

FAST DAYS AND FACTION: THE STRUGGLE FOR REFORMATION, ORDER,
AND UNITY IN ENGLAND 1558 – C.1640

By

Thomas Cornell Doumaux

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Approved:

Professor James A. Epstein

Professor Joel F. Harrington

Professor Helmut Walser Smith

Professor Katherine B. Crawford

Professor Paul Chang-Ha Lim

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To God for all the blessings that made this possible

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

While desire for religious reform was a pervasive obsession in early modern Europe, contemporaries disagreed about what kind of reform was necessary to attain the common goal of making God's will done on Earth as in heaven by restoring primitive and apostolic Christianity.¹ The formation of a unified, reformed English Church was particularly problematic. England had different Protestant reformations under Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Elizabeth I, with a return to Catholicism and Catholic reformation under Mary I. The prevalent strains of Protestantism and the influences from continental Protestantism varied in each Protestant reformation. The result of all these reformations was a church established on an untidy foundation with a range of views. These inconsistencies and ambiguities were both the great strength and great weakness of the English Reformation. Nonetheless, Reformed and then Calvinist views came to predominate among English Protestants over Christian humanist and Lutheran ones. By the latter decades of Elizabeth's reign only a beleaguered minority of Anti-Calvinist divines remained who looked to Melancthon for inspiration.²

¹ For a brief introduction to the diversity of reform views, see: David C. Steinmetz, *Reformers in the Wings*, second edition (Oxford, 2001), and Scott H. Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard* (Louisville, KY, 2004).

² A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, second edition (University Park, PA, 1989). Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1993). Richard Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation* (London, 1993). Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England 1547-1603* (London, 1990). Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven, CT, 1992). Andrew Pettegree, *Marian Protestantism* (Brookfield, VT, 1996). Diarmaid MacCulloch, "England," in Andrew Pettegree (ed.), *The Early Reformation in Europe* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 166-87.

While it established a broad Reformed church, the Elizabethan settlement, largely retained by James VI and I, created divisions among English Calvinists. With some changes it adopted the 1552 prayer book which was the most traditional liturgy of all the Reformed churches. It also retained traditional clerical dress along with some traditional ceremonies. It kept episcopacy which under the royal supremacy continued to exercise spiritual government through church courts which administered the old Roman canon law. It retained cathedral churches which focused on elaborate musical services.³ Such holdovers did not sit well with prevailing Reformed views which relative to Lutheran reform had a more expansive sense of “idolatry.”⁴ Many Calvinist conformists wanted further reform as well as puritans. Calvinist conformists, however, accepted the new order while puritans sought further change with some refusing obedience in the area of adiaphora or things indifferent, that is, ceremonies and practices neither commanded nor forbidden in scripture.

Elizabeth and James rejected further reform in part due to political considerations. Some continuity with the pre-Reformation church would ease the transition to Protestantism for “weaker brethren,” encourage Catholics to conform, further stability and civil peace, and restrain radicals from going to extremes. Many thought episcopacy best suited to monarchy and an essential pillar of it. James, for example, famously retorted to puritans at the Hampton Court Conference: “No bishop. No king.” Avoidance of a narrow doctrinal statement also had the advantage of allowing easier and more flexible diplomacy abroad with those adhering to other confessions. Nonetheless, a

³ Patrick Collinson, “England,” in Bob Scribner, Roy Porter, and Mikuláš Teich (eds.), *The Reformation in National Context* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 80-94, esp. 90-1.

⁴ Carlos Eire, *War Against the Idols* (Cambridge, 1985). Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts* (Oxford, 1988). Lee Palmer Wandel, *Voracious Idols and Violent Hands: Iconoclasm in Reformation Zurich, Strasbourg and Basel* (Cambridge, 1995).

narrower Calvinist gloss on the Thirty-Nine Articles was dominant informally and practically though not explicitly and legally. Calvinists kept dissenting voices subordinate to their gloss. Further, Calvinists glossed ceremonies to empty them of offensive pre-reformation content and present them to skeptics as innocent. Arguably, Elizabeth and James permitted such glosses in part to appease advanced Protestant opinion. The problem was that other readings and interpretations of the settlement were possible. Disputes would have to go to the monarch and the bishops for resolution which gave them enormous power to decide issues on a case by case basis as well as to fine tune the settlement to suit particular circumstances so as to secure order. While these arrangements buoyed a personal monarchy, it risked all on the skill and wisdom of the monarch. When Charles I came to the throne he foolishly overturned the Calvinist glosses which had made the church largely acceptable to puritans.

In short, one of the most important stories of early modern England is that of the struggle among English Protestant factions to create a Protestant self-understanding and make one version of it supreme.⁵ The unease English Protestants experienced about their self-understanding was widespread in Western Europe. With the shattering of Western Christendom and hopes for a universal Christian empire contemporaries were anxious and angry. Not surprisingly, one of the characteristic features of the age was the making and re-making of stark dichotomies as categories of thought to impose clarity and simplicity on a confusing situation. Dichotomies such as “true church”/“false church”

⁵ I use the terms “self-understanding” (or “self-representation”), “identification,” and “categorization,” instead of “identity” as categories of analysis. “Identity” is problematic. When used in a hard sense “identity” presumes that some fixed, foundational essentials are in existence. When used in a soft sense “identity,” in terms of being multiple, fragmented, constructed, unstable, and fluid, becomes too broad and ambiguous. Replacing “identity” with these other terms allows for better analysis of how self-understandings form in context. See: Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity,’” *Theory and Society*, 2000 29 (1): 1-47.

(see figure 1) and “godly”/“profane” (see figure 2) were commonplace. Individuals sought to become “godly people” and to give the church a reformed “image” or “face.” They envisioned an “other” defined as a mirror opposite to proper norms. Newly “imagined-communities” gradually came into being whose sense of self-understanding came less from intrinsically and objectively shared traits than from ones artificially constructed through symbols and myth.⁶

Study of fast days provides an important window onto the formation of English Protestant self-understanding and identification. First, fasts long were one of the most important emblems of Christian and church self-understanding. Second, fasts provided critical social and political space for English Protestants to think with themselves about who they were and to interpret the world around them. Third, fasts concentrated and magnified an astonishing number of discourses, narratives, and language key to English Protestant self-understanding and identification. Fasts transmitted and created shared meanings and values while participants experienced powerful social and psychological processes. The anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s famous description of the Balinese cockfight perfectly applies to fasts: “it is a Balinese reading of Balinese experience, a story they tell themselves about themselves.”⁷

Fasts were highly political because they involved identifying the sins offending

⁶ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980). Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1983; revised edition, New York, 1991). Anthony Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (New York, 1985). Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, 1986). Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Reno, 1991).

⁷ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973), p. 448. Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge* (New York, 1983). Patrick Collinson has encouraged applying Geertzian analysis to fasts as a window onto puritan culture. See: Patrick Collinson, “Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritanism as Forms of Popular Religious Culture,” in Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (eds.), *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700* (New York, 1996), p. 33, 50-1

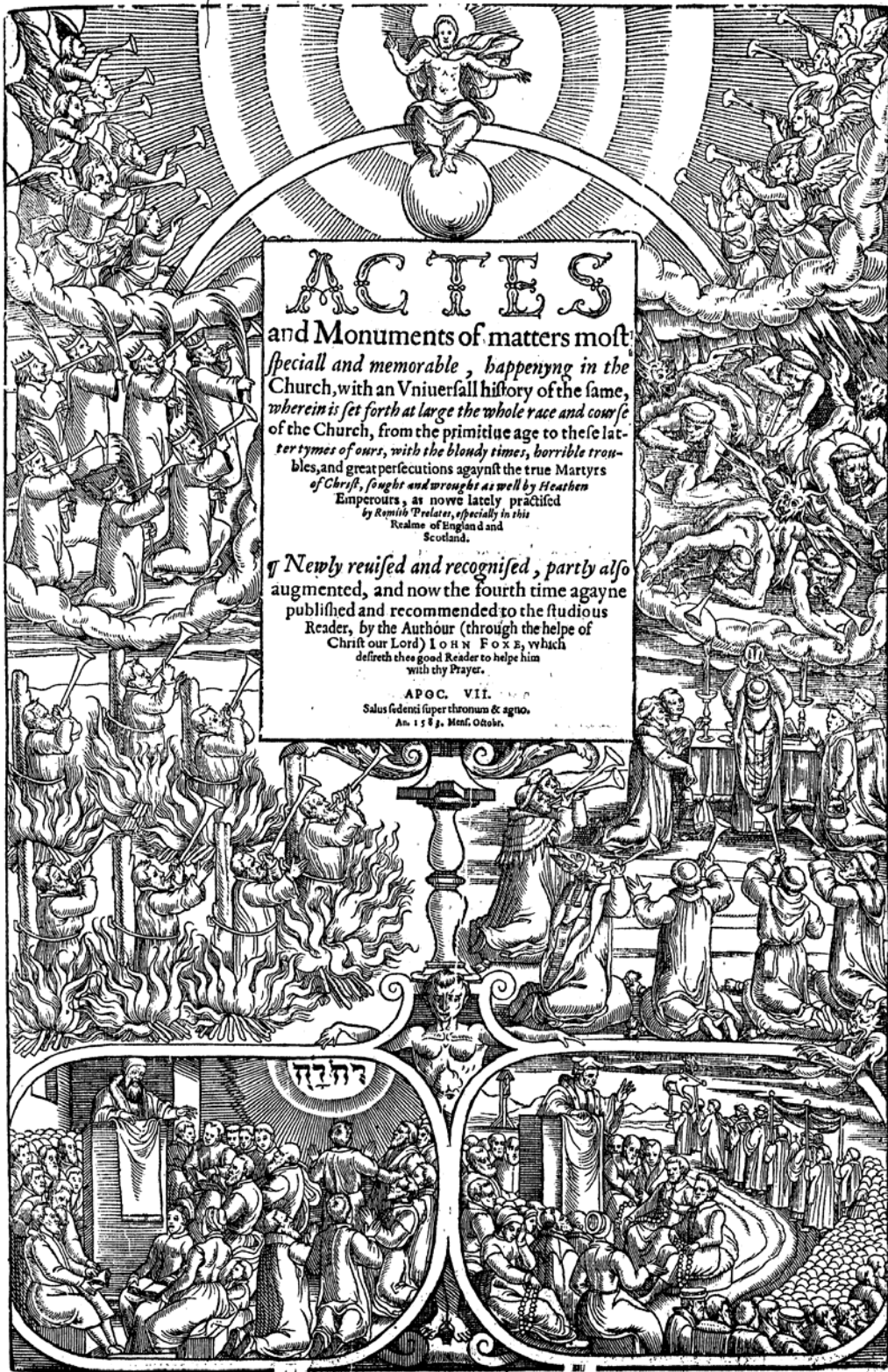


Figure 1

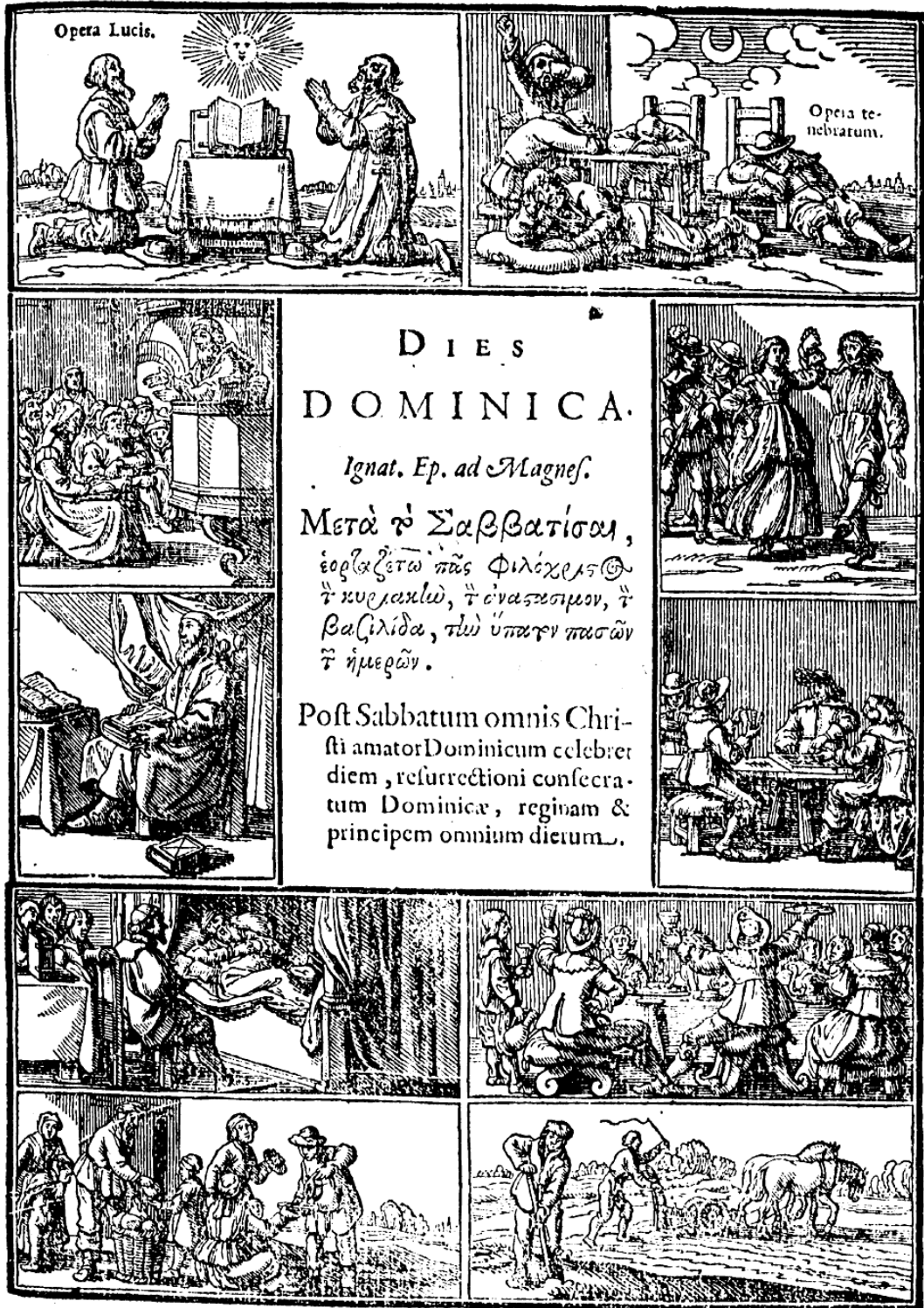


Figure 2

God and the reforms necessary to appease Him. Fasts were an important space in which the varied English Protestant reform movement continually re-created and re-defined itself. Rival Protestant factions used fasts to attempt to shape and dominate that movement. Here the theory of “collective action frames,” beliefs and meanings that call forth, build, mobilize, and legitimate movements, helps to explain the political nature of fasts. These frames serve an interpretive function by connecting select events, historical interpretations, experiences, issues, and beliefs to create a compelling rationale and imperative for action. They thereby seek to change bystanders into supporters, win concessions from targets, and demobilize antagonists. Three key types of framing are diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational. Diagnostic framing mobilizes support by explaining what is or went wrong, and who or what is to blame. It recasts the status quo as an intolerable abomination that demands transformation. Prognostic framing answers what is to be done by giving specific remedies and tactics to achieve movement objectives. Motivational framing mobilizes those who subscribe to diagnostic and prognostic frames to act. It is a call to arms appealing to things such as moral and religious duty, heavenly rewards, and earthly glory as martyrs. In summary, framing theory usefully shows that movements do not simply flow from ideology. Also, it shows that ideology does not spring pre-formed from sacred texts, cultural narratives, and experience, but develops and changes over time through the interaction of existing cultural resources, creative human agents, and events.⁸ Such framing took place in fasts which is why they offer important insights into politics and religion in early modern England.

⁸ David Snow and Scott Byrd, “Ideology, Framing Processes, and Islamic Terrorist Movements,” *Mobilization*, June 2007 12 (2): 119-36.

Fasts thus also offer insights into how contemporaries sought to create unity and peace amid post-Reformation turmoil. Historians often describe the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as times of “crisis” and “troubles,” as times when Europe was “divided” and “fractured,” and in which contemporaries desperately sought “order” and “stability.”⁹ While such interpretations are true to varying degrees of any historical period, and historians have debated in what sense “crisis” applies to the early modern period, a crisis in religion was of enormous importance. The Reformation(s) created the most serious religious breaches in the history of the Western Church. Early optimism that the Reformation would victoriously sweep across Europe ended in disillusionment. The widespread expectation that a general council would resolve divisions as many times in the past gradually faded into an unlikely hope. Challenges to old certainties and authorities bred insecurity as solid and dependable landmarks seemed to vanish. Contemporaries commonly thought “the world turned upside down.” They often remarked that “passions,” “madness,” and “humors” plagued their time.

⁹ Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge, 2000). J.H.M. Salmon, *Society in Crisis: France in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1975). Geoffrey Parker, *Europe in Crisis 1598-1648*, second edition (Malden, Mass., 2002). Thomas Robisheaux, *Rural Society and the Search for Order in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 1989). Theodore Rabb, *The Struggle for Stability in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1975). John H. Elliott, *Europe Divided 1559-1598*, second edition (Malden, Mass., 2000). David J. Sturdy, *Fractured Europe 1600-1721* (Malden, Mass., 2002). Geoffrey Parker and Lesley M. Smith (eds.), *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century*, second edition (London, 1997). Geoffrey Parker, *The World Crisis: Thirty Years of War, Famine, Plague, Regicide, and Radicalism, 1635-1665* (forthcoming). Jan De Vries, *The Economy of Europe in an Age of Crisis, 1600-1750* (Cambridge, 1976). Philip Benedict and Myron P. Gutmann (eds.), *Early Modern Europe: From Crisis to Stability* (Newark, 2006). Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford, 1965). Ian Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge, 1991). Peter Clark and Paul Slack (eds.), *Crisis and Order in English Towns, 1500-1700* (Toronto, 1972). Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (eds.), *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1985). Peter Clark (ed.), *The European Crisis of the 1590s* (London, 1985).

Among historians, the old notion of this period as “The Age of Religious Wars” has come back into vogue.¹⁰ Peter Brueghel the Elder’s paintings “The Triumph of Death” and “The Massacre of the Innocents” poignantly demonstrate the grim realities of that religious strife. In regards to England, John Morrill in his December, 1983 lecture to the Royal Historical Society, has argued: “The English civil war was not the first European revolution: it was the last of the wars of religion.” His interpretation linking religion to political conflict continues to be influential and has led to a major symposium entitled “Britain’s Wars of Religion” to be held July 11-12, 2008 at the Wilberforce Institute, Hull, UK.¹¹

Religion and politics were so deeply intertwined in early modern Europe that contemporaries thought religious division threatened the entire political and social order. Most notably, they thought religion essential to order as only the true faith would please God and lead Him to maintain blessings of peace and harmony. Also, monarchy was closely tied to the church. The church validated the king’s right to rule, and the king protected the church. The commonplace saying “une foi, une loi, un roi” concisely explains contemporary views of the basis for order. False religion supposedly led to disloyalty and rebellion. When Catholic gentleman at court withdrew to avoid attending the 1603 Easter service, James VI and I commented: “Who can’t pray with me, can’t love me.”¹² Unsurprisingly, the West developed considerable intolerance and repressive institutions. Indeed, the medieval church in the West had considerable success

¹⁰ Richard S. Dunn, *The Age of Religious Wars 1559-1715*, second edition (New York, 1979). Mark Konnert, *Early Modern Europe: The Age of Religious War, 1559-1715* (Orchard Park, NY, 2006). Mack Holt, “Putting Religion Back in the Wars of Religion,” *French Historical Studies*, Autumn 1993 18(2): 524-551.

¹¹ For Morrill’s views in detail, see: John Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (London, 1993), p. 31-175.

¹² Cited in John J. LaRocca, “‘Who Can’t Pray With Me, Can’t Love Me:’ Toleration and the Early Jacobean Recusancy Policy,” *Journal of British Studies*, Spring 1984 23(2): 22-36.

persecuting and marginalizing heresy and dissent. This tradition of suppression continued in the Reformation among Protestants and Catholics alike.¹³

Yet some in the Reformation came to believe that persecution stimulated rather than annihilated heresy. Some magistrates sought to end confessional violence due to war exhaustion, concern for social order, and fear of anarchy. Others did so from the principles of Christian charity, concord, and peace. They praised the “middle” and the “moderate” against the “extremes.” Such efforts though did not seek “toleration” in the modern sense but peaceful co-existence on carefully defined terms which allowed limited religious pluralism in hopes of creating stability. Of course for militants the only way to peace and unity was pure truth. Alongside their traditional focus on religious conflict and debate, scholars have recently produced many studies about efforts at peace, accord, and reconciliation whereas relatively few existed previously.¹⁴

¹³ Scott L. Waugh and Peter Diehl (eds.), *Christendom and Its Discontents: Exclusion, Persecution, and Rebellion 1000-1500* (Cambridge, 2002). David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ, 1998). R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250*, second edition (Malden, MA, 2007). Michael D. Bailey, *Battling Demons: Witchcraft, Heresy, and Reform in the Late Middle Ages* (University Park, PA, 2003). Gary K. Waite, *Eradicating the Devil's Minions: Anabaptists and Witches in Reformation Europe, 1525-1600* (Toronto, 2007).

¹⁴ Benjamin Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Religious Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007). Mark Greengrass, *Governing Passions: Peace and Reform in the French Kingdom, 1576-1585* (Oxford, 2007). Luc Racaut and Alex Ryrie (eds.), *Moderate Voices in the European Reformation* (Burlington, VT, 2005). W.B. Patterson, *James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1997). Jill Raitt, *The Colloquy of Montbéliard: Religion and Politics in the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford, 1993). Donald Nugent, *Ecumenism in the Age of Reformation: The Colloquy of Poissy* (Cambridge, MA, 1974). Gregory Hanlon, *Confession and Community in Seventeenth Century France: Catholic and Protestant Coexistence in Aquitaine* (Philadelphia, 1993). Keith Luria, *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early-Modern France* (Washington, D.C., 2005). J. Minton Batten, *John Dury, Advocate of Christian Reunion* (Chicago, 1944). Dermot Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy: Cardinal Pole and the Counter Reformation* (Cambridge, 1972). Peter Matheson, *Cardinal Contarini at Regensburg* (Oxford, 1972). R. Po-chia Hsia and Henk van Nierop (eds.), *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge, 2002). Ole Peter Grell and Robert Scribner (eds.), *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation* (Cambridge, 1996). Howard Louthan, *The Quest for Compromise: Peacemakers in Counter-Reformation Vienna* (Cambridge, 1997). Howard P. Louthan and Randall C. Zachman (eds.), *Conciliation and Confession: The Struggle for Unity in the Age of Reform, 1415-1648* (Notre Dame, IN, 2004). John Christian Laursen and Cary J. Nederman (eds.), *Beyond the Persecuting Society: Religious Toleration before the Enlightenment* (Philadelphia, 1998). Cary J. Nederman and John Christian Laursen, *Difference and Dissent: Theories of*

Importantly, the case was not as simple as extremists seeking to eradicate heresy and moderates and pragmatists seeking peace. All sought to balance the accepted Christian hallmarks of “Truth” and “peace,” of “purity” and “unity.” They disagreed over where to set boundaries between the two, not whether one should be sought over the other. This point is important because it allows us to see that issues were rarely clear cut. In the medieval church, for example, a fine line often existed between those exceptionally pious critics authorities canonized as saints and those they condemned as heretics. In the Reformation, defining heresy and orthodoxy was equally problematic, and even as “confessionalization” produced sharper lines and solidified distinct traditions, intra-confessional divisions existed. Given the contradictory impulses of peace and purity, how one viewed matters could change, and alliances could form and dissolve. For the historian an important area of study becomes to locate tipping points and thresholds which made the search for either “Truth” or “peace” to predominate. What made some appear orthodox and others heretics to contemporaries? At what point did dissent become intolerable and charity end? When did a brother in error become an agent of Satan and Antichrist?

Fasts give insight into the critical post-Reformation problem of increased religious diversity in an age seeking oneness and uniformity. They do so because they concentrated the language and narratives central to self-understanding and identification

Toleration in Medieval and Early Modern Europe (Lanham, MD, 1996). Perez Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton, NJ, 2003). W.J. Sheils (ed.), *Persecution and Toleration* (Oxford, 1984). C. Berkvens-Stevelinck, J. Israel, and G.H.M. Posthumus Meyes (eds.), *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic* (New York, 1997). Hans R. Guggisberg, *Sebastian Castellio 1515-1563: Humanist and Defender of Religious Toleration in a Confessional Age*, transl. and ed. Bruce Gordon (Burlington, VT, 2003). Stefan Zweig, *The Right to Heresy: Castellio Against Calvin* (New York, 1936). Gary Remer, *Humanism and the Rhetoric of Toleration* (University Park, PA, 1996). Richard Bonney and D.J.B. Trim (eds.), *Persecution and Pluralism: Calvinists and Religious Minorities in Early Modern Europe 1550-1700* (Oxford, 2006).

which directly addressed the above questions. They thus show what policies increased or decreased religious conflict, what policies made a given church work or unraveled it, and what contexts helped moderates to foster accord and radicals to polarize and divide. I seek to turn the long debate over the causes of the English Civil War on its head by asking why peace lasted among English Protestant factions for over 80 years first. How did authorities successfully deal with the problem of divisions among English Protestants under Elizabeth and James to hold together a relatively inclusive national church? Why did the Church of England then tear apart under Charles?

All Protestant factions in England supported and engaged in fasts, but their discourses could diverge or converge in them. Because factional self-understandings overlapped as much as they conflicted, the potential existed either for their merging into a shared, broad self-understanding, or for their fragmenting into more sharply defined sectarian ones. Both centrifugal and centripetal impulses were at play. A range of English Protestant self-understandings was possible, and factions defined their self-understandings in conflict against each other as well as against Catholics and separatists.¹⁵ Each faction glossed the religious “settlement” with competing readings of the history of the English Reformation and its foundational documents. Factions invented partisan narratives and a politicized vocabulary to interpret their experiences. They used these ideological and polemical constructs to stigmatize adversaries, justify themselves, and build political support for their vision of the church. In short, fasts were a powerful practice that could foster either unity or division.

¹⁵ A range of Protestant self-understandings also was possible because self-understanding resulted from the very existence of a boundary separating what one was from what one was not, not where that boundary was drawn. See: Kai Erikson, *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York, 1966), esp. p. 10-15, 19, 26, 125.

This study therefore uses facts to see how the dialectic of what Patrick Collinson has described as “a stressful relationship” between puritans and conformists generated self-understandings and identifications. This dynamic, unstable relationship formed and changed self-understandings and identifications over time in a manner contingent on events and choices. Because so many studies focus on puritans in isolation our understanding of the development of English Protestantism has been limited and distorted. Focus on the moderates as well as radicals, and how they interacted in context gives a fuller perspective so not get distorted image.¹⁶ This study focuses on puritans (in relation to conformists) because they were the key variable in the church. How authorities dealt with them had enormous importance shaping the English church.

My definitions of the various English Protestant factions require some explanation because historians’ interpretive nomenclature for them has been controversial.¹⁷ This study seeks to transcend the dichotomous categorization of English Protestants into “Anglicans” and “Puritans” as anachronistic. The evidence shows a blurred spectrum of opinion, but with Reformed views predominant. Since Calvin became the first among equals in influence, the term Calvinist is fit. While any categorization to an extent over-generalizes, evidence supports defining untidy clusters of radical puritans, moderate

¹⁶ Peter Lake and Michael Questier (ed.), *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c.1560-1660* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2000), introduction. Peter Lake, “Religious Identities in Shakespeare’s England,” in David Kaston (ed.), *A Companion to Shakespeare* (Malden, Mass., 1999), p. 57-84. Patrick Collinson, *The Puritan Character: Polemics and Polarities in Early Seventeenth-Century English Culture* (Los Angeles, 1989), p. 19. Patrick Collinson, “Ecclesiastical Vitriol: Religious Satire in the 1590s and the Invention of Puritanism,” in John Guy (ed.), *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 155.

¹⁷ Patrick Collinson, “A Comment: Concerning the Name Puritan,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, October 1980 31(4): 483-88. Collinson, *Puritan Character*. Patrick Collinson, “Bartholomew Fair: Theatre Invents Puritans,” in David Smith, Richard Strier, David Bevington (eds.), *The Theatrical City: Culture, Theatre, and Politics in London 1576-1649* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 157-68. Collinson, “Ecclesiastical Vitriol,” p. 150-70. Peter Lake, “Defining Puritanism – Again?,” in Francis Bremer (ed.), *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Faith* (Boston, Massachusetts Historical Society, 1993), p. 3-29. Kenneth Fincham, “Introduction,” in Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642* (Stanford, 1993), p. 1-22.

puritans, Calvinist conformists, and Anti-Calvinist conformists. These clusters overlapped, blurred into each other, and contained sub-divisions. Contemporaries perceived such distinctions though, and as a term of abuse referred to any adversarial cluster as a “faction.”¹⁸ Separatists and Roman Catholics are not analyzed here, except as they influenced the perceptions of puritans and conformists, because the intent is to describe conflict over self-understanding among Protestants within the Church of England. While the Radical Reformation little troubled the English Reformation, groups like the Brownists and the Family of Love raised fear far out of proportion to their numbers. In addition to Catholics in general, so-called “church papists,” who conformed outwardly while rejecting the Protestant faith, were a constant source of anxiety.

I define puritans as “the hotter sort of Protestants,” differing from Calvinist conformists in zeal or degree but not in kind. Radical puritans were more likely to criticize authorities and the established church in public and less likely to conform than the moderate type. Conformists were zealous adherents to the liturgy and episcopal form of government of the established church. Calvinist conformists prioritized preaching the Word, the reformation of manners, and anti-Catholicism. Calvinist conformists shared much therefore with puritans. Indeed, moderate Calvinist conformists and moderate puritans could be indistinguishable. I use the term “godly” to refer to puritans and those Calvinist conformists who had cordial relationships with them and shared much of their sensibilities. Calvinist conformists though clashed with puritans over questions of order in the pursuit of shared priorities. English authorities sought post-Reformation peace by

¹⁸ The term “faction” did not mean a political party with a coherent ideology and organization, but rather a loose and fluid group of individuals sharing common perceptions and goals. Specifically, in early modern parlance faction referred to a minority who sought to promote private interests or preferences at the expense of the public good and public order, and often did so by subversive methods.

requiring only outward conformity rather than inner belief. To the ire of puritans, this policy created a situation where conforming “church papists” and “profane” persons were left alone while non-conformist Protestants faced prosecuted.

Anti-Calvinist Conformists rejected Calvinist doctrine on predestination, prioritized prayer, ceremony, and the sacraments, and radically narrowed the differences between the Church of England and the Church of Rome. They shared similar concerns for order and obedience to authority with Calvinist conformists. In particular, hard-line Calvinist conformists could find common cause with Anti-Calvinist conformists against radical puritans. However, the conformity they envisioned was to their differing priorities and views. Moderate Anti-Calvinist conformists used discussion, teaching, and preaching to advance their visions of reform by persuasion. They exercised relatively unbiased patronage. Radical Anti-Calvinist conformists, especially the Durham House Group, organized as a mutually supportive group. They sought to acquire positions of power in the church and use them to implement change. They exercised partisan patronage to increase their numbers and influence. During Laud’s ascendancy in the church, I refer to such men as “Laudians.” Anti-Calvinist conformist priorities and beliefs gave rites and ceremonies new importance as they were no longer “indifferent” but essential. This change had critical implications for puritans because partial or occasional conformity was no longer enough.

Royal policies had a critical influence on the relations among factions and thus on puritan self-understanding. England’s Reformations, as the Act in Restraint of Appeals (1533) attested, rested on the English monarch possessing an “imperial crown.” The royal supremacy gave the monarchy vast caesaro-papal powers over church and state.

Indeed, English Protestants even embraced the originally Catholic title for the English king as “defender of the faith.” Further, while all Reformations had a mix of top down reform from princes and/or magistrates, and bottom up reform from the people, the English Reformation occurred mainly as a princely inspired act of state, or at least so the current state of historiography would have us believe.¹⁹ The monarch was also the focal point of the English Reformation because England was one of most centralized states in Europe, and it lacked the great quasi-independent cities and singular great reformers to lead reform as on the continent. A church based on such a prince though was problematic because religion could change with the ruler and the vagaries of court politics. The fate of English Protestants depended on their monarch’s fertility, continued life or death, and religious inclinations.

Political context therefore was critical to puritan self-understanding and identification, to the nature of “puritanism.” At times puritans were inert like wet gunpowder, an obedient part of the establishment upholding order. At other times puritans were volatile like dry powder, potentially rebellious and revolutionary. Puritan perceptions of the English episcopate as containing either “good bishops” or “antichristian prelates” varied depending on royal and episcopal policies.

For this reason, this study begins with the reign of Elizabeth I and ends with the calling of the Long Parliament. Further, by looking at the whole period, rather than smaller parts of it as in traditional studies, how self-understandings formed and changed under the policies of Elizabeth, James, and Charles becomes clearer. From the evidence of fasts, my thesis shall be that the policies of Elizabeth and James created factions but

¹⁹ For a useful overview of debate on the English Reformation, see Christopher Haigh (ed.), *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge, 1987).

then managed tensions so as to contain conflict. Centrifugal forces were kept weaker than centripetal ones. Indeed, from the 1590s, English Calvinist self-understandings even converged. The policies of Charles, however, aggravated tensions and led to diverging self-understandings and divisive identifications.

My conclusions are at odds with the views of revisionists like Peter White, Kevin Sharpe, and G.W. Bernard. They argue the Church of England was a *via media* between Rome and Geneva. “Anglicans” were irenic, patristic, moderate, and covered a broad spectrum of opinion with no group dominating the middle. Anglicans believed in the virtue of the mean and amicable disagreement. The foremost goal of England’s monarchs was not confessional clarity but a broad national church, unity in church and state, and preservation of the hierarchical social and political order. The policies of monarchs and their bishops thus sought peace, order, conformity, uniformity, and obedience. Charles I and Archbishop Laud merely reasserted these traditional policies after a period of laxity under Archbishop Abbot. By contrast, “Puritans” were a radical, Calvinist fringe. They were stirred to rebel by the re-imposition of traditional governance, the whipping up of apocalyptic thought by the Thirty-Years War, and an English foreign policy based not on confessional grounds but the interests of the crown.²⁰

²⁰ Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud 1573-1645* (London, 1940). P.A. Welsby, *George Abbot: The Unwanted Archbishop 1562-1633* (London, 1962). Peter White, “The Rise of Arminianism Reconsidered,” *Past and Present*, November 1983 101: 34-54. Peter White, “A Rejoinder,” *Past and Present*, May 1987 115: 217-29. Peter White, *Predestination, Policy, and Polemic: Conflict and Consensus in the English Church from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge, 1992); Peter White, “The Via Media in the Early Stuart Church,” in Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1640* (Stanford, 1993), p. 211-30. Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven, 1992). Kevin Sharpe, “Archbishop Laud and the University of Oxford,” in Hugh Lloyd-Jones (ed.), *History and Imagination* (New York, 1981), p. 146-64. Kevin Sharpe, “Archbishop Laud,” *History Today*, August 1983 33: 26-30. G.W. Bernard, “The Church of England, c.1529-c.1642,” *History*, 1990 75(244): 183-206. G. W. Bernard, *The King’s Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church* (New Haven, 2005).

Arguably, they would point to this *via media* as the basis for the peace which lasted for more than 80 years, and a “Puritan Revolution” as the reason the church unraveled.

My findings agree with revisionists Nicholas Tyacke and Patrick Collinson in general, revisionists Conrad Russell and John Morrill in regards to religion, and post-revisionists Peter Lake, Kenneth Fincham, and Anthony Milton. They reject the notion of a *via media* and the existence of “Puritans” and “Anglicans” as two well defined parties. Puritans were not an alienated opposition, but pillars of the establishment, and orthodox, loyal members of church and state. They were in the mainstream of the Elizabethan and Jacobean church because most conformists were Calvinists in doctrine and prioritized preaching the Gospel, combating Catholicism, and reforming manners. Puritans supported the church not only because of this shared Calvinist agenda, but because many conformists tolerated some non-conformity for the sake of their shared goals. In this view, the innovations of a small, militant group of Anti-Calvinist conformists who came to dominate the church under Charles I was the cause of the Civil War. This “Arminian” or “Laudian” revolution provoked a conservative puritan counter-revolution.²¹

²¹ Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal, 1519-1583: The Struggle for a Reformed Church* (London, 1979). Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants* (Oxford, 1982). Patrick Collinson, *Godly People* (London, 1983). Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestants England* (New York, 1988). Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Oxford, 1967). Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (New York, 1982). Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London, 1988). Peter Lake, “Calvinism and the English Church 1570-1635,” *Past and Present*, February 1987 114: 32-76. Peter Lake, “Lancelot Andrewes, John Buckeridge, and Avant-Garde Conformity at the Court of James I,” in Linda Levy Peck (ed.), *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 113-33. Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c.1590-1640* (Oxford, 1987). Nicholas Tyacke, “Puritanism, Arminianism, and Counter-Revolution,” in Conrad Russell (ed.), *The Origins of the English Civil War* (New York, 1973), p. 119-43. Nicholas Tyacke, “Debate: The Rise of Arminianism Reconsidered,” *Past and Present*, May 1987 115: 201-16. Nicholas Tyacke, “Anglican Attitudes,” *Journal of British Studies*, April 1996 35: 139-67. Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600-1640* (New York, 1995). Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*

The historiographical shift to characterize the Church of England as filled with many factions engaged in a power struggle for cultural hegemony dovetails with recent advances in cultural theory. I have conceived this study as a “new cultural history” with focus on the production and transmission of meaning through ritual, symbols, language, and narrative. The theory of historical sociologists William Sewell Jr. and Anne Kane has been central to my approach. Their work stresses the dialectic over time between cultural structures and social structures, economic structures, political structures, and events. They view cultural structures as autonomous, meaning they are not reducible to other structures even while they are not independent of them.²²

By “cultural structures,” I refer to ritual, symbols, language, and narrative which were all central to fasts. The symbolic anthropology of Clifford Geertz and “practice” theory of anthropologists such as Marshall Sahlins and Pierre Bourdieu demonstrate the importance of ritual and symbols to self-understanding and identification. Through rituals people interpret and give meaning to their experience through symbol systems.²³ I contend that fasts were just such a ritual. In addition, practice theorists and Geertz’s critics give an understanding of culture that supports a Sewellian approach. These

(Stanford, 1993). Conrad Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford, 1990). Conrad Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637-1642* (Oxford, 1991). Morrill, *Nature*.

²² William Sewell, Jr., “The Concept(s) of Culture” in Victoria Bonnell and Lynn Hunt (eds.), *Beyond the Cultural Turn* (Berkeley, CA, 1999), p. 35-61. William Sewell, Jr., “Toward a Post-materialist Rhetoric for Labor History” in Lenard Berlanstein (ed.), *Rethinking Labor History* (Urbana, Illinois, 1993), p. 15-38. William Sewell, Jr., “Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille,” *Theory and Society*, December 1996 25/6: 841-81. William Sewell, Jr., “A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation,” *American Journal of Sociology*, July 1992 98(1): 1-29. William Sewell, Jr., “How Classes are Made: Critical Reflections on E.P. Thompson’s Theory of Working-class Formation” in Harvey Kaye, and Keith McClelland (eds.), *E.P. Thompson: Critical Perspectives* (Philadelphia, 1990), p. 50-77. Anne Kane, “Cultural Analysis in Historical Sociology: The Analytic and Concrete Forms of the Autonomy of Culture,” *Sociological Theory*, Spring 1991 9(1): 53-69.

²³ Geertz, *Interpretation*. Marshall Sahlins, *Culture and Practical Reason* (Chicago, 1976). Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1977, originally 1972). Richard Nice (transl.), Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984). Richard Nice (transl.), Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford, 1990). For the closely related concept of “performance,” see Stanley Tambiah, *Culture, Thought, and Social Action* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985).

theorists view culture as the dialectic between symbol systems and the practices that create them. Because they view culture as heterogeneous, loosely coherent, mutable, highly permeable, fuzzily bounded, and contested, they stress conflict between groups and the importance of issues of power. They thus also emphasize historical context and human agency in the creation and transformation of meaning. While people understood and interpreted experience in terms of symbol systems, their experience changed those systems as they communicated them in ritual performances.²⁴

I also contend that language in fasts was central to self-understanding and identification. This point, as well as further support for a Sewellian approach, can be seen in what Helmut Smith has termed the “weak version” of the linguistic turn. Significantly, he argues it is almost indistinguishable from Geertz’s theory. It holds that language is an independent, irreducible factor shaping experience alongside social, economic, and political structures. Language does not simply reflect the world, but helps

²⁴ Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York, 1997). Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York, 1992). Talal Asad, “Anthropological Conceptions of Religion: Reflections on Geertz,” *Man*, June 1983, new series 18(2): 237-59. Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore, 1993), especially p. 27-54. See also: Sherry Ortner, “Introduction,” *Representations*, Summer 1997 59: 1-13. William Roseberry, “Balinese Cockfights and the Seduction of Anthropology,” *Social Research*, Winter 1982 49(4): 1013-1028. Victoria Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, “Introduction,” in Victoria Bonnell and Lynn Hunt (eds.), *Beyond the Cultural Turn* (Berkeley, CA, 1999), p. 1-32. Lynn Hunt, “History Beyond Social Theory” in David Carroll (ed.), *The States of “Theory”* (New York, 1990), p. 95-111. Gabrielle Spiegel, “History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages,” *Speculum*, January 1990 65(1): 65-9, 74, 85-6. Ronald Walters, “Signs of the Times: Clifford Geertz and Historians,” *Social Research*, Autumn 1980 47(3): 537-56. William Sewell, Jr., “Geertz, Cultural Systems, and History: From Synchrony to Transformation,” *Representations*, Summer 1997 59: 35-55. R. Po-Chia Hsia and R.W. Scribner (eds.), *Problems in the Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Europe* (Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1997). Richard Biernacki, “Method and Metaphor After the New Cultural History” in Victoria Bonnell and Lynn Hunt (eds.), *Beyond the Cultural Turn* (Berkeley, CA, 1999), p. 62-83. Aletta Biersack, “Local Knowledge, Local History: Geertz and Beyond,” in Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, CA, 1989), p. 72-96. Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre* (New York, 1984), esp., p. 3-7, 75-104, 257-63. Roger Chartier, “Text, Symbols, and Frenchness,” *Journal of Modern History*, December 1985 57: 682-695. Robert Darnton, “The Symbolic Element in History,” *Journal of Modern History*, March 1986 58(1): 218-34. For further debate, see Dominick LaCapra, “Chartier, Darnton, and the Great Symbol Massacre,” *Journal of Modern History*, March 1988 60: 95-112. James Fernandez, “Historians Tell Tales: Of Cartesian Cats and Gallic Cockfights,” *Journal of Modern History*, March 1988 60: 113-27.

to constitute it. Language influences human conceptions of reality by classifying and organizing perceptions of the external world and thus giving meaning to them. This version of the turn affirms human agency in making and re-making language in linguistic performances. It thus also stresses historical context in that language is only intelligible when understood as the action agents take in response to experience and events. It seeks to make causal connections explicit between material structures, events, experiences, performances, and language. The uneven distribution of power also receives strong attention as an important factor in conflict among agents. Additionally, this theory affirms authorial intention and a distinction between text and context as language shapes experience but does not completely constitute it. Finally, it claims a degree of stability in language (norms, conventions, and idioms) as communities must develop shared recognitions and understandings of words and systems of signs to engage in mutually understandable exchanges.²⁵

Finally, I contend that narrative in fests was central to self-understanding and identification. The work of Margaret Somers and others holds that people construct self-understandings by interpreting their past, and locating their experiences in a repertoire of

²⁵ Helmut Walser Smith, "Geschichte Zwischen Den Fronten: Meisterwerk Der Neuesten Geschichtsschreibung Und Postmoderne Kritik," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* [Germany], 1996 22 (4): 592-608. I would like to thank Dr. Smith for providing me an English translation draft version of this paper. For useful overviews of the linguistic-turn, see: Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory* (1983; second edition, Minneapolis, 1996). Spiegel, "History." John Toews, "Intellectual History after the Linguistic Turn: The Autonomy of Meaning and the Irreducibility of Experience," *American Historical Review*, October 1987 92(4): 879-907. Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History* (New York, 1994), especially chapter 6-7. Joyce Appleby, "One Good Turn Deserves Another: Moving Beyond the Linguistic; A Response to David Harlan," *American Historical Review*, December 1989 94(5): 1326-1332. Martin Jay, "Should Intellectual History Take a Linguistic Turn? Reflections on the Habermas-Gadamer Debate" in Dominick LaCapra and Steven Kaplan (ed.), *Modern European Intellectual History* (Ithaca, NY, 1982), p. 86-110. Martin Jay, "The Textual Approach to Intellectual History" in Gisela Brude-Firnau and Karin MacHardy (eds.), *Fact and Fiction: German History and Literature 1848-1924* (Tübingen: Francke, 1990), p. 77-86. The weak version of the linguistic turn also has much in common with the work of J.G.A. Pocock, see: J.G.A. Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time* (New York, 1971), esp. p. 3-41. J.G.A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge, 1985), esp. p. 1-34.

stories so as to make sense of them. Stories consist of events which have been simplified, ordered, and related by a plot that places them in an overall causal sequence (beginning, middle, and end). With their structure and coherence, narratives thereby create significance and meaning out of numerous and disordered past events. The meanings of stories are influenced by which events have been selected to be included, and what starting and ending points have been selected. Narrative also gives meaning by placing events in an on-going process, and giving them a direction in time. In other words, narrative establishes an end goal, and arranges events so that they are moving to the goal, away from it, or are stationary. The corresponding plots to these motions are respectively progress, regression, and stagnation. Joining plots creates the overall theme of the narrative. While narratives construct and reconstruct actors over time, actors retain creative agency in making those narratives. Their sense history is important to understanding how stories guide action and how narrative mediates social processes and interactions. Further, distribution of power is important in that it often decides which narratives prevail in political struggles.²⁶

In this study, I focus only on the mutual interaction of cultural structures with political structures and politics because to date scholars have found no direct and generally valid links between religious affiliation and socio-economic structures in early

²⁶ Margaret Somers, "The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach," *Theory and Society*, October 1994 23(5): 605-49. Margaret Somers, "Narrativity, Narrative Identity, and Social Action: Rethinking English Working-Class Formation," *Social Science History*, Winter 1992 16(4): 591-630. Margaret Somers and Gloria Gibson, "Reclaiming the Epistemological 'Other': Narrative and the Social Construction of Identity" in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1994), p. 37-99. Mark Freeman, *Rewriting the Self: History, Memory, Narrative* (New York, 1993). Theodore Sarbin (ed.), *Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct* (New York, 1986). William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative," *The Journal of American History*, March 1992 78(4): 1347-1376. Mary Gergen and Kenneth Gergen, "The Social Construction of Narrative Accounts," in Kenneth Gergen and Mary Gergen (eds.), *Historical Social Psychology* (Hillsdale, NJ, 1984), p. 173-88. Michael Carrithers, *Why Humans Have Cultures* (Oxford, 1992), chapter 5. Jerome Bruner, *Acts of Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990). Victor Turner and Edward Bruner (eds.), *The Anthropology of Experience* (Urbana, Ill., 1986).

modern England. In particular, attempts to link particular religious views to horizontal slices of the social hierarchy have failed. The most frequent attempt has been to link “Puritanism” with the gentry and middling sort as part of a larger claim that economic polarization produced cultural polarization. Yet many scholars have found that puritans crossed the social spectrum proportional to the distribution of society as a whole, that greater potential existed than heretofore thought for the lower strata to inculcate Protestant and puritan views, and that concern to discipline the lower social orders was hardly a puritan or even a Protestant concern. Also, the social make-up of Royalists and Parliamentarians was virtually identical, so in the Civil War religious divisions cut vertically down through the social hierarchy.²⁷

²⁷ For arguments supporting a link, see: Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling 1525-1700* (New York, 1979). Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London, 1982). J.A. Sharpe, *Early Modern England: A Social History 1550-1750* (Baltimore, 1987). J.A. Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England 1550-1750* (New York, 1984). William Hunt, *The Puritan Moment* (Cambridge, Mass, 1983). Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (New York, 1964). Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution* (New York, 1967, originally 1958). Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution* (New York, 1968 revised edition). Richard Henry Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (Gloucester, Mass., 1962, originally 1926). Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change* (New York, 1966). Lawrence Stone, *Social Change and Revolutions in England 1540-1640* (London, 1965). Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (Oxford, 1965). Lawrence Stone, *The Causes of the English Revolution, 1529-1642* (New York, 1972). Brian Manning, *The English People and the English Revolution* (London, 1976). For contrary views, see: Martin Ingram, “Religion, Communities and Moral Discipline in Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth-Century England: Case Studies,” in Kaspar von Greyerz (ed.), *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1985), p. 177-93. Martin Ingram, “Ridings, Rough Music and the ‘Reform of Popular Culture’ in Early Modern England,” *Past and Present*, 1984 105: 79-113. Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex, and Marriage in England 1570-1640* (Cambridge, 1987). Martin Ingram, “The Reformation of Manners in Early Modern England,” in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox, and Steve Hindle (eds.), *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (New York, 1996), p. 47-88. Marjorie McIntosh, *A Community Transformed: The Manor and Liberty of Havering 1500-1620* (Cambridge, 1991). Marjorie McIntosh, *Autonomy and Community: The Royal Manor of Havering 1200-1500* (Cambridge, 1986). Marjorie McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehavior in England, 1370-1600* (Cambridge, 1998). For a full journal discussion of Controlling Misbehavior see: *Journal of British Studies*, July 1998 37(3). Collinson, *Religion of Protestants*, chapters 5 and 6. Collinson, *Godly People*. Margaret Spufford (ed.), *The World of Rural Dissenters, 1520-1725* (Cambridge, 1995). Nicholas Tyacke, “Popular Puritan Mentality in Late Elizabethan England,” in Peter Clark, Alan Smith, Nicholas Tyacke (eds.), *The English Commonwealth 1547-1640* (New York, 1979), p. 77-92. Margaret Spufford, *Contrasting Communities* (Cambridge, 1974). Margaret Spufford, “Puritanism and Social Control?” in Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (eds.), *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 41-57. Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories* (London, 1981), chapters 12-13. Paul Seaver, *Wallington’s World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford, 1985).

Most recently, in the vein of Fernand Braudel, David Underdown has argued that two sorts of geographic regions with different social and economic structures gave rise to different religious and political affiliations in the Civil War. But John Morrill effectively has countered that Underdown exaggerated the differences between the two regions, and that each region had considerable variation and fuzzy boundaries with large transitional areas. Finally, Morrill argues too many exceptions disprove the rule.²⁸ In summary, all these attempts are reductionist, viewing culture as derivative from social and economic structures and interests. Yet, as argued here religion was a causal factor in its own right.

Margaret Spufford, "Can We Count the 'Godly' and the 'Conformable' in the Seventeenth Century?" *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, July 1985 36(3): 428-38. Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1560-1640* (Cambridge, 1991). Peter Lake, *Antichrist's Lewd Hat* (New Haven, 2002). Ann Hughes, "'Popular' Presbyterianism in the 1640s and 1650s: The Cases of Thomas Edwards and Thomas Hall," in Nicholas Tyacke (ed.), *England's Long Reformation 1500-1800* (London, 1998), p. 235-59. David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order* (Cambridge, 1980). Margaret Spufford, "First Steps in Literacy: The Reading and Writing Experiences of the Humblest Seventeenth-Century Autobiographers," *Social History*, 1979 4: 407-35. Eamon Duffy, "The Godly and the Multitude in Stuart England," *The Seventeenth Century*, January 1986, 1(1): 31-55. Ian Green, *The Christian's ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England c.1530-1740* (Oxford, 1996). Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1998). Judith Maltby, "'By this Book:' Parishioners, the Prayer Book and the Established Church," in Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642* (Stanford, 1993), p. 115-37. Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1989). Collinson, *Birthpangs*, chapter 5. Collinson, "Elizabethan and Jacobean." Patrick Collinson, "Comment on Eamon Duffy's Neale Lecture and the Colloquium," in Nicholas Tyacke (ed.), *England's Long Reformation 1500-1800* (London, 1998), p. 82-3. Patrick Collinson, "Shepherds, Sheepdogs, and Hirelings: The Pastoral Ministry in Post-Reformation England," in W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood (eds.), *The Ministry: Clerical and Lay* (Studies in Church History volume 26, Cambridge, Mass., 1989), p. 199-207. Timothy Breen, "The Non-Existent Controversy: Puritan and Anglican Attitudes on Work and Wealth, 1600-1640," *Church History*, 1966 35: 273-87. Laura Stevenson O'Connell, "Anti-Entrepreneurial Attitudes in Elizabethan Sermons and Popular Literature," *Journal of British Studies*, Spring 1976 15: 1-20. Paul Seaver, "The Puritan Work Ethic Revisited," *Journal of British Studies*, Spring 1980 19(2): 35-53. C. John Sommerville, "The Anti-Puritan Work Ethic," *Journal of British Studies*, 1981 20: 70-81. Leo Solt, "Puritanism, Capitalism, Democracy, and the New Science," *American Historical Review*, 1967 123: 18-29. Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge, 1987), chapter 5. For the Civil War, see: Morrill, *Nature*, chapters 7, 9-10, 14. Ann Hughes, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (New York, 1991), chapter 3. Ann Hughes, "Local History and the Origins of the English Civil War," in Cust and Hughes (ed.), *Conflict in Early Stuart England* (New York, 1989), chapter 8. John Morrill, *The Revolt of the Provinces* (London, 1976). Anthony Fletcher, *A County Community at Peace and War: Sussex 1600-1660* (London, 1975). Ann Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire 1620-1660* (Cambridge, 1987). B.G. Blackwood, *The Lancashire Gentry and the Great Rebellion, 1640-1660* (Manchester, Chetham Society, third series, volume 25, 1978). B.G. Blackwood, "The Cavalier and Roundhead Gentry of Suffolk," *The Suffolk Review*, numbers 5 and 7, (1985-6). John Morrill, *Cheshire 1630-1660* (Oxford, 1974).

²⁸ David Underdown, *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660* (Oxford, 1985). Morrill, *Nature*, p. 224-41. For Underdown's response, see David Underdown, "A Reply to John Morrill," *Journal of British Studies*, October 1987 26: 468-79.

Only an indirect link can be made between religion and society. Population growth outstripped economic growth in the long sixteenth century creating high inflation which rose faster than wages and gutted them in real terms. A substantial portion of the population was now permanently in poverty, while a few gained mightily. Concern with vagabonds, bandits, and beggars ran high. Crop failure, war, and plague were recurring and random and blamed on sin. Unease fed witchcraft panics. The printing press created an information revolution that allowed radical and heretical ideas to spread with unprecedented speed, often in unlicensed pamphlets.²⁹ Contemporary art like Albrecht Dürer's *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, and numerous works on the last judgment are indicative of these widespread concerns.

With weak state institutions, order depended to a great degree on voluntary obedience to authority. Lacking a standing army, a police force, and disaster relief agencies, the prospect of rebellions and riots, which were not infrequent occurrences in early modern society, weighed heavily on contemporaries. But as we shall see, early modern English people differed in the relative emphasis they placed on two broad, but not mutually exclusive, programs as the best means to address disorder. One relied on the Lord working through His elect whom He raised up to witness to Truth and advance reform. The other relied on God working through established social and political hierarchies, which He ordained, to achieve reform in accord with obedience to authority. The former was bottom up, while the latter was top down. That formative work of

²⁹ Wrightson, *English Society*. J. Sharpe, *Early Modern England*. Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, second edition (n.p., 1971). Julius R. Ruff, *Violence in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, 2001). Robert Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1994). Paul Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1990). John Walter and Roger Schofield (eds.), *Famine, Disease, and the Social Order in Early Modern Society* (Cambridge, 1989). Andrew B. Appleby, *Famine in Tudor and Stuart England* (Stanford, CA, 1978).

English Protestant history and martyrology, John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, contained both views. Foxe portrayed both reforming godly princes *and* godly martyrs as the defenders of the Gospel and the true church.³⁰

While England's relative centralization empowered the crown by linking the center to the localities, it paradoxically opened the possibility for popular opposition to it. There was broad participation in the local administration of church, state, and law enforcement well down to the middling and lower ranks because government was not bureaucratic. The crown relied on the cooperation of local elites. Local people thus were experienced in and understood the workings of government. They were capable of independent collective action, and could lobby, petition, and mobilize allies at court and in parliament.³¹ In particular, advanced English Protestants acted just so throughout the period as they never found their godly prince. The best candidates, Edward VI and Prince Henry Stuart, both died in their youths. Moreover, centralization made royal policies broadly felt, shared experiences. Thus, when a monarch appeared to act contrary to or insufficiently for "God's cause," the godly would not shirk their role as saints and lesser officers in the commonwealth. As polarization and fear of disorder increased, so did political conflict between the two competing visions of how to create order.

³⁰ Jane Facey, "John Foxe and the Defence of the English Church," and Peter Lake, "Presbyterianism, the Idea of a National Church and the Argument from Divine Right," in Peter Lake and Maria Dowling (eds.), *Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth Century England* (New York, 1987), p. 162-192 and p. 193-224 respectively. Peter Lake, "Anti-popery: the Structure of a Prejudice," in Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (eds.), *Conflict in Early Stuart England* (New York, 1989), p. 72-106. For a particularly lucid statement of competing concepts of order, see: Underdown, *Revel*.

³¹ See for example, Cynthia Herrup, *The Common Peace: Participation and the Criminal Law in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1987).

Despite the insights fasts can provide, surprisingly little has been said about them in the vast body of scholarly literature on early modern English Protestantism.³² Most discussions are narrow, cursory accounts of fast sermons to the Long Parliament. The most useful, but limited, treatment of fasts appears in the works of Patrick Collinson. He shows that fasts were a part of the Elizabethan classis movement and of the voluntary religion of puritans. Tom Webster covering the early Stuart period shows that fasts remained an important socializing event for puritans, creating and strengthening a sense of community among them. C.J. Kitching has a brief treatment, limited to Elizabethan times, of the otherwise neglected subject of special public prayers (which often were joined with public fasting). Christopher Durston looks at fasts during the Civil War and Interregnum to argue that poor observance of them was another instance of the failure of the puritan cultural revolution. Richard Greaves gives an encyclopedic overview of fasting. For New England, William DeLoss Love's antiquarian account remains the only full length study.³³ This gap in the historical literature is important to fill with a full

³² For useful references to fasts that gave starting points for my research, I would like to acknowledge the work of Patrick Collinson, Tom Webster, Christopher Durston, and Richard Greaves cited in note 33. The same applies to Jacqueline Eales, *Puritans and Roundheads: The Harleys of Brampton Bryan and the Outbreak of the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1990). Jacqueline Eales, "Thomas Pierson and the Transmission of the Moderate Puritan Tradition," *Midland History*, 1995 20: 75-102. Stephen Foster, *Notes from the Caroline Underground* (Hamden, CT, 1978). Rosemary O'Day, *The English Clergy* (Leicester, 1979), p. 168-69. William Sheils, *The Puritans in the Diocese of Peterborough, 1558-1610* (Northampton, 1979). Also, I would like to thank Dr. Geoffrey Browell for useful primary references, and Sister Gillian Ruth for a valuable secondary source.

³³ John Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism During the English Civil Wars 1640-1648* (Princeton, 1969). Hugh Trevor-Roper, "The Fast Sermons of the Long Parliament," in Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1968), p. 294-344. James Spalding, "Sermons Before Parliament (1640-1649) as a Public Puritan Diary," *Church History*, March, 1967 36(1): 24-35. Ethyn Kirby, "Sermons Before the Commons, 1640-42," *American Historical Review*, April 1939 44(3): 528-48. N. Frederick Nash, "Fast Day Sermons for the House," *Bulletin of Bibliography* 1985 42 (4): 203-14. Peter Kaufman, "Fasting in England in the 1560s," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 2003 94: 176-93. Patrick Collinson, "The Puritan Classical Movement in the Reign of Elizabeth I" (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1957), p. 323-46, 356, 504, 735, 1163-1176. Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*. Patrick Collinson, "Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritanism," p. 32-57. Collinson, *Religion of Protestants*, p. 260-63, 266. Tom Webster, *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England: The Caroline Puritan Movement, c.1620-1643* (Cambridge, 1997), especially chapter 3. Christopher Durston, "'For the Better Humiliation of the People:'

length study as fasts were one of the most vital and central aspects of early modern Christian culture. Further, fasts continued to have importance beyond this period as they declined gradually through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and have survived through the twentieth century to the present in some Protestant churches.³⁴

Study of fasts is also significant because study of self-understanding has almost exclusively concentrated on Protestant martyrologies, histories, and national calendars. Virtually no attention has been paid to the formation of self-understanding in practices such as fasts. When studied, devotional practices are often generalized and abstracted from their context. We do not see how they influenced, and in turn were influenced by, social, economic, cultural, and political developments.³⁵

A key reason scholars have ignored fasts is that no defined body of sources exists for their study aside from the fast sermons to the Long Parliament. The evidence is

Public Days of Fasting and Thanksgiving During the English Revolution,” *Seventeenth Century*, 1992 7(2): 129-49. C.J. Kitching, “‘Prayers Fit for the Time:’ Fasting and Prayer in Response to National Crises in the Reign of Elizabeth I,” in W.J. Sheils (ed.), *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition* (Oxford, 1985), p. 241-50. Richard Greaves, *Society and Religion in Elizabethan England* (Minneapolis, 1981), p. 490-99. William DeLoss Love, *The Fast and Thanksgiving Days of New England* (New York, 1895).

³⁴ H. Bartel, “The Story of Public Fast Days in England,” *Anglican Theological Review*, 37(3), 1955, p. 190-200. Richard Janet, “Providence, Prayer and Cholera: The English General Fast of 1832,” *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 1982 51(3): 297-317. Richard Janet, *The Decline of General Fasts in Victorian England 1832-1857* (Ph.D. diss., Notre Dame University, 1984). Henry Ippel, “Blow the Trumpet, Sanctify the Fast,” *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 1980 44(1): 43-60. Henry Ippel, “British Sermons and the American Revolution,” *Journal of Religious History* [Australia], 1982 12(2): 191-205.

³⁵ For a start to scholarship on martyrology and Protestant history, see: Leslie P. Fairfield, *John Bale, Mythmaker for the English Reformation* (West Lafayette, Ind., 1976); D.M. Loades, *John Foxe and the English Reformation* (Brookfield, Vt., 1997); Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse* (Oxford, 1978); V. Norskov Olsen, *John Foxe and the Elizabethan Church* (Berkeley, 1973); William Haller, *The Elect Nation* (New York, 1963). For the English Protestant calendar, see: David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (Berkeley, 1989). A notable exception to narrow research on religious practice is Caroline Walker Bynum’s study of the eucharistic devotions of medieval female saints in *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (Berkeley, 1987); see also David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1999). For puritan devotion see: Geoffrey Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Oxford, 1976); Owen Watkins, *The Puritan Experience: Studies in Spiritual Autobiography* (New York, 1972); Norman Petit, *The Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life* (New Haven, Conn., 1966); Charles Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth Century New England* (Chapel Hill, 1982).

scattered haphazardly and thinly through an extremely wide range of documents. To cull enough evidence one has to define the study to cover the whole nation over a relatively long historical period. Significantly, this study brings together a large amount of disparate information, including from documents not heretofore studied.

CHAPTER II

FASTING AND THE ENGLISH “SETTLEMENT” OF RELIGION

Fasting, prayer, and alms were three of the quintessential “good works” of the medieval Church. While English Protestants rejected traditional good works such as hearing mass, going on pilgrimage, invoking saints, praying for the dead, and making offerings to “images,” they retained fasting, prayer, and alms. Most directly, English Protestants claimed that they simply discarded what scripture did not command while retaining that which it did. Scripture required fasting, prayer, and alms as part of keeping the Lord’s covenant. Indeed, English Protestants took great pains to refute the constant Catholic charge that they opposed good works, especially fasting.

English Protestants argued Christians had to perform good works not only to obey God’s commandment and show themselves obedient children to their heavenly Father, but to show their thankfulness for their redemption in Christ, and to glorify the Almighty. Christians also had to perform good works to help their neighbors, to demonstrate faith to others to win them to Christ, to stir others up to glorify God by the example of their godliness, to prevent giving offense to others to the detriment of religion, and to stop the mouths of the adversaries against them. Finally, Christians had to do good works for themselves to get assurance of their election, to exercise their faith to persevere to the end, to prevent temporal and eternal punishments, and to obtain the rewards God promised for such works. In sum, they claimed that to be baptized and believe was not enough to be saved. The “true faith” was “lively” and not “idle.” God delivered

Christians from the power of darkness to work out our salvation in fear and trembling, to serve Him not the Devil, the flesh, and the world. Indeed, once they had felt eternal joys, all saints supposedly counted all worldly riches and joys as dung, and with fasting, prayer, and alms labored for eternal life.

English Protestants also claimed they restored a proper understanding of good works by stripping away “superstition,” “errors,” and “abuses.” Works were not meritorious of salvation; they were the “fruits” of faith. Grace, as a free gift from God, not works justified humans. Good works were the effects not the cause of our justification. For this reason, good works were signs of election, “testimonies” and “declarations” of justifying faith. Also, only those justified by faith had the workings of the Holy Spirit and the regenerated or converted heart, will, and conscience necessary to perform good works. God accounted all works done by the unregenerate to be sin because they did not arise from a pure spirit, love, and faith. Christians could only perform good works by grace from God; all they performed by themselves was sin. Even the good works the righteous performed were tainted by their still imperfect humanity and thus unworthy of merit. Thus God was just to reward sin with damnation, but not to reward works with salvation, which in any event were a gift from Him. English Protestants did still speak of good works as “necessary to salvation” but only in the sense that they were the consequents of faith and markers directing the way to eternal life. Without such works one did not have “true faith.” One’s faith was “dead” and one would not walk the narrow path to salvation.

On fasting days above all, Christians were to do works of piety to God, and works of charity to brethren. When Christians confessed their sins and humbled themselves in

fasting, prayer, and alms to pacify God on fast days, they appeased Him and received blessings from Him but not because of any intrinsic merit in such works. Rather, God rewarded such fasts because they proceeded from faith through Christ and were in obedience to the law. God showed mercy from grace. In other words, they pleased God with fasting, prayer, and alms because these works “testified” to their “true repentance” (inward conversion of the heart) as the effect of their faith whereby they had apprehended the merits of Christ. Christians did not make “satisfaction” for sins by chastising and punishing themselves with fasting, prayer, and alms. Only Christ’s atoning sacrifice did that. Only by faith did Christians apply Christ’s merits to themselves.¹

While English Protestants affirmed the importance of fasts, what kind of fasts they thought reformed was another question. Two major kinds of fasts existed. First, were the traditional set fasts such as Lent, Ember Days, and the eves of Saint’s Days. Second, were the Reformed or Calvinist fast days which were exceptionally long and intense services of repentance in response to perceived providential judgments like plague, flood, famine, fire, and war. These fasts differed from traditional set-fasts as they were impromptu in response to circumstances. They could, however, be observed regularly (weekly or monthly) for the duration of an extended crisis. Also, they could be fixed to a particular day and observed yearly as an anniversary fast for an exceptionally

¹ William Perkins, *A Reformed Catholike*, ([Cambridge], 1598), p. 25-6, 30, 64, 92-102, 112-13, 309-10, 319-20 (STC 19736). Andrew Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (London, 1592), p. 498, 515-16, 522-23, 580, 583-96 (STC 25696). Andrew Willet, *Hexapla* ([Cambridge], 1611), p. 134-39, 184, 188, 192, 201-2, 266, 309-10, 393, 447, 520, 575 (STC 25689.7). John Jewel, *An Apologie* (London, 1562), p. 18 (STC 14590). John Jewel, *A Defence of the Apologie* (London, 1567), p. 15, 318-23 (STC 14600.5). John Jewel, *The Second Tome of Homilies* (London, 1571), p. 171-73 (STC 13669). John Jewel, *Certaine Sermons* (London, 1583), Sig., m3v, n8v (STC 14596). Lewis Bayly, *The Practise of Pietie* (London, 1613), p. 212, 647-54 (STC 1602).

dreadful event. All English Protestants accepted this kind of fasting though English Calvinists, and especially puritans, had particular fondness for them.²

The Elizabethan “settlement” left an ambiguous foundation which competing English Protestant factions sought to gloss according to their preferences. The best evidence advocates of traditional set fasts had was the Book of Common Prayer. The calendar in the front of it listed traditional fast days. Also, the liturgy retained services for Lent which referred to fasting. The epistle reading for Ash-Wednesday was Joel 2:12-17, and the Gospel reading was Matthew 6:16-21. The collect for the first Sunday in Lent noted Christ’s forty day fast. It asked the Lord for grace to use such abstinence to subdue the flesh to the spirit. The epistle reading was 2 Corinthians 6:1-10, and the Gospel reading was Mathew 4:1-11.³ Taken in isolation, the Book of Common Prayer makes fasting in these times appear a matter of religious observance in the Church of England.

By contrast, English statutes (including 2 and 3 Edward VI chapter 19, 5 and 6 Edward VI chapter 3, and 5 Elizabeth I chapter 5) asserted that abstinence from flesh in Lent and in other traditional times were only “politick laws” or “politick constitutions” for civil purposes such as maintaining the navy, supporting port towns and the fishing industry, and preserving livestock.⁴ Likewise, from Edward VI onwards articles and

² Time shortage prevented my inclusion of substantial research on a representative range of English Protestant writing on fasts. I intend to present this material elsewhere. Suffice it to say here that English Protestants interpreted mention of traditional set-fasts in the Book of Common Prayer variously. Separatists and Anti-Calvinist conformists understood them as religious fasts. Puritans interpreted them as civil fasts for the good of the fishing industry and the navy. Some Calvinist conformists shared this view with puritans, while others thought them partly civil and partly religious, and others religious but voluntary. Anti-Calvinist conformists argued that traditional set fasts were religious, and pressed at the notion they were “indifferent” by suggesting they might be apostolic or scriptural.

³ *The Booke of Common Prayer* (London, 1580), (STC 16307).

⁴ *The Statutes at Large* (London, 1770), volume 2, p. 419, 439-40, 543-48. The statute 27 Elizabeth I 11 repealed Wednesday as a fish day. For other relevant legislation see: 31 Elizabeth I ch. 10 (1589), and 35

injunctions referred to abstinence in Lent and other traditional days as “a mere positive law.”⁵ Contemporaries variously interpreted these laws, and articles and injunctions to mean that either eating fish on fast days was civil, or that all set fast days were civil.

The official homily on fasting advocated impromptu fasts and did not mention traditional set fasts. The homily’s definition of a fast implicitly ruled out the forty day fast of Lent as a true fast because it claimed examples from scripture and the primitive church required “a withholding of meat, drink, and all natural food from the body, for the determined time of fasting.” However, the homily did not restrict fasts to just a day or a few days, and repeatedly only used the ambiguous phrase “for the determined time of fasting.” Also, the homily argued that fasts in scripture were a total abstinence all day “until the evening” or “till night.” Likewise, the practice of the “primitive church” was shown in the Council of Chalcedon. It made a canon to correct abuses in fasts and re-affirmed them to be a total abstinence all day “till after the evening prayer.” The general rule from scripture and early church then was to abstain from all meat and drink “the whole day, from morning till night.” The homily though did not comment as to whether this breaking of the fast was only to be on the last day of the fast, and thus left open the possibility of longer fasts broken each successive evening with a meal only to begin again the next day. Further, the homily does not call the fast day a sabbath and prohibit ordinary work, though something of the sort seems implied in having the fast last all day with no worldly pleasures. The homily did reference the Old Testament set fasts of Leviticus 16:29-30, and 23:27-30 as commanded by God, and Zachariah 8:19 as ordained

Elizabeth I ch. 7 (1593), and 39 Elizabeth I ch 18 (1597), 2 James I ch. 25 (1604), 3 Charles I ch. 4 (5) (Ibid., volume 2, p. 668, 678, 694-95; volume 3, p. 28, 127-28). For a convenient collection of statutes see: *The Several Statutes in Force for the Observation of Lent* (London, 1661), (Thomason Tracts, E.1084[3]).

⁵ Edward Cardwell, *Documentary Annals of the Reformed Church of England* (Oxford, 1844), volume 1, p. 26-7, 67.

by the Israelite “governors.” Yet, it did not comment as to whether these texts supported set fasts in the present or not.⁶ Despite its ambiguities, the character of the discussion with its focus on recounting example after example from scripture which were almost all of the short and spontaneous variety of fasts, and nothing about the set fasts of the early Church like Lent, shows a clear bias to impromptu fasts, and looks strikingly similar to puritan treatises on the subject.

In criticizing pre-Reformation fasts, the homily did not discuss their set nature, but focused on rejecting fasting as merit and satisfaction. It rejected the “superstition” of the Pharisees who put “religion” and “holiness” in the “outward work” of fasting. The Pharisees were thus “hypocrites.” It stressed that God focused on how the heart “affected.”⁷ The ends of fasting were to chastise the flesh and bring it in subjection to the spirit, to make the spirit more earnest and fervent in prayer, and to give a testimony and witness of humble submission to God. The homily significantly argued that the first end belonged “most properly to private fast.” Such sentiment, undercut a main argument for Lent as a public fast.⁸

The homily also argued that abstinence from flesh on fish days was merely a civil matter, and implicitly glossed Lent and other set fasts as civil fasts. It conspicuously referred to “abstinences” (rather than fasts) which magistrates made “upon policy, not respecting any religion at all in the same.” It distinguished between the “policies of princes” for the good of the commonweal, and “ecclesiastical policies” prescribing works (i.e. impromptu religious fasts) which were a secondary means by which “God’s wrath may be pacified, and His mercy purchased.” Accordingly, “positive laws” were for

⁶ *Certain Sermons or Homilies* (Philadelphia, 1844), part 2, p. 248-52, 255.

⁷ *Ibid.*, part 2, p. 251-55.

⁸ *Ibid.*, part 2, p. 254-55.

public order to preserve fishing towns, increase fishermen, furnish the navy, help national defense, and increase victuals so as to keep their prices low and better feed the poor.

Such positive laws when not repugnant to God's law were to be observed for conscience sake not for thing which in itself was "indifferent" but for the law of God that required obedience to the magistrate. Authorities did not make these laws "to put holiness in one kind of meat and drink more than another, to make one day more holy than another," rather, they were "grounded merely upon policy." The difference between such abstinence and fast days is also clear in that the homily notes that one could have two meals on days ordered for abstinence from flesh.⁹

The homily also implicitly rejected traditional set fasts as having scriptural or apostolic origins which would make them immutable because it defended the right to alter fasts. The homily affirmed that in and of itself fasting was "a thing merely indifferent." No human law touching things indifferent could "bind the conscience" to a perpetual observation of them. The higher powers had "full liberty" to alter and change such laws whether ecclesiastical or political. With respect to "ecclesiastical policy," the homily did not urge "prescribing a form of fasting." No necessity existed to follow the order used in Old Testament and by Christ's apostles after His ascension. To do so would give up the "liberty" of the Gospel, and bring people again into the "bondage of the Law." The Church was not tied to any order, law, or decree made by man, and could change such when need required. Specifically, it lawfully could change or abandon such orders "when they tend either to superstition or to impiety; when they draw the people from God, rather than work any edification in them." Christ left this authority to the Church. The Church Fathers used this authority to change orders, decrees, and

⁹ Ibid., part 2, p. 255-57, 259.

constitutions of the Church in regards to fasting. The homily cited the *Tripartite History* saying of fasting that “it was diversely used in diverse places, by diverse men.” Here the homily makes its only and passing mention of Lent as one such fast which the early church observed differently. At that time, there was no “one uniform order in fasting,” and much variation in regards to times, types of meats, and whether abstinence was in whole or in part. All this diversity broke neither their “charity,” which was the “very true bond of Christian peace,” nor their “agreement and concord in faith.”¹⁰ So while the homily does not condemn Lent, it strikes an ambiguous and tepid chord about it. It suggests that a sufficiently reformed version of Lent would be acceptable in a church, but that it was not something to be sought either.

More evidence for impromptu fasts in the homily comes when it does not interpret Matthew 9:15 (Luke 5:33-35), a key proof text for Lent, as establishing a commemorative fast about the passion and death of Christ. Rather, it affirms that Christ rebuked the Pharisees in Luke 5:33-35 for “ignorance” because “they could not discern between time and time.” Only certain times were appropriate to fast “for all times serve not for all things.” Christ in Matthew 9:15 (Luke 5: 34-35) set out the time to fast as when the “bridegroom” was taken, and the “marriage” ended. Fasts were not to occur while the “bridegroom” was present and the “marriage” lasted. That is, “so long as God revealeth His mercy unto us, and giveth us of His benefits, either spiritual or corporal, we are said to be with the bridegroom at the marriage.” Likewise, “the marriage is said then to be ended and the bridegroom to be gone when Almighty God smiteth us with affliction, and seemeth to leave us in the midst of a number of adversities.” Such times were “fit” to humble ourselves to God in fasting. For private men fit times were

¹⁰ Ibid., part 2, p. 252, 255-59.

adversities like trouble of mind, loss of friends and goods, and long and dangerous sicknesses. For the public, fit times were when God would “afflict” a whole region or country with war, famine, pestilence, and other “calamities.” The homily cites the example of the fast of Ninevah after God had sent them the prophet Jonah.¹¹ In short, we have here a Reformed/Calvinist style impromptu fast in response to divine providence and intended to restore a covenant relationship between the Lord and His people.

Moreover, preaching the Word was given a central place in these fasts. Individuals appointed private fasts for themselves “to turn His wrath from them” when they lamented their sinful lives. The impetus for them so doing was not only seeing present danger over them, but the “preaching of the prophets” which admonished them and brought them to consideration of their sin. The example of the Ninivites who were brought to repentance by “Jonas’ preaching” was again a key example.¹²

Though not officially sanctioned, the Geneva Bible was by far the most common version in England during the Elizabethan and much of the Jacobean period. Scholars long have been aware of its Calvinist notes which were so influential in shaping English Protestant culture. Not surprisingly, the notes attacked interpretations of Biblical verses used to justify Lent. Regarding Exodus 34:28, Moses’ forty day and night fast, the note read: “This miracle was to confirm the authority of the Law, and ought no more to be followed than other miracles.” The note for 1 Kings 19:8 also affirmed that Elijah was nourished “miraculously.” Similarly, regarding Luke 4:2, the note read: “This fast was miraculous, to confirm the Gospel, and ought no more of men to be followed than the

¹¹ Ibid., part 2, p. 251, 259-63.

¹² Ibid., part 2, p. 249-50, 254.

other miracles that Christ did.” About the set fasts in Zechariah 7:5 the note drew the lesson that God was displeased with fasts the Israelites “invented of themselves.”¹³

Yet, the Geneva Bible was not unique among English Bibles. The notes of the Bishop’s Bible are silent on passages traditionally used to support Lent, and only support impromptu fasts. The notes argued that passages like Jeremiah 36:6 taught that there should be public fasts in time of war and all “distresses,” and passages like Acts 14:23 taught the need for such fasts when people went about some “weighty matter.”¹⁴ The notes of the Matthew Bible also only mention impromptu fasts. For Ezra 8 they teach the need for fasts at times of “some great tribulation.” For Matthew 9, a crucial text for Lent, the note reads: “This is no superstitious fast upon prescript days, but such as is mentioned in the Acts the 27 chap. and in other places of the epistles.” The Matthew-Beck Bible repeated the same note on Matthew 9, and developed the same theme in the note for Matthew 17 which read: “Here take the superstitious papists, great hold for their prescript fastings and set number of prayer: But fondly. For here is nothing whereupon to build any prescript day or number.” Rather, the text only meant that those troubled with the “wicked spirit of frenzy” could be delivered when they gave themselves to prayer and fasting.¹⁵

Next to the Bible, John Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* was the most formative influence on English Protestant culture and national identity. Foxe undermined Lent and other set fasts. As to Ember fasts, Foxe held that they were first ordained by the third century Bishop of Rome Calixtus, at only three times a year and merely “for the increase

¹³ *The Bible* (Geneva, 1560), fol. 42r, 161v, 28v, 382r (STC 2093).

¹⁴ *The Bible* (London, 1569), fol. 106r, 65v (STC 2105).

¹⁵ *The Bible* (London, 1551), fol. 127v, 9r (STC 2083). *The Bible* (London, 1551), fol. 6v, 11v (STC 2088).

of corn, wine, and oil.” Subsequently, Foxe noted that Calixtus II in the 12th century was the one who brought in the four Ember fasts, and presumably the reader is to infer that these were corrupt.¹⁶ Foxe was willing to admit the antiquity of Lent because he denied that the second century Bishop of Rome Telesphorous first originated it, and instead argued that according to the ancient Ignatius a “forty days fast” had existed long before that bishop. Then, in arguments that would typify the views of puritans and many Calvinist conformists, Foxe cited Apollonius in Eusebius’s history who affirmed that the heretic Montanus was “the first deviser and bringer-in of these laws of fasting into the church, which before was used to be free.” Also, Socrates in his history showed that there had been “diverse and sundry fastings of Lent in sundry and diverse churches.” This situation led Socrates to conclude: “And because that no man can produce any written commandment about this matter, it is therefore apparent, that the Apostles left this kind of fast free to every man’s will and judgment, lest any should be constrained, by fear and necessity, to do that which is good.” Later, Foxe supported this sense of liberty in set fasts in another skeptical slap at the idea of Telesphorus as the author of Lent. Foxe argued that “if he did ordain that fast, yet he did ordain it but freely to be kept: for so I find among the decrees, that Lent was commanded first to be fasted but only of the clergy or churchmen.”¹⁷ Foxe also highlights the lack of scriptural command for Lent from Christ’s fast. In a marginal note to the section of a May 21, 1547 letter of Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, refuting Protestant arguments against Lent as trying to

¹⁶ George Townsend (ed.), *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe* (New York, 1965), volume 1, p. 165; volume 2, p. 176.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, volume 1, p. 150-51; volume 6, p. 379.

imitate the miracle of Christ's fast, reads that Christ's actions "as pertained to public example ever had some public commandment joined withal."¹⁸

Foxe supported his general commentary on set fasts with specific examples of martyrs themselves making similar statements. Foxe thereby more deeply rooted his views on set fasts in Protestant history. These examples occur in his sixth book dealing with the last 300 years of history where Foxe discussed "the grievous and sundry persecutions raised up by Antichrist." Foxe affirmed that the Protestant religion now in England had not "sprung up and risen but of late." By contrast, this religion was in England "of old and ancient time" and had existed not only over the last two centuries from Wycliffe, but also had "continually from time to time sparkled abroad." To prove his claims, Foxe pointed to supposed examples from the diocese of Norwich of people "who have defended the same cause of doctrine which now is received by us in the church." While these people were "not so strongly armed" as present Protestants, they were nonetheless "warriors in Christ's church, and fought to their power in the same cause."¹⁹

One example was the turner John Florence from Shelton who was executed in 1424 for teaching heresies including: "That men ought to fast no other time, but the 'Quatuor temporum.'" Margery Backster, the wife of a wright in Martham who died in 1428, was another example. The purported deposition against her included her view: "that every faithful man or woman is not bound to fast in Lent, or on other days appointed for fasting by the church." She also bluntly claimed: "that Pope Sylvester made the Lent." A marginal note here reads: "Against the Popes' fasting days." John

¹⁸ Ibid., volume 6, p. 83.

¹⁹ Ibid., volume 3, p. 580-81.

Burrel, a servant to Thomas Moon of Ludney who died in 1430, supposedly made similar statements. Articles against him for heresy included his belief: “That no man is bound to fast the Lent, or other fasting days, appointed by the church, for they were not appointed by God, but ordained by the priests.”²⁰

The only support for Lent in Foxe is his printing the 1538 articles of heresy against John Lambert with Lambert’s replies. To the question if Lent and other fasts were to be observed, Lambert replied yes, but he focused on practical reasons stressing that fasting was commendable only to avoid sloth, to be more ready to serve God, to tame concupiscence, and to check lust. He made no mention of Christ’s fast, or other defenses of Lent. Reference to Lent and other fasts as appointed by the “common law” is also significant in that it suggests Lambert may have thought of them as civil matters.

Lambert also accepted fasting as indifferent, and denied that breaking them was “deadly sin” because no “positive law of man, made without foundation of scripture” could bind the conscience. Lent and other fasts were likewise made “by man” and “without authority of scripture.” Lambert only mentioned general temperance as commanded in scripture saying it required Christians to fast “perpetually,” eating and drinking only as need requires. Support for liberty and voluntary observation of fasting also are evident. Lambert argued that the prelates would “better have persuaded the people to pure fasting by preaching of the Word of God, and fatherly exhortations, than by ordaining of so sore a multitude of laws and constitutions.” Lambert not only believed preaching about fasting as the legitimate and effective way to foster the practice of it, but that mandatory

²⁰ Ibid., volume 3, p. 584, 595-97. Backster also supposedly defended the lawfulness of eating any foods on fast days, and had her servant Agnes Berthem prepare a pot with bacon and oatmeal on the Saturday after Ash-Wednesday. John Burrel also believed one could eat flesh and fish indifferently on fast days, including Fridays. (ibid.)

obedience by law led to corrupt and hypocritical practice. He prayed for God to send His “heavenly doctrine” to transform people, and to put away “our old Adam with all his dissimulation and painted show, that is much caused by human laws and constitutions.”²¹

Taken as a whole these documents suggest that prevailing opinion in the Church of England was in the Reformed tradition. Calvin, Bucer, and Bullinger had an ambiguous attitude to traditional set-fasts. While they rejected the way Catholics observed and understood these fasts in regards to distinctions among meats, merit, and other matters, they did not reject set fasts per se. They only rejected that traditional set fasts like Lent had scriptural or apostolic authority as their basis; they were “indifferent.” With this point made, they thus affirmed the liberty of churches to make and abolish fasts as they deemed fit. Of course, they stressed that impromptu fasts were the true kind of fast. Bucer and Bullinger also argued that observance of set fasts was to be voluntary.²²

²¹ Josiah Pratt (ed.), *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, third edition (London, 1852), volume 5, p. 201-2.

²² For Calvin’s views on fasting, see: James Anderson (ed.), *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1949), volume 1, p. 585. Thomas Myers (ed.), *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1948), volume 2, p. 136-38, 237-38. John Pringle (ed.), *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1948), p. 228. William Pringle (ed.), *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1948), volume 4, p. 227-30. William Pringle (ed.), *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1956), volume 1, p. 156, 207-9, 330-31, 406. William Pringle (ed.), *Commentary on the Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1956), p. 61-2. Henry Beveridge (ed.), *Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1957), volume 1, p. 503; volume 2, p. 28-9. Henry Beveridge (ed.), *Tracts and Treatises. . . by John Calvin* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1958), volume 1, p. 113-14; volume 2, p. 149; volume 3, p. 45, 56, 60, 325-29, 378. John Owen (ed.), *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1950), volume 1, p. 348; volume 2, p. 220. John Owen (ed.), *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1950), volume 2, p. 36, 67-8; volume 3, p. 103-4; volume 5, p. 171, 173-75. Charles Bingham (ed.), *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1950), volume 3, p. 391-92. John McNeill (ed.), *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia, 1960), volume 1, p. 611; vol. 2, p. 1241-1248. For Bucer’s views, see: Wilhelm Pauck (ed.), *Melancthon and Bucer* (Philadelphia, 1969), p. 253-54. D.F. Wright (transl. and ed.), *Common Places of Martin Bucer* (Appleford, England, 1972), p. 91, 208-10, 225-26, 265. For Bullinger’s views, see: *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Part 1, The Book of Confessions* (Louisville, 1994), p. 111. Thomas Harding (ed.), *The Decades of Henry Bullinger* (Cambridge, 1849), vol. 1-2, p. 428-34.

Parallels to the homily on fasting, John Foxe, English bible notes discussed above are significant.

CHAPTER III

“A FASTING AND A PRAYING PEOPLE:”¹

MAKING ENGLISH CALVINISTS

Like Christian humanists, Protestants believed Christianity in the West had become too encumbered with external rites to the detriment of internal faith. One then wonders why fasting survived England’s Protestant Reformations. More surprising still is that fasting was central to puritan visions of Reformed religion. Yet, little attention has been given to fasts because scholars that study religious ritual have tended to focus on liturgies and the sacraments. This chapter shows why English Calvinists retained fasts, introduces the language and narratives common to fasts, and demonstrates that fasts created religious self-understandings. Ironically, obsessive concern with discerning genuine inner faith led English Calvinists to retain outward ritual even as they condemned how Roman Catholics practiced it.

English Calvinists retained fasting because they believed it had impeccable biblical basis. God commanded fasts; they were His “ordinance.” The commandment remained as occasions requiring fasts continued and the ends of fasts continued, though Gospel liberty abolished the ceremonial law and thus the set fasts of the Old Testament. They noted that while scripture (especially Luke 18:10-13, John 4:23-4, 1 Timothy 4:8, Romans 14:17, 1 Corinthians 8:8, Matthew 6:2, 6:16, 15:11, and Joel 2:12-13) stressed that the “contrite spirit” and “broken heart” were most important to the Lord and warned

¹ John Stalham, *Vindiciae Redemptionis* (London, 1647), Sig. A2r (Wing S5187). This quote is from Stalham’s dedicatory epistle to his parishioners of Terling, Essex. He affectionately was referring to their godly reputation.

the outer without the inner was “hypocrisy,” it also taught He required to be served both in soul and body because He had made and redeemed both. Yet this view begs the question of why English Calvinists interpreted scripture so. Arguably, fasts filled a gamut of pressing religious concerns and needs, and thus encouraged this reading.

At times, English Calvinists argued that “outward actions” always expressed the “inward affections of the heart.” In particular, fasting, praying, and weeping were the “fruit” or “effect” of faith, and showed that “true sorrow” was in the heart.² Because humans were “natural hypocrites” one who lacked the easier “outward humiliation” could be suspected of lacking the harder “inward repentance.”³ Thus, English Calvinists thought fasts necessary as a “testimony” and “profession” of, and a “witness” to their “inward contrition” and “unfeigned repentance” to the Almighty. Fasting and abstaining from all delights were “tokens” and “outward signs” arguing to God that a people were “unfeignedly humbled” and had recognized their “unworthiness” of His blessings. It showed they were so “inwardly touched” with sorrow for sin, desire for deliverance from damnation, and thirst and hunger for righteousness and salvation, that they had lost all desire for food and drink, and loathed “all worldly things and pleasures.” A fast would “testify” to the Lord their humble submission to Him and that they justly deserved punishment at His hands. Fasting showed God that a people preferred to serve Him before themselves, the “world,” and the “flesh.”⁴

² Griffith Williams, *The True Church* (London, 1629), p. 781 (STC 25721). Richard Field, *Of the Church*, second edition (Oxford, 1628), p. 106 (STC 10858). Robert Wakeman, *Jonahs Sermon, and Ninivehs Repentance* (Oxford, 1606), p. 73-4 (STC 24948). *Certain Sermons or Homilies* (Philadelphia, 1844), part 2, p. 255. William Perkins, *The Works of . . . William Perkins* (London, 1631), volume 2, p. 14 (STC 19653). Andrew Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (London, 1634), p. 756 (STC 25700a.7).

³ Richard Stock, *The Doctrine and Use of Repentance* (London, 1610), p. 66 (STC 23275). Williams, *True Church*, p. 781.

⁴ *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, part 2, p. 249, 255, 471-72. Henry Holland, *The Christian Exercise of Fasting* (London, 1596), p. 12 (STC 13586). Oxford University, Bodleian, MS Rawlinson C597, fol. 144v.

Fasting and other outward expressions of mourning were also necessary demonstrations to a human audience. Fasting prevented giving “offense” to the “weak” who would otherwise think the devout were “hypocrites.” Outward display of humiliation was especially important in “public fasts” so one might be “profitably observed for the example of others.” Such “visible things” would increase humiliation in others, and the lack of them foster the opposite.⁵ So clearly, English Protestants meant fasts to be a drama, a public spectacle in which the English people were not only observers but actors. Finally, the outward was necessary as without fasting “true Christians” might think themselves “carnal Gospellers,” “lip Gospellers,” “profane Gospellers,” or “false Christians.”

While arguing the necessity of fasting, English Calvinists carefully stressed that the “chief part” of a fast was “inward humiliation” and “a contrite and humble heart” not bodily abstinence, “outward gesture,” and “outward ceremony.”⁶ That is, the “true fast” was not the “outward fast” which chastened the body but the “inward fast” which afflicted the soul. The “true fast” was turning from sin, doing good works, fervent

Nicolas Bownde, *The Holy Exercise of Fasting* (Cambridge, 1604), p. 11, 31, 74-9, 112-13 (STC 3438). John Udall, *The True Remedy Against Famine and Warres* (London, [1588]), Sig. 79r (STC 24507). Arthur Hildersam, *The Doctrine of Fasting and Praier* (London, 1633), p. 62 (STC 13459). John Norden, *A Sinfull Mans Solace* (London, 1585), Sig. 77v (STC 18634). John Ayre (ed.), *The Catechism of Thomas Becon* (Cambridge, 1844), p. 529. William Gouge, *The Whole Armour of God* (London, 1639), p. 474 (STC 12110.5). Samuel Gardiner, *The Cognizance of a True Christian, or the Outward Markes Whereby He May Be the Better Knowne* (London, 1597), p. 48 (STC 11573). George Downame, *The Christians Sanctuarie* (London, 1604), p. 7, 13, 20, 23, 29, 32, 42-3, 52 (STC 7113). William Perkins, *The Works of . . . William Perkins* (London, 1631), volume 2, p. 103 (STC 19653). William Perkins, *The Works of . . . William Perkins* (Cambridge, 1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 156-57 (STC19651). Robert Bolton, *The Saints Soule-Exalting Humiliation* (London, 1634), p. 37, 39, 56-57 (STC 3247). William Wilkinson, *The Holie Exercise of a True Fast* (London, 1580), p. 6, 28-9 (STC 25667). William Attersoll, *The Conversion of Ninevah* (London, 1632) in *Three Treatises* (London, 1633), first pagination, p. 42-3, 54 (STC 900.5). Lewis Bayly, *The Practice of Pietie*, 28th edition (London, 1631), p. 497-500 (STC 1609.6). George Abbot, *An Exposition Upon the Prophet Jonah* (London, 1600), p. 457 (STC 34). John Downame, *A Guide to Godlynesse* (London, 1629), p. 665-66, 669, 675 (STC 7144). James Usher, *A Body of Divinitie* (London, 1645), p. 387 (Wing U151).

⁵ *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, part 2, p. 255, 471-72. Downame, *Sanctuarie*, p. 22. George Abbot, *Jonah*, p. 463-64.

⁶ Hildersam, *Fasting*, p. 58. *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, part 2, p. 248-50, 472.

praying, and the “spiritual exercise” of “inward virtues and graces” such as contrition, humiliation, faith, and repentance. Above all, one had to have “sense” and “feeling” of sorrow for sin.⁷ English Calvinists stressed that “outward shows” without “inward contrition” were “hypocritical” and “superstitious.”⁸ Typical of his ilk, in his advice about a fast Alexander Leighton warned “that it be performed with sincerity and singleness of heart, for if it be done in hypocrisy, or perfunctorily slighted over in the performance, it provokes God, and plagues the performer.”⁹ English Calvinists thus obsessed over having “true humiliation,” “sound humiliation,” “true repentance,” and “unfeigned repentance” from “inward and true sorrow for sin.”¹⁰ By contrast, “counterfeit and feigned humiliation” was when one when mourned for sin under judgment but returned to it when out of danger.¹¹ In short, English Calvinists almost came full circle to rejecting outward repentance, but, like magisterial reformers in general, practical considerations moderated their thought, preventing them from following the logic of reform to a totally spiritualized religion.

Perhaps the most important benefit of fasts, which made English Calvinists so enthusiastic about them, was how they aided the conversion of sinners to God. English

⁷ Bolton, *Saints*, p. 37-9, 54-7, 62-4, 158, 161-62, 170, 173-74. George Downname, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 44. *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, part 2, p. 248-50, 254, 261. Bayly, *Practice of Pietie*, p. 500-4. John Downname, *Guide to Godlynesse*, p. 673. George Downname, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 17, 27-33, 44, 56. Bownde, *Holy Exercise*, p. 28.

⁸ Norden, *Sinfull Mans Solace*, Sig. 76v-80r. John Downname, *Guide to Godlynesse*, p. 672.

⁹ Alexander Leighton, *Speculum Belli Sacri, Or the Lookingglasse of the Holy War* (n.p., 1624), p. 208-9 (STC 15432).

¹⁰ Perkins, *Works* (1631), volume 2, p. 15. Adam Harsnet, *Gods Summons Unto a General Repentance* (London, 1640), p. 56, 59, 65-6, 73, 110-12 (STC 12875). Gouge, *Whole Armour*, p. 478-79. Bolton, *Saints*, p. 114. Gardiner, *Cognizance*, p. 48. 87-9) Stock, *Doctrine*, p. 87-9. Wilkinson, *Holie Exercise*, p. 33. Bownde, *Holy Exercise*, p. 37-8, 62-4, 95-7, 138-40, 160-62. James Ussher, *Vox Hibernae or Rather the Voyce of the Lord from Ireland* (London, 1642), title, sig. A2r, sig. B4r (TT, E.132(32)). James Ussher, *A Body of Divinitie* (London, 1645), p. 331-33, 337 (Wing U151). Essex Record Office, MS D/DBa F5/1. Holland, *Christian Exercise*, p. 52-4, 56, 79-81. John King, *Lectures Upon Jonas* (Oxford, 1597), p. 469-71 (STC 14976). George Downname, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 56-8. Hildersam, *Doctrine*, p. 90-1.

¹¹ Harsnet, *Gods Summons*, p. 84, 88-9.

Calvinists believed that “outward humiliation” of the body “helped forward” and “furthered” the “inward humiliation” and “affliction” of the soul.¹² The key obstacles to salvation were “self-love,” “pride,” and “vainglory.” They produced “hard and stony hearts.” They created a false opinion of one’s holiness and good works thereby making one presumptuous of salvation. This “carnal man” was lost in “carnal security” or “senseless security.” Therefore, “humiliation” - realizing ourselves to be vile sinners who were unworthy of mercy, deserving of damnation, and helpless to save our own souls - was an urgent necessity. Humiliation was an important part of repentance, which also included confession of sins, contrition, taking hold of God’s promises of free pardon through Christ, “amendment” or turning from sin, and prayer for mercy. Further, once humble, the heart was open to instruction, receptive to taking the “divine impression” of the Word, just as melted wax took the impression of a seal, or hot iron the impression the blacksmith hammered.¹³

English Calvinists argued that “outward ceremonies” were “extraordinary helps,” “spurs,” and “means” to humiliation as they “stirred up” the affections.¹⁴ They argued that the soul followed the constitution of the body. If the body was humbled, the mind and soul would be too. The soul could not be humbled if the body was “puffed up.” To further humiliation, fasts involved far more than forbearing all food and drink (with due exemptions for the weak, sick, infirm, aged, and children). A fast consisted of less than normal or no sleep so one could “watch and pray,” and the wearing of base, mean,

¹² Attersoll, *Conversion*, first pagination, p. 53. Wilkinson, *Holie Exercise*, p. 13, 26. Bownde, *Holy Exercise*, p. 61-2. Bolton, *Saints*, p. 37, 39, 56-57. Downname, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 7. Hildersam, *Doctrine*, p. 61.

¹³ Thomas Case, *The Morning Exercise Methodized* (London, 1676), p. 369 (Wing C836). Adam Harsnet, *Gods Summons*, p. 65-66, 110-12. Stock, *Doctrine*, p. 159-60.

¹⁴ Daniel Rogers, *Two Treatises* (London, 1640), p. 133-34 (STC 21173). George Abbot, *Jonah*, p. 463-64. Attersoll, *Conversion*, p. 43. Bownde, *Holy Exercise*, p. 7. George Downname, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 17, 20.

simple, or mourning attire. Also, one was to abstain from all of the following: costly or fine attire, the marriage bed, the ordinary labor and works of one's calling, worldly business, recreation, music, sports, pastimes, and any worldly delight or comforts. English Calvinists did not deem the Old Testament practices of sackcloth, ashes, and renting of clothes as necessary because they were part of the ceremonial law which Christ abrogated. The moral duty to humble oneself though remained.

By so "afflicting" the body, the Christian got "a quicker feeling" or "a more thorough sense and feeling" of their deserved punishment for sin and "unworthiness" of blessings.¹⁵ Also, Christians had to remove the "distraction" of worldly things and cares as they were "hinderances" and "impediments" to humiliation and religious duties. They bred "hypocrisy" by removing the heart from worship even as the body was present.¹⁶ Christians could allow no encouragements to "pride" to undermine their mourning and humiliation. All this was especially important because a fast was not "an ordinary and common service of God."¹⁷ In a fast, repentance, humiliation, and prayer had to be "more than ordinary," "extraordinary," and "more special" in order to appease God, avert plagues, and re-gain grace and favor.¹⁸

Also, a fast helped one to acquire "knowledge" of the self as hopelessly sinful and of God as good, gracious, loving, and patient. While the product of free grace, inward humiliation and repentance necessitated work. The Christian had to "labor" and practice "spiritual exercises" to attain this knowledge. The Christian had to wage "spiritual

¹⁵ Bownde, *Holy Exercise*, p. 68, 94. Wilkinson, *Holie Exercise*, p. 26, 28. John Downname, *Guide to Godlynesse*, p. 671.

¹⁶ George Downname, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 23-4. Bolton, *Saints*, p. 56-7.

¹⁷ Bownde, *Holy Exercise*, p. 169.

¹⁸ Udall, *True Remedie*, Sig. 82r. *A Survey of the Book of Common Prayer* (Middelburgh, 1606), p. 156 (STC 16450). Downname, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 12-14, 24.

combat” or “spiritual warfare” as a “soldier” donning “spiritual armor” and use these exercises as “spiritual weapons.” Each Christian had to be his own “physician” and use the “spiritual medicine” or “spiritual physick” of fasting to heal the soul and cure its “diseases” by repelling or killing sin.¹⁹ By contrast, “sloth” and “idleness” weakened the “spirit” and strengthened the “flesh” making one vulnerable to sin and Satan.

In the “holy exercise” of a fast, one was to engage in intense self-examination, meditation, holy conference, prayer, and hearing and reading the Word.²⁰ One was to “search” and “examine” one’s heart and the nation in light of the Ten Commandments to “catalogue” and confess the general “sins of the land” and one’s own particular sins.²¹ One was to find out the “Achan” or “excommunicate thing” which made God withhold blessings and send judgments.²² In other words, one was to find “the causes of God’s hiding His face from His people.”²³ With scripture as a guide, one was to meditate not only on offending sins but on God’s justice, His wrath and judgments for sin, “unthankfulness” for blessings and mercies (including Christ’s sacrifice), breaking one’s baptismal covenant, breaking vows to renew it and to forsake particular sins, returning to the same sin after repentance, sinning willfully, and how one’s sin corrupted others. Such “quickening matter” would foster “inward sorrow,” “bleeding of the soul,” “a soft and tender heart,” “a broken and a contrite spirit,” and “feeling sense” of sin and our

¹⁹ James Godskall, *The Kings Medecine for this Present Year 1604* (London, [1604]), “to the mayor, aldermen, sheriffs of London,” sig. B5v-6r (STC 11936). Henoah Clapham, *An Epistle Discoursing Upon the Present Pestilence*, second edition, (London, 1603), p. 9 (STC 5340). Daniel Featley, *Ancilla Pietatis: Or, The Hand-Maid to Private Devotion*, fourth edition (London, 1630), p. 611 (STC 10727).

²⁰ Bownde, *Holy Exercise*, title. Wilkinson, *Holie Exercise*, title.

²¹ Bolton, *Saints*, p. 83-4, 114, 140. Robin Jeffs (ed.), *The English Revolution I: Fast Sermons to Parliament* (London, 1971), volume 18, p. 51-2. BL, Add MS 38,492 (55), fol. 98. Guildhall Library, MS 204, p. 402

²² Robert Jenison, *Newcastles Call, to Her Neighbor and Sister Towns and Cities* (London, 1637), p. 105-6 (STC 14492). Leighton, *Speculum Belli*, p. 208, 278 (STC 15432). Hildersam, *Doctrine*, p. 69, 137. Holland, *Christian Exercise*, p. 39-40.

²³ Matthew Lee (ed.), *Diaries and Letters of Philip Henry* (London, 1882), p. 58.

“unworthiness.”²⁴ Hearts would “melt” and be “rent” and “pricked” leading to accusing and judging oneself. By contrast, not to sorrow when God smited was “a sign of an hard and incorrigible heart.”²⁵ However, a fast also was to give hope. One was to meditate not only on the “curses” of the Law, but on the “gracious promises” of the Gospel so as to find comfort and increase fervency in prayer.²⁶ Thomas Swadlin, for example, claimed his fasting brought him “joy in the Holy Ghost.”²⁷ Fasts thus ended up in a balance between conveying fear of God’s justice in judgments to avoid presumption, and hope in His promises of mercy to avoid despair.

More specifically, fasting aided sanctification’s two parts: “mortification” and “vivification.” Mortification was overcoming the tyranny of original sin. It “crucified,” “bridled,” “beat down,” and “tamed” the “flesh,” bringing it into obedience to the “spirit.” As fasting made the body weak, the spirit would grow stronger and could “more freely attend on God.”²⁸ Fasting also was valuable in religious duties as it made mental faculties stronger, quicker, sharper, and clearer. Protestant reformers here retained the traditional pre-Reformation view of the body as a locus of unruly passions and humors which led the soul to sin and created disorder. They retained the assumption that God intended a superior, rational faculty to control the sensual body and emotions which fostered sin. Also, reformers retained traditional humoral theory according to which changes in season, temperature, diet, and numerous other things easily unbalanced the body. Finally, fasting aided sanctification as mortification made the body a more suitable

²⁴ Bolton, *Saints*, p. 62-4, 83-4, 114, 140. Bownde, *Holy Exercise*, p. 73.

²⁵ George Downname, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 33.

²⁶ Bownde, *Holy Exercise*, p. 62-4, 97-8, 133-34. George Downname, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 39-40.

²⁷ T.S. [Thomas Swadlin], *Sermons, Meditations, and Prayers Upon the Plague. 1636* (London, 1637), p. 215 (STC 23509).

²⁸ Ayre (ed.), *Catechism of Thomas Becon*, p. 543-45.

temple for the Holy Ghost and dwelling place for the regenerate soul. Fasts also aided “vivification” or new regenerate life as having Christ in the heart led to holiness. A fast was a “spiritual feast” where the Word as “spiritual food” nourished the soul.²⁹ In terms of self-understanding, English Calvinists believed themselves in fasts to be killing the “old man” and creating the “new man.”

All these effects of fasts were most important to English Calvinists as a “help” to “extraordinary prayer” which was the “most principal end” of a fast.³⁰ After all, the Lord’s “extraordinary” judgments had to be matched by “extraordinary exercises of fasting and prayer.”³¹ What made this “a special or peerless kind of prayer” was its greater length, “strength,” “fervency,” and “zeal.”³² The fast of Ninevah was paradigmatic. In Jonah 3:8, the Ninevites “cry mightily,” that is from the heart and spirit, so God would hear their prayer. Thus, the Westminster Assembly of Divines in 1644 advised that prayers at public fasts be “with more special importunity and enlargement than at other times.” The Assembly also advised ministers to craft prayers so the people would be “much affected, and even melted thereby.”³³ In general, English Calvinists held that Christians had to be “very sensible” of and “deeply affected” with sin under the hand of God. Worse judgments would result if in the midst of divine wrath, prayers were “cold,” “formal,” “perfunctory,” “drowsy,” or “sleepy.” To have “unaffectedness” and

²⁹ Thomas Lewis (ed.), *Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley* (Camden Society, 1854) old series, volume 58, p. 94. John Downname, *The Conflict Betweene the Flesh and the Spirit* (London, 1618), p. 385-86 (STC 7139). Gardiner, *Cognizance*, p. 62.

³⁰ George Downname, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 43. Holland, *Christian Exercise*, p. 665-66, 669, 671. Ussher, *Body of Divinitie*, p. 383-84. John Downname, *Conflict*, p. 381. Thomas Cartwright, *A Confutation of the Rhemists Translation* (London, 1618), p. 45 (STC 4709). Gouge, *Whole Armour*, p. 454, 462, 473-74, 478, 485. Hildersam, *Doctrine*, p. 49, 62. John Gauden, *Ecclesia Anglicanae Suspiria* (London, 1659), p. 618 (Wing G359). Leighton, *Speculum Belli*, p. 204-5. Bolton, *Saints*, p. 36-7.

³¹ Claire Cross (ed.), *The Letters of Sir Francis Hastings 1574-1609* (Somerset Record Society, vol. lxxix, 1969, p. 43

³² Wilkinson, *Holie Exercise*, p. 34. Bolton, *Saints*, p. 171.

³³ Oxford University, Bodleian, Tanner MS 61 (88), fol. 210r.

“senselessness” under God’s judgments was contemptuous of Him. Inadequate “ardency of affection” and “life” in prayer was evidence of a people being “hypocrites.” Such only acted “formally” and “ceremonially” with “a bare and cold profession of religion” and “superficial fasting.”³⁴

As a “help” to “inward humiliation,” fasting was a critical weapon against “deadness,” “dullness,” and “hardness of heart.” It made one “lively and fresh” and thus “fit” to pray. By contrast, fullness made one “unfit” for prayer as one became “dull,” “heavy,” “drowsy,” and “sleepy.” Fasting would “lift up” or “elevate and carry up” the mind to God by removing focus from earthly things.³⁵ Bodily hunger and thirst “sharpeneth the spiritual hunger and thirst of the soul” to produce “extraordinary fervency.”³⁶ Fasting was like “a whetstone to sharpen our dull spirits, and to set an edge upon our blunt hearts.”³⁷ Thus fasting helped one to pray with “more feeling affection” as it would “quicken” the spirit. When one felt the “spirit of prayer” to “wax faint,” fasting would help to “stir up” the heart to it. With “lively faith,” prayer would be “fervent,” “vehement,” “effectual,” “forcible,” “powerful,” and “earnest.” Such prayer was “extraordinarily powerful.”³⁸ Fasting gave the tool of prayer an “edge” and made it “sharper” so it cut better.³⁹ Fasting was to prayer “as feathers to the arrow” making it to

³⁴ Ussher, *Vox Hibernae*, title, sig. A2r, sig. B4r.

³⁵ Gouge, *Whole Armour*, p. 462, 475-77. Attersoll, *Conversion*, p. 42-4, 53, 55. Bownde, *Holy Exercise*, p. 28-36, 58-63, 68, 94, 101, 111-12. Wilkinson, *Holie Exercise*, p. 13, 24-8, 35, 58, 61 Bolton, *Saints*, p. 56-7, 60. George Downname, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 3, 7, 20, 28-9. King, *Jonas*, p. 465, 469-71. Perkins, *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 157. Perkins, *Works* (1631), volume 2, p. 103. Gardiner, *Cognizance*, p. 48-51, 59. John Downname, *The Summe of Sacred Divinity* (London, [1625?]), p. 167 (STC 7148.3). John Downname, *Conflict*, p. 381. Bayly, *Practice of Pietie*, p. 492, 515. Holland, *Christian Exercise*, p. 13.

³⁶ George Downname, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 13, 20. John Downname, *Guide to Godlynesse*, p. 675. Bolton, *Saints*, p. 37.

³⁷ Bownde, *Holy Exercise*, p. 239.

³⁸ Gouge, *Whole Armour*, p. 454, 462, 473-74, 478.

³⁹ Bownde, *Holy Exercise*, p. 112, 239. Field, *Of the Church*, p. 106. Samuel Torshell, *The Saints Humiliation* (London, 1633), p. 11-12 (STC 24142).

fly farther and more accurately to its target.⁴⁰ English Calvinists loved to cite Augustine, Basil, and Chrysostome that fasting and alms gave prayer “wings” to fly to God.⁴¹ They often cited Matthew 17:21 to argue that fasting and prayer was such a “potent combination” it could drive out the strongest devil from a person.⁴²

⁴⁰ John Brinsley, *The Healing of Israels Breaches* (London, 1642), p. 75 (Thomason Tracts, E.119[14]).

⁴¹ George Abbot, *Jonah*, p. 454-55. Daniel Featley, *Clavis Mystica* (London, 1636), p. 890 (STC 10730). John Ayre (ed.), *The Early Works of Thomas Becon* (Cambridge, 1843), p. 163. Gardiner, *Cognizance*, p. 108. Holland, *Christian Exercise*, p. 1. Downname, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 39. G. Williams, *True Church*, p. 774. Henry Scudder, *The Christian's Daily Walke in Holy Security and Peace*, seventh edition (London, 1637), p. 70 (STC 22120). Wilkinson, *Holie Exercise*, p. 34-5. Bolton, *Saints*, p. 171.

⁴² Holland, *Christian Exercise*, p. 27. John Ley, *A Patterne of Pietie* (London, 1640), p. 78 (STC 15567). For the general source material to pages 1-11, see: Bolton, *Saints*, p. 8, 32-3, 36-9, 54-8, 64-142, 158, 161-62, 170-71, 173-74. Bownd, *Holy Exercise*, p. 1-2, 7, 10-11, 18-36, 39-40, 45-6, 48, 50-2, 56-63, 66-8, 70-9, 82, 85-94, 99-101, 108-13, 133-34, 138, 140-41, 158-59, 162, 169, 174, 208-9, 239, 258-60, 353-61. Attersoll, *Conversion*, first pagination, p. 42-4, 49-50, 53-5, 59, 102-4, 108-9. Bayly, *Practice of Pietie*, p. 492, 494-504, 515. John Downname, *Guide to Godlynesse*, p. 362-63, 583-84, 665-66, 669-73, 675 (STC 7144). John Downname, *Conflict*, p. 328, 333, 342-51, 381, 383-86, 391. John Downname, *The Christian Warfare* (London, 1604), p. 1, 7-8, 539-41, 602-8 (STC 7133). John Downname, *Summe*, p. 167. Ussher, *Body of Divinitie*, p. 331-33, 337, 349, 383-84, 386-88. Ussher, *Vox Hibernae*, title, sig. A2r, sig. B4r. George Abbot, *Jonah*, p. 434-36, 454-55, 457, 462-64, 473-75 (STC 34). King, *Jonas*, p. 464-66, 469-71, 490, 499-500. Griffith Williams, *True Church*, p. 773-75, 781. Thomas Morton, *A Catholicke Appeale for Protestants* (London, 1609), p. 306, 310 (STC 18176). Featley, *Ancilla Pietatis*, p. 611, 708. Featley, *Clavis Mystica*, p. 890. Thomas Fuller, *Abel Redevivus* (London, 1652), p. 589 (Wing F2401). Stock, *Doctrine*, p. 1, 41-67, 71-3, 86, 104, 113, 159-60, 308-24. T.S. [Thomas Swadlin], *Sermons*, p. 208-10, 212, 214-15. Gouge, *Whole Armou*, p. 454-57, 462-67, 473-79. William Gouge, *Gods Three Arrowes* (London, 1636), p. 8-9, 13-14, 154, 171-72 (STC 12116.5). Gardiner, *Cognizance*, Sig. A2-A3, p. 28, 32-3, 42, 47-50, 55, 58-9, 62, 108. George Downname, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 1, 3-4, 6-9, 11-14, 17-36, 38-9, 41-4, 52, 55. Wilkinson, *Holie Exercise*, p. 6-15, 17, 21-9, 34-5, 84-6. Hildersam, *Doctrine*, p. 4-9, 45, 49-50, 55-8, 61-2, 65-6, 72-5, 115-16, 119-27. Holland, *Christian Exercise*, p. 1, 9, 12-13, 19, 22, 27-30, 52-4, 56, 79-81. Perkins, *Works* (1631), volume 2, p. 14-15, 102-3. Perkins, *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 156-57, 160, 162; second pagination, p. 274-75, 301-2, 485-86. William Perkins, *The Works of . . . William Perkins* (London, 1626), volume 1, p. 41 (STC 19652). William Perkins, *A Reformed Catholicke* (London, 1611), p. 197, 200 (STC 19738). Cartwright, *Confutation*, p. 45, 169-70. Daniel Rogers, *Two Treatises*, p. 133-34. Cambridge University Library, Add MS 3117, fol. 63r-v. Oxford University, Bodleian, MS Rawlinson C597, fol. 143v, 144v. Oxford University, Bodleian, Tanner MS 61 (88), fol. 210r. Oxford University, Worcester College, AA.8.3 (127). BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 93v, 131r. Essex Record Office, MS D/DBa F5/1. Udall, *True Remedie*, Sig. 79r, 81v-82r. Leighton, *Speculum Belli*, p. 208-9, 278. Clapham, *Epistle*, p. 9. Scudder, *Christian's Daily Walke*, p. 69-70, 72, 84-128. John Brinsley, *The True Watch and Rule of Life* (London, 1637), p. 18-122 (STC 3785). Brinsley, *Healing*, p. 75. Ayre (ed.), *Early Works of Thomas Becon*, p. 163. Ayre (ed.), *Catechism of Thomas Becon*, p. 529, 532, 542-48. Norden, *Sinfull Mans Solace*, Sig. 76v-80r. Christopher Shutte, *A Compendious Form and Summe of Christian Doctrine* (London, 1579), Sig. e1v-2r (STC 22468). Richard Allestree, *The Practice of Christian Graces, or, The Whole Duty of Man* (London, 1660), p. 133 (Wing A1160). Samuel Bird, *A Friendlie Communication or Dialogue Between Paule and Demas* (London, 1580), Sig. 6r (STC 3086). *A Survey of the Book of Common Prayer* (Middelburgh, 1606), p. 156 (STC 16450). *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, part 2, p. 248-55, 260-61, 459-66, 471-72, 477-83. Torshell, *Saints Humiliation*, p. 4-6, 11-12, 105-9, 113. Case, *Morning Exercise*, p. 364-84. Adam Harsnet, *Gods Summons Unto a General Repentance* (London, 1640), p. 56, 59, 65-6, 73, 79-80, 84, 88-90, 95, 97-100, 103, 106-7, 110-112, 115 (STC 12875). Robert Wakeman, *Jonahs Sermon, and Ninevahs Repentance* (Oxford, 1606), p. 74 (STC

For English Calvinists the mirror opposite of the “true fast” was the Roman Catholic fast. They portrayed Catholics as “hypocrites” because they lacked an “inward conscience” established on “an understanding knowledge” and “sincere faith” that Christ was our redeemer, and put all religion in “superstitious ceremonies,” “outward ceremony,” and “external exercises.” To place “holiness” and “religion” in the “outward work” of fasts was “superstition.” Because their fasts were “merely external” and the “bare performing of outward things,” they were just “popish dumb pageants” and “hypocritical pretences.”⁴³ So in counterpoint to “right fasting” and the “religious fast,” English Calvinists spoke of Catholic’s “counterfeit fast,” “popish fast,” “popish pharisaical fast,” “popish superstitious fast,” “heretical fast,” and “popish mock-fasts.”⁴⁴

24948). Robert Jenison, *Newcastles Call, to Her Neighbor and Sister Towns and Cities* (London, 1637), p. 105-6 (STC 14492). Edward Topsell, *Times Lamentation. Or an Exposition on the Prophet Joel* (London, 1613), p. 279 (STC 24132). Godskall, *Kings Medecine*, sig. A3r-8r, B3v-6r. Ley, *Patterne of Pietie*, p. 76-8. John Owen, *A Sermon Preached to the Parliament, Octob. 13. 1652. A Day of Solemn Humiliation* (Oxford, 1652), p. 32-3 (Thomason Tracts, E.678[28]). *Mercurius Politicus, Thursday September 10 – Thursday September 17, 1657* (Thomason Tracts, E.505[22], p. 1623. *Die Mercurii, 19 July, 1643.* (Thomason Tracts, 669.f.7[30] (at 44 on microfilm). *Thursday the Tenth of September, 1657. At the Council at White-hall* (London, 1657)(Thomason Tracts, 669.f.20[68]). *By the Protector. A Declaration of His Highness the Lord Protector, for a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation* (London, 1658)(Wing C 7072). Edward Maunde Thompson (transcription), *The Minutes of the Sessions of the Assembly of Divines from August 4, 1643 to April 24, 1652* (1868-69), volume 2, p. 118. William Shaw (ed.), *Minutes of the Manchester Presbyterian Classis* (Chetham Society, 1891), volume 22, part 2, p. 152, 154. Robin Jeffs (ed.), *The English Revolution I: Fast Sermons to Parliament* (London, 1971), volume 18, p. 51-2. John Birchall, *The Non-Pareil* (York, 1644), p. 14 (Wing B2940). Thomas Lewis (ed.), *Harley*, p. 94. Matthew Storey (ed.), *Two East Anglian Diaries* (Suffolk Records Society, vol. 36, 1994), p. 93. James Halliwell (ed.), *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds D’Ewes* (London, 1845), vol. 1, p. 353. Matthew Lee (ed.), *Philip Henry*, p. 58. John Rushworth, *Historical Collections* (London, 1721), volume 6, part 1, p. 1069. Cross (ed.), *Hastings*, p. 43.

⁴³ Abbot, *Jonah*, p. 437-38, 457, 478. John Woolton, *The Christian Manuell* (London, 1576), p. 39-40 (STC 25976). Torshell, *Saints Humiliation*, p. 5-6, 9-10, 13-15. Bolton, *Saints*, p. 39-40, 46. George Downame, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 60-1. Daniel Rogers, *Two Treatises*, p. 134. Bownde, *Holy Exercise*, p. 41-5. Richard Field, *Of the Church*, p. 106-8.

⁴⁴ John Gere, *The Character of an Old English Puritan or Non-conformist* (London, 1646), p. 3 (Wing G589). Warwick Record Office, CR 136/A4, p. 84-5. Cartwright, *Confutation*, p. 18. Attersoll, *Ninevah*, p. 100. Perkins, *Works* (1626), volume 1, p. 528. Perkins, *Works* (1631), volume 2, p. 102, 104. George Downame, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 28, 60-1, 63. Bownde, *Holy Exercise*, p. 41-5. John Downame, *Conflict*, p. 381. Willet, *Synopsis Papismi*, p. 1058-1061. Robert Abbot, *A Defence of the Reformed Catholicke of M.W. Perkins* (London, 1606), p. 65-6, 142-47 (STC 48). Wilkinson, *Holie Exercise*, p. 17-20. Torshell, *Saints Humiliation*, p. 5-6, 9-10, 13-15. Bolton, *Saints*, p. 39-40, 46. Gardiner, *Cognizance*, p. 18-21, 44-6. Gouge, *Whole Armour*, p. 461-62.

Additionally, according to scripture (1 Timothy 4:1-5, Matthew 15:11, 1 Corinthians 10:25, and Collosians 2:16, 20) their distinction of foods “for religion and conscience sake” was the “doctrine of devils” and “popish tyranny” which denied “Christian liberty.”⁴⁵ It was “will worship” putting Christians in “great bondage” under the “commandments and doctrines of men.” Catholics made it a “deadly sin” to eat flesh or eggs on fasts, which was a matter of “policy” not “divinity,” of “law civil or political” not “divine law.”⁴⁶ They made it a mortal sin not to fast saint’ vigils, Ember days, and other times appointed by the pope. They made fasting “satisfactory” for sin and “meritorious” as a good work, rather than relying on “God’s free mercy only.” Such doctrine showed that the pope was “Antichrist,” and the Church of Rome “the synagogue of Antichrist” and “the whore of Babylon.” Moreover, their fasts were not from all food and drink, and either ended early in the morning or afternoon. Catholics were “epicures” who gorged on permitted fine and delicate foods, ale, and wine in fasts, and on all food before and after.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ William Hinde, *A Faithful Remonstrance of the Holy Life and Happy Death, of John Bruen* (London, 1641), p. 16-18 (Wing H2063). Philip Stubbes, *A Motive to Good Workes* (London, 1593), p. 167-70 (STC 23397). Friedrich van Hulsins, *The Character of a Christian: As He is Distinguished From All Hypocrits and Hereticks* (London, 1627), p. 259-60, 386-92 (STC 5151). Bolton, *Saints*, p. 40-1, 45-46, 58. George Downame, *Christians Sanctuarie*, p. 63. Perkins, *Works* (1631), volume 2, p. 102, 104. Perkins, *Works* (1618), vome 3, first pagination, p. 159, 162. John Downame, *Conflict*, p. 381. Matthew Sutcliffe, *An Abridgement or Survey of Popery* (London, 1606 [?]), p.65, 213-14, 310 (STC 23448). Willet, *Synopsis Papismi*, p. 1058-61. Gouge, *Whole Armour*, p. 461-62. Perkins, *Reformed Catholicke*, p. 200-4. Ayre (ed.), *Catechism of Thomas Becon*, p. 533-35, 542. Torshell, *Saints Humiliation*, p. 5-6, 9-10, 13-15. Gardiner, *Cognizance*, p. 18-21, 44-6.

⁴⁶ Hulsins, *Character of a Christian*, p. 259-60, 386-92. Stubbes, *Motive to Good Workes*, p. 167-70.

⁴⁷ For sources for English Protestant anti-Catholic views p. 12-14, see: D. Rogers, *Treatises*, p. 134. Cartwright, *Confutation*, p. 18. Perkins, *Reformed*, p. 200-4. Perkins, *Works* (1631), volume 2, p. 102, 104, 513; *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 159, 162; *Works* (1626), volume 1, p. 528. John Ayre (ed.), *Catechism*, p. 533-36, 542. Gardiner, *Cognizance*, p. 18-21, 44-6. G. Abbot, *Jonah*, p. 437-38, 455-57, 478. Wakeman, *Jonahs*, p. 74. Attersoll, *Ninevah*, first pagination, p. 100. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 39-41, 45-46, 58. G. Downame, *Sanctuarie*, p. 26, 28, 60-1, 63. Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 41-5, 59-60, 83-5, 196. *Homilies*, part 1, p. 47-54; part 2, p. 248-53, 471. J. Downame, *Conflict*, p. 381. Morton, *Appeale*, p. 306-11. Wilkinson, *Fast*, p. 17-20, 31. Holland, *Fasting*, p. 94-6, 99-100, 104-8. Gouge, *Armour*, p. 461-62. Torshell, *Humiliation*, p. 5-6, 9-10, 13-15. Hinde, *Faithful Remonstrance*, p. 16-18. Stubbes, *Motive to Good Workes*, p. 167-70. Hulsins, *Character of a Christian*, p. 259-60, 386-92. Gere, *Character*, p. 3.

One of the most concise caricatures of Catholics is found in the play *The Life of Sir John Old-Castle, the Good Lord Cobham* (1600). In the time of Henry V, Harpool, a servant to the Wycliffite Lord Cobham, affirmed to the Catholic Bishop of Rochester:

“I am neither heretic nor puritan, but of the old church: I’ll swear, drink ale, kiss a wench, go to mass, eat fish all Lent, and fast Fridays with cakes and wine, fruit and spicery, shrive me of my old sins afore Easter, and begin new afore Whitsuntide.”⁴⁸

The Catholic “other” was an influential image. Sir Simonds D’Ewes observed public fasts, but Thursday, February 15, 1627 was the first day he spent in private fasting and prayer “having always before declined it by reason of papists’ superstitious abuse of it.”⁴⁹

A few additional aspects of fasts at the center of English Calvinists’ inner/outer problem deserve special attention. English Calvinists cherished manifest emotional outpourings as proof of the “affections” vital to fasts. In a fast, Christians had to “labor” to have “more tender affections and deeper humiliation then ordinary.” English Calvinists believed that “the intenseness of our sorrow” was a “witness” to “the unfeignedness of our humiliation.” Thus, John Shawe argued that fasting days were to be “weeping days.” The numerous biblical examples of “God’s people” weeping profusely or having “loud crying” in fasts were paradigmatic. So above all, “abundance of tears” or “abundant weeping” was important as they “outwardly testified” or “witnessed and signified” that Christians “inwardly sorrowed” and had “unfeigned repentance.” Tears

Woolton, *Christian Manuell*, Sig. Diiiiir-v. Warwick Record Office, CR 136/A4, p. 84-5. George Buddle, *A Short and Plaine Discourse* (London, 1609), p. 41, 45, 51, 53, 60-1 (STC 4014). BL, Add MS 4933A, fol. 73. Sutcliffe, *Abridgement*, p. 10, 58-9, 62, 65, 91, 130, 143, 203, 205-6, 213-14, 243, 298, 310. Matthew Sutcliffe, *A Challenge Concerning the Romish Church* (London, 1602), first pagination, p. 12, 57, 58-9, 67, 114, 116-17, 122, 124, 129, 131, 140-41; second pagination, p. 20-3 (STC 23454). John White, *The Way to the True Church* (London, 1608), p. 223-25 (STC 25394). Willet, *Synopsis Papismi*, p. 1058-64, 1193-94. Robert Abbot, *Defence of the Reformed Catholicke*, p. 34, 64-6, 142-47. William Ames, *The Workes of the Reverend and Faithful Minister of Christ William Ames* (London, 1643), book four, p. 47-8 (Wing A2993). Field, *Of the Church*, p. 106-8.

⁴⁸ C.F. Tucker Brooke (ed.), *The Shakespeare Apocrypha* (Oxford, 1967), “Life of Sir John Old-Castle, the Good Lord Cobham,” p. 153 (act 4, scene 3).

⁴⁹ Halliwell (ed.), *D’Ewes*, vol. 1, p. 352-53.

were “the most usual signs of earnest and ardent prayer” as they arose from “compunction of heart for sin committed against God.” Therefore, they were “powerful with God.” Arthur Hildersam claimed God took such “precious account” of tears that He could respect them more than words in prayer. William Gouge noted from Psalm 56:8 that God kept the tears of “saints” in a bottle. William Perkins though counseled that having tears in humiliation was “commendable” but not absolutely necessary, and that one could have “true humiliation” without them.⁵⁰

Surprisingly, English Calvinists deemed music important to attaining the proper emotional state in fasts. While they rejected most music as counter-productive to humiliation and inappropriate to fasts, singing psalms remained central. For example, the Westminster Assembly of Divines advised in 1644 that “fit” psalms be sung at public fasts “to quicken affections suitable to such a duty.” To ensure the music was not pleasant, they urged that the singing of psalms be “tuneably and gravely ordered.” Also, ever making music to serve the Word, their exhortation was that the chief care be to sing “with understanding, and with grace in the heart, making melody unto the Lord.”⁵¹

Also surprising, given their shrill criticism of Roman Catholic practice, English Calvinists including John Downname, James Ussher, Arthur Hildersam, William Perkins, Robert Bolton, John Gauden, and William Gouge emphasized “fit gestures” or “comely gestures” as integral to “extraordinary prayers.” As we saw before, the common

⁵⁰ Guildhall Library, MS 204, p. 306. John Shawe, *The Three Kingdomes Case* (London, 1646), p. 27 (Thomason Tracts, E.330[1]). Torshell, *Humiliation*, p. 105-9. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 34-5. Attersoll, *Ninevah*, first pagination, p. 53. Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 70-2. Hildersam, *Fasting*, p. 73, 75. Holland, *Fasting*, p. 52-4, 79-81. Perkins, *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 162; *Works* (1631), volume 2, p. 15. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 158. Gouge, *Armour*, p. 455-57. J. Downname, *Conflict*, p. 277. Scudder, *Daily Walke*, p. 140.

⁵¹ Oxford University, Bodleian, Tanner MS 61 (88), fol. 210r, 211r.

justification was that God was to be worshipped with body and soul. More specifically, certain gestures suited “extraordinary and greater humiliation” as a means to “stir up,” “help,” “increase,” and “further” the all important “godly sorrow,” “inward humility” and “fervency.” Gestures were the “hand-maids” of the mind, spirit, and heart, and “quicken” them. English Calvinists also justified gesture in prayer from biblical exemplars. They sought to imitate “God’s saints” by standing, bowing, kneeling, uncovering the head, lifting up eyes and hands to heaven, spreading the arms abroad, laying prostrate on the ground, casting down of eyes, smiting the breast, wringing hands, unusual moving of the lips, weeping, and having “deep sighs and groans” (as in Psalm 38:9, Romans 8:26, and Ezekiel 9:4). In addition to tears and the above, William Gouge added other “signs of extraordinary ardency” as one’s “inward heat” broke forth in “extraordinary prayer.” They included “extraordinary distemper of body” (sweating blood and a sad countenance), and “often repeating and inculcating the same petition.”

As with other outward aspects of fasts, English Calvinists believed that “a true fast rightly celebrated” required “outward gesture” as it “declared,” “testified,” and “manifested” faith, fervency, reverence, thankfulness, shame, unworthiness, sorrow, repentance and “the inward humility of the heart.” John Downname argued such was critical “in respect of that glorious presence before which we present our souls and bodies.” To honor God, “inward devotion” had to be manifested by “the outward disposition of body.” Gesture also was a means to edify other Christians and make them “like-minded” and join in prayer. For example, James Ussher argued that in public “extraordinary prayers” that “open shew” of affections including gestures was mutually edifying. He argued that in a public fast sorrow was “to be declared openly to the view

of all.” In contrast, in a private fast the more secrecy one had of grief, the more proof one had of sincerity. From Matthew 6:16-17 he warned of “hypocrites” who made public display of their private fasting for human praise. Others of course also warned that even in public fasts “the inward affection and disposition of the heart” had to match gesture or else they were mere “hypocritical shews.”⁵² Paradoxically then, display verified inner genuineness in public fasts but invalidated it in private ones.

Such was the concern English Calvinists had to have “true humiliation” in fasts, that they took great care to “prepare” for them. For example, December 27, 1644 the Westminster Assembly of Divines advised parliament to call on each family and person before public fasts privately and carefully “to prepare their hearts to such a solemn work.” In June, 1625 parliamentary debates, Serjeant Ashley called for a delay of the fast on the grounds that “extraordinary humiliation” required “extraordinary preparation.” One of the June, 1644 charges against Nicholas Coleman, the Royalist rector of Preston in Suffolk, was that he not only failed to give notice of fast days to parishioners, but that he also did not “excite or stir them up to prepare their hearts for the solemn duties of those fast days.” An April, 1644 charge against William Walker, the Royalist vicar of Winston, Suffolk claimed that he had “played at tables all night before the fast about a year since.” Brilliana Harley in July and December 1640 hoped God would “fit” her family for fasts. Also, Samuel Rogers on May 16, 1636 and October 13, 1636

⁵² J. Downname, *Guide*, p. 209-10, 230, 232, 555-56. Ussher, *Body*, p. 382, 385-86. Hildersam, *Fasting*, p. 51-2. Perkins, *Works* (1631), volume 2, p. 67; *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 158-59; second pagination, p. 130, 255. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 163. Gouge, p. 33, 233-35, 222-24. Gouge, *Armour*, p. 455-57. John Gauden, *Ecclesia Anglicanae Suspiria* (London, 1659), p. 618 (Wing G359). Downname, *Conflict*, p. 277. Scudder, *Daily Walke*, p. 140.

respectively prayed to be “fit” for, and for God to “prepare” his soul for, fasts the days following.⁵³

English Calvinists believed individuals and assemblies had to be “sanctified” in fasts with spiritual exercises preparing them for worship beforehand. Concern for “preparation” stemmed from the notion that while God was present everywhere, humans in a manner came into His immediate presence in fasts. For example, John Brinsley had concern for “preparation” before fasts because by a “grievous visitation” God “seems to summon us by death to appear before Him, to give an account of our stewardship.” Further, “the Lord will be sanctified in all them that come near unto Him in any such special manner, threatening to cut him off that approacheth in his uncleanness.”⁵⁴

Tellingly, contemporaries described a fast as being humbled “before Almighty God,” “before God,” “before the Lord,” “before His footstool,” “before the Judge,” “before the judgment seat of the Lord,” “before the high throne of God’s judgment,” “lying prostrate before His Majesty,” “cast down at His feet,” “before the throne of grace,” and “before the throne of His Majesty.” Also, in calling on people to keep the public fasts of 1625 properly, William Gouge warned: “Prepare to meet thy God O England.” Another favorite metaphor was that those who sought to be “reconciled” to God in a fast appeared before Him like a prisoner arraigned before a judge who confessed guilt of crimes and petitioned for compassion and mercy. Christians were like prisoners standing “at the barre of God’s tribunal.” In fasts, Christians were “to meet the Lord by repentance,” and “approach the throne of grace” confident in Christ’s satisfaction for our

⁵³ Oxford University, Bodleian, Tanner MS 61 (88), fol. 210r. Maija Jansson and William Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625* (New Haven, CT, 1987), p. 239. Clive Holmes (ed.), *The Suffolk Committees for Scandalous Ministers 1644-1646* (Suffolk Records Society, vol. 13, 1970), p. 55, 57. Lewis (ed.), *Letters*, p. 99, 104. Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 119, 168.

⁵⁴ Holland, *Fasting*, p. 60, 65-66. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 56. Brinsley, *Watch*, p. 18-19.

sins. In fasts, Christians came into “the presence of God” or “the presence of our Lord and sovereign.” Often, the godly would say that by fasting we “meet with the Lord” or “meet our God.” Also, a fast with “extraordinary prayer and humiliation” was a means of “drawing near to God.” Alternatively, God would not “draw near” to us until we were humbled.⁵⁵

This language was not just common in print literature but in manuscript diaries. On Wednesday, December 17, 1634 Samuel Rogers wrote that with others he had fasted and prayed, and that “the Lord denied audience but I will trust in the Lord my strong encouragement.” On October 13, 1636, the eve of a fast, Rogers prayed God would “meet us in the ordinance.” He was not disappointed as on the fast he noted that the Lord “drew near.” Likewise, Philip Henry noted of an October 10, 1661 family fast that “the Lord was with us.”⁵⁶ All these phrasings were not merely rhetorical. They aided edification by giving a concrete image to help people understand the state of their invisible spiritual relationship to God. Also, the godly believed that in fasts the Holy Spirit was entering their hearts to give grace. They thought repentance facilitated this union by removing the sins that had separated them from God. The Lord had cut off grace and withdrawn from them due to their sin to try to get them to repent.

⁵⁵ James Larkin (ed.), *Stuart Royal Proclamations* (Oxford, 1983), vol. 2, p. 193, 221, 714, 735, 759. Cross (ed.), *Hastings*, p. 43-44. D. Rogers, *Treatises*, p. 134. John Knewstubb, *A Confutation of Monstrous and Horrible Heresies* (London, 1579), sig. **6r (STC 15040). Gouge, *Arrowes*, p. 13-14. Leighton, *Speculum*, p. 193. A. Harsnet, *Summons*, p. 68-9. Edward Underhill, *The Records of a Church of Christ Meeting in Broadmead, Bristol* (London, 1847), p. 63. Fuller, *Abel*, p. 594. Thomas Case, *The Excellent Woman* (London, 1659), second pagination, p. 27, 45, 62 (Wing C829). Simeon Ashe, *Living Loves Betwixt Christ and Dying Christians* (London, 1656, third edition), p. 67 (Wing A3963). Jeffs (ed.), *Fast Sermons*, volume 1, p. 17-18, 103 (subscript pagination). Arthur Lake, *Sermons* (London, 1629), third pagination, p. 207 (STC 15134). Torshell, *Humiliation*, p. 11, 58, 104. Featley, *Ancilla*, p. 671. Scudder, *Daily Walke*, p. 118. Attersoll, *Ninevah*, first pagination, p. 61. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 33, 37. Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 139. Perkins, *Works* (1631), volume 2, p. 103.

⁵⁶ Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 22, 168. Matthew Henry, *The Life of the Rev. Philip Henry*, ed. J.B. Williams (London, 1839), p. 50. Lee (ed.), *Henry*, p. 97.

In particular, “preparation” entailed refraining from delights the day before the fast and having only a modest, sparing dinner the night before it so “heaviness,” “drowsiness,” and “dullness” would not undermine self-examination, meditation, conference, reading, and prayer. The Christian was to consider the causes and occasions of the fast. One was to clear one’s mind of “worldly business.” One was to stay up later than normal in the evening in devotion, sleep for a period, then rise sooner than normal to continue their religious exercises. Thus, Nehemiah Wallington from 1641-43 commonly awoke at 2am, 3am, or 4am the day of a fast for devotions before going to church around 7 to 8am.⁵⁷

These preparations were intense. For example, puritans recalled that the minister John Murcot was “very solemn and severe” not only in celebrating fasts but in “preparation” for them. He would “unbosom and unbowel himself before the Lord: He did not only skim off the uppermost froth of his heart; but would search every nook and cranny, and fetch up mud from the very bottom.” Likewise, the godly remembered Christopher Love as “very strict” in his “preparation” for public and private fasts.⁵⁸

Contemporaries often found preparation effective. Richard Rogers noted January 12-13, 1588 that he had “prepared” himself carefully for the last fast. The fast had the desired effect as he was “very well stirred up and affected” the whole day. In preparation on the eve of a fast, December 13, 1636 Samuel Rogers commented God “meets me a little” and that he was confident the Lord was merciful and loving. Thus, “in the strength

⁵⁷ Gouge, *Armour* , p. 472-73. Perkins, *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 156, 161-62. Bolton, *Humiliation* , p. 60. Scudder, *Daily Walke* , p. 82-4. Bownd, *Fasting* , p. 46-7. BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 6r, 11r-v, 39r, 44r, 51r, 61r, 62v, 65r, 69v, 71v, 75v, 88v, 102v, 113r, 117v, 129v-130r, 139r, 145r, 147r, 157r, 161v-162r, 174r-v, 187v.

⁵⁸ Winter, Chambers, Eaton, Caryl, Manton (eds.), *Several Works of Mr. John Murcot* (London, 1657), “Moses in the Mount,” p. 36 (Thomason Tracts, E.911[1]). Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 28.58, p. 70.

of this, will I go out to fasting and mourning the day approaching.” With respect to rising early on fast days, Nehemiah Wallington found “my mind being then without distractions and for my spirit being fresh I have meat with many sweet meditations in closing with the Lord in holy prayer and much sweetness I have had with His Holy Spirit in the performance of holy duties. . .” On an October, 1643 monthly fast, Wallington was in prayer in his study at 4 am “striving to have high and reverent thoughts of the majesty and glory of the great God, as also of mine own vileness and unworthiness to approach any more before His presence. . .” He wanted the Lord to humble him and make him “fit” to offer prayers and praise. He claimed the Lord caused his heart to “relent,” and gave him tears with “comfort.” He noted that he found by experience “that there is nothing that doth more kindly break and dissolve the hard, stony heart then when the great God doth come and apply His unspeakable love and free grace in the Lord Christ unto a poor distressed soul.”⁵⁹

Poor preparation could create so much guilt that it still fostered the desired emotional state sought in a fast. For example, Richard Rogers on July 25, 1590 complained:

“I was the better for my fasts but not as I have been. My preparation was justly to be charged with sin, for that I did not search myself deeply before, and find out my unworthiness before, neither particular nor deep, [sic] thoroughly confess them in the action. I felt no great working of it upon me, but that it held me in from vain wanderings.”

Similarly, on a May 2, 1666 fast, Owen Stockton wrote: “I found my heart much out of frame by my miscarriage the night before.” He was thus “indisposed” to prayer, meditation, and other works. Henry Newcome also was grieved, noting in his diary on a Wednesday, January 22, 1662 public fast that “the Lord was pleased to withdraw from

⁵⁹ Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 61.13* (M.M. Knappen typescript), p. 55. Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 187. BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 69v, 161v-162r.

me that I had little sweetness in the duty. I was but too confident and proud and unprepared.” On a March 2, 1643 weekly fast, Wallington grieved that he overslept to 5am so he was not as prepared for the fast as should have been. His guilt worsened as he paralleled himself with the ungodly: “And hearing wickedness in the street it grieved me to hear that men could be up early and readier and cheerfuller in the service of the Devil than I can be in the service of my God.”⁶⁰

Even good preparation did not automatically succeed in fostering a good fast experience. Nehemiah Wallington wrote March 11, 1641 that he went to a place with others but found “much deadness” despite “sweet expressions” in prayers. He wrote he subsequently was grieved and troubled that his “hard heart” would not relent and only had wished the duty to end. The next day he went to the house where the fast was to be, but found it had been cancelled. He interpreted this as God judging him for missing the chance to humble himself. He concluded: “I was humbled because I was not humbled.”⁶¹

Good preparation could also fade over the course of the long fast day. Wallington noted for the December 23, 1641 public fast, that he awoke at 2am to “prepare” for it. He had a long meditation on how he, as a “poor sinful wretch,” could prevail with God for “poor Ireland.” He tried to convince himself from the examples of Elijah and Nehemiah that it was possible. He came to trust in the “promise” of God that He granted what we pray for in faith. Thus, “I did at that time feel the life of faith in me and my spirit much raised that my thought I was crept in a corner of heaven and never did I know an hour so soon gone as that hour that I spent there so that I came down much refreshed. . .” He

⁶⁰ Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 61.13* (M.M. Knappen typescript), p. 169-70. Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 24.7, p. 61. Thomas Heywood (ed.), *The Diary of Rev. Henry Newcome* (Chetham Society, 1849), volume 18, p. 49. BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 75v.

⁶¹ BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 6r.

lamented that while he was in the morning by himself “gold,” he was with his servants “silver,” with the rest “brass,” and at night “lead” being “both heavy and drowsy.”⁶²

Ministers often used the Sunday before fasts for “preparation” of their flocks for a coming fast. Sir Thomas Barrington in his sermon notebook recorded that in Essex for the Wednesday, August 2, 1626 national fast Mr. Harrison did so by preaching Sunday, July 30, 1626 on Jonah 3:5. He rehashed the doctrine of fasts and how Ninevah responded to Jonah’s preaching of God’s coming judgment with a fast. Bishop Joseph Hall gave a “preparation” sermon Sunday, March 30, 1628 before the king prior to his Saturday, April 5, 1628 fast sermon to the Lords. He preached on Galatians 2:20 about mortification and being crucified with Christ. Not surprisingly, many treatises on fasting and humiliation were collections of sermons ministers preached to their flocks in times of plague or other natural disaster to instruct them in the proper observance of fasts. Also, Samuel Torshell explained “preparation” with the type of martial metaphor Calvinists loved. Since fasting and prayer were “God’s weapons,” and fasts “days of pitched battle,” Christians needed to engage in “the mustering and training of the soldiers, before the day of the set encounter, that we may know our postures, and the use of our weapons.” Similarly, seeing plague increase, James Godskall called on the nation not to be “careless soldiers.” He praised the diligence of London’s “spiritual captains” who worked “to train up the Lord’s soldiers” teaching them to use spiritual “weapons.” He praised their weekly fasts the king commanded in the 1603 plague as “weekly musterings in the Lord’s field.”⁶³ To sum up, fasts were an event of great gravity for English

⁶² Ibid., fol. 11r-v.

⁶³ Essex Record Office, MS D/DBa F5/1. Joseph Hall, *The Contemplations Upon the History of the New Testament: The Second Tome* (London, 1661), p. 270-272 (Wing H375). For examples of didactic sermons

Calvinists. They required intense emotions to show one was not a “hypocrite” and to appease the Lord. Penitents came into the awesome presence of the Almighty precariously perched between hope and despair.

Now that we have an understanding of the essential parts of English Calvinist conceptions of fasts, cultural anthropology offers further insight. From this perspective, English Calvinists designed fasts to foster a particular self-understanding. They created a special environment which ordered space and time so as to evoke powerful psychological experiences. They intended participants immersed in this simplified model world to experience the values and beliefs which structured it as objectified reality. Participants created meaning for themselves from this experience.

Victor Turner’s interpretive model of a rite of passage also has useful parallels to the conversion experience godly people sought in fasts. First, participants in fasts separated themselves from their normal life routines. They left the profane to approach the sacred. Second, they entered a liminal state. They were temporarily suspended between their old sinful state and their future forgiven and regenerate state. They envisioned the potential of a godly life that had been unrealized in normal life. They crossed a threshold to commune with God in a sacred world. Lastly, participants came back to the world in a new state, that of restored purity and obedience to God.⁶⁴

Insights from anthropology are useful to show how dichotomous categories such as “flesh” and “spirit,” and the “world” and “heaven” were important to how English

on fasting and humiliation, see: Attersoll, *Ninevah*; Hildersam, *Fasting*; Bownd, *Fasting*; Wilkinson, *Fast*, and G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*. Torshell, *Humiliation*, p. 1. Godskall, *Medecine*, sig. A7r.

⁶⁴ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago, 1969). Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols* (Ithaca, NY, 1967). Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago, 1960). For contemporary commentary on Turner, see: Bobby C. Alexander, *Victor Turner Revisited: Ritual as Social Change* (Atlanta, GA, 1991).

Calvinists created their self-understanding. First, they gave a sense of becoming holy and approaching the sacred. English Calvinists loved to cite Basil's line that while fasting Christians came nearest to "the life of angels" and "the likeness of the angels." They praised how fasting and talking with God made "Moses's face to shine before men," and how fasting took Elias "up to heaven." Griffith Williams argued that prayer and fasting were "as the two wings of a dove, that do speedily carry us up to the presence of God." Robert Bolton claimed in a fast Christians had "a sweet and more near communion and conversing with their God." Richard Field argued that one's "holy meditations and contemplations" while fasting gave one a "foretaste" of the "heavenly manna" or "spiritual life" one would have in heaven.

Second, these dichotomies demarcated the sacred from the profane. One key goal of fasting was to be "heavenly-minded" and have "contempt of the world," as opposed to having a "carnal mind" and "earthly-mindedness." Fasting "elevated" the mind to long for "heavenly things," while "worldly delights" were like "bird-lime" keeping thoughts from flying upwards. To focus on "earthly vanities" was to ignore religious duties and "spiritual delicacies." Some argued fasting "weakens the body, that it may strengthen the spirit, and heighten it." John Ley argued that observing days of humiliation was "as it were stealing so many days (whole days) from the flesh and the world." Perhaps most suggestively, the godly often referred to 1 John 2:15 that whoever had "love of the world" did not have "love of the Father." Likewise, they cited James 4:4 that whoever was a "friend of this world" was an "enemy to God."⁶⁵ Finally, the godly could contrast

⁶⁵ J. Downname, *Conflict*, p. 5. John Downname, *The Second Part of the Christian Warfare* (London, 1611), p. 809-17 (STC 7138). J. Downname, *Guide*, p. 362, 784-85, 794-96. Edmund Bunny, *A Booke of Christian Exercise* (London, 1584), p. 274-323 (STC 19355). Ley, *Patterne*, p. 76-8. R. Field, *Church*, p. 106. Gardiner, *Cognizance*, p. 51. Hez. W. [Ezekias Woodward], *A Good Souldier* (London, 1644), p. 26

themselves with common caricatures of the “carnal epicure,” “belly-god,” “drunkard,” and “glutton.”⁶⁶

Fasts to wean oneself from the world, as well as the other ends discussed in the previous analysis of prescriptive literature, were common in practice. Many examples exist of fasts to combat sin and to acquire grace so as to become a new regenerate being. Supposed “satanical buffetings” tormented Thomas Hall (b.1610), the puritan pastor of King’s-Norton, Worcestershire for thirty years so he at times “fasted and prayed three days together against them.”⁶⁷ Likewise, Thomas Swadlin, Edmund Staunton, and Richard Rogers had private fasts to overcome their sins, corruptions, and worldly temptations which they likened to “devils” which only fasting and prayer could cast out.⁶⁸ Nehemiah Wallington on April 7, 1624 set apart the next sabbath for private fasting and prayer for God to give him strength to overcome lust. He believed God heard his prayer because the following week he felt a “great abatement” of the lust which had troubled him for fifteen years.⁶⁹

(Thomason Tracts, E. 46[7]). G. Abbot, *Jonah*, p. 455. Cambridge University Library, Add MS 3117, fol. 62v. G. Williams, *True Church*, p. 773-75. Bayly, *The Practice*, p. 493-95. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 51. Swadlin, *Plague*, p. 208-9.

⁶⁶ See for example: J.M. Cowper (ed.), *The Times’ Whistle* (London, Early English Text Society, 1871), p. 55-74. *Homilies*, part 2, p. 264-73.

⁶⁷ Dr. Williams’s Library, “A Brief Narration of the Life and Death of Mr. Thomas Hall,” p. 27. Fasting could open one to new temptations. Nehemiah Wallington in his record of God’s mercies to him noted that as a teenager c.1618-19 the Devil tempted him to commit suicide. In his “trouble,” he fasted for a day and a half. While others were at dinner, the Devil tempted him again so he ate as many of the “worst apples” he could find in an unsuccessful attempt to harm himself. (Guildhall Library, MS 204, p. 4)

⁶⁸ Swadlin, *Plague*, p. 211. Swadlin also prayed God would “dispossess me of these devils by the virtue of thy promise made to my charitable fasting prayers.” (ibid., p. 213) Richard Mayo, *The Life and Death of Edmund Staunton* (London, 1673), p. 44 (Wing M1528). Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 61.13* (M.M. Knappen typescript), p. 108-9.

⁶⁹ Guildhall Library, MS 204, p. 15-17, 402. His fast also concerned a lack of delight in the service of God, the “many things amiss” in his family, and “the sins of the land.” (ibid.)

Fasts often led to new determination against sin. On an April 17, 1643 fast, Nehemiah Wallington found his heart “set more against sin than ever.”⁷⁰ At other times, fasts led to realization of a sinfulness. Ralph Josselin wrote in his diary on a February 26, 1645 public fast: “oh Lord never was there more need of personal reformation than now; stir me up to it I humbly entreat thee.” He found success in a private humiliation on July 17, 1646 writing: “the Lord good in giving me a spirit to eye Him and to engage with Him against my corruptions; He in mercy give me power over them.”⁷¹

The primary concern for the godly was to please God. In one of her private fasts Elizabeth Scott labored “to seek the Lord to mortify my corruptions, that I might not dishonor Him, but be acted by Him and His grace to His glory, and to order all for me aright according to His will.” Nor did Scott pray only for herself. In another a private fast she tried “to seek to God for more grace, to honor Him, and that God would do also the same in my husband that he might honor God.”⁷²

Each fast also helped to create the Christian anew in a lifelong cycle of sin and repentance. Owen Stockton wrote on a February 6, 1666 day of humiliation that he determined “to set upon the renewal of my repentance and returning unto God.” In remarkable detail he methodically documented his systematic meditations which ranged from his reasons to repent, his “sense” of sinfulness, God’s “gracious promises” of pardon, looking to Christ “to give me repentance,” taking hold of “God’s covenant” with His promise “to cause us to return to Him,” and “fitting” himself better to serve God including by “purging” sin. Importantly, he noted how he tried to see himself as more vile by “the remembrance against what mercies, what manifestations of God’s love, what

⁷⁰ BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 88v-89r.

⁷¹ Alan Macfarlane (ed.), *The Diary of Ralph Josselin 1616-1683* (London, 1976), p. 35, 64.

⁷² Case, *Excellent*, second pagination, p. 28, 15.

corrections I had sinned.” In short, reviewing one’s spiritual life history was a central part of fasts and led to a revised self-understanding.⁷³

A critical component of fasts that aimed at more lasting victory over sin was to make “covenants,” “vows,” or “promises” to God against returning to those sins. In his diary entry for November 8, 1665 Isaac Archer noted that on the last fast day he made a “resolution” against certain sins including “pride, envy, some vices of the tongue, vain and evil thoughts, frothy unsavory discourse, unseemly carriage.” Nehemiah Wallington wrote of an April 28, 1642 fast that he was humbled, “purposing and promising to strive to walk close with my God.” On a June 28, 1642 fast he wrote of “renewing” his “vows.” Similarly, on an April 26, 1643 fast he noted he would “renew” his “covenant.” Philip Henry in his diary described one fast as “a day of more than ordinary engagements entered into, and strong resolutions taken up of closer walking, and more watchfulness! O my God, undertake for me!” On July 10, 1661, in one of his frequent family fasts, Henry shows how a sense of drawing near to God and receiving grace was the basis of making promises. He wrote in his diary: “The Lord was sweetly seen in the midst of us, and I trust it was a day of atonement. Sin pardoned, requests made, covenants renewed, in Jesus Christ.”⁷⁴

English Calvinists used private fasts not only for “renewing” repentance, but often in their “first conversion unto God.” They drew inspiration from the Apostle Paul who

⁷³ Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 24.7, p. 52-3.

⁷⁴ Storey (ed.), *Diaries*, p. 110. BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 28v, 34r, 94r. Williams (ed.), *Henry*, p. 41, 50. Richard Rogers apparently also renewed covenants. In his December 12, 1587 diary entry he told of a fast on December 6 of ministers “to the stirring up of ourselves to greater godliness.” The fast brought good ideas which they resolved “to bring it into writing a direction for our lives, which might be both for ourselves and others.” (Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 61.13* (M.M Knappen typescript), p. 46, 43). At other places in his diary Rogers often mentions that a “covenant” was “renewed.” (Dr. Williams’s Library, 61.13* (M.M. Knappen typescript), p. 6-7, 13, 27, 34-6, 39-42, 48, 53-5, 59, 63, 78-9, 82-4, 86-7, 90-1, 93, 102, 105, 111, 135-36, 158).

fasted and prayed for three days in his “first conversion” on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:9). They believed such fasting helped to humble them and to pray more effectually for grace.⁷⁵ Elizabeth Scott (d. 1658) told how at about age nineteen God “brought me to keep fasts by myself, and to humble my soul before Him, and shewed me how vile I was in a great measure, and made me confess my sins with shame and sorrow.” Thomas Hall’s biographer remarked: “At his first setting out in the ways of God he spent much time in fasting and prayer; and all his days he was forward (as occasion required) to that duty, accounting them soul-enriching days, and opportunities wherein God reveals himself more especially to His people.” The presbyterian minister Christopher Love (d.1651) spent his early life to age fifteen in “sinful pastimes” like play, cards, and dice. But when William Erbury came to town to preach on a lecture day, and Love heard him and received subsequent guidance from him, he became ashamed. He wanted to quit these pastimes despite encouragement from his ungodly father to continue in them. At the same time Erbury also influenced many of his “companions in sin and vanity” and they too were “brought home to God.” Love said they:

“had not played so often together, but now they fasted and prayed oftner each with other; and that they might not neglect their school time nor displease their parents they took the night time to meet in (when their parents thought they had been in bed) and for many months whilst they continued together they set apart two nights in a week for fasting and prayer.”

His father rejected him as his reputation changed from that of “a young gamester” to “a young puritan.” Moreover, this narrative was one Love himself often told. The writer noted of this story that it was “as he used to say” and “as he would say.”⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Holland, *Fasting*, p. 19-20. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 15.

⁷⁶ Case, *Excellent*, second pagination, p. 8-10 (Wing C829). Dr. Williams’s Library, “A Brief Narration of the Life and Death of Mr. Thomas Hall,” p. 98. Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 28.58, p. 1-5. Stephen K. Roberts, “Erbery, William (1604/5-1654),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. The Lady Frances Hobart (1603-1664) converted her husband from “the vanities of his youth”

Pastors, as the primary example of godliness to their flocks, had extra pressure to fast to vanquish their sin. For example, Henry Scudder remarked of William Whately, lecturer at Banbury, Oxford:

“He was much in days of private fasting and humbling himself before God alone, that he might make and keep his peace with God, and obtain more grace to keep more close to Him, and to walk more evenly with Him, and that he might the better keep under his body, and bring it into subjection (following the example of the apostle) least having preached to others he himself should not live answerable to his doctrine without reproof, knowing that ministers ought to be unprovable.”

Similarly, Ralph Josselin on a February 25, 1646 public fast, penned in his diary the plea “make me an example of the doctrine of repentance and amendment of life.”⁷⁷

In public fasts, ministers also felt great pressure to perform well in preaching and prayer to convert their hearers from sin to God. They were the Lord’s “watchmen” and “messengers” warning the people of judgment. Also, as the Westminster Assembly of Divines in 1644 advised on prayer in public fasts, ministers were “the mouths of the people unto God.”⁷⁸ Ministers thus had fasts to pray to be more effective in their calling. Ralph Josselin’s November 14, 1651 private fast was in part “to seek God to make me more profitable in the ministry of the Word, and that the Word might prosper to beget

to “those good ways of God” including attending “private fasts.” (John Collinges, *Par Nobile* (London, 1669), p. 13 (Wing C5329)) John Rogers noted keeping “many fast days” in his story of becoming “awakened.” He despaired and would pray, weep, sigh, and knock his breast. Gathering himself, he continued in prayer off and on for five days together “scarce eating a bit of bread in all that time.” After this, he was “in another form and frame of spirit (though by fits full of distraction and desperate thoughts) yet more serious, and set to weigh things as in a balance, and to expostulate with the Lord, and to pray by fits most furiously, and now and then tears began again (which were all dried up before) to trickle and come tumbling down my face like swollen drops of blood. . .” After three to four more days of praying, he came to know his righteousness through faith in Christ, and was “comforted” and “filled with joy.” (John Rogers, *Ohel or Beth-Shemesh* (London, 1653), p. 422, 426, 430-31 (Wing R1813)) Hanserd Knollys told how in his initial conversion he “kept several days of fasting and prayer alone, wherein I did humble my soul for my sins, and begged pardon and grace of God for Christ’s sake.” (William Kiffin and Hanserd Knollys, *The Life and Death of . . . Mr. Hanserd Knollys* (London, 1692), p. 4 (Wing K715))

⁷⁷ William Whately, *Prototypes* (London, 1640), “The Life and Death of M. Whately” (STC 25317). Macfarlane (ed.), *Josselin 1616-1683*, p. 55.

⁷⁸ Oxford University, Bodleian, Tanner MS 61 (88), fol. 210r.

and strengthen souls, and to bless our fellowship.”⁷⁹ Thomas Brand had fasts for his Lord’s Day work, which Samuel Annesley noted in a poem on his death:

“In secret often fasting, to prepare
The food of souls with utmost pain and care.”⁸⁰

The type of impact godly clergy longed for has no better example than Nehemiah Warton’s report of parliamentary army fasts in Worcester to George Willingham on September 30, 1642. He told how on last Wednesday, Obadiah Sedgwick preached at the fast and the Lord “extraordinarily assisted” him “so that his doctrine wrought wonderfully upon many of us and doubtless hath fitted many of us for death which we all shortly expect.”⁸¹

Ralph Josselin often assessed how well he performed his duties in fast days with variations of the phrase “God good to me.”⁸² While generally satisfied with himself, Josselin had highs and lows. One of his better performances was on a March 26, 1645 public fast. Josselin reflected: “the Lord raised up my spirit with boldness, and enlarged me in the work of the day.” Similarly, on an August 26, 1646 public fast he commented: “God was good in enlarging my heart in praying and preaching, affectionately moving my spirit. . .” Josselin thought himself merely good on a December 29, 1658 public fast laconically noting: “God gave me a spirit of prayer.” He thought he did poorly on an October 30, 1656 public fast noting: “I find my heart very dead and unaffected for and under such a solemn duty. I found little of God to my heart therein, the Lord affect and break my heart in the sense thereof.” Likewise, Owen Stockton on a February 6, c.1667-

⁷⁹ Macfarlane (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 262.

⁸⁰ Samuel Annesley, *The Life and Funeral Sermon of the Reverend Mr. Thomas Brand* (London, 1692), Sig. T2r (Wing A3230).

⁸¹ PRO, SP 16/492/28.

⁸² Macfarlane (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 17, 22, 24-6, 28, 30, 33, 35, 39-44, 47, 49, 50, 53, 55, 59, 63-4, 67, 71, 76, 87, 90, 110, 121, 139, 142, 166, 191, 241, 331, 432.

68 day of humiliation lamented he was “much indisposed” to the duties of the day and that his heart was “unfit” to pray and perform family exercises.⁸³

Many examples of fasts illuminate the importance of the flesh/spirit, world/heaven dichotomies in self-understanding, as well as a sense of leaving the profane to approach the sacred. Mrs. Jane Ratcliffe of Chester, purportedly used fasting and prayer “not only as weapons against our great adversary the Devil, but as wings to elevate her soul as near to her God as could be.” Philip Henry had “sweet communion” with God in fasts. In a diary entry for one fast he wrote: “It is good for me to draw near to God. The oftner and the nearer the better. How sweet is heaven indeed, if heaven upon Earth has so much sweetness in it!” Elizabeth Scott reportedly would come out of her fasts “full of heaven.” Wallington commented on his May 18, 1643 fast that he desired “an end of duties that I might be at home in the world again.” Later, he noted “as soon as I came home to the world again never minding the day nor duties of the day.” Indeed, he referred to time after duty in a fast as being “down in the world” again.⁸⁴

Overcoming love of food to concentrate on the spiritual was a particular problem for Samuel Ward at Sidney Sussex, Cambridge in the later half of the 1590s. He often complained in his diary of his over-eating and love of particular foods. He lamented it made him “unfit” and “sluggish” for, and to neglect, worship and spiritual duties.⁸⁵ More specifically, January 31, 1596 he wrote: “My mind was set altogether of my belly, I could not find such a thirst after Christ, as after temporal food.” Likewise, February 21, 1596

⁸³ Macfarlane (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 37, 67, 436, 384. John Fairfax, *The True Dignity of St. Paul's Elder, Exemplified in the Life of . . . Owen Stockton* (London, 1681), p. 114 (Wing F129).

⁸⁴ Ley, *Patterne*, p. 78. Williams (ed.), *Henry*, p. 41. Case, *Excellent*, second pagination, p. 110. BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 100r, 88r.

⁸⁵ Cambridge University, Sidney Sussex College, MS 45, fol. 16r, 18v, 19v, 20r-v, 21r-v, 22r-v, 23r, 24v, 25v, 26r-v, 27r-v, 28r-v, 29r-v, 30r-v, 31r-v, 32r-v, 33r-v, 34r-v, 35r-v, 36v, 59v.

he wrote: “My carefulness for seeking for my supper, and my little care for spiritual things.” Not surprisingly, he complained July 12, 1595 of “my negligence in fasting.” The next day, he again griped: “My liberal diet where rather I should have fasted, great danger being imminent.”⁸⁶

Richard Rogers often complained that worldly affairs made him “unprofitable” and “unfit.” In his diary, April 25, 1587 he noted he was ashamed of his “too much minding the Earth” and resolved: “that I must needs use fasting against it as a remedy.”⁸⁷ Also, the Parliamentary army captain Adam Eyre on January 12, 1648 had a private fast “to seek the Lord.” Instead of living as a “sanctified Christian,” he had yielded to “corruptions” and engaged in “worldly discourses” so his mind now was “as a stranger from God.”⁸⁸

Given the long length of most fasts, much guilt resulted from the mind understandably drifting to ponder mundane affairs. On a January 28, 1646 public fast Josselin lamented “the vanity of my thoughts taken up with unprofitableness. Lord make my meditation every day sweet of thee, and let my refreshments and retirements be in heaven.” Also, on an August 16, 1650 private fast he wrote “my heart was dead, and drowsy, and wonderfully tossed with corrupt imaginations. The good Lord heal me and pardon the same to me. . .” Josselin was hardly alone. Richard Rogers lamented in his diary entry for a December 6, 1587 fast that “I in other’s prayer not lifted up, but drowsy, wandering, etc. even at such a time. O false heart.” He saw fit on December 12, 1587 to

⁸⁶ Cambridge University, Sidney Sussex College, MS 45, fol. 23v, 25r, 21r. Similarly, May 27, 1595 Ward, noting his “negligence” in worship and prayer, complained of his “overmuch delight in those transitory pleasures of this world.” (ibid., fol. 17r) June 27, 1595 he lamented: “My going to drink wine, and that in a tavern, before I called upon God.” (ibid., fol. 20r) July 17-19, 1595 he was no better than previous days writing: “my want in fasting, notwithstanding of present calamity.” (ibid., fol. 21v)

⁸⁷ Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 61.13* (M.M. Knappen typescript), p. 8.

⁸⁸ *Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies* (Surtees Society, 1877), volume 65, p. 88.

comment again about the same fast that during the closing prayer of another: “I wandered, neither did mine heart go with part of it, which at such a time was no small sin and occasion to unsettle me. Oh woeful heart.” Philip Henry too complained after a February 19, 1657 private fast: “I was much straitened, no life at all in the duty, many wanderings.”⁸⁹

As we shall see more in a moment, English Calvinists could be so zealous to leave the world to approach the divine that at times they paralleled medieval ascetic ideals. Nonetheless, they attacked the ascetic ideals of Roman Catholics, especially monks and friars like the Eremites. They referred to practices including “immoderate” fasting, flagellation, whipping, scourging, going bare-foot, and wearing haircloth as “unnatural chastising of their bodies.” Such practices were not commanded in scripture and were “monkery,” “human invention,” “will-worship,” and “superstition.” Opinion of merit in them undermined the doctrine of justification.⁹⁰ Yet while maintaining that Christ’s blood alone made satisfaction for sin, they still argued fasting was to “chastise” the flesh and to take “revenge” or “godly revenge” on oneself for sin. One was to judge and punish oneself so God would not. This “holy revenge” was a “sure sign” that the Holy Spirit was at work. A “surer evidence” of repentance could not be found.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Macfarlane (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 53, 213. Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 61.13* (M.M. Knappen typescript), p. 43, 46. Lee (ed.), *Henry*, p. 43.

⁹⁰ Featley, *Ancilla*, p. 679-81 (STC 10727). Willet, *Synopsis*, p. 351-52, 511, 757-59, 1063 (STC 25700a.7). R. Abbot, *Defence*, p. 152-54. George Townsend (ed.), *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe* (New York, 1965), volume 2, p. 55-6. Attersoll, *Ninevah*, first pagination, p. 37. Sutcliffe, *Abridgement*, p. 113. Sutcliffe, *Challenge*, first pagination, p. 32, 123-24. J. Downname, *Conflict*, p. 381-82. A. Harsnet, *Summons*, p. 619-20.

⁹¹ *Homilies*, part 2, p. 254. Ayre (ed.), *Catechism*, p. 543-45. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 20, 23, 33, 36 (STC 7113). Earl of Roden (ed.), *The Private Diarie of Elizabeth Viscountess Mordaunt* (Duncairn, 1856), p. 25. Hildersam, *Fasting*, p. 62. Stock, *Repentance*, p. 251-59. Allestree, *Whole Duty*, p. 133. Bayly, *Practice*, p. 497. Attersoll, *Ninevah*, first pagination, p. 36. Swadlin, *Plague*, p. 210. Gouge, *Armour*, p. 476-77. Cambridge University Library, Add MS 3117, fol. 63r. G. Williams, *True Church*, p. 773. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 37, 39, 56-57. Case, *Morning*, p. 403-4. A. Harsnet, *Summons*, p. 617-26.

Suggestively, prescriptive English Calvinist literature often warned against “immoderate” fasting which would make the body “unprofitable” and “weak,” and therefore “unfit” for Christian duty and one’s ordinary calling. They also saw a need to explain that the cold climate of England meant English Protestants could not imitate the three days fasts of biblical exemplars who lived in the hot climate of the Middle East.⁹²

Despite their prescription of moderation in fasting, English Calvinists often praised extreme fasting. Joseph Alleine (b. 1633) was frustrated that his soul was tied to a body which required food, drink, and sleep, thereby preventing him from spending all his time in “nobler things.”⁹³ Likewise, Elizabeth Scott was so “heavenized” the day after a fast that she wished “she could live without eating or sleeping, to spend that time upon the immediate service of God, such enjoyments of Him did she find therein.”⁹⁴

Contemporaries remarked of the minister William Whately’s fasting: “He was so much in this that it is thought by such as knew him best that it impaired the health of his body; though it made much for the good of his soul.” John Ley said of his parishioner Jane Ratcliffe’s fasts: “Her love and delight in communion with Him made her mindless of meat, careless of provision for the flesh.” Ley thought her so often weakened by fasting that he likened her to the Apostle Paul, and prophesied before her death “that her zeal would eat her up, and that her emphatical soul would not long be kept down out of heaven, nor her feeble body long held up above the earth.” The Cheshire minister William Hinde knew John Bruen of Stapleford, Cheshire well, and recalled that his

⁹² J. Downame, *Conflict*, p. 339-40. G. Downame, *Sanctuarie*, p. 18-19. G. Abbot, Jonah, p. 457-60. King, *Jonas*, p. 486. G. Williams, *True Church*, p. 772. Bayly, *Practice*, p. 515. Holland, *Fasting*, p. 29. Scudder, *Daily Walke*, p. 146. Morton, *Appeale*, p. 308. Perkins, *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 156-57.

⁹³ Mrs. Theodosia Alleine, *The Life and Death of Mr. Joseph Alleine* (London, 1672), p. 31-2 (Wing A1013).

⁹⁴ Case, *Excellent*, second pagination, p. 110.

“private fasting” was not only “very frequent and fervent” but conducted with “so great austerity, that he did much weaken his body, as well as afflict his soul thereby.”⁹⁵

Likewise, Thomas Hall (b.1610), puritan pastor of Kings-Norton in Worcestershire, purportedly “gave himself very much to fasting and prayer.” Even when his health suffered as a result, he did not remember himself being hurt by it “but it was rather helpful to him even on that account, so good it is, to spend ourselves in the hardest services for God.” Also, he wore a hairshirt and “grave” (i.e. grave-clothes used in burial).⁹⁶ In October, 1643 Nehemiah Wallington related an encounter he had had with a godly woman who was “heavenly in affections.” She lamented she could be no more in service to God, though Wallington told her she went far beyond him in such service and “even above her strength and ability, and more than God required of her.” In particular, she “would go constantly to church and sometimes be all day forth and eat nothing and then go and spend two hours alone late at night in prayer after she is come home.” She abstained from food “to the much weakening of her body” believing she was “unworthy” of it.⁹⁷

Godly ministers could even find medieval accounts of alleged miracles edifying. Nicholas Estwick in a funeral sermon drew on a story from the Venerable Bede. While Estwick was skeptical of Bede’s account, he found its moral lesson useful. The story was that Drithelme of Northumberland was raised from death to life and retained a glimpse of the afterlife. This knowledge had such an effect “that he utterly detested this present life, and abandoned all worldly cares, chastised his old impotent body with daily fasting,

⁹⁵ Whately, *Prototypes*, “The Life and Death of M. Whately.” Fuller, *Abel*, p. 594. Ley, *Patterne*, p. 77, 79. Hinde, *Bruen*, p. 157.

⁹⁶ Dr. Williams’s Library, “A Brief Narration of the Life and Death of Mr. Thomas Hall,” p. 26.

⁹⁷ BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 172r-172v.

plunging himself in winter season into the cold water, singing of psalms and devoutly praying. . .” Estwick intended this story to move his hearers “to seek the Lord while He may be found” because life was short and damnation eternal.⁹⁸

Another reason the godly fasted so much was that fasts splendidly addressed their concern about the ebb and flow of sin and grace. Christians were to fast and pray when they sensed a want of “God’s saving graces” so they would be supplied, when they found themselves “weak in faith” and needed it “increased and strengthened,” when their hearts felt “hardened” and they needed them “softened” in sorrow for sin, when their trust in the Lord was “ready to faint and fail in every small trial,” and when they perceived a want of the “gifts and abilities” needed to perform religious duties. They were to have private fasts when they had a sense of “desertion,” “extraordinary deadness of heart,” or “declination.”⁹⁹

Fasts gave the godly a means to raise their spiritual temperature when the world cooled it. On August 30, 1587, Richard Rogers wrote that a recent journey to London with his wife had not been spent “profitably” but rather in “needless speech.” Thus he felt a loss of his “fervency,” and was concerned with “declinings” and “remitting of zeal.” He went on: “And if we had not since our return had a fast in which we were well stirred up, Aug[ust] 28, I think I should have further fallen some ways.” Fasts met his concern that “the world deceive me not by drawing mine heart to more dealings therein then are expedient for me.” As one might expect, Rogers frequently wrote of fasts as highpoints in his spiritual temperature and as benchmarks to assess how much he had cooled when enmeshed in worldly affairs. On May 23, 1589, he wrote that he had fasted

⁹⁸ Nicholas Estwick, *A Learned and Godly Sermon* (London, 1633), p. 46-7 (STC 10556).

⁹⁹ J. Downname, *Guide*, p. 668. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 52-3.

with good success but “by little and little lost that which with so much ado I had recovered, and grew unprofitable again and unapt for study as before.” On August 11, 1590 he jotted: “Although the fruit of the last fasts be worn away, yet till these few days I retained some savor of them.” He lamented how no good thing lasts long before “declinings” set in.¹⁰⁰ Fasts were also the right opportunity to pray for spiritual vitality. On October 29, 1645 Ralph Josselin wrote of the public fast that day: “my heart Lord thou knowest is not eas’d up in thy ways with that life and vigor as it ought, oh when will thou lift it up?” Josselin sought the same on a December 30, 1646 fast pleading: “my heart is dull, and my body out of tune; the Lord my God help and pardon and forgive and sanctify my spirit, and heal my soul.”¹⁰¹

Of course, like all rituals, fasts did not mechanically produce the experiences participants sought. A range of outcome was possible in practice. At times, fasts could prove very effective giving believers a sense of the Holy Spirit raising their spiritual

¹⁰⁰ Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 61.13* (M.M. Knappen typescript), p. 24-5, 105, 172. January 12-13, 1588, he lamented the positive effects of the last fast had not lasted long beyond the fast day. He found himself less “heavenly minded” as he was swept up by less edifying company and topics. (ibid., p. 56) January 26, 1588, Rogers wrote that he had recovered from his “declining” after the last fast. (ibid., p. 58) April 16, 1588, Rogers worried he was falling away from his godly course. Further, he said due to extensive traveling “I could not turn to my God by fasting and prayer. I know that is the cause why I am no better.” (ibid., p. 67-8) Writing August 4, 1588, Rogers noted that July 25 he fasted in large part to shake off “love of world,” and that he “especially marked that my course since might be better.” He lamented that his “course” after much recent fasting was to fall into the world. (ibid., p. 77-8) September 17, 1589, he planned to “stir up” his “dull and loose heart” by a fast. (ibid., p. 117) While fasting, September 20, 1589, he noted that when he fasted he had good meditation and prayer, and subdued his “inordinate affections.” When he fasted, he was not troubled by “the things I am usually most deceived by and carried away with.” He went on “but when I go from these to walk among many occasions and deceivable allurements the former grace and strength is utterly quailed as fire with water is quenched, whereby I might see what cause there is to be in fasting, at leastwise in some such like exercises, often as I read the Apostle was.” (ibid., p. 121-22; note: “utterly” was later crossed out and “ready to be” written above it) Of private fasts on September 18, 1589, “with our young men,” and September 20, “with my brethren,” he noted he “recovered sensibly that good grace, and banished slavish sottishness about folly and vanity, and blockish barrenness and unprofitableness of life.” However, he feared “the diming of this light in me again.” (ibid., p. 126) February 14, 1590, he noted that he could not attain zeal and diligence in duty without fasting. (ibid., p. 146-47) July 25, 1590, he lamented that a fast for various reasons had not gone well. “And so by little and little unto this day, since July 20 the last fast, I have felt my faintness to increase. . .” He thus intended to fast again the next week. (ibid., p. 169-71)

¹⁰¹ Macfarlane (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 49, 82.

temperature. In his diary entry for Tuesday, June 21, 1636, Samuel Rogers noted he had been in fasting and prayer at G.D., and: “The Lord went out mightily with us, and thawed our hearts.” Likewise of a day of fasting and prayer on Friday, February 27, 1635 at G. Wiggs he commented: “the Lord went out with us mightily, enlarged and broke our spirits.” Also, he was thankful that God “raised me up marvelously.” Nehemiah Wallington on an April 17, 1643 fast thought it “an heavenly day,” and exclaimed “such joy I found this day to my soul that I want expressions to set it forth.” The reverend Philip Henry (1631-96) recalled how as an adolescent he went to the monthly fasts of the Civil War period at St. Margaret’s, Westminster. Sitting on the pulpit stairs, he took sermon notes and recorded “sweet meltings of soul” in prayer and confession of sin.¹⁰²

Fasts could also be very effective at creating a sense of union with God. On Wednesday, September 20, 1637, Samuel Rogers had a private day for fasting and prayer “to get in the same communion with God which I was wont to have.” He was not disappointed noting: “And the Lord hath granted it in some comfortable measure.” Wallington on a December, 1642 fast day stated: “Oh the much sweet comfort I found with my God in holy prayer. I cannot relate it nor you understand it but I am sure that I was ready to cry out with that good martyr: ‘He is come. He is come.’ And so still is my spirits held-up with comfort praised be His name.” On a February 20, 1651 private day of humiliation, Josselin noted that “there God was on our hearts.” On February 23, 1651 Josselin again referenced this fast at his house “wherein God’s presence was much.”¹⁰³

¹⁰² Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 129, 26. Rogers had many other similar entries: Tuesday, December 29, 1635, was a day fasting and mourning in which he noted: “the Lord went out with us” at G. Dex. (ibid., p. 79) Tuesday, July 12, 1636, was day of prayer and fasting at G. Per. Rogers wrote: “The Lord graciously went out with us.” (ibid., p. 135) On a Wednesday, November 9, 1636 fast he thought “the Lord goes out with me.” (ibid., p. 176). BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 88v. Williams (ed.), *Henry*, p. 12.

¹⁰³ Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 264. BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 62v. Macfarlane (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 235-36.

When not giving euphoria, fasts often gave a sense of spiritual renewal and solace. Samuel Rogers noted on a Friday, October 13, 1637 fast: “the Lord carries me through the duty graciously; and though affect not so up; yet faith in some measure is upon the wing, and now I lie down in His arms.” Wallington in a March 16, 1643 fast found “comfort” and “benefit,” and was “refreshed.” He thought a August, 1643 fast was “full of comfort,” and in an October 12, 1643 fast he found “much comfort.” Additionally, on a November 29, 1643 fast, he found “sweetness” in prayer and meditation. Similarly, Owen Stockton on July 21, 1665 noted in his diary that he had found “sweet refreshment” on that day of humiliation.¹⁰⁴

Naturally, the godly often noted the centrality of the Word to success in fasts. The Word increased their spiritual temperature, brought them to commune with the Lord, and gave confidence in justification by faith. Wallington on a November 29, 1643 fast had “much sweetness and profit” by the Word as well as “much enlargeness of spirit.” God made his heart “relent” and he had tears. On September 21, 1662 Ralph Josselin noted “in His Word very sweet to my fast.” The godly often believed God pointed them to certain texts in fasts. Elizabeth Scott had a private fast to “humble my soul before the Lord, and pour out my complaint before Him, and seek strength from Him; God sweetly encouraging me with many scriptures, and melted my heart, oft pouring it into His bosom, and drew me out of my self into Jesus Christ.” Likewise, Owen Stockton had a day of private humiliation on November 23, 1666: “for my unprofitableness under my afflictions, sighing under my incorrigibleness, God minded me of Jer[emiah] 31:18, 20

¹⁰⁴ Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 269. BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 77v-78r, 139v, 157r, 174r-v. Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 24.7, p. 9.

which much refreshed me and strengthened my faith. Blessed be God.” Also, on an August 2, 1665 fast day, Stockton wrote in his diary:

“I was encouraged to hope in God for the pardon of my sins and for power against my sins from the promise 1 John 1:9. If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. As I was pleading it in prayer, I was revived by it and afterwards meditating upon it, my faith was strengthened to depend upon God for forgiveness of my sins.”¹⁰⁵

In addition to fully successful outcomes, fasts commonly gave mixed results.

Samuel Rogers noted on Tuesday, October 20, 1635 that he had joined others in a day of fasting and prayer at Em. He assessed: “the Lord went out mightily with me in the duty; and a little faith was stirring; though not that fervency of affection, which should have been.” He also found equivocal results in a fast on Tuesday, May 17, 1636 at G. Perry’s: “The Lord gave great enlargement, but I am bound in mine own bowels, and I feel my proud heart swell, more than ordinary. Lord what shall I do, thou hast done all hitherto, conquered a dead, proud, backsliding heart. Oh drive some strength into my soul still.” On a Wednesday, January 11, 1637 fast at Farnham, he found a modestly disappointing combination: “a little thawed” but “much deaded.” Josselin on an April 2, 1651 public fast wrote: “my heart not broken though somewhat enlarged in prayer, the Word very precious, sweet, and comfortable.” In one private fast, Elizabeth Scott said she found “some comfort in God’s acceptance” although she was “much wanting in the performance of the same.” On another private fast day she assessed: “though much distempered yet had some hopes of acceptance.”¹⁰⁶

Rather than a single, general outcome, participants in fasts often had many different emotional experiences over the long course of a fast day. For example, on a

¹⁰⁵ BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 174r-v. Macfarlane (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 492. Case, *Excellent*, second pagination, p. 27-8. Fairfax, *Stockton*, p. 113. Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 24.7, p.11.

¹⁰⁶ Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 64, 119, 195. Macfarlane (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 241. Case, *Excellent*, second pagination, p. 14-15.

Friday, July 17, 1635 fast Rogers observed he had “many ebbs and flows in it.” Similarly, of a Friday, August 5, 1636 fast in “secret” he commented: “sometimes up, sometimes down.” Josselin on a May 7, 1650 private fast found that his heart was “very much dull and drowsy” early in the day but “more affected” later in prayer. Owen Stockton in a fast c. December, 1665 discovered his heart “out of frame” during family exercise but in the evening he had some “revivings.”¹⁰⁷

The godly could find benefit and solace from combined outcomes though. Nehemiah Wallington interpreted mixed results in fasts as God’s way of keeping him from spiritual pride and despair. On Wednesday, January 11, 1642 he attended a private fast. In the middle of the day he observed: “my heart began to thaw and melt and comfort I found.” But toward evening “dullness and heaviness” took hold. He thought God had showed love to him in “mingling sweet and sour together” so he would not succumb either to rest or to pride in duty by not giving the glory to God. He had a similar experience in a fast Thursday, January 19, 1643:

“I found some benefit and profit being somewhat renewed yet grieved that I could keep the day no better being sinchable [sensible?] of my untoward keeping of the day that if I had no other sin but the sin of that day and that in my best performances God might justly throw me forever out of His presence.”

He opined that the mind of a Christian invariably swung between two extremes:

“And thus you may see how the Spirit of God (so long as we live here) is going and coming, going and coming. Sometime rapt up in the third heaven with Paul to see things unutterable, and sometimes cast down to hell saying with David that God hath forgot to be merciful and that this is my death.”

But he reasoned that he had hope. In His love, God would “mingle sweet and bitter together.” The heavenly father had a plan: “for if we had all sweet here we should never

¹⁰⁷ Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 49, 142. Macfarlane (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 199. Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 24.7, p. 49.

long for heaven, neither should we praise the Lord Christ. And if all bitter we should then sink under our burden and so disappear.”¹⁰⁸

Finally, poor results were common as well. Regarding a Wednesday, December 21, 1636 fast, Samuel Rogers lamented that his heart was “very straight” to the duty. Nehemiah Wallington complained of a Thursday, February 16, 1643 fast that he was “much in duty but little with God, much in prayer but little in heaven.” On a May 18, 1643 fast he mourned being “dead and dull” the whole day; and on an August, 1643 fast he complained that his heart had been “hard” and his eyes “dry” all day. Most elaborately, Owen Stockton complained on November 1, c.1655 in a private fast: “I could not get my heart to be afflicted and mourn under sin, but found much lightness in prayer, the Lord hid His face, and did not come into my poor soul with His quickening presence.” Such a lack of proper emotions alarmed the godly as a sign of divine disapproval. Thus, Josselin on a May 26, 1647 public fast prayed: “my heart is very unsensible of the sad state of things; Lord my God accept me, and in thy Christ be

¹⁰⁸ BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 63r-v, 65r. He frequently had mixed results in his constant monitoring of his spiritual temperature. On the Thursday, February 2, 1643 fast he noted: “although I had much backwardness and dullness at the beginning yet before the close of the day the Lord did return with some comfort and sweet to my poor soul.” (fol. 65v) On a February, 1643 monthly fast, he said the sermons did “refresh” his soul but in private prayer he was “straigtened.” (fol. 75r) On the March 29, 1643 monthly fast he was “dead and dry” and his heart “hard,” but later his heart “melted,” the Spirit “breathed life” into his “dry and dead soul,” and he found “much comfort” in duties. (fol. 82r) On the April 10, 1643 weekly fast in the morning he was “very dead, dull, and untoward” in duty, but in the afternoon the Lord “melted my hard heart and moistened my dry eyes.” (fol. 84v) On the April 26, 1643 monthly fast he saw “somekind of glimmering on my soul” and had “some little profit.” But despite “sweet and profitable matter” he was “very dead and dull and unprofitable” in duty. Later still he was “dead and drowsy.” Later again he was “dull, base, and heartless” in duty. Yet, “in the close of the day in the cool of the evening my loving God comes in a still manner and bursts open the door of my heart and makes prayer sweet unto my poor soul that made it to melt.” He went on: “I can not relate the joy that then came flowing into my poor soul even at such a time when we usually grow weary and the spirits dullest.” He was “refreshed.” (fol. 91v-93v) In the June 26, 1643 monthly fast he was “something dead and dry.” Later, “the Lord returned again with some melting and thawing of mine untoward heart.” (fol. 120r) On a September 1643 weekly fast he found “a little comfort” and “some little workings and movings of my spirit.” (fol. 147v) On a December, 1643 monthly fast he found the Word and prayer “very sweet,” but the day ended before his heart began to “relent.” Thus, “then it did begin to be sorry the my God should give to me such excellent means and I should benefit so little by it.” (ibid., fol. 188r)

reconciled unto me, and let thy love be upon me, the praise of the riches of thy glorious grace.”¹⁰⁹

Of course, while praising God for all the good effects of their fasts, the godly blamed themselves for all failings in them. On July 13, 1636, the day after a fast, Samuel Rogers confessed that he “deserved frowns for yesterday’s work.” Expectedly therefore, he wrote: “I cannot find the Lord sweet to me.” Owen Stockton noted he spent a September 6, 1665 fast day “somewhat unprofitably” and was not as “affected” as he should have been with “public judgments” and the miseries of others. He thought “therefore it was meet with God to bring affliction into my family.” Here he referred to how the next day one of his children died. This incident strikingly shows how the godly viewed the Lord as just in his wrath. Judgments were attempts to bring sinners to repentance. More usually though, they interpreted God’s withholding grace as temporary and His way of preventing spiritual pride. For example, Wallington thought he kept a March 9, 1643 fast with “much weakness.” He reasoned that in fasts the Lord would sometimes “hide” the benefits of them to keep him humble. Wallington was sure it would not be long before He “returns” with comfort.¹¹⁰ Again, God sometimes deferred sending grace to prod a Christian to pray more and more fervently, to sorrow with more intensity, and teach patience. The Christian would have to “strive” and “wrestle” with God in prayer a little longer for grace.

A disappointing affective result in a fast paradoxically could lead the godly to find assurance in justification by unmerited grace through faith. Such was often the case

¹⁰⁹ Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 189. BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 69v, 100r, 146r. Fairfax, *Stockton*, p. 88. Macfarlane (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 95. Wallington also opined of an April, 1643 fast that he was “somewhat dead, drowsy, and unprofitable” in the later part of day. (ibid., Add MS 40883, fol. 84r)

¹¹⁰ Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 135. Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 24.7, p. 17. Fairfax, *Stockton*, p. 103. BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 76r.

with Owen Stockton, the ejected minister of Colchester, Essex (1662). Writing in his journal of a fast day August 2, 1665, he lamented that he was not as “affected” with divine judgment on the nation by sword and pestilence, nor with his own sins as he ought to have been. He took comfort in 1 John 1:9 that if he confessed this “insensibleness and hardness of heart” he would be forgiven. Similarly, on August, 28, 1665 he was guilt-stricken about being “lifeless” in prayer and “insensible” of his sins and “national judgments” on a day of humiliation. He took comfort in Isaiah 64:6,8 (which “was brought to remembrance”) that all our righteousness was nothing to God, and that God was our father. His faith “revived” and he was able again “to lay hold on God as my God.” Finally, on the October 4, 1665 fast day he wrote:

“Having felt that day a great want of a broken heart in the performing of the duties of the day, I was driven out of myself to lay hold upon the righteousness of Christ. I had comfort from the Word Eph[esians] 1:6 ‘He hath made us accepted in the beloved.’”

He noted that while “considering with myself” he “was brought to remembrance” that God was not liar in the Word. Thus, he should not doubt he was accepted in Christ. While there were defects in his sanctification, he was a believer to whom this passage applied. At night in devotions he took further comfort that though he did not have that “mourning frame of spirit” which was “suitable” to the fast, he did have some desire for righteousness.¹¹¹ For English Calvinists, God made everything to work for the good.

The presence of other godly people in fasts was also a critical factor influencing emotional experiences in them. For English Calvinists, especially puritans, “mutual communion” was highly edifying. This “society” of saints included “conference” for instruction, exhortation, admonishment, counsel, and comfort. They frequently used metaphors about how if laid together coals or sticks would quickly grow to “a great fire,”

¹¹¹ Dr. Williams’s Library, Ms 24.7, p. 11, 17, 23(2)-24.

but separated they would give “little heat,” “hardly keep fire,” “cool,” and soon “go quite out.” As in Psalm 27:17, like iron or knives whetted on each other they would “sharpen” and put an “edge” on each other. They would “stir up” graces in each other, and “quicken” each other’s spirits. Obviously such beneficial communion dovetailed perfectly with the ends of fasting. William Gouge advised about “extraordinary prayer” as in fasts in the Bible that: “Mutual assistance of saints makes prayers much more powerful and effectual then otherwise they would be.” This was because “the fervor of one man’s spirit joined with another is as fire put to fire whereby the heat is much greater.”¹¹² From the perspective of the social scientist, English Calvinists counted on group psychology to evoke emotions that were contagious in the constructed environment of fasts. Also, shared trial bonded people and increased a sense of community.

The group dynamic also pressured the godly to compare themselves with and demonstrate to others their progress in sanctification, and the graces and spiritual gifts they possessed. Describing unauthorized puritan fasts, the separatist Henry Barrow remarked that after a fast on their way home or at supper that puritans would speak of nothing “but how excellently such a man and such a man did.”¹¹³ On August 23, 1665 Isaac Archer noted in his diary that he went on a Wednesday to Colonel Charles Fleetwood’s in Feltwell upon invitation of Thomas Taylor, former minister of Bury. The family had set that day apart for fasting and prayer, perhaps for the plague then raging, and they asked him to join them. Archer noted:

“the Colonel himself prayed in a most heavenly manner, and Mr. Taylor preached very notably, and I prayed with them, but was grieved at my own deadness, and that I could

¹¹² J. Downname, *Conflict*, p. 387. J. Downname, *Guide*, p. 658. Gouge, *Arrowes*, p. 252. Attersoll, *Ninevah*, first pagination, p. 94. Francis Cheynell, *An Account Given to the Parliament* (London, 1647), p. 6-7 (Wing, C3806A).

¹¹³ Leland Carlson (ed.), *The Writings of Henry Barrow 1587-1590* (London, 1962), p. 417.

not pray so meltingly and fluently as others there, though I checked myself for this spiritual pride and envy.”¹¹⁴

Nicolas Thorowgood wrote to Thomas Case to tell him that in her fasts Elizabeth Scott was impressive: “How heavenly would she pray in the family those nights! How fervently, how broken hearted in confessions!”¹¹⁵ Henry Newcome noted of a November 23, 1660 private fast at Mrs. Barton’s that in duty he forgot a line in the verse of the psalm he was using and had to begin on another verse. This mistake “was noted by all the company, and was a breach in the devotion of the whole chorus.” He lamented that such gaffs, especially by those of renown in public, would be talked about in godly circles for a long time.¹¹⁶ Reputation though did not always impress most. Whether he was holding up Christ’s teaching that the last would be first, or just inspired by the efforts of Christians growing in grace, Vavasor Powell remarked: “I often found my heart in days of humiliation, more affected and melted by the prayer of weaker then stronger Christians.”¹¹⁷ The godly also compared emotional outcomes of fasts to see how they measured up. On a fast day, September 6, 1665 Isaac Archer opined in his diary:

“On such occasions of humiliation my heart would be much let out, and after that, or any other performances, my soul would be sad for a while, and I used to be in a serious frame as having something sticking upon me, or that I had done no better, or could get my heart no humbler, or from a sense of what I had said or heard; whereas others used to be cheerful just after duties, it may be because they relied more upon God for hearing and answering the requests put up to Him.”¹¹⁸

One particular tension among the godly in private fasts was between the duty to edify others and the need to keep one’s fasting secret lest one become a “hypocrite” seeking human praise. Also, the godly arguably were eager to demonstrate their

¹¹⁴ Storey (ed.), *Diaries*, p. 106.

¹¹⁵ Case, *Excellent*, second pagination, p. 110.

¹¹⁶ Richard Parkinson (ed.), *The Autobiography of Henry Newcome* (Chetham Society, 1852), volume 26, sub-volume 1, p. 133.

¹¹⁷ Edward Bagshaw (the younger), *The Life and Death of Mr. Vavasor Powell* (London, 1671), p. 40 (Wing, B418).

¹¹⁸ Storey (ed.), *Diaries*, p. 107.

diligence to gain the love and esteem of their fellows. Jane Ratcliffe's minister John Ley claimed despite frequent visits to her house, that he could not tell what days she fasted in private until they were passed:

“so observant was she of our savior's rule which was, to fast without an appearance of fasting, Matt[hew] 6:18. But the next day after I could easily discern by the debility or faintness of her speech more than ordinary (as of Jacobs wrestling by his halting, Gen[esis] 32:31) that she had spent her spirits in spiritual exercises the day before.”¹¹⁹

While Ratcliffe likely was fatigued, one suspects she may not have hid it as well as she could to impress her godly pastor.

Further insights into the fast day experiences and prescriptive literature previously discussed can be gained from understanding a critical strand of thought running through them: assurance of election. What English Calvinists took as signs of “unfeigned faith and repentance” were identical to all the focal points of fasts. They included being humble, amendment, hatred of sin, love of Christ, desire for the Word, being weaned from “love of the world,” desire for “heavenly things,” conflict between the flesh and the spirit, sorrow for sin, desire for righteousness, obedience to God's commandments, and love of the godly. More specifically, William Perkins, Andrew Willet, and John Jewel argued that desire for humiliation and fasting was among the “fruits” and “effects” of faith, and along with prayer and alms “testimonies” of our justification. George Downname argued that “rightly performed” fasting “affordeth a good testimony to our conscience, that the promise belongeth to us.” Of course, he referred here to “the promise of God in Christ.”

In addition, Perkins, Richard Stock, and other Calvinists also argued that “true repentance,” the major goal of a fast, was a sure sign one was a “child of God” as it only

¹¹⁹ Ley, *Patterne*, p. 79.

arose from justifying faith. Also, “true repentance” only came from “saving grace” as a “gift of God” not as a result of human effort. Thus, the worst possible condition for people was to be “insensible” of sin under God’s wrath. To be so was a sure sign that God had given them over to sin, damnation, and likely destruction on Earth. So we can now understand more fully the pressures for extreme emotion in fasts. Fasts helped make the inner soul visible so one could assess one’s status. In short, fasts shored up assurance and thereby more sharply defined those who understood themselves to be godly.

A major complication for English Calvinists though was the problem of “temporary faith” giving rise to “temporary repentance.” They believed a person could have some “stirring” of conscience while divine wrath hung over them, but once the storm had passed they would return to their sin. The archetype here was Ahab who repented in his famous fast only from fear of punishment. Thus, he only received a temporal blessing. The key to “true repentance” was “godly sorrow” which arose from hatred of sin and of offending God. By contrast, “worldly sorrow,” which was appropriate but insufficient, arose from fear of punishment. Thus, the godly had yet another motive for introspection to determine from whence their repentance came.

Paradoxically, “comfort” in assurance of election came from teetering on the brink of despair in “true repentance” and “godly sorrow.” Contemporaries reveled in the contradiction of Christians casting themselves down to be exalted in Christ, of tears leading to joy, of fasting leading to feasting. Biblical texts like Psalm 126:5 and Zachariah 8:19 were understandably favorites in fasts.¹²⁰ More often than not though

¹²⁰ J. Downname, *Warfare*, p. 238-45. Francis Roberts, *Believers Evidences for Eternall Life* (London, 1655)(Wing R1579). Scudder, *Daily Walke*, p. 129-36. Jenison, *Newcastles*, p. 140-42. *Homilies*, part 2, p. 247-48, 255, 476. A. Harsnet, *Summons*, p. 11-12, 18, 28-30, 36-7, 51-4, 67-8, 72-3. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 159. Perkins, *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 157, 233, 246, 301, 317-18.

English Calvinists found themselves as in a favorite saying of the time: “betwixt hope and fear.” This liminal state of pregnant possibilities, great energies, and great resolve made godly people a powerful force.

In his fast sermons, Arthur Hildersam addressed godly anxieties about how much sorrow qualified one as having “truly repented” and “unfeignedly sorrowed and mourned.” After reviewing biblical exemplars who repented with great weeping and mourning, Hildersam anticipated his hearers’ concerns and rhetorically asked if Christians had to match them. He answered that “God’s children” were not all humbled and broken in heart to the same degree. Humiliation was to be proportionate to the sin, and God gave grace in varying measures to the elect such that the Word produced varying yields in them. Nonetheless, all “God’s faithful and true hearted people” were in some measure humbled and mourned for sin. One was in “a woeful case” if one could neither mourn for sin, nor strove to do so. Hildersam then rhetorically asked if one had to weep for sin to be in “the state of grace” and to have “truly repented.” He replied that tears were not always necessary in “unfeigned repentance.” The constitution of the body made some much more unapt to weep than others. Also, grief was sometimes so great that one could neither pray in words nor weep but only express the desires of their hearts in “sighs and groanings” as in Romans 8:26. He warned though “if the constitution of thy body will serve thee to weep for other things and yet thou couldst never weep for thy sins, surely thy case is fearful.” This caution clearly excluded few from crying in fasts.

Stock, *Repentance*, p. 1, 13-19, 22, 26, 49-50, 125, 136-42, 150-52, 155, 167-75, 199-240, 261, 267. Leighton, *Speculum*, p. 273-76. Case, *Morning*, p. 359-64, 385. Ussher, *Body*, p. 331-33, 337, 388. Clapham, *Pestilence*, p. 11-13. Wakeman, *Jonahs*, p. 73-4. Perkins, *Works* (1631), volume 2, p. 14. Guildhall Library, MS 204, p. 61, 267. D. Rogers, *Treatises*, p. 134 (STC 21173). John Beadle, *The Journal or Diary of a Thankful Christian* (London, 1656), p. 45-6 (Wing B1557). Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 62-4, 95-8, 106, 108-11, 114-17, 134, 146. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 7, 10, 30-1, 38-42, 53-4, 59. Wilkinson, *Fast*, p. 33. Willet, *Synopsis*, p. 756.

Hildersam though also gave “signs and notes” to discern if one “soundly” mourned, was “rightly” humbled, and therefore in the “state of grace” with the “saving sorrow of God’s elect” even if lacking tears. He saw two problems. First, people were commonly like those in Isaiah 58:3. They were “hypocrites” who wrongly thought themselves “rightly humbled” and to have “rightly sorrowed.” Second, many of “God’s children” who were “true mourners” were apt to doubt their repentance. Therefore, one had to know how to distinguish humiliation and sorrow that was “sincere and saving” from that which was “counterfeit.” Like others, Hildersam stressed the penitent to mourn chiefly from “godly sorrow” for the evil of sin and offending God, rather than from “worldly sorrow” for punishment on ourselves.¹²¹

In practice, the godly often applied the narrative structure of the swing from despair to assurance to interpret their fast day experiences. Fasts were a comedy where the protagonist overcomes difficulties to attain a cherished desire, and thereby finds a happy ending. For example, Nehemiah Wallington wrote of a fast on Wednesday, January 25, 1643: “although kneeling down with a hard heart, yet I did rise with a melting heart.” On a January 11, 1642 private fast he commented: “I find most comfort when my heart is most humbled and joy in my heart when tears are in mine eyes.” Philip Henry in his diary exclaimed of one fast: “If sowing in tears be so sweet, what then will the harvest be, when I shall reap in joy. Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and will, in due time, heal all diseases.” Correspondingly, Elizabeth Scott had a private fast “to seek the Lord, and humble myself for my failings.” She noted the result was joy: “God did sweetly melt my heart, and helped me to pray, and made it a comfortable day.” She had a similar fast by herself noting it was “to humble my soul

¹²¹ Hildersam, *Fasting*, p. 86-91, 130-43.

before God, and renew my repentance, and seek help and direction from Him.” This fast too was a success as she assessed: “my God made it a sweet day unto me.” Most explicitly, Samuel Rogers concluded of a Wednesday, November 16, 1636 fast: “the Lord thaws my heart sweetly; and I can lie down in some sweet assurance of acceptance through Christ.” So strong was his comfort, that on November 17 he could write that there was “some effect yet remaining upon my heart of the fast, my soul looks yet to the house of mourning.” But, as we saw before, fasts could fail to produce the desired emotional experience. Of a June 18, 1657 private fast, Philip Henry noted he had “much deadness” and “many distractions.” He thus worried: “T’is a sad sign I am in great measure if not wholly carnal that I taste no more of sweetness in duties.”¹²² So fasts could also be a tragedy, though as we have seen the godly often interpreted such a narrative as a subplot in a larger comedy.

Not surprisingly, tears were a focal point in practice not just prescription. Elizabeth Hoyle often came out of “her days of humiliation in secret” into her family “speaking of her sins, with eyes as full of tears as may be.” In October, 1643 Lady Mildmay, wife of Sir Henry Mildmay, at church on a fast day supposedly “so wasted her eyes that day in beholding the face of the preacher” that she mistakenly put a 20s gold piece in the collection for the ministers of Ireland rather than 1s. Nehemiah Wallington wanted tears in fasts so much that he worried about making an “idol” of them and taking pride in them. Similarly, Richard Rogers noted January 12-13, 1588 that he had tears, “as pathological as at most times,” in his prayer at the beginning of the January 11 public

¹²² BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 65r, 63r-v. Williams (ed.), *Henry*, p. 41. Case, *Excellent*, second pagination, p. 28, 31. Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 179. Lee (ed.), *Henry*, p. 51. John Bruen found so much “joy and comfort” in the “holy duties” of fasts (and Lord’s days) that he wished every day was one “for then I should be well.” (Hinde, *Bruen*, p. 214 (misnumbered 212)).

fast, but lamented “the Lord hath humbled me since that.” He concluded: “I see there was good cause why the Lord denied me the grace of weeping in my sermons at our fast, which I had hoped for, seeing I had been very like to have abused it.” He believed part of the reason was “that I somewhat pleased and satisfied myself in my days work.” Aside from themselves, godly clergy also were to move their hearers to tears. In prayer, especially in fasts, the puritan minister John Murcot (1623-54) purportedly was “copious, enlarged, spiritual, powerful, to the melting of the congregation into tears and sighs.”¹²³

The commonness of tears and gesture among puritans in fasts led critics to satirize them. Richard Carter pronounced:

“Behold, when they do pray or fast,
Their hands and eyes to skies they cast,
Sighing foole-lowd, grone glout, and lower,
Wringing a crabbed face most sower.”

Royalists derided Hugh Peters as “the pulpit-buffoon” who was “skilled to move the rabble by mimical gestures.”¹²⁴

The godly also took up the prescription to fast when one needed blessings like assurance.¹²⁵ Sir Simonds D’Ewes claimed that in 1627 at Albury Lodge he came to

¹²³ Birchall, *Non-Pareil*, p. 11. Robin Jeffs (ed.), *The English Revolution III: Newsbooks I: Oxford Royalist* (London, 1971), volume 2, p. 167. BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 134r-v, 145r. Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 61.13* (M.M. Knappen typescript), p. 55-7. Winter, Chambers, Eaton, Caryl, Manton (eds.), *Murcot*, “Moses in the Mount,” p. 27. Henry Scudder wrote of William Whately in private family fasts: “At which times he did exceed himself in pouring out his soul to God in most abundant and most free confessions of sin, and expressions of sorrow for sin, with tears and with earnestness of petition for pardon and grace, and for the good of the churches of God, but for our whole state and church of England more specially and particularly.” (Whately, *Prototypes*, “The Life and Death of M. Whately.”)

¹²⁴ Richard Carter, *The Schismatic Stigmatized* (London, 1641), p. 17 (Wing C664). Richard Perrinchief, *The Royal Martyr: Or, The History of the Life and Death of King Charles I* (London, 1693), p. 206 (Wing P1603). At the December 22, 1648 “mock-fast” of the two houses of parliament at St. Margaret’s, Westminster, Peters “acted” his “comic sermon.” He likened the army to Moses leading the people from Egyptian bondage. He asked himself how it was to be done and said it was not yet revealed to him. He then covered his eyes with his hands, and laid his head on a cushion until the people fell into laughter and awoke him. He then cried out he had it by revelation that the army had to root up monarchy in Britain, France, and other kingdoms. (*Anarchia Anglicana: Or the History of Independency* (London, 1660), part 2, p. 49-50 (Thomason Tracts, E.1052[2]).

¹²⁵ Perkins, *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 157. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 10, 30.

know the use and benefit of private fasts performed “alone in secret” or with family members. He began his “secret fasting,” which he noted he practiced ever since, searching for “signs” and “marks” of his election to gain assurance. To finish a whopping 64 signs of assurance (including the graces of knowledge, faith, hope, love, zeal, patience, humility, joy, repentance, obedience to God and the magistrate, mercy, and good works) took D’Ewes the greater part of “some threescore days of fasting.” He finished up in private fasts on Saturday, December 29, 1627 and January 19, 1628, and remarked that the sum of assurance consisted in having a “lively faith” and a “godly life.” From December 17, 1627 D’Ewes’s wife asked to join him in “like days of humiliation and fasting” to search for signs of her election. With his assistance, she finished assessing her marks in their days of “conjoined fasting and humiliation together” on Saturday, June 27, 1629.¹²⁶

The godly also joined together in fasts for those struggling for assurance. One such example is the death bed struggle of one Throckmorton, an account of which his brother penned c.1637 at the request of other godly people. Some leading puritan clergy including Dod, Sibbes, Burges, Harris, Wheatlie, and Winston visited Throckmorton to convince him of his election from scripture texts and evidence in his life. Throckmorton claimed he could muster a degree of rational assent to his salvation from this knowledge, but he wanted to “see one glimpse of His favor, shining upon my poor soul,” for God “to show Himself to my soul,” and to “feel” that God was a “loving Father” to him. Dod

¹²⁶ Halliwell (ed.), *D’Ewes*, vol. 1, p. 352-54, 362-63, 369, 375, 414. D’Ewes claimed the “religious converse” at Albury Lodge “much enlarged” his knowledge and piety. Albury Lodge in Albury Hertfordshire was the house of his wife’s aunt Brograve who was the youngest daughter of Thomas Barnardiston. She was a godly woman and ran a godly household that influenced D’Ewes who already had godly influence in his upbringing. D’Ewes’s wife was also related to the Barnardiston’s through her mother. (Ibid., vol. 1, p. 352-53, 95, 104, 120-21, 137, 141, 249, 317, 350)

tried to reassure him that even if such feeling was absent, the evidence of his election was clear and abundant. Still not convinced, Throckmorton strongly desired what he termed the “ordinance of absolution” as necessary “to the confirmation of his comfort, and peace of soul.” What he meant was for Dod “to set apart a whole day, for prayer and fasting for me, with four or five ministers as Mr. Harris, Mr. Wheatlie, Mr. Cleaver, and Mr. Winston.” From his memory and his spiritual diary, he would give account of his life and confess all his sins. He would then accept their joint resolution, by the Spirit of God, about his “spiritual estate before God” or “condition before God.” He affirmed that it performed “according to the pure institution of Christ” and administered “faithfully and rightly,” God would be “present” with the ministers in it, bless it, “speak comfort” to his soul, and “shine” on him with mercy and peace. At the least, he would be more at rest knowing he had used all the “ordinances” known “to find Him.” Dod responded that Throckmorton’s request was “very godly and holy” and not to be denied. He wished, however, that Throckmorton would rest assured on the testimony he had given and labor by himself for assurance. Dod was unable to be present at the fast but promised: “yet will I join the same day with my son Timothy in private for you, in fasting and prayer, and will be as earnest with the Lord for you, as if I were present at your bed side with the rest.” They appointed the following Saturday for the fast, and gave notice “to London to many worthies to join their power at the same day.”¹²⁷ Throckmorton’s desire to confirm election with an emotional experience - in modern slang the “warm fuzzies” - is understandable given the previous discussion. His story is further testimony to the exceptional power fasts had for contemporaries. Fasts supposedly offered more

¹²⁷ Oxford University, Bodleian, MS Rawlinson D 1350, fol. 261r-264v. For more on godly clergy advising that when feeling was absent to seek assurance in God’s promises and remembrance of former mercies and the love of God to them., see: J. Downname, *Warfare*, p. 529-37.

immediate access to God and a more effective means to sway Him. Their intense devotions, and in this case the added heat of godly company, heightened emotions too.

Throckmorton's story of fasts for assurance was not unique. Jasper Heartwell's eyewitness account of Joan Drake's despair of her salvation in deep sense of God's wrath for her sin, and supposed demonic possession is similar. In the final weeks of her life, Drake alternated between euphoria of salvation and despair. During a "private fast" for her, she went to sleep and woke in "a very mild gentle temper." Coming out of this "private fast" two days before her death "she revives again, maintains her grounds, former joys, and feeling; from thence until her death, remaining in a silent rapture of joys." Moreover, capturing the godly narrative of repentance detailed above, Heartwell referred to the events as a "tragic-comedy" and "trage-comical."¹²⁸

The language and narratives regarding the concept of "affliction" were also key to self-understanding in fasts. English Calvinists affirmed that the "time of fasting" was the "time of affliction." The "special end" of a fast was to "afflict" our souls before God. Indeed, the goals of afflicting oneself by fasting were the same as God's for sending judgments. In prosperity, people tended to forget God and His commandments, and rest in "carnal security." Thus, God acted as a "heavenly physician" giving "bitter medicines" to cure. Affliction humbled and softened the heart so it was receptive to the Word preached. It worked to "stir up" grace in Christians and restore their spiritual "heat." It was a means to convert sinners to God especially by giving sight and sense of sin, mortifying the flesh, and weaning them from "love of the world" to the "joys of

¹²⁸ John Hart, *The Firebrand Taken Out of the Fire* (London, 1654), "to the reader," p. 11-14, 23, 26; 139-53, 159-61, 165-68; 3, 131 (Wing H949)

heaven.” Afflictions were “helps” or “means” to “purify,” “purge,” and “refine” Christians of corruptions like dross from gold in a fire.

The narrative of affliction was one and the same with repentance. From near despair over sin, Christians could find “comfort” in God’s “gracious promises” to those who were humbled for sin. Additionally, worldly loss was spiritual gain. The Lord would send “saving graces” (faith, repentance, hope, love, fear, patience, humility, fear, charity, obedience, fervency, wisdom) to His people in their “spiritual exercise.” God and angels would specially protect and support them in “the day of trouble.” He would send His people strength, peace, joy, consolation, and “refresh” them “with the sweet feeling of His love and comforts of His Holy Spirit.” Indeed, “tribulation” brought them “the company of God Himself.” These benefits dovetailed perfectly with those of fasts.

Rather than comfort though, affliction often evoked acute anxiety, intense self-examination for evidence of faith, and a strong need to identify oneself as among the godly elect. English Calvinists argued that God sent affliction to “try” His people. It was the Lord’s “experiment” or “test” to see who would be faithful to Him in suffering. Also, God intended the faithful to “demonstrate” to the world the spiritual graces He had sent them, and the trueness of their love and service to Him. They were to “show” themselves to be “God’s children,” and “manifest” their faith and virtues to edify others. William Perkins even called judgments “winnowing times” where God separated the “chaff” from the “wheat.” John Downname and Robert Bolton used the same metaphor. Downname also affirmed that tribulation was a “touch-stone” to discern “time serving hypocrites” from “true professors and sincere Christians.” All the godly feared they might have temporary faith and fall away under affliction as in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:5-6). God

sent affliction to address the chronic problem that human beings could only see the outward shows not the invisible secrets of the soul. Many people misjudged having “saving graces” and thought themselves “children of God” when they really remained “servants of sin and slaves of Satan.” Further, John Downname even argued that affliction made distinctions between “weaker” and “stronger” Christians. He argued that while every “small blast” of the wind of affliction winnowed the “wheat” from the “chaff,” when a “strong blast” blew it made a “second division” between “lighter corn” and “purer wheat and weightier grain.” In short, fasts in response to affliction pressured the godly not only to show themselves as elect, but to compete with each other to discern who had the most grace.

Affliction also had another narrative strand that equally forced the godly to question their election. The Lord sent the same affliction on the elect and reprobate but with very different intentions for each. For the reprobate, God was “punishing” them out of wrath to satisfy justice as a “severe judge,” “just judge,” and “righteous judge.” For the elect, God was “chastising” or “correcting” them out of love as a “gracious Father.” The godly had to interpret God’s motive towards themselves by how they responded to affliction. The elect bore their cross “quietly,” “meekly,” “mildly,” “peaceably,” “willingly,” and “cheerfully.” With Job as their “pattern,” they knew God did it for their salvation. They could do so as under “chastisement” God sent them graces such as “joy,” “patience,” and “comfort.” Also, they could thereby forsake sin and turn to righteousness. Any distress for sin was really a comfort showing the working of justification in humiliation and repentance. Of course, they also humbled themselves and rightly observed fasts. Indeed, John Downname claimed that if fasting and prayer did not

avert or remove judgments, they would change their nature: “they shall cease to be punishments, which are inflicted to satisfy God’s justice, and shall be unto us the chastisements of a gracious father, signs of our adoption, testimonies of His love.” By contrast, the reprobate would “murmur” and “repine.” These wicked “worldlings” under “punishment” would grow worse, blaspheme God, and despair.

To ward off despair and offer hope in difficult times, English Calvinists painstakingly assured, at length and repeatedly, that affliction was a sign of election (if one improved under it with true humiliation, prayer, and promise of amendment). Hebrews 12:6-8 and Revelation 3:19 were the key texts to show that the Lord sent “fatherly chastisements” to His “sons” or “children” whom he loved, while He neglected to do so for “bastards” whom He hated. Thus, “continual prosperity” in the world was a sign of reprobation. Further, they cited a slew of biblical texts to argue God’s children would enter heaven only by enduring afflictions and suffering with and for Christ in the world (2 Timothy 2:12 and 3:12; John 16:33; Matthew 5:11-12 and 16:24-25; 1 Peter 2:21 and 4:12-13; Luke 6:22-23 and 9:23-24; Acts 5:41 and 14:22; Romans 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:6). Thus, they were to “rejoice in tribulation” as a sign of election and in anticipation of their reward in heaven. John Downname could thus speak of “joyful mourning or mournful joy.”

Crucially, when affliction constituted “persecution” by Christ’s enemies a self-understanding as a martyr was forged. As we shall see, this self-identification was a critical aspect of puritan-conformist relations, and it ebbed and flowed in relation to changes in royal policy and the make-up of the episcopate. In particular, biblical texts like John 15:19-20, James 4:4, and 1 John 2:15 taught that “friends of the world” and

“friends unto God” were implacable enemies. One could not “love the world” and “love the Father” and vice-versa. The “hatred of the world” was “comfortable evidence” that we were “beloved of God” and “the true disciples of Jesus Christ, whom He hath chosen out of the world.” Contrarily, if “the world” loved us we should suspect ourselves. So under certain circumstances, puritans could come to identify themselves as the elect whom the bishops, as “the world” or “worldly men,” subjected to “persecutions” to discourage them from “the ways of godliness” and “the duties of a godly life.”¹²⁹

The importance of the narratives and language associated with affliction is evident in fasts. Two examples give relatively complete overviews of how the godly interpreted their suffering and accepted it as a call for reform. Owen Stockton wrote in his diary on October 24, 1665: “I set apart that day to humble my soul by fasting and prayer, that I might obtain from God a sanctified use both of national and personal afflictions. . .” He spent a good part of the day meditating how to make “a right improvement of these corrections.” From various Bible texts, he concluded God’s

¹²⁹ Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 168, 172. Wilkinson, *Fast*, p. 41-2, 44. Holland, *Fasting*, title. Hildersam, *Fasting*, p. 91-8, 103-4, 117. J. Downname, *Guide*, p. 356-63, 674, 761-77. Ussher, *Body*, p. 388. G. Abbot, *Jonah*, p. 214-16. Attersoll, *Ninevah*, first pagination, p. 100, 139-41. Perkins, *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 125; second pagination, p. 141-42, 283, 288-89, 452, 561. R.Y. [Richard Younge], *The Whole Duty of a Christian: Or, The Character of a True Believer* (London, 1653), p. 25 (Wing Y195). John Downname, *Consolations for the Afflicted* (London, 1613), p. 94-9, 106, 111-18, 143-48, 246-306, 387-515, 548-637, 671-713 (STC 7140). J. Downname, *Warfare*, p. 157, 161. Bunny, *Booke*, p. 219-70. Robert Linaker, *A Comfortable Treatise for the Reliefe of Such as are Afflicted in Conscience* (London, 1625), fifth edition, p. 13-16, 38-9, 194, 201-6 (STC 15642). Christopher Love, *A Treatise of Effectuall Calling and Election* (London, 1658), p. 120 (Wing L3180). Essex Record Office, MS D/DBa F5/2, p. 15, 17, 27, 37, 117, 119, 121, 129. Guildhall Library, MS 204, p. 184-89, 204, 207-10, 213, 215, 271, 299, 313, 316-18, 454. BL, Add MS 4275, fol. 167, 169. BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 26v, 31v-33v, 34v-35r, 92r-v, 133r, 157r-159r. Oxford University, Bodleian, MS Rawlinson D 1350, fol. 262v. Lake, *Sermons*, third pagination, p. 203. Lambeth Palace Library, MS 848, p. 72-6. Edward Dering, *Certaine Godly and Verie Comfortable Letters* (London, 1614), p. 11-12, 18-19, 35 (STC 6683.3). Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 1-7, 10-11, 13, 16-18, 24-5 (STC 3247). Phineas Fletcher, *Joy in Tribulation* (London, 1632), p. 26-45, 51, 54-5 (STC 11080). *Homilies*, part 1, p. 77. *The Works of George Gillespe* (Edmonton, Canada, 1991 reprint), volume 1, p. 15-17. Leighton, *Speculum*, p. 205, 277. Topsell, *Times*, p. 187, 189. Jeffs (ed.), *Fast Sermons*, volume 1, p. 104 (subscript pagination). John Bond, *Occasus Occidentalis: Or, Job in the West* (London, 1645) (Thomason Tract, E.25[22]), p. 2. William Perkins, *A Faithfull and Plaine Exposition upon the 2. Chapter of Zephaniah* (London, 1609), p. 127-132 (STC 19708).

chastisements were to conform him to “God’s image” and foster obedience to “God’s will.” He went through the Bible and made a long list of divine attributes with corresponding verses, and another long list of verses to guide his thoughts, affections, and actions. He resolved to pursue each one to “imitate” and “walk with” God in “holiness.”¹³⁰ Second, the parliamentary army captain Adam Eyre in a January 12, 1648 private fast desired God to deliver him from dangers or “sanctify” them to his good, but he then reasoned:

“I confess, O my God, I have hitherto sought for and labored to find quiet here, but I now see it is thy will I shall not; for thou hast strewed the way to thy heavenly habitation with manifold crosses and calamities; wherefore, do, O do thou enable me with patience to trace the steps of thy Son, my mediator, who hath led the same way to thy celestial mansion; and grant me, it be thy holy will, thy Spirit, in such a measure as may enable me to discern, and also to walk in that way which shall be acceptable to thee.”

He also followed the model of that other great exemplar in affliction: “if it be thy will to bring me into the same condition with Job, O grant me the patience of Job; but thy sacred Spirit is alone sufficient for me, wherefore I do here commit myself, soul and body, into thy hands, only entreating Thee to have mercy upon me, and that for my mediator, Christ Jesus, His sake.”¹³¹

A sense of receiving graces from the Holy Spirit was also evident. Elizabeth Scott often kept fasts “to seek the Lord” for her children when they were afflicted. Her diary entries show her striving for patience and her sense of receiving strength and support from God through her trials. On one such occasion she wrote: “This day I was at a fast, and God came sweetly in and melted my heart, and made His promise good, that they that wait on Him shall renew their strength, God sweetly answered my prayer in a mercy for one of my children.” In another fast for her children she wrote: “God carried

¹³⁰ Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 24.7, p. 32-5. Fairfax, *Stockton*, p. 12-14.

¹³¹ *Yorkshire Diaries*, p. 88-9.

me through the duty with some sweet meltings and incomes.” Indeed, in her fast day exercises Scott frequently thought God was upholding her: “God did sweetly melt my heart and helped me to pray,” “the Lord did help me,” “the Lord sweetly assisted me,” “the Lord did graciously assist me,” “the Lord did much assist and help me,” “my God did help me,” and “God gave me some sweet assistance.”¹³²

Samuel Rogers also found the Lord generous in giving strength and patience. In his fast in “private” on Wednesday, December 14, 1636 he wrote: “The Lord carries me on through the day and gives me strength. He humbles my soul, and brings me to stoop. But I can not find the thawing, and melting that I would. But I will wait, and hearken what the Lord will say, for He will speak peace.”¹³³ Nehemiah Wallington found his heavenly father giving him comfort and aid. Of a June 28, 1642 fast he noted he had “some comfort” in his performance. The sermon was on 1 King 8:47-8 that if we were humbled under God’s “afflicting hand” we will find comfort from His “helping hand.” He also found communion with the Lord. Of the July 26, 1643 fast, he noted: “I tell you when I think the Lord leaves me and He doth me hurt then He is nearest to me doing me most good.”¹³⁴

A strong sense of fatherly corrections is evident in Sir Simonds D’Ewes fasts. On July 9, 1631 D’Ewes first born son (born June 24) was deathly ill. D’Ewes noted: “I had attended him, fasting the greatest part of the day.” He interpreted this affliction as a means to humble him for the sin of pride in the victories of Gustavus Adolphus and the wealth he enjoyed after his father’s death. He claimed he would have been in greater

¹³² Case, *Excellent*, second pagination, p. 25-36, 71; see also second pagination, p. 109-110.

¹³³ Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 187.

¹³⁴ BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 34r, 131v.

danger of the sin of pride had God not taken his dearest child.¹³⁵ Unfortunately, this was not the last child he lost supposedly for his sins.

Saturday, May 7, 1636 again found D'Ewes in fasting and prayer for the life of his ill child. The child, his only son (b. July, 1634), subsequently died May 9. Again, D'Ewes interpreted this affliction as sent "to humble me more and more, and to wean me from the love of the profits and preferments of this life." He feared God would deny him a male heir. Interestingly, we can see not only obedient acceptance of God's will, but hints of a martyr self-understanding:

"I began to consider that a higher providence might ere long call me to suffer for His name and Gospel, or might prepare a way for my passage into America. I desired in all to submit [to] God's will, and often implored this mercy of Him - that I might never suffer as an evil doer, and that He would never lay more upon me in suffering for a good cause than I should be able to bear."¹³⁶

Other examples show the godly building on a sense of the growth of the graces of faith and hope in God's good intentions for them rather than looking to worldly means. On April 5, 1665 Owen Stockton wrote in his diary: "I set apart that day for fasting and prayer on behalf of my daughter Elianor that had been so long sick and in the evening had my faith revived from Isa[iah] 44:3 'I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed.'" Elizabeth Scott kept a private fast alone "to seek help from God, in the great strait I was in; for no power but His could help me out and deliver me." On the same issue she subsequently kept another private fast "with others" and wrote "my heart was out of frame and very heavy, and perplexed, but God came in and melted, and made the duty very sweet; and at night, a sweet, quiet, and believing waiting frame came upon my spirit."¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Halliwell (ed.), *D'Ewes*, vol. 2, p. 46-7.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 145-46.

¹³⁷ Dr. Williams's Library, MS 24.7, p. 1. Fairfax, *Stockton*, p. 97-8. Case, *Excellent*, second pagination, p. 27.

In fasts, the concept of affliction also fostered identification that created a sense of community. In accord with Hebrews 13:3 and Romans 12:15-16, Christians were to partake in each other's afflictions as they were "fellow members" of Christ's mystical body. In this "spiritual union," they were to have "fellow-feeling" of the afflictions of other members. That the church's compassion would bring forth fervent prayers for those suffering was to be a "great comfort" to them. Such prayer was "most powerful" with God. Thus godly people were to have fasts for "the afflictions of their brethren" and others in the church as "the members of one mystical body." Such "love of the brethren" was a key sign of election. Being "feeling members" was "evidence" of election as we were thereby "lively members of Christ's body." To fast for other churches was "to witness our communion of saints" and "to shew a fellow feeling of their sighs and sorrows." The godly were to have private fasts when faithful servants had "to bear Christ's cross in times of persecution." If one did not fast for the "afflictions of Joseph" then one had no part in the "communion of saints." The afflictions of others also gave occasion for English Protestants to renew efforts to use God's blessings such as peace, plenty, and the Gospel to good effect. A favorite fast sermon text was Luke 13:5 "Except ye repent you shall likewise perish." God sent judgments on others "as examples and instructions unto us" whereby we see ourselves in them "as in a glass" to know the punishment we deserved.¹³⁸ Indeed, Samuel Torshell c.1633 called for fasts for "the Church" and warned "the nations that serve not the Church shall be utterly wasted."¹³⁹

¹³⁸ J. Downame, *Consolations*, p. 600-1, 619. Francis Roberts, *Believers Evidences for Eternall Life* (London, 1655), passim (Wing R1579). Guildhall Library, MS 204, p. 134, 298, 424-26. Attersoll, *Ninevah*, first pagination, p. 58. Hildersam, *Fasting*, p. 3-9. Wilkinson, *Fast*, p. 49. Holland, *Fasting*, p. 31-2, 43-4. Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 16-17, 214, 230-31, 255, 334-39. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 50-3. PRO, SP 25/76A, p. 63; *A Declaration of His Highness* (London, 1655)(Thomason Tracts, E.1064[54]). Ussher, *Vox*, title, sig. A1r-A2r, sig. B4r.

¹³⁹ Torshell, *Humiliation*, second pagination, p. 7, 9-11.

Fasts for Protestant churches on the continent were particularly common as English Calvinists believed the Church of England to be part of a larger reformed church. These fasts not only expressed this sense of identification but helped to create it. The godly frequently cited Nehemiah 1:3-4 and Esther 4:16-17 as teaching the need for fasts for God's people in affliction. Throughout the period here under study, a variety of fasts took place in England for the sufferings of "our poor brethren," "the poor people of God," "those who profess the true reformed religion together with us," "those of the religion in foreign parts," "our poor brethren and fellow members in the body of Christ," "the oppressed witnesses of Christ," "the professors of the truths of Christ," "the remnant," the "people of God," and "poor Protestants." Naturally, these fasts primarily concerned Protestants who suffered "for Christ's sake" under Catholic persecution in Spain under the Inquisition, France, the Savoy, the Low Countries, Holland, and Germany. Other fasts concerned New England, Ireland, Sweden, and the confederacy of the Elector of Saxony.¹⁴⁰ As we shall see in later chapters, puritans and Laudians would

¹⁴⁰ BL, Add MS 38,492 (55), fol. 98. BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 118v. Wallington noted of the November 29, 1643 monthly fast that the sermon was on Nehemiah 1:4. The doctrine was: "The sufferings of God's people are great grief unto holy hearts." Hearers were to pattern themselves after John 2:11, Jeremiah 9:1, Isaiah 22:3-5, and 2 Corinthians 11:29 acting as "servants of the same family, children of the same Father, and members of the same body." They were to know themselves to be among the elect because "we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14) and because "When they were sick I was clothed with a sack, humbled myself with fasting" (Psalm 35:12-14). The preacher reprov'd those whose hearts were not moved at the misery of "God's children" as in Germany and Ireland, and who neglected God's command in Romans 12:15. Also, "it is a sign we are but glass eyes, a wooden arm when we are not sinchable [sensible?] of the misery of the Church" (Amos 6:1, 6-7). (ibid., fol. 174v-176r). Dr. Williams's Library, MS 201.12-13, Charles Surman (typescript), *The Records of the Provincial Assembly of London 1647-1660* (unpublished, 1957), p. 147. Oxford University, Bodleian, MS Rawlinson C 597, fol. 146v. Fuller, *Abel*, p. 589. Larkin (ed.), *Proclamations*, vol. 2, p. 193, 221, 759. The private and public fasts in May-June 1655 for the Savoy Huguenots had particular import. In English Protestant historical thought, the "Waldenses" were "famous martyrs" whose profession stretched back to the Apostles. The Waldenses were one of many medieval heresies that Protestants used to trace their lineage when the institutional church supposedly became the false church of the papal antichrist. All the "people of God" in England and Wales were to join "with one heart and lip" on the fast day and give "a liberal collection and contribution." See: *The Barbarous and Inhumane Proceedings Against the Professors of the Reformed Religion Within the Dominion of the Duke of Savoy* (London, 1655)(Wing B687); *A Collection of the Several Papers Sent to His Highness the Lord Protector* (London, 1655) (Thomason Tracts, E.842[11]); Thomas Birch (ed.), *A Collection of the State*

clash over fasts for Protestants on the continent as they had very different understandings of the relation of the Church of England to both them and the Church of Rome.

The affliction narrative also fed into the reality that the Calvinist Reformation was to a large degree a refugee reformation. The experience of exile was a defining characteristic in the Calvinist sense of self. The world was a place of suffering for the godly from which only faith in God's providence offered hope. That hope was grounded on the belief that God's children would have final victory despite temporary suffering and defeat. The presence of Dutch and French exile churches in England, as well as the experience of Marian exile for English Protestants, increased the connection between Calvinist experience, affliction narrative, and fasts. Indeed, the example of Reformed exile churches encouraged puritans and bred fear among Laudians.

Fasts also concerned fellow countrymen as well. Bishop John Jigon in August, 1603 ordered services on ordinary fast days in his diocese out of "tender consideration" for townspeople suffering from the plague in his diocese. He called on ministers to excite the people "(as fellow members of one mystical body) to a brotherlike feeling of this discipline, sent of God for His glory and the reformation of our sins." They were to fast for "our Christian brethren." The Bishop of London, Richard Bancroft, in passing on the king's order for public fasts, called on those in places not infected to take notice of it "being all persons that profess the name of Christ, members of one body and thereby bound, each of us, to have a very sensible feeling of the miseries one of an other."¹⁴¹

Papers of John Thurloe (London, 1742), volume 3, p. 411-13, 431-32, 466-67; PRO, SP 18/97/86; PRO, SP 18/97/87; PRO, SP 18/97/88; *The Perfect Diurnall. . . Armies Monday May 28 – Monday June 4, 1655*, p. 4395-4397 (Thomason Tracts E.842[1]); PRO, SP 25/76A, p. 63; *A Declaration of His Highness* (London, 1655)(Thomason Tracts, E.1064[54])

¹⁴¹ Thomas Barton (transcribed), *The Registrum Vagum of Anthony Harrison*, part 1 (Norfolk Record Society, 1963), volume 32, p. 37-8.

December 14, 1641, the House of Commons moved for a fast “out of a deep sense of the calamity of our countrymen and brethren of Ireland.”¹⁴² On July 26, 1665 Isaac Archer noted in his diary that the plague begun in April 1665 had now led the government to announce monthly fasts. Accordingly, Archer composed sermons on 1 Kings 8:38: “wherein my spirit was much let out in a fellow-feeling with my brethren; and my daily prayer was for them.”¹⁴³ Samuel Torshell c.1633 called for fasts to “entreat for Lancashire and our other counties for whose sake we assemble.” He reproved the “senseless” who claimed to be “members of the body” of the church, yet were not “sensible” of its pain. If they failed to fast and pray, God might smite the nation.¹⁴⁴

Some fasts appear to have been for more localized afflictions rather than ones of national significance. Thomas Mainwaring of Peover and Baddiley, Cheshire noted that on October 31, 1650 he was at Wrenbury “it being a fast day for Shrewsbury and Whitchurch.” Likewise, on November 28, 1650 he was at Acton “it being a fast day for Salop and Whitchurch.”¹⁴⁵ Adam Martindale recalled a public fast day held at Blackley Chapel “on the behalf of poor Manchester.”¹⁴⁶ On a May 2, 1666 fast Ralph Josselin noted “we prayed heartily for Colne and Colchester, and the land, the Lord hear and heal.”¹⁴⁷ Philip Henry kept Thursday, September 14, 1665 as a private fast “for poor London.”¹⁴⁸ Fasts also regarded family members suffering affliction. Philip Henry noted

¹⁴² John Nalson, *An Impartial Collection of the Great Affairs of State* (London, 1682), volume 2, p. 737-38 (Wing N107A).

¹⁴³ Storey (ed.), *Diaries*, p. 105.

¹⁴⁴ Torshell, *Humiliation*, second pagination, p. 7, 9-11.

¹⁴⁵ Cheshire Record Office, DDX 384, p. 55, 57.

¹⁴⁶ Richard Parkinson (ed.), *The Life of Adam Martindale* (Chetham Society, vol. 4, 1845), p. 54.

¹⁴⁷ Macfarlane (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 527.

¹⁴⁸ Parkinson (ed.), *Newcome*, sub-volume 1, p. 153.

of his November 27, 1655 day of “secret fasting” that: “Many special requests were put up in behalf of sundry dear relations.”¹⁴⁹

Significantly, the godly fasted for each other and this helped to forge a sense of community and strong identification among them. On a June 2, 1657 private fast at Joseph Ridgeway’s house, Philip Henry wrote that there were “many petitions put up in my behalf there” because he doubted his abilities as minister, and his progress in sanctification.¹⁵⁰ The puritan Edward Harley writing to his father Sir Robert on February 28, 1654 noted that he kept the monthly fast at Mr. Nalton’s church “where you were affectionately remembered.”¹⁵¹ When apart, the godly often made sure they knew which “public or private days” to keep fasting so they were in devotions at the same time when they promised “to remember one another.”¹⁵² In 1633, the minister Thomas Weld wrote from New England to his former followers in Terling, Essex telling them that “we fast and pray for you, we love you dearly you lie next our hearts. Sorrow we are when we hear any evil betide you, glad when any good.”¹⁵³ Nehemiah Wallington pledged to spend time in prayer and humiliation when he heard of “the afflictions and troubles of God’s children,” and that he would fine himself two-pence to be given to the poor every time he did not.¹⁵⁴ In the 1650s when Margaret, Richard Baxter’s future wife, became gravely ill, the godly were especially concerned because she was a recent convert to their ranks. Baxter and his “praying-neighbors” were “so sorry that such a changed person should presently be taken away before she had time to manifest her sincerity, and do God

¹⁴⁹ Lee (ed.), *Henry*, p. 17.

¹⁵⁰ Lee (ed.), *Henry*, p. 51.

¹⁵¹ *Historical Manuscripts Commission, Fourteenth Report, Appendix, Part II. The Manuscripts of . . . the Duke of Portland* (London, 1894), volume 3, p. 204-5.

¹⁵² Parkinson (ed.), *Newcome*, sub-volume 1, p. 27.

¹⁵³ BL, Sloane MS 922, p. 173.

¹⁵⁴ Guildhall Library, MS 204, p. 35.

any service in the world, that in grief they resolved to fast and pray for her.” From their past experience, they believed a fast would work. Supposedly, the prayers were “extraordinary fervent” and she was “speedily delivered.”¹⁵⁵ As we shall see in later chapters, when puritans came to see themselves as persecuted by church authorities they commonly had fasts for those in trouble. Fasts helped to establish and maintain a ready network of godly people who had a keen sense of each other’s plights and an ability to respond to them.

Fasts usually included alms-giving to the poor and those suffering in war or natural disaster. English Protestants thought God commanded giving alms in scripture (especially Isaiah 58:5-7 and Zachariah 7:9). Also, alms were a “special means” to move God to turn away temporal judgments because good works were the “fruit” of “true faith.” Those who gave alms were “the children of the Highest” and “like God their Father, who is the Father of mercies.” Good works were suited to a fast day to curry God’s favor by loving one’s brethren and dedicating to God’s service earthly goods heretofore abused. Finally, they wanted to guard against the “covetous” saving what they spared “under a pretence of godliness” as a means of self-enrichment.¹⁵⁶

Lady Margaret Hoby noted that a public fast on October 25, 1603 included a collection for the people at Whitby.¹⁵⁷ William Whiteway noted that at weekly fasts July

¹⁵⁵ Richard Baxter, *A Breviate of the Life of Margaret* (London, 1681), p. 8-9 (Wing B1194).

¹⁵⁶ Cambridge University Library, Add MS 3117, fol. 63v. G. Williams, *True Church*, p. 772, 774. Buddle, *Discourse*, p. 42, 48-9, 65, 66 (misnumbered 68), 67 (misnumbered 69). Torshell, *Humiliation*, p. 7. John Boys, *An Exposition of the Dominical Epistles and Gospels, Used in our English Liturgie, Throughout the Whole Yeere* (London, 1610), p. 11 (STC 3458A). Bayly, *Practice*, p. 509-14, 519. J. Downname, *Guide*, p. 677. Ayre (ed.), *Prayers and Other Pieces of Thomas Becon* (Cambridge, 1844), p. 529. Ayre (ed.), *Catechism*, p. 538-39, 545-46. Gardiner, *The Cognizance*, p. 108. Attersoll, *Ninevah*, first pagination, p. 54. Hildersam, *Fasting*, p. 25-6, 48, 53, 65. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 20, 46-7, 58. Perkins, *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 162. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 172 (STC 3247). Thomas Hill, *An Olive Branch of Peace and Accommodation* (London, 1648), p. 36-7 (Wing H2025).

¹⁵⁷ Dorothy Meads (ed.), *Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599-1605* (New York, 1930), p. 207.

20 to October 26, 1625, the town of Dorchester collected for relief of Exeter which was in great distress because of the plague.¹⁵⁸ Parliament's fasts in the 1620s had collections including in 1625 for relief of parishes infected with plague, and in 1628 for the poor. During the Civil War, Parliament occasionally ordered all collections at fasts in London, Westminster and the lines of communication sent for relief of a specific town under Royalist siege and refugees from it. December 8, 1648 the House kept a fast and ordered the collection be given to poor soldiers' widows and wives.¹⁵⁹ During the Irish rebellion in December, 1641 parliament's fast included a public collection for "distressed Protestants" coming out of Ireland.¹⁶⁰ On October 4 and December 6, 1665 public fasts, Ralph Josselin's congregation collected for "poor Colchester." Likewise, a public fast in his congregation on October 10, 1666 collected for London after the great fire. Josselin also noted private fasts taking up collections as the ones on October 25, 1649 and February 20, 1651 for the poor.¹⁶¹ In fasts, the Westminster Assembly of Divines also collected for the poor, maimed soldiers, and others.¹⁶²

As noted before "true repentance" was not just an emotional state, it necessitated "a full conversion and departing from sin," "true reformation," and taking up good. Also, English Calvinists like Owen Stockton held that the "work of a fast" was to leave

¹⁵⁸ David Underdown (ed.), *William Whiteway of Dorchester His Diary 1618 to 1635* (Dorchester Record Society, 1991), volume 12, p. 76.

¹⁵⁹ Francis Relf (ed.), *Notes of the Debates in the House of Lords*, p. 56 (Camden Society, series 3, vol. 42, 1929. Jansson and Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings 1625*, p. 67, 79, 242. Robert Johnson, Mary Keeler, Maija Jansson Cole, William Bidwell (eds.), *Commons Debates 1628*, vol. 5 (Lord's Proceedings 1628), p. 95, 97-9 (New Haven, 1977). Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, volume 6, part 1, p. 1222, 1356. BL, Add MS 21, 935, fol. 262r, 264v.

¹⁶⁰ Willson Coates (ed.), *The Journal of Sir Simonds D'Ewes*, p. 278 (New Haven, 1942).

¹⁶¹ Macfarlane (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 521, 523, 531, 183, 236.

¹⁶² Thompson (ed.), *Minutes*, p. 133. Alex Mitchell and John Struthers (eds.), *Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (Edinburgh, 1874), p. 147, 228. John Rogers Pitman (ed.), *The Whole Works of the Rev. John Lightfoot* (London, 1824), volume 13, "Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines," p. 19, 267. See also: Surman (typescript), *Records*, p. 38-40, 48-9, 78-9, 85, 92-3, 101, 116, 121-22, 127, 135, 162, 166, 172.

wickedness. The church's homily on fasting referred to a fast as a "cleansing day." Indeed, the godly frequently cited Isaiah 58:5 warning not "to hang down the head as a bulrush." That is, returning to sin after judgment, just as a reed that bends in the storm straightens back up after it has passed. In addition to Isaiah 58, Zachariah 7 and Jeremiah 14:12 figured large in teachings that the Lord would not accept fasts without reformation and instead continue or increase judgments. God abhorred such fasts because outward acts of humiliation without reformation were merely "hypocritical shews" and "pride." They were "a mockery of God." As in Joshua 7, a people had to find out the "Achans" and their "accursed things" which brought wrath upon them. Also, as in Deuteronomy 23:14, to restore God's "presence" with a people, the camp had to be "holy" and "pure" with no "pollution." It had to be "purged" of "unclean" and "wicked" things and persons because the Lord was "holy" and would not abide with such.

In short, fasts thus built enormous pressure within godly people to act against evil, and demonstrate their hatred of sin and love of righteousness. If they failed to do so, the godly would think themselves "hypocrites." One's faith was "dead" unless amendment came with repentance. Also, as Nehemiah Wallington reported of Mr. Pawmer's November 30, 1642 fast sermon on Joshua 7:12, if one did not put away the "cursed thing" then "the love of God is not in him."

In fasting and humiliation, the true Christian was not only to reform sin but do so with zeal like Phineas. In particular, zeal was the "spiritual heat" and "holy fire" which arose from love for the service of God and the Church. The concept of "zeal" was another key part of a fast which played a large role in godly self-understanding. Indeed, zeal was an important touchstone to determine if one was elect or not. English Calvinists

argued zeal was a “sign” or “fruit” of “true repentance.” Those with zeal could be assured they had “truly repented” and were saved. The need for zeal thus intensified godly concern to increase their spiritual temperatures in fasts.

Those with zeal would excel in piety, godliness, holiness, and good works. Above all though, those with genuine zeal would defend and promote “God’s cause,” that is, God’s glory and honor, the “true” or “pure” worship and service of God, the Gospel, and “the truth.” Those with “true zeal” and “true love to God” would sorrow and mourn when they could not procure these things or when they saw them in decline or violated. They would oppose any attacks on or slights of these things, including “popery,” “false doctrine,” and the “corruption and wickedness of the times.” Unlike “lukewarm Laodiceans” and “neuters,” the “truly zealous” would gladly lose all for these. Further, due to their “love of God,” the zealous would persevere in this godly course despite all opposition, difficulties, discouragements, and dangers. In particular, those who were “zealous and forward in the way of truth and godliness” would be “scorned and mocked” as “too zealous” and “too forward.” “Satan’s complices” would cast “reproaches and indignities” on them to hinder their efforts. Yet, those who condemned zeal in others, only showed they were void of it themselves. Though, critics could justly accuse of “hypocrisy” those who claimed zeal only to pursue “private ends.” Zeal was to be guided by the Word and according to “true knowledge and faith,” not opinion, fancy, affections, custom, or tradition. All this was vital to fasting because God’s cause was to be the chief care of “God’s people” when humbled in a fast.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 24.7, p. 9. Holland, *Fasting*, p. 59. Perkins, *Works* (1631), volume 2, p. 103; and *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 161-62. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 170. Edward Reyner, *Orders from the Lord of Hostes, For Regulating the Hostes of the Lord* (London, 1646) “to Colonel Edward Rosseter,” p. 1-2, 4, 7-8 (Thomason Tract, E.337[1]). Oxford University, Worcester

English Calvinists placed preaching the Word at the center of their struggle in fasts for “unfeigned repentance,” “sound and saving humiliation,” and “prayer with fervency and faith.” Preaching was a “powerful means” to forge a “humbled,” “broken,” and “soft” heart.¹⁶⁴ Ministers used the language and narratives previously discussed to convert the “heart.” The separatist Henry Barrow described unauthorized puritan fasts as a “stageplay.” Such fasts often had 3-4 sermons one after the other. He claimed puritans organized the preaching in advance: “One of them must play sin, an other the judgments of God, the third repentance, the fourth the Gospel.”¹⁶⁵ The Assembly of Divines in 1644 advised texts for preaching “as may best work the hearts of the hearers to the special business of the day, and most dispose them to humiliation and repentance.”¹⁶⁶ Preachers often set up a conversation with their hearers, or a conversation between individuals with themselves. Thomas Hill in fast sermon proposed to make “a few queries to conscience now, and allow conscience likewise to make some queries to you.” The questions “conscience” raised were to convince one of the guilt of sin. He also raised specter of “hypocrisy” and being a “hypocrite” in repentance before an all knowing God. Expecting at least the godly in his audience to know stock narratives, he noted that many hearing a sermon would leave remarking of the minister: “This man, though a stranger to me, hath read over the story of my life, and as if he had been acquainted with my bosom secrets all my time, I had them discovered to me in this

College, AA.8.3 (127). Oxford University, Worcester College, Clarke MS 18, fol. 41r-v, 50v-51r, 52v. BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 52r-v. G. Abbot, *Jonah*, p. 462, 475-79. King, *Jonas*, p. 485, 490, 501-3. Hildersam, *Fasting*, p. 45-7, 69, 137. Holland, *Fasting*, p. 39-40. Buddle, *Discourse*, p. 32, 36. Stock, *Repentance*, p. 241-51. Case, *Morning*, p. 403. A. Harsnet, *Summons*, p. 533-617, 125-26 (STC 12875). Leighton, *Speculum*, p. 208-9. Wilkinson, *Fast*, p. 84-6. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 28. Wakeman, *Jonahs*, p. 74.

¹⁶⁴ Hildersam, *Fasting*, p. 102-3, 105. Wilkinson, *Fast*, p. 48. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 56-8.

¹⁶⁵ Carlson (ed.), *Barrow 1587-1590*, p. 415.

¹⁶⁶ Oxford University, Bodleian, Tanner MS 61 (88), fol. 210v.

sermon; how comes this to pass?” Thomas Hooker in a fast sermon remarked to the congregation to encourage emotion: “Will not these things move you, my brethren? Methinks I see your colors rise. I am glad of it. I hope it is to a good end. You may be wise, and happily so wise as to choose life rather than death.”¹⁶⁷ Fast sermons played on doubts about election. One fast sermon stressed that all were not “true saints” who seemed so. As in the parable of the sower, some heard and received the Word so they appeared as “glorious professors” and “saints” but “a winter of affliction and persecution discovered them to be hypocrites.”¹⁶⁸

A final aspect of fasts that shaped godly self-identification was the concept of a covenant. That God had a covenant with the Church, or His people, to be their God if they were His people was commonplace in the Reformed tradition. The Reformed tradition also held that church and state were to be one with the human community reformed by the Word and governed by divine law. The magistrate was to reform the church and community and administer justice in accord with scripture. Arguably, God thereby had covenants with such reformed nations as well.

English Calvinists saw themselves, their communities, and their nation as in a covenant relationship with Him. England was not *the* elect nation but was *an* elect nation along with other Protestant states.¹⁶⁹ However, English Calvinists often spoke of England as having a favored status. They thought by accepting its “signs and seals,” baptism, that England had entered into a covenant with God. Specifically, the promise

¹⁶⁷ Hill, *Olive*, p. 5-15, 18-20. George Williams, Norman Pettit, et. al. (eds.), *Thomas Hooker: Writings in England and Holland, 1626-1633* (Harvard, 1975), p. 242 and n.120.

¹⁶⁸ Zeph. Smyth, *The Doome of Heretiques, Or, A Discovery of Subtle Foxes, Who Were Tyled Tayle to Tayle, and Crept into the Church to Do Mischiefe* (London, 1648), p. 4 (Thomason Tracts, E.467[7]).

¹⁶⁹ For background and debate on this point, see: William Haller, *The Elect Nation* (New York, 1963). V. Norskov Olsen, *John Foxe and the Elizabethan Church* (Berkeley, 1973).

English Protestants made in baptism in the Book of Common Prayer was to forsake the devil, the world, and the flesh. For example, John Brinsley perceiving judgment coming on England hoped God would “vouchsafe to recall us again to His covenant, and put new life into us, to meet Him falling upon our faces in fasting and prayer, to pacify His wrath.” He explained why God’s wrath was at a peak:

“The covenant of our God, which the whole land professeth, and each of us in our baptism have solemnly entered into, we have most grievously transgressed. And this many of us have done with so high a hand, as that we have caused that His heavenly Gospel to be blasphemed, enforcing Him to threaten to take His covenant, with all His blessings from us: yea, to leave us to be made a prey and a spoil unto our enemies, which thirst after our blood continually.”

He added: “All of us having solemnly entered into covenant with our God, have caused Him to threaten to take away His covenant by our transgression. This confessed by all, An. 1588.” At that time all confessed that “if He should then have cast us off utterly, for ever being His people, or a nation anymore, that yet we had most righteously deserved it.” He claimed that many times since in plague, dearth, and dangers, England had acknowledged the same.¹⁷⁰ Fasts with the England as covenanted nation narrative and providentialist national narrative wove together Protestantism and Englishness.

Covenants were multiple and operated from the individual to the national level. However, contemporaries did not tend to make distinctions among them. So a particular vow or covenant one made against a particular sin was part of the larger covenant of the nation, and part of the covenant of grace encompassing all the elect. A variety of examples show the centrality of the concept and its variants. In a perceived time of judgment, William Gouge gave typical godly counsel. The Christian was to complete a search to find out the sins that brought judgment, have “godly sorrow” for them, confess

¹⁷⁰ John Brinsley, *The Third Part of the True Watch* (London, 1623), second edition, Sig. b2r-v (STC 3787).

them, loath them, and resolve to never to return to them. Then for the more sure performing of this purposed amendment it was to be “ratified by solemn promise, vow, and covenant.” He cited the “worthy pattern” of the Israelites’ covenant in their fast in Nehemiah 9:38. Archbishop Ussher in his fast sermon to the Lords, December 22, 1641 cited Deuteronomy 28 as proof that the sins of England were a “breach of covenant with Almighty God.” In 1630, Robert Jenison preached in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne that English cities had “generally failed to keep covenant with God” and needed humiliation and reformation as in the fasts of Hezekiah, Esther, and Ninevah. In 1637, Jenison claimed the plague came “to avenge the quarrel of God’s covenant.” He encouraged all “to seek God more solemnly by fasting and prayer, and renovation of our covenant with God, returning to the same, with full purpose to cleave unto the Lord according to His Word in a perpetual covenant.” William Gouge said of the July 2, 1625 public fast that this day of humiliation was a “day of reconciliation” and a day “to enter into a solemn covenant with God” as in Ezra 10:3 and Nehemiah 9:2. In a 1645 fast sermon, Thomas Hill preached that “public fasting days” were times to “renew your covenant with God.” He asked his hearers to enquire of their conscience how they kept their “vows,” “promises,” and “covenants.” Those who had taken “the Solemn League and Covenant” were to ask their consciences how they had fulfilled it “in advancing the glory of God, and the public good, and the carrying on the work of a Scripture-Reformation.”¹⁷¹

Likewise, based on biblical fasts with covenants such as Nehemiah 9:38 and 10:1, 29-30, and Ezra 10:1-3, the likes of Henry Scudder, John Downname, James Ussher, Henry Holland, William Attersoll, Arthur Hildersam, George Downname, William

¹⁷¹ *The Booke of Common Prayer* (London, 1580) (STC 16307). Gouge, *Arrowes*, p. 8-10. Ussher, *Vox*, sig. B3r. Robert Jenison, *The Cities Safetie* (London, 1630), p. 29-30, 84-5, 87 (STC 14489). Jenison, *Newcastles*, p. 211-12, 227; see also p. 252, 254-56. Hill, *Olive*, p. 7.

Perkins, and Robert Bolton all argued that a fast was a time to “renew our covenant with God” and promise amendment and eschew sins. Also, fasts were a time to make or renew “a particular vow” or “a solemn vow” to leave and not return to some sin. Such covenant renewal did not have to be formal. Samuel Torshell argued “renewing the covenant” as in Nehemiah 9:38 and Jonah 3:8-9 was “ever required at least implicitly in regard of the purpose of the will.”¹⁷²

The concept of the covenant provided the basic narrative of fast days: life was a cycle of sin and repentance. As God’s people, England broke the covenant by falling away from God in sin. God would then “leave,” “depart,” and “hide His face” from them by withholding blessings and sending judgments. They had “to seek the Lord” or “to seek His face” by fasting, prayer, and humiliation to assuage Him and restore the covenant.¹⁷³ In spiritual diaries, and local and national historical writings, the godly diligently tracked this cycle of what they took to be God’s providential judgments and deliverances. They had a sense of duty to do so to glorify God by noting these things both for themselves and for posterity. Also, they would re-read such material periodically to edify themselves in an assessment of progress or backsliding, and to be “stirred up” to repentance, thankfulness, obedience, and find comfort. Such introspection was at the heart of fast days.

Key biblical texts common to fasts were especially important to how English Calvinists interpreted events in the framework of England’s covenant relationship. First, Hosea 4:1-2, with the notion that God had a “controversy” with the land for breach of

¹⁷² Scudder, *Daily Walke*, p. 135-36. J. Downname, *Guide*, p. 676. Ussher, *Body*, p. 388. Holland, *Fasting*, p. 59, 69, 81-7. Attersoll, *Ninevah*, first pagination, p. 61. Hildersam, *Fasting*, p. 54. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 47-8. Perkins, *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 162. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 172-78. Torshell, *Humiliation*, p. 7, 40-5, 65, 67, 80-83.

¹⁷³ PRO, SP 25/78, p. 72, 141-42. Oxford University, Worcester College, AA.8.3 (127).

covenant was paradigmatic. Also, Isaiah 5:1-6 told how God had planted a “goodly vineyard” with “chosen vines” but it brought forth “wild grapes.” He thus tore down the “hedges” and “walls” that protected it.

With such texts in mind, puritans and conformists commonly argued that England was “unthankful” for its peace and plenty, and the Gospel. England’s sins were worse because they had been “unfruitful” despite this “exceeding grace.” God had delivered the nation out of “spiritual Egypt,” and “miraculously” preserved it from treacheries, treason, and invasion. God had passed over other nations and “preferred” England over them. The church’s general confession for the fast after the 1580 earthquake opined that England was “first in knowledge, last in zeal; before them in the doctrine of thy holy Gospel, behind them in the discipline of the same.” A common complaint was that far from profiting from the Gospel the English “wax worse and worse.” They had much ignorance due to “want of preaching.” If God sent a nation the Word but they did not use it for converting and saving souls then that people was “inexcusable” before the Lord. As in Matthew 21:43 or Romans 11:20-22, God might remove the Gospel and give it to a nation that would bring forth “better fruits.” God had sent warnings to rouse England from “the sleep of sin and security.” Therefore, God might remove providential protections and let plague, famine, flood, and war destroy them.

Fortunately, the Lord had made covenant “promises.” The godly strongly affirmed that fasts rightly performed would secure these “promises.” If “God’s people” repented and humbled themselves, He would forgive them, be merciful, and deliver them (2 Chronicles 7:14, 15:2, 30:9; 1 Corinthians 11:31, Joel 2:15-19; Psalm 50:15; Zachariah 8:19; Leviticus 26:3, 23-4, 40-2; Ezekiel 33:14-15). Indeed, English Calvinists lauded

the power of fasts performed in “truth” and “simplicity,” or “duly,” “Christianly,” “sincerely,” and “religiously” in accord with the Word. Since such a fast was His own appointed “ordinance,” the Lord would bless it. At times, English Calvinists assured them to be unfailing in obtaining requests. Fasts produced “extraordinary blessings,” and “strange, miraculous, and almost incredulous effects.” They would speedily remove judgments, and certainly bring great mercies and blessings as Christ surely would reward them. Mark 9:29 and Matthew 17:21, where Christ affirmed demons could only be cast out by fasting and prayer, were key texts proving the power of fasts. Also, even the fasts of “hypocrites” like wicked Ahab appeased God’s wrath and stayed temporal judgment though they were only “outward humiliation,” “outward and bodily ceremony,” and “temporary humiliation” with no “true repentance” (1 Kings 21:27-9). If such a fast could bring such a benefit, how much greater was the power of the “true humiliation of His faithful children” and the “inward and outward humiliation of the redeemed of God.” The only fasts God did not regard were those in which people sought not to God but to themselves, lacked the “inward,” and did not turn from their evil ways (Isaiah 58:3-6; Jeremiah 14:12; Zachariah 7:5, 11-12).¹⁷⁴

Alongside their assurances of the effectiveness of true fasts due to God’s “covenant promise,” English Calvinists contrarily warned that God could leave His

¹⁷⁴ *Homilies*, part 1, p. 71-80; part 2, p. 260-63. Wilkinson, *Fast*, p. 13-15, 35-40, 56-66, 75. Holland, *Fasting*, p. 41-3, 57-9, 87-90, 92. John Mayo, *A Sermon of Fasting, and of Lent* (London, 1609), p. 26-7 (STC 17755). Attersoll, *Ninevah*, first pagination, p. 10, 67-8, 74 (STC 900.5). Brinsley, *Healing*, p. 69. Richard Parr, *The Life of . . . James Ussher* (London, 1686), p. 57 (Wing U163). J. Downname, *Consolations*, p. 706-8. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 171. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 39-40, 53. Hildersam, *Fasting*, p. 20-1. Leighton, *Speculum*, p. 207-8, 281. J.V. [John Vicars], *Prodigies & Apparitions or Englands Warning Pieces* (n.p., [1642-43]), p. 17-19 (Wing V323). Brinsley, *Third Part*, Sig. b6v. Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 33, 136-56, 160-62. Torshell, *Humiliation*, p. 3, 10-11, 57. BL, Add MS 40883, fol. 34r. *The Wonderfull Effects of a True and a Religious Fast* (London, 1642), title (Wing W3365). Allestree, *Whole Duty*, p. 132. Featley, *Clavis*, p. 906. Gouge, *Armour*, p. 478-79. Featley, *Ancilla*, p. 665. Scudder, *Daily Walke*, p. 143-44. Perkins, *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 162.

people and give them over for good if they kept returning to sin and failed to progress in godliness. Thus, the godly narrative in fasts included an alternate ending to the one that concluded with divine mercy. Would the Lord's patience finally end and His justice prevail? A key text was Jeremiah 14:11-12 where God told the prophet Jeremiah not to pray for a once too often backsliding people. The Lord also said He would not hear their cry in their fast and instead would consume them by sword, famine, and pestilence. So in addition to their dual view of God as both the loving father and the just judge, godly clergy also sought to guard against presumption just as in their assurances of the success of fasts they sought to guard against despair. Pastorally, this dark ending underscored their calls for "speedy repentance" and not to begin humiliation too late lest God reject their prayers. The ministers too, though, often had real doubts. On the September 29, 1647 public fast Ralph Josselin wrote "the Lord in some measure was merciful unto me in the Word, tending to discover whether our ruin were approaching yet or not; and our continuance in evil speaks it sadly that we are. The Lord in mercy prevent it if possible." Usually, though ministers sought to end their fast sermons with more hope than fear. For example, Arthur Lake offered comfort in one fast sermon noting that the very fact of their assembly in a public fast showed "that we have not so far forsaken God, neither hath God who hath put these things into the mind of the king and state so forsaken us, but we may hope for acceptance."¹⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the death of Edward VI and the subsequent loss of the Protestant church under Mary made an impression on English Protestants that is hard to overstate. In their view, Mary was punishment on England for failure to take up the Gospel and reform. God could remove the Gospel again.

¹⁷⁵ Jenison, *Newcastles*, Sig. A3v-A4r, p. 207-9. Attersoll, *Ninevah*, first pagination, p. 73, 76. Macfarlane (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 105. Lake, *Sermons*, third pagination, p. 212.

In light of England's sin and uncertainty of God's actions, William Perkins counseled English Protestants to fast often "for the continuance of the Gospel in sincerity among us, and to our posterity."¹⁷⁶ Perkins' plea long found support. On a June 23, 1657 fast, Ralph Josselin wrote in his diary: "I was very sensible of God's going from England, [and] called on people to be found mourners for the abominations among us, and to stick close to God in His ordinances. . ."¹⁷⁷ The same sense of covenant and providential judgment operated on the individual level. Henry Newcome recalled about the fasts of John Machin, lecturer of Astbury, Cheshire 1652-1660:

"Great benefit and comfort he knew was to be had in these ordinances, and he would not rest contentedly without it; but diligently observed the success of them, and upon God's withdrawing from him, made it his business to seek his God until he found Him again, and the cause also of His withdrawing."¹⁷⁸

English Calvinists also took the deaths of godly leaders a sign of God leaving England and turning the people over to sin. Not surprisingly, the likes of William Gouge urged fasts when "a man of great use, whose death is a very great loss, is stricken with a dangerous sickness, and lieth betwixt hope and fear."¹⁷⁹ Private fasts abounded for Oliver Cromwell in September, 1658 in his last illness "to seek the Lord" to prolong his life.¹⁸⁰ Samuel Ward of Sidney Sussex College wrote in his diary among his "motives to fasting and public humiliation" June 19, 1625 as item number three: "The loss of so many worthy men: Earl of Southampton and his son, the Lord Belfast, Marquis Hamilton, Earl of Oxford."¹⁸¹ To "stir up" future generations, Nehemiah Wallington recorded the results

¹⁷⁶ Perkins, *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 160.

¹⁷⁷ Macfarlane (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 306.

¹⁷⁸ Henry Newcome, *A Faithful Narrative of the Life and Death of . . . John Machin* (London, 1671), p. 45 (Wing N896).

¹⁷⁹ Gouge, *Armour*, p. 471.

¹⁸⁰ *The Public Intelligencer Monday September 6 – Monday September 12, 1658*, p. 806 (Thomason Tracts, E.756[16]). *The Public Intelligencer Monday September 13 – Monday September 20, 1658*, p. 826 (Thomason Tracts, E.756[18]). Birch (ed.), *State Papers*, volume 7, p. 369, 374.

¹⁸¹ Cambridge University, Sidney Sussex College, MS 45, fol. 63r.

of a fast in early September 1641 for Lord Saye who was dying. He told of: “a company that did set themselves to humble their souls in fasting and prayer to God for him. And at that time in the very act of the duty God (of His mercy) did send some reviving unto him. So that all may see that fasting and prayer is not in vain with the Lord.”¹⁸² Richard Baxter recalled how during his ministry at Kidderminster in the 1650s that in his serious illnesses his neighbors met “and upon their fasting and earnest prayers I have been recovered.” One case was when he took a gold bullet as a cure but was unable to pass it for three weeks. “But at last my neighbors set a day apart to fast and pray for me, and I was freed from my danger in the beginning of that day.”¹⁸³ When the famous minister Jeremiah Whitaker (1599-1654) was in his last illness, the “saints of God” showed him similar love. In and about London, most congregations prayed for him, and ministers and other “praying friends” “set apart” three days (one private and two public) “to seek God in his behalf.” Also, “in remote countries, besides the ordinary prayers made for him, there were some fasts kept, with special reference to his affliction.” The night before he died, Simeon Ashe visited him and told him that many of his friends intended “to set apart that day in seeking the Lord for him.”¹⁸⁴ As we saw before, such fasts also bound the godly together, especially puritans, into communities.

As mentioned before, godly clergy counseled recounting past blessings (many the result of fasts themselves) in addition to past sins to make one more humble and repent in fasts. Robert Bolton advised recounting “public miracles of mercy” to preserve the Gospel in England, and the nation itself, including the Armada, the Gunpowder Plot,

¹⁸² BL, Add MS 21, 935, fol. 94r.

¹⁸³ Matthew Sylvester, *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (London, 1696), book 1, p. 80-1 (Wing B1370). Baxter, *Breviate*, p. 8.

¹⁸⁴ Ashe, *Living*, p. 64-7.

numerous protections of Queen Elizabeth from plots, and bringing Prince Charles safely home from Spain. Bolton also advised any Christian to consider the “particular and private catalogue of thine own personal favors from God’s bountiful hand.” English Protestants were to consider how, despite all these public and private blessings, they still responded “unthankfully” to God with sin. Likewise, the Westminster Assembly of Divines advised in 1644 that prayers at public fasts acknowledge God’s “manifold, great, tender mercies, especially to the church and nation” so as “the more effectually to soften and abase our hearts before Him.” Such devotional exercises added impetus to give fasts a prominent place in English Protestant historical thought. The godly also believed that in scripture God commanded Christians to teach their children about “remarkable providences,” “deliverances,” and “God’s wondrous works” to glorify the Lord.¹⁸⁵ Crucially, narrative construction was central to fasts and operated on the individual, community, and national level. These historical narratives were critical to English Protestant self-understanding. Moreover, the efficacy of fasts in England became legend.

Daniel Rogers affirmed England’s fasts had always brought “some blessing” upon their “public humiliation.” Robert Jenison encouraged the people to fasting and prayer citing the “good success” of “God’s people” not only in scripture but in England.¹⁸⁶ One pamphlet placed England’s fasts in a line of descent from notable Biblical fasts and fasts of the “primitive Christians” in the early Church. It trumpeted of fasts in England “the most remarkable deliverances that have without ever failing attended upon this godly and holy practice here in this kingdom of England.” It celebrated the:

¹⁸⁵ Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 97. Oxford University, Bodleian, Tanner MS 61 (88), fol. 210r. Roger Clap, *Memoirs of Captain Roger Clap* (Boston, 1807), p. 5.

¹⁸⁶ D. Rogers, *Treatises*, p. 135. Jenison, *Newcastles*, p. 211.

“most perspicuous, undeniable, admirable, never to be forgotten, never to be paralleled testimonies, evidences, and tokens in this kingdom of the unexpressable mercies, benefits, and deliveries that have been ushered in unto this people, and nation in general, by the public and openly commanded practicing of this duty of fasting and praying.”

William the Conqueror defeated the superior army of King Harold by commanding strict fasting, prayer, humiliation, and hearing the Word in his forces for two days. By contrast, over the same period Harold gave himself “to jollity, drinking, reveling and domineering.” At Agincourt Henry V defeated a vastly superior force because while the French drank, sang, and gambled, he commanded humiliation, strict fasting, and prayer all day. Henry himself was “the first that began it, the last that ended it.” Of course, English Protestant fasts were especially dramatic. Supposedly:

“some 15 days before the death of Queen Mary, the Protestants that then lay hid, with unanimous consent, as well those that were in prisons, and in restraint, as the remnant yet at large, solemnized and exercised this duty, with as public indiction, and general intimation as then they durst, and behold the efficacy, this comet vanisheth suddenly, and in her stead ariseth that glorious planet under whose wing and protection so blessedly ever since hath flourished, the Gospel of Christ.”

The Spanish Armada which the pope in his “infallibility” boasted of as “invincible” also fell to fasting in 1588. Queen Elizabeth, on the advice of “her religious Council” and “with the general vote of the whole realm” sought recourse in heaven by “an universal, and national humiliation.” About three weeks before the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, hints of subversive Catholic activity led King James and “some other truly religious of his Council,” to proclaim “a public fast and humiliation for the good of the true Protestant religion, and to beseech God of His wonted goodness towards us, to defend and protect us from dangers that might be.” In response, God exposed the secret plot. In 1625 with pestilence raging, Charles I proclaimed a fast. Upon “the general and public humiliation” deaths “miraculously” and “upon a sudden” decreased. Now in 1642, the author advised readers to take heart in the monthly fasts ordered by “our right religious

king and happy parliament.” The remainder of the “Achans” that troubled the three kingdoms would be taken away, and Protestants in Ireland comforted.¹⁸⁷ Clearly, in English eyes, God treated England as a favored child.

Many others made similar if less colorful accounts. To rebut Catholic criticism of Protestants in regard to fasting, Henry Holland cited 1588 and 1593 as examples of times when England had “a comfortable experience of God’s blessing upon the private and public fastings and prayers of God’s people in the land.” Later, Holland argued that God responded to proper fasts even if the English people performed them “in great weakness in the best assemblies of our land.” With respect to the 1563 national fast for the pestilence he noted: “The Lord heard His people, and they were mercifully delivered.” In 1588 due to the threat of Spanish invasion there was “some charge” for public humiliation. “In some few assemblies God’s people were humbled, and cried mightily unto the Lord. There followed a most memorable and miraculous deliverance never to be forgotten in our land.” In the 1593 pestilence, “some few were humbled and mourned” and the pestilence ceased in August-September when it always raged worst.¹⁸⁸ Robert Bolton and George Downname told how England’s “public fasts” had met with “good and happy success.” These fasts included 1563 (plague), 1580 (earthquake), 1588 (Armada), 1596-97 (famine), and 1603 (pestilence).¹⁸⁹ Nicholas Bownde lauded God’s faithful response to fasts not only in scripture but in “our own experience.” The Lord had heard the English people “when we have by fasting and prayer thus publicly sought unto him.” He recalled “how earnestly they did seek unto God” in 1588 when fear swept the land over the Armada, and that there was “in all places much fasting and prayer, and the

¹⁸⁷ *Wonderfull Effects*, title page and passim.

¹⁸⁸ Holland, *Fasting*, Sig. A4v, p. 91-2.

¹⁸⁹ Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 32, 44, 52. G.Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 54.

people came willingly to it.”¹⁹⁰ Francis Rous nostalgically recalled the “fast of eighty-eight” as the reason England was still alive and enjoying God’s blessings.¹⁹¹

During the 1631 dearth, William Gouge urged fasts and glowingly gave “late evidence” of their efficacy. The August 2, 1626 public fast in England and Wales (kept July 5 in London, Westminster, and places adjacent) stopped excessive rains that had lasted from spring through the summer. On that August 2 fast day the sky cleared until the harvest ended, which proved plentiful, thus avoiding a famine. Similarly, William Whiteway, the merchant-magistrate and MP of Dorchester, penned in his diary for August 2, 1626 that the general fast was held, “upon which the weather, which had been all the summer unseasonable, was turned into a very fair harvest.”¹⁹² Edward, Lord Montague writing to his brother Lord Manchester December 2, 1627 commented on the failure of Buckingham’s expedition to capture the Isle of Ré in October. He hoped the nation might be “stirred up to a public humiliation” and that he would advance such a fast.

“We saw what blessings, through the great mercies and immeasurable goodness of God, followed our late performance of that duty in the great sickness, and after for fear of famine. I doubt not of the like blessing upon our martial affairs (wherein of late we have had no good success), if the like course may be held.”¹⁹³

Accounts of fasts even made their way into verse. One concerned the 1625 plague outbreak and subsequent fasts. Readers learned of the Lord’s fury at their sin, how their rightly humbled king pitied his people, began to fast himself, and then

¹⁹⁰ Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 156-57. See also: *Certain Arguments to Perswade and Provoke the Most Honorable and High Court of Parliament Now Assembled* ([Middelburgh?], 1606), p. 23 (STC 7736).

¹⁹¹ Francis Rous, *Oil of Scorpions: The Miseries of these Times Turned into Medicines and Curing Themselves* (London, 1623), p. 247 (STC 21344).

¹⁹² Gouge, *Arrowes*, p. 171-72. Underdown (ed.), *Whiteway*, p. 83.

¹⁹³ *Historical Manuscripts Commission, 15th report on the Manuscripts of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry* (London, 1899), volume 1, p. 267.

proclaimed weekly public fasts for the duration of the outbreak. The Lord, faithful to His Word, had mercy on the English people as they turned to Him with broken hearts.¹⁹⁴

Some accounts stressed the importance of the inward to the efficacy of fasts to legitimate some persons and teach a lesson. Secretary Thurloe wrote to Henry Cromwell, Lord Deputy of Ireland, on June 8, 1658 about the recent victory of English and French forces over the Spanish army near Dunkirk. The victory was on the very day that Cromwell and his Council kept “a day of fasting and prayer, to seek God for help in that siege.” He claimed: “truly I never was present at any such exercise, where I saw a greater spirit of faith and prayer poured forth.” Thomas Gumble, chaplain to General Monck, wrote about how c. December 6, 1659 Monck’s forces at his headquarters at Coldstream in north England had fasts. They were for God’s blessing on Monck’s designs for the Restoration with liberty of conscience in religion. “God was pleased to hear, and graciously answer: for though hypocrisy is devilish and destructive; yet religion, and the duties thereof, do miraculously succeed all undertakings, especially where they are maintained in truth and sincerity.”¹⁹⁵ Other fasts could legitimate the godly (in their own eyes) against the wicked. Nehemiah Wallington wrote of a May 10 public fast in hopes “that God would stay His hand in these fires.” The fast succeeded as no fires burned from May 10 to October 12. Nonetheless, some did “mock and flout at” those of “His despised servants” who kept the fast. It’s success was God’s encouraging “His poor despised children” and stopping the mouths of all “scoffing Ishmaels.”¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ *A Song or, Story, for the Lasting Remembrance, of Divers Famous Works, Which God Hath Done in Our Time* (London, 1626), p. 41-2 (STC 22922).

¹⁹⁵ Birch (ed.), *State Papers*, volume 7, p. 157-58. Thomas Gumble, *The Life of General Monck* (London, 1671), p. 162, 172 (Wing T56).

¹⁹⁶ BL, Sloane MS 1457, fol. 98v.

Documenting the wonderful effects of fasts in history at the individual and community level was also common and central to godly self-understanding. John Bruen as a “faithful servant of Christ” quickened his soul “to a diligent and due observation of the ways and works of God, both in His mercies towards the godly and in His judgments against the wicked.” In accord with Job 36:24-5, he recorded the “works of the Lord” for all to behold. Bruen recorded how one mercy occurred in Cheshire c.1601 when R.K., a servant to his brother Hardware, was thought “bewitched” and growing weaker. Hardware sent for Bruen and his family “to spend a day with him, in prayer and fasting.” Bruen brought “good M. Wats,” the preacher, with him. R.K., who had been near death, began to amend that evening, and improved quickly in coming days. Other local fasts in Cheshire were notable. Edward Burghall, the puritan vicar of Acton near Nantwich, noted that the 1631 plague raged in many parts of the country “but Cheshire was graciously preserved, where were many public fasts kept for the turning away of God’s hand.” In another case, Gilbert Burnet told how the Calvinist conformist William Bedell had no ability to resist when the Irish Rebellion in late 1641 threatened his house and many neighbors had fled to him for shelter. With no worldly help available, they turned to God in fasting and prayer and prepared for death. The rebels spared them though they permitted no other English in Cavan county to live in their own houses undisturbed.¹⁹⁷

Great judgments were also central in the linkage of history and fasts. In the annals of Chester written c.1622, fasts and their success became prominent events in the town’s history. For example, in 1608 when plague swept into the city, the bishop and mayor organized a public fast: “The effects of this is worthy the noting: for not one house

¹⁹⁷ Hinde, *Bruen*, p. 146-147 (misnumbered 142-43) (Wing H2063). James Hall (ed.), *Memorials of the Civil War in Cheshire* (Lancashire and Chesire Record Society, 1889), volume 19, p. 6. Gilbert Burnet, *The Life of William Bedell* (London, 1685), p. 180-81 (Wing B5830).

broke out or any more died of the plague from that day until now at this present; of that we were thankful to our good God.”¹⁹⁸

Due to “many great fires” which were “signs of wrath” on account of London’s “many great and crying sins,” on April 24, 1655 the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons in Common Council believed it their duty to order a public fast on May 8, 1655 “for their seeking of the Lord by fasting and prayer.” They feared the Lord who was “a consuming fire” and might “justly make this place like Sodom.”¹⁹⁹ The very moderate puritan John Conant (1608-93), vicar of All Saints, Northampton, saw a great fire quickly sweep through and devastate his town September 20, 1675. Conant interpreted the fire as a providential judgment on the town due to:

“those who had not so much as offered their presence at the preaching of the Word, but rather spent their time in idleness, debauchery, and lewdness at home, a sin which amongst many others the poorer sort and especially those of the street where the fire began were most notoriously guilty of, and could never be reclaimed.”

By contrast, the fire did not touch Conant’s house though the structures on three sides around it burned. Conant set apart September 20 every year as a day of humiliation with the approval of his bishop. On these fasts “he constantly joined with his parish in public to implore God for a sanctified improvement of this sore visitation, and affectionately

¹⁹⁸ “The Annals of Chester” in *The Cheshire Sheaf*, third series, volume 9 (Chester, 1913), p. 42-3. This passage perhaps was written before 1610 the next outbreak of plague, but Annals as whole are dated c. 1622. See: *The Cheshire Sheaf*, third series, volume 8, (Chester, 1911), p. 79.

¹⁹⁹ Central London Records Office, Journal 41, fol. 116v. *The Perfect Diurnall. . . Armies, Monday May 7 – Monday May 14, 1655*, p. 4354 (Thomason Tracts, E.838[12]). The actual fast day “to seek His face” in “timely repentance” may have been Thursday, May 10, 1655. (ibid.) Fires were common in early modern England, and contemporaries often viewed them as divine judgment, see: John Hilliard, *Fire From Heaven* (London, 1613)(STC13507); *A Relation of the Most Lamentable Burning of the Citie of Corke* (London, 1622)(STC 5766); *A Briefe Sonet Declaring the Lamentation of Beckles, a Market Toun in Suffolke. . . Pitifully Burned With Fire* (London, [1586])(STC 23259); *The True Lamentable Discourse of the Burning of Teverton in Devon-shire* (London, [1598])(STC 24093); *Wofull Newes From the West-parts of England. Being the Lamentable Burning of the Towne of Teverton, in Devonshire* (London, 1612)(STC 10025); Thomas Wilcox, *A Short, Yet a True and Faithful Narration of the Fearfull Fire That Fell in the Towne of Wooburne* (London, 1595)(STC25629); *The Woeffull and Lamentable Wast and Spoile Done By a Sudden Fire in S. Edmonds-bury in Suffolke* (London, 1608)(STC 4181). For the classic study of how the godly used one such fire to further reformation in Dorchester, see: David Underdown, *Fire from Heaven* (New Haven, 1992).

gave them from the pulpit his meditations on that dreadful fire.” Conant’s “pious custom” so inspired Dr. Morgan, the late rector of Gayton, three miles from Northampton, that he left a yearly stipend for a sermon to be preached at All Saints on that day forever.²⁰⁰ Of course the Great Fire of London in 1666 also gave rise to such annual commemorative fasts, and other fires and disasters likely did the same. Such fasts were central to local history and weaved godly narratives into self-understanding.

In summary, this chapter has shown how fast days were important to English Calvinists. Fasts were exceptional for bringing together the language, categories, and narratives at the heart of English Calvinist self-understanding. Moreover, fasts did so in the most intense and longest religious services of the time. Fasts created a physical environment designed to break down self-confidence to the point of despair and back. Fasts generated powerful emotions of joy and guilt giving participants great energy, will, and desire to achieve reform goals. This energy and drive largely stemmed from participants swinging between doubt and certainty, despair and assurance, hope and fear. Often they existed in between these states, unsure to which of the many dichotomous categories of thought they belonged. Thus, they had a strong need to prove their sense of self. They were obsessed with the need to affirm the genuineness of proper inner states with affective experiences. In so doing, fellowship with other godly people was essential. Fasts were one of the core socializing events for the godly and vital to the creation of a community of the godly. Fasts fostered puritans’ self-understanding as the elect zealously fighting for reform and covenant renewal. While all Calvinists shared the same language, categories of thought, and narratives, how they defined them in practice varied. As we shall see, this led to conflict between puritans and conformists.

²⁰⁰ John Conant, *The Life of the Reverend and Venerable John Conant* (London, 1823), p. 36-44, 46.

CHAPTER IV

MAKING THE PURITAN FACTION

Puritans zealously agitated for a Reformed vision of the church and nation that went beyond what successive monarchs and many other authorities deemed appropriate and conducive to good order. Yet puritans were neither revolutionaries nor separatists. They were devoted members of the Church of England committed to an inclusive national church co-terminus with the nation. With the failure of political efforts to make the church a better vehicle of reform by altering the Book of Common Prayer and the episcopal form of government in the 1580s, puritans re-focused their energies to seek reform within the existing church structures through practical divinity, devotional and moral writings, and proselytizing. The situation of being in a church “but half-reformed,” not desiring to separate from it, and yet having their hopes frustrated, created enormous tensions. A key one was between the religious duties of obeying God and of obeying earthly superiors. Given this situation, puritans became a church within the church to be the leaven that leavened the whole loaf.

Puritans were not controversial however for being godly people pressing reform. The Reformed tradition stressed that the church on Earth was a mix of the elect and hypocrites, of “leaven” and “lump.” The church was a school or nursery of faith in which those who had grown spiritually were to assist others to do the same. The problem was the exceptional zeal puritans had in fulfilling their perceived duties as saints. Depending largely on their ability to play this role and on the response they perceived, a potential

tension arose as to whether the “godly community” could remain in the national church or whether it should form an exclusive group or sect. While the vast majority of puritans rejected separatism and wrote vehemently against it, separation was an option for some radical puritans. Its attractiveness increased and decreased depending on the political context.

In terms of varied local and regional contexts, Puritan zeal was consistent. In Reformation England, some regions had relatively quick reform with much support from below, while others had slow reform mainly imposed from above. Most popular support for the Reformation existed in the southeast where Lollardy had been manifest and where French, Dutch, and other Protestant exiles from the continent established refugee churches. Diarmaid MacCulloch argues that regional variation was due to the pre-existing strength or weakness of the parish system. Lowland parishes as in the southeast allowed detailed pastoral supervision and easier circumstances in which Protestant ministers could teach. Northern parishes were large, empty uplands, or populous townships. They were unwieldy and traditionally depended on supplementary religious services which chantry chapels and monasteries provided. In such parishes, Protestant ministers had a hard time getting the contact with parishioners necessary to advance the new faith. Despite these regional trends, strong pockets of popular Protestantism existed in the north despite Catholic concentration in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Likewise, Catholics still had strength in the south and county networks of Catholic gentry there.¹ In all contexts though, puritans perceived themselves to be an embattled minority whether against Catholics, “church papists,” the “profane,” or formalist Protestants.

¹ Diarmaid MacCulloch, “England,” in Andrew Pettegree (ed.), *The Early Reformation in Europe* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 166-87.

The widely scattered examples of puritan fasts thereby share many common traits. Furthermore, post-revisionists have challenged the revisionist notion of the predominance of localism focused on a “county community.” Instead, they argue that counties contained multiple communities and relationships which either formed sub-divisions within them or cut across them to other regions. National self-understanding was strong, and the county was neither the prime nor sole focus of loyalty. Contemporaries viewed it as a part of the national polity, and perceived national and local concerns and politics to be linked and not contradictory. Thus, in the Civil War divisions took place within counties, not between counties and the center.² The godly community responding to royal policies was one such focal point of loyalty.

In all variable contexts, the godly community sought to fulfill their role as the leaven in part by a variety of supplemental, voluntary religious activities including fasts. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, in fasts puritans constructed self-understandings and identified with other godly people in a manner that demarcated them from the “other” of “carnal gospellers,” the “profane,” and “papists.” In the Elizabethan period, puritans were the most zealous for fasts among English Protestants. They fasted more frequently than others, had fasts without the approval of public authority, and extended the length of preaching and prayer in official public fasts. In their view, only the godly consistently recognized supposed providential signs of divine wrath and responded to them with fasting and prayer. The “ungodly” by contrast obviously reveled in profane pastimes. Not surprisingly, conformists saw puritan fasts as “hypocritical” displays of spiritual pride and subversive disobedience to authority. The character “Zeal-of-the-land Busy” in

² Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (eds.), *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics 1603-1642* (New York, 1989). Ann Hughes, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (New York, 1991).

Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* is one of many negative caricatures of such godly people.

Most basically, the godly thought fasts a touch-stone of the child of God. Lewis Bayly argued that if one did not fast on a "just occasion" then "he may justly suspect, that his heart never yet felt the power of true Christianity." George Downname argued that those who did not properly observe public fasts were "carnal men." He suggestively cited Leviticus 23:29: "Every person that humbleth not himself that day shall even be cut off from his people."³ Many puritans called for Christians to have separate private fasts in addition to public fasts in times of danger. For example, in order to best entreat the Lord, Alexander Leighton called for both kinds of fasts, "that we might be humbled as one man together, and every man apart by himself."⁴

Also, the godly supplemented public fast services with additional private devotions and meetings on those days. They called on the people to "sanctify" the whole day. They were not only to go to church on a public fast, but "in secret" or in private to engage themselves in reading the Word, meditation, prayer, singing psalms, and works of charity and mercy. Generally, private here meant alone, with one's spouse, or with family. Christians were to observe all the usual devotions of a private fast day on the day of a public fast "both before and after the public exercises." As we saw in the previous chapter, the godly called for "preparation" before fasts to "fit" people for it. The period after the public fast was also to be spent in religious duty. The Westminster Assembly of Divines in 1644 advised ministers to admonish their flocks that a fast day did not end

³ Lewis Bayly, *The Practice of Pietie* (London, 1631), 28th edition, p. 519 (STC 1609.6). George Downname, *The Christians Sanctuarie* (London, 1604), p. 13, 17 (STC 7113).

⁴ Alexander Leighton, *Speculum Belli Sacri, Or the Lookingglasse of the Holy War* (n.p., 1624), p. 208 (STC 15432).

with the conclusion of “public duties.” The remainder of the fast day was to be spent “in reinforcing upon themselves and their families in private, all those godly affections and resolutions which they professed in public.” Likewise, Daniel Featley advised in a fast sermon: “let our prayers and strong cries in public be echoed by the voice of our weeping in private.” Many puritans zealously did just that. The puritan Samuel Rogers noted in his diary of the public weekly fast on Wednesday, November 9, 1636, that he and others fasted and prayed at Hatfield “in public and private together.”⁵ Nicolas Bownd noted that many of the “godly” fasted privately before the official order for a public fast came out in 1603.⁶ Also, since public fasts typically began in London and Westminster before rest of England, some puritans in the counties began observing them publicly on the earlier London date to have more of them.

The godly placed great responsibility on every family or householder to fast privately “as occasion serveth.” Such occasions could include when the husband and wife first entered government of a family so as to remove “distempers” or “carnal antipathies” that might hinder peaceable and loving living together. They might also be for fertility if they prove barren, for the wife when near delivery of a child, and for children who grow wicked or lewd. The whole family might fast when there was a death, a notorious sin, misery on the church, a judgment present or imminent on the land, some needed blessing, some “weighty affair” like parliament, or no public fast when one was needed. All had a duty to pacify God and ask for a benefit. William Perkins thought

⁵ Robert Bolton, *The Saints Soule-Exalting Humiliation* (London, 1634), p. 54, 60 (STC 3247). G. Downame, *Sanctuarie*, p. 58-9. William Attersoll, *The Conversion of Ninevah* (London, 1632) in *Three Treatises* (London, 1633), first pagination, p. 117 (STC 900.5). Nicolas Bownd, *The Holy Exercise of Fasting* (Cambridge, 1604), p. 221, 233-39 (STC 3438). Henry Scudder, *The Christian’s Daily Walke in Holy Security and Peace* (London, 1637), seventh edition, p. 141-42 (STC 22120). Oxford University, Bodleian, Tanner MS 61 (88), fol. 210v. Daniel Featley, *Clavis Mystica* (London, 1636), p. 905 (STC 10730). Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 176.

⁶ Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 226.

families that observed private fasts in times of need were as “little churches, yea even a kind of paradise upon Earth.” By contrast, families that neglected to fast privately were “companies of profane and graceless atheists.” Perhaps one of the best examples of such a family is that of the puritan Sir Simonds D’Ewes. From 1627 to 1636 and beyond he led a great many family fasts and performed “all pious duties.” He often read from the Bible and “other godly books” with the assistance of one of his servants under his strict direction. D’Ewes lived out William Gouge’s counsel that the “master” of a household could order private family fasts as he was “king, priest, and prophet in his own house.”⁷

As we saw in the previous chapter, the godly stressed that private fasts were to be “in secret” in accord with Christ’s warning in Matthew 6:6, 16-18 not to be a “hypocrite” seeking human praise. Christians were to fast “in secret” so they fasted unto God who alone could see “in secret,” and not unto human beings. Elizabeth Scott had such “secret” fasts. The Suffolk puritan minister John Carter (1554-1635) also was “much and frequent in secret fasting.” Indeed, he told none but his wife who often joined him in fasting and retiring to their chamber to pray.⁸

As the “hotter sort of Protestants,” puritans constantly complained of “neglect” of public fasting and prayers in England, and how “manifold just occasions” for fasts passed by unheeded. They simply had a greater sense of sin, greater expectations for holiness of

⁷ Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 233-39. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 53. Edward Topsell, *Times Lamentation. Or an Exposition on the Prophet Joel* (London, 1613), p. 278 (STC 24132). William Vaughan, *The Golden-Grove* (London, 1600), Sig. Q2v-4v (STC 24610). William Perkins, *The Works of . . . William Perkins* (Cambridge, 1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 670 (STC19651). James Halliwell (ed.), *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds D’Ewes* (London, 1845), vol. 1, p. 352-56, 359-60, 362-63, 369, 374-75, 414, 428-29, 435; vol. 2, p. 46-7, 52, 66, 69, 73, 88, 91, 99, 102, 122, 126, 141, 145. See also: William Whately, *Prototypes* (London, 1640), “The Life and Death of M. Whately” (STC 25317). William Gouge, *The Whole Armour of God* (London, 1639), p. 483 (STC 12110.5).

⁸ Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 214-15. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 49. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 52. Matthew Henry, *The Life of the Rev. Philip Henry*, ed. J.B. Williams (London, 1839), p. 40. Thomas Case, *The Excellent Woman* (London, 1659), second pagination, p. 46, 62, 109 (Wing C829). John Carter [junior], *The Tomb-Stone* (London, 1653), p. 20 (Wing C656).

life, greater expectations of the ministry, and greater attunement to supposed providential judgments or warnings of such judgments. So they desired more fasts than many conformists thought occasion required. In an oft repeated phrase, which occasionally must have caused some conformists to roll their eyes, puritans called for fasts arguing “never was there more cause.”⁹

For example, Alexander Leighton in 1624 complained bitterly that England alone of the nations “professing the Gospel” had not had public fasts for suffering Protestant churches since the outbreak of the Thirty Years War. He lamented England had only had private fasts noting: “that the souls of God’s people have been exceedingly humbled in secret for the afflictions of Joseph, and have poured out their hearts, in abundance of sighs and tears for their miseries.” Leighton also chastised conformist prosecution of puritans for unlawful public fasts as discouraging them. He lamented “that this nation hath been at such opposition and enmity with this duty, that it is thought as dangerous a thing to undertake it, as it was in Athens to make mention of the recovery of Salamis; or as it was amongst the Jews, to speak in the name of Jesus.” Of course in the thinking we saw in the previous chapter, those who did not love God had to love the world. Thus Leighton reasoned a lack of desire for fasts showed a nation enslaved to sin and Satan, and not wanting to find out its sin. They had had peace and plenty too long and forgotten God. He warned this fact would provoke God to send wrath on England.¹⁰

Likewise, in great passion Samuel Torshell exclaimed:

“There are cursed *Edomites* that say of *Jerusalem*, *Down with it, down with it even to the ground*: and do envy the prosperity of *Sion*. Fasting and prayers build up a wall, but the

⁹ BL, Additional MS 36,825, fol. 23r. Robert Johnson, Mary Keeler, Maija Jansson Cole, William Bidwell (eds.), *Commons Debates 1628* (New Haven, 1977), volume 2, p. 35. Gouge, *Whole Armour*, p. 485. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 54. Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 37, 332-34. Perkins, *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 163.

¹⁰ Leighton, *Speculum*, p. 206-8.

*Haronite, the Ammonite, and the Arabian, Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, laugh at the work, and labor to hinder it. There are some that dare say; What needs this ado? Wherefore are these intended assemblings? Thus they oppose their own safety, and endeavor against that with which God both is pleased, and pacified. Nay, some are so mad; that [which] we use for a remedy or prevention, they esteem and accuse as the means to bring in the pestilence. How far at length will the malice of Satan extend?"*¹¹

As with Leighton, we can see the language and narratives discussed in the previous chapter at work driving apart identification between puritans and conformists. Torshell argued the godly had a duty to “watch” for sin and signs of coming judgment, and not be “careless,” or “secure” and “asleep.” Those who would “reproach” the godly as “malcontents” and “precise” for so doing were “professed enemies to the abused and despised holiness.” Citing biblical examples, he opined: “This hath ever been the portion of the saints.” Torshell likened puritans to Jeremiah who suffered the “rebukes” of “blind courtiers” for prophesying God’s judgment (Jeremiah 38:4). Just as then:

“There are some that have the garb of wise ones, that cavil at our plain and necessary preachings, and endure not our fore-warnings of the people. These speeches, say they, breed fears and discouragements to sad and disquiet the minds of people; and this is to seek their hurt rather than their welfare, by weakening their hands.”

Torshell argued that by contrast people were strong when they saw their weakness, when they had been humbled to rely on God. Also, the “profane” mocked “provident Noah” and the Sodomites wondered at “busy Lot.” Torshell claimed in the present: “Those still wonder, and speak their wonder: What ado is here? What an unnecessary ado? What needs this fasting? These assemblings? This frequency?” These were simply the “unjust murmurs of men blinded, and not able to discern God’s ways.”¹² So we can see the notion that anyone who did not love the godly had to love the world, and that the world would hate and scorn Christ’s true disciples for their godliness.

¹¹ Samuel Torshell, *The Saints Humiliation* (London, 1633), p. 12 (STC 24142).

¹² Torshell, *Humiliation*, p. 17-38, 21-3. Torshell cited Psalm 69:10-12 as an example of the godly suffering the scorn of the profane. Here David complained: “When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach, I made sackcloth also my garment, and I became a proverb to them; They that sit in the gate speak against me, and I was the song of drunkards.” (ibid.)

In urging public fasts or official toleration of unlawful fasts, some puritans tried to sway Calvinist conformists by raising the specter of the common Catholic enemy and blaming Catholics for authorities suppressing fasts. The puritan Richard Prowde, parson of Burton upon Dunmore, wrote to Lord Burghley May 13, 1579 to move the Queen for further reformation. He lamented that the “practice of the papists” had grown “to put down profitable exercises of the Word, as also of prayer and fasting, sometimes used: where tears were shed, not only for their own sins, but of those mourning souls of Sion, for all the abominations of Jerusalem.” In “this exercise of prayer and fasting,” puritans only sought to turn the wrath of God from the nation as they foresaw coming judgment. Prowde feared more judgments because he worried that Burghley and other Protestants in government did not see the “practice” of Catholics “that first set brother against brother herein.”¹³ What Prowde was arguing here was the common puritan position that in the localities Catholics, who supposedly hated preaching, schemed to spread falsehoods to authorities against the godly and godly clergy. Catholics had hoodwinked some conformists into acting against the godly, the realm’s best subjects, by claiming they were disorderly and subversive.

An opposite approach was to launch incendiary attacks on bishops who suppressed unauthorized puritan fasts. The puritan satirist Martin Marprelate, who scandalized contemporaries with his ridicule of many in authority, targeted John Aylmer, Bishop of London among others. In Lent, 1588 Aylmer had written letters to the Archdeacon of Essex to forbid “malicious sectaries” from holding “public fasts.” Later, he rhetorically asked: “Who forbiddeth men to humble themselves in fasting and prayer

¹³ John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation* (1709-38; New York, 1966 new edition), volume 2, part 2, p. 662-63, 290-91.

before the Lord, and then can say unto the preachers, ‘Now you were best tell the people that we forbid fasts?’ John London.” Martin also put on the dichotomous godly/profane spectacles. Purportedly, on the sabbath the bishop, lacking his mates to play at bowls, took his servants and went haymaking at his house at Haddam in Essex. By contrast, at the same time “the godly ministers round about being exercised, though against his commandment, in fasting and prayer.” He even referred to Aylmer as “dumb, duncical John of good London.” Martin went on to claim that conditions for peace between him and the bishops included: “That they never forbid public fasts; molest either preacher or hearer, for being present at such assemblies.”¹⁴

Fasting also shaped puritan self-understanding in another way. William Gouge argued that when the godly fasted and prayed in response to sin abounding around them that they benefited the entire community and nation. God so respects the godly that “He will rather spare many wicked ones for a few righteous ones, then destroy a few righteous ones with many wicked ones.” The godly were like Lot in Sodom, Abraham bargaining with God to spare Sodom for a few righteous, and Moses preventing God from destroying the children of Israel due to the golden calf. Indeed, He claimed God spared England, London, and other places in the kingdom only due to “some faithful saints” or “a remnant of righteous persons” who lived therein. While the presence of “saints” brought divine blessings like peace, plenty, safety, and liberty, ironically none were “more hated, scorned, reproached, evilly entreated and persecuted in the world.”

Suggestive of conformist silencing of non-conformist preachers, he noted that before

¹⁴ William Pierce (ed.), *The Marprelate Tracts 1588, 1589* (London, 1911), “An Epistle to the Terrible Priests” (October, 1588), p. 47, 80, 93-5. John Strype, *Historical Collections of the Life and Acts of . . . John Aylmer* (1701; reprint New York, 1974), p. 141.

Heidelberg felt the “faithful ministers” were taken away.¹⁵ So for conformists to prosecute puritans for illegal fasts was a double proof of election for them. They were elect not only for desiring to fast out of hatred of sin, but also for suffering affliction for Christ’s sake.

Many examples of this self-perception exist. A key biblical text and a favorite for fast sermons was Ezekiel 22:30 where God sought someone to “make up the hedge” and “stand in the gap” so He would not destroy Jerusalem.¹⁶ The godly thought by fasting, one did just that. Thus, Nicholas Estwick in his funeral sermon for Robert Bolton asserted that “he by his fastings, often and extraordinary prayers, often hath stood in the gap, and mightily wrestled with the Lord to keep away judgments.” The “godly minister” was like Aaron making “an atonement for the people.”¹⁷ In her private fasts, Elizabeth Scott often noted humbling herself not only for her sins but the sins of others including her immediate and extended family, and “the sins of the times.”¹⁸ In the Interregnum, the congregational church at Yarmouth kept many fasts to stand in the gap and ward off divine wrath from the nation. They ordered a fast on Tuesday, November 13, 1655 “for the nation and the town and the church.” A fast on Wednesday, May 11, 1659 was “to seek the Lord on the behalf of the nation.” Finally, on April 10, 1660 they gave an order “for the humbling of our souls before the Lord for the sins of the nation.”¹⁹

Of course, in the dichotomous universe of godly thought there was an opposite. Thomas Scott, in his 1620 assize sermon in Norwich told the judges that “every

¹⁵ William Gouge, *Gods Three Arrowes* (London, 1636), p. 25-7 (STC 12116.5).

¹⁶ See for example: Oxford University, Bodleian, MS Rawlinson C 597, fol. 147r-v.

¹⁷ Nicholas Estwick, *A Learned and Godly Sermon* (London, 1633), p. 60, 64 (STC 10556).

¹⁸ Case, *Excellent*, second pagination, p. 32, 35.

¹⁹ Dr. Williams’s Library, John Duncan, *Copy of the Original Record of the Yarmouth Congregational Church* (n.p., 1960), p. 48, 60, 62-3, 58.

inhabitant is either an Achan to shame the place in which he dwells with sin, and to draw a general curse upon it, or else a Lot to save it from destruction.” He made clear this applied even to “the poorest and simplest man.”²⁰ So the choice of each individual was momentous for society, and if one was not godly one was profane.

The godly were clear that if God did send judgment on the community or nation to wipe them out, He would place a “mark” on the foreheads of those who had mourned for the “sins of their time” to spare them on that day (Ezekiel 9:4, 6). In “common calamities,” God would remember those who fasted privately for public sins.²¹ Thomas Froyssell in a funeral sermon for Sir Robert Harley said he was much in fasting and humiliation. He noted: “I have seldom seen an heart broken upon such a day as his was wont to be: He was one that did stand in the gap, that did sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land, and for it God set a mark upon his forehead.”²² Lest we forget, such a sense of sin was a sign of election. For example, the puritan Isaac Archer noted in his diary on a September 6, 1665 fast day:

“I was grieved to see others so wicked when God’s hand was so heavy upon the nation, and thought it a sign of grace to be vexed and concerned at the provocations of others; by this I did not delight in the workers of iniquity, but could weep at the not keeping of God’s law which others were guilty in.”²³

Archer’s sensibility was particularly common to godly clergy who had an especial duty to be “watchmen” for sin and “messengers” of God’s impending wrath. For example, Nicholas Faunt wrote to Anthony Bacon October 11, 1593 sadly to tell:

“Only the ministers here, so far as they dare, are not unmindful in their solemn fasts and other exercises, of our state and the danger so imminent thereunto, the rather for that they gather that this hand of God is neither here nor elsewhere so taken to heart as it ought to

²⁰ Thomas Scott, *The Projector* (London, 1623), p. 28-9 in *The Works of . . . Thomas Scot* (Utrick, 1624) (STC 22064).

²¹ James Ussher, *A Body of Divinitie* (London, 1645), p. 388 (Wing U151). Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 227-28.

²² Thomas Froyssell, *The Beloved Disciple* (London, 1658), p. 107 (Wing F2249).

²³ Matthew Storey (ed.), *Two East Anglian Diaries* (Suffolk Records Society, vol. 36, 1994), p. 107.

be; and therefore they seem to fear a more sharp kind of chastisement: which the Lord in mercy divert from us.”²⁴

Because the godly thought desire for fasting and humiliation was the fruit of justifying faith, they also thought it demarcated them from the profane, and showed that they loved God while others did not. To their critics, all this amounted to spiritual pride. Puritans were aware of this danger. For example, Nicholas Bownd warned the godly against being like the “proud Pharisees” in Luke 5:33 and boast: “Oh we have been at a fast today, but you have not, and so despise other that do not, and justify themselves in comparison of them.” Bownd stressed fasts were to humble us and not “to swell, and puff us up in respect of our holiness and worthiness.”²⁵ Yet, Bownd spoke of spiritual pride here only in a particular sense. Arguably, Bownd thought the godly were more holy than the profane. He just did not want them to think that their superior holiness, as in fasting, had any merit, satisfied for sin, or justified them.

Substantial further evidence exists of puritan zeal for fasts, of how fasting distinguished them in their own eyes and in the eyes of their critics, and of how fasts created tension between puritans and conformists. We saw in the previous chapter that fasts in 1588 became a legendary part of the story of the defeat of the Spanish Armada. In practice, puritans were at the forefront of private fasts and highly energized by the fear of the Spanish Catholic superpower. On July 30, 1588 Richard Rogers wrote in his diary about an armada scare that caused neighbors training nearby speedily and frantically to rush to the sea coast. The local puritans sprung into action: “Hereupon we consented to fast, 40 of us, with good grace, wherein I was very well affected, armed against the

²⁴ Lambeth Palace, MS 649 (233), fol. 342.

²⁵ Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 82-3.

worldly pleasure. There was no such pleasure to me as that days work.” Rogers also noted that this feeling stayed with him for days if not a couple weeks.²⁶

One of best contemporary accounts of a puritan fast, though a prejudicial one, comes from the Jesuit William Weston in prison at Wisbech Castle from 1588. Apparently driven by fear of a Spanish invasion, Weston noted that the prison had been overrun by “a great multitude of puritan visitors, especially a little before our arrival, partly from the town itself, partly from the villages near.” Peering from his cell windows he could see the large open courtyard within the walls where the puritans gathered. The gaoler and his family were puritans, and the justices also were among their supporters. With such a share of the local establishment, puritans not surprisingly “used to come in crowds, flocking from all quarters to be present at their exercises.” Weston said a thousand or more persons sometimes assembled. The fast began with three or four sermons, preached one after the other. Then they served communion which they received moving, not on their knees or standing. Perhaps related to admission to the sacrament, the puritans had a “kind of tribunal” in which elders investigated and punished the misdemeanors of the brethren. All had Bibles and diligently looked up texts cited by the preachers, and compared the passages to see if they had been taught truly and in confirmation of their own doctrine. They had arguments amongst themselves about the meanings of various biblical texts. Men, women, children, workers, and simpletons would all often end up in quarrels and fights. After fasting all day at the exercise it ended with a plentiful supper. Weston observed that as time passed, their “fervor” waned, and principal leaders were removed so that their numbers diminished and they sought other

²⁶ Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 61.13* (M.M. Knappen typescript), p. 76-7.

places for their “sacrilegious assemblies.”²⁷ Particularly useful here is a sense of the energy and connectedness of the godly community. The logo-centric nature of fasts is evident in the numerous sermons and careful confirmation of their teaching from the scriptures. A mini-consistory punishing sin was a reform goal puritans hoped to bring to the whole church. Also, we see the importance of having powerful patrons for protection to have such mega-gathering fasts.

One of the most important sort of fasts to puritan self-identification involved godly clergy. In Elizabethan times and beyond, puritan “prophesyings” or “exercises” (clerical gatherings to expound scriptures) were often fasts. After Elizabeth put down the prophesyings in 1577, puritan clergy regrouped and held private fasts which grew into clerical conferences or classes. They focused on building up a godly ministry, reforming the Book of Common Prayer, developing a form of parochial discipline to reform manners, and dealing with practical pastoral problems. Most members were willing to conform to some degree, and they believed themselves to be legally working within the church for reform. Few members sought to overthrow episcopacy, and had the movement been successful some form of presbytery within episcopacy would have resulted.

In particular, many meetings of the Dedham Classis were fasts. Like other meetings of the classis, fasts were clandestine and held at private houses in a rotation of towns. Godly gentry like Sir Robert Jermin, Suffolk JP, and Lord Rich gave them protection and patronage. Only a select and trusted few participated in or knew of them. For example, on the February 1, 1585 fast at the home of Edward Morse, members

²⁷ John Morris (ed.), *The Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers* (London, 1875) second series, volume 2, “The Life of Father William Weston, S.J.,” p. 240-41.

moved to allow Morse to sit in because he was “a good man” and it was his house. Members agreed though that his attendance was an one time exception and was not to be a precedent. The classis met monthly from October, 1582. On meeting days the classis decided to spend “in prayer and fasting,” they gave “admonition” to any brethren thought at fault in their ministry, doctrine, or life. Members proposed fasts at the meeting immediately before the one on which the fast was to take place, and designated three or four “speakers” and a moderator (who also began and ended the meeting in prayer). Suggesting the far greater intensity of a fast, ordinary meetings only had one “speaker” and a moderator. The group either mandated a scripture for the sermons in advance, or left the selection to the discretion of the speaker. These sermons were exercise in interpreting the Word. Sometimes the fast was the only activity of the day, and at other times the classis undertook some other business as well. Preachers after such fasts would stay after at the house of the host or some godly woman’s house where they had relaxed fellowship.²⁸

After the end of the classis movement, clerical meetings or “exercises” for interpreting scripture continued. The records of the Diocese of Lincoln have perhaps the most detailed example of an “exercise” observing a fast. On November 8, 1603, Thomas Brightman, curate of Haynes in the Archdeaconry of Bedford, answered charges against him about the exercise of regional godly clergy at Southill in Bedford County. On Wednesday, September 28, their fast began at 9 am and ran without intermission to 5 pm. Remarkably, five different ministers gave five sermons. Three were for the length of one

²⁸ Roland Usher (ed.), *The Presbyterian Movement in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth as Illustrated by the Minute Book of the Dedham Classis 1582-1589* (London, 1905), p. 25-6, 28-9, 31, 33 and n.2, 38-42, 50-2, 56-62, 66-8, 73. Leland Carlson (ed.), *The Writings of Henry Barrow 1587-1590* (London, 1962), p. 417. Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Oxford, 1967).

hour, one was more than an hour, and Brightman's lasted for two hours. Brightman's sermon attacked many "corruptions" in the Church of England. He criticized government by bishops as the "lordly superiority" of ministers over one another. He criticized the church for accepting an "unteaching ministry," ministers who could teach but did not, and "scandalous ministers" in life and conversation. Finally, he complained that "true ministers" could not exercise the "full authority" Christ gave them, meaning the ability to impose spiritual censures to discipline their parishioners for sin.²⁹

Brightman's presbyterian leaning criticisms made sense to many puritans who were eager to glorify God and apply the graces He had given them but did not have the opportunity to make a difference because of the supposedly poor ministry. Significantly, the main text the puritans chose from the options in the order of morning prayer to be read that day was Daniel 9. This text concerned a fast to repent, remove the Lord's judgment, and restore the covenant with Him. Brightman's sermon was on Nehemiah 9:38, a chapter that also was about a fast to restore the covenant.

Exercises like Brightman's which had fasts were common and enduring. In 1606, Thomas Hutton noted that puritans referred to any of their clerical meetings in market towns for sermons, scripture, and prayers as a "fast." As late as January 2, 1634 Archbishop Laud reported to the king that the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield had suppressed "diverse monthly lectures, with a fast and a moderator (like that which they called prophesying in Qu[een] Elizabeth's time)."³⁰

²⁹ C.W. Foster (ed.), *The State of the Church in the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I as Illustrated by Documents Relating to the Diocese of Lincoln* (Lincoln Record Society, 1926), volume 23, sub-volume 1, p. cxvi-cxvii. On prophesyings as fasts, see: Patrick Collinson, *Godly People* (London, 1983), p. 475. This fast took place during the 1603 plague and likely was a weekly Wednesday public fast.

³⁰ Thomas Hutton, *The Second and Last Part* (London, 1606), p. 200 (STC 14035), printed after *Reasons for Refusal of Subscription to the Booke of Common Prayer* (London, 1605). Lambeth Palace Library, MS 943, p. 248.

Perhaps the most demonstrative and therefore controversial puritan fasts were unlawful public ones. John Strype, referencing the diary of a puritan minister in London, noted that puritans c.1580 “appointed fasts to be kept by their own authority.”³¹ Other examples give more details. The puritan minister Erasmus Cooke had to answer the articles James Rolfe, official to the archdeacon of St. Albans, administered against him on June 21, 1596. Cooke and other ministers of the archdeaconry of St. Albans had appointed and held “public fasts” without lawful warrant. Thus John Aylmer, the late Bishop of London, had convened and confined them. Cooke held his fast “publicly” on Monday in the parish church of St. Michael’s after giving advanced warning and notice of it. According to Rolfe, he then preached on several texts from Amos, Jonas, and other places, and prayed and sang psalms for at least four to seven hours. Conformists found such length excessive and possibly harmful to the laity. In their zeal, puritans thought one could not preach or pray too much in God’s service. Cooke replied that he had preached three sermons on Jonas and Hosea and continued six and a half hours in preaching, praying, and singing psalms. Another offensive aspect of Cooke’s fast was that it had included “ministers of other dioceses” or “diverse ministers of other jurisdictions” such as Mr. Dyke and Mr. Wiborne, as well as “diverse people of other and foreign parishes to a great number.” While edifying for puritans to join their fire together and worship with other “saints” in their network, conformists saw transgression of lines of authority as dangerous disorder. Cooke replied that Wiborne was present but not Dyke.³² Significantly absent from the charges against Cooke was any criticism of the

³¹ Strype, *Annals*, volume 2, part 2, p. 334.

³² Hertfordshire Record Office, MS ASA 5/5/291 (St. Albans Archdeaconry Records, Box X, Bundle A, miscellaneous papers). Patrick Collinson, “The Puritan Classical Movement in the Reign of Elizabeth I,” unpublished London Ph.D. thesis, 1957, p. 1182-1183.

established church. Cooke's agenda appears to have been to edify his parish with godly people and for their spiritual strength to move God to grant their requests.

The correction books of the Archdeaconry of Leicester record for March 21, 1627 that John Thornton, vicar of Thornton, "of his own authority" had called a fast. He confessed that on Wednesday, March 14 that "he did celebrate a fast in the church of Thornton at which there was a congregation." He with two other ministers each preached a sermon, each of which was "almost two hours long." He claimed "that he believeth it was lawful so to do for that the fast established by the king's book was not yet called in."³³ Leicester had long been a puritan stronghold so Thornton likely had some support among the local establishment. He could thus have the fast in the parish church. His attempt to legitimate his actions was not merely self-serving. Puritans felt a real conflict between obeying God and the magistrate. Arguably, Thornton was trying to grasp at any hint of legal sanction to permit him to serve the Lord. As we shall see in the next chapter, godly bishops would find in such an excuse some degree of respect for authority. By contrast, more radical puritans brazenly asserted their own right to act as they thought God commanded irrespective of the civil magistrate. The lack of calls for further reform of the Book of Common Prayer or church government suggests a degree of moderation in Thornton as well.

John Oxenbridge, preacher of Southam, faced charges in the Lichfield church court on April 21, 1596. The account held that Oxenbridge did "publicly ordain and appoint a public and solemn fast at a certain set and appointed day which was to be solemnized and celebrated in the church of Southam by sundry preachers." Also, "a great multitude and many hundreds besides his own parishioners" came to the fast. This figure

³³ Leicester Record Office, 1D 41/13/58, fol. 262v.

may or may not be accurate as crossed out in the manuscript is an estimate of the multitude as “above two thousand people.” To gather such a large crowd Oxenbridge had given public warning of it a fortnight beforehand. The fast had three sermons by three different preachers. They included Oxenbridge, Mr. Barton, and Mr. Dod of Hanwell. The fast lasted from 8am to 4pm.³⁴ That the fast took place in the parish church as in other examples suggests not only local support but a desire to impact the larger community through preaching and repentance. The apparent lack of criticism of the established church, which surely would have been among the charges if that had been the case, further suggests this focus. Also, the large number of godly attendees gadding to the fast from afar suggests a very efficient and energetic network of puritans.

Puritan gadding to fasts was common. The separatist, and harsh puritan critic, Henry Barrow noted of puritan fasts: “The people are solemnly bidden from all quarters to this stage-play who (at the first invention of it) flocked in thick and threefold to behold this novelty.”³⁵ Of Jeremiah Whitaker’s parish ministry from mid-1620s, Simeon Ashe recalled “no man was more frequent in assisting in days of humiliation in private, both in Rutlandshire, and the adjacent counties, whenever invited thereto.”³⁶ So again we see how fasts were important to sustaining and creating a sense of community among the godly across parish and diocesan boundaries. Indeed, John Fuller speaking of more than twenty year religious fellowship with John Beadle said: “We oft breathed and poured out our souls together in prayer, fasting, and conferences.”³⁷

³⁴ Lichfield Record Office, B/C/3/3. The manuscript is difficult to read where it gives the length of the fast. It was possibly from 7am to 8pm.

³⁵ Carlson (ed.), *Barrow*, p. 415.

³⁶ Simeon Ashe, *Living Loves Betwixt Christ and Dying Christians* (London, 1656), third edition, p. 56 (Wing A3963).

³⁷ John Beadle, *The Journal or Diary of a Thankful Christian* (London, 1656), to the reader (Wing B1557).

In another example, authorities suspended and imprisoned Edward Philips, preacher at St. Mary Overy's in London, for moving observation of the public fast from Wednesday to Thursday, January 20, 1596 which was Twelfth-Day. To conformists this move was "contempt" of authority and public order. Philips hindered "hospitality" by turning "a day of rejoicing and feasting," which was a key time for liberal giving, into "a day of mourning and abstinence." Philips responded that the hospitality which many had already set aside not knowing of the fast, as well as the alms given at fast, had relieved the poor. Thus, he altered traditional festive relief of the poor to a more reformed and somber method.

Further, while his own service ended around noon, the fast did not conclude then or there. Philips noted that authorities claimed that after his service, he did "very schismatically lead a great multitude through the city after my heels to Mr. Downname's sermon." Philips claimed that no one went to Downname's church for one and a half hours after his sermon, and that the only people in his company were Mr. Ratcliff, a fellow minister of his church, and their wives. Further, they passed over the water which made the less show. Philips was also charged with conspiring with Downname to keep his exercise in the afternoon. Philips admitted this but said it was Downname's idea which Downname admitted before the High Commission. Philips even had a deacon lead afternoon prayers in his church while he and Ratcliffe were away.

In sum, we see a planned puritan multi-parish fast on a feast day. Philips claimed he chose Thursday for the fast in part because it was his regular lecture day, and greater crowds could be drawn to worship. Yet, for a puritan the thought of a raucous feast the day after a solemn fast would have seemed an insult to God and hypocritical. All the

work and benefits of the fast would be lost. Therefore, we can suspect Philips had strong motive to quash the feast. Also, clearly some puritans gadded through the streets moving from one lecture to the next. The godly could hardly have found a better way to differentiate themselves from the profane who were indulging themselves on a feast. The godly could hardly have found a more public stage to demonstrate their graces to the edification of others. With Philips, Ratcliffe, and Downname, the puritans had substantial ministerial resources to continue the fast in the afternoon with intensity. Also, puritans cleverly skirted official limits on the length of parish services, by going to two of them to make up what they considered the proper length of a fast day.³⁸

Further evidence that Philips likely was trying to subvert a feast day can be found in William Prynne's 1641 recounting of articles of the House of Commons against William Pierce, Bishop of Bath and Wells. The bishop's offense was as follows:

“He convented and punished one Master Thomas Elford, a minister, for preaching at the parish of Montague, upon the revel day, upon the prophet Joel's exhortation, *to fasting, weeping, and mourning*; charging him *that not only his sermon, but his very text was scandalous to the revel, and gave offense to the meeting.*”

In a marginal note Prynne complained: “O blasphemy! Why was not the revel rather scandalous to the text?” So if puritans could not have a fast against a profane day, they could at least preach on fasting! In kind, Thomas Scot wrote that “the godly fast, and pray, and weep, when the wicked feast, and play, and revel.” Apparently living out this advice, on November 30, 1626 Hugh Peters and other London puritans kept a fast on St. Andrews Day. Finally, Elizabeth Scott reportedly would:

“set apart for the said fasts, upon which there were some great shews or sights to be seen in the City, as twice she did upon a Lord Mayor's day, the occasion of her fasts falling out on those times of the year, making choice of those days rather than others, because of

³⁸ BL, Lansdowne 83 (34), fol. 98.

the vanity of the seasons and profaneness in the City by surfeiting and drunkenness more then at other times.”³⁹

The dichotomous universe of early modern thought clearly was highly effective at shaping self-understanding. Scott also wanted to be a saint whose fasts deferred judgment from the nation, or at least placed a mark on her.

Additionally, Philip’s method to have a fast covertly was a common and long standing puritan ploy. Christopher Dow writing in 1637 gives an invaluable description of how puritans circumvented authorities to have fasts:

“Some good Christians (that is, professors) intimate their necessities to some minister of note among them, and obtain of them the promise of their pains to preach upon that occasion, pitching upon such days and places, as where and when sermons or lectures are wont to be; and having given under hand notice to such as they judge faithful, of the day to be observed, and the places where they shall meet for that end, thither they resort, and mixing themselves with the crowd, unsuspected have the Word they so much desire, with the occasion covertly glanced at, so as those that are not of their counsel, are never the wiser. Thus, I have diverse times known them to begin the day upon a Wednesday, where they had a sermon beginning at six in the morning, and holding them till after eight: that being done, they post (sometimes in troops) to another church, where the sermon beginning at nine, holds them till past eleven, and from thence again, they betake themselves to a third church, and there place themselves against the afternoon sermon begin, which holds them till night.”⁴⁰

As we saw in the previous chapter, the godly had a great desire for fasts as they served so many essential needs and goals. Puritans were determined to have their fasts anyway they could. In this manner, they ingeniously found a way to serve God but also to stay within the bounds of the law.

A simpler variation of this technique was to have fasts on lecture days in a single church. The godly could covertly attend a church to which they did not belong by mingling with the strangers that usually came to hear the sermons. The Dedham Classis

³⁹ William Prynne, *The Antipathy of the English Lordly Prelate Both to Regal Monarchy and Civil Unity* (London, 1641), part 2, un-numbered pages between p. 304-5 (Wing P4074). Thomas Scott, *Vox Dei* (n.p., n.d.), p. 23-4 in *The Works of . . . Thomas Scot* (Utrick, 1624)(STC 22064). Raymond Stearns (ed.), “Letters and Documents By or Relating to Hugh Peter,” Essex Institute Historical Collections, volume LXXI, number 4, October, 1935, p. 309. Case, *Excellent*, second pagination, p. 110.

⁴⁰ Christopher Dow, *Innovations Unjustly Charged Upon the Present Church and State* (London, 1637), p. 208-9 (STC 7090).

arranged such a fast at the supra-congregational level. At their January 8, 1588 meeting they agreed that a “public fast” was “very necessary.” They also agreed first “to confer with the ancients of our parishes about it” who would inform all relevant others about it. They then discussed the manner in which they would observe the fast, “whether many churches together joining in one or every church severally.” They decided “it was not necessary, that every church should have a fast, the little churches might join with the greater. And for the day it was thought to be on the lecture days in every church which some liked best.”⁴¹ So the classis split the difference between having one megagathering and every church apart. The disadvantage was that lectures were not necessarily on the same day in every town. The benefit was to join together more of the burning coals of the godly than normal.

As we saw with Brightman, some puritans focused their reform zeal on the Elizabethan settlement. A fast at Ridlington in Northamptonshire in 1589 shows puritans trying to marshal their spiritual power to effect reform of the liturgy by appealing to God for assistance and rallying their ranks to work for the same:

“Mr. Holmes did preach upon a private fast in the parish church at Ridlington, did continue from ix to iii in the presence of Mr. Sheriff, Mr. James Harrington, with others both of town and country, in which sermon the said Holmes spake these words as the like in effect: that the Book of Common Prayer was a great idol and full of abominations, as the churching of women and burial of the dead, and that he liked neither of the churching of women and burial of the dead, and that they did not belong to their office but were an apish tricks. Then Mr. Wilkinson, parson of Tinwell, the said day preached and said, ‘Good brethren, lift up your hearts and pray mightily unto God, and believeth this that our brother hath said, for he hath spoken the truth, and that we might have reformation of these things.’ Then Mr. Gibson preached and told them that these his brethren had spoken the truth, and prayed them to believe him and to lift up their hearts mightily to God, and prayed for reformation.”

Again, the length of the fast and that three ministers gave three sermons was too much for conformists. More troubling was the attack on the Book of Common Prayer. In this

⁴¹ Usher (ed.), *Presbyterian*, p. 68.

instance, puritans clearly were integrated into the local establishment perhaps making them less discrete about challenging authority. In particular, they were able to hold this private fast in the parish church, with a sheriff and a prominent local squire in attendance. But they were not so indiscrete as to have a public fast of the whole congregation. Additionally, puritans were active in the 1580s in Rutland in the parishes of North and South Luffenham, Tinwell, Ridlington, Great Casterton, and Oakham where the exercise was based. They built support among the local gentry and networked with other godly people.⁴²

The Ridlington fast may not have been merely a local effervescence of puritan zeal but part of a larger fast. Over the winters of 1584-85 and 1586-87 puritans had fasts around the beginning of sessions of parliament to plead with God to make it further reform the church. They also coordinated several of these fasts across swaths of the country. The Dedham Classis not only had fasts at several of their meetings during this time, but was a focal point of efforts to join fasts together (including with theirs) and they corresponded with “the brethren of London” in particular to do so. Coordinated fasts were important, as William Tay of Laierdelehay told Mr. Parker, pastor of the church at Dedham, so “with one heart, mind, and order, the churches might deal with the Lord by fervent prayer.” In addition to ministers stirring up their people “to earnest prayer for the good of the Church,” the Classis sought to dovetail fasts with lobbying efforts for “the cause of the Church,” especially encouraging godly gentlemen “to be zealous for reformation.”⁴³

⁴² Northamptonshire Record Office, X609/23, fol. 216. William J. Sheils, *The Puritans in the Diocese of Peterborough, 1558-1610* (Northamptonshire Record Society, vol. 30, 1979), p. 45-7, 62-3.

⁴³ Usher (ed.), *Presbyterian*, p. 40-2, 59, 82-3.

The papers of Edward Lewkenor contain a 1584-85 document which sheds light on some arguments the fasting/lobbying effort made with MPs. In *A Brotherly Caveat to the Godly Zealous and Wise Gentlemen of the Parliament House*, the puritan author advised MPs to be as Nehemiah. This biblical exemplar was not discouraged, even by “an heathenish prince,” from rebuilding the ruined walls of Jerusalem, “but giving himself to prayer and fasting preserved the cause of God’s church and prevailed.” Under “so Christian a prince as ours,” God’s hand was hardly shortened, and given his favor of “godliness” He would surely bless reform efforts with success “if we make not ourselves unworthy by our cowardliness.”⁴⁴ One even wonders if the puritan author was alluding to the coordinated fasts. For a godly MPs the “extraordinary prayers” of the saints would have been no slight confidence builder.

When puritans ran afoul of authorities and suffered “affliction” at their hands, other saints would fast for them. A key example is the Suffolk JP and MP Edward Lewkenor’s list of “necessary causes” for humiliation in 1587-88. One section of the list fell under the comment: “The imprisonment of any special minister or member of the church requireth the earnest prayer of the church for him.” He referenced Acts 12:5 where the church prayed for Peter when he was in prison. Lewkenor wrote that this “outward exercise” (i.e. fasting) was undertaken so prayer was “more fervent.” Also, one was to fast and pray “in grief that these things oft have touched our consciences no sooner.” He specifically mentioned Secretary of State Walter Davison, who was in the

⁴⁴ BL, Add MS 38,492 (22), fol. 37v.

Tower, and “a worthy man.” He also emphasized “the restraint of godly ministers from their places to the loss of many congregations.”⁴⁵

One minister whom authorities apparently had suspended took advantage of the fast at the February 1, 1585 meeting of the Dedham Classis to request assistance:

“Mr. Negus moved the brethren that in this public exercise they would pray to God for him, and commend his state unto the highest, being about to take his journey to London for his restoring to liberty in his calling. It is to be remembered that he was at that time restored to his public ministry again before he came back to us.”⁴⁶

Fasts then were an important means of forging bonds among the godly and a sense of fellowship and community. God’s deliverance of Negus would also become a part of puritans’ sense of history as a blessing to be long remembered and often recounted for praising God and shaming their ingratitude.

Similar to Negus, on September 20, 1589 Richard Rogers had a fast “with my brethren” for “our liberty” (as well as for the king of Navarre, and against “the iniquity of the time”). Yet in addition to fasts with other puritans, Rogers had fasts alone. Writing in his diary April 29, 1590 Rogers thought the devil was trying to discourage him with concerns about losing his liberty as well as other matters. He concluded he needed to fast “that I might somewhat recover myself.” On July 17, 1590 he had such a fast because he was still disconcerted and distracted from his godly “course” by fears of losing his liberty

⁴⁵ BL, Add MS 38,492 (55), fol. 98. With Elizabeth shunning responsibility for the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, Davison received substantial blame for dispatching the death warrant. Lewkenor was surely elated at Mary’s execution. As the Roman Catholic Church did not recognize Henry VIII’s divorce or re-marriage, in Catholic eyes Mary was the legitimate heir to the English throne not Elizabeth. Also, should Elizabeth die Mary would have claim to it. Until Mary was dead, Catholic intrigue would swirl around her as a focal point and breed plots against Elizabeth. (Simon Adams, “Davison, William (d.1608),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, online edn., May, 2006).

⁴⁶ Usher (ed.), *Presbyterian*, p. 42. In Suffolk and churches within the Dedham Classis 1586-87, “the brethren” had fasts with collections for relief of “the French Church” with whom they were in correspondence. (ibid., p. 57-8, 66) The Suffolk puritans had also fasted due to God’s judgment in the scarcity of food, the “little good” it had wrought in people, and generally they feared “the contempt of the Gospel.” (ibid., p. 58)

to preach. His description of the fast shows many of the features of the affliction narrative:

“I desired to take opportunity to fast, if through God’s goodness I might hereby obtain a more thorough seasoning of my heart with grace of faith in the hardest estate, and so of comfort and courage in silence, and to bear separation from my long continued fellowship with God’s people, yea and do comfort myself in my God, come prison, come outward desolation howsoever, and a putting down of our sweet liberties, yet God is still to us as before He was to us and perhaps will be sweeter when the world is sourer, when we shall see that we must needs depend upon Him, then when we served Him so hoverly and in so common a manner as of late, by trusting too much to ourselves, most justly we have complained of.”

He hoped the “affliction” of possibly losing his liberty would “rouse” him and other godly clergy to more diligence in their calling than they had during their “prosperity.”

Thus he told himself that God would turn trials to good, that He would send graces to support him, and that He would strengthen his faith and teach him to rely on Him. The fasts he had in July lifted his spirits, as on July 25, 1590 he wrote that he was “better” for them.⁴⁷

In Calvinist conformists’ eyes, the foregoing examples of puritan fasts appeared excessive in length and a threat to good order. Not surprisingly, many of these examples come from the records of authorities prosecuting puritans for them. But Calvinist conformists shared with puritans the understanding of fasts reviewed in the previous chapter. For example, on May 2, 1581, Edwin Sandys, Archbishop of York wrote to William Chaderton Bishop of Chester in part to admonish him privately about allowing unlawful puritan fasts in Yorkshire:

“My Lord, you are noted to yield too much to general fastings, all the day preaching and praying. Verily a good exercise in time and upon just occasion, when it cometh from good authority. But, (when there is none occasion, neither the thing commanded by the prince or a synod) the wisest and best learned cannot like of it, neither will her Majesty permit it. There lurketh matter under that pretended piety. The Devil is crafty; and the young ministers of these our times grow mad.”

⁴⁷ Dr. Williams’s Library, MS 61.13* (M.M. Knappen typescript), p. 126, 158, 167-69.

Sandys clearly thought these puritans were having the types of fasts that attacked the established church and called for further reformation. We can very likely identify one of these ministers. On March 7, 1582 Sandys again wrote to Chaderton urging him to suspend from preaching the radical puritan vicar of Sedbergh, Yorkshire Giles Wigginton. Sandys described him as “a young man, very far out of frame.” Sandys thought he would not accept the authority of bishops, and was laboring “by what means he can, to overthrow the state ecclesiastical.”⁴⁸ So for conformists their touchstone of the true Christian was obedience to the prince and the established church. They asked how genuine the piety of puritans could be if they broke God’s basic commandment to obey authority. They saw puritan criticism of them regarding fasts as uncharitable, slanderous, and arising from spiritual pride if not madness.

In reply to puritan agitation for reform, conformists argued that God’s blessings on England as well as the miraculous preservations of Elizabeth testified that the church was properly reformed. So too did the martyrdom of bishops who helped to establish the Gospel in England long ago, the same Gospel which had been freely preached ever since. By arguing the church was corrupt, puritans encouraged disobedience and rebellion, and discouraged the people from seeking salvation in it. Puritans were obstructing the establishment of God’s kingdom and the Gospel by causing discord and faction. Division in religion would lead to division in the commonwealth and contempt of the magistrate. Thus, puritans were drawing down divine wrath on whole realm. Indeed, William

⁴⁸ Francis Peck (ed.), *Desiderata Curiosa* (London, 1732), volume 1, book III, p. 28-30, 45. From his days at Trinity College, Cambridge Wigginton’s views and combative nature made his college master John Whitgift an enemy. As archbishop, Whitgift watched him closely and eventually ordered Sandys to proceed against him which forced Chaderton to deprive him of his living in 1585. Frequently in prison for his activities, his treatment was noted prominently in *The Epistle*, the first Marprelate tract. He was also an associate of the fanatics William Hacket and Edmund Copinger. See: William Joseph Sheils, “Wigginton, Giles (fl. 1564-1597),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

Overton, the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, purportedly claimed that “the public fasts and the prayers of the puritans were the cause of the invasion of the Spaniards, and of all other troubles and turmoils within the land.”⁴⁹

In reply, Elizabethan puritan clergy complained of being labeled “seditious” and “factious.” In their view their loyalty was demonstrated by being fasting saints who stood in the gap to avert judgment on the nation. By contrast, their opponents, who reproached them for so doing and did not do likewise, were worldlings :

“Who more often have humbled themselves in fasting and earnest prayer for the preservation of the precious life and happy estate of her most excellent Majesty, of the right honorable of her highness Council, and of all the land then they? Nay, it is well known that they almost only have done it, and have been rebuked for it by those who would yet without doing any such duty, be counted the best subjects.”

While they as godly clergy deserved encouragement for such fasts and their calling in general to the ministry, authorities “slandered” and “diversely punished” them.⁵⁰

For their part conformists stressed that even if well intentioned, puritan fasts were dangerous to order. George Abbot, for example flatly asserted: “It is no true fast in a Christian common-wealth, which is begun and ended with manifest disobedience to that superior power which doth serve the same God with them.” Abbot cautioned: “Good things may be done amiss, and so the goodness of them may be impeached.” John King said the same citing the rule of Zonaras: “Good is never good, except it be done in good sort.” They said they supported public fasts (with their prayer, preaching, singing, and distribution of relief to the poor) but opposed the way puritans authorized them. Their approach denied public fasts their “full perfection” which occurred when rulers appointed them. For conformists, only “public persons,” “civil and ecclesiastical governors,” or

⁴⁹ Ronald McKerrow (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Nashe* (Oxford, 1958), vol. 1, “The Returne of the Renowned Cavaliers Pasquill of England” (1589), p. 76-97. Pierce (ed.), *Marprelate Tracts*, “Certaine Minerall and Metaphysicall Schoolpoints” (March 20, 1589), p. 187.

⁵⁰ Albert Peel (ed.), *The Seconde Parte of a Register* (Cambridge, 1915), volume 2, p. 81.

“superior magistrates” could command public and general fasts not “inferior subjects,” “private members,” or a “private person.” If the times required a public fast and authorities failed to appoint one, then Christians could have private fasts by themselves or in their families because “God must be served.” But to allow the least disobedience to the “lawful and Christian governor,” as in appointing public fasts, would lead to its spread like wild fire among “busy and catching natures” until all authority unraveled. They warned of “disorder,” “anarchy,” “confusion,” “housed conventicles and encamped factions,” the “Anabaptistical crew” as a “schismatical sect” assembling to have a fast on “every idle motion of their brain,” the “frantic Anabaptist,” the horror of Munster, and separatist sects like the Brownists.⁵¹

In addition to obedience to authority, two other concepts were crucial to how Calvinist conformists defined themselves in relation to puritan self-understandings: charity and unity. Like the concepts key to puritan self-understanding, obedience, charity, and unity were traits all English Calvinists believed characterized the true Christian. As puritans did with certain shared dichotomous categories, conformists in creating their self-understanding appropriated these concepts to themselves and attributed their negative counterparts to the other. Thus, Abbot asked puritans not to be so “censorious” and “critical” of authorities, whom they knew to be “no enemies to God and

⁵¹ Samuel Gardiner, *The Cognizance of a True Christian, or the Outward Markes Whereby He May Be the Better Knowne* (London, 1597), p. 74-5, 77 (STC 11573). George Abbot, *An Exposition Upon the Prophet Jonah* (London, 1600), p. 415-18, 429-31 (STC 34). John King, *Lectures Upon Jonas* (Oxford, 1597), p. 471-75, 489 (STC 14976). Robert Wakeman, *Jonahs Sermon, and Ninevehs Repentance* (Oxford, 1606), p. 74-5, 80-3 (STC 24948). John Mayo, *A Sermon of Fasting, and of Lent* (London, 1609), p. 59 (STC 17755). Countering puritan claims to authority to appoint fasts from the fast of Ninevah, Abbot and King argued that the scripture did not mean the people of Ninevah called their public fast but that they petitioned nobles, who then requested it from the king. The king and his council of nobles then made a proclamation. (Abbot, *Jonah*, p. 415, 418; King, *Jonas*, p. 471-72; Wakeman, *Jonahs*, p. 74-5, 80-3) King told that puritans inferred from the Ninevah fast “that in matters appertaining to God, we must not tarry the leisure of princes till their license be obtained, for princes (they say) are slowest to believe, and farthest from humbling themselves before the majesty of God when His anger is kindled.” (King, *Jonas*, p. 471)

true religion,” as to think they would not call a public fast when warned of a danger, and “religiously requested” for it. He thought it a breach of Christian charity to suspect such authorities of being “hard hearted and insensible.” He warned puritans against “murmuring” about others, and against their “seditious complaining.” He warned them of “seditious singularity, and over-weaning contempt and condemning of other, lest thou more offend with that, then thou profit with thy abstinence.”⁵²

John King understood these traits of self-identification similarly. He told puritans that having unauthorized fasts showed “a presumption of thine own zeal, an affectation of singularity, a commending and preaching of thyself unto the people.” To have unauthorized fasts was a “censure” against the rest of the “brethren” that they were “over-cold” in religion and the magistrate “too slack.” He warned them not to suspect that rulers were “careless,” or to make other such “uncharitable and hasty surmises.” In short, he was challenging their application of dichotomous categories that legitimated puritans and condemned conformists. Most eloquently, he challenged the heart of puritan self-understanding in fasts:

“In many the dangers of our land both at home and abroad, many the members and subjects thereof, as if our country had no more orators, and there were none to stand in the gap but themselves, have assembled together, either in towns, or in hamlets, and sometimes in a private house to fast and pray before the Lord. Their humbling of themselves in such sort, confessing of sins, offering of their hearts in devout supplication, singing of psalms, prophesying in course from morning till evening, as they are plausible exercises in the sight of men, so I will not say the contrary but full of godliness and Christianity. But (under correction of better knowledge and judgment) I think, that obedience and love, had been better then all this sacrifice, and that thus to minishe the authority of the magistrate, by preventing his decree, and controlling as it were his government, and to give sentence against all the children of the land besides of negligence and unmindfulness in God’s affairs, may more offend, then their service or devotion can do good otherwise.”

For King, charity also fostered the unity of the whole church. He affirmed that a public fast in which all joined together was the most pleasing kind to God when the threat was

⁵² Abbot, *Jonah*, p. 416-17.

common to all. They could then give “a whole burnt offering” and be “a people at unity within ourselves.” Likewise, Robert Wakeman in his influential Paul’s Cross sermon, upheld the fast of the Ninevites as exemplary where they had “but one heart, and one soul, one mind, and one meaning, one faith and one fast, one desire, and one attire, among them all from the greatest to the least.”⁵³

Even the puritan friendly Bishop of London, Edmund Grindal took issue with radical puritans who audaciously ignored authority and refused to recognize any power in it to deny their fasts. William White in a 1569 letter to Grindal protested that the bishop seemed to be “offended with a late exercise of prayer and fasting” because he “had not heard of any exercise of fasting and prayer without consent of public authority.” White replied that the people of Ninevah proclaimed a fast and their king did not blame them for going before him in well-doing. Christian magistrates therefore should not condemn zealous subjects. Grindal “by the authority of God’s Word, ought rather to have commended and defended the zeal of such pastors and people, than at the complaint of a parasite to cast their pastor into prison without hearing his cause either before or after.” He argued that “flatterers” and “clawbacks,” who were the cause of all evil commanded by authority, had misled Grindal.⁵⁴ We can see in White much of the language and narrative discussed in the previous chapter at work. His zeal for what he took to be his duty in serving God, his suspicion of any who questioned it as being against God, and his denigrating categorization of his critics as agents of evil all fit.

White had a lot of company. The Lord Lieutenant commanded John Travers to jail in part for “proclamations of general fastings,” in addition to other offenses such as

⁵³ King, *Jonas*, p. 473-75. Mayo, *Sermon*, p. 59. Wakeman, *Jonahs*, p. 74-5, 80-3.

⁵⁴ Peel (ed.), *Seconde Parte*, volume 1, p. 64-5.

irreverent behavior to John Woolton, the Lord Bishop of Exeter.⁵⁵ The Archdeacon of Surrey, Dr. John Hone, wrote to stop a fast in the parish of Kingston on Thames September 11, 1586. His reasons for fearing what such a fast might look like are unsurprising given that the radical puritan John Udall was preacher there. Purportedly, in a few short years his “strange and new opinions” had produced “schisms, parties, and divisions.” In his letter, Hone recounted many complaints of “contemptuous disorders” in church matters by certain “newfangled people” in the town and parish. They were undermining and challenging the Book of Common Prayer, ceremonies, and the authority of bishops. In their place new ceremonies, a new form of prayer, “new feasts and fasting days,” and private meetings contrary to laws and customs of Church of England had been “invented.” All suspected persons were to be presented at the upcoming visitation.⁵⁶

Similarly, c.1580 the JP, Edward Boughton, esquire of Cawston, Warwickshire had articles objected against him to the privy council. As with Udall, his accusers said he was “an obstinate puritan,” that he undermined the Book of Common Prayer and set up a “new service” and “new fasts” and “such other like singular devises.” By so doing, he caused a “great disturbance” in the part of the diocese where he lived.⁵⁷

While moderate puritans substantially accepted the position of the likes of Abbot and King at least in theory if not in practice, more radical puritans made arguments to give the godly substantially more freedom to organize fasts. Arthur Hildersam, for example, wrote a brief manuscript to prove “Christians of sundry families may lawfully (even in these times and in such a church as ours is) in a private house join together in fasting and prayer.” His argument centered on Acts 12:5-12 which he believed was such

⁵⁵ Inner Temple Library, Peyt 538, volume 38, fol. 62.

⁵⁶ Peel (ed.), *Seconde Parte*, volume 2, p. 39-41.

⁵⁷ PRO, SP 12/146/65.

a fast in regards to the imprisonment of Peter. To the objection that this case was different because it was in a “time of persecution,” Hildersam argued that while authorities allowed many truths of God to be freely and publicly preached, the doctrine and duty of “public fasting” on “just occasion” was not allowed but “opposed” and “persecuted.” The present times too were a “time of persecution” he claimed.⁵⁸ The affliction narrative clearly was suggested here.

A c.1580s remonstrance of puritan clergy in Ashby to the Bishop of Peterborough (Edmund Scambler or Richard Howland) in response to charges of holding unlawful prophesyings or fasts offers further insights into how these meetings influenced the process of identification between puritans and conformists. The puritan clergy appealed first to generalized reform goals that all English Calvinists shared. They argued the bishops were wrong not to join, let alone to command an end to, “public praying, fasting, and prophecy” because such was profitable to the church and edifying to the people. The clergy suggested that these people were not seditious or factious claiming they included “many good consciences.” These loyal and obedient subjects merely frequented these fasts because they had no teaching where they lived. Here the clergy appealed to the shared desire for proselytizing with Calvinist bishops who also worried of souls being damned for want of preaching. The puritans then affirmed that the ministers met for the fasts because they were “moved by God’s Spirit without any outward compulsion.” Here they were denying being a part of a Classis or some type of shadow presbyterian government that conformists so feared. They were simply being good Protestants following their consciences in Christian liberty.

⁵⁸ BL, Add MS 4275 (124), fol. 281.

Aware of the charge of being uncharitable, they claimed that if the bishop had personally seen the proceedings he may have thought differently and might have put things in order for the “true fast.” Though they also admonished him by playing on his sense of duty to the souls of the people by claiming they were ignorant of this fast due to his negligence. But they then again appealed to the common bond of preaching arguing they had a “better opinion” of the bishop than to think he would be displeased and offended at “the diligent coming together of so many to hear the Word of God” which they could not have in their own places in these “blind corners” around Ashby. These people had come only to see the practice of a “true fast” which was “so rare in England.” Moving from the carrot to the stick again, the puritans boldly asserted that the prelates were “too much Pharisaical, pontifical, and too far from the Spirit of Christ our Savior, who rejoiced to see the people so willing to hear, and lamented that there were no more laborers the harvest being so great.” They also appealed to the Calvinist emphasis on edifying fellowship affirming: “All men do know by experience that sticks of fire scattered can give no such piercing heat as when they are laid together, neither yet lights far dissourced and separate have like power as near joined.”

They then took on conformist concerns about order arguing that the coming together for conference, and fasting and prayer was not disordered but approved in the Old and New Testament, the apostolic and ancient churches, and the Reformed churches in the present. They then appealed to shared concerns about profaneness and raised the familiar dichotomous category of godly/world. They lamented that in a Christian realm that it was lawful for people to assemble for Robinhood and games, but “poor ministers of Christ” meeting to exercise themselves in the Word was an unlawful assembly.

In regards to the bishop's order that they should have no other rites and orders than appointed by the Book of Common Prayer, they claimed it was borrowed from "the popish porteous." No book could be warranted any further than the Bible supported it. The bishop's "worm's meat" did not allow "your fellow bishops Christ's faithful ministers" to further fasts. Therefore the prayer book was not legitimate. Most boldly they asserted their right to judge occasions to fast: "But let it be that we had no commandment of man, yet that the necessity of our time doth require such public exercises there is no man can deny that hath any conscience of sin, or any consideration of God's plagues imminent, or any care for the furtherance of Christ's Holy Gospel among us." Here their zeal to stand to their convictions and witness to truth moved them away from common ground with Calvinist bishops. Such statements attacking the form of prayer, suggesting ministerial parity, and giving inferior clergy authority reserved to their superiors could hardly have been compelling.

Finally they tried to encourage the bishop to take the logic of a consoling statement in his letter in a direction towards their view. The bishop acknowledged that ministers "may seem to have somewhat to do in our own parishes and congregations when we have the charge." The puritan clergy responded that they thought it "very strange" that they did not have authority and duty in "very deed" because otherwise they were not "true pastors and teachers" for their parishes and congregations but only "shadows." Again, arguing for the instruction and good of the people, they claimed "lordly bishops" did not even see many parishes and thus could not instruct them nor know "when to move them to mourning and fasting or to thanksgiving." A bishop's

charge was too great to be a proper shepherd.⁵⁹ So while these puritans did a reasonable job playing on common desires for preaching, their statements concerning order, which gave them space to pursue God's cause as they saw fit, would have been abhorrent to the bishop.

Perhaps the best evidence of how divisive puritan fasts could be at the local level is the case of John Vicars, parson of St. Mary's in Stamford, Lincolnshire. Vicars was a young and tactless firebrand who advanced questionable or heterodox doctrines and an extreme view of the sabbath. In sermons, prayers, and/or the administration of communion at St. Mary's, he rebuked, denigrated, and cursed the town magistrates, other ministers, and many in his congregation. At the same time, he lauded himself as minister and his "faction" who engaged in voluntary religious exercises. His critics claimed he preached opinions "tending to the making of a rent and schism in the church, but also to a disturbance and division in the state." They said he was "factious" and "schismatical" drawing his followers into dislike and contempt of the present church government and services. Thus, only a year or two into his ministry at Stamford, Vicars appeared before Bishop John Williams in October, 1628. In January-February, 1630 he was petitioned against to the king and Privy Council. He was convented before the Privy Council who with the king referred the matter to the high commission court before whom he appeared in November, 1631. The charge that he had "troubled" Stamford and made "a great

⁵⁹ BL, Add MS 27,632, fol. 47r-51r. These clergy likely had the support of local godly gentry for their petition. The manuscript is found in the papers of Sir John Harrington. Similar criticism to the Ashby clergy's identification of bishops with traditional set fasts can be found in the Dedham Classis. William Tay of Laierdelehay writing December 22, 1587 to Mr. Parker, pastor of church at Dedham referred to the prelates "profaning of that holy ordinance of fasting." He revealed in thought that the proposed fast of the Dedham Classis, and associated fasts of puritan dominated churches, would "make a manifest and open contradiction to the b[ishop]s' superstitious or profane fasting and mumbling of their matters, so as the common ignorant people may plainly see the difference between the glorious ordinance of the Lord and the imagined shadow of the b[ishop]s' traditions." (Usher (ed.), *Presbyterian*, p. 82-3)

distraction and division there amongst the people” had merit as some townspeople witnessed for the prosecution while others did so for the defense.⁶⁰

Vicars also frequently led illegal fasts. Even after Bishop Williams admonished him for a variety of offenses on Simon and Judes Day, 1628, authorities complained that “he hath of his own authority appointed public fasts.”⁶¹ Articles exhibited against him to the Privy Council in early 1630 (rehashed in 1631 in high commission) included that he “hath kept three public fasts of late by his own authority.” The first took place on January 22, the second on January 29, and the last on Candlemas day (i.e. February 2). The first two fasts were additionally troublesome as “some of his followers” shut up their shops to go to church, and would not sell anything even though it was the market day.⁶² The fast on Candlemas, the purification of the Virgin Mary, must have been especially offensive to avant-garde conformists as it obscured and contradicted the feast day. Indeed, radical puritans rejected traditional feast days and this one supported the “superstitious” practice of the churching of women. Given that Vicars in a 1629 sermon questioned December 25 as the day of Christ’s birth, and that Candlemas was dated in

⁶⁰ Samuel R. Gardiner (ed.), *Reports of Cases in the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission* (Camden Society, N.S., vol. 39, 1886, reprint 1965), p. 198-238, 273-74; Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.II.21, fol. 17r-19v, 75v-76r; Northamptonshire Record Office, FH 587, p. 1-3; PRO, SP 16/119/52, fol. 69r-76. Vicars conformed to a degree and occasionally, and his limited non-conformity was a small part of the 1628, 1630, and 1631 charges. Indeed, from 1628 he appears to have improved his conformity as some charges did not reappear in later prosecution, though he also refused to read the Book of Sports. He submitted to Williams’ order to read prayers on Sunday at St. Mary’s in his surplice and apologize for his offenses (though he carefully phrased them to admit to as little as possible), acknowledged the duty of ministers to conform, and disavowed many controversial doctrines. He also submitted on April 26, 1632, though the case dragged on in High Commission past February 6, 1634 (the surviving records cease February 14, 1634) while he negotiated over the wording of his submission and recantation to guard his conscience and protect himself from charges of perjury as he had denied the truth of most charges under oath. (CUL, MS Dd.II.21, fol. 75v-76r, 300v; Gardiner (ed.), *High Commission*, p. 273-74, 205-6, 209-10; PRO, SP 16/119/52, fol. 69r-76; Northamptonshire Record Office, FH 587 p. 1-3) Puritans to a degree had a case for terming him one of “diverse conformists” who in their view were suffering “persecution” under Laud. (Theophilus, *Divine and Politike Observations* (Amsterdam, 1638), p. 59-60 (STC 15309)).

⁶¹ Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.II.21, fol. 18r-v.

⁶² Northamptonshire Record Office, FH 587, p. 1-3.

reference to Christmas, he likely was making a point about that as well.⁶³ True to puritan form, a final complaint told how he “used and made” four prayers that lasted four hours in the fast.⁶⁴

After Vicars was convented before the Lords of the Privy Council and bound to appear before them he appointed “several” (in some versions two) “public fasts” at Stamford on week days “without any warrant or authority.” He preached both forenoon and afternoon “diverse times.” His preaching and extempore prayers took 6 or 7 hours. Apparently though, he was using an official fast book for the service as another complaint was that “he left out some of the common prayers.” Of course, he also “made diverse cursings against some of his parishioners, &c.” Moreover, a “great concourse” or “great company” of people came from both the town and the country to hear him.⁶⁵ Significantly, Vicars claimed that “in the time of his public fasts” the he “did not observe any extraordinary matter upon those days.”⁶⁶ Here Vicars was denying attacking the church or government which surely was the case as none were cited in charges against him. These fasts thus would have been much less an issue to Calvinist conformists.

Puritans often viewed being prosecuted as an attack on God’s cause, and prosecutions for fasts as silencing the divinely ordained means to protect the Protestant English church and nation. Vicars’ last fasts no doubt concerned fear of losing him as the “light” of the Gospel and the “mouth” of God in Stamford. One prosecutor, Dr. Eden, saw this easily enough when he scoffed “that doubtless the appearing before the Lords was the great cause of the fasts, &c.” Likewise, Bishop John Bowle quipped: “If the

⁶³ Gardiner (ed.), *High Commission*, p. 200, 207, 214, 222, 230-31, 235; Northamptonshire Record Office, FH 587, p. 1-3.

⁶⁴ Gardiner (ed.), *High Commission*, p. 210.

⁶⁵ Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.II.21, fol. 18v; Gardiner (ed.), *High Commission*, p. 203, 216-17.

⁶⁶ Gardiner (ed.), *High Commission*, p. 210.

Lords of the Council send for him, the poor people must come to church and leave their shops, if not a thunderbolt is discharged upon them.”⁶⁷

Further evidence sheds light on the tenor of these fasts and the state of mind of Vicars and his adherents at them. After he came from Stamford to London in February, 1630 to appear before the Privy Council, Vicars wrote “a consolatory epistle” to “his proselytes and followers” in Stamford. Purportedly, it was:

“a pernicious, seditious, and factious letter therein abusing apostolical phrases, and sundry texts of scripture to evil and wicked ends and purposes, and tending to persuade them to disobedience to superiors and not to fear them, and to persuade them to be constant in those factious and schismatical grounds wherein he had formerly instructed them. . .”

Specifically, Vicars’ scripture citations included Philippians 1:28-9 and Peter 1:4, 14 which not only drew sharp lines between Christ’s suffering little flock and Christ’s adversaries, but promised blessings on the former for holding fast to Christ. Equally defiantly, Vicars supposedly wrote:

“He heard the lion roared, and were not my heart (saith he) build upon the rock I might well fear; but be not discouraged at my sufferings, which is your crown, and be not afraid of the revilings of men, and finally pray for us, and do as Hezekiah did against Sennacherib, be not troubled with any Sanballat whatsoever.”⁶⁸

The reference to the lion likely was from 2 Timothy 4:17-18 and 1 Peter 5:7-10 which affirmed trust in the Lord to preserve and deliver from evil His suffering servants who remained steadfast in faith. Hezekiah, a godly king who reformed idolatry, had prayed for and, due to his trust in and faithful obedience to God, received divine intervention that preserved Jerusalem from the siege of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, who, in contrast, had blasphemed the Lord by denying He could deliver the city. Sanballat, governor of Samaria, was an enemy of Nehemiah (and the Israelites), and ridiculed, scorned, and opposed his rebuilding the walls and gates of Jerusalem. He falsely accused Nehemiah of

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 217, 227.

⁶⁸ CUL, MS Dd.II.21, fol. 18v; Gardiner (ed.), *High Commission*, p. 204, 216, 222.

plotting rebellion against Artaxerxes, king of Persia, and of trying to make himself king of Judah. Indeed, to oppose the rebuilding was to oppose God who answered Nehemiah's repentance in fasting and prayer for such in faithfulness to His covenant by having Artaxerxes consent as Nehemiah prayed.

Conformists viewed such defiance, in lieu of humble submission and acknowledgment of error, as subversive. Bishop Theophilus Field thought Vicars' "Apostolical epistle" was "a scandalous libel against this state, as if the government under our religious and gracious king were like that in the times of Nero and Mary." Sir Henry Marten criticized the letter as "an apish imitation of the Apostles." He also saw what we can see as an attempt to construct self-understanding: "all that holy St. Paul said for himself in his epistles you must apply to yourself, our king is the lion, his council Nero." Laud mocking puritan language referred Vicars' "letter to the brethren." He went farthest claiming "the church you hold to be no true church though it christened you."⁶⁹

Further evidence about the tone of the fasts comes from another inflammatory act. After he was summoned and bound over to appear before the Privy Council, 12-13 of "his followers" went with him on his journey. At the inn at Stilton:

"then and there Mr. Vicars after his wonted manner at the chamber in the inn made to them extemporary prayers and interpreted scriptures, and gave them exhortations tending to confirm them in those pernicious points of doctrine which he had formerly delivered unto them. . ."⁷⁰

Previously, steps against his conventicles, many of which were surely fasts, had led Vicars to challenge authority. In 1628, he responded to Alderman Nicholas Lambe's actions to suppress them by preaching on Mt. 26:31 the Sunday before the election of the next alderman. He called for someone who would not "smite the shepherd, nor

⁶⁹ Gardiner (ed.), *High Commission*, p. 230, 222-23, 237.

⁷⁰ CUL, MS Dd.II.21, fol. 18v; Gardiner (ed.), *High Commission*, p. 205.

consequently scatter the flock.” He charged the voters of Stamford with the sin of murder (i.e. of souls) for electing such men in the past. He also purportedly preached: “That by the horns in the prophet Zachary are meant wicked magistrates that push at the saints of God for having their godly conventicles or their holy meetings.” Further, he argued that men were to cleave to the ministry when it clashed with magistrates, and give money to defray the costs of “persecution.” Also, if the temporal magistrate proved “naught” the people lawfully could remove him from office. In particular, Vicars said this was the case when magistrates drew their sword against the “godly” and the ministry, but sheathed it against the “wicked.” While the context suggests that Vicars only addressed the Stamford magistrates and removal by normal electoral means, conformists saw subversion of all civil magistrates and establishment of clerical rule.⁷¹ But such radicalism had limits as witnesses affirmed Vicars had preached obedience to magistrates.⁷²

In his public preaching, Vicars also made “notes of distinction” or “notes of difference” between the people of Stamford in regards to his “private conventicles.” Those who frequented them he praised and blessed as “his children begotten in the Lord,” but those who did not he cursed as “the children of the Devil” and “sends to hell &c.” He made differences between “the godly and the wicked,” “the fearers of God and those that do not.” Such distinctions led “to the terrifying of the consciences of them that frequent not his conventicles.” Moreover, Vicars would “keep company” only with those who

⁷¹ PRO, SP 16/119/52, fol. 69r, 70. Northamptonshire Record Office, FH 587, p. 1. Gardiner (ed.), *High Commission*, p. 203, 226-27, 234.

⁷² Gardiner (ed.), *High Commission*, p. 209-10.

attend his conventicles.⁷³ Given that all Calvinists accepted these distinctions, the problem was the pastorally insensitive and divisive way Vicars did so. Vicars and his advocate also appealed to Calvinist conformists by claiming he was only preaching in a general sense about assurance. Vicars admitted making a distinction between “sinners” and “the godly,” but denied that he made it as accused. Rather, he merely had preached such “that men might know themselves to be the children of God, and gave notes to that purpose.”⁷⁴

Finally, we have seen how fasts for puritans and Calvinist conformists involved renewing vows and covenants with the Lord. Similarly, one of the 1628 complaints against Vicars was that in the conclusion of a fast sermon preached he said:

“All you that hear me this day must of necessity enter into a covenant, and make a vow to God before you depart out of the church, which vow so made, if any shall afterwards be a blasphemers, drunkard, swearer, &c. God will never forgive them, but they shall be damned body and soul.”⁷⁵

Such covenants also were central to charges of distinctions among the people of Stamford. In “secret meetings” or “private meetings,” Vicars compelled those that came to enter into “a covenant with God” or “a formal covenant of grace” by which they were to obey God’s commandments and law. According to these charges Vicars claimed this was “to renew the covenant of baptism.” Reeves argued that Vicars’ “new covenant” was the same as a “new baptism.” Likewise, Neile thought this “new covenant” nullified the “first covenant” of the sacrament of baptism. Laud argued the danger was not

⁷³ Ibid., p. 200, 208, 213-14, 219, 226, 235; Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.II.21, fol. 17v. Vicars also made distinctions based on voluntary practices he demanded at home on the sabbath. “He and his followers call their own houses Sion, and the houses of those that oppose their follies Egypt, Babylon, Sodom.” He persuaded some maids to leave their service “because God’s vengeance did hang over the house where they dwelt.” He argued servants should leave houses lacking proper sabbath observance and “come out of Babylon into Sion.” See: Northamptonshire Record Office, FH 587, p. 2; CUL, fol. 18v-19r; Gardiner (ed.), *High Commission*, p. 228.

⁷⁴ Gardiner (ed.), *High Commission*, p. 208, 219.

⁷⁵ PRO, SP 16/119/52, fol. 73. This doctrine was a prime example of how his excessive efforts to bring his hearers to repentance and godliness led to heterodoxy.

isolated as he had heard of the same “covenant of grace” practiced in the West of England (a slap at Bishop Hall?). An “act of repentance” he argued was not a “new covenant.” The only “new covenant” was made in baptism.⁷⁶

Surprisingly, Morton and Marten agreed in condemning Vicars’ “new covenant of grace.” As we have seen covenant renewal was unexceptional, and the charges said it was “without any oath or seal put to” so his practice appears standard.⁷⁷ Morton and Marten though saw a new covenant being made rather than renewal of the baptismal one. Morton affirmed there was “but one baptism, but one covenant.” Interestingly though, he then spoke of church (not individual) repentance: “God Himself hath given us an example when His church played the harlot, return, return again, &c. no new covenant to be made, &c. this is the holy doctrine of our church.” Marten thought this doctrine Vicars’ worst offense. He equated this covenant with being “baptized anew.” Breaking the baptismal covenant, did not necessitate making “a new covenant,” but repentance and keeping God’s commandments. Vicars also made this covenant divisive: “for your covenanters they are all children of God, and the rest must go to Hell.”⁷⁸ In the end, Vicars was sentenced to be deprived, degraded, excommunicated, fined £100, and committed to prison until he gave a bond of 500 marks to perform the orders of court and paid the 200 marks cost of the suit. He was also to make a public submission and recant his opinions both at Paul’s Cross in London and St. Mary’s in Stamford.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Gardiner (ed.), *High Commission*, p. 202, 215, 226, 234, 236-37; Eden also questioned “the covenant of grace.” (ibid., p. 216); Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.II.21, fol. 18r.

⁷⁷ Gardiner (ed.), *High Commission*, p. 202.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 233, 222-225. Vicars justified his practice from 2 Kings 23:2-3 where Josiah entered a covenant with God to keep His commandments. (ibid., p. 202) Perhaps this text appeared to commissioners as a “new” covenant. Also, that Josiah was a godly king reforming idolatry was suggestive, but not mentioned by prosecutors and commissioners as a slander on the Church of England.

⁷⁹ Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.II.21, fol. 19r, 25r, 81r, 145r-v, 216r-v, 273r. For the individual sentence recommendations of high commissioners, see: Gardiner (ed.), *High Commission*, p. 221, 225, 228,

The case of Anthony Lapthorne, rector of Tretire and Michael Church in the county of Hereford, in High Commission October 9, 1634 had striking similarities to that of Vicars. Again, we see in unlawful fasts a tactless puritan firebrand and his adherents alienated from the rest of their parish community. The relevant charge was that he:

“upon Whitsunday 1631 openly in the church proclaimed a fast to be kept there upon the Friday following inviting many foreigners of other parishes to be there also, requiring all to be at the church by eight of the clock in the morning or thereabouts. And the company being assembled the said Mr. Lapthorne called these foreigners the children of God, and told them the reason of that fast was for that the Sunday following was appointed for the making of ministers by the bishops, which he affirmed to be one of the crying sins of this kingdom, and that he hoped to prevail with God by prayer to convert them or confound them, telling also his own parishioners that seeing they had profited no better by his preaching, certainly they were possessed with devils which could not be cast out but by fasting and prayer desiring the said strangers to assist him therein. That the said Friday coming the parishioners assembled, and with them sundry foreigners the said Mr. Lapthorne presently about eight of the clock got up into the pulpit where he spent five hours in preaching and expounding, and extemporary prayers of his own devising, and after went to Tretire church and there continued as before until six of the clock at night.”⁸⁰

After he became rector of Tretire c.1631, Lapthorne quickly made enemies there. Like Vicars, from the pulpit he admonished and railed against some parishioners. He pressed the sins of some parishioners more than others when they received communion. He denigrated neighbor ministers as “idol shepherds,” “dumb dogs,” and “soul murderers.” He engaged in similar types and degrees of non-conformity as Vicars, though he also rebuked parishioners who bowed at the name of Jesus or kneeled when coming into the church as “worse then papists” and “plain idolaters.”⁸¹ Strikingly absent were charges of heterodoxy. Thus, while he was found guilty, and deprived and suspended, his sentence was less harsh than Vicars’.

230-31, 233-34, 238. Perhaps significantly, on continent the Protestants often advanced as conventicles with Catholics decrying them as schools of heresy which lead to separation. Protestants had sought to avoid attending Catholic services but also avoid sectarian household churches. Also, the language of “covenant” and “brethren” was associated with Anabaptists.

⁸⁰ PRO, SP 16/261 fol. 83v-84r (84v-85r) note: the first folio number corresponds to the MS pagination, and the second to the state papers pagination.

⁸¹ PRO, SP 16/261 fol. 83v-84r (84v-85r).

Indeed, this deprivation was only the latest in a career of lost livings and lectureships for offenses including non-conformity, unlicensed preaching, and violating royal directions on preaching. Yet, Laphorne kept getting opportunities in the church. In part this reflected that Laphorne was well connected politically. He had been a royal chaplain to Elizabeth and James, and had become rector of Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire on the presentation of the crown (though in June, 1618 the high commission deprived and degraded him from it). He had the support of puritan gentry like the third Earl of Pembroke, the first Viscount Conway, and Sir Francis Rous.⁸² But his resiliency also reflected that Laphorne, as a skilled, college educated, and orthodox minister, was a commodity highly sought by Calvinist bishops seeking more preaching pastors in their parishes. Indeed, he had a long relationship with Bishop Morton who helped him at numerous times for this reason.⁸³ So here we start to see evidence of diversity among puritan fasts and how conformists responded to them. The qualities of

⁸² PRO, SP 16/261 fol. 83r-84v (84r-85v). Kenneth Fincham, "Laphorne, Anthony (1572-1658/59)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

⁸³ Significantly, in February, 1639 Bishop Morton defended Laphorne to Secretary Windebank, and justified himself to Anti-Calvinists for indulging him. Morton recalled that c.1624-25, when he was Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, that Pembroke, Lord Steward, recommended Laphorne to him and that he placed him at Cannock, Staffordshire. Morton emphasized he did so only "after I had reduced him to conformity" but this must have been only the limited or occasional variety. He claimed it was "the most profane and barbarous parish within that diocese," yet Laphorne took such pains "that he brought them to be as religious and orderly as any others." When in December 1635 he was ousted from the living of Great Burstead, Essex for lacking a license, Morton, then Bishop of Durham, recalled how Laphorne came to him for favor including in regards to his former diligence at Cannock. Morton again showed compassion and made him curate of Ovingham, Northumberland and even paid him £40 yearly from his own resources. Again though, Morton emphasized that he did so only after Laphorne demonstrated that he was permitted, after his censure in high commission, to preach anywhere except in or about London. Morton said he profitably placed him in "the most barbarous place within Northumberland, where there had been almost no preaching for 40 years before." Morton did so "for the good of souls, upon necessity, not knowing any that would be more laborious than he, and that the people there are so heathenish that one who was churchwarden, as my archdeacon relates to me, could not repeat to him the Lord's Prayer." Morton though had tried to place limits on Laphorne as years before he had suspended him from a lectureship at Tamworth, Warwickshire. See: *Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series, of the Reign of Charles I. 1638-1639* (London, 1871, reprint, Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1967), p. 434-35. Fincham, "Laphorne."

the minister and the local context shaped the nature of puritan led fasts, the self-understandings they fostered, and how much of a threat Calvinist conformists perceived.

One additional case provides an example that provides a transition to the next chapter which shows that the division fasts created between puritans and Calvinist conformists was limited. Some puritan fasts could be far less controversial locally than those of indelicate radicals like Vicars and Laphorne who publicly chastised and offensively set themselves apart from the larger community. These fasts were most prevalent where a moderate puritan was minister, and puritans dominated the local establishment such that they had the support or acquiescence of most of the community. In these situations, puritans were less an affront to demands for communal unity and harmony because their vision of a godly community formed its basis, and because they were more secure. The result was relative stability such that central authorities were less inclined or less able to intervene. One such case was that of Immanuel Bourne in High Commission November 14, 1633. He was not only parson of the parish church of Ashover but official to the Archdeacon of Derby for the past nine years in the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield.⁸⁴

At “sundry times” in the archdeaconry, Bourne appointed, countenanced, or at least was present at “diverse solemn fasts or exercises of religion.” The fasts were kept “of Mr. Bourne’s own power and authority without any other warrant.” At them there usually congregated “diverse and sundry people from diverse and sundry parishes” even “far remote parishes.” At them there were usually two or three sermons by several men,

⁸⁴ Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.II.21, fol. 258v-260v. Bourne’s case had begun at least on October 27, 1631 and took over two years to resolve procedural issues, examine witnesses, and reach the sentence. (ibid., fol. 10v, 19v, 32v, 37r, 56v, 70r, 93v, 100v, 110v, 114v, 132v, 158v, 179r, 190r-191v, 193r, 228r, 238v, 246r, 252r)

and the congregation was kept in church between four and nine hours. Bourne was usually one of the preachers and a “chief actor” in the fasts, or at least an auditor. Showing wider community participation, these were “public fasts” held in Bourne’s parish church or other parish churches within his jurisdiction and not private fasts in homes. Yet, private fasts also appear. Bourne had diverse persons of other parishes in his house for prayers, exercises, and expoundings, and went to other men’s houses out of his parish to like exercises. He was accused of having been present at “conventicles” and having abetted and protected them by virtue of his authority as official at Derby.⁸⁵

While these charges were similar to Vicars’ and Lapthorne’s the sentence was not. Suggesting that Calvinist commissioners were assuaged and Anti-Calvinist ones undercut, the high commission declared:

“Now in respect that Mr. Bourne had brought good testimony to the court of his diligence in preaching as also of his conformity to the orders, rites, and ceremonies of the Church of England and his continued practice thereof for later times the court thought meet to proceed mildly with him and only ordered him to acknowledge his errors aforesaid publicly in this place the next court day or otherwise in some sermon in his own parish church as this court shall appoint.”

Surprisingly, they claimed to have insufficient proof of “conventicles” though they had suspicion of them because they thought the ministers and laity in the archdeaconry of Derby were more conformable before than after he became official. Since the country was “little bettered or reformed” by his exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction there, he was advised (but not forced) to relinquish his exercise of it to another “better experienced” and apply himself to studies in divinity. Perhaps the hardest part of the sentence was that the commission ordered him to pay the court costs for the suit.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.II.21, fol. 259r-260r.

⁸⁶ Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.II.21, fol. 260r-v, 262r-v. On November 21, 1633 the commission ordered Bourne to make submission in a sermon in the parish church and to certify performance of it at the first session of the next term. (ibid., fol. 262r-v)

The reasons for this lenience began with Bourne being more tactful and moderate than Vicars and Lapthorne. Strikingly absent in the case against Bourne is evidence that his fasts divided the community, or were used to exalt a puritan clique and condemn the majority as ungodly. Surely prosecutors would have trumpeted such evidence had it existed because conformists of all kinds found it troubling. Further, charges of non-conformity were relatively limited and despite finding him guilty of them, the court accepted that he was conformable. His substantial conformity likely helped powerful patrons successfully intervene for him. The now familiar figure Thomas Morton, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield (1619-1632), surely was one of them. For more than a decade Bourne had served under Morton. The bishop would not have found him a cause for concern, but a valued minister. Indeed, one suspects Anti-Calvinists made direct petitions to bypass Morton's diocesan court to prosecute Bourne in high commission.

Morton's successor in 1632 was the Laudian Robert Wright, whom Laud had recommended for the see. Surprisingly, this change did not prove disastrous to Bourne. Wright was pragmatic and cautious in implementing Caroline-Laudian policies where they met strong resistance. He was reluctant to antagonize powerful local godly men and women. Indeed, Bourne had considerable local support, and was entrenched in the local structures of church, state, and society. C.1619 Bourne became chaplain to Sir Samuel Tryon and his wife Elizabeth. He married Jemima, the daughter of Sir Thomas Becketingham, and Lady Tryon's cousin and companion. Tryon presented Bourne to the living of Ashover in 1621. In 1625 and 1630, Bourne bought extensive property in Ashover, and later the advowson of Ashover. At this time, his younger brothers Nathaniel and Elisha also acquired livings in Derbyshire. Bourne sat on the commission

of the peace for Derbyshire, and was related to John Spateman, another local JP. Finally, local magistrates likely acquiesced to or authorized the fasts as Bourne denied his authority alone was responsible for them (though the commission did not believe him). Indeed, one wonders if the fasts would have been an issue had they not turned into trans-parish revival meetings.⁸⁷

In summary, in this chapter we have seen how puritans as “the hotter sort of Protestants” took shared language, categories, and narratives to such a degree that they differentiated themselves from conformists over how far to take reform. A certain level of disagreement on definitions of popery or godliness, or a difference in assessment of the level of sin and providential signs, for example, began to trigger a process of assimilating one’s opponents to the wrong end of a dichotomous category. Fasts proved a flashpoint that pushed that process along.

Fasts helped to make puritans into a powerful, self-conscious subgroup. Puritan self-understanding and their need continually to validate it created extraordinary levels of discipline and motivation. Fasts continually renewed spiritual heat and the will to live out the implications of being among the elect. God spoke through judgments and it was they who most frequently and consistently perceived divine signs, interpreted them properly, and responded to them in the language of ritual repentance. God worked through the elect to realize a holy order on Earth. As saints playing their role in God’s providential plan for human history, they had to attack sin wherever it arose, and advance godliness, the Gospel, and pure worship against all opposition. While puritans desired to achieve reform through the magistrate, if magistrates failed in their duty to reform

⁸⁷ D.J. Oldridge, “Wright, Robert (1560-1643),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Rosemary O’Day, “Bourne, Immanuel (1590-1672),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

puritans still had a calling to advance it forward. At times this brought them up against the limits of the law. They had to choose to obey God or human authority or figure out a delicate balance. If they did not to their utmost further reform then they lacked zeal and were not among the elect, and the Lord justly would send judgment on them and the nation.

Puritan efforts at reform that fell outside or offensively pressured the civil and ecclesiastical hierarchy caused conformists to fear subversion and disorder. Conformists simply emphasized to a greater degree that God worked to achieve order through the “natural” secular and ecclesiastical hierarchies. If inferiors could challenge the vision of order laid out by their superiors in the divine hierarchy then chaos would result. Those who disobeyed authorities and did not show them deference could only be hypocritical zealots. In the next chapter, we shall see how conformists and puritans were not as divided as might appear, and how they managed to walk together however uncomfortably.

CHAPTER V

FACTION MOLLIFIED: CALVINIST CONFORMISTS AND MODERATE PURITANS

Evidence presented in the previous chapter would seem to support the traditional dichotomous image of “Puritans” and “Anglicans.” Puritans and conformists conflicted over fasts, and fasts helped develop faction and differing self-understandings. To the ire of conformists, puritans had fasts without the approval of authority. For conformists this usurping of the power of bishops and magistrates appeared a dangerous threat to order. The low threshold puritans had to perceive a need for fasts, which were to be only for dire times, seemed likely to raise panic among the people on slim grounds. That such fasts at times attacked the established church only made them seem more subversive. Also, that puritan fasts lasted so long with sermons one after the other and seemingly endless prayers appeared overkill. For puritans, conformists were dangerously remiss in responding to sin and signs of providential judgment with fasts. Conformists had too little zeal in reforming the church, attacking sin, and preaching the Gospel. Such Christians were potentially “lukewarm,” “hypocrites,” or “worldlings.” Conformists stood in the way of the “saints” advancing “God’s cause” not seeing that true order came from this endeavor. Suppressing fasts opposed God’s commands in scripture and imperiled the nation.

Yet, conflict was not the whole picture, and shared principles and priorities could limit its severity. To focus narrowly on polemic and instances of conflict gives the

misleading impression that puritans were a peripheral faction alienated from the established church, and that puritans and conformists were monolithic. This chapter shall provide a counter-point to this image. Evidence regarding fasts shows that moderate puritans and Calvinist conformists shared much common ground, and that they both plastered over differences for the sake of unity, preaching the Gospel, the reformation of manners, and attacking Catholics. While a level of tension remained, such actions contained conflict within bounds, and blunted the potential of fasts to create faction. Indeed, fasts could unite puritans and conformists in a common self-understanding, as much as they could divide them by acting as a boundary forming mechanism. Under Elizabeth and James, puritans by and large could pursue the reform goals derived from their self-understanding as godly people within the Church of England, and view it as a true church on the side of Christ in the epic battle against Satan and the Anti-Christ. Puritan self-understanding and the self-understanding of the Church of England were commensurable. From this perspective, puritans appear in the mainstream of the church, and a Collinsonian revisionist picture gains support.

Specifically, we shall see in this chapter how conformists allowed legal wiggle room for puritans to have fasts that were not too large or too critical of church and state. We shall find that conformists were often complicit with puritans in holding fasts and eager for authorities to appoint them. Official forms of prayer for public fasts also expressed much of the language, categories, and narratives that puritans shared with Calvinist conformists. Further, the weakness of church and state allowed puritans to get away with unlawful fasts to a considerable extent. Also, puritans developed clever strategies to have their fasts within the bounds of established law. When Calvinist

conformists did catch puritans, they were eager to demonstrate charity and mercy, as well as to retain the valuable services of college educated preachers. Puritans just had to give some suggestion of being remediable and of respect for conformist concerns about order. Indeed, puritans often made gestures of deference to authority hoping to make their fasts less offensive. In short, all these factors shaped identification processes so many Calvinist conformists appeared on the right side of the dichotomous categories reviewed in previous chapters.

In part, the conflict between puritans and conformists over the authority to call local fasts stemmed from ambiguities in the concepts of “private” and “public” in early modern discourse. Those concepts mattered to fasting because puritans and conformists both made a fundamental distinction between “private” and “public” fasts. Surprisingly, moderate puritan and Calvinist conformist definitions of fasts, and what theoretically was and was not legitimate, were indistinguishable. Indeed, the same ambiguities that led to conflict could, where authorities were willing, make ample room in the church for puritans to have their fasts within limits. Not only were moderate Calvinist conformists concerned to make space for the voluntary practices of the godly, but puritans were concerned with order and the separatist threat.

Moderate puritans and Calvinist conformists agreed that a “private fast” was undertaken voluntarily, and that all Christians had liberty to keep them as their own consciences and perception of need dictated. They stressed that a “private person” or a “private motion” initiated these fasts. The only caveat was that persons under the government of another could not take a day to fast without the permission of their superior to miss work. In regard to a “public fast,” they stressed that only “public

authority,” “governors,” “magistrates,” or “public persons” could call them. Public fasts were to occur in regard to “public,” “general,” or “common” concerns such as war, famine, pestilence, the persecution of the Church, or the need of a benefit or blessing. Public fasts were compulsory, and all subject to the authorities calling them were bound to obey. If they did not, they were to be held accountable as in Leviticus 23:29.

Definitions of private fasts left two significant openings for puritans to have unauthorized fasts. First, the causes of private fasts were not limited to the particular sins, sufferings, and needs of an individual or family. Both puritans and conformists held that all Christians had a duty to fast privately for “public” matters of concern, and the sins of the laity, ministers, and magistrates at all levels in town, country, and kingdom. Legitimate causes included a calamity on any part of the universal Church, national church, or commonwealth; they could include the calling of important assemblies like parliament, and the undertaking of important state actions like war. On their own accord, Christians were to identify the prevailing “sins of the land” and “common corruptions” like profaning the sabbath. Private fasts thus gave the godly opportunity, often far beyond their station, to meddle with high level affairs, and to press their sense of reform needs.

Second, an opening existed in regard to the size of private fasts. Some conformists, and puritans like Robert Bolton, William Perkins, and the author of the *Holie Exercise* were relatively restrictive. They limited a private fast to an individual, or a single family or household in whole or in part. Of course, how broadly one defined “family” was an open question. And because the godly heavily intermarried, the inclusion of extended families could have been significant. The definitions of other

puritans though, left more wiggle room. Henry Scudder, in his enormously popular devotional guide, defined a private fast as “when one alone, one family, or some few together do fast.” Nicholas Bownd, in his officially sanctioned treatise, allowed private fasts to be gathered “out of diverse households,” and to include not only a given family but “some other of their godly neighbors and friends.” Surprisingly, some conformists said the same. The official homily on fasting left a big gap saying private fasts “pertaineth to one particular man, or to a few, and not the whole number of the people.” James Ussher allowed private fasts with “special friends.” His comments also suggest stretch in the term, in that a fast was “less private” when by a particular house, and “more private” when by a particular person alone. Conformists like Lewis Bayly, and puritans like William Attersoll and William Gouge simply did not comment on size, and this may have been deliberate either to avoid a sticky issue or to place no limits on attendance.

Definitions of public fasts also left two significant openings for puritans to have unauthorized fasts. First, an opening existed in the criteria of public fasts compared with private ones. In regard to private fasts, conformists and puritans often cited a private house or chamber as the most fitting location. The primary motive for a discrete location stemmed from Matthew 6:16-18 which encouraged personal fasting “in secret” to ensure “sincerity,” and to remove the temptation to make a show for human praise as “hypocrites” did. By contrast, in public fasts, fears of profaneness reversed priorities, and the likes of James Ussher affirmed that in them grief and sorrow were “to be declared openly to the view of all.” Also, conformists and puritans stressed that public fasts were to be “publicly” or “openly” performed in the “temple” and “public places” where the people ordinarily assembled for worship in the church established by a Christian prince,

and not in any “private house or houses.” They were to be performed by diverse families assembled in whole “public” congregations, and were to involve either a single congregation, or some or all the congregations of the national church in a town, city, country, or realm. Ussher again showed stretch in the term in that fasts were “more public” when by all churches, and “less public” when by some particular churches. By defining public fasts so narrowly as entire congregations assembled in parish churches, puritans and conformists gave room for fasts in private spaces by small gatherings that were less than full congregations. Such fasts could be labeled private, and give cover to voluntary gatherings of the godly from the charge of being unauthorized public fasts.

Second, an opening existed in that the terms concerning who lawfully could call public fasts were vague. Terms like “public authority” could apply to a wide range of persons in a church and state shot through with puritans and puritan-friendly conformists. Not only might these authorities readily approve public fasts, but moderate puritans who shared conformist concerns for order could find relief for their strained consciences with some official sanction for their fasts. More specifically, conformists were clear that civil magistrates, ecclesiastical magistrates, the prince, and bishops could act either jointly or independently to appoint public fasts. Some puritans were vaguer. Attersoll only required public fasts to be “openly commanded.” Bownd and the author of the *Holie Exercise* at times gave authority to call public fasts to those who “under Christ” or “next unto Christ Jesus” had “government” of the place where the fast was held. They only claimed that a “private man” could not appoint a public fast. Yet in general, Calvinist conformists and moderate puritans like Perkins and Gouge adhered to the typical Calvinist stance of ministry and magistracy jointly appointing public fasts. The Church

or ministry would judge the time and occasion of a fast, and inform and call on the magistrate, who heeding their advice, would then authorize and proclaim it. At least in print, only the radical puritan John Udall defined the relative authority of magistrates and ministers to proclaim a public fast such that ministers had the dominant role. For Udall, God gave each minister authority in his office to “sanctify” a public fast and “call” a solemn assembly for his charge when he perceived God to threaten or punish. The individual minister could not call a solemn public fast through the whole kingdom, because he had no authority further than his own flock. However, the whole church guided by a “Council of Ministers” could call a general fast for the whole kingdom. If the “eldership of ministers” failed to call a public fast when necessary, then a particular minister could call his own charge to fast.¹

One further gap deserves attention. Unsurprisingly, puritans like John Knewstub, Gouge, Bownd, and Bolton argued that if magistrates and governors were “careless” or

¹ For puritan views, see: William Attersoll, *The Conversion of Ninevah* (London, 1632) in *Three Treatises* (London, 1633), first pagination, p. 55-56 (STC 900.5). Robert Bolton, *The Saints Soule-Exalting Humiliation* (London, 1634), p. 53 (STC 3247). William Perkins, *The Works of . . . William Perkins* (Cambridge, 1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 158, 670 (STC19651). Willilam Perkins, *The Works of . . . William Perkins* (London, 1626) volume 1, p. 42 (STC 19652). William Gouge, *The Whole Armour of God* (London, 1639), p. 482-84 (STC 12110.5). William Wilkinson, *The Holie Exercise of a True Fast* (London, 1580), p. 46-8 (STC 25667). Nicolas Bownd, *The Holy Exercise of Fasting* (Cambridge, 1604), p. 208-58 (STC 3438). Henry Scudder, *The Christian’s Daily Walke in Holy Security and Peace* (London, 1637), seventh edition, p. 71, 78-9, 138-40 (STC 22120). John Udall, *The True Remedie Against Famine and Warres* (London, [1588]), Sig. 79v-81v (STC 24507). For Calvinist conformist views, see: John Mayo, *A Sermon of Fasting, and of Lent* (London, 1609), p. 14 (STC 17755). *Certain Sermons or Homilies* (Philadelphia, 1844), part 2, p. 248. Lewis Bayly, *The Practice of Pietie* (London, 1631), 28th edition, p. 493, 517-18 (STC 1609.6). Samuel Gardiner, *The Cognizance of a True Christian, or the Outward Markes Whereby He May Be the Better Knowne* (London, 1597), p. 74-5, 77 (STC 11573). Henry Holland, *The Christian Exercise of Fasting* (London, 1596), p. 13-16, 39-41, 61-2 (STC 13586). George Downname, *The Christians Sanctuarie* (London, 1604), p. 48-9 (STC 7113). James Ussher, *A Body of Divinitie* (London, 1645), p. 385-86 (Wing U151). Daniel Featley, *Ancilla Pietatis: Or, The Hand-Maid to Private Devotion* (London, 1630), fourth edition, p. 582, 588-89, 669-73 (STC 10727). John King, *Lectures Upon Jonas* (Oxford, 1597), p. 487-89 (STC 14976). George Buddle, *A Short and Plaine Discourse* (London, 1609), p. 17-18 (STC 4014). The conformist Gabriel Powell argued that only magistrates could command a general fast on subjects which constrained them to obedience. A bishop could not because people might be subject to another temporal magistrate in the same diocese. (Gabriel Powell, *De Adiaphoris* (London, 1607), p. 43 (STC 20146))

“negligent” in appointing public fasts when occasion demanded it, that all the faithful had a God given “duty” to have private fasts. Private fasts in such circumstances were acceptable to God, profitable, and gave no “offense.” Yet, puritans could sound like conformists warning against going too far here. Bownd argued that Christians must not “disorderly undertake, and set up public fasts in our churches upon our own private motion, but must sue for, and expect the allowance and commandment of public authority; that all things might be done in the house of God honestly and by good order, according to the golden rule of the Apostle, or rather the Spirit of God.”²

Even more surprising is how much Calvinist conformists could sound like puritans in allowing fasts. Buddle argued that public fasts might not be called when necessary if Satan shut the eyes and closed the hearts of “fleshly magistrates” with their own “fat” and “well-liking of sin,” or if the “high magistrate” and “high priest” were “acedious” or “slothful.” In such circumstances, Buddle claimed all “private Christians” were bound “in foro conscienciæ” by “absolute command” of God to fast “in secret.” Further, private Christians could do so “not only in secret, but with those godly Israelites in the five and twenty of number.” That is, Christians even could fast:

“in more open view, as in their tent doors, and at the door of the tabernacle, as it were, to shew and signify unto the high priest, or high magistrate, their earnest desire of a lawful fast in public. And although, it be a furious, Corah-like, and an Anabaptistical attempt, odious both to God and good men, if any private persons, or people under the government of others, do proclaim or set up a public fast: yet it is the necessary duty of all God’s people in this case, which now I have propounded, to stir up and say in the public audience of many unto God’s magistrate or God’s bishops, as those zealous Jews did to Ezra, the high priest in the 10 ch. of Ezra the 4. ver. ‘Arise Ezra. For the matter, belongeth unto thee. We will also be with thee: Be thou of comfort and do it.’”

² John Knewstubb, *A Confutation of Monstrous and Horrible Heresies* (London, 1579), sig. **6r (STC 15040). Gouge, *Armour*, p. 483-84. Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 210-11, 225-29, 233-34, 350. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 53.

George Downname agreed that if authorities neglected to call public fasts then Christians were to fast “privately and secretly.” More generally, Daniel Featley argued that private fasts did not “savor of schism,” and were not “puritanism.” He conceded that where the supreme magistrate had “vigilant zeal” to enjoin public fasts, that private ones “may be better spared.” Featley though immediately pulled back to add: “yet even then are they often requisite, both to prepare men to public, and because public fasts cannot be of that frequency, fervency or continuance, as sometimes the redoubled stroke of God’s justice calleth for.”³ To say the least, such attitudes put strong limits on how far Calvinist conformists would restrict puritan fasts.

In practice, the forgoing discourse helped to reconcile puritan desires with conformist scruples. Orders from Archbishop Matthew Hutton and others in 1591 to every bishop in the Province of York gave warning that “public fasts, and such unwonted assemblies without sufficient authority, are not to be suffered but utterly prohibited.”⁴ Acting on directions from Richard Fletcher, Bishop of London, William Hutchinson, Archdeacon of St. Albans, gave a similar charge to the ministers of the archdeaconry in an April, 1596 visitation. He affirmed that only magistrates with “sufficient authority” were to appoint public fasts, and that ministers and people at fasts not appointed by “authority” aforesaid were to be punished.⁵ While impressive at face value, to knowledgeable contemporary ears such statements left holes which the godly could exploit. The orders did not limit private fasts to a single family, and did not define

³ Buddle, *Discourse*, p. 32-3. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 17. Featley, *Ancilla*, p. 663-64, 670-71.

⁴ Cambridge University, Caius College, MS 197/103, p. 169. The other signatories were Rob. Longher., Rich. Pearsy, Wm. Palmer, E. Ebor. Also, these orders mentioned as coming in part from the Queen herself.

⁵ Hertfordshire Record Office, MS ASA 5/5/291, (St. Albans Archdeaconry Records, Box X, Bundle A, miscellaneous papers)

“sufficient authority.” Any number of persons throughout the church and state may have qualified to legitimize such fasts. Further, given that Hutton and Fletcher were friendly to moderate puritans and their priorities, the ambiguity of the orders may have been deliberate, and puritans could likely expect approval of public fasts from them and their subordinates. Also, at least early in Elizabeth’s reign Calvinist bishops were more concerned with stamping out lingering Catholic fasts, than puritan ones. For example, on August 17, 1561 Bishop Scory wrote to Cecil to complain about “popish justices” who observed “abrogated fasts,” and enforced them all too effectively.⁶

Of course, there was some conflict. For example, the Queen crushed an attempt of the House of Commons in January 1581 to appoint a public fast for itself. Yet, this was a special case. Had the Commons fast taken place and the Queen not joined by fasting herself or appointing additional public fasts or even a national fast, she would have appeared derelict in her duty or even ungodly. Indeed, pressuring the Queen to appoint a public fast was likely what some in the Commons hoped to achieve. Further, the Queen surely knew that puritan fasts timed to the assembling of parliament were taking place across the country, and she would not have wanted to give cover and sanction to them with official fasts. Nonetheless, Elizabeth’s response (no doubt crafted by Burghley) affirmed that she “very well liked both of fasting, prayer and sermons” but only disliked the “disorderly proceeding,” “the manner not the matter” the Commons took. The Commons may have gotten away with a private fast though. Indeed, they debated whether their fast should be observed in “private” with “everybody to himself” and “every man in his own conscience,” or in “public” in the Temple church by all members who could and would come. The private option narrowly lost to the public one

⁶ PRO, SP 12/19/24.

on a 100 to 115 vote. Because the fast was public, the Queen was able to forbid it claiming that she alone had the jurisdiction to appoint such a “public fast,” and that the fast constituted meddling in causes of religion which she had forbidden. Not discouraged, the Commons, despite differences of opinion, again voted for a day of “fasting and prayer” for themselves, and motioned the Queen for a “general fast” in the 1584-85 parliament.⁷

Such defeats over fasts though seem to have been infrequent. The godly could have unauthorized public fasts by exploiting ambiguities in the definitions of legitimate public and private fasts. One suggestive example of a practice that likely was not uncommon through the period comes from Dorchester where puritan magistrates like William Whiteway and puritan ministers like John White dominated. In his diary, Whiteway referred to what he termed a “general private fast” in April, 1631 for the King of Sweden. Whiteway very likely was referring to what puritans like Bownd called a “private fast held in many several families at once.” The key proof text for this fast was Esther 4:16, where Queen Esther commanded the Jews to fast against the conspiracy of

⁷ *The Journals of the House of Commons*, volume 1, p. 118-19, 671, 715-16. T.E. Hartley (ed.), *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, vol. 1, p. 526-28 (Wilmington, Delaware, 1981). PRO, SP 12/147/18. BL, Add MS 48,119, fol. 167v. A less serious controversy occurred in 1625, though the “private” or “particular” fast parliament wanted referred to a corporate fast for themselves, and the “public” or “general” fast to one for the rest of the nation. So conceived, the “private” fast might have been considered “public” because parliament was the “representative body,” “high court,” and “great council” of the whole kingdom. The issue never came to a head though as Charles sanctioned both fasts. King and parliament papered over conflict by fudges which avoided resolving contradictions in constitutional thought, and made the final outcome ambiguous as to who had exercised what disputed right, and who had submitted to whom. Also, the location of the fast was important, for when Sir John Jephson and Sir Dudley Norton suggested the Commons house as the place for their private fast, Sir Benjamin Rudyard quickly protested: “I beseech you not to refuse the church [St. Margaret’s, Westminster], remember it is God’s house, lest we make this a conventicle which should be a council.” The Commons sided with Rudyard. See: Maija Jansson and William Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625* (New Haven, CT, 1987), p. 44, 47, 53, 65-9, 204-5, 208, 210-13, 215, 217, 228-30, 233, 235, 238-39, 241-43, 257-60, 264-66, 504, 506. Samuel Rawson Gardiner (ed.), *Debates in the House of Commons* (Camden Society, new series, volume 6, 1873), p. 6, 13, 15, 17-18, 28-9. *Commons Journals*, volume 1, p. 799, 801. *The Journals of the House of Lords*, volume 3, p. 441, 443, 447-48. James Larkin (ed.), *Stuart Royal Proclamations* (Oxford, 1983), vol. 2, p. 99, 193, 221.

Haman. For Bownd, this example instituted a fast that was both “public” and “private” at the same time. It was “private” in respect of place because it was kept in “several houses dispersed here and there” and not in “any common place of assembly.” It was “public” in respect that it was kept by the “whole Church of God” in the city, and because the Queen’s command “imposed” it on all the Jews. Bownd also claimed Zachariah 12:12 supported a duty to fast “every family apart” in times of general calamity that had no public fasts. Perkins even linked the two texts claiming that Zachariah 12:12 foretold of the fast of Esther in that the “land” would bewail “every family apart.”⁸

While they could game the system, the godly often shared or respected conformist scruples about fasts. Rather than having unauthorized fasts, many moderate puritans preferred to petition bishops and the prince for public fasts. Sir Francis Hastings was typical when in a draft speech c.1588 he pleaded for a national fast in regard to the Spanish threat. He affirmed he would “leave it to the religious care of such as carry the chief place in our church who I doubt not will play Azariah’s part in warning our Asah; and I assure myself our Asah will hearken to it, and her whole people will follow with willing and most joyful hearts.”⁹ When the Commons pressed for their fast in January 1581, they offered to let the privy councilors in their ranks select the preachers to ensure they would be “persons discrete to keep a convenient proportion of time, and to meddle with no matter of innovation or unquietness.”¹⁰ A 1580s remonstrance of puritan clergy in Ashby to the Bishop of Peterborough regarding charges for holding unlawful

⁸ David Underdown (ed.), *William Whiteway of Dorchester His Diary 1618 to 1635* (Dorchester Record Society, 1991), volume 12, p. 115-16. Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 233-34, 256-57, 225-26. Perkins, *Works* (1618), volume 3, first pagination, p. 158, 670.

⁹ Claire Cross (ed.), *The Letters of Sir Francis Hastings 1574-1609* (Somerset Record Society, vol. lxix, 1969, p. 43.

¹⁰ PRO, SP 12/147/18. See also: *Commons Journals*, volume 1, p. 118.

prophesyings/fasts claimed: “We came together by God’s authority and yours for no evil, but for every good purpose, we assemble no people, nor challenge authority to do it, neither have we any authority to bid them go back when in public congregation they are desirous to hear God’s Holy Word at our mouths.”¹¹ Such gestures of respect for authority were all that some Calvinist bishops needed to look the other way.

The petition of Edward Phillips of St. Mary Overy’s in Southwark to Lord Burghley from prison January 20, 1596, shows that even in a relatively egregious case puritans tried to respect authority. Phillips was charged with “contempt of authority and public order” for transferring a public fast from a Wednesday to a Thursday (which was the Twelfth-Day feast). In regard to the Wednesday observances, Phillips claimed he “reverently” read common prayer, but did not preach as this was left to the minister’s discretion and his regular lecture was on Thursday. In regard to Thursday, Phillips, to deny he encouraged his flock to disobedience, claimed that before public prayers he carefully explained his actions to his congregation. He told his flock that he recognized Wednesday as the day assigned by higher powers, that he had nothing against it, and that he had “in some sort” solemnized it already. Thursday was suitable for a fast because it was a holy day, a day of public restraint from labor which was best spent in “holy exercises.” Also, because Thursday was his ordinary lecture day the assembly of people was more frequent. Thus, in “godly discretion” and “without any purpose to prejudice public order,” he was moving them to amendment of life, and works of charity.

To sway Burghley, Phillips also appealed to their common Calvinist stress on preaching. He claimed “it is not forbidden by any of her highness’s laws to any preacher,

¹¹ BL, Add MS 27,632, fol. 47r-51r. Godly gentry support for this type of petition is suggested in that this account is found in papers of Sir John Harrington.

upon good occasion, at any other day, to exhort the people to repentance towards God, obedience to her highness, and charity towards the poor, being assured that the law of God commands the Word to be preached both in season and out of season.” Phillips then appealed to the Calvinist desire to adjust fasts and feasts as need required. He claimed he had not appointed a “standing set fast” on the Twelfth Day, and affirmed that “any day upon extraordinary occasion may be converted to the exercises of holy humiliation, if public authority do not restrain it, as I cannot perceive that any of her highness’s laws doth restrain in this case.” As to the length of the fast, he denied it went from 9am to 1pm, and claimed it had ended somewhat before noon. Further, there was “no prohibition by law, but for keeping the auditory the whole day together.” In a final gesture to godly sensibilities, he appealed to Burghley as a “religious Christian” to show him compassion as fellow member of Christ’s body.¹² The holes in Phillip’s reasoning were obvious, and Burghley doubtless knew that the puritans did have an all day fast because after Phillip’s morning lecture his flock had gadded to another one in the afternoon. Nonetheless, the chastened and penitent tone, and show of respect to authority may well have been enough for sympathetic conformists like Burghley to grant clemency. Phillips was trying to reconcile godly scruples and obedience to authority, and he clearly thought that highlighting this fact would be persuasive.

The case of Erasmus Cooke, vicar of St. Michael’s in St. Albans, Hertfordshire also shows a puritan trying to serve God while respecting authority. October 3, 1593 the churchwardens and sidesmen (and Cooke) signed and sent a certificate to Dr. Edward

¹² BL, Lansdowne 83 (34), fol. 98. John Strype, *The Life and Acts of . . . John Whitgift* (London, 1718), p. 490-91.

Stanhope, Chancellor to the Bishop of London, recounting a relatively mild offense. It noted that Cooke on October 3:

“being Wednesday, in the time of morning prayer in our parish church, read the book of prayer appointed by authority to be joined with public fasting, and at the same time did preach a sermon in which he exhorted those that were present unto moderation of diet for that day, and charitable alms for the poor.”

Cooke thus made many gestures to authority while trying to create a quasi-public fast. He chose the usual day of a public fast, used the ordinary service and the official fast book, and only urged voluntary fasting.

Three years later Cooke went further as evidenced by articles administered against him by James Rolfe, official to the archdeacon of St. Albans, on June 21, 1596. On Whitsunday, Cooke had openly given notice during service from the pulpit (or other public place) that they would have a “public fast” on Monday in their parish church. He exhorted the congregation to be present and to prepare themselves by abstinence unless too weak, and subsequently “publicly” held the fast in the parish church. In his defense, Cooke argued “non credit esse veru that any such exercise of fasting is forbidden by law as he hath used.” In what sense Cooke thought this true is suggested in that he had on Whitsunday told the parishioners “that tomorrow being holiday they were by law to come to church and that then he meant to be exercised more then ordinary and so willed them the rather to repair to the church and wished those that could to abstain from meat.” Cooke’s defense was therefore to deny his was a public fast, and to gloss it as voluntary. Echoing Phillips, Cooke then claimed that the Monday in Whitsunweek was a holyday in the church and one to be sanctified with a public observance. Cooke presumably implied that a minister had the discretion to make any service suit the needs of the time.

The 1593 offense did not hurt Cooke's career, and the Archbishop admitted him as a preacher on October 16, 1594. Cooke advanced in part because he had the patronage of Lady Anne Bacon and Anthony Bacon who interceded for him with the Chancellor Stanhope in 1593. Indeed, in the 1590s, Lady Anne had made her home at Gorhambury near St. Albans a retreat for puritans. Equally significant, Cooke's superiors in the church hierarchy indulged him because they emphasized preaching. In a long list of assessments of how all the ministers in the archdeaconry preached at this time, Cooke got good marks for diligence.¹³

Similar to Cooke in 1593, in his 1603 Lincolnshire fast that we saw in the previous chapter, Thomas Brightman gave partial conformity by reading the morning confession and the ninth chapter of Daniel, and then singing a psalm without any other observation of the prayer book. The text, confession, and psalm were not only from the order of morning prayer in the Book of Common Prayer, but also the order of morning prayer in the 1603 fast book.¹⁴ So here again was some effort to respect authority.

Puritans also were clever in finding ways to make their fasts appear consistent with the established church. Dr. Robert Aylett reported to Sir John Lambe, Dean of the Arches June 29, 1636 from Feering, Essex, that he had questioned John Sym, a Scotsman and minister of Leighe in Essex, "for bidding and keeping a fast in his parish church on

¹³ Lambeth Palace, MS 649 (285), fol. 414. See also: William Urwick, *Nonconformity in Hertfordshire* (London, 1884), p. 117-18. Stuart Babbage, *Puritanism and Richard Bancroft* (London, 1962), p. 156. Hertfordshire Record Office, MS ASA 5/5/291 (St. Albans Archdeaconry Records, Box X, Bundle A, miscellaneous papers). Patrick Collinson, "The Puritan Classical Movement in the Reign of Elizabeth I," unpublished University of London Ph.D. thesis, 1957, p. 735, 1177, 1181-1183. H.R. Wilton Hall (ed.), *Records of the Old Archdeaconry of St. Albans. . . 1575-1637* (St. Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archeological Society, St. Albans, 1908), p. 83-88, 116-19. Furthermore, Cooke's superiors knew him well. Edmund, Bishop of Norwich ordained him June 12, 1589. John Aylmer, Bishop of London instituted him vicar of St. Michael's June 12, 1591, and William Hutchinson, Archdeacon of St. Albans, inducted him on June 25, 1591.

¹⁴ C.W. Foster (ed.), *The State of the Church in the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I as Illustrated by Documents Relating to the Diocese of Lincoln* (Lincoln Record Society, 1926), volume 23, sub-volume 1, p. cxvi-cxvii.

Wednesday in Ascension week.” Aylett enclosed with his letter to Lambe “a kind of defense” Sym had made. In his letter, Sym stressed that he had performed “the appointed divine service of the church” in addition to his sermons, and that the fast had taken place on the Wednesday in Rogation week, which also was the ordinary lecture day. Most interestingly, Sym appealed to traditional observances to justify his actions. He grounded his fast on “especially the order of the church, appointing the observation of those days of Rogation, for prayer and supplications to God, (as the name intimates) and for such other special exercises of religion and devotion, as then the occasions do require.” He then cited medieval canon law on this point, and argued this canon law had not been abrogated in the Church of England. Thus, he thought the fast had been “lawfully” done “in regard that I know no law or edict of our king, church, or kingdom contrary to the same.”

Further, the Church of England tried to conform to the “primitive church” and the Church of England’s ecclesiastical governors directed the ministry to order themselves by the writings and ordinances of the “primitive fathers and church” when they were in conformity with the Church of England. His fast was warranted because it was “agreeable to antiquity,” and the “primitive law and practice of the church.” More specifically, Sym stressed that inquiries at visitations only called for presentment of those “that appoint or keep other fasts, or festivals than are by the church and public authority appointed.” By contrast, his fast was “appointed and allowed by lawful authority.”

Rogation days were “for religion and devotion” in the Book of Common Prayer. Thus, he said he had acted “lawfully,” and “according also to the intent and appointment (as I understood) of the Church of England.” He had not asked his superiors for permission,

because he thought himself “sufficiently warranted” by and acting according to “the law and order of the church.”¹⁵

In part, Sym clearly was being shrewd here. He may have been trying to appeal to Laudians who enthusiastically pressed traditional Rogation observances. However, he may also have been using an older strategy that had worked under James, and helped some puritans to be accepted as moderates. Indeed, from the Jacobean period, Sir Robert Harley had had large puritan fasts at Brampton Bryan under the cover of Ember fasts.¹⁶ Calvinist conformists like Arthur Lake, Daniel Featley, and John Boys all supported traditional set-fasts.¹⁷ But these Calvinist conformists glossed traditional set-fasts very differently from Anti-Calvinists. They put new wine in old wineskins by emphasizing preaching and responding to supposed providential judgments in these fasts. Such Calvinist conformists would have seen in Sym’s defense a proposal for a markedly Calvinist church that at once both accommodated moderate puritans and secured obedience to the established settlement. Many Calvinist bishops likely would have taken up Sym on the offer.

¹⁵ PRO, SP 16/327/101; SP 16/362/106 (This letter is mis-dated in the state papers to 1637, and is the missing letter mentioned as enclosed in SP 16/327/101 dated 1636).

¹⁶ Stanley Gower wrote to Sir Robert Harley November 9, 1640 hoping he would let him preach on their March 7 Ember day fast at Brampton despite his suspension. (BL, Add MS 70,002, fol. 308) Gower again wrote Harley November 20, 1640. He wanted to know if he could keep “our Ember day” because a rumor of its suspension was abroad. Gower warned that the loss of it even once threatened the loss of the desired godly company who would take it as gone for good. He hoped Harley would let him keep the fast. If God blessed Harley’s proceedings, Gower advised him not to trouble himself with asking the bishop’s permission for the fast. Gower said if he had Harley’s approval, he took it for more than the bishop’s. He argued: “it is not now a time to fear bishops’ suspensions, but rather that suspension may be a just complaint against the bishop.” Gower said he had told the bishop that he meant to appeal from him to the parliament. Referring to the Ember fasts, he added: “we are in a fine case when we shall be suspended for observing one of their own canons.” (BL, Add MS 70002, fol. 309) The bishop of Hereford here was George Coke.

¹⁷ Featley, *Ancilla*. Arthur Lake, *Sermons with some religious and divine meditations* (London, 1629), p. (STC 15134), esp., third pagination, p. 208. John Boys, *An Exposition of the Dominical Epistles and Gospels, Used in our English Liturgie, Throughout the Whole Yeere* (London, 1610) (STC 3458A). Boys even claimed Rogation week was “extraordinarily consecrated above all other weeks in the year unto prayers and supplications.” It was of “sincere antiquity” and not “a superstitious invention of upstart popery.” See: Boys, *Exposition*, p. 219-20.

In considering puritan efforts to respect authority, historians should not dismiss them merely as attempts to evade punishment. Puritans shared many scruples about authority with conformists. Writing c.1636-38 about attending private fasts “with company,” Sir Simonds D’Ewes commented: “Yet did I forbear to be present at any fast where diverse families met, except it were in the public congregation, when a fast was enjoined by the authority of the magistrate.” In regard to a 1630 family fast and others that followed, D’Ewes said he performed them “with the more comfort and security, because it was neither repugnant to the laws of the commonwealth, nor of the church.” He had struggled to come to this resolution on the issue, and more radical puritans pressured him to go farther. For example, Richard Chamberlain wrote to D’Ewes that he was glad he approved of a “family fast,” and would also be glad if “as the times require” he were persuaded of the “other kind remaining” which differed from “secret” and “family” fasts (i.e. private fasts beyond just family members). In pointed arguments, Chamberlain tried to persuade D’Ewes that Christians who were “familiarily acquainted,” “bordering neighbors,” and “of several families” could lawfully gather to fast.¹⁸

Even during the heydays of the Civil War, puritan ministers could have scruples about having public fasts without due authorization. When lacking official notice as to if the Wednesday, December 30, 1646 monthly fast was to be kept (presumably because there had just been an extraordinary public fast on December 23), Ralph Josselin was in doubt about what to do. He reasoned “but considering it’s my duty to call for a mercy as well as any man’s else, and if I neglect I do my endeavor to continue the evil, I resolved

¹⁸ James Halliwell (ed.), *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds D’Ewes* (London, 1845), volume 1, p. 354, 428-29. BL, Harleian 339, fol. 38. For dating D’Ewes’ writing to 1636-1638 see: Halliwell (ed.), volume 1, p. 20, 36, 48, 175, 181, 333; and volume 2, p. 49, 85, 117, 126.

to keep it, though without public notice. . .” Josselin’s anguish was no doubt eased as an order arrived before he had to make an announcement on the matter.¹⁹

Of course, when puritans pursued their desires for reform to the limits of the law while trying to remain within it, they sometimes crossed the line so far they knew no claim to legality was credible. When caught in these circumstances, puritans often gave lame excuses. In their aforementioned 1580s remonstrance to the Bishop of Peterborough, puritan clergy in Ashby tried to excuse lay attendance at one of their fasts/prophesyings. They claimed: “leaving open the church doors as was convenient, the people knowing it is always lawful to hear God’s Word holy day and working day by many preachers, or by few, did of themselves quietly come to pray with us, and to learn some good lessons in God’s schoolhouse. How unlawful this fast was we beseech you to judge as you would be judged.”²⁰ Popular attendance at prophesyings had been one of the principal complaints against them. The given excuse, however transparent, allowed the Ashby puritans to deny willfully acting contrary to authority. Also, by appealing to Calvinist stress on preaching, coupled with the suggestion that the laity had behaved orderly, they hoped their fast would seem close to something acceptable.

The aforementioned case of Erasmus Cooke provides another example. The Archdeacon of St. Albans, Dr. William Hutchinson, at his visitation held at Barnet April 30, 1596 had delivered a charge to the ministers of the archdeaconry (given him in directions from Richard Fletcher, Bishop of London) against holding any unauthorized “public fast.” To excuse having had a fast anyway, Cooke answered: “True it is that he heard Mr. Dr. Hutchinson say somewhat about fasting but understood not fully what was

¹⁹ Alan Macfarlane (ed.), *The Diary of Ralph Josselin 1616-1683* (London, 1976), p. 80.

²⁰ BL, Add MS 27,632, fol. 47r-51r.

said by reason Mr. Dr. did speak very softly.”²¹ So Cooke claimed he had not willfully disobeyed his superiors, he simply was unaware of their orders.

Finally, evasive answers were also in the godly repertoire. When authorities tried to unearth unauthorized fasts for the Earl of Essex on rumors that he was severely ill or dead in December, 1599, godly ministers were hardly forthcoming. They admitted making charitable public prayers for him, but were ambiguous about special fasts. R. Gardiner of Whitechapel said “for any other particular meeting either in mine own church, or any other, I was present at none.” John Spenser, vicar of St. Sepulcher’s, said that no assembly or meeting for prayers for Essex took place “in his church, nor any else that he was present at.” With respect to his church, George Downame, parson of St. Margaret’s in Lothbury, claimed he neither had nor attended “any extraordinary assembly.” Henry Holland, vicar of St. Bride’s, claimed “otherwise during his restraint, [that he] hath not intermeddled with any other public prayers or assemblies in his church for him.”²²

These answers seem straight forward denials, but on closer inspection they were evasive. First, they did not address private fasts in houses. Indeed, for their part authorities were only interested in public fasts in parish churches, and clearly had no qualms about private fasts for Essex. Second, the ministers left open the possibility that they knew about fasts even if they did not attend them. Significantly, Spenser, Holland, and Downame were Calvinist conformists. While they were all chaplains to Essex, other conformists who admitted praying for Essex, like John King of St. Andrews in Holborn, were not. Even sermons at Paul’s Cross included prayers for Essex by name, though

²¹ Hertfordshire Record Office, MS ASA 5/5/291 (St. Albans Archdeaconry Records, Box X, Bundle A, miscellaneous papers).

²² Lambeth Palace Library, MS 3470, fol. 216r, 217r-v, 218r-v. PRO, SP 12/274/1; SP 12/273/59.

some of these preachers were Cambridgemen who, according to ancient custom, prayed for the Chancellor of Cambridge (then Essex) when they were at the Cross. Whatever the reason, many Calvinist conformists prayed alongside puritans like Anthony Wotton, and Stephen Egerton of Blackfriars. The Earl of Essex as a privy councilor, a defender of reformed churches, and a patron of zealous Protestants was yet another common cause for fasts which drew Calvinist conformists and puritans together. The godly who gave evasive answers had good reason to think they would be winked at.

While puritans could be deceitful, there was far more to their casuistry than avoiding punishment. Arguably, both puritans and Calvinist conformists were complicit in papering over of differences to keep peace in the church. In short, Calvinist conformists allowed puritans to proselytize and reform manners within the church in accord with imperatives derived from their self-understanding as the elect, while puritans kept their activities within tolerable limits. In part, puritans were attempting to resolve a real and painful tension they felt between their sense of duty to obey both God and human authorities in church and state. When the two were in accord there was no problem, but when they were in conflict puritans had to choose whom to obey. Puritans saw the two in conflict when they perceived providential signs calling for public fasting, but human authorities were not appointing them. Lame excuses allowed them to avoid making the choice of whom to obey. This tension helps to explain why puritans were so eager to grasp at anything that gave a hint of official legitimization to their fasts. Only the most radical puritans had no scruples about making unauthorized fasts, and would claim that obedience to God trumped obedience to human governors in this case.

More pragmatically, puritans knew quite well that Calvinist conformists made a critical distinction between radical puritans (i.e. “factious,” “seditious,” “unquiet,” “turbulent,” “schismatic”) whom they viewed as dangerous, and moderate puritans (i.e. “quiet,” “peaceable,” “conformable,” “tender consciences”) whom they would indulge.²³ Arguably, puritans in their lame excuses, and deferential statements to law and authority were trying to portray themselves in such a way that Calvinist conformists would not see them as a threat, and place them in the moderate category. By so doing, puritans could pursue the reform goals their self-understanding as “saints” required with far less fear of prosecution. Listening to puritan defenses, friendly ears would hear a tacit admission of having wrongfully bent or broken the law, as well as respect for it. Such sentiments showed a real desire to have deference to authority, and this fact would have been enough to win mercy from understanding conformists. Calvinist conformists valued college educated preachers, desired their services, and could bend over backwards to keep them if they did not create too much controversy.

Even when conformists were motivated, the weak early modern state made it hard for them to discover and suppress unauthorized fasts. Looking again at the 1636 case of Sym, we find Dr. Aylett complaining to Lambe about the limits of his ability to monitor puritans who engaged in unauthorized fasts: “You know it is in Rochford Hundred far remote from me and in Essex Archdeaconry where I hear are many such kind of preaching and fasting.” Aylett said he would, if commanded by Lambe, make inquiry though he thought this more properly belonged to the archdeacon or his officials.²⁴

²³ For more on how Calvinist conformists distinguished among puritans, see: Kenneth Fincham, *Prelate as Pastor* (Oxford, 1990). Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, “The Ecclesiastical Policy of King James I,” *Journal of British Studies*, 1985 24: 169-207.

²⁴ PRO, SP 16/327/101.

Moreover, Lambe likely addressed Aylett because the archdeacon and his officials in Essex were friendly to puritans, and apparently allowing fasts to take place there with relative impunity. While the godly had long dominated Essex, continued puritan fasts there also suggest that the accommodation of puritans in the Elizabethan and Jacobean period still lingered there in the 1630s.

The fasts for the Earl of Essex are more examples of the difficulty church and state had of knowing about puritan fasts let alone stopping them. Dr. Edward Stanhope wrote to his brother Sir John Stanhope from Lambeth December 29, 1599. The authorities were up against an informal godly network which could quickly transmit information, and spontaneously act on it in similar ways because of their shared beliefs and priorities. The actions for Essex were the result of what Stanhope termed a “constant flying report,” or a “confident report” which had “blown abroad,” of the Earl’s extreme sickness and likely death. Authorities clearly expected fasts to have taken place in these circumstances, and made inquiries. Stanhope claimed the relevant ministers gave testimony in their own hands that there had not been “any extraordinary day for public prayer” appointed for Essex in their churches. However, he later admitted he could not be certain:

“it is disavowed by them all that there was any special day appointed for the concurs of other ministers then the ordinary minister or preacher of the parish, or any calling so much as the parishioners themselves upon any extraordinary day appointed for prayers for him. Which might peradventure have been done, and never been more known unto us, then many other conventicles, which sometimes we hear not of until half a year after they are all escaped; for London churches be so many, and some ministers so variable, as Argus himself could not have an eye in all those churches at once.”

Additionally, the investigation was hardly aggressive in that it only covered select ministers who preached near the Earl’s house or in “great assemblies,” and then relied on them to volunteer self-incriminating evidence while under little or no coercion. One

wonders if Chancellor Stanhope preferred not to find wrongdoing so as to have less to report that would further anger the Queen. Indeed, Stanhope made clear that he wrote only because he heard the Queen was highly offended with the Bishop of London for failing to prevent ministers in and about London from making public prayers for Essex despite his “restraint.” Stanhope wanted his brother to intervene with the Queen and pass on the information he provided to show that Bishop Bancroft had not failed in his duty. As Chancellor to the bishop, Stanhope also feared the Queen was angry with him and wanted to clear his name as well.²⁵

Further, the early modern state was also weak in that it had limited resources to spend in prosecutions. The English church and state could impressively marshal the resources and will to prosecute at all levels if the offense seemed a blatant challenge to authority and a radical threat to order. If the offense seemed lesser, however, the will to go through the trouble and expense of prosecution could be sapped, and the case eventually might be dropped and the offender let go with a minor punishment or just a warning. Furthermore, the English church and state was shot through with puritans, their patrons, and sympathetic Calvinist conformists who could step in to shelter offenders. By taking a moderate and repentant stance, puritans aided their allies in the establishment by giving them political cover to indulge them or intervene for them.

These realities help to explain why prosecution of puritans for fasts was rare. Indeed, the unauthorized fasts that are documented suggest that authorities acted only when puritans were unusually obnoxious. The Ridlington fast in 1589 drew attention because it was a private fast in the parish church, and blatantly attacked the Book of

²⁵ PRO, SP 12/273/59. For more on how ministers heard that Essex was dying and that public prayers were made in other churches, see: Lambeth Palace Library, MS 3470, fol. 217r-v, 218r-v.

Common Prayer. The puritans in Ashby in the 1580s drew fire for popular attendance at their ministerial fasts. In 1596, Phillips offended by changing the day of a public fast to a feast day, and because the godly flagrantly gadded through the streets to another church to continue the fast. The fasts for the Earl of Essex in 1599 drew attention because the Queen was outraged at prayers for a man then imprisoned for treason. Even then only David Roberts of St. Andrews in the Wardrobe was committed because he went beyond benign platitudes in prayers to desire the full restoration of the Earl and portrayed his enemies as evil. Cooke got in trouble as a repeat offender who kept having public fasts in the parish church without sufficient authority. His 1596 fast in particular blatantly broke an explicit order given just weeks previously against unauthorized public fasts. Also, attendance at this fast included ministers from other parishes in the archdeaconry and even other dioceses, and many people from other parishes. Further, this gadding took place in a time of pestilence increasing danger of contagion, and the fast was on “worken days.”²⁶ Sym bid an unauthorized public fast in his parish church which lasted all day. In summary, given the frequency of puritan fasts, the low number of prosecutions suggests that if puritans conducted their unauthorized fasts quietly they were overlooked, or that official authorization was not hard to get. A low-key fast of a godly congregation in their own parish might not be bothered. Prosecution for private fasts appears virtually non-existent.

Moreover, just how tame and timid unauthorized puritan fasts could be comes into view if we stop looking at them only from the perspective of overzealous conformists and consider the view of radicals. The separatist Henry Barrow chastised

²⁶ Hertfordshire Record Office, MS ASA 5/5/291 (St. Albans Archdeaconry Records, Box X, Bundle A, miscellaneous papers). Collinson “Classical Movement,” p. 1182-1183.

fasts which puritans conducted without the license or allowance of their lord bishops for not going far enough. Barrow scathingly called them “hypocritical fasts,” like those in Isaiah 58 and Zachariah 7, which failed to discover the “sin of the land” to the people. Barrow claimed that in these fasts the preacher observed his ordination oath to his bishop wherein he bound himself “not to speak against any thing by public authority established, etc. He hath great regard, not to meddle with any of these matters, least he awake the sleepy dog, and know not how to appease him again, or recover his credit and estimation with him.” These preachers did well speaking out against sins against the second table, but they claimed there was no sin against the first table in England, except among papists, recusants, and the ungodly. In regard to the “state of the church,” there was simply “nothing amiss,” and it was flourishing with such learned ministers as no other church had. Barrow did concede that he had heard that if the audience was “such as will back them” these ministers would “have a fling at the bishops in some eloquent Delphick dark speeches, such as may be retracted, or have a double construction.” According to Barrow, these puritan clergy would consider the church fully reformed with the removal of the bishops, and the establishment of the “discipline of the apostles” in their parishes. This was the goal for which they would “mourn in the chine, and sigh in secret” in their fasts.²⁷ Thus, Barrow provides an important counter-weight to conformist accounts by showing how painfully puritans tried to obey authorities, and how limited their desires for further reform were. Also, the limited speaking out in fasts that Barrow mentions refers to radical presbyterians. As we have seen, more moderate puritans accepted episcopacy, and in fasts, when they touched on further reform at all, they often only prayed for the

²⁷ Leland Carlson (ed.), *The Writings of Henry Barrow 1587-1590* (London, 1962), p. 415-18.

addition of local discipline, and slight changes to the Book of Common Prayer. Such fasts were hardly worth the time of authorities.

The controversial “general fast” at Stamford, Rutlandshire on September 14, 1580 exemplifies and ties together all the previous issues discussed.²⁸ Evidence about the Stamford fast is exceptionally rich because the Jesuit Robert Parsons made an issue of it in a pamphlet dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, and thereby set off a furious print debate. Parsons hoped to persuade Elizabeth that the real subversives of obedience to princes and authority were Protestants, especially the “puritan,” and not Catholics. He argued that this “general fast” had been prohibited by the Bishop of Lincoln in letters to the alderman and comburgesses of Stamford dated September 5. He claimed that at the “public fast” the two preachers taught that they did not need the warrant of the Queen, Council, or bishops to hold it, and that they could disobey “flesh and blood” to obey God’s commandment. They claimed religion, reform, and actions that glorified God should be based on ministers’ preaching and conscience, rather than acts of parliament and edicts of the prince. Equally outrageous to Parsons was that these preachers had spoken for 10-12 hours together. In brief, these puritans showed they would attack the magistrate on account of such a small matter as “a little fantastical rage of fasting.” Catholics, by contrast, were “quiet and modest” and against the “perilous innovations” of those whose doctrine was to have no governor at all.²⁹ In summary, Parsons had constructed a clever ploy to aggravate tensions between conformists and puritans, so as to divide English Protestants and win toleration for Catholics. His caricature of puritans carefully gave

²⁸ John Field, *A Caveat for Parsons Howlet* (London, [1581?]), Sig. G5v, G6v, G7v-G8r, H1r (STC 10844.3). Percival Wiburn, *A Checke or Reproofe of M. Howlets Untimely Screeching* (London, 1581), p. 57v (STC 25586).

²⁹ John Howlet [Robert Parsons], *A Brief Discours Contayning Certayne Reasons Why Catholiques Refuse to Goe to Church* (Douai, 1580), Sig. †8v, ††1r-††2r (STC 19394).

them all the defining features of radicals that raised conformist fears of disorder. These were the same features that moderate puritans so firmly denied to win over conformists.

While Parsons tried to draw sharp lines between puritans and conformists, many conformists supported the fast, and those who did not had quite limited concerns. In their rebuttals, puritans like John Field, and Percival Wiburn rehashed the official correspondence about the fast to downplay tensions over authority, and unite puritans and conformists. Field admitted that at first it was “somewhat feared” the fast would not prove “orderly enough” due to “the intimation of some perhaps not best affected to such holy exercises.”³⁰ These fears were brought to the attention of Lord Treasurer Burghley, a member of the Privy Council, because he had inherited the manor of the burgh of Stamford, and was Lord of the town. Believing the reports, Burghley sent a letter to the town magistrates dated July 2 forbidding the fast. Burghley said he had heard that Robert Johnson, parson of Luffenham in Rutland in the diocese of Peterborough, had come to Stamford in the diocese of Lincoln, and with six or seven other preachers intended “to erect a new innovation by decreeing to the people an universal fast, and to continue thru I know not how long.” He worried such a fast might be an “innovation” in the orders of the church established by parliament. A “private person” like Johnson could not call such a fast in any diocese, let alone outside of the one where he had his cure, without either the prescription of the bishop or ordinary, or their permission. Thus for the “avoiding of offence,” Burghley ordered the town magistrates to have Johnson forbear the fast.

While he opposed the fast, Burghley’s letter shows he only had limited concerns including crossing lines of jurisdiction, a public fast on the authority of parish ministers,

³⁰ Field, *Caveat*, Sig. B1r.

an excessively large gathering of clergy and people, and an excessively long service. Further, Burghley demonstrated strong support for public fasts and preaching. Of Johnson he said: “I commend his zeal towards that town, to move them to such divine acts, as fasting and hearing of sermons is, whereunto I wish all the people there [were] more given then I think they are.” Johnson, and any others, could preach if they got a license from the bishop of the diocese. Burghley allowed private fasts as a consolation, saying if he wished, Johnson might “do well to exhort men to fast and pray, being the necessary actions for Christian men to use.” Indeed, Burghley had a favorable opinion of Johnson and referred to him as a “good preacher.”³¹ Furthermore, while Johnson (1540-1625) had been born in Stamford, he was no mere heady local malcontent. From 1571, he had been chaplain to Sir Nicholas Bacon, the Lord Keeper, and he had amassed an impressive list of positions in the church. Neither was he a radical, for while he had resisted subscription in 1571 and was suspended, shortly thereafter he submitted. Moreover, the Stamford controversy had no negative impact on his career, as in June, 1591 he became Archdeacon of Leicester.³²

Despite this inauspicious beginning, the rest of the correspondence also shows how cordial relations were between the godly, Burghley, and the Bishop of Lincoln. All parties had enough flexibility and respect for each other to work out a compromise. Burghley’s July 2 letter activated a network of godly people who wrote to Burghley to refute concerns about disorder raised either by zealous conformists or Catholics or both.

³¹ BL, Lansdowne 102 (100). John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation* (London, 1709-38, reprint New York, 1966 new edition), volume 2, part 2, p. 334-35. Field, *Caveat*, Sig. G2v, G8v. Wiburn, *Checke*, p. 56r-57v.

³² In 1570, he became canon of Peterborough, canon of Norwich, and prebend at Rochester. In 1572, he became canon of Windsor. In 1574, he became rector of North Luffenham, Rutland. In 1575, he became prebend at Peterborough. See: Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, *The Dictionary of National Biography* (London, 1917) [hereafter *DNB*], volume 10, p. 914-15.

One such petition came from the puritan Lord Zouche who wrote to Burghley July 20 asking him to countermand his letters to the alderman and his adherents in Stamford that had stayed the appointed fast.³³ These petitions, including letters from Johnson, satisfied Burghley's concerns. Field noted that on "better information" given to him of the town's "good desire and proceeding," that Burghley changed his mind. But while Burghley was supportive of an orderly fast, which the town and clergy were no doubt promising him, he still had his doubts. To assure order he did not simply approve the fast. He required the town to get the bishop's sanction for their plans as well, and he wrote to the bishop about the matter. So in what Field called a "loving letter" of July 25 to the town magistrates, Burghley said he would approve anything the bishop would direct or order about the fast. Burghley also sent a letter dated July 25 to Johnson again expressing support for fasts, and again praising Johnson for his pains in preaching for which he had cause "both to esteem and love him."³⁴

In accord with Burghley's July 25 letter, the alderman and comburgesses wrote the bishop of Lincoln July 30 for allowance of the fast. They recapped how they merely had made a request to the "godly learned preachers about us" to serve in a fast with prayer, meditation, preaching, and relief of the poor. The request had been "misreported" to the Lord Treasurer, and as a result he had ordered the fast stayed or forborne in his July 2 letter, an order the magistrates affirmed that they had obeyed. Now on "some fuller and more particular declaration made" in letters sent from Johnson, Burghley in his July 25 letters had given his "good and favorable allowance" to the fast, and advised

³³ Zouche warned Burghley "not to discomfort the Lord's children, but to remember amongst his great affairs this most excellent saying of our Savior Christ: 'He that denieth me amongst men, I will deny Him before my Father which is in heaven.'" (*Historical Manuscripts Commission, Ninth Report, Salisbury*, part 2 (London, 1888), p. 332)

³⁴ Field, *Caveat*, Sig. G2v-G3r. Wiburn, *Checke*, p. 57v.

them to ask the bishop for his direction and consent. In his account, Wibur also stressed that the town forbore the fast until they got allowance from Burghley's letters of July 25, as well as the bishop's August 5 letter in answer to the town's July 30 letter.³⁵

Thomas Cooper, the bishop, approved the fast in an August 5 letter, and described the "order" he thought good. His requirements were consistent with puritan style fasts, and so few that they left much room for puritans to act as they liked. First, he called for the magistrates to have a conference with John Hanson the town preacher to agree on "some day or days" to use the "godly exercise of preaching and fasting." Second, the fast was to be "without the confluence of other strangers that appertain not unto your town." Third, the Sunday before the fast, Hanson was to preach a sermon to exhort the people to "prepare" for the fast. Fourth, he ordered that there be only two sermons, one by Hanson and one by Richard Lively, minister in Market Deeping, with the rest of time before, between, or after sermons spent in open or private prayer, or contribution to the poor. Significantly the bishop was willing to have more than one fast, stressed preaching, and placed no limit on the length of the sermons or the fast days. He primarily wanted to avoid an excessively large gathering from distant places in different jurisdictions. The bishop finished his letter with a friendly warning that his order was sufficient and "neither would I wish you to do it otherwise, for I know, and have signification given me already that it will be very offensive, and breed more inconvenience then I would gladly have come to pass. These my letters I pray you keep, for the manner of my allowance, if

³⁵ Field, *Caveat*, Sig. G3r-G3v. Wibur, *Checke*, p. 57r-57v. Wibur also noted that while the fast was "a time stayed" because of "misreports," that it was eventually taken in hand "with the good countenance and liking of authority." (Ibid., p. 55v) The town magistrate's July 30 letter also noted Johnson as "a preacher to his lordship," so perhaps he was well known to the bishop and held in some esteem by him. (Field, *Caveat*, Sig., G3v)

the matter hereafter come in controversy.” He even signed his letter “your very loving friend.”³⁶

Yet a rival network of those opposed to advanced Protestants remained at work. Lord Zouche, Archdeacon Nicholas Shephard, and town recorder Francis Harrington subsequently complained that not only before but after the order of the bishop approving the fast, it was “secretly undermined, and some ways crossed, by false intimations and untrue suggestions.” This rival campaign had some success as the bishop apparently changed his mind regarding the fast and succumbed to the doubts implicit in his August letter. Field admitted that after sending his August 5 letters allowing the fast “that the bishop sent some such restraint, fearing by some rumor or suggestion, that his appointed order should not have been observed, both as touching the confluence of people, and also for bringing in some foreign preachers, for whose doings he could not answer.” The bishop’s letters were those of September 5 which Parsons had mentioned.³⁷

Despite the bishop’s late change of heart, the evidence clearly shows that puritans and godly conformists had superiors at the highest levels of church and state who were willing to indulge them. The limits those superiors required were acceptable to moderate puritans. Equally important, the godly not only had the support of the local establishment, they *were* the local establishment. The local notables in church and state all vehemently denied Parson’s charges and defended the fast. Puritans like Field and Wiburton thus were not alone in denying the fast sermons had the doctrine Parsons attributed to them. Richard Lively denied the “odious crime” of disobedience and contempt of law and magistrates. He claimed he was far from the “Anabaptistical

³⁶ Field, *Caveat*, Sig. G4r, G6r.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Sig. G8v, G2r.

opinion” of wanting no governor at all, and strongly supported Romans 13 that both secular and spiritual persons were bound to obey the “higher powers.” Lively had his denials corroborated by an appended statement from the alderman and comburgesses acquitting him from the “slander of disobedience.” John Hanson and the preacher Robert Crosdale exhaustively gathered sermon notes (apparently including their own), and together with Tobie Houghton, gentleman of Clyff in Northamptonshire, who had taken lengthy sermon notes first hand, found upon review of them that no such doctrine was taught, and that the preachers had not spoken those words. Additionally, Edward, Lord Zouche, Nicholas Shephard, the Archdeacon of Northamptonshire, and Francis Harrington, the recorder of Stamford also wrote a testimonial claiming they were informed by “some both of honorable and worshipful callings” who were present at the fast (and this very likely included them), that the reported words were never uttered, and that what was taught was spoken “with all loyal and dutiful obedience, and in good terms.” What was spoken could have been preached both in matter and manner before any estate in the land “without just occasion of offense.”³⁸

While virtually all puritans rejected the doctrine Parsons attributed to them, given that the fast took place contrary to the bishop’s final letters, the preachers may have made some statements about why the fast was legitimate. Such statements likely would have been heavily qualified, and hearers may have interpreted them variously. We perhaps have some hints when Lively claimed that while he did not utter the positions Parsons cited, that “by charitable instruction they might be mitigated from that rigor that you

³⁸ Ibid., Sig. B1r, G4v-H1v. The addendum to Lively’s letter was signed by the comburgesses: John Wimbleby (alderman), William Lacy (gentleman), John Houghton (gentleman), Reinold Harrison, Richard Evely. (Ibid., Sig. G7v) Wiburn, *Checke*, p. 56v-57v, 58v-59r.

would enforce upon them.”³⁹ Nonetheless, the key point is that local Calvinist conformists not only accepted puritans, but defended them as moderate and orthodox. Differences among English Protestants paled in the face of the common Catholic enemy.

The debate over the length of puritan fasts, an important concern for conformists like Burghley, also sheds light on puritan-conformist relations. Disputing Parson’s account, Lord Zouche, Shepheard, Harrington, and Wiburnd claimed the two sermons together lasted a little above five hours. Given that some conformists thought an hour sufficient, this was a bold admission, especially considering that it appeared in a work directed at conformists and designed to affirm the moderation of the fast. Clearly, the godly of Stamford thought many authorities would find this amount of preaching acceptable. Indeed, we have seen that the bishop only limited the number of preachers, not the length of the sermons. Wiburnd even felt confident enough to argue that he never heard of a prescribed length for preaching, because the length of sermons was an “indifferent thing” and to be more or less as occasion required.⁴⁰

In regard to the lawfulness of the fast itself, we again see puritans (and some Calvinist conformists) not only trying to protect themselves with rationalizations and half-truths, but honestly struggling to do their duty to both their divine and human masters. The tension felt by the godly was so acute that any hint of official sanction would open the floodgates to their activities, because with tortured self-deception they would take it as sufficient. For this reason, despite the evidence Parsons cited to the contrary, Field could repeatedly state that the Stamford fast had the consent of authority

³⁹ Field, *Caveat*, Sig. G7r.

⁴⁰ Wiburnd, *Checke*, p. 58v-59r. Field, *Caveat*, Sig. H1r. In reality, Parsons only claimed the ministers *spoke* for 10-12 hours, while the fast’s defenders included only the length of the *sermons* in the five hours they mention. Thus, Parsons’s time was possibly correct if we add time for the ministers to have prayed.

(Burghley and the bishop), was kept “orderly” and with “decency,” and that all was done as directed by authority. More specifically, Field disingenuously claimed that upon receiving the bishop’s September 5 letters, the alderman and burgesses “very wisely considering that the exercise was now already appointed and warranted, and being clear in their own knowledge from any meaning of altering that which was prescribed and granted, least they should seem to yield to such suppositions as they never dreamed of, and so shew themselves guilty: they kept their determination according to the order which was prescribed.” In their statement, Zouche, Shepheard, and Harrington made a similar argument that the fast was kept according to the “true meaning” permitted and prescribed in the bishop’s letters, and with the allowance of Burghley. Nothing was taught “corruptly, disorderly, or seditiously,” and all was done in accord with the “godly order” set down by the Privy Council (apparently referring to the orders for the national fast of 1580).⁴¹ In summary, the argument was that authorities only had forbidden a fast that had certain abuses, and had allowed a fast that met certain conditions. Because the town kept the fast in accord with those conditions, and the named abuses were not present, the fast was lawful.

Hints of more radical reasoning only arose when Wibur claimed that the fast was legitimate even if some “circumstances” were not “precisely kept.” He argued that there would have been no “contempt” of authority, because “the godliness and reverence of the matter of itself would sufficiently have excused and commended it in these days of the profession of the Gospel under so godly and virtuous a prince, and other magistrates.” Yet, Wibur quickly backed off affirming that Stamford had merely followed the “godly order of public and extraordinary fasting” commonly used in the Church of England, and

⁴¹ Field, *Caveat*, Sig. B1r, G2r-G2v, G4v, G8v.

recommended by the Queen and Council when necessary. To fast so was far from “disorderly, or seditious dealing.”⁴² Again, Wibur expected sympathy from superiors.

In their defense, the town followed most of the bishop’s orders. Only two preachers spoke, and it is unlikely that large numbers of strangers flocked to Stamford or else Parsons would have remarked on it. Nonetheless, the town did break the bishop’s order by replacing Hanson with Johnson. The bishop likely excluded Johnson because he was out of his jurisdiction, and was the key figure organizing the fast and pushing for it to be a mega-gathering of godly people and clergy. Fast supporters claimed the change was made upon occasion of the “defect” or “failing” of Hanson, seemingly referring to an illness. Yet, Hanson apparently attended the fast and took sermon notes. The pro-fast accounts also stressed that the town magistrates duly viewed Johnson’s license, and that both preachers were licensed and “lawfully and sufficiently allowed and authorized.” But, while Johnson may have had a license, it is not clear that the Bishop of Lincoln had given him a license to preach in his diocese.⁴³ Stamford’s efforts to respect authority were real, even if they fell short.

In summary, the Stamford fast shows how puritans and Calvinist conformists reached out to meet each other’s concerns. Such gestures were important because both puritans and conformists were drawn to dichotomous views of the world to explain experience. If authorities supported fasts, puritans located them on the side of God, and felt able to integrate into the church. If authorities opposed fasts too much, puritans potentially placed them on the side of Satan, and felt alienated from the church. In short, the puritan experience of authority had profound implications for how they understood

⁴² Wibur, *Checke*, p. 57v-58r.

⁴³ Field, *Caveat*, Sig. G4v, G7v, G8v-H1r. Wibur, *Checke*, p. 56v.

their own self-understanding, the self-understanding of the Church of England, and the relation between the two. The central contention here is that the shared beliefs and accommodating practices of Calvinist conformists in fasts encouraged the godly to identify their superiors as on the side of Christ in the apocalyptic battle against Anti-Christ. The Stamford fast shows that the godly trusted that if rightly informed, their superiors would side with them and Christ, though they realized those authorities might temporarily be deceived into acting against Christ's cause. The godly of Stamford identified their real enemies as the network of Catholics like Parsons, and the ungodly who worked to stop the fast. Supposedly, these two groups in a shadowy conspiracy fomented lies against the godly, and duped unwitting Protestant governors.

These facts are especially evident in certain passages from Lively and Wiburn. Both men understood the controversy over the fast in terms of an historic and continuing war of Satan against God. No one should be surprised at opposition to the fast, they claimed, because in every age there was opposition to building the church, advancing the kingdom of Christ, and destroying the kingdom of Satan. One of the Devil's favorite means to hinder godly endeavors was to foment against them "slanders," "misreports," "sinister informations," "false accusations," "complaint," "conspiracy," and "colorable undermining after a politik manner." These attacks were why in Matthew 5 Christ said Christians were blessed when men spoke evil against them. While the Devil might also use "open force and violence," the subtle path was often more effective. As proof, Lively and Wiburn made long paired lists of famous godly people in the Bible and their notorious adversaries who used these tactics. They categorized these evil persons as "false prophets," "hirelings," "hypocrites," "false accusers," "conspirers," "violent

dealers,” and “seditious persons.” Lively and Wiburn extrapolated these stark battle lines into the present conflict to portray the enemies of the fast as just such persons. Other than Parsons, and the anonymous ungodly, one person drew special comment. Parsons claimed that a Protestant minister present at the fast had given him his information about the two sermons. Fast defenders argued that the minister may have taken faulty notes, or had a poor memory, or a poor understanding, or that Parsons simply had distorted or fabricated the information. More interestingly, Field claimed if he was a minister then he possibly was an “apostate,” or an “accuser and slanderer of his brethren.” Wiburn concurred that the minister was possibly an “hypocrite,” “false brother,” and a “Judas.”

Further, Wiburn hinted that such deception should not work in England in the present. God had stirred up good kings like Darius and Cyrus to rebuild the temple and Jerusalem, but they were heathens. While they were sometimes favorable to the Church, at other times the Church’s adversaries through complaints given with “great cunning and policy” could successfully sway them from the good cause. By contrast, God had blessed England’s efforts at building the Church because He had raised up not a heathen but:

“a Christian sovereign and prince, herself professing the Gospel of Christ Jesus, who doth not stand by and look on the builders: but bending her royal authority and wisdom to the defense and maintenance of the truth, and repressing of error and falsehood, so moderateth the whole, that she greatly encourageth all God’s people her obedient subjects, and terrifieth the adversaries: her Majesty’s counsellors, the nobility, the spiritual pastors, and the other officers and ministers of the laws are likewise professors and setters forward of this business in their degree and calling, to the great comfort of the common people, and those of the lower sort.”⁴⁴

Adversaries were thus less able to do harm.

⁴⁴ Howlet [Parsons], *Brief Discours*, Sig. †8v. Field, *Caveat*, Sig. B1r-B1v, G2r, G5r-G5v, G8r. Wiburn, *Checke*, p. 55r-57r. Wiburn placed “on the one and better side” Zerubabel, Jeshua, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah, and “on the other side” Rheum, Shimshai, Tatnay, Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem, and their companions in Samaria, and the people beyond the river like Cheeneth, Arabians, Ammonites, Ashdodims, and others with Shemaiah, Noadiah. (Ibid., p. 55v-56r) Lively named the following pairings: Chorah, Dathan, Abyram against Moses and Aaron, “priests and false prophets” against Jeremiah, Amaziah against Amos, scribes and Pharisees against Christ, and Tertullus against Paul. (Field, *Caveat*, Sig., G5r)

Of course, the language and argument in this instance and the rest of the pamphlets more generally was, in part, rhetorical posturing calculated to shame rulers into supporting fasts and other godly initiatives. At another level though, they show that Wiburn and his ilk genuinely trusted that the rulers of the English church and state were on the side of Christ. Albeit, if authorities pressed conformity at the expense of godly desires, they could find themselves tarred for aiding or being in league with Catholics, the ungodly, and Satan. The above passage also shows that puritans trusted not only governors at the center like Lord Burghley and the Bishop of Lincoln, but also magistrates in the localities like Lord Zouche, Alderman Wimpleby and the rest of the Stamford comburgesses, and Archdeacon Shepheard.⁴⁵ From the historian's point of view, the great benefit of men like Burghley and the Bishop of Lincoln to the Church of England was their pragmatism and flexibility in finessing factions. Ideologically, they were positioned to be sympathetic to the Reformed goals of the godly as well as the concerns for order of zealous conformists. They were like the soft cream filling between two hard cookie ends, holding the two together while simultaneously acting as a cushion.

The Stamford fast also needs to be placed in larger perspective. We have seen how even in this controversial fast that conformists and puritans shared much common ground. Also, we must be wary of taking this fast as the norm because the historical record is skewed to recording conflict rather than agreement. Even so, prosecution of puritans for fasts is infrequent in the records, despite the large number of such fasts. Many fasts took place without scandal because the godly received sufficient approval, or

⁴⁵ As late as 1643, puritans lauded Cecil and Bacon as Elizabeth's "admirable councilors" who were "totally addicted to the Protestant religion: the honor of whom leaves her honor unquestionable; for as much as to choose good instruments is the noblest testimony of goodness." (*The English Pope* (London, 1643), p. 4 (Wing E3109))

authorities turned a blind eye or were not aware of them. The advocates of the Stamford fast appealed to just such other fasts in their writings. Field noted the fast had been in “diverse places” of the realm after the earthquake, and was “ordinarily sought for” by Stamford’s alderman and burgesses, who only wished to humble themselves before God “as others had done.” In their July 30 letter to the Bishop of Lincoln, the Stamford magistrates noted the exercise of fasting lately observed in “many places” of the realm, and in “sundry such places” in the diocese, “as law thought convenient for that purpose.” Wibur also noted the “public order set down by authority,” which had moved all generally to repentance, fasting, prayer, alms. The godly of Stamford had been stirred up by the Queen’s call for “extraordinary exercises” of fasting and prayer, and the example of its practice in “diverse places” of the realm including the Diocese of Lincoln.⁴⁶

The actions of the Bishop of Ely show that the godly in Stamford were correct on this point. In September, 1580 he sent an order to the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University enjoining “a public fast to be kept there with sermons.” The bishop was likely moved by public fasts for the earthquake, and news reports of preparations by the papacy and the Holy League to invade England. The Vice-Chancellor was uncertain if the university should obey their diocesan bishop, and feared they might transgress the laws of the kingdom, or give offense to the Queen. He wrote to Lord Burghley, who was the chancellor of the university, for advice. September 15, 1580 Burghley replied to the Vice-Chancellor that he was not sure if the bishop had authority to order the “public fast,” but that if all was done as the bishop wrote “in order and comeliness,” then no “just

⁴⁶ Field, *Caveat*, Sig. G2v-G3r. Wibur, *Checke*, p. 57v. Also, they may have been referring to the national fast of 1580, but the phrasing suggests they were referring to haphazard public observances which likely resulted from official orders urging voluntary fasting which some then used to petition for public fasts.

offence” could be taken. If the “form” of the fast the bishop prescribed was consistent with either the established laws of the realm or of the church, or the usual practice of the church (as by direction from a metropolitan or synod, or approved by the Queen’s authority), he wished it to take place. He affirmed: “I were greatly overseen, if I should not allow both of fasts, and of exhortations thereto.” The only concern Burghley gave was his hope “that the preachers will do herein their offices as preachers and exhorters, not as devisers or commanders of new orders in the church, least thereby, in meaning well, they may yet by novelty give cause of offence.”⁴⁷ Fasts clearly had strong support from many bishops, and others at the center.

The cooperation of puritans and Calvinist conformists in fasts is also evident in a 1596 complaint to Lord Treasurer Burghley. In it a godly minister balked at the rigorous steps Judge Edmund Anderson was taking against preachers in the county of Lincoln, as part of his pledge to hunt all puritans out of his circuit. Anderson’s assault on ministers who preached at a fast was included among his supposedly unjust proceedings. The account shows that the fast had had substantial support from some authorities: “the last Lent there was obtained by Lord Clinton, and the Deputy Lieutenant for those parts with other justices, the bishop’s allowance, with certain conditions, for a meeting to be held at Lowth to spend the whole day in the hearing of the Word in which men might fast, if they would.” The fast took place with preachers the local magistrates had invited providing sermons. Anderson responded by trying to prosecute them under the statute of conventicles and animating the grand jury.

The rest of the document gives important contextual evidence about how much support the godly had for such fasts from conformists. Puritans clearly had some

⁴⁷ BL, Lansdowne 102 (102). Strype, *Annals*, volume 2, part 2, p. 387-89.

enemies in high places. For his part, Anderson (1530-1605) was a hyper-conformist who made no distinction between moderate and radical puritans. His broad attack on all puritans led the godly to see an attack on Protestantism. The godly complained that “he meaneth by puritans all but papists and atheists,” and that his accusations made the “ill-affected” think “all religion will be made Brownism.” His broad definition of puritans led Anderson to see a very large threat. Indeed, in his first and second charge at Lincoln with “wonderful vehemency” he claimed the county was troubled by “Brownists,” “disciplinarians,” and “erectors of presbyteries.” The godly claimed Anderson’s perception of the local state of religion was based on the false reports of “covert papists.” In their view, Anderson was something of a dupe, though in reality he had prosecuted Robert Brown years before, and in 1596 was taking on the separatist John Udall. Anderson’s temperament aggravated the situation. He was a firebrand, contemptuous of outspoken preachers, and notorious for coming to the bench “inflamed with wrath.”

For their part, to win over the Lord Treasurer, the godly ministers portrayed Anderson as excessive and contentious, and themselves as simple zealous Protestants. They knew he did not think that all puritans were alike, and that he would support moderates. Thus, they downplayed the existence of radical puritans, claiming no “schisms” existed in the county. The author of the petition claimed to have been at Alford for 14 years and that there were no Brownists, none who favored erecting of presbyteries, and that the people were not made acquainted with the controversy over discipline. He claimed the ministers had long labored to keep the people ignorant of what the likes of Martin Marprelate pursued. Yet now they were “traded as fautors of that which we have always oppugned.” Raising the common Catholic enemy, he argued the

godly clergy would not stray into such controversies because men had enough to do “to stand by that religion, which her blessed Majesty hath approved unto us by her express laws.” Indeed, the godly clergy turned the tables on Anderson, blaming him for creating “faction,” and bringing the ministry into “intolerable contempt.” Unlike the local gentry, the local clergy were united as committed Protestants, and very few were “papists in their hearts.” Anderson was the one discountenancing the Queen’s religion, and disturbing her “quiet and loving people.” Preaching was not divisive, but the means to create unity and obedience. Catholics and the ungodly hoped by deceiving zealous conformists like Anderson to attack preachers and have all preaching cried down.

These claims to moderation did not fall on deaf ears. The godly ministers had supporters in high places. Their supporters among the local gentry included Lord Clinton, the Deputy Lieutenant, various JPs, and Sir George Sampall. The Lord Treasurer had previously intervened for the preachers by writing letters on their behalf. Indeed, the godly felt so confident that Burghley would see Anderson as excessive that they highlighted the fast, and prosecutions of minor non-conformity that threatened preaching. Judge Clench was also favorable. Purportedly, he was “flat opposite” to Anderson, so when he sat in rotation, the “maliciously affected” would try to adjourn their complaints though on file until the next assizes when Anderson sat again. The ministers also trusted the privy council to support them, in that they requested them to set out a uniform interpretation of statutes so judges could not differ in their opinions and application of the law (such as using recusancy and conventicle statutes against puritans). Perhaps most importantly, the bishop supported the godly clergy, and many preachers knowing Anderson’s “humor” turned to him to intervene on their behalf, and he promised

to do so. Indeed, to Anderson's outrage, the bishop even attended an arraignment in person to support a puritan preacher he "well liked" and who was generally "well accepted," had "conformable affections," and had subscribed.⁴⁸

In sum, we see here, as in Stamford, a situation where the godly found many authorities quite supportive of lengthy, Word-centered fasts as long as certain minimal conditions were met. Calvinist conformists and moderate puritans worked hand in hand. Many Calvinist authorities accommodated puritans for the sake of preaching and attacking Catholics. Anderson upset this cozy relationship and gave opportunity for those who were not zealous Calvinists to resist godly domination of the community. Rather than being a peripheral faction, the godly were one network competing with others to win over authorities. Puritans found enough support from the center such that their experience of authority led them to place the English church and state on side of God. They saw their real enemies as Catholics and the ungodly.

Moreover, even radical puritans and Calvinist conformists who clashed over fasts could be so close in doctrine that their shared ground limited the fallout. This reality is evident in a pamphlet debate sparked by Archbishop Bancroft's drive for conformity and subscription upon his elevation. At one point, the conformist Gabriel Powell (1576-1611) argued that conformists in England were like Nehemiah whose prayer and fasting helped build up Jerusalem. The anonymous radical puritan responded it was all too evident "what opposition many of the prelates have always made to true fasting." Powell replied that "it is utterly untrue that any prelate ever opposed himself against true fasting, except it were peradventure against the disordered conventicles, and presumptuous

⁴⁸ BL, Lansdowne 82 (53), fol. 110r, 111r-113r. *DNB*, volume 1, p. 373-76.

practices of some harebrained refractories, contrary unto all good discipline and order.”⁴⁹

This exchange is important because, as we saw in an earlier chapter, it was typical of radical puritan-conformist clashes on the issue, and seems so severe.

Looking at the rest of the debate, though, we find that the puritan and the conformist both claimed ceremonial conformity and church discipline were the issues not doctrine. The puritan argued that the Church of England was “fully reformed in doctrine.” He repeatedly affirmed that England and its prelates professed the Gospel. He only took issue with “some superfluities” which obscured and hindered the Gospel, and the lack of some things which furthered it. Because puritans accepted the doctrine of the Church of England, he claimed conformists unjustly called them “schismatic.” Powell agreed that the controversy was not about the “ministry of the Gospel” of which he held puritans a part. The controversy rather was over “a few petty accidental circumstances.” He repeatedly affirmed that conformists did not proceed against puritans for “preaching the Gospel.” He had not found any puritan to err in “any fundamental or material point of doctrine.” They did so only in some “particular fancies in some smaller points.” Puritans were not “schismatic” in the sense of being separatists, or because they were guilty of “heresy.” Indeed, they held “the entire and sound profession of the saving truth of God.” Rather, puritans were schismatic in being disturbers of the peace and quiet of the church, causing contention and faction, and disobeying the magistrate with innovation

⁴⁹ Gabriel Powell, *A Consideration of the Deprived and Silenced Ministers Arguments* (London, 1606), p. 29-30 (STC 20142). *A Myld and Just Defence of Certeyn Arguments, at the Last Session of Parliament* (n.p., 1606), p. 63 (STC 3522). Gabriel Powell, *A Rejoinder unto the Mild Defence* (London, [1606?]), p. 138 [printed following Gabriel Powell, *De Adiaphoris* (London, 1607) (STC 20146)]

and novelty.⁵⁰ While both men were posturing to claim the other should relent over such minor points, the scope of their differences was limited.

Only in the second pamphlet did the puritan raise the issue of doctrine in an attempt to refute the charge that puritans were “schismatic.” He then claimed that the “prelates” were falling from the doctrine which “heretofore hath been constantly, and generally held by our church.” Among the “popish” and “Lutheran” errors now taught was general grace, the death of Christ for every particular person, the denial of particular election and reprobation, that true justifying faith could be lost, and that no certainty of salvation was possible. Powell forthrightly replied that these charges were “utterly untrue: for we detest and abhor even all and every of the particular points, he saith we teach.” Powell challenged the puritan to justify his claims from the confession of faith of the Church of England, or from “any writer of ours of credit in the church.” The puritan’s charges were just desperate “railing” and “slander” on the Church of England because he had run out of legitimate arguments. Powell affirmed: “for what other thing doth he, seeing we are so far from defending any of these blasphemies he speaks of, as any man on their side.” Moreover, because Powell was called “by some in authority” to answer the supplication (he had been chaplain to Richard Vaughan, Bishop of London, from 1605), he was speaking for the church in an official capacity.⁵¹ Given the puritan’s

⁵⁰ *Certain Arguments to Perswade and Provoke the Most Honorable and High Court of Parliament Now Assembled* ([Middelburgh?], 1606), p. 18 (STC 7736). *A Myld and Just Defence*, p. 5, 44, 54, 56-7, 60-1. Powell, *Consideration*, p. 20, 22, 27, 48, 58. Powell, *Rejoinder*, p. 97-8, 107, 113-14, 118-20, 122, 124, 135-37, 156-58, 165, 184-85.

⁵¹ *A Myld and Just Defence*, p. 44-5, 132. Powell, *Rejoinder*, p. 118-19, 171, 187. Powell, *Consideration*, dedicatory epistle to parliament. The puritan also accused the bishops of errors regarding images in churches (especially Exeter), the manner of Christ’s presence in the Lord’s Supper, the necessity of baptism, and auricular confession. He said they claimed the pope was not the Anti-Christ. He blamed them for the ignorance of the people, and accused them of arguing that there was not much need of preaching because all the people needed to know was the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the articles of faith. (*A Myld and Just Defence*, p. 44-5, 155-56). Other bishops also favored Powell. In 1609,

previous statements that doctrine was not an issue, Powell appears correct. The puritan likely was selectively pointing to the Anti-Calvinist minority as a means to tar the whole hierarchy.

In sum, both the puritan and Powell accepted Calvinist doctrine as the long established doctrine of the Church of England, and preaching the Gospel as paramount. This agreement placed strong limits on how far even this radical puritan, let alone a moderate one, would criticize the church in fasts. As we have seen, in the fasts of the classes in the 1580s, and the 1589 fast at Ridlington, prayers for further reform rarely exceeded concerns about ceremonies, the Book of Common Prayer, and the need for discipline. At no point was there fear that authorities were against the Gospel. The potential of puritan fasts to create a puritan self-understanding opposed to conformists was limited. Under Charles, the “ameliorating bond” of Calvinist doctrine and a stress on preaching dissolved. Accordingly, puritan fasts changed.

Another example that doctrine was not an issue in Elizabethan conformist complaints about puritan fasts comes from the printer and playwright Henry Chettle. In his eulogy for Queen Elizabeth, he claimed puritans were “for the most part, ignorant and mechanic people, led by some few hot spirited fellows.” Their “selected company” accounted themselves “saints” and “holy ones.” He complained how “Kit Cobler and Kate his wife” both “presume they have as sufficient spirits to teach and expound the scriptures, as either Peter, or John, or Paul, for so bluntly they term the blessed Apostles.” Thus: “their vanity and pride our Elizabeth hated, and therefore bridled their ways, and was not moved with their hypocritical fasts; because they fasted to strife and debate, as it

Thomas Ravis, Bishop of London, made Powell the prebend of Portpool in St. Paul's. In 1610, George Abbot, Bishop of London, made Powell vicar of Northolt, Middlesex. See: *DNB*, volume 16, p. 240-41.

is written by the Prophet Isaiah 58 and to smite with the fist of wickedness.” So by Chettle’s account the chief concern about puritan fasts was socially divisive self-righteousness and unlearned exposition of the Bible.⁵²

Because they had so much in common, a Church of England dominated by Calvinist conformists was acceptable to puritans though tensions existed. In the previous chapter, we saw that the likes of George Abbot and John King condemned unauthorized puritan fasts, and that this created tension by requiring puritans to forgo fasts in obedience to authority. However, Abbot and King also laid an equally heavy charge on magistrates to rule in godly ways and order fasts, and this charge defused tension by giving puritans every reason to wait on and obey authority. In short, they aligned the desires of puritans with those of the church hierarchy.

For puritans, the king of Ninevah, who called a public fast in response to the preaching of the prophet Jonah, was a cherished model of the godly magistrate. Thus, it is no surprise to find puritans like William Attersoll lauding the king of Ninevah as an example for magistrates of godly rule.⁵³ More surprising, is that conformists like Abbot and King were as zealous as puritans in pressing the example of the king of Ninevah, and in the same godly language.

Abbot stressed that on hearing Jonah preach, the king proclaimed a general fast because he was “most lively touched,” and had a “sensible feeling” or “lively feeling” of sin. By listening to “God’s Word” delivered by “prophets,” the king showed how the preaching of ministers was to instruct magistrates about God’s will and what was good for the people. The king’s example also showed that God required the heads of nations to

⁵² Henry Chettle, *Englands Mourning Garment* (London, 1603), Sig. D3v-D4r (STC 5122). Emma Smith, “Chettle, Henry (d. 1603x7),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

⁵³ Attersoll, *Ninevah*, first pagination, p. 81-9.

be vigilant in times of danger, rather than “winking with drowsy eyes,” and order fasts. Further, Abbot and King affirmed that the king’s command ensured the fast was “orderly,” in that it flowed from the top down, and made all Ninevah like “a single man” with “one head” and “one heart.”

King and Abbot also stressed that in the fast the king of Ninevah rose from his throne, removed his robe, and put on sackcloth and ashes. Rather than remaining in glory and delegating humiliation to others, the king appeared before his subjects stripped of all majesty, as a common man, a beggar, a bondsman, and a corpse. This gesture was important because supposedly the prince was the head of the corporate body, and inferiors by nature imitated superiors. Abbot required the prince to “stir up” his subjects by giving them an example of “conversion” and a “broken melting heart.” Leaders were to be like a “great spur” or a “load-stone” moving their followers. Sounding like a puritan, Abbot argued that the warm heart of the godly king was to be a “propagating heat” throughout rest of the body members. He affirmed: “Fire desireth to breed fire.” He claimed “the soul which is truly converted to grace, loveth to convert other.” The godly prince had a duty to ensure his subjects “feelingly” knew their misery, and had a “lively apprehension” of it. John King also required the king as the “first” in a kingdom to be first in repentance, and set an example to encourage others. The king was “*a coal burning* unto himself, and *a lamp shining* unto other men.”⁵⁴

Abbot also gave an additional reason for rulers diligently to appoint fasts. He affirmed that because God had lifted up princes as His “vicereagents,” He paid particular attention to them, had particular affection to them as humans on whom He had imprinted

⁵⁴ George Abbot, *An Exposition Upon the Prophet Jonah* (London, 1600), p. 421-49, 480 (STC 34). King, *Jonas*, p. 472, 475-78, 480-81, 487.

His majesty, and held them to a higher standard of account. Godly rulers like the king of Ninevah were “touched” before and above others, and given “graces extraordinary” to foresee and discern more than the common sort. Their humiliation and prayers had a more direct and immediate route to God, and God accepted them with greater favor and acquaintance than those of common and private men. The fasting and prayer of rulers was thus particularly powerful in turning aside divine wrath, and brought relatively greater blessings. It was like a conduit through which blessings flowed down to the people. For example, the fasting and prayers of Josiah, David, Hezekiah, and even wicked Ahab were especially respected because of their authority. But, the response of rulers to divine judgment was a double edged sword because to those whom God had given the most, He expected the most. Thus, God took the neglect of His service by a royal potentate “more unkindly” than by a common man. He accordingly severely punished them and their kingdoms for failings as in the cases of Saul and Solomon.⁵⁵

Significantly, Abbot and King did not vest all responsibility with the prince. Abbot required lesser magistrates and heads of households to “stir up” those under them to fast. Citing Jethro’s rebuke of Moses for trying to rule alone, King stressed that the work load of princes was so vast, that they needed to appoint subordinates and delegate to them. Moreover, Abbot and King also emphasized that rather than acting alone, the king of Ninevah issued the proclamation for the fast with the advice and consent of his

⁵⁵ Abbot, *Jonah*, p. 426-29, 443-44. While glorifying godly princes, Abbot and King also placed sharp limits on their use of power. They both saw the legitimacy of a ruler, as coming less from their holding office and the symbols of office, than from ruling in accord with God’s will for the common good. Abbot went so far as to claim that if princes ceased to do so then by right they should cease to reign, and give up the name of king. He noted that in extreme cases where rulers advanced by Christ turned against the Gospel, God violently cast them down. Abbot also saw a particular danger with “absolute princes” with “authority unlimited” because they thought themselves exempt from taking part in public humiliation and repentance with the common sort due to their pride in the “mighty prerogative of their sovereignty.” When kings would “stir up” the people to repentance and fasting they showed themselves “worthy” of their scepter and crown. (Ibid., p. 425, 427, 431-32, 445; see also: King, *Jonas*, p. 478)

“council,” “princes,” and “nobles.” They forcefully argued that the state was better when the king was humble and honored to benefit from the wisdom and knowledge of godly counselors, and to act only with their approval. Abbot held that England’s king-in-parliament model embodied this way of governing.⁵⁶ In short, by urging the ideal of godly rule, the likes of King and Abbot imparted a sense of duty to governors at all levels of the English church and state to order and advocate for fasts with zeal.

The impact of these ideals is hard to overstate, and as we have seen they were put into practice by princes, parliaments, bishops, JPs, town magistrates, and heads of households. Despite puritan hyperbole to the contrary, authorities frequently called and authorized public fasts. Indeed, the fragmentary historical record likely understates the number of public fasts. Also, fasts are understated because there was a range of official responses to crises in Elizabethan and early Stuart England according to their perceived severity. In lower to medium level crises, a prayer was added to routine worship services, along with a call for voluntary or limited fasting. As the severity increased, prayers were printed, and graduated into increasingly elaborate services for Wednesdays and Fridays which shared much with those for national fasts. At these times, local and regional magistrates either called fasts on their own authority, or petitioned their superiors for them. In the midst of crises, bishops who called for voluntary fasts were likely disposed to approve petitions for fasts, and in some cases turn a blind eye to unauthorized ones. Apparently, English bishops rarely appointed their own prayers and

⁵⁶ Abbot, *Jonah*, p. 426, 429, 437, 439, 441-42, 444-45, 449-53. King, *Jonas*, p. 472, 474, 481-84, 487. Abbot paralleled godly rule in Ninevah and England: “And God is better pleased, when good things shall be commanded, first by the highest in place, and then after it shall be added, *by the Lords spiritual and temporal, and by the assent of the commons*: And princes which are gracious do never grieve at this; and wise men do love that stile, when all is not appropriated to one, but there is a kind of parting.” Such was the “*Stylus Parlamenti Angliæ*.” The king of Ninevah was wise in that “to purchase the more authority he joined in his stile his councilors and great officers.” (Abbot, *Jonah*, p. 452, 449).

fasts for their dioceses, though Irish and Scottish bishops did. In high level crises, mandatory public fasts for the whole nation took place, and they were ordered according to a long form of prayer printed as a service book. So public fasts are difficult to count, and a range of responses occurred suited to the threat level.

Nonetheless, ample documentation shows that in major crises under Elizabeth and James abundant public fasts took place: 1563 (plague), 1572 (St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre), 1580 (earthquake), 1588 (Spanish Armada), 1593 (pestilence), 1596 and 1597 (famine), and 1603 (plague).⁵⁷ While only some of these fasts were definitively national ones, puritans and conformists referred to all of them as such. Part of the confusion for contemporaries stemmed from the great similarity between forms of prayer with explicit orders for fasts, and those that required limited fasting or merely exhorted fasting. Orders for limited or voluntary fasting as a complement to public prayers likely gave rise to widespread local fasts. The godly often used official fasts and special public prayers as a basis to petition for and legitimize supplemental fasts.

For example, the 1580 fast appears to be such a case, and we saw the godly of Stamford use it to advocate for their fast. In his July 20 letter to Burghley, Lord Zouche affirmed that Stamford could have a fast because the last book set forth by authority authorized fasting and prayer. Wiburton, Field, and the Stamford magistrates also appealed the recent "public order" of the Queen, and the recent fasts that had been held in many

⁵⁷ Edward Cardwell (ed.), *Documentary Annals of the Reformed Church of England* (Oxford, 1844), volume 1, p. 313-14. John Strype, *The Life and Acts of Matthew Parker* (London, 1711), second pagination, p. 34-5. PRO, SP 12/29/56. Strype, *Annals*, volume 2, part 1, p. 238. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 54. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 44. Holland, *Fasting*, Sig. A3v-A4v, p. 91-2. *Certaine Praiers* (London, 1593)(STC 16524). *Certaine Prayers* (London, 1603)(STC 16532). The smaller number of fasts in the reign of James I likely is a result of several factors. First, the evidence listing fasts comes from pre-1604 sources, and Bolton plagiarized Downname in his treatise. Second, James' reign had fewer crises than Elizabeth's which merited fasts. Some special prayers like those in 1611 and 1613 may well have led to widespread fasts though. In 1618-25, James likely avoided national fasts because his foreign policy aimed at staying out of the Thirty-Years War, and such fasts would have brought pressure to intervene.

places in the realm and the diocese of Lincoln. Likewise, the puritan clergy in Ashby in their 1580s petition also argued: “we do think that we have sufficient warrant by the several books, the one set forth for the plague, the other during the troubles of the church straightly commanded by the authority of the Queen’s Majesty.”⁵⁸ Indeed, looking again at Erasmus Cooke, he appears to have been doing much the same. His attempt to use a common practice apparently failed because his fast was simply too far removed from the period of official services, and he did not ask permission first. In a time when services were taking place under such books, authorities likely would have encouraged and approved fasts. Moreover, the cumulative effect of such fasts would have been to make them look like de-facto national fasts to people on the ground. So just counting official national fasts understates the total number of public fasts. Moreover, even the list of fasts above likely understates them, because in other years authorities also appointed special prayers with calls for fasting.

A look at the forms of prayer explains the confusion. In addition to their similarity to forms of prayer for national fasts, those with no separate orders for fasts contained much on fasting. The scripture readings for lessons often included well-known verses on fasting like Joel 1 and 2, Isaiah 58, and others. Also, some listed the homily of fasting, and the homily of repentance (which included much on fasting) to be read when there was no sermon.⁵⁹ Further, the forms of prayer often included statements strongly

⁵⁸ *Historical Manuscripts Commission, Ninth Report, Salisbury*, part 2 (London, 1888), p. 332. Field, *Caveat*, Sig. G2v-G3r. Wiburn, *Checke*, p. 57v. BL, Add MS 27,632, fol. 47r-51r.

⁵⁹ Specifically, the readings were as follows: 1572 (Matthew 6, Acts 9), 1580 (Joel 1 or 2, or Isaiah 58, and homily of repentance), 1586 (Joel 1 or 2, Jonah 3, Isaiah 58 or 59, Zachariah 7, and the homily of fasting, and homily of repentance), 1588 (2 Kings 19, and 2 Chronicles 20:1-30, and the homily of fasting), 1611 (Joel 1). See: William Keating Clay (ed.), *Liturgical Services, Liturgies and Occasional Forms of Prayer Set Forth in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (Cambridge, 1847), p. 540-47, 562-63, 593-94, 608-9. Strype, *Whitgift*, p. 269, 276. Strype, *Annals*, volume 3, part 2, p. 15. *A Forme of Praier to be Used in London, and Elsewhere in this Time of Drought* (London, 1611)(STC 16538).

encouraging fasting. The preface to Archbishop Matthew Parker's 1560 form of prayer for unseasonable weather said the scriptures taught that when God sent judgments to call the people to repentance, that "the godly have been provoked and stirred up to more fervency and diligence in prayer, fasting, and almsdeeds." This line would continue with slight changes in prefaces to forms of prayer for national fasts through the reign of Charles I. From the 1563 national fast, that line in the preface was followed by examples of fasts by David, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Judith, Esther, and Daniel. Also, the 1588 form of prayer, which included no separate order to fast, nonetheless used the preface from the 1563 fast book. Also, the 1586 form of prayer included Joel 2:12, 15-16 in the preface to call for turning to God with fasting.

Further, Archbishop Whitgift writing to his bishops, May 13, 1586 to order observance of the form of prayer claimed that to appease God's wrath and divert judgment he thought it "very meet and convenient that we fall to earnest repentance, prayers, fasting, and other deeds of charity." Writing to his bishops November 30, 1587, Whitgift again ordered public prayers, and argued that because of the Catholic threat that England needed to resort to the "small weapons" of Christians "to prayers, fasting, and other godly exercises." Also, directions in the 1580, 1586, 1587, 1588, 1589, 1596 forms of prayer required preachers and parish clergy in services to "exhort," "move," or "stir up" the people to, and make sure they were "persuaded" or "induced" to, fasting, "heartly repentance," prayer, alms, amendment, and "true humiliation." Further, these orders strictly required these exhortations to be done promptly and with extraordinary diligence.

Finally, forms of prayer with no separate orders for fasting nonetheless could seem to order fasting. The 1563, 1593, and 1603 national fasts came with separate orders

permitting only one moderate meal on Wednesdays. Yet, the 1586, 1587, and 1589 forms of prayer also called for “fasting.” The 1580 orders called for the people to refrain from one meal on Wednesdays and Fridays, and bestow some or all the value of it on the poor. The 1588 orders called the people to “abstinence and moderation in their diet” so they would be more able to relieve the poor, pray, and hear the Word. The 1596 orders mentioned stirring the people up to “abstinence” and “fasting.” Further, it called on people to use “a greater moderation than heretofore in their diet.” On Fridays and other days by law already appointed for fasting days, people were not to have suppers, and they were to abstain altogether on each Wednesday night. This abstinence was to increase ability to relieve the poor and needy. Householders were to have “hospitality” and relieve neighbors. The orders also restricted taverns, inns, and victualling houses.⁶⁰

These gradations of observances made contemporaries unsure whether they were national fasts, or public prayers around which authorities had approved many local fasts. The 1572 form of prayer did not have a separate order for fasting, yet Lord Burghley referred to it as a “national fast.” Henry Holland placed the 1588 observances with those of 1563 and 1593 among “3 or 4 general fasts published by the governors.” But he also noted of the 1588 fast only that “some charge there was for public humiliation” and that in “some few assemblies” God’s people were then humbled. More confusing, he noted the 1588 and 1593 fasts among “private and public fastings and prayers” which had brought blessings on England. Nicolas Bownd claimed that in 1588 England by fasting

⁶⁰ *Certaine Praiers* (1593), Sig. B4v. *Certaine Prayers* (1603), Sig. D4r. Clay (ed.), *Liturgical Services*, p. 479, 489-90, 562-63, 592-93, 608-9. Strype, *Parker*, first pagination, p. 90. Strype, *Whitgift*, p. 276, 490; second pagination, p. 206-7. Cardwell, *Documentary Annals*, volume 2, p. 56-59. Hertfordshire Record Office, MS ASA 5/2, number 54, p. 329-30; number 70, p. 377; number 78, p. 421-22; number 89, p. 457 (St. Albans Archdeaonry Records). Other forms of prayer under Elizabeth and James possibly involved fasting such as those in 1590 and 1613. See: Clay, *Liturgical Services*, p. 632-46. *A Forme of Prayer to be Publicly Used in Churches, During this Unseasonable Weather, and Abundance of Rain* (London, 1613)(STC 16539).

and prayer had “publicly sought unto Him.” He said that there was then “in all places much fasting and prayer.” George Downname, and Robert Bolton plagiarizing him, listed 1563, 1580, 1588, 1596, 1597, and 1603 as “public fasts.”⁶¹

Regardless of their exact nature, bishops strongly advocated for fasts. Archbishop Parker wrote Secretary of State William Cecil July 23, 1563 that he did “much marvel” that there was not yet an order for fasting and prayer throughout the nation. Parker said he had ordered what observances he dared without further authorization. Bishop of London Edmund Grindal was already drawing up a form of common prayer for his own cure before he received orders from Cecil to do so for the national fast. Moreover, reporting on the fast to Cecil August 21, 1563, Grindal noted that the greatest advantage Catholics had over English Protestants was in fasts “which we utterly neglect.” This failing was why in the preface to the orders for the fast he had noted that fasting had been “too much neglected” in England and that the present fast was “for some beginning of redress herein.”⁶²

Archbishop Grindal was again in the forefront in response to the 1580 earthquake, and on April 12, 1580 ordered all parsons, vicars, and curates in the deanery of the arches in London to “exhort” their parishioners to resort to church services on Wednesdays and Fridays to hear “some short exhortation” to repentance in homilies or preaching. Further, the people were “of their own accord without constraint of law” to spare one meal on

⁶¹ Strype, *Annals*, volume 2, part 1, p. 238. Holland, *Fasting*, Sig. A4v, p. 91-2. Bownd, *Fasting*, p. 156-57. G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 54. Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 44.

⁶² BL, Lansdowne 6 (62), fol. 154. BL, Lansdowne 6(63), passim. BL, Lansdowne, 6(68) passim. Strype, *Parker*, first pagination, p. 131-32; second pagination, p. 34-5. Clay (ed.), *Liturgical Services*, p. 489. In his July 23, 1563 letter to Cecil, Archbishop Parker said that on his “private consideration,” he had exhorted the mayor and commonalty in a meeting at the cathedral church “unto prayer, &c.” He had appointed “prayer and preaching” on Sundays in the cathedral church, and the common prayers for times of grief in the parish churches on Mondays and Wednesdays. He did not enjoin the rest of the diocese or province with the like for want of sufficient warrant from the prince or council. He had left the rest of the diocese to their own liberty to follow the city in common prayer or not. (BL, Lansdowne 6(62))

those days to relieve the poor, and in their households at night to say the litany, and psalms and prayers of their choosing. Indeed, when the Council sent Grindal orders for a national response to the earthquake on April 23, 1580, they required the “order of prayer and other exercises” he had appointed in his diocese to be applied to all dioceses.⁶³

Also, Bishop of London John Aylmer advocated an immediate national fast in his April 22, 1580 letter to Burghley. He was disappointed with the Queen’s initial preference to have no “solemn matter” made of the earthquake (meaning a day set apart through the kingdom), but only “serious notice” of it in public devotions. Aylmer told Burghley he also wanted a fast to rebut the common Catholic charge that English Protestants “never fast and seldom pray.” Aylmer had speedily framed prayers for his diocese upon the earthquake, and to move quickly urged Burghley not to order a new form of prayer compiled, but to use an existing one.⁶⁴

The eagerness of Parker, Grindal, and Aylmer for fasts leads one to conclude that many bishops would have readily approved local fasts in times of crisis. Some extant examples are suggestive. In regard to the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre, Bishop of London, Edwin Sandys wrote to Lord Treasurer Burghley September 5, 1572 noting that many had required “a public fast and prayer” to confound the “cruel enemies of God’s Gospel.” While Sandys said he would not consent to it without warrant from the Queen, apparently authorization was forthcoming. The Lord Treasurer wrote September 19, 1572 to a correspondent in France (likely English Ambassador Sir Francis Walsingham)

⁶³ Lambeth Palace, Grindal’s Register, fol. 197r, 198v-199r. On the last of April, Grindal sent forth the “order of prayer and other exercises” on Wednesday and Friday to turn God’s wrath to be used throughout realm. See also: *APC*, xi, p. 450.

⁶⁴ BL, Lansdowne 30 (49), fol. 145. John Strype, *Historical Collections of the Life and Acts of . . . John Aylmer* (London, 1701, reprint New York, 1974), p. 51-2. The puritan-like complaints of Grindal and Aylmer were shared by other Calvinist conformists too. Henry Holland griped fasting was “too much neglected” in England. George Downname grumbled “we have not been so frequent in this exercise as were to be wished.” See: Holland, *Fasting*, Sig. A4r; and G. Downname, *Sanctuarie*, p. 54.

that since England's sins contributed to God's allowing the "persecution of Christ's members," that they had appointed a "national fast."⁶⁵

While eager to have fasts, bishops wanted to ensure they were orderly. In an April 22, 1596 letter, William Redman, Bishop of Norwich, responded positively but cautiously to the petition of a group of godly gentlemen for a "general fast." He commended their "godly and Christian care" for a fast to divert God's wrath now threatening "by danger of the common enemy to His Gospel and our peace." He pledged to agree to their request as soon as he knew it would be "taken in good part" by higher authorities. Accordingly he had written the Archbishop of Canterbury, and indeed, he claimed he intended to do so for a fast before he received their letter. He thought this course best "having found by experience that such extraordinary actions put in execution [by] private authority have not been well taken." In the meantime, the "preachers" were "to continue their exhortations unto repentance and the fruits thereof, whereby the people may not only be drawn to the particular humiliation of themselves in private, but may be prepared to testify the same more effectually in public manner when it shall be thought meet."⁶⁶

Facing a plague outbreak, on August 14, 1603 the mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen of Norwich sent a letter to John Jegon, Bishop of Norwich, asking him to appoint a day of fasting and prayer in three or four places of his choice in the city (i.e. for supra-parish assemblies). They were deferential saying that public fasts were something "which we would not attempt without your lordship's favor and good liking." Yet, they also stressed

⁶⁵ BL, Lansdowne 15 (41), fol. 79. Strype, *Parker*, first pagination, p. 357-59. Strype, *Annals*, volume 2, part 1, p. 238.

⁶⁶ BL, Add MS 38,492 (57), fol. 100. The petitioners were Sir William Springe, knight; Edward Lewkenor, esq.; Robert Jermyn, knight; John Higham, knight; Robert Ashfield, knight; and Thomas Crofte, esq.

that such fasts had been authorized in the past to encourage him: “And for that in former times upon like occasions the same hath been used within this city we hope of your lordship’s furtherance therein.” Jegon replied August 16 that he rejoiced at their “godly zeal and good devotion” to have prayers and fasting, and wished God would increase that desire. But in this letter, and his August 17 letter giving orders to commissaries of the Archdeaconries of Norwich, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Sudbury, Jegon also expressed concerns that huge assemblies would spread the plague, and therefore refused to allow them in the larger towns in the diocese. Nonetheless, he affirmed that the plague was likely to increase unless the people turned to God “by fasting, prayers and almsdeeds.” He therefore ordered the ministers to be “extraordinary careful and painful” in “exciting” the people to repent. He ordered the “ordinary days of fasting and public prayers” to be “most carefully observed” in the whole diocese. On Wednesdays, Fridays, and other days of “public assemblies” services were to include the prayers set out by authority for times of plague and other fit prayers, as well as psalms 50, 90, and 91 before or after the litany.⁶⁷ In short, Jegon, like Bishop Lake, was putting new wine into old wineskins by making the ordinary fast days de-facto extraordinary public fasts. Arguably, he was allowing the godly to have low-key fasts in their parish churches, while he waited to see what the king and archbishop would order.

Bishops’ orders for special observances in times of crisis also suggest that public fasts occurred, authorities licensed them, and that puritans did test the limits of the law.

Archbishop Whitgift wrote to Bishop Aylmer July 10, 1588 that no “order of fasting”

⁶⁷ Thomas Barton (transcribed), *The Registrum Vagum of Anthony Harrison*, part 1 (Norfolk Record Society, 1963), volume 32, p. 36-9. Jegon’s orders were soon enhanced as on August 22, he received a letter from Richard Bancroft, Bishop of London, dated August 11 that the king had ordered public fasts on Wednesdays and set out a form of prayer.

was to be used other than such as Aylmer would prescribe in accordance with “the laws and orders of the church established.” Whitgift noted that to ensure fasts were so performed, he had had the form of public prayer used on like occasions in the past re-printed with some additions, and that Aylmer could send for them for his diocese if he wished. Aylmer, in passing on Whitgift’s orders in a July 12 letter forbid using “any fasts not allowed by the book of common prayer.” Further, he forbid allowing people to go from their own parish church to hear preachers in other places, because the Archbishop and Queen’s commissioners had forbidden this the last Lent due to its fomenting “a great contempt amongst the ministry” in the past. Finally, in December 27, 1596 Whitgift commanded his bishops to see to it that his orders for fasting and prayer were observed in every parish “without calling, or suffering persons of other parishes to assemble themselves, as some heretofore offensively of their own heads have attempted, under color of general fasting.”⁶⁸

Not only puritans, but conformists as well, took official orders as sufficient license to launch all day multiple sermon fasts. To Whitgift’s shock, Andrew Perne, Master of Peterhouse at Cambridge University and a conformist (and crypto-Catholic), had responded to his 1587 letters ordering observances by undertaking such a fast in Cambridge. In a December 19, 1587 letter flush with anger and a deep sense of personal betrayal, Whitgift chastised Perne for following the example of the “schismatical fast” of those who were “contentious” in the church, and doing so without the proper warrant or authority of any superior. Whitgift asserted that for every particular congregation to do as it listed was unlawful, and that Perne had acted as if he had had “both royal and

⁶⁸ Hertfordshire Record Office, MS ASA 5/2, number 78 (St. Albans Archdeaconry Records), p. 421-22. Strype, *Whitgift*, p. 276, 490; second pagination p. 206-7. Cardwell, *Documentary Annals*, volume 2, p. 56-9.

archiepiscopal jurisdiction.” He affirmed that the manner and form of Perne’s fast which had had “three sermons successively” was unheard of, and had been forbidden by authority. By contrast, he claimed his letters required prayers and “godly exercises” in accordance with the custom of the Church of England and the laws of the land. The manner of the fast Perne had moved was “glorious, plausible, and hypocritical.” Whitgift lamented: “I would least have thought that you could have been drawn to consent to such innovations, much less to have been a provoker thereof.” Yet, Whitgift’s letter shows that Perne was not alone either. Whitgift noted that the Vice-chancellor of Oxford “with the rest there” had the “same conceit” as Perne for such a fast, but unlike Perne they had sought his permission first. Whitgift said he had stayed that “disorder,” and told the Vice-Chancellor “not to have above one sermon, and that in the forenoon only, and not to continue any assembly for any longer time than is usual.”⁶⁹ While Whitgift was resistant, the issue was not fasts as he had often approved them, but ones with excessive preaching and that were overly long.

Whitgift was sensitive on the issue in universities due to his experience c.1567-72 when Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. Thomas Cartwright, a puritan fellow (and Whitgift’s future nemesis) had recently returned from Geneva inspired by its practices. Cartwright kept a fast in the college chapel while Whitgift was absent and away from home. Cartwright and “some of his adherents” made three sermons on a single Sunday. In them, they “vehemently inveighed” against the surplice and other ceremonies of the church. They were so effective that all but three scholars in the college at evening prayer in the chapel cast off their surplices (“as an abominable relic of superstition”) contrary to

⁶⁹ Lambeth Palace Library, MS 3470, fol. 89. For more on Whitgift’s prior relationship with Perne that led to his reaction, see: Sir George Paule, *The Life of . . . John Whitgift* (London, 1612), p. 3-4 (STC 19484). Strype, *Whitgift*, p. 4-6.

the statutes of the house. By such means Cartwright “drew after him a great number of disciples, and followers.”⁷⁰

Yet, the universities were not the only problem. On June 4, 1589 Whitgift was writing again, this time to Martin Calthorp, the Lord Mayor of London. The mayor clearly had petitioned Whitgift for something that whiffed of a puritan style fast. Coyly, Whitgift replied:

“I understand not what kind of exercise of prayer and fasting your lo[rds]hip meaneth in your letters. And therefore I can not, until I be more particularly informed thereof give my consent thereunto. There is by lawful authority one uniform order thorough this whole province appointed to be observed for that action. I think it not agreeable to the state of a well governed church to swerve therefrom.”

Apparently, the fasts of the foreign churches in London had impressed the mayor, for Whitgift noted: “The strangers are no examples to us, but they ought to take example of us. Their government is voluntary and popular so is not ours.” Whitgift advised that the mayor should, like his predecessor, only act with direction from him as his ordinary, and that he had done well to forbear “innovating” anything.⁷¹

Clearly, Whitgift was fighting an uphill battle. Moreover, as we saw in a previous chapter, on May 2, 1581 the Archbishop of York, Edwin Sandys had to write to the Bishop of Chester, William Chaderton to chide him for allowing radical puritan led public fasts.⁷² Yet, as he told Chaderton, even Sandys approved of fasts when he thought an occasion merited them and when an appropriate authority sanctioned them. Moreover, bishops like him were ready to permit fasts if certain restrictions were met. Many

⁷⁰ David Lloyd, *Memoires* (London, 1668), p. 6 (Wing L2642); Paule, *Whitgift*, p. 9; Francis Fullwood, *The Church-History of Britain . . . endeavoured by Thomas Fuller* (London, 1655), p. 140 in “The History of the University of Cambridge” (Wing F2416).

⁷¹ Lambeth Palace Library, MS 3470, fol. 116.

⁷² Francis Peck, *Desiderata Curiosa* (London, 1732), volume 1, book 3, p. 29.

moderate puritans would have tried to respect those restrictions while others would have strayed somewhat.

Chaderton was not an exception either. One contemporary chronicle noted that when plague hit Chester in 1608, that “Bishop Lloyd with the mayor” caused “a worthy and a rare fast.” This fast was a very advanced Protestant one in that they ordered it “for the morning until evening,” and kept it “as a sabbath with prayer and preaching [sic] of the Word.” Moreover, there were four “preachers that then preached” including Hugh Burches, rector of Thurstaston and deputy of the chancellor, the puritan Nicholas Byfield of St. Peter’s (Chester), Robert Whitle, and “the bishop himself.”⁷³ Had he been alive, Archbishop Whitgift would have been displeased to say the least, yet the Archbishop of York at this time was the puritan friendly, zealous preacher Tobie Matthew.

Matthew, as Bishop of Durham diligently preached from September through December 1603 on Wednesdays at public fasts for the plague in various towns. As frequently with one as with two other preachers, Matthew and his cohorts also often preached on the same text like in a prophesying. Moreover, Matthew not only preached on the national public fasts, but at local fasts which he likely authorized. On Wednesday, October 24, 1593 at York Cathedral he preached at “the extraordinary exercise for the plague; coram com. Huntington. com. Shrewsbury &c.” On Sunday, February 6, 1597 he preached at a fast at Berwick. Before the beginning of the 1603 national fast, on Sunday, September 18, 1603 he preached at a fast at Bernard Castle. In 1597, he preached at fasts on Friday, June 24 on the feast of John the Baptist at Sedgfield, and on Wednesday, June

⁷³ ‘The Annals of Chester’ in *The Cheshire Sheaf*, third series, volume 9 (Chester, 1913), p. 42-3. For the dating of the chronicle to c.1610-22, see: *The Cheshire Sheaf*, third series, volume 8, (Chester, 1911), p. 79.

29 on the feast of St. Peter at Darlington.⁷⁴ This bishop was not shy about fasts, even on feast days.

One thing English bishops did not do was to order fasts throughout their diocese on their own authority. Charles and Laud squelched the practice in the Irish and Scottish churches. Laud wrote to John Spottiswood, Archbishop of St. Andrews, December 1, 1635 to convey the king's (and his) anger that Adam Ballanden, Bishop of Aberdeen, had "given way to and allowed" a public fast throughout his diocese on the Lord's Day. The king's direct command was that Spottiswood and Patrick Lindsay, Archbishop of Glasgow, along with all bishops in their respective provinces ensure:

"that no man presume to command, or suffer, any fast to be upon that day, or, indeed, any public fast upon any other day, without the special leave and command of the king, to whose power it belongs, and not to them."

Laud referenced the forthcoming canons which included one against "this unworthy custom."⁷⁵ In those 1636 canons for the Church of Scotland, the 14th chapter regarded "public fasts." None in holy orders without the license and direction of his ordinary was to appoint or keep fasts or be present at them.⁷⁶ Clearly, Charles saw himself as the ordinary to Scottish bishops.

Likewise, on November 20, 1636 Laud wrote to Lord Viscount Wentworth about a complaint against Archibald Hamilton, Archbishop of Cashells, who "upon his own authority" commanded a fast once a week for eight weeks together throughout his province. "This his Majesty takes extremely ill, the power only belonging to himself, and

⁷⁴ York Minster Library, MS Add 18, "The Diary and Journal of His Grace Toby Matthew Lord Archbishop of York," p. 39, 50, 52, 71-3.

⁷⁵ William Laud, *The Works of . . . William Laud* (Oxford, 1847-1860), volume 6, p. 443-44. Laud said the king was "settling that church against all things that were defective in it, and against the continuance of all unwarrantable customs unknown to, or opposed by the ancient Church of Christ." He had to act against the bishop as "others may follow his example, if this pass without a check." (ibid., p. 443)

⁷⁶ Laud, *Works*, volume 5, p. 599.

not to any bishop whatsoever.” Lord Wentworth was given authority to discipline the Archbishop and did so.⁷⁷

Some bishops even supported fasts for those thought to be possessed or tortured by the Devil. Bishop John Parkhurst wrote to Heinrich Bullinger June 29, 1574 that the 13-14 year old son of an alderman of Norwich had been incredibly tormented for weeks by the Devil. Parkhurst bragged that he had ordered public prayers in the city and a fast proclaimed until evening, and that as a result the Devil was overthrown.⁷⁸ Bishop Joseph Hall thought the puritan minister and exorcist John Darrell “a godly and zealous preacher.” Hall had witnessed Darrell use fasting and prayer to eject “evil spirits” in Nottingham and Lancashire in 1596 and 1597. When traveling on the continent in 1605, Hall even rebutted the taunt of a Catholic divine that the Church of England had produced no miracles by claiming “that in our Church we had manifest proofs of the ejection of devils by fasting and prayer.”⁷⁹

One richly documented case c.1601 provides important insights to how bishops balanced their godly inclinations with their concerns for order. Richard Vaughan, Bishop of Chester, and a future bishop of London, along with three high commissioners for causes ecclesiastical, granted license for a “private fast” for Thomas Harrison, an afflicted 11-12 year old boy of Northwich. In their authorizing letter, the bishop and commissioners called for prayer to be made publicly by the minister of the parish (and other preachers going to the parish) before the local congregation as often as it

⁷⁷ Laud, *Works*, volume 7, p. 298-99, 305, 328. The king was “resolved to reduce that kingdom to order in all things.” He wanted action against the archbishop “so both himself and others of his place and condition, may have warning not to meddle with the king’s prerogative without his leave.” (ibid., p. 298)

⁷⁸ R.A. Houlbrooke (ed.), *The Letter Book of John Parkhurst* (Norfolk Record Society, 1974-75), volume XLIII, p. 86-7.

⁷⁹ P. Wynter (ed.), *Works of . . . Joseph Hall* (Oxford, 1863), vol. 1, p. xxxi; vol. viii, p. 209-10.

assembled. Also, they named seven “preachers” to go to the boy “by turns” as they had leisure to use “private prayer and fasting” for his ease, comfort, and deliverance. Those ministers listed and none other were to go to the child. Significantly, these preachers included moderate puritans like Thomas Pierson. Further, the bishop and commissioners required the preachers “to abstain from all solemn meetings, because the calamity is particular, and the authority of the allowing and prescribing such meetings rests neither in them nor in us, but in our superiors, whose pleasure it is fit we should expect.” These restrictions were part of the bishop’s attempt to limit the sensation that had swept the county at the time, and was remembered as major event four decades later. The bishop also required the parents to keep the number of visitors to their house “very small,” and to limit them to those “in authority” and “of special regard and known discretion.” The bishop’s orders were not exactly followed, however, because the puritan Cheshire notable John Bruen recorded that along with two of the preachers (Harvey and Pierson), he and “some 20 or 30 more” had prayed and fasted together for the boy.⁸⁰

In sum, the bishop shared the godly desire to heal the boy by spiritual medicine, but he also wanted to preserve good order. He allowed the godly a fast, but with restrictions to avoid a public spectacle. For puritans, the proselytizing benefits of this incident were no doubt disappointingly limited, but this was a far cry from being prosecuted for what they saw as serving God. For conformists, the bishop contained the excesses of the event to maintain order. While the godly bent the bishop’s orders, their

80 John Darrell, *The Replie of J. Darrell to the Answer of J. Deacon and J. Walker Concerning Demoniakes* ([England?], 1602), p. 21-2 (STC 6284). John Deacon and John Walker, *A Summarie Answere to Al the Material Points in Any of Master Darel his Bookes* (London, 1601), p. 71-6 (STC 6440). William Hinde, *A Faithful Remonstrance of the Holy Life and Happy Death, of John Bruen* (London, 1641), p. 148-52 (Wing H2063). The commissioners were David Yale (Chancel), Griffith Vaughan, and Hugh Burghes (or Burches). The seven preachers were masters’ Garrad (or Gerrard), Massey, Coller, Harvey, Eaton, Pierson, and Brownhill. According to Harvey, the divines present “generally” held the boy possessed. The bishop was unsure if the causes were natural or diabolical, but he doubted possession.

offense was relatively minor as the fast apparently took place in the house and not in public. So while he surely pleased neither extreme, Vaughan kept conflict to a minimum, and allowed puritans to live out their self-understanding within bounds.

While some bishops greatly indulged puritans, and others allowed fasts consistent with official ones, the churchmanship of bishops may have been irrelevant in many cases. Untold numbers of public fasts took place because many godly local authorities thought they had both the duty and the lawful authority to order them. Archdeacon Squire of Leicester wrote to the puritan minister Anthony Gilby of Ashby de la Zouch on September 30, 1579. With “sin abounding in all places” and “the cruel assaults of our great enemies” he saw a need for prayers so he appointed a communion on the next Sunday, and a fast as “preparation” on Friday. He wanted Gilby to help in the service, and offered his help to Gilby in the future for the like. James Gosnell also wrote to Gilby about Dr. Squire’s “preparation” for the communion saying it was indeed “a public fast openly published.” He went on: “You know the great need that we have now of them in England, and the good that may arise by their example.” Gosnell pleaded for his participation saying that otherwise “we shall be but two speakers” (apparently himself and Squire). He promised to do the same for Gilby in the future in “any the like exercise.”⁸¹

On August 9, 1572 the mayor and jurats of Rye ordered a “general holy and solemn fast” for the next Monday and to continue every Monday until the “unseasonable weather” ended. Such weather was “a token of God’s great displeasure” for their “loose life” and neglect of duties to serve Him. The fast was advanced in that it was an all day service in which the people were to go to church “both to call upon God by prayer and

⁸¹ Cambridge University Library, MS Mm.1.43, p. 436-37.

also for hearing His Word both forenoon and afternoon.”⁸² In 1587, “unseasonable weather” and “other troubles” in the realm moved the mayor of Chester to proclaim a “public fast” to be kept on Wednesday and Friday. This fast was also long in that it was to be from 8 to 11 am in the morning, and from 1 to 5 pm at night.⁸³ In 1594, “the clergy, with the consent of the bailiffs and assistants” appointed Sunday, August 11 as a “general fast” in Shrewsbury to call on God for “seasonable weather” to bring in the harvest. Most inhabitants attended it at St. Mary’s Church where they prayed, lamented their sins, and called on God. Preaching was again stressed as the “godly sermons” at the fast were lauded as comforting hearers. Also, the fast was long in that it continued from 8 am to 4 pm, and the people “never came out of the church until then.”⁸⁴ Clearly, godly fasts could take place at the local level without the authorization of bishops.

Such local fasts could easily slide under the radar, or bishops may have turned a blind eye to them because they were for uncontroversial reasons, orderly, and authorized by magistrates. Some authorities though could overlook more controversial unauthorized fasts, or puritan activities in official fasts, when they aligned with English Protestant nationalism, and so-called “country” ideology. That ideology was marked by virulent anti-Catholicism, and a sense that the country was thrifty, honest, virtuous, Protestant, and acted for the common good, while the court was extravagant, corrupt, wicked, soft on Catholics, and acted for private interests. These ideologies were particularly evident in the period 1618-25. James I had refused to intervene in the Thirty-Years War to aid

⁸² *Historical Manuscripts Commission, Thirteenth Report, Appendix, Part IV* (MS of Rye and Hereford Corporations) (London, 1892), p. 21.

⁸³ ‘The Annals of Chester’ in *The Cheshire Sheaf*, third series, volume 9 (Chester, 1913), p. 14.

⁸⁴ H. Owen and J.B. Blakeway, *A History of Shrewsbury* (London, 1825), p. 398. T. Phillips, *The History and Antiquities of Shrewsbury* (Shrewsbury, 1779), p. 210. This account is reprinted in these books from a contemporary chronicle of Shrewsbury continuing up to 1603.

Protestants, and he attempted a Spanish marriage for Prince Charles to bring peace. Also, James' new favorite the Duke of Buckingham, and the rising expenses of the state due to economic and military change led to the impression of waste at court. The memorandum book of William Davenport of Bramhall Hall, Cheshire (1586-1655) is a rich source for such views because he shared a godly critique of the court, but was not a puritan and was neutral in the Civil War. Much of the manuscript consists of transcriptions of materials circulating in the provinces 1613-50 which had strong "country" views.⁸⁵

One suggestive poem c.1623 lauded Elizabeth I and implicitly criticized James and the court. The poem is relevant because it calls for fasts and the reasons it gives for them are consistent with narratives common in puritan fasts. The poem in some ways is very un-puritan though, in that it portrays "blessed St. Elizabeth" in heaven like a Catholic patron saint. She hears her mortal subjects' "petition," favorably delivers their prayers and supplications to God in hopes of mercy for the sinful nation, and conveys messages from God to England. In other ways, the narrative was godly. For the nation's miseries to end and God's blessings return, Elizabeth advised that England must leave its sins. She claimed her reign had left England wealthy, strong, and secure, but this reality led to "pride," and "ingratitude" to God for blessings now "unthankfully forgotten." England needed to be "humbled." Just as those who had "surfeit" needed to "strictly fast" to regain health, so did England because it had taken "surfeit" of Elizabeth's "happy reign" and cast away God. During Elizabeth's rule, royal finances were managed for the common benefit of all, and were ample for defense and aid to friendly nations. Yet, now finances were wasted on favorites and friends producing deficits and putting the nation in

⁸⁵ J.S. Morrill, "William Davenport and the 'Silent Majority' of Early Stuart England," *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, 1975 58: 115-27.

peril. The Devil by “craft and policy” had done more than all the world by force could do beforehand to defeat England. The poem also placed this tale in a Foxeian historical narrative. Elizabeth purportedly found England mired in “ingorance and superstition,” and its Protestants “a harried, scattered flock.” Nonetheless, she built it into a Protestant nation. Elizabeth even gave a prophecy from God warning of war, plague, fire, and famine. It also gave the standard godly fear of God leaving England:

“the Gospells sunne, shall loose His gloriouse lighte,
and ignorance as blacke, as darkest nighte,
shall spread her sable winges, aboute this ile
and Babylons proude whore once more defyle
Albyons white clyffes. . .”

The necessary response was evident. There was “an execrable thing” that lay hidden, and until it was brought to light, and “Achan” punished England would continue “to be put to flight before the men of Aim.” Elizabeth asked “who stands up alas to stop the gap” where God’s wrath comes in, and advised the people of England to “pray, repent, and fast.”⁸⁶ Clearly, puritan fasts reached far beyond puritan ranks on some issues.

The works of Thomas Scott which called for similar fasts, also showed the same fusion of godly and “country” ideology, of the godliness of a Christian with the civic virtues of a good citizen. In particular, Scott loved to contrast the United Provinces with England. He lauded the Dutch as a diligent, hard working, frugal, sober, and temperate people who worked for the common good to the benefit of the commonwealth and Church. He chastised the English as a slothful, idle, prodigal, drunken, and gluttonous people who worked for private interest to the harm of the commonwealth and Church.

⁸⁶ Cheshire Record Office, CR 63/2/19, fol. 33r-34v. In many other letters, speeches, and poems there is much against the Spanish Match, toleration of Catholics, Buckingham, and Arminians. See: *Ibid.*, fol. 24-5, 27r, 27v-28, 30v-33r, 35r, 36-38r, 40r, 43v-58, 60r-61r, 63v-67v, 69r-71r, 76v-77r, 78r, 81r.

While the Dutch frequently fasted, the English frequently feasted and would not even obey the magistrate for “ordinary and civil fasts for politicke respects.”

The English also compared unfavorably with respect to “extraordinary and religious fasts.” God blessed Dutch endeavors because of their frequent public fasts, but England was negligent to fast because it was asleep in the security of its long possession of peace and plenty. In highly emotive terms, Scott noted missed occasions for fasts such as the death of Prince Henry “of excellent hope.” He told how James’ daughter Princess Elizabeth (who had married Frederick, Elector Palatine) had fled in the dead of winter from Catholic forces while “great with child,” and had endured terrible suffering while being “hunted.” Drawing on Apocalyptic narrative, he likened her to “that woman in the Revelation, pursued by the Dragon.” The Palatinate had been spoiled, its chief city (which had been a “sanctuary for the persecuted members of Christ” and a “seminary of piety”) had fallen, and all the rest of it was besieged without hope of recovery. The Protestant Church among the Grisons in Switzerland and in France was “oppressed and persecuted.” Scott lamented:

“and yet for all this have not fasted a meal, shed a tear, let fly a public sigh, or general groan, abated any of our pomp or pride, for these afflictions and humiliation; but rather, like corrupted flesh, swel’d higher for these strokes; or as senseless limbs, have not felt the cauterizing and cutting off our own members. Nay, 88 and the Powder-plot are forgotten, or we have forgotten to give thanks for those deliverances.”

Like puritans, Scott wanted public fasts that would advance a Protestant nationalist agenda. Specifically, he wanted them to support an Anglo-Dutch alliance, and a broader alliance of Reformed churches, against Spain and the supposed papal Antichrist. The sharp factional lines such fasts would draw placed puritans squarely alongside Calvinist bishops like Joseph Hall and George Abbot. In separate prefaces, Scott contrasted “the true-hearted British Readers” with “the half-hearted English-Spanish Reader.” Scott

denied his position stemmed from a “puritanical humor.” Protestants were simply the best and truest subjects to a Protestant king, while Catholic subjects were plotting traitors. An anti-Spanish policy was loyal too because Spain sided with Satan in the apocalyptic battle to oppose the Gospel, and persecute “true Christians.”⁸⁷

Again, by standing on issues which had a resonance far beyond their ranks, puritans could find themselves with much broader than normal support. For example, Scott also wrote in great fear of stunning Protestant defeats on the continent, of Prince Charles’ trip to Spain, and the Spanish Match. Across the nation, there would have been much sympathy with Alexander Leighton’s sentiments when among the reasons for public fasts before a hoped for entry into the war, he warned James I: “If you desire to present yourself to God, as a member of His unspotted spouse in Christ, be not unequally yoked; away with that Lincie-wolsie match: (with reverence be it spoken) it is a beastly, greasy, and a lowsie-wearing, unbecfitting your grace.” Robert Bolton’s sentiments would have been equally supported when he claimed that among the “marvelous things” fasts had brought was “the safe return of Prince Charles from Spain.”⁸⁸ Many authorities were likely reluctant to prosecute such fasts. For example, Thomas Hooker, apparently during the 1625 public fasts took issue with Charles’ marriage to a Catholic. Cotton Mather recounted the incident:

“when the judges were in their circuit, present at Chelmsford, on a fast kept throughout the nation, Mr. Hooker then, in the presence of the judges, and before a vast congregation, declared freely the sins of England, and the plagues that would come for such sins; and in his prayer he besought the God of heaven, to set on the heart of the king,

⁸⁷ Thomas Scott, *The Beligcke Pismire: Stinging the Slothful Sleeper and Awakening the Diligent to Fast, Watch, Pray, and Work Out Their Own Temporal and Eternal Salvation with Fear and Trembling* (London, 1622), p. 1-4, 12-14, 22-36, 39-40, 49-50, 54-63, 66-7, 76-85, 88-99; Sig. A2r, A3v, A4r-aa1v (STC 22069a).

⁸⁸ Thomas Scott, *Vox Dei* (n.p., n.d.), p. 58-73 in *The Works of . . . Thomas Scot* (Utrick, 1624)(STC 22064). Alexander Leighton, *Speculum Belli Sacri, Or the Lookinglasse of the Holy War* (NP, 1624), p. 194 (STC 15432). Bolton, *Humiliation*, p. 36.

what his own mouth had spoken, in the second chapter of Malachi, and the eleventh and twelfth verses, (in his prayer he so distinctly quoted it!) *An abomination is committed, Judah hath married the daughter of a strange God, the Lord will cut off the man that doth this*. Though the judges turned unto the place thus quoted, yet Mr. Hooker came into no trouble; but it was long before the kingdom did.”⁸⁹

As shall see in a later chapter, Bishop John Williams could sanction and ignore puritan fasts which ostensibly raised money for continental Protestants.

Moreover, while authorities could be sympathetic with the motives for some puritan fasts, the official extraordinary fasts also shared much content with puritan ones. Official prayers and homilies were filled with Foxeian historical themes, anti-Catholicism, the identification of the pope as Anti-Christ, Old Testament providentialism, the belief that England was a nation in covenant with God, and a strong emphasis on preaching. Crucially, these themes fused together in a narrative of England as the most blessed yet most sinful nation, such that God might forsake it. This narrative was central to puritan fasts, and helped unite them with Calvinist conformists in a common English Protestant self-understanding.

Indeed, many lines in common prayers became puritan favorites and emblems for them of the Church of England as a true church. The 1563 form of prayer Bishop of London Edmund Grindal produced noted among God’s blessings was that He “hast delivered us from all horrible and execrable idolatry, wherein we were utterly drowned, and hast brought us into the most clear and comfortable light of thy blessed Word, by the which we are taught how to serve and honor thee, and how to live orderly with our neighbors in truth and verity.” Further, because the 1563 form of prayer was the basis for many subsequent ones, this line also appeared in the 1593 and 1603 fast books as well.

⁸⁹ Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (Hartford, 1820), volume 1, p. 313.

Also, Grindal showed his advanced Protestantism in that he borrowed from prayers in John Knox's *Book of Common Order*, and this passage was among the borrowings.⁹⁰

Also, the homily on the justice of God which appeared in the 1563 form of prayer was a veritable puritan fast sermon. Alexander Nowell, Dean of St. Paul's, made the homily at Grindal's request, and it further developed the English Protestant historical narrative. Nowell recounted the Old Testament narrative of Israel's covenant relationship with God from Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. While God sent prophets to call to the Jews to repent when they broke the covenant, they remained "stiff-necked and rebellious." God then sent famine, war, and pestilence to make the Jews repent, but they grew worse under "rod and correction." At last, God destroyed Israel and the temple, and sent the people into captivity. Nowell then argued that because God was immutable he had done the same with the Christians of Asia, Africa, and Greece. Those people continued in sin despite the "prophets" they had in many great Church Fathers. God thus gave them over to their enemies to become captives and slaves, and many lost the Gospel to Islam. Again noting that God was immutable, he claimed the same was happening in England. God had sent "prophets and preachers" who preached "God's holy Word" to call the nation to repentance. God had sent plague, war, famine, fire, and the Marian exile to bring England to repentance. Yet, despite the warnings of scriptures "preached unto us in so many sermons," there was little improvement. Nowell concluded: "unless we now at the last repent, I see not what time is left for repentance."⁹¹

⁹⁰ Clay (ed.), *Liturgical Services*, p. 484. *Certaine Praiers* (1593), Sig. A4v. *Certaine Prayers* (1603), Sig. B1v. David Laing (ed.), *The Works of John Knox* (Edinburgh, 1864), p. 305.

⁹¹ Clay (ed.), *Liturgical Services*, p. 491-94. BL, Lansdowne 6 (63). Strype, *Parker*, first pagination, p. 131-32; second pagination, p. 34-5. These themes were not only recounted in public congregations. The 1563 form of prayer also included a meditation for householders. It noted: "Did not we, through our wicked lives, wretchedly lose the Ark of thy holy Word and the true ministration of thy sacraments not many years ago, which the popish Philistines took from us? And now, when thou through thy plagues

In *A Godly Admonition* which was published as a homily with the 1580 form of prayer, this historical narrative was expanded to make use of the recent earthquake. It noted that before the destruction of Jerusalem and captivity, and in addition to the prophets' warnings, there were "signs, tokens, and wonders." Likewise, many "tokens" occurred before the Danes and William the Conqueror displaced the Britons, whom God judged for "neglecting of God's Word preached and planted many hundred years among them." God now threatened England for its "contempt" of religion, and "security and sound sleeping in sin." Considering England's acts from the "restitution of the Gospel" to the present, and God's ordinary dealing "where His truth hath been planted, and groweth to be condemned," there was cause to see a message in the earthquake. Sounding like a puritan, the author then delved further into self-examination to weave this self-understanding creating narrative: "Let us enter into ourselves, and examine our time past." In the "sharp trial" of Queen Mary's reign, English Protestants had vowed obedience to God if He would deliver them from "the bondage of the Romish Antichrist into the liberty of the Gospel of His son Jesus Christ." God had done so and blessed England with peace and plenty, "a golden world above all the residue of our neighbors bordering round about us." Most notably: "The word of truth hath been preached unto us early and late without let or disturbance." Nonetheless, England had sinned in its prosperity, and had no reformation of manners. The author then used that favorite puritan Bible verse Matthew 3:10 to argue "that every tree which beareth not good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire." And he stressed moreover that the "axe is laid to the root of the tree." England had to repent and amend "lest. . .our candlestick be removed,

laid upon them hast miraculously sent it us again: see how bold we be with the Bethsamites unreverently to receive it." England still sinned, condemned holy ordinances, lacked reformation of manners, and was in "careless security." See: Clay (ed.), *Liturgical Services*, p. 505.

our light quenched, Christ's Gospel taken from us, and we for our unthankfulness be cast out with our children into utter darkness."⁹² The author was even so bold as to note the lack of "orderly discipline" as a cause why many fell back to "papisty" or ran into "godless atheism."⁹³

Neither can these themes in common prayers and homilies for official fast days be attributed only to forward bishops like Grindal. Bishop John Aylmer's 1585 prayers for common and household use in regard to unseasonable weather, fears of foreign enemies, and plots against Elizabeth show them too. Like others, Aylmer claimed that God had blessed England more than other nations. Most importantly, God "beheldest our miserable captivity both of body and soul under Antichrist, and didst consider our calamity in the late days of persecution, when the bodies of the saints were burned in our streets, and didst in a moment turn our mourning into mirth. . ." He went on that God "didst also purge thy sanctuary, and church from all the abominations and idolatry of Antichrist, and hast placed thy tabernacle, and thy glorious seat and rest among us, and hast made us an holy people unto thy self." While God blessed England with peace and good harvests, the nation had continued in sin, and there was no reformation of manners. He worried God would send "heathen and strange nations" to possess England.⁹⁴

Archbishop Whitgift was no different. In the preface to his 1586 order for public prayers, he noted God had blessed England above other nations. He claimed: "when we were in thralldom and captivity under the tyranny of Rome, and carried away with the

⁹² Clay (ed.), *Liturgical Services*, p. 567-75. Strype, *Annals*, volume 2, part 2, p. 396-97, 401, 406. The 1580 "Admonition" also was published separately by the Queen's printer under the title "A Discourse, Containing Many Wonderful Examples of God's Indignation, Poured forth Upon Divers People For Their Intolerable Sins."

⁹³ Clay (ed.), *Liturgical Services*, p. 574.

⁹⁴ *A Necessarie and Godly Prayer Appointed by the Right Reverend Father in God, John, Bishop of London to be Used Throughout All His Diocese Upon Sundays and Fridays, for the Turning Away of God's Wrath* (London, 1585). Strype, *Aylmer*, p. 80.

false worshipping of God, He, by our gracious sovereign, delivered us: He planted the elect and chosen vine of His Gospel among us, by law and authority.” Also, by providence God had protected the Queen and England from enemies and conspiracies. Yet, while God looked for “fruits” in the “vineyard” He had planted, England only brought forth “sour and unsavory grapes.” England showed “contempt of His Word” and dishonored the “profession of the Gospel.” Whitgift cited Jeremiah 7:13 that God might forsake them and not hear their prayers. In accord with Isaiah 55, England had to seek the Lord while He could be found.⁹⁵

Nor were these examples isolated in the liturgies. These themes were pervasive. The 1563, 1572, 1580, 1585, 1586, 1588, 1590, 1593, and 1603 prayers variously noted God’s “great mercies,” “wonderful and great benefits,” “manifold benefits,” “many and singular special benefits,” and “exceeding benefits and blessings” to England while other nations were afflicted. These blessings included the “Gospel,” peace and plenty, and “miraculously” preserving the Queen from danger and conspiracies. Yet, England was “unthankful” in “receiving of thy holy Word,” and showed “contempt of thy Word.” England had “abused” these benefits with “manifold sins,” and was “most unmindful” of God in prosperity, and lacked reformation of manners. Further, orders often stressed that when a “preacher” was available, he should expound on this theme in his sermon.⁹⁶ Again, even Archbishop Whitgift said the same. In his May 13, 1586 letters ordering special observances, he began with a long passage on this narrative, and noted among the

⁹⁵ Clay (ed.), *Liturgical Services*, p. 591-93.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 483-86, 544, 546, 567, 591, 593, 613, 615, 618, 636, 640-41, 644-45. *Certaine Praiers* (1593), Sig. A4v. *Certaine Prayers* (1603), Sig. B1v. *A Necessarie and Godly Prayer* (1585).

“manifold benefits” God gave England was first and foremost “the true preaching of His Word.”⁹⁷

Generally, the prayers frequently stressed “preachers,” “ministers of His Word,” the “ministry of thy Word,” and “preaching” of the “Word” and “Gospel” as the key to repentance, salvation and new life. They called for God to advance the “Gospel” and nations and rulers who supported it.⁹⁸ The idea of England being in covenant with God, and of covenant “promises” of deliverance upon repentance was common, and relevant scriptures often cited like Isaiah 65:24, Hosea 6:1, Deuteronomy 4:29-31 and 30:1-3, Psalm 50:15 and 86:7, Jeremiah 18:8 and 29:12-14, and Joel 2:12-14.⁹⁹ The scripture readings for lessons in services and meditations for householders also were filled with Old Testament examples of providential judgment for breach of covenant, prophets calling Israel to repentance, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian Captivity. They included Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, 1 Kings 8, 2 Kings 24, 2 Samuel 24, Jeremiah 18 and 22, 2 Chronicles 34, Isaiah 1, Ezekial 18-19, Daniel 9, Jeremiah 10, Joel 2, and Jonah 2-3.¹⁰⁰

The stress on preaching in the official prayers and homilies for fasts was reflected in practice. The orders for services in 1563 and 1580 included calls for a sermon, with reading homilies mentioned only as a less preferable course when no preacher was available. The 1563 orders went so far as to allow a preacher to omit one of the lessons,

⁹⁷ Hertfordshire Record Office, MS ASA 5/2, number 54, p. 329-30 (St. Albans Archdeaconry Records).

⁹⁸ *Certaine Praiers* (1593), Sig. B2v, B3v. *Certaine Prayers* (1603), Sig. B3r-v. Clay (ed.), *Liturgical Services*, p. 486-87, 564, 571, 576-78, 637, 645-46.

⁹⁹ Clay (ed.), *Liturgical Services*, p. 482-89, 494-99, 576, 609-10, 612-13, 633, 636, 638, 640. *Certaine Praiers* (1593), Sig. A3r, A4r-B3r, B4r. *Certaine Prayers* (1603), Sig. A4r-B4r. *A Forme of Praier to be Used in London, and Elsewhere in this Time of Drought* (1611).

¹⁰⁰ Clay (ed.), *Liturgical Services*, p. 480, 503. *Certaine Praiers* (London, 1593), Sig. A2v. *Certaine Prayers* (1603), Sig. A3r-v. *A Forme of Praier to be Used in London, and Elsewhere in this Time of Drought* (1611). *A Forme of Prayer to be Publikely Used in Churches, and During this Time of Unseasonable Weather, and Abundance of Rain* (1613).

and the longest of the three prayers appointed in the Litany and to say the shortest so as to have more time for the sermon. On August 12, 1563 Bishop Grindal wrote Cecil to affirm that he was taking steps to have sermons at fasts in London. Also, in the 1580, 1586, 1587, and 1588 orders archbishops Grindal and Whitgift required “preachers,” ministers and curates to have sermons and exhortations to move the people to fasting and prayer. In his May 3, 1589 letter to the Archdeacon of St. Albans, Bishop Aylmer in passing on Whitgift’s orders added a requirement for him to admonish ministers to preach at least once per week so the people were “stirred up” to fasting and prayer. Moreover, such orders made a strong impression on puritans. John Jegon, Bishop of Norwich, was so forceful in the 1603 national fast that Nicholas Bownd lauded his “straight charge” for leading in the diocese to “much more preaching and hearing of the Word of God, and praying unto Him, then was before, and otherwise would have been.” Jegon’s “godly incitation” made the ministry “more painful” in their callings than would have been. Bownd even dedicated his treatise to Jegon because it was composed of sermons preached at this encouragement. Also, Bownd was encouraged for the future that the new bishop would establish a zealous preaching ministry, and compel people to frequent it.¹⁰¹

Of course, puritans were never satisfied with the amount of preaching, and tension remained when bishops limited preaching. Yet even while setting limits, the amount bishops permitted was far from meager. Aylmer in his July 12, 1588 letter to the Archdeacon of St. Albans passing on Archbishop Whitgift’s orders required ministers to be given “straight charge” not to have more than one sermon “at ons” [at once?] on any

¹⁰¹ Clay (ed.), *Liturgical Services*, p. 480-81, 490, 563, 593, 609. BL, Lansdowne 6(69). Hertfordshire Record Office, MS ASA 5/2, number 54, p. 329-30; number 70, p. 377; number 78, p. 421-22; number 89, p. 457 (St. Albans Archdeaconry Records). Bownd, *Fasting*, Sig. ¶3-7.

given day. The 1593 order for the fast permitted one sermon at morning prayer of not above an hour. The order justified this limit as necessary to avoid the “inconveniency” which resulted from “abuse of fasting” such that “some make it a faction more then religion.” Also, to keep the people “a whole day together” in service led to “overmuch weariness and tediousness,” and the danger of spreading contagious disease. The 1603 orders repeated almost verbatim the 1593 ones, but they clarified allowing on the fast day not only one sermon at morning prayer of not above one hour, but also one at evening prayer of the same length. The passage about abuses of fasting was made more palatable to the godly. First, it added an attack on Catholics: “Some esteeming it a meritorious work: others a good work, and of itself acceptable to God without due regard of the end.” Second, it narrowed and specified the puritan abuse to now read: “others presuming factiously to enter into public fasts without consent of authority.”¹⁰² So again, while tensions remained, the difference between Calvinist bishops and puritans was a matter of degree not of kind. Calvinist bishops were committed to preaching the Word as essential to bringing the inner state of true repentance and powerful prayer needed to assuage God. They just wanted to avoid what they saw as disorder.

Finally, in Foxeian, Word centered terms the 1563, 1572, 1588, and 1590 common prayers stressed the common Catholic enemy, and ties to continental Protestants. They referred to continental Protestants as “brethren” persecuted for “profession of thy Word” or “profession of the Gospel.” They referred to them when noting the “blood of thy saints” martyred by the “kingdom of Antichrist.” There were prayers for England to be “a defense to thy Church and people persecuted abroad.” There

¹⁰² Hertfordshire Record Office, MS ASA 5/2, number 78, p. 421-22. *Certaine Praiers* (1593), Sig. B4v. *Certaine Prayers* (1603), Sig. D4r.

were prayers for God to protect the Queen against “Antichrist,” and to strengthen her hand to strike and destroy the “rose-colored whore” and “all the heads of that cruel beast.” England was noted as professing the “true doctrine of the Gospel,” as being attacked “for thy Gospel sake” and the “sincere profession of thy Word and Gospel.” Protestants were “thy little and despised flock.” Catholics were “enemies of thy Gospel,” and hated the “true profession of the Gospel,” the “truth of thy Gospel,” and “thy true Church.” Catholics had entered into a league to never desist until they had destroyed “all such as profess thy Gospel,” and they were “confederate with Antichrist, and sworn against the truth.” Catholics sought “the suppression of thy Gospel, and the overthrow of all such as do profess it.”¹⁰³ These prayers thus united puritans and many bishops.

Again, bishops who were by no means puritan friendly shared this anti-Catholicism. Bishop Aylmer in his 1585 common prayer referred to “our idolatrous and ignorant fathers.” He prayed against the “cursed sea and generation of Antichrist” who sought by all means to extinguish the “true service and Gospel of thy son Jesus Christ.” The enemies of the “truth” included the Turks in the east and “Antichrist in the West.” Archbishop Whitgift in his 1586 common prayer prayed for God to spare England as “His people” and “beloved vineyard,” and not to let the “wicked seed of Antichrist” rule over it. He prayed for God to remove the threat of the “Antichristian power.” He described Catholics as “enemies of thy truth.” In his November 30, 1587 letter ordering common prayer he also noted the “extreme malice” the Catholic adversary had to the “true profession of the Gospel,” and their daily attacks on it.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Clay (ed.), *Liturgical Services*, p. 507, 577-78, 614-617, 636-39, 641-43, 645-46.

¹⁰⁴ *A Necessarie and Godly Prayer* (1585). Clay (ed.), *Liturgical Services*, p. 592. Hertfordshire Record Office, MS ASA 5/2, number 70, p. 377.

While puritans and conformists united against what they perceived as the common Catholic enemy in fasts, they also did so against common Protestant enemies. In addition to attacking Catholics, another well trod path for puritans to endear themselves with conformists and win a place in the church was to attack separatists. By drawing the boundary of the legitimate Christian community to exclude both Catholics and separatists, puritans and their conformist allies created a national church relatively inclusive of most Protestants. John Knewstub's attack on the Family of Love shows just this use of fasts. He defined the Family of Love as outside the Protestant fold by describing them as one of the "damnable sects" that wrongly had the name "Gospellers." At the same time, he cleverly redefined the term "puritan" to apply only to separatists so as to secure non-separating puritans a place in the established church. He claimed:

"A number in this land, upon a false alarm, have been in a vain jealousy and fear of puritanism. Now the justice of God hath payed us. For that which was spoken before in slander, now may be spoken in truth: and that which was believed, when it was not, is scarce suspected when it is. For if you seek after the puritans, these they be."

Paradoxically, Knewstub saw the Family as both the cause and effect of God's wrath. On the one hand God had raised up this "cursed sect" out of wrath, but on the other God was angry because this "heresy" had been allowed to exist and grow. Knewstub called for the orthodox community, defined to include puritans, to stand united against this threat:

"Now it remaineth that for the glory of God so shamefully defaced, for the truth so slanderously reported, for the church so grievously stricken, for the commonwealth presently wounded, and further hazarded: that all those to whom the Lord hath given any means of stopping this gap, where at His wrath hath thus broken in upon us, make hast to the rescue of the truth, and resistance of the evil."

The first and foremost act, as Knewstub twice argued, was to appease the Lord by all English Protestants humbling themselves in prayer and fasting. He again underlined the unity of puritans and conformists when he specified that the fast "ought (without all controversy) to be public: to the end, that the church with all her children together lying

prostrate before His Majesty, all their cries and complaints at once sent up, may so ring in His ears, as that He may be the rather moved to pity towards her.”¹⁰⁵

Yet puritans like Knewstub were not alone in using fasts this way, some Calvinist conformists did so too. While Bishop of Durham, Toby Matthew in his preaching diary noted for Wednesday, November 9, 1603: “Gainford fast. Mr. Craddock ego ipse, pars Eph. V. De circumspectè ambulando ex occasione proclamationis R. contra puritannos et papistus subscribedae etc. deliquentes.”¹⁰⁶ Arguably, careful consideration of the context here makes clear that Matthew used this public fast for the plague to make a serious political statement as to the boundaries of the orthodox community.

With the accession of James I and the Millenary Petition, the period 1603-4 saw a great intensification of the debate about non-conformity, and the location of the boundaries of the legitimate Protestant community more generally. Matthew was akin to Calvinists like William Bedell (future bishop of Kilmore and Ardagh), Anthony Rudd (Bishop of St. David’s), Gervase Babington (Bishop of Worcester), Henry Robinson (Bishop of Carlisle), and Matthew Hutton (Archbishop of York) who worked during this period for continued if not greater indulgence of non-conformist preachers. They distinguished between moderate and radical puritans, and valued non-conformists as a great help with the primary mission of preaching. They saw non-conformists as orthodox and loyal, and Catholics the real threat.¹⁰⁷ These men would have desired to respond to the October 24, 1603 royal proclamation Matthew referred to because it affected the accommodation of non-conformists. The proclamation was part of a continued response

¹⁰⁵ Knewstub, *Confutation*, sig. **1v, **3v-**4r, **5v-**6r.

¹⁰⁶ York Minster Library, MS Add 18, p. 72.

¹⁰⁷ PRO, SP 14/10/64, 65, 66. Babbage, *Puritanism*, p. 44, 48-65, 77-84, 98-99, 113-14, 235, 237-39, 243-54. Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Oxford, 1967), p. 448-67.

to the Millenary Petition, and a new flood of puritan petitions and agitation. The proclamation showed growing alarm over more radical efforts as a threat to law and order. The title of the proclamation was telling of its tenor as it concerned “such as seditiously seek reformation in church matters.” To limit hopes for change, James affirmed the church was fundamentally sound, but he also struck a balance by admitting some “corruptions” might have crept in over time, and promising to listen to arguments for further reform from cooler heads at the Hampton Court Conference, and to act if persuaded. But even here he tried to limit overzealous petitioners in that he claimed he would see if any “enormities” existed as was “pretended.” Further, he referred to those scandalized by abuses as the “seeming zealous,” and promised punishment of those who by “pretended zeal” advanced “novelty” and “confusion.”¹⁰⁸

Worse for the godly, the “exhortation” or homily printed with the common prayers for the 1603 fast criticized the excesses of the recent reform campaign. It noted how the people of Israel “murmured” against God in the wilderness. It noted how “the multitude of the people of Israel taking part with those factious and seditious conspirators Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, murmured against Moses and Aaron, and grudged against that their authority of magistracy and priesthood wherein God Himself had established them.” Just as the people of Israel had “murmured and rebelled” against Moses and Aaron, some in England had “despised government, and spoken evil of those that are in authority.” They were “traitors, heady, high minded, murmurers, malcontents, fault-finders.” They were “such as have attempted reformation, and alteration; with no less disturbance to the Church of God amongst us: no less danger and peril to the state, and

¹⁰⁸ James Larkin and Paul Hughes (eds.), *Stuart Royal Proclamations* (Oxford, 1973), p. 60-3.

commonwealth; and therefore with as much offense assuredly in the sight of God, as was the contradiction of Corah and his complices.”¹⁰⁹

With the fast approaching Hampton Court Conference (re-scheduled by the proclamation for after Christmas), as well as the coming parliament and convocation in early 1604 which would take up the non-conformity issue, some type of action was prudent, and James had created an opening for address. In March 1603, shortly before his accession, a second edition of James’ *Basilikon Doron* was published in London, and quickly became a best-seller going through multiple printings. In a new preface to the reader, James responded to criticism of his negative comments on “puritans” in the previous edition. James backed down by narrowly defining puritans: “as to the name of puritans, I am not ignorant that the style thereof doth properly belong only to that vile sect amongst the Anabaptists, called the Family of Love.” Also, the name belonged to separatists such as “Browne, Penry, and others.”¹¹⁰

Looking again at Matthew’s diary entry, one is struck first by his choice to interpret the proclamation as against both puritans *and* Catholics, when only more radical non-conformists were its target. Second, one has to consider what Matthew meant when he referred to “puritans.” Here one can do no better than the interpretation of Dr. Henry Sampson in his life of Matthew, *The Preaching Bishop* (c.1698). Citing the same fast in

¹⁰⁹ *Certaine Prayers* (1603), Sig. C2v-3v. Significantly, the 1603 prayers balanced anti-puritan passages with anti-Catholic ones to encourage moderates to conform. They also added puritan favorites like sabbath breach among the sins causing the current plague.

¹¹⁰ Johann Sommerville (ed.), *King James VI and I: Political Writings* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 5-7, 268. James also promised favorable treatment of non-conformists, and distinguished between moderate and radical puritans. As to “brain-sick and heady preachers” whom he also lumped with puritans, James said he meant only those who agreed with the sects in separatist views and actions. He affirmed: “I protest upon my honor, I mean it not generally of all preachers, or others, that like better of the single form of policy in our Church, then of the many ceremonies in the Church of England; that are persuaded, that their bishops smell of a papal supremacy, that the surplice, the cornered cap, and such like, are the outward badges of popish errors.” He thought these matters “indifferent,” and loved and honored those with these opinions. He only required where the law otherwise demanded, that they content themselves “soberly and quietly” with their own opinions, and not resist authority, break the law, or stir up rebellion or schism. (ibid.)

Matthew's preaching diary, Sampson commented: "not long after he preached another sermon against the Brownists and these are all the reflections he makes against Protestant dissenters and both times against the same sort of men for he must be supposed to mean the same sort of puritans as King James doth in the preface to his second edition of his *Basilikon Doron*, which are the Brownists." That Sampson's agenda was to uphold preaching and indulgence to non-conformists in the Church of England in his time does not invalidate his interpretation because arguably Matthew was doing the same.¹¹¹

An effort similar to Matthew's took place in 1580 as well. The officially sanctioned 1580 fast treatise, which came out along with the form of prayer and the new homily, gives some hints. It noted a need to fast for the churches around England because they were in great decay in part because of "the heresies of Papists, Arrians, Anabaptists, Family of Love, &c. as also of the schism of Lutheranism." It noted that all these heresies except the "schism of Lutheranism" were in England. Otherwise, the only issue in England was a "great distraction" about church government, and "diversities of judgments" in other matters, surely meaning ceremonies.¹¹²

In summary, Calvinist bishops and moderate puritans both made efforts to accommodate each other. They had substantial success mollifying tensions such that puritans who were potentially volatile were generally placated. Fasts promoted unity because puritans and Calvinist conformists shared so much common ground. They

¹¹¹ BL, Additional MS 4460, fol. 25r, 26v, 28v-29r. As Archbishop, Matthew's visitation articles for York (1607, 1622-23) made no mention of fasts. They only inquired about lectures or exercises to ensure clergy were licensed and conformed. Also, they asked if any at them that taught or professed "any doctrine of innovation not agreeing to the ordinances of the Church of England: as papistry, Brownism, or any other heresy or schismatical error, whereby themselves or others may be drawn from their due obedience in causes ecclesiastical." (Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church* (Church of England Record Society, Suffolk, 1994), volume 1, p. 55, 57)

¹¹² Wilkinson, *Fast*, p. 50-1. William Wilkinson, *A Very Godly and Learned Treatise* (London, 1580), p. 15r (STC 24251.3). Strype, *Annals*, volume 2, part 2, p. 396-97, 401, 406.

agreed on doctrine, the paramount importance of preaching the Word, a Foxeian narrative of English history, and opposition to Catholics and separatists. Fasts encouraged puritans to trust and esteem Calvinist bishops and the prince, and view them as on the side of Christ and the Gospel. So as puritans created their self-understanding in fasts, they did so viewing the Church of England as part of that self-understanding, and thinking their narrative and the narrative of the English church and state told in public fasts as one and the same.

CHAPTER VI

“BEHOLD, YE FAST FOR STRIFE AND DEBATE:”¹ CALVINIST AND ANTI-CALVINIST FAST SERMONS 1625-1629

In previous chapters we saw how fasts in Elizabethan and Jacobean England could both divide and unite Calvinist conformists and puritans. This paradox stemmed from the policies of Elizabeth and James which created, but kept within bounds, tensions between English Calvinists. In those contexts, fasts worked to create a puritan self-understanding distinct from other English Protestants. Nonetheless, puritans still identified with Calvinists conformists and the church. Within the Elizabethan-Jacobean political framework, shared Calvinist beliefs and priorities fostered interactions and perceptions that forged substantial though delicate bonds.

As we shall now see in this chapter, by contrast, Charles’s policies not only worsened tensions, but obliterated the factors that had contained conflict. The ability of puritans to identify with the church hierarchy and the church in pursuit of God’s cause was jeopardized. In this context, fasts worked predominantly and more intensely to divide. Within the Caroline political framework, Anti-Calvinist beliefs and priorities were so anathema to Calvinists that they fostered interrelationships and associations that polarized, undermined trust, and bred conspiracy theories. That royal policy profoundly influenced the development of English Protestant culture is not surprising. English monarchs had great power due to the royal supremacy over the church, the traditional obedience and deference citizen-subjects gave them, and the relatively centralized nature

¹ Isaiah 58:4 (KJV)

of the English state. The interaction between royal policies, the godly, and what became a rabidly anti-Catholic public was formative.

Before delving into Caroline fasts though, a brief overview of these royal policies is necessary to provide context. Elizabeth had two key religious policies. First, she refused to alter the 1559 settlement to suit advanced English Protestants. Second, she sought a broad national church by requiring only outward conformity to it rather than inward assent from conviction of conscience. While both policies created conflict with puritans, they were ameliorated by several factors. Significantly, the Thirty-Nine Articles and Book of Common Prayer were in the Reformed tradition of Switzerland and southwest Germany. While a conservative Protestant, Elizabeth was pragmatic and flexible and let Calvinists run the church within the bounds of her *semper eadem* policy. Indeed, many of her councilors and bishops were “godly” and sympathetic to puritans. She also placed many returning Marian exiles in the church hierarchy who had gone to Reformed regions on the continent. From the 1570s to 1590s Calvinist doctrine came to dominate English Protestantism such that Archbishop Whitgift and other conformists argued there was no difference in doctrine between them and puritans. In the 1580s and 1590s, Whitgift led aggressive action against vocal Anti-Calvinists. He developed the Lambeth Articles to affirm Calvinist orthodoxy, and properly gloss the Thirty-Nine Articles. Moreover, Calvinist conformists and puritans shared a commitment to preaching the Word, reforming manners, opposing Catholics and separatists, and maintaining close ties to and aiding Reformed churches on the continent.

With respect to conformity, many bishops and their officials dealt mildly and patiently with puritans to retain their preaching services. Like the queen they did not

wish to make “windows into men’s souls,” so those who desired further reform could be embraced if they were quiet about it or conformed. Further, puritan clergy often had powerful patrons, including many throughout the church and state, who intervened to protect them. Likewise, godly MPs had a strong voice in parliament and weakened conformity drives. Moreover, parliament had passed the acts that implemented England’s reformations, and was part of the “king-in-parliament.” MPs thus took it as part of their public office and calling to have a concern for religion. If English monarchs wanted supply to flow freely they had to take the concerns of MPs seriously.²

While James rejected calls for further reform and codified the Elizabethan settlement in the constitutions and canons of 1604, his policy too was to create a broad and inclusive church. He suppressed radical puritans but accommodated moderates. For James, radicals were separatists and presbyterians who challenged episcopacy, the royal supremacy, and the authority of the crown to impose ceremonial conformity. Moderates were those who remained obedient and discrete despite their possible dislike of certain ceremonies and episcopacy. If puritans subscribed, he took this as proof of loyalty, deemed them moderate, and compromised over enforcement of ceremonial conformity. Many Calvinist bishops were generous to puritans about the terms of subscription and

² Patrick Collinson, “The Religion of Elizabethan England and of its Queen,” in Michele Ciliberto and Nicholas Mann (eds.), *Giordano Bruno 1583-1585: The English Experience* (Firenze, 1997), p. 3-22. Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal 1519-1583* (London, 1979); Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England 1547-1603* (Basingstoke, 1990). Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer* (New Haven, 1996). Patrick Collinson, *Godly People* (London, 1983), chapter 2, 6, 13. Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Oxford, 1967). Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants* (Oxford, 1982). Andrew Pettegree, “The Reception of Calvinism in Britain,” Wilhelm Neuser, and Brian Armstrong (eds.), *Calvinus Sincerioris Religionis Vindex* (Kirkville, MO, 1997), p. 267-89. Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590-1640* (Oxford, 1987). Peter Lake, “Calvinism and the English Church, 1570-1635,” *Past and Present*, February 1987 114: 32-76. Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans* (Cambridge, 1982). Patrick Collinson, “England and International Calvinism 1558-1640,” in Menna Prestwich (ed.), *International Calvinism 1541-1715* (Oxford, 1985), p. 197-223. Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed* (Cambridge, 1995), chapter 8. Andrew Pettegree, *Foreign Protestant Communities in Sixteenth-Century London* (Oxford, 1986). Andrew Pettegree, Alastair Duke, and Gillian Lewis (ed.), *Calvinism in Europe, 1540-1620* (Cambridge, 1994).

conformity. Talented moderate puritans thus readily found preferment to positions of authority in the church. As usual, parliament pressed for latitude for puritan clergy.

To further his policy and create room for political maneuver, James patronized a spectrum of theological opinion including Anti-Calvinists. Yet, James was a sermon loving Calvinist and thus kept Calvinists dominant in the church in most bishoprics and the most powerful ones. He opposed Arminian doctrine and supported the Synod of Dort's quashing of the Remonstrants. Indeed, he appointed an all Calvinist British delegation to support this outcome, though on moderate terms. As one would expect, James, and his policing Calvinist bishops, kept the activities of English Anti-Calvinists within limits, and to be preferred they had to be tactful advocating their views and often qualify them. By patronizing a range of views, however, James increased Anti-Calvinists in the episcopate. Calvinists and Anti-Calvinists jostled for influence at court, and tried to manipulate James into supporting their positions by playing on his respective fears of Catholic and puritan threats to order.³

Unlike James, Charles thought reform had gone too far in England, and he sought to restore what he took as the ancient orthodox doctrine and practices. Rather than preaching, he prioritized the sacraments, the liturgy, worship, ceremony, beauty and holiness in consecrated church buildings, and a more sacerdotal priesthood. He appointed Anti-Calvinists to top positions in the church and to the Privy Council. From these positions, Anti-Calvinists exercised biased patronage in cathedrals and parishes to

³ Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, "The Ecclesiastical Policy of King James I," *Journal of British Studies*, 1985 24: 169-207. Kenneth Fincham, "Episcopal Government, 1603-1640," in Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1640* (Stanford, 1993), p. 71-8. Patrick Collinson, "The Jacobean Religious Settlement: The Hampton Court Conference," in Howard Tomlinson (ed.), *Before the English Civil War* (New York, 1983), p. 27-51. Collinson, *Religion of Protestants*. Kenneth Fincham, *Prelate as Pastor* (Oxford, 1990). Kenneth Fincham, "Prelacy and Politics: Archbishop Abbot's Defence of Protestant Orthodoxy," *Historical Research*, February 1988 61(144): 36-64. Peter Lake, "Calvinism."

build their ranks. Further, in contrast to the mostly moderate Anti-Calvinists James patronized, Charles tended to promote radical Anti-Calvinists and then give them wide latitude. Contrary to Calvinist bishops who prioritized their role as preaching pastors, Anti-Calvinist bishops focused on their role as supervisors establishing order. The twin priorities of ceremony and discipline dovetailed in a demand for subscription and conformity to unprecedented degrees. In contrast to the past, authorities subjected puritans to sustained and intense pressure. Any who fell short were deemed unprincipled, factious, disloyal, and subversive. Compromise was repugnant because unlike James, Charles did not distinguish public loyalties from personal belief. He thought any disobedience led to anarchy and rebellion, and did not see that toleration of limited non-conformity served order. Therefore, he saw no difference between moderate and radical puritans. He saw “puritanism” and subversion in any disaffected to his policies. Charles’s linkage of obedience to the king to reverence in worship and respect for the arrangement of its ornaments intensified this view. Additionally, with these emphases, Charles and Anti-Calvinists viewed all voluntary religion as separatist and intolerable. For these reasons, Charles and Laud thought puritans not Catholics were the primary threat. They believed the indulgent policies of Elizabeth and James to puritans had undermined the unity and peace of church by allowing a powerful fifth column to emerge in it. Thus, Charles marginalized Calvinist bishops including Archbishop Abbot who appeared to ignore the puritan threat and see “popery” where there was only “orthodoxy.”⁴

⁴ Julian Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church* (Oxford, 1992). Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, “The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I,” in Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642* (Stanford, 1993), p. 23-49. Fincham, *Prelate*. Kenneth Fincham, “William Laud and the

More specifically, Charles's policies addressed ceremonies, preaching, the Lord's Day, and altars. Charles and Laud required conformity to new ceremonies and ones which had been out of use for decades in many places. Charles's ban against preaching and publishing on predestination, including at the universities, went far beyond the modest restrictions James had put in place in 1622. Crucially, the ban itself tacitly conferred on "Arminian" views a legitimacy equal to Calvinist ones. Moreover, the implementation of this ban was biased against Calvinists, and Anti-Calvinists came to control the printing presses and universities. Charles changed all afternoon sermons to catechizing by bare question and answer (not just preaching on the catechism, creed, Ten Commandments, or Lord's Prayer as James ordered in 1622). He placed new requirements and restrictions on lecturers, and Laud suppressed the Feoffees for Improvements which sought to fund godly preachers. Charles re-issued the Book of Sports and, unlike James, aggressively implemented it and banned defenses of the "sabbath." Finally, he and Laud required communion tables in parish churches to be railed in at the east end of chancel and turned altar-wise.

The impact of Caroline-Laudian policies on Calvinists was paradoxical. The trust and relationships painstakingly built between Calvinist conformists and puritans under Elizabeth and James served them well as they mounted a vigorous defense of Calvinist doctrine. However, Anti-Calvinist conformists had some success driving wedges between them over issues of conformity and order. In these struggles, fasts were a prominent battleground because they gave occasion for belligerents to make strong statements of their view of the self-understanding of the English church and state.

Exercise of Caroline Ecclesiastical Patronage," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, January 2000 51(1): 69-93. Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*.

Heavily tilting to Calvinist views, the Commons and the Lords petitioned Charles at the opening of (and during) parliamentary sessions for private fasts for themselves and general fasts for the kingdom in 1625, 1626, 1628, 1629, 1640, 1641, and 1642. Most basically, these fasts, like their Elizabethan and Jacobean predecessors, were Calvinist in substance. Indeed, they were the same as the monthly fasts of the Long Parliament which grew from them. They lasted all day generally from about 8:30 or 9 am to 4, 5, 6 pm or later, and had two sermons, one forenoon and one afternoon. The Commons even appointed four preachers for sermons in 1625 (subsequently pared to three), and three preachers again in 1629.⁵

⁵ For 1625, see: Maija Jansson and William Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625* (New Haven, CT, 1987), p. 44, 47, 53, 65-9, 130, 204-5, 208, 210-13, 215, 217, 221-22, 228-30, 233, 235, 238-39, 242-43, 257-60, 264-66, 504, 506, 706. Francis Relf (ed.), *Notes of the Debates in the House of Lords* (Camden Society, series 3, volume 42, London, 1929), p. 55-7, 64-5. Samuel Rawson Gardiner (ed.), *Debates in the House of Commons* (Camden Society, new series, volume 6, 1873), p. 6, 13, 15, 17-18, 28-9. *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. 1, p. 799. *Journals of the House of Lords*, vol. 3, p. 441, 443, 447-48. For 1626, see: CUL, MS Mm.4.38, fol. 117b. William Bidwell and Maija Jansson (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1626* (New Haven, 1992), volume 3, p. 98, 100, 139, 145, 377, 383, 386, 405, 407-8, 410, 444. *Commons Journals*, vol. 1, p. 851, 869. For 1628, see: Robert Johnson, Mary Keeler, Maija Jansson Cole, and William Bidwell (eds.), *Commons Debates 1628* (New Haven, 1977), volume 2, p. 30, 32-35, 36-7, 41-2, 46-7, 66, 71, 79, 83, 88, 94, 145, 153; volume 5 (*Lords Proceedings 1628*), p. 78-83, 95-99, 148, 151-54. *Commons Journals*, vol. 1, p. 873-5, 878. *Lords Journals*, vol. 3, p. 693, 697-98, 711. BL, Add MS 36, 825, fol. 22v-24. For 1629, see: Wallace Notestein and Francis Relf (eds.), *Commons Debates for 1629* (Minneapolis, 1921), p. 17-18, 28-9, 41-2, 81, 83, 109-10, 129. BL, Harleian 1221, fol. 87r-v. CUL, MS Mm.v.1, fol. 29b and MS Gg.iv.13, p. 97. *Commons Journals*, vol. 1, p. 922-24, 926-27. *Lords Journals*, vol. 4, p. 13-15, 20, 24. For 1640, see: Judith Maltby (ed.), *The Short Parliament (1640) Diary of Sir Thomas Aston* (Camden, 4th series, volume 35, London, 1988), p. 12, 24, 30, 35-6, 109. Esther Cope and Willson Coates (eds.), *Proceedings of the Short Parliament of 1640* (Camden Society, 4th series, volume 19, 1977), p. 64-5, 67, 69, 99-100, 108-9, 143, 167, 169 and n.4, 237, 241, 242, 246. *Commons Journals*, vol. 2, p. 4, 6, 8-11. *Lords Journals*, vol. 4, p. 61, 63-5, 67. Maija Jansson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Opening Session of the Long Parliament* (Rochester, NY, 2000), vol. 1, p. 17, 20-1, 29, 39, 45-6, 55, 57-9, 65-8, 70-2. *Commons Journals*, vol. 2, p. 20, 22-4, 30. *Lords Journals*, vol. 4, p. 84-5. For 1641, see: Willson Coates (ed.), *The Journal of Sir Simonds D'Ewes* (New Haven, 1942), p. 278, 281-82, 308-9, 314, 341. Wallace Notestein (ed.), *The Journal of Sir Simonds D'Ewes* (New Haven, 1923), p. 2, 18, 530. *Commons Journals*, vol. 2, p. 348-49, 353, 356. *Lords Journals*, vol. 4, p. 480-81, 485, 488, 493, 497. For 1642, see: Vernon Snow and Anne Young (eds.), *The Private Journals of the Long Parliament 7 March to 1 June 1642* (New Haven, 1987), p. 21, 109, 155, 228, 232, 234, 370. Willson Coates, Anne Young, Vernon Snow (eds.), *The Private Journals of the Long Parliament 3 January to 5 March, 1642* (New Haven, 1982), p. 432, 435, 438, 445, 447. *Commons Journals*, vol. 2, p. 447, 449. *Lords Journals*, vol. 5, p. 21. The Lords 1625 private fast was "to be several" at 9am and 2pm. (Jansson and Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625*, p. 69. Relf (ed.) *Notes of the Debates in the House of Lords*, p. 56. The April 1628 fast services in the Commons were to begin at 9am and 2pm. (*Commons Journals*, vol. 1, p. 878).

Moreover, as we saw in the 1580s and 1624 in the Commons, in 1625-29 and 1640-42, many MPs in the Lords and Commons excitedly pressed for fasts with heightened urgency. Agitation had been building in the latter years of James's reign. In 1622, Thomas Scott lauded the Dutch arguing:

“that upon every extraordinary occasion, when they are to consult about any special point of state, or execute any thing consulted of, which concerns the public safety, they begin at God, and appoint certain Bid-days, as they call them, or days of fasting and prayer, to implore the direction and assistance of God in the prospering of their enterprises.”

By contrast, England's peace and plenty for 64 years had “rockt us asleep” so that they had forgotten to fast. Likewise, in the Commons on February 23, 1624 Sir Edward Cecil noted that the Low Countries never undertook “any great business” without “a general fast.” He advocated “a general fast for this House” and another “to be general through all the kingdom” because “as our case stands, we have great need of the like.” On March 20, 1628 Sir James Perrott seconded a motion for a fast at the beginning of the parliamentary session saying it was “a pious custom.” Sir Robert Phelips also supported the motion arguing:

“for it hath not been the custom of parliaments only, but also of general states; for when God is pleased to bestow any blessing upon them, they should express gratitude. Or when God, for the sins of men, threatens them with punishments, there should be a humiliation. Heathens did use to humble themselves. Christians in France never begin a great assembly of the three estates, but they use it.”⁶

As the latter suggested, MPs quickly began to believe and claim that fasts at the opening of English parliaments were an established tradition. On June 22, 1625, Sir

⁶ Thomas Scott, *The Belgicke Pismire: Stinging the Slothfull Sleeper, and Awakening the Diligent to Fast, Watch, and Pray* (London, 1622), p. 87-9 (STC 22069a). *Commons Journals*, vol. 1, p. 671, 715-16. Johnson, Keeler, Cole, Bidwell (eds.), *Commons Debates 1628*, vol. 2, p. 32. At times, the Commons may have been more forward than the Lords. Some in the Commons in 1625 argued their House had a right to petition the king directly without the Lords, and that they should do so because “the Lords had refused them in like occasions in former times.” See: Jansson and Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625*, p. 212; and Gardiner (ed.), *Debates in the House of Commons*, p. 13. In the Short Parliament, the Lords joined the Commons to petition the king for a fast. But once the king approved the petition, the Lords fell out with the Commons over the date to observe it. See: Cope and Coates (eds.), *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, p. 64-5, 67, 69, 99-100, 108-9, 143, 167, 169, 237, 241-42, 246.

Edward Coke claimed the Commons did not need the Lords to join a petition for a fast based on “a precedent in E. 3 time wherein the like petition was by the Commons alone.” Similarly, on April 29, 1626, Sir Nathaniel Rich regarding another petition for a fast argued that in Edward III's time the king was petitioned for a general fast “for the good success of the parliament and good correspondence between the king and people.” Also, MPs took advantage of Charles's indulgence for fasts to bolster their case. On March 20, 1628 in a motion in Commons for the House to have a fast, William Strode claimed it was “according to the former laudable customs of the House.” By November 17, 1640, Stephen Marshall in his fast sermon to the Commons claimed to fast at the beginning of parliament was “a received thing in England.” Calvinist bishops were no less enthusiastic. Bishop Williams in his 1629 fast sermon to the Lords exclaimed: “Our great assemblies, of late, have begun very well with the general devotions of fasting and prayer. Who so profane as to deny it?” None of this pleased Charles. In his 1629 answer to parliament's petition for a fast, he reluctantly consented saying he was not fully satisfied of its necessity. He added: “I must tell you that this custom of fasts every session is but lately begun” and warned “that I expect that this shall not hereafter be brought into precedent for frequent fasts, except upon great occasions.”⁷ The gulf between Charles and many MPs regarding the threshold for a fast was large.

⁷ Jansson and Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625*, p. 221. Gardiner (ed.), *Debates in the House of Commons*, p. 13. Bidwell and Jansson (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1626*, p. 100. Johnson, Keeler, Cole, Bidwell (eds.), *Commons Debates 1628*, vol. 2, p. 32. Robin Jeffs (ed.), *The English Revolution I: Fast Sermons to Parliament* (London, 1970), volume 1, p. 140 (subscript pagination). John Williams, *Perseverantia Sanctorum* (London, 1628), p. 39-40 (STC 25727). Notestein and Relf (eds.), *Commons Debates for 1629*, p. 28-9. *Lords Journals*, volume 4, p. 15. The king tactlessly denigrated parliament as he clearly did not think its meeting was a “great occasion.” Nor did he deem the “extraordinary” prayers of a fast necessary to acquire divine favor to deal with issues facing the nation. Likely, he thought policy decisions belonged to his prerogative and that parliament was primarily a funding mechanism. Charles also denigrated the role of parliament in fasts. In his orders to the bishops about the

Another bold statement MPs made about their ecclesiastical preferences was their choice of preachers for the private fasts of the House of Lords and House of Commons (see table 1). By appointing only moderate Calvinist conformists and moderate puritans, MPs consciously supported Calvinist predominance in the Church of England. This exclusiveness at Parliament's opening fasts contrasted with other times when preachers before Parliament were more diverse. It also contrasted with diversity at court, including at fasts when Charles had the likes of Bishop Laud preach before him at the 1626 fast.⁸

Arguably, MPs choice of preachers was a barefaced response to Richard Montague's *A Gagg for the New Gospel?* (1624) and *Appello Cæsarem* (1625). These controversial books sparked a renewed discourse about conformity and orthodoxy. For his part, Montague was acting as a stalking-horse for militant Anti-Calvinists. At this time, Anti-Calvinists seized their chance to play on James' fears of "puritan"/"popular" threats to overthrow the Calvinist domination of the church. For most of his reign, James' fears of Catholics were preponderate, but in his latter years fear of puritans came to the fore. The occasion was tensions between James and the godly following the outbreak of the Thirty-Years War.

1626 fast, he included the motives for the fast the Commons set down but authorized them to use or ignore them as they saw fit. (SP 16/31/18)

⁸ In his replies to parliament's petitions for fasts, Charles said he expected that authorizing them and beginning with God and devotions to speed and facilitate business in parliament. See: Notestein and Relf (eds.), *Commons Debates for 1629*, p. 28-9; Jansson and Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625*, p. 53, 241, 506; Gardiner (ed.), *Debates in the House of Commons*, p. 17. CUL, Gg.iv.13, p. 98. *Lords Journals*, volume 3, p. 443; volume 4, p. 15. For this same reason Charles likely did not object to their choice of preachers. For his relative leniency to puritans and Calvinists in general from 1625 to 1629 while parliament was meeting, see: David Como and Peter Lake, "Puritans, Antinomians and Laudians in Caroline London," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 1999 50(4): 684-715. Richard Cust, "Charles I, the Privy Council and the Parliament of 1628," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, number 2, 1992, p. 25-50.

Table 1: Fasts in Parliament 1625-1641

Date of Fast, and House of Parliament	Appointed Preachers	Position(s) in Church of England
July, 1625 ¹		
Lords	Dr. Arthur Lake (1567-1626) Dr. John Davenant (1572-1641)* *The Lords subsequently replaced Davenant with Dr. George Carleton (1557/58-1628)	Bishop of Bath and Wells Bishop of Salisbury (or Sarum) Bishop of Chichester
Commons	Josiah Shute (1588-1643) Dr. John Preston (1587-1628) Dr. Thomas Westfield (1573-1644)* *The Commons subsequently replaced Westfield with Richard Holdsworth (1590-1649)	Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, Lombard St., London Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge; lecturer at Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge; preacher at Lincoln's Inn Rector of Hornsey and St. Bartholomew, Smithfield Rector of St. Peter the Poor, Broadstreet, London
April, 1628 ²		
Lords	Dr. Joseph Hall (1574-1656) Dr. John Davenant	Bishop of Exeter (or Exon) Bishop of Salisbury (or Sarum)

¹ Relf (ed.), *Notes of the Debates in the House of Lords*, p. 56. Jansson and Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625*, p. 67, 205, 208, 210, 211, 215. James Halliwell (ed.), *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds D'Ewes* (London, 1845), volume 1, p. 273. Gardiner (ed.), *Debates in the House of Commons*, p. 6, 29. *Commons Journals*, vol. 1, p. 799. *Lords Journals*, vol. 3, p. 448.

² Johnson, Keeler, Cole, Bidwell (eds.), *Commons Debates 1628*, volume 2, p. 79, 83, 88, 94; and volume 5 (*Lords Proceedings 1628*), p. 95, 97, 99. Relf (ed.), *Notes of the Debates in the House of Lords*, p. 64. *Commons Journal*, vol. 1, p. 875. *Lords Journals*, volume 3, p. 698.

Commons	Jeremiah Dyke (1584-1639) Dr. Walter Balcanquhall (c.1586-1645) *Robert Harris (1580/81-1658) also received consideration, but was not chosen	Parson of Epping, Essex Dean of Rochester Rector of Hanwell, Oxfordshire
February, 1629 ³		
Lords	Dr. John Williams (1582-1650) Dr. Joseph Hall	Bishop of Lincoln Bishop of Exeter (or Exon)
Commons	Dr. John Harris (1587/88-1658) Robert Harris Charles Fitzgeffry (c.1575-1638)	Lecturer of St. Margaret's, Westminster; Rector of North Crawley, Buckinghamshire; Prebend of Whitchurch; Canon in Winchester Cathedral Rector of Hanwell, Oxfordshire Lecturer in Fowey and rector of St. Dominick, near Saltash, Cornwall
April-May, 1640 ⁴		
Lords	*The Short Parliament ended before the Lords appointed preachers for their fast.	
Commons	Dr. Richard Holdsworth Stephen Marshall (1594/95?-1655)	Archdeacon of Huntingdon; Prebend of Buckden; Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge; President of Sion College Vicar of Finchingfield, Essex

³ Notestein and Relf (eds.), *Commons Debates for 1629*, p. 41-2, 83, 129. One parliamentary journal wrongly lists Fitzgeffry's first name as "William." (ibid.). *Commons Journals*, vol. 1, p. 927. *Lords Journals*, vol. 4, p. 24.

⁴ Cope, and Coates (eds.), *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, p. 237. Maltby (ed.), *The Short Parliament*, p. 35-6. *Commons Journals*, vol. 2, p. 9.

November, 1640 ⁵		
Lords	Dr. Thomas Morton (1564-1659) Dr. Barnabas Potter (1577-1642)	Bishop of Durham Bishop of Carlisle
Commons	Stephen Marshall Dr. Cornelius Burges (1589?-1665)	Vicar of Finchingfield, Essex Vicar of Watford, Hertfordshire; Rector of St. Magnus, London Bridge; assistant of Sion College
December 22, 1641 ⁶		
Lords	Dr. James Ussher (1581-1656) Dr. John Williams	Archbishop of Armagh Archbishop of York
Commons	Edmund Calamy (1600-1666) Stephen Marshall	Curate of St. Mary Aldermanbury, London; Rector of Rochford, Essex Vicar of Finchingfield, Essex

⁵ Jansson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Opening Session of the Long Parliament*, volume 1, p. 59, 64, 161 n.1. *Commons Journals*, vol. 2, p. 24. *Lords Journals*, vol. 4, p. 85.

⁶ James Ussher, *Vox Hibernae* (London, 1642)(TT, E.132(32)). John Nalson, *An Impartial Collection of the Great Affairs of State* (London, 1683), volume 2, p. 754 (Wing N107A). *Commons Journals*, vol. 2, p. 348. *Lords Journals*, vol. 4, p. 480.

In particular, James' son-in-law Frederick V had claimed the throne of Bohemia only to lose the Calvinist Palatinate to Catholic Habsburg forces. James wanted to play the role of peacemaker, recover the Palatinate by a Spanish marriage for Prince Charles, and even reunite Christendom by a general church council presided over by Christian princes. By contrast, the godly saw the war, which was going disastrously for Protestants, as an apocalyptic struggle against the papal Antichrist and Spain. They urged James to recover the Palatinate by force and defend the Reformed churches on the continent from Habsburg and Catholic tyranny as part of a confessional alliance of Protestant states. With broad public support the godly vehemently opposed the Spanish Match. They feared it would lead to toleration of Catholics at home who would subvert church and state, subjection of England to Spanish domination, and the undermining of other Protestant states. Because James' policies would imperil true religion at home and God's cause abroad, the nation would lose the Lord's providential protection and suffer divine wrath. With hot agitation in Parliament in 1621 and 1624, and sermons denouncing royal policy across the country, James' fear of puritans rose.

At this point, Montague put forward his Anti-Calvinist vision of the church. This vision offered greater hope for Christian rapprochement because it rejected the identification of the pope as Antichrist, and radically narrowed the gap between the Church of England and the Church of Rome. To be peacemaker and catholic, James need only reject Calvinist doctrine, quash puritans in the church, and have more distant relations with Reformed churches on the continent. Montague may have had some success. James, either for political expedience or from new conviction, allowed

publication of both books. He also defended Montague against the accusation of being a “papist.” Daniel Featley though claimed James remained a Calvinist to the end.

Whatever the case, James soon died and the accession of Charles brought great promise as Anti-Calvinists had sounded out his religious views and found them favorably disposed to their own.¹

Montague breathtakingly overthrew more than 60 years of Calvinist dominance. He gave the religious settlement an Anti-Calvinist gloss, and claimed the church had left undetermined issues he could not so gloss. He dismissed the vast corpus of English Calvinist writing as mere “private opinions,” “fancies,” and “conceits,” and not the “public,” “established,” “general,” “received,” “approved,” “resolved,” or “authorized” doctrine of the church. While the Synod of Dort included a British delegation, its conclusions were no rule to the Church of England, were contrary to its doctrine, and impeached its discipline. Unfortunately, “puritans” published their doctrine as the Church of England’s, and Catholic polemicists were quick to accept this claim to impute such views to “Protestants.” In reality, “puritanism” was not the doctrine of Church of England. Indeed, “Calvinists” and “puritans” were against its doctrine and discipline. Puritans were “novellers” teaching “novelty,” “novel opinions,” and “heresy.” By contrast, Montague argued he was teaching the doctrine of the Church of England which

¹ Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution* (Cambridge, 1989); Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642* (Stanford, CA, 1993); and W.B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1997). James’ response to the Thirty-Years War differed from most English Calvinists because his anti-Catholic views differed from them as well. His view of the pope as Antichrist was limited to the papal claim to civil and spiritual supremacy, and the power to depose secular rulers. James also differed from the godly by distinguishing radical from moderate Catholics. Radicals accepted papal deposing power and rebellion against the enemies of Rome. Moderates took the oath of allegiance to the king, and thereby rejected papal deposing power. James offered moderates toleration and loathed religious persecution. (See above: Cogswell, Fincham, Patterson) For Featley’s claim about James’ Calvinist views see: Daniel Featley, *A Parallel: Of New-Old Pelagian Error* (London, 1626), Sig. A3v-A4r (STC 10735).

agreed with scripture, the Church Fathers, and the “true,” “ancient,” “primitive,” “catholic,” “orthodox,” and “Apostolical” doctrine. To bolster his claim the title page of his *Gagg* included the line: “Published by Authority.” Likewise, his *Appello* included a licensing statement from Dr. Francis White, the Anti-Calvinist Dean of Carlisle, affirming it to agree with the “established” doctrine and discipline of the Church of England. Montague claimed “puritans” called all who disagreed with them “papists.”

Crucially, Montague re-defined all Calvinists as “puritans.” He went so far as to claim that with respect to the discipline of the Church of England that “the puritans and schismaticks themselves, at least the wiser and subtler sort of them, come off roundly now, for ends best known amongst themselves, remaining *quod errant, quoad doctrinam, & tantum non in EPISCOPATU Puritani.*” Not surprisingly, Montague argued that even “conformable puritans” were part of a fifth column within the church fomenting a “popular” plot. Failing to change the church by open opposition, the “hypocritical puritan” conformed outwardly to get preferment so he could then undermine that to which he had subscribed. This “time-serving colluding” allowed puritans to preach “foreign doctrine,” cunningly passed off as the church’s, to bring in “foreign discipline.” That is, they aimed to bring in “popes in every parish” or “puritanical parity” in the church and “popular democracies and democratical anarchies” or “popular irregularity” in the state. They could do so because their preaching won fanatic “proselytes” who took their teaching as absolute and gave them total obedience. Montague’s assessment of the threat puritans and papists posed was similar to his fellow Anti-Calvinist John Howson. Howson claimed puritans outnumbered Catholics in England 100 to 1, and thought Calvinist conformists like Abbot even opposed preaching against supporters of

“puritanizing.” Montague took pains to link “puritan,” “presbyterian,” “popular,” and “Calvinist.” In contrast to “puritans,” whom he said were “a schismatical party” or “faction” disquieting and dividing the church, Montague claimed the mantle of “moderation,” “peace,” and “unity.” His position was “moderate” charting “middling courses,” while theirs was “factious” and “innovating.”²

English Calvinists of many stripes, including the British delegates to the Synod of Dort, vigorously responded with a mirror opposite view. They denied being “puritans” or supporters of “puritanism.” They denied any link between Calvinist doctrine and presbyterian discipline. Montague was the one disturbing the peace and unity of the church. He was the one who was “busy” and “factious.” “Arminians” were the

² Richard Montague, *Appello Cæsarem. A Ivst Appeale from Two Vniust Informers* (London, 1625), Sig. a1v-a4v, *1r-A4v, p. 1-13, 16, 23-6, 28, 30-2, 35-7, 42-5, 48, 55-8, 60, 69-74, 78-80, 83-4, 90, 100, 105-14, 118, 129, 132-42, 174-75, 187, 190, 211, 215, 226, 230-40, 242-45, 271, 289-90, 292-93, 305-6, 308-9 (STC 18031). Richard Montague, *A Gagg for the new Gospell? No: A New Gagg for an Old Goose* (London, 1624), title, Sig. Ж2r-4v, p. 34, 48-50, 73-4, 103, 110, 157-58, 169-72, 179-81, 184, 187, 214, 246, 248, 250, 321, 323-26 (STC 18038). Nicholas Cranfield and Kenneth Fincham (eds.), “John Howson’s Answers to Archbishop Abbot’s Accusations at his ‘Trial’ before James I at Greenwich, 10 June 1615” in *Camden Miscellany*, volume xxix, 4th series, volume 34 (London, 1987), p. 330. Anti-Calvinists called some moderate Calvinist bishops “puritans” under James as well. For example, Barnabas Potter was known as “the puritanical bishop.” In 1619, some in Ireland, purportedly “crafty papists” or men “of no great repute for learning or worth,” called James Ussher a “puritan” to block any preferment. But the Lord Deputy and Council of Ireland wrote to James VI and I on his behalf, and in discourse with the king Ussher satisfied him of his conformity. The king was so impressed that he offered Ussher the bishopric of Meath unsolicited. In these cases, however, the term puritan involved attitudes to organ music (Potter) and discipline/ceremonies (Ussher) not doctrine. See: David Lloyd, *Memoires* (London, 1668), p. 153 (Wing, L2642); Richard Parr, *The Life of the Most Reverend Father in God, James Usher* (London, 1686), p. 15-17 (Wing U163); and Nicholas Bernard, *The Life & Death of the Most Reverend and Learned Father of Our Church Dr. James Usher* (London, 1656), p. 50-1 (TT E.1584[2]). In 1615 before King James, when Archbishop Abbot claimed Archbishop Bancroft had held the Anti-Calvinist Oxford divine John Howson a “papist,” Howson retorted that Bancroft had thought Abbot a “puritan.” Howson said Bancroft thought so when Bishop of London because of Abbot’s stance against the Cheapside cross. He admitted that Bishop Ravis later brought Abbot into favor again with Bancroft. Howson also implied that Abbot was among the “puritans” accusing him and other Anti-Calvinists like Lancelot Andrewes of being “papists” and maintaining “popery.” James was unconvinced by Howson’s charge against Abbot, and when the latter went on to suggest that Henry Robinson, Bishop of Carlisle, was a “puritan,” the king replied: “He was a bishop and now no puritan.” So contrary to Montague, James denied the possibility of “puritan bishops.” James also cleared Howson of heterodoxy, but rebuked his preaching as contentious, and directed him to preach more against Roman teaching. James promoted Howson to the bishopric of Oxford in 1618. See: Cranfield and Fincham (eds.), “John Howson’s,” p. 320-41. For a study of how Anti-Calvinists appropriated traditional anti-puritan rhetoric and expanded it to include all Calvinists, see: Peter Lake, “Puritanism, Arminianism, and a Shropshire Axe-Murder,” *Midland History*, 1990 15: 37-64.

“sectaries.” Montague was the one asserting his “private opinion,” “private fancy,” “private sense,” “private interpretation,” or “private conception” as the “public,” “received,” “authorized,” and “established” doctrine of the church. His doctrine contained the “heresy” or “errors” of “Pelagianism,” “Arminianism,” and “popery.” He was the one engaging in “innovation” and “novelism.” The Calvinist doctrine of the Church of England was “ancient,” “primitive,” “Apostolical,” “catholic,” and “orthodox.” It agreed with scripture, the Church Fathers, the Reformed churches on the continent, and the Synod of Dort. James VI and I approved of the Dort articles, and opposed “Arminianism.” Their position was the “moderate” one. They were the ones with “moderation” aiming at peace in church.

In their view, Montague slandered the “orthodox,” including the church’s most learned, zealous, and grave doctors and divines, as “Calvinists” and “puritans.” Particularly outrageous was Montague’s line about “puritan bishops.” Featley shot back that Anti-Calvinists were “tantum non in uxoratu Papistæ,” and according to John Owen others replied they were “Tantum non in Uxoratu Pontificii.” They argued the term “puritan” had always meant ceremonial non-conformists and/or opponents of episcopacy. No such thing as “puritan doctrine” or “doctrinal puritanism” existed. A puritan was not a “heretic.” Puritans and conformists had always shared the same doctrine, which had been the long established orthodoxy of the vast majority in the English church. They claimed Montague made all who opposed his “Arminian,” “Pelagian,” and “popish” doctrines to be “puritans.” Calvinist conformists only demanded outward conformity. Like Elizabeth I, they opposed church and state prying into consciences and hearts. In their view, once puritans were “conformable” they ceased to be a threat. They were no

longer “puritans” or “rebels,” but “loyal,” “well-disposed” subjects. For them, the turn puritans took from the 1590s, away from attempting to change the religious settlement towards working within it, was a major victory not a new and more sinister threat.

These Calvinists thought “Arminianism” aided Spain and Rome by subverting the “Gospel” and “Truth,” and dividing English Protestants so as to create a breach for the Catholic enemy to enter. They only disagreed about whether those advancing “Arminianism” were complicit agents in a “plot” to bring in “popery” and reduce the Church of England to Rome, unwitting dupes of such, or merely brothers in error who were nonetheless imperiling church and state. Burton, with some support from Calvinist conformists, added that those disparaged as “puritans” and “Calvinists” were merely zealous Protestants, the bulwark keeping England from being reconciled to Rome. If overthrown, the remaining “civil and good fellow Protestants” would be easy converts to Rome. Further, all these Calvinists feared that “heresy” would bring divinely ordained destruction to the nation. Moreover, for Calvinists like Featley, Montague was straining at “a puritan gnat” while swallowing “a popish camel.”³

³ Walter Balcanquhall, *A ioynt attestation, avowing that the discipline of the Church of England was not impeached by the Synode of Dort* (London, 1626), p. 2, 4-5, 21, 25-6 (STC 1239). George Carleton, *The Collegiat Suffrage of the divines of Great Britaine, concerning the five articles controverted in the Low Countries* (London, 1629), p. 171-78 (STC 7070). Carleton, Davenant, Balcanquhall, Samuel Ward, and Thomas Goad all subscribed to these two publications. (See above: Balcanquhall, Carleton) Responding to Montague’s doubting that the British delegates to Dort consented to its decrees, Balcanquhall told the Commons committee on religion in 1625 that the British delegates gave their consent on oath, and that it “extended to all the canons excepting three concerning discipline which were excepted by protestation.” See: Gardiner (ed.), *Debates in the House of Commons*, p. 48. Joseph Hall, *The Contemplations upon the History of the New Testament: The Second Tome* (London, 1661), p. 346 (Wing H375). Joseph Hall, *Via Media*, in *The Shaking of the Olive-tree* (London, 1660) p. 365 (Wing H416). Hall did not subscribe because he left the synod after a few months due to ill health and was replaced by Dr. Goad. See: Hall, *The Shaking*, p. 35-6; and Joseph Hall, *The Reconciler* (London, 1629), p. 74-75 (STC 12709a). George Carleton, *An Examination of those things wherein the author of the late Appeale holdeth the doctrines of the Pelagians and Arminians to be the doctrines of the Church of England* (London, 1626), Sig. A3v, p. 1, 4-7, 13-14, 18, 21-22, 25, 28-30, 38-9, 45, 49, 56, 78-9, 95-6, 105, 111-112, 114-116 (STC 4633). George Carleton, *An Examination*, second edition (London, 1626), p. 2, 5-11, 19, 22-3, 28, 33-4, 40, 44-6, 61-2, 78-9, 97-9, 121-22, 197, 207, 209-10, 213-19, 221-22, 226, 228, 230-33 (STC 4635). Daniel Featley, *A Parallel*, Sig. A3v-A4r. Daniel Featley, *A Second Parallel Together with a Writ of Error Sved Against the*

Significantly, these Calvinists appealed to and found sympathy in parliament and MPs often repeated their arguments. In the *Collegiat Suffrage*, the British delegates to the Synod of Dort called on magistrates to safeguard “orthodox doctrine,” root out “errors,” and resist “innovation.” John Yates and Nathaniel Ward had petitioned the Commons against Montague’s *Gagg* (which gave occasion for Montague to write *Appello*), and Yates reprinted it in his reply to Montague to stir MPs anew. In parliament 1625-29, the vast majority of MPs made the same Calvinist arguments against Montague and “Arminianism” we have reviewed, and even added to them. MPs found a strong ally against Montague in Archbishop Abbot, when in 1624 the Commons referred Montague’s *Gagg* to him. Despite the Commons not going through proper channels, and potential anger at court, Abbot agreed to scrutinize the work to support “truth” and continue “peace” in the church. He found serious errors, got permission from the king to call Montague before him, and blamed him for disturbing the church. In a “fatherly” manner, Abbot ordered him to revise his book to satisfy the Commons and make good his denials of “popery” and “Arminianism.” He warned him not to wed himself to his own

Appealer (London, 1626), Sig. A2v-B4r; first pagination, p. 22-4, 45, 95; second pagination, p. 1, 6, 36-8, 49, 52, 95-7 (STC 10737). Featley was surely writing with Archbishop Abbot’s support as the latter complained of Montague’s “Arminian book” three times only to be thwarted by the intervention of the Duke of Buckingham. See: John Rushworth, *Historical Collections* (London, 1659), p. 457 (Wing, R2316a). John Yates, *Ibis ad Caesarem* (London, 1626), title; Sig. A1r, A2v, A3r, A4r-v, B1r-v, B2r, B4r-v; first pagination, p. 1-7; second pagination, p. 1-4, 6-8, 10n, 13, 61-2, 64-71, 74, 85; third pagination, p. 36-44 (STC 26083). Francis Rous, *TESTIS VERITATIS* (London, 1626), title, p. 104-7 (STC 21347). *A brieve censure vpon an appeale to Caesar* ([Oxford], 1625?), p. 34 (STC 18032). Henry Burton, *A plea to an appeale* (London, 1626), Sig. ¶2v-¶4v, a1r-a2r, a3r a4r-v, A1r-v, A2r-A4r; p. 1-10, 13-14, 24-5, 28, 37, 40-46, 48, 86-93 (STC 4153). Henry Burton, *For God and the King* ([Amsterdam], 1636), p. 117-121 (STC 4142). John Owen, *The Doctrine of the Saints Perseverance Explained and Confirmed* (London, 1654), p. 315-16 (Wing O740). Henry Hickman, *Laudensium Apostasia* (London, 1660), title, p. 10-11 (Wing H1911). The most concise Anti-Calvinist statement defining Calvinist doctrine as “puritan” is the December 15, 1630 letter Dr. Brooks of Trinity College, Cambridge wrote in reply to Laud who had encouraged his “Arminian” book: “I dare say that their doctrine of predestination is the root of Puritanism, and Puritanism the root of all rebellions and disobedient intractableness in parliaments, &c. and of all schism and sauciness in the country, nay in the church it self: this hath made many thousand of our people, and too great a part of the gentlemen of the land Leightons in their hearts.” See: William Prynne, *Canterburies Doome* (London, 1646), p. 167 (Wing P3917). For British involvement in the Synod of Dort see: Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p. 87-105.

“opinion.” Montague disregarded Abbot and published the more inflammatory *Appello* without his knowledge.⁴ After parliament sought to imprison Montague and censured him, Charles made him a royal chaplain to protect him. Worse, in 1628 Charles made him Bishop of Chichester. While in January, 1629 Charles sought to appease Parliament and called in *Appello*, it had long since served its purpose.

This context makes clear why the preachers MPs chose for their fasts stood near the center of the church. Many were chaplains to James and/or Charles, including Preston, Burges, Davenant, Carleton, Potter, Balcanquhall, and Holdsworth. All had powerful patrons. Moreover, they had relationships across the blurred puritan-Calvinist

⁴ George Carleton, *Collegiat Suffrage*, p. 171-78. J.P. Kenyon (ed.), *The Stuart Constitution 1603-1688*, second edition (Cambridge, 1986), p. 140-42. Yates, *Ibis ad Cæsarem*, third pagination, p. 46. Gardiner (ed.), *Debates in the House of Commons*, p. 26, 33-5, 42, 47-53, 62-3, 69, 179-86. Notestein and Relf (eds.), *Commons Debates for 1629*, p. 12-18, 27-28, 35-7, 97, 100, 109-10, 194. Montague said he had been told and assured (doubtless by the Anti-Calvinist Bishop of Norwich, Samuel Harsnett) that in the diocese of Norwich, Ward and Yates were “two Grandees of the faction.” That is, they were “puritans in faction” who were merely “pretending conformity by subscription.” See: Montague, *Appello*, p. 3, 6, 22, 77, 162, 204, 231, 308-9, 319. On July 7, 1625, the Commons committee on religion which was dealing with Montague’s books reported that Montague labored “to put a jealousy betwixt the king and his well-affected subjects” by saying “puritans” were “a potent prevailing faction in the kingdom.” They complained Montague did not give a specific definition of the term (i.e. non-conformists or presbyterians) so “by his opinion we may all be puritans. Mr. Ward and Mr. Yates are puritans, and yet these are men that subscribe and conform.” Montague claimed these two were “puritans in heart.” Montague even said “Bishops may be puritans, *tantum non Episcopatu Puritani*.” Likewise, on April 17, 1626 Pym reported on Montague’s books “that under the name of puritans he collecteth the greatest part of the king’s true subjects.” He tries to being the king in “jealousy” with them. See: Gardiner (ed.), *Debates in the House of Commons*, p. 49, 181. Responding to Montague’s charge of being a “Grandee of faction,” Yates argued he had subscribed to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, and preached and written in defense of its government. He claimed by private conference and public preaching to have won many to conformity. Any who conformed were not “puritans” or “rebels.” Yates said he detested “puritans” properly defined as “maligners of the state, and Grandees of faction, which labor to draw sovereignty into contempt, annihilate just laws, taint superior powers with disgraceful notes of persecution and tyranny.” These puritans undertook “to blow trumpets of rebellion.” They were “saints in shew, but Scythians in substance.” Such puritans included Alexander Leighton, though he also referred to them as “separatists” whose path of “division” and “disloyalty” led many to be “divided from the Church of Great Britain.” He stressed the need for and duty to seek “peace” and “unity” in church and state. (Yates, *Ibis ad Cæsarem*, third pagination, p. 36-44) Similarly, Burton argued that a minister was not a “puritan” if he was “conformable,” earnestly preached in defense of ecclesiastical ceremonies, and brought the laity to conform. He decried Montague for tagging orthodoxy with “the reproach of puritanism, the very name, being enough to cause Truth to be taken for heresy; sincerity, for hypocrisy; a peaceable conformitant, for a seditious schismatick; a loyal subject, for a traitor; an honest, man for a varlet.” See: Burton, *A Plea*, p. 8; Sig. ¶4v-a1r. Montague doubtless felt the same about how puritans applied the term “papist” to Anti-Calvinists.

conformist transition based on ideology, friendships (often forged at university), and in some cases family ties. The conformists were known for being frequent preachers, being opponents of “Arminianism,” having cordial relations with puritans, distinguishing between moderate and radical puritans, being flexible or soft on nonconformity for the sake of preaching, being critical of, or resistant to Laudian policies, having English Protestant nationalist views, and being hawkish on the Roman Catholic Church. Lake and Morton were among a group of Calvinists Archbishop Abbot patronized and headed that staunchly defended doctrinal Calvinism, and acted against “Arminians” like Laud and Howson at court and in the universities. The puritans were also noted opponents of “Arminianism” and Caroline-Laudian initiatives, but they were the moderate sort. They were “conformable” in part or in whole, flexible, tactful, and accepted a set liturgy and episcopacy.⁵

⁵ For Holdsworth see: Patrick Collinson, “Holdsworth, Richard (1590-1649),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, May, 2006; *An Elegiacall Commemoration of . . . Mr. Josiah Shute* (London, 1643), p. 2 (Thomason Tracts, E.75[1]); Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 267. PRO, SP 16/442/84; 16/442/138; 16/445/22. For the others: Nicholas W.S. Cranfield, “Carleton, George (1557/8-1628),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. J. Sears McGee, “Westfield, Thomas (1573-1644),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. A.J. Hegarty, “Potter, Barnaby (bap. 1577, d. 1642),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; and Lloyd, *Memoires*, p. 153-56. Stephen Wright, “Harris, Robert, (1580/81-1658),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Kenneth Fincham, “Lake, Arthur (bap. 1567, d. 1626),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Jason Yiannikou, “Dyke, Jeremiah (bap. 1584, d. 1639),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. C.S. Knighton, “Harris, John (1587/8-1658),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Vivienne Larminie, “Davenant, John (bap. 1572, d. 1641),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Arnold Hunt, “Shute, Josias (bap. 1588, d. 1643),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Sharon Achinstein, “Calamy, Edmund (1600-1666),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, online edn., October, 2006. Alan Ford, “Ussher, James (1581-1656),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Tai Liu, “Burgess, Cornelius (d. 1665),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Tom Webster, “Marshall, Stephen (1594/5?-1655),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, online edn., Oct. 2006. Richard A. McCabe, “Hall, Joseph (1574-1656),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Jonathan D. Moore, “Preston, John (1587-1628),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Anne Duffin, “Fitzgeffry, Charles, (c.1575-1638),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. John Coffey, “Balcanquhall, Walter (c.1586-1645),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. All of these men remained Calvinists. Puritans like Burgess, Calamy, and Marshall changed with the

Of particular import, and quite conspicuously, Carleton, Davenant, Hall, and Balcanquhall were British delegates to the Synod of Dort (1618-19), and active defenders of Calvinist orthodoxy. Lake was also known for his role as an advisor to the delegates. Further, Morton was the senior Calvinist representative at the York House Conference which met February 11 and 17, 1626 to address the national scandal caused by the publication of the “Arminian” Richard Montague’s books. In 1620, John Preston had preached a well-received anti-Arminian sermon to James. He as well played a leading role at the York House Conference and consulted with his close friend Davenant about Montague’s works.⁶ So here we see MPs defining the middle ground to exclude both radical puritans and Anti-Calvinist conformists from the mainstream. Moderate puritans and Calvinist conformists were the rock upon which they thought the church built.

Moreover, because the MPs selections of preachers regarded a fast day, they were making a more profound statement about their sense of English Protestant orthodoxy established under Elizabeth and James. Arguably, a fast day constituted and necessitated an expression of the reformed, or rather Reformed, public “face” of the church, of its established orthodox self-understanding. As we have seen, fast days were a special time to come before God repentant, reformed, and obedient to the Word as individuals, communities, and a nation. Fasting and prayer enlivened by pure worship and pure

times in the early 1640s to adopt a presbyterian position. While Balcanquhall defended Calvinist doctrine, from 1633 he supported Laudian beautification of churches and ceremony, and in the late 1630s opposed the Scottish Covenanters. (See above, Coffey) Though dated, the printed DNB often has useful information not in the online version. See: Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, *The Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 1917-22) [hereafter DNB], Holdsworth (volume 9, p. 1018-1020), Carleton (volume 3, p. 999-1000), Balcanquhall (volume 1, p. 945-46), Westfield (volume 20, p. 1264-1265), Potter (volume 16, p. 211-12), Robert Harris (volume 9, p. 23), Hall (volume 8, p. 959-64), Burges (volume 3, p. 301-304), Calamy (volume 3, p. 679-682), Marshall (volume 12, p. 1128-1132), Davenant (volume 5, p. 551), Lake (volume 11, p. 408-9), Preston (volume 16, p. 308-12), Williams (volume 21, p. 414-20), Morton (volume 13, p. 1057-63), Ussher (volume 20, p. 65-72), Shute (volume 18, p. 170-71).⁶ Jonathan D. Moore, “Preston, John (1587-1628),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. DNB, vol. 16, p. 308-12.

doctrine were the best hope to assuage an angry God, and the lack of purity in His presence would be a great insult. To appear before the divine judge seeking mercy while un-reformed, and (to a degree) un-Reformed, would be the height of hypocrisy. Such brazen disrespect of the Almighty would bring more divine wrath.

Further, fast days were a special time that necessitated the church and nation to possess unity along with truth in approaching God. The more Christians that joined the fast and spoke with one voice in common prayer, the more likely the Lord was to hear their cry. Division was neither a sign of a properly humbled heart nor characteristic of the body of Christ. Fasts were also thought to promote unity by fostering humiliation and seeking divine guidance (something parliament in its petitions for fasts hoped for in addition to success in and blessings upon its work). Indeed, on March 27, 1628 Secretary Coke reported from a conference with the Lords that they had agreed to join with the Commons request to petition the king for a fast. The Lords desired “that they and you should join in prayer and fasting to join together in the truth that serving one king and under one law, they may all join in one religion.”⁷ But unity entailed a vision of the church to be united around.

⁷ Johnson, Keeler, Cole, Bidwell (eds.), *Commons Debates 1628*, volume 2, p. 145. Fasts at the opening of parliaments also naturally stressed unity because contemporaries saw parliament as the means to reconcile prince and people. This concord and correspondence was critical as they believed the king-in-parliament to be the fountain from which order flowed to the kingdom. See: J.P. Cooper (ed.), *Wentworth Papers 1597-1628* (Camden, 4th series, vol. 12, 1973), p. 152-54. Maltby (ed.), *Short Parliament*, p. 4, 82-3. Halliwell (ed.), *D'Ewes*, vol. 1, p. 279, 377; vol. 2, p. 133. Phineas Hodson, *The Kings Request* (London, 1628), p. 30-1 (STC 13551). Fasts dovetailed with a prior tradition of communion services at the opening of parliament (including 1614 and 1621). MPs thought communion necessary to ferret out any “ill-affected” to Protestant religion and infected with “popery.” Also, they wanted to reconcile quarrels and establish love, peace, and unity among MPs and with the king and parliament to facilitate serving “God’s cause” and the kingdom’s. See: *Commons Journals*, vol. 1, p. 671, 715. Maija Jansson (ed.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1614* (Philadelphia, 1988), p. 37, 42, 99, 102. Wallace Notestein, Frances Relf, and Hartley Simpson (eds), *Commons Debates 1621* (New Haven, 1935), volume 2, p. 16-17 and n.4; volume 4, p. 11; volume 5, p. 432.

Montague assaulted the foundation of the accommodation of puritans within the church by marginalizing and defining Calvinist conformists as outside the mainstream. John Owen writing about the rise of the “Arminianizing party” cited Montague’s line about “puritan bishops.” He argued that previously many bishops and conformists of inferior orders were “solidly learned” in the writings of the “ancients,” and were “universally, almost to a man of the same judgment with Calvin.” In addition to Jewel, Abbot, and Prideaux, Owens’s list of “great names among the world of learned men” included bishops who preached at parliamentary fasts: Morton, Ussher, Hall, and Davenant. Likewise, Burton praised those who responded to Montague in print. He cited Carleton (who preached at parliament’s 1625 fast) along with Francis Rous as “worthies” and “two noble champions of God’s Truth.”⁸

The significance of these moderate centrists at parliament’s fasts is further highlighted by four developments. First, in November, 1640 the Lords appointed a committee on innovations in religion from their own members to settle the church. Bishop Williams was its chair. The key sub-committee which formed in March, 1641 also had Williams as chair, and included Burges, Marshall, Calamy, Morton, Ussher, Hall, and Holdsworth. Westfield also was named an assistant to the Lord’s committee. The Lords charged the committee to remove Laudian “innovations,” and prepare a moderate compromise that would accommodate and conciliate without creating a new settlement.⁹

⁸ Owen, *Doctrine of the Saints*, p. 316. Burton, *A plea*, Sig. a4r, A3v-A4r.

⁹ See note 5. Other moderate Calvinist conformists and moderate puritans on the sub-committee included Dr. Samuel Ward, Dr. John Prideaux, Dr. William Twisse, Dr. Robert Sanderson, Dr. Daniel Featly, Dr. Ralph Brownrigg, Dr. John Hacket, Master John White, and Master Thomas Hill. Francis Fullwood, *The Church-History of Britain from the Birth of Jesus Christ Until the Year M.DC.XLVIII Endeavoured by Thomas Fuller* (London, 1655), p. 174 (book 11) (Wing F2416). Had Davenant not been seriously ill (d.

Second, Charles turned to these men when he attempted to appease parliament by refashioning his episcopate. He released Williams from the Tower on petition of the Lords in November, 1640, and made him Archbishop of York (1641). On the death of Bishop Richard Montague in 1641, Charles translated Hall from Exeter to Norwich. In the same year, Charles appointed five moderate Calvinist conformists to bishoprics. Among them was Westfield who became Bishop of Bristol (1642). The king had offered Holdsworth this bishopric, but he refused in Thomas Fuller's view due to the times being unsafe for bishops and the smallness of the see.¹⁰

Third, some including Westfield, Robert Harris, and Holdsworth had difficulty choosing sides in the Civil War. Both king and parliament courted them thinking them more in line with their cause. Fourth, parliament thought enough of Westfield, Ussher, and Holdsworth to appoint them to the Westminster Assembly of Divines along with Robert Harris, Shute, Calamy, Burges, and Marshall. While Ussher and Holdsworth declined, Westfield attended the first session though none of the subsequent ones.¹¹

The particularity of MPs in selecting preachers for fasts and their sense of the orthodox self-understanding of the church is also highlighted by the ministers they refused to let preach at fasts. One was Dr. Thomas Anyan (1582?-1633?), President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford who became slated to preach before the House on

April, 1641), he likely would have been involved. The sub-committee considered adoption of presbytery within episcopacy or reduced episcopacy, and a more reformed liturgy.

¹⁰ See note 5. The other four moderate Calvinists that Charles elevated to the episcopate were Dr. John Prideaux (Worcester), Dr. Thomas Winniffe (Lincoln), Dr. Ralph Brownrigg (Exeter), and Dr. Henry King (Chichester). Fullwood, *Church-History*, p. 194 (book 11). Thomas Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England* (London, 1662), p. 305 (Wing F2441).

¹¹ See note 5. Other Calvinist conformists and puritans invited to the Assembly from the sub-committee of the Lord's committee on innovations in religion included Dr. Brownrigg (Bishop of Exeter), Dr. Daniel Featley, Dr. John Prideaux, Dr. Robert Sanderson, Dr. Samuel Ward, Thomas Hill, Dr. William Twisse, and John White. See: Fullwood, *Church-History*, p. 198-200 (book 11). Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* (London, 1692), vol. 2, p. 41, 61, 72, 213 and *Fasti Oxonienses* (London, 1692), p. 844 (Wing W3383A).

Wednesday, August 3, 1625 at the weekly fast. MPs were furious. For over a decade, accusations had flown about his depravity. Indeed, in 1624 MPs had censured him and petitioned James and later Charles against him.¹² In the jargon of the day, he seemed a “notorious sinner.” Clearly, MPs thought a fast led by the likes of Anyan would bring more divine wrath not avert it. Another example is the selection of preachers for the Commons’ fast in the Short Parliament. When Secretary Francis Windebank suggested a Mr. Shepeheard as a preacher, other MPs successfully objected that during the last parliament this minister had complained: “that they enacted many laws against papists, but not a jot of one against puritans.” The godly would have heard in this phrasing standard Anti-Calvinist polemic. They also would have been suspicious of anyone Windebank suggested. Laud was a long-time family friend of Windebank, and supported his candidacy to the king for secretary of state. Windebank had received a reputation for

¹² As early as 1614, fellows at Corpus Christi had accused him of drunkenness, sexual misdeeds, and various forms of misconduct and corruption. In 1618, another appeal against Anyan was made to Bishop Andrewes. In April, 1624 petitions came to parliament against him. In hearings before a select committee, MPs deemed him guilty, censured him, and petitioned James in May, 1624 and Charles in June, 1625 to remove him from office, and restore the “ancient discipline” of the two universities. James and Charles bristled at what they viewed as interference in ecclesiastical jurisdiction and referred the matter to other authorities. But powerful patrons protected Anyan. As well as being a royal chaplain to James, he had been a chaplain to Thomas Egerton, Lord Ellesmere (1540-1617), who was Lord Chancellor of England, and Chancellor of the University of Oxford. Ellesmere’s wife Lady Alice Spencer, Countess of Derby (1559-1637), a wealthy, prominent lady at court, also patronized him. Because of his patrons, Anyan continued in office. After MPs protested to the university about him preaching at the fast, Vice-Chancellor John Prideaux tactfully resolved the issue by getting the delegates to meet to discharge Anyan and appoint another to preach. See: Jansson and Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625*, p. 259-60, 262, 303, 380-81, 383. *Commons Journals*, vol. 1, p. 692, 707, 713, 777, 791, 796. Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, vol. 1, p. 819 (Wing W3382). In his *Negotium Posterorum*, Sir John Eliot claimed this episode showed “the spirit of that party which studied an innovation in the Church, and was taken for an indication of more danger. That boldness thought improper for such men, scholars and churchmen being not always found so confident. Still, it increased the fear and with that the jealousy grew more hot, which then appeared in sparks and after flamed more clearly.” (Jansson and Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625*, p. 533. Anyan had Calvinist views on doctrine, the papacy, the Roman Catholic Church, the centrality of preaching, and church history, so his alleged criminal acts not religious ideology motivated MPs in this case. See: Thomas Anyan, *A Sermon Preached at S. Maries Church in Oxford, the 12. of Iuly. 1612. Being the Act Sunday*. (London, 1612)(STC 697); Thomas Anyan, *A Sermon Preached at Saint Marie Spittle April. 10. 1615*. (Oxford, 1615)(STC 698); Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p. 74-5; A.J. Hegarty, “Anyan, Thomas (1582?-1633?),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, online edn., May, 2006.

freeing Catholics suffering under anti-Catholic laws, and was known for negotiating with the papal nuncios. The Grand Remonstrance of 1641, in regards to the “popish party,” would term him “a powerful agent for speeding all their desires.” In 1644, Prynne would see Windebank as a central player in the popish plot. He was “a most fierce papist,” “a Jesuitical secretary,” “an archpapist.” A final example is the litmus test Francis Rous and other MPs succeeding in putting in place when the Commons nominated ministers for their fast in the Long Parliament. Neither any member of the convocation nor any who had helped to craft the June, 1640 canons and etcetera oath were to preach at the fast.¹³ The canons were an important effort to enforce, advance and establish more formally Laudian-Caroline “innovations” in ceremony and doctrine, and require all clergy to take an open-ended oath accepting it and all else ordered by authority. Further outrage arose because, contrary to precedent, the convocation continued to sit after the dissolution of the Short Parliament to pass the canons. In the view of many MPs, the lack of parliament’s approval made the canons illegal.

The make-up of the preachers at parliament’s fasts ensured that fast sermons embodied the shared themes and priorities of Calvinists conformists and puritans: anti-Catholicism (and close ties to reformed churches on the continent), preaching, the reformation of manners, nationalist English Protestant history, and defense of Calvinist orthodoxy. Analysis of these and other fast sermons at the same time, provide an exceptional window onto the competing visions of the Church of England that factions

¹³ Cope and Coates (eds.), *Proceedings of the Short Parliament*, p. 237. Brian Quintrell, “Windebank, Sir Francis (bap. 1582, d. 1646),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Kenyon (ed.), *Stuart Constitution*, p. 211. William Prynne, *Romes Master-Peece: Or, the Grand Conspiracy of the Pope and His Jesuited Instruments*, second edition (London, 1644), p. 17, 22-4, 29 (Wing P4056). Jansson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Opening Session of the Long Parliament*, volume 1, p. 69, 64, 71. Notestein (ed.), *Journal*, p. 18 and n.25, 530.

promulgated. Scholars of early modern Britain have recently re-discovered the importance of sermons. Sermons were a key means to disseminate and build support for a vision of truth, peace, and unity. The pulpit was a critical source of news for the population. Pulpits linked the center and localities. Sermons at court, to parliament, and in high profile pulpits like Paul's Cross had wide audiences. Manuscript sermon notes and letters, printed sermons and news pamphlets all spread knowledge of sermons far and wide. The crown had long known the power of sermons and sought to "tune the pulpits." MPs requested many fast sermons to parliament to be printed, and this became standard during the Civil War and Interregnum. The crown also had court sermons printed, and Royalist fast sermons countered Parliamentary ones. Scholars have also found that the news and book trade was far greater than previously thought.¹⁴

Calvinist conformist fast sermons to parliament were militantly anti-Catholic, and supported a pro-war, anti-Spanish foreign policy. They called for stronger action against seminary priests, Jesuits, and recusants (seen as necessarily disloyal) in England to stymie the supposed dire threat they posed to church and state. They called for England to intervene in the Thirty-Years War as part of an alliance of Protestant states to save the Church abroad. The plight of the Palatinate and Lady Elizabeth (James VI and Is daughter who had wed Prince Elector Frederick) drew especial attention and sympathy. They thus implicitly criticized the tacit suspension of anti-Catholic penal laws during the marriage negotiations with Spain and France, and provisions of the Treaty of Paris

¹⁴ Lori Anne Ferrell, *Government by Polemic: James I, the King's Preachers, and the Rhetoric of Conformity, 1603-1625* (Stanford, 1998); Peter McCullough, *Sermons at Court: Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching* (Cambridge, 1998); Richard Cust, "News and Politics in Early Seventeenth-Century England," *Past & Present*, 1986 112: 60-90. Alastair Bellany, "'Raylinge Rymes and Vaunting Verse:' Libellous Politics in Early Stuart England, 1603-1628," in Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (eds.), *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (Stanford, 1993), p. 285-310. Alastair Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2002), esp. ch. 2.

(1624), the marriage treaty of Prince Charles to Princess Henrietta Maria, which pledged the suspension both of recusancy laws in England and military aid to the Huguenots at La Rochelle. They also implicitly attacked how the new Catholic Queen openly proselytized her faith, and the high profile of Catholics at court. Additionally, these conformists often portrayed the war in the apocalyptic framework of John Foxe's Book of Martyrs.

In detail in his 1626 fast sermon at Whitehall, and briefly in his 1628 and 1629 fast sermons to the Lords, Hall made inflammatory remarks about Catholics and Spaniards. He mocked their "pastry-deity," and how they were bidden "to adore a God which they know the baker made." He argued there was no greater sin than "idolatry" in believing bread could be God. He railed at how they perpetrated sadistic "torments," "hideous forms of murder," and "bloody massacres." They engaged in "treacherous assassinations," "plots," and "malicious and secret machinations." They were a "savage beast," "bestial," and engaged in "savage cruelty." They hated peace and delighted in war. The Catholic laity consisted of "ignorant and seduced enemies of God's Church." Supposed "blind obedience" guided this "credulous seduced multitude" to join "in opposition to God." They were bid "to forswear their allegiance, and to take arms against their lawful and native sovereign." Led by "false zeal" to delight in blood, Catholic and Spanish agents and forces were merely the latest "enemies of God's Church," "enemies of God," and "enemies of the Gospel." He referred to Catholics as the "Antichristian faction" and lamented how Reformed churches on the continent groaned under "the tyrannous yoke of Antichristian oppression." Their terrible acts were the latest in a long line of persecution and martyrdom of Christians from the ancient Church through "the flames of our late Marian times," the 1588 Armada, the 1605 powder plot, and "Spanish

cruelties” in the Indies during the late war. War against them was just because it was “God’s war” and “the main cause of God.” He argued that the “roaring lion” was as active now in “the last days of the Gospel” as he was in the first against “the way of saving truth” because he knew his time was short. He called on “Christian princes and potentates” and “true-hearted Christians” to unite and “be gathered by the voice of God’s angel to a blessed and victorious Armageddon.”¹⁵

Featley in his 1626 fast sermon railed against transubstantiation and the impossibility of Christ’s body being in more than one place at once. Also, one of the grossest errors of “popery” was “their entitling ignorance the mother of devotion.” He argued that ministers were “trumpeters in God’s army” preparing soldiers to fight “the Lord’s battles.” He then asked if ministers ought not to take a lead role “when the enemy aimeth not so much at the commonwealth as at the church, and not so much at the body as at the soul of the church, the religion we profess, and our most holy faith?” He claimed that “our true and incorrupt religion” was at stake, and that in the battle against the “Trent faith” angels were on “our side.” None were to make “our Argus’s” and “true patriots” to “sleep in security” so destruction could hit unawares. The Catholic enemy and God’s justice were always awake.

Williams claimed that continental Protestants were suffering for professing “the true religion.” He said the hearts of “true Englishmen” would be sore for the church on the continent. Davenant attacked the Catholic doctrines of absolution and papal indulgences, and called the latter “foolery.” He labeled as “foolish” and “superstitious

¹⁵ Hall, *The Contemplations*, p. 268, 344-51. Hall’s sermon can be dated to 1626 from internal evidence about the recent thanksgiving sermon he preached before king at Whitehall on January 29, 1626 on the same psalm. (ibid., p. 251, 344) Joseph Hall, *One of the Sermons Preach’t to the Lord of the High Court of Parliament* (London, 1629), p. 35, 44-45, 50 (STC 12693).

observations” the beliefs that holy water, relics, pilgrimages, saints, and the Virgin Mary were means to acquire grace. He railed against “proud papistical merit-mongers.” For his part, Lake referred to Catholics and Spaniards as “enemies of thy truth.” He claimed “popish priests and Jesuits” were like a plague of locusts and caterpillars “that came out of the bottomless pit.” He claimed “popish recusants” were characterized by “ignorance of truth” and had “the seed of disloyalty.” These “seduced” souls had to engaged by a charitable conversion mission and if they failed to convert they had to be severely punished. He warned of seminary priests and Jesuits as “seducers” who worked “to steal away so many hearts from God and the king.” Protestants had to counter the proselytizing of the Church of Rome overseas. Lake argued that “ambition and covetousness” guided Catholic missions such that “they have with detestable cruelty made their way to those worldly ends, and instead of saving souls have destroyed millions of persons.”

Hall, Lake, Williams, Featley, and Harris used terms for the “reformed churches” on the continent such as “our afflicted brethren,” “our distressed brethren,” “God’s people,” “His Church,” and/or the “Church of Christ abroad.” Featley termed fallen continental Protestants “martyrs.” Lake also saw them as such saying: “we should in our humiliation join our cries with those souls under the altar, that were slain for the Word of God, and the testimony which they held, saying, *How long, O Lord holy and true, doest thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell in the earth? Rev. 6:10.*”¹⁶

¹⁶ Daniel Featley, *Clavis Mystica* (London, 1636), p. 891-92, 894-95, 899-903 (STC 10730). John Williams, *Perseverantia Sanctorum* (London, 1628), p. 17, 54-5 (STC 25727). John Davenant, *One of the Sermons Preached at Westminster: The fifth of April, (being the day of the Public Fast)* (London, 1628), p. 25, 27, 30 (STC 6300). Arthur Lake, *Sermons* (London, 1629), third pagination, p. 201, 205-7, 217-18, 220 (STC 15134). John Harris, *The Destrvcion of Sodome* (London, 1628), p. 21-2, 50 (STC 12806).

These sermons told MPs what they wanted to hear as their petitions for fasts in 1625, 1626, 1628, and 1629 noted the plight of the Protestant churches on the continent, fear of the destruction and subversion of the English church and state, and hope for the preservation and advancement of “true religion” at home and abroad.¹⁷ MPs also were concerned about failure in their anti-Catholic military ventures. One of the reasons Commons MPs listed for a fast in 1626 was in part a veiled reference to Buckingham’s recent disastrous expedition to Cadiz: “The want of God’s blessings upon our counsels and designs, we having not reaped that good success in our actions which otherwise might have been expected.”¹⁸ Also, March 24-31, 1628, MPs used the fast as a rationale to petition Charles to enforce laws against Jesuits, seminary priests, and recusants, as well as restrain Catholics from the Queen’s chapel, Denmark House, and the chapels of foreign ambassadors, and ban them from court and London. The petition, as well as MPs including Edward Montague, Baron of Boughton, stated that the public fast would neither appease God’s wrath, nor end judgments, nor bring desired mercies without reform of “the public and visible sins of the kingdom.” Of those, “idolatry and superstition” were “the most heinous and crying sins.” Worse they were supposedly rampant and suffered too much in the nation.¹⁹ Calvinist conformists were as enthusiastic about this development as puritans. Writing to Archbishop Ussher April 1, 1628, Dr. William Bedell, provost of Dublin College, excitedly related this news. Ussher was doubtless

¹⁷ For 1625, see: Jansson and Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625*, p. 44, 204, 221-22. Gardiner (ed.), *Debates in the House of Commons*, p. 6. *Commons Journals*, vol. 1, p. 799. *Lords Journal*, vol. 3, p. 441. For 1626, see: CUL, MS Mm.4.38, fol. 117b. For 1628, see: Johnson, Keeler, Cole, Bidwell (eds.), *Commons Debates 1628*, volume 2, p. 46-7. BL Add MS 36, 825, fol. 22v-24. *Lords Journals*, volume 3, p. 693. For 1629, see: Notestein and Relf (eds.), *Commons Debates for 1629*, p. 17, 109-10. CUL, Mm.v.1, fol. 29b, and Gg.iv.13, p. 97. BL, Harleian 1221, fol. 87r-v. *Lords Journals*, volume 4, p. 15.

¹⁸ CUL, MS Mm.4.38, fol. 117b.

¹⁹ Johnson, Keeler, Jansson Cole, Bidwell (eds.), *Commons Debates 1628*, volume 2, p. 214-16; volume 5 (*Lords Proceedings 1628*), p. 95, 97-8. PRO, SP 16/98/83.

ecstatic because in 1601 he had warned of divine judgment on Ireland or any nation for toleration of “idolatry” and “popery.”²⁰

Links between fasts and anti-Catholic, pro-war sentiment already were evident in the 1624 parliament. As noted above, MPs opposed the Spanish Match, and feared “popish”/Spanish threats and plots at home and abroad. So on February 23, Sir Edward Cecil (1572-1638) grandson of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, and nephew of Sir Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, moved for a fast for the Commons, and another for the kingdom. Cecil was a staunch Protestant soldier with experience in the Netherlands fighting against the Spanish. He also had led the British elements of an international force in the Protestant Rhineland duchies of Julich and Cleve to resolve a succession dispute. For years, he desperately had wanted to command forces to save the Palatinate. James showed considerable tact brushing off the request. After Cecil, Secretary Calvert, and Sir Richard Weston (Chancellor of the Exchequer) met with James, Cecil reported back to house that he had “good hope” the king would grant it. The king had “patiently” heard them, thanked them for their “good intentions,” and said he would confer with his bishops as usual in such cases. Of course, James then never returned an answer. He had considerable experience with Scots Presbyterians using public fasts to oppose royal policies and knew better than to give the godly in England such a platform.²¹

²⁰ Parr, *Usher*, p. 389. Bedell specified that when the Lords received the Commons’ motion for a public fast, that they added a motion to petition the king for putting in execution all laws and acts of state against recusants. He told that the bishops of Norwich (the Anti-Calvinist Samuel Harsnett) and Lichfield (the Calvinist Thomas Morton) penned the petition which both houses then presented to king. Harsnett was an unusually strong anti-Catholic for an Anti-Calvinist which helps explain his involvement. See: Bernard, *Usher*, p. 38-41.

²¹ “Nicholas Ferrar’s Diary 12 Feb.-8 Mar. 1624,” in *Seventeenth-Century Political and Financial Papers* (Camden Miscellany, volume xxxiii, 5th series, volume 7, Cambridge, 1996), p. 21, 11-70. Roger Lockyer, “Cecil, Edward, Viscount Wimbledon (1572-1638),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Jansson and Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625*, p. 204. *Commons Journals*, vol. 1, p. 671, 715-16. In 1624, complaining of the lack of a public fast for Protestants on the

In addition to anti-Catholicism, a second key trait of Calvinist conformist fast sermons was prioritizing preaching the Word. In regards to the divine judgments the 1625 fast was to remove, Lake claimed the greatest was that the “white horse” did not prevail now as in the first age of the church and the last hundred years. Lake was referring to the white horse in Revelation 6 which he interpreted as “the Gospel of Christ prevailing in the world.” The best way to reverse the “great diminution” of the “Orthodox Church” or “reformed churches” was for England (and other Protestant states) “to make much of God’s truth while we have it, and to make a saving use for our eternal comfort, which God knoweth hitherto we have not done as much as we should, and we do everyday less and less: And what wonder, if that be weary of us, seeing we grow weary of it?” Lake specified that using the Gospel for their own good was insufficient, they had to “propagate it to others” across the world. He lamented how “Christian states,” including England, were guilty of not doing so in “that they have not been careful to bring them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to the knowledge of Christ, and participation of the Gospel.”²² Lake’s views here are indistinguishable from standard puritan sensibilities.

Likewise, Hall used the same language as puritans. In his 1628 fast sermon, he hoped God would strike “flinty hearts,” and “melt” and “convert” them. In his February, 1629 fast sermon, he interpreted his text (Acts 2:37-8, 40) as a “sermon” Peter gave “if

continent, Alexander Leighton correctly assessed the situation opining “I cannot but with grief observe, that this nation hath been at such opposition and enmity with this duty, that it is thought as dangerous a thing to undertake it, as it was in Athens to make mention of the recovery of Salamis; or as it was amongst the Jews, to speak in the name of Jesus.” Further, he claimed that of all nations professing the Gospel only England had not been publicly humbled for Protestants on the continent. He feared the curse of Meroz for the lack of a public fast: “we only have not set forth to *help thus against the mighty*.” Also, this neglect was “a fearful fore-runner and provoker of God’s long protracted wrath to fall upon us.” (Alexander Leighton, *Speculum belli sacri* ([Amsterdam], 1624), p. 206-7 (STC 15432))

²² Lake, *Sermons*, third pagination, p. 207, 217-18.

not at a fast, yet at a general humiliation.” His preaching caused his hearers to be “pricked in their hearts.” Peter as a “fisher of men” by this preaching used the nets of “heavenly doctrine and reproof” to pull up a “wondrous shoal of converts to God.” Further, the way for the “spiritual physician” to give a “medicinal stroke” was through the ear because it was “the very surface of the heart.” Not surprisingly, Hall cited 2 Timothy 4:2 to urge: “Oh let us preach the Word *ευκαιρως ακαιρως, In season, out of season.*” Ministers were not to delay to “strike” and make a “gracious impression” “when the iron of men’s hearts is softened by the fire of God’s Spirit, and made flexible by a meet humiliation.” England’s response to preaching though was lacking. Hall lamented how England continued in sin and asked how long the ministry had to “thunder out God’s fearful judgments against willful sinners.” He queried: “Lord what is become of the success of thy Gospel?” He complained of decline from “a vigorous heat of zeal” to “a temper of lukewarm indifferency” to “a careless mediocrity” to “all extremity of debauchedness.” Like puritans, he also complained of insufficient preaching. He said England had no greater sin than “the affamishing of souls by a willful or lazy silence.”²³

Davenant too used godly language. He saw preaching as a means to get his audience to “search” and “examine” their hearts and consciences, as a means of “stirring up” the people to repentance. Preaching was vital for humans to get “new hearts.” That is, for turning “stony and rebellious hearts” into “soft and obedient hearts,” or changing “iron hearts” into “humble, soft, and religious hearts.” Similarly, John Harris declared in his fast sermon that to “help” repentance “the Word of God must be preached.” Lake argued that “godly sorrow” in a fast necessitated that hearers “be prickt at the heart.” He

²³ Hall, *The Contemplations*, p. 270. Hall, *One of the Sermons*, p. 1-11, 15-17, 45, 61-3.

proclaimed we must “break our stony hearts” and “melt our hearts.” We must “feel” wounded for sin and not be “senseless” in sin.²⁴

These conformists also saw preaching as critical to reforming provoking sins. In 1628, Hall stressed that “the glorious light of saving Truth” was needed to show people their sin. All stressed that a fast required reform of common sins like fornication, adultery, drunkenness, gluttony, wantonness, usury, theft, blasphemy, swearing, covetousness, idleness, irreligion, atheism, indifference in religion, corruption, oppression, extortion, fraud, falsehood, quarreling, profaneness, pride, and superstition. In his 1626 sermon, Hall termed such sins the “Achan” in the camp bringing defeat and leading God not to respond to prayers. Lake stressed that reform was a key part of “true repentance,” and that to be no better for punishment or to return to sin after being “delivered” from a plague was a great sin. As much as any puritan, conformists like Hall, Harris, and Lake complained about magistrates’ lax law enforcement and sin being more rampant than ever. Hall went so far as to say that while “every man” was not to be an officer and punish sin, more cause existed to complain of the “neglect” of authorities, than the “presumption” of those meddling beyond their place. The “floodgates of evil” were open. Hall defended ministers taking the sinful nation to task: “it is the warrantable and necessary duty of S. Peter and all his true evangelical successors when they meet with a froward generation to call it so.” He rejected complaints against ministers for “tartness,” “hard censure,” “needless rigor,” and “envious calumny.” He decried those who claimed ministers “slander the time” and said: “The generation were not untoward; if your tongue were not uncharitable.” In his 1628 fast sermon, Hall listed “contempt of

²⁴ Davenant, *One of the Sermons*, p. 1-13, 26-9, 42, 48, 53. Harris, *Destruction*, p. 3, 6-7, 16, 43-5. Lake, *Sermons*, p. 208-9.

God's messengers" as common sin. Featley also called on ministers to let fly: "we are as trumpeters in God's army; and if the trumpet be cracked, or give an uncertain sound, how shall the soldiers prepare themselves to fight the Lord's battles?"²⁵

As a corollary to reforming sin, Calvinist conformists also defended the "godly." Harris claimed that wicked men should respect the "righteous" because they benefited from them. These "faithful men" were the "buttresses and pillars" of the world upholding it from "ruin and confusion." "Good men" were "sanguis mundi," and "honest men" were "medulla mundi." Harris affirmed that "one righteous man" was so dear in the sight of the Lord that his holiness could balance the sins of thousands of wicked men. The Lord showed great restraint for "the children of God's sake." Thus, "dissolute wretches" should not condemn "good people." The "tares" would quickly be pulled up if not for the "good corn." The godly were like Lot preserving Sodom, or Moses who would "stand in the gap" between the world and God's wrath, or Elijah who had "such power with God" because of his "holy life." A "good man" had great power because "God will come to parley with him, and yield to him in any tolerable request." Such was the case with Abraham and Moses making "intercession" to change God's mind. Such an example should move "a heart composed of hatred against God's chosen, and turn it into love." As in Revelation 12:17, the Devil in all ages made war against the "seed" and "remnant" that kept God's commandments and the Gospel. The Devil "infused a strong conceit in the hearts of all his subjects, that *they* were the causes of all calamities." Indeed, as in Isaiah 1:9 "it is a fatal sign, when there is a decrease of good men." As long as "good men" existed, the world would endure, but when "a general dearth of good

²⁵ Davenant, *One of the Sermons*, p. 1-13, 19. Hall, *The Contemplations*, p. 268-70, 351. Featley, *Clavis*, p. 906, 901. Hall, *One of the Sermons*, p. 23-4, 38-52. Harris, *Destruction*, p. 10-11, 34-45. Lake, *Sermons*, p. 216-19.

men” arose the world was ending.²⁶ Likewise, Hall in his 1629 fast sermon claimed “never times were so overgrown with iniquity, as that God hath not left Himself some gracious remainders.” In every harvest, there were always “some gleanings” left on the field. He argued that “these few, if they may give a blessing to the times, yet they cannot give a style; the denomination still follows the greater (though the worse) part.”²⁷

Third, Calvinist conformist fast sermons often entailed what Patrick Collinson has called the “prophetic mode” and other scholars of puritans the “jeremiad.”²⁸ In this style, a favorite of puritans and many Calvinist conformists, ministers imitated Old Testament prophets by paralleling England with Israel, and calling for repentance and renewing covenant in response to providential judgments. Most importantly, this style provided a narrative that incorporated anti-Catholicism, preaching the Word, reformation of manners, and English Protestant nationalist history. This narrative is the same one we have seen in the fast books under Elizabeth and James. England was the most blessed yet most sinful nation so God might forsake it. The theme of “God is leaving England” was a platitude among Calvinist conformists and not just puritans like Thomas Hooker whose famous sermon is the archetype of the genre. So too was John Winthrop’s famous line that New England had to be “a city upon a hill” or else God would withdraw providential blessings and make them a story and byword among all nations.

Lake argued that England had a special obligation to reform because like Israel it was “an eminent place.” That is, it was “a land flowing with milk and honey,” and “the

²⁶ Harris, *Destruction*, p. 17-22.

²⁷ Hall, *One of the Sermons*, p. 27-8, 30-1.

²⁸ Patrick Collinson, “Biblical rhetoric: The English nation and national sentiment in the prophetic mode” in Claire Mceachern and Debora Shuger (eds.), *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 15-45. Michael McGiffert, “God’s Controversy with Jacobean England,” *American Historical Review*, 1983 88(5), p. 1151-1174. Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison, WI, 1978).

seat of the Church, and a type of heaven.” God expected such a people to be “fruitful” in a “fruitful land.” To sin in the “Land of Immanuel” made sin much worse. Also, a special obligation incurred because of the “tenure” of the place, in that God gave it to the Israelites to hold in “frank almoigne.” That is, God freely gave the land in return for the people bestowing themselves to His service; and specifically “that they might keep His statutes and observe His laws.” This tenure applied to England because all its blessings were from God even if they seemed from “second causes.” Further, Lake had already argued with respect to the Gospel that England not only was obliged “to make much of it for our own good,” but to propagate it to others. He hoped if England and other Protestant states reformed their great sin by zealous proselytizing, that God would not only expand the Church but “continue us His people.”²⁹

Daniel Featley in his 1626 fast sermon stressed the threat of God giving over England to its enemies for her sins. Tellingly titled “The Last Offer of Peace,” the sermon’s text was Luke 19:41-2 where Christ wept over Jerusalem and foretold its destruction. Featley paralleled the blessings and failings of England with those of Jerusalem. He thought he heard Christ damningly telling England:

“If thou, even thou, if thou which art the queen of all the reformed churches; if thou which hast enjoyed the sunshine of the Gospel without any eclipse by persecution for more than 60 years; if thou who has had line upon line, precept upon precept, admonition after admonition, and exhortation after exhortation; if thou whom God hath miraculously preserved from imminent destruction by defeating the invincible Armada in eighty-eight, and since discovering the matchless powder plot; if thou, even thou, who sitteth quietly under thine own vine, when all thy neighbor vines are plucked up by the roots, or trampled under foot; if thou, even thou knowest not, or wilt not take notice of the things that belong to thy peace.”

Despite these blessings, England was sinful, unrepentant, and “unthankful.” Featley lamented “we that have the Word taught among us most purely, yet live impurely, who

²⁹ Lake, *Sermons*, third pagination, p. 217-20.

know better, yet do worse.” England had “knowledge” rather than popish “ignorance” because “the clearest beams of the Gospel have for these many years shined in our climate.” But the plea of having “a greater knowledge than other nations” hurt their case before God. England thus had engaged God’s justice to pour down vials of vengeance including for “peremptory refusing of the means of salvation.”³⁰

In his April 5, 1628 fast sermon to the House of Lords, Hall preached on the ever popular text for fasts Isaiah 5:4-5. Here, the Lord vowed to take away the “hedge” of His “vineyard” so it would be trodden down and eaten by foxes, boars, and beasts because it brought forth “wild grapes.” Hall used this text to parallel Israel with England in their experience of “favors, wrongs, revenge” or “blessings, sins, judgments.” That is, Hall saw God’s relations with humanity as a sort of conversation: “God begins with favors to His people, they answer Him with their sins, He replies upon them with judgments.”

As for blessings, Hall told how the Lord had “fenced us about with the hedge of good discipline, of wholesome laws, of gracious government; with the brazen wall of His Almighty and miraculous protection.” From the “watch-tower of heaven,” providence looked over the island, protecting it from “foreign powers,” “secret conspiracies,” and any “plot.” He gave “deliverances” from sword, pestilence, bad weather, tempests, and the Powder Plot. Hall also noted Prince Charles’ safe return from Spain claiming God was still saying to “His anointed” that “I kept you from treacherous hands; I return’d you safe from the danger of your southern voyage.” Further, God had “brought our vine out of the Egypt of popish superstition” and planted it in good soil. He had tried to “improve” the vineyard by “sweet opportunities and encouragements,” but when “fatherly counsels” failed, He turned to “the wine-press of His afflictions” and “fatherly

³⁰ Featley, *Clavis*, p. 891, 903-4.

corrections.” Of all God’s blessings on England though paramount was “that heavenly treasure of the Gospel which makes us the vineyard of God, and that sweet peace which gives us the happy fruition of that saving Gospel.”

Hall could not help boasting of England as the first among equals of the reformed churches: “O God, what, where is the nation that can emulate us in these favors?” Hall remarked on how God had “chosen” England as His vineyard and the English as His people. Additionally, God’s “choice” of England had a larger purpose: “How hath He chosen us out of all the Earth, and divided us from the rest of the world, that we might be a singular pattern and strange wonder of His bounty?” God’s “incomparable favors” on the island were so above other nations’ and in such contrast to the suffering of the reformed churches on the continent that it was “at the least His second Israel.” This status brought obligation though: “Oh never, never was any people so bound to a God.”

Of course, England as “God’s vineyard” brought forth “wild grapes.” The heinousness of her sins was “aggravated” by the favors God had given. The English people’s sins would be understandable if like pagans and Catholics they lived “in darkness and the shadow of death,” but they had no such excuse “now that the beams of the glorious Gospel have shined thus long, thus bright in our faces.” God expected “fruit” from England as “a vineyard so chosen, so husbanded,” and “the mirror of His mercies to all the world.” Therefore, God had a “just quarrel” with England for her “unthankfulness” and “wretched ingratitude.” God was just “to pull up our hedges, to break down our wall, to root up our vine, to destroy and depopulate our nation, to make us the scorn and proverb of all generations.” Lacking the “hedge” of “good government and wholesome laws” and the “wall” of “divine protection,” England would collapse

from within and without. The English would become like the Israelites: “that dearling people which was once the example of God’s mercy is now become the fearful spectacle of His fury and revenge, surviving only in some few abhorred and despised vagabonds to shew that there was once such a nation.”

This judgment could be averted though. Hall prayed to the Lord as known for “keeping the covenants and mercies to them that love Thee.” In the same covenant language puritans used, he prayed his hearers would “turn” to God, abandon sins provoking God, and “in this our day, this day of our solemn humiliation, renew the vows of our holy and conscionable obedience.” As Hall noted in his 1626 fast sermon, if the nation reformed God would hear their prayers and remain “a wall of brass about our island.” The covenant would be renewed such that God would “make this nation of ours victoriously glorious to the ends of the world, even to all ages and times; then shall He be known to be our God, and we shall be known to be His people forever.”³¹

Likewise, in his April 5, 1628 fast sermon on Jeremiah 3:22, Davenant stressed keeping “covenant” with God as a church, a nation, and as individuals. With the plague at home and military defeats abroad, Davenant called for recognition that God was

³¹ Hall, *The Contemplations*, p. 261-70, 351. The full meaning of Hall’s praise of Charles’ “deliverance” from Spain can be seen in his more expansive remarks in his January 29, 1626 thanksgiving sermon before the king at Whitehall. Hall followed up fast sermons for the 1625 plague to remind again of “mercies” and “blessings” on England. Among the list was protection of Protestant succession from Elizabeth through Charles despite the plots of King of Spain, Rome, and Hell against it. “Those two late blessings (if no more) were worthy of immortal memory: the prince out of Spain, religion out of the dust. For the one, what a winter was there in all good hearts when our sun was gone so far southward? How cheerful a spring in his return? For the other, who saw not how religion began (during those purposely-protracted treaties) to droop and languish, her friends to sigh, her enemies to insult, daring to brave us with challenges, to threaten our ruin? The Lord looked down from heaven, and visited this poor vine of His, and hath shaken off these caterpillars from her then wasting leaves. Now we live, and it flourisheth.” (Ibid., p. 257-58) In his 1626 fast sermon, Hall repeated that Catholics had sought to disinherit part of the royal issue. (Ibid., p. 351) In his 1629 fast sermon, Hall continued to press the most favored but sinful nation narrative. He said of England “in this day of our public mourning”: “Oh let us be thankful for our blessings, wherein, through the mercy of God, we outstrip all the nations under heaven; but withal, let us bewail our sins, which are so much more grievous, because ours.” See: Hall, *One of the Sermons*, p. 40.

“avenging the quarrel of His covenant.” First, God did so “for our hypocrisy; in that we call Him *Our God*, and make shew as if we were His peculiar people; in that we call Him *Our Father*, and pretend that we are His true children, and yet in the mean time we will neither serve Him as *Our God*, nor love Him as *Our Father*.” Second, if forgetting the covenant was not bad enough, God had a “farther quarrel” against these “covenant breakers” with England’s “plain treachery” by confederating with God’s enemies the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Moreover, he had argued:

“No nation in the world hath seen more apparent effects of God’s admirable protection over them, then we have done. No nation in the world hath been more laded, and overladed with plenty of all manner of blessings, then we have been: And (which I am sorry may truly be added) no nation in the world hath shewed themselves more careless, and thankless, and graceless, towards so gracious a Lord, and mighty Protector then we have done. I cannot think of the general impiety of these times, but me thinks I see withall a terrible black storm gathering over our heads: me thinks I see God withdrawing His wonted favorable protection from us, and suffering us to be overwhelmed with such judgments, as our folly and impiety hath long ago deserved.”

Indeed, Davenant warned England might be destroyed like Sodom or subjected to a Babylonian Captivity.³²

John Harris in his 1629 fast sermon to the Commons argued “that no nation hath been more bound to God than we, no nation hath sinned against God with a higher hand than we, and therefore no nation hath greater cause to fast and weep, mourn and lament for their sins than we.” England was “ungrateful” because while “a sinful nation,” she had peace and safety, and the “Word of God” had “free passage.” By comparison, other people “more righteous than we” suffered in war. This contrast was most evident in “the distressed condition of the Church of Christ abroad.” If England repented “then our God will not forsake us, nor give us up for a reproach, that strangers should rule over us.”³³

³² Davenant, *One of the Sermons*, p. 1-13, 22, 39-40, 44-50.

³³ Harris, *Destruction*, p. 49-51. Though their sermons were not printed Carleton and Potter very liked hit this theme as well. Carleton wrote *A Thankfull Remembrance of God’s Mercy* (1624) which best seller of

As with anti-Catholicism, MPs thought this message was critically important. For example, the report of the Commons committee for the general fast in 1626 told that the nation had relapsed into “a multitude of former impieties and iniquities,” and that many “present evils” and “heavy punishments” were on the nation. They feared if England did not reform her sins to “make our peace with God,” He would progress from “His fatherly chastisement tending to our reformation, to the severity of a just judge tending to our destruction.” He would take away the nation’s leading military men, judges, ministers, and counselors to bring anarchy. He would give England over to her enemies to rule over them. He would “remove from us the golden candlestick of the light of His Gospel, and give it to a nation that shall bring forth better fruit.” Therefore, MPs had a duty to make “wholesome laws” and see existing laws better enforced against common sins.³⁴

One place revisionists could point to for support of a “via-media” is the calls for unity these Calvinist conformists made in their fast sermons. For example, Davenant in his 1628 fast sermon to the Lords advised the clergy, nobles, magistrates, and commonalty only to have “strife” over who would first leave his sins and come to God. All “other strife” was to be laid aside. Featley opined “our divisions have weakened us, and it is union that can strengthen us.”³⁵ A revisionist interpretation becomes less convincing though given the desire of these conformists for unity around the Calvinist understandings and priorities that had prevailed under Elizabeth and James. Calvinist conformists blamed Montague and “Arminians” for divisions and sought unity by either directly suppressing or gently co-opting them.

English Protestant nationalism, and many editions. Potter was known at court as the “The Penitential Preacher.” (Lloyd, *Memoires*, p. 154)

³⁴ Cambridge University Library, MS Mm.4.38, fol. 117b.

³⁵ Davenant, *One of the Sermons*, p. 14-16. Featley, *Clavis*, p. 891-92.

Revisionists also could ask why Calvinist conformists did not say much (at least directly) about controversies like “Arminianism” in their fast sermons. In part, as conformists, they simply were more guarded in criticizing authority and more mindful of order than puritans. In some cases, Charles I's orders for silence on this doctrinal debate (1626, 1628, and 1629) placed them in a bind. Also, that their fast sermons were so basic and typical in pressing bedrock English Calvinist views was itself a subtle but strong statement. They re-affirmed Calvinist priorities against Anti-Calvinist ones. Further, since their fast sermons shared the themes and priorities of puritan ones, Calvinist conformists arguably knew they only had to take their logic so far, and godly MPs and moderate puritan preachers to the Commons would go the rest of the way. Moreover, contemporary opinion held controversy unseemly on a fast day. How far one safely could criticize others depended on what broad opinion and authorities defined as controversial. While Calvinist conformists were on firm ground with the bulk of clerical and lay opinion, they ran against the king's view on the matter. To overreach would have been counterproductive and harmful to their careers. The king and Laud saw criticism of their policies before the people as signs of a “popular” puritan plot to undermine the monarchy, advance self-interests, and make England a popular state.

Nonetheless, Calvinist conformists had strong motivation to make some statement. The Reformed tradition placed great importance on witnessing to truth in fidelity to one's conscience, and thereby inspiring others. The Protestant Reformation owed much to believers who did so. Indeed, Calvin had written passionately against “Nicodemites.” He called on the reformed to publicly profess their faith rather than hide it and protect themselves from persecution. The inner and outer person was to be one.

Moreover, these men were ministers who believed they had a calling to preach the Gospel and attack heresy. Lest they forget, pulpits and sounding boards in the church were commonly emblazoned with biblical texts like 1 Corinthians 9:16: “woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!”

The most substantial anti-Arminian statement was Davenant’s sermon which summarized the hypothetical universalism that he and Samuel Ward had proffered at the Synod of Dort.³⁶ His sermon taught this doctrine in a pastorally oriented manner, which not only suited the occasion, but subtly upheld Calvinist orthodoxy. Davenant argued that we come to God for pardon of sin, sanctifying grace, and eternal life by repenting and converting, by a “true faith”/“lively faith” and a “new life”/“holy life,” by a “new heart.” Yet, Davenant also stressed that God was the only source of grace, and that we could get it only “directly and immediately” from Him. In short, one had to have already come to God and received grace in order to come to God.³⁷

This circular thinking can be unraveled. Davenant stressed that God offered forgiveness and salvation to all. He taught that God “calls” and “invites” sinners to come to Him, that He would “offer” grace to them, and give them a “choice” of sin or grace.³⁸ The Apostle James taught that sanctifying grace was a “gift” from God, and if any lacked

³⁶ Hypothetical universalism sought to uphold the absolute sovereignty of God, while defending Him as both just and merciful. Arminians accused Calvinists of making God an unjust tyrant and the author of sin. These Calvinists replied that Christ’s sacrifice was made for all men, not just the elect, on condition that they believe. However, belief came through faith, which God decreed only for the elect. In other words, using a scholastic distinction, they argued that Christ’s death was ‘sufficient’ for all (offered universally), but ‘efficient’ only for the elect (applied only to them). See: Margo Todd, “The British Delegation to the Synod of Dort: Half-way Calvinists?” (unpublished). Philip Benedict, *Christ’s Churches Purely Reformed* (New Haven, 2002), p. 293-352, esp. p. 316. I thank Dr. Todd for permitting me to read her unpublished paper.

³⁷ Davenant, *One of the Sermons*, p. 8, 22-32. Indeed, Davenant emphasized the absolute sovereignty of God in teaching how knowledge of God’s “infinite power and universal dominion” should bring obedience to His commands. Davenant lauded God with a variety of titles including: “universal and omnipotent Lord over all the world,” “Lord Creator,” “sovereign Lord of heaven,” “omnipotent Lord and universal judge,” and “universal Lord Protector.” (Ibid., p. 32-43)

³⁸ Davenant, *One of the Sermons*, p. 4, 17-18, 20, 21, 26-9.

it “let him come to ask it of God, which giveth to all men liberally, and reproacheth no man.” A problem arose though in that if God offered the “gift” of grace to all, who would not take it? Davenant replied:

“Those who find not themselves over-pressed, and wearied under the burden of their sins: Those who feel not in themselves a hungering and thirsting after righteousness; those that care not for the means of obtaining grace; to wit, prayer, the Word, the sacraments: in brief, those that are more desirous to enjoy their sinful lusts, then to subdue and conquer them: these, and all these refuse to come unto God for His sanctifying grace.”

When God offers His grace to such, they “thrust it back” to continue in sin, rather than obtain “a power and strength to overcome the sinful lusts of their own hearts.” In short, “sinful men” reject God’s “invitation.”³⁹ Clearly, one needed grace to accept grace. Davenant made this clear in statements supporting total depravity. He argued that even pagan philosophers had some knowledge of the truth “that man’s goodness is God’s gift.” Seneca had said “*Bonus vir sine Deo nemo est. Nulla sine Deo bonamens.*” That is, “There is no good man; nor no good mind in any man without God.” Further, Davenant taught: “It is our own base and sinful lusts which stay our coming unto God . . . We are wedded to our own lusts; we cannot come.” The “author” of “this marriage betwixt thine own heart, and thy sinful lust,” and the one who “persuades” us to forsake the commands of God, and not to come at “God’s call” to continue in sin was the Devil. Thus, “wretched men” to the dishonor of God “let the Devil take his choice.”⁴⁰

So how did humans accept the offer of grace while slaves to sin? Davenant made clear that coming to God was the Lord’s doing not foreseen faith:

“Now if any man ask me whence came this admirable change, that men of brazen foreheads, and iron hearts are so suddenly become men of humble, soft, and religious hearts, all that I can answer is this: The same God that had long called unto them for their hearts, had now at length given them new hearts, and a new spirit, and had taken the stony heart out of their body, as the Prophet Ezekial speaks, *Bona voluntas est hominis*

³⁹ Ibid., p. 18, 26-9.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 26-9, 18-19.

propria, sed Deo inspirante concepta.[Chap. 36. Verse 26.] A good will, or a good heart, is a man's own when he hath it: but it is the divine inspiration from whence he hath it.”

Referencing Romans 3 and 6, he argued they taught that salvation was a “free gift” through Christ. Repentance, good works, and a godly life were not a “deserving cause” of salvation and “fall short of deserving eternal life.”⁴¹

Davenant's closing prayer summarizes his attempt both to affirm God's universal offer of grace and the sovereignty of God necessitating that only those predestined to election could accept this offer. He prayed that the Almighty who had on this fast day “called us unto Him by His Word” would also “draw us unto Him by the effectual operation of His Holy Spirit.” If this happened, they would renounce the service of the world, the flesh, and the Devil, and return to the service of God. They would recover God's providential favor on Earth, and “enjoy His everlasting favor hereafter.”⁴²

Davenant's history of opposition to “Arminianism” lends further support to the claim he was defending Calvinist orthodoxy in his fast sermon. As noted before, Davenant had signed the *Ioynt Attestation* (1626) of the British delegates to the Synod of Dort. On January 30, 1629, he wrote a letter to Bishop Hall for publication in Hall's *Reconciler* arguing “Arminianism” was contrary to, and the Synod of Dort agreeable to, the articles of the Church of England. His 1630 Lenten sermon at court disobeyed the king's injunction against preaching on predestination. On the complaint of the Anti-Calvinist Samuel Harsnett, then Archbishop of York, Davenant subsequently had to appear before the Privy Council to defend himself. In 1631, he wrote *Prealectiones de duobus in theologia controversies capitibus*. With Samuel Ward, he spent the 1630s countering Arminian writings, and with Thomas Morton and Joseph Hall sought to unite

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 5, 26-32.

⁴² Ibid., p. 53-4.

Reformed churches against Arminians. In the 1640 convocation, Davenant strongly advocated for a canon suppressing “Arminianism.” Davenant’s efforts led puritans to praise him as one of the “opposers of popery and Arminianism.”⁴³

While his sermon was not printed, and manuscript evidence remains elusive, suggestive clues exist to George Carleton’s 1625 fast sermon to the Lords. C. May, 1624 Carleton wrote to Archbishop Abbot calling for a national fast if war with Spain occurred. Also, he noted that in many places “the doctrine of general grace” was published as if it was the doctrine of the Church of England. Thus, he requested that the articles of the Synod of Dort or the Lambeth Articles be approved in convocation.⁴⁴ Given the commonplace notion that false doctrine brought divine wrath, including defeat in battle, Carleton surely would have thought “Arminianism” among the evils to be reformed in the fast.

Further support for this view is found in Carleton’s *Examination* (1626). In his dedication to the king, Carleton argued that in addition to Charles’ trip to Spain to woo the Infanta, “two other great dangers have assailed your kingdom of late, the plague and the Pelagian heresy, the one destroying bodies, the other souls.” In regards to the latter, Carleton asserted that in his *Appello* Montague had claimed “the doctrines of the Pelagians and Arminians for the doctrines of the Church of England.” Since the plague occasioned a fast in 1625, Carleton must have thought “heresy” merited the same.

Indeed, in the second edition of the *Examination*, he warned lack of knowledge of the

⁴³ Vivienne Larminie, “Davenant, John (bap. 1572, d. 1641),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. DNB, volume 5, p. 551. Theophilus, *Divine and Politike Observations* (Amsterdam, 1638), p. 50-1 (STC 15309). Davenant, along with Samuel Ward, Archbishop Abbot, William Bedell, and Richard Sibbes was close to Ussher. Ward, and likely Davenant, made use of Ussher’s historical works in the 1630s to attack ‘Arminians’ in print. See: Alan Ford, “Ussher, James (1581-1656),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; and DNB, volume 20, p. 65-72.

⁴⁴ Mary Anne Everett Green (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series, of the Reign of James I 1623-1625* (London, 1859; reprint, Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1967), p. 232; PRO 14/164/11.

Word and holy doctrine caused the destruction of churches and states. He even cited Hosea 4:6 to caution “that the people of the Jews were destroyed, and led into captivity for want of knowledge.” By contrast, “true knowledge” kept church and state safe.⁴⁵

While limited in their ability directly to oppose “Arminianism,” Laudian worship, and absolutist pretensions, Calvinist conformists made significant, albeit discrete references against them in their fast sermons. Hall lamented divisions in the English Church, but as we shall see he intended to settle them on Calvinist grounds. In his 1626 fast sermon at Whitehall, Hall compared the “enemies of the Church,” including the “Antichristian faction,” with the Church: “Why are we several, whiles they are conjoined? Why should partial factions and private fancies distract us, when the main cause of God is on foot?” In his 1629 fast sermon to the Lords, Hall argued that in contrast to the unity and purity of the first days of the Church now in the last days there was “nothing but unquiet clashings of opinion, nothing but foul heresy, either maintained by the guilty or imputed to the innocent, nothing but gross idolatry in paganism, in misbelieving Christianity.” Later on, Hall listed among England’s greatest sins “rending in

⁴⁵ Carleton, *Examination*, first edition, Sig. A3v. Carleton, *Examination*, second edition, p. 214-15. Carleton also likely intended to convey that doctrinal deficiencies were a violation of the covenant. In the King James Version, Hosea 4:6 reads: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.” Furthermore, Carleton in his *Examination* was merely repeating in England what he had counseled abroad. In his speech to the Prince of Orange and States General at The Hague in 1619, Carleton feared loss of knowledge was happening in the Netherlands. He urged authorities to establish peace and unity around the recent conclusions of the Synod of Dort, to preserve the “purity” of the doctrine that had been publicly taught there for 20-30 years, and to resist “innovation” and corruption by admixture of “false and counterfeit stuff.” He blamed the Remonstrants for subverting this doctrine or “knowledge.” Without unity and purity in doctrine, he counseled, peace would be destroyed and thereby religion as well. See: George Carleton, *An Oration made at the Hage, before the Prince of Orenge, and the Assembly of the High and Mighty Lords, the States Generall of the United Provinces* (London, 1619), p. 1-11 (STC 4638).

pieces the bowels of our dear Mother the Church, by our headstrong, and frivolous dissensions.”⁴⁶

Hall also alluded to solutions for these divisions. In his 1629 fast sermon, Hall argued that if an “error” arose in the Church then not “every unlearned tradesman” or “every blue apron” was to write on theological questions. Rather, the resolution of such issues belonged to the office of learned divines in the universities. In his 1628 fast sermon to the Lords, Hall argued God had blessed His English vineyard with “means” or “just censures” to remove the “stones” of “false opinions” and “false doctrine” which “hold down His truth” and “keep down the growth of the vines.” Moreover, in rehashing the Lord’s blessings on England in the same sermon, Hall included the idealness of the Elizabethan-Jacobean status-quo, especially in doctrine, learning, and worship:

“In plain terms, how hath He made us a truly orthodox church, eminent for purity of doctrine, for the grave and reverend solemnity of true sacraments, for the due form of government, for the pious and religious form of our public liturgy? With what plenty hath He showered upon us the first and later rain of His heavenly Gospel? With what rare gifts hath he graced our teachers? With what pregnant spirits hath he furnish’d our academies? With what competency of maintenance hath he heartened all learned professions? So as in these regards, we may say of the Church of England, *many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.* [Proverbs 31:29]”⁴⁷

The full meaning of Hall’s asides becomes clear when put in the context of his other works at the time. Most important is Hall’s *Via Media* (c.1624-26), a proposal to resolve the Calvinist/“Arminian” rift which he dedicated to King Charles. Hall appears to give revisionists some support. Hall used the language of “peace,” “unity,” and “moderation.” He argued that English Protestants agreed on the main points but fell out over “immaterial inferences.” He argued public disputation and writing would only

⁴⁶ Hall, *The Contemplations*, p. 346. Hall, *One of the Sermons*, p. 36-7, 45. Likewise, Peter Lake has found that Hall made anti-Arminian asides in his early 1620s court sermons. Hall blamed them for doctrinal innovation, novelty, and distracting and dividing the church. Peter Lake, “The moderate and irenic case for religious war: Joseph Hall’s *Via Media* in context,” in Susan Amussen and Mark Kishlansky (eds.), *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England* (New York, 1995), p. 69.

⁴⁷ Hall, *One of the Sermons*, p. 48-9. Hall, *The Contemplations*, p. 267, 265.

spread and intensify conflict not end it. The only solution was “a severe edict of restraint to charm all tongues, and pens upon the sharpest punishment from passing those moderate bounds, which the Church of England, guided by the scriptures hath expressly set, or which on both sides are fully accorded on.” Hall then distinguished “matters of faith” from “scholastical disquisitions.” God authored the former and they were express teachings in scripture or necessary consequences of them. Because they concerned salvation, Christians had to believe them, they were fit for the pulpit, and tongues had to be free to speak them. Humans authored the latter points and they were deduced by “crooked inferences.” Because they did not concern salvation, Christians were free to believe or reject them, they were fit for schools, and tongues could be bound not to speak them. In Hall’s view, the points now in debate were the latter kind, unfit for “popular ears,” and unworthy to break the peace of the Church. Men were to avoid these “needless and unprofitable speculations” to keep unity and peace. Hall then glossed the Thirty-Nine Articles, the views of the defenders of the Synod of Dort (and those of the British delegates), Arminius, and the work of the Anti-Calvinist Bishop John Overall to show common ground. He argued Overall had gone a “mid-way” between “two extreme opinions” (i.e. Arminius and high Calvinists) and had praised the Church of England for its “moderation.”⁴⁸

However, a crucial question, which revisionists fail to ask, is what did Hall define as core truth and what as fringe speculation? In his memoirs, Hall described how he defined orthodoxy in his *Via Media* to quiet the controversy. With astonishing spin, he claimed the quarrel was a misunderstanding. Montague was not touting Arminius but

⁴⁸ Joseph Hall, “Via Media: The way of peace in the five busy articles commonly known by the name of Arminius” in Joseph Hall, *The Shaking of the Olive-Tree* (London, 1660), p. 352-54, 365-67, 374-75, 379-80, 385-87 (Wing H416).

Overall, who was “a more moderate and safe author.” Unfortunately, Montague had done so too hastily, too vehemently, and too tartly. Hall said he had taken the points of common agreement between Overall and the English divines at the Synod of Dort as “a body of accorded Truth” that “every moderate Christian” would accept. All other questions he deemed “merely superfluous.” He presented the book to the king with a motion for “a peaceable silence to be enjoined to both parts, in those other collateral, and needless disquisitions: which if they might befit the schools of academical disputants, could not certainly sound well from the pulpits of popular auditories.”⁴⁹

As Peter Lake has argued, the language of moderation, peace, and unity often served polemical purposes. It was a way to gain the moral high ground of irenic charitableness, and turn the tables on one’s opponents by accusing them of being fanatic innovators who caused division and schism by imposing their own fancies on others. In *Via Media*, Hall defined “moderation” in Calvinist terms. Hall achieved this feat by assimilating Montague’s views to those of Overall (conveniently dead since 1619), and then Overall’s to the moderate Calvinist position of the British delegates to Dort. Whereas Carleton and Featley attacked directly by assimilating Montague to the heresies of Arminianism, Pelagianism, and popery, and demanding he recant, Hall attacked indirectly assimilating Montague to his middle-ground, and co-opting him to accept the moderate Calvinist position. Not surprisingly, *Via Media* was suppressed in accord with royal edict inhibiting the controversy, and not published until 1660.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ “Observations of Some Specialties of Divine Providence in the Life of Jos. Hall, Bishop of Norwich,” in Joseph Hall, *The Shaking of the Olive-Tree* (London, 1660), p. 37-9 (Wing H416).

⁵⁰ Lake, “Moderate and Irenic,” p. 55-83. Peter Lake, “Joseph Hall, Robert Skinner and the Rhetoric of Moderation at the Early Stuart Court,” in Lori Ferrell and Peter McCullough (eds.), *The English Sermon Revised* (New York, 2000), p. 167-185. Peter Lake, “Religious Identities in Shakespeare’s England,” in David Kaston (ed.), *A Companion to Shakespeare* (Malden, Mass., 1999), p. 57-84. Hall, *The Shaking of the Olive-Tree*, Sig. b2r, p. 39. Further evidence supports the above interpretation. Hall blamed

Hall's fast sermons of the later 1620s are consistent with his sermons of the early 1620s which Lake studied. Hall's fast sermon asides now take on a different meaning than appears at first glance. Hall recognized a doctrinal error in the church and kept alluding to his program to settle the dispute on Calvinist terms. His moderate Calvinist doctrine would be the established core doctrine which none could question, and to which all had to subscribe and to teach publicly. The rest was left contained in universities. Yet, even here, contrary to the king's commands, he wanted it debated (though in an orderly manner that isolated the controversy from larger society). Hall clearly trusted the universities to reject "Arminian" positions and uphold Calvinist ones. Indeed, debate was to the advantage of Calvinists as the gag order placed "Arminian" doctrine on an even

"Arminians" for departing from settled orthodoxy and beginning the crisis. In the subtitle of *Via-Media* and in his memoirs Hall referred to the "five busy articles" of Arminius, and he blamed Montague for occasioning conflict in England. In a c.1629 letter concerning falling away from grace, Hall rebuked "our new excuti-fidians" and "new disciples of Leiden" for "heresy" and identified them as "troublers" of the peace of the church. Indeed, as early as c.1611 Hall had blamed Arminius for disturbing peace of church with "singularity," "new opinions," and "new truths." See: Hall, *The Shaking of the Olive-Tree*, p. 351, 37-8, 389-91; and "To M. Ionas Reigesbergivs in Zeland," in Joseph Hall, *The Works of Joseph Hall* (London, 1628), p. 395-97 (STC 12636). While Hall's use of the language of moderation in his anti-Catholic and anti-Arminian polemic led some puritans to suspect him, his Calvinist orthodoxy is clear. In his *Reconciler* (1629), Hall rebutted such accusations and added testimonial letters from leading Calvinists. In his letter, Thomas Morton, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, said Hall was "a most orthodox divine." In a letter to Davenant, Hall refuted the aspersion "Arminianism." He said Davenant would recall hearing him at the Synod of Dort: "with equal vehemency to the rest, swaying down the unreasonableness of that way." Hall also affirmed: "I am still the same man, and shall live and die in the suffrage of that reverend synod; and do confidently avow, that those other opposed opinions cannot stand with the doctrine of the Church of England." The disagreements in England (according to his spin) were "far different from Netherlandish" so he attempted to forge a "safe peace" which would not sacrifice one dram of "God's Truth." He affirmed his commitment to "His whole Truth," and his "ever zealous detestation of all popery and Pelagianism." Davenant concurred in his reply: "As for the aspersion of Arminianism, I can testify that in our joint employment at the Synod of Dort, you were as far from it as myself. And I know that no man can embrace it in the doctrine of predestination and grace, but he must first desert the articles agreed upon by the Church of England; nor in the point of perseverance, but he must vary from the common tenet, and received opinion of our best approved doctors in the English Church. I am assured that you neither have deserted the one, nor will vary from the other." See: Hall, *The Shaking of the Olive-Tree*, Sig. b2r, p. 39; Hall, *The Reconciler*, p. 74-77, 84-5, 67-8. Significantly, around February, 1629, Laud's chaplain, Dr. Thomas Turner, expunged these passages condemning "Arminianism" when licensing the work. Indeed, William Prynne subsequently found a copy of the expurgations in Laud's study. See: Prynne, *Canterburies Doome*, p. 165-66; Theophilus, *Divine and Politike Observations*, p. 60; PRO SP 16/136/81. Nathaniel Butter, the stationer, however left these passages in the book. His disobedience led to a pursuivant apprehending him and bringing him before Laud. At Laud's special command he was then committed as a prisoner to the fleet without bail or mainprize. Butter also was later articted against in the High Commission Court. (See above Prynne, Theophilus)

footing with prevailing Calvinist doctrine. Moreover, Hall along with Davenant, Ussher, Williams, and Abbot wanted to remove doctrinal distractions to unite English Protestants so they could focus on the other priorities we have seen in Calvinist conformist fast sermons. In particular, they wanted parliament to give the king supply to wage war against Catholic powers as part of a Protestant alliance.⁵¹

In his 1629 fast sermon, Bishop Williams sounded very much like Hall. He addressed the doctrinal debate by noting that England had “a knowing, learned, and (the busy meddling of some few, in some matters of no substance, excepted) a right venerable clergy.”⁵² Williams’ chaplain and the future bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, John Hacket (1592-1670), later claimed that Williams had aimed this passage at Anti-Calvinists. Explaining Williams’ perceptions of the times, Hacket argued that the Synod of Dort’s determinations “awakened the opposition of diverse scholars in our kingdom, who lay still before.” Even then, the controversy would have been much less, if those

⁵¹ Fincham and Lake, “Ecclesiastical Policy.” Like Hall, the other British delegates to the Synod of Dort called on magistrates to forbid the impeachment of established, orthodox doctrine (defined as their moderate Calvinist position), but allow peaceful disagreement in minor and unresolved matters. (Carleton, *Collegiate Suffrage*, p. 171-75) By contrast, the August 2, 1625 letter of the Anti-Calvinist bishops Laud, Buckeridge, and Howson to the Duke of Buckingham used the same approach and language as Hall to support Montague’s vision of orthodoxy. They praised the “moderation” of the Church of England for not being “too busy with every particular school-point.” Thereby the church preserved “unity” by not forcing men to subscribe “to curious particulars disputed in the schools.” While some of what Montague argued was “the resolved doctrine of the Church of England,” other points were “fit only for schools” and should not distract or break the peace of the church. In the former kind of points were those to which ministers subscribed so they had to maintain them, but in the latter they were at liberty to take or leave them. At this point though, their view of moderation radically departed from Hall and the other British delegates to Dort. They claimed James “saw and approved all the opinions of this book.” They said James would not have allowed them “if they had crossed with truth and the Church of England.” They argued that if the “fatal opinions” of those who opposed Montague were publicly taught and maintained, they would undermine civil government and the external ministry. All or most of these “contrary opinions” had been in the Lambeth Articles of 1595, but Queen Elizabeth suppressed them “upon notice of how little they agreed with the practice of piety and obedience to all government.” Peace reigned until lately when some of these views received countenance at the Synod of Dort. The synod was of the Dutch nation and its articles were not received by public authority in England so they had no force here. They hoped that the Church of England “will be well advised, and more than once over, before she admit a foreign synod, especially of such a church as condemneth her discipline and manner of government, to say no more.” (William Laud, *The Works of . . . William Laud* (Oxford, 1857), vol. 6, pt. 1, p. 244-46)

⁵² Williams, *Perseverantia*, p. 56.

“disaffected to the synod” had not been so partial in giving preferment to Anti-Calvinists almost to the exclusion of Calvinists. Laud in particular was to blame as his one-sided preferment created “a new faction, never known before he sat at the stern.” Richard Montague’s book also was to blame for opening the “schisms and divisions” in the church. More specifically, Williams despised how Anti-Calvinists refused to extend fellowship and courtesy to those whom they scorned as “followers of Calvin,” and thereby made a “very causeless breach.” For this reason, and the aforementioned, Hacket claimed, Williams made the remark in his fast sermon.⁵³ While Hacket was hardly a disinterested writer his account jives with recent studies.⁵⁴

That Williams viewed debates over predestination as ‘matters of no substance’ at first glance appears to support revisionist interpretations. Indeed, Hacket’s citation of the passage from the fast sermon has a concluding clause not found in the printed version: “for though it is not about so small a thing as a strife of words, yet it is so great a thing, as no words could ever determine.” Hacket went on to claim that Williams followed the “moderation of the Fathers” who allowed differences over questions “not so prime and substantial.” Williams had “moderation” in points which were “unfundamental” and “unresolved.” While Williams was a solid Calvinist, he was not so “rigidly addicted” to his own “fancies” that he lacked “charitable allowance” for “weak” or “dissenting brethren” who were unsound in some “lesser truths.” Williams did not think these questions were worth causing “faction.” Hacket claimed Williams was like Whitgift, Bancroft, Harsnett, Andrewes, Barlow, and Overall who as “great observers of unity” did not discriminate in preferments in regards to position on predestination. Williams acted

⁵³ John Hacket, *Scrinia Reserata* ([London], 1693), part 1, p. 88; part 2, p. 42, 82, 86-7 (Wing H171).

⁵⁴ Fincham, “William Laud,” p. 69-93.

in “Christian charity” to prefer both “sides” because unlike Catholics they were both Protestants in the “channel of the scriptures.” Hacket claimed Williams showed “neutrality” as a patron.⁵⁵

Yet, again how is “moderation” defined here? Arguably, Williams in his sermon and Hacket in his retrospective were akin to Hall, and claimed the mantle of “moderation” for polemical purposes. Indeed, Hacket used Williams’ supposed moderation to attack Laud. Hacket affirmed that Williams opposed Charles’ gag order as he thought debate would lead to unity, and the lack of it to more conflict. While Williams obeyed Charles’ ban, he was suspected as a supporter of the adherents to the Synod of Dort, and a man not after Laud’s heart. Thus, Laud saw him as an enemy and worked to destroy him. Sitting quiet was not enough: “He that did not tune his mind, as well as his outward carriage, to the present harmony, was censur’d to be out of tune, and not fit for the choir.”⁵⁶

Further, Williams’ opinion of Anti-Calvinists was not as charitable as Hacket would have us believe when we look at his *Holy Table* (1637). John Owen asserted that

⁵⁵ Hacket, *Scrinia*, part 1, p. 16-17; part 2, p. 42-3, 87. Andrews (1555-1626) won favor from Calvinists for his affability, learning, and eloquent preaching. In contrast to the ‘Durham House Group’ to whom he was an intellectual mentor, he chose to advance his vision of a reformed church by respectful argument and setting an example for imitation. He did not use the Laudian approach of ruthless, bare-knuckled power politics. Calvinists also esteemed Overall (bap. 1561-1619) for his learning. Harsnett (bap. 1561-1631) was a complex figure who was a diligent preacher, a zealous anti-Catholic, and supporter of the Petition of Right. Significantly, though Andrewes, Overall, and Harsnett were not part of the Durham House Group of Neile, Laud, John Buckeridge, John Cosin, Augustine Lindsell, Richard Montague, Francis White, and Thomas Jackson. See: P.E. McCullough, “Andrewes, Lancelot (1555-1626),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; Nicholas W.S. Cranfield, “Overall, John (bap. 1561, d. 1619),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; Nicholas W.S. Cranfield, “Harsnett, Samuel (bap. 1561, d. 1631),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, online edn., May 2007; Andrew Foster, “Durham House Group (act. 1617-1630),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, online edn., May 2005. “And there needs no greater approbation of his uprightness nor a fuller conviction of the corrupt genius of those days, then that he and some more of his form . . . were so long left un-preferred; whilst the dignities of the church (which should have been the reward of men singular for their piety and ability) were chiefly taken up by such who rather studied, preached, and practiced the politiques then divinity.” (*An Elegiacall Commemoration of . . . Mr. Josiah Shute*, p. 10-12)

⁵⁶ Hacket, *Scrinia*, part 1, p. 89-90; part 2, p. 87.

those who “Arminianized” were persons “as the Bishop of Lincoln once told them, whose learning lay in a few unlearned liturgies.”⁵⁷ In a general statement not specific to the altar controversy, Williams also condemned Heylyn and other Anti-Calvinist divines “that tamper so much in doctrine with Sancta Clara.” This person was Christopher Davenport an English Franciscan friar. Using the writings and sermons of English Anti-Calvinists including Andrewes, Montague, and Richard Hooker, his book *Deus, natura, gratia* (1634) had glossed the Thirty-Nine Articles to argue the Church of England and the Church of Rome agreed in many points. Significantly, the proceedings of the Lord’s committee in 1641 that Williams chaired appended to a list of “innovations in doctrine” a list of “some dangerous and most reproveable books.” The first named was “The reconciliation of Sancta Clara, to knit the Romish and Protestant in one.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Owen, *Doctrine of the Saints*, p. 316.

⁵⁸ John Williams, *The Holy Table* (London, 1637), p. 71 (STC 25725). A. P. Cambers, “Davenport, Christopher (c.1595-1680),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. *A copie of the proceedings of some worthy and learned divines, appointed by the Lords to meet at the Bishop of Lincolnes in Westminster: touching innovations in the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England* (London, 1641), p. 2 (Wing C4103B). The difference between Calvinist and Anti-Calvinist attitudes to the Church of Rome is critical here. The Calvinist Thomas Fuller argued the Church of Rome and Church of England were irreconcilable as the latter could not lawfully agree with “papists” in “idolatry.” Peace not possible with Rome as even “the most learned and moderate papists” were unwilling to compromise at all. Sancta Clara’s gloss on the Thirty-Nine Articles he claimed was a false one. (Thomas Fuller, *The Appeal of Iniured Innocence* (London, 1659), p. 61-6 (Wing F2410)) Rous decried Sancta Clara as advancing “the popish design” including bringing the articles of the Church of England to “popery.” Rous argued one could not reconcile Rome and England without loss of Protestant religion because the pope would not leave any of his errors. Indeed, Sancta Clara supposedly confessed “that he dealt in this way of treaty, not to draw the Church to the Protestants, but the Protestants to the Church.” (Francis Rous, *Mr. Rouse his speech before the Lords at the transmission of Dr. Cossens* (London, 1641), p. 2-3 (Wing R2027)) By contrast Heylyn claimed the Church of England and Church of Rome did not disagree on “fundamentals” or “any essential points.” He argued that Laud sought to heal breach out of “charity” and desire for “unity” and “peace.” Heylyn blamed “puritans” and Jesuits for widening that breach. If these “hot spirits” had been pacified for a while then “moderate men” might have agreed on “equal terms” and brought peace to Christendom. He cited Sancta Clara as proof that some in the Church of Rome were moderate and could be won to accept the articles of the Church of England. (Peter Heylyn, *Examen Historicum* (London, 1659), first pagination, p. 259-63 (Wing H1706)). Elsewhere, Heylyn remarkably agreed with Sancta Clara’s gloss on the Thirty-Nine Articles and rejected Calvinist ones. Heylyn said Sancta Clara was one “who makes the articles of this church rightly understood according to the literal meaning, and not perverted to the ends of particular factions, to be capable of a catholic and orthodox sense.” (Peter Heylyn, *The Way and Manner of the Reformation of the Church of England Declared and Justified* (London, 1657), p. 67 (Wing H1746)).

Also, Hacket was not claiming that Williams patronized Anti-Calvinists evenly with Calvinists. As we saw, Hacket and Williams opposed Laudian patronage that had overthrown the Calvinist ascendancy of the church. Arguably, they advocated maintaining Calvinist pre-eminence. Like Hall, they would effectively silence Anti-Calvinists by forcing them to accept moderate Calvinist views as the established doctrine of the church. In short, Hacket only seems to be praising the preferment of a few talented Anti-Calvinists in a church safely dominated by Calvinists.

Calvinist conformist fast sermons also had comments supporting governance through long-standing constitutional traditions rather than arbitrary rule. Such kingship and churchmanship came from conviction, but also supported Calvinist interests. Their positions maintained parliament's voice in matters of church and state, which was predominantly against Anti-Calvinists, and allowed Calvinists to stand on the established religious settlement, or at least long standing interpretations of it, to oppose Laudian changes. For example, Hall in his 1628 fast sermon to the Lords subtly held up constitutional rule in praising God's blessings on England. The Almighty had "fenced" England with "the hedge of good discipline, of wholesome laws, of gracious government." Indeed: "Never land had more exquisite rules of justice, whether mute or speaking. He hath not left us to the mercy of a rude anarchy, or a tyrannical violence, but hath regulated us by laws of our own asking, and swai'd us by the just scepters of moderate princes."⁵⁹

In his 1629 fast sermon to the Lords, Williams was greatly concerned by divisions. He argued there was "great cause of humbling" if God was not with a nation's armies, if there were "Cadmus teeth" sown in the land, "apples of contention" thrown

⁵⁹ Hall, *The Contemplations*, p. 267.

among them, or if Ephraim and Manasses were against each other, and both against Judah. Humiliation was also necessary if the prince was “jealous of the people,” and the people were “suspicious of the prince,” or if “Achitophels” were giving bad advice to both. The late parliaments had failed to bring comfort to the state due to “the jealousy and distraction of her best friends.” Williams claimed that “faction, ambition, and private ends” had separated a “good king” from a “good people,” and so separated both from their desired benedictions from God, and prevented divine blessings. Specifically, God blessed a people with “the goodness, sweetness, and graciousness of the king.” God blessed a king with “the affection, zeal, and cheerful supply of the people.” These blessings would come only with “perseverance” in humiliation and repentance to the “latter end.” Williams, however, lamented that nothing dried faster than a “public tear.” What began on this fast day had to continue for life as a fast from sin.

Williams urged cooperation between king and parliament, praised king, nobles, and commoners alike, and upheld the idealness of the Jacobean status-quo. Blessings abounded on England “in a prince all made of virtues, in a people full of piety and devotion, in a religion well-established, in a government politiquely founded, in a land that floweth with milk and honey.” Williams dismissed the conspiracy theory of puritan led popular rebellion which Anti-Calvinists successfully counseled the king to fear. He claimed that “whatever desperate and obnoxious persons may whisper to the contrary,” the commonalty was “dutiful” and “zealous,” and “respectful” though he warned “as I hope they will ever shew themselves.” Significantly, Williams gave no parallel criticism of puritan conspiracy theories of a popish plot. Not surprisingly, Hacket reported that at the parliament Williams was “censured for over-doing his part in popularity, yet only by

such as will calumniate all, that act not according to their mind.” Hacket then affirmed Laud to be among those doing all possible against Williams.

Hacket cited one of the key passages in the fast sermon heaping praise on all as showing how the bishop supported a balance between the prerogatives of the crown and the liberties of the people. Williams was trying to maintain what he saw as traditional rule of law. The Forced Loan according to Hacket had thrown down the “fence of the Great Charter” because it lacked a statute to authorize it, and gentlemen were imprisoned for refusing to pay. It thus caused an uproar. Hacket claimed that Williams was consistent in his counsel “whether in favor, or out of favor,” and advised Charles as he did James: “Rule by your laws, and you are a complete monarch; your people are both sensibly and willingly beneath you: If you start aside from your laws, they will be as saucy with your actions, as if they were above you.” As with Hall, Williams wanted unity so England could focus on the Calvinist priorities we have seen above in their fast sermons. Especially important was MPs giving supply to the king for military support to the Palatinate and other reformed churches on the continent.⁶⁰

Consideration of Calvinist conformist fast sermons and how much they shared with puritans makes understandable Anti-Calvinist complaints of “puritan bishops.” In some cases, moderate puritan fast sermons differed from those of Calvinist conformists only by being slightly hotter and focusing more on providential narrative. John Preston’s 1625 fast sermon to the Commons is one such example. Preston preached on Numbers 25:10-11 to praise the “zeal” of Phineas for turning aside divine wrath. England needed

⁶⁰ Williams, *Perseverantia*, p. 13, 24, 39-41, 54-8. Hacket, *Scrinia*, part 2, second pagination, p. 73-4. For an excellent study of “popularity” see: Richard Cust, “Charles I and popularity” in Thomas Cogswell, Richard Cust, and Peter Lake (eds.), *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 235-258.

such “zeal” because not only “great sins” but “lukewarmness” and “coldness” brought wrath and led the Lord “to remove the candlestick.” For God “to continue His Gospel of peace,” England had to be “zealous for the Lord” and “zealous against sin” While England had the “light” of “former times” and “ancient times” she lacked their “heat.” If the nation did not follow through with reform, God’s wrath would continue to their “utter destruction.” Of the Armada in 1588 and the Gunpowder Plot, Preston warned “the axe was then laid to the root.” God had let the tree stand a while longer to see if would bear more “fruit.” Now, facing a third trial England had to do so. Preston warned of the faulty fast of Isaiah 58:5. England had to remain humble in peace and prosperity, and not forget “the work of humiliation” after the fast day. They were to emulate the fast in Nehemiah 9:1-10 where “the princes and people came altogether, and seal a covenant to the Lord, to reform their sin of taking strange wives, and entered into a curse, and an oath to walk in God’s Law.”

Preston warned that a fast had to be followed by reformation, and called on parliament to act. In addition to aiding the church abroad, England first needed to punish sins like whoredom, fornication, oaths, idolatry, superstition, and injustice. Second, in what surely was an allusion to both “papists” and “Arminians,” he said England had to contend for “faith” and “Truth” against “our adversaries.” Preston explained this involved “the whole doctrine of faith, every jot whereof is precious.” He affirmed the legitimacy of parliament addressing doctrinal issues (which was in question among MPs): “let no man say he hath nothing to do to with this, for it is the common faith which every man hath to do with: you know in common things wherein every man hath interest, every man is ready to maintain his right.” The defense of “the whole doctrine of faith” and

“every point of faith” was of “exceeding great moment” because as long as the judgment was “perverted,” the soul was irrecoverable. Third, England needed to set up “a learned ministry” in the church and “an able preaching minister” in every parish to be as a “candle,” or as “stars” giving light. Preston said MPs knew it was “a great complaint, *My people perish for want of knowledge.*” In particular, Wales and the Northern Countries lacked the light, and Catholic “dogs” devoured the flock by teaching their “doctrines of darkness.” Not surprisingly, “popery” abounded most in “the dark places of the kingdom.” Finally, in an extended aside earlier in the sermon Preston stressed keeping the “sabbath” “sanctified” and “holy.” He was horrified by “the breaches of the sabbath.” In short, Preston’s reform program is the same as Calvinist conformists. The latter only would have quibbled that such a minister in every parish was a laudable but unrealistic goal, and questioned how far he took the term “sabbath.” Significantly, Preston made no explicit mention of “Arminians,” and no attacks on ceremonies or bishops.

Also, while encouraging parliament with Phineas, Preston had concern for order. He said: “if it be zeal that turns away the wrath of the Lord, where is our boldness, our courage, our forwardness for the Truth? Why are we so fearful and shy of doing the thing that otherwise we think meet to be done?” To the objection that one might be “too bold,” he argued that “zeal” was not to have “liberty” but to be kept under “bridle.” However, one could not be “too much” within “a right channel.” The danger of “excess” could be avoided by a “well-regulating” of “boldness.” One was to have “discretion” and “moderation.” But this only meant avoiding the “extreme” which was the wrong course. To have “moderation” in a “right course” was “lukewarmness” and “coldness.” God would “curse” those who were negligent in “the work of the Lord” (i.e. Meroz).

Just like Harris and Hall, as a corollary to reform, Preston defended the godly. He decried discouraging “zeal” for it turned away God’s wrath: “Why do wicked men cry down all religion and zeal under the name of preciseness, and over-much strictness of life, walking boldly in the streets, and reckoning it their glory to wound God through the sides of men?” No one should be made ashamed to be a Christian and hide. Rather, they should “wear His livery in open view.” All should nourish and cherish the “zealous.” The “chaffe” was not burned only because some “corn” was mixed in with it. If the corn was separated as with “winnowing” then the chaffe would be set on fire. God stayed judgment due to his “elect ones,” “saints,” and “holy and zealous ones.” While the “world” would cast out these men, God saw them as jewels. Any injury to the “zealous” and “cutting off of them” was like the cutting off of Sampson’s hair. It would take away the strength of a nation, city and town.⁶¹

Some moderate puritans though daringly crossed lines their fellow Calvinists respected. The moderate puritan Jeremiah Dyke’s 1628 fast sermon to the Commons is one example. In his dedication to the Commons, he said he knew publishing it at their request could bring consequences: “I easily foresee to how many censures I expose myself by this course, but I have set up my rest with Him.”⁶² The sermon focused on cataloging the ways God gave ‘warning’ of judgment and applying them to England. One warning was God’s “gradual departure” from a nation and church which he repeatedly affirmed was the case with England. The “footsteps” of His departure included when “idols and idolatry” entered the land as was the case in England with “the spread and growth of popery and idolatry.” It occurred when the ministry of a church grew “corrupt and

⁶¹ John Preston, “A Sermon Preached at a Generall Fast,” in *The Saint’s Qualification*, third edition (London, 1637), p. 231-38, 258-81 (STC 20265.5).

⁶² Jeremiah Dyke, *A Sermon Preached at the Pvblicke Fast* (London, 1629), Sig. A3r (STC 7425).

unsound in doctrine and manners,” as was happening in England with “the departure of our old Truth in the increase of Arminianism.” It occurred when God was not with the nation’s armies so they no longer had strength and success, and thus made the nation vulnerable to “captivity.” The English sword used to be feared by adversaries but now she “turns her back upon her enemies.”⁶³

Dyke stressed that ignoring warnings made judgment worse, and England had long done so. Parliament had to act because: “God we see is going and departing from us.” Parliament was “the great Senate of the land” upon who, “next under God and the king,” rested the eyes and hopes of the nation. God had called MPs to save church and state. In addition to the “personal reformation” of each individual in the nation, parliament had to launch a “public reformation” of all “national provocations.” If they had a fast without reformation, then God would not hear their prayers (as in Jeremiah 14:10, 12), give no deliverance, and return no strength to the armed forces. But, if they heeded the warnings with proper fasting and humiliation, they could rest on covenant promises as in 2 Chronicles 12:6-7.⁶⁴

Dyke’s reform agenda was much the same as Lake and Preston. He called for establishing “an able preaching ministry,” “a teaching ministry” in every congregation and parish, and for it to have a proper maintenance. He wanted aid to overseas churches. He called for greater enforcement of laws against the “Romish locusts” who were supposedly swarming everywhere in England, drawing men from obedience to God and king, and increasing “popery.” While in Joshua’s fast the “Babylonish garment” was the “accursed thing” to be removed, England had a “Babylonish god,” a “Babylonish idol,”

⁶³ Ibid., p. 7-25, 29.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 25-27, 32-42.

and “swarms and crowds of Babylonish priests.” Unless parliament removed the “execrable thing” by reformation, the fast would fail as Joshua’s no matter how “deep and hearty” the abasement. In summary, the main difference between Dyke and Calvinist conformists was his daring explicitly to mention the “common complaint” that “Arminianism” alongside “popery” was spreading and needed to be suppressed because “as these come in, so God will go out.”⁶⁵

Like Calvinist conformists, Dyke stressed unity around Calvinist priorities and beliefs. Dyke hoped his fast sermon would help to make them “an happy healing parliament to make up all the breaches of the land.” He called on parliament to go about the work of reformation with “a spirit of concord and unity.” He lamented “disunion.” Dyke hoped that just as God promised the two houses of Israel and Judah, He would make the two houses of parliament “one in His hand,” and have the “staff of binders” which was the “bond of unity” by which they were “knit together.” Unity consisted of being “in and for God to do Him and His Church all possible service.” Disunity would lead to disaster. Further, the work was to be done “with speed,” and to be done “thoroughly” and “courageously” so as not to betray church and state with “carnal and base fears.” Failure to act would lead to all perishing, so they had nothing to lose by doing so. Crucially, Dyke implied that Anti-Calvinists were the innovators. He urged MPs to keep “our old God, and our old truth” under which the kingdom formerly had peace, prosperity, and wonderful victories and deliverances. He urged them to reject “new doctrines and novel opinions” which led to God’s judgment of war. He told them that if they had love of “your old peace” they had to maintain “your old truth, the old

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 42-49.

way, and the good way. The Lord is with you whilst you are with Him.”⁶⁶ As with Preston, noticeably absent here are any attacks on the Book of Common Prayer or prelacy, or calls for presbyterian government, or even reduced episcopacy. Significantly, MPs so liked the sermon that on April 16, 1628 they voted to give Dyke 20 nobles in silver plate in gratitude.⁶⁷

Other moderate puritans were less outspoken than Dyke. The case of Dr. Robert Jenison gives a rare behind the scenes look at how Caroline-Laudian policies antagonized Calvinists, yet fear of prosecution sharply circumscribed the extent to which they criticized authority in public. This self-censorship allowed Laudians to muzzle moderates with few traces, leaving the field to radicals whom they could attack with less risk of alienating Calvinist conformists and public opinion. Jenison is useful because he was part of a network of moderate puritans and Calvinist conformists who shared similar outlooks and priorities. He frequently corresponded with his former tutor Dr. Samuel Ward, master of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, who in turn maintained close correspondence with leading Calvinists like John Davenant, Arthur Lake, William Bedell, Tobie Matthew, James Ussher, Thomas Gataker, and Thomas Goad.⁶⁸

Jenison’s letters often concerned how far to take criticism in works intended for print. Samuel Ward and Dr. Richard Sibbes reviewed them and helped get them printed. In his March 20, 1628 letter to Ward, Jenison expressed alarm at the rise of supposed Arminians but said he only had dared to cross Arminian opinions in his sermons in

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Sig. A3v, p.47-49, 43.

⁶⁷ *Commons Journals*, vol. 1, p. 883. Jason Yiannikou, “Dyke, Jeremiah (bap. 1584, d. 1639),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. By contrast, parliament’s preachers at the 1625 fast were only paid 40s each. (Jansson and Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625*, p. 242.

⁶⁸ Oxford University, Bodleian, Tanner MS 290 (10), fol. 15; Tanner 73 (11), fol. 29; (54), fol. 136; (181), fol. 437; (195), fol. 475; Tanner 71 (15), fol. 30; (49) fol. 136; (54) fol. 143; Tanner 72 (119) fol. 260; (125) fol. 269; (137), fol. 294.

passing. He told Ward how pained he was: “thinking that for my part, I too far betray God’s truth.” He had subscribed to the canon against publicly contradicting fellow-ministers and doctors, and as Arminian “opinions” found favor he did not want this used as “canon-shot” against him. He asked Ward to advise him “that I be not wanting to my calling or to that duty which God and conscience may require of me.”⁶⁹

A fast would have provided a perfect opportunity for Jenison to satisfy his longing to preach publicly and forcefully against “Arminianism.” Indeed, in the same letter, Jenison noted his labor “to speak pertinently and to exhort fitly according to the occasions and occurrences of the times.” Thus, “immediately upon the ill news out of France” (i.e. the failure of the Duke of Buckingham’s expedition to aid the Huguenots in La Rochelle) he had preached three times on Joshua 7:8-9 about the Israelites turning their backs before their enemies, and how the Canaanites would surround and destroy them. Since then he had worked his sermon notes into a treatise called “‘A Word in Season or, England’s Summons to Appear before the Lord in Fasting and Prayer, &c.’ The intent being to move for a general fast.” He was sending it to Dr. Sibbes or John Arrowsmith, who would bring it to Ward to read and comment upon. If Ward thought it fit to print, he hoped he would do his best to get it approved and printed at Cambridge. Though he offered: “If you think it will be ill-taken by great ones (and yet I know not why it should, unless the very text applied to our times displease them) then by no means

⁶⁹ Tanner 72 (119), fol. 260. Similarly, in a May 26, 1621 letter to Ward, Jenison discussed a treatise (a section of which he dedicated to Ward) in which he made thinly veiled, passing remarks against the Spanish Match. The printing of the book had been halted voluntarily and re-collection of them attempted. Jenison blamed Sibbes’ “timorousness” in that after perusing and approving it, he now wanted to edit those passages because they would prove dangerous to them. Jenison wanted no changes to be made. See: Tanner 73 (11), fol. 29.

would I have you be seen in it. Let me only have your private advice, and I shall take the whole hazard to myself.”⁷⁰

Jenison’s bravado though was quite limited. He told Ward he was inclined to dedicate the treatise to the king. He asked if he did so if he should entreat permission first or present a written copy before he presumed to print it. If he did the latter though, he feared it would be suppressed.⁷¹ In a follow-up letter April 2, 1628 he told Ward he had heard an order was given for a public fast in Parliament and London on April 3 and throughout the land on April 21. Also, Arrowsmith had told him that the king on the Duke’s arrival home had given a straight charge to the ministers of London to take no public notice of the defeat in France. For these reasons, he had decided not to pursue printing his treatise. He hoped the fast would be “truly and humbly performed” because otherwise “our feigned turning” would further provoke God as in Jeremiah 3:10.⁷²

How limited Jenison was in his fast sermons can be gleaned from a 1630 treatise based on sermons he preached at Newcastle during “dangerous times” warning of “signs” of a city’s destruction. Dedicated to the mayor, recorder, aldermen, and sheriffs of London, he repeatedly explained the need for public and private fasts with their exercises of humiliation and acts of repentance and reformation. Critically, he also gave justifications for these fasts. Indeed, these sermons appear intended to follow-up ones he told Ward he would preach at the 1628 general fast on Mt. 12:25.⁷³

⁷⁰ Tanner 72 (119), fol. 260.

⁷¹ Tanner 72 (119), fol. 260. Jenison also was considering dedicating it to the House of Commons, or to “one man of note” like Sir John Savile. He was inclined to the king to whom appointing a fast “primely concerns and best befits.” He also was inclined to do so, rather than by others to him, because he trusted the king’s “benign acceptance.” (ibid.)

⁷² Tanner 72 (125), fol. 269; (137), fol. 294.

⁷³ Robert Jenison, *The Cities Safetie* (London, 1630), title page, Sig. ¶3r, p. 2, 17, 24-25, 28-33, 83, 85-9, 93-4, 150, 159-64, 187 (STC 14489). Jenison said he applied Mt. 12:25 to the division between a pastor and his people. He argued that the union of the two had to be “in the Lord.” He rejected union whereby

The 1630 treatise opened with a long discussion of Mt. 12:25. Following the now familiar theme, Jenison argued that “division” in cities was due to “division” from God because their “unity” presupposed “union with God and His Law.” This “union with God” also gave safety “from God’s presence, according to covenant, and from those promises of His protection, which He hath made and annexed to diverse qualifications in His people.” Specifically, “God is with, and in the midst of such cities, as are with Him by faith, fear, righteousness and obedience, and otherwise by humiliation and repentance.” They had to be “godly cities.”⁷⁴

Jenison only made one veiled reference to “Arminianism” despite often expressing dread and despair over its rise in letters to Ward 1622-30.⁷⁵ He argued that: “unity in evil, is disunion from God: Agreement in heresy or popery (though unity and universality be pretended) is but schism from God.” The parenthetic matter recalls not only Catholic claims but the polemical language of Anti-Calvinists. Further, Jenison claimed the covenant duty of “faith” required “an entertainment of the doctrine of God and of Christ.” He later claimed England had failed “to keep covenant with God” not only in “righteousness” but also in “other duties mentioned.” Later yet, Jenison asserted that England formerly had come “out of Babylon” (i.e. the Church of Rome) “by renouncing communion with them in their service and doctrine.”⁷⁶ Since England broke its covenant duty of “faith” yet formerly had pure doctrine, Jenison implied error had entered England. Such cryptic remarks show how muzzled and timid he was. Also,

the people were not “troubled” with “much preaching,” and pastors played the “goodfellow” with the basest of their flock. He said Mr. Potter, who the purported Arminian Dr. Thomas Jackson occasionally brought down to preach, was one such “goodfellow.” (Tanner MS 72 (125), fol. 269).

⁷⁴ Jenison, *Cities Safetie*, p. 1-3, 10-17, 29, 47, 57, 135.

⁷⁵ Tanner 73 (54), fol. 136, (181), fol. 437, and (195), fol. 475; Tanner 72 (119), fol. 260; Tanner 71 (15), fol. 30. For Jenison’s continuing concern in 1632, see: Tanner 71 (49), fol. 136, and (54), fol. 143.

⁷⁶ Jenison, *Cities Safetie*, p. 2, 17, 29, 159.

Jenison faced the problem that with parliament no longer in session Laudians had a freer hand to suppress Calvinists because political expediency no longer necessitated some restraint.

The provoking sins Jenison named as bringing wrath were mostly standard ones Calvinist conformists mentioned. His instruction to English cities about the sins that brought destruction spoke of them in general terms from scriptural examples. While he did assure that these sins reigned in England, he left it at that and gave no specifics.⁷⁷

Only in regard to a few sins did Jenison go farther than Calvinist conformists. First, was “the profanation of the Lord’s sabbath.” This sin included English cities though “in some places more than others.” But Jenison glossed his sense of this sin to appeal widely. He specified England had “too open” profanation, especially open markets on “the Lord’s day.” In his only specification, he told that such was the case in Teverton, Devonshire which suffered a terrible fire as divine punishment.⁷⁸

Jenison also implicitly criticized Laudian pressures on preaching and puritan clergy. Among sins against God Jenison listed “the restraining of the means of God’s pure worship and service.” Specifically, Jenison warned of terrible judgment on all such “as restrain, forbid, and hinder the free passage of the Gospel in the ministry thereof.” To the utmost of their power, he argued English cities had done just this.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Jenison, *Cities Safetie*, p. 97-101, 133-36. The sins included: “rebellion against God” (by general sin), pride, rebellion and sedition against superiors, violence and oppression of inferiors, “security,” sensuality, “carelessness,” “lust,” “senselessness,” “sottishness of heart,” “blockishness and fatness of heart,” negligence of magistrates punishing offenders, and ministers neglecting their duty as “watchmen.” (Ibid., p. 105-29, 139) First and foremost though was tolerating “idolatry,” seminary priests and Jesuits, recusants who also refused the loyalty oath, and not enforcing laws against them as “the enemies of truth and holiness” and “His enemies.” (Ibid., p. 42-3, 93, 101-105, 112, 116-17, 137-38, 159, 172-74) In addition to failing to act against Catholics at home, England had done the same abroad threatening “the curse of Meroz.” (Ibid., p. 144)

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 25, 110-12, 138, 165.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 108-10, 138.

Closely related, Jenison argued God would “depart,” “forsake,” and destroy cities “who either never were in special covenant and league with God, or otherwise have broken their covenant with Him.” The same applied to cities that rejected “offers of peace and of God’s covenant.” That is, Jenison claimed cities would be destroyed “who either accept not of Christ being offered them, or otherwise thrust Him and His messengers out of them, persecuting them from city to city.” While mainly “popish cities,” they also included “such cities and towns at home, as grow weary of Christ’s faithful servants and ministers, and thrust them out from among them.” In London and other English cities, towns, and villages were “they that refuse the offers of grace and peace by Jesus Christ, and to their power either do expel, or would expel, or stop the mouths of God’s faithful messengers, that they might hear them no longer.” Such acts would bring terrible judgment unless they repented and embraced Christ and His messengers. Implicitly rejecting Laudian rationales for such policies, Jenison argued: “It will not be pretences which will serve to excuse them: for then should Antichrist himself be blameless for his persecutions and excommunications of us.”⁸⁰

By contrast, Jenison argued England should reverently entertain “His faithful servants and messengers unto whom He reveals these His secrets, and whom He useth as His own mouth, to be heralds of His wrath.” England was: “Not to discourage or threaten them, when they threaten us.” “God’s servants” were to be heeded in “these evil times and days of sin.” To reject them was to reject the remedy for sin and divine wrath, and to hasten destruction.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 77-84, 136-37.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 174-78.

Jenison furthered these themes when he decried the sin of rebellion against and disobedience to lawful governors God placed in authority. Significantly, he then added:

“Yet it is not amiss, by the way to note, that this hateful crime of sedition and rebellion, hath in all times been most falsely objected and laid to the charge of God’s holy prophets and apostles, and other holy men, whom God hath employed in the public function of teaching and instructing His Church, as if they were the only men that troubled and wrought commotions in the cities, places, or kingdoms, where they live; and the reason is, because governors look to be obeyed in their unlawful commands and injunctions, and to have such as are to be under them only in the Lord, to fashion themselves to their wills against God.”⁸²

This sin often was charged against “the innocent.” Likewise, among sins against inferiors, Jenison noted “violence, strife, and contradiction” against “the godly” and “the righteous and innocent.” Jenison affirmed that in London and other English cities were those who “vex and oppress” inferiors “especially the godly.” He cited Proverbs 11:10-11 that the fate of a city was linked to the godly, so when it goes ill with them through “the violence of the mighty” then it goes ill with the city. Jenison argued that “the just and righteous, and to such as trust in Him, and do Him service” gave safety to city for God had made a “promise” to preserve them.⁸³ Yet in all these attacks on preaching and the godly, Jenison remained circumspectly vague neither specifying the supposed oppression nor Laudian bishops and their underlings as oppressors. Moreover, we see here a moderate puritan trending to the narrative of the godly as Christ’s suffering little flock.

The moderate puritan William Gouge was more timid and tepid in tone than Jenison. Printed about the same time as Jenison’s, his treatise gave the same emphasis to covenants, providential judgments, and fasts. In the first book on plague, which Gouge said he preached in August, 1625 when weekly fasts were celebrated, he gave a standard,

⁸² Ibid., p. 113-15.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 114, 119-20, 139, 18-25.

uncontroversial list of sins provoking the Almighty.⁸⁴ The second sin of “profanation of holy things and times” included the complaint that “the Lord’s Day, it is in many places by many persons made the Devil’s Day.” But Gouge did not use the more controversial term “sabbath,” and implied profanation entailed wild debauchery. In the fourth sin, ingratitude, Gouge included for the Word: “Superstitious persons wish for Queen Mary’s days again. Schismatiques wish there had been no reformation unless it had been better. The profane cry out of too much preaching.” Here Gouge aimed at Catholics, separatists, and the ungodly. He may have suggested Anti-Calvinists agreed with the profane, but that the latter disliked preaching was a commonplace. More significantly, he defended an imperfect reformation! In the sixth sin, profane ministers, Gouge complained of “their bitter invectives against such as make most conscience of sin.” Puritans accused many Anti-Calvinist clerics of being “good-fellows,” but any such suggestion was buried under standard godly complaints about the clergy in general. Elsewhere, Gouge said of the “saints” that none were “more hated, scorned, reproached, evilly entreated and persecuted in the world.” But Gouge said this to charge the wicked with “monstrous ingratitude,” because God spared them for the sake of “a remnant of righteous persons” Again, this idea was commonplace and Gouge spoke only in general terms.⁸⁵ In sum, Gouge was silent about “Arminianism” and Caroline-Laudian policies. To satisfy his conscience and

⁸⁴ William Gouge, *Gods Three Arrowes* (London, 1631), p. 8-14, 26-7, 33, 51, 79-82 (STC 12116). The provoking sins were: 1) the growth of “idolatry” defined as “popery,” and toleration of “seducers” to it; 2) profaning the Lord’s Day, and neglect and careless observation of prayer, preaching, and the sacraments; 3) many “professors” being as ungodly as the profane; 4) “ingratitude” for God’s mercies; 5) magistrates abusing their power; 6) ministers discouraging the upright, animating the profane, and socializing with the base and lewd sort; 7) inhumanity to those suffering afflictions; 8) general countenancing of sin; 9) obstinacy in sin; 10) small profit from God’s Word due to lack of faith in those hearing ministers; 11) impenitency for sin; 12) “inward apostasy” in becoming “lukewarm” and its consequent “outward apostasy” in renouncing true religion. (Ibid., p. 79-82)

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 79-80, 26-7.

sense of calling, he focused on anti-Catholicism and the reformation of manners, which is all he safely could do under the current regime.

Conflicting pressures on moderate puritans are also evident in Josiah Shute who preached to the Commons in the 1625 fasts. A 1643 account of his life defended him against the “crime of temporizing.” He was “a professed (though not a rigid) antagonist” first to the Caroline-Laudian revolution and then to “the fatal alterations of our giddy times” and “the heady people” during the Long Parliament. With respect to the former:

“when at any time he saw plainly any indirect designs on foot, which some great agents in church and state, kept going, either to put new fetters upon the subjects, or new disguises on religion; he could never be courted to lend his tongue to make apologies for their innovations; nor could be silenced from declaiming against the dangerous attempts of these first troublers of Israel.”

But, his opposition had limits: “he sometimes commanded himself to a mannerly and civil obedience, as a subject, and a son of the church; in some indifferent things, rather yielding to the public, and a good conscience, than to the willfulness of his own private opinions.” Further, in that now familiar language, he was “a lover of union and right devotion” and at every lecture attacked “the dividing separatist and superstitious papist.” He was one of the “chief champions” of “Truth and peace.” Not surprisingly, moderate puritans like Shute, so central to the Jacobean church, were marginalized:

“And there needs no greater approbation of his uprightness, nor a fuller conviction of the corrupt genius of those days, than that he and some more of his form (whose standing in the gap, when superstition was rushing in, drew upon them that then venerable nickname of puritans) were so long left unpreferred; whilst the dignities of the church (which should have been the reward of men singular for their piety and ability) were chiefly taken up by such who rather studied, preached, and practiced the politiques then divinity.”⁸⁶

⁸⁶ *An Elegiacall Commemoration of . . . Mr. Josiah Shute*, p. 10-12. Significantly, the Calvinist conformist Richard Holdsworth preached the funeral sermon for Shute’s brother Nathaniel, another moderate puritan preacher. (Ibid., p. 2) For a virtually identical account of Josiah which lacks some of the qualifications suggesting moderation, see: Thomas Povey, *The Pious Life and Death of Mr. Iosiah Shvte* ([London], 1643?), p. 7-8 (Wing P3044).

Consideration of radical puritans provides further sense of the restraint shown in the Calvinist conformist and moderate puritan fast sermons reviewed here. Radicals had fewer scruples in their role as “God’s trumpets.” Dedicated to the king and parliament, Henry Burton’s *Israel’s Fast* (1628) articulated in detail the fast he desired. Unlike Dyke, Burton railed against Laudians as part of a supposed popish plot. Burton’s text was the familiar Joshua 7, which doubtless was more pointed in light of recent English military disasters. Burton argued England desperately needed such a fast because it was “full of Achans.” Jesuits and seminary priests were the “ring leading Achans.” Another Achan was “popish idols” like the mass, images, and “popish trumperies.” The final Achan was “neutralizers” though “the bias of their affections, wheels and sways them round to popery.” They were “popish Arminians, or Arminian papists.” This Achan was the most dangerous “in that under the seemly vale and masionlike habit of the Church of England, they labor to bring in that old Babylonish strumpet hoodwinkt, that we should all re-acknowledge her for our mother.” Recent Anti-Calvinist books “published by authority” did just that, including by spreading “Arminian heresy.”⁸⁷

This “confederacy of Achans” had gotten such high authority that they controlled the legal printing presses in England. They prohibited books “directly against popery and Arminianism,” and any book just against “popery” had to have many qualifications. By this device they mightily prevailed with “great ones, scholars, and others,” and drew England closer to “that whore.” If, as formerly, the presses were open and free “to print books by authority against popery and her confederate Arminians” then “the Truth” would banish “their neutralizing Achans.” Burton called on the king and parliament to

⁸⁷ Henry Burton, *Israel’s Fast* (Rochel, 1628) Sig. A3r-A4r, a2r-a4r; p. 1-8, 14, 20-3, 25-6, 29-39 (STC 4147).

act so “orthodox books” could be freely published by authority again. But for now, this faction was so powerful that the teachings of Jesuits and seminary priests which had been deemed “treason” now passed for “good religion.” Significantly, Burton thought the Church of England’s doctrine had been orthodox prior to the rise of English Arminians. He called on parliament to act because:

“the clouds of Pelagian heresy, mounting to the top of man’s airy imagination, by casting a false shadow upon the pure doctrines of the Church of England, derived unto us from the fountains of scripture, by the conduits of the prime reformers of religion, and continued unto us ever since by the uninterrupted pipes of the most learned and illustrious martyrs, prelates, and doctors of our church, would bring our meridian light of the Gospel, to a twilight, by intermingling with it the Egyptian fogs of the Church of Rome.”⁸⁸

“Israel’s fast” was the means “to preserve God’s vineyard, by purging out the Troubler of Israel.” If king and parliament were “lukewarm” and had “no courage for the truth,” the fast would prove perilous because it would not have been duly and dutifully performed by prompt reformation of offending sins. God would deem all accessories to Achan’s sin. He would send “fearful judgments” if the Achans were not “purged and punished” after the fast. The fast would provoke more plagues if it lacked “thorough reformation of Israel’s sin.” England would not stand before her enemies nor God be with her armies until the “accursed thing” was taken away (and Burton’s title page listed the book as printed in Rochelle). A “hypocritical fast” would anger God as Jezebel’s fast for Naboth’s vineyard and in Isaiah 58. Specifically, he argued “the right seeking of God’s glory in our fast” was to remove not only “personal sins” but “state-sins” like idolatry and heresy, and to establish “the true religion.”⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Ibid., Sig. A3r-b2r; p. 24-5, 30-2. Clearly comparing the biblical Achan to England’s, Burton complained if stealing the Babylonian garment was so heinous, how much more “the bringing in of idolatrous relics with all Babylonish equipage and furniture, to set up the Babylonish religion in Israel.” Worse, if this was not done “secretly” as by the original Achan, but “openly.” (Ibid., p. 24)

⁸⁹ Ibid., Sig., A3v, a2r, a4v, b1r, p. 1, 5-8, 16-23, 25, 28-34, 38-9.

In his delineation of the orthodox community, Burton too argued for “unity” and “unanimity” in church and state. Specifically, he wanted the king and parliament to go “inseparably together,” and for the whole state to act “as one man” against the Achans. For Burton the “Achans” were “dividers” separating “God from Israel” and “Israel from themselves” especially the king from his loyal subjects. They were the “Troublers of Israel.” They knew a kingdom divided against itself could not stand, and this was their goal. In particular, the “Achan faction” by “privy whisperings” had bred “disaffections” between the king and parliament. Burton called on parliament to take the “Achan faction” away from the king because it was a “mighty confederacy” that might be too hard for him to overcome without assistance. “Israel” was “dangerously sick” and parliament was “the great college of physicians” that had to cure her.⁹⁰

A key cause of division was the “intoxicating flattery” and “siren-songs” by which “powerful enchanters” had gained positions at court. They had tried to persuade all that they were the king’s best friends. Doubtless with an eye to the recent sermons of Dr. Robert Sibthorpe and Dr. Roger Mainwaring, Burton argued:

“Their themes and theorems are, that kings are partakers of God’s own omnipotency; though this be a divine attribute, incommunicable to any creature: That justice can be no rule or medium, whereby to give God, or the king his right. As if right were not grounded upon justice, as the rule of it.”

Though Burton also exalted kings saying they were “next unto and under God in their power and sovereignty over His people,” and that by calling and office they could be termed “gods.” Yet, he also limited their power by asserting that in a “well governed state,” the king was not to be alone in his counsels and actions, but to rule with

⁹⁰ Ibid., Sig. A3r-A4v, a1r-a3r, a4v, b1r-b2r; p. 29. Burton blamed “popishly affected” and “factious spirits” in parliament for hindering supply to the king. He trusted the people to elect loyal MPs, the other sort only being elected due to “posting” and “packing” of elections. With only the orthodox in parliament and around the king they would all “increase with the increase of God.” (Ibid., Sig., a1r-a1v)

parliament. While kings were “fathers of their country,” MPs too were “good fathers.” Specifically, Burton argued that by ancient custom English parliaments had always had the power in ecclesiastical matters to establish good and wholesome laws so as to advance “God’s cause.”⁹¹ The contrast with Laud’s vision of kingship was stark.

Burton saw himself akin to Hushai who showed himself the “king’s friend” by frustrating “Achitophel’s traitorous counsel” and reconciling subjects to their sovereign. Burton drew sharp lines between “true bred English” or “true-hearted English Israelites,” and “traiterous Achans” who betrayed church and state to “the beast,” and were “traitors to God’s truth, and the religion established whereon the king’s throne is firmly established.” They also were “traitors” by “betraying us into our enemies’ hands by making God our enemy.” The centerpiece of Burton’s unity was the example of King Asa and his people who beginning “a great work of reformation” entered into “a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart, and with all their soul.” They swore an “oath” to do so, and those who failed to seek God were to be put to death. Likewise, in England, king, Lords, and Commons were to all enter “a solemn general covenant sealed by a particular sacred oath.” This covenant would discover and remove “dividing Achans.” Burton urged the king and parliament “to establish the religion of Christ, so long and happily hitherto avowed and maintained in the Church of England.” He wanted them to abolish the two main “troublers of Israel” which were “Antichristian idolatry” and “Arminian heresy.” Unless they did so, they would have no success in

⁹¹ Ibid., Sig. a1r, a4v, b1r, p. 10-13, 30-3. Burton claimed kings were bound to rule in accord with God’s laws and Word. Further, they were “God’s servants and stewards, whose chief office it is to maintain and vindicate the honor of their Lord.” Likewise, parliament did not have power to make “new articles of the faith” or establish any religion they wished. Rather, guided by the Word they only could establish “the true religion” and abolish “all false religions.” (Ibid.)

parliament in civil matters.⁹² We have seen that “renewing covenant” was common for Calvinists. What was new here was the formality with which it was being undertaken. Also, this use of fasts dovetailed with the demands of MPs for a mandatory communion service at the start of parliaments to root out crypto-Catholics.

While differing from moderates in his outspokenness, Burton too left episcopacy and long established ceremonies untouched.⁹³ Even in 1624, Alexander Leighton did not. He called for a national fast as a prelude to England waging “holy war” on the continent. “God’s cause” required the things of “the whore” and “the beast” to be cast out of “God’s house.” It had to be “cleansed” from “superstition,” “idols,” “idolatry,” and anything of “man’s invention” which “polluted” it. The nation had to be for “the purity of God’s worship.” Referring to the Joshua narrative, Leighton warned of “the fire of God’s wrath from heaven” because “we have ever kept in, and pleaded for the excommunicate thing.” The nation would not prosper in any endeavor as long as God had a “controversy” with it, and these sins made “a separation betwixt us and God.”

Further, Leighton blamed “great prelates” for keeping “superstition” and the “ensign staff” of Rome in the church. He urged them not to be as “the little beast with the two horns” of Revelation 13:11-18. They were to drop lordly titles and places, and stop “beating His servants.” He urged them: “*Let Christ reign in His ordinances*, and let that maxim once be made good, in a good sense, *no ceremony, no bishop*.” He claimed bishops opposed fasts because: “the plants that are not of God’s planting, know well, that the use of humiliation, would find out the causes of our evil, amongst which themselves

⁹² Ibid., Sig. A4r-A4v, a1r-a1v, b1r-b1v p. 30-2.

⁹³ Indeed, Burton referred to the king’s “reverend bishops,” “that precious bishop Jewel,” and Jewel as “the good bishop.” (Ibid., p. 14, 30) The other sins he listed in need of reform were neglect of “God’s people” on the continent, impropriation of tithes, and simony. (Ibid., p. 11, 24, 29, 32).

would be found to be the chief: So that it is no wonder, that they cannot endure to hear of humiliation.”

Leighton also was radical in chastising England for “the neglect or unsound performance” of prayer and fasts. While some might object that England had abundant prayer, God had not heard it so it must have been faulty. Likewise, among reasons for the lack of fasts was “the conceited glory of the church; *the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*, say they, and that in great pomp and glory, and what need we mourn? It is an *outside glory indeed*, but there is but a little glory within.” What Leighton was dismissing here was the ordinary set prayers of the church. Instead, he called for extempore, Spirit inspired prayer in fasts to move God.

In addition, even a radical like Leighton argued for unity around his reform vision. In the fast, ministers, magistrates, and people were to humble selves “as one man together” for these offenses against God. All were to “stand up in the breach.” He called for “every man in his place . . . to bring Jezabel from the window.” Like Joshua, they must “find out the excommunicate thing, and consume it with fire: for so long as it is with us, God will not be with us.” If they continued “lukewarm” in “our Laodicean conceit,” the Lord would spit them out of His mouth. If He did so, Leighton feared “we are such a loathsome thing, that He will never take us up again, but make a new people to Himself.” Further, the fast could not have “hypocrisy,” and serve human ends rather than God: “Humiliation, without reformation, is a mockery of God, and the undoing of a good cause.” As shown in Isaiah 58 and Zachary 7, such fasts would provoke God and plague

the performer. But if they did properly fast and reform, then God would humble their enemies in accord with “His covenant.”⁹⁴

In his 1628 appeal to parliament, Leighton again called for fasts to save the nation from the enemy in war. For the fast to be successful, “we must with Joshua remove that thing of the curse; namely, the prelacy from having any power over it; for woeful experience hath taught us, that the prelate’s finger is like the Harpie his claw, it spoileth every thing, it cometh in.” Having them as “helpers or ringleaders” in the fast would bring a curse rather than a blessing because they were “the troublers of Israel,” and “enemies” of reformation and humiliation. Leighton approvingly recalled that in an August, 1626 general fast in London one pastor then “pleading for reformation” preached on Joshua’s removing the “excommunicate thing” of Achan. He said: “in plain terms, that the main thing was that damnable hierarchy, who made no matter of the sinking of the church and state; so they might swim in their honors, and pleasures.”

In 1628, Leighton thus argued more explicitly for abolishing episcopacy. Indeed, he claimed that in reformations in “reformed churches” a national council only arose after the hierarchy, “the very baine of councils,” had been cashiered. He called for unity around abolishing episcopacy in the fast. As in Zephaniah 2: “The mean then of removal is to gather yourselves together in serious humiliation, and reformation, before the Lord, in knitting your hearts together, in the band of love, every one lending his helping hand (according to his place) to the breaking down of Babel.” Leighton lauded the example of

⁹⁴ Alexander Leighton, *Speculum Belli Sacri, Or the Lookinglasse of the Holy War* (NP, 1624), p. 192-208, 278-81 (STC 15432). Leighton also wanted the public fasts for England’s sins in regards to the sabbath, oaths, Spanish Match, and failures to help continental Protestants in the Thirty Years War. Indeed, he noted as cause for humiliation that state had defaced “the honor of God,” allowing “our people to serve God’s enemies against those that fight the battles of the Lord.” This policy pit “brother against brother,” “smites at God’s cause,” and “proclaims that we are not God’s friends indeed.” (Ibid., p. 194, 276-80)

Scotland for reformation by fast. When the worldly power of the Catholic Queen Mother and French troops dominated the Scots Protestants:

“but having with them a mighty man of God, who could stand up in the gap, and tell the nobles, and other of their particulars, in the controversy with God, every man humbled and reformed himself, so that the Lord was entreated, and at length they were rid of the prelacy, and all their excommunicate things; yea great fear fell upon the Queen, and prelates, and all their popish forces, by the frequent, and fervent humiliations of God’s people; in so much, that the Queen confessed, that she feared more the prayer and fasting of Mr. Knox, and his assistants; than an army of 20,000 men.”

Leighton argued that if parliament cleared the fast of “the leprosy of the prelates” and charged ministers to “deal plainly” about “prelacy” in it, then:

“The prelates hearts would fail them, their knees should smite one against an other; and as the sound of rams horns shook the walls of Jericho; so this one piece of humiliation, being of a right bore, and well plied, would shake the prelacy all in pieces, yea by this means some of them happily might give over their hold, and make their peace with God.”

Also, unity and perseverance were critical to success: “God’s people, with all, must labor to be of one mind, and of one heart; and by entering covenant with God, against those His enemies, and all that is enmity to God, resolve to hold them at staves end, till God give the victory.”⁹⁵

In contrast to Calvinist conformists, in their fast sermons Anti-Calvinist conformists propagated themes and priorities sharply at odds with those of puritans. The orthodox self-understanding or public “face” of the church they wished to exhibit before the Lord in fasts appeared “popish” to puritans. Two sermons highlight the radically different vision of a properly reformed church around which Anti-Calvinists called for unity in fasts: the July 5, 1626 fast sermon Laud, bishop of St. David’s, preached on

⁹⁵ Alexander Leighton, *An Appeal to the Parliament, Or Sions Plea Against the Prelacie* (n.p., 1628), p. 80, 108-9, 330-33 (STC 15430). He argued the Queen Mother of Scotland was “an arch-enemy of the Gospel” who was “fighting against God, and the erecting of His kingdom.” (ibid., p. 206) Leighton believed so much in the power of the “fervent prayer” of the righteous to prevail with God to defeat “the enemies of Zion,” that he boasted a fast would cause more fear among the enemy than human forces: “if they should see us taking up the controversy with God, and growing great with Him, it would make their hearts tremble, as the Philistines did when they heard the Ark was brought into the camp.” (Ibid., p. 198-99, 203-9, 281)

Psalm 74:22 to the king at Whitehall,⁹⁶ and the April 21, 1628 fast sermon Dr. Phineas Hodson, chancellor of the metropolitan church of St. Peter, preached on Psalm 27:4 at York.

Rather than the Word preached, Anti-Calvinists emphasized the church building, ceremony, and common prayer in fasts as the vehicles to instruct and inspire. Hodson interpreted his text to show that the Temple was the place for prayer in a fast because it was the “house of the Lord” where God “dwells.” In the text, David wished to dwell in the Temple all his days to behold the “beauty of the Lord.” Hodson argued “God’s beauty” was not seen everywhere, the sure way to find it was “to dwell where God dwells.” To “dwell” and pray in the “sanctuary” or “God’s house” in the “time of trouble,” would lead God to protect and deliver them from enemies. The Lord would do so because by warring against their own corruptions and rebellions against Him, they made God “our friend” and made “peace” with Him.⁹⁷

Hodson argued that prayer in “the house of the Lord” when “enemies” threatened required the service of body and soul. David prayed not just in heart but with his tongue,

⁹⁶ This honor was only the latest for Laud under the patronage of Charles. In January, 1626 Charles transferred the deanery of Westminster, one of the richest in the church, to him from Bishop Williams. Laud also took Bishop Williams’ place in the coronation ceremony of Charles I. In June, 1626 Charles promoted him to the bishopric of Bath and Wells. (William Laud, *The Works of . . . William Laud* (Oxford, 1853), volume 3, p. 178-79, 192-93)

⁹⁷ Phineas Hodson, *The Kings Request* (London, 1628), p. 5-13, 20-23 (STC 13551). Davenant’s fast sermon was radically different: “We come unto God, not by shifting of places, but by changing of our manners and practices. Coming unto the church (as now we do) is but coming unto the material house of God: ceasing to do evil, practicing to do well, that is our true returning unto God.” (Davenant, *One of the Sermons*, p. 9) Burton (with an eye to separatists) argued that the place to observe a public fast was the place appointed for public worship, “God’s house.” Private devotions at home to the neglect of the public ministry in a fast would only bring a curse from God. He claimed “ever in the public ordinance God doth more manifest His presence in the communication of His graces, then in our private families.” He argued the whole fast could be spent in the church, but with a warning to Laudians: “Not that there is more virtue in the church walls, or pews, or pillars, then in our private houses or closets; but the public ordinance is the most perfect beauty of holiness, ever to be preferred before private devotions.” Burton, *Israels Fast*, p. 15-16.

so “the reflection of his words might beat upon his soul.” Indeed, David was a “king of ceremonies.” The outer was needed to “stir up” devotion. Hodson went on:

“He is not so far out of love with ceremonies as some men take him to be, for all their quarrel at putting religion in a ceremony. The tongue and the hand, and the knee, and the eye, and the habit, and the hat, and the outward appearance, will sometimes remove a curse, and bring a blessing when they want the heart, as is plain in the story of Ahab, 1 King 21. In a word, never man neglected the duty of prayer, that did not first neglect the ceremonies of that duty. From this root they grow up to the highest pitch of impiety.”

Hodson linked not observing ceremony to a lack of humility. He warned against being “high minded” as God disliked petitions given with “a proud peremptory faith, (I am not like other men, you know the dialect).” Moreover, Hodson argued that beauty “transported” humans emotionally and the Temple was “the perfection of beauty.” Affection and zeal flowed from seeing the “beauty of the Lord” in “the Lord’s house.” Fervent prayer and repentance then moved God to deliver the nation and restore His blessings. Indeed, Hodson described a veritable mystic union of God, David, and the Temple.⁹⁸

Similarly, Laud most feared that, as with Jerusalem, victory of the “enemies” would lead to “profanation” of the Temple and “all the rites of religion,” the destruction of the “beauty” of the church, the “defiling of the holy place,” and an attempt to pluck God “out of His house.” Also, his citation of Ps. 74:6-8 about the enemy destroying carved work with axes and hammers, and setting fire to the rest suggested the actions of Protestant iconoclasts rather than Spanish Catholics.⁹⁹ By contrast, in their fast sermons, Calvinist most feared the enemy overthrowing the Gospel.

⁹⁸ Hodson, *Kings Request*, p. 12-14, 5-7, 21-2. By contrast, Calvinist interpreters used Ahab’s fast not to praise ceremony but to claim God could be so merciful as to respect the mere outward form of repentance. Indeed, Preston in his fast sermon gave a standard warning about “formality” and that “outward performance” was not what God respected and accepted. In short, Calvinists reversed Hodson’s fears about the relationship of the inner to the outer. See: Preston, “A Sermon,” p. 231-33, 239, 267-68. Burton, *Israels Fast*, p. 18-19.

⁹⁹ Laud, *Works*, volume 1, p. 121-29.

Anti-Calvinists also used fasts to argue for a concept of “justice” and “honor” that underwrote an unlimited monarchy, and attacks on Calvinist doctrine and “puritans.” Like Calvinists, Laud argued fasts required amendment of offenses against God, and he used this idea as a bludgeon to advance a vision of reform. Specifically, to restore God’s providential protection fasts had to embrace “God’s cause,” and unite “our cause” with and conform it to His. If we did not support God’s cause, we would be cursed like Meroz. If our cause differed from His, He would neither hear our prayers nor deliver us in “the day of trouble.” Further, if they returned to their old sins as soon as they left the church door God would cry out against such a fast as in Is. 58:5.¹⁰⁰

The first component of the “cause of God” was “the magistrate, and his power and justice.” Laud gave the conventional citation of Romans 13:2 that to resist them was to resist God and thus “God’s cause.” Agreeing with “the School,” Laud affirmed:

“that any the least irreverence of a king, as to dispute of his judgments, and whether we ought to follow and obey him, *sacrilegium dicitur*, is justly extended to be called sacrilege.’ And since all sacrilege is a violation of something that is holy, it is evident that the office and person of the king is sacred.”

The king could not be violated by “deed, word, or thought” because to do so violated “God’s cause” and Him. God was so tender of His “justice” and “honor” that as in Matthew 25:45 the sufferings of “little ones” and Christians reflected on Him and were defended and accounted as “God’s cause.” The likeliest threat to first the “honor” and subsequently the person of the king was from those who were “sacrilegious” against God and the church (i.e. non-conformists).¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 122-47.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 131-33, 145. Laud also portrayed the king as a key mediator between God and his people, and claimed England was blessed in this “above other nations.” While kings were no longer “prophets” like David, the king was “a seer, so far as is possible.” The king’s right eye looked to heaven for God to maintain him, and his left looked on the people to maintain them (and relieve their “just grievances”) as God maintained him. Charles was exemplary in calling his people to “God’s cause.” He had “sounded an

In addition to these suggestions of absolutism, Laud counseled Charles to stand by his policies to establish peace and order, not to compromise, and accept limited monarchy in practice if not in theory, as Calvinist conformists urged in their fast sermons. Charles' rightness would be self-evident to all:

“Your merit, and the nobleness of your heart, will glue the hearts of your people to you. And your religious care of ‘God’s cause’ and service will make Him, I doubt not, ‘arise,’ and haste to the ‘maintenance’ of your cause, as of ‘His own.’ Only in these, and all times of difficulty, ‘be strong, and of a good courage, keep close to the law of the Lord.’ [Joshua 1:7] Be full of counsel, and then resolute to act it. Else, if you shall not be firm to deliberated counsels, they which are bound to serve you, may seek and find opportunities to serve themselves upon you.”¹⁰²

The second component of “God’s cause,” was “truth” and “unity” in the church. To corrupt doctrine (i.e. Calvinists) or rent the church into sects (i.e. non-conformists) was to attack “God’s cause.” So was impoverishing the church and abusing her in her means, because any who make the church “base” would thereby “pluck God as low.” For the church’s cause to be God’s, its devotions and actions had to be “pious” and not “savor of impurity and irreligion.” Earlier Laud affirmed that for a fast to work none could have the sin of pride by which they “oppose and un-glory” the Lord. He counseled humility as in Ps. 99:5: “we must fall low on our face before His footstool, for He is holy.”¹⁰³

alarm” to wake his people by proclaiming a fast, and had gone with them into “the house of the Lord” to fast and pray. Quite differently, Calvinists held godly clergy to be the ‘watchmen’ who judged times, and that the prince was to act upon their counsel. Significantly, Charles I was the first English monarch to authorize national fasts directly by royal proclamation, and he did so from the first fast he called in 1625. By contrast, Elizabeth and James with their privy councils ordered fasts by sending letters to the archbishops that then passed down through the church hierarchy to bishops and archdeacons. They thereby involved many authorities in their rule. Charles also promoted himself in the proclamations by noting he was following the example of “godly kings”/“pious kings”/“good kings” in former ages in times of crisis. He also affirmed that he, and his family and household would set an example for his subjects in observing the fasts. His actual observance won fawning praise. (Ibid., p. 122-24, 138-39; James Larkin (ed.), *Stuart Royal Proclamations* (Oxford, 1983), vol. 2, p. 47, 85, 98-9, 193-94, 221-22, 539, 735. Jansson and Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625*, p. 242. Burton, *Israel’s Fast*, p. 14.

¹⁰² Laud, *Works*, vol. 1, p. 139. Too many men only followed “God’s cause” if it supported their “faction” and “party.” He argued that “parties are ever after private ends.” The cause of God, church, and state were always common. (ibid., p. 138)

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 128, 132-33.

Laud argued these two qualities made God “a protector of any king, any state, any national church, against either inbred or foreign ‘enemies;’ against the fox at home and the lion abroad.” That is, the state had to have “honor and justice,” and the church had “to labor devotion as much at least, if not more than, knowledge.” If either was lacking, “‘God’s cause’ and ours may be two,” and He would leave them to famine, pestilence, sword, and other judgments. Laud could not have more impugned Calvinist ministry which centered on teaching “saving knowledge.” Further, when Laud warned to weave and incorporate the cause of king and people/church and state so strongly to God’s that “no cunning of the devil” could separate them, he arguably implied Calvinists as the threat. Earlier, Laud had told “the Church of old often did upon great apprehensions, as we do this day, fast, and pray together: that is, labor by all means to make God for the state.” They did so because as in Judges 9:33 and Matthew 17:21, “if there be any ‘evil spirit,’ as you lately heard, got in between ‘Abimelech and the men of Schechem,’ between the king and his people, there is no exorcism so sovereign to cast him out, as ‘fasting and prayer.’ For some ‘devils,’ you know, will not otherwise [go] out.”¹⁰⁴ So fasts were occasions to define Calvinists as outside the legitimate Christian community.

The third component was “blasphemy” against God. Later, Laud arguably accused Calvinists at home and Catholics abroad of this sin. He claimed the “enemies of God’s truth and of the peace of His people” were “base and uncivilly irreligious.” While they were “cunning, subtle enemies,” Laud assured “malignity against God’s cause, and ‘blasphemy’ against His person, will make the greatest wisdom in the world turn ‘fool.’ And folly dares adventure anything against man; nay, against God too; which is alike true of the fool at home, and the fool abroad.” Laud described a spiral whereby “blasphemy”

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 125, 145-47.

led to “folly” then to “malice” then to “higher degrees of ‘blasphemy.’” The enemy’s desire to overthrow “His cause” inevitably grew until it came to reproach and hate His person too. One could not tolerate those who had ‘blasphemy’ in their hearts because it would inevitably grow and break out in speech. ‘Blasphemy’ also menaced men for serving God. The parallel with derogation of the king’s honor and person is clear. Laud warned they would hear blasphemy all day every day against king, church, and God “if we take not better course than hitherto we have done to keep out the ‘enemy’ and his ‘blasphemy.’” He argued that those who “blaspheme” or “our enemies and His” were “wise” in some things but in “their plots and practices against us” they were “fools.”¹⁰⁵

Laud was most concerned with the ‘blasphemy’ of Calvinists though. He warned: “men of all sorts, as well as usurping enemies, had need be watchful over this sin. For a man may quickly be within the borders of it, before he be aware; especially if he be bold and busy with the ‘cause of God,’ as it is reserved and secret in Himself.” Again, the “enemy” was “bold with God,” and the “foolish man” was known by his “boldness.” Earlier in a closely related aside, Laud claimed “many things in the works of Providence many men, yea, and sometimes the best, are a great deal too busy with.” This business not only included interpreting events to discover or question God’s providential rule which was “above their reach,” but trying to know “all the secrets of predestination.” Laud referred to 2 Timothy 2:19 that predestination was one of God’s “foundations” and that He put a “seal” on it, so to break those seals was “very dangerous.” Continuing with this text, Laud argued: “The endorsement is enough for us, and very plain to be read. It follows: ‘and let every man that calls on the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.’ If he do not that, he is not Christ’s; let him talk of predestination while he will.” Since Laud

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 133-34, 140-44, 147.

defined “blasphemy” as detracting some excellency in God, or giving Him attributes not agreeable to His nature, nothing could be more so than a doctrine of predestination which allegedly made God unjust and the author of evil.¹⁰⁶

While neglecting its significance as a fast sermon, Nicholas Tyacke has made important findings and conclusions about Laud’s sermon. He notes that it came only three weeks after Charles’ proclamation regarding the “Arminian” controversy and thus amounted to commentary on royal policy. Further, Laud was not just endorsing the ban on debate. His reference to “busy” men prying into the secrets of predestination was language similar to the kind Lancelot Andrewes used to criticize the Synod of Dort. Also, Laud’s emphasis on departing from iniquity suggested it as the cause rather than the effect of predestination.¹⁰⁷ That Charles subsequently requested the sermon printed is further evidence that he took the Anti-Calvinist position as the “orthodox” and “moderate” one, and that the ban should not silence it.¹⁰⁸

Hodson also affirmed sanctification as the cause, not the effect, of justification. He argued that “to behold His beauty,” the Christian had to “labor” for “holiness” or “inward beauty.” Also, one had to dedicate oneself to God’s service, and love God above all to create desire and diligence for Him. He said: “unless we in some measure partake of that beauty, and be gracious by it in the eyes of God, by being holy as He is holy, He will never shew us His own beauty, for they must be beautiful themselves in some measure, that enjoy such a beauty as His is.” Moreover, “no man beholds Him face to face in the next world, that by grace beholds not His beauty in this.” By contrast, “carnal men” did not relish “spiritual pleasures,” that is, “to behold the beauty of the Lord.”

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 140-41, 130-31.

¹⁰⁷ Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p. 269, 45, 103.

¹⁰⁸ Laud, *Works*, volume 1, p. 120.

They saw such as “foolishness.” Though they might dwell in the Temple they never beheld His beauty. Only those who came to the Temple “to see the beauty of the Lord” would do so.¹⁰⁹

Hodson made clear he was talking here of predestination by foreseen faith. David came to the Temple “to behold the beauty of the Lord.” His forsaking all worldly desires to do so was “the good will of God.” Here Hodson applied Ephesians 1:5 to verse 9 of Psalm 27 to explain his sermon text. He argued that according to “the good pleasure of His will” those adopted and predestined were those who were so taken with God’s beauty that they esteemed all things dung in respect to Him. Hodson went on:

“as we read in the ninety Psalm, as a man feareth, saith David, so is God’s displeasure: so may I say as a man believes and loveth, so is God’s good pleasure, *Voluntas Domini*; hence our Savior, *according to your faith be it unto you*, Matth. 9:29, and according to your love so is God’s beauty, for just as we stand affected to God, do we behold God reflecting upon us, *Ille placet Deo cui Deus placet*, he pleaseth God that’s pleas’d with God.”¹¹⁰

Hodson stressed not neglecting to promote the “outward beauty” of church and state defined as “order and unity,” “unanimity and uniformity.” These two made “decency which is beauty.” He wanted church and state “beautified” because they had lacked “outward” beauty lately. Targeting puritans, he said “surely I see no great cause to hope for amends in the church, at least in these parts; where, with many, nothing but singularity is accounted sanctity; whilst men hold of this man, and of that man, of this church, and of that church, and yet by no reason, by no authority can be brought to see that they are carnal.” Such people were those Paul chastised in 1 Corinthians 3. There were “divisions” in the state, a “rent” between prince and people, and “distractions” and

¹⁰⁹ Hodson, *Kings Request*, p. 6-7, 24-9. Possibly referring to puritans, Hodson included among those who would not see the beauty of the Lord, those who came to the Temple “to spy a fault” or “to pick a quarrel.” (ibid, p. 25)

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 25-9.

“jealousy and combustion” in parliament because of “some lovers of themselves.” To remove “confusion,” “faction,” and “strife,” he prayed for parliament to unite prince and people, and that “with one heart and one hand they may join against the enemies of religion, and the state.” He thought “contention” prevented God from giving providential comfort.¹¹¹

Notably absent from the fast sermons of Laud and Hodson are the anti-Catholic/anti-Spanish ideology and derogatory language that Calvinist conformists and puritans used. This omission is astonishing given that the fasts concerned the threat of Catholic invasion and the suffering of Protestants on the continent at Catholic hands. The king’s directions for the fast July 5, 1626 said most important motive for the fast, and the matter most important for ministers to treat was the present danger of foreign invasion which was “as great, if not greater then that of 88.” “The same enemy being now more potent, more provoked, and having greater land and sea forces ready to assail us.” This “proud enemy” sought nothing less than “the monarchy of Christendom.”¹¹² Laud never named Catholics as enemies, though he clearly meant them as the enemy abroad in counterpoint to the ‘puritan’ enemy at home. Hodson merely noted the threat of the pope, emperor, Spain, and France. He then immediately warned they had cause to fear “a worm and a moth at home, as dangerous as all these.” Further, the sermons only attacked Calvinists/ puritans not Catholics, the reverse of Calvinist fast sermons.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 27-34, 10-11. Hodson cited 1 Corinthians 1:10, 1 Peter 3:8, Philippians 2:1-2, Jeremiah 32:39, John 17:21 which spoke of being of “one mind,” “one judgment,” “one heart,” and “one way.” They were to have no “contention” or “vain-glory.” He hope they would be “all one” in judgment so as to have “one rule” in religion, ecclesiastical government, civil matters, things pertaining to the common good, and the “majesty and honor of the king and state.” He wanted them to be “as a city that is at unity in itself,” and “one family.” He wanted “the marriage of king and people, in a happy bond of love and unity.” (ibid.)

¹¹² PRO, SP 16/31/18.

Also absent from these fast sermons was the English Protestant nationalist narrative. Very briefly, Hodson did call on the nation to be “thankful” for God’s deliverances from the Armada, powder treason, famine, and pestilence. He hoped the Lord now would preserve them from the sword, and warned that He could send the nation into “captivity” and “idolatry.” However, he did not claim England as the Lord’s favorite nation, merely noting that God’s motive for “patience” with her while He sent the sword on neighbor countries was “a secret worth our discovery.”¹¹³ Hodson also did not mention “deliverance” from Rome in the English Reformations, nor the “blessing” of the Gospel and England’s failure to respond to it, nor the reformation of manners, or England as a covenanted nation. He was reluctant to delve too much into providence.

Charles himself intended these fasts to advance this vision of reform. He was far more inclined than Elizabeth and James to grant fasts at the start of parliaments. While all had nothing against fasts per se and were willing to approve them, Elizabeth had quashed agitation for them in the 1581 and 1584-85 parliaments, and James tactfully had brushed off a request of the Commons for a fast in the 1624 parliament.¹¹⁴ Elizabeth feared them a part of the classis movement of the 1580s, and James, as King of Scotland, had seen Scots presbyterians use fasts to subvert royal policy. As noted before, Charles saw approving MPs petitions for fasts as a means to get business speedily done in parliament, and to assert royal authority. Indeed, in his reply to the 1629 parliament petition for a fast, Charles tactlessly said the chief motive for the fast was the state of the reformed churches abroad “but certainly fighting will do them much more good than

¹¹³ Hodson, *Kings Request*, p. 10, 4-5.

¹¹⁴ T.E. Hartley (ed.), *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I* (Wilmington, Delaware, 1981), volume 1, p. 526-28. PRO, SP 12/147/18. Jansson and Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625*, p. 204. *Commons Journals*, vol. 1, p. 118-19, 671, 715-16. *Lords Journals*, volume 3, p. 441, 443, 447.

fasting.”¹¹⁵ Further, as we shall see, he tried to “tune the pulpits” to support royal policies. He presumed both that the people would give unquestioning obedience to strong, unilateral rule, and that they could be easily misled. The key threat was a few, leading, “popular” malcontents who could sway them.

Thus, in a July 5, 1626 letter to Archbishop Abbot and the other bishops, Secretary Coke relayed the king’s chief motives as well as “intentions” for the general fast. Despite saying no prince was “more assured in the hearty love and fidelity of his people,” Charles took steps to ensure continued obedience. Bishops were to see that “the best affected and ablest men of the clergy” cleared away all “malicious aspersion,” “misunderstandings,” and “rude and false reports” cast among the people “either to dishonor his government, or to distract or alien the hearts of his subjects.” The “few” he worried about were “factious,” “wicked,” “ill-affected,” “Spanishly, popishly, or seditiously affected” persons who acted from “malice.” Loyal ministers were also “to animate and encourage the good and faithful subjects, to rely (under God) upon his majesty’s providence and care.”

These “intentions” were not to be made public in the bishops’ orders for the fast, nor “to be preached in every pulpit where there may be no cause.” They were not to be revealed to ministers who might “take liberty to raise any jealousies betwixt the king and his people, or to make invectives against the late parliaments, or otherwise to stir any discontentments or offense.” By bishops silencing critics and directing “the best reputed and best disposed churchmen” to preach as ordered, the fast would promote “a due respect and good intelligence betwixt the king and his people.” Specifically, ministers were to defend anti-Spanish/pro-war policy, facilitate getting the king supply, and give

¹¹⁵ Notestein and Relf (eds.), *Commons Debates for 1629*, p. 28-9; *Lords Journals*, vol. 4, p. 15.

assurance of the king's willingness to hear grievances raised in parliament. For each of these issues the letter set out the spin they were to be given to show that the king's proceedings were for the good of church and state, as well as legal, just, moderate, and based on precedent.

In regards to settling "peace" and "good government," with respect to religion ministers were to affirm what king had made known in his proclamation. The king's commitment:

"to maintain the unity of that true reformed religion which is set forth in the articles of the doctrine of our church, and which hath been sealed with the blood of our martyrs, and which is agreeable to the scriptures and was accordingly taught in the primitive church, of which faith being the professed defender, he will not suffer it to be sophisticated or corrupted with any mixture of popery or any schism."

To procure this "happy union," the bishops as "chief fathers" to whom he had committed church matters, were to endeavor by all means:

"to be of one mind and to prevent and quench all differences (if any be) which may break the church's peace: and that you take such order, that the clergy under you may employ their labors in planting and advancing the plain and received doctrines of salvation, and the fruits of good life, without popular discourses or disputes upon curious and undetermined points tending to opposition of science or to the nourishing of party or schism, or to the setting of men's wills, more then their consciences on works."¹¹⁶

While at first glance this language appears to support the status quo, even a via media, unity here centered on a radical re-interpretation of the English settlement along Anti-Calvinist lines ala Montague. As we saw, Laud's fast sermon fulfilled these orders to Charles' delight. Further, the orders on religion re-iterated Charles' recent ban of debate on predestination which silenced Calvinists.

¹¹⁶ PRO, SP 16/31/18. The term "science" is used in an archaic sense: "Contrasted or coupled with conscience, emphasizing the distinction to be drawn between theoretical perception of a truth and moral conviction." ("science," *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 1989, Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000 <http://dictionary.oed.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/cgi/entry/50215796>) Also, c. January, 1627, the measures submitted to the Duke of Buckingham for hastening the loan, included "the form of fasting and prayer (moved by your grace) to be generally observed through the kingdom in the beginning of this work." (PRO, SP 16/526/10)

In conclusion, that national fasts 1625-29 were controversial is remarkable. Charles had reversed James' pursuit of the Spanish Match and a peaceful settlement to the Thirty Years War, the policies which so alarmed the godly in the early 1620s. In his orders for the 1626 fast, in response to critics Charles boasted "never any prince with more hazard of his person, and with more difficulty and resolution freed his people from the snares of those abusive treaties, by which their religion, their peace, their freedom, and their estates, had assuredly been lost."¹¹⁷ Charles' pro-war, anti-Spanish policy to defend Protestant churches on the continent should have contributed to unity. Indeed, such fasts would have done so under Elizabeth and James. The rise of militant Anti-Calvinists ensured the tenuous peace that had long settled puritans was broken. Charles badly miscalculated that fasts would unify the nation behind him. He did not realize the extent of godly and/or anti-Catholic opinion among his subjects.

In fast sermons, puritans and Calvinist conformists defended Calvinist doctrine, and stressed anti-Catholicism, preaching, attacking sin, and the national covenant narrative. Moderate puritans hardly differed from Calvinist conformists, and only a few were outspoken against "Arminianism." Radical puritans too shared much with Calvinist conformists though they attacked episcopacy. Anti-Calvinist conformist fast sermons though pursued a radically different vision of the church anathema to puritans. The ability of puritans to identify with the church hierarchy and see the Church of England as on the side of Christ against Satan and the Anti-Christ was seriously weakened.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., SP 16/31/18.

CHAPTER VII

PURITANS VEXED: CAROLINE-LAUDIAN

“INNOVATIONS” IN PUBLIC FASTS

Anti-Calvinists not only preached fast sermons advancing their vision of a properly reformed church, with Charles they made significant changes to the order of public fasts to bring them in line with that vision. These changes further made public fasts a flashpoint and alienated puritans. In puritan eyes, these “innovations” undermined fasts as the means to convert sinners and appease the Lord, and would lead God to judge England. They perceived Anti-Calvinist conformists to be suppressing preaching in fasts while adding “popery” and “superstition” to them. They saw Charles and Laud stripping away much of the language, topics, and narratives from the official liturgies for fasts with which they so identified. They long had taken these aspects of the official fast books as important symbols which vouchsafed the Church of England to be a true Reformed church on the side of Christ in the struggle against Anti-Christ. These symbols were manifestations of the shared understandings and priorities which helped puritans to identify with Calvinist conformists under Elizabeth and James. Puritans became less able to identify with the church hierarchy and the church as a result of these changes.

The first changes began on June 24, 1625 when Charles commanded Archbishop Abbot and six other bishops to develop a new form of prayer for a public fast. The six bishops included the leading lights of avant-garde conformism: Bishop of London, Montaigne; Bishop of Durham, Neile; Bishop of Winchester, Andrewes; Bishop of

Norwich, Harsnett; Bishop of Rochester, Buckeridge; and Bishop of St. David's, Laud.¹ Abbot was in a weak position to stop changes as he had been out of favor with James for years, and typified the "puritan bishop" Charles sought to marginalize.²

One of the most dramatic changes to the forms of prayer was the addition of a new section called the "latter service" (1625, 1636, July 1640, and November 1640) or "second service" (1626 and 1628). This second service was the truncated communion service from the Book of Common Prayer prescribed in the rubric for use on holy days when no communion was given. The second service followed the Book of Common Prayer except for the substitution of one collect, and the addition of others (some to suit a fast and several from the end of the full length communion service). While sermons were not removed, the second service took the place of the directions (now omitted) in the previous fast book (1603) for non-preaching ministers in regard to reading an exhortation and homilies, and preaching ministers in regard to sermons. Significantly, the 1625 fast book repeated the part of the rubric for the full communion service that directed the "priest" to stand at the north side of the table while reading service. Further, since no communion was given, the table might not be moved in accord with the rubric (when communion was given) into the body of the church or chancel where morning and evening prayers were appointed to be said. Rather, it could remain in its prescribed position when not used in communion in the place where the pre-Reformation altar had stood. As Anti-Calvinists would interpret them, the rubrics prevented the second service

¹ William Laud, *The Works of . . . William Laud* (Oxford, 1847-60), volume 3, p. 165-66.

² Abbot may not have objected to the term "second service" though he would have questioned if it was to be read at the communion table and the disposition of the table at that time. C.1611 he said he was informed: "that the public service of Almighty God in the churches is much omitted, and thereby come to neglect, and almost scorned, forasmuch as the ministers read not divine service, the first and second service, before their sermons according to the order of our church liturgy, and the canon, in that case provided. . ." See: George Abbot, *To all and every the ministers, church-wardens, and side-men, within the citie, suburbs, and diocese of London* ([London], [1611?])(STC 16776.12).

from being read from the reading pew or pulpit. That Anti-Calvinists wanted these prayers read at the table in its altar position is further suggested by their not inserting the full communion service in the fast book which would have required the table to be moved into the body of the church or chancel. Suggestive of the controversial nature of this arrangement (especially with parliament in session), the 1626 and 1628 fast books omitted the rubric instructing the “priest” to stand at the table. Not surprisingly, during the Personal Rule it re-appeared in the 1636 and July, 1640 fast books, and even the November, 1640 one. The 1640 books have “Morning Prayer” running across the header of the page continuing through the second service, whereas previously the title of the book did so. If considered part of morning prayer, the table could be moved into the body of church or chancel where, according to the rubric, morning prayer was to be read. Regardless, by this arrangement, Anti-Calvinists placed the “altar” back in fast days which heretofore had centered on the pulpit and reading desk.

This change was unprecedented. Only the 1563 fast book directed ministration of communion. In 1563, Archbishop Matthew Parker told Secretary Cecil that he had altered some parts of the fast book which Bishop Grindal had created. The changes were in “circumstances” but not in “substance and principal meaning.” He thought them necessary because “offense grew by new innovations.” He did not want to change the established form of prayer appointed by law, and wanted to draw it “as nigh as could be” to the Book of Common Prayer. The problem was that Grindal’s order “directed all the service to be said in the body of the church” and thus “abolished all chancels.” Parker approved of the litany with the new psalms and collects being said “in the midst of the people” because the litany already was read there. But the other parts (which Strype in

his paraphrasing termed the “second service”) were to be celebrated in the chancel.³ So not only did a future archbishop seek more advanced reform in the fast, the current archbishop merely maintained the prayer book order moving the table to the middle of the chancel, and reading service at it during communion. The Caroline-Laudian arrangement would have shocked Parker.

The pre-Caroline arrangements exemplified the Reformed tradition by emphasizing that the people were to see, hear, and commune with the minister in the service. This arrangement contrasted with the Mass at the altar in the East end of the chancel where few could hear the priest. Arguably, Grindal and Parker were rehashing differences between the Edwardian bishops John Hooper and Nicholas Ridley. Like Hooper, Grindal preferred the way of Zwinglian (and by his time Scots) reformers who made chancels irrelevant by making the church one room with communion tables near the pulpit. Like Ridley, Parker preferred the way of Emden, Berne, and the Netherlands where chancels were de-facto communion rooms in which the people gathered around the minister and table. Under Elizabeth and James, tables stood table-wise in the middle of the chancel (or the east end of the nave), and often had seats all around them for the laity.

³ John Strype, *The Life and Acts of Matthew Parker* (London, 1711), p. 132. BL, Lansdowne 6 (66). *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical. . .1603* (London, 1604), Sig. O1r-v (STC 10070). Authorities brought the 1603 fast book more in line with the Book of Common Prayer by directing use of sections of it. Communion at fasts was unusual. At the least, the parliamentary fasts of 1625, 1628, and 1640 did not have communion, the sacrament being administered by design within a few days following the fast. See: Francis Relf (ed.), *Notes of the Debates in the House of Lords*, (Camden society, series 3, vol. 42, 1929), p. 56, 65. Maija Jansson and William Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625*, (New Haven, CT, 1987), p. 69, 204, 211, 213, 242-43, 266. Samuel Rawson Gardiner (ed.), *Debates in the House of Commons* (Camden Society, new series, vol. 6, 1873), p. 6, 18. Robert Johnson, Mary Keeler, Maija Jansson Cole, William Bidwell (eds.), *Commons Debates 1628* (New Haven, 1977), vol. 2, p. 32-37, 153; vol. 5 (*Lords Proceedings 1628*), p. 95, 97. BL, Add MS 36,825, fol. 22v. Esther Cope and Willson Coates (eds.), *Proceedings of the Short Parliament of 1640* (Camden Society, 4th series, vol. 19, 1977), p. 143, 237. Maija Jansson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Opening Session of the Long Parliament* (Rochester, NY, 2000), vol. 1, p. 20, 59. Wallace Notestein, *The Journal of Sir Simonds D'Ewes* (New Haven, 1923), p. 2, 18. *Commons Journals*, vol. 1, p. 799; vol. 2, p. 9, 24. *Lords Journals*, vol. 3, p. 698.

By contrast, Laudians removed these seats, raised and railed in “altars,” and placed them in the east end of chancel altar-wise.⁴

The second service was so important to Anti-Calvinist conformists that they referred to fast books from 1625 onwards as official sanction for their altar policy. The type of response they desired was not long in coming. For example, in June-July 1627, the vicar of Grantham, Lincolnshire coupled application of the division of service in the fast book of 1625 to regular services with relocation of the table from where it had stood “time out of mind” to “the old altar-place” where it was turned altar-wise and fixed in place. These actions provoked vigorous opposition from the alderman and other local Calvinist conformists. They sought the intervention of Bishop John Williams as they knew he would be sympathetic. In his letter to the vicar, Williams noted the vicar spoke oddly of “communion” saying: “which you (out of the Books of Fast in 1^{mo} of the king) are pleas’d to call second service.” Likewise, Williams referred to: “your first or second service (as you distinguish it).”⁵

Williams remarks about the fast book in his letter to the vicar drew fire. Almost surely, Williams followed the practice of leaking private letters to make criticism of official policies that would be dangerous if done publicly. Indeed, Heylyn charged Williams with such and rued that manuscript copies of the letter were much sought after

⁴ George Yule, “James VI and I: Furnishing the Churches in His Two Kingdoms,” in Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts (eds.), *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 182-208. In 1604, canon 82 even dropped the requirement of Elizabethan Injunctions for the table to be placed where the altar stood when not in use.

⁵ John Williams, *The Holy Table* (London, 1637), p. 2-12, 15, 20; 3, 173-76 (STC 25725). Further, Williams likely was implicating Anti-Calvinist bishops when he implied that under forceful questioning the vicar told him “who they were that set him on upon these alterations.” (ibid., p. 9) Perhaps another hint was when Williams claimed that the vicar was a chorister in college, trained in music, and so brought from his faculty “some odd crotchets into the ministry.” (ibid., p. 5) Heylyn responded by trying to cast doubt that “some great man” encouraged the vicar. (Peter Heylyn, *Antidotum Lincolnense*, second edition (London, 1637), p. 19-20 (STC 13267.5))

and “applauded.” He even claimed it was not sent to the vicar but to one or more of Williams’ “privados” to disperse it through country.⁶ Widespread circulation of the letter, which presumably increased after Laudian altar policy got royal backing in 1633, led the Anti-Calvinist Peter Heylyn to respond in 1637 (the year after the 1636 fast repeated the arrangements of the 1625 fast book). He rebuked Williams’ remark as a “slight” and argued:

“that it seems to cast a scorn on them, by whose direction the Book of the Fast, in 1^o. of the king was drawn up and published, as if it were a novelty or singular device of theirs, to call the latter part of divine service, by the name of second service.”

Trying to balance conformist scruples to two books, Williams responded that he approved the term “second service” and did not oppose the partition of service in the fast book. Rather, he criticized the vicar’s applying “that grave and pious book” to the Book of Common Prayer. He asserted the useful fiction that the fast book “never intended to give rubrics to the public liturgy.” Further, shortly after asserting “communion” and not “second service” as the “ancient appellation,” he dubiously claimed:

“that those directors of the Book of Fast, had (no doubt) their particular reason for the particular division of those pious devotions (which none but a slight man would offer to slight;) but never dream’t (I dare swear for them) to impose upon the public liturgy of the church, any other then the ancient and legal partitions and appellations.”

A relentless debater, Heylyn argued that Williams’ response was inconsistent and insincere. If the fast book was so pious, how was it “a grievous sin” for the vicar to apply its appellations and division of service to the Book of Common Prayer? Similar to Heylyn, the Anti-Calvinist John Pocklington characterized Williams’ remarks as “petulant language,” “jeer,” and “jest and scorn.” Placing him at odds with highest authorities, he claimed Williams:

⁶ Heylyn, *Antidotum*, Sig. A5r-A5v, Sig. B3v, Sig. B5r, p. 20, 334. Peter Heylyn, *A Coale from the Altar* (London, 1637) Sig., A3r, p. 4 (STC 13271).

“could not but know, but that the book of fast was not compiled, nor ordered to be read publicly in every congregation, without the appointment of the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, nor without his Majesty’s gracious directions, and royal confirmation thereof.”⁷

The division of service was crucial. Williams argued that only a single service was established by act of parliament and the Book of Common Prayer of which the order of morning prayer and communion were merely parts. The division of morning service into first and second service was a “new reckoning” and “newfangledness.” It led the people to fear a return to “the two masses used of old, that of the catechumeni, and that of the faithful.” Further, Williams argued that the order of morning prayer was not the whole morning prayer but only a part of it. This point was important because he claimed morning and evening prayer were to be read in the body of the church or chancel according to rubric. Further, “common prayer” was officiated in the reading pew, and “communion” at the table. Additionally, he claimed, citing Richard Hooker, that prayers made for communion were “commonly” (to which he added but “not always”) read at the table when no communion was given. He affirmed that whenever officiated upon the table by law had to stand in the body of the church or chancel where the minister could be heard.⁸

Heylyn rejected William’s unitary view of morning prayer as encompassing common prayer and communion. He affirmed that the order of morning prayer or “first service” was the whole morning prayer, while the communion prayers were a separate “second service.” Heylyn claimed if Williams’ view prevailed then when there was no communion there would be no part of service officiated at the table. In his view, this

⁷ Heylyn, *Coale*, p. 24. Heylyn, *Antidotum*, Sig. B8v, p. 300, 320-26. Williams, *Holy Table*, p. 3, 173-76. John Pocklington, *Altare Christianum*, second edition (London, 1637), p. 191 (STC 20076).

⁸ Williams, *Holy Table*, p. 10, 174-76, 206. Richard Hooker, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie* (London, 1611), book 5, section 30, p. 248 (STC 13714).

eventuality was not only indecent but contrary to his interpretation of the rubric after communion.⁹ Heylyn claimed second service was agreeable to “antiquity” and the intentions of church when Book of Common Prayer “first established.”¹⁰ He interpreted the statement in the Book of Common Prayer just before the litany saying morning and evening prayer ended here, and the rubric before communion to affirm two services.¹¹ Though Heylyn had to explain the non-Laudian status quo, which he did by asserting that in most places the two services had become joined due to “the people’s sloth and backwardness in coming to the church of God.”

In addition to the changes to the fast book of 1625, other new interpretations led to the same alteration to fasts. Heylyn and Pocklington both admitted they had to overcome the rubric before communion (which specified that the table was to be moved into the body of the church or chancel). In different ways, they re-interpreted the rubrics, canons, and injunctions to mean that in all but a few cases, the table in parish churches was to be turned altar-wise, railed in, raised with steps to ascend to it, and stand close to the wall at the upper end of the chancel/quire. This location was “the altar-place” separated from the rest of the chancel. In it, the table was to remain fixed and not taken down in either first or second service. Also, Heylyn argued that “the ancient orders of the Church of England” were best preserved in royal chapels and cathedrals. Royal chapels (which aligned with Laudian fashion) were the “best interpreters” of laws, canons,

⁹ Heylyn, *Antidotum*, p. 324-26.

¹⁰ According to Heylyn, the true English liturgy was the 1549 Book of Common Prayer which had altars and the entire service in the chancel. It had been revered in its time as agreeing with the primitive and apostolic church. The 1552 prayer book was the result of foreign interference. Specifically, a “plot” orchestrated by John Calvin led to it. According to Heylyn, only at parliament’s approval of that book did the taking down of the vast majority of altars and their replacement with tables occur. Bishop Hooper, who led a “faction” or “party” of non-conformists, was the instrumental English agent who aided Calvin. See: Heylyn, *Antidotum*, Sig. B6r, p. 50, 105, 110-27. Heylyn, *Coale*, p. 29, 38-9. See also: Pocklington, *Altare*, p. 72.

¹¹ Heylyn, *Coale*, p. 24-5.

rubrics, injunctions. Cathedral churches were the “best observers” of the proper form and order of service. With many cathedrals changed to Laudian fashion, Laudians easily argued parish churches should conform to their “mother churches.” Heylyn further argued that the king had approved altars in the St. Gregory’s case (1633) and encouraged archbishops, bishops and ordinaries to appoint tables in the churches under them to imitate cathedral churches and royal chapels. In his declaration, the king claimed to be against “innovation” and “novelties,” and to be adhering to “ancient constitutions.” Similarly, Heylyn and Pocklington claimed this ordering agreed with “antiquity” and the “ancient practice” of the “primitive church.” Indeed, Heylyn claimed it was likely apostolic tradition. Pocklington argued altars had been brought into the Church by the successors of the Apostles by “the special direction of God’s Holy Spirit.”

When coupled with Laudian altar policy, the division of first and second service surreptitiously ushered in a range of meanings that radically altered fasts (in addition to Sunday and holy day worship). The first service was “sola oratio” and included reading and expounding scripture and singing psalms. It took place “in auditorio,” the “auditorium,” meaning in the nave or body of the church among the people at the readers pew or pulpit. By contrast, the second service included prayers, consecrations and mysteries. It took place in a special part of “presbyterium,” that is “in sacrario” or “in sacrarium” at the altar. The quire or chancel was “set apart” as a place only for the priest to make prayers (for the “sacred persons” of kings, princes, and bishops, for the whole church, and the Lord’s Prayer) as well as to celebrate the “holy mysteries” and make “oblations.” The altar was in the “most eminent” part of the church, the “chiefest place,” the “highest place,” “the holy place,” “a place more holy than the rest,” “the holy of

holies,” “sanctum sanctorum,” and “the holy tabernacle.” The altar was the “presence” of Christ on Earth, His “throne” and “chair of state.” Pocklington stressed the ancientness of “distinction of places” within the church building “to make a difference between place and place, person and person, holy and profane.” Related, he also argued that in “the primitive church” that “orders” or “degrees” of people had specific places in relation to altar. Fuller members had closer more honored positions where they could better see and hear, and partake in sacraments. Also, first service was principally for those who were not full members and took place in the body of the church where all could see and hear. The second service was peculiarly for full members. While the laity could close around the pulpit, they were to remain below the altar, and only the priest was allowed within the chancel rails. Those without holy orders could perform first service, but only the priest could do so for second service.

Even when no communion was given as in fasts, a sharply different understanding of communion was inferred. Heylyn and Pocklington argued the sacrament was more than a “sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,” it was a “commemorative sacrifice,” “mystical sacrifice,” “representative sacrifice,” and “unbloody sacrifice.” This memory or commemoration of Christ’s sacrifice was in and of itself a sacrifice they claimed. While “spiritual sacrifices” could be offered by anyone anywhere, only “priests” could make “sacrifices of the altar.” They alone had the “power to consecrate” passed down from Christ to the Apostles and to all their successors in the priesthood. Such external, visible, and “proper sacrifices” necessitated a “material or corporeal altar.”¹²

¹² Heylyn, *Coale*, p. 14-17, 23-4, 29, 38-9, 49-50, 57-63. Peter Heylyn, *The History of the Sabbath* (London, 1636), second pagination, p. 120 (STC 13274). Pocklington, *Altare*, p. 4-8, 14, 25, 41-4, 71, 79-87, 91, 95-6, 113, 124-28, 130-36, 142-43, 174-75, 191, 193 (STC 20076). Christopher Dow, *Innovations Unjustly Charged Upon the Present Church and State* (London, 1637), p. 120, 187 (STC 7090). Heylyn,

By contrast, Bishop Williams interpreted the articles, injunctions, canons, rubrics, to mean that in parish churches the table was to be moved into the midst of the church or chancel where the minister was best seen and heard by people gathered around. When not in use, the table was to stand in the upper part of chancel table-wise. The table could remain in the quire where mounted by steps as it was open so all could see and hear. He claimed the king's declaration in the St. Gregory's case was specific to that church, and that ordinaries had to follow the rule of the Book of Common Prayer and established laws and canons. Williams argued that only "spiritual sacrifices" of prayer, praise and thanksgiving were offered at the table. A "metaphorical and improper altar" was all that was necessary for a "metaphorical and improper sacrifice" and a "metaphorical and improper oblation." Williams rejected Anti-Calvinists' "commemorative sacrifice" arguing there was "a commemoration only of a sacrifice."¹³

He rejected the terms "priest, altar, and sacrifice," the "sacrament of the altar," the "sacrifice of the altar," and "commemorative sacrifice" as the language of "papists" which enshrined "popery." To use these terms fostered "superstition and popery," especially as altars only were erected for "the sacrifice of the mass." By contrast, "Protestants," and the Church of England, used the terms "minister," "table," and "supper" or "communion." An altar was for sacrifice and oblation. A table was for eating "the Lord's Supper." Indeed, sacrifice on an altar was contrary to clerical

Antidotum, p. 212-13, 219-20; 138-39; 307; Sig. B3r, p. 100-31; 327; 1-67 (STC 13267.5). John Pocklington, *Sunday No Sabbath*, second edition (London, 1636), p. 24-7 (STC 20078). For more on Laudian attitudes to the church building and altar see: Robert Shelford, *Five Pious and Learned Discourses* (London, 1635), p. 1-22 (STC 22400). Laud, *Works*, volume 4, p. 284. Peter Peckard (ed.), *Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Nicholas Ferrar* (Cambridge, 1790), p. 300. Alan Maycock (ed.), *Chronicles of Little Gidding* (London, 1954), p. 46. For Calvinist views see: *Certain Sermons or Homilies* (Philadelphia, 1844), part 2, p. 143-56, 241-46. Puritans argued that most cathedral churches had tables standing in the midst of the chancel until very recent days when erected as altars. See: *Englands complaint to Iesvs Christ against the bishops canons of the late sinfull synod* ([Amsterdam], 1640), Sig. D4r (STC 10008).

¹³ Williams, *Holy Table*, passim.

subscription, as well as the relevant article and homily.¹⁴ Moreover, he rejected their distinction between priest and laity. All were “priests” in that all in could offer “spiritual sacrifices.” Further, reading pew, pulpit, and any other place in the church was as proper an altar for such sacrifices. The placement of the table was “indifferent,” in part because God was present everywhere.¹⁵

Which vision of second service, so important to the nature of a fast day, had the great legitimizing power of the crown behind it is telling. Heylyn’s two books had been licensed by Samuel Baker who attested to its sound doctrine. Baker was chaplain to the Lord High Treasurer and Bishop of London William Juxon, an ally of Laud. Heylyn boasted about his work being “published by authority,” and licensed at the bishop’s house. A chaplain to the king, who dedicated his *Antidotum* to him, Heylyn implied the king’s personal sanction for his work as he claimed to have the king’s express consent and approbation to reprint his St. Gregory’s declaration. By contrast, he ridiculed Williams’ book as only having “an unlicensed license.” Indeed, not only had Williams had to publish his book anonymously, but he had licensed it himself to give it a strong affirmation as orthodox, consistent with the discipline of Church of England, and supportive of the king’s power and rights in ecclesiastical matters. He could only manage to claim Heylyn’s book had been licensed merely by a “private friend.”¹⁶

In his book against Heylyn’s, Prynne made the same arguments we saw from Bishop Williams (though adding rejection of bowing to the altar, *jure divino* episcopacy, the necessity of obedience in “things indifferent,” and other typical puritan views).

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 16-18, 93, 95, 98, 103-4, 115-16, 123, 127, 142, 154-55, 199; 2, 13-14; and passim.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 75-6, 106-8, 165-67, 204, 219.

¹⁶ Heylyn, *Antidotum*, Sig. A5v, p. 2-3. Williams, *Holy Table*, p. 1. Puritans accused Baker of censoring anti-Catholic remarks. See: Arnold Hunt, “Baker, Samuel (d. 1658),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Oct. 2006.

Indeed, he approved of Williams' letter to the vicar of Grantham, and clearly saw him as orthodox.¹⁷ If Heylyn thought Williams turned puritan, Prynne adopted the posture of a Calvinist conformist defending "the long established doctrine and discipline of the Church of England." He turned the king's declarations after the 1628 parliament, before the Thirty-Nine Articles, and in the St. Gregory's case, which had been so useful to Laudians, back on them. The king was against any "innovation," "backsliding to popery," or "novelties." Thus he would be against these "popish innovations," "late Romish novelties, rites, and ceremonies," and "the many dangerous innovations and backslidings to popery that have crept into our church of late." Rebutting Heylyn's labels, Prynne denied he was acting out of "vainglory" or "faction."¹⁸ More than polemical posturing, Prynne was expressing how accommodated he was to the heretofore predominant readings of the English settlement of religion.

In regard to second service, Prynne shared much with Williams, but had important differences. Like Williams, he noted Laudian language saying "communion" had become "second service" "as they now term it" and "as they call it."¹⁹ Like Williams, Prynne interpreted the rubrics, canons, and injunctions to mean that the table was to be moved into the body of the church or chancel where evening and morning prayers were said. Unlike Williams, he interpreted them to mean the minister was to say service at the table only when communion occurred. The rubric at the end of communion did not state that when no communion took place that the service was to be read at the table. When

¹⁷ William Prynne, *A Quench Coale* (Amsterdam, 1637), first pagination, p. 73; second pagination, p.194 (STC 20474).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, first pagination, p. 3-6, 10, 12, 22, 28, 67-70; second, p. 28, 177, 184-94, 207, 278, 319, and passim.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, second pagination, p. 189; William Prynne, *Canterburies Doome* (London, 1646), p. 490-93 (Wing P3917).

there was no communion, the minister was to read second service in the reading pew or pulpit where he would face west towards the people and thus be best heard. The table was not purposed for reading divine service but for the minister to consecrate and administer the Lord's Supper. To read second service at the table when no communion occurred was an abuse and perversion of its purpose. In this, he argued he was defending the established doctrine and practice of the Church of England, and the practice of "antiquity" and the "primitive church" against "innovation."²⁰

Further, he claimed that in parish churches when no communion took place that service was read in reading pews which were appointed for such. He claimed reading it at the table "was never used or urged in parish churches till now." Prynne likely is accurately relating the case in most parish churches which helps explain why Heylyn complained of no service being read at the table. Indeed, Bishop Montague both in his 1635 visitation articles for Chichester and his 1638 ones for Norwich asked if second service was read at the table and not in the pew or reading seat both before and after sermon according to the "ancient tradition" of the church. Prynne also addressed these "innovations" in cathedral churches believing them purposely introduced there first to draw parish churches into conformity with them as mother churches. They read second service every Sunday and holy day at the table because by rubric they were to celebrate communion on those days. Interestingly, Prynne also claimed: "But now the substance of the communion is quite omitted and discontinued, and not so much as looked after by our bishops and cathedral men; and the ceremony, to wit, the use of reading second service at

²⁰ Prynne, *Quench Coale*, second pagination, p. 229-35; Prynne, *Canterburies Doome*, p. 490-93. See also: Prynne, *Quench Coale*, first pagination, p. 11, 34, 63, 69-70; second pagination, p. 69, 189, 191; William Prynne, *A Looking-glasse for All Lordly Prelates* (London, 1636), p. 36 (STC 20466). Some puritans though were highly critical of Williams allowing the term "second service." See: Richard Dey, *Two looks over Lincolne, or, A view of his holy table* (London, 1641)(Wing D1288).

the table (now forsooth at the high altar, as they call it) only retained and urged.” This change was contrary to the rubric in communion, injunctions, and 28 canon.²¹ Prynne feared this change. Citing Bishop Hooper, Prynne added that in addition to erecting “altars,” calling tables “altars” and turning them altar-wise, reading second service at them also “will make ignorant people and superstitious false hearted ministers still to dream of sacrifices, mass, and popish priests, and will usher popery, mass and mass-priests by degrees into our church again, etc.”²²

Likewise, Henry Burton was against “innovations” including reading second service at altar in upper end of chancel where in many churches the people could not hear. He claimed to be upholding doctrine and discipline established under Elizabeth. He was against reading second service at table imagined as “more holy” than readers pew. Bringing in the “new altar” was planned to make parish churches conform to cathedral mother churches under “pretence” of piety, peace, unity, uniformity. Really the change was to reduce them to peace and uniformity with “old mother Rome.” Like Prynne, he saw Laudians rebuilding Rome in England “by degrees,” “the beginning and creeping in of idolatry and superstition,” and the corrupting of worship with “superstitious and idolatrous rites.” Like Williams, he termed them “our new reformers,” and added they were for “popery” defined as a change “from antiquity of truth to novelty of error.”²³

In his Star Chamber speech at the censure of Burton, Bastwick, Prynne in 1637, Laud himself addressed the charge of “innovation” in reading “second service” at the communion table. He claimed that in his memory it was in use in “very many places” as

²¹ Prynne, *Quench Coale*, second pagination, p. 233-35. Prynne, *Canterburies Doome*, p. 94-5, 492-93.

²² Prynne, *Quench Coale*, second pagination, p. 69-70.

²³ Henry Burton, *For God, and the King* (n.p., 1636), Sig. a2v, p. 66, 129, 150; Sig. a3v, p. 51-2, 54; p. 105; p. 159-65; p. 32-3, 99; p. 67, 100. (STC 4141); Henry Burton, *An Apology of an Appeal* (n.p., 1636), first pagination, p. 4 (STC 4134).

the most proper place to read the communion prayers. He claimed this “ancient custom” had been altered “by little and little” where “the emissaries of this faction” came to preach. He interpreted rubrics to support this view. Theophilus claimed that reading second service at the table was out of use in many places “200 to one” in the period of Laud’s memory. The practice of it “in some few places without a lawful warrant” did not remove the stigma of “innovation.”²⁴

Theophilus also claimed that many rubrics, orders, and prayers had been left in the Book of Common Prayer because prelates at the beginning of the Reformation had no possibility to reform them at first. The situation was like the Apostles indulging Jewish converts by regarding circumcision and dietary laws. But “all religious and modest bishops” since the Reformation had forbore either to practice “other unlawful orders” left in it or to command reading prayers at the communion table when no communion was given. While the minister was to read at the table when communion took place, “it followeth not that when the communion is not given he must necessarily read the same at the communion table, and not in the desk, as the custom hath been in this case before these late innovations.”²⁵

The controversy over second service had real impact in the parishes as well. Puritans complained that many otherwise “godly conformable ministers” were excommunicated, suspended, deprived, censured, and silenced for not reading second service at the altar when no communion was offered. That they were “persecuted” for not submitting to such “popish innovations” or “innovations and new doctrines” became a puritan cause célèbre. As we saw puritans claimed this practice was either not

²⁴ Laud, *Works*, volume 6, part 1, p. 55. Theophilus, *Divine and Politike Observations* (Amsterdam, 1638), p. 40, 61 (STC 15309).

²⁵ Theophilus, *Divine*, p. 40-1.

sanctioned in the law and canon, or contrary to them. They railed about the visitation articles of bishops' Wren, Piers, and Montague which called for reading second service at the altar (and railed in altar-wise), as well as orders by bishops John Towers, Augustine Lindsell, Robert Skinner, of course Laud for the same.²⁶ Indeed, reading second service at the communion table often was among charges against conformist clergy in the Civil War. These charges also included bowing to the east end of the chancel and to the communion table when going up to it to read second service.²⁷ Petitions to the Commons in the Long Parliament by London citizens also complained of the reading of second service at the altar.²⁸ In another petition in 1641 by a clergyman, he complained of having been suspended by Bishop Wren for not reading second service at communion table set altarwise where few of his parishioners could hear him.²⁹ The articles of impeachment against Wren included prosecuting ministers for not reading “second service” at the communion table turned altar-wise when no communion was offered and where the people could not hear, as well as being conceived as “a more holy place.”³⁰

To back up their new meaning for fasts, in the 1625 fast book, Anti-Calvinists also altered the responsive reading of the Ten Commandments from the prayer book communion service by replacing the term “minister” with “priest” in all the prompts. From 1563 onwards the only terms used in printed directions in fast books had been

²⁶ Prynne, *Quench Coale*, first pagination, p. 34, 37, 70; second pagination, p. 232. Prynne, *Canterburies Doome*, p. 79-80, 93-7, 112, 374-75, 378-79, 441, 488. See also the 1627 visitation articles of John Cosin, Archdeacon of East-Riding in York (*The Correspondence of John Cosin* (Surtees Society, 1869), volume 52, p. 113; and William Juxon, *Articles to be enquired within the diocese of London* (London, 1640), Sig. A4v (STC 10267))

²⁷ Clive Holmes (ed.), *The Suffolk Committees for Scandalous Ministers 1644-1646* (Suffolk Records Society, vol. 13, 1970), p. 35, 37, 40, 42, 45, 62, 66, 86; Cambridge University Library, MS Mm.1.38, fol. 441r, 454v; CUL, MS Mm.1.53, fol. 214r-220.

²⁸ BL, Harleian 1219, fol. 193r.

²⁹ PRO, SP 16/476/112.

³⁰ *Articles of Impeachment, of the Commons. . . Against Matthew Wren* ([London?], 1641), Sig. B1r, A3r (Wing E2525).

“minister,” “curate,” or “pastor.” Some additional exchange of “priest” for “minister” occurred in subsequent fast books under Laud, but both terms still appeared amply. Later, puritans claimed “Arminians” were trying to “corrupt” the Book of Common Prayer, “as some did the book appointed for the fast, in which the word minister is found but once, but the word priest 45 times.”³¹

These changes produced local fights. In complaints about the men Wren chose as his commissioners (and rural deans and household chaplains) while Bishop of Norwich, Edmund Mapletoft was prominent. Supposedly, he was among those whom Wren knew “to be, and stand affected to his innovated courses, and to popish superstition, and to be erroneous, and unsound in judgment and practice.” Puritans were alarmed. Mapletoft was one of 59 commissioners Bishop of Norwich Matthew Wren (1585-1667) charged with inspecting and reporting ecclesiastical offenses in his diocese. Wren could conduct visitations only once every seven years, and he had inherited his four archdeacons.³² A Laudian, and friend of the Ferrar family, Edmund Mapletoft from Holbrooke, wrote to Wren November 26, 1636 with concerns about the public fast, and suspicions that his clergy had not yet received the fast book for reasons other than incompetent administration:

“For we have such a stir with our people about the fast, as if they meant to keep it in good earnest, and the reason is, Mr. Bayliffe of Ipswich (antiquo moro) have sent for their clergy in the town, and imparted books to them all save old Mr. Foster (and he had said that the communion service was anciently read at the communion table, in open court, ergo he was an old doting fool, and unworthy of their favor to have a book.) And all our froward men about us have got the book and as if they had been pen’t, burst out into

³¹ *The Correspondence of John Cosin*, p. 161-63. The passage comes from proposed articles to be exhibited against John Cosin, Francis Burgoyne, Marmaduke Blaxton, Dr. Hunt, Dr. Lindsell, and William James of the Cathedral Church of Durham, which was delivered to Bishop Harsnett before the censure of Peter Smart on August 3, 1630. The charges were based on claims of “Arminian” “innovation” and “popery” contrary to Book of Common Prayer, injunctions, advertisements, canons, and homilies.

³² *Articles of Impeachment, of the Commons. . . Against Matthew Wren*, Sig. B2v. Nicholas W.S. Cranfield, “Wren, Matthew (1585-1667),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, online edn. May, 2006.

preaching to the amazement of our people, who having no books sent to us, expect to receive them (as we are wont) from our governors in church officers.”³³

That nonconformity for reading second service at the communion table was common in Norwich diocese does suggest that some chicanery was afoot.³⁴ Some godly clearly did not want the “innovation” of the second service observed at the fast by willing conformists. More dramatically, many MPs at the November 17, 1640 Commons’ fast in St. Margaret’s Church in Westminster made a symbolic rejection of the second service. In his diary Sir Thomas Peyton wrote:

“that in the forenoon when the lessons and the litany and the prayers following were read, ‘to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,’ etc., that the clerk with a loud voice named to be sung the 34 psalm, which, whatever he of purpose or of mistake did it, I cannot determine, but however the mistake was, the second service was intended to be continued by those that were to officiate for that purpose at the altar which was begun a little way by then, but the body of the church perhaps not liking it, took the tune of the psalm and presently it was received by the whole church, and with this voice was the second service drowned and for that time lost and no more was heard of it.”³⁵

Arguably, this action was a counter-ritual affirming that according to injunctions, canons, articles, rubrics, the table was to be moved where the minister could be heard. Drowning out the minister not only covered a “popish innovation,” but turned the tables on him. Other layers of meaning are also possible. Suggestively, Prynne later quoted from Pocklington’s attack on Bishop Williams’ *Holy Table*. Pocklington wrote that “psalms of degrees” called “graduals” had been sung when the priest ascended steps to the altar set in the highest place in the church, “in sacrario, or sancto sanctorum,” to read

³³ Oxford University, Bodleian, Tanner MS 68 (52), fol. 176r.

³⁴ Tanner MS 68 (52), fol. 180, 333v, 338r.

³⁵ Jansson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Opening Session of the Long Parliament*, vol. 1, p. 161. Hamon L’Estrange, *The Reign of King Charles* (London, 1655), p. 200 (Wing L1189). John Nalson wrongly attributed this action to the Lords: “Nor was the established religion only to be affronted before the Commons, but before the Lords, for the Bishop of Carlisle and the Bishop of Durham preaching before the Lords in the Abbey-Church at Westminster, as the second-service was reading at the communion-table, a psalm was sung, so that he who officiated was forced to desist, to prevent some greater inconvenience, tumult, and disorder.” John Nalson, *An Impartial Collection of the Great Affairs of State* (London, 1682), volume 1, p. 533 (Wing N106A).

second service.³⁶ Additionally, Commons MPs may have been drowning out the minister's own singing. Some puritans complained that the people could not hear "when their priest says or sings his second service at his new altar, as he is enjoined."³⁷

The points being made here about the fundamental changes Caroline-Laudian policy was making to fasts can be seen in woodcut illustrations from the period. Calvinist-style fasts were portrayed as large, open-air services at St. Paul's Cross (see figures 1, 2, 3) which was a famous pulpit and largely an official voice of the government.³⁸ Figure 1 alludes to the paradigmatic fast of Ninevah as relevant for fasts during the 1625 plague. Figure 2 is the back page of *The Wonderfull Effects of a True and Religious Fast* (1642). Figure 3, is from Michael Sparke's *The Crums of Comfort* (1628) showing devotions in a time of widespread fasts during the 1588 Armada. In this case the Queen herself is in the gallery. Later James, his queen, the prince, and other officials like Lord Mayor often attended. The attendance shown surely made a statement of official sanction of church and state at highest levels for this style of fast. Nothing would have struck Anti-Calvinists as more profane and "puritan." Laudian style fasts are evident in Edward Sparke's *Thysiasterion* (1663) (figure 4), a devotional guide to the feasts and fasts of the church. This image stands across from the beginning of a chapter on Rogation Week, a tradition time for fasting. We see the priest between the porch and altar with reference to Joel 2, a key text on fasts and the epistle reading in the Book of Common Prayer for Ash-Wednesday services. The citation "The House of Prayer" also

³⁶ Prynne, *Canterburies Doome*, p. 217-18; Pocklington, *Altare*, p. 142.

³⁷ *Englands Complaint*, Sig. D3r.

³⁸ That this image is of St. Paul's Cathedral and St. Paul's Cross is easy to confirm from contemporary woodcuts. This particular woodcut was previously used in the pamphlets of Henry Farley who sought the restoration of St. Paul's. See: Henry Farley, *The Complaint of Pavles, to All Christian Sovles* (London, 1616)(STC 10688.5); and Henry Farley, *St. Pavles-Chvrch Her Bill for the Parliament* ([London], 1621)(STC 10690).

makes its point about the church building as the proper place for a fast with an emphasis on prayer over preaching. Most importantly, the priest looks to a massive altar, towering high above the laity and ascended by steps, as the focal point. The same image appears across from the title page of Anthony Sparrow's *A Rationale upon the Book of Common-Prayer* (1664) (figure 5) with the enticing quote noted to be taken from the great Anti-Calvinist Bishop Andrewes. Figure 6 is another image from E. Sparke, and in the upper left corner is a fast. We might think it odd that no altar is sight until we realize the image is from the altar's point of view. Further, here fast is paired with feast harkening to the Christian tradition Laudians hailed. Finally, figure 7 also from *Crums* shows that Calvinists could accept a metaphorical altar. The image relates to the 1603 plague which occasioned national fasts. As before, the people are not in church but outdoors around an altar with "fast" over one group, "pray" over another, and "mercy seat" over the altar. The sacrifice of a burning heart with fire fueled by the oil of grace poured from heaven shows that only "spiritual sacrifices" are being offered.

But these were not the only changes to fasts. In 1628, Alexander Leighton complained that when public fasts were appointed that bishops provoked rather than pacified God, "the prelates will be sure to watch for spoiling of the pot with one Coloquintida or other of their own invention."³⁹ The puritan prebend Peter Smart claimed John Cosin brought ceremonial innovations to the cathedral church at Durham including in fasts. To the ninth charge, that Cosin had turned the most part of services into "piping and singing," Smart added:

³⁹ Alexander Leighton, *An Appeal to the Parliament, Or Sions Plea Against the Prelacie* (n.p., 1628), p. 109 (STC 15430).

THE
WEEPING LADY:
OR,
LONDON
LIKE NINIVIE
IN SACK-CLOTH.

Describing the Mapped of her owne
miserie, in this time of Her heauy Visitation;
with her hearty Prayers, Admonition, and Pious
Meditations, as the occasions of them offer
themselves in Her PASSION.

Written by T. B.



Printed at London by B. A. and T. F. for MATHEW
RHODES, and are to be sold by Nath: Browne, in the
Long Walke, neere Christ Church. 1629.

Figure 3

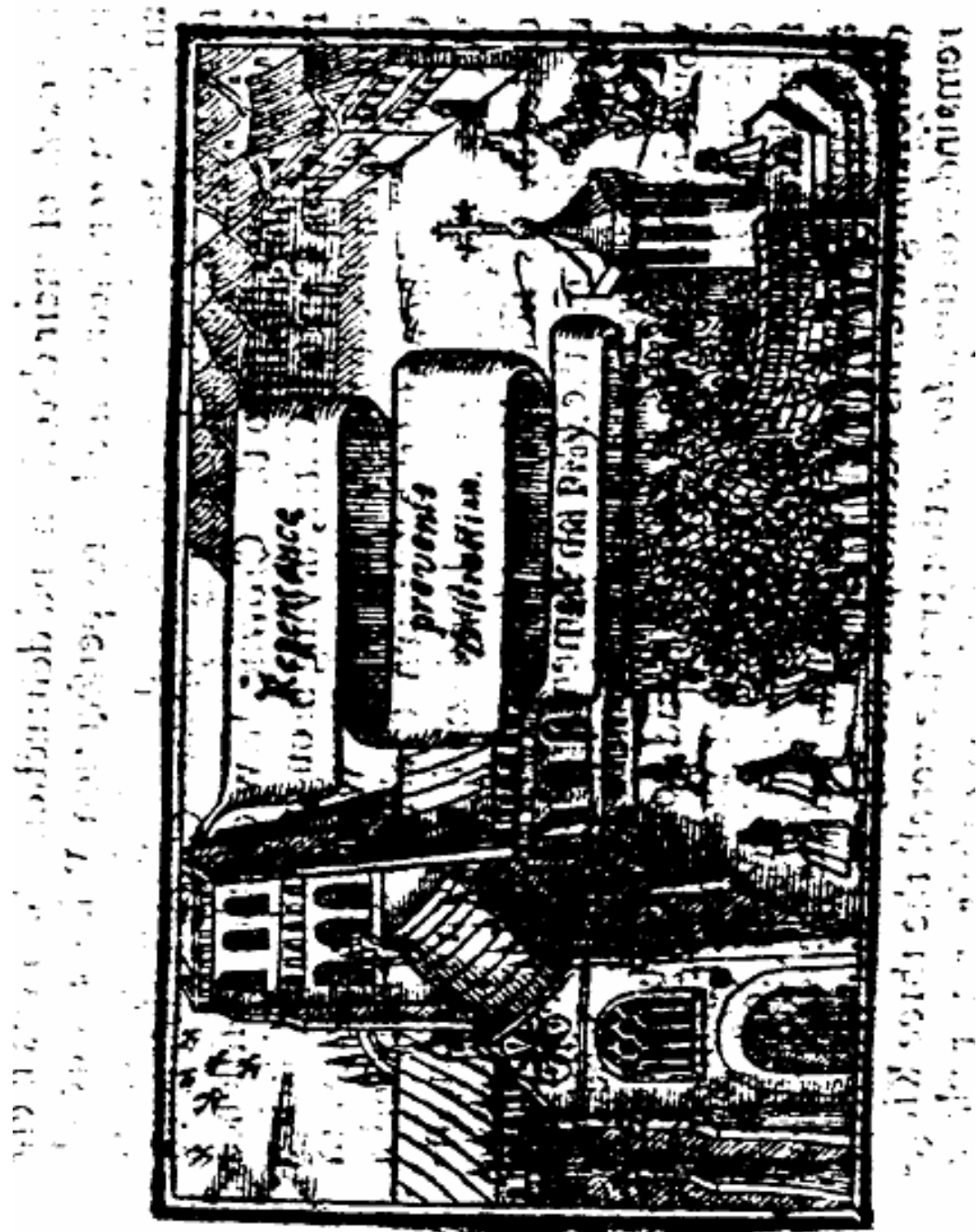
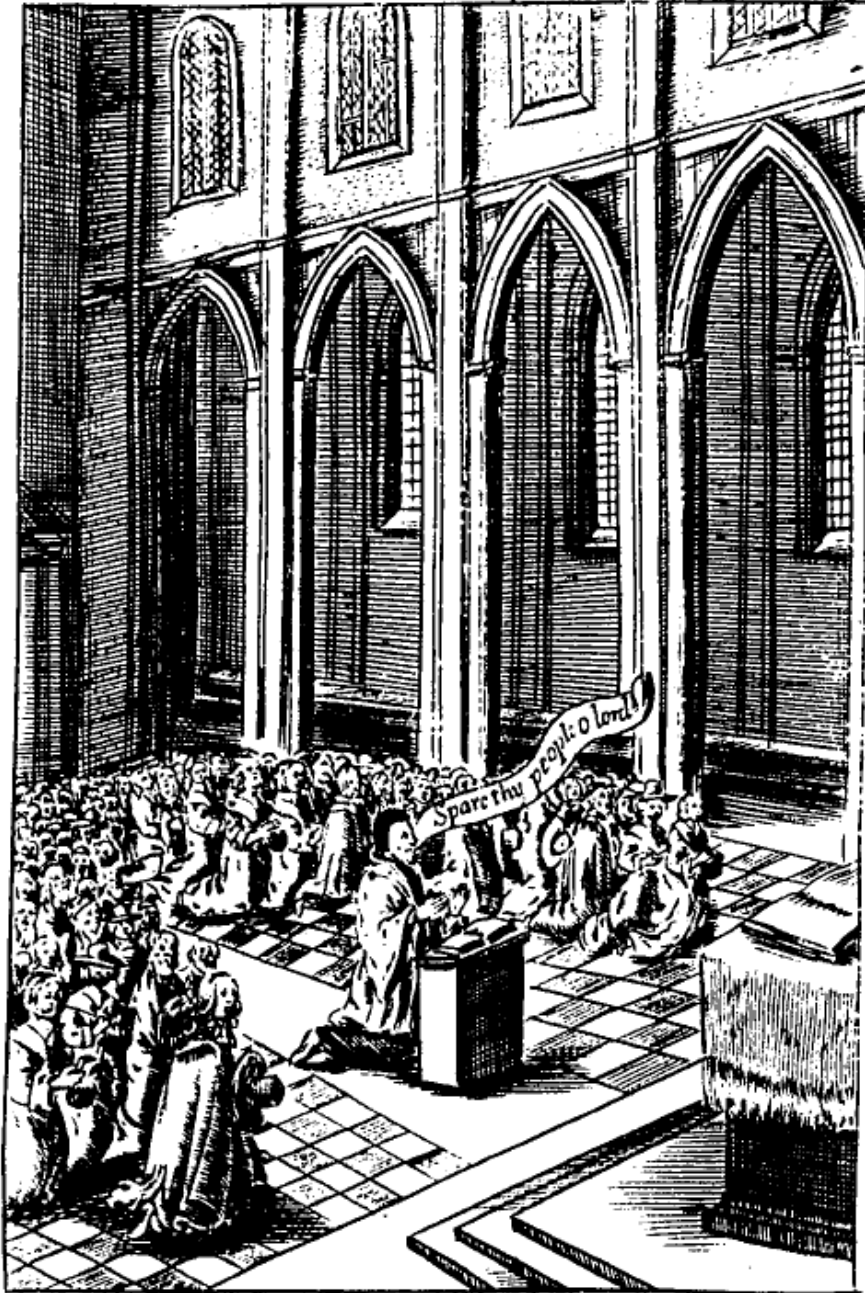


Figure 4



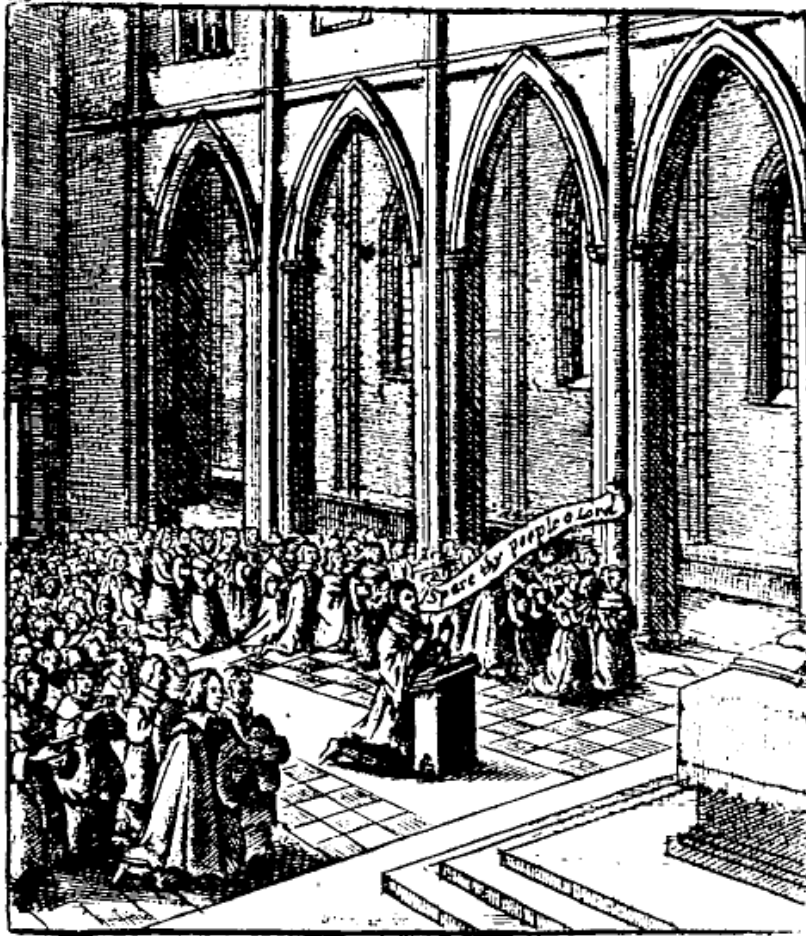
Figure 5

The House of Prayer. *Matt. 21.13.*



*Let the Priests the Ministers of the
LORD, weepe before the Porch, and
the Altar, and let them say, Spare
thy people O LORD. etc. Joel 2. 17.*

Figure 6



The *Litany* to be said in the *midst* of the Church, in allusion to the Prophet *Joel*, 2. 17. *Let the Priests the Ministers of the LORD, weep between the Porch and the Altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, &c.*

Bishop Andrews Notes upon the Liturgy.

Figure 7

Rejoycing wth such as keepe Holyday. Pj. 42. 15.



This kinde goeth not out but by
Prayer. and Fasting. Mat. 17. 21

John. 2.

- 1 And the third day there was a Marriage in Cana of Galile
- 2 And both Iesus was called, and his Disciples etc.
- 3 And when they wanted Wine etc.
- 7 Iesus sayth vnto them, fill the water pots etc.
- 9 When the Ruler of the Feast had tasted etc.
- 10 But thou hast kept the best wine untill now . P. J

Figure 8



Figure 9

“On the fast day after Easter last, he commanded the last prayer at the end of the communion, to be sung with the organ as an anthem, so that no man could understand one word, in so much that the people rising up and sitting when it began to be sung, Mr. Cosins called to them that sat near about them, saying, you must kneel, you must kneel, it is a prayer: then all the congregation kneeled down, and prayed very devoutly they knew not what. It was the fondest fast that ever any man saw, it being rather a triumph, then any fast or humiliation.”⁴⁰

Among complaints of “innovations” at Cambridge University in the 1630s puritans gave to the Long Parliament in 1641 was an account of Emmanuel College where:

“Mr. Hall and Mr. Holbech brought up the form of bidding prayer (hortationis formulam) before their sermons in the chapel on the public fast July 8, 1640 which form none of us ever knew to be used in the chapel before unless once before by the said Mr. Holbech.”⁴¹

Little wonder that puritans did not conform. Anti-Calvinists too balked. Dr. Robert Sibthorpe wrote to Sir John Lambe to complain of a “preaching fast” in Northampton on Thursday, June 21, 1638 by Mr. Ball in the forenoon and Mr. Newton in the afternoon.

⁴⁰ Peter Smart, *The Vanitie and Downe-fall of Superstitious Popish Ceremonie* (Edinburgh, 1628), p. 19-20 (STC 22640.7). This incident later re-appeared in the Long Parliament in 1640-41 among articles against Cosin. In the sixth article, Cosin was charged with prohibiting metre psalms to be sung before or after sermon, and turning prayers and reading psalms into anthems which were then sung, so the people did not know if they were a prayer or not. Cosin admitted that he usually sang the Creed before the sermon and an anthem after, rather than a psalm at the minister’s going up into the pulpit and coming down. He was also charged with turning prayers in the Book of Common Prayer into hymns to be sung and played with an organ. Cosin claimed he had the people kneel at prayers and not anthems. Also, Cosin claimed that at the fast, when the form of commination was read and prayers “used” (i.e. sung) that were annexed to it “he did quietly invite one or two persons who were heedlessly sitting before him to kneel, as all others did, at the recital of Psalm 51, with the collect following, for so doth the Book of Common Prayer expressly require.” (W.H.D Longstaffe. (ed.), *The Acts of the High Commission Court within the Diocese of Durham* (Surtees Society, volume 34, Durham, 1858), p. 224-225, 215). Nor was Smart a radical. Theophilus argued he was “a singular conformist” in 1629 when prosecuted. (Theophilus, *Divine*, p. 59-60) Prynne claimed he was “a man every way conformable to the established doctrine and discipline of the Church of England.” (Prynne, *Quench Coale*, first pagination, p. 1) This view was not mere puritan rhetoric. An earlier generation of Anti-Calvinists who advanced their views with discretion and sought to maintain peace in the church were shocked at the militancy and crude use of power by Laudian Anti-Calvinists. John Howson, Bishop of Durham, wrote to Bishop Laud October 20, 1630 and said he pitied Smart and did not want him deprived. He conceived “that so many innovations in church service superstitiously urged, and displeasing to other men well affected, drove him into the most intolerable actions. . .” (*Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series, of the Reign of Charles I. 1629-1631* (London, 1860, reprint Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1967), p. 363; PRO, SP 16/174/64)

⁴¹ Also among the complaints was that at other times he bowed to the table coming and going to read second service. BL, Harleian 7019, fol. 82. Two other charges perhaps dealt with fast days. Cosins at Peterhouse Chapel while master of the college: “On solemn days a pot of incense is set upon the steps of the altar, and as the smoke ascends the organs and voices in the chapel are raised.” He also read second service at the altar. Further: “On a solemn day the said Dr. Beale did publicly in the chapel and immediately before the morning prayer exhort and command the fellows and scholars of that College [Jesus], to bow towards the altar, and to stand up at the doxology.” BL, Harleian 7019, fol. 71, 80.

Neither prayed for any of the archbishops or bishops, nor did either use the Lord's Prayer at the conclusion of their prayers before sermon. Also, neither they nor the people used any of "the reverend gestures or rites and ceremonies enjoined."⁴²

The 1636 fast book had additional changes.⁴³ Surprisingly, the 1625 book retained many traditional prayers and passages that puritans clung to as proof that the Church of England was a true church. Indeed, Burton and Prynne claimed prelates had "gelded" the 1636 fast book to highlight what they saw as the removal of much of the potency and life of the 1625 book.⁴⁴ Ironically, because Charles' proclamation for the 1636 fast called for reprinting the 1625 fast book, puritans and conformists found themselves arguing from the others' traditional stance. Prynne and Burton claimed the king's proclamation had been violated as the 1636 book was not an exact reproduction of the 1625 one. Burton added that because of this fact ministers could lawfully read what had been omitted from the 1625 book. By contrast, Christopher Dow played interpretative games claiming that the 1636 proclamation did not specify reprinting the 1625 book without alteration, and only disallowed an entirely new book.⁴⁵ Indeed, Heylyn wondered why puritans were not pleased as they complained so much of "long prayers" in the liturgy limiting time for preaching. Likewise, Dow claimed the omissions were only to abridge the service, which had been thought "very tedious," especially by puritans. With respect to the 1625 book, "some of Master Burton's humor did as much

⁴² PRO, SP 16/393/75 fol. 144r.

⁴³ *A Forme of Common Prayer* (London, 1636)(STC 16553).

⁴⁴ Burton, *For God*, p. 49-50. William Prynne, *Newes from Ipswich* ([London], 1641), Sig. A2v, A3v (Wing W1797). Burton preached his two sermons November 5, 1636, and Prynne's pamphlet was dated November 12, 1636. The royal proclamation ordering the fast came forth October 18, 1636.

⁴⁵ Burton, *Apology*, first pagination, p. 3. Burton, *For God*, p. 141-42. Prynne, *Canterburies Doome*, p. 249-51, 523. Dow, *Innovations*, p. 141-42.

grumble at when that first book was appointed, and took more liberty of shortening it, than that comes to.”⁴⁶

Henry Burton and William Prynne saw “innovation” in the prayer for a blessing on the Queen and royal progeny in the litany, with the replacement of the opening phrase: “Almighty God, which hast promised to be a Father of thine elect and of their seed.”⁴⁷

James I had the phrase added to the Book of Common Prayer in 1603, and the 1603 fast book called for reading the litany from it as part of its morning and evening prayers.

Authorities removed the phrase in some editions of Book of Common Prayer by the king’s printers as early as 1627, though it lingered in other editions (also by the king’s printers) as late as 1632.⁴⁸ Laud replied that the change to the Book of Common Prayer was made in his predecessor’s time when he had no authority to do so (though he added: “further than I was called upon by him”). Also, Laud said the king gave special direction for the change to his predecessor because he then had no children for which to pray.

Puritans like Theophilus were dubious. If the king commanded the phrase removed then he did so at the suggestion of some prelate whose advice he trusted on issues of prayer and divine worship. If the king removed the phrase at a time when he had no children, it should be revived because he now had them. Further, Theophilus perceived ideological motives claiming:

“to obtain his Majesty’s warrant for leaving out these words, it is likely that his Gr[ace] or some other prelate hath suggested to him such arguments as papists and Arminians use for impugning that article of Christian religion, which concerneth God’s election, without acquainting his Majesty with the answer made thereto by orthodox writers.”

⁴⁶ Peter Heylyn, *A Brief and Moderate Answer* (London, 1637), p. 160 (STC 13269). Dow, *Innovations*, p. 143-44.

⁴⁷ Burton, *Apology*, first pagination, p. 2. Prynne, *Newes*, Sig. A2v.

⁴⁸ *The Booke of Common Prayer* (London, 1627)(STC 16369.7) printed by Bonham Norton and John Bill; *The Booke of Common Prayer* (London, 1632)(STC 16385.7) printed by Robert Barker; *The Booke of Common Prayer* (London, 1632)(STC 16386) printed by Robert Barker.

Finally, Theophilus argued that the change was illegal. As parliament appointed the prayer to be used it could not be lawfully omitted nor changed without warrant of parliament.⁴⁹

Laud's answer is plausible but it downplays his role. The 1625 fast book, unlike the 1603 one, reprinted the litany in full, and here the phrase already is absent contrary to the litany in editions of the 1625 and 1626 Book of Common Prayer made by the king's printers.⁵⁰ The same altered litany occurs in the 1626 and 1628 fast books. Clearly, the 1625 Anti-Calvinist committee, with the support of Charles, made the change. The puritan case is also plausible because Laud had good reason to deny "Arminian" motives for changes. Like his fellow Anti-Calvinists, Laud was well aware that Calvinists had dominated the Church of England, and that to succeed with their agenda they had to frame issues carefully. Indeed, the context of his rebuttal of charges of "innovation" was under the public spotlight in his speech in Star Chamber June 14, 1637 (at the censure of John Bastwick, Henry Burton, and William Prynne), and in his trial during the Long Parliament. The king also commanded Laud's speech at Star Chamber printed for public consumption. If Laudians could frame their changes as issues of conformity, they could divide the Calvinist camp by pitting conformists against puritans. If the issue was "Arminianism," Calvinists would be more united.⁵¹ Moreover, the phrase was exactly the type of statement that Anti-Calvinists found so distasteful and feared so much about the doctrine of predestination in church services. For them it fostered either presumption

⁴⁹ Laud, *Works*, volume 6, part 1, p. 50. Theophilus, *Divine*, p. 33-4. For Laudian replies, see also: Dow, *Innovations*, p. 133.

⁵⁰ *The Booke of Common Prayer* (London, 1625)(STC 16364) printed by Bonham Norton and John Bill; *The Booke of Common Prayer* (London, 1626)(STC 16367) printed by Bonham Norton and John Bill.

⁵¹ A.J. Fielding, "Conformists, Puritans and the church courts: the diocese of Peterborough 1603-42" (Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, 1989). Laud, *Works*, volume 6, part 1, p. 46-7. David Como, "Predestination and Political Conflict in Laud's London," *Historical Journal*, 2003 46(2), p. 263-94.

or despair in that God only was a loving Father to the elect. It fostered “puritanism.” Moreover, with this prayer in the litany, it was one of the most repeated in the liturgy, being said on Sundays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and other times, including fast days. But Theophilus wrongly downplayed Charles’ role, relying on the old strategy of decrying evil counselors to avoid criticizing the king. James had added the phrase as a means to exalt royal authority by ingraining a view of the royal family as saints doing God’s will. Significantly Charles, who was just as zealous to press royal authority, did not follow suit. Arguably, he shared Anti-Calvinist sentiments about the dangers of the people thinking on predestination. Moreover, the phrase drew attention to predestination at a time when Charles was trying to end heated doctrinal debates subsequent to the Synod of Dort (though to the advantage of Anti-Calvinists).

Burton and Prynne also roared about a second change to the collect for the Queen and the royal progeny: the removal of mention of Charles Is only sister the Lady Elizabeth and her princely issue.⁵² Elizabeth had married Frederick (the Prince Elector Palatine, and from 1619-20 King of Bohemia) in 1613 and they subsequently appeared in the litany in the Book of Common Prayer. Heylyn, Dow, and Laud claimed that Charles had given special order for this change, and that it was merely to keep the fast book consistent with the Book of Common Prayer which had been changed years earlier. Heylyn added that Elizabeth appeared in the 1625 fast book because Charles then did not have any children to be remembered, but now he did. In any event, Elizabeth and her children still were included in the catch all phrase “and the rest of the royal progeny.” Laud also claimed that the church ordinarily named in prayer only “the right line

⁵² Burton, *Apology*, first pagination, p. 3. Burton, *For God*, p. 143. Prynne, *Newes*, Sig. A2v. Prynne, *Looking-glasse*, p. 45. Elizabeth, Frederick, and their children also appeared in the 1626 and 1628 fast books.

descending.” Further, by claiming that prelates made the change “to bring in popery,” puritans were trying to “poison” the minds of the king’s subjects with the notion that Lady Elizabeth and her children would keep “popery” out of the kingdom while the king and his children would not.⁵³

In rebutting these claims, Theophilus again shied away from criticizing the king, and said if he commanded the changes he must have been “abused” by advice given him. He implied those favoring change were disloyal and corrupted by bribes from Spanish and Catholic sources. The godly only wanted mention of her because their hearts were “inflamed with a zeal in their religion.” He hoped the king would “discover” what the prelates had done “under pretext and cover of his authority” and “to the prejudice of true religion.” He affirmed that Laud also blotted out of the patent granted by the king in 1635 for a collection for the distressed churches of the Palatinate “the words bearing them to be of the same religion, which our church professeth.” The former patent granted by King James “avowed the people of the Palatinate to be of our religion.” It “argueth that he hateth the religious professors, both in that country where the Queen of Bohemia was born, and in that wherein she was married, and wherein her self and her princely children have been bred and educated,” and that he is a prelate who “hateth the Queen of Bohemia’s religion, or professeth another religion then she and her children do.” Prayer for the Queen of Bohemia was not departing from allegiance to the king, but participating in godly fellowship, just as Reformed churches in France and the United Provinces prayed for the Queen of Bohemia, her children, and Charles I.⁵⁴

⁵³ Heylyn, *Brief and Moderate*, p. 160-61. Dow, *Innovations*, p. 143-44. Laud, *Works*, volume 6, part 1, p. 49-50.

⁵⁴ Theophilus, *Divine*, p. 31-3.

Conformist apologetics was plausible. Elizabeth and Frederick appeared in the 1632 editions of the Book of Common Prayer by the king's printers, but dropped from editions printed in London thereafter.⁵⁵ Partly, this reflected the death of Frederick in 1632. Also, Charles' first son Charles James died at birth, and it must have taken time to be sure Charles II (b. 1630) and Mary (b. 1631) would survive infancy. Nonetheless, reason for suspicion remains. Recovery of the Palatinate, which had fallen to Catholic forces in 1620, was a cause célèbre of the godly.⁵⁶ They wanted England to play what they saw as her divinely ordained duty in the Thirty-Years War which in their view was an apocalyptic battle between Christ and Anti-Christ. For example, in articles exhibited against John Vicars of Stamford to the Council in early 1630, the sixth charge referring to the 1628 public fast stated: "In confessing of the sins of the magistrate at a fast he prayed to this effect: 'O Lord we confess that we have sinned in not furnishing the confederate princes with money according to our promise.'"⁵⁷ Charles in his personal rule had no money to fight a war, and no desire to recall a furious parliament, yet Elizabeth in exile was a constant focal point for pro-war aspirations. Moreover, Elizabeth represented a bond between England and Reformed churches on the continent which Laudians despised. To reorient the Church of England away from Calvinist influences, removing

⁵⁵ *The Booke of Common Prayer* (London, 1632)(STC 16386) printed by Robert Barker; and *The Booke of Common Prayer* (London, 1632)(STC 16385.7) printed by Robert Barker. Elizabeth and her issue did continue in editions of the Book of Common Prayer printed in Edinburgh: *The Book of Common Prayer* (Edinburgh, 1633) (STC 16394) and *The Book of Common Prayer* (Edinburgh, 1633) (STC 16394.3). Specifically, they were noted in the prayer for the Queen and the royal progeny as well as in an earlier part of the litany to the refrain of "We beseech thee to hear us good Lord." The final notice of Elizabeth and her issue appears in *The Book of Common Prayer* (Edinburgh, 1634)(STC 16399) in the earlier part of the litany but not in the prayer for the Queen.

⁵⁶ Indeed, even Archbishop Tobie Matthew in his visitation articles asked not only about the prayer for the king, but specifically for Frederick and Elizabeth as well. See: Tobie Matthew, *Articles to bee inquired of, in the diocesan visitation of the most reuerend father in God, Toby by the prouidence of God L. Archbishop of Yorke, primate of England, and metropolitane begun and continued in the yeeres of our Lord God 1622, and 1623, and in the 17 yeere of His Graces translation.* (London, 1623), p. 1 (STC 10379.5).

⁵⁷ Northamptonshire Record Office, FH 587, p. 1-3; PRO, SP 16/119/52, fol. 70.

Elizabeth from mind would be a significant step. Finally, Charles may have had fears of puritan rebellion in support of Elizabeth and her children. While an absurdity in the 1630s, the Glorious Revolution of 1688 did bring the Stuart line to an end with the Catholic James II, and brought in William and Mary in his stead (with William III being the son of Charles' daughter Mary and William II, Prince of Orange).

Prynne also complained that the orders for the 1636 fast did not list profaning the sabbath or the Lord's Day as one of provoking sins like both orders for public fasts and fast books did in the 1603 and 1625 plague outbreaks. The 1603 book even called it the "sabbath day." Also, the exhortation published by king and parliament noting the sabbath in 1603 was republished in 1625. This omission was galling because the plague currently raging was due in part to sabbath breach, occasioned in particular by the Book of Sports.⁵⁸ Indeed, the exhortation in the 1603 book did note: "the Lord's Sabbath is not kept holy but polluted." In the 1625 reprint, though the word "sabbath" had been replaced by "Lord's day."⁵⁹

Also, the 1625 fast book repeated the first collect from the 1563, 1593, and 1603 books which contained a favorite passage of puritans:

"Thou hast delivered us from superstition and idolatry, wherein we were utterly drowned, and hast brought us into the most clear and comfortable light of thy blessed Word by the which we are taught how to serve and honor thee, and how to live orderly with our neighbors in truth and verity."⁶⁰

To the indignation of Burton and Prynne, the 1636 book dropped this passage. Did the bishops think "popery" was no longer superstition and idolatry? Was the Word no longer

⁵⁸ William Prynne, *A Divine Tragedy Lately Acted* (Amsterdam, 1636), "to the reader," p. 30-1 (STC 20459). William Prynne, *The Unbishops of Timothy and Titus* (n.p., 1636), p. 24, 26 (STC 20476.5).

⁵⁹ *Certaine Prayers* (London, 1603)(STC 16532); *A Forme of Common Prayer* (London, 1625)(STC 16541).

⁶⁰ *A Forme of Common Prayer* (1625), Sig. e4v.

to be commended?⁶¹ In response, Heylyn claimed precedent in that an anti-Catholic phrase from the litany of the 1552 Book of Common Prayer was removed in the 1559 one. The lines prayed for deliverance “from the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and all his detestable enormities.” None quarreled with the change, and none doubted what was omitted was true. But because it was conceived to be “a very great scandal and offence” to English Catholics, it was left out of the liturgy of Elizabeth I. English Catholics were “as apt to take offense now, as they were before.” Dow affirmed that “men may be good Protestants and yet not damn all their fore-fathers, who lived before the Reformation.” Laud argued that “though God did deliver our forefathers out of ‘Romish superstition,’ yet (God be blessed for it) we were never in.” Therefore the clause was “unfittingly expressed” and left out.⁶²

Theophilus and Prynne replied that this part of the collect was still relevant for some of the elderly and converts, and in delivering their forefathers God had delivered the present generation. The collect passage was a thanksgiving for a great deliverance and thus always appropriate as scripture taught. Just as Israelites perpetually remembered to thank God for bringing them out of Egypt, England was to remember her deliverance from “Egyptian Romish bondage and Antichristian deluge.” Theophilus affirmed: “A reverend remembering and thanksgiving in our prayers to God, for delivering our forefathers out of Romish superstition, is a point, more material in God’s worship than either an aerial cross, a surplice, or bowing at the name of Jesus.” Moreover, as many “formalists, or good conformists” were being led by “most prelates” in the “broad way” to “popery,” the clause was still fitting. Prynne asserted Laud should

⁶¹ Burton, *Apology*, first pagination, p. 3. Burton, *For God*, p. 142-43. Prynne, *Newes*, Sig. A2v.

⁶² Heylyn, *Brief and Moderate*, p. 158. Dow, *Innovations*, p. 142-43. Laud, *Works*, volume 6, part 1, p. 48-9.

have retained it “had his heart been upright or sincere to God and our religion” because the clause was merely “a just censure” of popery. “A clause so pious, so just and equitable, that it is almost a miracle, how any but a most inveterate papist could except against it.”⁶³

This passage likely survived in the 1625, 1626, and 1628 fast books because they supported Charles’ pro-war policies, but now with a pro-peace policy it was counter-productive.⁶⁴ Significantly, this change is the only one for which Laud did not deny or downplay his share of responsibility. From his student days at Laud had a reputation for having a mild disposition towards Catholics. As Anthony Milton has shown, ideologically Anti-Calvinists rejected this type of Foxeian narrative of a sharp break from the Church of Rome seen as a false church and the pope as Anti-Christ. Also, whereas Calvinist bishops focused on getting puritans to conform, Laudians put emphasis on getting English Catholics to conform. They believed that many would have done so if the Church of England had not lost so much external worship, and had not allowed church buildings to be maintained so poorly. Also, Laud hoped that omitting anti-Catholic

⁶³ Theophilus, *Divine*, p. 30. Prynne, *Canterburies Doome*, p. 249-51.

⁶⁴ Some Protestant nationalist narrative and mention of ties to Protestant churches on the continent remained in the fast books for 1626 and 1628 (*A Forme of Prayer* (London, 1626)(STC 16543), and *A Forme of Prayer* (London, 1628)(STC 16547.5)). These fast books claimed that God’s blessings on the kingdom made it admired by friends and envied by enemies. They stated that no nation had so many mercies and deliverances including the powder-plot, the Spanish Armada, and the plague, but that England was far beyond other peoples in sinning. They noted the enemy was bent on “the utter destruction of our nation, as being that which chiefly maintaineth the evangelical truth.” They told that “in this our English and Spanish War, truth may seem to fight against falsehood, innocency against Antichristian cruelty, and sincerity of worship against flat idolatry. . .” The 1628 book included prayers for “all the reformed churches” because they were “fellow members of one and the same mystical body that have a fellow feeling of one another’s calamities.” They were “mourning with them that mourn, and rejoicing with them that rejoice.” It noted fear for the destruction of the nation and its religion. It told the enemy was not just after goods, lands, and lives, but wanted to strike at “our religion,” “our souls,” and “our God.” These enemies were “superstitious and merciless” who kept brethren under “more then Egyptian bondage,” and forced them to defile their souls with “idol-worships.” They were “innovators,” “corrupters,” “polluters” of worship. They were “abandoners of thy catholic church.” Prayers included pleas for protection from “Antichristian tyranny.” The 1626 book also often noted the English as “professors of God’s truth” who had the “Gospel.” The 1628 collects noted that “our brethren, joint professors with us of the same reformed religion” were suffering on the continent.

rhetoric like “papal Anti-christ” or “whore of Babylon” would remove obstacles to wining Catholics to the Church of England. In his view, such talk only alienated Catholics, brought scorn on the speaker or writer, and fomented hardness of heart in the adversary.⁶⁵ More practically, Charles and Laud surely did not want to offend their Catholic Queen. All that Prynne and like minded critics needed to know was that Laud had appeared to purge from the fast-book anything that “in the least degree” addressed “popery.” The same was the case for John Bastwick who believed the prelates left out many things on purpose that tended to “the beating down of popery and superstition.”⁶⁶

Burton and Prynne also saw subversion in the removal of lines they took as condemning the “popish doctrine” of merit in fasting. The sixth order for the fast warned of “abuse” of fasting: “Some esteeming it a meritorious work: others a good work, and of it self acceptable to God without due regard of the end.”⁶⁷ Heylyn by contrast interpreted the phrase about “abuse” of fasting to refer to the previous sentence limiting the length and number of sermons: “wherein, some men (your self for one) had placed so much sanctity; that public fasts so solemnized were by some thought (no doubt) meritorious works.”⁶⁸ Heylyn’s interpretation, while informative of Anti-Calvinist sentiments, was inaccurate. The sixth order in the 1625 order for the fast was a reprint from the 1603 one. The 1603 order in turn was derived from its predecessor in 1596. That original order was indeed directed at godly excesses in fasts, but it lacked the lines about merit which were added in 1603. Arguably, the lines about merit were squeezed in haphazardly to give

⁶⁵ Laud, *Works*, volume 3, p. 407-8; volume 4, p. 230, 278, 309, 333, 348-49; volume 6, part 1, p. 55; volume 2, p. xvi. John Rushworth, *Historical Collections* (London, 1721), volume 1, p. 62.

⁶⁶ Prynne, *Canterburies Doome*, p. 250. John Bastwick, *The Answer of John Bastwick to the Exception Against His Letany* (n.p., 1637), p. 19 (handwritten, p. 146) (STC 1573).

⁶⁷ Burton, *Apology*, first pagination, p. 4. Burton, *For God*, p. 142-43. Prynne, *Newes*, Sig. A3r. Prynne, *Canterburies Doome*, p. 250.

⁶⁸ Heylyn, *Brief and Moderate*, p. 162-163 (misnumbered 161).

some balance to the sixth order with a strong anti-Catholic statement. Such posturing was characteristic of James I. Also, puritans thought they silenced lectures in London and all infected places so they might advance their “damnable superstitions and idolatries.”

For his part, Laud denied he made the change and claimed “he to whom the ordering of that book to the press was committed” left it out because “in this age and kingdom there is little opinion of meriting by fasting.” Laud approved of this reasoning and added:

“the contempt and scorn of all fasting (save what humorous men call for of themselves) is so rank, that it would grieve any Christian man to see the necessary orders of the Church concerning fasting, both in Lent and at other set times, so vilified as they are.”⁶⁹

So Laud was concerned that the statement undermined set fasts which Anti-Calvinists stressed. He also likely wanted to tone down anti-Catholic rhetoric to try to win more recusants to the Church of England. Finally, some Anti-Calvinists were seriously questioning justification by faith alone, and looking to elevate the status of works and fasting in particular as a necessary discipline. They admired the strict fasts of ancient monks, and wanted fasting as a form of penance. So this anti-Catholic statement might tar these efforts by fostering overly sensitive prejudices.

Theophilus was not convinced. Catholics in England still believed in merit in fasting, and enjoining Lent and other set fasts used by the Roman Church fostered the same opinion in “lukewarm conformists.” Also, it bred fear and suspicion among the

⁶⁹ Laud, *Works*, volume 6, part 1, p. 49. After his fall, Laud repeated these claims in his defense. The fast book was altered “by him that had the ordering of that book to the press, not by me.” Laud agreed with the reason given, and did so “without any the least approbation ‘of merit.’” He noted that “in this age and kingdom, when, and where, set fastings of the Church are cried down, there can be little fear of that erroneous opinion of placing any merit in fasting.” (Laud, *Works*, volume 4, p. 276) Heylyn concurred “These times are so fallen out with fasting (unless it be a fast of their own appointment) that you have little cause to fear lest any man should place a part of merit in it. *Non celebranda esse jejunia statuta*. To cry down all set times of fasting, which was the heresy of Aerius in the former times, is reckoned a chief point of orthodox doctrine, in these present times.” (Heylyn, *Brief and Moderate*, p. 163 (misnumbered 161))

godly that the change was “purposely ordered to content papists and atheists,” and would spread belief in merit among “the weaker sorts of persons religiously disposed.”⁷⁰

Though the 1636 sixth order also dropped remarks aimed at puritans including “others presuming factiously to enter into public fasts without the consent of authority, and others keeping the people together with overmuch weariness and tediousness a whole day together.”⁷¹

Further, the 1636 fast book left out the whole collect beginning: “It had been best for us, &c.” which had been in fast books from 1563. The prayer was Word centered and followed the familiar Calvinist narrative. In the face of divine blessings England had sinned, and then ignored “thy dreadful threats out of thy Holy Word continually pronounced unto us [by] thy servants our preachers.” But the Word also held out “thy gracious promises” of mercy if the nation repented. Implicit here is the assumption that the Word preached was the means to bring repentance and comfort. Burton and Prynne interpreted this change as an assault on preaching and godly clergy. Prynne claimed that “impious popish prelates” had done so:

“because it magnifies continual, often preaching of God’s Word, and the scriptures, and calls our powerful preachers, God’s servants. A sign these prelates have conspired together like so many execrable traitors, to extirpate our frequent powerful preachers, and continual preaching of God’s Word (as they have done in many places of late) though prescribed by God Himself and our homilies.”⁷²

Among the November 17, 1636 charges against Burton by the Commission for Causes Ecclesiastical for his sermon was reference to leaving out this collect “as if quoth you a company of poor cold prayers without reformation and the quickening power of the Word

⁷⁰ Theophilus, *Divine*, p. 30-1.

⁷¹ *Certaine Prayers* (1603); *A Forme of Common Prayer* (1625).

⁷² Prynne, *Newes*, Sig. A2v. Prynne, *Looking-glasse*, p. 48. Burton, *An Apology of an Appeal* (n.p., 1636), first pagination, p. 4 (STC 4134). Burton, *For God*, p. 142-43.

were sufficient.”⁷³ While puritans saw in this prayer official sanction for a sermon centered service, Heylyn interpreted it to support neither “continual preaching” nor “powerful preachers.” In a statement that would have shocked Bishop Grindal (the prayers author), Heylyn erased any difference between preaching and reading scripture:

“Cannot the dreadful threats of God’s Holy Word, be any other way pronounced, and pronounced continually by God’s servant, then by the way of sermons only, or if by sermons only, by no other preachers than those whom you style powerful preachers, by a name distinct? I trow the reading of God’s Word in the congregation, presents unto the people more dreadful threats, then what you lay before them in a sermon; and will sink as deep.”⁷⁴

Laud admitted that the collect had been left out because it “made mention of preaching,” but he added that the motive was obeying the act of state which forbade sermons on the fast days in infected areas.⁷⁵ Theophilus did not accept Laud’s reasons as sufficient.⁷⁶ Also, this order was unprecedented and not completely guiltless from the puritan charge as we shall now see.

Robert Shelford claimed preaching was just preparation for the sacrament where principal grace was found. Ambrose Fisher claimed catechizing and preaching just enabled one to perform worship. Public prayer was “God’s immediate worship.” John Pocklington claimed preaching was the same as catechizing and reading lessons, scripture, or homilies. Richard Neile as Archbishop of York in January 1634 complained to the king about neglect of public prayers in Chester and Carlisle “as if all religion were but in a sermon.” Moreover, Laudians argued no difference existed between reading and “ordinary” preaching. Preaching was just for “extraordinary” times or when notorious sins, errors, or abuses broke out, or new laws and canons were promulgated. With the

⁷³ PRO, SP 16/335/69, fol. 143v. This phrasing does not appear in the printed sermon.

⁷⁴ Heylyn, *Brief and Moderate*, p. 158-59.

⁷⁵ Laud, *Works*, volume 6, part 1, p.48-9.

⁷⁶ Theophilus, *Divine*, p. 29-30. The collect did not re-appear in the July 8, 1640 fast book or the November-December, 1640 fast book. Both fasts addressed plague as well. (*A Forme of Common Prayer* (London, 1640)(STC 16557); *A Forme of Common Prayer* (London, 1640)(STC 16559))

ancient and true doctrine of the primitive church restored, “extraordinary” preaching was no longer needed for this problem. One sermon a month was fine. Preaching was not a key to role of the bishop, which rather included ordination of priests and deacons, consecration of churches, and enforcement of ecclesiastical laws. Some made an “idol” of preaching when they would “place even the whole Christian religion in hearing of sermons.” Richard Tedder bluntly claimed because so much preaching led to the neglect of prayer: “the more preaching, the less faith.” He went on: “Never was there such a sermon-age as this is, and never was there such a leanness in religion.” Preaching had its place in the first planting of the Gospel. Some made all religion to be hearing sermons. Tedder spoke of “idol sermons.”⁷⁷

The most scandalous “innovation” for puritans in 1636 was limits on preaching. In his October 18, 1636 proclamation, Charles ordered that public fasts in infected places were to be celebrated in public in parish churches only “by a devout and religious use of the prayers in the printed book.” Ministers in any infected place were not to “detain their assemblies any longer time together to hear either sermons or other divine service, because such detaining of the people so long together, may prove dangerous to the further increase of the sickness.”⁷⁸ Burton, Prynne, and Theophilus were outraged. First, if the danger of assemblies spreading plague was so great why were plays, interludes, comedies, masks, dances, revels, and banqueting permitted (including at court) but

⁷⁷ Shelford, *Five Pious*, p. 67. Ambrose Fisher, *A Defence of the Liturgie of the Church of England, or Book of Common Prayer* (London, 1630), “to Sir Robert Filmer” (STC 10885). John Pocklington, *Sunday No Sabbath*, second edition (London, 1636), p. 28-32 (STC 20078). PRO, SP 16/259/78 fol. 168r. Prynne, *Canterburies Doome*, p. 225-27. Richard Tedder, *A Sermon Preached at Wimondham* (London, 1637), p. 3, 5-6, 10-19, 21 (STC 23858).

⁷⁸ In places free of infection, sermons not exceeding an hour were permissible. James Larkin (ed.), *Stuart Royal Proclamations* (Oxford, 1983), vol. 2, p. 539-40. Also, the order for the fast printed in the fast book allowed one sermon for the morning and one for the evening prayers of not more than hour. (*A Forme of Common Prayer* (1636))

preaching prohibited? The 1625 fast book banned such activities as spreading the plague. Further, such scurrilous festivities would only provoke God. To the “great lordly prelates” Burton warned “when the Lord calls to fasting, you fall a feasting.” Surely thinking of this, Prynne among a long list of Laudian transformations of English Protestantism included: “our religious fasting (even in this time of plague and danger) into feasting.” Second, why was preaching not banned on the Lord’s Day as well as fast days if assemblies were dangerous? Finally, why was only preaching suppressed and none of God’s other ordinances such as reading common prayer and homilies which also required assemblies and would spread pestilence?⁷⁹

Bastwick complained:

“And in times of greatest calamities, when fasting, humiliation, and mourning is called for: and when ministers ought most of all, to cry aloud, and to lift up their voices like a trumpet; and to stir up and awaken the people, to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, in that, His plagues and judgments are gone out among us, and His hand of displeasure lifted up, readier deeply to wound. Then do they take this occasion to put down both teaching and preaching.”⁸⁰

Moreover, prelates supposedly extended the letter of the proclamation such that if one parish, suburb, or house was infected and the pestilence continued “in the least degree” then all Wednesday sermons in the whole city were to be suppressed during the fast.⁸¹

Among the November 17, 1636 charges against Burton by the Commission for Causes Ecclesiastical is that in his November 5, 1636 sermon he said that the fast

⁷⁹ Burton, *For God*, p. 49-50, 147. Prynne, *Newes*, Sig. A2r. Prynne, *Unbishopsing*, p. 155, 157-59. Prynne, *Quench Coale*, first pagination, p. 66. Theophilus, *Divine*, p. 26-7. William Prynne in 1636 (likely before the public fasts of the fall) chastised those prelates who “in these doleful days of plague and pestilence suppress, neglect all public fasting, preaching and praying, which now if ever should be cried up and practiced. And instead thereof give yourselves over to dancing, feasting, playing, sabbath breaking, to draw down more wrath and plagues upon us.” (William Prynne, *A Divine Tragedy Latelý Acted* (Amsterdam, 1636), p. 46 (STC 20459) Nehemiah Wallington writing c.1641 copied this passage from Prynne into his journal apparently seeing its relevance again. (BL, Add MS 21,935, fol. 47r)

⁸⁰ John Bastwick, *The Letany of John Bastwick* (n.p., 1637), p. 14 (handwritten, p. 114) (STC 1572).

⁸¹ Burton, *For God*, p. 147. Prynne also claimed that authorities had suppressed all Wednesday lectures in London and other infected towns as long as the infection continued even if only in one parish. (Prynne, *Newes*, Sig. A2r)

appointed by king was “nothing else but a mocking of God with a company of cold prayers because the preaching of the Word which is the life of a fast is denied us.”⁸² Tellingly, Prynne proclaimed that preaching was “the very life and soul of a fast, as being the only means to humble men for their sins, and bring them to repentance.” Theophilus qualified that Prynne did not mean sermons were the “only” means to humble, just “the most and (best) special good means.” Indeed, Prynne and Burton also stated that preaching (especially “powerful preaching”) was the “chief means” to bring the people to “true humiliation and reformation.” Unless people turned away from sin in repentance, God would not turn away His wrath. So preaching at such times was most needed and most effectively acted on the soul and conscience. Preaching gave “spiritual food” and “spiritual physick.” Preaching was integral to a “true fast.” Without it men were not convinced of sin, converted from sin, and would only “harden their necks against the Lord.” Theophilus noted that preaching “pincheth or disquieteth profane men’s consciences.”⁸³ Sin was the cause of plague not preaching. Preaching by reproofing sin and working conversion was the “chief antidotes and cure” and “chief means” to keep out the plague not a cause of its spread. The lack of preaching the Word perpetuated and even attracted the plague as sin had free reign. Forbidding preaching was a cause of divine wrath as in 1 Thessalonians 2:16.⁸⁴ The doctrine that “powerful preaching” brought pestilence, and suppressing preaching preserved people against it was not taught “till our present new doctors and Lord Prelates.”⁸⁵ Restriction on preaching in fasts was

⁸² PRO, SP 16/335/69, fol. 135r-v. This phrasing does not appear in the printed sermon.

⁸³ Burton, *For God*, p. 49-50, 146-49. Prynne, *Unbishopsing*, p. 155-56, 159, 162-63. Prynne, *Newes*, Sig. A2r. Prynne, *Looking-glasse*, p. 97. Theophilus, *Divine*, p. 26-7.

⁸⁴ Burton, *For God*, p. 49-50, 147. Prynne, *Newes*, Sig. A2r. Prynne, *Unbishopsing*, p. 23-4, 26, 29-30, 32-3, 137-38, 146, 155-56.

⁸⁵ Prynne, *Unbishopsing*, p. 155.

contrary to the practice in scripture and “all former ages.” Burton claimed this to be such “innovation” as “the like was never heard, nor read of in the world.” Burton and Prynne claimed that in all public and general fasts from Elizabeth to the present preaching was in all places (including infected areas) “without restraint” and commanded fore-noon and after-noon as in the 1603 and 1625 orders.⁸⁶

That puritans disregarded the restrictions on preaching in the 1636-37 public fasts seems highly likely. Indeed, the Lichfield church court records for April 18, 1639 have a presentation of Ithiel Smart, vicar of Wombourne, “for keeping a fast immediately after my Lord Bishop’s visitation contrary to the king’s proclamation.” The fast took place in the parish church on Sunday from 9-12 am and 1-5 pm. Similarly, the London sheriff Isaac Pennington kept a “fasting sabbath” throughout his shrievalty c.1638 in defiance of the royal proclamation.⁸⁷

Burton, Prynne, and Theophilus did not blame the king or privy council for prohibiting preaching but prelates like Laud. Prynne claimed prelates had “malice” and “hatred” against preaching and the Gospel. Prelates had acted “cunningly” to “take advantage” of God’s judgment to suppress preaching and preachers when most needed. Prelates used the plague as “pretence” and “pretext” to “cloak” their wicked designs. Bishops “pretend” preaching increases plague and restrict it to prevent such, but they really did so “to suppress preaching, piety, and religion.” Theophilus argued that if, as Laud claimed, the Council and not Laud put down sermons in infected places, they likely

⁸⁶ Burton, *For God*, p. 144-47. Prynne, *Newes*, Sig. A2r. Prynne, *Unbishopsing*, p. 23-4, 26, 29-30, 32-3, 137-38, 146. Prynne, *Looking-glasse*, p. 97.

⁸⁷ Lichfield Record Office, B/C/3/16. Chestlin, *Persecutio Undecima. The Churches Eleventh Persecution* ([London], 1648), p. 57 (Thomason Tracts, E.470[7]). Valerie Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford, 1961), p. 179. No royal proclamation other than the 1636 one limiting preaching in plague inflected areas seems to fit the ones mentioned in these examples.

referred the matter to the prelates who enjoined the fast without sermons in London “contrary to the orders for other fasts in former times.”⁸⁸

Laudians defended singling out preaching on fast days because sermon gadding was rampant at those times. Heylyn claimed the king ordered the ban on preaching on fast days in infected parishes to prevent the spread of disease “which in a general conflux of people, as in some churches, to some preachers, might be soon occasioned.” Likewise, Laud said experience showed a problem “in men’s former flocking to sermons in infected places.” With no sermons in infected places authorities hoped:

“that infected persons or families, known in their own parishes, might not take occasion upon those by-days to run to other churches where they were not known, as many use to do, to hear some humorous men preach; for on the Sundays, when they better kept their own churches, the danger is not so great altogether.”

Heylyn and Dow also argued that when fasting, people were more susceptible to infection. Laud denied any intention to put down Wednesday lectures. Fast days had just traditionally taken place on them. Moreover, the fasts ended and no Wednesday lectures were suppressed.⁸⁹

Most provocatively Heylyn and Dow denied that “all former ages” prescribed preaching “as a necessary part of a public fast.” The copious scriptures that Prynne cited to defend preaching in fasts made no mention of it, and no scripture showed an “absolute necessity” of having a sermon at a fast. The only tradition Prynne could prove was the fast-books from 1603 and 1625. So “all former ages” was only 34 years and “not a minute more,” and there was “no precedent before the year 1603.” The “old rule” in scripture and the Church was “fast and pray” not “fast and preach.” The Church Father’s maxim was “*Oratio jejunium sanctificat, jejunium orationem roborat.*” For Dow,

⁸⁸ Laud, *Works*, volume 6, part 1, p. 46-7. Burton, *For God*, p. 144-46, 149. Prynne, *Newes*, Sig. A2r, A3r. Prynne, *Unbishopsing*, p. 137-38, 145-46, 154-57, 160. Theophilus, *Divine*, p. 26-7.

⁸⁹ Heylyn, *Brief and Moderate*, p. 53-4. Dow, *Innovations*, p. 145. Laud, *Works*, volume 6, part 1, p. 46-7.

preaching was merely “a principal means for the instruction of Christian people in the ways of godliness.” Similarly, Laud argued that preaching the Word “according to His ordinance” was “a great means of many good effects in the souls of men,” but not the “only means” to humble them. “And some of their sermons are fitter a great deal for other operations: namely, to stir up sedition, as you may see by Mr. Burton’s. . .And ‘tis the best part of a fast to abstain from such sermons.”⁹⁰ This debate over the relation of preaching to fasts did not begin in 1636 nor end there.⁹¹

While Laudian apologetics were truthful about secular motives for policy, that policy also fit ideological preferences so well that puritans were understandably suspicious. As we have seen, the Laudian vision of a fast day focused on the “beauty of holiness” and prayers before the altar, not preaching the Word. For Laudians, preaching was secondary, and dangerous from the mouths of the godly. The 1636 policy was unprecedented. In contrast to 1636, Charles’ July 3 proclamation for the 1625 fast

⁹⁰ Heylyn, *Brief and Moderate*, 54-6. Dow, *Innovations*, p. 146-47. Laud, *Works*, volume 6, part 1, p. 47. John Squire made the same arguments almost verbatim including that a sermon is “an excellent instrument of, and ornament to a public fast,” but not “the essence, being, and very soul of a fast.” (John Squire, *A Thanksgiving for the Decreasing and Hope of Removing the Plague* (London, 1637), p. 20-1, 27-8 (STC 23119).

⁹¹ The royalist news-book *Mercurius Aulicus*, with Peter Heylyn as chief editor, commented on the Wednesday, May 29, 1644 monthly fast at Samford. He ridiculed it as a “mock-fast” with four sermons “one after another” such that “it is not fast and pray, but fast and preach with the puritan faction.” (Robin Jeffs (ed.), *The English Revolution III: Newsbooks 1: Oxford Royalist* (London, 1971), volume 3, p. 119; volume 1, p. 2) William Attersoll in a series of sermons during public fasts c.1631 attacked Anti-Calvinists who claimed preaching was “neither needful nor expedient” in a public fast. He was astonished that some “are not ashamed to affirm, that they have often heard and read of the exercise of fasting and praying, but never of fasting and preaching; as if forsooth the time were spent unprofitably that is spent that way.” Preaching the Word was “the principal and special means” to “stir up” people to faith and repentance. Without “true repentance” fasting had no “life.” He defended a fast as a sabbath, and that in scripture God required preaching on the sabbath and days of fasting as an implied part of worship: “So the Temple was called the house of prayer; we never read it called the house of preaching; and yet it serveth no less for the one then for the other. But these men conceive and imagine, there is some time wherein the preaching of the Word is unseasonable.” Repentance was wrought “by preaching of the Word in the hearts of men.” The Word was “quick and lively, powerful and piercing.” Faith was “the fountain and beginning of repentance.” Faith came only from the hearing the Word as in Romans 10:17. The Word preached was the “ordinary means” to work faith as in Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 15:1-2, and James 1:18. (William Attersoll, *The Conversion of Ninevah* (London, 1632) in *Three Treatises* (London, 1633), first pagination, p. 22, 44-6, 62-3 (STC 900.5)

banned all public services in plague zones, not just preaching. On August 5, 1625, the Privy Council confirmed this policy in an order sent to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York requiring all bishops to see that no assembling in churches for the fast took place in infected parishes. In infected parishes, observance of the fast was to be done “privately” in houses. Likely anticipating godly in search of sermons, the Privy Council also ordered churchwardens in non-infected parishes to keep persons from infected places out of their public assemblies. Further, the royal orders for the 1626 fast also lacked the 1636 type of restriction on preaching.⁹² While logically the godly should have been angered in 1625 too, the singling out of sermons in 1636 seemed more sinister.

Previously, authorities had limited the length of preaching only, and singled out puritans for doing so. The fall out was limited though as substantial preaching was still allowed. In 1593, the order for the fast added to the 1563 order:

“that on the fasting day they have but one sermon at morning prayer, and the same not above an hour long, to avoid the inconveniency that may grow by abuse of fasting: as some make it a faction more then religion, and other with overmuch weariness and tediousness, keep the people a whole day together, which in this time of contagion, is more dangerous in so thick and close assemblies of the multitudes.”

The 1603 orders (reprinted in 1625) were almost verbatim, though they closed a loophole by requiring only one sermon of no more than an hour at evening prayers as well as at morning prayers. Also, the order was more specific that the problem was some “presuming factiously to enter into public fasts without consent of authority.”⁹³

Moreover, while in the past authorities had been concerned with supra-parochial assemblies and sermon-gadding (as Heylyn and Laud also mentioned), preaching in

⁹² Larkin (ed.), *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, vol. 2, p. 47-8, 48 n.3. John Dasent (ed.), *Acts of Privy Council of England*, new series (Wiesbaden, 1974), volume 40, p. 125. PRO, SP 16/363/1. While dated July 1, 1637, internal evidence and dates show this document referred to the 1626 fast.

⁹³ *Certaine Praiers* (London, 1593), Sig. B4v (STC 16524). *Certaine Prayers* (1603), Sig. D4r. *A Forme of Common Prayer* (1625), Sig. O3r.

parish churches had been allowed. On July 30, 1563 Grindal wrote to Cecil that he had sent order to London for exhortations of diligence in coming to parish churches on the relevant days, but some were offended that they were not having “general assemblies” as in the time of unseasonable weather. Grindal said he thought that such mega-gatherings were unwise in a time of infection for fear of spreading it. If Cecil concurred, he wanted to order that “general concourses” be forborne in infected cities and “moderate assemblies” of one parish meeting in their parish church be commended.⁹⁴ Yet, Grindal was flexible, and on August 12 he wrote Cecil to ask whether he could allow the Lord mayor to have “common assemblies” once or twice per week with his brethren and liveries in London, at which he (Grindal) would “see sermons made accordingly,” or if it would be better to have them “in every parish church privately, and no common assemblies to be had.”⁹⁵ In short, Grindal would have been horrified by a ban on preaching in parish churches. So too would have been other bishops. For example, in a c.1608 letter the future Bishop Joseph Hall counseled ministers against fleeing in time of pestilence. He warned them against neglect of their flocks and especially their souls: “There can be no time wherein good counsel is so seasonable, so needful. Every threatening finds impression, where the mind is prepared by sensible judgments. When will the iron hearts of men bow, if not when they are heat in the flame of God’s affliction?”⁹⁶

⁹⁴ BL, Lansdowne 6 (63). John Strype, *The Life and Acts of Matthew Parker* (London, 1711), first pagination, p. 131-32; second pagination, p. 34-5.

⁹⁵ BL, Lansdowne 6 (69). The 1563 order for the fast required all curates and pastors to exhort parishioners to church but to have a “prudent respect” in assemblies to keep the sick from the whole where the plague was raging. (William Keating Clay (ed.), *Liturgical Services, Liturgies and Occasional Forms of Prayer Set Forth in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (Cambridge, 1847), p. 479).

⁹⁶ “To Mr. E.A.,” in Joseph Hall, *The Works of Joseph Hall* (London, 1628), p. 350-351 (STC 12636).

Nicholas Bownd dedicated his treatise on fasting to John Jegon, Bishop of Norwich, praising him for his “diligent care” to “stir up” men to observe the 1603 fast. Bownde noted that “the pestilence was then very sharply, and that a long time stretched out” in Norwich, Yarmouth, and other places in Jegon’s diocese. Nonetheless, Jegon had sent out letters “full of great and weighty reasons” to observe the fast with the result “that both here, and in many places else, there was much more preaching and hearing of the Word of God, and praying unto Him, then was before, and otherwise would have been.” His “straight charge laid upon all” thus had done “much good.”⁹⁷ Yet Jegon did fear mega-gatherings. On August 14, 1603 the mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen of Norwich sent a letter to Jegon asking of him “to appoint a day of fasting and praying in some 3 or 4 places within this city where your Lordship shall think most fit for that purpose, that by the prayers of the godly it might please God to stay His hand.” They noted “that in former times upon like occasions the same hath been used within this city,” but then made a mistake by citing “the disorders of the unruly multitude” as a reason for the plague’s increase. Jegon replied on August 16 that he was concerned about “public assemblies” because the “unruly multitude” as they wrote was “so rude and careless.” Jegon said “my former observations of other places in the like case” inclined him so, as “your late experience with the populous triumphs, otherwise loyal and most commendable” should convince them. He would consider their proposal but in the meantime he would give orders to his “whole diocese” that “the ordinary days of prayer and fasting” be carefully observed. So in his August 17 letter to the commissaries of the Archdeaconries of Norwich, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Sudbury, Jegon noted that the danger

⁹⁷ Nicolas Bownd, *The Holy Exercise of Fasting* (Cambridge, 1604), Sig. ¶3-7 (STC 3438). Bownd in part though also was defending himself for beginning the fast when the fast books arrived, which was before the bishop’s letters arrived giving parallel orders for its observance.

of infection in Norwich, Yarmouth, and other principal towns in his diocese was so great that “public assemblies and exercises of godliness” may not be as safely had there as elsewhere. Jegon ordered that “the ordinary days of fasting and public prayers be most carefully observed” with “some godly exhortation with devout prayers” on behalf of those afflicted in Norwich, Yarmouth, and other places in the diocese. So “on Wednesdays, Fridays, and other days of public assemblies” before or after the litany they were to say psalms 51, 90, 91, the prayers for the time of common plague, and other prayers fit for the purpose.⁹⁸ Given Bownd’s praise, and that the Norwich magistrates were asking for a few mega-assemblies, Jegon allowed preaching in parish level assemblies.

While puritans clearly overstated the matter for political effect, the key point here is how they interpreted events through the lens of their world view. Prynne claimed that bishops had grown such “open fighters” against God, religion, and the good of the people, that to prevent plague they had put down weekly lectures and Lord’s Day sermons in the afternoon. Theophilus admitted fears about the suppression of lectures had not come to pass, but the godly were justified:

“Men that had heard of the prohibition of sermons upon the Wednesday in the time of solemn fast, and had seen many other symptoms of dislike of them, and inclination to place all exercise of religion in the ceremonies and litany, might very probably fear and think there was some intention to suppress Wednesday lectures.”

He still suspected an intention to suppress them would be translated into fact.⁹⁹ Indeed, in the 1630s Laudian bishops had been putting down lectures they deemed “factious” and

⁹⁸ Thomas Barton (transcribed), *The Registrum Vagum of Anthony Harrison*, part 1 (Norfolk Record Society, 1963), volume 32, p. 36-8.

⁹⁹ Prynne, *Unbishopsing*, p. 137-38 (STC 20476.5). Theophilus, *Divine*, p. 28. Puritan suspicions long lingered. For example, on June 17, 1638 Dr. Samuel Clerke wrote to Sir John Lambe that he had advised the mayor of Northampton that due to the current plague in the town that the Thursday lecture and Sunday afternoon sermons should be forborne. But “they then raised a report of me that I went about to starve their

“disorderly.”¹⁰⁰ Further, Charles, Laud, and Laudians were not completely innocent of the puritan accusations.

Prynne wrote *Newes from Ipswich* largely against Bishop of Norwich Matthew Wren. Wren reported to Laud December 7, 1636 in response to the king’s instructions to the bishops. He said that for the duration of the fast he had altered lectures at St. Edmund’s Bury. Bury had two single lectures, one on Wednesday and one on Friday. He ordered the Friday one to be moved to Wednesday during the fast. He would allow these and other lectures only if the ministers and people strictly conformed to a Laudian understanding of conformity. The preacher was to be in surplice and hood, and read the “second service” at the communion table. He was to go to the pulpit after the Nicene Creed, and, rather than making his own prayer before the sermon, use only the prayers prescribed in canon 55. His sermon was not to be above one hour. The minister was not to give a blessing from the pulpit, but to descend to the table and read the prayer for the universal church. The people were to go to church at the beginning of the service (i.e. not to come late just to hear the sermon), and show humility and reverence in the church by kneeling, standing, bowing, having their heads uncovered, and answering audibly. He had denied lectures to Wimondham and Eastharling in Norfolk who made suit to him, because they did so after the fast began. Once the fast ended he would do with them as with Bury.¹⁰¹

souls.” Further, “schismatical puritans” like Mr. Clerke [Giles Randall?] of Eascote in parish of Pattishall said sermons were “porridge” but “long puritan sermons” were “roast meat.” (SP 16/393/15)

¹⁰⁰ Laud, *Works*, volume 5, part 2, p. 319, 328.

¹⁰¹ PRO, SP 16/337/19, fol. 37v-38r. Indeed, Prynne complained that Bishop Wren in his injunctions and visitation articles barred ministers from using any prayers before or after sermons other than what canon 55 prescribed, but in which no prayer against plague, drought, famine, sword, pestilence. (Prynne, *Unbishopsing*, p. 137-38.

To the disgust of hyper-conformists, puritans had been able to avoid conformity as lecturers, and subjection to the government of a bishop. These standards of conformity had not been required of ministers in parish churches let alone a lecture. So radical was this change, that Prynne published this letter later as a prime example to indict Laud.¹⁰² Indeed, in his diocese in 1636 Wren was pressing reading the second service at the communion table railed in at the East end of the chancel. He was facing intense local opposition in places like Norwich. Locals claimed Wren's policies were contrary to long standing practice.¹⁰³

A letter from Dr. Clement Corbett, chancellor of Norwich, to Bishop Wren giving an account of his visitation also sheds light. In the June 3, 1636 entry Corbett criticizes lectures for siphoning off money from the church and "popularizing." He posited that if the king would abolish "that ratsbane of lecturing" which had "intoxicated many thousands of this kingdom" then the church would be uniform and orthodox.¹⁰⁴ Not surprisingly, Corbett glossed the king's instructions regarding the Fall-Winter 1636 fast to put down lectures. Writing to Wren on November 21, 1636, he justified putting down Mr. Cock's lecture at Norwich as part of interdicting all preaching on the fast day in accord with the king's proclamation. He asked for Wren's support for putting down the lecture because of an ensuing controversy: "For not only Mr. Cock, but the parishioners and the other lecturian generation murmur much thereat." In arguments to Corbett, parishioners asked why Sunday sermons were permitted but not others, and noted that the proclamation had not specifically mentioned interdicting lectures. Corbett had replied that the proclamation interdicted all sermons and admitted only prayers in infected towns

¹⁰² Prynne, *Canterburies Doome*, p. 374-75.

¹⁰³ Tanner MS 68 (1), fol. 26r, 27r, 33r, 54r, 158r, 160r.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 2r.

and cities on the fast day. Apparently, the town outmaneuvered Corbett and forced Wren to overrule him as on November 27, he wrote Wren that he would give permission to preaching at Norwich on the fast day, and to Cock's lecture.¹⁰⁵ One does wonder if Wren placed conditions of conformity on the lecture like those at Bury. Other bishops had more success, as in 1637, the Bishop of Worcester reported that during the "heavy visitation" of Worcester he had caused lectures in that town to cease.¹⁰⁶

Burton and Prynne also criticized the effectiveness of the "gelded" 1636 fast. Burton stated: "Sure we are, that God hath given us sad signs of the little pleasure He takes by such a fast." While the number of dead was decreasing each week before the fast, there was then "a sudden terrible increase" in its first week over any previous week's total. By contrast, the prayers and preaching of the last "great fast" caused a worse plague to be "suddenly and miraculously removed." Burton claimed this success occurred with the continuance of preaching during the heat of the summer (i.e. when the plague spread most, whereas in 1636 the fast was in the winter). So, "that great and extraordinary increase" the first week of the fast, together with terrible storms and fearful weather since the beginning of it was "God testifying . . . that He abhors such a fast, as of which His very judgments speak, *Call you this a fast?*" That is, "the angry countenance of heaven ever since pouring God's wrath upon this your hypocritical mockfast." Prynne concurred that orders for general fasts in the last two plagues called for two sermons per fast day forenoon and afternoon including in infected parishes and in the summer season. And

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., fol. 3v.

¹⁰⁶ Laud, *Works*, volume 5, part 2, p. 354.

that these events were “a clear evidence that God is much offended with these purgations, and the restraint of preaching on the fast day.”¹⁰⁷

Heylyn and Dow retorted that no man knew “God’s most secret counsels,” His judgments were “unsearchable.” Burton had acted with “impious presumption,” and “un-Christianly” and “shamelessly” to claim restraint of preaching was the cause of the increase of plague. In his St. Paul’s sermon, John Squire called Prynne a “railing news-monger” and his abettors “over-uncharitable” for claiming that the plague increased due to the fast. That claim was “the most shameless, schismatical, seditious libel.” Prynne was a “false prophet” with a “lying spirit” in his mouth to say the plague would not abate until sermons were joined to prayers and fasting. To find the true cause, Heylyn referred Burton to the second homily on obedience, which stated that nothing drew plagues from God more than “murmuring and rebellion against God’s anointed.” Dow concurred and added that Burton and puritans were guilty of “murmurings and seditious railings against governors and government.” Likewise, Squire saw the likely cause as the “seditious railing of that factious libeler” (Prynne and other puritans) against governors and government. Heylyn, Dow, and Squire agreed that scripture had examples of judgments for disobedience to authority, but none “for want of a sermon at a public fast.” Dow and Squire claimed that the fast was successful, that God heard their prayers and had delivered them. Despite the lack of sermons, the plague decreased weekly all the time of the fast. The increase was mainly due to the week before the fast began. Squire went on that this success was not surprising given the excellence of the fast. All the people had met in their particular assemblies with “most admirably devout prayers,” and had been “thronging to kneel on the pavement, at our public prayers, and most piously penned

¹⁰⁷ Burton, *For God*, p. 49-50, 143-44, 147-48. Prynne, *Newes*, Sig. A2r, A3r.

devotions.” The reading of the homily in the fast book was a sermon, and the “most excellent” one he knew on the subject. This sermon was satisfying for all but those who were “more curious, than conscionable hearers.”¹⁰⁸

Burton and Prynne demonstrate a shift in puritan perception of the church hierarchy, and a redirection of narratives common to fast days to define the situation. Burton argued the end of a “true fast” was reformation, but prelates did not purpose to reform “their violent oppressions, and outrageous tyrannizing over God’s ministers and people, to the utter overthrow of religion; and setting up of idolatry and superstition in the worship of God.” This fast being “a mere mock fast” would only bring more judgments. Prelates “under pretense of a fast (as Jezebel did to devour Naboth’s vineyard) would devour Christ’s vineyard, while they suppress the preaching of the Word.” Prynne blamed prelates “who even now in the very midst of God’s judgments, proceed on still in your malicious, violent, implacable hatred, enmities and persecutions against God’s faithful ministers, saints, and the very power of holiness.” Bastwick saw the prelates in league with Antichrist. They were “the tail of the beast” which in Revelation 12 swept stars from heaven, the stars being ministers, the lights to the world.¹⁰⁹

Most significantly, Prynne adapted the biblical narrative of Isaiah 58 which described the Lord’s true fast to call for freedom for those bishops derided as “precisians” and “puritans.” Prynne wanted the bishops to call a fast due to the pestilence and “set free” himself, Bastwick, Leighton, and others in prison in accord with Isaiah 58. Again citing Isaiah 58:4-14 he warned prelates:

¹⁰⁸ Heylyn, *Brief and Moderate*, p. 56. Dow, *Innovations*, p. 3, 145-46. Squire, *Thanksgiving*, p. 20-8. See also O.W. [Obadiah Whitbie], *Londons Returne, After the Decrease of the Sickness* (London, 1637), especially pp. 2, 13-16, 27 (STC 25371).

¹⁰⁹ Burton, *For God*, p. 143, 148-49. Prynne, *Unbishopsing*, p. 29-30. Bastwick, *Letany*, p. 13-14 (handwritten, p. 113-14).

“And that your fast may be acceptable, beware that it be not *a fast for strife and debate, to smite with the fist of wickedness, or to make your voice to be heard on high, beware least it be only a hanging down of your heads, like a bulrush and afflicting of your souls only for a day. But let it be that true fast, which God hath chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to let the oppressed go free, to undo the heavy burdens* (which you have lately laid on ministers and people) *and to break of every yoake,* (wherewith you like Lordly Barons have clogged the consciences (yea and bodies) of God’s servants, and brought them into a miserable bondage and captivity under you, as if they were your vassals, not brethren:) *to break your bread to the hungry, to bring the poor that are cast out,* (yea the poor ministers and Christians you have most unChristianly cast out of their livings, houses, and God’s house itself, thrown into your nasty prisons, where they must still be detained, when others are set free) *to your houses,* (yea to their own houses, livings, and God’s house again,) *to clothe the naked, to draw out your soul to the hungry, to satisfy the afflicted soul; to turn away your feet from the sabbath from doing your pleasure on God’s holy day; to call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honorable, to honor God alone therein, not doing your own ways, not finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words.”*

He argued that if they did so they would be spared, but if not, God would judge the nation and the bishops in particular.¹¹⁰

There is little wonder Burton claimed that all the king’s “loyal and faithful subjects” believed there was “some dangerous plot now in agitation by these innovators, to undermine and overthrow both our religion and good laws.” These “innovations” created fear of “an universal alteration of religion” as they tended “to reduce us to that religion of Rome.”¹¹¹ Prynne claimed to have discovered the efforts of “some domineering Lordly Prelates” to undermine “the established doctrine and discipline of our Church” and extirpate all “orthodox” preachers and preaching, to bring in “popery, superstition, and idolatry.” The fast book alterations showed “a resolved professed conspiracy of these Romish Prelates, even now again utterly to drown us in popish superstition and idolatry.” Prelates acted “so we may walk on in Romish, hellish darkness, serving and honoring the Pope and Devil instead of God, and live in all disorder without truth or verity.” Such “Romish innovations” led to a general fear of “a sudden alteration of our religion.” John Bastwick also saw “devilish plots” of prelates to

¹¹⁰ Prynne, *Unbishopsing*, p. 159-60, 32-34.

¹¹¹ Burton, *Apology*, first pagination, p. 5. Burton, *For God*, Sig. A2r, p. 147.

advance popery. Unlike Burton and Prynne, Theophilus claimed none of the “innovations” alone proved that prelates intended “to bring in popery” but taken as a whole they did. As Augustine said: “Small drops make floods [and] through small rifts the water soaketh in, filleth the deck, and sinketh the ship.”¹¹²

The language that Prynne adopted to refer to bishops shows the extent of the unraveling of the accommodation Calvinist conformists had worked so long and hard to achieve: “Luciferian Lord Bishops,” “archagents for the Devil and Pope of Rome,” “master underminers of our religion,” “archtraitors” to our religion, “true-bred sons to Roman Antichrist,” “persecutors,” “Antichristian prelates,” and “God’s sworn and most professed open enemies.”¹¹³

These were “persecuting prelates” who suspended and silenced preachers “for no offence either in life or doctrine, for no violation of any ceremonies by law established, but merely for not subscribing to their late popish innovations, illegal injunctions and commands, warranted by no law of God or man.” While conformity was “pretended” the true cause was their “desperate hatred” of preaching, preachers, and the progress of religion. Among the worst was Bishop Wren who “persecuted” many ministers in Norwich diocese for not yielding to “popish innovation,” and “his strange novel magisterial innovations and late visitation articles.” Wren suspended and silenced preachers when most needed in fast. He even did so with Mr. Scot of Ipswich who was “a reverend ancient conformable minister.” Prynne noted:

“many ministers and people there having left the kingdom, and thousands more being ready to depart the land, there being never such a persecution and havoc made among

¹¹² Prynne, *Newes*, title page, Sig. A1v, A2v, A3r. Prynne, *Looking-glasse*, p. 15. Bastwick, *Answer*, p. 19 (handwritten, p. 146). Theophilus, *Divine*, p. 29, 31, 38-9.

¹¹³ Prynne, *Newes*, Sig. A1v, A2r, A3r-A3v. Prynne, *Unbishopsing*, p. 137-38, 159, 162-63.

God's ministers since Q[ueen] Mary's days, as a proud insolent prelate hath there lately made, against all laws of God and man, to the astonishment of the whole realm."¹¹⁴

Further, the bishops:

“persecute those who profess and maintain the established doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, which themselves pretend to defend and strive for; those who are members, yea pillars, of our own orthodox Church and neither separate from it in point of doctrine nor discipline, being likewise altogether spotless, innocent, undefiled in their lives, even because they preach, and defend God's truth, and the doctrines, the Articles of the Church of England against papists, Arminians, and superstitious Romanizing Novellers.”¹¹⁵

All these innovations, as well as the “persecution” of “God's ministers and people” were bringing divine judgment. If the king executed judgment on the prelates for their “intolerable tyranny,” then “this fast [shall] be pleasing to the Lord.” If not, then the plague would increase.¹¹⁶

Anti-Calvinists as well drew back. Because differing understandings of the second service underpinned fasts, they made them unacceptable respectively to Calvinists and Anti-Calvinists. Pocklington and Heylyn saw their views as a boundary line between “true children of the church,” and “heretics,” “schismatics,” “sacrilegious and factious persons,” and the “impious” and “irreligious.” Those with views like Williams were “fanciful and popular men” and “new fangled people.” In particular, they endlessly labeled Williams' views as “puritan,” and claimed he was confederate with them. They claimed he was like Burton, Bastwick, Prynne, and a slew of other radicals. Most cutting, they claimed John Cotton, the onetime minister at Boston, Lincolnshire, likely was the author of Williams' book.¹¹⁷ As his diocesan, Williams had had cordial relations with Cotton, who embarrassingly now had departed to New England.

¹¹⁴ Prynne, *Newes*, Sig. A3r-A4r. Prynne, *Unbishopsing*, p. 140.

¹¹⁵ Prynne, *Unbishopsing*, p. 145-46.

¹¹⁶ Prynne, *Newes*, Sig. A2v-A4r.

¹¹⁷ Helyn, *Coale*, p. 3, 20-1, 41-3, 58. Heylyn, *Antidotum*, Sig. A6r-B4r, p. 3-6, 13, 16-17, 21, 27, 35-6, 41, 74, 78, 86, 98-9, 173-75, 200, 275, 277-79, 318-20, 322-23, 330-31, 335-40. John Pocklington, *Altare*

Heylyn also charged Williams with that other characteristic of puritans, popular sedition. Heylyn argued one could not serve two masters. One could not both serve the Lord and please the people. Heylyn praised how the king and Laud, more than any before them, were committed to a higher degree of uniformity and conformity to the “ancient orders” appointed in the BCP, including gestures which had been prescribed but little practiced. But Williams’ wrote and spread abroad his letter to the vicar of Grantham “to discountenance that uniformity of public order to which the piety of these times is so well inclined” and “to distract the people, and hinder that good work which is now in hand.” Williams’ other “factious and schismatical pamphlets” did the same. He was trying to frighten and inflame the people, and scatter “doubts and jealousies” among them by casting false scandals and slanders on church and state. Williams railed about “the alteration of religion, here by law established,” the bringing in of “some popish and prohibited sacrifice,” and great danger to religion from “the adversaries of the Gospel.” Among other specifics, Heylyn cited Williams’ quarrel at the distribution of service into a first and second service, and likening it to the two mass of old. Williams pressed this lie so he would be admired and honored as “a zealous minister, and a stout patriot for the public,” “a champion for men’s Christian liberty,” and “the grand patron and defender of men’s Christian liberty.” He thereby would gain “the love and favor of the multitude,” “the favor of the people.” Williams’ intended his arguments “to please the people.” He used “popular argument” so he would be followed in a “popular way.” He sought “profit, applause, or popular dependencies.” Williams was among the “pleasers of the people’s humors.” More specifically, he sought to gain the favor of “the brethren” or “the

Christianum (London, 1637), “To the Christian Reader,” p. 35, 52-3, 69, 92, 106, 116, 153-54, 156-57 (STC 20075). John Pocklington, *Altare Christianum*, second edition (London, 1637), Sig. A2r, p. 51, 69, 89, 141, 176, 183, 185-86 (STC 20076).

brethren of the dispersion” who were “all for novelties.” If not for Williams and his “pleasing popularity” peace and universal conformity would exist among the people.¹¹⁸

Likewise, Pocklington complained of how Williams “scoffeth and traduceth the piety of the times at every turn so irreligiously, and profanely.” He tagged Williams for trying “to humor fanciful people.” Williams was another in a long line of “seducers.” He was a “subtle innovator” who by “popular devices,” “feigned words,” and “deceitful speeches” sought “to beguile simple, and well meaning souls, and to draw much people after him.” Pocklington saw a “plot” of Williams and “his brethren” to overthrow church and monarchy with popular rule.¹¹⁹

Indeed, Pocklington and Heylyn thought any opposition to Caroline-Laudian policies inexcusable. Heylyn claimed merely to be defending “the doctrine and continual usage both of the primitive church of Christ, in the world abroad, and the reformed church of Christ in this your Majesty’s realm of England.” Pocklington claimed the king and other governors of the Church of England were only trying “to restore” the table to the “ancient and true place it had in the primitive church,” and to conform the church to “the beauty and awful majesty that the houses of God were in in the primitive church.” The changes were so parish churches agreed with cathedrals and royal chapels in England. The altar policy was just to keep the table and consecrated places from “profanation,” and ensure “reverence,” “decency,” “honor,” “comeliness,” and “respect.” Moreover, they claimed that without an “altar” there was no “sacrifice” and no

¹¹⁸ Heylyn, *Coale*, p. 4, 31, 39-40, 42-3, 58. Heylyn, *Antidotum*, Sig. A2v-A3v, A6r-B1r, B2v, B3v, p. 51, 61, 83-7, 200, 264, 317, 332-39.

¹¹⁹ Pocklington, *Altare*, 2nd ed., p. 92. Pocklington, *Altare*, 1st ed., p. 83, 139, 141-44, 147-54, 156, 159-60.

“priesthood.” If only “spiritual sacrifices” existed, there was no need for “outward worship” or “material churches.”¹²⁰

Likewise, Williams drew boundary lines. On the one hand he assimilated Anti-Calvinists to Roman Catholicism as we saw in his rejection of their terminology. Also, he argued Heylyn took the same positions as Jesuits and “papists.” These were contrary to “Protestant” ones and would establish “popedome.” Further, he referred to Heylyn as “Dr. Coal, a judicious divine of Q. Mary’s days.”¹²¹ Finally, in a rare public statement of Calvinist conformist opposition to official policy, Williams claimed to see a veritable plot. Laudians were like the English Catholic exile Thomas Harding who, writing against Bishop Jewel, supposedly:

“confest *he never meant the people should understand any more of what was said at the altar, then what they could guess at by dumb shews and outward ceremonies . . . Why then do S. James, and S. Mark, in their several liturgies, give the people so large a part in all the prayers and litanies poured out at the very Altar? But these new reformers, though they prepare and lay grounds for the same, dare not (for fear of so many laws and canons) apparently profess this Eleusinian doctrine. They are as yet busied in taking in the outworks, and that being done, they may in time have a bout with the fort itself.*”¹²²

¹²⁰ Heylyn, *Antidotum*, Sig. A3v and passim. Pocklington, *Altare*, p. 146 and passim. Of course, they were also downplaying sweeping changes in meaning to give themselves political cover.

¹²¹ Williams, *Holy Table*, title and passim; p. 14, 118-22, 126, 150-51, 154-55, 165-67, 193, 197, 199, 201, 204. Almost certainly, Williams was likening Heylyn to Dr. Henry Cole (c.1500-c.1580), one of the Catholic divines who took part in the 1554 disputations about the sacrament at Oxford with the soon to be Protestant martyrs Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer. Cole also preached a sermon condemning Cranmer at his burning. See: John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* (London, 1583), p. 1428-63, 1799-1802, 1885-1887, 1960-1961, 1970, 2044 (STC 11225). Cole later engaged in a famous debate with John Jewel which in part dealt with doctrine relevant to the altar controversy. See: John Jewel, *The true copies of the letters between the reverend father in God Iohn Bisshop of Sarum and D. Cole* (London, 1560)(STC 14612). Heylyn replied that Williams “factiously” referred to Queen Mary’s days to inflame the people with fear “as if the light in which we live, proceeded not from the dear sunshine of the Gospel, but the fierce fire of persecution.” (Heylyn, *Antidotum*, Sig. A6v).

¹²² Williams, *Holy Table*, p. 204. Heylyn made much of what he termed Williams’ “schismatical, factious, and seditious” remark (especially as it surely offended the king). He cited it in brief in his dedication to the king, in full twice in his preface to the clergy of Lincolnshire, and in full once and in brief two more times more in the text. (Heylyn, *Antidotum*, Sig. A3v, A7v-B1r, p. 51, 264, 339). Also, Williams’ meaning is very similar to Prynne’s rebuke of Anti-Calvinists including Heylyn: “We know, that when a city is beleaguered, whiles the sconces and outworks are safe and defended, the city is in no danger of surprisall: But if the enemies once get them, all is in danger to be lost: Our Lord’s-Tables, ministers, Lord’s Supper, yea the very use and defense of these titles, as well as the things, are the bulwarks and outworks of our religion, as long as we maintained them, there was no fear of mass or open popery; But since the altars and the name of altars invaded and thrust out our Lord’s-Tables and their names, priests our ministers and the title ministers, and those other massing ceremonies prevailed, the outworks of our religion are quite lost

Indeed, Williams repeatedly warned that such policies would scandalize the people, and even “quiet,” “peaceable,” and “conformable” subjects.¹²³

On the other hand, he tarred Laudians (including thinly veiled references to Bishop Wren) as puritans. Like puritans, Laudians were innovators altering the long settled ecclesiastical laws of the Church of England. He derided moving tables and turning them altar-wise as a “new alteration.” He derided their “new altars,” “new fashions,” “new conceit,” and “new house.” They were “contentious persons and quarrelers, whom no order, no reason, no reformation can please.” Dissatisfied with the religious settlement, they authorized their “alteration” on the basis of their “private” judgment, “humor,” “fancy,” “conceits,” “eccentrics,” “whims,” and “singularity.” The orders of the church were not to depend on the preferences of one or two men; otherwise they would have to change as often as some were offended. Subjects were bound to follow those in authority not run before them. If every minister did as he pleased, the uniformity and order of the Church of England would be subverted. The king’s 1633 declaration, he argued, had not given ordinaries license to follow their personal preferences. They still had to place the table in accord with the established laws and canons.¹²⁴

and taken, with many of the in-works too; by our popish adversaries, and all is in great danger of speedy surprisall; Is it not then high time for us to awake and bestir ourselves; To beat out these secret traitors, which demolish these out-fortifications, or betray them to our Romish adversaries and to make good and regain these sconces (if it be possible) without which all will be hazarded, if not quite lost, and that in a little space for ought we know?” (Prynne, *Quench Coale*, first pagination, p. 72)

¹²³ Williams, *Holy Table*, p. 7-8.

¹²⁴ Williams, *Holy Table*, p. 4-6, 8, 9, 21, 100, 106, 110, 126-27, 200, 211; 4-5, 59-86, 98, 112, 136, 142, 188, 192, 201, 208, 218, 224. For Williams’ argument that Laudians must follow canons, see *ibid.*, p. 22-35, 41, 58-61, 64-71, 74, 83, 98, 205. For Heylyn’s recognition of the attack on Wren, see: Heylyn, *Antidotum*, Sig. B2r-v, p. 77-8, 99.

Williams responded to Heylyn's allusions to Caroline-Laudian policies by asking what proclamations, rubrics, canons, injunctions, articles authorized "that good work now in hand, and the special inclination of these times to a peculiar kind of piety, differing from the piety of former times." This piety and "secret" good work he claimed were only so many "dreams" and "miracles," and so much "fancy" and "imagination." In another startling attack on Laudians he went on:

"I should therefore reasonably presume, that this good work in hand, is but the second part of Sancta Clara, and a frothy speculation of some few, who by tossing the ball of commendations, the one to the other, do stile themselves (by a kind of canting) judicious divines: Whereas they be (generally) as you may observe by this poor pamphleteer, doctissimorum hominum indoctissimum genus (as Erasmus spake of another the like) men learned only in unlearned liturgies; beyond that, of no judgment and less divinity. For who but one whose ruff (as Sir Edward Coke was wont to say) is yellow, and his head shallow, would propound these wild conceits of an imaginary piety of the times, and a platonical idea of a good work in hand, for a model to reform such a well composed church as the Church of England?"¹²⁵

The reference to Sancta Clara was virtually a charge of a "popish plot." Here we also have the line against Anti-Calvinists that John Owen so liked. Finally, we have a strong affirmation of the Elizabethan-Jacobean status quo as exemplary for a reformed church. Indeed, puritans and Commons MPs in the Long Parliament thought Sancta Clara proof of a "plot of reconciliation."¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Williams, *Holy Table*, p. 60, 63-4, 82-6, 112, 188, 192, 197, 224, 228. Significantly, while Heylyn cited this remark in his reply, he did not disavow Sancta Clara. (Heylyn, *Antidotum*, p. 84)

¹²⁶ According to Prynne, Burton, and other puritans, Laud's "great favorite," Dr. Augustine Lindsell, was "a great companion and friend of Sancta Clara." Lindsell acquainted Laud with Sancta Clara and the two met 4-6 times, supposedly while the book was being written. Laud it was claimed even perused the book before it went to press. Puritans believed the book had been printed 2-3 times in London at Laud's direction or at least with his permission. The book was dedicated to the king and supposedly given to him by "a great prelate." Laud too was given a copy which he kept in his study. Laud was thus part of the "plot" to corrupt the articles of religion by putting "a Roman gloss" on them or giving them "that Romish contradictory sense" so as "to reconcile us speedily to Rome, and not Rome to us." Secretary Windebank, who knew Sancta Clara well, was "a great patriot" of his book. Further evidence of how far the king and Laud countenanced the book was that Windebank wrote his son to convey to "the Roman party" at Paris that the king would be greatly offended at any Jesuit prosecution of Sancta Clara for the book. Gregorio Panzani, the papal emissary sent to London in 1634, supposedly treated with Archbishop Laud via Sancta Clara to plan "a total alteration of religion" and "reconciliation." Sancta Clara's book was "much applauded" by the archbishop's "agents" and "creatures," as well as "our innovators." This fact was not surprising given that Sancta Clara had relied so much on "our novel authors," "our popish doctors," and

The Anti-Calvinist changes alienated Prynne, and he now claimed to have discovered “their desperate practices, aims, plots, and intentions to suppress and root out our sincere religion, and usher in popery by degrees.” There was great fear among “loyal subjects” of “an approaching alteration, and total apostasy unto the See of Rome.”¹²⁷ Prynne lamented how in the past “our famous orthodox writers” like Jewel, Rainolds, Whitaker, Fulke, Willet and Perkins had triumphed over “Rome’s greatest Goliaths.” Now they had Anti-Calvinists including Montague, White, Pocklington, Heylyn, and others were “siding with the papists, maintaining their Antichristian errors, doctrines, ceremonies and abuses before all the world, without blush or shame.” These were just “erroneous superstitious popish writers” overtaken with their “factious strange superstitious humor.”¹²⁸

Whereas Heylyn’s interpretations of the law and the king’s declarations legitimized Laudian efforts to bring in change where they were in authority (and pressured Calvinist conformists to do the same), Prynne saw this gradual method (as we

“our most eminent moderate divines.” Also, Theophilus claimed “that the prelates thought the book was to the advantage of our Church, because a popish author of it alloweth us the name of a Church, and approveth the doctrine of our English divines (out of whose writings (notwithstanding) he citeth nothing but popish doctrine).” Indeed, in answer to the Commons articles of impeachment against him, Laud argued “it was disliked by many of the papists, because it gave much advantage to our church and religion.” In reality Burton claimed, the book was intended “to cast off the old man, that is, the Calvinistical, to reduce our church to mother Rome again.” The plan was to marginalize “Calvinists and puritans” and “some few puritan (tantum non in episcopatu) bishops that are for doctrine orthodox,” so “lukewarm neuters, and moderate men” and “peaceable and indifferent men as Ely, Chichester and all other well affected to Rome, and above all, the arch-prelates” could reconcile England to Rome. He opined that until lately all English divines and prelates had kept “an immortal war, and which can never admit of a truce, against the pope and all his Antichristian heresies packed up in that diabolical Council of Trent.” See: Theophilus, *Divine*, p. 2-3, 25. Burton, *For God*, p. 117-22, 154n. Henry Burton, *A replie to a relation, of the conference between William Laude and Mr. Fisher the Jesuite* ([Amsterdam], [1640]), p. 73, 84, 253, 309 (mis-numbered 269) (STC 4154). Prynne, Quench-Coale, first pagination, p. 38; second pagination, p. 218. Prynne, *Canterburies Doome*, p. 39, 209, 360, 393, 421, 423-31, 442, 532, 547-48, 550, 555, 557, 559-62. William Prynne, *Hidden Workes of Darkenes* (London, 1645), p. 145 (Wing P3973). William Prynne, *The Popish Royall Favourite* (London, 1643), p. 66 (Wing P4039A). *The English Pope* (London, 1643), p. 17-19 (Wing E3109).

¹²⁷ Prynne, *Quench Coale*, first pagination, p. 4, 67, 36.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, first pagination, p. 62-7; second pagination, p. 332, 193, 43.

saw with the vicar of Grantham) which bypassed parliament and convocation as further proof of a plot. Bishops brought in “Romish innovations” at first “secretly in corners,” “by degrees,” “by little and little,” and “countenancing them under hand.” But while they began “more covertly underhand by way of persuasion and entreaty,” they ended using visitation articles to impose them through the whole diocese, and crushing opponents in the High Commission and elsewhere. In all these “innovations, popish practices, and ceremonies,” bishops were “the chief plotters and fomenters of them.”¹²⁹ Of course, Protestants thought the church had become corrupted by Anti-Christ the same gradual way. Thus Prynne affirmed that “the grandest designs of our popish adversaries” could not proceed without success in seemingly “smaller matters.”¹³⁰

Prynne had his own lexicon for Anti-Calvinists. He described them as “disloyal novellers,” “our popish novellers,” “our Romanizing novellers,” and “ignorant shallow-pated novellers.”¹³¹ They were “innovating Romish spirits,” “our popish innovators,” “our superstitious innovators,” “our audacious innovators,” and “undutiful, perfidious innovators.”¹³² They were “treacherous rebellious sons,” “open powder-traitors,” “secret traitors,” “rebellious sons of Belial,” and “arch-traitors.”¹³³ They had “Antichristian, treacherous, disloyal designs,” or “Antichristian Romish designs.”¹³⁴ While he condemned bishops, Prynne respected godly bishops and clearly could live under their kind. Of the transformation of good to bad under Laud, he opined: “Our bishops for the

¹²⁹ Ibid., first pagination, p. 3-4, 8, 67-9; second pagination, p. 69-70, 189, 193, 204, 212, 315.

¹³⁰ Ibid., first pagination, p. 72.

¹³¹ Ibid., first pagination, p. 28; second pagination, p. 20, 268, 315; passim. See also: Burton, *For God*, p. 96, 99-100.

¹³² Prynne, *Quench Coale*, first pagination, p. 1, 7, 66; second pagination, p. 15, 18, 20, 26, 36, 43, 63, 147, 166, 205, 349.

¹³³ Ibid., first pagination, p. 4, 13-14, 16-18, 66, 72; second pagination, p. 212, 278, 315, 349.

¹³⁴ Ibid., first pagination, p. 4, 35, 66; second pagination, p. 193, 206-7, 320.

most part into bite-sheeps.” They had become “swaging domineering prelates,” “lordly domineering prelates,” and “Antichristian tyrants.”¹³⁵

In summary, puritans were coming to identify themselves more and more against the church hierarchy rather than with it. Puritans found themselves defending aspects of fasts they never had to under Calvinist archbishops. For example, while Calvinist conformists and puritans debated the amount of preaching, Anti-Calvinist conformists and puritans debated whether there needed to be preaching at all in fasts. Anti-Catholicism and support for the reformed churches on the continent, including Princess Elizabeth and Frederick, were bedrock issues for Calvinists. Caroline-Laudian alterations to fasts amounted to a sea change from those of the Jacobean and Elizabethan church. Thus we saw how a Calvinist bishop like John Williams could side with puritans against Laudians over the altar issue. Moreover, by pressing reforms contrary to the mainstream in the church and popular opinion, Laudians made an opening for puritans to steal the political center. This reality helps to explain why puritans as a minority could win broad political support by positioning themselves as the best defenders of English Protestantism.

¹³⁵ Ibid., first pagination, p. 66; second pagination, p. 320, 347-48.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MARGINALIZATION OF THE MIDDLE: PURITANS AND “PURITAN BISHOPS” UNDER SEIGE 1625-1640

As we saw in earlier chapters, hawkish conformists from the time of Elizabeth had attacked puritan fasts and thereby alienated puritans. Yet, Calvinist conformists suspected puritans on narrow grounds, had far more shared ground with them, and often offered authorized fasts acceptable to them. Further, many other authorities in church and state at that time had not viewed them as overly worrisome, and some were sympathetic. This balance changed as Charles filled the upper ranks of church and state with Anti-Calvinists and anti-puritan zealots.¹

¹ Early Stuart visitations articles are misleading regarding episcopal attitudes towards fasts. The articles of some permissive Calvinists were as diligent as some strict Anti-Calvinists, and the articles of some strict Anti-Calvinists were as weak as some permissive Calvinists. All the articles below asked if on Sundays the minister declared the fasts appointed in the Book of Common Prayer for the following week. Variation occurred in inquiries about unlawful fasts. Archbishop Bancroft's articles (1605) asked whether the minister on his own authority appointed any 'public' or 'private' fasts, prophecies, or exercises, or tried to cast out devils by fasting and prayer. James Montagu's articles for Bath and Wells (1609) were derived from Bancroft's but omitted the questions about unauthorized fasts. The articles of Richard Vaughan for London (1605) were similar to Bancroft's on this point, as were those derived from his by his successors Thomas Ravis (1607) and John King (1612), as well as Gervase Babington for Worcester (1607) and Robert Abbot for Salisbury (1616). William Chaderton's articles for Lincoln (1607) were the same as Bancroft's on this point but asked if the minister was present at unauthorized public fasts, and did not ask about 'private' fasts. Articles derived from Chaderton's retained this article including George Montaigne's for Lincoln (1618), John William's for Lincoln (1622), Lancelot Andrews's for Ely (1610), Richard Neile's for York (1633, 1636). Archbishop George Abbot's articles for Gloucester (1612) were similar to Bancroft's regarding fasts. Articles derived from Abbot's retained this article, including William Laud's for St. David's (1622), articles Laud drew up for Lincoln (1634), Thomas Morton's for Coventry and Lichfield (1620) and Durham (1637). John Overall's articles for Norwich (1619) made no mention of unauthorized fasts. Articles derived from his retained this omission, including Francis White's for Carlisle (1627) and for Norwich (1629), Samuel Harsnett's for Norwich (1627), John Howson's for Durham (1629), and John Davenant's for Salisbury (1622, 1628, and 1635). Lancelot Andrewes's articles for Winchester (1619) were similar to Chaderton's. Laud's articles for St. David's (1622), for London (1628), and for Canterbury Province (1635) were similar to Bancroft's. See: Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church*, volume 1 (Church of England Record Society, Suffolk, 1994), p. 9-10, 18-19, 29-30, 34, 38, 47, 74-5, 101, 103, 180-81; William Laud, *The Works of . . . William Laud* (Oxford, 1847-60), volume 5, part 2, p. 383, 385, 402-3, 424, 426.

In a preview of things to come in the Caroline Church, on May 11, 1624 Robert Jenison, lecturer at All Saints in Newcastle, wrote to his old Cambridge tutor Samuel Ward. He told how since the death of vicar Powers, Richard Neile (1562-1640), Bishop of Durham, had picked quarrels with him “shrewdly” to discourage the godly from promoting a puritan (and surely himself) to the now vacant vicarage. Neile was a zealous attacker of nonconformists, and at this time the most important Anti-Calvinist patron in the episcopate. Specifically, Jenison said Neile had chided him for some “old matters.” One was:

“for moving our magistrates for a fast, this time twelve months when besides the dearth, so many of good note in one week died, and were sick. This he said was to give his authority to our magistrates. Now I protest my motion was they would procure it either of the ordinary or of his Majesty.”²

Many Calvinist bishops would have been satisfied with this explanation and not very upset that town magistrates approved a fast without their sanction as long as it was “orderly.” Moreover, Jenison was the sort of moderate puritan with whom Calvinist bishops allied, but Neile, like Montague, feared most. Thus, in another letter to Ward on August 25, 1624, Jenison told how he had had to appear by summons at the visitation, but was dismissed after a speech. He claimed there was no substance to charges against him as Neile “knows of old, and still, that I am every way conformable.”³ Jenison’s claim

² Oxford University, Bodleian, Tanner 73 (181), fol. 437. William Joseph Sheils, “Jenison, Robert (bap. 1583, d. 1652),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Likely due to Neile’s patronage, in November, 1623 his chaplain Thomas Jackson gained the important vicarage of St. Nicholas’s Newcastle over Jenison whose influential local family was supporting him. See: A.J. Hegarty, “Jackson, Thomas (bap. 1578, d. 1640),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

³ Tanner 73 (195), fol. 475. Crucially, definitions of “puritans” and “conformity” were changing in ways that undermined the accommodation of moderate puritans like Jenison. Thus, Jenison complained to Samuel Ward August 21, 1620 that “a puritan in worthy Doct. Cradocks interpretation is of large extent, and includes all such, as he is not, I mean all honest men and conscionable livers.” See: Oxford University, Bodleian, Tanner MS 290 (10), fol. 15. Thomas Edwards (1599-1647) distinguished between “old conformity” which he practiced, and the “new” under Laud which he did not. Old conformity consisted of things “established by law” such as the Book of Common Prayer, ordination by bishops, and episcopal government. New conformity consisted of “innovations” in government and worship “which came in of

was no lie or self-delusion. In a January, 1634 letter to the king about the province, Neile, then Archbishop of York, listed Jenison as conformable.⁴

While the chances of puritans being caught for fasts were not great, even the stealthy approach of gadding from sermon to sermon was not safe from determined conformists. In what must have taken extraordinary effort, or simple luck, Bishop of London George Montaigne (1569-1628) uncovered just such a fast. While not among the leaders of the Anti-Calvinists, Montaigne was in their camp in the 1620s and generally supported their policies.⁵ Writing to the Duke of Buckingham December 12, 1626, Montaigne noted that a “private fast” had been kept on St. Andrew’s Day (November 30) in the city. Specifically, Lord Warwick had desired Hugh Peter, a lecturer in London, to preach that day out of his own charge in Christ Church. Along with Warwick, another organizer was Sir Robert Harley who told Peters “that there were diverse that would take the opportunity of the many sermons preached that day to humble themselves to Almighty God in a holy fast.” Montaigne crowingly reported that his swift action against partakers in the fast “doth startle them all.” He had taken some participants (apparently the presiding ministers) into custody for “some undutiful and bold speeches” in their prayers concerning the king and queen. Under attack from the bishop and failing to

later days” such as Laudian altar practices and the Book of Sports. See: Thomas Edwards, *The First and Second Part of Gangraena*, third edition (London, 1646), first pagination, p. 65-6 (Wing E230); and Thomas Edwards, *Antapologia* (London, 1644), p. 15-16 (Wing E223). Not surprisingly, charges against Jenison in March 21, 1639 by the Commission for Causes Ecclesiastic in York Province included issues relating to reading “second service.” (PRO, SP 16/415/7) Jenison submitted c. August, 1639 in answer to the articles against him in High Commission. (Tanner MS 67 (49), fol. 123) Archbishop Neile wrote to Secretary Windebank September 6, telling how the king had accepted Jenison’s submission and allowed him to return to Newcastle upon conditions. One main condition was for him to read “second service” at the communion table in hood and surplice. Jenison refused and was suspended. (PRO, SP 16/428/35) Apparently, Jenison attempted further but unsatisfactory compromise. Writing to Secretary Windebank October 4, 1639, Neile related how he doubted Jenison’s profession of conformity. (PRO, SP 16/430/24) Jenison was deprived and in 1640 left England for Danzig. (Sheils, “Jenison”)

⁴ PRO, SP 16/259/78 fol. 167v.

⁵ Andrew Foster, “Mountain[Montaigne], George (1569-1628),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

satisfy him in personal meetings, Peter turned to his patron Warwick to intervene for him. Warwick met with Montaigne but reported that “that which I grieve is most carped at is that men kept a fast that day” (i.e. on a feast day). Warwick set up another meeting between Peter and Montaigne, and directed him to give “mild answers.”⁶ While Montaigne treated Peter with formal ‘charity’ by trying to reconcile him to obedience, with so little common ground a successful rapprochement was unlikely. Moreover, for puritans, Peter was one of many “good conformists” whom Laud punished.⁷

By 1637, the Laudian Christopher Dow could report about puritan fasts:

“Now because the diligence and care of the church and state, and the watchfulness of pursuivants, hath frightened them from their private assemblies, where they were wont, to enjoy themselves and their own way in this kind. They have used in the city of London, a new, and a quaint stratagem, whereby, without suspicion, they obtain their desires.”

While not entirely new, this approach, as we saw Dow detail in an earlier chapter, was to gad from one lecture or church service to another to fill the day with preaching and prayer while fasting voluntarily. Dow lamented the effectiveness of this evasion: “And so (without danger of the pursuivants, they observe a public fast, as much as these hard times will give them leave) after their own way and heart.”⁸ While we can doubt the effectiveness of authorities in stopping private fasts in homes and churches, Dow correctly portrays the increased vigilance. Also, while puritan creativity helped them to

⁶ PRO, SP 16/525/48. This document is reprinted in Raymond Stearns (ed.), “Letters and Documents By or Relating to Hugh Peter,” Essex Institute Historical Collections, volume LXXI, number 4, October, 1935), p. 309-10 and in the *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, first series, XII, p. 336-37.

Purportedly, Hugh Peter had said the following: “For the king he prayed God would commune with his heart in secret and reveal unto him those things which were necessary for the government of his kingdoms, and he prayed for the queen that God would remove from her, the idols of her father’s house, and that she would forsake the idolatry and superstition wherein she was and must needs perish, if she continue in the same.” (ibid.)

⁷ Theophilus, *Divine and Politike Observations* (Amsterdam, 1638), p. 59-60 (STC 15309).

⁸ Christopher Dow, *Innovations Unjustly Charged Upon the Present Church and State* (London, 1637), p. 208-9 (STC 7090).

evade authorities and have their fasts, they still felt intense pressure and feared prosecution.

Previously we saw that puritans frequently gave lame excuses to Calvinist conformists to explain wrongdoing in fasts. These conformists often reciprocated to this tacit acknowledgment of authority by giving minor punishments. This delicate balance though was breaking down under Charles as Laudians had little tolerance for these offenses, and made little distinction between moderate and radical puritans. Dr. Clement Corbett, chancellor of Norwich, wrote to Bishop Matthew Wren February 5, 1637 noting he supposed Wren would have convented Thomas Case (1598-1682) before the High Commission Court “for presuming to begin the fast before His Majesty’s proclamation was here.” When confronted about this “insolent act,” Case “excused that he heard it was at London and supposed it had been here likewise.” Nor was this dubious explanation the worst one. On February 17, 1637 Corbett again wrote Wren that Case had added to his former “audacious act” in that the godly from other areas were gadding to his fasts. When Corbett objected to Case about “the great confluence both from Norwich and other places tither,” Case answered “that accidentally they came.” To Case’s absurd explanation Corbett replied “that he might as well make me believe there was no heat in the sun.” Corbett promised to tell Wren of Case’s other “pranks and tricks” when he came to visit.⁹ While the gadding would have raised concerns, most Calvinist conformists would have viewed beginning the fast early as a minor offense hardly

⁹ Tanner MS 68 (1), fol. 5r-v.

meriting going to the High Commission. Indeed, Case had had the favor of the likes of Archbishop Tobie Matthew (d. 1628).¹⁰ Such bishops would have been far more lenient.

On such example is Bishop Hall. In 1662, Samuel Clarke related this invaluable episode in his life of Ignatius Jurdaine, the puritan mayor of Exeter:

“I have heard above thirty years ago, that some godly persons in Exeter were convented before the bishop’s court for keeping some private days of humiliation; whereupon Mr. Jurdaine went to the bishop (who was a godly man) to intercede for them. The bishop told him that such conventicles were forbidden by the law, the state being jealous lest the seeds of sedition or heresy might be sown in them. To whom Mr. Jurdaine replied: *My Lord, do you think that the Lord Jesus Christ, when he comes to Judgment, will say concerning these, and such like poor Christians: ‘Take them Devil, take them, because though they sought me by fasting and prayer, yet they did not observe every circumstance with so much prudence as they might have done.’* Whereupon the bishop dismissed them.”¹¹

So here we see how puritans esteemed such bishops as “godly.” For his part, Hall clearly accepted Jurdaine’s implicit vouching that nothing seditious or heretical was taking place. Therefore, Hall balanced what he thought a minor offense against his perception of the godly as an embattled minority in a sea of nominal Protestants, profane persons, and “papists.” Jurdaine’s comments hit their mark as Hall surely saw purportedly loyal and orthodox voluntary religion as conducive to order by attacking sin and Catholics, and procuring divine favor through prayer and repentance.

Hall could not have been more counter to the trend of the Caroline episcopate, and more a throwback to the Jacobean period. In the 1630s, he was not on the roster of Lenten preachers at court and rarely preached at court.¹² He claimed the Duke of Buckingham, who had thrown his lot in with Anti-Calvinists, opposed his promotion but was in France at the time so his letters arrived too late to prevent it. In retrospective

¹⁰ Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, *The Dictionary of National Biography* (London, 1917) [hereafter DNB], volume 3, p. 1173-1176.

¹¹ Samuel Clarke, *A Collection of the Lives of Ten Eminent Divines* (London, 1662), p. 485 (Wing C4506).

¹² Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, “Popularity, Prelacy and Puritanism in the 1630s: Joseph Hall Explains Himself,” *English Historical Review*, September 1996, cxi (443): 856-877.

autobiographical comments and a letter written in the early 1630s (intended to be leaked), Hall told how his churchmanship as bishop of Exeter (1627) had clashed with Laudians:

“I entered upon that place, not without much prejudice and suspicion on some hands. For some that sat at the stern of the church had me in great jealousy for too much favor of puritanism. I soon had intelligence who were set over me for espials. My ways were curiously observed and scanned.”

Specifically, informers and critics complained implicitly in pulpits and explicitly at court of his being “a favorer of puritans” and of “a prodigious growth of puritanism” in the diocese. Hall was three times on his knees to the king answering such charges. In his view, Hall merely encouraged lecturers and preachers who were “conscionably forward,” “painful,” “orthodox,” “peaceable,” “discreet,” “conformable,” and led strict lives. They had given “a cheerful subscription,” and had been commended “by grave and unquestionable testimonies.” He defined Laudian clergy, who decried such for “puritanism” and as “puritan and factious,” to be “envious good-fellows” or “jolly good-fellows.” They were negligent, careless, lazy, non-preaching, immoral, and profane. Likewise, Hall defined the laity who charged the godly with “puritanism” as “popishly and profanely affected.” They hated frequent preaching, catechizing, and “the success of the Gospel.” Similarly, Hall said his detractors were “the papist and the profane rabble.” Moreover, Hall said he was quite able “to distinguish between religion and faction.” The longstanding definition of “puritanism” had been “a refractory opposition to the government, rites, and customs of the church.” This view differed from Laudians who claimed “that the modern puritanism is more subtle then in former times; and that under the color of a full outward conformity, there may be nourished some unquiet and pestilent humors, which may closely work danger to the church’s peace.” Hall rejected this

definition as un-acted upon private thoughts presented no danger, and he had no “window into men’s hearts.”

Disregarding his critics, Hall told how his way brought peace and order to his diocese. He used “fair and gentle means,” “gentle persuasions,” and preached in a “mildly-vehement fashion” to win over “factious spirits” and beat down “contentious singularity.” He claimed that in time neither one “unconformable clergy man” nor one “suspected Leightonist of the laity” remained in the diocese. He affirmed “that this diocese was never so free from faction, and true puritanism, since that name was hatched in the world. How many (perhaps hundreds) could I produce that had formerly wont to boggle at the name of a bishop, out of a false prejudgment, which now profess honor to that sacred calling?” They went on “comfortably together” and he had “peace and comfort at home in the happy sense of that general unanimity and loving correspondence of my clergy.” Moreover, as “knowledge and love of the Gospel” had increased in his diocese, “faction” had decreased. Supposed excess of religion did not create disobedient busy bodies. The parts of the diocese that had “the least knowledge, care, and profession thereof” were the most resistant to giving financially to the government. By contrast, “the more populous and more knowing and religious parts” had more “true-hearted and open-handed subjects.”¹³

While self-serving, Hall’s statements had substance to them. As late as the 1670s, puritans remembered him as “good Bishop Hall, who kept the diocese in peace, and was himself a doctrinal puritan, and loved a learned and holy minister.” Likewise, the renowned non-conformist Richard Baxter fondly spoke of “good Bishop Hall.” John

¹³ Joseph Hall, *The Shaking of the Olive-Tree* (London, 1660), p. 41-3 (Wing H416). Hall’s letter is reprinted in full in Fincham and Lake, “Popularity,” p. 878-81.

Owen praised “the pious and elegant Bishop Hall” as “a man of excellent temper and moderation,” and as “that incomparable prelate.” Samuel Clarke called Hall “that worthy man of great renown.”¹⁴

Hall’s example was hardly unique. The Jacobean churchmanship of the Calvinist bishop John Williams was very similar and also came under attack from Laudians. Williams meshed well with the policies of James I as he was a Calvinist committed to preaching, was flexible, had a pragmatic approach to matters, and was willing to accommodate moderate puritans. Not surprisingly, he was one of James’ favorite bishops. In 1621, James preferred him to the bishopric of Lincoln and made him a privy councilor and Lord Keeper of the Great Seal (the first cleric to hold the post since 1558). In 1625, Williams gave James last rites and preached his funeral sermon. From 1624 though he had lost favor with the Duke of Buckingham who under Charles switched from backing Calvinists to Anti-Calvinists. Williams also quickly found himself out of favor with Charles. He lost the position of Lord Keeper. He lost the ceremonial functions of the deanery of Westminster to Laud who thereby took his place in the coronation of Charles. He was forbidden to sit in the 1626 parliament, and overcame serious court opposition to attend it in 1628. His court sermons in Lent 1629-32 were coolly received.¹⁵

¹⁴ cited in Fincham and Lake, “Popularity,” p. 877 (DWL, Quick MSS, RNC 38.35, p. 475, 481, 494, 500); Richard Baxter, *The English Nonconformity* (London, 1689), p. 215 (Wing B1259); John Owen, *Moderation a Vertue* (London, 1683), p. 77-8 (Wing O772); Samuel Clarke, *The Lives of Two and Twenty English Divines* (London, 1660), p. 33 (Wing C4540).

¹⁵ Brian Quintrell, “Williams, John (1582-1650),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. John Hackett, *Scrinia Reserata* ([London], 1693) passim but especially, part 1, first pagination, p. 9, 12, 15-17, 31, 86, 88-90, 95; part 2, second pagination, p. 32-3, 38-9, 42-4, 64-5, 68-82, 86-7, 99-114 (Wing H171). Laurine Purola, “Bishop John Williams and the Diocese of Lincoln, 1621-1641” (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1981), passim but especially p. 22, 27-31, 47-50, 53, 79-83, 135-40, 265-67, 269-70, 293, 303-4, 325-26. PRO, SP 16/364/44. Laud. *Works*, volume 6, part 2, p. 345-46, 348-52, 360-61; volume 7, p. 337.

Williams chaplain and biographer John Hacket delineated the on-going discourse about puritans in the church. Some “good fellows” termed Williams a “puritan” and informed the Court he “favored puritans.” According to Hacket though, under Elizabeth the “old non-conformists” were first nicknamed “puritans” by “Parsons the Jesuit, or some such franion.” A critical change occurred later:

“But some supercilious divines, a few years before the end of K. James his reign, began to survey the narrow way of the Church of England with no eyes but their own, and measuring a right Protestant with their straight line, discriminated, as they thought fit, sound from unsound, so that scarce ten among a thousand, but were noted to carry some disguise of a puritan. The very prelates were not free from it, but tantum non ni episcopatu puritani, became an obloquy.”¹⁶

Williams claimed that puritans “whom the emulous repined at” were of two sorts. One kind was of “a very strict life” and “a great deal more laborious” in their cures than their detractors. Williams did not love men less because they were stigmatized with “a by-word of contumely.” Another sort called puritans “were scarce an handful, not above three or four in all the wide bishopric of Lincoln, who did not oppose but, by ill-education, seldom used the appointed ceremonies.” Even with these he worked patiently to bring them to conform regularly. He conferred with them “with much meekness,” and sometimes sent them to argue with his chaplain. If this failed, Williams sent them to “his old collegiate” Richard Sibbes or William Gouge. They were moderate puritans “who knew the scruples of these men’s hearts, and how to bring them about, the best of any about the city of London.” If all these efforts failed, he protracted the hearing of their cases in the hopes “that time might mollify their refractory apprehensions.”¹⁷ With such

¹⁶ Hacket, *Scrinia*, part 1, p. 95.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, part 1, p. 95. Of the first sort of puritan Hacket gave the example of when Harsnett, Bishop of Norwich, whom he described as learned prelate and a wise governor but for “a little roughness,” proceeded against Samuel Ward of Ipswich in his consistory. Ward appealed to the king who referred the matter to Williams in his capacity of Lord Keeper. Williams held that Ward while not blameless was one who could be “won easily with fair dealing.” By his persuasion, Harsnett took his submission, and Ward continued in his lecture. Purportedly, Williams found Ward candid and ready “to serve the Church of England in its

views in mind, Williams in September and December 1633 wrote to Laud to deny he was among “the favorers of puritans or sectaries.” He could claim his diocese was “more free from unconformable ministers than ever it hath been these sixty years.”¹⁸

Further, Hacket argued Williams was like St. Paul “who was *made all things to all men, that by all means he might save some*, 1 Cor. 9.22.” Since puritans were “weak” brethren, Williams showed them hospitality, equanimity, and sufferance by design. He sought to build trust and relationships with non-conformists “whom he gained first with kindness, and then brought over with argument.” Additionally, Williams counseled the king to confer dignities in the church on some of the most famous and worthy non-conformists to draw more of them to a good opinion of the hierarchy and to support the polity wherein they were honored. Also, when the hyper-conformists John Lambe and Robert Sibthorpe petitioned Williams for the restoration of diocesan officials Reginald Burden and Henry Allen whom the bishop had suspended, they (in Hacket’s phrasing) affirmed them to be “the swiftest of their kind to chase the puritans.” But Williams replied: “That men of erroneous, but tender consciences, would never be reduced by such as were scandalous for bribes and taverns, and other bad haunts.” Aside from the harsh accusations against Burden and Allen, Williams was arguing that conformists who socialized with the profane majority could not earn the trust of the “godly” and sway their opinions.¹⁹ According to Hacket, Laud’s approach sharply differed from Williams’:

“Bishop Laud would not connive at the puritans, nor seek them with fair entreaties, but went on to suppress the ringleaders, or to make them fly the kingdom. Bishop Williams perceived that this made the faction grow more violent, to triumph against justice, as if it were persecution, that the cutting of some great boughs made the under-woods grow the faster. His way to mitigate them, was to turn them about with the fallacy of meekness: If

present establishment” including having brought many beneficed men to conform. Supposedly, Harsnett also came to view Ward as useful in assisting him in his government of the diocese. (Ibid.)

¹⁸ Laud, *Works*, volume 6, part 1, p. 313-14, 336.

¹⁹ Hacket, *Scrinia*, part 1, p. 95; part 2, p. 43, 111-12.

they came to him, they had courteous hospitality; if they asked his counsel in suits of law, he gave them all assistance; if some ceremonies would go down with them, he waited till their queasy stomachs would digest the rest; he thought it no dishonest thing, if he might win his weak brethren, to shift a point of the compass, when the winds blew overthwart, and to fetch them in, not always by a straight course, but sometimes by obliquity.”²⁰

Anti-Calvinists emphasized keeping tight control to maintain order, fearing anything less would lead to anarchy. This view was their take on the axiom that fallen human nature was inherently sinful and rebellious against authority given the chance. Thus, Laudians thought indulgence of non-conformists only encouraged more disobedience to authority and greater radicalism. Williams thought the reverse. For moderate Calvinist bishops order flowed from preaching the Word and furthering the reformation of manners. Doing so increased godliness and obedience, and beat down sin and “popery.” In their view, silencing orthodox preachers for non-conformity threatened to destroy all for which Protestants had struggled over a trivial matter. To those who wanted harsh action against puritans, Hacket replied:

“Men that are sound in their morals, and in minutes imperfect in their intellectuals, are best reclaimed when they are mignarized, and stroked gently. Seldom anything but severity will make them anti-practice. For then they grow desperate: *Iracundus Dominus quosdam alfugam cogit, quosdam ad mortem*, says Seneca. And they are like to convert more with their sufferings, then with their doctrine. He that is openly punished, whatsoever he hath done, he shall find condolement.”²¹

²⁰ Hacket, *Scrinia*, part 2, p. 86. Williams support of constant preaching, especially as a duty of bishops by canon, was also key to his attitude to puritans, and to how Laudians viewed him. Hacket claimed: “For the good office of preaching, performed often by a bishop, was called puritanism by some in those times, that fomented such a faction, that made the name of puritan the very inquisition of England. Not using it, as formerly, to preserve the good order, and discipline of the church; but to cast any man out of favor, that was so innocent, as not to be able to be charged with anything else. Thrust a worthy man between the first and second censure, and how hard did we make it, by such uncharitable traducings, to live evenly in the indivisible point of Protestantism?” Williams own diligent preaching led some to tell the king he was “an upholder of non-conformitans.” By contrast, Hacket argued frequent preaching by bishops would have won the people to them by showing they adhered to the doctrine of the Church of England in opposition to “popery.” Preaching by bishops as the gravest, most learned divines, and “chief pastors” was of most profit to the people who were always eager reverently to hear such authorities. Hacket claimed: “It was so with us in England, to the brink of our great change.” Bishops were “the best trumpeters to sound a retreat from innovations.” None were more powerful than “the good prelates” in warning the people of them. (Ibid., part 2, p. 38-9)

²¹ Ibid., part 1, p. 95-6.

So Williams and Hacket emphasized that Calvinist language and discourse proved more troublesome when under force. The “godly” wanted to be “instruments” of God, “witnesses” to Truth, and “soldiers” of Christ. They constantly asked themselves whether they were standing for truth or falsehood, for God or the Devil. As “servants of God,” they expected to suffer affliction and reproach in the world for practicing “God’s truth.” They expected to be despised for “love of the Truth’s sake” and being “godly professors” of it. In heaven though, they would receive “the crown of glory” for so doing. The Church of Christ was “a little flock and number” suffering persecution. If the Church of England persecuted “saints” this was a note of a “false church.” In short, too firm a hand could make puritans appealing pseudo-martyrs and push some to separatism.

By contrast Anti-Calvinists saw preaching Calvinist doctrine as subversive. For example, December 15, 1630 Dr. Samuel Brooke wrote to Laud to say of “unquiet and turbulent spirits” that “their doctrine of predestination is the root of puritanism, and puritanism the root of all rebelliousness and disobedient intractableness in parliaments, etc., and all schism and sauciness in the country, nay in the church itself.” It made thousands of people and a great part of the gentlemen of the land Leighton’s in their hearts. In the last parliament, puritanism was apparent in attacks on the church and articles of religion under pretense of putting down Arminianism. All would be lost if too much lenity and forbearance was shown to them. Authorities had to act or like weeds they would overrun the corn. Brooke saw no difference between moderate puritans and radicals like Penry, Wigginton, Hacket, and Coppinger.²² Also, conforming to ceremonies in church services taught reverence for holy things and the divinely ordained order including monarchical and episcopal government.

²² PRO, SP 16/177/8.

In the summer of 1627, this ideological polarization precipitated a clash between Bishop Williams and some of his diocesan officials over how to deal with puritans. Under the Caroline-Laudian regime, local anti-puritans had more sympathetic authorities to which to appeal in church and state, and the crown now backed these authorities to a far greater degree. Further, local anti-puritans perceived or portrayed puritans according to a type that drew an external response.²³ Doubtless encouraged by this new political landscape Williams' anti-puritan officials launched a massive offensive against non-conformists in Leicester. The southern part of Lincoln diocese, especially Leicestershire, long had been a puritan strong hold and tolerated as such. With such rich hunting grounds, by April, 1627 20-30 puritans stood presented to the ecclesiastical court at Leicester and others had been summoned for nonconformity, especially for not kneeling when receiving communion. A grand jury of Leicester presented more non-conformists, who were not yet convented and would not be reformed by the ecclesiastical judge, before the judge of the assizes. Williams sought to stop the onslaught to maintain the status quo equilibrium. A long series of fit and start legal proceedings ensued in which Williams was accused of a variety of offenses including favoring puritans, breaking his oath as privy councilor by revealing the king's secret counsel, tampering with witnesses, and slandering Sir John Monson. These cases culminated in Williams' sensational trial in Star Chamber June-July 1637, which resulted in him being heavily fined, censured, suspended, and imprisoned in the Tower.

The battle lines in Lincoln diocese arrayed Anti-Calvinists against Calvinists. Sir John Lambe (commissary and official for the Archdeaconry of Leicester) and Robert

²³ A.J. Fielding, "Conformists, Puritans and the church courts: the diocese of Peterborough 1603-42" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Birmingham, 1989). Richard Cust, "Anti-Puritanism and Urban Politics: Charles I and Great Yarmouth," *Historical Journal* 1992 35(1): 1-26.

Sibthorpe (Lambe's surrogate and commissary of the High Commission in Leicester) headed the Anti-Calvinists which consisted mostly of Lambe's surrogates in the archdeaconry court of Leicester including Henry Allen (or Alleyn) (also a proctor), Reginald Burden (rector of Leire near Leicester), Robert Weldon, Edward Blunt (vicar both of St. Martin's and of St. Margaret's in Leicester), and John Hill. Bishop Williams headed the Calvinists which included John Prigeon (or Pregon), Walter Walker, and a plethora of local puritans. Prigeon had been the principal registrar to bishops of Lincoln from the 1610s, and was also registrar to the Archdeacon of Lincoln, and had become, as a result of Williams' efforts, registrar of the archdeaconry or commissary court at Leicester from March 25, 1625. Walker was the deputy registrar for Leicester.²⁴

The opening salvos came May 17, 1627 at the bishop's residence in Buckden, Huntingdonshire. Blunt was convented before Williams to answer various charges of crimes, disorders, and misdemeanors made against him by William Sherman, Robert Miller, and other puritans who apparently also attended. Blunt's diligence had led Sherman and Miller to be brought before the High Commission as "principal ringleaders"

²⁴ Just as some Calvinist conformist-puritans relationships had family as well as ideological foundations, so did the ones among Anti-Calvinist conformists attacking Williams. Sibthorpe had married Lambe's sister, and Allen had married the daughter of Lambe's sister (Sibthorpe's wife). So Sibthorpe was Allen's father in law, and Lambe his uncle by marriage. Sibthorpe, Lambe, and Allen often entertained and lodged with each other. Sibthorpe, Weldon, Burden, Blunt, and John Hill met at houses including Allen's to plan their actions against Prigeon and Walker including tampering with witnesses. (PRO, SP 16/361/100 fol. 207(MS) 206 (SP); PRO, SP 16/361/102 fol. 217 (MS) 216 (SP); PRO, SP 16/537/32 #18, #66; PRO, SP 16/155/4, fol. 8r, 13r-15r, 19r-v; PRO, SP 16/155/5 fol 34r (#21); PRO, SP 16/155/6 fol. 38v (#15)) On May 14, 1627 (or 1628) Williams made Walker proctor of the ecclesiastical court of the archdeaconry of Leicester (or a general proctor of the diocese of Lincoln). This promotion clearly was to thwart Sibthorpe's charge against Walker that he had been overstepping his bounds as deputy registrar by involving himself with litigants, especially when Allen was proctor. Sibthorpe as surrogate for Lambe often had admonished Walker to silence in court saying he was an actuary and not a proctor. When Walker had persisted Sibthorpe had threatened to suspend him for his "insolencies." Lambe, Sibthorpe, Burden, and Blunt had worked to prevent Walker's preferment in communications with Williams when he was admitted for one of the general proctors of the diocese. They opposed Walker in open court and refused to let him practice in the archdeaconry of Leicester despite him showing his admission under William's episcopal seal. (PRO, SP 16/155/4, fol. 12v (#17), 16v (#27), 18r (#35), 19r-v (#41); PRO, SP 16/155/5, fol. 34r (#17)).

of disorder in Leicester.²⁵ Burden and Allen attended to support Blunt. In “great passion,” Williams directed Blunt to cease prosecution of them (threatened him if he failed to do so), and chided him for complaining against puritans. He later commanded him to be suspended, deprived, and put out of his surrogateship. Williams also blamed Lambe for allowing the prosecution. In contrast, Williams allegedly told these puritans he desired them to embrace his “love,” as he would theirs. If he had their “love,” they would have his favor. In his version, Williams claimed he also chided the non-conformists, and succeeded in reconciling Blunt and those complaining of him.

More stormy meetings took place at Buckden July 24-25, 1627. In May, Allen had presented articles against Prigeon (and Walker) and both were appointed to appear at Buckden for Williams to hear the cause. Lamb and Sibthorpe came with Burden and Allen to defend them. Williams cleared Prigeon of wrongdoing and “sharply rebuked” Allen for making what he deemed false accusations and his “other evil carriage and misdemeanors.” Lambe and Sibthorpe were furious that Williams scolded Allen rather than Prigeon whom they claimed had hindered prosecution of puritans. Subsequently, Williams suspended Allen and Burden, and forced Lambe to put Allen out of his proctorship in Leicester. Williams also tried to get Lambe removed as commissary and official of Leicester, and Burden removed as surrogate to Lambe. Finally, he tried to get Sibthorpe, Burden, and Weldon put out of their benefices.

²⁵ Among their offenses, Sherman and Miller fostered a scheme to buy the vicarage of St. Nicholas’ Church, Leicester for Francis Higginson, a well-known non-conformist. Try to get it away from poor vicar whom they tried to force out with suits. The vicarage had passed the same way to Mr. Bryan, a nonconformist, and from him to Mr. Richardson, all in a short time. Miller and Sherman both contributed despite not being parishioners. Williams permitted Higginson to lecture at St. Nicholas, and just “winked at” the corrupt manner which procured it for him. He said it was alright if they not like a minister to get a better one with money. (PRO, SP 16/88/13) Further, Sibthorpe claimed that Walker helped to make the conformable vicar of St. Michael’s non-resident and place Higginson there. (PRO, SP 16/155/4, fol. 17r (#29))

The heated exchanges in these meetings and the posturing in subsequent legal proceedings provide invaluable evidence about the discourse on order and conformity in the church, and how contemporaries manipulated language to demonize opponents and acquit allies. Anti-Calvinists claimed those making charges against them were “puritans” who sought to disgrace them because they would not tolerate their “irregular courses” which were contrary to ecclesiastical law. There were “many puritans” in Leicester and “many nonconformists” in Leicestershire as it was “much overspread with puritanism.” They merely wanted Williams to allow them “to proceed against them sharply.” They argued that nonconformity could not be tolerated because it merely encouraged others to it. Bishop Williams however refused and protected puritans allegedly out of self-interest. He purportedly said he had Buckingham as an enemy and some said the king too, and that he was unsure the king would stand by him. Thus, he did not want to “meddle” with puritans and bring their wrath or “the envy of the people” on himself as well. He told the Anti-Calvinists that he did not care that they complained about him to the privy council because he was already out of favor at court and did not expect to be promoted to another bishopric. Williams also supposedly said regarding Laud that “if the Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells meddled with him, he would make him a younger brother.”

According to the Anti-Calvinist group, Williams, Prigeon, and Walker diligently worked to hinder proceedings against puritans and dismiss them from court. Williams himself often wrote letters on behalf of accused puritans. In some cases, he wrote that the king’s pleasure was that it was acceptable if lecturers before preaching only sometimes (but not always) read service and only occasionally did so in hood and surplice, and if not all afternoon sermons were replaced by catechizing. Prigeon and Walker even worked

alongside the Leicester puritan William Sherman to mediate with the ecclesiastical judges for non-conformists. Williams also wrote to sympathetic Calvinists like Archbishop Abbot and Sir Henry Marten to stay proceedings in High Commission against puritans from his diocese. From before the 1627 meetings and long after, Lambe, Sibthorpe, Blunt, Burden, and Allen informed the court and council that Williams was a “favorer of puritans,” “a father of all the puritans,” and that puritans “ruled all with him.” They described Prigeon and Walker as “commonly reputed and taken for friends or favorers of the schismatical persons and courses of Leicester,” and each as “a great favorer of puritans,” and Prigeon also as “a great countenancer of nonconformitants.” Purportedly, when convented and questioned before the commissary court at Leicester non-conformists asked to be referred to their diocesan because they thought they would be assured of favor. Williams’ actions protecting puritans led to “rejoicing” among them. Adding insult to the Anti-Calvinist group, puritans “boasted” and made “great vanity” of the bishop’s favor, and even “thanked God for him.” They grew “insolent” against the ecclesiastical judge in Leicester. However, as Williams showed, he had disciplined, and ordered his subordinates to proceed against, non-conformist ministers and laity. The consummate Jacobean bishop, he simply distinguished moderates from radicals, and acted only when all other options had been exhausted or when puritans created exceptional tumult. Had someone as politically astute as Williams been purely self-interested, he would have turned Laudian to endear himself to Charles I and rising Anti-Calvinist bishops.

For their part, Calvinists faulted Anti-Calvinists for calling those they prosecuted “puritans,” and flatly denied there were any in Leicester or Leicestershire. Leicester was

“of as good conformity as any such town,” had no known “nonconformist,” and those they harassed were “conformable.” Williams told the Anti-Calvinists that such persons were not to be troubled in court “for such trifling indifferent things.” Also, Prigeon and Walker were not “puritans,” but “conformable” professing and practicing the established doctrines and rites of the Church of England. They had friendships with and good reputation among conformists in Leicester. The stark difference with Anti-Calvinists here stemmed from different definitions of conformity. Williams and his allies were trying to protect painstakingly negotiated terms of subscription and conformity which kept orthodox puritan preachers in the church. As long as some degree of conformity was shown, Williams deemed them “conformable” and not “puritans.” By contrast, anything short of full conformity, including to Laudian “innovations,” was the hallmark of a “puritan” for Anti-Calvinists.

Like Bishop Hall, Williams sought to shift the test of loyalty from conformity to paying taxes. When he asked if Leicester freely gave to the Forced Loan’s collection, Lambe, Sibthorpe, and Prigeon affirmed they did. Williams pounced to proclaim: “No man of discretion can say that that place is a place of puritans.” He thought it a lack of discretion to disturb such a town “under color of puritanism” especially while the Loan was being gathered. He added in that cliché of moderate puritans that those who readily paid were “the king’s best subjects.” Sibthorpe asked Williams if he intended to let Leicester puritans loose to disgrace and do “mischief” to Allen “whom they hated for being conformable.” Williams replied if puritans paid the Loan they could use any legal course against Allen even if he was “the most conformable man in the kingdom.”²⁶

²⁶ This reality also helps explain why in 1628 Williams gave the Stamford puritan John Vicars modest punishment and a second chance. Vicars’ witnesses claimed he preached obedience to the magistrate

The Calvinist group also sought to discredit the Anti-Calvinist group by portraying them as corrupt and self-interested “good-fellows” attacking the godly. Allen, Burden, and Weldon brought “scandal” on the Leicester archdeaconry court because of their “turbulent actions” and double-dealing. Further, Allen, Blunt, Burden, and Weldon were “vicious,” and “notorious” and “infamous” for “scandalous” lives of fornication, adultery, criminal activity, immoderate drinking, and haunting alehouses, taverns, and inns. They failed to punish the same in office. They used their offices to convert the innocent to gather court fees to their profit. Allen in particular was “a person of evil name fame and conversation and a great molester and troubler of his neighbors,” “a turbulent, slanderous person,” and “a writer of libels.” Williams actions against them for this behavior allegedly led Lambe, Sibthorpe, Allen, Weldon, and Burden to plot against him for revenge and to protect their personal and family interests. Yet, Sibthorpe and Lambe were notorious puritan hunters in Northamptonshire and elsewhere so they needed no special occasion to attack the Leicester puritans and Williams as a puritan friendly bishop. At most ideology merged with personal animosity and self-interest.

Interestingly, Hacket told that Williams had intervened to save Lambe from charges of crimes in the 1621 and 1624 parliaments, and had gotten him the office of commissary in 1623. Yet, Lamb “marked the revolution of the times,” saw the bishop out of favor under Charles, and concluded he had more advantage being his enemy than his friend. Thus, Hacket called Lambe and Sibthorpe “pick-thanks.” Beneath the

including the Forced Loan. For “at the time of the Loan he read the king’s and council’s letters, and persuaded the people to a liberal contribution.” He preached “that tribute must be given to Caesar.” (Samuel R. Gardiner (ed.), *Reports of Cases in the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission* (Camden Society, N.S., vol. 39, 1886 (reprint 1965), p. 209-10, 217)

political posturing, we can see how ideological polarization and new opportunities for anti-puritan offensives under Charles dissolved traditional patronage relationships.

Competing definitions of puritans was also crucial. When Williams asked Lambe what type of people he meant by puritans he replied: “that they seem to the world to be such as would not swear, whore, nor drink; but yet would lie, cozen, and deceive: that they would frequently hear two sermons a day, and repeat the same again too; and afterwards pray, and sometimes fast all day long.” By contrast, when Williams asked Prigeon what kind of persons Sibthorpe called “puritans,” he replied those “that lived orderly and civilly and heard sermons upon Sunday and pray in their families” or such “as would not swear, whore, and be drunk but would hear sermons and pray in their families.” Prigeon claimed that his inquiry into those of whom Sibthorpe complained had found only “that some families after evening prayers on Sundays used among themselves only to sing a psalm” or in another account “that some masters of families used to call their servants but admitted none other to sing a psalm.” Prigeon’s reply was the standard claim puritans made about simply being sound and diligent Protestants.

Which side could claim to support the king’s policies also was critical. Williams’ spin was surprisingly good. In the July, 1627 meeting at Buckden, he told the Anti-Calvinist group about a conference he had had with the king in 1625. He had advised the king to approve an anti-Catholic petition from the Lords and Commons during the 1625 Parliament at Oxford. The petition included two articles to restore and give “some favor” to silenced ministers who were “peaceable, orderly, and conformable to the church government” so as to stem an alarming increase of Catholics. Of course by Williams’ definition the “conformable” could include puritans. Significantly, Williams claimed the

petition was “very ambiguous” and “seemed doubtful” about how much time these ministers had to conform. The king approved the petition such that no “sharp proceedings” were to be made against puritans. Only those who were “notorious disturbers of the state” or “dangerous disturbers of the peace of the state” were to be acted against. Williams claimed he initially counseled the king to deny the petition because it touched on the king’s regality and if denied would stop the mouths of puritans though they might have “muttered.” But the Duke changed the minds of the council (and king). Before he knew the king’s answer, Williams therefore changed his private counsel to the king in a second meeting as otherwise he would “fall into the hands of the parliament.” When the Anti-Calvinist group reported Williams said Buckingham had been “a great favorer of puritans,” he was likely speaking of this time. By contrast, the Anti-Calvinist group claimed the petition was only from the Commons and applied only to conformist ministers (as they narrowly defined it). They claimed Williams distorted the articles in the petition to allow “the liberty of puritanism.” Williams also wrote many letters to surrogates like Burden in favor of puritans, supporting his policy with similar recounting of the king’s instructions to give way to non-conformity.²⁷

Of course what constituted leniency and whom an especial threat was open to interpretation. Arguably, Williams was attempting to parlay Charles’ willingness to

²⁷ Hackett referred to another conference between the king, Buckingham, and Williams c. May, 1627 (which he wrongly dates to 1628). The king asked “how he might win the love of the Commons, and be popular among them.” Williams answered “the puritans were many, and main sticklers; if his Majesty would please to direct his ministers, by his secret appointment, to shew some connivance and indulgence to their party, he might possibly mollify them, and bend their stubbornness.” The king said he liked the counsel as he had thought of it before and would use it. Two months after, Williams “regulated his own courts at Leicester with some such condescensions,” and told Sibthorpe and Lambe he had “lately conferred with the king” so this was not only his own but the king’s pleasure. He claimed “severity” against puritans was not “seasonable” for to get his ends from some leading MPs the king was giving such “some forbearance though not openly professed.” The MPs were to be brought around “by holding a gentle hand over the ministers of their faction.” (Hackett, *Scrinia*, part 2, p. 80, 112)

tolerate some moderate puritans as a short term tactical ploy into an open ended strategic commitment. With Charles needing supply, Williams gave blunt warnings to the Anti-Calvinists not to meddle with puritans at that time. He told them for the past three years puritans had been and continued to be a powerful force that would hold sway in parliament for years into the foreseeable future. The Anti-Calvinists were hardly impressed. They thought Williams account of his conference with the king “false news” and “tales.” Allen later referred to William’s arguments as “certain disloyal and derogatory speeches uttered by his lordship of the king and in favor of puritans, with other words and acts of his opposing ecclesiastical government and incompatible in a churchman.”²⁸

Prevalent among the puritan activities which the Anti-Calvinist group claimed Williams and Prigeon countenanced were “unlawful fasts.” The Anti-Calvinist group complained of them at length in 1627 not only to Williams but to the council (and saw fit to repeat these charges in later years). They recounted that about Leicester, Leicestershire, and nearby “that there were diverse fasts kept there without all public authority, unless his lordship appointed or approved them.” Worse, these “diverse unlawful fasts” were “publicly held” in the archdeaconry of Leicester and places near

²⁸ Hackett, *Scrinia*, part 2, p. 80, 86, 111-14 (Wing H171); John Rushworth, *Historical Collections* (London, 1721), volume 1, p. 420-21, and volume 2, p. 417; PRO, SP 16/361/100 fol. 206-9 (MS) 205-8 (SP) [MS folio listed first then SP folio number]; PRO, SP 16/361/101 fol. 210-16 (MS) 209-15 (SP); PRO, SP 16/361/102 fol. 217-21 (MS) 216-20 (SP); PRO, SP 16/211/65; PRO, SP 16/211/73; PRO, SP 16/537/32; PRO, SP 16/537/33; PRO, SP 16/85/99; PRO, SP 16/88/13; SP 16/204/97; PRO, SP 16/155/4 fol. 8r-30v; PRO, SP 16/155/5 fol. 34r-v; PRO, SP 16/155/6 fol. 36r-39v; Purola, “John Williams,” passim but especially p. 54-62, 98-9, 103-4, 107, 265-83, 294-96. For more godly attempts to redefine the term “puritan” to mean a sound, devout, upright, loyal Protestant as opposed to a “formalist,” and “profane,” “worldly,” or “popishly affected” people, see: Thomas Scott, *The Interpreter* (n.p, 1622)(STC 14115); William Prynne, *Historiomastix* (London, 1633), p. 797-828 (STC 20464).

thereunto.²⁹ One took place at Croft by Mr. Goodman and his curate and another minister; at Burrowe (Burrough on the Hill?); at Thornton by Mr. Burrows and others; at Woodhouse by Bryan, Coates of Nottingham, and Foxcroft of Gotham; at Frolesworth by Simon Moore and Higginson; at Nuneaton in Warwickshire by Mr. Moore and others; and at Wiggeston by Mr. Pecke and Higginson. There were “sundry others at Leicester without lawful authority.” Most notable of the Leicester fasts was one by White parson of Fockingham, Male (or Lottemale) curate of Sempringham in Lincolnshire, and Mr. Barry (or Barrie or Barrye) of Cottesmore in the county of Rutland who was “an ancient notorious, inconformable preacher.”³⁰ In these fasts “there was preaching without any divine service or prayers.” All these fasts had charitable collections for “the distressed brethren beyond [the] sea” or “the distressed Protestant ministers of the Palatinate, above 240, with much other people, who are forced to meet in woods for the exercise of religion.” Four “ministers of note in London” (Taylor, Sibbes, Davenport, Gouge) had

²⁹ With authorities barely able to keep track of “public” puritan fasts, the “private” variety appears to have gone completely unreported. The existence of “conventicles” which surely observed fasts suggests this reality. Complaints of “conventicles” in Leicester (in the homes of William Sherman, Robert Miller, Mr. Higginson and others), Easton (in the parish church with a Mr. Whinnell who expounded scripture though not licensed, and made extempore prayers to others of parish), Loughborough (in the house of John Holte and included the parsons wife and others of the parish), and Ashby-de-la-Zouch (by Holte and others where Holte though not a minister expounded scripture and prayed extempore). These conventicles were “notoriously seen and known” and usually met “without concealment.” The bishop was informed but gave no order for proceedings. According to the Anti-Calvinist group, Williams’ laxity and favor to puritans encouraged them to have conventicles. (PRO, SP 16/85/99 #3; 16/88/13)

³⁰ Indeed, several of these ministers are identifiable as non-conformists whom Williams, Prigeon, and Walker had intervened to spare from prosecution. For example, Simon Moore, curate and lecturer of Frolesworth was presented for non-conformity to the ecclesiastical judge at Leicester. At Prigeon’s direction, Moore went to the bishop who gave him favor and allowed him to stay at Frolesworth without punishment. When the case came up in the Leicester court, Prigeon and Walker told how the bishop had dismissed the charges against Moore and stayed proceedings against him. They showed a letter from the bishop to spare Moore in “indifferent things.” The bishop gave Moore six months to conform, yet he remained a non-conformist. Due to the bishop’s favor, “he is grown so insolent that he hath since scandalized the said ecclesiastical judge, and threatened him that he will sit on his skirts.” (PRO, SP 16/8813; SP 16/211/65) In reply, the Calvinist group claimed Williams at first dismissed Moore as he submitted to him and promised conformity. Sometime after Williams’ initial admonishment when a new complaint was made against Moore, he then suspended or censured him. (PRO, SP 16/155/4, fol. 23v (#57))

orchestrated the collection.³¹ They had subscribed to a certificate which was read in the pulpit after the last sermon in the fasts “to procure a more liberal contribution and to set a colorable authority upon the said fasts.”

Two of these fasts received more detailed treatment in the records. One was the “unlawful fast” or “unlawful fasts” at Woodhouse under the auspices of Lady Joan Herrick (or Heyricke) and her chaplain Mr. Bryan (or Brian). Williams angrily “fell foul” on Burden for prosecuting them, and made Mr. Thurborne, the churchwarden who presented them, do penance. The bishop wrote a letter to the ecclesiastical judge to stay proceedings against Lady Herrick and Bryan. In a hearing at Buckden, Williams acquitted Bryan for the “unlawful fasts” and nonconformity (which Lambe’s surrogate unsuccessfully had ordered him to reform). He also made Thurborne submit to Lady Herrick and Bryan. The Anti-Calvinists found these events especially offensive as they deemed Bryan “an indiscrete nonconformable minister” whom in the May, 1627 meeting at Buckden had been a witness against Blunt. They had objected at that meeting that Bryan had kept “diverse unlawful fasts” and at them preached the doctrine that if a man laid with his wife three or four days before or after a fast that he was guilty of a crime equal to adultery. Allegedly, the bishop at that time did not find fault with this doctrine or reprove Bryan. Thereby, Bryan “took occasion afterwards in a public prayer before his sermon to give thanks for his good success, and that the said persons were countenanced, and their persecutors bridled.”

³¹ That Gouge, Sibbes, Taylor, and Davenport ran afoul of authorities for their efforts became a cause célèbre among the godly. Puritans were outraged that these men were condemned as “notorious delinquents” for signing a certificate encouraging private contributions for the relief of “some poor ministers of the Palatinate.” See: Theophilus, *Divine*, p. 60.

Williams correctly saw the prosecution as politically tactless. Lady Herrick was the sister of Sir Humphrey May a privy councilor, chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster, and an MP for Leicester 1624, 1625, 1626, and 1628-29. Further, her husband Sir William Herrick had been an MP for the borough of Leicester in Elizabeth's last parliament, and the first and third parliaments of James. He had been knighted under James, become his jeweler, and acquired a tellership in the exchequer of receipt (though he was forced to sell these offices 1623-24).³² At Buckden, Williams told Burden that even when Lord Keeper he would not have dared to go so far against Herrick. He said the times were not suited to act against puritans as the Commons favored them, and a breach had opened between the state and the Commons over the Loan.

The second fast which drew more comment was the one held June 13 at St. Martin's Church (or St. Mary's Church) in Leicester. White, Male, and Barry preached "without intermission" from 8 or 9am to 7 or 8pm. There were "very little or no common prayers." Further, "at this fast were assembled a great number of people from all parts of Leicestershire and other counties adjoining." Complaints also stressed the amount collected at Leicester. Suggesting it was a relatively large fast, the collection was 18lb 19s compared to 5lb at Burrow, 5lb at Woodhouse, and (in comparison to the latter two) "at other places more or less according to the number of people there present."³³

³² Andrew J. Hopper, "May, Sir Humphrey (1572/3-1630)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. G.E. Aylmer, "Herrick, Sir William (bap. 1562, d. 1653)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

³³ Bryan confessed the money (or at least some of it) was given to "poor ministers in England" including at Woodhouse along with himself and Mr. Ives his curate. (SP 16/85/99; SP 16/88/13) Such redirection of funds had precedent. At the July 10, 1587 meeting of the Dedham Classis, Mr. Salmon asked whether to send the 20s that was gathered at a fast for the French Church to them or to distribute it in his parish. "It was answered since it was so published in the fast to be gathered for that use, it should be employed to that use, except he should understand that the necessity of the French Church were provided for, and then he might give to the poor of his own parish." (Roland Usher (ed.), *The Presbyterian Movement in the Reign of*

The Anti-Calvinist group maintained that Prigeon and Williams knew of the fast and had a hand in it. They claimed:

“That his lordship’s register Mr. Prigeon was not only present, but private with the ministers in the morning before they began, and much admired them afterwards; in so much that the common voice was it was done by his lordship’s approbation, because his officer countenanced it.”

Another version claimed that:

“before the said fast began Mr. Prigeon the registrar went to the said Lincolnshire preachers (as he himself confessed) and directed them for their proceedings therein. And after went to the said fast. And at his coming from thence much commended the said course of theirs and dealt with the said preachers to continue the said fast the next day also. And gave out that he would go to the said Lord Bishop [and] procure a constant lecture to be set up and held at Leicester by such godly men for the people’s edification.”

Further, Prigeon, William Sherman, and others allegedly directed the collection to be placed in the hands of Robert Miller. This reality also made an impression as: “it was verily thought and conceived that the said Lord Bishop had given way to the said fasts and collections, because his Lordship’s register was so busy and forward therein.”

Williams indeed had given some sanction to the fasts. Goodman, one of the preachers at the Croft fast, reported “that there were three ministers only in Leicesterhire appointed by his Lordship to hold the said fasts whereof he was one.” Apparently, as we have seen before, puritans took approval on certain conditions and went much further than authorized. Prigeon had a copy of the certificate read at St. Martin’s Church delivered to him and after the fast went to Buckden and showed the bishop the certificate and acquainted him with the fast. Allegedly, Williams gave no order to proceed against these “disorderly persons” but rather “excused them.” He did not order investigation of the “unlawful fasts,” other “disorders,” or what became of the collection, and gave no order for “reformation.” Additionally, Prigeon and Walker allegedly moved Sibthorpe to defer

Queen Elizabeth as Illustrated by the Minute Book of the Dedham Classis 1582-1589 (London, 1905), p. 66).

proceedings against Robert Miller (and others) and saved him from being questioned about receiving the collection at the “unlawful fast” in Leicester.

This inaction supposedly led to more disorder. After the Leicester fast there had been another fast at Woodhouse “without authority.” Also, “irregular ministers” continued holding “unlawful fasts” in many places in the archdeaconry of Leicester. One was at Loughborough on St. Bartholomew’s day (August 24) by John Brown and Bryan. At this fast these two “gave out (for assembling of greater company) that some London ministers of great note for singularity would preach thereat.” Also, the content of some fasts was seen as seditious. Goodman in his fast sermon did “utter certain speeches against the present state and government of the church.” In sermons Higginson preached at these “unlawful fasts” and some ordinary lectures at St. Nicholas, he:

“enjoined against the prelates and bishops that live at court and lord it over their brethren (as he called it) in the country and compared them unto the high priests amongst the Jews; and charged them with flattering of kings and great men for their own turn, and with winking at idolatry, with diverse such scandalous speeches tending to bring contempt and hatred of the common people upon the said bishops.”

There had lately been “diverse such fasts or exercises” at Rotherbie in the county of Leicester where Higginson used to preach. The “fruit” of the sermons was that “some of the hearers have grown mad.” Specifically, the fasts drew some wives abroad from their husbands at “unseasonable times.” When their husbands complained, “they answered that they must obey God rather than men as they were taught. And herefore they would not fulfill their husband’s pleasure and neglect such holy company.”

In reply, the Calvinist group claimed Pigeon had not favored the fast or applauded the sermons and preachers, but rather tried to stop it. The morning before the fast began, and before any sermon had been preached he had gone to the house of Mr. Norris in Leicester where Male and White were and told them “how dangerous it was for

them to keep any fast, or preach in that manner without authority.” He entreated them to desist saying “if they went on without authority they would incur the Lord Bishop of Lincoln’s displeasure.” Not satisfied with Male’s and White’s answers, Prigeon went the morning of the fast before the sermons began to the mayor of Leicester, Gilbert Fawcett, and entreated him to stop the fast because it was “unlawful” and would draw the bishop’s “displeasure.” Apparently unsuccessful, Prigeon departed the mayor and attended court held on the day of the fast with Burden as surrogate. A marginal note next to this testimony claimed Prigeon only spent part of the day at court. Prigeon though denied Sibthorpe’s claim that he left court to attend the fast and that Burden followed him to it. Rather Burden and Allen went from court to the fast about 11 am leaving Prigeon in the church where court was kept.

Belatedly, Williams acted though he did not personally prosecute offenders.³⁴

Rather, August 23, 1627 he sent a letter to his chancellor Dr. John Farmery to convent and suspend White and Lottemale for nonconformity and “unlawful fasts,” and to proceed against all ministers who did the same. Prigeon was to attend Farmery at Grantham and inform him about the matter, which he did. Williams also ordered Titlowe, vicar of Grantham, to give the chancellor information on the like “unlawful

³⁴ Williams may have been reluctant to act because Male and White were chaplains to Theophilus Clinton, the fourth Earl of Lincoln. Clinton had puritan connections as in 1620 he had married Bridget, daughter of William Fiennes, first Viscount Saye and Sele. Indeed, among the 1627 complaints against Williams was that Neile, Bishop of Durham, going lately to the north told Thomas Richardson, the Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in the Circuit at Lincoln, of certain preachers who were chaplains to the Earl of Lincoln who “had used strange phrases and other passages in their prayers both before and after their sermons which tended to the breeding of discontent among the people, and derogated from his Majesty’s religious and most just proceedings.” When the judge spoke of it in his charge all the other justices, they claimed they knew or heard nothing of any such words or men. Hearing the charges could not be proved, Williams was reported “to have made himself merry with the Bishop of Durham’s device and the Lord Chief Justice his causeless charge.” Further, Williams gave no directions against these “disorderly persons” but rather excused them. (PRO, SP 16/85/99 (#5, #11)) In the July 1627 meeting at Buckden, Williams reportedly denigrated Neile as he: “in a scornful manner spake of the Bishop of Durham and the Lord Richardson.” (PRO, SP 16/361/101, fol. 210 (SP) 211 (MS)).

fasts.”³⁵ Williams may have acted to protect himself politically by taking steps to counter the charge of favoring puritans. Yet, as we have seen, even moderate Calvinist conformists would have taken issue with the manner of the Leicester fast with worshippers coming from far and wide. Though the relatively few complaints of the Anti-Calvinist group about the content of the fast sermons suggests the preachers were by and large circumspect and moderate in the pulpit. Given that Burden and Allen had attended the Leicester fast they apparently had nothing to report. That the Anti-Calvinists did not quote Goodman but only generalized his comments suggests they may have been less offensive to those who were not hawkish conformists. Higginson’s criticism of court prelates was far from an attack on episcopacy, and to a large degree just stated common notions among country people. The Anti-Calvinists did not cite anything from the Rotherbie fast sermons but just pointed to the alleged effects of Calvinist doctrine in creating rebellious puritans. Significantly, disobedience to husbands had a direct correlation to disobedience to the king. In the patriarchal political thought of the day, the king’s authority was often likened to that of a father. All in all the preachers appear to have been in line with moderate puritan fast sermons that had veiled or restrained criticism of authorities. That Prigeon could complement the preaching suggests the same.

Indeed, Prigeon may well have been trying to stop the fast seeing how “disorderly” it was going to be. With it having occurred, he may simply have tried to make the best of the situation and affirmed his support for godly preaching and fasts. His suggestion for setting up a lecture with the bishop’s sanction though looks very much like

³⁵ For the above discussion of the fasts in the diocese of Lincoln, see: PRO, SP 16/361/101 fol. 210-12 (MS) 209-11(SP); PRO, SP 16/211/65; PRO, SP 16/211/73; PRO, SP 16/88/13; PRO, SP 16/85/99; PRO, SP 16/155/4, fol.15v (#25), fol. 22v (#52), 23r-v (#53-55); PRO, SP 16/155/5 fol. 34v (#52-56); PRO, SP 16/155/6, fol. 36r-v (#2); PRO, SP 16/537/32, #41, #125; Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, volume 1, p. 420-21.

an attempt to channel these godly energies in a lawful direction that would serve the church without disturbing the peace. Nonetheless, the Anti-Calvinist group was correct to point out that Williams and Prigeon were giving some indulgence to fasts, and had cordial relations with and a long record of protecting many of the puritans in Leicester who were instrumental in the fast.

As with Hall, Williams' accommodating churchmanship made him a favorite bishop among puritans. Even at the end of the 17th century puritans fondly spoke of him. Cotton Mather noted that Williams highly esteemed John Cotton of Boston and curried royal favor for him when Lord Keeper. Mather praised Williams' "general goodness and candor" for allowing Francis Higginson to continue to preach, hold public and private fasts, and promote contributions for Protestants of Bohemia and the Palatinate while a non-conformist in Leicester. These "more easy circumstances" ended when Laud, then Bishop of London, prevailed over Williams. Laud "set himself to extirpate and extinguish all the non-conformists that were Williams's favorites among whom one was Mr. Higginson." Thereby, "the blades of the Laudian faction about Leicester appeared, informed and articulated against Mr. Higginson, so that he lived in continual expectation to be dragged away by the pursuivants unto the High Commission Court where a sentence of perpetual imprisonment was the best thing that could be looked for." Higginson's case was not unique. In regards to Peter Bulkly, Mather remarked how "the good Bishop of Lincoln" connived at his non-conformity (as he did at his father's) and allowed him to live "an unmolested non-conformist." But in later years, when Sir Nathaniel Brent was

Archbishop Laud's vicar-general, complaints were made against his non-conformity and he was silenced. Therefore, in 1635 he departed for New England.³⁶

Laud's approach to puritan fasts was radically different. When Laud was a prisoner in the Tower, Sir John Denham (1615-1669) sent him a letter November 5, 1641 asking him to confess that he had "ignorantly" and not "knowingly" imprisoned "God's people." When Laud objected to the letter, Denham came to see him in the Tower the next Sunday. At one point in their conversation, Laud lamented the current "disorder" including how men were "suffered to frequent conventicles without restraint." Denham replied that Laud had a mistaken notion of conventicles. A conventicle was "when a company of men meet together to a wicked intent, to plot and devise mischief to the church or state." Denham said he was certain, partly based on his own attendance at some, that such was not the case with these men, and that in their assemblies "they pray earnestly for the king, and all in authority." Laud objected they had no authority to meet let alone "forty or threescore together." Denham affirmed that scripture authorized those that "feared the Lord" and "saints" to meet often to edify one another. Laud replied that they could do so "neighbor with neighbor in public congregations." Denham answered:

"it may be these men are persuaded in their consciences, that the Lord calls them to humbling themselves, in fasting and prayer: and it may be authority doth not see it meet to appoint a day: is it evil in them then, some two or three families, it may be ten or twelve persons to meet together to spend a day on that occasion. And they cannot do this alone by themselves; for men are apt to be dull and drowsy when they are alone: and therefore they think it meet to be together, to stir up one another, as you know, my Lord, the more fuel is laid on the fire, the hotter it burns, and the more it flames."

³⁶ Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (London, 1702), book III, p. 18, 71, 73, 96. English puritans were not alone in their glowing opinions of Bishop Williams. One Captain Napier, a Scottish gentleman, while in England and visiting Williams almost daily in the Tower spoke words that ended up in an August 8, 1638 report endorsed by Laud. Apparently in his lodgings he had told how he approved of Williams above all other English bishops and "that if he had been made Archbishop of Canterbury none of these matters had fallen out." Napier here was referring to the Scots rebellion. (PRO, SP 16/397/26, fol. 39v)

This type of argument was likely to work with a Bishop Hall, and was similar to what Mayor Jurdaine told him. Yet Laud's response was radically different: "When he heard this, he smiled, and almost laughed out: flames."³⁷

The key reasons for the different reaction were that Laud did not share Calvinist sensibilities and was far more suspicious of puritans. These differences are particularly apparent in the exchange between Denham and Laud. Denham said he had been at the High Commission Court and seen men "truly fearing God" committed to prison. Laud claimed he only had imprisoned those who out of "willfulness and obstinacy" could not be satisfied by conferences with divines to obey authority (some even after a year). When Denham claimed they acted from "tenderness of conscience," Laud replied that that was unknowable. Here the likes of Hall would have been willing to consider conscience and show leniency to such recognizing them as moderate puritans. For Laud all voluntary religion was subversive not just devotions seeking further reformation. By contrast, advanced Calvinist conformists defined "conventicles" more narrowly to cover only Catholics and separatists.

To meet Laud's objection, Denham affirmed that he knew some of the men and their "conversation" and that they were "very godly men." One was "to judge the tree by the fruits." With this idea in mind, Denham again asked if Laud had imprisoned people not knowing them to be "the servants of God." Laud replied "I judge all to be the servants of God until they apparently shew the contrary, but their action I judge to be evil." Further, Laud complained that to imprison 3 or 4 per year was no matter when he let "thousands" go free; "and if we had not taken such a course with some of them, the number would have so increased, and men would have taken liberty to have done what

³⁷ Sir John Denham, *An exact copy of a letter* (London, 1641), passim (Wing A2).

they list, as now we see they do since we see authority suppressed.” Again, Hall would have seen the piety of puritans with more sympathy as he shared much of it. Hall would have cracked down on puritan fasts only if they blatantly challenged authority. Also, Hall did not share this paranoid view of puritans as potential wild fire.

Laud’s views caused puritans to lose the trust in the episcopate that many Calvinist conformists had carefully cultivated. With stunning bluntness, Denham stated that what he had seen at the High Commission Court led him to conclude that if Laud had been “enlightened with the true knowledge of Jesus Christ” he would not have acted so. For his part, when asked about “puritans” and “precisians” Laud claimed some “honest men” were given that name. He went on: “I am persuaded that many of those simple-hearted men are seduced, sometimes by others that are more cunning than they, but I ever had a tender care over the conscience of men, I stand not on the word puritan, but if a man be an honest man, what ever he is I do approve of him.”³⁸ This belief, explains his strategy of aggressively prosecuting only a few puritans who seemed to be ring-leaders beguiling others into disobedience, while at the same time seeing vast masses of puritans threatening rebellion.

Denham’s account is corroborated by the case of Roger Quatermayne who appeared before the High Commission Court several times from February to October 1640. On October 25, 1640 he appeared before many of the Lords of the Privy Council at Whitehall. One charge was preaching at and making “conventicles” over the summer drawing “much people together.”³⁹ When Laud repeated the charge, Quatermayne

³⁸ Ibid., passim.

³⁹ Roger Quatermayne, *Quatermayns Conqvst Over Canterbvries Covrt* (London, 1642), p. 1-22 (Wing Q148). The charge held that Quatermayne had conventicles in diverse places including Oxfordshire and

denied it. He argued that for people to meet together, humble themselves, and pray when divine judgments were on the land was no “conventicle.” Scripture commanded such.

Official opposition to his fasts thereby alienated Quatermayne. He asked:

“my Lords, are not the judgments of God upon us? Is here not the plague of pestilence, and a threatened famine, and the sword of war hanging over our heads? And shall not we, my Lords, humble our selves in the sense of God’s displeasure? It is an argument, my Lords, that there is no religion among us.”

Similarly, when the Lords thought Quatermayne’s description of puritans expounding scripture to each other in these meetings amounted to unlawful preaching, he responded it merely was “godly conference,” a duty to which all Christians were bound to edify and build up one another in their faith. He added: “I did always think, that public duties did not make void private, but that both might stand with a Christian.” Laud agreed but affirmed that Quatermayne’s “conventicles” were “not private.” Quatermayne responded they were “not public.” When Quatermayne then asked Laud to define a “conventicle,” the answer was so narrow as to preclude most voluntary religion. Laud said it was “when ten or twelve or more or less, meet together, to pray, read, preach, expound.”

Quatermayne of course rejected this definition. Suggestive of the legal ambiguity of the issue, Lord Chief Justice, Sir Edward Littleton said nothing when Laud asked him to sanction his definition. Seizing the moment to affirm a moderate Calvinist gloss on the matter, Quatermayne claimed his meetings were not conventicles by any statute or canon law. Further, suggesting how Laud’s definition would lead him to defy authority, he said “if this be a conventicle, then I will be a conventicler while I live, with God’s help.”

Further, when Quatermayne admitted keeping a conventicle in his house last Wednesday before coming to High Commission Court, Laud responded that such was lawful if

Berkshire. Quatermayne denied being at Farrington saying he had been at Longworth. (Ibid., p. 22) The charge likely concerned Faringdon, Berkshire and not Farrington, Dorset.

“private,” meaning “so it be only with your own family.” In shock, Quatermayne replied: “And no body else, my Lord, truly my whole family consists wholly in my wife and my self, and therefore I must call in my neighbors to help me, for this duty if it be kept as it ought, will require more than a man and his wife to keep it.”⁴⁰ For Quatermayne, Laud’s restriction harmed the edifying experience of a fast which required a sufficient number. He also surely held that the more joined in prayer, the more likely God was to hear.

The pressure on Quatermayne to resist authority and develop a martyr complex is also evident. Laud asked him about his “conventicles” at Watlington where many of “the Scottish faction” existed. In a standard puritan lame excuse, Quatermayne replied he was born there and went “to visit my friends.” When Laud pressed, he conceded: “My Lord, you said I might in private, and when I am there, I am as at home, and my Lord, we always did it in private, and not in the public congregation.” Further, he protested the meetings were hardly subversive. When Lord Newburgh asked how they prayed in them, Quatermayne answered:

“that the Lord will be graciously pleased, out of all these combustions and confusions, to bring forth a sacred order for the establishment of the Gospel, the rooting out of popery, superstition, and idolatry. For the uniting of the two kingdoms together, England and Scotland, in peace, and settling his Majesty and his posterity royal in peace, that so we may live under our own vines and fig-trees, to serve our God, and to be loyal and obedient to our king and sovereign, and loving and charitable one to another.”

This reply is suggestive as it assumed the Gospel no longer established in England, and implied peace and obedience were conditional on reform of the church. Unconvinced, Laud pressed about “the Scottish faction” at Watlington, to which Quatermayne lamely replied he did not know what the Archbishop meant by the term. Lord Cottington was

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 27-9. Quatermayne’s Wednesday conventicle was surely a fast for his deliverance. Quatermayne told Laud: “I set apart the day before to seek to God for a blessing to direct me how to carry myself before you.” (ibid., p. 29)

sure Quatermayne did and asserted if “well examined” he would be found to be “one of the principal.” Tellingly when the Lords decried the Scots as “rebels and traitors” acting “under pretence of religion” and asked Quatermayne’s opinion of them, he refused to answer. He evaded relentless re-asking of the question from Laud, Lord Cottington, Lord Goring, Sir Thomas Roe, and Lord Henry Montagu, Keeper of the Privy Seal. Indeed, suspicion of treason and of instigating a raucous crowd to break up the Thursday, October 22 High Commission Court meeting at which he was to appear, put Quatermayne’s life on the line. He recalled concluding: “if my death might be as Sampson’s, the pulling down of the English Antichristian hierarchy, the pulling down the devilish spiritual courts, then should I gladly sacrifice my life in the cause of the Gospel, for Christ and His true English church.” With his trial drawing thousands of spectators, he likely thought his death would lead to action in the Long Parliament or perhaps popular agitation. Among many puritans visiting him in prison, Quatermayne singled out the radical John Goodwin (an early advocate of armed resistance to the king).⁴¹

The contrast in conformist views can also be seen by revisiting the prosecution of John Vicars in the High Commission in part for unlawful fasts. The individual views of Calvinist and Anti-Calvinist commissioners regarding Vicars’ fasts can be gleaned from their comments on conventicles which often were private fasts. Tellingly, the existence

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 29-33, 35. Puritans naturally would have linked the Scottish rebellion to the rebellion of the northern tribes against Rehoboam. The prophet Ahijah had told Jeroboam that the Lord would give him ten tribes to rule over from Solomon’s son because in the latter years of his reign Solomon allowed worship of false gods and did not keep God’s statutes. Rehoboam’s decision to rule harshly was in accord with providence to provoke rebellion and so fulfill Ahijah’s prophecy. When Rehoboam prepared for war against Israel, Shemaiah prophesied against it arguing the rebellion was God’s providence. See: 1 Kings 11:29-39, 12:15, 22-4; 2 Chronicles 10:15, 11:2-4 (KJV). Puritans thus had reasons for rejecting war against the Scots from bases other than sympathy. Indeed, puritans would not have seen these verses as legitimizing rebellion. As the Geneva note for 2 Chronicles 10:15 stated: “God’s will overrides all so that nothing can be done but according to the same, and yet man’s will works by itself, so that he cannot use the excuse that his deed was of God’s ordinance.” Tai Liu, “Goodwin, John (c.1594-1665),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Quatermayne also formed a relationship with another radical Cuthbert Sydenham who prefaced his work.

of conventicles in and of themselves was not enough to sway Calvinist opinion. The prosecutors had to prove they were of a kind that Calvinist conformists would find threatening. Anti-Calvinist commissioners including Francis White (Bishop of Norwich), Richard Neile (Bishop of Winchester), and William Laud (Bishop of London) stressed “conventicles,” as well as nonconformity, sabbatarianism, and Vicars’ requirements for clergy to preach and the laity to hear sermons as his most serious offenses.⁴² In contrast, Calvinist commissioners like Sir Henry Marten and Thomas Morton (Bishop of Lichfield) began their speeches affirming the central importance of preaching and the need to suppress unsound doctrine.⁴³ The Calvinist commissioners were consistent with the emphasis Bishop Williams placed on doctrine in Vicars’ 1628 submission. Further, one of the key witnesses against Vicars in 1628 (on mostly doctrinal points) was the

⁴² Gardiner, *High Commission*, p. 228-30, 233-38. While White began with doctrine, he later affirmed he was most affected with Vicars’ bringing the public worship service into disgrace. Undoubtedly, Sir John Lambe, Dean of Arches, agreed with the Anti-Calvinists, but he laconically said Vicars’ denials were unconvincing and that his justifications failed. (ibid., p. 228-30, 221) Along similar lines to the prosecutor, Neile claimed non-conformity led Vicars to his “erroneous opinions.” (ibid., p. 233-34)

⁴³ Ibid., p. 221-25, 231-33. Sir Henry Marten was a moderate Calvinist who disapproved of many Caroline-Laudian religious policies. He used his positions as official of the archdeaconry of Berkshire, chancellor of the diocese of London, and then dean of arches to limit punishment of puritans for non-conformity. In the 1628 parliament, he publicly supported a bill that would have prevented prosecutions for sermon gadding, and as dean of arches assessed damages against ordinaries who prosecuted such. When Laud became Archbishop, Marten was quickly removed as dean of arches, and replaced with Sir John Lambe. Marten was more comfortable with James who had placed him on high commission in 1620. See: James S. Hart Jr, “Marten, Sir Henry (c.1561–1641),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Morton was patient with non-conformists and accepted occasional conformity. This leniency stemmed from his view of the role of a bishop as a preaching pastor, and his focus on proselytizing and the Catholic threat. Indeed, in 1636 the king wanted Morton checked for slackness in disciplining the diocese of Durham. See: Brian Quintrell, “Morton, Thomas (bap. 1564, d. 1659),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Morton was willing to think some of Vicars’ doctrine had been “misconceived.” He only briefly touched on the sabbath to denounce Vicars’ refusal to bury a woman on it. Similarly, he briefly touched on the issue of preaching, but only to reject that scripture required two sermons every sabbath. Archbishop George Abbot surely shared doctrinal emphasis, but the scribe only records that he was terse and condemned Vicars “as sharply as any.” (Gardiner, *High Commission*, p. 231, 233, 238) For Vicars’ views these Calvinists criticized see: ibid., p. 201-2, 208; PRO, SP 16/119/52, fol. 70; Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.II.21, fol. 18r; Northamptonshire Record Office, FH 587, p. 3).

puritan rector of Great Billing, Northamptonshire, Dr. Daniel Cawdrey.⁴⁴ Thus, one prosecutor, Dr. Reeves, knowing he had the Anti-Calvinists in hand tried to link conventicles to heresy to win over the Calvinists.

Showing Laudian priorities the first article against Vicars was that he kept “private and unlawful conventicles,” and Reeves began his speech with the charge that Vicars was “a conventicle keeper.” Reeves then claimed conventicles were the root of Vicars’ offenses as “the nurseries of errors and heresies.” Further: “As private meetings are hurtful to the commonwealth, so these conventicles are to the hurt and breach of the peace of the church by errors and schisms. No man at first upon his own brain broacheth his errors, but by being confirmed in them in these private meetings, then they set them on foot &c. . .” Moreover like Laud, Reeves argued these were not “family duties” but

⁴⁴ J. Fielding, “Cawdrey, Daniel (1587/8-1664),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; PRO, SP 16/119/52, fol. 75-6, 69r-72. The balance of the complaints against Vicars show that his radicalism and heterodoxy stemmed mostly from efforts to attack sin and advance godliness. The charges though were exaggerated to an extent. In 1628, some of his radical opinions do not appear in Williams’ recantation order and apparently were not substantiated. Vicars said he rejected and never held opinions listed under the heading of “misconceived” and not proved. He admitted that some of what he taught was an attempt (however over the top) to bring his flock to repentance by instilling a sense of sin and fear of damnation. Further, in 1631 as well as 1628 and 1630, some statements appear taken out of context or crudely distorted, and Vicars and his witnesses gave more nuanced and moderate explanations of them. Nonetheless, charges of doctrinal irregularities had enough merit to draw godly condemnation. The relatively indulgent Bishop Williams saw fit to suspend Vicars, have him disavow controversial doctrines, and admonish him to demean himself “soberly, peaceably, and discretely.” (Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.II.21, fol. 18r; PRO SP 16/119/52, fol. 69r-76.) Significantly, some complaints against Vicars came not from his “ordinary auditors,” but outsiders brought in to spy on him and work together to find fault with sermons he preached over three years. (Gardiner, *High Commission*, p. 217, 220) In addition to Cawdrey, other witnesses included Mr. Cooke, parson of St. George’s, Stamford; Mr. Gibson, parson of Costerton Magna; Mr. Weld, parson of Pickworth, Lincoln; and Mr. Butler of Peterhouse. (PRO, SP 16/119/52, fol. 69-72) Also significant, many charges closely followed Anti-Calvinist caricatures of “puritans.” Indeed, Vicars was likely in the cross-hairs of an active group of regional Anti-Calvinists including Sir John Lambe and Robert Sibthorpe. Moreover, from at least May 9, 1633 the king himself considered Vicars’ petition to be freed from prison (Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.II.21, fol. 162v). Because the Lambe family was based in Northamptonshire, Nicholas Lambe, an alderman whom Vicars’ preached against, perhaps was a relation to John. (SP 16/119/52, fol., 69r-v; J. Fielding, “Lambe, Sir John (c.1566-1646),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004)) Further, John was then chancellor of Peterborough diocese, and the chancellor was noted as preventing Vicars from moving a public fast from a Wednesday to a Thursday. (SP 16/119/52, fol. 71) On November 28, 1633, the case was referred to Sir John Lambe then Dean of the Arches, Court of Canterbury (Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.II.21, fol. 273r).

“private exhortations and expoundings, &c. and he forbids them not to come (although he were a lodger with another man) but admitteth them freely.” Theophilus Field Bishop of St. David’s also thought them “conventicles” and not “household duties.”⁴⁵

To the charge of “private and unlawful conventicles,” Vicars and his advocates sought to portray them as something Calvinist conformists could accept. They attempted the lame excuse. Vicars “being a young man did pray and repeat sermons in the house where he lodged, and diverse of his parishioners came in and were present, but not by his invitation, &c.” He was just leading family devotions where he lodged to which some occasionally came. Also, they appealed to 73 canon, which banned ministers holding “private conventicles” and “secret meetings,” as it specified those that impeached the Book of Common Prayer, or the doctrine or discipline of the Church of England. Vicars had preached no “seditious opinions” and nothing against the Church of England and its doctrine. Vicars surely held this view when in his 1628 recantation he denied he practiced or allowed “any private conventicles in houses,” and claimed that he had “often preached against the same.”⁴⁶ The lack of mention of lashing out against “Arminians,” bishops, or altars in the charges supports Vicars’ defense. While Morton said nothing about conventicles, Marten did briefly note Vicars’ “unlawful conventicles.”⁴⁷ In short, Marten and Morton were brought to oppose Vicars from Calvinist priorities. Their fear of doctrinal error meshed with Anti-Calvinist fear of Calvinist teaching on predestination and voluntary religion.

⁴⁵ Gardiner, *High Commission*, p. 198, 212, 230.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 199, 206, 218. PRO, SP 16/119/52, fol. 76. *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiasticall* (London, 1604), Sig. M4v-N1r (STC 10070).

⁴⁷ Gardiner, *High Commission*, p. 223.

Like Vicars, the fiery Alexander Leighton perceived puritan fasts as innocent. He portrayed them as the sort that bishops like Hall and Williams would have easily tolerated. But with Laudian bishops leading a charge against them, Leighton applied categories that showed puritans were again identifying themselves against the church hierarchy and not with them. Leighton complained that under the charge of “conventicles,” bishops wrongly interpreted laws that targeted “plotting papists” to be “against the very best subjects, namely, such as gather themselves together, to humble their souls for the sins of the times, for the safety of Sion, and the deliverance of the common-weal.” This “persecuting of God’s people” was for their private fasts in which they were merely “joining their strength together, to prevail with the Lord.” Such fasts were warranted from the Word, the practice of “saints,” and the custom of churches. Yet by a factor of ten to one, bishops prosecuted puritans over papists, such that the “doves” were beaten while the “ravens and pye-maggots” were left free to prey on the state.⁴⁸

In an account of his “sufferings” in High Commission and Star Chamber, Leighton recalled an interview in prison with Sir Henry Marten in February 1630. Sir Henry raised “an old calumny” telling Leighton he heard he was “a great conventicle-keeper.” As above, Leighton framed puritan fasts in a way that appealed to what Calvinist conformists could accept if not embrace. He distinguished between fasts of “God’s people” which were lawful as they furthered order, and “conventicles” which were unlawful as they fostered disorder. Foremost, fasts were lawful as God strictly commanded them and no human law could forbid what scripture warranted. Also, God was the force that moved people to “afflicting the soul by humiliation.” Further, fasting

⁴⁸ Alexander Leighton, *An Appeal to the Parliament, Or Sions Plea Against the Prelacie* (n.p., 1628), p. 34-5, 331-32 (STC 15430).

and prayer were “the main preservers of peace” and “the preservers of the state” as they acquired all blessings God promised, and warded off all judgments He threatened. The godly humbled their souls “to meet God by repentance, that He may meet us in mercy.” They “soberly” and “holily” met “for the truth and state.” Further, the “mourners in Sion” kept the peace by pacifying others (i.e. proselytizing) or restraining their rage by “power of prayer.” Akin to Jurdaine’s comments to Hall, Leighton then stressed the great gap in danger between errant Protestants and Catholic insurgents. He affirmed: “say there were some anomaly in the carriage of the business, yet it is far from such an enormity as maketh up a conventicle.” Inspired by the Devil, conventicles met for evil purposes such as to disturb the peace, to plot revenge, and to plot rebellion against the state and “true religion.” In another appeal to godly sensibilities, Leighton claimed the “mischievous malice” of profane persons led to action against fasts.

Finally, Leighton’s self-understanding and identification of conformists is evident. He told Marten and Dr. Reeve that their “cruel usage” of him was “a pregnant evidence that they were not of God,” especially as at the same time Jesuits had free reign. Leighton claimed he moved Marten to tears and compassion for him though Reeve remained unconvinced and chided him for doing more hurt than Jesuits. Returned to his cell, Leighton had “much cheerfulness” and thanked God that he, “though the weakest and unworthiest of His soldiers,” had gotten the better of his adversaries in this encounter.⁴⁹ Of course, in his witness to “truth,” Leighton failed to see how puritan fasts

⁴⁹ Alexander Leighton, *An Epitome* (London, 1646), p. 6-10 (Thomason Tract, E.354[2]). John Bastwick had a similar view. He also complained that prelates judged and punished all “private Christian meetings” as “schismatical meetings and conventicles.” Yet, these meetings of godly people were innocent being “for the humbling of their souls before God, under His heavy displeasure, for their own sins, and for the abominations of the times; by which, they might divert judgments, and procure blessings to the Church and land, and mutually benefit and profit one another.” He claimed the precedent of the Apostles and commendation and command of Christ to do so. Prelates were like “Antichrist” in opposing these

at times agitated for reforms which would have led Calvinists conformists to deem them conventicles. For the present though, puritans thought Laudians were the one's illegally altering the religious settlement.

Other examples of Laudian or at least hard-line conformist views on fasts confirm the evidence analyzed above. Richard Carter claimed of puritans that:

“in their conventicles they pretend nothing but reformation, humiliation, fasting, and prayer, persuading poor ignorants, that they are all for reformation, reformation, and nothing but reformation, (forsooth) hereby they disturb the peace of our church wonderfully.”

Charles Swaile, rector of Hurst in Sussex, was ejected in 1645 for a variety of charges including that in sermons he “reproved keeping private days of humiliation, inveighing against such as kept them.”⁵⁰

This greater fear and prosecution of puritan fasts under the Caroline-Laudian regime created a backlash. Prynne complained that bishops had “murdered and tumbled into hell” many souls by their own ungodly actions and suppressing of godly activities including “private fasts.” In a list of grievances the puritan MP Sir Robert Harley wrote up in 1639 and presented to parliament in 1640, he placed prosecution of private fasts second only to restrictions on preaching as the top most issue. Echoing Vicars' defense, Harley sought to carve out space for godly people to have fasts that did not (at least in puritan eyes) attack church and state. The item read:

“Whether it be fit that Christians who meet together to fast and pray for subduing their sins, diverting judgments, for obtaining increase of grace, or some especial blessing for from God, not meddling with any business of state, should be punished for it under pretence of conventicles?”

examples, and “in persecuting and afflicting the dearest servants of God.” (John Bastwick, *The Letany of John Bastwick* (n.p., 1637), p. 14-15 (handwritten p. 114-15) (STC 1572))

⁵⁰ Richard Carter, *The Schismatic Stigmatized* (London, 1641), p. 2 (Wing C664). Cambridge University Library, MS Mm.1.38, fol. 417r. More zealous conformists defined a conventicle as any private religious meeting which included participants not of the same family. They thought such meetings inevitably caused “schism” and “contention” in the church. (Lambeth Palace Library, MS 680, fol. 74)

Likewise, the Shropshire curate William Voyle proposed less restrictions on preaching and fasts to the Long Parliament c.1640. Licensed preachers were to be able to hold lectures anywhere where none already existed. No licensed preacher was to be hindered from preaching. In their own cures, preachers were to be able to preach as they saw fit, licensed or not. Licensed preachers were to be able to preach in other men's cures with their consent. Voyle desired "the like for holding fasts against sins and other well taken just occasions as pestilence and other diseases, war, unfavorable weather, scarcity, dearth, and the like without troubling bishops, etc. for licenses."⁵¹ If as appears he applied the specifications for preaching to fasts, his proposals would have legalized all puritan fasts including ones to which godly people from other parishes and dioceses gaddled. Indeed, the easing of restrictions on preaching was a necessary precondition for such fasts to ensure supply of godly clergy.

For some puritans suffering Laudian prosecution for fasts became a badge of honor. In his life of the puritan minister Thomas Taylor (d. 1632), Joseph Caryl commented: "He was often exercised in keeping fasts, a duty then exposed both to injury and ignominy." John Beadle lauded the zeal of the godly under affliction in the pre-Civil War period:

"These people, when they were forbidden to meet together in private, where they used to afflict their souls before the Lord, for their own sins, and the evils of the times, by prayer and fasting; and that notwithstanding the severest censures of those in power, who condemned such meetings as unlawful conventicles; yet did meet, and that frequently, and (it is hoped) fruitfully."⁵²

⁵¹ William Prynne, *A Looking-glasse for All Lordly Prelates* (London, 1636), p. 99 (misnumbered 97) (STC 20466). BL, Add MS 70,002, fol. 251-2, 370.

⁵² Thomas Taylor, *The Works* (London, 1653), Sig. b3v (Wing T560). John Beadle, *The Journal or Diary of a Thankful Christian* (London, 1656), p. 45-6 (Wing B1557).

Clearly, the notion of being God's suffering little flock was powerful and persecution was even an inducement to attend illicit fasts. Action against puritans tended to increase their volatility and sense of alienation. It tended to increase local polarization and disorder.

While the Caroline-Laudian regime cracked down on fasts to restore order, escaping relatively unscathed was still possible in some cases. Sir Nathaniel Brent, the Vicar General, in his account of his March, 1637 visitation of the diocese of London provides one such example. He noted that Mr. Harrison was a lecturer where the puritan Sir Thomas Barrington dwelled, and had "prayed and preached above three hours in the time of the fast, and curtailed the prayers set out by authority." Brent let Harrison off with only an admonition because he was a "very old man" who seemed "very sorry," and diverse testified he was "very conformable."⁵³ That Harrison was surely John Harrison, the family chaplain to the Barrington's at Hatfield Broad Oak, Essex also explains the leniency as Sir Thomas likely intervened on his behalf.⁵⁴ While let off, this brush with authority would have left an impression. In the past, authorities likely would not have bothered to pursue this type of offense. Even if Laudians prosecuted only a few key puritans, these cases shaped godly perceptions far out of proportion to their numbers. And again without shared Calvinist sensibilities the alienation and suspicion of puritans would have been magnified. Who was prosecuting was as important as the prosecution.

The necessities of political circumstances as during the Short Parliament could also undercut prosecutions. On April 21, 1640 at Tower Hill in London at the house of a Mrs. Wilson the separatist congregation of Henry Jessey was "seeking the Lord with

⁵³ PRO, SP 16/351/100, fol. 261r-v. This case provides another example of the extraordinary energies fasts could draw out of even aged godly clergy. A 1636 account of the Diocese of London says Harrison preached and prayed four hours together. See: SP 16/339/53, fol. 123v.

⁵⁴ Sean Kelsey, "Barrington, Joan, Lady Barrington (c.1558-1641)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

fasting for the parliament (like to be dissolved unless they would grant subsidies for wars against the Scottish).” Jessey was taken while “praying for the king.” Archbishop Laud’s pursuivant Sir William Balford, Lieutenant of the Tower, arrested Jessey, Mrs. Jones, Mr. Brown and about 20 others and sent them to the Tower. The case was brought to the king, and Laud wanted them bound to sessions, but no indictment was brought against them at their appearance and they were freed.⁵⁵ Arguably, Charles chose the path of political expediency to help his agenda in parliament.

While Charles no doubt viewed his gesture as magnanimous, overlooking what he would have seen usurpation of his authority, he would have received little credit from puritans. They still would have believed their liberties violated, and merely thanked providence for a merciful deliverance. Moreover, without Calvinist sensibilities as common ground, and with Caroline-Laudian policies unchanged, no basis for trust existed. Additionally, Laudians sought to cow puritans by harassment rather than court convictions. The former left no fingerprints, gave Laudians political cover against charges of persecution, and avoided high profile court showdowns that became rallying cries for puritans.⁵⁶ So while many Calvinist bishops saw de-facto toleration of puritans as a permanent strategic decision, for Laudians dismissing or not bringing charges was only a tactical, short-term ploy until circumstances permitted stronger action.

That church and state no longer tolerated puritan fasts to a substantial degree had enormous consequences. Fasts were a critical means by which puritans lived out their self-understanding as the elect. They “stood in the gap” and protected the nation with

⁵⁵ Champlin Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters in the Light of Recent Research* (Cambridge, 1912), volume 2, p. 300-1.

⁵⁶ David Como, “Predestination and Political Conflict in Laud’s London,” *Historical Journal*, 46, 2 (2003), p. 263-94.

their fasts from divine punishment for sin. Under the likes of Hall and Williams they could, within limits, do so inside the structures of the church. But if authorities prosecuted them for so doing, what else could they be but “Antichristian” agents trying to silence godly prayers so the Lord would give England over to Satan and the Antichrist? If episcopacy allowed suppression of the godly fasts was not that form of government contrary to God’s design? Marginalizing Calvinist bishops undermined the creative fudges that kept puritans within the church and their energies channeled to serve proselytizing and reformation of manners. So under Charles, puritans became alienated, saw themselves as persecuted, and re-directed their energies against Caroline-Laudian policies in church and state.

CHAPTER IX

FACTION AGGRAVATED: PURITAN SELF-UNDERSTANDING 1625-1640

Laudians undermined moderate Calvinist bishops by squeezing them between becoming hawkish enforcers of conformity and being tarred as “puritan bishops” and “favorers of puritans” who would be out of favor at court. The marginalization of Calvinist bishops like Hall and Williams removed the key soothing and moderating influences over puritans that had so successfully co-opted them. At the same time, puritans viewed the departure of Caroline-Laudian rule from Elizabethan-Jacobean precedent as a headlong plunge to Rome. Increasing anger and anxiety led to the perception of a “popish plot.” Archbishop Abbot wrote to the bishops of his province April 9, 1629 to relay that the king thought the late “disunion” in parliament let some “extraordinary distempers” rise to disturb the peace. Some preachers “little less then seditiously divulge that religion doth totter, and the purity of the Gospel is in great hazard.” The king wanted bishops and archdeacons to stop this and ensure preaching of obedience to the highest magistrate. No undutiful speeches were to take place in the pulpit “as if there were like to be any innovation or alteration in religion.”¹ Charles had good reason to make such orders. The April 10, 1630 articles in High Commission against Charles Chauncey, vicar of Ware in Hertfordshire, related he preached there was a “great alteration” in religion, that “idolatry” had been admitted into the church, and that preaching the Gospel would be suppressed.² Likewise, the November 17, 1636 articles

¹ PRO, SP 16/140/37.

² PRO, SP 16/164/40, fol. 57v-58v.

of the Commission for Causes Ecclesiastical against Henry Burton for his November 5 sermons included a similar charge. In his sermon, Burton wondered at how “our new re-founders of popery” had wrought “such a monstrous and sudden alteration, notwithstanding the long establishment, and clear light of the Gospel, and the strong sense of good laws, whereby it is hedged about.” He claimed their “innovations” made the people fear “an universal alteration of religion.”³ C. 1634 Henry Dade, Commissary of Suffolk, wrote to Laud complaining of how Samuel Ward’s preaching about alteration of religion caused “giddiness” in the people.⁴ In his diary entries covering 1635-38, Samuel Rogers made frequent and desperate pleas to God for “thy church” in England and on the continent. He wrote of “cursed times,” “decaying times,” “mournful times,” “sorrowful times,” and “stormy sad days.” He prayed “Lord preserve thy truth which is now tottering.” Against Laudians he exclaimed “my soul abhors those cursed sycophants by day more and more.”⁵ November 25, 1633 Bishop Lindsell of Peterborough wrote to Sir John Lambe, Dean of Arches that Mr. Perne of Wilby was a puritan and nonconformist engaging in “popular preaching.” Specifically, in a sermon he complained of “the overflowings of popery everywhere in this land, and wished or hoped, that God would raise up a standard to hinder it.”⁶ Sir Simonds D’Ewes noted for December, 1634 how “the vast desolations of God’s church abroad, and the general hatred of truth and piety at home, filled my soul with frequent sorrow and amazement.”⁷ June 13, 1636 John Andrewes, rector of Beconsfield in the Archdeaconry of Buckingham wrote to Laud

³ PRO, SP 16/335/69 fol. 143r. Henry Burton, *For God, and the King* ([Amsterdam], 1636), p. 105, 147, 56, 92 (STC 4142).

⁴ PRO, SP 16/260/17.

⁵ Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 38, 99, 135, 144, 181-82, 191, 199, 207, 210, 263, 273, 339, 364.

⁶ PRO, SP 16/251/25.

⁷ James Halliwell (ed.), *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds D’Ewes* (London, 1845), vol. 2, p. 110.

about Mr. Pennington, a parishioner who complained that since Laud's visitation a gap had been opened for "the increasing of popery and spreading of Arminianism."⁸ Articles of the commission for causes ecclesiastical against Richard Walker related that on Friday, February 7, 1640, he preached at St. Leonard's East Cheape, London that there was "great cause of mourning" because religion was decaying. Pelagians were spreading error and heresy, the imprisoning of faithful ministers stopped them from speaking against the errors of the times, and the people were living in ignorance and blindness.⁹ The Northamptonshire puritan, Robert Woodford in his diary entries for 1637-40 perceived divine judgment on Protestant churches and lamented "this evil and troublous time." He frequently prayed against, and heard sermons against, idolatry, superstition, popery, Arminianism, the corruption of God's ordinances, profaneness, sinful innovations, and will-worship or the inventions of men in worship. More generally, he prayed for God to deliver the church, and feared a "plot" of wicked, superstitious men against Truth and the Gospel.¹⁰

Laudian-Caroline policies also raised expectations among puritans that God was preparing England for destruction. In addition to the policies themselves, puritans discerned an array of other "signs" and "portents" warning of such. Whereas in the past puritans focused blame on reform not having gone far enough, insufficient preaching, and mundane "sins of the land" like fornication and drunkenness, they now redirected their narratives to focus on "backsliding," and the loss of doctrinal "truth" and the Gospel. In their pamphlets on signs and wonders, puritans claimed "superstitious," "popish" and

⁸ PRO, SP 16/326/18.

⁹ PRO, SP 16/446/71.

¹⁰ Oxford University, New College, MS 9502, p. 17, 138; 12, 19, 195, 197, 200, 203-4, 209, 215, 226, 311, 352, 355-56, 371, 385, 487; 386, 464.

“idolatrous” worship was supplanting “pure worship.” In particular, they gave attention to the destruction of several parish churches in violent storms 1638-40, especially Withcomb in Devonshire and Anthony in Cornwall. In addition to sensational descriptions of death and devastation, many accounts carefully noted that some storms had hit during Sunday services while parishioners were receiving communion.¹¹ None of this would have surprised Laud. On March 3, 1616, he wrote Bishop Richard Neile worried that puritans would claim a recent monstrous birth in Gloucester was a divine judgment on his turning the communion table into an altar in the cathedral church there.¹²

Significantly, puritans like Prynne justified calls for fasts by pointing to such “visible prognostics from heaven.” Among many signs of divine wrath, Prynne singled out one seen in Sussex and other places February 23, 1636 where three suns and an inverted rainbow appeared in the sky. Supposedly, while the suns were very rare, the rainbow was only seen once before in any age and that too was in England. Prynne referred his readers to Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* and Dr. George Hakewill’s recounting of the same from Foxe in his *Apology*, which told that two suns and an inverted rainbow had appeared in London and Westminster on February 15, 1555. Prynne argued these “prodigies” portended “Queen Mary’s bloody unhappy days” and cited a marginal note to the passage where Foxe commented “strong sights seen before the coming in of King

¹¹ *The Barbarous and Inhumane Proceedings Against the Professors of the Reformed Religion Within the Dominion of the Duke of Savoy* (London, 1655), p. 50-4 (Wing B687). Daniel Parsons (ed.), *The Diary of Sir Henry Slingsby* (London, 1836), p. 28-30. *A True Relation of Those Sad and Lamentable Accidents, Which Happened In and About the Parish Church of Withycombe in Dartmoors* (London, 1638)(STC 25607). *A Second and Most Exact Relation of Those Sad and Lamentable Accidents, Which Happened In and About the Parish Church of Wydecombe Neere the Dartmoors* (London, 1638)(STC 25609). PRO, SP 16/401/53. J.V. [John Vicars], *Prodigies & Apparitions or Englands Warning Pieces* (n.p., [1642-43]), p. 28-31, 38-44 (Wing V323). Sir Richard Carew, *The Voyce of the Lord in the Temple* (London, 1640)(STC24870). Lewes Hughes, *Certaine Greevances* ([London], 1640)(STC 13917.5), p. 32-37. BL, Add MS 21,935, fol. 16r-18v, 2-4, 9-16r.

¹² William Laud, *The Works of . . . William Laud* (Oxford, 1847-60), volume 6, part 1, p. 240-1.

Philip and subversion of religion.” Prynne further linked the signs of 1636 and 1555 noting they appeared the same month, time of day, and continued the same length of time. Prynne claimed the rainbow was a sign of “a covenant of mercy and peace” as between God and Noah. By contrast, an inverted rainbow was like a bow pointing an arrow towards earth, a sign that God was at war and wrathful. The 1636 signs led Prynne to conclude:

“that we having so long waged war against heaven with our prodigious shameless manifold open sins, (see Jer. 3. 8. 9. Jer. 3. 3.) and so far broken our covenant and long continued league with God in the sincerity and purity of His ordinances, He hath now a resolution to break off His covenant of peace and grace with us, and to denounce open war against us from heaven.”

Specifically, Prynne cited “our backslidings toward Rome within these 4 years past.”

The only consideration that kept him from expecting the same consequences now was his trust in the king’s attachment to Protestant religion, and “those many godly Christians of all sorts and ranks of men, which are everywhere scattered up and down among us (though many by our bishops’ tyranny have been forced to fly the realm, and more like to follow).” Prynne saw the English church and state being undermined by “the open desperate designs and practices of some swaging domineering prelates” and “the secret treacheries of the Jesuits, priests, and papists.” But he claimed confidence that as these “plots” were now exposed, that the king and lords would speedily proceed against the “plotters” and “fomenters” of “all these late dangerous innovations.” To this work and the diverting of divine judgments, he hoped “all true English hearts that have any spark of loyalty in them to their sovereign, love to their country, or zeal to the established religion

of our church, which in their breast, will now without more delay join their uttermost assistance, (it being now high time or never) thus to do.”¹³

Prynne saw the recent pestilence as “arrows” shot from God’s bow. He claimed the altar policy of “our Rominizing novellers” was “most gross idolatry” and “among other several particulars of our late backsliding to the Church of Rome” had brought plague down and other judgments which were “likely to increase upon us to our utter ruin.” England’s “innovations” and “apostasies” in doctrines, ceremonies, and religion had defiled the church, corrupted worship, depraved lives, and thus provoked God to send heavy plagues in many places especially London and Newcastle, the latter of which was “almost wholly un-peopled.” These “innovations” ensured “the increase and ushering in of popery.” Writing c. July, he lamented that while the “arrows” of pestilence fall thicker every day that “we have not yet put on the arms of public fasting, prayer, humiliation and repentance, (but rather of feasting, dancing, masking, playing, chambering, dallying, and what not,) the only armor of proof that can ward off their deadly stroke.” The pestilence would continue to spread “till we all jointly humble ourselves with fasting, weeping and mourning both in public and private for our sins and innovations, reform our wicked and profane ungodly lives, and purge out all these idolatries, superstitions, errors, ceremonies and innovations that have defiled our church.” By office, the king was responsible speedily and thoroughly to reform to stop the pestilence. The king was personally accountable before God’s tribunal so if he was negligent the Lord could strike him and

¹³ William Prynne, *A Quench Coale* (Amsterdam, 1637), second pagination, p. 316-21 (STC 20474). Note: Prynne altered the terms “strangest” and “strange” in Foxe and Hakewill to “strongest” and “strong” in his quotations. Nehemiah Wallington copied this section of Prynne in his journal. (BL, Sloane MS 648, fol. 61r-v).

his family with sickness or death in “the day of His wrath.” Other arrows besides plague would follow.¹⁴

Samuel Rogers writing August 13, 1636 claimed the plague “follows the court,” and along with recent drought was a forerunner of greater judgment. The provoking sin was the prevailing the last seven years of “idolatrous superstitious Arminians.”¹⁵

Similarly, in Northampton, Miles Burkitt was a leading opponent of the imposition of Laudian altar policy in 1638. The coincidental outbreak of plague in Northampton at same time led local puritans like Robert Woodford and others to view it as divine judgment on the altar policy.¹⁶ An ensuing fast pressed this conclusion. Dr. Robert Sibthorpe complained to Sir John Lambe June 29, 1638 that in Northampton men were still “inveighing against idolatry, yet idolizing their own inventions.” On Thursday, June 21 they had had what he contemptuously referred to as a “preaching fast” by Mr. Ball in the forenoon, and Mr. Newton in the afternoon.¹⁷

The taking away of godly ministers by suspension, deprivation, or death was another sign of God leaving England. In 1636-37, Samuel Rogers railed against “that cursed wretch Wren” for attacking puritan ministers and suppressing lectures in Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. On July 28, 1636 he wrote: “Lord regard thy church sinking, the enemies tread it down; the hedge is broken, and lies open; oh set in stakes that may uphold it; Dear God yet dwell with sinful, rebellious, idolatrous, oppressing, profane England.” He again lamented on October 26, 1636: “the Lord thus plucks out our stakes

¹⁴ Prynne, *Quench Coale*, first pagination, p. 43-44; second pagination, p. 315-16, 318.

¹⁵ Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 145-46.

¹⁶ For Burkitt’s resistance see: PRO, SP 16/395/79, 16/406/88, 16/393/92 fol. 178r, 16/499/44, 16/393/15, 16/387/70, 16/393/75. For Woodford’s account see: Oxford, New College, MS 9502, p. 17, 148-49, 226. For background on the plague in Northampton see: PRO, SP 16/390/34; 16/399/7; 16/398/51.

¹⁷ PRO, SP 16/393/75 fol. 144r.

that are sound out of the hedge, and rotten ones are put in; how soon is such an hedge pushed down to let wrath come in.” Nicholas Estwick in his December 19, 1631 funeral sermon for the renowned Robert Bolton warned that it was a sign of God’s wrath, and a forerunner of heavy judgments to have “excellent instruments of God” taken away. When the gardener takes away the “wall and fence” and plucks up the “choicest plants,” he would allow the garden to be defaced.¹⁸

Fears of “popery” at home and abroad were foremost in puritan minds. William Whiteway of Dorchester noted in his diary April 1, 1631 that “a solemn general private fast” was kept that day for the success of the King of Sweden in battle.¹⁹ The moderate puritan Samuel Ward of Sidney Sussex College on June 19, 1625 had a list of 16 “motives to fasting and public humiliation.” Topping it was the “fear of increasing popery” centered on the new Catholic queen’s chapel. The second and seventh items concerned the “prevailing of the enemy” on the continent.²⁰

Perhaps the richest source is the lists of heads of prayers of the puritan Harley family for their private fasts at Brampton Bryan, Herefordshire. The lists cover a critical period being dated (sometimes twice showing two uses) as December 17, 1624 and June 8, 1625; February 26 c.1626; March 30, 1627 and February 29, 1628; February 22, 1633 and April 12, 1633 (with an additional copy dated February 22 with some alterations); and January 24, 1634. The Laudian-Caroline changes to public fasts were have reviewed challenged these prayers almost point for point.

¹⁸ Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 140, 172, 184, 186, 211. Nicholas Estwick, *A Learned and Godly Sermon* (London, 1633), p. 60-1, 64 (STC 10556).

¹⁹ David Underdown (ed.), *William Whiteway of Dorchester His Diary 1618 to 1635* (Dorchester Record Society, vol. 12, 1991), p. 115-16.

²⁰ Cambridge University, Sidney Sussex College, MS 45, fol. 63r.

First, the prayers gave much attention to the well-being of “God’s church” at home and abroad, and the defeat of “the plots of all the enemies of it.” Specifically, the Harleys prayed for the “distressed churches,” and “specially the Reformed churches,” in various parts of the continent including the Palatinate. They prayed for the Huguenot churches to be delivered from “persecution.” They prayed for the unity and success of Protestants in Thirty-Years War. Closely related, in prayers for the royal family, the Harleys not only named the king and queen and their children, but “the Queen of Bohemia and her child” or “the King and Queen of Bohemia, [and] their child.” The Harleys thus retained the titles of Frederick and Elizabeth long after Catholic forces forced them into exile. These priorities found little support during the personal rule as Charles lacked money for military adventures and had no intention of calling a parliament to get it.

Second, in their prayers for others in authority, the Harleys only named the council, nobility, judges, and other magistrates in their prayers. They omitted mention of bishops and archbishops. Also, throughout the years prayers for the universities were a staple, and surely increasingly focused on the Anti-Calvinist takeover due to royal control over appointments of chancellors.

Third, the Harleys prayed for “the Gospel” both at large and in the king’s dominions. They desired its “freedom,” “free passage,” and “prosperity.” They thanked God for the “means” and “continuance” of the Gospel locally.²¹ Also, in 1633-34 they

²¹ On January 24, 1634 they prayed “for this place that God would in rich mercy restore the Gospel to us by one after His own heart.” (BL, Add MS 70,062). This refers to the death on October 16, 1633 of the puritan Thomas Pierson, who had been rector of Brampton Bryan since 1612. In 1634, the puritan Stanley Gower took his place. Jacqueline Eales, “Pierson, Thomas (c.1573-1633),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Jacqueline Eales, “Gower, Stanley (bap. 1600?, d. 1660),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. I thank Dr. Eales for kindly answering questions about the Harley manuscripts and confirming various names in them.

prayed for “the case of the feofees” whereby from 1625 groups of puritan merchants, lawyers, and clergy bought lay impropriations as they became vacant to appoint godly ministers to these livings. The Harleys also prayed for “our exercises” in Cheshire, Lancashire, London, Leominster, Weobley, and Salop. Exercises were heirs to the banned Elizabethan prophesyings where clergy came together for conference and expounding scripture to improve preaching. The 1633-34 lists go beyond apparent concern for their success to hope merely “for the continuance of our exercises.” Also crucial to the Gospel was that while the 1624-25 prayer wanted “popery” out of the land, by 1627-28 the suppression of “popery and Arminianism” in the “churches of Britain” and the “king’s dominions” had been added. Finally, following what they took as a Gospel requirement, the Harleys prayed for “the sanctification of the sabbath” in England. Contrarily, Laud and Charles believed restrictions on preaching were necessary for order and to restore balance in church services by elevating prayer and ceremony. They rejected a “sabbath” as undermining harmless pastimes and recreations, and driving people to Catholicism.

Fourth, their prayers for “the ministers of the Word and sacraments” included the Hereforshire ministry in Brampton, Wigmore, Leintwardine, and Aylton, as well as in Knighton, Radnorshire. In the February 22, 1633 and April 12, 1633 list a marginal note of “Mr. Herring, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Holker” appears next to this prayer. Herring was the radical puritan Juliness Herring (1582-1644) of Shrewsbury, Shropshire who was part of a puritan network stretching from Cheshire through Shropshire and Herefordshire. Herring had had Thomas Pierson of Brampton preach in the town. He was in trouble with Laud in the 1630s. Cotton was John Cotton (1585-1652) who at the time was in

trouble with the High Commission and considering leaving England. Just who Holker was remains elusive, but the trend here is evident.²²

In addition to puritan clergy, the Harleys prayed for puritan gentry and their families like Lord and Lady Vere, Lord Brook, Lord Saye, Lord Conway, and “all Christian families.” The prayers for “the children of affliction” likely concerned more than friends and family suffering illness or misfortune. The prayer in 1634 “for those that are gone out of the land” clearly was for puritans who had emigrated to New England or the continent. Indeed, they also prayed for the “British churches” in New England. Furthermore, the Harley’s fasts were coordinated with the private fasts of other puritans. They prayed “for all families that join with us,” for a blessing on “those that join with us elsewhere,” and that God would grant the mercies they often begged for “to those that join with us this day in other places, especially to those that have freely assisted us in the like duties.” For Laud, all these prayers were for a fifth column of seditious and factious persons who were undermining the established church. Indeed, Laud and Charles saw such godly networks as little less than a conspiracy.

Fifth, parliament was a top concern, and that Sir Robert Harley was a prominent puritan MP added to this typical godly focus. The December 17, 1624 and June 8, 1625 prayers thanked God “for the good success of the last parliament.” The 1627-28 prayers hoped “for a happy parliament.” During the personal rule, the prayers for 1633-34 hoped “for a happy meeting in parliament.” But for Charles and Laud parliament was

²² Jacqueline Eales, “Herring, Julines (1582-1644),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, online edn, May 2005. Another marginal note further down the list names a “Mr. Foyssell” next to a prayer for the direction of Mr. Dun. This puritan minister was Thomas Froyssell (c. 1610-1673) who was one of 13 ministers appointed to use the library of Thomas Pierson. (BL Add MS 70,062; Jacqueline Eales, “Froyssell, Thomas (c.1610-1673),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004).

dominated by a puritan rabble bent on undermining monarchy and religion for private gain.

Sixth, the Harleys' sense of history is emphasized in their thanksgivings to God. These included not only "our particular deliverances" but "the public deliverances" of the king and land from "our enemies in 88," "the powder plot," "the plague," and "the downfall of papists at Blackfriars." The latter occurred in 1623 when the building in which the Jesuit Robert Drury was preaching suddenly collapsed. Also, they gave thanks for the life of the king "and his safe return," a reference to his arrival back in England from Spain in 1623 after unsuccessful marriage negotiations. Charles' return and the failure of the Spanish Match were met jubilantly by not only puritans but a broad swath of the population. Yet for Laud, all these commemorations only advanced a hysterical and fanatic anti-Catholicism that he saw as deterring recusants from joining the Church of England.

Finally, the Harleys labored "to renew covenant with God." They prayed "that God will be pleased in mercy to establish us in the covenant as He hath received us to renew it with Him." Also, "that God would enable us in mercy to keep covenant with Him as He hath to renew it." Among scriptures for renewing covenant listed was Nehemiah 9 in which the Israelites separated themselves from all strangers, returned to the laws of God, and recounted all Lord's great providential blessings to them and all their sinful acts of disobedience. They prayed for God "to receive us graciously to renew covenant with Him and enable us to keep it better hereafter."²³ As with the Scottish Covenanters, Laud would have viewed this covenant and its agenda as a mere "cloak" or "pretence" for private interests.

²³ BL, Add MS 70,089/93; BL, Add MS 70,001, fol. 238r; BL, Add MS 70,062.

In addition to puritan fasts, official public fasts also became increasingly divided, even physically. On the December 8, 1640 public fast “for the parliament” at Cambridge University Calvinists apparently dominated the proceedings. Specifically, a Mr. Shute and a Mr. Lynford were the preachers at St. Mary’s. Shute was most likely Josiah Shute, rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, Lombard St. who preached at the 1625 fast to Commons, and later was nominated to preach before the Commons at the May, 1642 monthly fast.²⁴ That this was the case is also suggested as Anti-Calvinists refused to join the fast and observed it separately. A 1641 petition to the Long Parliament against Anti-Calvinists at the university noted of Queen’s College: “The last public fast December 8, 1640, Dr. Martin contrary to the designment of the Vice-chancellor and Heads came not out in the morning to the university church but kept that solemnity with his fellows and scholars in his own chapel affronting hereby the public order of the consistory.”²⁵ As we saw in the previous two chapters, Calvinists and Anti-Calvinists had very divergent views about a proper fast, what occasioned the need for a fast, and what reforms were necessary to appease the Lord.

Two relatively radical examples suggest what the Cambridge Anti-Calvinists wished to avoid enduring even in a more moderate kind. The Northamptonshire puritan Robert Woodford on the same December 8, 1640 public fast for removing judgments and

²⁴ James Crossley (ed.), *The Diary and Correspondence of Dr. John Worthington* (Chetham Society, vol. 13, 1847), sub-volume 1, p. 9. Josiah Shute was rector of St. Mary Woolnoth 1611-43, and Archdeacon of Colchester 1642-43 when he was ejected. Shute may also have been Josiah’s equally godly brothers Timothy and Thomas, but Thomas was in Chester if still alive, and Timothy was a prebend of Exeter 1630-45, and rector of Holy Trinity Exeter from 1635 before his ejection. See: John Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses* (Cambridge, 1927), part 1, volume 4, p. 71-2. Vernon Snow and Anne Young (eds.), *The Private Journals of the Long Parliament 7 March to 1 June, 1642*, (New Haven, 1987), p. 232, 370. *An Elegiacall Commemoration of . . . Mr. Josiah Shute* (London, 1643)(Thomason Tracts, E.75[1]). Lynford was possibly Samuel Linford, fellow of St. Catherine’s, junior proctor 1641-42, and subsequent prebend of Exeter in 1642 who was ejected before the Restoration. See: Venn and Venn, *Alumni*, part 1, volume 3, p. 87.

²⁵ BL, *Harleian* 7019, fol. 78.

a blessing on the parliament noted that Mr. Holmes preached in the morning, and Mr. Ball preached and prayed in the afternoon for four and a half hours. He jotted in his diary: “Lord remove bishops and idolatry and superstition and pestering ceremonies, and thy plagues out of the land, and send forth thy light and thy truth. . .”²⁶ Thomas Edwards was prosecuted in the High Commission Court for preaching a sermon at Mercers Chappell on a fast day in July, 1640 “against the bishops and their faction.”²⁷

Nor were divisions only over religious matters. Giles Randall, minister at Easton in county of Huntingdon, on the general fast day Wednesday November 23, 1636 in the parish church of Easton purportedly spoke “scandalous and factious” words. Witnesses claimed he publicly preached that the loan and ship monies were among the “sins of the land” causing God’s wrath on the nation. Further, he called the taking of the loan and ship money a “felony” and “oppression,” and that without restitution there could be no salvation.²⁸ Sir John Eliot (1592-1632) in his memoirs *Negotium posterorum* had suspicions of various persons noting of the August 3, 1625 weekly fast by both houses: “The outward piety seemed great and many, doubtless, had it truly in their hearts. Yet some insincerity was suspected where the practice and professions did not meet, that holiness being distrusted which has not righteousness to accompany it.” Conrad Russell argues that Eliot was a classicist and not a biblicist. Contrary to the conspiracy theories of puritans, his were secular derived from his reading of Roman history. He saw individuals seeking arbitrary power to achieve personal ends as the threat to liberties and

²⁶ Oxford University, New College, MS 9502, p. 522.

²⁷ Thomas Edwards, *The First and Second Part of Gangraena*, third edition (London, 1646), first pagination, p. 65-6 (Wing E230).

²⁸ PRO, SP 16/355/8, 16/361/64. In his defense, Randall claimed he only preached against “unjust gains” including usury, and the way the money was taken which he believed was contrary to the eighth commandment. In particular, he claimed he preached against the unjust levying of ship money which he saw as falling more on the poor than the rich, and not ship money per se. (PRO, SP 16/361/64)

the rule of law, rather than ideologies like “Arminianism.” Eliot’s secular conspiracy theories though converged with puritan fears of a popish plot such that he found common cause with MPs like John Pym in attacking the Duke of Buckingham and supporting the Petition of Right.²⁹ Indeed, Sir Francis Rous in the 1626 parliament, and Sir William Bulstrode, Sir Thomas Hoby, and Sir Robert Phelips in the 1628 parliament supported having a fast in part because they claimed a “devil” or “devils” in the kingdom were so powerful they could not be “cast out” but by prayer and fasting.³⁰ Clearly, Buckingham, “Arminians,” and Catholics at court were among the “devils” they had in mind. For example, a 1628 article against John Vicars, parson of St. Mary’s Stamford, told that after the death of Buckingham he prayed God would make the king rejoice at the death of “that wicked Achan, or these wicked Achans.”³¹

While fasts demarked some as devils, it supposedly marked others as saints. In addition to their December Ember fast, in January and early February 1639, Edward, Brilliana and many in the Harley family had other fasts. They “set Wednesday apart,” had a “private day,” and “sought the Lord.” Brilliana was delighted they often coordinated these observances on the same day or at least adjoining weeks. Writing Edward on February 8, 1639 (the day after Ash Wednesday), she thanked God “we kept Wednesday last” and reflected on their joint prayers:

“If ever we had cause to pray, it is now. Sure the Lord is about a glorious work; He is refining His church; and happy will those days be, when she comes out like gold: and if

²⁹ Maija Jansson and William Bidwell (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1625* (New Haven, CT, 1987), p. 533. Conrad Russell, “Eliot, Sir John (1592-1632),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, online edn., Oct. 2006.

³⁰ William Bidwell and Maija Jansson (eds.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1626* (New Haven 1992, volume 3, p. 410. Robert Johnson, Mary Keeler, Maija Jansson Cole, William Bidwell (eds.), *Commons Debates 1628* (New Haven, 1977), volume 2, p. 33-4. BL, Additional MS 36,825, fol. 23r. PRO, SP 16/98/63.

³¹ PRO, SP 16/119/52, fol. 70. In submission, Vicars claimed if in his prayer after his sermon he said it was their desire for God to “cut off then amend those cursed Achans,” that that was a “slip of my tongue.” (PRO, SP 16/119/52, fol. 76).

ever wicked men had cause to fear, it is now; for certainly the Lord will call them to account. Their day is at hand. Let us be found mourners, that so we may be marked.”³²

Likewise in his sermon notebook Sir Richard Newdigate, wrote of the Wednesday, July 31, 1644 fast that Mr. Harcourt preached that those humbled for sin in a nation would have “a mark set upon them for deliverance.”³³ As discussed earlier, the godly took fasts as “winnowing times.”

The divisive nature of fasts under Caroline-Laudian rule was magnified by the intense affective experience of fasts which was heightened in times of crisis such as the 1630s. With greater fears of God leaving England and greater hopes in deliverance through God’s covenant promises, and larger swings between the two, fasts were more intense. Fasts kept spiritual temperatures high, and created a sense of unity with others through a shared trial against a common enemy. Further, fasts not only fostered a sense of being “God’s people” remaining faithful in a time of trial, but assurance of election.

Samuel Rogers was typical in that in the mid-1630s he participated in public and private fasts with William Sedgewick, rector of Farnham in Essex, George Hughes (Sedgewick’s old tutor from Pembroke College, Oxford), and Jeremiah Dyke of Epping in Essex. Rogers ran in puritan circles at Cambridge University and later in Essex with the Harlakenden’s, Barrington’s, and clergy like Sedgewick and Spurstowe. He wrote on Thursday, December 18, 1635 that he fasted at Epping and “the Lord went out mightily in enlarging my heart; and though I can not see so clearly, yet the Lord hath made me to lie at His feet; and there will I perish if I die; Lord answer our poor suits for our land, and selves.” On the Wednesday, November 16, 1636 public fast he reflected:

³² Thomas Lewis (ed.), *Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley* (Camden Society, old series, vol. 58, 1854), p. 22-3, 29.

³³ Warwick Record Office, CR 136A/10, p. 262.

“Now we fast at Farnham, the Lord enlarges Mr. Sedgewick mightily, he sp[eaks] plainly: the Lord thaws my heart sweetly; and I can lie down in some sweet assurance of acceptance through Christ; Oh Lord let none of our poor suits be lost. Oh dear God, be not angry ag[ainst] the prayers of thy dear ones, who in the strength of thy covenant have gone out to thee. Oh down, down with the enemies of thy truth, and Lord lift up the heads of thy people.”

On November 17 he could say:

“There is some effect yet remaining upon my heart of the fast, my soul looks yet to the house of mourning; and I will piece in with them; Mine eyes wait upon thee. Oh thy church, thy church Lord. Restore the liberties of thy faithful ones, shut not thine ears to the prayers of the saints. But pour down thy wrath upon the kingdom of Antichrist that all his brats may come to ruin.”

Regarding the Wednesday, November 23, 1636 public fast he noted:

“Fasting and prayer at Farnham. Mr. Hu[gh]es; the Lord thaws my heart, wrings out many tears and my soul can a little rock itself upon my G[od] of graces. I will lie down in faith, and peace. The Lord hath drawn near my soul, and I will praise Him, and lie down in the arms of my first husband.”

The next day November 24 found Rogers still affected by the fast:

“My soul is yet among the mourners. My thoughts are still upon Zion. Oh thy church, thy church in England: Lord preserve it. Turn away thine angry countenance from the prayers of thy saints, and yet smile upon them; and make us yet the joy of the Earth.”

For the Wednesday, November 30, 1636 public fast he wrote: “Fasting and prayer at Mr. Harrison’s, my soul rejoices to be with the mourners in Zion, that I may piece in with them.” Harrison was likely John Harrison, the chaplain to the puritan Barrington family at Hatfield Broad Oak. On Tuesday, February 28, 1637 Rogers went to a private fast at George Hughes’s. The results were extraordinary:

“The Lord mightily went out with Mr. Sedge[wick] and with me, more then ever I found I think. Oh how hath the Lord wound up my heart to heaven, pitcht me upon Christ; and sent me down strength through Him; and gave me footing for faith in His promise; and great raptures of joy, and peace from thence.”

On Wednesday June 21, 1637 he went to a fast at G. Perry’s and noted: “The Lord went out wonderfully with me. I think I never was so carried out expre[ssing] ag[ainst] the

enemies of the ch[urch].” Further, this fast like many others was part of a network of such fasts as he intriguingly described it as “secretly general every 2 weeks.”³⁴

The Northamptonshire puritan Robert Woodford recorded similar experiences in his diary about the November 17, 1640 public fast for removing judgment and for “a blessing upon the parliament.” He noted: “God did wonderfully enlarge the hearts of His ministers and people.” Woodford was at Adermanbury Church “about 14 hours together” as three ministers (Edmund Calamy and two strangers) preached and prayed one after another. Commenting on Marshall and Burges preaching to the Commons he noted they “delivered glorious things with extraordinary zeal and fervor.” In summation he jotted: “This hath been a heavenly day.”³⁵

Further sense of the intensity of puritan fasts comes from the February 12, 1638 articles against Stanley Gower, rector of Brampton-Bryan. Purportedly, all his sermons aimed to persuade the people “that the times are dangerous and superstitious.”

Furthermore:

“They do often appoint fasts of their own creating and upon such a day Mr. Gower will go into the pulpit between eight or nine of [the] clock in the morning and there pray and preach (ex tempore) til past one of the clock following; then they sing a psalm but Mr. Gower cometh not forth the pulpit til it be past five of the clock following if daylight continue so long.”³⁶

³⁴ Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 77, 179, 181, 183, 208-9, 239. Joyce Sampson, “Sedgewick, William (bap. 1609, d. 1663/4),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Jason Yiannikko, “Dyke, Jeremiah (bap. 1584, d. 1639),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Personal tragedy apparently hampered Rogers’ experience on November 30: “The Lord gave enlargement, yet a dead child. I will yet hang upon thee and wait.” Rogers apparently blamed his “hellish, proud, base heart” for the loss. Contrary to his experiences of afterglow, the next day, December 1, he lamented “the Lord is not near with His smiles to my soul.” Another poor experience occurred the following week in the Wednesday, December 7, 1636 public fast: “Fasting and praying; I go to Epping and am disappointed of Mr. Dike. My heart so sad and weak, that I could hardly get it up; and likely for that; a trying journey makes me unfit for all things; my heart yet joins with the mourners, and mine eyes look up.” (ibid., p. 183, 185) For more on the Essex network of puritans see: Tom Webster, *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1997).

³⁵ Oxford University, New College, MS 9502, p. 515. After noting his fear of parliament breaking up November 19, by December 2 he then had “great hopes” for it. (ibid., p. 516, 520)

³⁶ PRO, SP 16/381/92.

The hysteria raised by the reign of Charles I and the Thirty Years War gave occasion to puritan fasts with a frequency as well as an intensity that even puritans accounted unusual. Thomas Edwards wistfully recalled the “ado” among the godly in the 1620s and 1630s when “popish innovations,” “popery,” and “Arminianism” were publicly preached and printed with license: “how did they that feared the Lord speak often one to another, keep fasts in private, speak against the bishops and their chaplains, talk of nothing but leaving the land?” Joseph Lister (b. 1627) recalled the period c.1639-40 as a time when Christians were decried as “puritans.” With many ministers silenced, and many going to New England, the godly were filled with sadness and foreboding concluding “that popery was like to be set up and the light of the Gospel put out.” With pride Lister asked rhetorically: “O what fasting and praying, publicly and privately, what wrestling with God was there day and night?” These fasts were “weeping, praying, and wrestling seasons” kept day and night in his mother’s house with “great strictness and severity” such that none ate for twenty-four hours. In 1640, arguing the need for a formal covenant along with public fasts to secure deliverance and reformation, Cornelius Burges asked: “Have we not had more fasts at parliaments of late, than in many years before? Yea, hath not there been generally among God’s people more frequent humiliations, more frequent seeking of God, notwithstanding the malice and rage of some men to discountenance and suppress it, than in former times?”³⁷

Yet there was no suggestion of rebellion here. The only hint is in the January-February 1639 reports of Alexander Davidson, Mayor of Newcastle, and Sir William Belasys, and John Marley to Secretary Windebank. The puritans John Fenwick (a

³⁷ Edwards, *Gangraena*, second pagination, p. 74. Thomas Wright (ed.), *The Autobiography of Joseph Lister, of Bradford in Yorkshire* (London, 1842), p. 5-6. Robin Jeffs (ed.), *The English Revolution I: Fast Sermons to Parliament* (London, 1970), volume 1, p. 65 (subscript pagination).

merchant), his wife Jane, two Scotsmen (at least one of whom approved of the covenant), and Thomas Bittleston (a tanner) had gone into Scotland from Newcastle. On examination, Brittleston admitted he and Fenwick attended a public fast in Edinburgh at the high church on a Wednesday in November, 1638. They heard one preach in the forenoon, and a Mr. Rouge preach on Psalm 122:6-7 in the afternoon. Bittleston related “that he and the said Mr. Fenwick went from Newcastle purposely to see and observe the manner of the day of humiliation, and doth confess that for his part he doth very well approve of the proceedings of the Scots in their ministry and manner of humiliation.” Rouge in his sermon to Scottish magistrates told them that “if you mend not the breach that is made in the covenant by the backsliders, your streets will run with blood, and your carcasses will be meat for the fowls of the air. . .”³⁸ Clearly there was sympathy with the Scots Covenanters, but their fasts underscored rebellion in a way English ones would not for several more years.

What is evident among English puritans is a sense of suffering for witnessing to Truth and defending the church which strengthened their self-understanding as “God’s people.” In articles against Chauncey from April 10, 1630 he purportedly said in the pulpit that he took pride in the name “puritan,” and claimed those called “puritans” were “the chariots and horsemen of Israel, and those that stand in the gap.” In the pulpit he also said England needed men of spirit and courage to tell their superiors in the church of their neglect as there was never so much atheism, popery, Arminianism, and heresy as

³⁸ PRO, SP 16/410/5; see also 16/412/10; 16/413/42. Robert Jenison, a moderate puritan lecturer in Newcastle, also was questioned about the Fenwick-Bittleston affair. Later, he was accused of having “sundry conferences” with and corresponding with Scots covenanters, and preaching against preparing for war with the Scots. See: PRO, SP 16/413/42; SP 16/415/7; SP 16/430/24. Jenison denied having conference with Scots covenanters. He had preached on Romans 13, and detested the resistance to authority and proceedings of the Covenanters. In his sermon, he did not mean to discourage preparation for war. See: PRO, SP 16/415/8.

now. Similarly, in the late 1630s Robert Woodford often noted his desire to be an “instrument” of God’s glory. On March 21, 1639 he wrote of his approval of Mr. Crawford’s sermon calling on his hearers “to stand for the truth in times of greatest darkness and danger.”³⁹ Sir Thomas Wroth on September 12, 1635 wrote to Elizabeth Cleere (i.e. Dr. Stoughton) lamenting things were going “from worse to worse” and “the sad condition of these times.” He counseled: “Now is the time to show our courage, if now we stand to our Captain Christ Jesus, and forsake not Him we are sure to be well paid for our service; it will argue some patience if we quietly suffer usq adrucum [advuvum?] amissionum but it will be a great [sic] of true Christian resolution if we suffer usq ad sanguine affusionem.”⁴⁰ Mr. Hill a non-conformist of Emmanuel College in a sermon c.1635 proclaimed: “That these were the days of persecution long since prophesied of: that they must arm themselves against it, &c.”⁴¹ The March 21, 1639 charges against Robert Jenison by the Commission for Causes Ecclesiastical in York Province, included that in sermons he said “the saints of God, or God’s people” were “persecuted by great ones.” Another charge was having “conventicles” (some of which were surely fasts) in his house and the homes of others.⁴² The aggressive actions Anti-Calvinist bishops took against puritan fasts under Charles only heightened this sense.

The puritan Nehemiah Wallington shows the greater frequency of puritan fasts, their alienation from the church hierarchy, and how puritans increasingly focused on the self-understanding of the remnant suffering for Christ. He wrote in his diary:

³⁹ PRO, SP 16/164/40, fol. 55v, 58v-59r. Oxford University, New College, MS 9502, passim, p. 344.

⁴⁰ PRO, SP 16/297/39.

⁴¹ PRO, SP 16/308/52, fol. 123v.

⁴² PRO, SP 16/415/7. Jenison replied he did not mean nonconformists when he spoke of “persecution.” He said God’s people were oppressed by men “in prosperity.” Elsewhere, he only complained that some had been “too much condemned, and partially dealt with all.” He had spoken of “some hard measure” that he and others had received in Newcastle. See: PRO, SP 16/415/8.

“O remember, remember (and let it never be out of your mind) that the year 1640 was a praying year: for that year was a troublous and a sad year with the poor people of God, so that they were fain to meet in private to make their complaint unto God. And that the enemy did know full well, which made them send out their blood hounds (the pursuivants) to smell and find them out that they might devour them. But they were deceived: for the great God did preserve and was a hiding place unto His poor despised children, for behold in April the tenth day 1641 [i.e. 1640] when so many of God’s children did meet together in divers places in fasting and prayer for the king’s good success at parliament then were many of these (blood hounds) the pursuivants abroad, yet I did not hear of any of us they took.”

Similarly, on Tuesday April 14 “many did put that day aside to humble themselves in fasting and prayer unto the Lord.” Perilously, “the adversaries” were told of the fasts and specifically that “a great company” would be meeting in Cheapside in one of ten houses in a row. The pursuivants searched nine of the houses, but becoming frustrated and thinking they had been tricked, they gave up without searching the tenth house which was where the fast was located. Wallington claimed this was the Lord’s doing to ensure that “God’s people were delivered out of these blood hound mouths.”⁴³ Clearly brushes with authorities became part and parcel of often retold godly narratives of divine deliverances. Equally clearly, fasts marked God’s friends and enemies.

Fasts did the same for Laudians. In the summer of 1640 the king consented to a general fast at the urging of Laud. It would include prayers “against God’s enemies, and the king’s.”⁴⁴ Likewise, English Catholics had fasts clearly intended to show them as loyal subjects in contrast to puritan fasts sympathetic to Scots Covenanters. Specifically, the Queen Henrietta in late March, 1639 commanded a fast to be kept in her chapel at Somerset House by English Catholics every Saturday with solemn services and sermons.

⁴³ BL, Add MS 21,935, fol. 93v. Elsewhere recap same in saying in 1640 “that although there were so many great meetings of us in private fasting and prayer, and so many pursuivants abroad to catch them, yet I know not one company taken.” On Tuesday, April 14, 1640 “there were many put that day apart to humble themselves in fasting and prayer.” (BL, Sloane MS 922, p. 198-200) Wallington also note: “Oh therefore remember, remember that as the year 1640 was a praying year (but yet with much fear of pursuivants) for mercy with God.” (BL, Add MS 21,935, fol. 96v)

⁴⁴ PRO, SP 16/456/44.

These fasts were for the king's success in his designs and safe return from Scotland. Also, she asked English Catholics to give "liberal contributions" at the fasts for the king's expedition against the rebels.⁴⁵ These Catholic fasts would only have further convinced English puritans that the king's cause was against God's.

Several other examples also shed light on how the changing character of the episcopate changed puritans. Puritans increasingly emphasized that they were Christ's suffering little flock, and that the church hierarchy was now "other," the enemy, and outside the godly community. The uniting self-understanding forming mechanisms of fasts now increasingly worked to tie puritans together in opposition to the established church, rather than as a reforming vanguard working with it. Purportedly, in a fast on Thursday, June 21, 1638 in Northampton, neither Mr. Ball nor Mr. Newton prayed for any archbishops or bishops.⁴⁶ Puritans in the north of England had had sympathetic Calvinist archbishops like Matthew Hutton and Tobie Matthew, but when the Anti-Calvinist Samuel Harsnett became Archbishop of York, they prepared for the worst. Harsnett had a long record of anti-puritan zeal, and was a noted "Arminian" and ceremonialist. Cotton Mather claimed that in 1631 while Harsnett traveled back north:

"upon designs of mischief against the reforming pastors and Christians there, certain ministers of the south set apart a day for solemn fasting and prayer, to implore the help of heaven against those designs; and on that very day, he was taken with a sore and an odd fit, which caused him to stop at a blind house of entertainment on the road, where he suddenly died."⁴⁷

⁴⁵ PRO, SP 16/415/65, 16/417/3.

⁴⁶ PRO, SP 16/393/75 fol. 144r.

⁴⁷ Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (Hartford, 1820), volume 1, p. 280. As I shall explore more elsewhere, this fast has remarkable parallels to the "black fast" of popular culture designed to bring an enemy's death. See Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York, 1971), p. 49, 611-12. In actuality, Harsnett's health already had been failing and he had gone to the waters of Bath for healing. On his journey back north from there he died in Moreton, Gloucestershire. See: Nicholas W.S. Cranfield, "Harsnett, Samuel (bap. 1561, d. 1631)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, online-edn, May 2007.

Puritan fasts for godly clergy in the cross hairs of anti-puritan hawks were hardly unusual. William Whiteway of Dorchester noted in his diary on June 1, 1630: “This day was a private fast kept by certain persons, for the turning away of the danger threatened, namely the removing of Mr. White.”⁴⁸ That the likes of John White (1575-1648) were in trouble shows how times had changed. He was a moderate conforming puritan who had served as rector of Holy Trinity, Dorchester for a quarter century. Now he came under scrutiny as a leading opponent of “Arminianism,” Laudian ceremonial change, and the Book of Sports. Further, he was a leading figure in New England ventures and helped many puritans to emigrate. He also supported the international Protestant cause with prayer meetings, petitions, and collections, and was prominent collecting for the Feoffees for Improvements. Indeed, authorities seized his papers, investigated his finances, and by 1635 were prosecuting him in High Commission.⁴⁹

More puritan fasts took place regarding the sensational Star Chamber trial of the radical puritans Henry Burton, John Bastwick, and William Prynne in 1637. On June 12, 1637 Samuel Clerke reported to Sir John Lambe that Charles Chauncy (c.1592-1672), vicar of Ware in Hertfordshire, whom Lambe had recently corrected in High Commission “doth mend like sour ale in summer.” He had held a fast the previous Wednesday with another preacher which lasted six to eight hours. Further, “the whole tribe of God did flock thither, some three score from Northampton, the Lord Say with his Lady did honor them with their presence; the end (as I am told) to join in prayer that God would deliver His servants from persecution, whom we do conceive to be Bastwick, Prynne, and Burton.” The other preacher likely was Miles Burkitt, vicar of Pattishall in

⁴⁸ Underdown (ed.), *Whiteway*, p. 111.

⁴⁹ Rory T. Cornish, “White, John (1575-1648),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

Northamptonshire, who also was cited about the same time for having been at a “general fast” in the parish church of Marston St. Lawrence in Northamptonshire “kept for Prynne and Burton’s deliverance.” Worse, he did so subsequent to being admonished.⁵⁰ The size of these fasts is surprising, as well as the one in Marston being a public fast with the entire community apparently involved.

Fasts for the incarcerated did not occur just on the outside of prisons. The case in High Commission of a “conventicle” of “Brownists” and “Familists” in Blackfriars precinct is one example. They were taken on Sunday, April 29, 1632 at the house of one Barnett, a brewer’s clerk, which they claimed as their parish church. The minister John Latroppe and nine others were committed to prison after refusing to swear an oath. On June 7 a report related that “the last week there was a general fast held in the prison, that they might be delivered out of prison.”⁵¹

Ironically, unmolested moderate puritan led fasts provided a vehicle to keep radical puritans identifying with the church. Individual fasts and fasts dominated by radicals could allow a sense of God’s “speaking” through the Holy Spirit, the Word, and

⁵⁰ PRO, SP 16/361/67, 16/406/88, 16/472/48. Note: Francis J. Bremer, “Chauncy, Charles (bap. 1592, d. 1672),” *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. The DNB claims Chauncy became vicar of Ware on February 27, 1627, but resigned that post upon becoming vicar of Marston St. Lawrence, Northamptonshire on August 28, 1633. Chauncy emigrated to New England in 1638. Further sense of the focus of the fast comes from other charges in that about the time when Burton and Prynne passed through his parish, Burkitt said in the pulpit “that though the faithful were molested, persecuted, and cropt, yet they would continue faithful still or words to that effect, meaning Burton and Prynne.” Also, a collection likely was taken at the fast in that Burkitt also was charged with “exhorting his parishioners to contribute to the necessities of the saints in want, meaning Burton and Prynne.” Interestingly, Burkitt in his November, 1640 petition to parliament also mentioned his “woeful experience of the violence and malice” of Dr. Sibthorpe who, as commissioner and JP, with his brother in law Sir John Lambe aggressively attacked him. See: PRO, SP 16/406/88, 16/472/48.

⁵¹ Samuel R. Gardiner (ed.), *Reports of Cases in the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission* (Camden Society, NS, volume 39, 1886, reprint 1965), p. 278-79, 284, 286, 292, 300. Other members taken were Humphrey Bernard, Henry Dod, Samuel Eaton, William Granger, Sara Jones, Sara Jacob, Pennina Howse, Sara Bourbon, and Susan Wilson. (Ibid.) Eaton may have been the rector of West Kirby Cheshire who was suspended in 1632. This also may explain why he was singled out for questioning. See: S. J. Guscott, “Eaton, Samuel (d. 1665),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

providences to undermine such identification. Such radicalizing fasts were more likely under Caroline-Laudian policies that pushed some puritans to separation. Examples of both kinds of fasts can be found in Edward Terrill's post-Restoration account of the history of the independent Church of Boadmead Bristol with which he was associated from the mid-1650s.⁵² According to Terrill, via the Reformation God was bringing the church from "the wilderness of Antichristian darkness." While previously doctrine and worship had been reformed, under Charles God continued the Reformation and "raised up" a people to cast off the "papal hierarchy" or "lordly bishops" who were "the skirts of the whore of Romish Babylon" and "rested in the relics of Antichristian forms of worship." "His people" were "in pain to be delivered" and cried to God "against those Egyptian task-masters that began to make their burdens heavier." Their "inventions" and "innovations" in worship "came in again apace." Specifically, Terrill noted that puritans like Dorothy Kelly/Hazard found life increasingly unbearable in the church. Whereas her non-conformity previously had been indulged, Dorothy now was in trouble for it and conformity was enforced to a greater degree. She withdrew more and more from her parish's services. With others she searched for an accommodating parish, and engaged more in private meetings on Sundays "when the clergy began to be high."⁵³

But prior to that, a minister God "raised up" in Bristol was William Yeamans (1578-1632/33?).⁵⁴ Terrill lauded Yeamans as a "zealous preacher" and respected him despite his conforming to some degree for he added: "although in some things, he,

⁵² Roger Hayden (ed.), *The Records of a Church of Christ in Bristol, 1640-1687* (Bristol Record Society, 1974), p. 5-12.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 81-2, 87-8.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 81, 84. Yeamans began in Bristol with his appointment to St. Philip's parish in 1604, and in 1607 the city council appointed him a preacher and in 1613 gave him £25 per year to preach an additional week day sermon. In 1615, he became a prebend of Bristol Cathedral. (*ibid.*, p. 310)

keeping in his place, did observe according to the time that then was.” Yeamans further redeemed himself in that he would not suffer his hearers to use “any blind devotion” like bowing at name of Jesus, or to profane the sabbath. Due to his godliness, “the awakened souls and honest minded people” flocked to hear him and for near twenty years kept “many fast days” with him in private houses and other places. The two main locations were the houses of the glover William Listun and the carpenter Richard Langford. Other leaders of these fasts included the grocer Anthony Kelly, the schoolmaster Robert Haynes, the farrier Richard Moone, and the butcher Goodman Cole. At these fasts c.1612/13 to c.1632/33, Terrill said of this core group with “many others” that “they did cry day and night to the Lord to pluck down the lordly prelates of the time, and the superstitions thereof; which prayers the Lord heard and graciously answered in His time.” But first God “suffered them to pass through sore afflictions.”⁵⁵ So here we see a familiar story of puritan fasts (though relatively radical) aimed at further reformation of the national church from within it. Indeed, Terrill likely understates the amount of participation in the established church by his heroes.

The death of Yeamans c.1632-33 changed matters. Terrill related that without Yeamans the participants in the fasts were “like sheep without a shepherd.” They listened to the best available preachers in the city because “in some things they seemed religious in those days.” But they were unsatisfactory, especially for often inveighing against those going to New England. Thus, looking for godly preachers, they came under the influence of radical clergy from south Wales and Shropshire who were then moving towards separation. William Wroth, Walter Cradock, Richard Symonds, Henry Walter, and others frequently visited Bristol and established a strong relationship with the group.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 84, 17.

When they came to town “the professors would run after them as hungry souls for food.” In November 1639, Wroth, Cradock, and Walter founded an independent church at Llanvaches.⁵⁶ The Bristol puritans again found fixed leadership when the fiery Matthew Hazard came to preach in the city and subsequently on December 19, 1639 became vicar of St. Ewin’s. A key lay figure that also emerged was Dorothy Kelly, the widow of Anthony Kelly (and thus surely a regular attendee at the fasts), whom had a reputation for exceptional godliness. Indeed, the two became a leading duo as they married in 1640. They saw their new house and parsonage of St. Ewins as a providential answer to her frequent prayer in light of busy spiritual courts: “Lord, hast thou never a little corner to hide us from the rage of man?”⁵⁷

While Matthew remained within the Church of England, he lacked the authority and influence of Yeamans perhaps due to his youth. This reality, coupled with years of radical influence and the political context of the Bishops’ Wars, allowed fasts to lead to separation. Terrill related that the way the Lord brought Dorothy and others “to separate from the world” was through voluntary religious practices. After “those whose hearts God had touched” had been “awakened,” they gaddened to sermons, sanctified the sabbath, met for sermon repetition, and also:

“kept many days of prayer together, as a company of good people, sensible of the sins and snares of their day. In doing of which duties they began to be more humble and spiritual, and grow more resolved for God, heaven, and eternal happiness, and for the worship of God according to Holy Scriptures. So that when they had been conversant in these duties and pious acts of hearing the best men, repeating their notes to one another, whetting it on their hearts, and praying it over, fasting and praying together frequently, and had thus continued in so doing for about the space of twenty years, and beginning to grow somewhat numerous in that work, *they had strength to begin to go farther*, for the path of those truths of building up one another was well beaten.”⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 83-4, 310, 19.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 85, 87-8, 293.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 82, 85-6.

Specifically in 1640, “it pleased the Lord to stir up some few of the professors of this city to begin to lead the way out of Babylon.” Five puritans met at Hazard’s house to covenant to “come forth of the world” and no longer “worship the beast.” Of those who thereby refused to hear common prayer any longer, at least three can be identified from the Yeaman’s group: Dorothy, Goodman Cole, and Richard Moone.⁵⁹

Scorn and derision for these meetings also fostered their sense of self-understanding and their eventual separation. Terrill lamented how the godly “were branded with the name of puritans; it being an old trick of the Devil, in his instruments, to cast some reproachful name or other upon the servants of the Lord in all ages.”⁶⁰

Further, these Bristol puritans had reproach cast on them for their fasts by “the world and wicked men.” Indeed, meetings for fasting and prayer:

“being so frequent, and many resorting unto it, they became such a light, as a city upon a hill that could not be hid, especially from the bishops, who, instead of being promoters and encouragers in such acts of piety, they were the obstructers, and could not bear it, for they endeavored to suppress them.”

During one fast, “the rude multitude and seamen” vandalized the house in which they met because they heard “a conventicle of puritans” was meeting there. When some of the “good people” complained to the mayor for action against the main offenders, he imprisoned some of the puritans who were at the meeting instead. Some puritans “being public, active, spirited men” then drew up a petition to parliament (c.1640) against the mayor. William Listun went to London to deliver petition to parliament “who then favored the righteous cause of God’s people in general, and well resented their case in

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 88-90. Matthew Hazard remained in the church and read common prayer “according to the necessity of his place,” although he did not conform in other aspects. The new separatists still went to the parish church to hear Hazard preach after common prayer ended. (ibid.)

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 83, 86. Terrill thought the term “puritan” arose around 1600, and that before then the term of abuse was “Brownist.” He claimed in other parts of Europe that the abusive terms for those whom “the Lord had enlightened in the true and saving doctrine of justification by free grace” were “Waldenses, Lutherans, Calvinists.” (ibid., p. 83)

Bristol.” The petition so startled the mayor “that it abated the execution of the fury of his spirit.” Thus, “the Lord stood by them, and made them stronger and stronger to go forward in reformation, as the prelates went forward in their innovations and superstitions.”⁶¹

Evidence about the aforementioned Richard Symonds sheds further light. Symonds had strong ties to Bristol, as he preached there on occasion, and likely moved there c.1639-40 and married Bridget Hazard. She was the widow of George Hazard, who, in turn, was the father of Matthew Hazard. Years before, after being suspended from his cure in north Wales for non-conformity, Symonds eventually wound up a schoolmaster in the household of the Harley family at Brampton in 1638. But he was increasingly influenced by Walter Cradock, with whom he had begun an association several years earlier, and his separatist group at Llanfair Waterdine, Shropshire. His increasingly radical and separatist views created tensions with the more moderate Harleys. They questioned Cradock’s judgment, thought he went too far vilifying the Book of Common Prayer, and found his opinions too stiff and based on small grounds. In turn, Cradock was sharply critical of the character and preaching of Stanley Gower, rector of Brampton. Not surprisingly, Brilliana Harley wrote her son Edward on December 6, 1639 that “Mr. Symonds makes hast away; they grow deeper and deeper in their opinions, so that he now thinks it is not fit to join with us in the public fast, and so they intend to be gone on the Monday before the fast.”⁶² Likely, Symonds found the

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 86-7.

⁶² Stephen K. Roberts, “Symonds, Richard (b. 1609, d. in or after 1658),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. PRO, SP 16/381/92. Thomas Lewis (ed.), *Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley* (Camden Society, old series, vol. 58, 1854), p. 77-8, 26, 49, 69, 74. *Historical Manuscript Commission, Fourteenth Report, Appendix, Part II. The Manuscripts of . . .the Duke of Portland* (London, 1894), vol. 3, p. 73.

prayers and reform agenda insufficient to appease God. He likely did not want to hear criticism of separatists, nor endure Gower trying to persuade him to remain in the church to fight for relatively modest reforms. The separatist church established at Llanvaches in November likely proved too attractive.

In summary, puritan fasts had the potential to move self-understanding along a range of trajectories depending on the context of local godly leadership and the policies and attitudes of authorities in church and state. Puritans shared a repertoire of language and narratives in fasts, but differed in the conclusions they drew from them. The example of Yeamans suggests reasons why some Calvinist bishops indulged puritan fasts. To harass and prosecute moderate puritans for such would leave a vacuum that more radical voices would fill. Winking at puritan fasts and non-conformity kept many radical puritans within the church where they were more subject to orthodox, moderating influences. It prevented or at least retarded the formation of radical sects, separatists, and heresy.

Importantly, the vast majority of puritans, who had long attacked separatists, remained in the church fighting against “backsliding.” Of those who went to New England, the vast majority considered the churches there to be in communion with the Church of England, and not separatist congregations.⁶³ Moreover, far from advocating a “revolution of the saints,” puritans in their fasts looked for deliverance via “waiting upon God,” for the grace patiently to endure “persecution,” and for guidance on whether to flee to New England. Above all they prayed for a successful parliament. For example, on November 17, 1636 Samuel Rogers still pondering the public fast the previous day exclaimed: “Mine eyes wait upon thee. Oh thy church, thy church Lord.” August 13,

⁶³ Webster, *Godly Clergy*.

1636 his conscience was torn between a sense of calling to defend true religion and a belief in obedience to authority: “the Lord in mercy fight for His witnesses that seem to be slain now almost; Lord thy church, thy church, thy poor creatures, that know not how to keep a good conscience in these sorrowful times, help us, and deliver us for thy goodness sake.” From September, 1636 he frequently thought about going to New England to resolve this dilemma. He set apart Saturday, April 1, 1637 to fast in private about New England and at this point was leaning towards going. He wrote: “the Lord hath sweetly drawn near to me and given me an heart to bless His name for His goodness to me. The more of N.E. I have, the more of God I enjoy.”⁶⁴

As we saw earlier, parliaments from Elizabethan times were prime occasions for puritan fasts to call on God guide authorities and to rally the godly to press their grievances. In “country” ideology, parliament was the means for counseling the king, reforming and preserving church and state, and defending liberties and true religion at home and abroad. Parliament countered the influence of wicked counselors and Catholic ambassadors on the king. In particular, on April 13, 1640 Woodford wrote of parliament as the means to restore church and commonwealth, and crush “those that plot against thy truth and Gospel.”⁶⁵

Not surprisingly, puritans like the Harleys, Robert Woodford, and Sir Simonds D’Ewes prayed in private and public fasts for the success of parliaments in the late 1620s and early 1640s, and for parliaments to be called in the 1630s. In the 1628 parliament fast, Jeremiah Dyke claimed there was “a great spirit of prayer” in the land and that he

⁶⁴ Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 179, 145-46, 217. For Rogers’s thoughts on New England see p. 154-56, 162, 170, 187, 197, 199-200, 215-17, 220, 228, 232.

⁶⁵ See for example: Halliwell (ed.), *D’Ewes*, vol. 1, p. 158-58, 161-62, 164-65, 168-69, 172-73, 198-99, 212, 242, 372, 377-80, 402-7; vol. 2, p. 111-12, 133, 136, 292. Oxford University, New College, MS 9502, p. 464.

was persuaded “that never any parliament in this kingdom was more heartily prayed for.” In 1646, recalling the past to defend parliament settling church government, the Erastian Thomas Coleman queried: “Have all our prayers and fastings during the times of prelatial pressures been for a parliament, a parliament?”⁶⁶

Puritan hopes though were frustrated and their perception of England as abandoning “God’s cause” at home and abroad increased. Arthur Hildersam in his 1625 fast sermons (printed in 1633 and possibly updated) said:

“We have prayed for the good success of our parliament, that the King, and Nobles, and Commons might agree together (as one man) for the settling of God’s ark and religion among us, as they did in Solomon’s time, 1 King 8:1. But the parliament (for all our prayers) hath received such an end, as every good heart hath cause to lament.”

He held out hope though that their prayers would prevail with God if they would pray “fervently and importunately” and not “coldly and drowsily.” Sir Simonds D’Ewes (1602-1650) on the Wednesday, February 18, 1629 public fast noted that it was “for the good success of the present parliament, though all men of judgment began already to despair of it.” Lady Elizabeth Masham writing to her mother Lady Joan Barrington just before the same 1629 parliamentary fast said she hoped to join her in it. But she had grave doubts about the fast’s success:

“I pray God fit us all earnestly to cry to the Lord; we never had such need as now we have, we have no other refuge to fly unto. We may justly fear that we shall cry now and He will not hear us, because we have so long refused to hear Him calling to us, and if we do fall into great misery we may lay our hand on our mouths and confess He hath been very gracious in sparing us so long. I pray God give us wisdom to prepare for the worst!”

D’Ewes noted on Friday, March 20, 1629 that the public fast through the kingdom “for the success of the parliament” still was observed even after its dissolution. He further commented: “yet the fears and astonishments men were in of the future miseries and

⁶⁶ BL, Add MS 70,089/93. BL, Add MS 70,001, fol. 238r. BL, Add MS 70,062. Oxford University, New College, MS 9502, p. 464, 522. Halliwell (ed.), *D’Ewes*, vol. 1, p. 374. Jeremiah Dyke, *A Sermon Preached at the Pvblicke Fast* (London, 1628), p. 39 (STC 7425). Thomas Coleman, *A Brotherly Examination Re-Examined* (London, 1646), p. 16 (Wing C5049).

calamities, made it be very solemnly and zealously observed in most places; that so God's wrath towards this kingdom for our sins, and His intended judgments, might be diverted or mitigated." Not surprisingly, on Saturday, June 13, 1629 D'Ewes still was mulling over matters as he had another "secret fast" alone "yet devoted a great share of it to the public."⁶⁷

Further, while puritans fasted for parliament, they also elected puritans to parliament for instituting fasts. Isaac Pennington (c.1584-1661), who was elected a London sheriff in 1638 and chosen to be an alderman in January 1639, was elected to both the Short Parliament and the Long Parliament in 1640 purportedly "for his known zeal by his keeping a fasting sabbath throughout his shrievalty." In her study of London, Valerie Pearl argues that Pennington's fasts partly were to raise sympathy for Protestant victims of the wars on the continent, and to support the efforts of the London puritans Thomas Taylor, Richard Sibbes, John Davenport, and William Gouge to create a public fund for the relief of the distressed Protestants of the Palatinate. So again fasts were a key mark of the godly, and Pennington had lived in the puritan dominated parish of St. Stephen, Coleman St. from 1633 and become a leading figure among the London godly.⁶⁸

The change in godly perceptions of England from Elizabethan to Jacobean to Caroline times is best evidenced by a pulling together a select group of sources. These sources show how puritans redirected and redefined stock narratives, language, and categories in response to their context. Whereas the prince and church hierarchy had

⁶⁷ Arthur Hildersam, *The Doctrine of Fasting and Praier* (London, 1633), p. 39-42 (STC 13459). Halliwell (ed.), *D'Ewes*, vol. 1, p. 401, 407-8, 414. Arthur Searle (ed.), *Barrington Family Letters 1628-1632* (Camden Society, 4th series, vol. 28, 1983), p. 55-6.

⁶⁸ Chestlin, *Persecutio Undecima. The Churches Eleventh Persecution* (NP, 1648), p. 57 (Thomason Tracts, E.470[7]). Valerie Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford, 1961), p. 179. Keith Lindley, "Pennington, Isaac (c.1584-1661)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

seemed on the side of Christ (though in a flawed way) under Elizabeth and James, under Charles they appeared among the enemies of Christ. Whereas under Elizabeth and James questions regarded the amount of preaching, ceremonies, and church government, under Charles the Gospel itself seemed at stake.

The first source is meditations and prayers that circulated in manuscript in 1588 during times of heightened fear which bred unauthorized fasts. Puritans likely used these manuscripts in private fasts as the authors intended them for “these dangerous days.” They call for humiliation, repentance, and reform to assuage God and remove present or threatened judgments. They have the same tone, style, and content as puritan discourses on fast days, and at the least offer a close approximation to the prayers and meditations puritans did use in them. Significantly, authorities confiscated this document and diligently marked offensive passages.⁶⁹

The 1588 manuscript begins with the familiar national narrative affirming God’s “great loving kindness towards this realm of England.” His “incomprehensible mercy” included “delivering all of us out of the thralldom of Egypt,” and the “spiritual bondage” of “popery and ignorance.” God had blessed them “by advancing the Gospel in England, and showing such favor to the poor distressed for the same cause, as the like was never seen, nor observed of in the chronicles of this land.” Closely related, the supposed providential accession of Elizabeth was another focus of “how gracious the Lord hath been to this poor island these 30 years together.” Her reign had brought the Protestant

⁶⁹ Lambeth Palace Library, MS 445, p. 395, 399. “Certayn P[ro]fitable Meditations to be deeply co[n]sidered of in thes dangerous dayes” and “A moste necessarie prayer in thes dangerous dayes,” (ibid.)

faith, and peace and prosperity despite the efforts of England's enemies. Indeed, England was so blessed and fruitful that it was "as the land of Canaan."⁷⁰

But the nation was to weigh "our unworthiness" of these mercies for "our great rebellions" meaning "our want of obedience to His Word and Gospel." England had been "unthankful" by not worshiping "as Himself hath appointed without adding or diminishing unto or from the same." England had not adopted "Christ's holy government," meaning the "indissoluble," "inviolable," and "unchangeable" "offices and ordinances" He established. Instead, England maintained the "cursed canon law," "devilish offices," and "confused orders" of "the sinful pope of Rome," "the wicked beast of Rome," the "Antichrist." Further, "the most and greatest subjects of the land" had maintained a "dumb idol ministry" rather than establishing a "learned ministry" and a "preaching ministry" of "faithful and painful laborers." As the ministry then was, "great ones" had been "vainglorious" and "seldom preached thy Word to thy people." They had used "hard dealings against thy servants" including suspending and depriving many "worthy preachers" for not using the "popish cross and surplice." As a result, "all our great magistrates" and "all our great ministers" were guilty of "willful soul murder" by condemning many thousands to hell for lack of instruction. In short, England had made "small accompte" of the Gospel and brought forth little "good fruit" and much "bad fruit."⁷¹

The author feared that without "speedy repentance," England's sins would lead God to destroy the nation and "religion" in it. Claiming that England's profession of the Gospel was the cause of her blessings, the nation's chief sin was failing to advance

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 395, 404.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 396-97, 405-407, 413, 416.

preaching the Gospel sufficiently when God gave opportunity. Also, the means by which he feared God would destroy the nation were external such as famine, plague, and invasion by “those uncircumcised Philistines of Italy and Spain.” The only plots were the “conspiracies” and “treacheries” against the person of Queen Elizabeth. Further, these fears concerned what God was “threatening,” what might happen in the future. God might remove the Gospel by bringing “these Canaanites to threaten our destruction, and to root it out quite, that it should never bud forth any more in England.” England had to repent “for now is the axe laid to the root of the tree if we bear not forth good fruit we are sure to be hewn down.” Should this occur, the English people again would be in “captivity” not only on Earth in this life but in hell in the next.⁷²

The puritan author idealized Elizabeth as a Protestant champion. She was “our Christian Deborah.” She was “a lover of His Gospel, a professor of His Gospel, a defender of His Gospel, and a very nurse mother of His holy Gospel.” After planting her, the Lord continued her by “wonderful preservation” from numerous treasons, rebellions, and enemies. In part, this obsequious flattery was an attempt to pressure her into a role. In part, it showed the fear that Elizabeth had no children, and the memory of the accession of Mary I after the death of Edward VI. Arguably though, it also reflected that her closest councilors included advanced Protestants like William Cecil, and that her episcopate had many bishops like Edmund Grindal who were committed to preaching and gladly would have accepted further reformation (though their conformist scruples caused conflict with puritans). Thus, the author repeatedly prayed for Elizabeth and for her to have a long reign so the Gospel would continue and flourish in England (and surely these statements must qualify his statements about how much the bishops preached and limited

⁷² Ibid., p. 397-98, 413-15, 421.

preaching). Thus, he feared God's justice might not be appeased for the nation's sins without the deaths of her and thousands of her "true subjects." God would act "to root us all out, both prince and people" for their rebellions. These "true subjects" or "faithful Christians" were of course committed Protestants who wished well to Elizabeth and England. Thus, he strongly linked the fate of England and the Gospel in it with the fate of Elizabeth.⁷³

Crucially, the puritan author continuously used "us," "we," and "our" to refer not to the godly but to England. Also, his favorite phrase was "this poor island." For him, England's sins, blessings, punishments, repentance, and enemies were collective and shared. For him, "our church in England" was the established church not gathered congregations. Paradoxically, the English were "His people" even as "the most of us are deep dissemblers, papists, atheists or carnal gospellers."⁷⁴ Indeed, the author often shifted between England as a promoter of and rebel against God's cause. Arguably, when he considered England relating to God in isolation, he condemned her as sinfully rebellious. When he considered England in relation to Catholic states and the Roman Catholic Church, he assured that God would protect her for professing the Gospel.

More specifically, the author contended that the best evidence whether people were God's "enemies" or "friends" was how they treated the Gospel. 'Enemies' were "hindering" the preaching and government of the Gospel, while 'friends' were doing their utmost to advance them. The author condemned English leaders in church and state for "hindering" preaching, and acting to "hinder" Christ's government. At the same time though, the author spoke collectively of England and its church. He praised God that

⁷³ Ibid., p. 395, 397, 399, 404, 413-17, 419, 420-22.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 395-98, 401, 404, 407, 409, 413-418.

“when we were thine enemies, thou made us friends.” He affirmed that the Lord brought “us wretches” out of spiritual bondage “when we were His enemies.” Moreover, the writer also attributed the sin of acting to “hinder” the Gospel to the whole as it was the “sin of us wretches, sin of rebels, sin of us enemies.” Thus he could ask God to “forgive us all, our carelessness herein” for not repenting this sin “with fasting and praying, with weeping and mourning.” Arguably, another part of the author’s definition of ‘enemies’ applied more to Catholics than conformists. With respect to the Gospel, these enemies worked “to root out the very foundation thereof, that it should not be known, nor thy will obeyed of thy servants in the world.”⁷⁵ These enemies did not merely “hinder” the Gospel, but destroyed it. So when considering England in isolation bishops were enemies to the unfettered spread of the Gospel and biblical church government. But when considering England in European context, the bishops were Protestants on the side of Christ against “papists.”

Crucial here is the author’s sense of England as a nation in covenant with the Lord. While God’s people might rebel against Him, as with Israel, God would honor His covenant and save them from foreign enemies if they repented. He reminded God that the English were “thy people” and that Catholics were not only “our enemies” but “thine enemies” or “thy utter enemies.” Specifically, the pope was “thy utter enemy, our Queen’s very enemy.” He claimed “all our enemies” were: “The wicked beast of Rome, the curs[ed] king of Spain, Satan, and all the rest.” Likening his prayer to that of Hezekiah, the author prayed against “that beast Saneheribb, the pelting pope of Rome” and “his bond slave Rabsaketh, the cursed king of Spain.” These men were “against

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 395, 400-1, 407, 413-14. Perhaps more targeted at conformists was the author’s plea for God to destroy “all the enemies of this holy government” and “all noisome plants” which He had not planted that hurt it, and root them out so no longer trouble “thy dear vine in England.” (ibid., p. 418)

Thee, our Queen and thy people” and sought “thy dishonor, and our utter undoing by all means possible.” He affirmed that “all of us” justly deserved destruction, but asked God for protection from Catholics because:

“we profess thy most glorious Gospel and labor in some measure to further the preaching, and most holy government thereof in England: and seeing herein they show themselves not our enemies only, but thy adversaries also: And to bend all their forces to dishonor thy great name, to root out the kingdom of thy son Jesus in this poor island. And further with Rabshaketh, rail still against us calling us heretics, puritans, and schismatics, with all other most odious and reproachful speeches, even because we desire to fear thee in some measure.”

Closely following the Old Testament language of sinful Israel pleading for providential deliverance, the author noted that Catholics would say: “you heretics are all deceived to put your trust in the Lord, for who can deliver you from the power of Spain.” He argued: “do they think thou sleepest, do they think thou changest, or that thy power faileth, or that thou forgetteth to honor thy great name.” If Catholics were victorious:

“then how blasphemously would their mouths be opened against thy majesty and say ‘where is now the God of these vile heretics in whom they put their trust, we made Him run away, we made Him flee the field like a heartless coward’ and so discredit thy great name.”

England would not doubt God’s “merciful providence” to preserve them from enemies because He had “graciously promised to hear and deliver us” when they called on His name. Some hint of the special role of the godly is evident in that the author also prayed: “O Lord be entreated if there be but ten men, throughout all England which desire to please thee, and serve thee truly.”⁷⁶

If “our Queen and our people” were to be preserved from Catholic foes, especially if God granted a victory over them, they had to “promise” and make “holy vows” (i.e.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 401-3, 407, 416-18, 420. He repeatedly stressed England’s profession of the Gospel. He prayed that the more Satan stirred up “his members” to cast down the Gospel, the more God would advance it by preaching “and namely in England, because they so deadly hate our prosperity for professing the same.” (ibid., p. 403-4) He prayed God would save England “for thine name’s sake, seeing we are all hated for professing thy Gospel, and made a laughing stock, to all thine enemies, Satan, and all the rest.” (ibid., p. 417) Nonetheless, the author was willing for England to undergo many troubles for “professing His Gospel.” (ibid., p. 419)

covenant renewal) to reform and do so speedily. The Queen's "true subjects" would take this "vow" to reform. He hoped the Queen would be so grateful that she would be drawn and directed:

"to advance thy Gospel, in the highest degree, and never cease purging, til all be refined, and thy worship made pure, throughout all England, that every congregation, may have their preaching pastor, with the rest of thine officers planted accordingly, duly, and truly, to worship thy majesty, that sin may be punished, and godliness cherished, to our further comfort, and praise of thy glory, world without end."

If the Queen and England did not reform and were "unthankful" for victory and great mercies, then God would destroy the nation after sparing her so long.⁷⁷ Noticeably absent from this reform list is any mention of doctrine, or sense of the Gospel being corrupted. Indeed, considering the writer was a radical presbyterian that he saw the Church of England as flawed but conformists on the side of God is striking.

The works of John Brinsley (fl. 1581-1624), curate at Ashby-de-la-Zouche, Leicestershire and headmaster of its grammar school, provide insights into fasts in the latter years of James' reign. In the mainstream of English Calvinist thought, many of his works went through multiple printings and editions. Brinsley's puritan connections included the noted Arthur Hildersam, his fellow minister at Ashby, and the highly respected Edward Elton, rector of St. Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey, Surrey, his lifelong friend and colleague. Elton (and likely Hildersam) critically reviewed some of Brinsley's works. Laurence Chaderton, the celebrated head of Emmanuel College, Cambridge also commented on drafts of Brinsley's writings, and encouraged and directed them. Though cited for non-conformity in 1604 and 1617, Brinsley had good relations with Calvinist conformists because he was a quiet and peaceable puritan. He avoided public criticism of the religious settlement to focus on proselytizing and the reformation of manners. In

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 414-15, 418.

particular, Brinsley was close to the future bishop Joseph Hall, and had married his sister Barbara. Brinsley affectionately dedicated *Cato Translated Grammatically* (1612) to Hall and expressed gratitude to him for frequently giving spiritual counsel to Barbara (supposedly assaulted by the Devil) and for reading and commenting on drafts of his works. Similarly, Hall wrote “A Commendatory Preface” to *LVDVS LITERARIVS* (1612), Brinsley’s highly respected work on the grammar school, to laud education and learning as fundamental to proselytizing and saving knowledge. The renowned controversialist Andrew Willet praised Brinsley and placed him on a long laudatory list of noted English Protestant bishops, doctors, divines, and preachers. Also, the Archdeacon of Leicester Robert Johnson (a leader of the Stamford fast of 1580) encouraged and directed his writings. Other patrons included Henry Hastings (third earl of Huntingdon) and the Hastings family, William Cavendish (Baron of Hardwick), and Edward Denny (Baron of Waltham).⁷⁸ In short, Brinsley is a useful figure because he

⁷⁸ John Brinsley, *LVDVS LITERARIVS* (London, 1612), Sig. §1r-§2v (STC 3768); John Brinsley, *Cato Translation Grammatically* (London, 1612), Sig. A3r-A6r (STC 4859); John Brinsley, *The Posing of the Parts* (London, 1612), Sig. A2r-A3v (STC 3770b.5); Andrew Willet, *An Harmonie Vpon the First Booke of Samvel* (London, 1614), Sig. ¶3r-v (STC 25679); “LECTORI” by I.M. in Charles Butler, *RHETORICAE LIBRI DVO*, fifth edition (London, 1621)(STC 4199.5); John Morgan, “Brinsley, John (fl. 1581-1624),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; Richard A. McCabe, “Hall, Joseph (1574-1656),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; R.A. Christophers, “Elton, Edward (c.1569-1624),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. For Brinsley’s obsessive vetting of his work, and his sense of wide godly approval of it see John Brinsley the Elder, *The Third Part of the True Watch*, second edition (London, 1623) Sig. a2r, b5v (SCT 3787). Joseph Hall had grown up in Ashby, and the famous puritan Anthony Gilby, who was the incumbent there as well as superintendent of the grammar school which Hall attended, heavily influenced him. The Gilby family was close to the Hall family, and Hall’s mother was a puritan. Hall was under Laurence Chaderton at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Hall also shared benefactors with Brinsley, as his father was an officer of Huntingdon’s, and Lady Denny patronized him. (McCabe, “Hall”) (Joseph Hall, “Observations of some specialties of divine providence in the life of Jos. Hall, Bishop of Norwich,” in *The Shaking of the Olive-Tree* (London, 1660), p. 3-17 (Wing H416). Elton was born near where Brinsley lived and they attended the same grammar school together, as well as Christ’s College, Cambridge. Elton authored numerous works of practical divinity that were so influential, that in 1667, Richard Baxter listed him alongside William Perkins, Richard Greenham, and John Dod as a luminary of the age. (Christophers, *ibid.*) Brinsley dedicated *The Posing of the Parts* to Robert Johnson’s son Abraham, who was also the son-in-law of Laurence Chaderton. (Brinsley, *Posing*) For one of Hall’s godly letters to Barbara see: “To my sister Mrs. Brinsley,” in Joseph Hall, *The Works of Joseph Hall* (London, 1628), p. 301-2 (STC 12636).

stood near the center of the Jacobean Church, a part of the then predominant moderate puritan and Calvinist conformist clusters.

The woodcut (see figures 8a-8b) on the title page of the second edition of Brinsley's *The Third Part of the True Watch* (1623) highlights a critical thread in godly thought. The illustration is based on Old Testament stories of the Lord's relationship with Israel, and, characteristic of the age, presents a dichotomous view of the world. On the right side of the Tetragrammaton, the Lord calls the godly nation to repentance. Preaching prophets, the godly and godly kings undertake fasts and renew covenant with God. Thereby, they bring deliverance to the nation, and salvation to souls. On the left side of the Tetragrammaton, Satan deceives the ungodly nation. False prophets, the wicked and wicked kings continue in sin, trample God's covenant, and persecute true prophets. Thereby, they bring destruction to the nation, and damnation to souls. Standard fare on fast days, this narrative, and puritan perceptions about which side of the woodcut depicted England, is vital to understanding the period.

In his preface to the *Third Part*, Brinsley applied this narrative to England. Elton's "A Commendatorie Epistle" concurred with Brinsley's argument. Brinsley claimed that for decades he had thought the condition of England akin to that of Judah before the Babylonian Captivity. Imminent judgment hung over "God's people" for sin. Godly clergy, like prophets such as Ezekial, Jeremiah, and Isaiah, had acted as "God's messengers" or "public watchmen" giving warning of divine wrath based on scriptural precedent and current "infallible tokens" of it. While long threatened, God as "our most tender Father" had often and mercifully deferred this deserved judgment. Long patient, He instead had spared England by "our wonderful and even miraculous deliverances"

including the 1588 Armada, the 1603 plague, and the Gunpowder Plot. Elton termed these crises, as well as the plight of Protestants on the continent, “fatherly corrections” or “admonitions.” Brinsley claimed that from 1588 in times of danger all had confessed that God would be just “if He should then have cast us off utterly, for ever being His people, or a nation any more.” Yet, England did not follow through with amendment of sin and submission to Him. Sins increased rampantly without redress, and the people were farther from “sense” of sin, fear of judgment, and repentance. Ministers had to “awaken” the English people who after so many deliverances and such long prosperity were “fast asleep” in “security,” “hard-hearted,” and “dead” in sin.

Brinsley argued that all of God’s “threatenings” and “promises” centered on the “the covenant of God.” The sins of the English people both collectively and individually had broken “the covenant of our God” and this was the main cause of divine wrath. Indeed, God was angrier with England “as He hath known us above all other nations.” Without “speedy repentance” and “unfeigned repentance,” God would destroy England. In particular, God often used “the enemies of His Gospel and murderers of His saints” as judgment “to avenge the Lord’s quarrel.” So England faced “the fury of Babylon,” “the bloody Babylonian,” and “a worse captivity than ever came upon Judah.” The only means to turn the Lord from this judgment was for all jointly to return to obedience to “the Lord’s covenant.” To do so, in proper response to the times of extreme peril, meant they had “to meet Him falling upon our faces in fasting and prayer.” At the center of a fast then was the overarching need “that each may renew the oath of our obedience to Jesus Christ” or “that we may every one renew our vow and covenant with Him.” The



Figure 10a

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THE
Third part of
THE TWE-WATCH
 or
The Call of y^e Lord
 to awake all sorts to
 meete him speedily
 with intreaty of
 peace, & to turne
 vnto him by true
 repentance. shew-
 ing what causes
 we haue forthwith
 to betake o^r selus
 to watching &
 prayer.

Taken out of y^e vision
 of Ezechiel Chap: 9.
 By IO: BRINLEY.
 The second edition.

Imprinted
 at LONDON for
Thomas Pamer
 1623.

*His people calling them to repent by all means
 Eccl. 1. 16. 20. Mic. 6. 8. Ezek. 9. 8.*

*in mercy, preaching and praying for them
 Jer. 16. 17. Jerem. 9. 1. Ezek. 9. 8.*

*mourning for all y^e abominations past and praying for
 Ezek. 9. 4. Hest. 3. 15. Neh. 13. 4. Ier. 26. 18.*

*Gods prophets, praying and fasting
 2. Chr. 20. 3. 20. 2. Chr. 24. 20. Ier. 26. 18.*

*ued safe and flourishing, their enemies destroyed
 Esay. 37. 36. Ier. 22. 15. 16. 24.*

*appealers of the wrath and helpers to saue taken
 Ier. 51. 65. Dan. 12. 15. Dage. 17.*

*the whole world seeking by all his subtillties to destroy
 the Church: 2. Chr. 24. 1. 1. King. 22. 25. Apocal. 12. 3. 9.*

*Prophets blind and crying peace, strengthening y^e wicked
 way. Jer. 5. 31. 23. 12. 17. Esay. 26. 9. 10.*

*Prophets, scoring all a monstrous & wicked
 way. 2. Chr. 36. 15. 15. Esay. 5. 11. 12. 13. Ier. 4. 13.*

*wicked, calling the true Prophets, draping Gods Covenant
 vnder their feet. 2. Chr. 24. 19. 20. 21. Ier. 26. 20. 21. 27.*

*Jerusalem hereby destroyed and made a spectacle
 of Gods vengeance. 2. Chr. 36. 17. 21. 2. King. 24. 9. 18.*

*the wicked kindles of Gods wrath cast into Iopheth, take
 burning with fier and bring them. Esay. 30. 37. & 66. 24. Mat. 23. 34. & 23. 34.*

Figure 10b

conflation of singular and plural nouns and pronouns shows that a mixed individual and national covenant was at issue. Further, success of such a fast depended on “a faithful performance of our vows.” As in Joshua 7, the nation would not stand before her enemies until “Achan’s sacrilege” was found out and punished. England had to search out and discover her sins especially “when so many Achans be in every corner.” If England repented, she would be delivered and “a glorious nation” to the second coming. God would continue and increase the peace and felicity “of His chosen flock and of their native country.”

The critical point at which some puritans could depart from Calvinist conformists was in taking the identification of the sins provoking God so far as to include perceived short-comings in the religious settlement and some royal policies. Though even here, the differences in some instances could be less of substance than of style. The directness and un-deferential tone of some puritans had as much to do with how subversive they sounded to Calvinist conformist ears. Indeed, Brinsley passionately argued that ministers had a duty to show people their sins even if some were “offended.” Yet in his case, this potentially radical notion resulted in a standard list of sins that Calvinist conformists often made. Sins included a growing Catholic threat with many returning to “the vile idolatry of former days” and “popery.” They also included a growing ungodly threat with “profaneness,” “atheism,” drunkenness, whore-mongering, fornication, blasphemy, riot, excess, pride, idleness, and oppression. His mention of “profane sabbath-breakers” would not necessarily have troubled Calvinist conformists depending on how far he took the term. The same went for his naming those who despised “the Word of the Lord,” “all true godliness,” “the power of religion,” and “all true piety;” as well as those without

“any sound, true, saving knowledge,” “true understanding” or “sound and sanctified understanding.” Elton though pressed further when he complained of those “hating all true piety and scorning it under most odious names.” The last clause clearly meant terms like “puritan.” Elton had no need to press when he cited England’s ignoring the suffering of “our brethren abroad,” above all in Bohemia and the Palatinate, “the very chief of them a principal part of ourselves” (i.e. Princess Elizabeth). He warned of the angel saying “curse ye Meroz” because “they came not out to help the Lord against the mighty.” In sum, Brinsley (and Elton) negotiated a balance between the competing demands of both Christ and Caesar in a way that Calvinist conformists embraced or at least tolerated. He set his goal for all to obey Christ alongside his goals to “preserve the honor due to all in authority” and “to bind all hearts to their superiors.”⁷⁹

Arguably, Brinsley reflects how moderate “puritanism” had become in the last decade of Elizabeth’s rule and under James. Radical presbyterians had been crushed and with no further reformation politically possible, puritans shifted to work within the existing church structures. In doing so, they found accommodating Calvinist conformists like Hall. So under Elizabeth and James, puritans saw England, despite the perceived defects and deficiencies of the religious settlement, as more in line with the godly nation. In particular, England possessed the top four frames of the godly nation in Brinsley’s woodcut. What outraged the godly and made them so to fear divine justice was that England did not complete repentance with amendment of sin. Thus, despite her godly “prophets” and monarchs, England was heading for the last two frames of the ungodly nation. The narrative of England was a tragedy not a triumph. But there was hope. In a church and state dominated by Calvinist conformists, puritans were able, with varying

⁷⁹ Brinsley, *Third Part*, Sig. a2r-c3v.

degrees of hindrance, to live out the imperatives derived from their self-understanding as godly people. They viewed the Jacobean Church as a true church advancing the Gospel and the reformation of manners though without the necessary sense of urgency and scale of effort.⁸⁰ While fasts could precipitate limited conflict over relatively narrow questions of ceremonial conformity, discipline, and order, they by and large united puritans and Calvinist conformists because they aligned on many fundamentals. Under Elizabethan and Jacobean rule the potential of this narrative to foment conflict largely was kept in check.

By contrast, under Caroline governance this narrative was a gale that whipped up a conflagration. Conflict also was greater because the narrative shifted to a more radical and frightening one. The godly now construed England to be failing not only in the lower frames of the wood cut, but trending towards the ungodly nation in the upper ones as well. Puritans now perceived authorities to be suppressing the Gospel itself, persecuting preaching ministers, backsliding to “popery,” re-uniting with the Church of Rome, abandoning persecuted Protestant churches on the continent, and giving the ungodly more freedom to sin and increase profaneness.⁸¹ They thought Satan was fomenting a “popish plot” to subvert church and state. In a church dominated by Anti-Calvinist conformists, authorities subjected puritans to high and sustained pressure. Fasts were now far more divisive as Anti-Calvinists held doctrines and priorities fundamentally contrary to Calvinist orthodoxy. In fasts, puritans increasingly identified the national sin as Caroline-Laudian policy which they saw as betraying Christ’s cause, breaking God’s commandments, and imperiling the nation. A vicious cycle started whereby the greater

⁸⁰ For pithy comments regarding contrasting puritan perceptions of the policies of James and Charles see: John Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (New York, 1993), p. 36, 53.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

the Anti-Calvinist changes in the church, the more puritans rallied against them in fasts, and the more offensive puritans became, the more authorities came to see puritan fasts as subversive, and the more steps they took to suppress puritans to restore order and unity, the more puritans believed themselves persecuted.

In short, the interaction between godly discourses and Caroline-Laudian policies (or at least puritan perceptions of them) resulted in a fundamental shift in puritans' sense of the self-understanding of the church and their self-understanding in relation to it. The previously latent potential for puritans to think of themselves as Christ's suffering little flock in opposition to the Church of England, rather than to think of the church as a whole as such, became more and more actualized. Previously accommodated, moderate puritans became increasingly radicalized. The self-understanding forming mechanisms of fasts increased fragmentation by energizing the self-conscious subgroups they had helped to create, and emphasizing the differences between them. Charles' marginalization of moderate Calvinists like bishops George Abbot, Joseph Hall, and John Williams, whom had placated puritans and won their trust, would bring calamity upon his kingdoms.

For the Caroline period, another set of prayers that circulated in manuscript in 1635 affirms these conclusions. The prayers are very similar to the ones from 1588, and for the same reasons noted before were either made for fasts or very similar to those used in them. Indeed, the title suggestively mentions their occasion as "the present affliction of God's Church." Further, authorities also seized these prayers and carefully marked offending passages.⁸² The 1635 prayers share much of the language and narratives of the

⁸² PRO, SP 16/301/37, fol. 101r. "A Faithfull Soules Prayer & Meditation Upon the Present Affliction of Gods Church" (ibid.)

1588 ones. They used the inclusive language of “we,” “us,” and “our” to refer to England not puritans. The English were “thy people,” “thy children,” “the apple of thine eye.” England collectively shared sins, punishments, and blessings. The author used the language of covenant: “thou art our God and we thy people.” The English were “a people which thou hast honored with thy knowledge.” God had “promised” to watch over and uphold them and hear their prayers. Thus, the author called on God to “remember thy ancient compassions and covenant with thy people. Remember thou the blood of thy children shed in great abundance, which crieth for vengeance from the Earth.” This covenant began with the Reformation in the familiar national narrative: “Thou hast called us with a holy calling, and out of the thick darkness of error wherewith the Earth is covered; thou hast illuminated us with thy knowledge and received us into the number of thy children.” Yet, England was guilty of “ingratitude” for abusing God’s graces by sinning and failing to serve Him well. In particular, “we have despised thy Word, and have not had it in reverence.”⁸³ Yet, here differences begin.

As discussed in an earlier chapter, puritans used a variety of half-truths and tricks to protect themselves from authorities. This prayer was no exception. To create plausible deniability, the writer was vague as to whether he was referring to Catholic attacks on continental Protestants abroad, or Laudian attacks on English puritans at home. That the official reviewer marked the document heavily shows that authorities heard the double meaning in many passages.

In stark contrast to 1588, doctrine was now an issue, and rather than reform not having gone far enough or fast enough, England was now backsliding. Judgments threatened in 1588 now seemed underway:

⁸³ Ibid., fol. 101r-103r.

“Thou hast advanced the hand of the adversary and hast exposed us to shame, and carried a heavy hand over us. Thou hast displanted the plants which thy hand did plant and ruined the churches which thou hadst erected by the blood of martyrs and preaching of the Gospel. Thou hast broken by the hedge of thy providence which environed thy church and hast exposed it as a pray to wild beasts. And now O Lord wee see that in places where thy Gospel was purely preached, there at this day lying is re-founded, and idolatry re-established, and the enemies of thy truth triumph insolently, and insult on the ruins of thy house.”⁸⁴

Another passage laments conforming to Laudian changes under pressure:

“We confess that we have need of humiliation, and that thy church hath need of re-purgation. Therefore is it that thou takest thy fan in thy hand to make clean the floor and to raise the wind of persecution which serves to carry away the chaff, and to chase away hypocrites. But also (O good God) amidst this tribulation, the weak ones do faint, the good ones are oppressed, and share in the affliction. Idolatry strengtheneth itself, and the night of ignorance waxeth dark, thy holy name is blasphemed and the doctrine of salvation is trod under foot by thy adversaries.”⁸⁵

A sense of the godly as Christ’s suffering little flock is also evident: “It is thy goodness that there are yet some of us. It is thy great mercy that we are not wholly consumed.”⁸⁶

Attitudes towards Charles differed sharply from the fawning praise of Elizabeth as Deborah. This change reflected Charles’ patronizing militant Anti-Calvinists, while Elizabeth had staunch Calvinists around her. The prince now appeared to puritans as a hostile force and not an ally. His preferred bishops and councilors appeared to be part of a satanic plot, a fifth column within the church and state:

“Thou which doest appease the waves of the sea, the uproars of people, and which holdest the hearts of kings in thine hand as the falling down of waters hold back the people’s fury, give our king thoughts of peace, remove from him counsels of violence, frustrate the attempts of our enemies who through hope already devour us, dissipate their counsels, thou which takest the wise in their craft, thou who knowest the depth of Satan, piercest with thine eyes into the counsels of the son of perdition whom thou wilt destroy with the breath of thy mouth and wilt cast down all power which opposeth itself against thine.”⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Ibid., fol. 101v-102r. The author lamented the changing nature of the ministry in England as conformists aligned themselves with Laudian-Caroline policies: “The ministers and preachers of the Word have failed in their charges, and in many respects naughtiness and profanation proceedeth from the prophets. And in these late years of many many have proved revolters who had the conduct of thy flock.” (ibid.)

⁸⁵ Ibid., fol. 103r.

⁸⁶ Ibid., fol. 102r

⁸⁷ Ibid., fol. 103r. Of course, even the likes of Leighton, Prynne, and Burton publicly could praise Charles as a Protestant, and even say that without him religion would already be subverted. (Prynne, *Quench Coale*, second pagination, p. 319-20) The lack of even this backhanded praise here is astonishing. More telling of puritan attitudes to Charles was Samuel Rogers who wrote privately in his diary on March 7,

To the author, this capture of Charles' mind was a divine judgment, and he lamented the bygone past of supposedly godly princes like Elizabeth and James:

“When we have had power and human means, and when thou hast exalted princes and potentates amongst us who seemed to become a constant support to thy church, and an assured retreat in the time of storm, we have trusted on the arm of flesh, instead of trusting to thee, the only God, which abasest the pride of the mighty and liftest the poor out of the dust, thou dost advance and bring under their estate.”⁸⁸

Despite these differences, hope and trust in God for “deliverance” remained.

“Thou wilt not therefore suffer Satan to triumph and rejoice at the dissipation of thy church, nor thy holy name be blasphemed without punishment.” God in all ages had relieved “thy people,” and “even in our times hast made us feel comfort by many deliverances and hast delivered our fathers from many cruel persecutions making them pass through trials more grievous then these.” The author prayed God would protect England: “for men hate us not for that we have offended thee, but because we have defended thy quarrel, and that thy name is renowned before us. These blood suckers are thirsty after our blood, not to assuage the patient, but to satisfy their desire.” He prayed that God would “preserve thy Word unto us, and afflict us rather with all other affliction in this life, then to take this light from us since it is the testimony of thy favor towards us, our privilege among all nations and the way to approach thy kingdom.” He prayed they would have the Gospel in “purity,” the church “peaceable” with its “breaches” repaired, and divine service “purely” established.⁸⁹

1636 “Lord preserve, and convert our king.” (Queen’s University Belfast, Percy MS 7, p. 99) Rogers was not alone. In a 1628 list of complaints against John Vicars, parson of St. Mary’s, Stamford was that when the state had appointed a public fast on Wednesday, he “of his own authority, without any other warrant” changed the day to Thursday “the day of his Majesty’s coronation.” The fast would have been observed had not the chancellor prohibited this. (PRO, SP 16/119/52, fol. 71) Vicars also made offensive prayers for the king. He claimed he only prayed for God to give the king “more and more a sanctified spirit” not “a more sacred spirit” as accused. (Gardiner (ed.), *High Commission*, p. 206)

⁸⁸ PRO, SP 16/301/37, fol. 101v.

⁸⁹ Ibid., fol. 102v-103v

Another source for the Caroline period is the title page of John Preston's *The Golden Scepter* (1638), a collection of three treatises published posthumously. The panel on the left side clearly was meant to apply to the treatise comprised of fast sermons, just as the other panels related to the other two treatises. The left side panel shows the fast from 2 Chronicles 12 in which the princes of Israel and King Rehoboam humbled themselves when King Shishak of Egypt had conquered the cities of Judah and reached Jerusalem. They fasted as the prophet Shemaiah said the war was a divine judgment. Because they had "forsaken" the Lord and His law, He had left them in the hand of Shishak. The panel shows apostle-like princes penitently kneeling before a metaphorical altar, but the king with hands clasped together is set apart and looks off into the distance. One of the apostolic figures has turned to look for the king bewildered by his action. The panel thereby suggests that the faith of the king was amiss and not focused on Christ. Indeed, Rehoboam only humbled himself briefly and subsequently returned to evil as his heart was not right with God and not resolved for true religion. He did not serve the Lord as he did not seek Him for guidance nor follow the Word but trusted in worldly strength. A linkage between Rehoboam and Charles here seems probable given the publication date. Parallels would lead contemporaries to think of this text. Just as the northern tribes rebelled against Rehoboam's rule, so the Scots in 1637-38 were heading for rebellion against Charles. When Rehoboam came to the throne Jeroboam and Israel promised faithful service if he would lighten the "heavy yoke" of Solomon. Rehoboam rejected the sage advice of the old counselors of Solomon to be conciliatory to the people to gain their loyalty. Instead, he took the advice of young men to increase their yoke and that he was more powerful than his father and better able to keep the people in subjection. Likewise,

parliament clashed with James over taxes and more so with Charles. Most importantly, towards the end of his reign Solomon allowed idolatry into the land leading the Lord to send judgment on his son, particularly rebellion. James had sought to be a peacemaker in Europe, pursued the Spanish Match, eased anti-Catholic laws in England, and promoted some Anti-Calvinists. While Rehoboam furthered idolatry leading to Shishak's invasion as punishment, Charles promoted Anti-Calvinists far more, and altered worship.⁹⁰ In short, here we see a radical gloss on Preston's moderate fast sermons. Moreover, this gloss was made in a subtle way to slip it past censors, which was especially necessary for such condemnation of the king.

Puritans very likely saw Charles as ruling like Great Britain's Rehoboam under the sway of evil councilors.⁹¹ Contemporaries were well aware of Bishop Williams' famous funeral sermon for King James entitled "Great Britains Salomon," the biblical king and father of Rehoboam. Indeed, puritans complained that the end of James's reign "resembled Solomon's" with increasing "declination" as "papists" more and more dominated his counsels.⁹² Further, the puritans Thomas Goodwin and Thomas Ball prepared the treatises for publication. At this time, they were zealous opponents of the regime and under pressure from it. In November, 1638 Goodwin left for the Netherlands

⁹⁰ 1 Kings 11:43; 12:1-24; 14:21-31; 2 Chronicles 9:31-12:26. Conflict over taxes under James included the Bate's Case (1606) which confirmed the king's right to levy duties without parliamentary consent. Also, parliament conflicted with James over impositions (1610, 1614) and monopolies (1621). Parliament clashed with Charles over the collection of tonnage and poundage (1626, 1628), and the forced loan (1626) which precipitated the Five Knight's Case (1627) where the king imprisoned men without trial for refusing to pay the loan. Parliament again addressed unauthorized taxes (1629). The collection of ship money (1634-38), which occasioned Hampden's case (1638), also was a polarizing issue.

⁹¹ Some puritans affirmed that Charles was a sincere Protestant who never approved of "popery," "yet under the mask of qualifying, and dulcifying distinctions, it is to be feared it found some acceptance, as being a profession more disposing subjects to security, and blind obedience than Protestantism." So he was seduced by Rome's bewitching allurements that its religion gave more temporal or secular advantage to monarchy than the Reformed religion. Thus to a degree Charles sought reconciliation to Rome. (*The English Pope* (London, 1643), p. 18-21 (Wing E3109))

⁹² *English Pope*, p. 5-9.



Figure 11a

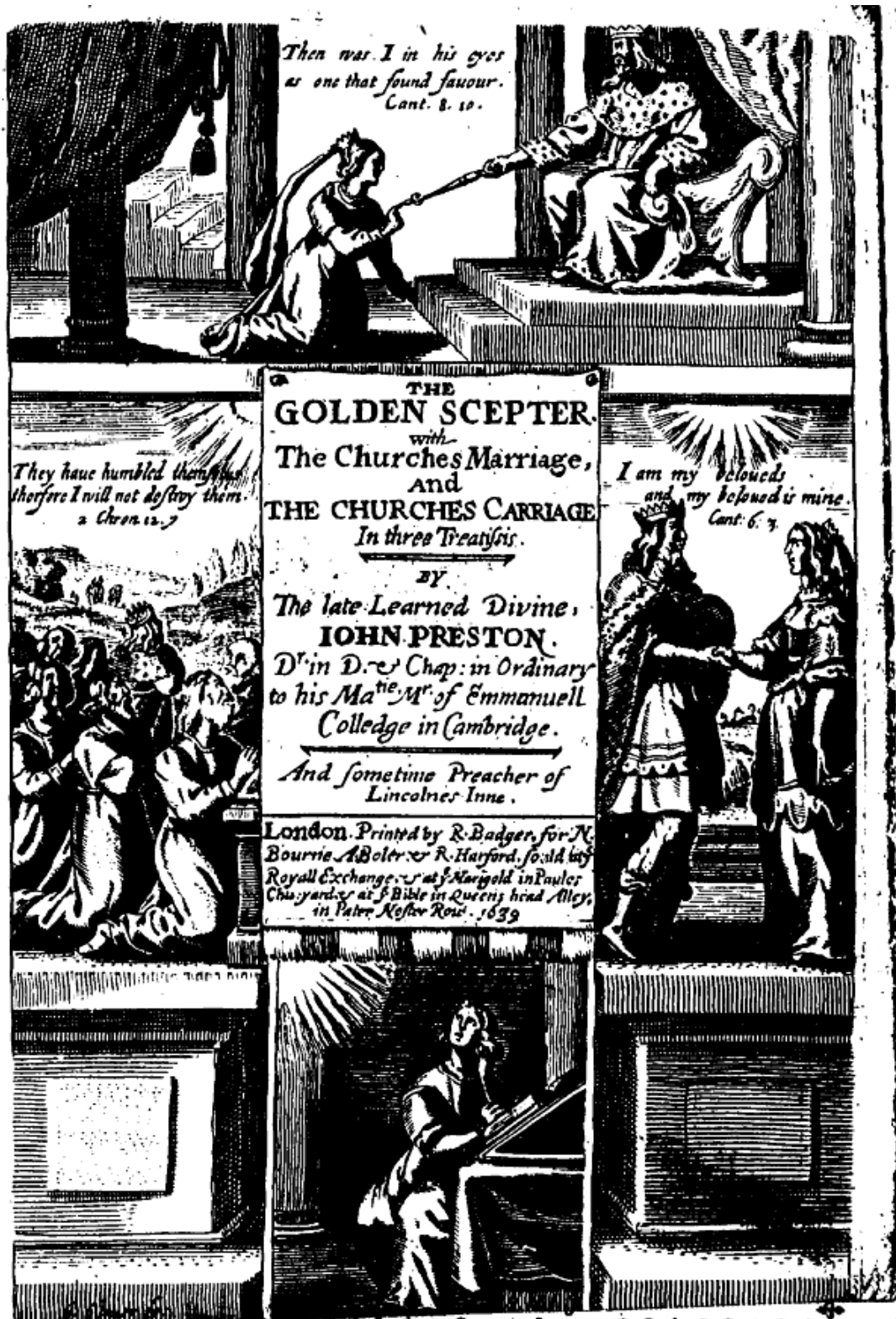


Figure 11b

to serve the English congregation at Arnhem. As we have seen, Ball was a leading figure in puritan fasts critical of Laudian-Caroline policies. Also, the printer, Nicholas Bourne, specialized in theological works including those of the puritan Arthur Dent and the Calvinist conformist Daniel Featley. He was a Calvinist who published anti-Catholic newsbooks about events in the Thirty Years War and zealously supported the cause of continental Protestants. Significantly, Laud prosecuted his partner, Nathaniel Butter, for leaving anti-Arminian passages in Joseph Hall's *Reconciler* (1629). Laud's chaplain, Dr. Thomas Turner, had expunged these passages condemning "Arminianism" when licensing the work. Finally, *The Golden Scepter* was dedicated to the influential Northamptonshire puritan politician Richard Knightley (1593-1639), who was a zealous opponent of Catholics, "Arminians," and court policies, and a great advocate of subjects' liberties. He also had strong ties both to puritan clergy like John Preston and John Dod, and to a plethora of puritan gentry.⁹³

In the public fast at the opening of the Long Parliament, puritans did not burst out radically as one might expect. As we have seen some puritans were concluding that Charles' reign showed that the godly prince and bishops could not be trusted to safeguard the church, and could even be its enemies. Also, by forcing Charles to call parliament, the rebellion in Scotland placed puritans in an unprecedented position of power. It would enable them to push through radical reforms they had long abandoned as politically

⁹³ T.M. Lawrence, "Goodwin, Thomas (1600-1680)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, online edn, May 2007. J. Fielding "Ball, Thomas (1590-1659)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. S.A. Baron, "Bourne, Nicholas (b. in or before 1584, d. 1660)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. S.A. Baron, "Butter, Nathaniel (bap. 1583, d. 1664)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. For Butter, see also: William Prynne, *Canterburies Doome* (London, 1646), p. 165-66 (Wing P3917); Theophilus, *Divine and Politike Observations* (Amsterdam, 1638), p. 60 (STC 15309); PRO SP 16/136/81. Richard Cust, "Knightley, Richard (1593-1639)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, online edn. Oct 2006.

impossible (and not absolutely necessary even if preferable). With fear of “popery” and a “popish plot” running rampant puritans had influence far beyond their numbers. They seized the mantle of being defenders of England and the Protestant faith. Nonetheless, the fast sermons were short specific reforms and long on general narrative. In part, puritans were just coming to realize the new political reality. In part, moderate puritans still were attracted to modest reforms, especially rolling back Laudian “innovations,” and wanted to maintain a united Calvinist front. However, in two important ways the fast sermons before the Commons significantly departed from those to parliament in the 1620s. First, they called for a covenant to be formalized in an unprecedented manner and explicitly taken by the nation, not just implicitly “renewed” as was commonplace. The sense of having almost lost the Gospel and returned to idolatry led the godly to try to secure and codify orthodoxy by further developing the covenant. Doing so defined the legitimate Christian community in England with a loyalty oath, and built pressure for follow through reform. Second, some brief and vague lines could be interpreted to call for further reformation beyond the Elizabethan-Jacobean status quo. Yet, episcopacy was not mentioned and other lines suggested the moderate reforms proffered in the Millenary Petition and at the Hampton Court Conference.

In some ways, MPs shaped the fast to suggest merely a return to the Elizabethan-Jacobean status quo. The Lords and Commons decided on Tuesday, November 17, the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth’s accession, as the date for the houses of parliament and London to observe the fast.⁹⁴ However, this date also potentially set up a reform push by bringing to the fore the theme of thankfulness for the Gospel. It also brought to the fore a

⁹⁴ Maija Jansson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Opening Session of the Long Parliament* (Rochester, NY, 2000), volume 1, p. 58.

retrospective assessment of England's progress under it since that time. While not yet sanctioning resistance, fasts were forging puritans into a powerful revolutionary force. Fasts built pressure for change because true repentance required reform. Many puritans became uncompromising lest insufficient reformed again showed England to be "unthankful" to God and brought down worse judgments. The nation had to respond to God's providential deliverance or all would be lost. If they only repented outwardly with no amendment, they were just "hypocrites."

Cornelius Burges preached the morning fast sermon on Jeremiah 50:5 to teach that when God gave any "deliverance" to the Church, especially from "Babylon," that Christians had "to close with God by a more solemn, strict, and inviolable covenant." Burges taught that "to enter into covenant with God" was "the principal part of a religious fast" and "the proper and chief business of a fast." He claimed "drawing near to God by extraordinary prayer and humiliation," confessing and bewailing sin, and craving mercy were only part of a fast. Such "labor" would be "utterly lost" without a covenant. England had to do so now that she, like Israel, had been delivered from Babylon by "an army from the North."⁹⁵

Burges went on to make a larger parallel between the "slow pace" of the English Reformation after deliverance from "mystical Babylon" with Israel's hundred year rebuilding of the temple after deliverance from "old Babylon." While the Israelites began the work under Zerubbabel and Ezra, it did not thrive and reach completion until Nehemiah led prince and people to enter "a public and solemn covenant" at a "public fast." The "labor" of numerous previous fasts had been "lost" for the lack of a covenant, so "many things were amiss" and "great deformations" remained, and a long time passed

⁹⁵ Jeffs (ed.), *Fast Sermons*, volume 1, p. 17-22, 24-30, 32-3, 43, 47-55, 66, 81 (subscript pagination).

before their reformation had “any tolerable perfection.” With a covenant Asa and Nehemiah made “a more thorough reformation.” In parallel, England had some “beginnings” of deliverance from Babylon under Henry VIII, which Edward VI furthered, but not “an instant reformation.” Elizabeth supposedly would have “thoroughly pluckt up popery both root and branch” including “superfluous ceremonies, and all remaining rags of superstition, as well as gross idolatry.” But she did all she could just to make any “beginnings” of reformation, so it was not “thoroughly polished and perfected.” Now England had begun “to fall quite back again” and “not only to coast anew upon the brinks of Babylon, from whence we were happily delivered, but even to launch out into her deepest lakes of superstition and idolatry, under pretence of some extraordinary *piety of the times*, and of some *good work in hand*.” Burges saw:

“Arminianism, Socinianism, and popish idolatry breaking in again over all the kingdom like a flood.” As with Israel, fasts did not prevent such. It occurred in England despite having more fasts at parliaments of late, indeed “fast after fast,” and “more frequent humiliations” among “God’s people” (“notwithstanding the malice and rage of some men to discountenance and suppress it”) because they had not entered into “a solemn, public, universal covenant.” This omission caused the “slow proceedings of reformation,” and the many “ebbings and flowings” in religion.

More specifically, the lack of a covenant allowed “factions,” “interests,” and “engagements” in Israel and England to hinder reformation. It allowed parliaments to have “one spirit of division or another,” like the “evil spirit” God sent between Abimelech and the men of Shechem (Judges 9:23-4). He claimed “extraordinary fasting and prayer” without a covenant was not sufficient. Parliaments had been broken up

despite fasts. A covenant would create unity around obedience to God's Word. As yet England had not "joined together as one man, zealously to propugne His truth and ordinances, and to stand by Him and His cause, as becomes the people of God, in all just and warrantable ways, against all opposers and gainsayers." Burges also likened the covenant to a marriage. God and people would join to become "one flesh." As a fast was to create one's self-understanding as a child of God, the covenant would codify it and as a result provide clear direction:

"You would then think, when you come to manage, debate, vote, any question, 'I am the Lord's, not mine own, not my friends; will this I do, stand with my covenant? Will it please God? Will it be profitable for the state? Is it agreeable to justice and equity? Then, on with it, no man shall divert, or take me off.'"

At Nehemiah's fast "they separated themselves from strangers" and the godly meant to do the same in England.⁹⁶ A fast was best for entering a covenant because hearts were "in more than ordinary tune for such a work." They were humbled for sin and the repentant had taken pains to "soften" and "melt" them. One had to "strike through the covenant" then or risk the heart becoming trapped in "desperate hardness."⁹⁷

To not only press reform but the covenant, Burges rehearsed the familiar Protestant nationalist narrative of the "great ingratitude" of England for "miraculous deliverances" from "Babylon," the Armada, and the Gunpowder Plot (as well as "the personal deliverances He hath often given to each of us apart"). England had neither reformed nor entered into a covenant after any of them. Now with the "present mercy" of the calling of parliament, the "ancient, regular and approved way" to cure public evils, England had another opportunity. Of course, he also lauded the memory of Elizabeth's accession on November 17 to inflame MPs to enter into a covenant. Significantly, while

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 25, 31-2, 39-46, 51-5, 61-2, 65-71, 76-79, 81, 83 (subscript pagination).

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 81.

he claimed Elizabeth began the work, he called on them “to go forward, to perfect that happy reformation, which yet in many parts lies upolished and unperfect.” MPs were to “not only continue the possession of what she (as a most glorious conduit pipe) hath transmitted to us, but perfect the work.”⁹⁸

Surely realizing that this agenda would alienate many Calvinist conformists, Burges emphasized the common ground of rooting out “idolatry” (especially the mass) and furthering preaching in his reform agenda. He lamented that lately preaching had been “vilified, “blasphemed,” and:

“brought into so deep contempt (and by none more than by those who should labor most to hold up the honor of it) that it is made a matter of scorn, and become the odious character of a puritan, to be an assiduous preacher. Yea, so far have some men run mad this way, that it is held a crime deserving censure in the highest ecclesiastical court in this kingdom, to tell but a few clergymen out of a pulpit, that it is an essential part of the office of a bishop, to preach.”

He decried the Laudian claim that preaching was “necessary for the planting of a church, but not so afterwards.” Faith came by hearing (Romans 10:17), and the Word preached was “the milk and food” that Christians needed to live and grow, as well as the “seed” from which they were first begotten in Christ. Lately, if a preacher tried “to convince the conscience” of particulars needing reformation he was “either derided as worthy of nothing but contempt, or else censured as indiscrete, rash, factious, and seditious.”

Afternoon sermons on the Lord’s days had been cried down as “Judaizing Puritanism.”

While the king’s order converting afternoon sermons to catechizing could have edified

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 55-8, 74-5, 82 (subscript pagination). Burges called on MPs to: “remember and consider that this day, even this very day, the 17 of November, 82 years sithence, began a new resurrection of this kingdom from the dead, our second happy reformation of religion by the auspicious entrance of our late royal Deborah (worthy of eternal remembrance and honor) into her blessed and glorious reign; and that, from thenceforth religion thrived, and prospered under her government with admirable success, against a whole world of oppositions from popish factors at home and abroad: so as the very gates of hell were never able to extinguish that light, which God by her means hath set up amongst us.” One does wonder if Burges held a straight face in the pulpit when he claimed the date was a “special providence” saying: “for, I presume, little did you think of the 17 of November, when you first fixed on this day for your fast.” (ibid., p. 82)

the people, “our new masters” considered “catechetical” preaching to be “worse than preaching” and wanted only “the bare questions and answers of the child’s catechism.” Authorities had silenced godly pastors from their pulpits on week days even in populous towns. The lack of preaching had allowed the people to run into popery, Anabaptism, Familism, and atheism. Yet Laudians “blush not to attribute the daily falling off of multitudes from our church, to over-much preaching.” A renewed effort to establish preaching in the dark corners of England, Wales, and Ireland was needed to save thousands of souls from perishing. All “idle, unsound, unprofitable, and scandalous ministers” had to be reformed or cast out, and a godly preaching ministry settled in every parish.⁹⁹

Stephen Marshall preached the afternoon fast sermon on November 17, 1640 and told MPs to embrace Burges’ covenant. In general though, his sermon gave an unusually detailed exposition of the standard theme of how England (already) was in covenant with God. It thus stressed Protestant national self-understanding and defined the community’s enemies. His text was the familiar 2 Chronicles 15:2: “The Lord is with you while ye be with Him, and if ye seek Him He will be found of you: but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you.” He argued the text concerned “God’s presence in the covenant of grace, in which He is so joined with a people, that they also are joined unto Him.” To be “joined with a people,” Marshall explained was to be “in covenant with them.” It meant that “he is their God, and they are His people.” God’s ‘presence’ also meant He would give providential blessings and protection to “His own separated people” or “His peculiar

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 83-94 (subscript pagination). Indeed, in the dedication to the printed fast sermons, Burges and Marshall stressed that their main point was the “perfecting” of the Reformation by erecting “an able, godly, faithful, zealous, profitable, preaching ministry” in every parish church in England and Wales. (ibid., p. 14, 101)

people.” Any misfortune was a result of God “withdrawing” from His people because of their “unfaithful walking with Him.” Marshall thus called on parliament to discover the “greatest traitors” against king, church, and state, and the “authors” of the evil befalling England. He argued that “our greatest enemies” were those whose sins would “rob us of our God” and remove providential blessings and protection. Further, they would cause ruin as “the bringers of God’s wrath upon the nation.” Even the sin of just one “Achan” or “Jonah” would bring trouble on the rest so he had to be “cast out.” Marshall pointed to the profane and Catholics as culprits, but implicated Laudians most of all. He questioned MPs if the sinners among them included “haters of God’s ways” and “scorners of His children, and His ordinances.” Laudians especially were dangerous for England because the Lord was “more easily provoked by a people among whom He walks.”

Marshall called on MPs to undertake reformation just as King Asa did in the text to remedy “an horrible apostasy from the purity of God’s worship” that had taken place under Rehoboam. In familiar language, they were to be “repairers of all our breaches” so as “to keep Him with us.” They were to “stand in the gap” or “to stand betwixt God and the nation.” When it came to specifics though, Marshall, like Burges stuck to an agenda that many Calvinist conformists would accept. Specifically, England had to separate from all iniquity and become “a holy people, a Jeshurum, a righteous nation.” To date though, any who forbore swearing and drunkenness were “cried down with the odious name of a puritan.” England had to maintain “the purity of His ordinances from idolatry and superstition.” Recently though, Laudians had undermined the Thirty-Nine Articles:

“Oh the miserable defection that we have made from God, adulterating thereof! Tell me, beloved, what one point, what one article of faith controverted betwixt us and the Church of Rome is there, that our pulpits, and presses, and university acts have not been bold withal? As if we were weary of the truth which God hath committed to us: as if indeed, for our not receiving the truth in love, God were giving the nation up to believe lies.”

In what surely was a reference to the Book of Sports, Marshall complained that the “Lord’s Day” had been profaned and never such “high affronts” to it in all the Christian world “as of late hath been in England.” This sin happened despite “our ancient doctrine established” and “excellent laws” backing it. Significantly, to appeal to conformists Marshall used the more neutral term “Lord’s Day” rather than the more disputed term “sabbath.” In another common goal with Calvinist conformists, Marshall called on MPs to ensure the Word spread to every corner of the land. For “these eighty years” many parishes had never had a proper preacher, or at least not for very long. Many were “starving” for lack of the “bread of life” so authorities were guilty of “murdering” souls. This problem had been worsened by many “faithful and painful ministers” being punished for “trifles.” MPs were to see established “a faithful, learned, painful, preaching ministry: that every candlestick may have a candle, that every flock may have a faithful shepherd to guide them.” Marshall also pointed to Laudians when he decried:

“the extreme daring, bold audaciousness of a generation of men, that have adventured as much as in them lies, to corrupt God’s worship, that not only rejoice to see the idolatry and superstition of Rome practiced by others, but have dared to set their thresholds by God’s threshold, and to dress out all God’s worship, according to their own fancies, things too apparent to need any further proof.”

England was not to be “juggled out of our religion” by “a generation of men, who seek only to glory in our flesh.” Like Burges though, Marshall made statements suggesting reforming ceremonies beyond rolling back Laudian policies. MPs were to “pluck up every plant that God hath not planted” and throw out “every rag that hath not God’s stamp and name upon it.” “God’s people” were to worship according “His own ordinances” and not “the devices and traditions of men.” While more reform may have chafed some Calvinist conformists, others would have been glad to see longstanding

ceremonial clashes resolved for the sake of preaching. More importantly, as with Burges, Marshall made no mention of altering episcopacy.

To complete reform, and bring the godly together as the standard bearers of English Protestant self-understanding, Marshall told MPs to be on “God’s side,” support “God’s cause,” and “avenge God’s quarrel.” All “His friends” would be zealous for “His Truth, His ordinances, His day, His ministers, His children, the tears of the afflicted.” MPs were to act as “when Phineas goes with his javelin, and executes vengeance on Zimri and Cosbi.” MPs were not to fear that “the Lord, to punish the pride, sloth, hypocrisy, and formality of His people, hath of late suffered the enemies of the Church to prevail exceeding far.” The “face of Christendom” was rent with war, sedition, heresy, and schism. Arguably Marshall here was linking Laudian-Caroline policies in England to the plight of reformed churches on the continent. MPs were to take heart though, for “we know that the Lord accounts that the most seasonable time for His friends to own His cause, when the enemies are most violent against it: then God saith, *Who is on my side, who?*” God would give victory over all “His enemies” in long run. Though in what might have raised questions for Calvinist conformists, he warned MPs that “if through fear, treachery, cowardice, pride, or sloth, you withdraw yourselves from God’s work, deliverance shall come to God’s people another way.” They would lose their share in the “comfort” to come, and be guiltier to God than “the very authors of our mischiefs.”¹⁰⁰

Marshall also played up the national history narrative. He argued that “all the nations in Christendom have been in grievous perplexities many years round about us: we have been hitherto kept as another land of Goshen, where light hath still shined, when all others have been in darkness.” England was a sinful nation so it was a wonder that the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 103-52 (subscript pagination).

Lord had not forsaken them long ago and “severely revenged the quarrel of His covenant.” He asked MPs to remember:

“This day eighty two years ago, the Lord set up the Gospel among us, and took us to be a nation in covenant with Him. Oh the progress that some nations would have made! The thankfulness and fruitfulness that some people would have attained to in so long a time! But that we should grow worse and worse in point of God’s worship, that we should hanker after idolatry, and superstition, and fall away worse than any of our neighbors, that God hath visited so severely: What shall we say, when God comes to reckon with us for these things?”

Marshall called on them to “make this another blessed seventeenth of November.”¹⁰¹

As the fast sermons in the parliamentary fasts of the 1620s, those of Burges and Marshall were moderate in comparison to the reforms radicals argued fasts required. About the same time Burton and Prynne put forth books advocating a national public fast to assuage divine wrath and procure divine blessings on the kingdom. Significantly, they sought change by “lawful means” not rebellion. They petitioned the king and parliament to act. They hoped their books would free the king’s mind, and God in reply to prayers the king’s heart, from captivity to Laud and other prelates. Unable to accept that Charles was against them on principle, they saw him as a good king who was simply misinformed and seduced by the flattery of sycophantic prelates. The wicked counsel of prelates was what divided king from people.

They portrayed stark battle lines. Burton petitioned the king as “the true church and children, and the true faith and religion of Jesus Christ.” In contrast, Laud and the “prelates” sought to “unchurch” the Church of England and overthrow “all true Christian faith and religion” and undermine “the very foundations of faith and Christian religion.” They sought to set up a “false church” as well as “false faith” and “false religion.” They

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 121, 132, 138, 137, 149 (subscript pagination).

sought to reconcile the Church of England to the Church of Rome, and claimed they were one and the same church with the same faith and religion.

The sins for which Burton and Prynne claimed the nation needed to repent and reform were mainly the “innovations” of Laudians and prosecution of those who opposed them. They included: “persecution” of “God’s ministers and people” and the Gospel, bringing in “popish superstition and idolatry” (esp. “Antichristian altars and images”), re-issuing the Book of Sports permitting profanation of the “sabbath,” restraining afternoon preaching on Lord’s Day, overthrowing the orthodox meaning of the Thirty-Nine Articles to gloss them to agree with “Pelagians and Arminians” and suppress preaching of the doctrine of grace. Such complaints were consistent with those of moderate puritans.

Different from the fast sermons to parliament was the hard-line puritan view that imposing ceremonies and human ordinances on consciences was “Antichristian bondage” or “Antichristian tyranny.” Also different was that Burton now joined Prynne in shrill attacks on episcopacy. Burton termed bishops or episcopacy “the prelatical faction,” “an Antichristian faction,” “so many Antichrists,” “Egyptian taskmasters and Babylonian lords.” Episcopacy was “the main pillar of the Antichristian throne,” “mere Antichristianism,” and “an Antichristian kingdom.” Prynne called bishops “the limbs of Antichrist,” “Christ’s adversaries,” and “notorious innovators.” Episcopacy was “an Antichristian tyranny” and Antichrist’s “Antichristian hierarchy.” Burton called for “a sound and serious thorough reformation” and “speedy reformation” to stay God’s hand. Prynne too called for “a thorough Reformation.” In particular, they required parliament to remove all bishops as the “main causes” of all “disorders” and “enormities” in church and state, and “the main instruments and movers” of all “outrages” in the land. Prynne

argued that if England shunned a public fast reformation because the prelates thought them “puritanical,” and defended episcopacy that church and state would not long stand as it waged “open war” against Christ. To “cast out” bishops, Prynne argued, parliament had to “let a league be renewed between Christ and this kingdom, by humiliation, by Reformation, by purgation of the land from all Romish altars, images, and other superstitions in churches, and from all manner of human inventions and ceremonies whatsoever to bind the conscience of any man in the service and worship of our God.” He called on people suffering under “the heavy yoke of Antichrist and the burdens of Egypt” to be like the Israelites in Egypt praying against their “taskmasters.” They were to “pray incessantly for the good success of this parliament, that it may be as a Moses sent of God in the doubling of their bricks to deliver them from the spiritual Egyptian bondage of the prelates.”¹⁰²

These radical views gained ground as the accommodating churchmanship of moderate Calvinist bishops became eclipsed by the disciplinary churchmanship of Anti-Calvinist bishops. Moderates rethought whether episcopacy was a threat or aid to “God’s cause.” Those with presbyterian sympathies who had come to terms with living in an episcopal church were now increasingly unable to do so. This situation points to how disagreements over how far to take reform would break the Calvinist conformist-puritan working alliance, and cause puritans to fragment amongst themselves 1640-1660.

¹⁰² Henry Burton, *A Reply to a Relation of the Conference Between William Laud and Mr. Fisher the Jesuit* (n.p., 1640), Sig. A3r-C4v (STC 4154); William Prynne, *Lord Bishops None of the Lords Bishops* (London, 1640), Sig. K3r-L3v (STC 20467).

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSIONS

“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” - Amos 3:3 (KJV)

Politics deeply affects the way people think about whom they are, and how they relate to the larger community, church, and nation. English Protestant self-understanding was neither singular nor constant, but diverse and malleable. In the struggle to define English Protestant self-understanding, political power determined which versions of it had official sanction, and became predominant. While a united church and a shared self-understanding were possible, political developments led to fragmentation.

The evidence from fasts shows that royal policy in general and the ways England’s rulers dealt with inherent tensions the English Reformation produced had a profound impact on Protestant self-understanding. From the 1560s to 1580s puritans agitated to rework the religious settlement but were crushed. While this experience differentiated them from conformists, they largely rejected separatism. Puritan fasts underscored their calls for further reform, though national fasts also laid grounds for unity. From the 1590s to 1625, puritans shifted to working within the existing settlement to proselytize and reform manners. In this context, they focused on accommodating themselves to the Church of England which in their view was doctrinally sound and had a hierarchy containing many godly clergy. The fellowship between moderate Calvinist conformists and puritans, and the constraining authority of church and state generally kept puritans in safe channels. In these circumstances, fasts supported moderate puritans

and moderate thought. While fasts occasionally were sources of tension between conformists and puritans, and had the potential for division, more often than not they integrated and unified the two in a common agenda and a shared analysis of the challenges facing the nation. Specifically, official public fasts aided unity by focusing on the common struggle against Catholic and separatist threats to the English church. Unity also resulted from conformist toleration of puritanized public fasts and unauthorized puritan fasts. Such indulgence encouraged puritans to remain within the church by allowing them to play out their self-appointed role as the leaven of the whole loaf.

From 1625 to 1640 Caroline-Laudian policies alienated puritans from the established church which now appeared doctrinally unsound and from the church hierarchy which seemed increasingly dominated by “Anti-Christian tyrants.” Puritans who had been able to live out the reform imperatives of their self-understanding in the Church of England could no longer do so. In this context, fasts increased division as puritans and Anti-Calvinist conformists aimed at different reforms which stemmed from different analyses of crises. Puritans focused on opposing Caroline-Laudian policy, witnessing to “Truth,” and saving the church from a “popish plot.” In counter-point, Anti-Calvinists focused on what they took to be a “popular,” puritan plot to subvert the monarchy and church. Due to these facts, fasts led Protestants increasingly to define each other as the devils to be exorcised from the corporate body. The mechanisms of fasts that formed self-understanding now energized self-conscious subgroups and emphasized the differences between them. Further, when Laudian authorities took stronger than normal action against puritan fasts, puritans increasingly thought of themselves as Christ’s suffering little flock rather than the whole Church of England. With moderate Calvinist

conformists marginalized, radical voices became more influential. However, for a time puritans and Calvinist conformists generally maintained unity in opposition to Caroline-Laudian “innovations.”

Looking beyond 1640, the evidence examined in this study suggests important further questions and hypotheses. From 1640 to 1660, the traditional institutions of church and state weakened to an unprecedented degree and puritans largely took them over. The first two years of the Long Parliament saw a radical change in the nature of puritans. The logic of fast day narratives could have moved puritans to take up arms. With the monarchy severely weakened by a need for supply from parliament to fight rebellions in Scotland and Ireland, puritans found themselves in an unprecedented position of power and freedom from constraint. Puritans shifted their thoughts to focus on “thorough reform” of the church. These facts opened heretofore unrealistic possibilities and removed constraints to radical thought. Puritans realized that political circumstances allowed going far beyond reversing Laudian “innovations” and returning to the Elizabethan-Jacobean status quo. With the godly prince and the godly bishop discredited as faithful custodians of the church, presbyterian views flourished anew as godly people sought to takeover that role. Iconoclasm broke out which was not just against recent Laudian changes but long established ones. In short, Charles and Laud arguably created the very “Puritanism” they most feared.

Fasts also would have focused puritans on suggestive questions. What could the dramatic defeat of the “popish plot” and the puritan rise to power be but providential blessings in response to godly fasts? Could this not be the beginning of the long held expectation that God’s covenant “promises” would be fulfilled with the fall of Antichrist?

Would England respond to this last and greatest undeserved deliverance with slow and insufficient repentance and reform? Would not God at long last forsake England if puritans failed to take this God given opportunity? That puritans now focused on what they preferred rather than what they opposed would explain why unity between them and Calvinist conformists shattered. It would also help to explain why Calvinist conformists came to see puritans as a threat and joined royalist ranks. Meanwhile puritans themselves divided over how far reforms should go, falling out amongst themselves in parliament's monthly fast days. Fasts arguably furthered a cascading fragmentation, helping to produce centrifugal forces which overpowered centripetal ones.

In summary, how puritans changed in various contexts shows that the long debate over whether early modern England was characterized by "conflict" or "consensus" is a false dichotomy which misses the more important issue of how authorities managed inherent tensions. Consensus and conflict both were present in varying degrees at all times, along with a language of peace and unity, as well as of heretic, antichrist, and purity. In the Elizabethan and Jacobean church moderate Calvinist conformists finessed tensions and built relationships, while in the Caroline church Anti-Calvinist conformists aggravated tensions and destroyed relationships.

The famous lines from Yeats' *Second Coming* could describe the coming of the English Civil War:

"Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity."

Caroline-Laudian policies destroyed the center, undermined the best (who did not lack for conviction), and created intense passions in many more than the worst. Interpretation of events through mutually re-enforcing rival conspiracy theories and dichotomous categories of thought interacted with the political context to undermine unity.

The problem of unity was endemic to the Reformation era. Commenting on the religious strife of his time, Charles V observed: “How absurd to try to make two men think alike on matters of religion when I cannot make two timepieces agree!”¹⁰³ Protestant division however particularly stemmed from the problem of authority. Protestants had great belief in the clarity and simplicity of Bible. Indeed, William Chillingworth trumpeted: “The Bible, I say, the Bible only is the religion of Protestants!”¹⁰⁴ Of course, scripture proved far from self-evident, and Protestants could agree on neither interpretation nor application. The remedies Protestants sought can be summed up in Richard Baxter’s motto: “In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity.” But defining what was “necessary” and what “doubtful” merely presented another problem. If opponents were not swayed by what others took as the plain meaning of the Word, a slew of dichotomous categories and negative labels were available to stigmatize and ostracize them.

Contemporaries were well aware of the problem of language. In his *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*, John Locke wrote of “the imperfection of words,” that is, lack of clarity as to what they signified. This imperfection created difficulty for

¹⁰³ Cited in Lewis Spitz, “The Formula of Concord Then and Now,” *Sixteenth Century Journal*, December 1977 8(4): 8-22.

¹⁰⁴ William Chillingworth, *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation* (Oxford, 1638), p. 375 (STC 5138). Christian humanists also thought their methods applied to the Bible would lead to a new consensus for Christianity. Like Protestants, they viewed the Bible as self-interpreting and self-explaining, as a text that a pious and open mind with a pure and simple faith could understand.

understanding in communication. While accepting the Word as infallible, Locke highlighted varied Biblical interpretation and commentary as proof of the fallibility of human readers in understanding the Bible. He sought to re-direct religion to God's supposedly clearer revelation in reason and nature.¹⁰⁵ Likewise, Michel de Montaigne observed of Reformation strife in his *Essays*: "Nostre contestation est verbale." Brian Cummings argues that Montaigne here was not merely trivializing Reformation debate, but arguing for skepticism about the clarity of language in interpreting scripture. Moreover, Cummings argues that the Reformation crisis of theology was linked to a crisis of language.¹⁰⁶

Despite the problems of language, Baxter's notion of "charity" was a powerful ideal that in a proper context could constrain division. All saw the need to balance "Truth" with "peace." Paradoxically, the value placed on being one body in Christ could foster either unity or division depending on the context. Under Elizabeth and James, godly conference, backed by the coercive power of church and state, acted to constrain division. An important insight can be made from the Baptist minister John Fawcett's (1740-1817) famous hymn which praised "the tie that binds" and "the fellowship of kindred minds." Being like-minded was not merely the cause of unity, but fellowship

¹⁰⁵ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1975), p. 475-90. Locke argued that when the will of God was "clothed with words" doubt and uncertainty necessarily followed. Fortunately, God also universally revealed Himself in "His works and providence" and had given humans a sufficient "light of reason" so all could know that He existed and was to be obeyed. Since the precepts of "natural religion" were plain and intelligible to all humankind, and were seldom controversial, but other "revealed truths" conveyed by language were liable to the obscurities and difficulties of words, Locke concluded: "methinks it would become us to be more careful and diligent in observing the former, and less magisterial, positive, and imperious, in imposing our own sense and interpretations of the latter." (ibid.)

¹⁰⁶ Cited in Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford, 2002), p. 15, 26-30. Cummings concludes that the Reformation was a linguistic, literary, and textual revolution. Further, because the Reformation was bound with interpretation of language and literary culture, Cummings argues that we must understand writing to understand early modern religion and vice-versa. (ibid., passim)

also the cause of binding ties. Bound by “charity,” the godly worked in the community of saints for agreement. Apparently though, in the context of the Civil War and Interregnum though, puritans turned the famous line of Satan in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* on its head so it was better to reign in heaven than serve in hell. Puritans could not agree on which vision of a purely reformed church to impose with their new power. As fellowship became limited to smaller groups, radical ideas, narratives, and interpretations could emerge with less contestation. Fasts would then serve to undermine the unity of the faction they had helped create, and thus undermine the puritan revolution that began so successfully.

So here we have some answers to the mystery of why “puritanism” appears and disappears in the records of authorities as a problem. It shows why puritans, whom revisionists like Patrick Collinson have so effectively argued were mainstream pillars of the established church and a stabilizing force, could from 1642 become the revolutionary force of Protestant Whig historiography. Puritans could be either conservative or radical depending on the context. We have seen that pre-1640 puritans were hardly revolutionary as they expressed dissent in lawful, peaceful means through the constitutional means of the king-in-parliament. Lacking parliament in the Personal Rule as a means to offer the “constitutional opposition” of lesser magistrates which Calvin sanctioned, puritans fasted and prayed for one, waited on God, kept their heads down, emigrated into exile, or acquiesced to suffer prosecution in court. As we have seen, many puritans were so timid in their fast sermons and works for publication, so concerned that even veiled references would be too offensive, that they can hardly be imagined to take up arms against their king. Even radicals dedicated their books to the king or parliament

to seek change through the normal constitutional process. In fast sermons, there is no evidence of resistance theory as a means to achieving the reform they thought would appease God.

Indeed, puritans had long portrayed themselves as the king's "best subjects" because they were true Protestants, faithful to the religion upon which the throne and God's favor was predicated. They caricatured "papists" as the ones who plotted and rebelled against kings. Rebellion was a sin and would bring divine judgment. But puritans had revolutionary potential under the right conditions. Laud did have reason for concern as Calvinists on the continent under attack from Catholic regimes, including France during the Wars of Religion and the Low Countries during the Dutch Revolt, had developed resistance theory. Under Mary Tudor 1553-1558, John Knox, Christopher Goodman, and John Ponet articulated resistance theory for England. The Swiss Reformation was linked with republicanism.

Ironically, Charles and Laud created the very "popular" puritan threat to episcopacy and monarchy that they feared. While under Elizabeth and James, obedience to God and king was often commensurable or at least capable of being fudged, under Charles the two increasingly diverged for puritans. Charles took politics down a path that created the perception among the godly that they had to choose between two masters. They had to choose between Truth and peace, obeying God and obeying earthly authority. In their eyes, they chose to serve God not Mammon. As with puritans, not to liken Charles' divisive rule to Rehoboam's is difficult:

"And when all Israel saw that the king would not hearken unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? and we have none inheritance in the

son of Jesse: every man to your tents, O Israel: and now, David, see to thine own house.
So all Israel went to their tents.”¹⁰⁷

In his great Bible commentaries on 1 Kings 12:1-24, 14:21-31, and 2 Chronicles 9:31-12:16, the non-conformist minister Matthew Henry (1662-1714) compared Solomon’s wise rule to the arrogance and foolishness of Rehoboam’s: “The high-mettled horse may be kicked and spurred by him that has the art of managing him; but, if an unskillful horseman do it, it is at his peril.” Of Rehoboam, he added: “He fancied himself better able to manage them, and impose upon them, than his father was, not considering that he was vastly inferior to him in capacity.” This comment could as well describe the differences between James VI and I, and Charles I. Further, Henry argued rulers who with self-denial engaged in moderate, mild, and gentle dealings with their people could gain great things. By contrast, violent and rough rule changed the people: “No more needs to be done to ruin men, than to leave them to their own pride and passion.” Similarly, he argued: “Many have been driven to the mischief they did not intend by being too severely dealt with for what they did intend.”¹⁰⁸ As we have seen, such rule did not just create anger and rash acts as Henry argued, but the creation and use of radical language and narratives. It affected the way people defined their self-understandings and identified with the church, their communities, and the nation. Again, Charles and Laud created the very “Puritanism” that they dreaded, changing conservatives into radicals.

Neither Charles nor Laud was particularly cruel or oppressive. Rather, the extreme views they held moved them to act in ways that made their rule problematic. Fasts under Charles had laid a foundation of radical language and narrative, of covenants

¹⁰⁷ 2 Chronicles 10:16 (KJV). See also 1 Kings 12:16 (KJV).

¹⁰⁸ Matthew Henry, *An Exposition of all the Books of the Old and New Testament*, third edition (London, 1721-25), volume 2.

broken, of God's impending forsaking of England, of the necessity of reform, of God's "promises" fulfilled, which in the events of 1642 likely underwrote resistance. The disciplining and bonding effects of fast days united puritans against Caroline-Laudian rule, and forged them into a powerful political force that launched a successful revolution. Arguably then there was long term ideological division in the Church of England. But this "high road to civil war" only occurred because culture and politics had interacted in a way contingent on political struggle and the policy choices of monarchs, bishops, and lesser clergy and magistrates. There were many possible outcomes, and many possible self-understandings for the church. Self-understanding was malleable, shaped and created by political struggle.

In fairness to Charles, Elizabeth's settlement divided English Calvinists, and James essentially adopted that settlement and allowed an Anti-Calvinist faction to grow in the church. They bequeathed a church to Charles with deep but managed fault lines. Only a perceptive and skilled ruler with willingness to indulge Calvinists could have managed it. Also, we may speculate that had the Personal Rule continued longer, that Charles may have succeeded in gradually imposing his vision of the church. Remarkably, the English people acquiesced to changes in religion brought by Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I. Anti-Calvinists were succeeding in driving wedges between Calvinist conformists and puritans, as the former more and more were forced to choose to obey Caroline-Laudian rule and thus become compromised in the eyes of the latter. Charles' sense that the people were obedient save for a few trouble-making puritans directing them otherwise had a kernel of truth. By contrast, the Scots rebelled in 1637 against the new Scottish Prayer Book. The Irish rebelled as well for other reasons.

That both were a response to Charles' rule leads us back to the fact that he lubricated the fault lines and created an earthquake. That the English rebelled last is significant. To bring substantial segments of the population to rebel against their king was an extraordinary feat as obedience to authority was a dominant feature of English Protestant culture.

Despite their disagreements, for over 80 years English Protestants managed to walk together though with difficulty. This peace was a remarkable achievement and most credit goes to moderate Calvinist bishops (and magistrates) and moderate puritans. They held the center together, managed tensions, and kept conflict within bounds because their pragmatic and flexible churchmanship, their willingness to compromise to work together for shared reform goals. While occasionally obnoxious and disruptive, puritans were largely contained. Puritans could thus glowingly refer to such a Calvinist bishop as "the good bishop," and Calvinist bishops refer to puritans as "godly people." The "ameliorating bond" to use Dr. Tyacke's well-known phrase was as much moderate Calvinist bishops and moderate puritans as "Calvinism." The problem was radical puritans and radical Anti-Calvinist conformists who were rigid and polarizing.

Under Elizabeth and James, most puritans perceived the Church of England in fundamentals to be in covenant obedience to God's Word and walking with Him. This Calvinist concord fostered communion and fellowship. By making acceptable space for puritans within the church, moderate Calvinist conformists channeled the puritan sense of calling to serve God and the common good to the strengthening of church and state. By bringing such a powerful constituency into the governing structures of church and state, England's rulers broadened their base and achieved greater stability. To a degree, such

sanctioning and legitimatizing of internal criticism served order. Ideals of charity, fellowship, unity, peace kept potential radicalism of puritans in check to a large degree. Puritans could work with and come to accept Calvinist bishops, and the discipline of the hierarchy and orthodox puritans backed by the power of the state was key.

But under Charles English Protestants were not able to walk together. When strongly supported by the monarchy, moderate Calvinist bishops had staved off the logic of extremes. When Charles withdrew that support, they came under more criticism from the extremes and were unable to define the center and bring people to it. Charles' fear of "popularity" led him to seek order by less involvement of the population in governing. The interaction of culture and politics under Charles, and likely in the Civil War and Interregnum fragmented a broad English Calvinist self-understanding into a variety of sectarian ones. The Restoration settlement ultimately became a *klein-kirche* solution as a significant body of dissenting churches took root outside the national church.

In the long run, the Reformation in England ran aground on the common problem of holding together the center in a time when the reality of new religious pluralism clashed with the ideals of religious unity and homogeneity as the basis of social and political order. If one was silent against those whom hardliners attacked then hardliners would assail such silence as tacit support, and those under attack would view it as betrayal. Those who attempted to mediate an accord between conflicting confessions or avoid taking sides by limited reforms would end up satisfying neither. Moderates would become discredited when radicals with whom they had built relationships and worked so hard to keep in the fold acted contrary to the established order. Hardliners then blamed

moderates for aiding blatant enemies. Strong state power was needed to define and uphold the center to avoid these eventualities.

The failure of the center during the Long Reformation in England had two important parallels. One is the fracturing of Christian humanists in the Reformation, and their failure to maintain a coherent reform movement within the early 16th century Church. The fate of Erasmus, whose books Protestants and Catholics both condemned, shows the difficulty of holding the middle ground. Another parallel is the *spirituali* in Italy who tried to integrate elements of Protestant doctrine into the Catholic tradition without abandoning traditional worship, traditional church structures, and obedience to the established church hierarchy. Euan Cameron has argued that their engagement with Protestants helped to keep the Italian Reformation at the level of conventicles, of discussion and reading rather than of action and reform from below. It fostered Nicodemism and inhibited the formation of a firm confessional creed and the development of institutional structures that would define a new church. By contrast, Cameron argues that the Roman hierarchy's heavy-handed response to Luther 1517-21 "turned the Reformation into a revolt." The *spirituali* sought to avoid this outcome in Italy. In contrast to contemporary hard-line Catholics who blamed the *spirituali* for the Church's troubles, Cameron claims that Italian evangelism was very effective against the Reformation not its covert ally or an Italian Reformation.¹⁰⁹ Like the *spirituali* dealing with Italian Protestants, moderate Calvinist conformists kept puritans within the church where they were being absorbed and blended into the mainstream, and their potential as a disruptive reform movement forestalled.

¹⁰⁹ Euan Cameron, "Italy," in Andrew Pettegree (ed.), *The Early Reformation in Europe* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 188-214.

We might ask what could have happened if England's rulers had healed the puritan-conformist breach by opting for an Archbishop Grindal inspired settlement of presbytery within episcopacy, parish level consistories, and modest changes to the Book of Common Prayer. One of the most important stories of the later Tudor and early Stuart period was the failure to do so. There was no shortage of opportunities from the 1570s-1580s, to 1603-4, to 1640-41, and 1660-61. Under such a settlement the language and narratives in fasts would have been highly unifying for English Calvinists. The Church of England would have remained a broader, more inclusive church, and the fragmentation of English Protestantism would have been delayed considerably. Puritans forsook the best chance they had in hopes of even greater reformation. Purportedly, the moderate puritan "old Mr. John White" counseled accepting the Lord's committee compromise rather than the Root and Branch Bill, and prophetically warned radical presbyterians: "Time would come when they would wish they had been content with what was offered."¹¹⁰ Fast day themes and narratives were an important reason why they rejected compromise. Fast days were a potent force that helped both to forge and fragment English Protestant self-understanding.

¹¹⁰ John Hacket, *A Century of Sermons* (London, 1675), p. xvii (Wing H169).

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