “I Do declare and promise That I will be true and faithful to the Commonwealth of England, as it is now Established, without a King or House of Lords.”⁴³² In response, a short essay called *The Humble Proposals*, widely attributed to Reynolds, entered the ongoing pamphlet war, known as the Engagement Controversy.⁴³³ The author attempted to negotiate for a compromise, acknowledging divine

⁴³¹ Cheynell, *Account*, 23.

⁴³² C. H. Firth and Robert S. Rait, eds., *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1911), II:325.

⁴³³ *The Humble Proposals* is attributed to Reynolds by Samuel Halkett and John Laing as well as Donald Wing. Halkett and Laing, *A Dictionary of the Anonymous and Pseudonymous Literature of Great Britain: Including the Works of Foreigners Written in, or Translated into the English language* (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1883), II:1190; Donald Wing, *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America, and of English Books Printed in Other Countries, 1641-1700* (New York, NY: The Index Society, 1951), III:138. This is primarily because of Thomas Barlow’s identification on the title page of his copy of *Humble Proposals*: “By Dr. Reynolds the Vice-Chancellor of Oxon.” Bodl., A 6.7 Linc. This is likely an accurate attribution, as Anthony Wood noted that Reynolds initiated a similar “humble Petition” on behalf of the University of Oxford, the composition of which was committed to John Wilkins, then Warden of Wadham College, and Henry Langley, then Master of Pembroke

providence in the downfall of the old kingdom and the rise of a new government and promising to “live quietly and peaceably in our places and callings” in submission to all that was lawfully imposed.⁴³⁴ And yet representing presbyterian ministers, *The Humble Proposals* protested that a forced subscription to the Engagement oath would not only leave an “awfull impression on our Consciences,” but would be a stumbling block for those who would regard the subscribers as “breakers of our Oaths and Covenants...led by principles of fear or interest.”⁴³⁵ The proposed terms were far from enough, however, and Reynolds’ rejection of the oath eventually cost him both the vice-chancellorship in September 1650 and the deanery of Christ Church in March 1651.⁴³⁶ He retired to Braunston and would not re-enter public life until 1656, when conservative Cromwellians and presbyterians found the minister useful again in advocating the restoration of kingship and a centralised church government.

Gouge and a Radicalised St Ann’s Blackfriars

The year 1648 marked the beginning of the last stage of William Gouge’s life and ministry. In 1647-8, he was still active in the London presbyterian circle, serving as the prolocutor of the first meeting of the London provincial assembly on 3 May 1647 and subscribing to *A Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ* in December 1647.⁴³⁷ The last

College and one of the seven parliamentarian visitors. Like the *Humble Proposals*, the University petitioners promised to “live quietly and peaceably in their places...[and] submit thereunto in all lawful things,” and hoped that this declaration could replace the subscription to the Engagement oath. See Wood, *History and Antiquities*, vol. 2 pt. 2, I:629. Richard Baxter however thought it was written by Richard Vines because of its style: Richard Baxter to Richard Vines, 24 July 1650, DWL, Baxter Letters II, f. 24r.

⁴³⁴ Anonymous, *The Humble Proposals of Sundry Learned and Pious Divines within this Kingdome Concerning the Engagement Intended to be Imposed on them for their Subscriptions* (London: 1649, Wing R1253), 2.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴³⁶ Interestingly, according to Nathanael Salmon, an antiquary often discredited as an unreliable source, Reynolds’ wife Mary was subjected to the same fate of being removed from their lodgings in Christ Church by force like Mrs Fell: “Mrs. Reynolds...kept her post till she was carried out in the same manner [i.e., in a chair].” Salmon, *The Lives of the English Bishops from the Restauration to the Revolution* (London, 1733: ESTC T138288), 306. Wood however made no mention of this.

⁴³⁷ Brett Usher, “Gouge, William (1575-1653),” *ODNB*.

publication within his lifetime was *The Right Way*, a fast sermon he preached before the House of Lords on 12 September 1648, three months before Pride's Purge. Like many other presbyterians, Gouge preached with the hope that the coming negotiations in Newport with the king could successfully end the civil war.⁴³⁸ While a peace treaty was still conceivable in September and the eventual purging of Parliament by no means inevitable, many were fully aware of a formidable opposition comprised of New Model Army generals like Henry Ireton and John Pyne as well as laity like the Levellers, who repeatedly called for the suspension of the Treaty at least and preferably the trial of the king as well as abolition of monarchy and House of Lords.⁴³⁹ Seeing the religious and political radicalisation of the Army, many moderate, presbyterian-leaning MPs also put their hope in the renewed negotiations and regarded a reconciliation with Charles as an urgent necessity to restore stability.⁴⁴⁰

Perhaps due to the sensitive nature of this fast sermon, Parliament replaced the preachers they initially appointed, Thomas Valentine and Stanley Gower, with Gouge and Cornelius Burgess.⁴⁴¹ While Gower was a firm presbyterian supporter, Valentine, also a Westminster divine and rector of Chalfont St Giles in Buckinghamshire, seems obscure.⁴⁴² While neither Gower nor Valentine was a staunch independent, Gouge and Burgess might have been asked to step in instead because of their leadership and influence to mobilise

⁴³⁸ The negotiations began three days later, on 15 September 1648.

⁴³⁹ For the analysis of the oppositions to the Treaty, see David Underdown, *Pride's Purge* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 107-10.

⁴⁴⁰ Morrill, "The Puritan Revolution," 74-6.

⁴⁴¹ Robin Jeffs, bibliographical notes to *Fast Sermons to Parliament*, vol. 31 (London: Cornmarket Press, 1971), 8.

⁴⁴² Valentine served as a trier for elders in the ninth classis in London and has been identified by scholars as presbyterian: Keith Lindley, "Whitechapel Independents and the English Revolution," *The Historical Journal* 41, no. 1 (March 1998): 284; Chad Van Dixhoorn, "Westminster assembly, (act. 1643-1652)," *ODNB*. Valentine however chose to subscribe to the Engagement: Kirsteen M. MacKenzie, "Presbyterian Church Government and the 'Covenanted Interest' in the Three Kingdoms 1649-1660," (PhD dissertation, University of Aberdeen, 2008), 83, fn.55.

support for a peace treaty. Gouge's epistle dedicatory, written a week later on 19 September, clearly stated that the purpose of his sermon was "to seek God earnestly for a blessing up on the Treaty [of Newport]."443 He denounced another recourse to military action: "If the *breach* be not stopped by a *Treaty*, by what may it be stopped?.... By force men may for a time be kept in awe. But that AWE is no good keeper of a lasting peace."444

Gouge started with defining what a fast and public prayer was and its use for imploring God for removal of evils, sins, and judgements, and subsequently lamented that many had failed to observe the monthly fasts in troubled times.⁴⁴⁵ As an implicit reminder that the king was not completely wicked or superfluous, Gouge recalled God's "good providence" that Charles had reinstated the tradition of regular public fasts and rebuked those who neglected or despised fasts simply because the king ordered them.⁴⁴⁶ The preacher then pleaded for a "good accommodation" to secure a treaty that would end the "evils of this civil war," naming the uncensored spread of sectarian thoughts as one of them.⁴⁴⁷ Gouge finally suggested that those "principles, of old learned, must be unlearned" and "[t]hat *jus divinum* held in opposite cases must be cleared and demonstrated to which case it belongeth."⁴⁴⁸ This cannot be seen as a simple attack on hard-line episcopalianism, but a tactful retreat from *iure divino* discourse that the Sion College divines had consistently pursued in order to allow room for mutual accommodation.⁴⁴⁹ Against the

⁴⁴³ William Gouge, *The Right Way* (London, 1648: Wing G1394), A3v.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 22, 30.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 30-1.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 32-3.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 34, 35.

⁴⁴⁹ Gouge was not alone here. Another presbyterian Thomas Hill also warned against excessive use of *iure divino* arguments in 1648 and argued that many things were "better, more safely settled as *Prudentials*." Thomas Hill, *The Spring of Strengthening Grace in the Rock of Ages, Jesus Christ Demonstrated in a Plain and Short Sermon* (London, 1648: Wing H2029), 32; Milton, *ESR*, 253.

desire of political radicals that dominated the New Model Army, Gouge emphasised that “a generall oblivion of wrongs must be granted.”⁴⁵⁰

Contrary to Gouge’s wish, Pride’s Purge in December, followed by the execution of the king, not only pushed many presbyterians to the political side-lines, but seemed to have further encouraged lay rejection of both clerical authority and mainstream Protestant beliefs. Without coercive means to enforce discipline, clergymen like Gouge found themselves losing an authoritative status over the boundaries of orthodoxy, sometimes facing direct attacks by their own flock.⁴⁵¹ In January 1650, a parishioner of St Ann’s Blackfriars, Peter Chamberlen (1601-83), openly denounced Gouge’s position on infant baptism; and he was no mean opponent. Chamberlen’s family was widely respected and deeply involved in St Ann’s. The Chamberlens had migrated from France early in the reign of Elizabeth, and many members engaged in medical practice and midwifery.⁴⁵² Peter’s uncle, Peter Chamberlen the elder (c. 1560-1631), and father, Peter Chamberlen the younger (1572-1626) were both barber-surgeons. Peter Chamberlen the younger married Sarah Delaune, sister of Gideon Delaune, a royal apothecary who once served Anne of Denmark, and daughter of William Delaune, physician and minister of the French Church at Threadneedle Street.⁴⁵³

The son of Peter Chamberlen the younger and Sarah Delaune, often referred to as Dr Peter in order to be distinguished from his father and uncle, was also a physician. Assisted by his uncle, Dr Peter had an impressive career, attending King Charles I and

⁴⁵⁰ Gouge, *The Right Way*, 35.

⁴⁵¹ Daniel Cawdrey, another London presbyterian minister, also lamented in 1657 that without a settled discipline imposed by civil magistrates, ministers could “but *endeavour* to reform according to our *power...in a prudentiall way*” because they could not do so “in a disciplinary way.” Milton, *ESR*, 353; Daniel Cawdrey, *Church-Reformation Promoted* (London, 1657, Wing C1624), 135.

⁴⁵² Helen King, “Chamberlen family (*per. c. 1600–c. 1730*),” *ODNB*.

⁴⁵³ For the Delaune family and their long involvement in St Ann’s Blackfriars, including their active participation in the church’s opposition to theatrical activities within the parish, see Chapter 1.

Henrietta Maria before the outbreak of war, and, despite his puritan sentiments and radical theology, he would attend Charles II after the Restoration as well.⁴⁵⁴ Dr Peter was most remembered for his enthusiasm in midwifery, together with his failed attempt to form a college of midwifery and appoint himself as its governor in 1634.⁴⁵⁵ Widely notorious for his unauthorised involvement in midwifery, Dr Peter published a pamphlet in 1647, *A Voice in Rhama*, to justify his right to practice it, to defend his character, and argue for a need of a college for midwives. To bolster his case, Dr Peter laid out his familial influence, education, and experience, and lamented that it was his fame and ability that brought “Envie, and secret Enemies.”⁴⁵⁶ He asserted that beneath the “politick malice of the Ungratefull, and wilfull ignorance of the Envious” against his engagement with midwifery lay a more fundamental division of the world: “*Meum* and *Tuum* divide the World into Factions, into Atoms: and till the World return to its first simplicitie, or (as in the morning of the Gospel) to a Christian *Utopia*...Covetousnesse will be the Root of all Evil.”⁴⁵⁷ This worldview might have driven the independently-minded Dr Peter to a distrust of, and hence defiance against, established authorities, who, from his perspective, often suppressed his superior knowledge and expertise for their own personal gains. Finally,

⁴⁵⁴ David S. Katz, *Sabbath and Sectarianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 48. As Diarmaid MacCulloch observes, medical doctors could often get away with their startling radical theologies and enjoyed noble protection, likely due to their much-needed skills: Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided* (London: Penguin, 2004), 244-5, 262.

⁴⁵⁵ For a more thorough history of the Chamberlens and their dedication to midwifery, see Adrian Wilson, *The Making of Man-Midwifery: Childbirth in England, 1660-1770* (London: UCL Press, 1995), 53-7.

⁴⁵⁶ Peter Chamberlen, *A Voice in Rhama: Or, The Crie of Women and Children* (London, 1647: C1910), A4r.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, A5r. Christopher Hill is quick to cast Chamberlen's account of his misery into a Marxist mould, seeing it as part of the emergence of communist theories in the 1640s: Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London: Temple Smith, 1972), 92. Chamberlen's resistance to authorities was however often driven by a pursuit of influence and leadership rather than a proto-Communist endeavour to erase class differences.

after years of conflict with the College of Physicians, Dr Peter was expelled from the College in November 1649.⁴⁵⁸

By 1649, Chamberlen had also become an antipaedobaptist and started to challenge his minister Gouge. In the broadsheet he later published, Chamberlen first emphasised his “very reverend respect of Dr. *Gouge* from my Infancy,” which initially restrained him from contending with the pastor.⁴⁵⁹ When he finally sent a letter on 28 January 1650 to ask for Gouge’s opinion about the legitimacy of infant baptism, the minister responded that “*the Matter was very weighty, and of Publick Concernment,*” and he wished to discuss with other ministers. Chamberlen was however disappointed to find that since then, he had pursued Gouge with three more letters without getting any definite answer: “I had given him [Gouge] time to consider of it, and to consult about it, and desir’d that he would be pleased to let Mr. *Case*, Mr. *Calamy*, Mr. *Marshall*, Mr. *Goodwin*, or the whole Synod assist him in it.”⁴⁶⁰ The only reply Chamberlen eventually received was a verbal message conveyed through his own son that the minister would give no other response than the first one he provided, in which the minister acknowledged that it was a weighty matter of public concern. Gouge’s refusal to engage thus prompted Chamberlen to print a broadsheet, in which the layman concluded indignantly that the parishioners at St Ann’s Blackfriars should think for themselves: “For if the Blind lead the Blind must not both fall into the Ditch? The Lord give you Eyes to see?”

⁴⁵⁸ For Chamberlen’s turbulent relationship with the College of Physicians, mostly regarding his behaviour and various schemes of medical reforms, see Katz, “Chapter III Dr Peter Chamberlen and the Fruits of Failure,” *Sabbath and Sectarianism in Seventeenth-Century England*, especially 51-3.

⁴⁵⁹ This and the following quotes are from Peter Chamberlen, “To My Beloved Friends and Neighbours of the Black-Fryers” (London, 1650: Wing C1907).

⁴⁶⁰ These four ministers named are most likely Thomas Case (1598-1682), Edmund Calamy (1600-66), Stephen Marshall (1594/5?-1655), and Thomas Goodwin (1600-80), all Westminster divines.

Vernon helpfully points out that the elderly Gouge's silence was a strategic defence rather than recognition of defeat. Gouge, along with the whole body of London presbyterian clergymen, or the Sion College conclave, deliberately avoided debating a layman in public.⁴⁶¹ An anonymous source under the pseudonym, Philalethes, coming out of St Ann's Blackfriars itself, expressed just such clericalist sentiments in the times of leadership crisis: "admitting private men to vent heterodox opinions was not hastily to be yielded unto."⁴⁶² Instead, Thomas Bakewell, a London layman who had argued for *iure divino* presbyterianism in 1646, assumed the responsibility of writing a response and sparked a pamphlet war.⁴⁶³ This deliberate cultivation of "an aura of charisma and dignity for the ordained ministry," paralleled Reynolds and other presbyterian visitors' debate with Erbury in Oxford.⁴⁶⁴ London presbyterians like Gouge must have been aware that underneath many doctrinal conflicts at this time, regardless of whether it was infant baptism or church polity, the legitimacy of their clerical authority was at stake.

In his response, Bakewell first emphasised that Gouge had no need to respond to such a challenge. Bakewell then spoke of the minister's old age: he was seventy-five.⁴⁶⁵ This of course was not well-received. Chamberlen seized upon the humiliation of being denied an answer from Gouge as an opportunity to mock the whole body of mainstream puritan clergy, specifically naming Gouge and another senior puritan leader John

⁴⁶¹ Vernon, *London Presbyterians and the British Revolutions, 1638-64*, 247-9; *idem*, "The Sion College Conclave and London Presbyterianism during the English Revolution," (PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1999), 217-8.

⁴⁶² Philalethes, *An Answer to Doctor Chamberlaines Scandalous and Faslse [sic] Papers* (London, 1649: Wing A3357), 3.

⁴⁶³ Thomas Bakewell, *The Dippers Plunged in a Sea of Absurdities, or An Ansvver to Doctor Chamberlaine Concerning Sprinkling the Baptized* (London, 1650: Wing B531). Bakewell was an active presbyterian polemicist in the mid-1640s, e.g., *idem*, *An Answer to those Questions Propounded by the Parliament to the Assembly of Divines, Touching Jus Divinum in Matter of Church-government* (London, 1646: Wing B526A). His works ranged from polemics against antinomianism to those against anabaptists.

⁴⁶⁴ Vernon, *London Presbyterians and the British Revolutions, 1638-64*, 248-9.

⁴⁶⁵ Bakewell, *The Dippers Plunged in a Sea of Absurdities*, 2.

Downname, who licensed Bakewell's tract on Parliament's behalf: "What? That your Ministers should allow a Lay-man to take upon him their Function! and to answer what they durst not!"⁴⁶⁶ He further dismissed Gouge's old age as an excuse and finally launched an even more destructive attack on his own pastor. He named two witnesses, Edward Barber and Mark Whitlock, who testified that Gouge admitted privately that infant baptism was a "tradition of the Church," implying that Gouge acknowledged its lack of biblical warrant.⁴⁶⁷ Bakewell repudiated such accusation as outright untrue but also rather weakened the force of his denial by adding that not all church traditions were unbiblical.⁴⁶⁸

The pamphlet war yielded little success, and Chamberlen would later become a vocal Seventh-Day Sabbatarian.⁴⁶⁹ This extraordinary episode of a member of the younger generation of St Ann's Blackfriars denouncing his elderly presbyterian pastor can be seen as a watershed incident in the seventeenth-century history of the parish. By the time when Gouge passed away in 1653, St Ann's Blackfriars had transformed into the "centre of Fifth Monarchist agitation."⁴⁷⁰ Leading Fifth Monarchists like Thomas Harrison and Christopher Feake used St Ann's as a base to preach and disseminate their religious and political ideals, which was so effective that an intercepted letter in November 1653

⁴⁶⁶ Peter Chamberlen, *Master Bakewells Sea of Absurdities Concerning Sprinkling Calmely Driven Back* (London, 1650: Wing C1898), 2.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 3. As Diarmaid MacCulloch points out, infant baptism, like the perpetual virginity of Mary, was a neurasthenic point for mainstream Protestants, who struggled to find Scriptural proofs for these theological traditions they wanted to preserve. See MacCulloch, "The Virgin Mary and Protestant Reformers," in *All Things Made New*, 51. MacCulloch also helpfully links these issues with the question of church authority: Any acknowledgment that beliefs in Mary's perpetual virginity and infant baptism "had distinctly shaky justification in scripture... meant toying unhappily with some notion of church authority in addition to the authority of scripture."

⁴⁶⁸ Thomas Bakewell, *Doctor Chamberlain Visited with a Bunch of his own Grapes, Gathered out of His own Packet of Letters* (London, 1650: Wing B532), 10. While little is known about Mark Whitlock, Chamberlen's two witnesses were likely biased, as Edward Barber was most likely the Baptist leader in the city of the same name.

⁴⁶⁹ See Katz, "Chapter III Dr Peter Chamberlen and the Fruits of Failure," *Sabbath and Sectarianism in Seventeenth-Century England*, 48-89.

⁴⁷⁰ David Farr, *Major-General Thomas Harrison: Millenarianism, Fifth Monarchism and the English Revolution 1616-1660* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 134.

referred to the radical sect as the “factions of Harrison and the Black-Friar’s-men.”⁴⁷¹ Gouge’s successor, William Jenkyn, who had been a lecturer at St Ann’s and formally replaced the deceased incumbent in 1654, must have found it impossible to control the rapid radicalisation of the parish and would return to his old parish, Christchurch, Newgate Street, around the mid-1650s.⁴⁷² Competitions over the much-coveted St Ann’s pulpit continued, and leading parishioners like Abraham Miller and Nicholas Gouge, likely William Gouge’s second son,⁴⁷³ would painstakingly search for their ideal successor to Gouge and Jenkyn in the years to come, seeking pastoral assistance and recruitment advice from Richard Baxter as late as 1658.⁴⁷⁴

Scholars in recent years have attempted to retell the story of Interregnum presbyterianism. Instead of seeing it as a defeated movement that had achieved little, Peter Lake, Ann Hughes, and Elliot Vernon have all cautioned their reader against a total

⁴⁷¹ “An intercepted letter of Sir W. Vane to Sir John Sayers, major of the lord of Oxford’s regiment at the Hague,” Thurloe SP, I:610.

⁴⁷² Elliot Vernon, “Jenkyn, William (*bap.* 1613, *d.* 1685),” *ODNB*. Similar conflicts were common in this period, found both within parochial churches as well as between gathered and parochial churches in the same parish, cf. Milton, *ESR*, 366-7.

⁴⁷³ Other than Thomas and Nicholas (*b.* 1608), William Gouge had four other sons who reached maturity, Ezekiel (1610-37), James (*b.* 1619), William (*b.* 1622), and an unnamed one born in 1625, whose birth caused his mother Elizabeth’s death: Brett Usher, “Gouge, William (1575-1653),” *ODNB*. His third son Ezekiel Gouge was murdered in 1637 at the age of twenty-seven, “stabbed in the breast and throat” and later found in the Thames. The suspect, “Capt. Blundell,” was released because William Gouge thought he was innocent: News-letter by C. Rossingham, 22 June 1637, TNA, SP 16/362, f. 68v.

⁴⁷⁴ St Ann’s Blackfriars (Nicholas Gouge and Abraham Miller) to Richard Baxter, 30 November 1658, DWL, Baxter Letters V, f. 80r; Gouge and Miller’s letter revealed conflicts among parishioners over this recruitment. They hoped Baxter could persuade Thomas Baldwin, formerly Baxter’s assistant and now vicar of Chaddesley Corbett, Worcestershire, to be minister of St Ann’s Blackfriars. In the letter, Gouge and Miller spoke of another candidate, “Mr Barrow [John Berrow],” fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, who had been invited to preach by others at St Ann’s without the consent and to “the great discontent of the godly and well affected amongst us [Gouge and Miller’s party].” They further besought Baxter not to let “one of the famousest Congregations and Parishes in the City and Kingdome to be divided and broken for want of Mr Baldwin,” and again emphasised that it was not them who approached Berrow: “Whether Mr Barrow will accept if chosen, we know not: but this we know and are sure of, that he will not be chosen by us.” Baldwin would remain in Chaddesley Corbett, but another “worthy friend” of Baxter’s, John Gibbon, would come to St Ann’s. Both Baldwin and Gibbon, like Baxter, were ejected in 1662. C.D. Gilbert, “Baldwin, Thomas (*d.* 1693),” *ODNB*; Richard Baxter, *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*, eds. N.H. Keeble and Geoffrey F. Nuttall (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), I:362-3; *idem*, *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, eds. N.H. Keeble, John Coffey, and Tim Cooper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), I:473.

dismissal of the presbyterian project.⁴⁷⁵ Gouge certainly participated in what these historians viewed as London presbyterians' attempt to survive and even revive their version of the godly reformation. The story of St Ann's Blackfriars however demonstrated how a powerful presbyterian gradually lost control of his own parish, perhaps due to both his old age and later his death as well as the vigorous growth of new political and religious ideas in the City. In a sense, we not only see the breakdown of the old puritan alliance on a national level in mid-century England, but find its miniatures in local parishes as well.⁴⁷⁶

Davenport and a Divided New Haven

In a way unimaginable to their Old England counterparts, by the 1640s and 1650s, many New England ministers shared English presbyterians' leanings towards hyper-clericalism after being repeatedly challenged by laity. At the Cambridge synod, Davenport disapproved of the emerging clericalism he saw among those who suggested a heightened status of ministers whose calling and office went beyond their relation to individual congregations. Davenport, like many independents in Old England, considered his ideal polity the direct opposite: congregational autonomy and lay participation that acted as a safeguard against clerical tyranny. And yet even those like Davenport who persisted in the original principles of the New England Way would find themselves the object of accusations of papalist tyranny and unbiblical monopoly of orthodoxy.

Besides challenges against the established system of the New England Way, such as limited church membership, the colonies saw diverse, rapidly growing threats to their

⁴⁷⁵ The most recent one is Elliot Vernon's *London Presbyterians and the British Revolutions, 1638-64*. Vernon's research, starting with his doctoral dissertation, "The Sion College Conclave and London Presbyterianism during the English Revolution," has powerfully presented a vibrant continuation of reform in the Province of London.

⁴⁷⁶ Instead of treating the story of St Ann's Blackfriars as the definitive picture of presbyterianism or even the state of the Church of England in the 1650s, it is better, as Anthony Milton suggests, to see the experience of each locality as a snapshot of the highly complex religious landscape of this period. Milton, *ESR*, 359.

orthodoxy, among which the rejection of infant baptism was one of the most influential and consequently damaging. Just like Gouge in St Ann's Blackfriars, Davenport found himself defending this long-standing tradition against one of his own congregants, indeed none other than Governor Theophilus Eaton's wife, Anne.

Mrs Eaton seemed to have been heavily influenced by Lady Deborah Moody, a wealthy gentlewoman who left Hugh Peter's congregation in Salem to resettle in the Dutch colony of New Netherland in 1643.⁴⁷⁷ On her way to Long Island, Lady Moody visited New Haven and lent Andrew Ritor's *A Treatise of the Vanity of Childish-Baptism* to Mrs Eaton, who perused it secretly.⁴⁷⁸ The New Haven church first noticed Mrs Eaton's dissent in 1644 when she withdrew herself from partaking of communion and absented herself from services of baptisms.⁴⁷⁹ In order to win her back, Davenport examined Ritor's *Treatise* and started a series of sermons to prove the validity of infant baptism based on Colossians 2:11-12, from which Davenport argued in classic Reformed manner (starting with Zwingli) for a connection between circumcision and baptism—a connection Mrs Eaton refused to acknowledge.⁴⁸⁰

Anne Eaton, privileged and protected as the Governor's wife, was spared an immediate public scrutiny and humiliation. Instead of coldly shutting down an opportunity for lay-clerical debates, like Gouge and the Sion College conclave did to Chamberlen, Davenport and other New Haven leaders painstakingly conversed with Mrs Eaton in

⁴⁷⁷ Bremer, *Davenport*, 221; Carol Berkin, "Moody [*née* Dunch], Deborah, Lady Moody (c. 1585–1658/9)," *ODNB*. Lady Moody's late husband was Sir Henry Moody, 1st Baronet (1582-1629), MP for Malmesbury. She came out of a notable Protestant family, her maternal grandfather being James Pilkington (1520-76), Marian exile and Bishop of Durham under Elizabeth's reign.

⁴⁷⁸ Newman Smyth, "Mrs. Eaton's Trial (1644) from the Records of the First Church," *NHP V*, 135.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 136. These details are recorded as part of Davenport's account of the event. Davenport's comparison between infant baptism and circumcision can also be found in his later writings: "Baptisme is the Gospel circumcision," cf. "Rev. Mr. Davenport's Answers to the 21 Questions," under question 1. John Davenport: Papers [manuscript], 1633-1665, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA.

private. Other than justifying infant baptism through the pulpit, Davenport sent Theophilus Eaton a written response to the *Treatise* compiled from his lectures and sermons so that Mrs Eaton could more easily study them. Governor Eaton, William Hooke (1600/1-78), teacher of the church, to whom Mrs Eaton “would give ear sooner than to others,” and other church leaders would read out each point made in Ritor’s *Treatise* and Davenport’s written response to her so that she could “have liberty to object for her satisfaction while things were in her mind.”⁴⁸¹

These efforts were all futile, and Anne Eaton made sure the congregation knew her outright contempt for church authorities. One Sunday, when Davenport preached against Anabaptism, Anne Eaton said “it is not so” while she was still sitting among the congregation.⁴⁸² When Davenport then said “he would be brief,” she responded: “I would you would,” or “I pray be so.”⁴⁸³ A rejection of infant baptism and the rise of Baptists in New England must have seemed to go hand in hand with lay defiance against ordained ministry and, in the case of Anne Eaton, an equally troubling rebellion against the biblically-constituted authority of her husband, who also happened to be Governor.

To make things worse, “divers rumors” started to spread about Anne Eaton’s “scandalous walking in her family,” referring to her physical abuse of other family members and servants, most notoriously her violence towards her mother-in-law Elizabeth Eaton and stepdaughter Mary.⁴⁸⁴ The scandal dragged on until the following year, when not only New Haven congregants, but also other churches in Massachusetts and Connecticut expressed concerns that New Haven had been remiss “by their slowness to use

⁴⁸¹ Smyth, “Mrs. Eaton’s Trial,” *NHP* V, 136.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, 143.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.

the last remedy...for recovery,” i.e., excommunication.⁴⁸⁵ Mrs Eaton, still unrepentant after repeated confrontations and admonitions, was finally excommunicated in May 1645, with elders from other churches present to witness and support New Haven’s decision. One of them was recorded saying: “if this case had been in the Churches up the river [likely churches in Connecticut, like Hartford], it would not have been delayed so long.”⁴⁸⁶

Compared to other Colonies, New Haven did seem particularly lenient in dealing with Eaton. The Massachusetts General Court had already decreed in November 1644 that a rejection of infant baptism warranted banishment since antipaedobaptism usually led to “other errors or heresies” such as a denial of “the ordinance of magistracy and the lawfulness of making war,” a judgment Davenport would have found comparable with Eaton’s case.⁴⁸⁷ New Haven however passed no such laws. Bremer further drew attention to the lack of criminal charges against Anne Eaton and the focus on her moral lapses rather than antipaedobaptism as the cause of excommunication, in conscious reaction to an overemphasis on puritans’ discriminating attitude towards women and religious intolerance in previous historical accounts.⁴⁸⁸ Bremer was certainly accurate that New Haven was unusually lenient compared to other Colonies, and yet this was at least partly because of the unhappy position of Governor Eaton, the Colony’s highest civil authority

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 148. See Bremer, “Chapter 15: Cracks in the Foundation,” *Davenport*, especially 220-5, for a more detailed account of the whole trial.

⁴⁸⁷ Bremer, *Davenport*, 268.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 225. The truthfulness of the accusations against Eaton and her female supporters have been challenged, if not discredited, by many scholars today, most notably by Mary Beth Norton in her *Founding Mothers and Fathers* (1996), a Pulitzer Prize finalist. See Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York, NY: A.A. Knopf, 1996), 165-80. While Norton was accurate in her observations of the disadvantages of women experienced in the legal system as well as the advantages upper-class widows enjoyed in seventeenth-century New England, Davenport and other New Haven leaders certainly did not feel threatened by women as such, as much as by the increasingly influential narratives against their congregationalist orthodoxy, this time set forth by a governor’s wife. The spread of Baptist influence and its challenges to ordained ministry could be found in other colonies as well, and it was in no way an exclusively female movement.

who had apparently lost control of his own household.⁴⁸⁹ To Theophilus Eaton's great embarrassment, this power struggle between his wife and his pastor would continue even after Anne Eaton's excommunication.

After the excommunication, the Eaton controversy took a stronger anticlerical turn. Several women close to Anne Eaton continued to hold grudges towards their pastor. Among them was Lucy Brewster, widow of Francis Brewster, a wealthy merchant, who faced most charges during the trial in June 1646. Brewster was overheard asking Eaton to share her insights about baptism and proposing that she herself could "seduce some other weoman...soe they would be banished together," specifically naming Rhode Island as a potential location to resettle.⁴⁹⁰ Brewster was further accused of questioning a prayer Davenport gave, which she thought had indicated the necessity of churchgoing for one's salvation.⁴⁹¹ Similarly, she was caught saying that she was "sermon sick" when Davenport was preaching on church attendance as a means of grace.⁴⁹²

Ezekiel Cheever, one of the founding members of the New Haven church, sympathised with Anne Eaton as well. Like Mrs Eaton, Cheever, then town schoolmaster who would later become the most celebrated colonial educator, was of good social standing and had long been dissatisfied with New Haven elders' seemingly heavy-headed

⁴⁸⁹ The trial record, based largely on Davenport's account, deliberately avoided commenting on Theophilus Eaton's role, but the few references it had to the Governor portrayed him as passive, if not powerless, in his wife's alleged heresies and moral failings. Davenport began the trial by detailing how Mrs Eaton "fell into the error [of antipaedobaptism]" because she kept her thoughts from both her husband and her pastor, suggesting that the Governor did disagree with his wife over infant baptism but either failed to persuade her from her views or simply did not engage with her on the matter. Regarding Mrs Eaton's physical abuses of other family members, Davenport testified that church leaders approached Theophilus Eaton first with the hope that the Governor would verify the rumours they had been hearing, but Governor Eaton, instead of actively assisting the investigation, asked them to confront Mrs Eaton themselves. See Smyth, "Mrs. Eaton's Trial," *NHP V*, 135, 137.

⁴⁹⁰ Charles J. Hoadly, ed., *Records of the Colony and Plantation of New Haven, from 1638 to 1649* (Hartford, CT: Printed by Case, Tiffany, and Company, 1857), 246.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 242.

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*, 243.

approach to discipline.⁴⁹³ In May 1649, his complaints finally escalated into open conflicts with Davenport's loyal supporters.⁴⁹⁴ When several congregants commented that Anne Eaton had not demonstrated satisfactory signs of repentance and did not deserve a readmission, Cheever disagreed: "the church had more need to give her satisfaction for the wrong they did her in not letting her come to church."⁴⁹⁵ Cheever highlighted the central role the elders played in these disciplinary actions that, from his perspective, obscured lay authority in congregational matters: "We have nothing to do now but to say Amen, we are all Clerks now."⁴⁹⁶

For many contemporaries, underneath their sympathy towards Anne Eaton and her followers and distaste for what Eaton and Brewster perceived as an institutional monopoly of grace lay an implicit criticism of Davenport's New England Way as a papalist tyranny. Another testimony, which Brewster had outright denied, was especially telling. Brewster was accused of comparing the custom of walking to the front of the church to donate money with "going to masse or going up to the high alter," a comparison that might have evoked the folk memory of the pre-Reformation offertory procession one could find in Chaucer's famous Prologue portrait of the Wife of Bath.⁴⁹⁷ By touching on the issue of

⁴⁹³ Cheever married Mary Margaret Culverwell, Ezekiel Culverwell's daughter and William Gouge's cousin. Mary Culverwell had just died in January, only a few months before the trial, and Cheever would move to Massachusetts in 1650, first in Ipswich and later in Charlestown. In 1670, he would become the master of the Boston Latin School. See John T. Hassam, *Ezekiel Cheever. The Cheever Mss. and Letters* (Boston, MA: Press of David Clapp & Son, 1903), 7; Bremer, *Davenport*, 233.

⁴⁹⁴ The primary record of the Cheever controversy was Cheever's own account, preserved in "The Trial of Ezekiel Cheever before New Haven Church, 1649," *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society*, ed. J. Hammond Trumbull (Hartford, CT: Connecticut Historical Society, 1860), I:22-51. The nature of the conflict and subsequent trial was complicated because it not only involved several disciplinary cases in the New Haven church Cheever found issues with, but concerned Cheever's own personality and demeanour that made him deeply unpopular among fellow congregants. Here, I discuss this case as part of the aftermath of the Eaton controversy and focus on Cheever and Eaton's shared anticlericalism. For a more detailed analysis of Cheever's trial, see Bremer, *Davenport*, 228-33.

⁴⁹⁵ "The Trial of Ezekiel Cheever," *Collections*, I:29.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.* The records show that Cheever was not only accused, but had himself acknowledged that he did speak these words himself.

⁴⁹⁷ *Records of the Colony and Plantation of New Haven, from 1638 to 1649*, 244.

churchgoing as a means of grace, Eaton's followers set themselves against New Haven's increasingly controversial insistence in limited church membership. For them, restricted access to sacraments and excommunications of unfit members were not demonstrations of congregational assent, but expressions of a clerical dictatorship. Hence a spectrum of polemics over church polity among Davenport's flock: on one end, Eaton and her sympathisers saw or at least intentionally labelled New Haven's tight control of religion and moral life as papalist; on the other end, Davenport and other church leaders regarded the accused as radical, potential Anabaptists who threatened clerical authority, religious uniformity, and political stability.

Seeing that even his own congregation was divided over the nature of clerical authority, excommunication, church membership, and access to sacraments, Davenport found himself recycling his and fellow ministers' polemical efforts in the 1640s, originally meant to support the Dissenting Brethren, to reassert the New England Way. His sermon notes from 1649 to 1652 demonstrated a disproportionate attention to church polity and discipline, specifically visible godliness of a true church.⁴⁹⁸ Relying heavily on John Cotton's and Thomas Hooker's writings, Davenport not only emphasised "publick profession of the faith" as the prerequisite for church membership, but also stressed the necessity of a rigorous assessment of whether members "had the forme of...[godliness] & yet visibly denie[d] the power of it," with whom church members should "avoid all voluntary unnecessary familiarity."⁴⁹⁹ Davenport did not elaborate on what a necessary

⁴⁹⁸ John Davenport Sermon Book, 1649-1652, MS 5374. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA. Most sermons range from a few pages to around twenty pages of notes, but from the sermon notes dated on 8 August 1652 onwards, we have extensive notes based on Matthew 16.13-21 that cover various topics about church polity and discipline.

⁴⁹⁹ 8 August 1652, *ibid.*, 344, 347. Davenport quoted John Cotton and Thomas Hooker verbatim at times, and here he was citing Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline* (London, 1648: Wing H2658), 32.

familiarity would be in his notes, but Hooker gave marriage between a godly wife and an ungodly husband as an example, and New Haven congregants would certainly have thought of the unhappy match between Governor Eaton and his excommunicated wife when they heard Davenport preach.⁵⁰⁰ Finally, Davenport repeated the importance of limited church membership and barring non-members from sacraments, borrowing concepts and key phrases from Cotton:

Visible atheists, papists, Indians, enimys of Christianity have their children borne in the ch[urch] if they continue in theyre ripe age grossly ignorant, or denying the true faith...they may not be confirmed members, by admission to the lords supp[er], and unto other privileges of church communion, but were to be declared to be non-members.⁵⁰¹

In his weekly lectures, later published as *The Knowledge of Christ* in 1653, Davenport also denounced “the error of the Antipaedo-Baptists,” clearly with Anne Eaton and her followers in mind.⁵⁰² Both New Haven’s engagement with Anne Eaton’s group and the epistemological starting point laid out in *The Knowledge of Christ* showed Davenport’s confidence in Scripture as the shared reference point between him and radical puritans. The minister believed that the errors of antipaedobaptists were rooted in their failure to observe the unity of Scripture and the connection between Old Testament types and what they signified.⁵⁰³ The 1650s however witnessed a rapid growth of sects that

⁵⁰⁰ Hooker, *Survey*, 32: “Those that have a shew of godlines and deny the power thereof: The Apostles charge is, that, *we should turn away from such. i. e.* Renounce all voluntary, and unnecessary familiarity with such: For the condition, unto which we are called by God, may happily necessitate a man or woman to hold constant and intimate familiarity with such, in point of conscience, by vertue of their calling. A godly and pious *wife* must doe the *duties* of a *wife* in the most inward and intimate manner of familiarity with her *husband*, though *profane* and *wicked*.”

⁵⁰¹ 8 August 1652, John Davenport Sermon Book, 1649-1652, 347-8; John Cotton, *Of the Holinesse of Church-Members* (London, 1650: Wing C6448), 19, 20. While Davenport listed “atheists, papists, Indians,” Cotton named “Atheists, Witches, Papists, and all Heretics” as those who denied true faith and could not be admitted. Either Cotton changed “Indians” to “witches” and “heretics” for his Old England readers when *Holinesse* was published, or Davenport changed Cotton’s words to fit New Haven’s context.

⁵⁰² Davenport, *The Knowledge of Christ Indispensably Required of all Men that Would be Saved* (London, 1653: Wing D361), 84; This is a treatise on the redemptive work of Christ and its implications on faith and godly living. Davenport had been editing and rewriting these sermons since the late 1640s and consulted John Cotton in the early 1650s. John Davenport to John Cotton, 6 May 1650, *Letters*, 83-6.

⁵⁰³ Davenport, *The Knowledge of Christ*, 84.

would challenge this very premise of Scriptural authority. The future Quaker leader George Fox had already decided in 1647 that ordained ministries were not authoritative and the only true authority was the light or voice from God within oneself.⁵⁰⁴ In the same year that Davenport published *The Knowledge of Christ*, Samuel Eaton, New Haven's returnee and now an independent preacher in Cheshire, publicly denounced this newly formed sect in his *The Quakers Refuted*. Quakers would not arrive in New England until three years later, however, and Davenport would not debate against them until 1658, when a Quaker, Humphrey Norton, stood in trial before the New Haven court and significantly stepped up the existing anticlerical trends among Davenport's flock.⁵⁰⁵

Conclusion

As the preacher, visitor, and vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford, Reynolds carefully mediated between fellow presbyterians and their independent and royalist opponents, but his seeming ambivalence towards hard-line presbyterian reform often earned him disdain and mockery from both colleagues and enemies. Being consistently moderate however meant that he was extremely useful in strategic offices in places like Oxford, where consensus between different groups was urgently needed. It was thus not coincidental that he quickly rose to political prominence in the late 1640s. The Engagement controversy further revealed his genuine presbyterian commitments or at least his firmly conservative stance against the destruction of monarchy, unrestrained freedom of worship, and what seemed to be an arbitrary government. These concerns, coupled with Reynolds' fluidity in ecclesiology and actual collaborations with independents, were all

⁵⁰⁴ George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox*, ed. John L. Nickalls (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 11. Rosemary Moore, "Seventeenth-century Context and Quaker Beginnings," in *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies*, eds. Stephen W. Angell and Ben Pink Dandelion (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 15-6.

⁵⁰⁵ Bremer, *Davenport*, 273.

distinctive traits of Interregnum presbyterianism that went beyond the scope of *iure divino* presbyterianism that once dominated the Westminster Assembly.

In London, the elderly Gouge tried to advance presbyterian causes and, in 1649, attempted to mobilise MPs to secure a peace treaty with Charles that would hopefully steadily steer the reform in the presbyterian direction. Gouge's efforts nevertheless seemed futile by the early 1650s, when it had become clear that the religious life of his own parish, St Ann's Blackfriars, had not properly reflected these schemes of reform. The minister acknowledged that not all things that were earnestly sought would be granted, but sincere worship and praise were themselves an offering pleasing to God.⁵⁰⁶ Perhaps aware of his old age and frailty, Gouge put his hope in the next generation: "As our fathers, who served God in their generations, are gone, so shall we after a short time: God knows how soon."⁵⁰⁷ The old presbyterian luminary exhorted his hearers to pray for the younger generation. Gouge's son Thomas, a younger, but equally energetic presbyterian preacher, would not let his father down, although St Ann's did so tragically.

Energised by the collapse of the English monarchy and episcopacy and now enjoying a greater freedom to express their versions of godliness, many lay puritans started to question the disciplinary power of ordained ministers whose status of orthodoxy no longer seemed unshakable. These were particularly alarming for English presbyterians and New England Congregationalists, who shared the concern that had long troubled the Kirk: "how a godly few could maintain control over a nation and its church if they represented a minority within the nation."⁵⁰⁸ In the face of increasingly independently minded laity,

⁵⁰⁶ Gouge, *The Right Way*, 27.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁰⁸ The answer of the New England Way was limited church membership and exclusion of non-members from civil office. English presbyterians, without an actual, thorough, nation-wide, implementation of their ideal polity, did not manage to set up a centralised religious control. R. Scott Spurlock, "Polity,

Reynolds, Gouge, and Davenport all saw an inseparable link between centralised discipline and religious uniformity and reasserted their clerical authority.

Visitations, ejections, and all the debates Reynolds engaged in in Oxford were ways for him and fellow parliamentarian visitors to set themselves up as the only legitimate clerical and civil authority in the University. His vice-chancellorship was fatally brief, however, and it must have been hard for Reynolds to see whether his endeavours had yielded any fruit when he returned to Braunston in defeat in 1651. Similarly, Gouge and Davenport needed to fend off attacks on clerical authority from their own congregants. In both Old and New England, mainstream puritans were confronted by non-conventional thinkers like antipaedobaptists who not only rejected what was once uncontroversial and fundamental to church worship, but also defied the authority of ordained ministry. This transatlantic crisis enabled New England returnee Giles Firmin to question the practice of unrestricted baptism in traditional parish ministry, claiming to Richard Baxter that Stephen Marshall was troubled by the “parochial way...to baptize all, yet refuse above halfe at the *Lords Supper*.”⁵⁰⁹ In contrast, given a decade-long tension with the presbyterian majority, many independents in Old England nurtured a much higher toleration of religious radicals and were inclined to accommodate theological diversity, setting themselves apart from their supposed counterparts in the New World.

discipline and theology: the importance of the covenant in Scottish Presbyterianism, 1560-c.1700,” in *Church Polity and Politics in the British Atlantic World, c.1635-66*, 91.

⁵⁰⁹ Milton, *ESR*, 366; Giles Firmin to Richard Baxter, 24 July 1654, *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*, I:149-50.

Chapter 6 Puritans Conflicted and Diversified, 1653-60

The 1650s marked a rapid diversification of political and religious opinion among the godly. In both Old and New England, mainstream reform schemes were confronted with new, creative ideas of godly reform, and many finally recognised that a perfect consensus in church polity could only remain an ideal even among the like-minded. One striking example is the Captain-General of the Parliamentary armies, Thomas Lord Fairfax, who saw his differences with Oliver Cromwell as so irreconcilable that he had, after much agony of conscience, withdrawn from public life after the death of the king. Other than those who retreated from public affairs, there was also a significant faction of English presbyterians who had become so averse to the Cromwellian regime that they were contemplating the prospect of a restored Stuart monarchy (and episcopacy) as the 1650s progressed. A series of revolutionary moves of the New Model Army since late 1648, starting with Pride's Purge that then resulted in the regicide and a republic that demanded the Engagement oath, prompted many disillusioned presbyterians to secretly side with the exiled court. The most memorable was undoubtedly the royalist-presbyterian conspiracy known as Love's Plot, named after Christopher Love (1618-51), minister of St Lawrence Old Jewry. The Commonwealth dealt harshly with these conspirators, with Love executed in 1651 despite repeated petitions for mercy from London presbyterians.⁵¹⁰ This suppression of Love's Plot, conveniently coinciding with the defeat of the Scots, marked a brutal end of rigorous political resistance to Cromwell among London presbyterians.⁵¹¹

⁵¹⁰ Vernon, "The Sion College Conclave and London Presbyterianism during the English Revolution," 262-302. Here Vernon details Love's Plot and its significance for the presbyterian movement in the 1650s.

⁵¹¹ *Idem*, "Presbyterians in the English Revolution," in *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions*, I:68-9; *idem*, "The Sion College Conclave and London Presbyterianism during the English Revolution," 301.

This account of defeat is however only half the story of presbyterian political activism. With the inauguration of the Protectorate, many presbyterians channelled their hopes for a centralised, godly reform by lobbying for a monarchical style Protectorate. Edward Reynolds demonstrated just such a fascinatingly complicated political alliance, an alliance that was ultimately linked to forms of government, both political and ecclesiastical, rather than the individual political leaders concerned. Thus ironically, moderate presbyterians like Reynolds, Edmund Calamy, and Richard Baxter vowed loyalty to Cromwell the king-killer, so that he might one day become King Oliver I, through whom their version of the reformation of the English Church could continue.⁵¹² In this sense, moderate presbyterians like Reynolds could be regarded as genuine “royalists” in the late 1650s too, and their presbyterian reforms by no means at a dead end.⁵¹³

Puritans on the other side of the Atlantic might enjoy a relative political stability compared to those in Old England. Their freedom to legislate and govern however did not lead to a unified New England, free from conflicts among themselves and challenges from religious others. Instead, when the Boston synod of 1657 endorsed the “Half-Way Covenant,” New Haven officially became a minority in its adherence to the old practice of limited church membership. Davenport’s vision of a godly government, coherent with what the Cambridge Platform of 1649 affirmed as the New England Way, hinged on an actively maintained covenanted community that clearly distinguished between the godly and the ungodly. This eventually led to an unusually strict, Mosaic legalist, penal code that aimed at nurturing godliness within the covenant community and simultaneously a

⁵¹² John Morrill calls this the “supreme paradox”: Morrill, *Stuart Britain: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 59.

⁵¹³ The fact that there were still many who worked towards a centralised, nation-wide church government and aspired to a reformed national church leads scholars like Anthony Milton to affirm the existence of a “Cromwellian Church.” Milton, *ESR*, Chapter 10.

surprisingly lenient position towards those without. New Haven would gradually emerge to be conspicuously alone in its fervent pursuit of New England's "first love," i.e., the original New England Way.

Presbyterian Activism under the Protectorate: A Monarchist Reynolds

Oliver Cromwell had probably been considering assuming the royal title since he became Lord Protector of England in December 1653. There was "common report" calling him "Emperor of Great Britain" circulating in Cologne as early as 1654, suggesting that such ideas were already in place as he became Lord Protector.⁵¹⁴ Roy Sherwood's portrayal of Cromwell's court further demonstrates how he enjoyed a lifestyle of regal splendour right from the beginning of the Protectorate.⁵¹⁵ The Cromwellian regime was indeed dangerously reminiscent of Charles' Personal Rule. Pride's Purge already aroused suspicions about its tyrannical tendencies. Cromwell's expulsion of the Rump in April 1653, the unconventional Nominated Assembly in July, and his appointment of regional major-generals who attempted to establish a "godly" state, with hardly disguised intention of weakening both royalists and presbyterians, all served to alienate both old enemies like presbyterians and independent friends who were nevertheless politically conservative. Sir Henry Vane, an intimate friend of Cromwell's, had become disillusioned with the new government and clashed with the authorities for his popular pamphlet, *A Healing Question* (1656), which proposed a council or "Convention of faithful, honest, and discerning men"

⁵¹⁴ Roy Edward Sherwood, *The Court of Oliver Cromwell* (London: Croom Helm; Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977), 159 footnote*. One of John Thurloe's agents, in a letter dated 29 September 1654, requested confirmation of a circulating report in Cologne that the English Parliament had reached a consensus of entitling Cromwell as "Oliver, the first Emperor of Great Britain, and the Isles thereunto belonging, always Caesar." Thurloe SP, VI:15.

⁵¹⁵ Sherwood, *The Court of Oliver Cromwell*, 15.

as an alternative republican government that upheld Parliament and prevented personal and military tyranny.⁵¹⁶

Presbyterians expressed concerns about the emerging dictatorship as well. On 15 September 1656, three days before the Second Protectorate Parliament convened, Richard Baxter lamented in a letter to Edward Harley, the presbyterian MP who would soon be denied admission to Parliament, that the sooner the “ancient forme, of K[ing]. Lords & Com[m]ons” was restored, the sooner there would be “quiettness, & some lit[t]le ease of o[u]r p[r]esent burdens.”⁵¹⁷ These frustrations all pointed to one primary concern—the need to stabilise or balance the supreme reign of one person with some form of council or Parliament. Hence the “supreme paradox”: “Cromwell the king-killer, the reluctant head of State, the visionary, was begged by his second Parliament to become King Oliver.”⁵¹⁸ And for a while, this certainly seemed a feasible way forward. Parliament decisively voted down the Militia Bill on 29 January 1657 and conservative Cromwellian MPs seemed determined to tighten government control over religion and opposition to sects like the Quakers. Moderate presbyterians like Baxter and Reynolds thus had reasons to be more hopeful than before for a structural reform of both civil and ecclesiastical government, and they cast their lot with the kingship party.

Edward Reynolds' Presbyterian-Conservative Cromwellian Alliance

After four years of relative obscurity, Reynolds returned to London on 6 May 1655 to preach before the City Corporation, an invitation that anticipated, if was not actually

⁵¹⁶ Despite being applauded at first, the treatise was denounced as seditious a few months before the Second Protectorate Parliament convened. Thurloe SP, V:122; TNA, SP 25/77, p. 373; Sir Henry Vane, *A Healing Question Propounded and Resolved* (London, 1656: Wing V69), 20; for a thorough analysis of Vane and his *A Healing Question*, see David Parnham, *Sir Henry Vane, Theologian: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Religious and Political Discourse* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1997), 209.

⁵¹⁷ Richard Baxter to Edward Harley, 15 September 1656, DWL, Baxter Letters I, f. 226r.

⁵¹⁸ Morrill, *Stuart Britain*, 59.

decisive in, his resurgence to political importance a year later. The sermon, titled *Joy in the Lord*, was dedicated to Sir Christopher Packe (c.1599-1682) and the Court of Aldermen, marking the beginning of nine sermons Reynolds would preach before the City Corporation from 1655 to 1660. While Packe was a firm supporter of Cromwell and participated in anti-royalist schemes in the 1650s, he was active in many presbyterian projects in the 1640s, serving as a lay trier for elders in 1645 in the seventh London classis and twice a delegate to the London provincial assembly in 1648 and 1649.⁵¹⁹ It was likely powerful conservatives like Packe who were behind the invitations for Reynolds to preach before both City Corporation and Parliament as well as his installation on 17 June 1656 as vicar of St Lawrence Old Jewry, the church standing immediately in front of the Guildhall.

Reynolds' appointment as vicar of St Lawrence was evidently a strategic move on the part of London presbyterians as well.⁵²⁰ The parish had been led by a sequence of identifiable presbyterians such as Anthony Burgess, Christopher Love, and Richard Vines, who maintained vigorous preaching and active assessment of the godliness of its communicants, despite the frustration of presbyterian hopes on a national scale in the Interregnum.⁵²¹ It is noteworthy that Reynolds and his immediate predecessor Vines demonstrated strikingly similar preferences in church polity and trajectories of conformity. Both Westminster divines debated against other presbyterians to support the extension of synodical membership to selected laymen in 1644. Both resisted the Engagement oath in 1649, which cost Vines his mastership of Pembroke College, Cambridge, and the rectory

⁵¹⁹ Tai Liu, *Puritan London: A Study of Religion and Society in the City Parishes* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1986), 81.

⁵²⁰ St Lawrence's patron was Balliol College, Oxford. The Master of the College from 1651 to 1672 was Henry Savage, who had little sympathy for puritans. St Lawrence nevertheless seemed unaffected by the religious and political alliance of the College in its choice of ministers.

⁵²¹ Elliot Vernon, "A Ministry of the Gospel: the Presbyterians during the English Revolution," in *Religion in Revolutionary England*, eds. Christopher Durston and Judith Maltby (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 120.

of Walton, Hertfordshire, and Reynolds his positions in Oxford.⁵²² Furthermore, their shared commitment to Protestant uniformity against separatists and radical sects enabled them to collaborate with Baxter to promote ecclesiologically inclusive initiatives. Baxter recruited Vines and the two participated in John Dury's scheme to unite episcopalians, presbyterians, independents, and Erastians from 1649 to 1654.⁵²³ In the early 1660s, Baxter then worked closely with Reynolds towards a form of reduced episcopacy.

Reynolds was not only in time to witness the political struggles between radical and conservative independents in the Second Protectorate Parliament, which convened on 17 September 1656, but he actively fuelled monarchist polemics through his sermons. He had described the political upheavals up to the mid-1650s as "delusions and disappointments," specifically pointing out how "fickle" favours and condemnations among men could be.⁵²⁴ In November 1656, Reynolds warned wealthy London merchants of the City Corporation against prioritising personal gains over the only "true gain," Christ and the perseverance of one's soul.⁵²⁵ He warned his politically minded hearers, including both conservatives like Packe and the more radical city leaders like Robert Tichborne (c.1604-82), former regicide and Lord Mayor of the year, against mistaking an earthly kingdom for the heavenly one.⁵²⁶ The preacher was far from politically neutral, however, and would step before Parliament on 9 January 1657 to preach in support of making Cromwell the new king of England.

⁵²² William Lamont, "Vines, Richard," *ODNB*.

⁵²³ For Dury's ecumenical efforts and Baxter's involvement, see Tim Cooper, *John Owen, Richard Baxter and the Formation of Nonconformity* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 144-6, 128.

⁵²⁴ Edward Reynolds, *Joy in the Lord Opened in a Sermon Preached at Pauls, May 6*. (London, 1655: Wing R1261), A3r.

⁵²⁵ *Idem, True Gain* (London: 1657: Wing R1299), A2v.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

In this monarchist sermon, Reynolds first warned against a “Sinful peace” England was tempted with and lamented how “*Truth* [had been] corrupted, *Unity* dissolved, [and] the *Foundations* out of cou[r]se” in the nation.⁵²⁷ Lurking in the background was the question of toleration that was currently on everyone’s mind, since debates over the “horrid blasphemy” of James Nayler had just been settled a month before.⁵²⁸ Nayler was a Quaker leader who re-enacted Christ’s arrival at Jerusalem by riding on horseback into Bristol. Debates among the MPs over how to deal with Nayler lasted roughly ten days, and presbyterians and conservative politicians, including William Goffe and Edward Whalley, eventually prevailed against the more radical Cromwellians like William Packer, who pleaded for toleration on the basis of freedom of conscience.⁵²⁹ Nayler was eventually flogged three hundred times, with his tongue bored through with a hot iron and his forehead branded with the letter B for blasphemer.

To rid the country of its sinful peace and revive godliness, Reynolds proposed the restoration of kingship and reasserted the coercive power of the temporal sword in ecclesiastical affairs.⁵³⁰ He drew extensively from Elizabethan and early Stuart literature, pointing to both Old Testament Israel and Christian emperors like Constantine to stress the importance of kingship and a nationwide church government.⁵³¹ He preached that kings

⁵²⁷ *Idem, The Peace of Jerusalem: A Sermon Preached in the Parliament House, Jan. 9, 1656* (London, 1659: R1245A), 9, 11.

⁵²⁸ John Coffey, “The Toleration Controversy during the English Revolution,” in *Religion in Revolutionary England*, 59.

⁵²⁹ *Idem, Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558-1689* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 154. The terms “conservative” and “radical” Cromwellians are adopted from Barry Coward. The conservatives were those who promoted reform towards a more traditional government with regular parliaments, even monarchy, and a tightened control over religion. Radical Cromwellians would still want to keep a national church, but with much more toleration for different Protestant views. Barry Coward, *The Cromwellian Protectorate* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 80-2.

⁵³⁰ Reynolds, *The Peace of Jerusalem*, 22.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, 24-7.

were “*nursing Fathers unto the Church*,” just as John Jewel had famously argued.⁵³² Not only had Elizabethan presbyterians agreed with this notion when it suited them, but congregationalists like Davenport, when countering Laudian attacks that they “abridge[d] the povver of the civill Magistrate,” had also affirmed chief governors as nursing fathers of the Church in both civil and ecclesiastical matters.⁵³³ These classic arguments puritans had repeatedly appealed to in the past were Reynolds’ reminder that monarchy was indispensable for national piety. Citing Judges 17-8, Reynolds warned his hearers that “*Idolatrous corruptions* crept into the house [of God]” precisely because “*there was no King in Israel*.”⁵³⁴

Within two months, on 23 February, conservative MPs like Packe and Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke would formally present the famous “Humble Petition and Advice” that proposed a Cromwellian monarchy.⁵³⁵ The petitioners requested Parliament to meet at least once every three years, asked for specific limits on religious liberty that outlawed Unitarians and Quakers, and finally, proposed Cromwell to become King Oliver I. Cromwell eventually turned down the offer to be king on 8 May in fear of losing support from the New Model Army, and the “Humble Petition” would undergo further modifications before the Lord Protector ratified it on 26 June.⁵³⁶

⁵³² *Ibid.*, 27; Jewel argued that a king “ought to be a patron and a fosterer of the Church”: Jewel, *Apologie* (London, 1562: RTSC 14590), 57. In later editions, “fosterer” was changed to “nurse,” cf. *idem*, *Apologie* (London, 1564: RSTC 14591), N7v; *idem*, *Apologie* (London, 1600: RSTC 14592), 264.

⁵³³ For example, Cartwright, *A Reply to an Answer made of M. Doctor Whitgift*, 51; Davenport, preface to *An Apologetical Reply*.

⁵³⁴ Reynolds, *Peace of Jerusalem*, 25-6.

⁵³⁵ Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke (1605-75), MP for Buckinghamshire. Whitelocke opposed the trial and execution of Charles, but was able to secure respect from Cromwell, who frequently consulted Whitelocke in private. Ruth Spalding, “Whitelocke, Bulstrode, appointed Lord Whitelocke under the protectorate,” *ODNB*.

⁵³⁶ Coward, *The Cromwellian Protectorate*, 87-91.

From a “Monarchist” to a “Royalist” Presbyterian

Despite holding high hopes in further reforms, little did Reynolds and Baxter know that the regime was on its way to crumbling completely. Cromwell’s death on 3 September 1658 struck the first blow. Reynolds was deeply frustrated by the present “Times of wonderfull changes and unsettledness” that inevitably aborted many attempts of reform, as he mourned before the City Corporation on 15 September, twelve days after the protector died: “When the Lord had by his providence raised up this eminent Instrument [Cromwell]...we might probably have supposed that by degrees things would have wrought unto a composedness, and settlement in the midst of great Actions and great Successes, he likewise is suddenly taken away.”⁵³⁷ On 11 October 1658, Reynolds represented London presbyterians, including Edmund Calamy, Thomas Manton, Simeon Ashe, and Lazarus Seaman, to address and pledge loyalty to the new Lord Protector Richard Cromwell, showing his willingness to serve the protectorate government even at the end of 1658.⁵³⁸ Getting past the Engagement controversy in the early 1650s, many prominent presbyterians had gradually placed hope in the protectorate for furthering their ideals of church reforms.

Throughout the final months of the protectorate, Reynolds and Baxter continued to call for a settled discipline, accepted by “Presbyt[erians]: Indep[enden]ts & all honest Christians” against toleration of sectarian influences.⁵³⁹ In their exploration of what a godly Church of England looked like, moderate presbyterians had come to terms with the

⁵³⁷ Edward Reynolds, *Gods Fidelity, the Churches Safety* (London, 1659: Wing R1252), 38.

⁵³⁸ There is no manuscript of the address preserved today. Jeremiah, “Reynolds,” 200-1; *The Public Intelligencer*, no. 147, 912.

⁵³⁹ Richard Baxter to John Swinfen, 17 February 1659, DWL, Baxter Letters VI, f. 233r. These calls were echoed by moderate episcopalians like John Gauden, who once pleaded for “mutuall condescendings” among “the best Ministers both of the *Episcopall*, *Presbyterian*, and *Independent* way.” John Gauden, *Hieraspistes: A Defence by Way of Apology for the Ministry and Ministers of the Church of England* (London, 1653: Wing G357), 576; Milton, *ESR*, 333.

inevitability and necessity of incorporating different ecclesiological groups, or in Baxter's words, a reconciliation of all "sober godly people," including episcopalians.⁵⁴⁰ Judging that presbyterians had great influence on public opinion and busied themselves with irenic projects to re-establish confessional unity and curb sectarianism, George Monck advised the new Lord Protector to favour "the gravest sort of moderate presbyterian divines," such as Reynolds, Calamy, Cooper, and Manton, summon a parliament as soon as he could, and call an "assembly of godly divines."⁵⁴¹ Essentially, Monck suggested that the protectorate should align itself with the presbyterian agenda to secure support, and it seemed that the Lord Protector listened, allegedly taking "special notice of...the Presbyterian way," sending a message to the committee for religion in Parliament in April 1659 that none should "enjoy publick maintenance" without acknowledging the presbyterian government to be "owned in the nation."⁵⁴² Yet these efforts would never come to fruition.

In May 1659, General-major John Lambert dismissed the Rump and the protectorate collapsed after Richard Cromwell was forced to resign. Presbyterians were again cast down into despair. Tim Cooper speaks of the collapse of the Cromwellian regime as the "dashing of all Baxter's hopes, just as his hopes were at their highest."⁵⁴³ Reynolds demonstrated the same frustration with the political turmoil in November 1659: "We live in failing times, we have found men of *low degree Vanity, and men of high degree a lie*.... We trusted too much in Parliaments and they have been broken; in Princes,

⁵⁴⁰ Baxter to Swinfen, 17 February 1659, DWL, Baxter Letters VI, f. 233v.

⁵⁴¹ Thurloe SP, VII, 387.

⁵⁴² Milton, *ESR*, 441; James Sharp to Robert Douglas, 1 March and 5 April 1659, *Register of the Consultations of the Ministers of Edinburgh and Some other Brethren of the Ministry*, ed. Rev. William Stephen (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1930) II:153, 168.

⁵⁴³ Cooper, *John Owen, Richard Baxter, and the Formation of Nonconformity*, 227.

and they have given up the ghost...we have been afflicted both with our diseases and with our remedies.”⁵⁴⁴

This short-lived alliance between presbyterians and conservative Cromwellians, although largely a failure, was significant. It showed “royalist” sentiments both groups shared with their common enemies. Although far from being royalists for the Stuarts in 1657, presbyterians sought reform towards a tighter control over religion by mobilising Cromwellians in the interest of a more traditional form of government with king and Parliament, less dominated by the army. Confronted with yet another sudden usurpation of government, the desperate presbyterians finally looked to the Stuarts and the restoration of episcopacy as their only and final hope for a stable religious settlement. In the same sermon, Reynolds asserted that God loved England and a divinely initiated reform would not cease. Pointing out that the year 1659 marked the centenary of Elizabeth’s restoration of a Protestant monarchy, Reynolds did not set forth a random, ungrounded hope but a dog-whistle message for the return of Charles II.⁵⁴⁵ Reynolds had indeed been involved in establishing a parliament that reincorporated different voices, including presbyterians and royalists, at this time.

Seven days after the Long Parliament was restored, on 28 February 1660, Reynolds preached a message of hope, again in a thanksgiving sermon before the City Corporation. On the one hand, he repeated his condemnation of “men of unstable minds” who acted according to their “changeable and domestical Interests,” a hardly-coded criticism of the likes of John Lambert, who had resisted the authority of the Rump and utilised military power to control the country before being defeated by George Monck;⁵⁴⁶ on the other

⁵⁴⁴ Edward Reynolds, *The Brand Pluck'd out of Fire* (London, 1659: Wing R1240), 11.

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁵⁴⁶ *Idem*, *The Wall & Glory of Jerusalem* (London, 1660: Wing R1302), A3r.

hand, Reynolds praised God for “healing the Wound inflicted on the Honor of this Renowned City” and reassured the powerful Londoners among his audience that God would be “guideing the hearts of the people to chuse for this next *Parliament*.”⁵⁴⁷ These hopeful words anticipated the collaborative efforts to bring about the restoration of the Stuart monarchy in the Convention Parliament in April 1660 among presbyterian MPs like Sir Richard Browne, Lord Mayor of London (1660-61), and royalist MPs like Sir John Robinson, who negotiated on the City’s behalf with George Monck in February.⁵⁴⁸

When Reynolds decided to accept the Bishopric of Norwich, he was ready to promote the compatibility between presbyterianism and episcopacy.⁵⁴⁹ Unsurprisingly, presbyterian sources like Baxter’s *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ* and royalist ones like Anthony Wood’s *Athenae Oxonienses* rendered a stark contrast in their interpretations of Reynolds’

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, A3v-A4r.

⁵⁴⁸ The sermon also survived in the form of brief sermon notes taken by a moderate puritan John Harper, fishmonger and devoted parishioner of St Margaret Moses, London. See Edward Reynolds, 28 February 1660, John Harper Jr’s Sermon Notes, “[Notes on Sermons, 1625-1665],” UCLA, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, MS.1951.011, unpaginated and written in reverse. Although unpaginated, the digital scans of this sermon are marked as item 457 and item 456: <https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/21198/n1r610/?order=456>. The sermon notes are very brief, but what was written perfectly matches the content of the printed source. Interestingly, Harper noted in the beginning of his notes that this was a sermon “about Noone.” If Harper’s detailed and passionate notetaking of the sermons preached by Richard Culverwell, rector of St Margaret Moses, and Culverwell’s son-in-law and successor Benjamin Needlers, was an indicator of his own religious temperament, Harper might have been a moderate puritan conformist like his pastors. He rarely commented on contemporary events and left no remarks on Needler’s farewell sermon before the presbyterian minister was ejected in 1662 and Needler’s successor Charles Burke’s first sermon in his notes. Although Harper was rather dismissive of Reynolds’ 1660 sermon, his pre-1642 conformity, moderate puritan sentiments, and refusal to serve the Cromwellian regime suggest that his political and religious views might have borne an affinity to those of Reynolds. For a thorough analysis of Harper and his sermon notes, see Ann Hughes, “A Moderate Puritan Preacher Negotiates Religious Change,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 65, no. 4 (October 2014): 761-79.

⁵⁴⁹ Reynolds did not seem to know James Ussher (1581-1656) personally. The young Reynolds had not arrived in London in 1622, when Ussher had finished his first extensive stay in England and headed back to Ireland as the new bishop of Meath. Ussher visited England again from 1623 to 1626, but Reynolds was still in Oxford and would not become preacher of Lincoln’s Inn, his first post in London, until October 1628. Reynolds and Ussher were on opposing sides during the civil wars. Ussher chose to stay with Charles in Oxford in the 1640s, and while he headed back to London from Oxford in June 1646, Reynolds was sent by Parliament to the University in September. Ussher would stay in London and, in 1647, become preacher of Lincoln’s Inn as well. Reynolds however would not return to London until around 17 June 1656, approximately three months after Ussher died. For more details about James Ussher’s life and thought, see Alan Ford, *James Ussher: Theology, History, and Politics in Early-Modern Ireland and England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

transition of allegiance. Baxter was sympathetic despite turning down the Bishopric of Hereford himself, and his account is useful for grasping how Reynolds might have defended his own return to episcopacy: “he [Reynolds] tooke a Byshop & presbyter to differ not *ordine* but *gradu*, & that a Byshop was but the chiefe Presbyter, & that he was not to ordaine or governe but with his Presbyters assistance & consent”—familiar rhetoric repeatedly adopted by both presbyterians and episcopalians when it suited them.⁵⁵⁰ In the epistle dedicatory to his ordination sermon, Reynolds confirmed Baxter’s testimony when he declared his style of government:

After the Example of the *Antient Bishops* in the primitive and purer ages of the Church, who were wont to sit with their Clergy and preside in an Ecclesiastical Senate, I shall in matters of weight and difficulty intreat the *advice and assistance* of you who are *Presbyteri urbis*, in order to the more safe, judicious, regular, and inoffensive determining of them.⁵⁵¹

The ultra-Royalist Anthony Wood, on the other hand, seized upon Reynolds’ changing allegiance with glee, first noting that the preacher “flattered Oliver and his gang” and later “welcome[d] that mushroom prince [Richard Cromwell] to his throne.”⁵⁵² He then sarcastically commented that Reynolds accepted the bishopric of Norwich in 1660 “without a *nolo*” after frequently preaching “against episcopacy and the [previously enforced] ceremonies” and concluded that it was a “strange preferment...for a presbyterian” to become Abbot of St Benet’s at Holme, a nominal title that for historic reasons Reynolds automatically assumed as bishop of Norwich.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵⁰ Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, II:98. The posthumous publication of John Prideaux’s *De episcopatu* in 1660, in which the bishop affirmed that presbyters and bishops “eiusdem ordinis sunt,” was certainly not accidental. Prideaux, *De Episcopatu* (London, 1660: Wing P3420), 4. See also Milton, *ESR*, 454.

⁵⁵¹ Edward Reynolds, epistle dedicatory to *Preaching of Christ: Opened in a Sermon Preached at St. Peters Church in the City of Norwich at an Ordination Septemb. 22, 1661* (London, 1662: Wing R1272).

⁵⁵² Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, ed. Philip Bliss (London, 1817), iii, 1084

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*

Reynolds would disagree. Far from being purely opportunistic, moderate presbyterians like Reynolds saw themselves as faithful campaigners for a set of ideals that they believed would secure national piety: a more effective and centralised control of religion, clear clerical participation in ecclesiastical government and discipline, and lawful, proper authorisation of government action. Based on these convictions central to English presbyterianism, Reynolds could oppose the outbreak of war in 1642, defend *iure divino* presbyterianism against the joint attack of Erastians and independents in 1645, side with conservative Cromwellians to promote king-in-Parliament in 1657, and finally, endorse the restored episcopate in 1660.

However, contemporaries who had experienced Elizabethan presbyterian-conformist conflicts would no doubt see presbyterians' reconciliation with episcopacy as an ironic defeat. After all, *iure divino* presbyterianism, briefly revived at the Westminster Assembly, had once again become a chapter in the past. On the eve of the restoration of the Stuart monarchy and episcopacy, presbyterians found themselves repeating the conformist narrative of John Whitgift, taking steps that went even further than early Stuart conformable puritans like William Gouge by defending a close affinity between episcopacy and presbyterianism.⁵⁵⁴ The likes of Baxter and Reynolds however belonged to another strain of English presbyterianism that never wholeheartedly embraced its hard-line, *iure divino* counterpart.⁵⁵⁵ They were conformable before 1642 and have often been

⁵⁵⁴ John Whitgift, *The Defense of the Aunswere to the Admonition against the Replie of T.C.* (London, 1574: RSTC 25430), 1627.

⁵⁵⁵ Elliot Vernon has helpfully distinguished the "presbyterian party" into three categories: first, those who believed in a *iure divino* presbyterian polity that focused on the governance of elders through church councils that started from local presbyteries all the way to national synods; second, those "presbyterians" who rejected some fundamental features of the more hard-line presbyterian position, such as a biblical mandate for ruling elders, or affirmed the office of bishops as that of presbyters, who only differed from bishops in degree, not in order; finally, those who denied that Scripture set forth a model of church government and believed that civil magistrates could structure the church based on the general principles drawn from the Bible and church history. Baxter's and Reynolds' positions came closer to the second category. See Vernon, *London Presbyterians and the British Revolutions, 1638-64*, 2-3. Ann Hughes has also

left out of scholarly accounts of early Stuart presbyterianism. And yet they emerged from the mid to late 1640s onwards as presbyterian advocates whose flexibility in polity and ecclesiology as well as persistence in a centralised control of religion not only carried them through the troubled waters of the Interregnum, but earned them peace when Charles triumphantly returned, and, in Reynolds' case, a bishopric in the restored Caroline Church.

New England Way Betrayed

Compromises and ecclesiological diversifications characterised the religious landscape in mid-century New England as well. Shortly after the temporary triumph at the Cambridge synod in 1648, Davenport found himself entangled in a controversy surrounding the election of a minister in the Hartford church, which revived the debates over church membership and clerical authority in relation to congregational power. Conflicts within a congregation like this brought the structural flaws of the New England Way to the fore. New Englanders had to ask themselves: what would a good Congregationalist do if the majority of a congregation decided to yield their governing rights to a self-asserting clergyman? Should the wish of the majority party, that is, to essentially discard the New England Way, be granted? Or should the authority of the congregational majority be thwarted so that the Congregationalist government could be preserved? These were problems first-generation Congregationalists did not expect to encounter, and inevitably, with different personal considerations under different circumstances, they developed contradictory answers. Ecclesiological diversifications found their expressions in the day-to-day pastoral care as well, and each Colony had its own way of dealing with moral and theological deviants. With its hard boundary between

distinguished between a narrower and a broader definition of "presbyterianism": "Print and Pastoral Identity: Presbyterian Pastors Negotiate the Restoration," in *Church Life: Pastors, Congregations, and the Experience of Dissent in Seventeenth-Century England*, eds. Michael Davies, Anne Dunan-Page, and Joel Halcomb (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019), 153.

the covenanted godly within and the ungodly without, New Haven seemed more lenient in its treatment of heretics such as Quakers compared to other Colonies, eschewing capital punishment, the sentence awaiting them if caught elsewhere.

The Hartford Controversy

After Thomas Hooker died in 1647, the Hartford congregation in the Connecticut Colony plunged into a schism over the replacement for Hooker to serve alongside their other minister, Samuel Stone (*d.* 1663). Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705), a young Harvard graduate, was at one point a favourite candidate, but Stone, with majority support from the congregation, successfully blocked the selection. Stone's heavy-handed approach enraged the ruling elder William Goodwin, along with several other leaders, who saw the minister's intervention as an infringement on the congregation's authority to elect its own ministers. This clash within the Hartford leadership was intimately bound up with Stone's promotion of expanding church membership to baptised adults without a process of admission, issues that had never been fully resolved by the Cambridge synod. To resolve the dispute, Connecticut and New Haven elders joined in a council in June 1656 and eventually ruled that both parties needed to accept responsibility for the discord but that the minority dissenters should be dismissed if they could not be reconciled.⁵⁵⁶

The council failed to soften Stone's position and contain the damage. Instead, the controversy escalated into open conflicts among New England colonies when Stone left Hartford for Boston, where he was greeted with sympathy and support. Davenport, the most eminent clerical representative of New Haven, found himself increasingly central to the debate and, from mid-1657 onward, would become an active opponent to Stone and his Massachusetts supporters like John Norton of the First Church of Boston. Norton was a

⁵⁵⁶ Davenport to the Church at Wethersfield, *Letters*, 116-7.

fervent advocate for what would become known as the “Half-Way Covenant” and had failed to challenge the restrictions on infant baptism in the Cambridge synod.⁵⁵⁷ To New Haven and the Hartford minority’s fury, the Massachusetts General Court stepped into the unresolved conflict by calling another synod in Boston in June 1657, addressing not only the Hartford controversy, but yet another petition for the broadening of church membership. Possibly aware of the unpopularity of its views, the New Haven Colony strategically refused to attend. The letter Eaton and other New Haven magistrates sent to the Bay Colony, dated 25 February 1657, alluded to the Cambridge Platform of 1649 that had affirmed the established practices of the New England Way, including limited church membership.⁵⁵⁸ The letter outright declared that this renewed effort to overturn the verdict of 1649 was a “boldness” that ought to be suppressed. Citing the Book of Revelation, New Haven warned fellow colonies against becoming another “church of Ephesus” that had “left and abated in her first love” and consequently “provoaked Christ to deprive them of their church estate and priveledges.”⁵⁵⁹

Although New Haven absented itself from the 1657 synod, Davenport penned a brief response to the twenty-one questions to be discussed, as a declaration of the Colony’s position. Davenport reasserted that adult children of covenanted parents could not become members except “by theyre personal confederation [i.e., covenant] & faith visibly held forth.”⁵⁶⁰ Grandchildren could not inherit the covenant made by grandparents and

⁵⁵⁷ Mather, *Magnalia* I, 291. For Norton and his involvement in the debates over church membership and infant baptism at the Cambridge synod, see Chapter 4 of this thesis. For a detailed account of the Hartford controversy, see Bremer, *Davenport*, 258-67.

⁵⁵⁸ Charles J. Hoadly, ed., *Records of the Colony or Jurisdiction of New Haven, from May, 1653, to the Union. Together with New Haven Code of 1656* (Hartford, CT: Printed by Case, Lockwood, and Company, 1858), 196-8.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁵⁶⁰ Davenport, “21 Questions,” under question 2. He compares adults’ admission to church membership and access to sacraments such as baptism to adults’ circumcision in the Old Testament, which was only admitted to those who “would come into the communion of gods people.”

profession of faith was necessary for adults to partake in sacraments. Davenport repeatedly appealed to the “Ancient churches” and widely respected reformers like Martin Bucer, who, according to Davenport, rejected any to be “received into the Catholick church, unles[s] he be tried...& be found fit.”⁵⁶¹ Aware of how controversies from the outside could influence his own flock, Davenport also dropped hints in the New Haven pulpit that an expanded church membership was unbiblical. Through his sermon notes from 1652 to 1658, we see a repeated emphasis on a visible manifestation of faith as a prerequisite for church membership. The required conversion could only happen through the “divine efficacy in the ministry of the Word,” which was for “Adult[s], not infants.”⁵⁶² The Church, being a “holy society” or a “company of pilgrims,” required visible godliness, specifically profession of faith: “For as Christ believed on is the foundation of the invisible church, Christ believed on & professed is the foundation of a visible church.”⁵⁶³ It was the “duety of ministers & members of Xtian churches” that everyone they received “into ch[urch] fellowship...profess[ed] theyre faith & holynes in a good conversacon” and made “publick confession of theyre Faith before the ch[urch].”⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶² *Idem*, 9 November 1656, “Sermons Preached at New Haven, 1656-1658,” John Davenport Sermons and Writings, 1615-1658, Beinecke, GEN MSS 202, 68. This series of sermon notes on Luke 14.23-4, Jesus’ parable of the “great Supp[er],” fully demonstrates Davenport’s continual reliance on John Cotton, especially the latter’s *Of the Holinesse of Church-Members*. Davenport again quoted Cotton verbatim at various points of his arguments over church polity, such as his defence of the usefulness and applicability of parables “to all those ends of ministry,” specifically this parable in Luke 14 on p. 69; Cotton, *Of the Holinesse of Church-Members*, 73, but mispaginated as 69.

⁵⁶³ Davenport, 8 August 1652, John Davenport Sermon Book, 1649-1652, 344, 345. Davenport repeated this emphasis on “profession of faith & obedience” as the standard for church membership based not on “judgm[en]t of infallibility, but...judgm[en]t of charitable discretion” in his later sermons too, cf. *idem*, 9 November 1656, “Sermons Preached at New Haven, 1656-1658,” 68.

⁵⁶⁴ *Idem*, “Sermons Preached at New Haven, 1656-1658,” 72. Again, here Davenport drew extensively from Cotton’s discussions of the duty or “stewardly fidelity” that everyone in the congregation had to ensure the “honour & welfare of gods house,” pp. 71-2; Cotton, *Of the Holinesse of Church-Members*, 107, but mispaginated as 95. Against traditional interpretations and challenges from scholars like Michael Winship, Bremer forcefully argues that to require a profession of faith and visible fruit of one’s regeneration does not amount to conversion narratives, which Davenport did not seem to ever explicitly ask for. Based on the findings of this thesis, it remains unclear whether Davenport demanded conversion narratives by mandating public confessions of faith and manifestations of holiness “in a good conversacon.” For a more thorough discussion of the lack of direct evidence of conversion narratives, see Francis Bremer,

The religious climate had changed drastically within a decade since the Cambridge synod, which conservative Congregationalists like Davenport had successfully swayed in favour of the established New England Way. The verdict was overturned in 1657 by an overwhelming majority. “21 Questions” would lay the groundwork for *Another Essay for the Investigation of the Truth* (1663), an unified effort of Davenport, Nicholas Street, teacher of the New Haven Church, and Increase Mather (1639-1723), to resist the “Half-Way Covenant,” the mainstream position in New England after the Boston synod of 1662.⁵⁶⁵ Stone, on the other hand, would make a triumphant return to Hartford, having received an affirmation of a list of his requests that highlighted a heightened clerical authority over the congregation. Included in this list was a request for the Hartford church to “submitt toe every doctrine which he [Stone] shall propound to them” and “hearken toe the voice of their Teachers, as inferiors hearken to their superiors.”⁵⁶⁶

Although Stone repeatedly stressed that his demands were biblical and the required submission only went as far as Scripture permitted, he and the supporting majority in Hartford further alienated the “withdrawers” who now sought to join the church at Wethersfield. Davenport’s indignation permeated the letter he wrote to the Wethersfield church in support of the “withdrawers.” He condemned the controversy as “highly dishonourable to God...and to the way of the Congr[e]gationall Ch[urche]s” and was concerned that it would have “dangerous consequences” to other churches.⁵⁶⁷ He

“Did John Davenport’s Church Require Conversion Narratives for Church Admission?: A Response,” *The New England Quarterly* 87, no. 1 (March 2014): 132-9; *idem*, ““To Tell What God Hath Done for Thy Soul’: Puritan Spiritual Testimonies as Admission Tests and Means of Edification,” *The New England Quarterly* 87, no. 4 (December 2014): 625-65.

⁵⁶⁵ Davenport and Street, *Another Essay*. Increase Mather wrote an extensive preface to the treatise.

⁵⁶⁶ Samuel Stone, “Certain pr[o]positions presented to the Church of Christ at Hartford, by Samuell Stone, August 2. 57,” *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society*, ed. J. Hammond Trumbull (Hartford, CT: Connecticut Historical Society, 1870), II:75.

⁵⁶⁷ John Davenport to the Church at Wethersfield, *Letters*, 115. Although undated, the letter was most likely composed around February 1658.

recommended that Wethersfield receive the “withdrawers” as members, which unfortunately caused more schisms, this time within the Wethersfield congregation. In late 1659, John Russell, minister of the Wethersfield church, his followers in Wethersfield, and the “withdrawers” from Hartford, relocated together to Hadley, a Massachusetts town.

The Hartford controversy exposed the internal contradictions New Englanders repeatedly ran into when they attempted to live out what had once been purely an abstract theory. None of the first-generation seemed to have foreseen a self-contradicting scenario where the majority willingly gave up that authority to their minister. In order to insist on a congregation’s authority over ecclesiastical affairs, Davenport found himself repeatedly citing the authority of the first council of 1656, which had already permitted the minority dissenters to leave Hartford if conflicts persisted.⁵⁶⁸ By appealing to the first council, Davenport consciously bypassed not only Stone but also, fatally, the will of the majority of the Hartford Church. Perhaps the New England Way was not infallible after all. The Hartford schism, if merely of marginal importance to Davenport, precluded a greater strife between him and the likes of Norton in Boston a decade later. In fact, it ironically prefigured the greatest scandal of his career as a Congregationalist patriarch. In 1668, his determination to succeed the recently deceased pastor of the First Church of Boston, John Wilson, set him against his own New Haven congregation. Once again, he would overthrow the will of a congregation, this time secretly, by a series of lies, false promises, and a carefully contrived forgery.

Conservative or Tolerant? The New Haven Model

Recent studies of John Davenport’s church polity and the New Haven model of governance have generated seemingly conflicting accounts. Francis Bremer tells a

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 116-7.

powerful story of toleration, showcasing abundant evidence of New Haven's relative leniency towards heretics, such as Baptists and Quakers, compared to other Colonies.⁵⁶⁹ By contrast, Sandra Slater argues that New Haven was the most conservative among the Colonies based on a detailed comparison of varying legal codes published and adopted in seventeenth-century New England. The primary example was New Haven's 1655 sodomy penal code, with its elaborative style that conformed to "sermon literature" and the Mosaic law rather than English common law.⁵⁷⁰ Written in reaction to Bremer's version of New England puritanism that "minimizes the vast evidence supporting the existence of conflict," Slater narrates a story of clerical tensions and even jealousies between Thomas Hooker and John Cotton, categorised as Davenport's hero, that dominated New Haven's emergence as the stronghold of "traditionally rigid concepts of Puritanism."⁵⁷¹

Slater argues that in order to compete with the more prominent Massachusetts Bay Colony, Hooker's Connecticut and Davenport's New Haven developed their own distinctive features. Hooker developed an "evangelical zeal" and promoted a more inclusive church membership that foreshadowed the Half-Way Covenant, whereas Davenport's New Haven, as an extension of Cotton's influence and "rebuke to the liberality [of Hooker]," became "deeply conservative," even more conservative than the Bay Colony.⁵⁷² Analysing New Haven almost exclusively through the lens of its legal system, Slater believes that Davenport's New Haven was really Cotton's New Haven, appealing to the similarity between New Haven's 1655 sodomy code and Cotton's legal

⁵⁶⁹ Bremer, *Davenport*, 269, 275.

⁵⁷⁰ Sandra Slater, "'Two Suns in One Firmament': John Cotton, Thomas Hooker, and the 1655 New Haven Sodomy Statute," *Church History* 87, no. 4 (2018): 1019-21.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1007, 1009.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, 1008, 1014.

proposal, “Moses His Judicials,” rejected by the Bay Colony in 1639.⁵⁷³ Both codes incorporated more sexual sins under the crimes that demanded capital punishment than the legal code of the Bay Colony and the English common law. Hence two contrasting pictures of New Haven: one that Bremer portrays as anomalously tolerant, and another that Slater presents as anomalously conservative.

Bremer rightly points out that New Haven could be surprisingly lenient. Besides its mild treatment of antipaedobaptists (perhaps understandably in the case of Anne Eaton), the Colony resisted imposing capital punishment upon heretics like Quakers, a rapidly growing sect active in New England in the late 1650s. The first Quakers to arrive in New England were Mary Fisher and Anne Austin, travelling from Barbados to Massachusetts in the summer of 1656. John Hull (1624-83), merchant and mint-master of the Bay Colony, noted that the arrivals of Fisher and Austin and subsequent visits by other Quakers were their attempt to “oppose the ministry, and also to breed in people contempt of magistracy.”⁵⁷⁴ On 14 October 1656, the Bay Colony passed penal codes that targeted the Quakers. Anyone who knowingly brought Quakers or other heretics into the jurisdiction was to be fined one hundred pounds; shipmasters who brought in Quakers were required to take them away; Quakers themselves were to be imprisoned, “severely whipt,” and kept away from others so that they could not spread their beliefs until they were sent away; and lastly, those who disseminated or hid Quaker writings would also be fined, and if they

⁵⁷³ Isabel M. Calder, “John Cotton and the New Haven Colony” *The New England Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (January 1930): 87; Slate, “Two Suns in One Firmament,” 1003-4, 1021.

⁵⁷⁴ John Hull, “John Hull’s Diary of Public Occurrences,” in *Archaeologia Americana: Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society* (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1857), 3:178.

became Quakers themselves and persisted in their ways regardless of repeated warnings, they would be banished.⁵⁷⁵

New Haven only reacted to the Quaker “invasion” in the following year and with less zeal.⁵⁷⁶ This was likely because the New Haven Colony would not be directly confronted with Quakers until early 1658, when Humphrey Norton appeared at the church in Southold on Sunday and attacked the preacher, John Youngs.⁵⁷⁷ On 10 March 1658, Norton was brought before New Haven plantation court to stand trial. Specific charges included his denial of original sin, sacraments, infant baptism, visible covenant, and Scripture as the authoritative word of God as well as his exhortation for Christians to aim at perfection in this life.⁵⁷⁸ These attacks on mainstream beliefs led Norton, like many Quakers before him, to denounce the ordained ministry in New England, specifically charging Youngs as a false prophet and Davenport, who responded to Norton’s doctrinal challenges in court, “their chief Priest.”⁵⁷⁹ The Quaker would eventually be whipped, fined, and banished, with his hand branded with the letter H to signify “heresy.”⁵⁸⁰

Norton was one of many examples of Quakers’ persistent missions and aggressive polemic that much troubled New England authorities. Recognising that former laws had

⁵⁷⁵ Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, vol. 3 1644-1657 (Boston, MA: William White, 1854), 415-6.

⁵⁷⁶ Bremer, *Davenport*, 272. The specific reference Bremer cites is a brief order: “no Quaker, Eanter, or other Herritick of that nature, be suffered to come into, nor abide in this jurisdiction, and if any such rise up amonge ourselves that they be speedily suppressed and securied, for the better prevention of such dangerous errours.” *Records of the Colony or Jurisdiction of New Haven*, 217.

⁵⁷⁷ *New Haven Town Records, 1649-1684*, vol. 1 1649-1662, ed. Franklin B. Dexter (New Haven, CT: New Haven Colony Historical Society, 1917), 339.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 340-1.

⁵⁷⁹ Humphrey Norton, *New England’s Ensign* (London, 1659: Wing N636), 50. Norton intentionally paralleled his New Haven experience with Christ’s life narrated in the Gospels. His initial twenty-day imprisonment was implicitly compared to Christ’s forty-day fast in the wilderness. Norton further recalled being tempted by Satan during the imprisonment and how he countered Satan with a verbal rebuke “to his face,” before being brought to Davenport, the “chief Priest.” A reference to ministers, especially Youngs, as false prophets can be found in *New Haven Town Records, 1649-1684*, vol. 1 1649-1662, 341.

⁵⁸⁰ Norton, *New England’s Ensign*, 50; *New Haven Town Records, 1649-1684*, vol. 1 1649-1662, 343.

failed to deter Quakers from returning, the Bay Colony ordered on 19 October 1658 that future Quaker missionaries should be banished “upon paine of death.”⁵⁸¹ Contrary to Massachusetts’ wish, upon hearing the latest threat of death penalty, Quakers now felt even more compelled to cast away former tactics of disguise and returned to the Colony in broad daylight.⁵⁸² From 1659 to 1661, a series of Quakers were tried and hanged, including Marmaduke Stevenson, William Robinson, and Mary Dyer.⁵⁸³

Soon after Stevenson and Robinson were executed in October 1659, Davenport raised concerns with John Winthrop Jr (1606-76), a close friend, personal physician and then governor of Connecticut. While acknowledging the executions as an act of God’s “special providence, in judgment and wrath,” Davenport feared that death penalties only nurtured Quakers’ evangelistic zeal rather than extinguished it.⁵⁸⁴ He was also “very sorry” to hear that the Bay Colony turned down Sir Thomas Temple (1613-74), governor of Acadia or Nova Scotia, who offered to bring the Quakers away.⁵⁸⁵ Davenport considered Temple’s proposal to be “the best expedient” to free New England from Quakers, “who would have feared that kinde of banishm[en]t more then hanging.”⁵⁸⁶ In contrast to the Bay Colony, not only did New Haven resist the implementation of capital punishment, but the Colony further loosened its penal codes on 30 May 1660, leaving it to “the liberty of the authority in each plantation” to replace physical punishments with fines.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸¹ This new law was also applied to locals who turned to Quakerism: Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, vol. 4 pt. 1 1650-1660 (Boston, MA: William White, 1854), 346.

⁵⁸² Nan Goodman, *Banished: Common Law and the Rhetoric of Social Exclusion in Early New England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 93.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*; Bremer, *Davenport*, 275.

⁵⁸⁴ Davenport to John Winthrop Jr., 6 December 1659, *Letters*, 146.

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁵⁸⁷ *Records of the Colony or Jurisdiction of New Haven*, 363. The laws against Quakers in New Haven were set down in 1658, see pp. 239-41.

In contrast to New Haven's leniency towards heretics was the Colony's unusually elaborative sodomy code that incorporated more sexual sins for capital punishment than other colonies like Massachusetts and Connecticut, as Slater points out.⁵⁸⁸ A closer look at the penal codes however reveals that all three Colonies—New Haven, Massachusetts, and Connecticut—adopted Nathaniel Ward's *Body of Liberties* (1641) as a template, which they further modified to develop their own laws.⁵⁸⁹ This resulted in three sets of highly similar penal codes.⁵⁹⁰ New Haven's law-making however did reflect Cotton's inclusive approach to "unnaturall" or "Sodomiticall filthinesse," which could take various forms to defy God's intention for sex, "the propagation of posterity."⁵⁹¹ For example, New Haven stood out as the only colony to affirm Cotton's extension of the sodomy code to sex between women. New Haven also followed Cotton's Mosaic principle in demanding a death penalty for unrepentant, repeat sabbath-breakers, on the basis of Numbers 15:32-6, whereas the Bay Colony and Connecticut only stipulated fines.⁵⁹²

⁵⁸⁸ An earlier secondary source that discusses New Haven's unusually elaborative sodomy code is Thomas A. Foster, *Long Before Stonewall: Histories of Same-Sex Sexuality in Early America* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2007), 87-8.

⁵⁸⁹ The discussion takes the following penal codes into consideration: Nathaniel Ward, "The Body of Liberties 1641," *A Bibliographical Sketch of the Laws of the Massachusetts Colony from 1630 to 1686*, ed. Henry William Whitmore (Boston, MA: Rockwell and Churchill, 1890), 29-64; John Cotton's "Moses His Judicials," published as *An Abstract or the Lawes of New England as they are Now Established. An Abstract or the Lawes of New England as they are Novv Established* (London, 1641: Wing C6408); Thomas G. Barnes, ed., *The Book of the General Lawes and Libertyes Concerning the Inhabitants of the Massachusetts: Reproduced in Facsimile from the Unique 1648 Edition in the Huntington Library* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1975); *New-Haven's Settling in New-England and Some Lawes for Government* (London, 1656: Wing N645B); *The Code of 1650, being a Compilation of the Earliest Laws and Orders of the General Court of Connecticut* (Hartford, CT: Silus Andrus, 1825).

⁵⁹⁰ Slater points out that Cotton's "Moses, His Judicials" suggested that "incest, adultery, rape, buggery, prostitution, sodomy, and 'pollution of a woman known to be in her flowers' should all be punished with death." See Slater, "'Two Suns in One Firmament,'" 1021. All three colonies however affirmed most crimes named above as worthy of capital punishment. Nor did any of the colonies make any specific mention of menstruation and prostitution.

⁵⁹¹ Cotton, *Abstract*, 11; *New-Haven's Settling in New-England and Some Lawes for Government*, 23.

⁵⁹² Numbers 15.32-6 demands that sabbath-breakers be stoned to death. Cotton, *Abstract*, 10; *The Code of 1650*, 44; *The Book of the General Lawes and Libertyes Concerning the Inhabitants of the Massachusetts*, 20; *New-Haven's Settling in New-England and Some Lawes for Government*, 66. Furthermore, New Haven's penal code was by no means a duplicate of Cotton's penal proposal but expressed its own distinctive concerns. For example, instead of naming prostitution as one of the sexual crimes, New Haven's code specified that if someone should "act upon himself, and in the sight of others spill

New Haven's actual practice did not always reflect the strictness of its laws. First of all, there were only two known incidents of sex between women in New England, one in the Bay Colony in 1642, the other in Plymouth Colony in 1649.⁵⁹³ Neither case was categorised as sodomy and the women involved were dealt with relatively leniently.⁵⁹⁴ Since New Haven Colony did not leave any legal records of sex between women, it is hard to assess how a stricter or more inclusive sodomy code made a difference. Overall, executions were rare in New England, and all three colonies enforced capital punishment with caution. Over the course of thirty years from 1638 to 1668, when Davenport was in New Haven, there were only six counts of death sentence in the entire colony.⁵⁹⁵ Three of them were convictions of bestiality, prosecuted in 1642, 1655, and 1662 respectively. Two of them were pederasty, in 1646 and 1655 respectively. The last death penalty was given to Ruth Briggs in 1668, whose repeated acts of fornication and adultery did not bring about severe punishment until 1665-6, when she was convicted and banished. Three years later, Briggs would be executed on account of infanticide in Hartford—a fair punishment given the standards of the time.⁵⁹⁶ Contrary to Slater's case, New Haven Colony, under the

his owne seed" and "corrupting and tempting others to doe the like which tends to the sin of Sodomy," he should be punished according to the severity of the offence. *New-Haven's Settling in New-England and Some Lawes for Government*, 23-4.

⁵⁹³ Foster, *Long Before Stonewall*, 88.

⁵⁹⁴ Elizabeth Johnson was whipped and fined in 1642 for "unseemly practices betwixt her and another maid" and other offences such as "stubbornness to her mistress" and "stopping her ears with her hands when the Word of God was read," cf. *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County*, ed. George Francis Dow (Salem, MA: Essex institute, 1911), I:44. In March 1649, Sara Norman and Mary Hammon were presented to the General Court of Plymouth for "leude behavior each with other upon a bed." Norman was convicted and demanded to "make a publick acknowledgiment," whereas the fifteen-year-old Mary was "cleared with admonision," possibly due to her youth: Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth, in New England* (Boston, MA: William White, 1855), II:137, 163.

⁵⁹⁵ The convicted are as following: George Spencer for bestiality, New Haven 1642; William Plaine for blasphemy and pederasty, Guilford, 1646; Walter Robinson for bestiality, Milford 1655; John Knight for pederasty in New Haven, 1655; William Potter for bestiality, New Haven, 1662; Ruth Briggs for murder, New Haven and Hartford, 1668. Bremer discusses Spencer, Plaine, and Potter thoroughly. See Bremer, *Davenport*, 217-9. For brief summaries of each case, see Daniel Allen Hearn, *Legal Executions in New England: A Comprehensive Reference, 1623-1960* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1999), 9, 12, 28, 32, 41-4.

⁵⁹⁶ The murder was believed to be committed in New Haven around mid-February 1668. After initial investigation and prosecution, Briggs was sent to Hartford for trial and execution. By this time, the New Haven Colony had been merged with Connecticut. Hearn, *Legal Executions in New England*, 41-4.

leadership of Davenport and Eaton, did not enforce an unusually harsh discipline upon moral deviants at all, despite having a more elaborative set of capital laws.

Both Bremer and Slater point out New Haven's persistence in limited church membership and opposition to the Half-Way Covenant, but neither has fully articulated the meaningful connections between Davenport's church polity and their analyses of how social or religious deviants were treated in New Haven. As scholars unanimously observe, Davenport, Eaton, and fellow conservative Congregationalists like Increase Mather regarded church membership as a necessary fence to keep the ungodly away from the godly. This need to maintain a covenant community might have set the tone for what Slater calls a more conservative penal code at New Haven, where a set of unusually elaborated capital laws could be found. Nevertheless, it was likely the same clearly delineated boundary of a covenanted society that enabled New Haven to allow a more relaxed co-existence with unorthodox outsiders like Baptists and Quakers. Without the same active assessment of church membership, the Bay Colony might have felt more compelled to resort to law-making and discipline as a way to keep radical Protestants at bay. Hence a unique New Haven model: the beacon of the traditional New England Way and puritan godliness, and yet champion of religious toleration.

Conclusion

Looking at the overwhelming evidence of political marginalisation, traditional narratives of English presbyterianism from the 1650s onwards have been one of defeat. Instead of reinforcing a picture of a dying movement, Reynolds' clerical career highlights the various ways presbyterians stayed active in reforming the Church of England. Changes of tactics and alliance however did result in changes in the nature and self-definitions of the presbyterian movement. Despite temporarily endorsing *iure divino* presbyterianism at the Westminster Assembly, Reynolds would discard these inconvenient notions in the late

1650s, when the only way to achieve confessional unity was to collaborate with conservative Cromwellians to establish the supreme authority of the King-in-Parliament. Hence it was little surprise that Reynolds and fellow presbyterians switched to the royalist side and reembraced episcopacy in 1660, a polity he would proclaim as perfectly compatible with his version of presbyterianism.

English presbyterianism was actively evolving, taking on various forms and even beliefs in order to promote its core values: a national, unified government that maintained Protestant orthodoxy which, when necessary, should have the right to resist any top-down dictatorship over ecclesiastical affairs. After witnessing the rise and fall of many short-lived political powers throughout the 1650s, many in this movement, such as Reynolds, Baxter, and Calamy, realised that there was little they could do in politics as a clergyman, and only time would tell whether the current government and church polity would last. As a bishop, burdened with his puritan past and a notorious label of being an inconsistent opportunist, Reynolds would continue to grope his way forward in pursuit of an ideal Church of England.

New England in the 1650s was not plagued by the same level of political unrest, but the New World was equally troubled by divisions over church government and pastoral practices. Regardless of whether their specific analyses of Davenport's New Haven reflect the actual day-to-day life of the colony, what scholars like Bremer and Slater have helpfully observed is how New England was far from a unified and homogenous utopia. Davenport was one of those ministers who must have felt somewhat betrayed by his fellow Congregationalists, who had begun to cast away the New England Way. New Haven's severe warning in February 1657 against the Bay Colony not to leave and abate in their "first love" revealed that Davenport and Eaton still firmly believed in a *iure divino*

Congregationalism necessary for their versions of the godly reform.⁵⁹⁷ In reality, New Haven was forced to recognise an increasingly diversified New England, with each colony upholding its own approach to church membership and distinctive attitude toward heretics.

⁵⁹⁷ *Records of the Colony or Jurisdiction of New Haven*, 197.

PART III THE LAST FIERY TRIALS, 1660-88

Chapter 7 Edward Reynolds, a Presbyterian Bishop

In 1660, Edward Reynolds abandoned presbyterian polity and accepted the bishopric of Norwich. This decision marked his departure from like-minded friends, whose defeat and resulting dissent have dominated the history-writing of English presbyterianism. Reynolds' reconciliation with episcopacy nevertheless represented his continual, self-conscious pursuit of presbyterian ideals within the re-established Church of England. Reynolds focused initially on promoting church comprehension in the early 1660s and repeatedly lobbied his fellow leaders in the Church of England for a liturgy more adaptable to local needs and sensitivities. Schemes of comprehension, despite royal support, were effectively blocked by hard-line Anglicans, both clerical and lay, who saw comprehension as a slippery slope to religious diversity and a return to the chaos and violence of the previous two decades.

Although comprehension schemes failed, Reynolds sought to govern Norwich with greater toleration of Protestant nonconformity than many other bishops. He gathered like-minded clergymen around him, both in the cathedral Chapter and in the wider diocese, sometimes through ordaining and promoting friends and relatives, even those who were initially ejected after 1662. He also painstakingly promoted preaching and suppressed overly enthusiastic enforcements of ceremonial conformity by diocesan officials under him, once earning a sneering reference in 1673 by Owen Hughes, his own commissary to the diocese, to the "ingratitude and unkindness of the Presbyterian palace" in Norwich.⁵⁹⁸ Reynolds' personal triumphs and defeats in the Caroline Church opened up competing

⁵⁹⁸ Owen Hughes cited in Kenneth Fincham, "Material Evidence: The Religious Legacy of the Interregnum at St George Tombland, Norwich," in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Tyacke*, eds. Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 229; Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.b.305, no. 31.

visions of what the Church of England could have become. As a bishop, he proved to be one of a kind. His attempts to shape the restored episcopal Church into a more comprehensive, yet solidly Protestant, church did have considerable impact on what post-revolutionary Anglicanism would look like, despite being constantly confronted with the political dominance of high church ceremonialism.

Building Godly Episcopacy

On 25 and 30 April 1660, Reynolds preached before the newly-convened Convention Parliament with a clear intention of supporting the return of Charles Stuart and the restoration of episcopacy. The sermons, one preached before the Commons and the other the Lords, served one single purpose—to mobilise Parliament “to *hear, forgive, and heal the Land*.”⁵⁹⁹ On the one hand, orthodoxy should be restored to wipe out all heresies; on the other hand, tender consciences should be protected from any enforced conformity to things indifferent.⁶⁰⁰ This was the political language both moderate puritans and moderate royalists adopted in order to bring about a smooth restitution of the Stuart monarchy and episcopacy. Right after hearing Reynolds preach on 25 April, John Mordaunt (1626-75), first Viscount Mordaunt of Avalon, sent a letter to Charles that same day and praised Reynolds’ sermon before the House of Commons as “excellent, proper and honest.”⁶⁰¹

Since March 1660, Viscount Mordaunt had been involved in negotiations with the presbyterians along with royalist clergymen like George Morley (1598-1684).⁶⁰² Charles’ court was quick to spot Reynolds as a potential broker between presbyterian and

⁵⁹⁹ Edward Reynolds, *The Author and Subject of Healing in the Church* (London, 1660: Wing R1239), A3r.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, A4r, 34; *idem*, *The Meanes and Method of Healing in the Church* (London, 1660: Wing R1265), 24, 40-2. The preservation of tender conscience over things indifferent was a major theme in Reynolds’ sermons in 1660.

⁶⁰¹ John Mordaunt to King Charles II, 24-6 April 1660, Bodl., MS Clarendon 72, ff. 19r-20v, at 19v. William Ellesdon also reported to Hyde on Reynolds’ sermon on the same day, see f. 44r.

⁶⁰² Morley would soon replace Reynolds as Dean of Christ Church Oxford in July; Reynolds became Warden of his old college, Merton.

episcopalian camps. As early as 13 April, Morley disclosed to Sir Edward Hyde that those presbyterians who had “most power against them [the royalists]” were now “content to admit of the name Bishop, but not the power” for fear of an “arbitrary and tyrannical” church government.⁶⁰³ Presbyterian negotiators like Reynolds and Baxter obviously hoped to introduce some presbyterian ideals, such as a stronger clerical engagement with discipline and synodical oversight, into the soon-to-be-restored episcopal government, and they were also eager to see further concessions to their anti-ceremonialist sensibilities from the episcopalians.

After pledging that canons, ecclesiastical laws, and “a free synod” would be put in place to prevent tyranny, Morley observed that while others were not convinced, Reynolds became “fully satisfied.”⁶⁰⁴ On 9 May, Viscount Mordaunt reported to Charles that Morley had “prevailed with Reynolds and Calamy as to episcopacy and the Liturgy.”⁶⁰⁵ These discussions paved the way for a smooth meeting between presbyterian representatives and the king in The Hague later in the same month, where more amicable interactions followed.⁶⁰⁶ The presbyterian delegates professed that “they were no enemies to moderate episcopacy, only desired that such things might not be pressed upon them in God’s worship which in their judgment...to be matters indifferent.”⁶⁰⁷ Charles in return promised again to secure liberty to “tender consciences,” as stated in the Declaration of Breda.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰³ Jeremy Baker [George Morley] to Sir Edward Hyde, 13 April 1660, Bodl., MS Clarendon 71, ff. 233r-234v

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 233v

⁶⁰⁵ John Mordaunt to King Charles II, 9 May 1660, Bodl., MS Clarendon 72, f. 284r

⁶⁰⁶ London presbyterians who met Charles II in The Hague on 11 May included Reynolds, Calamy, Thomas Manton, William Spurstowe, and Thomas Case. For a thorough overview of Reynolds’ crucial role in the negotiations with Charles and collaborations with episcopalians in 1660-1, see Jeremiah, “Reynolds,” Chapter 6.

⁶⁰⁷ Sir Edward Hyde, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England begun in the Year 1641*, ed. W. Dunn Macray, vol. 6 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), Book XVI, sec. 242.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Book XVI, sec. 243.

The king's triumphant return to England marked the beginning of Reynolds' formal acceptance of episcopal polity. In June, Charles appointed Reynolds and other London presbyterians like Baxter and Calamy as royal chaplains.⁶⁰⁹ Now a committed supporter of the new regime, Reynolds denounced the Protectorate he formerly pledged loyalty to in another sermon before the House of Commons on 28 June 1660. The Cromwell family was compared to Abimelech, son of famous biblical judge Gideon, who declared himself king after killing seventy of his half-brothers and induced the Shechemites to follow him.⁶¹⁰ Abimelech was eventually "pulled down by the hands of his own Allies," the Shechemites, who were clearly compared to the Cromwellians, especially the radical ones like Charles Fleetwood and his Wallingford House party, as instruments of "the *strange conduct of the Same* [divine] *providence*."⁶¹¹ This serial political turmoil providentially brought about the restoration of the "secluded Patriots," among whom were undoubtedly royalist MPs, as well as the return of Charles, a Christ-like king "*fitted by a Crown of Thornes* to wear a Royal Diadem, and by the bitter cup of his *own Sufferings*."⁶¹²

Reynolds' change of allegiance must have seemed distasteful to many. Anthony Wood commented that the presbyterian accepted the bishopric "with great regret to his quondam brethren, whom he then left to shift for themselves."⁶¹³ And yet for Reynolds and many other moderate presbyterians, their collaborations with the restored Court precisely represented their effort to promote a distinctively puritan agenda against the reintroduction of aspects of Laudian ceremonialism. In the same sermon before Parliament, Reynolds urged moderation in the process of religious restoration, advising that "no unnecessary

⁶⁰⁹ R.O. Bucholz, ed., "The Chapel Royal: Chaplains, 1660-1837," in *Office-Holders in Modern Britain*, vol. 11 (Revised) Court Officers, 1660-1837 (London: University of London, 2006), 251-78.

⁶¹⁰ Edward Reynolds, *Divine Efficacy without Humane Power* (London, 1660: Wing R1246), 38.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, 39, 40.

⁶¹³ Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, iii, 1084.

thing may remain, as *a ground of offence*.⁶¹⁴ As bishop of Norwich, Reynolds would continue to promote a distinctively puritan spirituality that prioritised preaching and resisted what he believed to be an overly rigid ceremonialism in the next two decades.

A Short-Lived Triumph, October 1660

Twelve days after Reynolds' sermon before the House of Commons, London presbyterians presented "First Address and Proposals of the Ministers" to the king with a list of their requests. Baxter recalled that "Mr *Calamy* drew up most with Dr *Reynolds*: Dr *Reynolds* & Dr *Worth* [Edward Worth, later bishop of Killaloe] drew up that *which is against the Ceremonies*."⁶¹⁵ Addressing the ceremonies, Reynolds and Worth began with a familiar attack on the Laudian novelties, "urged upon such considerations as draw too near to the significancy and moral efficacy of sacraments themselves."⁶¹⁶ Reynolds and Worth sarcastically pointed out that these ceremonial demands had been rejected by Reformed churches abroad where the Lord was certainly worshipped in "the beauty of holiness."⁶¹⁷ When they met with the king and other bishop-elects on 22 October at Worcester House, Reynolds and fellow presbyterians further pressed that "Bishops should exercise their Church Power with the counsel and consent of Presbyters."⁶¹⁸ This proposal, brought up by episcopalians as early as the anti-Laudian reforms in 1640-1 and once enthusiastically embraced by Charles I as part of royalists' default bargain all the way up until Newport, had now become the best outcome presbyterians could possibly hope for.⁶¹⁹ John Cosin,

⁶¹⁴ Reynolds, *Divine Efficacy without Humane Power*, 16.

⁶¹⁵ Richard Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, eds. N.H. Keeble, John Coffey, and Tim Cooper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), II:79. Italicized medial texts indicate editorial extensions, whereas the italics of surnames are Baxter's original types.

⁶¹⁶ "First Address and Proposals of the Ministers," *Documents Relating to the Settlement of the Church of England by the Act of Uniformity of 1662*, ed. George Gould (England: W. Kent, 1862), 18.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 18-9.

⁶¹⁸ William Bates, *A Funeral-Sermon for the Reverend, Holy and Excellent Divine, Mr. Richard Baxter* (London, 1692: Wing B1107), 96.

⁶¹⁹ For the place of clerical counsel in various proposals of reduced episcopacy, see Milton, *ESR*, especially Chapter 4, 6. While there was essentially no hope of implementing a form of reduced episcopacy

once an active promoter of the Laudian reformation and soon-to-be bishop of Durham, protested to Charles: “If your Majesty grants this you will Unbishop your Bishops,” to which Reynolds promptly and devastatingly responded by citing *Eikon Basilike*, attributed to Charles I and published only ten days after the king’s death:⁶²⁰

*Not that I am against the managing of this Presidency and Authority in One Man by the joint Counsel and Consent of many Presbyters: I have offer’d to restore that, as a fit means to avoid those Errors, Corruptions and Partialities, which are incident to any One Man: also to avoid Tyranny, which becomes no Christians, least of all Church-men.*⁶²¹

According to William Bates, another presbyterian present at the conference, Reynolds’ appeal to “the King’s afflicted and inquiring Father” failed to immediately convince Charles II, who dismissed Reynolds by saying that *Eikon Basilike* was not infallible: “*All that is in that Book is not Gospel.*”⁶²² Although obviously reluctant to return to the highly compromised version of episcopacy that his father agreed to at Newport, Charles was not ungrateful for presbyterians’ support for his restitution and was keen to return the favour. In a Declaration issued on 25 October, the king eventually granted many of the requests in “First Address,” demonstrating his willingness to pursue a similar course of reform his father had once proposed and marking a significant, yet momentary, victory for the presbyterians.⁶²³ These concessions included the abolition of lay officials like

or a hybrid of episcopal/presbyterian government after Pride’s Purge, these ideas could still be found in some episcopalian royalist writings, e.g., Gauden, *Hieraspistes*, 263.

⁶²⁰ Bates, *A Funeral-Sermon*, 96. The authorship of *Eikon Basilike* is contested, but most scholars now hold the view that it is a collaborative royalist effort, primarily involving King Charles I and John Gauden. See Jeffrey Collins, “*Eikon Basilike* in Context: The Intellectual History of a Martyrdom,” in *Revolutionizing Politics: Culture and Conflict in England, 1620-60*, eds. Paul D. Halliday, Eleanor Hubbard, and Scott Sowerby (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021), Chapter 5; these negotiations that repeatedly returned to the terms of reduced episcopacy and what was expounded in *Eikon Basilike* confirmed Anthony Milton’s findings that the failed attempts at reaching a consensus in the 1640s nevertheless left a significant legacy. Milton, *ESR*, 215-6; Milton also briefly discussed Reynolds’ appeal to *Eikon Basilike* on p. 463.

⁶²¹ Bates, *A Funeral-Sermon*, 96-7.

⁶²² *Ibid.*, 97.

⁶²³ Bates recalled that Sir Edward Hyde intervened to moderate over this issue and brought about the conclusion that, “in weighty Causes,” bishops should consult the presbyters: *ibid.* Jeffrey Jeremiah has a

chancellors and commissaries,⁶²⁴ affirmation of greater power of local ministers over church discipline and admission of parishioners to communion, revision of the Prayer Book conducted by “learned divines of both persuasions,” and a “national synod” where the use of ceremonies could be more thoroughly discussed.⁶²⁵ In the meantime, no one should be compelled to conform to the pre-1640 ceremonies like kneeling at the communion, bowing at the name of Jesus, and using the cross in baptism.⁶²⁶ The use of the surplice was also made optional, except in the Chapel Royal, cathedrals, collegiate churches, and university college chapels.⁶²⁷

London presbyterians celebrated their triumph. Baxter recalled himself being “dejected [on 22 October], as being fully satisfied that the forme of Government in that Declaration would not be satisfactory.”⁶²⁸ Despair however turned into joy when he “mett the Kings Declaration cryed about the streets” a few days later, believing that the terms had been set “such as any sober honest Ministers might submit to.”⁶²⁹ London presbyterians, including William Gouge’s son Thomas, published a broadsheet on 16 November as a “grateful acknowledgement” to the king, in which they further pleaded

useful appendix that compares three documents, “First Address,” bishops’ answer to “First Address,” and the king’s Declaration. See Jeremiah, “Reynolds,” Appendix A.

⁶²⁴ Chancellors and commissaries were bishops and archbishops’ representative enforcers of ecclesiastical law and church discipline. Many presbyterians and other puritans saw them as part of the old, flawed episcopal government that infringed on clerical authority and had already denounced it in the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643. For commissaries’ ecclesiastical oversight in the pre-1642 Church, see Jeffery R. Hankins, “Anglican and East Anglican: The Episcopacy, the Bishop’s Commissary, and the Enforcement of Ecclesiastical Law in Early Seventeenth-Century Essex and Hertfordshire,” *Anglican and Episcopal History* 75, no. 3 (2006): 340-67.

⁶²⁵ King Charles II, *His Maiesties Declaration to All his Loving Subjects of his Kingdom of England, and Dominion of Wales, Concerning Ecclesiastical Affairs* (London, 1660: Wing C2997), 11, 14, 16.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁸ Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, II:91.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*

against the compulsory use of surplices in colleges and reordinations of those not episcopally ordained.⁶³⁰

While presbyterians might have temporarily prevailed with the king, high church episcopalians eventually prevailed in Parliament, now dominated by lay royalists. The Commons voted to reject the declaration on 28 November, and most bishops affirmed the need of episcopal ordination, now a *de facto* national policy. This provoked a long, torturous infra-presbyterian dispute over the nature of re-ordination.⁶³¹ To make things worse, the new Cavalier Parliament would spearhead a series of Acts to enforce ceremonial uniformity from 1662 onwards, resulting in the ejection of many puritan ministers and an effective exclusion of nonconformists from civil office. In March 1662, Charles made one last attempt to modify the bill of uniformity by recommending a proviso through Sir Edward Hyde, now Earl of Clarendon, to Parliament, which, if passed, would allow the king to preserve ministers of his choosing from being deprived “for not wearing the surplice or for not signing with the sign of the cross in baptism.”⁶³² While the proviso passed in the House of Lords on 9 April, with the support of several bishops including Reynolds, Sheldon, Morley, and Gauden, it was rejected in the Commons two weeks later.⁶³³ Failing to subscribe to the Act of Uniformity in 1662, many of Reynolds’

⁶³⁰ *To the Kings Most Excellent Majesty. The Humble and Grateful Acknowledgement of Many Ministers* (London, 1660: Wing C4557). The ministers listed below signed the broadsheet as representatives of many others in the following order: Samuel Clarke, Thomas Case, John Rawlinson, John Sheffield, Thomas Gouge, Gabriel Sanger, William Cooper, William Whitaker, Thomas Jacombe, Thomas Lye, John Jackson, John Meriton, Elias Pledger, William Bates, John Gibbon, and Matthew Poole. Other than Rawlinson, about whom little is known, and Meriton who would later conform, all other fourteen ministers would be ejected in 1662.

⁶³¹ Kenneth Fincham and Stephen Taylor, “The Restoration of the Church of England, 1660–1662: Ordination, Re-ordination and Conformity,” in *The Nature of the English Revolution Revisited*, eds. Stephen Taylor and Grant Tapsell (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2013), 197–232. See pp. 221–23 for presbyterians’ various take on re-ordinations. See the discussion below for Reynolds’ re-ordinations of fellow moderate puritans and ex-nonconformists as bishop of Norwich.

⁶³² 17 March and 9 April 1662, *Journal of the House of Lords*, XI:409, 425; Robert S. Bosher, *The Making of the Restoration Settlement: The Influence of the Laudians, 1649–1662* (London: Dacre Press, 1951), 250.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, 253.

presbyterian friends, including Baxter and Calamy, both of whom turned down Charles' offers of bishoprics, were now dissenters formally separated from him, now Bishop of Norwich.

Failed Attempts at Comprehension, 1667-8

Despite initial failures to incorporate presbyterian values into restored episcopacy, Reynolds, like-minded clergymen, and dissenters continued to campaign for comprehension to encourage more individuals to re-join the established Church without a troubled conscience. On 7 November 1666, Reynolds preached a sermon on moderation before the House of Lords, listing various kinds of moderation and called for “moderation of *Power*”: “we may use *our power* and *authority* sharply and severely, to the grieving, rather than benefiting our poor Brethren.”⁶³⁴ Before fellow peers, Reynolds pleaded that none would be “ακριβοδίκαιοι,” that is, “severe Exactors of the extremity of Justice, but to adorne our authority, and render it amiable with clemency and meeknesse.”⁶³⁵

On the other hand, Reynolds affirmed moderation of “*Humility and Modesty*” when it came to differences “in Matters Ritual.”⁶³⁶ Appealing to two eminent episcopalians, William Chillingworth (1602-44) and John Bramhall (*bap.* 1594, *d.* 1663), the late archbishop of Armagh, Reynolds argued that “some learned men” had extended their moderation or flexibility “even to the Case of *Subscriptions* by Law required.”⁶³⁷

⁶³⁴ Edward Reynolds, *A Sermon Preached before the Peers, in the Abby Church at Westminster, Novemb. 7. 1666. Being a Day of Solemn Humiliation for the Continuing Pestilence* (London, 1666: Wing R1281), 7. The key verse was Philippians 4.5: “Let your Moderation be known unto all Men. The Lord is at hand” (p. 1).

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, 22-3.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*, 24. The two quotations are in the margin: “For the Church of *England* I am persuaded that the constant Doctrine of it is so pure and orthodox, that whosoever believes it, and lives according to it, undoubtedly he shall be saved; and that there is no error in it which may necessitate or warrant any man to disturb the Peace, or renounce the Communion of it. This, in my opinion, is all intended by Subscription; and thus much if you conceive me not ready to subscribe, your Charity I assure you is much mistaken,” cf. William Chillingworth, preface to *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation* (Oxford, 1638: RSTC 5138), section 39; “We do not suffer any man to reject the 39 Articles of the Church of *England* at his pleasure yet neither do we look upon them as Essentials of saving Faith, or Legacies of Christ and his

Chillingworth, Laud's godson, was a notorious irenicist who combined denunciation of doctrinaire tendencies and theological divisions within the Laudian Church with a strong dislike for aggressive puritans.⁶³⁸ Bramhall, on the other hand, was a card-carrying Laudian who had painstakingly carried out the Archbishop's will in Ireland in the 1630s.⁶³⁹ These adroitly chosen examples reinforced Reynolds' point that since, as the Thirty-nine Articles demonstrated, the re-established Church maintained its doctrinal purity, none should refuse subscription simply because of their misgivings about certain theological or liturgical statements of the Church.

Reynolds' 1666 sermon has been regarded as the key sermon that paved the way for renewed attempts at comprehension in 1667-8.⁶⁴⁰ The Anglican and presbyterian collaborators had high hopes that a bill would successfully come through, with the support of none other than the king himself. John Wilkins (1614-72), the king's chaplain, Dean of Ripon, and soon-to-be bishop of Chester despite his strong associations with the Cromwell family, was the main negotiator with the presbyterians, among whom were Baxter, William Bates, and Thomas Manton.⁶⁴¹ On 4 January 1668, Wilkins held a meeting with

Apostles: but in a mean, as pious Opinions, fitted for the preservation of Unity. Neither do we oblige any man to believe them, but only not to contradict them," cf. John Bramhall, *Schisme Garded and Beaten back* (The Hague, 1658: Wing B4232), 190-1.

⁶³⁸ John R.T. Lamont, *Divine Faith* (London; New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 94-7; Chillingworth, *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation*, 386. Chillingworth had also converted to the Church of Rome in 1629 and reconverted back to the Protestant faith around 1631-2, with lifelong scruples about the Thirty-nine Articles. See William Laud to William Chillingworth, 5 September 1632, *The Further Correspondence of William Laud*, ed. Kenneth Fincham (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2018), 67-8, see also fn. 2.

⁶³⁹ John McCafferty, *The Reconstruction of the Church of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). This is so far the definitive account of the Laudian campaign in Ireland and John Bramhall's central role in it.

⁶⁴⁰ Walter G. Simon, "Comprehension in the Age of Charles II," *Church History* 31, no. 4 (1962): 440; Philip Connell, *Secular Chains: Poetry and the Politics of Religion from Milton to Pope* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 84; Milton, *ESR*, 505.

⁶⁴¹ Wilkins' wife was Oliver Cromwell's widowed sister, Robina. While having strong connections with the Cromwell family, Wilkins shared Reynolds' moderate sentiments and did not hesitate to conform to the Act of Uniformity in 1662. John Henry, "Wilkins, John (1614-72)," *ODNB*; Judith Maltby, "'Extravagencies and Impertinencies': Set Forms, Conceived and Extempore Prayer in Revolutionary England," in *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain*, eds. Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 240.

five bishops, Reynolds, William Nicholson of Gloucester, William Fuller of Lincoln, Herbert Croft of Hereford, and Walter Blandford of Oxford, to share his proposed concessions “to effect an understanding among all moderate Protestants to the peace of the Kingdom.”⁶⁴² Reynolds further proposed that indulgence be given “to those who did not feel they could comply with this new plan.”⁶⁴³ Several meetings with Baxter, Bates, and Manton followed. Not only were ceremonies like surplice-wearing, kneeling for communion, and the sign of the cross at baptism omitted or made indifferent, but Protestants who remained nonconforming, once registered, would be granted liberty to establish their own public worship.⁶⁴⁴

Despite strong support from the king, many bishops, and lay authorities, such as George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham (1628-87), the enterprise was jeopardised when a copy of the drafted bill was leaked to high church Anglicans in late January through Seth Ward, bishop of Salisbury, whom Wilkins had failed to lobby. When Parliament reconvened on 10 February, the House of Commons “did mightily and generally inveigh against it [comprehension]” and prevented the bill from being introduced on the day.⁶⁴⁵ Not only did the high church party, led by Archbishop Sheldon, kill the bill, but they successfully counterattacked by passing a new bill to revive the 1664 Conventicle Act on 28 April.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴² William Fuller cited by Walter G. Simon, *The Restoration Episcopate* (New York, NY: Bookman Associates, 1965), 162; other bishops involved in the comprehension scheme included William Piers, bishop of Bath and Wells, and Henry King, bishop of Chichester.

⁶⁴³ Edward Reynolds cited by Simon, *Restoration Episcopate*, 163.

⁶⁴⁴ The proposed toleration was subject to a three-year trial. This comprehension bill was never published, but Barlow kept a draft, now preserved in “[Pape]rs for and against Toleration. Anno 1667 1668,” Bodl., MS B.14.15, Linc., 5. This is a volume of treatises bound together and annotated by Thomas Barlow on the comprehension scheme of 1667-8.

⁶⁴⁵ Samuel Pepys, Monday 10 February 1668, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, vol. 9 1668-9, eds. Robert Latham and William Matthews (London: HarperCollins, 1971), 60. For a more detailed overview of the comprehension scheme of 1667-8, see Simon, “Comprehension,” 440-8.

⁶⁴⁶ Jeremiah, “Reynolds,” 303.

In his 1666 sermon on moderation, Reynolds concluded his address by pointing his hearers, the House of Lords, to God's wrath towards England, the Israel of his day: "his *Anger hath not been turned away, but his Hand is stretched out still.*"⁶⁴⁷ The preacher capitalised on the heightened apocalyptic sentiments due to the ongoing war with the Dutch, the lately subsided Great Plague of London, and the Great Fire of London in early September, to plead for repentance and national godliness as a remedy. Now preaching before Charles on 22 March 1668, when it had become clear that the latest attempt at comprehension had utterly failed, Reynolds condemned the "never enough-lamented Divisions" and indignantly concluded: "so long as *Ephraim* is against *Manasseh*, and *Manasseh* against *Ephraim*, and both against *Judah*, we may Justly fear that *God's Anger is not yet turned away, but that his Hand is stretched out still.*"⁶⁴⁸

The comprehension scheme of 1668 has not received enough scholarly attention possibly because it failed to bring about concrete changes and did not involve some of the Anglican authorities who would become influential in post-revolutionary England like John Tillotson and Edward Stillingfleet.⁶⁴⁹ Their failed attempts at comprehension in the 1670s were more intimately bound up with the political alliance led by Anthony Ashley Cooper, first Earl of Shaftesbury, against James, Duke of York, foreshadowing the revolution of 1688. The 1668 comprehension scheme however revealed a crucial shift in English Protestant ecclesiology. Not only were there dissenters who organised their own worship and even normalised separatism, but there were also bishops like Reynolds who, despite preferring comprehension, started to entertain the idea of a lawful co-existence of

⁶⁴⁷ Reynolds, *A Sermon Preached before the Peers*, 46-7.

⁶⁴⁸ *Idem*, *A Sermon Preached before the King at White-Hall on March 22, 1667, being Easter-day* (London, 1668: Wing R1283), 12.

⁶⁴⁹ Tillotson and Stillingfleet will emerge as leading Anglicans who renewed attempts at comprehension in the 1670s, but in 1668-8, they were merely marginal figures even if they were ever involved.

an established Church and dissenting churches. The attempt to repeal the penalisation of conventicles was essentially a concession that there could be more than one true church in England—a notion still quite unimaginable to many in the 1660s.⁶⁵⁰

Building a Godly Diocese

Even though Parliament rejected the king's declaration of October 1660 and the subsequent comprehension schemes at the national level failed, Reynolds' very existence and work as a bishop was a conspicuous example of continuous efforts to achieve reconciliation between moderate puritans and the restored regime. Norwich's subscription book shows that several ordinands and ministers were allowed to subscribe according to the royal declaration of October when they were instituted.⁶⁵¹ Reynolds' enforcement of the Act of Uniformity in mid-1662 demonstrated the same latitude. Within only fourteen weeks, Reynolds was to ensure that all clergymen had performed three tests: (1) the person should read Morning and Evening Prayer from the new Prayer Book, and declare "openly and publicly...his unfeigned assent and consent" to all of its content; (2) the person should denounce all forms of arms against the king as unlawful and abjure the Solemn League and Covenant; (3) the person must have received episcopal ordination, or he should seek the ordination speedily.⁶⁵² The enforcement became even more challenging when there was a severe delay in the publication of the new Prayer Book until only a few

⁶⁵⁰ This however is not the only nor the earliest example of such concession. One can point to the removal of the wedding communion rubric in the 1662 Prayer Book as an implicit concession on the part of the bishops that effectively ended the liturgical monopoly of the national Church in weddings. Diarmaid MacCulloch, "Roods, Screens and Weddings," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, first view (May 2021): 8-14.

⁶⁵¹ Fincham and Taylor, "The Restoration of the Church of England, 1660-1662," 220, fn. 62; see also NRO, DN/SUB/1/1 and 1/2. Many subscribed "juxta declarationem Regiam," such as Nathanael Fairfax, Edward Beckham, and John Lougher: NRO, DN/SUB/1/1, 238. There were many more, as shown on these Book of Assents.

⁶⁵² John Raithby, ed., *Statutes of the Realm: Volume 5, 1628-80* (London: Great Britain Record Commission, 1819), 365-7, BHO.

days before the deadline, 17 August 1662, making the liturgy inaccessible to many.⁶⁵³ Puritans in Norwich might have heard that their bishop was prepared to be deliberately lenient, however. Not only was conformity relatively easier to secure due to the pressing deadline and consequent lack of further inquiry, but Reynolds also intentionally drafted his own visitation articles that left out those that might be too offensive to puritans.⁶⁵⁴

Since bishops conducted their first visitations without a standardised set of visitation articles, they each designed their own versions based on the drafted articles approved by a committee of bishops in March 1662.⁶⁵⁵ While high church bishops like Matthew Wren, once bishop of Norwich in the late 1630s and an enthusiastic Laudian, now bishop of Ely, added even more questions to the drafted articles, Reynolds allowed significant omissions or modifications and thus worked with what I.M. Green calls a “decidedly diluted version” of the articles.⁶⁵⁶ Reynolds’ articles asked whether ministers had been “freely presented, and legally instituted,” but did not mention episcopal ordination at all.⁶⁵⁷ Many other bishops, however, including John Gauden, despite his moderate sympathies, clearly required ministers to be episcopally ordained.⁶⁵⁸ While Reynolds did inquire whether ministers had “read publick Prayers...and celebrate[d] every divine Office, in such form, manner, and habit as...[was] prescribed?,” the language was

⁶⁵³ I.M. Green, *The Re-establishment of the Church of England, 1660-1663* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 145. Ralph Josselin, a presbyterian and diarist, recorded that the revised liturgy only appeared in Essex on 16 August and lamented it to be a “sad case” that men were likely to “bee put in by this act of uniformity.” See Ralph Josselin, *The Diary of Ralph Josselin, 1616-1683*, ed. Alan Macfarlane (London: British Academy, 2015), 491.

⁶⁵⁴ Jeremiah, “Reynolds,” 331. Jeremiah observes how in just three days, from August 13 to 15, 383 subscriptions were secured in Norwich, and reasonably argues that “by gathering subscriptions to the Act this way, there was no opportunity to inquire into the subscribers’ views. The subscription book or printed form was filled in by the signer, the fee was paid and the subscription was complete.”

⁶⁵⁵ Green, *Re-establishment*, 138.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁷ Edward Reynolds, *Articles to be Enquired of in the Diocese of Norwich: In the First Visitation of the Right Reverend Father in God, Edward, Lord Bishop of Norwich* (London, 1662: Wing C4072), 2.

⁶⁵⁸ John Gauden, *Articles of Visitation and Enquiry Concerning Matters Ecclesiasticall: According to the Laws and Canons of the Church of England, Exhibited to the Ministers, Church-wardens, and Side-men of Every Parish within the Diocese of Worcester* (London, 1662: Wing C4090), 3.

deliberately softened when one compares it to other visitation articles. George Morley, bishop of Winchester, asked if ministers had loyally followed the “form and words prescribed in the Book of Common-Praier, without any addition, omission, or alteration of the same.”⁶⁵⁹ Finally, most bishops recommended with varying strictness the use of the surplice, whereas Reynolds’ articles never raised any questions about it.⁶⁶⁰ These distinctively puritan modifications were however far from a sign of godliness for some other clergy in Reynolds’ diocese, and in the years to come, they would repeatedly clash with the Bishop and his party.

When Reynolds arrived in Norwich as the new bishop, he was greeted by a strongly royalist cathedral chapter that had very little sympathy towards an ex-puritan like him who had benefited greatly from their misfortune during the civil wars. Three prebendaries, John Spendlove, Edmund Porter, and Edward Younge, as well as a few lay officers, like the chapter clerk Thomas Searle, were restored.⁶⁶¹ Searle’s “Catalogue of All the Deans of the Cathedral Church of Norwich” was a devout conformist’s story of lament over both the destitution of Norwich Cathedral, “poor plundered Zion,” as well as personal

⁶⁵⁹ George Morley, *Articles of Visitation & Enquiry Concerning Matters Ecclesiastical: Exhibited to the Ministers, Church-wardens, and Side-men of every Parish within the Diocese of Winchester, in the Primary Episcopal Visitation of the Right Reverend Father in God, George, by Divine Providence Lord Bishop of Winchester* (London, 1662: Wing C4087), 3.

⁶⁶⁰ Gauden asked if the surplice and other ornaments were properly prepared for use. Gauden, *Articles*, 2. Morley required ministers to affirm that they had actually worn them. Morley, *Articles*, 4.

⁶⁶¹ Other restored lay officers included the auditor Jeffrey Spendlove and the understeward Augustine Reeve. Ian Atherton and Victor Morgan, “Revolution and Retrenchment: The Cathedral, 1630-1720,” in *Norwich Cathedral: Church, City, and Diocese, 1096-1996*, eds. Ian Atherton, Eric Fernie, Christopher Harper-Bill, and Hassell Smith (London: Hambledon, 1996), 558-9. Younge was a former prebendary of Exeter under the patronage of Ralph Brownrigg, bishop of Exeter and a moderate conformist, before being sequestered during the civil wars. Porter had written extensively against puritans in defence of Prayer Book worship. Other three prebendaries installed in 1662 were Vincent Peirse, Joseph Loveland, and George Kent. Peirse was equally royalist, having served chaplain to both King Charles I and II and would be chaplain to King James II as well. See Francis Blomefield, “The City of Norwich, Chapter 40: Deans, Vicars-General, or Chancellors, Archdeacons, Commissaries, Officials, and Prebends,” in *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk* (London: W Miller, 1806), III:617-71. For a brief discussion of Porter’s pre-1640 career as prebendary of Norwich Cathedral, see Matthew Reynolds, “Predestination and Parochial Dispute in the 1630s: The Case of the Norwich Lectureships,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 59, no. 3 (July 2008): 407-25.

suffering during the Interregnum, which then abruptly finished on a joyful note when the author realised that the king had returned.⁶⁶² Many newcomers were equally anti-puritan, including the dean, John Crofts, whose family was very close to Charles.⁶⁶³ Like Crofts, many prebendaries, including Spendlove, Porter, Younge, and newcomers like Vincent Peirse, had strong East Anglican roots and would have seen Reynolds as an outsider whatever his theological views. Sensitive to his delicate position and keen to present himself as a bishop after a model of reduced episcopacy, Reynolds expressed the hope that the following style of government would not be “grievous” to his cathedral chapter:

After the Example of the *Antient Bishops* in the primitive and purer ages of the Church, who were wont to sit with their Clergy and preside in an Ecclesiastical Senate, I shall in matters of weight and difficulty intreat the *advice and assistance* of you who are *Presbyteri urbis*, in order to the more safe, judicious, regular, and inoffensive determining of them.⁶⁶⁴

This adroit piece of antiquarianism was not only Reynolds’ attempt to appeal to the vanity of his future colleagues, but a deliberate allusion to a specific form of episcopacy that many episcopalians and royalists had anxiously defended as early as 1640.⁶⁶⁵ And yet even if Reynolds might have begun his episcopate with an uncritical vision of reduced episcopacy, he would soon realise that being conciliatory was far from enough for a smooth running of a diocese when the Norwich cathedral chapter was frequently a source

⁶⁶² Atherton and Morgan, “Revolution and Retrenchment,” 557-8; Thomas Searle, “A Catalogue of All the Deans of the Cathedral Church of Norwich,” LPL, MS 593, 279-88. Atherton and Morgan observe that Searle first called himself “*tristissimum* (‘the saddest of all’)” on the title page but eventually drew a line through the word. See Atherton and Morgan, “Revolution and Retrenchment,” 557-8; Searle “A Catalogue,” 279.

⁶⁶³ Crofts’ sister Cicely was a maid of honour to Charles’ mother, Queen Henrietta Maria. His brother Baron William Crofts (*d.* 1677) was in favour with Charles, whose illegitimate son James Scott was put under Crofts’ care and known as James Crofts before being formally presented at court after the Restoration and made Duke of Monmouth. Stephen Porter, “Crofts, William, Baron Crofts (*d.* 1677),” *ODNB*.

⁶⁶⁴ Reynolds, epistle dedicatory to his ordination sermon preached on 22 September 1661, *Preaching of Christ*.

⁶⁶⁵ While scholars often refer to the incorporation of clerical counsel into episcopal government as Ussherian, there were many other episcopalians who advocated for it from 1640 onwards, such as Herbert Thorndike and John Williams. See Milton, *ESR*, 121-2. Milton also briefly discusses Reynolds’ ordination sermon on p. 504.

of tensions rather than a supportive “Ecclesiastical Senate.” The cathedral chapter managed to humiliate their bishop and one of his close associates, John Mills, whom Reynolds appointed as the diocesan chancellor on 13 September 1661, by refusing to confirm the patent of Mills’ office. No explanation was given until 1673, when Herbert Astley (1618-81), yet another “great lover” of King Charles I and a well-connected East-Anglian clergyman safely shielded by his Norfolk gentry family, succeeded Crofts to be dean: “his [Mills’] hand had been in blood [when serving as a judge advocate in the parliamentary army], having condemned to death diverse of the Kings friends.”⁶⁶⁶ There might have been brewing grudges towards the bishop since 1660, when Astley failed to secure the archdeaconry of Norfolk through the recommendation of his kinsman Sir Jacob Astley.⁶⁶⁷ The Astleys would have found out soon afterwards to their dismay that Bishop Reynolds had arranged the office for his own son.

Rejection of a confirmation was undoubtedly an outright insult to both Mills, who resigned in the same year, and the bishop, whose past career paralleled Mills’. Both were parliamentarian visitors to Oxford in 1649, and while Reynolds, the more prominent presbyterian of the two, was appointed vice-chancellor of Oxford and dean of Christ Church, Mills was installed as canon there.⁶⁶⁸ Both rejected the Engagement oath and were consequently expelled from the university. Since Mills’ career trajectory mirrored

⁶⁶⁶ Blomefield, “The City of Norwich, Chapter 40,” 617-71; Herbert Astley to Henry Bennet, earl of Arlington, 24 February 1673, Bodl., MS Tanner 133, f. 129r. In this letter, Astley mentioned that he believed Mills must have received “a full acco[un]t” from Crofts in the past. This might have been true, and Mills might have seen the arrival of a new Dean as an opportunity to finally obtain confirmation. Upon Mills’ request, Astley proposed to the Chapter to confirm the Chancellor’s patent again, but “it was refused by all the pr[e]bendarys.”

⁶⁶⁷ Jeremiah, “Reynolds,” 347. This Jacob Astley cannot be the famous Sir Jacob Astley (1579-1652) but could be his grandson Jacob (1640-1729). Jacob Astley describes Herbert Astley as “my dear kinsman,” whom he already “bestowed the living” of chaplaincy to the Earl of Northampton. See Jacob Astley to Edward Reynolds, 1660, Bodl., MS Tanner 285, f. 157r.

⁶⁶⁸ Montagu Burrows, ed., *The Register of the Visitors of the University of Oxford, from A.D. 1647 to A.D. 1658* (London: Printed for the Camden Society, 1881), lxii, 14.

Reynolds' and it was through Reynolds that Mills became chancellor, Crofts, later Astley, and the chapter of Norwich were essentially questioning the legitimacy of Reynolds' authority as their bishop.

Recruiting a Bishop's Party: Reordinations and Partial Conformity in Norwich

In the face of significant opposition, the bishop knew he needed his own people to run the diocese as he thought best. Reynolds had been able to install his son Edward as archdeacon of Norfolk in 1661 but needed to wait for other archdeacons to vacate their offices before bringing in more like-minded clergymen. In 1668, Reynolds appointed his brother John as archdeacon of Norwich (1668-76) and later his son-in-law John Conant (1676-94) as John's successor.⁶⁶⁹ Conant, formerly Rector of Exeter College, Oxford (1649-62), had been ejected and did not conform until 1670, when he was re-ordained by his father-in-law.⁶⁷⁰ Conant married Reynolds' daughter in August 1651, just five months after Reynolds was deprived of his deanery of Christ Church and moved back to Braunston. Unlike his father-in-law, Conant took the Engagement oath and fared better in the 1650s. He was made regius professor of divinity in 1654 and, like Reynolds, vice-chancellor of the university in 1657. After being ejected, he regularly attended parish services at All Saints, Northampton, where his father-in-law had been vicar in 1627-8 and where he himself would be vicar in 1671.⁶⁷¹ Conant's son intentionally downplayed his father's nonconformity, saying that the only surprising fact about his father's conformity was that he did not conform sooner.⁶⁷² It was however revealing that Conant was

⁶⁶⁹ Blomefield, "The city of Norwich, chapter 40," 617-71.

⁶⁷⁰ Conant was first ordained by the presbytery at Salisbury in 1652. R.M. Serjeantson, *A History of the Church of All Saints, Northampton*, illustrated by Thomas Shepard (Northampton: William Mark, 1901), 220-1.

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 218-22. Reynolds had also been vicar here in 1627-8.

⁶⁷² John Conant, *The Life of the Reverend and Venerable John Conant* (London: C. & J. Rivington, 1823), 35. Similarly, nonconformist preacher John Quick, in his *Icones Sacrae Anglicanae*, claimed that Conant already acknowledged the lawfulness and necessity of episcopacy and a set liturgy eleven years

remembered as having re-examined the established liturgy before being re-ordained, as testified by his own son:

This appears from his [Conant's] papers in my hands, running through many of the passages in the common prayer that have been objected against, and giving such orthodox senses of them as he concludes were agreeable to the judgment of the right reverend and pious compilers thereof. . . . [T]hey might reconcile the most scrupulous to join in these excellent forms of prayer.⁶⁷³

This seems to indicate how partial conformists were brought into the national Church by moderate bishops like Reynolds, who deliberately “sweeten[ed] the pill of re-ordination.”⁶⁷⁴ As Richard Baxter observed: “[there were] very able worthy Men, who Conformed and Subscribed upon this Inducement, that the Bishop bid them [*Do it in their own sence*]: And so they Subscribed to the Parliament’s words, and put their own sence upon them only by word of mouth or in some by-paper.”⁶⁷⁵ Another notable convert Reynolds re-ordained was Samuel Crossman (*bap.* 1625, *d.* 1684), best remembered by his lovely verse that has become a hymn, “My Song is Love Unknown.” A hostile source reported from Norwich in November 1665 to Henry Muddiman, an influential private journalist who would soon start publishing the *London Gazette*: “[Crossman,] one of the most notorious Presbyterians in Suffolk. . . [who] had not subscribed to conformity[,]” was “ordained privately by Bp Reynolds.”⁶⁷⁶ Not only did Reynolds re-ordain semi-conformists, but he recommended friends to seek re-ordinations from like-minded bishops. Puritan minister George Sanderson recalled that it was “many reverend friends (especially Dr. Reynolds)” who encouraged him to go to Thomas Sydserf, Bishop of Galloway or

before the minister conformed. See Milton, *ESR*, 497; Quick, “*Icones Sacrae Anglicanae*,” DWL Quick MSS 38.34, 727.

⁶⁷³ Conant, *Life*, 35.

⁶⁷⁴ Fincham and Taylor, “The Restoration of the Church of England, 1660–1662,” 220. Several examples of how other moderate bishops did the same can be found on pp. 220–21.

⁶⁷⁵ Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, II:190. The square brackets are part of the copy-text retained in this scholarly edition.

⁶⁷⁶ William Newell to Henry Muddiman, 3 November 1665, TNA, SP 29/136, f. 18v. Crossman would become a prebendary of Bristol Cathedral in 1667 and later Dean of Bristol in 1683.

Whithorn, from whom Sanderson “had orders...without any rigid (& indeed feared) impositions.”⁶⁷⁷ In order to consolidate clerical support and promote his own version of a godly church, Reynolds not only granted a much easier process of subscription to semi-conformists, but could at times resort to blatant nepotism, extreme even by the standards of his time. Reynolds’ opponents were undoubtedly furious at what they must have thought was questionable in the bishop’s behaviour.

Conflicting Versions of Godliness in Norwich Parishes

Tensions between Reynolds and his cathedral chapter reflected existing conflicts across the whole diocese. Puritan leaning church authorities and local magistrates must have been aware of how popular the restoration of the Stuart monarchy and the re-establishment of the old Church of England were.⁶⁷⁸ The city corporation of Norwich had to put a stop to the fervent celebrations that had continued for nearly a week after the Restoration.⁶⁷⁹ This enthusiasm was, at least for some, bound up with an ecstatic embrace of the return of cathedrals and affirmation of pre-1642 ceremonialism. Norwich-based polymath and physician Sir Thomas Browne (1605-82) lamented the destruction and celebrated the repair of Norwich Cathedral in his short tract *Repertorium*, including a frequently quoted detail of how a new “fair, well-tuned, plain organ” was set up by Dean Crofts and later “painted, and beautifully adorned” at the personal expense of his

⁶⁷⁷ George Sanderson, 30 December 1661, Bodl., MS Rawlinson Letters 52, f. 97r; Sydserf was a frequent ordainer who, being deeply sympathetic towards moderate presbyterians, was notoriously lax in practice. He ended up ordaining most people between May 1660 and August 1662. See Fincham and Taylor, “The Restoration of the Church of England, 1660–1662,” 208-10. Fincham and Taylor further observe that moderate bishops tended to ordain many between 1660 and 1662 whereas bishops with stronger Laudian sentiments like John Cosin of Durham and George Morley of Worcester were often inactive. This is possibly due to Laudian bishops’ stress on a rigorous assessment of candidates’ suitability and conformity and what they believed to be an appropriately heightened view of ordination, see pp. 210-2, 226-7.

⁶⁷⁸ Atherton and Morgan, “Revolution and Retrenchment,” 557-8.

⁶⁷⁹ Ronald Hutton, *The Restoration: A Political and Religious History of England and Wales, 1658–1667* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 125-6; NRO, NCR 16a/23, Mayors’ Court Book, 10 February 1654-16 June 1666, f. 120r.

“honoured friend Dr. Herbert Astley.”⁶⁸⁰ Browne may not be a zealous ceremonialist and he evidently admired Reynolds, his “honoured friend...much of the temper of his predecessor, Dr. Joseph Hall, of singular affability, meekness, and humility,” but his clerical friends as well as many lay sponsors for a swift restoration of Norwich cathedral loathed their new bishop’s indifference to their attempt at a neo-Laudian revival.⁶⁸¹

Ongoing clashes between two contrasting ecclesiological ideals found its occasional outbursts in the localities, both within parish churches as well as on the street. Confronted with the growing dissent, the acquiescent bishop, often supported by equally sympathetic civil authorities, aroused the suspicions and indignation of many who struggled to see Reynolds as a genuine episcopalian. An anonymous informer once wrote to Archbishop Sheldon that Reynolds claimed “that there was noe much difference, between the presbyterians, and the Church of England”: “if wee would descend one step to them, and they ascend one [step] to us, they might very well agree.”⁶⁸² The letter went on to accuse Reynolds of deliberately encouraging “diverse Presbyterians” to preach, indignantly protesting that the bishop’s outright appreciation of “seditious & factious preachers” had discouraged many.⁶⁸³ The report then ended with a revealing complaint that while Reynolds missed “not a sermon or lecture in all and whole City of Norwich,” he

⁶⁸⁰ Sir Thomas Browne, “*Repertorium*, or, Some Account of the Tombs and Monuments in the Cathedral Church of Norwich, in 1680,” in *Posthumous Works of the Learned Sir Thomas Browne, Kt. M.D. Late of Norwich* (London, 1715: ESTC T206578), 32-3. Browne began this work in the 1660s but would not finish it until 1680. While Browne lamented the damages done to the cathedral, his writing clearly lacked the strong indignation that characterised many royalist sources of this period. For a more thorough discussion of Browne and his *Repertorium*, see Reid Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Kevin, Killeen, ““In the Time of the Late Civil Wars’: Post-Restoration Browne and the Political Memory of *Repertorium*,” in “*A Man Very Well Studyed*”: *New Contexts for Thomas Browne*, eds. Kathryn Murphy and Richard Todd (Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill, 2008), 171-89.

⁶⁸¹ Browne, “*Repertorium*,” 20-1; for the restoration of the cathedral and donations it solicited, see Atherton and Morgan, “Revolution and Retrenchment,” 559-61.

⁶⁸² An informer to Gilbert Sheldon, undated, Bodl., Sheldon Papers, Add C. 304a, f. 68r. This undated letter was most likely written in the late 1660s, possibly in 1668 or 1669, since the letters transcribed before and after it are all dated around this time.

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*

“seldome or never” attended weekday services where “divine service” was read, even though the bishop had “passed by the very doore.”⁶⁸⁴ Considering how Reynolds justified his return to episcopacy in 1660 and his active promotion of preaching and toleration of nonconformity in the subsequent years, the informer was likely telling the truth.

In late 1670, the Corporation of King’s Lynn petitioned the Dean, Herbert Astley, and the Chapter of Norwich, to remove Mordaunt Webster, curate of St Margaret’s, King’s Lynn, for neglecting preaching duties.⁶⁸⁵ Webster was installed curate of St Margaret’s in November 1667 by the patronage of the Dean and Chapter of Norwich, and in 1669, he accepted the vicarage of All Saints, South Lynn.⁶⁸⁶ This meant that Webster was required to preach at St Margaret’s, its chapel St Nicholas, and All Saints, South Lynn. St Margaret’s was the main borough church and the size of a cathedral, and despite being called a chapel, St Nicholas was a huge parish church as well. These obligations proved too heavy for the minister to fulfil. Deeply dissatisfied with Webster, the Corporation deprived the minister of his stipend. In response, Webster stopped preaching on Sunday afternoons and only read the Homilies. Sometimes it appeared that Webster did not officiate at afternoon services at all. In a letter sent to Astley and his Chapter on 21 December 1670, the Corporation compared St Margaret’s parishioners to “infants put from the brest [breast]” who “starve[d] for want of spirituall food” due to the “Famin[e] of the Word,” i.e., a serious lack of preaching.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁵ The most thorough study of Mordaunt Webster is Amos C. Miller, “A Man of ‘Unquiet Spirit,’” *British Catholic History* 17, issue 1 (May 1984): 1-16. The earliest date of this dispute was 9 December 1670.

⁶⁸⁶ A curate of St Margaret’s was an equivalent of a rector or vicar, thanks to the peculiar history of St Margaret’s as a former priory church. For a more detailed history of St Margaret’s and St Nicholas, see Francis Blomefield, “Freebridge Hundred and Half: Lynn” in *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk* (London: W Miller, 1808), VIII:476-533.

⁶⁸⁷ “Complaint of the inhabitants of Lynn-Regis against Mordaunt Webster, 21 Dec 1670,” Bodl., MS Tanner 134, f. 99r.

In order to address the lack of sermons, Reynolds appointed Timothy Puller (*d.* 1694) as a lecturer to fill in for the Sunday afternoon services. Reynolds was however enraged when he heard that Webster deliberately “hinder[ed] Puller” and insisted on continuing reading the Homilies rather than preaching.⁶⁸⁸ Reynolds delivered a direct reprimand to Webster whose defiance was a “downright breach” of his promise to Reynolds and an “outfacing” of the authority of the bishop.⁶⁸⁹ Seeing that the bishop’s rebuke failed to effect any change, the Corporation decided to petition Archbishop Sheldon against Webster directly. The Corporation contrasted “a very mean young man, neith[e]r in Preist [*sic*] -orders nor mast[e]r of Arts,” sent by Webster to Sunday morning services at St Margaret’s, who “read divine service...without a sermon,” to Puller, who was “Bach[elo]r in Divinity, and ordered by the Bp [Reynolds].”⁶⁹⁰ They further accused Webster of deliberately reading homilies after evening prayers in order to prevent Puller from preaching. Shortly after receiving the petition, Sheldon sent a letter to Astley along with the petition on 14 November 1671 that asked Astley to speedily resolve the matter, explicitly recommending that the Dean and the Corporation should “consult together,” and if necessary, seek advice from Reynolds.⁶⁹¹ The Archbishop’s message was clear: there was no point in antagonising a unified City Corporation and a local bishop over one deliberately combative troublemaker.

The rest of the story centred on Webster’s fatal overconfidence and downfall. Judging that Astley was a fellow high churchman, Webster wrote to the Dean and accused Reynolds of encouraging “factious persons” like Henry Bell, Mayor of King’s Lynn and a

⁶⁸⁸ Edward Reynolds to Mordaunt Webster, August 1671, Bodl., MS Tanner 134, f. 129r.

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁰ “Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Common-Council of Lynn-Regis to Archbp. Sheldon,” Bodl., MS Tanner 134, f. 147r.

⁶⁹¹ Archbishop Gilbert Sheldon to Herbert Astley, 14 November 1671, Bodl., MS Tanner 134, f. 146r.

leading parishioner of St Margaret's, who behaved "rather like the Bishop of the Diocese."⁶⁹² Evoking Laudian criticisms of Calvin's undue influences on England's Protestantism and reassertion of clerical power over secular authorities, Webster scornfully remarked that Bell's behaviour would only lead one to guess that the mayor was "a magistrate of Geneva, then [*sic*] where the discipline of the Church of England prevayles [prevails]," a telling insult against his ex-puritan bishop.⁶⁹³ Webster was not entirely wrong in depicting his conflict with lay leaders of St Margaret's as part of the larger dual power struggle of Norwich's anti-puritan cathedral chapter with on the one hand their bishop, and on the other the godly in King's Lynn. The local Corporation must have resented the distant cathedral that by historic accident, called the shots in ministerial appointments from more than forty miles away. Yet unaware of Sheldon's order for Astley to "give that Corporacon & Towne better satisfaction," Webster imprudently characterised himself as a defender of the Church against subversive lay puritanism and demanded support from the Dean: "if any burden shall be brought upon the Church, it is your selves, and not I who must beare it, if... priviledges or Rights shall be taken from it, it is your selves, and not I who will be the greatest losers."⁶⁹⁴ Astley however found Webster a distasteful character, whom the Dean would later describe as a "unquiet spirit w[hi]ch was cast out of Lin...wandering up & downe & reviling those who...deserved better fro[m] him," and he saw no reason to clash again with Reynolds over someone he did not even

⁶⁹² Mordaunt Webster to Herbert Astley, 16 January 1672, Bodl., MS Tanner 134, f. 215r.

⁶⁹³ *Ibid.*; for Laudian attacks on puritanism as essentially foreign, and often specifically Genevan, as well as reforms to expand clerical power and jurisdiction, see Milton, *ESR*, 39-40, 57.

⁶⁹⁴ Sheldon to Astley, Bodl., MS Tanner 134, f. 146r; Mordaunt Webster to Herbert Astley, 22 March 1672, Bodl., MS Tanner 134, f. 217r.

like.⁶⁹⁵ While Webster briefly found favour at the Court of Arches in 1671, he would eventually be forced out of his post in 1675.⁶⁹⁶

Reynolds' active intervention in the conflicts in King's Lynn over its lack of preaching was set in stark contrast to his clear reluctance to enforce ceremonial uniformity on local parishes. The bishop's moderation not only encouraged many puritans to return to the restored episcopal Church, but emboldened them to maintain a degree of nonconformity. Puritan minister Isaac Archer proudly recorded his own partial conformity: "I did not signe with the crosse because it gave offence, and the Bishop, Dr Reynolds, did not require it in his articles; and I did as little as was possible, without incurring danger, and so kept my selfe very moderate, and displeased, I thinke, none by so doing."⁶⁹⁷ Archer might not have faced any opposition himself, but there were zealous ceremonialists seeking opportunities to revive the "beauty of holiness" in Norwich, contrary to Reynolds' will. Kenneth Fincham's analysis of a dispute over a gallery in St George Tombland, Norwich, perfectly demonstrates how Reynolds' party effectively crushed all hopes for a comeback of Laudian reform in a local parish. In September 1673, Dr Owen Hughes, commissary to the bishop, demanded the chancel gallery in St George Tombland, which

⁶⁹⁵ Herbert Astley to Robert Littlebury, 26 July 1676, Bodl., MS Tanner 285, f. 169r. Littlebury was a renowned bookseller in London, and Astley was his friend as well as customer. In the same letter, Astley also mentioned that Reynolds, who would die two days later, was "very dangerously ill." For more information about Littlebury, see Matthew Yeo, *The Acquisition of Books by Chetham's Library, 1655-1700* (Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill, 2011), 81-121.

⁶⁹⁶ Jeremiah, "Reynolds," 327; LPL, Court of Arches, Bbb. 237 (1671). The Arches Bbb series is in too poor a condition for readers to consult; Miller, "A Man of 'Unquiet Spirit,'" 6. While Webster managed to keep his post at St Margaret's and St Nicholas, St Margaret's did successfully employ another preacher, Richard Salter, in March 1672. Webster would convert to Roman Catholicism in 1688. James II's support and licensing of Webster's Roman Catholic mission and permission to set up a school in the East Anglia region would be a source of great irritation for William Lloyd, then Bishop of Norwich and soon-to-be non-juror. See Peter Smith, "Bishop William Lloyd of Norwich and his Commonplace Book," *Norfolk Archaeology* 44 (2005): 706.

⁶⁹⁷ Isaac Archer, April 1663, *Two East Anglian Diaries, 1641-1729: Isaac Archer and William Coe*, ed. Matthew Storey (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1994), 88-9. Archer's conformity in 1662 was a source of great tension with his father, William Archer, a dissenting minister who eventually disinherited his son. See Matthew Storey, introduction to *Two East Anglian Diaries*, 11.

was blocking the view of the communion table, to be demolished. The churchwardens, William Weston and Stephen Woods, resisted the order, and despite months of intense conflicts with Hughes, successfully preserved the gallery in May 1674, when Chancellor Dr Robert Pepper finally intervened.⁶⁹⁸ Hughes' defeat revealed an effective administrative network Reynolds had established, consisting of Chancellor Pepper, a parishioner of St George's, as well as men like Benedict Riveley, curate of St George's who happened to be Reynolds' domestic chaplain. These connections between Reynolds and the parish explained why the churchwardens could confidently defy a commissary, whose ceremonialist enthusiasm was clearly out of step with the bishop's accommodating stance.

Reynolds' moderation, often supported by sympathetic civil magistrates in the localities, had nurtured dissent outside of the national Church as well. Archbishop Sheldon demanded that Reynolds "putt a stop" to the conventicles in Ipswich in 1668, which involved attempts to procure a "great Church" for fourteen nonconformist ministers, who "despise[d] governm[en]t" and even proclaimed that separation was "a signe of true grace."⁶⁹⁹ Sheldon was obviously frustrated with the inaction of both the bishop and the local magistrates in Ipswich. He bitterly commented that Reynolds "must needs have heard of them [the conventicles]" and demanded that the bishop "endeavor[ed] to gaine the assistance of the Justices & Civill Magistrates."⁷⁰⁰ Sheldon's reply to Hugh Robert, his Ipswich informant, was even more revealing: "the misfortunes of the church w[hi]ch you complaine of are not peculiar to y[ou]r towne, but too universall throughout the whole Kingdome, and such things are not to be wondered at, wherever there wants power or zeale

⁶⁹⁸ Hughes' later appeal to the provincial court of arches failed as well. See Fincham for a thorough account of this controversy, "Material Evidence: The Religious Legacy of the Interregnum at St George Tombland," 224-40.

⁶⁹⁹ Gilbert Sheldon to Edward Reynolds, Bodl., Sheldon Papers, Add C. 308, f. 130v.

⁷⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

in the magistrates & justices to do their duty.”⁷⁰¹ In June 1670, Reynolds was again told to deal with a similar incident in Sudbury, this time by King Charles II himself.

Nonconformist preachers had occupied the parish church of All Saints, Sudbury, and, threatened by royal displeasure, Reynolds swiftly requested the churchwardens of All Saints to “see that none Preach but those that can p[ro]duce Licences, & Testimonials of their subscriptions.”⁷⁰²

The city of Norwich, where the cathedral church was, illustrated the same dynamic between anti-ceremonialist magistrates and their ex-puritan bishop that nurtured vigorous dissent. Many councilmen in the city were occasional conformists who managed to find their ways back into office in the 1670s even after being displaced for nonconformity, such as John Barnham, Thomas Lombe, and John Leverington.⁷⁰³ These councilmen were either caught holding conventicles or would do so later in the 1670s, demonstrating a repeated, deliberate effort among freemen and magistrates to promote nonconformists to civil leadership.⁷⁰⁴ A puritan bishop along with a sympathetic corporation meant that dissenters in Norwich enjoyed great freedom in public worship.

Possibly reacting to the tightening control of religion since the revocation of the Declaration of Indulgence in March 1673, dissenters became increasingly high-profile in public worship from the mid-1670s onwards. In December 1674, dissenters in Norwich

⁷⁰¹ Gilbert Sheldon to Mr or Dr Hugh Robert, 23 January 1668, Bodl., Sheldon Papers, Add C. 308, f. 130r.

⁷⁰² The message was delivered to Reynolds through Henry Bennet, then Baron Arlington. Edward Reynolds to John Spencer, 6 July 1670, LPL, MS 674, f. 52r.

⁷⁰³ John T. Evans, *Seventeenth-Century Norwich: Politics, Religion, and Government, 1620-1690* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 245-50; NRO, NCR 16d/8, Assembly Proceedings Book July 1668-April 1707, 3 May 1673, ff. 36v-37r. Barnham held dissenters’ meetings at his home, and when summoned before the Norwich Assembly on 3 May 1673, he, along with three other councilmen John Dearsley, Hugh Bokenham, and Roger Salter, refused to abjure the Solemn League and Covenant. Lombe was also summoned but did not appear. Leverington was also caught holding conventicles in 1664 and tried but still returned to the council in 1675.

⁷⁰⁴ Evans, *Seventeenth-Century Norwich*, 250.

started holding Sunday services in an open space called the Granaries that soon sparked oppositions on the street. Thomas Corie, the town clerk, wrote to Sir Joseph Williamson, then Secretary of State, about how both presbyterians and independents used the Granaries as their meeting place, where “very great numbers” showed up for the two conventicles.⁷⁰⁵ Two lay citizens, John Fawcett and Jacob Robbins, filed a complaint to the mayor, Henry Watts, after the first gathering in the Granaries on 6 December. Although the conventiclers were convicted, no penalties were imposed.⁷⁰⁶ Instead of deterring dissenters from gathering, such legal action only encouraged both presbyterians and independents to return the next Sunday “in greater numbers than at the first meeting.”⁷⁰⁷ Fawcett intended to disturb an afternoon gathering of presbyterians but was “violently assaulted [*sic*], beaten and troden upon by severall rude persons [presbyterians], and in great danger of his lyffe, beinge pursued into the streets by some hundreds of people....”⁷⁰⁸

Reynolds’ governing style contributed significantly to the prevalent partial conformity within the church as well as rigor of dissent without. Under his leadership, the diocese of Norwich stood out as one of the hotbeds of dissent in the Caroline Church. This was at least partly due to Archbishop Sheldon’s leniency towards Reynolds despite their clashing visions of what a reformed Church of England should look like. Whenever there was a report of dissent, the Archbishop was almost always inclined to admonish rather than intervene or punish, and this conciliatory approach allowed Reynolds significant

⁷⁰⁵ Thomas Corie to Joseph Williamson, 14 December 1674, *A Miscellany: The Correspondence of Thomas Corie*, vol. 27, ed. Robert H. Hill (Norwich: Norfolk Record Society, 1956), 36.

⁷⁰⁶ Evans, *Seventeenth-Century Norwich*, 251.

⁷⁰⁷ Corie to Williamson, 14 December 1674, *Correspondence*, 36.

⁷⁰⁸ Fawcett was eventually rescued by Robert Bendish, one of the JPs in the city, who “sent him [Fawcett] home by two constables.” *Ibid.*, 36-7; Fawcett would venture another attack on dissent by bringing charges against the mayor, Thomas Chickering, around 1677, for not “dilligent in his office” to suppress “unlawfull meetings,” but Chickering would be acquitted: “Catalogue of mayors and sheriffs of the city of Norwich to the year 1696, with a few notes of remarkable events,” Bodl., MS Tanner 396, f. 36v; also see Evans, *Seventeenth-Century Norwich*, 251.

flexibility to run the diocese his way. It is however hard to assess whether Reynolds' toleration of nonconformity eventually led to social stability and Protestant solidarity, as Reynolds repeatedly taught, or ironically, nurtured a growing dissent and exacerbated existing tensions between puritans and high churchmen. At the same time, while we will never know whether dissent would have been worse with a hard-line neo-Laudian bishop in charge, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that likelihood.

Conclusion

In 1673, after receiving numerous complaints that many clergymen had travelled long distances to Norwich Cathedral to have their "Titles conferred upon them for Holy Orders" only to find that Reynolds was absent from the diocese, Sheldon penned an unusually fiery rebuke to Reynolds, furiously asking for "its amendm[en]t" and threatened to enforce discipline against Reynolds since the Archbishop saw no reason why he should "beare the blame of other mens offences."⁷⁰⁹ This was a letter that differed drastically in tone from other ones Sheldon had written to Reynolds, whose outright dereliction of duty finally pushed his previously long-suffering Archbishop to lose his patience. At times like this, Reynolds' proclaimed puritan values must have seemed unbearably hypocritical to Sheldon, who seized upon the opportunity to question Reynolds' suitability as a bishop.

Reynolds survived the rebuke, presumably because he did mend his ways, but the bishop would not see the re-established Church transformed into the reformed episcopate he desired. Many, however, shared his ideals and continued his efforts. When discussions about comprehension were revived in the 1680s, one of the moderate episcopalians,

⁷⁰⁹ Gilbert Sheldon to Edward Reynolds, undated, BL, Harley MS 7377, f. 46r-v. This letter was most likely written between May and July 1673, since the letters transcribed before and after it are dated around this time. Jeffrey Jeremiah's citation of this source, while retaining most of the words found in this manuscript item, mysteriously changed the words "continued complaints I receive of y[ou]r absence from your Diocese" into "continued complaints I receive of your carelessness in allowing the growth of dissent in your diocese." Jeremiah, "Reynolds," 362.

Edward Pierce (1630/31-94), quoted Reynolds' 1666 sermon on moderation extensively in his anonymous tract, *The Conformists Plea for the Nonconformists* (1681) to show how subscription should focus on assent to official doctrines rather than enforced ceremonies—precisely how Reynolds argued for conformity when he appealed to conformists like Chillingworth and Bramhall.⁷¹⁰ Writing five years after Reynolds died, Pierce remembered the bishop to be “the most learned and rarely tempered,” carrying “the Wounds of the Church (in his Heart and Bowels) to his Grave with him.”⁷¹¹

Protestant unity seemed more urgently important than ever in the early 1680s when anti-Catholic sentiments were high due to the fabricated, yet widely-accepted, Popish Plot and the genuinely imminent prospect of a Catholic monarch. Time seemed to prove that moderate Anglicans and presbyterians had been right after all. Many who were anxious about a resurgence of Catholicism finally acknowledged that a shared doctrinal basis should have united Protestants to cast aside liturgical differences and disputes over church politics in the face of a common enemy. Reynolds' Norwich might not have been representative of the wider Caroline Church, but it gives us a glimpse of what the Church could have become had there been a more significant puritan faction in its leadership. The English Church could have fared differently if more moderate presbyterians had conformed. Had Baxter and Calamy also become bishops, a comprehension bill might have been passed in the 1660s. Had more moderate puritans returned to the national Church, Protestant dissent might have been much more subdued and marginalised. Had there been a stronger Protestant solidarity, Catholic recusancy might not have looked so formidable and its political influence so powerful. History unfolded the way it did,

⁷¹⁰ Edward Pierce, *The Conformists Plea for the Nonconformists* (London, 1681: Wing P976), 15-6.

⁷¹¹ *Ibid.*, 15, 35.

however, and instead of clinching a much-desired Protestant uniformity, the Church was heading towards yet another revolution.

Chapter 8 Thomas Gouge, the Welsh Trust, and Presbyterian Dissent

William Gouge's son Thomas, (1605-81), an ejected presbyterian minister, might seem to have discarded all hope his father so fervently held to for the "godly reformation" of the national church when he ventured into Wales for less controversial pastoral alternatives in the 1670s. The Welsh Trust, a charitable and educational scheme established by Gouge in 1674, was nevertheless a rare enterprise that brought together clergy and laity across emerging denominational divides, united in a desire for both greater comprehension in the established Church and a more robust Protestant defence against Catholic influence going far beyond the Welsh Marches. These Trust members included presbyterian dissenters like Richard Baxter and William Bates, leading Anglicans like John Tillotson and Edward Stillingfleet, and quite remarkably, a Socinian merchant Thomas Firmin—not only blurring confessional boundaries and hence escaping confessional historians' attention, but also enriching the picture of presbyterian dissent that goes beyond the traditional binary of "Dons" and "Ducklings."

The Trust's partnership with local parishes and promotion of the Prayer Book demonstrated a willingness to compromise on the part of Gouge and his fellow presbyterians. These presbyterians are those traditionally dubbed "Dons" by modern scholars, as opposed to "Ducklings," to refer to those who preferred comprehension over toleration of all dissenters, moderate puritans, Catholics, and radical Protestants alike.⁷¹² On the other hand, the Trust left a dissenting legacy through educational schemes for the Welsh poor and the high-profile dissent of some of its members. Historian Edmund

⁷¹² The terms were originally coined by Secretary of State Joseph Williamson in 1671. See TNA, SP 29/ 294, f. 223. For the modern use of the 'Dons and Ducklings' distinction, see Roger Thomas, "Comprehension and indulgence," in *From Uniformity to Unity, 1662-1962*, eds. Geoffrey F. Nuttall and Owen Chadwick (London: S.P.C.K., 1962), 208. Thomas is the first scholar to propose this distinction between presbyterians who preferred comprehension, or the Dons, and those who preferred separation, or the Ducklings.

Calamy (1671-1732) no doubt enjoyed observing about the work of the Trust: “If the Growth of Dissenters in Wales be an effect of the Increase of Knowledge there, we can’t help that.”⁷¹³ The Welsh Trust serves as a miniature of the tension among many moderate presbyterians between the reality of their dissent and yet the desire for church comprehension. This tension was greatly felt by their Anglican sympathisers who would become the key opponents of King James II and the most senior church authorities in the post-revolutionary England, who continued the godly vision of a reformed Church of England through strikingly similar initiatives, most notably the societies for reformation of manners. A closer look at the confessional make-up and literary output of the Trust as well as investigation into the comprehension schemes of the Trust members reveals a definite confessional broadening of the presbyterian dissent that played a crucial role in the shaping of post-revolutionary Anglicanism.

A Dissenter’s Ministry

Gouge’s Ongoing Pastoral Work for St Sepulchre

Unlike his father William Gouge, puritan luminary and celebrity preacher of St Ann’s Blackfriars, Thomas Gouge left little literary traces before 1662 and hence has attracted little scholarly attention.⁷¹⁴ He was a staunch member of the Sion College conclave, a self-conscious London presbyterian circle throughout the 1640s and 1650s, and, as vicar of St Sepulchre, he had vigorously guarded his parish against ceremonialist influences.⁷¹⁵ In September 1661, Sir Edward Broughton (*d.* 1665) included Gouge in a list

⁷¹³ Edmund Calamy Jr, *An Abridgement of Mr. Baxter’s History of his Life and Times*, (London, 1713: ESTC T119060), ii.10.

⁷¹⁴ A Welsh catechism, *byrr sy’n cynnwys sylfeini crefydd christnogawl* (1657: Wing G1358A) is attributed to Gouge by Wing. This is most likely a misattribution because Gouge did not seem to have connections with Wales in the 1650s. I am very thankful for Dr Sarah Ward’s suggestion that the author might have been an ejected episcopalian clergyman due to references to his readers in the preface as “Beloved neighbours” or “dear neighbours” whom he had abandoned.

⁷¹⁵ Gouge, along with his father and many other London presbyterians, subscribed in 1647 to *A Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ, and to our Solemn League and Covenant*. In 1648, he, again with his

of preachers who seduced people to “suffer any thing that shall be layd upon them then [than] to comply with those...in power.”⁷¹⁶ In April 1662, Gouge and his supporters, such as Thomas Tunman, alderman’s deputy, and John White, common councilman, rejected the election of William Rogers as churchwarden at St Sepulchre, since they believed he would enforce the use of the Prayer Book and place the communion table at the east end of the chancel.⁷¹⁷ Gilbert Sheldon, Bishop of London, then intervened to void the election of the candidates Gouge supported. After Gouge and his supporters resisted Sheldon’s order, some of Gouge’s own parishioners sided with Rogers and appealed to the Privy Council, accusing Gouge, Tunman, and White of “refusing the authority of bishops.”⁷¹⁸ Rogers succeeded and secured his election; he would soon see his vicar ejected thanks to the Act of Uniformity in late 1662.

For the last two decades of his life, the ejected minister divided his time and energy between two realms of ministry: first, devotional writing to maintain and further lay piety; second, charity work in London and Wales. His devotional writings, including a treatise on regeneration, several editions of his 1668 catechism, and a handbook about family worship, became his channel to continue pastoral care for both St Sepulchre and the wider society in conscious reaction to future anti-dissenting penal laws, the Conventicle Act of 1664 and the Five Mile Act of 1665. These publications would further form the basis of the devotional output of the Welsh Trust in the 1670s, along with the bible in Welsh, the Prayer Book, and other works of practical divinity.

father and fifty-four other ministers, subscribed to *A Vindication of the Ministers of the Gospel, in and about London* (London, 1648: Wing B5690A) to protest the imposition of capital punishment upon King Charles I.

⁷¹⁶ TNA, SP 29/41, f. 135. I am thankful to Dr Elliot Vernon for drawing my attention to this source.

⁷¹⁷ Greaves, “Gouge, Thomas,” *ODNB*; Paul Seaward, “Gilbert Sheldon, the London Vestries, and the Defence of the Church,” in *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England*, eds. Tim Harris, Paul Seaward, and Mark Goldie (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), especially 59-60.

⁷¹⁸ TNA, SP 29/53, f. 157.

The first of this series of pastoral resources was *The Christian Housholder* (1663), in which Gouge repeatedly referred to families as “little churches,” which must maintain true religion within themselves to guard against false teaching from the outside: “[I]n the latter days, *there shall be False Teachers, who shall privily bring in damnable Heresies...*[.] and therefore we are not to receive all for truth which is delivered in the Pulpit.”⁷¹⁹ Despite being dissatisfied with certain theological influences within the Caroline Church, Gouge did not fully denounce the institution.⁷²⁰ He affirmed the usefulness of “publick Ordinances” and encouraged his readers to sanctify the sabbath by attending church services.⁷²¹ If Baxter is to be believed, Gouge “went constantly to the parish Churches,” a detail Baxter deliberately included to sarcastically contrast Gouge’s “true episcopacy” to Anglican suppression of dissenters’ evangelism and preaching.⁷²² This “partial conformity,” as many scholars have recently observed, was common among moderate dissenters who did not adopt a clean-cut separation from the national church.⁷²³

⁷¹⁹ Thomas Gouge, *The Christian Housholder*, London 1663, republished in Wolverhampton 1787 (ESTC T10836), 3, 10, 22.

⁷²⁰ Another treatise, *Joshua’s Resolution, or, the Private Christian’s Duty in Times of Publick Corruption* (London, 1663: Wing G1369), was published anonymously in the same year and attributed to Gouge by Wing, *Short-Title Catalogue of Books*, II:122. The author of the tract however clearly believed that the English Church was going through a time of trial and persecution (pp. 13, 18). The author admonished its reader that while many offences, such as loose discipline and spread of idolatrous ideas, did not warrant sufficient ground for separation from the public assembly, public assemblies were to be left “when *false Gods and false Worship*s are established by a Law” (pp. 11-2). The author further taught that when one was “excluded from publick places,” which was “polluted by Idolatrous mixtures, and inventions of men, who abuse[d] their Authority,” one must exclude themselves “or give a seeming assent unto those undue impositions” and set up family worship (p. 12). Considering its obscure authorship, differences in both tone and content compared to *The Christian Housholder*, and the fact that it was published without the author’s consent to suit the publisher’s nonconformist agenda that “in all Ages the Saints of God have been Separatists” (A2v), I will not discuss *Joshua’s Resolution* in detail here.

⁷²¹ Gouge, *The Christian Housholder*, 26. While Gouge did not clearly speak of attending parish churches, the fact that he did not limit his reference to public, collective worship as the “ordinary means...for the reforming” of one’s life to conventicles is revealing.

⁷²² Richard Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae, or, Mr. Richard Baxters Narrative of the Most Memorable Passages of his Life and Times*, pt III (London, 1696: Wing B1370), 190.

⁷²³ A frequently cited article is J.D. Ramsbottom, “Presbyterians and ‘Partial Conformity’ in the Restoration Church of England,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 43, no. 2 (1992): 249-70. More recently, Michael P. Winship, “Defining Puritanism in Restoration England: Richard Baxter and others Respond to a *Friendly Debate*,” *The Historical Journal* 54, no. 3 (2011): 689-715; George Southcombe, “Chapter 3 presbyterians in the Restoration,” in *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions*, I:78; Milton, *ESR*, 505.

The Christian Housholder prepared Gouge for a greater project in reaction to anti-dissenting penal codes in 1664 and 1665. The Conventicle Act of 1664 forbade religious gatherings of more than five dissenters who were not immediate family members to each other outside of their parishes. This effectively quashed conventicles, depriving ejected ministers like Gouge of their alternative preaching platforms. The Five Mile Act of 1665 was another heavy blow to dissenting clergymen, now expelled from their parishes and thus geographically alienated from their former parishioners, many of whom might have followed their pastors to become dissenters. In response, Gouge penned *The Principles of Christian Religion* (1668), a catechism and one of a series of tools he provided godly families to maintain true worship when conventicles were abolished and ejected ministers far away from them.⁷²⁴ Compared to his 1645 catechism of the same title, a simple overview of the fundamentals of the gospel accessible to all at St Sepulchre, most likely to prepare them for communion, this 1668 catechism was equally Reformed, but much more theological, if not scholastic, intended for St Sepulchre parishioners and the wider public to further their own knowledge of Christian faith, despite the ejection of many puritan preachers like Gouge.

This can be seen in the answers given to the question, “what is God?”. The 1645 catechism teaches: “God is a spirit every way infinite, goodnesse it selfe, Creatour, preserver and governour of all things, distinguished into three persons, the Father, the Sonne, and the Holy Ghost.”⁷²⁵ The 1668 catechism describes God as a spirit of “infinite perfection” with a much more theological elaboration: “God is said to be a Spirit. 1.

⁷²⁴ Thomas Gouge, *The Principles of Christian Religion Explained to the Capacity of the Meanest* (London, 1668: Wing G1371). Subsequent editions throughout the 1670s are the 1670 edition (Wing G1371A), 1672 edition (Wing G1372), 1673 edition (Wing G1372A), 1675 edition (Wing G1373), and 1679 edition (Wing G1374).

⁷²⁵ *Idem*, *The Principles of Christian Religion* (London, 1645: Wing H2347A), 1.

Negatively, to intimate that he is not a body or material substance. 2. *Analogically*, Spirits being the most perfect and excellent of all created beings are the fittest to represent the incomprehensible God to our narrow conceptions.⁷²⁶ Theological terms were also introduced in the 1668 catechism and its subsequent editions, such as communicable and incommunicable attributes, and sin categorised into original and actual, to name a few. This catechism must have met a need in dissenting families, for it went through five more editions throughout the 1670s, which largely kept the same content and theological richness, with a few minor revisions that suggested Gouge's awareness of its reception among his readers.⁷²⁷

In the same year, Gouge also published *A Word to Sinners, and a Word to Saints* (1668), a theological treatise on regeneration, appended with *The Christian Housholder* (1663), the 1668 catechism, as well as a form of morning prayer, evening prayer, and a prayer for a single person. Binding small books into a collection of practical divinity had been a long-standing practice to assist personal or familial piety since the sixteenth century.⁷²⁸ Judith Maltby observes that bibles were often bound with the Prayer Book or at least parts of it, such as prayers or psalters; sometimes bibles were appended with tables that directed the reader to the authorised lectionary.⁷²⁹ Independent preacher Vavasor Powell (1617-70) had a fascinating tale to tell in his criticism of excessive, idolatrous reverence for the Prayer Book:

I heard one lately say, that brought a Bible to a Book-binders shop to be new bound: when the Book-binder said he could hardly binde it, and that he would sell a new Bible for a little more mony; The owner returned answer. *That that Bible*

⁷²⁶ *Idem, The Principles of Christian Religion* (London, 1668: Wing G1371), T2r.

⁷²⁷ For example, the quoted paragraph on the divine spirit was taken out in the 1670 edition possibly because Gouge might have felt that it was too hard for some to digest and share with the wider families on their own. The paragraph was however added back in the subsequent editions, possibly due to either the perceived usefulness of the teaching on Gouge's own part or popular demand.

⁷²⁸ Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England*, 25.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

was worth twenty new ones, and the onely reason was, because the Book of *Common-Prayer* was in it.⁷³⁰

After 1662, dissenters intentionally resorted to the same practice to sustain godliness among themselves when a clearer barrier between parishes and dissenters was imposed and their preferred preachers ejected. Ian Green observes that different dissenting groups produced their respective reading primers in combination with catechisms for children as well as catechising tools for householders for their families to use, citing Richard Baxter's *The Catechizing of Families* (1683) as an example.⁷³¹ Gouge's *A Word to Sinners, and a Word to Saints*, with the appended 1668 catechism and other pastoral resources, intended the same. It was a collection of practical divinity that served as the minister's last spiritual gift for St Sepulchre to maintain godliness within their own households, as Gouge testified himself: "Most of these truths have been Preached in your hearing, and now they are presented to your sight.... Though I cease to be your Minister, yet I shall not cease to do what in me lyeth to further your eternal happiness."⁷³² While Gouge could affirm the usefulness of attending parish churches and perhaps even practiced partial conformity himself, this deliberate creation of a separate set of pastoral tools undoubtedly nurtured presbyterian separatism.

Gouge's Charitable Evangelism in Wales

No longer the vicar of St Sepulchre, Thomas Gouge turned to philanthropic projects as his major pastoral alternative. In response to the Great Ejection, he raised funds among the wealthy in London for the ejected ministers and their families.⁷³³ During the

⁷³⁰ I'd like to thank Dr George Southcombe for drawing my attention to this source. Vavasor Powell, *Common-Prayer-Book No Divine Service*, London 1661 (London, 1661: Wing P3084), 15.

⁷³¹ Green, *The Christian's ABC*, 187, 196; Richard Baxter, *The Catechizing of Families* (London, 1683: Wing B1205).

⁷³² Thomas Gouge, "To my dearly beloved Friends the Inhabitants of *St. Sepulchres* Parish, London," *A Word to Sinners, and a Word to Saints* (London, 1668: Wing G1379), A2v.

⁷³³ Samuel Clarke, *The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons in this Later Age* (London, 1683: Wing C4538), 204.

Great Fire of London in 1666, despite suffering great financial loss himself, Gouge served as treasurer for a financial relief scheme set up by Henry Ashurst, London draper and renowned philanthropist. Among all the charitable works Gouge engaged in after the ejection, two were especially dear to his heart. John Tillotson, member of the Welsh Trust and future Archbishop of Canterbury (1691-94), recalled in his funeral sermon for Gouge that the ejected minister sometimes said “with great pleasure” that there were “two *livings* which he would not exchange for two of the greatest in *England*, meaning *Wales* and *Christ’s Hospital*.”⁷³⁴ Of these two, the Welsh Trust was certainly Gouge’s more distinctive contribution.

Gouge’s commitment to work in Wales does not seem to have arisen from any strong previous connection to the principality, but rather remarkably, from a contemporary literary text, Samuel Clarke’s memoir of Joseph Alleine (*bap.* 1634, *d.* 1668). Based in Taunton, Somerset, Alleine was a vocal advocate for continual preaching of the ejected ministers and organised private gatherings himself.⁷³⁵ In mid-1663, he was arrested for unauthorised preaching despite slim evidence and consequently imprisoned in Ilchester gaol until 20 May 1664. On 10 July 1665 Alleine was arrested again for holding a conventicle, resulting in another sixty days of imprisonment. The last years of Alleine’s life were plagued with poor health and in 1668 he died in his mid-thirties. According to Clarke, Gouge was deeply touched by the young man’s unfulfilled zeal for evangelism and told Clarke in person how he now became determined to go to Wales after reading the latter’s biography of Alleine:

Reading this, (said Mr. *Gouge* to me) it hath set me all on fire, with Zeal to prosecute that design: and God seems (in some measure) to have fitted me for it, having taken

⁷³⁴ John Tillotson, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the Reverend Mr Thomas Gouge* (London, 1682: Wing T1234), A3r.

⁷³⁵ Brian W. Kirk, “Alleine, Joseph,” *ODNB*; Winship, “Defining Puritanism in Restoration England,” 703-5.

away my Wife: and his Children, being grown up, were disposed of in the World; and he was left alone; and God had given him a competent Estate where withal to defray the Charges of his Undertaking.⁷³⁶

Consciously treading a fellow puritan's missionary footsteps, Gouge first went into Wales to preach in 1672, targeting the Welsh Marches where many understood English.⁷³⁷ This first round of evangelism was immediately met with opposition. Gouge was cited for unlicensed preaching by Francis Davies, bishop of Llandaff, and was excommunicated and silenced after non-appearance in court. Gouge eventually appeared before Church authorities and promised not to preach again. The judgment sparked various interpretations. It incited the indignation of fellow presbyterians like Baxter and Clarke, both activists for godly missions that aimed at Protestant conversions and spiritual renewal, who described these attempts to block Gouge's preaching as Satan's attack.⁷³⁸ According to them, Gouge relied on an old, perfectly lawful, licence issued by the University of Cambridge. Tillotson, on the other hand, left out this inconvenient detail and simply commented that Gouge obtained a license "from some of the Bishops to preach in *Wales*" later in life when the dissenter became "better satisfy'd in some things he doubted of before."⁷³⁹ This claim however lacked supporting evidence. Preaching at Gouge's funeral, Tillotson was obviously compelled to smooth out controversial points of a dissenter's life in order to protect his own orthodoxy and loyalty. With a shared concern and actual collaborations for comprehension lurking in the background, what both

⁷³⁶ Clarke, *Lives*, 204.

⁷³⁷ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*, 204, 205; Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, pt III, 190; Clarke was an active itinerant preacher himself as early as the 1620s in the Wirral, whereas Baxter's ministry at Kidderminster and leadership in the Association Movement in the 1650s, including his emphasis on preaching, catechising, and spiritual formation, served as a pastoral model for Protestant missions and parochial ministries both in and outside the re-established Caroline Church. Eamon Duffy, "The Long Reformation: Catholicism, Protestantism and the Multitude," in *England's Long Reformation, 1500-1800*, ed. Nicholas Tyacke (London: UCL Press, 1998), 39, 48-50.

⁷³⁹ Tillotson, *Sermon*, 82.

moderate presbyterians and Tillotson agreed on was that Gouge's pastoral alternatives and evangelistic charity should not have been considered controversial.

Gouge's initial attempts at preaching in the Welsh Marches, just like his publication of a separate set of pastoral resources for St Sepulchre, blurred the lines that some modern historians have drawn between "Dons" and "Ducklings." Gouge could be easily identified as a "Don" for his age, associations with key negotiators for comprehension like Baxter, Bates, and Manton, and finally his turn to seemingly uncontroversial charity projects after 1662. What we see however is someone who had tried to tread the dangerously high-profile path of a young presbyterian trouble-maker, Alleine. Traditional categories proposed by Roger Thomas become even more problematic if one considers Alleine's continual attendance at parish services and exhortations for others to do so.⁷⁴⁰ As Ann Hughes points out, if "Dons" could be just as active in illegal preaching as "Ducklings" while attending parish services, the tensions between comprehension and toleration might have been operating within each individual, prompting them to different decisions under different circumstances, rather than neatly dividing them into fixed presbyterian sub-groups.⁷⁴¹

The establishment of the Welsh Trust in 1674 was Gouge's change of strategy in pursuit of higher impact and lower risk. Two Welsh ministers, Stephen Hughes (1622?-88) and Charles Edwards (*b.* 1628?, *d.* in or after 1691), were the key players.⁷⁴² Hughes translated English religious writing into Welsh; Edwards busied himself in Oxford and

⁷⁴⁰ Winship, "Defining Puritanism in Restoration England," 703.

⁷⁴¹ Hughes, "Print and Pastoral Identity," 169.

⁷⁴² Gouge also collaborated with other Welsh translators both before 1674 and after the Trust was established. Richard Jones (1603-1673), a schoolmaster in Denbigh and a fellow dissenter, translated works like Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted* and Gouge's *Christian Directions*. William Jones (*d.* 1679), another ejected minister whose nonconformity seemed to be influenced by Baxter, helped translate Gouge's 1668 catechism and *A Word to Sinners, and a Word to Saints*. See Calamy, *Abridgement*, ii. 714; Robert Tudur Jones, *Congregationalism in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), 77.

London with proof-reading, editing, and publishing Welsh-language books; Gouge introduced English pastoral works such as his own and Baxter's and was successful in raising funds.⁷⁴³ The Trust printed and distributed or sold Welsh bibles and devotional works in Welsh for the poor.⁷⁴⁴ These works included Welsh translations of Gouge's *Christian Directions* (1661), his 1668 catechism, and *A Word to Sinners, and a Word to Saints*.⁷⁴⁵ They also financed and circulated the Welsh translations of other works that were either highly evangelistic or devotional, such as Richard Baxter's immensely popular *Call to the Unconverted* (1658), the royalist Richard Allestree's *The Whole Duty of Man* (1658), and the former Welsh bishop Lewis Bayly's *The Practice of Piety* (c. 1612). Lastly, they set up charity schools for children to learn English and be catechised, possibly using Gouge's 1668 catechism. Gouge was actively involved, visiting the schools once or twice a year to supervise their administration.⁷⁴⁶

These should not have struck contemporaries as novel. According to Clarke, Samuel Fairclough engaged in highly similar evangelistic works in Kedington, Suffolk, before he was ejected, including financial relief and schooling for the poor, free distributions of catechisms, "good Books," "Bibles of a larger Print," and even reading glasses.⁷⁴⁷ Baxter likewise testified that another presbyterian minister Thomas Wadsworth "gave *Catechisms* and *Testaments*, and some other Books" to the poor in his parish of Newington Butts, Surrey, teaching the illiterate how to read and instructing parishioners

⁷⁴³ Charles Edwards, *An Afflicted Man's Testimony concerning his Troubles* (London: 1691; Wing E191), 9; Derec L. Morgan, "A Critical Study of the Works of Charles Edwards (1628-1691?)," (DPhil dissertation, University of Oxford, 1968), 23.

⁷⁴⁴ Calamy, *Abridgement*, ii. 10.

⁷⁴⁵ These works had been translated beforehand by Richard Jones and William Jones, Gouge's other collaborators. The Welsh versions of these works are *Gwyddorion y grefydd Gristianogol* (London, 1679: Wing G1368A); *Hyfforddiadau Christianogol* (London, 1675: Wing G1368B); *Gair i bechaduriaid, a gair i saint* (London, 1676: Wing G1367).

⁷⁴⁶ Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, pt III, 190.

⁷⁴⁷ Clarke, *Lives*, 180; Duffy, "The Long Reformation," 47.

through sermon repetitions, catechising, and reading of pastoral writings such as Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*.⁷⁴⁸ What was unique about the Welsh Trust was its intentional incorporation of conformist resources like *The Whole Duty of Man* and the Prayer Book, its embrace of parish ministry, and its remarkably broad lay-clerical cooperation across party divides in the aftermath of the Great Ejection.

The Trust effectively teamed up with parish churches, carefully keeping private reports of the clergymen and magistrates who worked with them. Sponsorship and endorsement by local gentry as well as at least tacit support from the Anglican authorities certainly played a crucial part in the success of the Trust. The members were united first and foremost by their shared Protestant beliefs and determination to eradicate Catholicism in Wales. The same commitment glued many of them together to pursue comprehension, with dissenters who desired some form of pastoral engagement with the established Church on the one side and moderate Anglicans, including the so-called latitudinarians, on the other. They used the Trust to illustrate what comprehension could be like: a Protestant unity and evangelism that deliberately put aside ceremonial and even doctrinal disputes so as to create a more "godly" national Church, that is, a Church without ignorance or popery. Hence a lay-clerical network with diverse interests: some were fervent philanthropists whose hearts were constantly for the poor, like Thomas Firmin; some were passionate for evangelism against popery in Wales, such as Sir Trevor Williams and Sir Edward Mansel; some others must also have had comprehension in mind, like Baxter and Tillotson.

⁷⁴⁸ Richard Baxter, preface to *Mr. Thomas Wadsworth's Last Warning to Secure Sinners* by Thomas Wadsworth (London, 1677: Wing W187); Duffy, "The Long Reformation," 47.

Anti-Catholic Sentiments and Local Gentry Support for the Welsh Trust

Welsh gentry supporters of the Trust saw it as a driving force for Protestant orthodoxy against papalist threats rather than an outlet of dissent. Fears of Catholic influence dominated the religiopolitical climate in Wales after 1662. Philip Jenkins observes the “sheer numerical strength of Catholicism” in south-east Wales, such as Glamorgan and Monmouthshire.⁷⁴⁹ While it is impossible to discover the actual number of Catholics and recusants, Jenkins helpfully points out that contemporary perceptions of papalist threats are just as important for appreciating the prevalent fear of a Catholic comeback. Sir Trevor Williams (1623-92), MP for Monmouthshire and future benefactor of the Welsh Trust, claimed in Parliament in February 1671 that “half the people of Monmouthshire were catholics, many of whom were new converts, and that there were more priests than protestant ministers.”⁷⁵⁰ While Sir Trevor was exaggerating, he certainly saw Catholicism as a real threat to the Welsh Marches, a religious crisis not least exacerbated by the Catholicism of the marquis of Worcester, principal magnate in the area.

Suspicious of the recusant Somerset dynasty was the main reason why south-east Welsh Anglicans, clergymen and magistrates alike, were divided, and many moderate Anglicans felt compelled to accommodate and collaborate with Protestant dissenters. Sir Trevor and the Morgans of Tredegar led Monmouthshire’s opposition to Worcester, and many other Anglican MPs in the Welsh Marches shared the same zeal, such as Sir Edward Mansell (1637-1706), MP for Glamorgan on multiple occasions from the 1660s to the 1680s. Sir Edward and Sir William Morgan (c. 1640-80), along with Sir Trevor, were all

⁷⁴⁹ Philip Jenkins, “Anti-Popery on the Welsh Marches in the Seventeenth Century,” *The Historical Journal* 23, no. 2 (1980): 276.

⁷⁵⁰ Sir Edward Dering quoted by Jenkins, “Anti-Popery,” 279. See also Sir Edward Dering, *The Parliamentary Diary of Sir Edward Dering 1670-1673*, ed. B. D. Henning (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1940), 70.

future members of Gouge's Welsh Trust. As early as 1661, Sir Trevor and Sir William Morgan sponsored the anti-popery treatise of a Welsh Anglican writer, John Cragge, who denounced "Romish superstition" as both "Antichristian, and Antimonarchical" along with other dissenters like Quakers and Fifth-Monarchists.⁷⁵¹ Writing in an imaginary conversation between a Catholic gentleman and an Anglican minister, Cragge laid out twelve articles that challenged Catholic teachings of transubstantiation and purgatory, the claimed supreme authority of the Pope over chief magistrates of the nations, practices such as worship of images and crucifixes, and so on. Throughout the 1660s and 1670s, Sir Trevor competed for the county seat in Parliament with candidates supported by Henry Somerset. Sir Trevor, Sir William, and like-minded MPs such as John Arnold of Monmouthshire also actively drew attention in Parliament to the marquess' Catholic sympathies, referring to Chepstow with its still formidable castle as Worcester's "cathedral garrison," where "mass was constantly said."⁷⁵² Such political duels lasted for more than a decade, ending with the imprisonment of Sir Trevor in 1683 on a charge of violating the Statute of *Scandalum magnatum* soon after Somerset became Duke of Beaufort.

Underneath Cragge's renunciation of Catholics as "Antimonarchical" was the anxiety of many about a Catholic resurgence in politics, both in Wales and on a national scale. Sir Edward Mansell, Sir Trevor's political ally from Glamorgan, was already a harsh critic of the Duke of York, the future King James II, in 1672.⁷⁵³ Sir Edward would side with Sir Trevor to support Anthony Ashley Cooper, first Earl of Shaftesbury, in the

⁷⁵¹ John Cragge, *The Royal Prerogative Vindicated in the Converted Recusant* (London, 1661: Wing C6790), A2r, A2v.

⁷⁵² The first remark was John Arnold's and the second Sir Trevor's, meant to reinforce each other's attacks on the Marquess in Parliament. Arnold's comparison of Chepstow to a "cathedral" was likely drawn in the sense that Chepstow was the Marquess' principal seat. *The Manuscripts of the Duke of Beaufort, K.G., the Earl of Donoughmore, and Others* (London, 1891), 114.

⁷⁵³ Jenkins, "Anti-Popery," 283.

opposition to the prospect of Catholic monarchy as well as advocacy of “King by law” and frequent parliaments as bulwarks against any notions of *iure divino* kingship.⁷⁵⁴ When imprisoned in the Tower in 1677-8 for promoting these views, Shaftesbury created a list of lay peers and MPs, marked with letters “w” for “worthy” or “v” for “vile” to indicate each person’s potential usefulness for his religiopolitical cause. The letters could also be doubled or tripled to denote the degrees of “worthiness” or “vileness.”⁷⁵⁵ This list revealed the earl’s recognition of Sir Edward, Sir Trevor, and Sir William as his supporters, all marked with “ww,” and Henry Somerset as his opponent, marked with “vv.” This network of proto-Whigs and moderate Anglican gentry dominated the political make-up of the Welsh Trust. Gentry sponsors of the Trust like Mansell, Williams, and Morgan, along with Evan Seys, MP for Gloucester from 1661 to 1681, Sir Edward Harley, a former Presbyterian and MP for Radnor and Herefordshire on multiple occasions throughout the 1670s, and many others, formed both local opposition to Worcester and support of Shaftesbury in Parliament. For these moderate Anglican gentry, the anti-Catholic Welsh Trust, comprehension of moderate presbyterians, as well as opposition to the Duke of York, were all attempts to achieve the same religious and political goals.

A Cross-Confessional Clerical Alliance of the Welsh Trust

The clerical make-up of the Trust illustrated an astonishing diversity in conformity and ecclesiology, built upon a unanimous aversion to popery. The first subsection digs deeper into the two Welsh clergymen who worked alongside Gouge, Stephen Hughes and Charles Edwards, to demonstrate the variety of religious outlooks among the most

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 285; *idem*, *The Making of a Ruling Class: The Glamorgan Gentry 1640-1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 128; Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, *Two Speeches I. The Earl of Shaftesbury’s Speech in the House of Lords the 20th of October, 1675, II. The D. of Buckingham’s Speech in the House of Lords the 16th of November, 1675* (Amsterdam, 1675: Wing S2907), 10.

⁷⁵⁵ K. H. D. Haley, introduction to “Shaftesbury’s Lists of the Lay Peers and Members of the Commons, 1677-8,” *Historical Research* 43, no. 107 (1970): 87.

involved members of the Trust. The second and third subsections explore two aspects of the alliance between London presbyterians like Gouge, Baxter, Bates, and Matthew Poole on the one side and moderate Anglicans like Tillotson, Benjamin Whichcote, Edward Stillingfleet, and Simon Patrick on the other side. The second subsection focuses on the concessions presbyterian dissenters made in order for the Trust to run against the background of comprehension, including their promotion of the Prayer Book and collaborations with parish churches. The final subsection explores the same alliance from the perspective of the latitudinarians, who willingly joined the Trust despite their distaste of doctrinaire puritanism. The diversity of this clerical alliance blurred the confessional lines of the Trust and proves the degree of theological flexibility Gouge and his fellow Trust members willingly adopted for the sake of greater causes: charity, anti-Catholic evangelism, and comprehension.

Gouge's Welsh Collaborators: Stephen Hughes and Charles Edwards

Gouge, Hughes, and Edwards formed the core of the Welsh Trust. Like Gouge, Hughes was an ejected minister who continued preaching and ministering, based at several dissenting churches in Carmarthenshire. Congregationalism enjoyed a greater influence in Wales than presbyterianism, and Hughes contributed significantly to the maintenance of many independent churches in Carmarthen, earning him the name of “Apostol Sir Gâr”, or the apostle of Carmarthenshire.⁷⁵⁶ Taking advantage of his affluent upbringing and the wealth of his wife, Hughes devoted himself to his literary ventures, especially promotion of Welsh religious literature, often at his own expense.⁷⁵⁷ One of Hughes’ earliest and

⁷⁵⁶ Dylan Rees, *Carmarthenshire: The Concise History* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2006), 70; Jones, *Congregationalism in Wales*, 74.

⁷⁵⁷ Hughes’ father John Hughes was a Puritan silk-mercator, once an alderman and mayor of Carmarthen in 1650 and 1660. His wife, Catherine, was a wealthy woman from Swansea who seemed to willingly support Hughes’ literary pursuits. See Brynley F. Roberts, “Hughes, Stephen,” *ODNB*; Calamy,

most memorable literary endeavours was his collection, publication, and dissemination of the poems of Rhys Prichard (1579-1644/5), “the Old Vicar” of Llandovery and an immensely popular preacher. Prichard’s religious verses, entitled *Canwyll y Cymry* (*The Welshmen’s candle*) by Hughes, laid out the fundamentals of the gospel for the poor and uneducated in a way that was easy to memorise, as the poet testified himself:

Sound preaching is soon forgotten,
Vain songs are well remembered;
It’s this that has caused me to turn these lessons
into verse for my fellow Welshmen.⁷⁵⁸

Charles Edwards spent extensive years in Oxford, first elected as a Bible clerk at All Souls College in 1644, and later gained his BA at Jesus College in 1649.⁷⁵⁹ He would return to Oxford to see into print his first edition of *Y ffydd ddi-ffuant* in 1667, which was largely a brief abridgement of John Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments*.⁷⁶⁰ *Y ffydd ddi-ffuant*, however, took on a life of its own independent of Foxe: Edwards would expand it with an extra section on the history of faith in Wales in the second edition (1671) and another section on the efficacy of faith in the third and definitive edition (1677). It has been praised as a classic of Welsh prose by Saunders Lewis (1893-1985), one of the most celebrated modern Welsh writers and a historian.⁷⁶¹ Like Hughes, Edwards helped publish

Abridgement, ii. 718; Geraint H. Jenkins, *Literature, Religion and Society in Wales 1660-1730* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1978), 204.

⁷⁵⁸ “Abergofir pur bregethiad, / Dyfal gofio ofer ganiad; / A wnaeth im droi hyn o wersi / I chwi’r Cymry yn ganiadau”: Rhys Prichard quoted and translated by D. Densil Morgan, “The Reformation and Vernacular Culture: Wales as a Case Study,” in *The People’s Book: The Reformation and the Bible*, eds. Jennifer Powell McNutt and David Lauber (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, and imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2017), 85; Rhys Prichard, *Canwyll y Cymru, sef, gwaith Mr. Rees Prichard, gynt ficcer Llanddyfri* (London, 1681: Wing P3403B). For earlier printing of Prichard’s poems and their variations in content, see Eiluned Rees, “A bibliographical note on early editions of *Canwyll y Cymry*,” *Journal of the Welsh Bibliographical Society* 10 (1968): 36-41.

⁷⁵⁹ Derec L. Morgan, “Works of Charles Edwards,” 1, 2.

⁷⁶⁰ *Idem*, “Edward, Charles,” *ODNB*; Matthew Kilburn, “The Learned Press: History, Languages, Literature, and Music,” *The History of Oxford University Press*, vol. 1 Beginnings to 1780, ed. Ian Anders Gadd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 434.

⁷⁶¹ Morgan, “Works of Charles Edwards,” 52.

religious texts in Welsh. These included in 1671 a republication of Morris Kyffin's *Deffynniad ffydd Eglwys Loegr* (1595), a translation of Bishop Jewel's *Apologia pro Ecclesia Anglicana*. This was Jewel's defence of the Elizabethan Settlement of the Church and was a work that the Elizabethan regime had required as part of the equipment of every parish church in the kingdom; hence it contrasts sharply with the more purely dissenting output of Hughes.⁷⁶² It is quite clear from Edwards' translation of Jewel that he was perfectly happy with at least the pre-Laudian episcopal Church of England, with its anti-popery and acceptance of the non-episcopal reformed churches of the continent.

Despite ecclesiological differences, Hughes and Edwards shared a passion for promoting the Welsh language and equipping the Welsh public with Protestant theology. Besides publishing Prichard's poems, Hughes frequently travelled as an itinerant preacher in rural Carmarthenshire, helped setting up Welsh-speaking schools to teach both children and adults throughout the 1660s, and published a new edition of the New Testament in Welsh in 1672.⁷⁶³ Edwards prefixed his second edition of *Y ffydd ddi-ffuant* (1671) with three-page directions for the illiterate to learn Welsh alphabets and punctuation marks.⁷⁶⁴ In December 1675, Edwards printed an eight-page pamphlet arguing for the affinity between the Welsh language and Hebrew, titled *Hebraismorum Cambro-Britannicorum*.⁷⁶⁵ This short work was dedicated to "Viri Honorati," no doubt referring to gentry supporters of the Welsh Trust.⁷⁶⁶ Remarkably, with the perceived threat of growing popery, an Anglican, an independent, and a presbyterian could collaborate to translate, print, and

⁷⁶² John Jewel, *Eccho of the Sons of Thunder. Dad-seiniad meibion y daran*, trans. Morris Kyffin (Oxford, 1671: Wing J738).

⁷⁶³ Jenkins, *Literature, Religion, and Society in Wales 1660-1730*, 57.

⁷⁶⁴ Charles Edwards, *Unfeigned Faith. Y Ffydd Ddi-ffvant* (Oxford, 1671: Wing E193), A1v-A2v; Morgan, "Works of Charles Edwards," 33.

⁷⁶⁵ Edwards, *Hebraismorum Cambro-Britannicorum* (London, 1675: Wing E195).

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Ar; Morgan, "Works of Charles Edwards," 548.

disseminate around 8,000 Welsh bibles to give away or sell at a cheap price as well as a wide range of English Protestant writings. In the preface to Kyffin's translation of Jewel's *Apologia*, Edwards compared such classic Protestant texts to faithful yet neglected witnesses of the gospel that deserved a better welcome in Wales, clearly seeing his publishing endeavours as a way to restore true Christian faith among their ancestors in the last century.⁷⁶⁷ A shared zeal to consolidate Protestant resources against the spread of Catholicism not only bound Gouge, Hughes, and Edwards together, but also drew support from Welsh gentry like Sir Trevor Williams and Sir Edward Mansel. This basic ecclesiological triangle set the tone for the confessional diversity of the Trust, which would be widened and deepened by the rest of its members.

Presbyterians and Anglicans: A Liturgical and Ecclesiological Alliance

Gouge was essentially a London presbyterian, not a Welsh evangelist, and the make-up and literary output of the Welsh Trust demonstrated that. A list of patrons revealed a solid London presbyterian network, which included ejected ministers Richard Baxter, Matthew Poole, and William Bates.⁷⁶⁸ While there certainly was a genuine recognition of Gouge's charity and desire to participate in it among the presbyterian members of the Trust, Baxter, Poole, and Bates were also onto something else they perceived as equally, if not more, important: comprehension of presbyterians into the established Church.⁷⁶⁹ All three were active negotiators with Anglican authorities for comprehension throughout the late 1660s and 1670s. In 1674, the year when the Welsh

⁷⁶⁷ Edwards, preface to *Eccho of the Sons of Thunder* by John Jewel.

⁷⁶⁸ For the list, see M.G. Jones, "Two Accounts of the Welsh Trust, 1675 and 1678 (?)," *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 9 (1937): 71-80.

⁷⁶⁹ Baxter and Bates, along with Thomas Manton and John Owen, endorsed Gouge's second edition of *The Surest & Safest Way of Thriving* (London, 1676: Wing G1378), a treatise that encouraged charity works. Baxter had also commented that Gouge's life was "a wonder of sincere industrie in works of Charity": Baxter, *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, pt III, 190. They undoubtedly shared Gouge's philanthropic interests.

Trust was established, Tillotson, then dean of Canterbury, and Stillingfleet, then residentiary canon of St Paul's, reopened discussions about comprehension with Baxter, Poole, Bates, and Manton after the last attempt to get Parliament to pass a comprehension bill, drafted by Sir Matthew Hale, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, failed in 1668. They nevertheless once again toiled in vain because of a fierce opposition they faced from both within the Anglican hierarchy, led by Gilbert Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury, as well as many in Parliament. Under such pressure, moderate bishops like Seth Ward, Bishop of Salisbury, and George Morley, Bishop of Winchester, withdrew their parliamentary support. Tillotson explained to Baxter on 11 April 1675:

I am unwilling my Name should be used in this Matter; not but that I do most heartily desire an Accommodation, and shall always endeavour it: But I am sure it will be a prejudice to me, and signify nothing to the effecting of the thing, which as Circumstances are cannot pass in either House, without the Concurrence of a considerable part of the Bishops, and the Countenance of His Majesty; which at present I see little reason to expect.⁷⁷⁰

Gouge was not directly involved in these discussions, but the fact that key negotiators from both sides supported the creation and running of the Trust from 1674 to 1681 revealed his strategic role in the grand scheme of things. Frustrations with yet another failure at accommodation must have motivated both moderate Anglicans like Tillotson and Stillingfleet, dubbed by contemporaries as the "latitudinarians," and moderate presbyterians like Baxter and Bates to collaborate through Gouge's charity project, longing to see at least some form of Protestant unity. It was with this aim in mind that the Trust not only avoided dissenting writings more overtly critical of the Church of England, but also endorsed the Anglican liturgy. Collaborating with local parish churches, the Trust published and distributed the newly-revised Book of Common Prayer, a version

⁷⁷⁰ John Tillotson to Richard Baxter, *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, pt III, 157.

of the Prayer Book that had once again failed to satisfy the demands of presbyterian divines in 1662, when its enforcement had at first been firmly resisted by Gouge himself. Edmund Calamy, historian and grandson of the leading presbyterian divine of the same name, was quick to seize this opportunity to praise Gouge's passion for unity and moderation: "he [Gouge] was so far from that narrowness of Spirit or Bigotry to the Interest of the Dissenters, that he procur'd the Church Catechism, with a Practical Exposition of it, and the Common-Prayer, to be printed in Welch, and freely given to the poorer sort."⁷⁷¹

Calamy's praise revealed the ingenuity of Gouge's Welsh Trust. The charity scheme could not have been so effective and successful without its recognition of the parish system as well as promotion of the Prayer Book and some of the staple literature of the Restoration Church, like Allestree's *The Whole Duty of Man* (1658). This compromise might sound surprising, but it successfully enabled the Trust to promote Baxter and Gouge's solidly Reformed teaching as well. Gouge's retreat from dissenting preaching to found a charity was in fact an attempt at a systematic distribution of puritan resources to the Welsh public. Seeing from this perspective, the Welsh Trust was a significant step-up in Gouge's influence on puritan dissent, again demonstrating how preference for comprehension and impact on separatism were far from mutually exclusive in individual presbyterians' endeavours. Humphrey Lloyd (1610-89), bishop of Bangor, was not entirely distorting the reality in his letter to Sheldon, now Archbishop of Canterbury, when he called Gouge an "itinerant Emissarie, entrusted by the leading Sectaries" to lure both the "Credulous com[m]on people...[and] the weaker gentry" away.⁷⁷² Aware of the exaggeration in Lloyd's accusation that the Trust drew people into "a disaffection to the

⁷⁷¹ Calamy, *Abridgement*, ii. 9.

⁷⁷² Humphrey Lloyd to Gilbert Sheldon, 10 August 1676, Bodl., MS Tanner 40, f. 18r.

Government and liturgie of the Church,” Sheldon urged caution in his reply: “considering the nature of the design, it must receive no open discouragement from us.”⁷⁷³

One wonders how Gouge might have felt when he ordered and oversaw the printing, publishing, and free distribution of copies of the Prayer Book in Wales. Did he ever think of his previous grievances against William Rogers, who wanted to enforce the use of the Prayer Book at St Sepulchre? Gouge in the 1670s was no longer the same Gouge of late 1662. His ecclesiological ideals might still be similar, but his conscience over the extent of nonconformity must have undergone changes over the years, since the balance between dissent and pastoral urges was difficult to maintain. He now learned to broaden his network and embrace necessary compromises to the established Church, at least with those latitudinarians who shared a similar concern for national orthodoxy and flexibility in ceremonial conformity.

Presbyterians and Anglicans: A Reformed/“Cambridge Arminian” Alliance

The leading Anglicans of the Trust, Tillotson (1630-94), Stillingfleet (1635-99), and others like Benjamin Whichcote (1609-83), Simon Patrick (1626-1707), and Edward Fowler (1631/2-1714) already had close links with one another in Cambridge in the 1640s and were part of the philosophical school now called Cambridge Platonists, an academic network Baxter once disparagingly termed “Cambridge Arminians.”⁷⁷⁴ Although they were suspected of Arminianism, few explicitly upheld Arminian soteriology but generally

⁷⁷³ *Ibid.*; Gilbert Sheldon to Humphrey Lloyd, undated, Bodl., MS Tanner 40, f. 19r.

⁷⁷⁴ Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianæ*, pt III, 19-20. The term “Cambridge Platonists,” coined in the nineteenth century, is highly contested, not least because Platonism was merely one of the many strains of philosophy with which they interacted. For a more thorough analysis of how these religious philosophers, while far from being intellectually unified, can still be appropriately identified as a group, see Sarah Hutton, “The Cambridge Platonists: Some New Studies,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 25 (2017): 851-7, especially pp. 852-3; *idem*, “The Cambridge Platonists,” in *The Cambridge History of Moral Philosophy*, eds. Sacha Golob and Jens Timmermann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 235-56, especially pp. 245-8. I am very grateful for Prof Anthony Milton and Prof Kirsten Macfarlane for pointing me to these sources.

favoured moderation and detested exclusive confessional claims.⁷⁷⁵ For both presbyterian and latitudinarian members of the Trust, their compromises in the attempt at comprehension went beyond beliefs in the form of worship, conformity, and church government. In the face of greater enemies, such as Catholics, Quakers, and other radical dissenters, Reformed and non-Reformed Protestants could forget their theological differences and call one another friends.

This Protestant solidarity can be seen in their other charitable or educational projects led by both laity and clergy, prior to the Welsh Trust. Patrick, for example, solicited generous funding from wealthy laymen, including Dr Thomas Willis, physician and a devout royalist episcopalian, and Sir William Jones, a young, prominent lawyer from a strongly parliamentary family, to distribute alms to the poor and to infected households during the Great Plague of London.⁷⁷⁶ Stillingfleet assisted his friend Richard Kennet, an ejected minister, to acquire a house to run a school in Sutton, Bedfordshire, a nonconformist ministry “conniv’d at” because “neighbouring Gentry” sent their sons to him and hugely respected him.⁷⁷⁷ These latitudinarians would rise to ecclesiastical prominence, all as part of the establishment that took over the Church of England after the Glorious Revolution. Tillotson would become Archbishop of Canterbury (1691), Stillingfleet bishop of Worcester (1689), Patrick bishop of Chichester and Ely (1689, 1691), and finally Fowler bishop of Gloucester (1691). In that new political configuration, they would clinch new efforts at comprehension in the form of the Toleration Act of 1688.

⁷⁷⁵ John Spurr, “‘Latitudinarians’ and the Restoration Church,” *The Historical Journal* 31, no.1 (1988): 63-4.

⁷⁷⁶ Patrick was rector of St Paul’s, Covent Garden, then. Simon Patrick, “A Brief Account of my Life, with a Thankful Remembrance of God’s Mercies to me,” in *The Works of Symon Patrick: Including his Autobiography*, ed. Rev. Alexander Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1858), IX:442-4; Paul D. Halliday, “Jones, Sir William,” *ODNB*.

⁷⁷⁷ Calamy, *Abridgement*, ii. 118.

In a way, the Trust prefigured the latitudinarians' ecclesiological ideals in the post-revolutionary Church after 1689: a firm assertion of Protestant fundamentals and the downplaying to the point of irrelevancy of non-essential doctrinal disputes.

Benjamin Whichcote was the most senior among the latitudinarian members of the Trust and progenitor of the school of Cambridge Platonists. His academic career brought him close to the family of our protagonist, Thomas Gouge. Whichcote entered Emmanuel College in 1626, when the College was still under godly influence through its former Masters Laurence Chaderton, William Gouge's uncle by marriage, and John Preston. Among Whichcote's pupils was Nathaniel Culverwell (*bap.* 1619, *d.* 1651), a distant relative of William Gouge's.⁷⁷⁸ Whichcote proceeded MA, became a fellow at Emmanuel in 1633, and stayed on in Cambridge as a lecturer at Holy Trinity Church from 1643. In 1645, the Westminster Parliament appointed him provost of King's College, a position he would hold until being forced to vacate the provostship to the royal nominee James Fleetwood in 1660.⁷⁷⁹ Whichcote's time in Cambridge overlapped with Thomas Gouge, who entered King's College in 1625 and stayed in Cambridge until 1628, so it was likely that the two already knew each other in the 1620s. This is by no means the only pre-existing connection among the Trust members. Simon Patrick and William Bates would be another example; they studied at Queens' College, Cambridge, at the same time.⁷⁸⁰ Acquaintances might turn into friendships when some of them dined at Thomas Firmin's table in the 1650s or explored the possibility of comprehension in the 1660s.⁷⁸¹

⁷⁷⁸ Nathaniel's father Richard Culverwell (1581/2–1644) was possibly a grandson of either John or William Culverwell, Nicholas Culverwell's two brothers. Nicholas (*d.* 1569) was William Gouge's maternal grandfather. See Brett Usher, "Culverwell family," *ODNB*.

⁷⁷⁹ Sarah Hutton, "Whichcote, Benjamin," *ODNB*.

⁷⁸⁰ Patrick was admitted to Queens' in 1644, whereas Bates first entered Emmanuel College in 1643 but later transferred to Queens' in 1645.

⁷⁸¹ See the subsection on Thomas Firmin below for more information.

Whichcote, as leader of the Cambridge school, served as the point of contact for many Anglican Trust members of the younger generation. Patrick, Tillotson, and Stillingfleet were all Cambridge men who either personally knew Whichcote or had at least heard him preach. Simon Patrick was admitted to Queens' College through the recommendation of Whichcote, the provost of King's College, and Ralph Cudworth, then fellow of Emmanuel, and Patrick remembered both of them to be "very kind."⁷⁸² Tillotson entered Clare Hall in 1647 and Stillingfleet entered St John's College in 1648. Both men might have heard Patrick and Whichcote preach in Cambridge. Tillotson preached at Whichcote's funeral, remembering that Whichcote's Sunday preaching in Holy Trinity Church in Cambridge "in those wild and unsettled Times [the Interregnum] contributed more to the forming of the Students of that University to a sober sense of Religion than any man in that Age."⁷⁸³

Although being dubbed "Cambridge Arminians," this group of latitudinarian Anglicans did not espouse Arminian views, but generally rejected doctrinaire claims concerning soteriology. Tillotson, for example, was heavily influenced by William Chillingworth, whom we have previously met being praised by Reynolds.⁷⁸⁴ Chillingworth's *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation*, first published in Oxford in 1638, was a polemic against the Jesuit Edward Knott. In it Chillingworth targeted Calvinists more than once, criticising those who had a "fantasticall persuasion" that they were "predestinate" and yet lacked good works to confirm their calling.⁷⁸⁵ Chillingworth was far from a fierce exponent of Arminianism, however, but went on to set

⁷⁸² Patrick, "A Brief Account of my Life," in *Works*, IX:414.

⁷⁸³ John Tillotson, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the Reverend Benjamin Whichcot, D.D. and Minister of S. Lawrence Jewry, London, May 24th, 1683* (London, 1683: Wing T1235), 24.

⁷⁸⁴ See pp. 196-7 of this thesis.

⁷⁸⁵ Chillingworth, *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation*, 386.

forth his principle of moderation that preferred an inaccurate but “charitable judgment” of others’ errors over a true, yet uncharitable one: “[We] shall always...retain those in our Communion which deserve to be ejected, then eject those that deserve to be retain’d.”⁷⁸⁶ Chillingworth’s moderation was founded on a heightened trust in human reason and a conviction that the Christian faith was not based on an infallible authority but a moral certainty supported by evidence accessible to all men.⁷⁸⁷ For Chillingworth, salvation is for one to commit themselves to seeking God’s revelation in Scripture, not to a particular set of beliefs. John Lamont observes that this approach to Christian faith was Chillingworth’s most significant impact on the latitudinarians like Tillotson, Stillingfleet, and Fowler, who demonstrated the same aversion to heated puritanism they regarded as divisive and advocated toleration of dissent for the sake of unity.

Patrick’s doctrinal development told the same story. Under the influence of John Smith (1618-52), fellow at Queens’ and another leading Cambridge Platonist who had studied under Whichcote at Emmanuel, Patrick was liberated from doubts about absolute predestination and reassured that his dissatisfaction with the “advice by divines to silence carnal reason” was undergirded by sound reason.⁷⁸⁸ Eventually settled in the conviction that “God would really have all men to be saved,” Patrick would stay at Queens’ throughout the early 1650s and gain a reputation as a public Arminian through his teaching that relied on Henry Hammond’s *Practical Catechism* (1644).⁷⁸⁹ Patrick however denied the labelling: “[The use of Hammond’s catechism] procured me with many the name of an Arminian, though I never made controversy about those matters...but preached God’s love

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 407.

⁷⁸⁷ Lamont, *Divine Faith*, 95-6.

⁷⁸⁸ Patrick, “A Brief Account,” IX:419.

⁷⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

to mankind as the most evident truth.”⁷⁹⁰ John Spurr’s observation is helpful: “the lure of another theological system was less than their [latitudinarians’] revulsion at the despair and pride bred by the doctrines of puritanism.”⁷⁹¹ In quite an opposite fashion, here we see mildly Arminian latitudinarians like Patrick willingly walking alongside Reformed dissenters for the perceived greater good. Collaborations between these moderate Anglicans and predestinarian presbyterians demonstrated again the religious inclusivity of the Welsh Trust—an advertisement for comprehension and a miniature of latitudinarians’ ecclesiological ideal. The presbyterians seized the occasion to showcase their willingness to accommodate religious differences and pastoral assets, whereas latitudinarians generously opened the door to the Welsh parishes for them as a gesture of approval.

The Curious Case of the Socinian Thomas Firmin

If the Welsh Trust drew people together for its appeal to the Protestant fundamentals, Thomas Firmin (1632-97), an anti-Trinitarian girdler and mercer, certainly stood out as an anomaly. If presbyterians, independents, and Anglicans could work together to fight against popery, why did they not call out Firmin’s unitarianism? How does a Socinian fit in the narrative of the Welsh Trust? Firmin was heavily influenced both by John Goodwin’s preaching at St Stephen’s Coleman Street and later John Biddle’s unitarian teaching. Stephen Nye (1648-1719), a close friend and fellow Unitarian, commented that Goodwin’s preaching enabled Firmin to “exchange the (harsh) Opinions of *Calvin*, in which he had been educated; for those (more Honourable to God, and more accountable to the Human Reason) of *Arminius* and the Remonstrants.”⁷⁹² Goodwin would not identify himself as an Arminian, but his challenge to the Reformed doctrine of

⁷⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 425-6; Spurr, “Latitudinarians,” 81.

⁷⁹¹ Spurr, “Latitudinarians,” 81.

⁷⁹² Stephen Nye, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Firmin, Late Citizen of London* (London, 1698: Wing N1508), 6-7.

predestination and promotion of general redemption did move Firmin further away from his Reformed upbringing, which might then have encouraged him to explore more radical thoughts like Biddle's unitarian doctrines. Biddle's teaching on charity also turned Firmin into a passionate philanthropist, who faithfully pursued the former's ideal of charity that must extend beyond almsgiving to first-hand involvement in the lives of the poor.

Firmin's affluence, hospitality, and charity enabled him to befriend many and establish a powerful, cross-confessional network despite his Socinian convictions. Dinners at his house were frequented by many influential figures in the 1650s, including future latitudinarians like Tillotson and Whichcote.⁷⁹³ Firmin also actively sought a friendship with Gouge, as Nye recalled: "Mr. *Firmin* having set his heart so much on Charity, could not but esteem and love Mr. *Gouge*; a Man of the same Spirit: whom, while he was in *London*, he got to table with him."⁷⁹⁴ Perhaps it was those dinner parties at Firmin's that enabled Gouge and future Anglican sponsors for the Trust to maintain an amicable friendship and mutual respect when they had no other opportunity to stay connected in the 1650s and 1660s. Firmin would become an active member of the Trust, not only contributing financially, but personally engaging with the day to day running of the charity work. His name was repeatedly brought up on the two extant reports of the Trust, and the second report, possibly recorded in 1678, noted that "[the printed books] are kept and are to be seen at Mr. Thomas Firmin's house...in Lombard Street."⁷⁹⁵ There was no doubt that he was essential to the success of the Trust.

What was even more surprising than Firmin's collaboration with mainstream Protestants in charity works was their joint attacks on other radical sects, such as the

⁷⁹³ Philip Dixon, "Firmin Thomas," *ODNB*.

⁷⁹⁴ Nye, *Life*, 49.

⁷⁹⁵ Jones, "Two Accounts," 72, 76, 77. Nye testified to Firmin's financial contribution in *Life*, 50.

Quakers, despite the merchant's unitarian beliefs. Firmin was once curious about Quakerism and had hoped to convert William Penn (1644-1718), a tireless defender of Friends' doctrine of the Inner Light since the beginning of the 1670s.⁷⁹⁶ Penn recalled a "great Intimacy" with Firmin around 1668, who developed a false hope for alliance after reading what was widely taken as Penn's denial of the traditional doctrine of the Trinity in many works, such as *The Sandy Foundation Shaken* (1668).⁷⁹⁷ Firmin however found to his fury that Penn had denounced a Socinian as a "Blasphemer" and "Seducer" for denying the divinity of Christ in 1669.⁷⁹⁸ Penn insisted that he had always held to the same Christology, but his modalistic view did create misunderstanding that eventually led Firmin to huge disappointment.

While Firmin's objection to Penn's teaching was different from his Protestant friends, Penn spotted a collaborative relationship between Firmin and mainstream Protestants, especially John Faldo (1633/4-91), a congregationalist preacher whose anti-Quaker treatise *Quakerism No Christianity* was endorsed by many in 1675, including presbyterians like Gouge and Baxter.⁷⁹⁹ In one of his responses to Faldo, Penn referred to Firmin as "John Faldo's Mr. T.F," "the Promoter and Scatterer of these Pamphlets [against Penn]." ⁸⁰⁰ It seemed that the Socinian decided to channel his newly-formed hostility into active promotion of mainstream Protestant polemics against Quakerism.

⁷⁹⁶ Andrew R. Murphy, *William Penn: A Life* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 101.

⁷⁹⁷ William Penn, *The Invalidity of John Faldo's Vindication of his Book, called Quakerism no Christianity* (London, 1673: Wing P1305), 412; Vincent Buranelli, "William Penn and the Socinians," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 83, no. 4 (October 1959): 372-8; W.H. Stephenson, "A Seventeenth Century Philanthropist. Thomas Firmin (1632-1697), part III" *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, 6, issue 4 (January 1, 1935): 359.

⁷⁹⁸ William Penn, *Innocency with Her Open Face* (1669: Wing P1304), 4.

⁷⁹⁹ The endorsements can be found in John Faldo, *Quakerism No Christianity*, second edition (London, 1675: Wing F303).

⁸⁰⁰ Penn, *The Invalidity of John Faldo's Vindication*, 414. For a more thorough analysis of Penn's dispute with Faldo and his anti-Socinian polemic, see Madeleine Pennington, *Quakers, Christ, and Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 127-31.

Not only Reformed dissenters, but also latitudinarians could rely on Firmin's resources. Nye remembered that Firmin helped Tillotson arrange preachers for Tuesday lectures at St Lawrence when the latter was out of town, deliberately highlighting that "there was hardly a Divine of Note, (whether in *London*, or in the Country that frequented *London*) but Mr. *Firmin* was come acquainted with him."⁸⁰¹ It becomes clear that, in contrast to Penn, Firmin could present himself as mild a heretic as one could possibly get, actively poured out resources to reinforce the boundary of mainstream Protestant orthodoxy despite his own beliefs, and developed genuine friendships and an astonishingly wide network. Again, mainstream English Protestants could shrug off confessional differences among themselves as well as with individual radicals, as long as such accommodation contributed to a wider maintenance of what they perceived to be Protestant orthodoxy. And Firmin's usefulness and his willingness to be so used secured himself a place in this *mélange* of Gouge's evangelistic charity scheme.

Conclusion

The Welsh Trust revealed the multifaceted nature of the ongoing presbyterian reforms of the national Church after the Restoration. Seeing from the perspective of comprehension, one might observe a spectrum, even a binary, of opinion among presbyterians. The Welsh Trust complicated the picture, however. The Trust was initially a way for Gouge to pursue a less public, non-preaching, form of ministry, focusing on fundraising, publishing, and education in Wales, far from the centre of ecclesiological tensions and political bargains. In order to achieve real influence, however, Gouge felt compelled to widen his confessional network and yield to liturgical and theological concessions that he could not have imagined when he was ejected in 1662. Collaborations

⁸⁰¹ Nye, *Life*, 14.

across different confessional parties through an influential, productively publishing Trust that worked closely with parish churches challenges not only overly rigid ecclesiological groupings of Anglicans, dissenters, and radicals, but also the perceived antithesis between the “Dons” and “Ducklings.” Hence the Welsh Trust: a puritan project that effectively sowed dissent as well as a presbyterian-latitudinarian experiment in comprehension.

As an instrument of comprehension, the Welsh Trust was a tango between moderate dissenters and moderate Anglicans but also a wrestling bout between the two parties. Latitudinarians certainly hoped that their sponsorship of Gouge’s charity would be one of the measures to win moderate presbyterians over, even if a formal comprehension could not be achieved, but Baxter and his friends were much more obstinate than the church authorities thought, and were not for turning. The Trust came to an end when Gouge died in 1681, but towards the end of its life, the mutual trust between its Anglican and presbyterian members had already begun to crumble. Repeated failures of comprehension schemes and the rising fear of the Popish Plot exhausted the patience of many, leading latitudinarians like Stillingfleet to pressure even the moderate presbyterians, seen as semi-separatists, to full conformity: “To separate from those Churches ordinarily and visibly with whom occasionally you may joyn without sin, seemeth to be a most unjust separation.”⁸⁰² Stillingfleet argued that if these semi-separatists affirmed the established Church to be a true church and yet still avoided full conformity, such affirmation only aggravated rather than lessen their fault because “the very separating is a tacit and practical condemning of our Churches, if not as false, yet as impure.”⁸⁰³

Stillingfleet’s criticism incited many dissenters to fight back, including his fellow Trust member Baxter, who felt compelled to reassert the effort by London presbyterians to

⁸⁰² Edward Stillingfleet, *The Mischief of Separation* (London, 1680: Wing S5604 Variant), 35.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*, 36.

seek “Concord and Reformation” as early as 1660, specifically their proposal of an “Ussherian” episcopacy as well as a modified liturgy and flexibility in its use.⁸⁰⁴ Baxter protested in 1680 that for the past twenty years, the re-established Church had not only failed to respond properly to their requests, but had indeed raised the bar of conformity even higher: “the Change of the Liturgy on pretense of easing us, and the Act of Uniformity, have made Conformity now quite another thing than it was before.”⁸⁰⁵ Baxter then concluded that this “new conformity” would not have been acceptable to the old episcopalians, either, but “Ri. Hooker, Bishop Bilson, Bi-Usher and such others were they now alive would be Nonconformists.”⁸⁰⁶

The wrestling match would continue, with latitudinarians eventually making significant compromises in 1688-9. James’ toleration of Catholics, harsh dealings with the Covenanters, and suspension of Parliament since November 1685, were all dangerously reminiscent of his father’s arbitrary rule, prompting many Anglicans to favour a stronger Protestant union against what was perceived to be the greatest papist threat since the reign of Queen Mary I.⁸⁰⁷ The liturgy of comprehension was finally completed to meet the requests of moderate presbyterians, a task committed by Convocation in 1689 to William Lloyd, bishop of Worcester, Tillotson, Patrick, and Stillingfleet; however, in the end “comprehension” would lose to “toleration” in the form of the Toleration Act of 1689. The older generation of presbyterians had entered into the twilight of their lives by now, without much chance of seeing the acceptance of dissent and the end of the many ways in which they were penalized for their beliefs. Nevertheless, their efforts of reconciliation

⁸⁰⁴ Richard Baxter, *Richard Baxters Answer to Dr. Edward Stillingfleet’s Charge of Separation* (London, 1680: Wing B1183), A2r.

⁸⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, A2r-v.

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, A2v.

⁸⁰⁷ Tim Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society, 1660-1715* (London; New York, NY: Longman, 1993), 117.

with the established Church, including the project of Gouge's Welsh Trust, had certainly left an indelible mark on the developments of post-revolutionary England, not only in the forms of similar Anglican-dissenter initiatives such as the Societies for Reformation of Manners that involved former Trust members such as Tillotson, Patrick, and Fowler, but also the toleration of presbyterians and independents, anti-Catholicism, as well as a strengthened parliament.

Chapter 9 John Davenport, New England's Jacob the Trickster

Francis Bremer, in his definitive biography of John Davenport, *Building a New Jerusalem*, has pointed out the significance of Davenport's experience as part of the New England story as well as the larger, cross-Atlantic, history of international Protestantism. While Bremer has presented a thorough overview of the last decade of Davenport's life, connections between late Stuart transatlantic politics and Davenport's clerical career still await further exploration.⁸⁰⁸ A series of political events in the early 1660s cast the New Haven minister into despair. Through his Old England connections like William Hooke, he absorbed fears of a robust papalist comeback in his native country and spread reports of Catholic conspiracies to fellow New Englanders. In his adopted home, Davenport saw the broadening of church membership and the increasing reliance on synods as a compromise to presbyterian-episcopal, if not Catholic, influences and a slippery slope to ungodliness in New England. Disaffected New Haven was not only the last New England colony to recognise the restoration of the Stuart monarchy, but it also gained notoriety as the hideout for several Regicides who eluded English justice. These anti-Stuart sentiments and perceptions of disloyalty, at least indirectly, caused the absorption of the New Haven colony into Connecticut in 1664, a major setback for Davenport's influence as a Congregationalist leader; perhaps otherwise he would not have considered leaving New Haven for Boston in 1668. The same anti-Catholic, anti-Catholic sentiments among the likes of Davenport also aggravated existing tensions between them and the proponents of the Half-Way Covenant in Boston, where more conflicts awaited Davenport.

Davenport's pursuit of the Boston pulpit, specifically his creation of a forged letter to justify his departure from the New Haven Church, called into question his integrity and

⁸⁰⁸ See Bremer, *Davenport*, Chapter 18-21.

sincerity as a devout proponent of the New England Way. In a recent article, Bremer addresses the existing diversities in New England that paved the way to this reputational crisis for Davenport, paying attention to intra-clerical debates over ecclesiology and church government, but he is curiously silent on the scandal about Davenport's forgery, most likely because Bremer saw it as irrelevant to his discussion of church polity.⁸⁰⁹ Nevertheless, the profound impact of the scandal on the shaping of the New England Way simply cannot be overlooked. Davenport and his colleagues in the Boston First Church, James Penn and James Allen, were widely respected Congregationalist leaders whose fraudulent dealing opened the eyes of many to see how even the most outwardly consistent Congregationalists could abandon their professed convictions when beliefs clashed with personal interests and career prospects. Despite having been totally discredited, Davenport secured the post, sheltered by support from the majority of the First Church, Boston, whose preference for limited church membership, lay congregational power, and a more tolerant approach to regulate radical dissenters, outweighed their distaste for the dishonesty of their new pastor.

New Haven: A Lost Cause

In August 1659, when Davenport reported to John Winthrop Jr. that Richard Cromwell had been reduced to "a private gentleman," he disclosed his suspicions of a Catholic conspiracy to restore the Stuart regime: "I suspect that Jesuites have an hand in turning the wheele, to introduce the K[ing] of Scots."⁸¹⁰ Reflecting the common paranoia in his day about Quaker-Catholic conspiracies, Davenport surmised that a report about a

⁸⁰⁹ See Francis Bremer's recent article, "The New England Way Reconsidered: An Exploration of Church Polity and the Governance of the Region's Churches," in *Church Polity and Politics in the British Atlantic World, c.1635-66*, 155-73. Bremer's inquiry focuses on three contentious areas of church polity: church membership and infant baptism, tensions between laity and clergy over church governance, and synodical authority.

⁸¹⁰ John Davenport to John Winthrop Jr., 5 August 1659, *Letters*, 138, 139.

Quaker seeking to buy Whitehall Palace, Hampton Court, and Greenwich Palace was really a papist scheme to purchase royal estates “in the name and by the hand of a Quaker, to settle there, in time, a Jesuites colledge.”⁸¹¹ Davenport further pointed out that Catholic states like France and Spain might prevail with Charles II, “reducing England *sensim, sine sensu*, to become, as in former times, the popes ass againe.”⁸¹²

These anxious speculations that verged on fantasy were likely supplied by his friends back in England like William Hooke (1600/01-78), Davenport’s former colleague at the New Haven church who had returned to England in 1656.⁸¹³ In 1661, Hooke and Joseph Caryl published a collection of Davenport’s sermons in London, *The Saints Anchor-hold, in All Storms and Tempests*, likely delivered between the downfall of Richard Cromwell and the early days of Charles’ return. In the preface, Hooke and Caryl mourned over how the true Church “at this time was driven from *Jerusalem, Zion, Temple, Temple-Ordinances*, and native Place of residence, greatly afflicted and tossed with *Tempests*.”⁸¹⁴ Davenport further highlighted the theme of an unprecedented suffering of true believers in the hands of a global, Popish party. He first alluded to contemporary

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁸¹² *Ibid.*, 139-40.

⁸¹³ Susan Hardman Moore, “Hooke [Hook], William,” *ODNB*; John Miller has a thorough overview of how anti-Catholic sentiments and various conspiracy theories developed throughout the late sixteenth and seventeenth century. See his Chapter 4 “The Development of the Anti-Catholic Tradition,” in *Popery and Politics in England, 1660-1688* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 67-90. Miller pays particular attention to William Prynne as one of the most notorious conspiracy theorists among puritans. For Prynne’s repeated accusations of sectaries like Quakers as papists, see p. 86; William Prynne, *A New Discovery of Some Romish Emissaries, Quakers* (London, 1656: Wing P4017). For a transition from seeing popery as an external threat to attacking it as a threat attached to the English monarchs and the court and puritans’ participation in creating conspiracy theories, see Miller, *Popery and Politics in England, 1660-1688*, 84-90. Miller missed the connections between anti-Stuart and anti-Catholic narratives among Congregationalists in the early 1660s in his survey, only emphasising the transformation of anti-Catholic narratives from being anti-Stuart before 1648, anti-Cromwellian in the 1650s, anti-dissent in the 1660s, to anti-Stuart again in the 1670s and 1680s. This is possibly due to an overemphasis on Anglican and presbyterian polemics. Even so, Miller’s thesis of how anti-Catholic rhetoric developed and became closely tied to fears of arbitrary government remains very helpful.

⁸¹⁴ William Hooke and Joseph Caryl, preface to *The Saints Anchor-Hold, in All Storms and Tempests Preached in Sundry Sermons, and Published for the Support and Comfort of Gods People, in All Times of Tryal* by John Davenport (London, 1661: Wing D366), a3r.

events and lamented a “seeming frustration and disappointment of their [true believers’] former expectations.”⁸¹⁵ He then presented “a true Narrative of the Protestant Churches” across Europe around 1661, the year of the publication, and demonstrated how Protestants were suffering either under a Popish oppressor, like Louis XIV, or an indifferent prince whose political interest threatened the true religion.⁸¹⁶ One example of this universal attempt to convert Protestant nations to the Church of Rome was the imposition of a new governor and bishop on Geneva by Charles Emmanuel II, then Duke of Savoy, who threatened to besiege the city if they refused to capitulate.⁸¹⁷

Finally, Davenport turned to England but only briefly touched on it: “How it is...you have formerly heard, in part, and may have more hereafter”—a strategic avoidance to excuse himself from future accusations that he was denouncing restored episcopacy.⁸¹⁸ Even so, Davenport’s hearers in New Haven and readers in Old England would not fail to connect the preacher’s previous lament on the present state of English Protestantism with his warning against the “Popish party” or the “Antichristian party...creep[ing] into all Protestant States and professions.”⁸¹⁹ It was then no wonder that when Charles made a triumphant return to England in mid-1660 and his enemies fled out of the country, Davenport warmly received political refugees who sought safety in New Haven. Two regicides, Edward Whalley (*d.* 1674/5) and his son-in-law William Goffe (*d.* 1679?), originally residing in Cambridge, Massachusetts, arrived at New Haven on 7 March 1661 right before their arrest warrant was issued and lived with Davenport’s family

⁸¹⁵ Davenport, *The Saints Anchor-Hold*, 136.

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 181-6.

⁸¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁸¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

for a short while.⁸²⁰ Both Whalley and Goffe served as commissioners for the trial of King Charles I, signed the death warrant, and became major generals in the late 1650s. Like other regicides, they had been excluded from the Act of Indemnity and were now fleeing from royal agents. William Hooke, Davenport's old friend and his primary point of contact from Old England, was Whalley's brother-in-law, and might have encouraged Whalley to move to New England with Goffe.⁸²¹ They were rightly confident that New Haven leaders like Davenport would offer them protection.

Not only did Davenport receive the regicides into his own home, but the minister exhorted other New Englanders to do the same through the New Haven pulpit: "With-hold not countenance, entertainment, protection, from such [the 'reproached and persecuted people'], if they come to us, from other Countreys, as from *France* or *England*, or any other place."⁸²² Citing Hebrews 13:2, Davenport preached that by showing hospitality to strangers, "*some have entertained Angels unawares.*"⁸²³ John Crowne, a royalist, confirmed that many New Englanders heeded preachers like Davenport and received the regicides like men "dropped down from heaven."⁸²⁴

New Haven's growing notoriety as a deeply disaffected colony eventually did more harm than good. Davenport might have felt compelled to plead for New Haven's innocence and loyalty at court when he wrote a letter to Sir Thomas Temple to pass a message to William Fiennes, first Viscount Saye and Sele, Temple's great uncle, to

⁸²⁰ Thomas Kellond and Thosmas Kirke to John Endecott, Boston, 29 May 1661, *Colonial State Papers*, CO 1/15, f. 59. Kellond and Kirke, royal agents in charge of the arrest, reported that the regicides were at one point "harboured at the house of one Mr. Davenport." A recent and thorough account of Whalley and Goffe's flight to America is Matthew Jenkinson, *Charles I's Killers in America: The Lives & Afterlives of Edward Whalley & William Goffe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). See also Bremer, *Davenport*, 286; Christopher Durston, *Cromwell's Major-Generals: Godly Government during the English Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 235-6.

⁸²¹ Moore, "Hooke [Hook], William (1600/01–1678)," *ODNB*; Bremer, *Davenport*, 282.

⁸²² Davenport, *The Saints Anchor-Hold*, 198.

⁸²³ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁴ Bremer, *Davenport*, 284; Durston, *Cromwell's Major-Generals*, 236.

intercede for the Colony before the court. Davenport's account of how Whalley and Goffe escaped the search by royal agents in New Haven was however deliberately vague, and the minister boldly concluded that the escape was entirely providential and so impossible to prevent: "I believe if his maj[es]tie Rightly Understood the Curcumstances [*sic*] of this Event he would not be displeased with our majestrates, but to acquiesce in the Providence of the most high."⁸²⁵ Temple eventually brought Davenport's case to Sir William Morice (1602-76), a former presbyterian, kinsman of George Monck, and currently secretary of state.⁸²⁶ Possibly hoping to distance himself from the New Haven minister, Temple spoke of Davenport as someone "altogether unknowne" to him, but enclosed Davenport's letter along with his own, in which Temple emphasised that he himself had devoted "all the diligence & industry" to the inquiry into the whereabouts of Whalley and Goffe.⁸²⁷

Davenport might not have a strong desire to solicit support in London, but there were others in New Haven who did. William Leete, deputy governor of New Haven, was so anxious about royal displeasure that he travelled up to Boston to see John Norton, minister of the Boston First Church, with whom he had never been acquainted. Norton then wrote to Richard Baxter, now one of the royal chaplains, that Leete was utterly "distressed in his Spirit for the neglect [of apprehending the two regicides] wherein he chargeth himself therein" and had since changed his ways: "His endeavours also since

⁸²⁵ John Davenport to Thomas Temple, 19 August 1661, *Letters*, 193.

⁸²⁶ Viscount Saye and Sele had retreated from public life at this point so did not grant the favour. In the previous month, he wrote to John Endecott, governor of Massachusetts, that the letter would be his last one because his "glass" was "almost run out": "I have not been wanting, both to the King and council, to advance your interest; more I cannot do, but earnestly to pray the Lord to stand with you and for you." William Fiennes, first Viscount Saye and Sele to John Endecott, 10 July 1661, *The History of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay*, second edition, by Thomas Hutchinson (London, 1765), 220-1.

⁸²⁷ Sir Thomas Temple to Secretary of State William Morice, 20 August 1661, *Colonial State Papers*, CO 1/15, f. 80, 81. Jenkinson seems to portray Temple as simply another royalist authority who distrusted Davenport and genuinely desired to capture the regicides, but Temple would become a hearty supporter of Davenport's ministry and a regular attendee at the First Church of Boston, where Davenport would be pastor. Davenport's protection of the regicides and preaching in support of them can be found in Jenkinson, *Charles I's Killers in America*, 52.

have been...in full degree, as besides his own testimony, his Neighbours attest, they see not what he could have done more."⁸²⁸

These attempts to appease the restored Caroline regime went hand in hand with New Haven's realisation that royal displeasure was extremely inconvenient. New Haven, along with other colonies like Massachusetts and Connecticut, finally came to terms with the new political reality and formally recognised and celebrated the restoration of the Stuart monarchy around mid-1661. New Haven celebrated the reinstated Crown and proclaimed the king on 22 August 1661 and was the last colony to do so. A motivating factor behind New England colonies' slow and half-hearted reconciliation was the pursuit of royal charters, which secured their legal status as royal agents to politically and financially monopolise their respective territories.⁸²⁹ New Haven's fatal hesitation, coupled with its notoriety for harbouring regicides, at least indirectly resulted in the collapse of the colony, whose leaders knew very well that it was highly unlikely for them to obtain a royal patent, for which they had previously petitioned in vain.⁸³⁰

In the summer of 1661, John Winthrop Jr., governor of Connecticut and Davenport's physician and close friend, journeyed to London to petition for a single charter for Connecticut that would geographically incorporate New Haven.⁸³¹ Leete,

⁸²⁸ John Norton to Richard Baxter, 23 September 1661, quoted by Lemuel Alken Welles, *The History of the Regicides in New England* (New York, NY: The Grafton Press, 1927), 61. Although Leete seemed desperate to clear his own name, he was hardly innocent in helping the regicides escape from New Haven when Kellond and Kirke asked for his assistance in May 1661. See Jenkinson, *Charles I's Killers in America*, 43-54.

⁸²⁹ Of course, obtaining a royal charter also implied that the colonies willingly recognised the lawfulness of the restored Stuart monarchy and Charles' sovereignty over New England. See James Muldoon, "Colonial Charters: Possessory or Regulatory?" *Law and History Review* 36, no. 2 (2018): 355-81.

⁸³⁰ Jenkinson, *Charles I's Killers in America*, 51. Owen Stanwood also briefly discusses New Haven's more explicit hostility towards the Restoration compared to many in the Bay Colony, who could be at least outwardly compliant with the new regime in order to secure religious and political liberties. Stanwood, "Crisis and Opportunity: The Restoration Church Settlement and New England," in *Settling the Peace of the Church': 1662 Revisited*, ed. N.H. Keeble (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 197-8.

⁸³¹ For a detailed narrative of this process of attainment of a royal charter and subsequent merger of New Haven into Connecticut, see Bremer, *Davenport*, 290-301.

possibly thinking that it would be too hard for New Haven to obtain a charter for itself, had previously suggested the idea to Winthrop Jr. in private, with the hope that New Haven would maintain its political and ecclesiastical autonomy. Many other New Haven authorities like Davenport however explicitly objected to Winthrop Jr.'s mission right from the start.⁸³²

Despite a solid friendship with Governor Winthrop Jr., Davenport saw Connecticut as a nearby, rival colony in a worrying spiritual decline. The New Haven minister's involvement with the Hartford dispute in the late 1650s ended in defeat, and now he saw New Haven in danger of being swallowed up by another colony whose leadership and churches were deeply riven over the Half-Way Covenant and the question of synodical authority. Other than Samuel Stone's Hartford, John Warham in Windsor had long advocated the Half-Way Covenant, and churches in Wethersfield and New London were equally divided.⁸³³ To Davenport's disappointment, upon receiving a copy of the new charter in October 1662, Connecticut magistrates immediately initiated the merger, proclaiming their right over New Haven and luring New Haven residents and towns to their side, despite repeated objections raised by New Haven authorities. While Winthrop Jr. seemed sympathetic towards New Haven, he was inconveniently delayed by a lengthy territorial dispute between Connecticut and Rhode Island and would not return to New England until the summer of 1663.

Davenport led the opposition to the merger in the meantime. On 31 October 1662, he explained before the New Haven General Court that he had already written to Winthrop

⁸³² *Ibid.*, 291-2.

⁸³³ Paul R. Lucas, "Presbyterianism Comes to Connecticut: The Toleration Act of 1669," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 50, no. 2 (Summer 1972): 129-47; *idem*, *Valley of Discord: Church and Society along the Connecticut River, 1636-1725* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1976), 73-86. John Warham would abandon the Half-Way Covenant in 1664, which further divided the Windsor First Church (pp. 78-9); for Davenport's involvement in the Hartford controversy, see Chapter 6 of this thesis.

Jr. “not to have any hand in such an unrighteous act as to involve us in their patent” before the latter departed for London.⁸³⁴ Part of the replies from Winthrop Jr. was read, in which he expressed his personal objection to a merger, the intention of “some other of their Magistrates.”⁸³⁵ What Davenport and New Haven magistrates hoped was that Connecticut would wait until Winthrop Jr. returned, who had pleaded the same to his Connecticut colleagues after meeting with New Haven representatives, Nathaniel Whitefield, Robert Thompson, and John Scott in London: “I beg your favour to suspend your judgment upon it till I may have op[p]ortunity to give you a fuller account verbally.”⁸³⁶

New Haven had already started to crumble, however, and Winthrop Jr.’s colleagues would ignore their governor’s request. Many residents of New Haven towns, particularly those of Southold, Gilford, and Stamford, had begun to switch sides.⁸³⁷ Over the next year and a half, Davenport would see New Haven shrinking, with more and more inhabitants pledging allegiance and paying their taxes to Connecticut. Finally, on 13 December 1664, the nearly bankrupt New Haven Colony voted to confirm its submission to Connecticut.⁸³⁸ Davenport considered it a fatal blow to the ongoing campaign for the cause of the New England Way, proclaiming “Christ’s interest in New Haven Colony as miserably lost.”⁸³⁹

⁸³⁴ *Ancient Town Records*, vol. 2 New Haven Town Records 1662-1684, ed. Franklin B. Dexter (New Haven, CT: New Haven Colony Historical Society, 1919), 13.

⁸³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁶ John Winthrop Jr. to the Magistrates and General Court of Connecticut, 4 March 1663, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, series 5, vol. 8 (Boston, MA: MHS, 1882), 78.

⁸³⁷ *Ancient Town Records*, vol. 2 New Haven Town Records 1662-1684, 13; Winthrop Jr. to the Magistrates and General Court of Connecticut, 8 March 1663, *Collections*, series 5, vol. 8, 80. On 6 May 1663, New Haven sent another letter to Connecticut, lamenting how their own colony had been “so already dismembered” by Connecticut’s unceasing measures to admit those who decided to pledge loyalty to Connecticut and “put power into their hands” without even seeking any agreement with New Haven first. See *Records of the Colony or Jurisdiction of New Haven*, 481.

⁸³⁸ Bremer, *Davenport*, 301; Calder, *New Haven*, 249-53.

⁸³⁹ Davenport quoted by Edward E. Atwater, *History of the Colony of New Haven to its Absorption into Connecticut* (Meriden, CT: Journal Publishing Company, 1902), 527.

John G. Palfrey, a nineteenth-century historian, rightly observes that New Haven had now become “a monument of the great defeat and sorrow,” losing its appeal to Davenport.⁸⁴⁰

Boston: New Opportunities

On 24 September 1667, the First Church in Boston voted to invite Davenport to be their teaching officer.⁸⁴¹ It was amid acute disillusionment with his New Haven ministry that an invitation from Boston arrived. Davenport’s influence seemed at its lowest and his version of New England Congregationalism marginalised. The majority of the First Church shared Davenport’s suspicions of “presbyterian” leanings among many New England ministers, including John Wilson, their recently deceased minister, and John Norton (*d.* 1663), their former teacher; both were staunch advocates for the Half-Way Covenant at the Boston synod of 1662.

Leading the majority group was James Penn, the ruling elder and Davenport’s most fervent supporter. Other vocal leaders of the group included Edward Hutchinson, the eldest son of Anne Hutchinson, central figure in the Antinomian Controversy of 1636-8, and John Leverett (1616-79), major-general of the Massachusetts militia and future governor of the Bay Colony (1673-9). Other firm supporters included Anthony Stoddard, Thomas Clark, Thomas Grubb, and delegates sent to extend the invitation to New Haven, Edward Tying, James Oliver, and Richard Cooke.⁸⁴² In opposition, John Hull, merchant and diarist, Hezekiah Usher, one of the earliest New England booksellers, and others in the congregation like Edward Rainsford, Robert Walker, Theodore Atkinson, and William

⁸⁴⁰ John G. Palfrey, *History of New England during the Stuart Dynasty*, vol. 3 (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1865), 81.

⁸⁴¹ Richard D. Pierce, ed., *The Records of the First Church of Boston, 1630-1868*, vol. 39 (Boston, MA: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1961), 62.

⁸⁴² Bremer, *Davenport*, 317-8.

Salter supported the expansion of church membership and were unhappy with the appointment of Davenport as Wilson's successor.⁸⁴³

Divisions over church membership and the Half-Way Covenant often coincided with diverging attitudes towards radical Protestants, evident in the schism of the Boston First Church. Davenport and his supporters demonstrated a greater toleration for Baptists and Quakers. Hutchinson, Oliver, and Grubb were among those who petitioned the General Court to release imprisoned Baptists in November 1668.⁸⁴⁴ Prominent magistrates like Leverett and Sir Thomas Temple, who regularly attended the First Church, shared Davenport's sympathy towards radical Protestants as well. Leverett did not sign the 1668 petition for releasing imprisoned Baptists, but he once refused to issue an arrest warrant in the same year and was praised by Baptists for his tolerance.⁸⁴⁵ Temple and Davenport were both deeply concerned with the imposition of death penalties upon Quaker missionaries like Mary Dyer.⁸⁴⁶

When the General Court legislated that Quakers should be banished "upon paine of death" in October 1658, church members and future supporters of Davenport like Hutchinson and Clark dissented from the majority of the Court, resisting the heavy-handed approach their former church leaders Norton and Wilson promoted.⁸⁴⁷ If Hutchinson and Clark had heard of Davenport's reaction to the hangings of Marmaduke Stevenson and William Robinson in 1659 and of Mary Dyer in 1661, they would have appreciated the

⁸⁴³ *Idem*, "The New England Way Reconsidered," 169; *idem*, *Davenport*, 317.

⁸⁴⁴ E. Brooks Holifield, "On Toleration in Massachusetts," *Church History* 38 (January 1969): 192.

⁸⁴⁵ Bremer, *Davenport*, 318; Holifield, "On Toleration in Massachusetts," 193.

⁸⁴⁶ Davenport to John Winthrop Jr., 6 December 1659, *Letters*, 147.

⁸⁴⁷ John Norton was once commissioned to write an anti-Quaker treatise in which the First Church Boston pastor justified capital punishment. See John Norton, *The Heart of N-England Rent at the Blasphemies of the Present Generation* (Cambridge, MA, 1659: Wing N1318), 48-9; Bremer, *Davenport*, 317; *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, vol. 4 pt. 1 1650-1660, 346.

New Haven minister's concerns for the brutality of capital punishment and its usefulness for Quaker propaganda as well as New Haven's relative leniency towards the sect.⁸⁴⁸

The invitation for Davenport to assume pastoral leadership of the flagship church in New England marked a crucial attempt at a robust comeback of the New England Way. In the eyes of many, ex-pastor of the First Church John Norton had already damaged his own reputation when he promoted reconciliation with the Crown as early as 1661 and failed to secure enough economic liberties in the negotiations with London in 1662.⁸⁴⁹ The overwhelming support for a more inclusive church membership and infant baptism at the Boston Synod of 1662 further confirmed the fears many had that New England was turning away from its first fathers' godly principles towards an anti-Congregationalist, pro-Stuart church polity. For them, the church was a covenanted community of visible saints, not a mixture of believers and the visibly relapsed, nor a parish system in which every child, regardless of their parents' faith, were baptised, catechised, and brought up within a national, all-inclusive church.⁸⁵⁰

On the other hand, some others had been wary of Davenport's potential move to Boston for a while. An informer, taking advantage of the differences between Davenport's New England Way and the presbyterian-leaning position many favoured in Boston, accused the preacher of seditious preaching, and Richard Nicolls, then governor of New York and a committed royalist, was investigating the claims in the months leading up to the First Church's decision to approach Davenport officially. Doubts about his disloyalty

⁸⁴⁸ Davenport to Winthrop Jr, *Letters*, 148.

⁸⁴⁹ Francis Bremer, "Norton, John (1606-1663)," *ODNB*.

⁸⁵⁰ For Davenport and other Congregational patriarchs like Cotton and Hooker, the individual congregations as gatherings of visible saints did not negate the reality that churches were inevitably a mixture of true believers and hypocrites, but congregations were called to maintain the visible godliness of each of their members. Davenport, *John Davenport Sermon Book, 1649-1652*, 347; Cotton, *Of the Holiness of Church-Members*, 27; Hooker, *Survey*, 28.

had long been a theme in Davenport's transatlantic career, and again, the minister found a trustworthy friend to intercede for him, this time John Winthrop Jr. In a letter to Nicolls in July 1667, Winthrop Jr. not only testified that Davenport had always refrained from "giving offence," but asserted that the informer who "calumniate[d]" Davenport must have "not heard him [Davenport] preach a sermon since Noahs Flood."⁸⁵¹ Instead, Davenport merely preached "the true way of worship, or Christs government in the church against the popish, Antichristian, Roman Hierarchy."⁸⁵² Despite expecting a fierce opposition, Davenport was determined to seize the most prestigious ministerial position in New England, not only to promote his church polity ideals, but for his own benefit. Davenport would however realise that, to secure the offer and achieve these ambitions, he had to turn his back on these ideals as well.

Forging a Way Forward: the Boston Controversy

Davenport's move from New Haven to Boston was a catalogue of rule-breaking as a Congregationalist and deserves more scholarly attention, especially as to how the minister interpreted his own behaviour as well as how the laity responded to the scandal. To borrow Patrick Collinson's question about popular religion, "did the godly do as they were told?"⁸⁵³ here we also have an opportunity to see how the Boston First Church, church elders and lay congregants alike, put what they claimed to espouse into practice.⁸⁵³ The Boston First Church failed to embrace the invitation unanimously, and very soon, news of opposition to Davenport as their future pastor reached New Haven. Despite Davenport's "strong inclynation" to accept the invitation,⁸⁵⁴ which he described as a divine call, he was

⁸⁵¹ John Winthrop Jr. to Richard Nicolls, 15 July 1667, Winthrop Family Papers.

⁸⁵² *Ibid.*

⁸⁵³ Patrick Collinson, "The Politics of Religion and the Religion of Politics in Elizabethan England," in *This England: Essays on the English Nation and Commonwealth in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Patrick Collinson (Manchester; New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 2011), 51.

⁸⁵⁴ John Davenport to the First Church Boston, 8 October 1667, *Letters*, 270.

immediately aware of “constant reports of, not only the dissent, but of the strong opposition of above 40 Brethren” of the First Church, which was one of the reasons why the New Haven congregation was hesitant to let him go.⁸⁵⁵ Many feared that his departure would cause a “breaking” of the First Church as well as that of the New Haven Church.⁸⁵⁶

Despite lacking congregational assent, Davenport told Boston on 28 October 1667 that he had decided to go to them “for a further triall for to finde out the minde of God.”⁸⁵⁷ The New Haven church however unanimously denied his initial request to move immediately to Boston for the imminent winter and early spring. As a compromise, Davenport insisted that he “must make a journ[e]y to Boston by the will of God” after the winter.⁸⁵⁸ Davenport’s subsequent allusion to a “free pass” in the same letter must have been even more troubling to those objecting to his departure. The minister spoke of an agreement between New Haven and himself “in our first begin[n]ing for my being at liberty to follow the call of God” that was still “of the same force.”⁸⁵⁹ Davenport must have communicated this to the First Church before because in the invitation letter Boston sent to New Haven a month previously, Penn already mentioned how Davenport was “providentially loosened” from any commitment to the New Haven Church.⁸⁶⁰ This proposed liberty did not sit well with Boston dissenters, however, who called themselves the ‘dissenting Brethren,’ invoking the Dissenting Brethren at the Westminster Assembly: “[Davenport] looketh at himself as free from the Church but by what doth appeare hath not bin dismissed from them, whose temptation may hereby be heightned to dessert [*sic*] his

⁸⁵⁵ *Idem* to the First Church Boston, 28 October 1667, *Letters*, 271.

⁸⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 272.

⁸⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁰ The First Church Boston to the New Haven Church, 28 September 1667, *HOSC*, 15.

flock without any cause.”⁸⁶¹ They recognised that the merger of New Haven into Connecticut could have been a motivation behind Davenport’s desire to relocate, but the dissenters pointed out that Connecticut magistrates had not “put any impositions upon them [New Haven] nor abridged their Church liberties.”⁸⁶²

Boston dissenters were rightly indignant because Davenport was essentially claiming that although he had tirelessly and consistently preached congregational autonomy over both clergymen and synodical assemblies, he himself had never been bound by such rules since the founding of the New Haven Colony in 1638. Furthermore, not only was this concept of a free pass unheard of, but the fact that Davenport was still seeking a formal dismissal from New Haven must have weakened the force of his appeal. To make things worse, the New Haven church refused to endorse Davenport’s claim. Nicholas Street, Davenport’s long-time colleague and now New Haven’s spokesman, outright told Penn and the First Church in his initial response on 28 October 1667: “you are mistaken.”⁸⁶³ In the letter, Street seemed to think that Davenport grounded his liberty to resign “*upon the Change of Civill Gover[n]ment,*” which indicated Street’s ignorance of both what Davenport actually told Penn and the agreement Davenport insisted that existed between him and the New Haven church.⁸⁶⁴ Street’s interpretation might have reflected his observation of his colleague’s state of mind. It was clear that Davenport, utterly furious about the collapse of New Haven’s civil autonomy, now wanted to jump ship. No matter how Davenport presented his case, the whole New Haven church “unanimously declare[d]

⁸⁶¹ “Humble request of the dissenting brethren,” 30 September 1667, *HOSC*, 16.

⁸⁶² *Ibid.*

⁸⁶³ “The Church of New Haven letter in answer to the brethrens letter returned by captain Clarke,” 28 October 1667, *HOSC*, 20.

⁸⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

themselves to be of a different ap[p]rehention in this matter.”⁸⁶⁵ The last few lines of Street’s letter were particularly revealing:

The premises considered we see no cause nor call of God to resigne our reverend Pastour to yourselves, or to the Church of Boston, by any immediate act of ours, But such is our tender respect to him that we have soe declared ourselves to his satisfaction as we hope; As he is able for to give you a more full answer not only of his owne minde but of our also in this weighty matter.⁸⁶⁶

Here Street issued an implicit rebuke of Davenport’s wilfulness rather than a real desire to let Davenport speak for himself and New Haven. The letter was carefully worded so that the First Church could not easily present it as a formal dismissal to their congregation. Fully aware of a significant faction of dissenters, Street knew perfectly well that if his letter were read out, Davenport would never be installed. Street’s motives were however unclear—either Davenport’s old friend genuinely wanted the minister to remain in New Haven, or, perhaps out of an avenging spirit, Street refused to release the man who had abandoned his own flock. Caught in a terrible impasse, Davenport soon realised that he could only break by deceit. Street’s letter was withheld by Penn, and he and Davenport would find ways to get around it as their conflicts with the dissenters escalated in mid-1668. On 2 May 1668, Davenport finally arrived in Boston, as he promised he would. John Hull, one of the dissenters, recorded a “great shower of extraordinary drops of rain fell as they [Davenport’s family] entered the town,” perhaps interpreting it as a sign of divine displeasure or entertaining the possibility of an ecclesiastical storm to come.⁸⁶⁷

Once arriving in Boston, Davenport embarked on a series of sermons in which he reasserted that his conscience was clean against those who criticised his relocation. Three

⁸⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁷ Hull, “John Hull’s Diary of Public Occurrences,” 3:227; Bremer, *Davenport*, 326; for John Hull’s career, theological position, relationship with the First Church, Boston, and interpretation of divine providence, see Mark Valeri, “Providence in the Life of John Hull: Puritanism and Commerce in Massachusetts Bay, 1650-1680,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 117 (2008): 55-116.

sermons he preached in Cambridge during this time have survived. His choice of Scriptural text for the sermon on 2 July 1668, Acts 24:16, was particularly significant: “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void to offence toward God, and toward men.” This was the same passage that he had chosen to preach at St Stephen’s Coleman Street before he departed for Amsterdam in 1633. Davenport taught that “men should not set their wills above the way of their own understanding” and, speaking directly about himself, the preacher declared: “nor doe I exercise myself in Things to[o] high for mee.”⁸⁶⁸ This was precisely what Davenport was doing, however, and his self-deprecation must have seemed insincere to those who had doubts about his release from New Haven.

Enjoying strong support from Penn and other prominent First Church congregants like Leverett and Sir Thomas Temple, Davenport was not only undeterred by opposition nor troubled by his obviously questionable claims of liberty, but the minister could at times rebuke the dissenters publicly. Already in October 1667, a few months before he arrived in Boston, Davenport directly warned the dissenters in a letter against doing things “through strife and vaine glory” and against schisms among church members.⁸⁶⁹ This targeted admonition must have alienated him from the dissenting minority, who already felt neglected and silenced by the church. Existing tensions quickly turned into open conflict when Davenport decided to challenge the minority party on a lecture day on 16 July 1668. According to one of the dissenters Joshua Scottow, Davenport rebuked them in a prayer “in the presence of a great part of the Countrey,” accused them of jeopardising the unity the First Church had been famous for, and finally declared: “it is evident Satan hath a

⁸⁶⁸ Bremer, *Davenport*, 327-8; “Notes on sermons preached in Cambridge, Feb 1667 to Jul 1668] Ms. (in unidentified hand),” Houghton Library, Harvard University, MS Am 2356: First Church (Cambridge, MA) Sermon Papers, 287 (paginated as 288).

⁸⁶⁹ Davenport to the First Church Boston, 28 October 1667, *Letters*, 273.

great hand in it.”⁸⁷⁰ Having been so publicly humiliated, the dissenters now sought a dismissal to form their own church.

This internal dispute of a congregation was a miniature of the regional conflict between two clashing church polities, and although being the minority party in the First Church, the dissenters enjoyed support from nearby churches. Hoping to consult other churches on the question of whether the dissenters should be censured, Penn decided to call a council—a miscalculation on his part that yielded room for dissenters to solicit support. On 6 August, representatives from Dorchester, Dedham, Roxbury, and Cambridge gathered to hear the cases from both sides. It was worth noting that the delegates were mostly advocates of the Half-Way Covenant, including Richard Mather, Daniel Gookin, and John Elliot, whereas Richard Mather’s own son Increase Mather of the Second Church, Boston, who had long stood with Davenport against the broadening of church membership, did not attend. Contrary to Penn’s expectation, the council recommended that dissenters be dismissed, indicating that given the number of residents, Boston could use a third church anyway.⁸⁷¹

Seeing that the council did not function as they expected, Penn and the majority party decided to ignore the advice issued by the council. Two days later, on 10 August, the church called Davenport to office. Scottow remembered the church meeting for its calculating political manoeuvring. The dissenters were first asked to withdraw from the meeting in order for the congregation to discuss their petition for a dismissal. The dissenters responded that while the request was reasonable, “if the Church had [other] busines[s] to transact that concerned all the Church they durst not absent themselves.”⁸⁷²

⁸⁷⁰ Davenport’s prayer recorded by Joshua Scottow, *HOSC*, 24. Scottow left the only comprehensive account of this controversy.

⁸⁷¹ Joshua Scottow’s account, *HOSC*, 25-6.

⁸⁷² *Ibid.*, 28.

When the dissenters finally withdrew after repeated requests from the rest of the church, Davenport was immediately brought into the meetinghouse and formally installed. A letter was sent to New Haven to ask for a written confirmation that they had indeed dismissed their former pastor, and yet based on what Nicholas Street wrote in the previous year, it was hard to imagine that Penn and Davenport would be hoping for a positive response.

A few weeks later, Street's reply arrived. It was again a clear denial of a dismissal from New Haven. He acknowledged that in his previous letter, the last few sentences regarding New Haven's "tender respect unto him [Davenport]" and their willingness to grant him satisfaction, "singly considered as separated from the rest," was "capable of a strained interpretation of a vertuall dismissal."⁸⁷³ Street however reasserted that New Haven had never agreed to let Davenport go: "we doe not to this day see light to give him up to you, by any voluntary act of ours and therefore can doe nothing in order to the writing and sending such a dismissal."⁸⁷⁴ Just as Davenport had resorted to the notion of a clean conscience held only accountable to God (and, clearly, not to the congregation) to defend his integrity, Street declared that New Haven could not yield to the wish of the majority of the Boston First Church by acknowledging a dismissal that had never existed: "we can truely say it is purely from principles of Conscience, that we are withheld from acting according to your desire [to obtain proof of Davenport's dismissal]."⁸⁷⁵ Recalling that the majority party had already promised to not install Davenport if New Haven did not agree to dismiss their minister, Scottow lamented in his account: "if this letter had bin read our trouble had bin over."⁸⁷⁶

30. ⁸⁷³ "Copy of a concealed letter," New Haven to the First Church Boston, 28 August 1668, *HOSC*,

⁸⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷⁶ Scottow's account, *HOSC*, 29.

In response to further requests for a formal dismissal from both Penn and Davenport, Street sent an even longer letter on 12 October. This time we see Street's even clearer indignation about how the New Haven church had been treated and how Penn and Davenport's majority party had acted. Street forcefully challenged the lawfulness of the process of Davenport's admission to the First Church and the current request for a dismissal. Laid out in the most cold and flawless manner, Street's condemnation should have been devastating to Davenport, once his intimate comrade in defence of the New England Way:

A man can not have the essentials...of a Church officer put upon him in your Church that is not first a member of your Church soe that your hands are tied up by your own act, It is not for us to dismiss to the Church of Boston one that is all ready called to be a teaching officer to your Church at Boston, and if the match is made up as you say, what need a dismissal from us to helpe make him a member or officer in your church, but that which doth most strike with us is matter of conscience though yourselves and our Reverend Pastor are fully satisfied in these motions yet the church of Newhaven is not soe.... Being soe much in the Darke about his [Davenport's] way in leaving this Church and joyning to yours, but we are not without doubts and feares of some uncomfortable issue, there fore cannot clearly act in such a way as is expressed and desired [by you].⁸⁷⁷

Instead of reading out the letter in full, Penn and James Allen, another minister called to office along with Davenport, decided to draw up an abbreviated version of the letter that only highlighted New Haven's recognition of Davenport's departure as if it indicated a willing dismissal.⁸⁷⁸ Davenport's son, John Davenport Jr., personally transcribed the edited letter, so it was impossible that his father disapproved of this forgery.⁸⁷⁹ On 1 November, the Davenport family was admitted to the First Church, and on 9 December, Davenport and Allen were both ordained. According to Scottow, Davenport again appealed to the divine will when addressing the church at his ordination: "An

⁸⁷⁷ "The suppressed letter," New Haven to the First Church Boston, 12 October 1668, *HOSC*, 34.

⁸⁷⁸ For a comparison between the edited letter and the actual letter, see *HOSC*, 33-6.

⁸⁷⁹ Scottow's account, *HOSC*, 33.

outward call could not satisfy mee, if I had not an inward call.”⁸⁸⁰ Davenport declared that he had been waiting for months to discern the will of God, who had guided him through the dismissal from New Haven, reception into the Boston First Church, and now call to ministry: “[God had] cleare[d] his will...to the full satisfaction of my conscience.”⁸⁸¹

While Scottow painted a very negative picture of Davenport from the perspective of a dissenter, Davenport Jr., anxious to whitewash his father’s behaviour, described the “general satisfaction” among the First Church congregants with his father in a letter to John Winthrop Jr. three days after the ordination.⁸⁸² Completely silent about his own deceit, Davenport Jr. reported “the passage of divine providence” on the ordination day: “the season being moderate, & congregacon [*sic*] was full”; the election was confirmed by a vote, “w[hi]ch passed w[ith] universal silence”; upon listening to Davenport’s speech after the ordination, Sir Thomas Temple “was so moved that he wept.”⁸⁸³ Temple further told Leverett when they dined together that evening that “he had bene at many solemne meetings, but never saw the like solemnity” and fancifully remarked: “if the King had been pr[e]sent...he would have turned a Congregational man.”⁸⁸⁴

Davenport’s successful ordination did not end the dispute with the dissenters, who finally secured another council despite repeated censures from the First Church. This second council was initiated by other churches, “contra[ry] to the express mind of the church,” as Davenport Jr. indignantly recalled.⁸⁸⁵ First Church elders refused to recognise

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁸⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸² John Davenport Jr. to John Winthrop Jr., 12 December 1668, Winthrop Family Papers. Bremer cites this letter as 10 December 1668, possibly because Davenport Jr marked date as “12.10.68,” but 10 signified the tenth month under the old style of dating, hence giving us the date 12 December, cf. Bremer, *Davenport*, 333, also fn. 73.

⁸⁸³ Davenport Jr. to Winthrop Jr., 12 December 1668, Winthrop Family Papers.

⁸⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸⁵ John Davenport Jr. to John Winthrop Jr., 16 April 1669, Winthrop Family Papers.

the assembly as “an orderly Council” and declined to attend.⁸⁸⁶ When the representatives of this second council, which convened on 13 April 1669 again under the leadership of Richard Mather, visited the First Church on 14 April to seek an in-person conversation with Davenport’s party, the “doore was locked against them upon knocking.”⁸⁸⁷ Scottow then recalled with clear disapproval that these council delegates, led by Mather, “wayted soe long at the doore before they could deliver their message, that Mr. Peter Oliver [one of the leading dissenters] went to fetch chairs for them to sit downe at the doore.”⁸⁸⁸

On 16 April, the council reconfirmed the advice of the first council that the dissenters should be dismissed and were free to form their own church even if a dismissal could not be obtained. Davenport’s party, predictably unimpressed, proceeded to condemn the dissenters as schismatics, banned them from the communion, and declared that the council was “not an ordinance of Christ.”⁸⁸⁹ This properly marked the end of the dissenters’ engagement with the First Church and, on 12 May, the Third Church, also known as the Old South Church, was formally established, despite lacking unanimous support from Massachusetts magistrates, among whom were the First Church members like Governor Richard Bellingham, Leverett, and Edward Tying.⁸⁹⁰

⁸⁸⁶ John Davenport and James Penn to the messengers of the churches, 13 April 1669, *HOSC*, 60.

⁸⁸⁷ Scottow’s account, *HOSC*, 60; Davenport Jr. recorded Mather and other representatives’ attempt to enter the First Church to speak to the First Church leaders in his letter to Winthrop Jr as well. See Davenport Jr. to Winthrop Jr., 16 April 1669, Winthrop Family Papers.

⁸⁸⁸ Scottow’s account, *HOSC*, 60.

⁸⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁸⁹⁰ Bremer, *Davenport*, 338. Bremer noted that Thomas Thatcher prayed “that this infant church might live to condemn its condemners,” but the person who did the prayer on this occasion was in fact John Oxenbridge, who would succeed Davenport as pastor of the First Church after the latter’s death in 1670. See Scottow’s account, *HOSC*, 81. Bremer’s reference to Davenport Jr.’s letter, in which Thatcher was mentioned, was Thatcher’s sermon on 22 December 1669 that marked the erection of the new church building. See *HOSC*, 139; John Davenport Jr. to John Winthrop Jr. 24 December 1669, Winthrop Family Papers.

New England's Imperfect Jacob

On 19 May 1669, a week after the dissenters formed the Third Church, Davenport preached the annual Election Day sermon before Massachusetts General Court. In the sermon, he confronted those who he believed had infringed upon the congregational autonomy of the First Church by siding with the dissenters. He spoke of “two extreams” that had put the religious life in New England in great danger: “misguided zeal” and “formallity.”⁸⁹¹ He warned the magistrates against “making them [churches] bend to serve your worldly ends” and depriving churches of “the Power and Priviledges which Christ hath purchased for them by his precious blood.”⁸⁹² Clearly with the recent controversy and the newly-formed Third Church in mind, Davenport condemned those magistrates who “countenance[d] others to exercise power over the Churches” when Christ had already “given them [churches] power in their proper concernments within themselves.”⁸⁹³ Even if there were “Mens opinions... consented to by the major part of a Topical Synod,” they should not be imposed upon churches.⁸⁹⁴ From the disputes over the Half-Way Covenant to the schism of the Boston First Church, Davenport seemed genuinely troubled that New England was falling away from its former Congregational Way and slipping into what he saw as presbyterian or episcopal tyranny, totally oblivious to his own hypocrisy. That would soon be fully exposed.

There were already rumours in Boston that Davenport had not actually been formally dismissed from the New Haven church. In a church meeting on 6 January 1669, Richard Trewsdale, one of the deacons, complained that he heard of a letter “sent to the

⁸⁹¹ John Davenport, *A Sermon Preach'd at the Election of the Governour, at Boston in New-England, May 19th 1669* (Cambridge, MA, 1670: Wing D367A), 12.

⁸⁹² *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

Church from the Church of New Haven but was not read to them.”⁸⁹⁵ Another dissenter, Thomas Savage, had also accused Davenport of leaving New Haven “for worldly ends.”⁸⁹⁶ These speculations were rekindled, possibly by the preacher’s constantly belligerent attitude and preaching, and finally confirmed when Nicholas Street visited Boston in early June 1669, through whom many realised that there were significant discrepancies between what Street wrote and what was read out to the congregation. In order to respond to the charges, a church meeting was called on 17 June 1669. Davenport agreed to present the concealed letter Street sent on 28 August 1668 and sent his son to fetch it, but when Davenport Jr. returned, he claimed that he could no longer find the letter. The minister then explained that, instead of hiding the letter, he had shown it to more than forty church members, who advised against having it read to the whole church due to its “many mistakes.”⁸⁹⁷ When Penn declared that whatever was evil in the matter would be his full responsibility, Davenport retorted that he saw “no appearance of evill” at all.⁸⁹⁸

After Street’s last letter, once edited into a forgery to fake a dismissal, was read in its entirety, Scottow recalled that many, including Davenport’s staunch supporters like Hutchinson, Clark, and Leverett, were noticeably troubled and concerned that “there was a reall injury” done to both the First Church and their neighbouring churches.⁸⁹⁹ Davenport remained unrepentant, insisting that the extract was not a forgery because only “some superfluties and such things as did not properly belong to it” were left out.⁹⁰⁰ On 29 June 1669, under enormous pressure to clear his name, Davenport provided more details about his involvement, but again, his self-defence was deliberately ambiguous and hardly did

⁸⁹⁵ Scottow’s account, *HOSC*, 42. This is the letter dated 12 October 1668. See pp. 33-6.

⁸⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁸⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁸⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁸⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

him any good: “I neither dissuaded from reading the extract nor persuaded to the reading of the Originall script in publique, leaving events to God.”⁹⁰¹ As to the fact that it was his son who wrote up the extract, Davenport protested that it was not sufficient proof for his active participation in the scheme because it was still up to Penn and Allen to decide how to use it. Many of Davenport’s supporters were obviously torn. One of them, a Mr Search, asked the congregation to stop pressing the elders for an explanation “for Jacob got the blessing in a wrong way.”⁹⁰² The church eventually voted to affirm their support for the church elders.

Several nearby churches, including the Third Church, reacted immediately. On 15 July, seventeen ministers who had formed a council to address the controversy issued a public condemnation of the elders of the First Church, Boston, for the “fraudulent dealing,” “the great and publique scandall of unfaithfullnes and falshood committed by the 3 Reverend Elders of the first Church in Boston.”⁹⁰³ The statement started with a harsh rebuke of Davenport, citing the minister’s own testimony in *Apologeticall Reply* (1636) that grounded his resignation from St Stephen’s Coleman Street in congregational assent against his departure from New Haven. While the seventeen condemned all three elders, Penn, Allen, and Davenport, they particularly singled out Davenport to emphasise his guilt because he did the most to “justify the fact and himself as having no hand in the writing.”⁹⁰⁴ This time, Increase Mather’s name appeared among the signatories. Davenport’s old friend and fellow opponent to the Half-Way Covenant, whose father

⁹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁹⁰² *Ibid.*, 82.

⁹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

Richard Mather died only eight days after the disgraceful humiliation of being refused entry into Davenport's church, had now joined others to condemn him.⁹⁰⁵

Conclusion

Davenport died on 15 March 1670, only a few months after the scandal broke out.⁹⁰⁶ Those who followed him and shared his church polity ideals would continue to rely on his writings, and the leadership of Boston's First Church and the like-minded elite would remain opposed to the Half-Way Covenant. In 1672, his second response to John Paget, *The Power of Congregational Churches Asserted and Vindicated*, written in the late 1630s, was published in London in order to reaffirm the autonomy of individual congregations to govern themselves and defend the compatibility of this congregationalist principle with the authority of civil magistrates, against the ongoing attacks from presbyterians and episcopalians in Old England.⁹⁰⁷ One notable exception was Increase Mather, Davenport's ex-comrade in the opposition to the Half-Way Covenant, who not only publicly condemned his friend and other elders of the Boston First Church in July 1669, but would soon change his mind about synodical power and the Half-Way Covenant.

Richard Mather's death in the midst of the Boston controversy as well as the revelation of Davenport's forgery must have been decisive in Increase's change of alliance. Increase recorded his father's death under the context of the latter's leadership in the council in April 1669, which favoured the dissenters against Davenport's party.

⁹⁰⁵ Richard Mather had been struggling with poor health for years, particularly troubled by kidney stones. On 16 April, two days after he was shut out of the First Church, Boston, along with other delegates, he started to suffer from the "a total stoppage" of urine. He was sent to Increase Mather's house in Boston in the evening and returned home to Dorchester the next morning. See Increase Mather, *The Life and Death of that Reverend Man of God, Mr. Richard Mather, Teacher of the Church in Dorchester in New-England* (Cambridge, MA, 1670: Wing M1226), 26.

⁹⁰⁶ Davenport Jr. accounted his father's death in detail in a letter to Winthrop Jr., 28 March 1670, Boston, Winthrop Family Papers. Winthrop Jr. would later report it to Nicolls, who once inquired about the political nature of Davenport's preaching. See John Winthrop Jr. to Richard Nicolls, 24 September 1670, Winthrop Family Papers.

⁹⁰⁷ Davenport, *The Power of Congregational Churches Asserted and Vindicated*.

Increase Mather compared his father to Martin Luther, who also suffered from kidney stones that prevented him from fully participating in a council in 1537.⁹⁰⁸ The last words from the elderly minister to his son was a firm reaffirmation of the Half-Way Covenant: “*I have thought that persons might have Right to Baptism, and yet not to the Lords Supper; and I see no cause to alter my judgement as to that particular.*”⁹⁰⁹ In 1671, Increase Mather wrote *The First Principles of New-England*, which served as his first public endorsement of the Half-Way Covenant against “the *Antisynodialian Brethren.*”⁹¹⁰

From mid to late 1670s, John Leverett, who became governor of Massachusetts in 1673, would continue to resist what he saw as the increasing infringement of congregational autonomy and clashed with Increase Mather, who repeatedly urged magistrates to address moral degradation in New England, citing examples like disrespect for authorities, indecent dress, and drunkenness in his sermons.⁹¹¹ Leverett disapproved of Mather’s heightened view of clerical authority, nor did he like the idea of civil magistrates meddling with ecclesiastical affairs. The governor and his supporters in the General Court resisted Mather’s calls for moral reforms and, in 1678, declined Mather’s request for a synod to design and mobilise such reforms. Leverett however represented a rapidly disappearing generation. When the governor died in 1678, New England was ready to embrace a new era, in which Mather and the younger generation dominated the religious

⁹⁰⁸ Mather, *The Life and Death of that Reverend Man of God, Mr. Richard Mather*, 26; Heiko Augustinus Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 328-30.

⁹⁰⁹ Mather, *The Life and Death of that Reverend Man of God, Mr. Richard Mather*, 27.

⁹¹⁰ *Idem*, *The First Principles of New-England* (Cambridge, MA, 1675: Wing M1211). The preface was dated May 1671, but the work was published in 1675.

⁹¹¹ *Idem*, *Wo to Drunkards Two Sermons Testifying against the Sin of Drunkenness* (Cambridge, MA, 1673: Wing M1261); see also *idem*, *The Day of Trouble is Near* (Cambridge, MA, 1674: Wing M1196), 22; Francis Bremer, *First Founders: American Puritans and Puritanism in an Atlantic World* (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2012), 228-32; See also Richard P. Gildrie, Chapter 1 “The Reforming Synod of 1679,” in *The Profane, the Civil, and the Godly: The Reformation of Manners in Orthodox New England, 1679-1749* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 19-40, see pp. 24-31 for the tensions between Mather and Leverett.

scene. A synod, later known as the Reforming Synod, was finally called in September 1679, marking a decisive enhancement of clerical and synodical authority in New England.

The Boston controversy that plagued the final years of Davenport's life, intentionally overlooked by many of his contemporaries as well as historians today, is just as significant for our inquiry into New England religion and church polity. Seventeenth-century New Englanders were not oblivious of the inherent tensions over church polity nor hypocrisies among themselves. They knew that even the most eminent leaders could stumble, but sometimes, preferences for a particular church polity and discipline or simply favouritism towards someone, were enough for them to turn a blind eye to the most obvious dissonances between church polity and ecclesiastical politics. This is an ignominious end to the career of an otherwise esteemed pastor. And yet it is an invaluable lesson for historians today that we can never put our trust solely in what was written or said. At the end of the day, even the most dearly and passionately held beliefs could give way to selfish desires and personal gains.

CONCLUSION: PURITANS AND PERCEPTIONS OF ANGLICAN IDENTITY

The lives of Edward Reynolds, John Davenport, and William and Thomas Gouge challenge the boundaries between seemingly clashing identities and puritan sub-groups defined in past scholarship. What these four biographical studies have demonstrated is that it is dangerously misleading to cast people into ecclesiological roles, such as presbyterian or episcopalian, without any recognition that not only do individuals change, but religious traditions also evolve over time. What the divines at the centre of this thesis, all participants in the various “reformations” of the Church of England, have demonstrated is that ecclesiological fault lines were far from static, and that tensions between conformity and dissent cannot only be found between different puritan camps, but also within each puritan individual. This presents current scholarship with the serious challenge of rethinking its nomenclature: either retaining the original categorisation but with further qualifications, or, in some cases, refraining from imposing party labels on every individual under examination. Undoubtedly, the traditional groupings remain helpful, not least because many in early modern England used precisely these terms to describe themselves and others, and yet these categories are perhaps most appropriately used to describe a stage or temporary allegiance in the careers of individuals when they adapted to an ever-developing ecclesiology or church polity in reaction to their particular circumstances.

Puritan Players in the Laudian Reformation

Scholars have observed that many Reformed ministers had no fundamental issues with English episcopacy even when Laud reached the height of his power. Most puritans saw themselves as an integral part of the established Church and would not have considered breaking from the only national Church they knew, if there had been

observable progress in their endeavours.⁹¹² All of our four protagonists started out as conformable ministers and were genuinely eager to stay within the national Church despite the rise of Laudian neo-orthodoxy. In fact, Reynolds was likely not a puritan at all before he went to Braunston, where local opposition to ceremonialism inspired his later puritan activism. Without Laud's heavy-handed campaign for the "beauty of holiness," it is hard to see how any of them would have turned their back on the English version of episcopacy.

Reynolds in particular demonstrated that while most puritans felt threatened by the increasing attacks on the Reformed faith and the ceremonialist novelties that characterised the Laudian reformation, not everyone saw inherent, structural flaws in episcopal government. There were puritan episcopalians just as there were conformist episcopalians, and before 1642, the distinction between puritans and Reformed conformists was often more subtle than their contemporaries and scholars today have recognised. By contrast, Gouge was deeply immersed in semi-conforming presbyterian circles, while Davenport already enjoyed a wide network of religious independents that extended to the godly diaspora in the Netherlands and America. Nevertheless, none of them, including Davenport before 1633, challenged the lawfulness of episcopacy and the monarch as the Supreme Governor but praised the English Church as blessed and godly. They all could have put up with the Caroline episcopate, had not the Church hierarchy turned up the heat with its enforcement of Laudian piety or, in Gouge and Reynolds' case, had not the Laudian ascendancy collapsed.

The only minister who departed England in this story is Davenport. Probably he would not have left London had he not believed that Archbishop Laud was convinced of

⁹¹² Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); Lake, "Moving the Goal Posts? Modified subscription and the construction of conformity in the early Stuart Church," 179-209.

his nonconformity and would ensure his prosecution for it. None of Davenport's fellow clerical Feoffees for Improvements, including Gouge, turned into outright nonconformists as he did. Gouge not only survived the trial of the Feoffees and other fundraising activities that deeply displeased Laud, but worked with the Archbishop as late as October 1638, willingly commending the Laudian Church as a godly Church led by a godly monarch. Gouge's swift transformation into an open critic of episcopacy and celebration of Parliament's victories over the royalist army were perhaps more surprising to the Laudians and other episcopalians than Reynolds' public rebuke of fellow puritans' militant zeal in 1642. Without historians' benefit of hindsight and access to records of private encounters, networks, and correspondence, conformist contemporaries would have struggled to spot the ideological differences among conformable puritans before Laud's fall.

Ironically, Reynolds, the most obscure of the trio in the pre-war puritan community, was in fact a much more vocal critic of the Laudian reformation in the late 1630s than Gouge. The Braunston minister's conformity and (in contrast to Gouge and Davenport) his lack of engagement with the puritan underground in London meant that his distinctively puritan critiques of Laudian novelties attracted almost no censorship or discipline. This Laudian leniency parallels frequent misrepresentations of Reynolds' concerns and conformity in current scholarship. This is because Reynolds not only disguised criticisms in his calls for obedience to *adiaphora*, but he did conform and, in the early 1640s, even rebuked the hotter sort of the godly for their pursuit of war against Charles. Hence the distorted picture in some historical accounts of Reynolds as a Laudian or "champion of the beauty of holiness."⁹¹³

⁹¹³ Reynolds, *Israels Petition in Time of Trouble*; *idem*, *Eugenia's Teares*; Fielding, editor's footnote 439, *Diary*, 212; Cressy, *England on Edge*, 277.

This study of the diverse roles played by puritans in the Laudian Church challenges an oversimplified reading of the Laudian reformation as well. One way of understanding the variegated expressions of the puritan “movement” was that there were multiple versions of Laudianism that induced a range of reactions from its opponents. Davenport felt especially targeted by none other than Laud himself and was plunged into severe anxiety and despair that prompted his definite break from the Church he once wholeheartedly defended. Confronted with a similar threat of discipline, Gouge undertook a tactful retreat, and Laud reciprocated by leaving him be. As long as puritans restrained themselves from outright criticism and seemingly subversive activities like the Feoffees for Improvements, some Laudian authorities might just allow them to remain where they were without probing too much into their personal convictions and parish ministry—it was, after all, an accepted way of keeping the peace since Elizabeth’s reign. Such was a delicate balance that could only be maintained if both parties were willing to do their part.

This co-existence of different strains of piety and conflicting notions of orthodoxy was not only the defining feature of the Laudian reformation, but looking forward rather than backwards, prefigured the religious life of the Church of England in many decades to come. The national Church in the 1640s and 1650s cannot be reduced to a simple power struggle between episcopalian royalists and puritans, as if one represented the faithful and another a destructive force seeking to crush the suffering Church.⁹¹⁴ Not only the church polity debates in the Westminster Assembly, but subsequent reforming schemes after Pride’s Purge, even the many publications of New England Congregationalists, were conscious efforts to define what a reformed Church of England should be. Ecclesiological and confessional co-existence continued in various forms after 1642 under changing

⁹¹⁴Anthony Milton has made an excellent case for this in *ESR*.

political circumstances, and it becomes clear that conformity was a universal issue that everyone, even the episcopalians, had to grapple with. Any attempt at settling a confessional and liturgical definition for the Church of England (and Anglicanism) inevitably fails to appreciate this constant pattern of change. This, however, does not mean that we must content ourselves with silence. Underneath these conflicts and competing orthodoxies, there are other patterns to observe as well.

Transatlantic Motifs of Puritan Clericalism and Religious Uniformity

Despite an often-neglected diversity in conformity, ecclesiology, and even religious ideas among puritans, there was a shared tendency across different mainstream puritan communities to tighten religious control and resort to hyper-clericalism as the means to achieve it. Under the right circumstances, puritans could just be as “oppressive” as their Laudian “oppressors.” Threatened by new ideas such as antipaedobaptism and its accompanying anti-clericalism, William Gouge at St Ann’s Blackfriars and Davenport in New Haven demonstrated strikingly similar impulses to reassert their orthodoxy, albeit with different tactics. Without any effective, centralised discipline, Gouge and the Sion College conclave strategically avoided any direct clerical response to their lay opponents like Chamberlen; instead, Thomas Bakewell, a lay presbyterian, engaged in the ensuing pamphlet war with the antipaedobaptist.

Enjoying a full power of jurisdiction, Davenport’s New Haven, like many other New England towns, was quick to suppress antipaedobaptist influences. The fact that Anne Eaton and her followers were forced to comply with church discipline, faced charges, and anticipated excommunication and even banishment, shows that New England Congregationalists, unlike many of their Old England independent counterparts, were just as heavy-handed against perceived heresies as were presbyterians like Gouge and Reynolds. Regardless of what church polity they supported, many puritans in both England

and the New World, just like episcopalian royalists, aspired to a centralised government that could enforce national piety and orthodoxy. What differentiated these episcopalians, presbyterians, and Congregationalists, was not whether a nation-wide control of religion or a godly reformation was needed but what kind of piety and orthodoxy should be its defining characteristics. This shared concern set all of them apart from the more radical faction within the independents, whose persistence in congregational autonomy often led to a resistance to the long-standing notion of a national Church, a much higher tolerance of religious diversity, and finally, contempt of ordained ministry. At the end of the day, it is pretty much impossible to escape clericalism—even amongst the “godly.”

The Presbyterian Party and Competing Identities and Pieties

Another significant piece of evidence that there were commonalities in the midst of competing identities is the emergence and survival of the “presbyterian party.” Despite a clear aversion to the civil war, conformable puritans like Reynolds swiftly sided with hard-line presbyterians like Gouge and seemed completely untroubled by their own contributions to *iure divino* arguments for the presbyterian polity at the Westminster Assembly. It becomes clear that the Sion College conclave grew to incorporate those who willingly joined their *iure divino* presbyterian pressure group, reminiscent of presbyterians’ early Elizabethan glory days. English presbyterianism was no longer an underground, semi-conforming network based in London but an open, majority party at Westminster that included both staunch presbyterians as well as puritans who were once happily episcopalian.

In fact, events would show that it was the likes of Reynolds who eventually rose to presbyterian leadership. In the late 1650s, he, along with Baxter and Calamy, exercised a strategic influence in their negotiations with both conservative independents, or the “kingship party,” under the Cromwellian regime, and later, episcopalian royalists of

Charles' exiled court. Their flexibility in political allegiance lay in a conviction of the importance of a centralised, national church government that safeguarded mainstream Protestant beliefs as well as their monarchist sentiments. These values dominated the so-called "presbyterian party," enabling their advocates to go beyond one form of ecclesiology and church polity. In a way, the Scottish theologian Robert Baillie's assessment that the Westminster reformation only brought about a "lame Erastian Presbyterie" captured a defining characteristic of at least a strain of English presbyterianism—a sense of urgency or necessity to work with and concede to whatever political powers and the preferred church polities that came along with them in the quest for national piety and religious stability.⁹¹⁵

While the story of English presbyterianism after 1662 has often been told as one of dissent, Reynolds' career as Bishop of Norwich certainly represented a creative variant of presbyterianism. While the re-established Caroline Church lost as much as a thousand of its ministerial workforce in 1662, the late Stuart Church is characterised by a cycle of negotiations between presbyterians and episcopalians in the quest for comprehension—again, crucial attempts to redefine the Church of England largely ignored in the triumphalist denominationalist historiography. While most of these comprehension projects remained unfulfilled aspirations before the Glorious Revolution, there were sporadic expressions of these alternative versions of the English Church in the localities. Bishop Reynolds not only set the tone of moderation in his governance since he conducted the first visitation in Norwich, but also actively nurtured puritan semi-conformity and even outright nonconformity within the diocese. He painstakingly recruited like-minded clergymen to enhance control against a strongly royalist cathedral chapter, re-ordaining

⁹¹⁵ Baillie, *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*, II:362.

semi-conformists like John Conant and Samuel Crossman that would reinforce the anti-ceremonialist faction within the Church of England. He could passionately intervene to supply St Margaret's, King's Lynn, with a preacher, but would deliberately avoid enforcing ceremonial uniformity in parishes like St George Tombland, Norwich. Finally, conventicles in the Granaries in the City of Norwich would not have thrived in the mid-1670s if the sympathetic bishop and City Corporation had not turned a blind eye.

If Reynolds' diocese of Norwich is representative of the persistent co-existence of competing versions of piety and visions of the Church of England after 1662, Thomas Gouge and the Welsh Trust serves as its dissenting counterpart. As a collaboration between moderate presbyterians on the one side and latitudinarian church authorities on the other, the Trust was an intentional extension and advertisement of comprehension. Gouge and fellow presbyterians willingly printed and distributed copies of the 1662 Prayer Book, against which they had repeatedly protested. Despite being ejected, many of them not only attended parish services but, through the Trust, worked closely with both Anglican authorities and parish churches. While the endeavours of the Trust were a manifestation of what a more comprehensive, and yet solidly Protestant, Church of England would have looked like, it simultaneously released dissenting energy that came to alarm high church authorities like Humphrey Lloyd, bishop of Bangor, and Archbishop Sheldon. This unlikely double effect complicated the traditional antithesis between "Dons" and "Ducklings," showcasing how the boundaries between dissent and conformity, puritan and Anglican, and finally, presbyterian and episcopalian, were never as clear as scholars today often assume.

The End of the New England Dream

Like ever-evolving English presbyterianism, New England Congregationalism also underwent drastic diversification and redefinitions when theory was finally put to practice

in a foreign land. In the face of an unexpected multitude of baptised adults who were no longer an integral part of local congregations—a tangible cohabitation of the godly and the ungodly, some New Englanders devised and promoted the Half-Way Covenant as a remedy, marking a drastic departure from the New England Way, once promulgated as the ideal polity by first-generation New Englanders like Cotton, Hooker, and Davenport. New solutions inevitably fractured clerical unity and, in the minds of many, discredited the New England Way that seemed far too simple to address real pastoral issues.

New England Way adherents also painfully recognised the potential inner contradictions of their proposed polity that they had not previously encountered. The Hartford controversy of 1657-9, for example, exposed the inherent tensions of the principle of congregational autonomy: should the will of the majority of a congregation be heeded if that will was to disregard the basic tenets of Congregationalism? Ironically, in defence of the New England Way, Davenport found himself repeatedly appealing to the decision of a council that explicitly negated the will of both the majority of the Hartford congregation and their minister Samuel Stone. The New England story truly is about the tension between principle and pragmatism.

This tension seemed most acute when an individual was torn between professed and most likely sincerely held convictions on the one hand and selfish desires on the other. No matter how consistent and genuine they were when promoting their professed beliefs, people could still be tempted by self-interest and contradicted their words with their deeds. The Boston controversy of 1667-9, a tragedy of Davenport's fall from grace that involved the arch-Congregationalist's allusion to an unacknowledged "free pass," his exposed lies, and outright forgery, shocked not only New Haven and Boston, but also the rest of New England. More so than many fellow New Englanders, Davenport often portrayed himself as an unyielding idealist who tirelessly guarded the New England Way against

innovations, and yet this final controversy not only unmasked the now elderly minister to be a mere fellow sinner and indeed fraudster, but catalysed the already uneasy co-existence of New England's old orthodoxy (the New England Way) and new practices (the presbyterian-leaning, hyper-clericalist Half-Way Covenant) into an even more public and fiercer schism.

Looking Forward

Instead of defining Anglicanism through a confessional lens or movement that once dominated or is now dominating the Church of England, perhaps the best way to understand it is to embrace its ever-developing, multifaceted nature, or as Diarmaid MacCulloch suggests, to recognise it to be a distinctively “trial-and-error form of Christianity.”⁹¹⁶ Through the story of the protagonists in this thesis, one sees an emerging Anglican identity that was far more doctrinally, liturgically, and politically diverse than, for example, the one the pioneers of the Oxford Movement presented. Escalating clashes over how the early Stuart Church of England should be reformed eventually led to the extreme violence of the civil wars that deeply traumatised the majority of the English population. Instead of a moderate, *via media* version of Protestantism, Anglicanism was really an ecclesiastical reality born out of intense conflicts between different visions of what a godly reformation should be.

The existence of rigorous dissent is part of the Anglican story as well.⁹¹⁷ Many moderate puritans, like Thomas Gouge and Richard Baxter, were ejected from the national Church due to a revived ceremonialist zeal from 1662 onwards. Their pastoral and political engagements were however still attempts at reforming the Church of England that would

⁹¹⁶ MacCulloch, “And Finally: The Nature of Anglicanism,” in *All Things Made New*, 361-2.

⁹¹⁷ Diarmaid MacCulloch speaks of both “internal contradictions” and “external Protestant critique” as a distinctive characteristic of the Restoration Anglicanism that the established Church has lived with ever since. *Ibid*, 360.

take root in the re-established Caroline Church and beyond. Remarkably, their ideal version of the Church of England seemed to look highly similar to the one moderate Anglicans like Reynolds had in mind: solidly anti-Catholic (if not explicitly Reformed), anti-sectarian, and non-ceremonialist. And yet Thomas Gouge was ejected and excluded from the official ministry, whereas Reynolds as bishop of Norwich governed a diocese. Their voice was by no means the only one heard in the developing history of Anglican identity, but one of many that often clashed with one another, as the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the subsequent Non-Juror movement demonstrated.

The struggle continues. The Church of England is not any less entangled with debates and infighting over what its core teaching, style of piety, and social obligations are and should be. Scriptural authority remains a significant, deeply personal question for many Anglicans, and what the Bible actually says about God, the Church, and how each individual believer should live remains highly contested. The co-existence of drastically different strains of orthodoxy, along with their pastoral, liturgical, and political expressions, still characterises the Church of England today, and competing reformations of and debates over conformity to the Church of England rage on. While most Anglicans would affirm moderation, inclusivity, and unity as Christian virtues, what it means to be moderate, inclusive, and unified on the one hand and “godly” and “Christian” on the other remains a largely unresolved issue. Like the Anglicans and dissenters in late Stuart England, many still feel torn between the aspiration for further integration and acceptance of fundamental dissent both within and outside the Church of England. All those who take history seriously are obligated (or called?) to challenge themselves: to what extent should unity be pursued, or diversity celebrated? What are the dissenting voices of our age? And are we courageous or “Christian” enough to think the unthinkable and tolerate, or even fully embrace, the intolerable?

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